Chapter No. 1
"Obtaining Quality Source Material"
In this package, you will find:
A Biography of the authors of the book
A preview chapter from the book, Chapter NO.1 "Obtaining Quality Source Material"
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About the Authors

Claire Broadley and Mathew Dixon are trained technical authors with several years of experience. In 2011, they formed their own company, Red Robot Media, with a vision to bring their writing skills to the World Wide Web (WWW).

Since the launch of the company, Red Robot Media has provided essential technical writing services to companies around the world. This includes private and public sector clients in the UK, US-based software companies, and Japanese hi-tech manufacturers.

Thanks to all at Packt Publishing.
In memory of Daisy.

For More Information:
Camtasia Studio 8 – Advanced Editing and Publishing Techniques

Camtasia Studio 8 – Advanced Editing and Publishing Techniques is an immensely powerful video editing tool. It’s incredibly easy to get grips with this tool, and anyone can create a basic screencast video in a matter of minutes.

In time, many Camtasia Studio users begin to investigate the advanced features in the software with the aim of achieving a more professional result. This book is intended to be a guide for the intermediate users, who are ready to improve their skills.

We will look at the settings and features, follow step-by-step guides, and consider practical time-saving tips.

What This Book Covers

Chapter 1, Obtaining Quality Source Material, explains how we can obtain the best quality source material for our video. We also discuss about planning a Camtasia Studio project and look at the appropriate settings for the final output.

Chapter 2, Working with Audio, deals with creating or sourcing audio. We also cover audio editing, formatting, and publishing settings.

Chapter 3, Enhancing, Editing, and Drawing the Eye, covers a variety of ways to enhance a Camtasia Studio video. We also look at ways to apply these enhancements effectively.

Chapter 4, Creating More Complex Video Sequences, covers some of the more advanced features in Camtasia Studio.

Chapter 5, Publishing Tips and Techniques, covers various ways to publish videos and their pros and cons.

For More Information:
Obtaining Quality Source Material

Camtasia is capable of producing extremely professional video output. But to achieve professional results, it is essential that we start with good quality source material.

A little time spent on the basics will make life far easier as the project progresses, and it will ensure a far better result with fewer snags along the way.

In this chapter, we will look at how we can prepare ourselves for recording, how we record the screen, how to record with the webcam, and how to obtain quality material. We will also discuss how to record using separate devices and look at how the recordings will be imported into Camtasia.

To begin with, let's look at preparation.

Preparing for a recording
Before we capture the first video, we must ask a few key questions about our project as a whole:

- Who will view it?
- Where will it be distributed?
- What format will it be exported in?
- What size and resolution do I need to use?
- Will I be using effects such as zoom and pan?
- What will be the canvas color for our video?
- Will we be using audio, onscreen text, or both?
- What visual branding will be used?

For More Information:
As we proceed through this book, we will discuss these questions in more detail.

Some videos need more preparation than others but, regardless of the purpose, we must take basic steps to ensure that our video is of high quality and suitable for the intended output format at the bare minimum.

**Choosing the right dimensions**

There are three types of video dimensions that we will use to create our video:

- Production dimensions
- Editing dimensions
- Recording dimensions

The production dimensions that we choose will largely depend on where the final video will be viewed. We select the production dimensions when we produce and publish the video, but we should be able to decide what they will be before we start recording.

Consider the following possible scenarios:

- Suppose we are developing a video to be viewed by work colleagues only. This means that we will select only the resolution suitable for the monitors at our workplace.
- If we're developing a video for to be viewed on mobile devices, it is easier to work with the output device in mind, rather than trying to adapt a finished video to fit into a different screen size.

What if the video will be viewed on different devices? The solution is simple: we should use the highest resolution we'll need. That's because scaling the video down is far easier than scaling it up.

The editing dimensions determine the size of the editing canvas on which we will work. In most cases, the editing dimensions will be the same as the production dimensions. However, we can decide if we want to work on a large canvas, and zoom and pan to different areas.

If we choose to use different editing and production dimensions, the editing dimensions should be larger than the production dimensions. When we produce our video from a different-sized editing canvas (or zoom and pan the region) the image will be scaled to match the production dimensions. It is far better to scale down than scaling up.
We’ll have the chance to determine the editing dimensions for the Camtasia project when we record our first screencast or add our first item to the timeline.

Finally, the recording dimensions are set whenever we record the screen or with the webcam. These are shown later in this chapter.

When choosing the recording dimensions, don't forget the different types of effect we will be using. The video's resolution will be compromised when we apply a zoom and pan in Camtasia, so obtaining video at a higher resolution will help to retain the video clarity.

When we adjust the size of a video, we ideally want to maintain the aspect ratio. If we record the full screen, and if the dimensions of our monitor are different from those of the target device, we may end up with a video that is stretched and distorted, or a video that has extra canvas on display.

