

The logo of the Pulitzer Center, featuring a stylized white letter 'P' inside a light gray circle.

Pulitzer Center's
Guide to **Photos &
Audio Slideshows**

Tips for Taking Photos

It's all about taking good, simply composed shots that tell your story in an obvious way. Here are a few tips for taking better photographs.

- 1.** Do NOT shoot photos holding your phone vertical. Hold your phone horizontal.
- 2.** Capture a variety of shots. Try to include landscapes of the locations and scene setters, portraits, details, action pictures of people doing things and sequential images of action. This will improve the overall look and flow of the story.
- 3.** Avoid cluttered or distracting backgrounds in your photos. Examine the background beyond your subject for things like telephone poles, branches or wires that appear to be poking out of your subject's head. Our brain likes to complete shapes, so try to find a clean background behind a subject, even if it is just clean around that person's head. By moving yourself, or shooting from below or above, you usually can clean up a background.
- 4.** Try not to use the flash on smartphones and consumer-grade cameras. This will help you avoid washed-out looking photos, or the dreaded "red eye."
- 5.** Be aware of the edges of your frame. Scan the edges of your image and make sure you haven't awkwardly cropped your subject. Try to avoid cutting off a person's feet, or the top of their head, unless it is obviously intentional.
- 6.** Don't always shoot from the same height and angle. We often shoot from our chest because it feels natural. But try shooting from a low angle or from above to add visual variety. At times, it is also good to shoot on the same level as your subject. For example, when shooting kids, drop down to their eye-level or their height with your camera.
- 7.** Look for images that show depth and layers. It is nice when things are happening on multiple planes.
- 8.** Don't be afraid to get close to