For example, if we are planning to output at 640 x 480, filming at 1280 x 960 will allow us to zoom in to a quarter of the visible space without risking the output quality of the footage.

It's a good idea to develop rules for our dimensions and stick to them throughout our project.

**Choosing the right frame rate**

When we're working with video, whether it is from an internal or external camera, or if we are making a screen recording, we need to take some time to consider the frame rates.

If we're matching and importing content from different sources, we need to check the frame rate of each source. The frame rate of any imported footage might influence the decision on our project frame rate as a whole.

Developing conventions at the beginning of the project will help us to achieve a better-quality result.
The video can be edited to display at a slower clip speed, so we may be able to use mismatched frame rates to our advantage.

If we aim to produce our final video with a frame rate of 24 frames per second (fps), and if a source video is filmed with a frame rate of 30 fps, the mismatch will allow us enough leeway to reduce the clip speed of the source video by 80 percent without having a noticeable effect on the quality.

**Familiarizing yourself with the camera**

While Camtasia is great for recording the screen, we can also use live video in our projects.

There are two ways to capture live video: using the computer's built-in webcam or using a separate camera connected to the computer with a cable.

Some computers have very good built-in cameras capable of great quality footage, and these are very convenient if you need a quick solution.

For flexibility, an external camera is more useful and produces better results, simply because it can be positioned freely.

Here are a few points to note about camera capture:

- Any modern digital camera should give us the option to record in full 1080 pixel HD, and that's a big plus when it comes to a crisp output. As we'll see in this book, a better quality capture always leads to a better result.

  Even if we're not sure about the resolution for our live video capture, it is worth recording the footage in HD. If we ever want the finished project to be of a larger size, we will have the necessary footage for a bigger resolution.

- We should make sure that we know how to use the camera before setting it up. If we spend some time becoming familiar with its settings, it's one less thing we need to learn on the fly.
- A tripod is desirable to prevent our camera from toppling over, drooping or needing to be corrected between takes. A small and inexpensive desktop tripod is fine for basic recording, particularly in a makeshift studio setup. For more accomplished recording, use an inexpensive full-sized tripod for freedom of movement and flexibility.
Preparing the studio

If we record with the webcam or an external camera, we must make sure that the space we are recording in is fully prepared. Mostly we'll have to accept some compromises when setting up our makeshift studio, but there are things that we can do to improve the capture quality:

- We can light our studio from different angles so that there are no shadows. Most built-in cameras and consumer digital cameras require a lot of light to produce good quality results.
- We can remove the background clutter and other distractions, and we can place the camera in a convenient spot that gives us a clear view without the need for zoom. Digital zoom is a not acceptable, since it can introduce flaws and noise to the picture. But even optical zoom can be troublesome, since it's difficult to match between takes; so it's best not to use it.
- If we wear glasses, we'll need to remove them as they reflect the light or the image on the computer screen. It may be preferable to wear contact lenses while filming so that our viewers are not distracted by this.
- When it comes to audio, we can get a far better result by investing in a decent microphone. Invest in a good USB desktop microphone that can be set up just out of shot. Alternatively, a good lapel microphone is a great investment.

Avoid headset microphones, and try to avoid using the built-in microphone in the computer. Headset microphones are distracting, and a built-in microphone mostly will pick up background noise, such as the sound of the computer's fan or hard drive.

Saving your project

At the beginning of the project, it makes sense to plan ahead and save your project early.

When saving a Camtasia project, we can choose how to collate material used in the project, helping us to stay organized.

Saving now also ensures that autosave is enabled. Camtasia will then back up the project every minute as we work, which avoids the frustration of having to set up the project all over again if we forget to save it later.

For More Information:
Obtaining Quality Source Material

Navigate to **Tools** | **Options** to adjust the autosave settings. In the **Program** tab, the **Autosave every** checkbox can be switched on or off and the autosave frequency can be adjusted as required.

**Recording the screen**

Recording the screen is tricky and requires some skill and practice. This is where our resolution decisions and zooming and panning roles come into play.

**Planning a screen capture**

Before we start recording, we should take time to plan out the actions we are going to capture and the way we will make these actions flow.

Consider the following:

- Does the video involve multiple steps to achieve a certain result? How will we link these steps?
- In the video, will we record key presses, such as the typing of words, phrases, file names, and passwords? If so, do we know exactly what we are going to type and where?
- Will we be describing each action separately, or in one or two sentences?
- Have we created a dummy account with a false e-mail address to avoid giving away any personal data onscreen?

It doesn't hurt to run through the recording process a couple of times before capturing anything. Making notes of the most basic points can help us to plan the action effectively, which will save a huge amount of time at the editing stage. If we are adding a voice narration to the video, a carefully planned script will be helpful. We will discuss scripting in detail later in this chapter.

For More Information:

Any notes that we make will also aid in scripting any voice-over we are planning to record.

It's always tempting to record more than one stream at once (such as voice and capture, or video and capture). With practice, this can save time; however, the quality is often better when we focus on each element separately.

The best practice for screen captures

To obtain the best source material from capture, there are a number of simple rules that we can follow:

- We should set the recording dimensions according to the rules we have made.

- If we plan to zoom in to parts of this recording, we should record at a larger dimension.

- After setting the desired capture size, we can resize the application windows we plan to record, so that they will fit into the recording area. This means we do not need to crop the video later.

- We may decide to include other effects such as textboxes. We can take time to plan ahead. We can check whether there is enough space within the recording area to fit extra annotations into the shot? If not, we may have to increase the recording dimensions to allow us to shrink the video and make room for these effects on the canvas.

- Camtasia will capture the mouse pointer in a screen recording, so we should consider how we can use our mouse during the recording. We can actively minimize the mouse movements so we don't distract our viewer from the important action on screen.

- We can move the mouse pointer in deliberate and smooth strokes, pausing where we want to cut the video or extend the frames to give the voice overtime to catch up.

For More Information:

How to record the screen

Recording the screen in Camtasia Studio is very simple. In this section, we will record a basic screen capture on our Windows PC. We can quickly produce a screen grab at the beginning of a project. This is a useful method for testing the resolution dimensions and frame rates we are intending to use in the output. Perform the following steps:

1. Navigate to **Tools | Record the screen**. The screen capture window is displayed alongside the recording area, as shown in the following screenshot. Here, we can choose the options we are going to use for this recording.
2. Navigate to **Tools | Options** to access a number of useful settings that can be applied to the recording. The **Inputs** tab allows us to set frame rates as shown in the following screenshot:
3. The **Program** tab includes useful options for **Recording region**, particularly the **Force popup dialogs into region** setting, as shown in the following screenshot:

In the original dialog box, click on the red **rec** button. Camtasia initiates a countdown before starting to record the screen. The recording area is displayed and the controls remain accessible above or beneath the recording area. In the following screenshot, we can see the controls that are accessible while recording the screen:

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For More Information:  
When we record the screen, we should give some time at the beginning and end of the video for padding. Padding provides a little breathing room and can be trimmed out later.

4. Click on Stop or press F10. A preview window is displayed, as seen in the following screenshot. This allows us to check through the recording before deciding whether to keep it or not.

5. If we are happy with the recording, click on Save and Edit. If not, we can simply click on the Delete button to delete and start again.
Obtaining Quality Source Material

The recording is saved as a .camrec file and is made available in the Clip Bin window, as shown in the following screenshot. It is possible to produce the video here, but it is unlikely that we have the finished article from a single take, so we should resist the urge to produce it just yet.

![Clip Bin screenshot]

Recording from a webcam

Recording the narrator talking into a webcam is an easy way to make our video more engaging. But we should use this technique sparingly.

Showing the narrator is a good way to introduce a video, but we may not want to display the narrator throughout.

Viewers naturally relate to a voice-over when they know how the speaker looks like, but it can be distracting to see the narrator’s face from start to finish. A good compromise is to use the webcam to introduce the video (perhaps using Picture-In-Picture), and then fade it out so that the viewer can focus on the content.

For More Information:
Best practice for webcam captures
Camtasia can capture video of the presenter and the screen at the same time, but we'd never recommend this for a professional quality output.

Here are some reasons you might want to avoid capturing both together:

- Trained and experienced presenters can often maintain an interesting narrative while using a computer, but this is a learned skill. A voice-over will be peppered with false starts, pauses, and vocal tics that will be irritating for the viewer.
- As the narrator, if we're moving the mouse around, our gaze will be directed at the cursor—not the camera lens. We should try to maintain a steady eye contact with the camera lens at all times, and that means not trying to operate the computer while speaking.
- Simultaneous recording leaves less room for error. If we make a mistake, we'll have to re-do both video tracks from scratch.

Instead of trying to cut corners, we recommend preparing a script and recording it separately.

Using a script
We can think of a script as a series of cues, rather than something we read verbatim.

Do not write out the video narrated word for word. Instead, use a shorthand format that feels comfortable.

We like to list key concepts in a spreadsheet. With keywords in one column, we'll have ample space to make notes and record time cues in other columns, so we can build up a handy reference point and storyboard as the project develops.

When using a script, record the audio before recording the video that will sync to it. It's far easier to stretch and pause the video than to stretch and pause the recorded speech. Also, editing the voice-over tracks can result in stilted and unnatural voice-over tracks. Get the audio right first.

Finally, we should take care not to rush our speech. Clip speeds from a screen recording can be edited to match the voice narration, but the voice cannot be sped up or slowed down without making it sound strange. Leave plenty of pauses, speak clearly, and leave room for cuts.

For More Information:
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How to record the webcam

When we record video from the webcam, we should give some time for padding at the beginning and end of the video. This can be trimmed out later. It gives us a little comfort when we're editing. Perform the following steps to record the webcam:

1. Navigate to **Tools | Record Camera**. A dialog box is displayed. Here, we can control how the video is captured, what kind of camera is used, and in what format we'll capture it. We have selected our built-in camera. The **Properties** and **Format** options, shown in the following screenshot, allow us to fine-tune the camera settings. The settings may vary depending on how we plan to use the video clip.

   ![Camera settings screenshot]

   In this particular case, we've matched the frame rate and the resolution to the output frame rate and resolution. It's highly unlikely that our webcam video will be slowed down or zoomed at any point.

2. Click on the **Start recording** button. Camtasia immediately starts capturing our webcam video.

   For More Information:  
3. The Stop recording button, as shown in the following screenshot, becomes available while the recording is in progress. Click on the Stop recording button when you have finished the recording. Camtasia will process the recording and display it in the Preview window.

![Stop recording button](image)

At the end of our capture, we will need to manually reach over to click on the mouse to stop recording. This will cause our head and body to move, which can look unprofessional. At the end of the video, we should pause for a second before moving, so that we can edit the end of the clip.

4. If you are happy with the recording, save it. The recording is saved as a .wmv file and is made available in the Clip Bin window within Camtasia Studio, as shown in the following screenshot:

![Clip Bin window](image)

For More Information:
Importing media

We can also import media files into our Clip Bin window.

Importing media gives us the freedom to acquire video from another application, if we feel that it is going to give us a better result.

Here are a few examples:

- We may want to record footage onto a standalone digital camcorder, copy the resulting capture onto the PC, and then import it into Camtasia for editing.
- We may also have video content given by third parties that we need to bring into the Camtasia project and incorporate into the edited movie. Typical examples include title sequences or location footage.
- We may have a corporate logo that we want to incorporate into the movie as part of our brand and theme.
- We may need to import a specific piece of music for a back track.

Types of files

Camtasia can import a huge range of media files. For a complete list, refer to its help documentation. A few of the important media files are described as follows:

- .camrec: This is the default format of Camtasia. A .camrec file can contain more than one stream. Note that .camrec files are not widely used in other applications; thus, if you want to export a capture for editing, avoid this format. It is ideal for transferring captures between Camtasia Studio projects.
- .avi, .mpg, .mpeg, .wmv, .mov, .mp4: These are the video files commonly used in a variety of applications on all of the platforms and operating systems. Most of the videos that we import will be in one of these formats or it will be easy to convert to one of these formats, if they are not.
- .bmp, .jpg, .jpeg, .png: These are the image file types. Note that the .gif files are not supported in Camtasia but, if we need to import a .gif file, it can easily be converted to a .png format in a third-party application. If you don't have any image editing software on your PC, you can use a free cloud-based image editing application such as Pixlr in your browser.
- .wav, .mp3, .wma: These are the audio file types recognized by Camtasia Studio. We may need to perform a conversion if the file is in a different format, but this is not normally difficult to achieve using a third-party application for Windows. Examples of such applications include WinFF, FFMpeg, Handbrake, or SUPER.

For More Information:

Take care with mono files and use stereo audio if at all possible. Also, ensure that the .mp3 file is encoded at 128 kbps or above, or else there will be flaws in the sound quality. Just as we are looking for a high quality video, we are also aiming for a high quality sound.

- .swf: This is an Adobe Flash format and is useful if we need to bring in multimedia from the Macromedia applications.

How to import media

When we import media, it appears in the Camtasia’s Clip Bin window and is sorted according to the file extension. Perform the following steps to import the media:

1. Navigate to File | Import media, as shown in the following screenshot:

```
[Image: Camtasia Studio - Untitled.camproj]
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2. Browse and select the media file you want to import.
3. Click on Open.
The file is now in the **Clip Bin** window, and can be inserted into the project and edited.

Select a clip, and navigate to **Edit | Add to Library**, to add a media file in the **Clip Bin** window to the library for regular re-use in different projects.

**Editing contents**

At this stage, in a recording, we only need ensure all of our clips are placed on the timeline in the correct order.

It may be tempting to jump in and start the editing process. However, if we are adding audio, particularly a voice narration, we should wait. Audio plays a large part in the timing of our video, and editing our content now may create additional work later.

**Summary**

In this chapter, we’ve looked at planning ahead to obtain the best results. We have also devised conventions that will give our project structure.

Once our source video is the best we can achieve, it's time to start adding our audio. In the next chapter, we will look how to further improve the captured footage and make key elements stand out more clearly.

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**For More Information:**

Where to buy this book


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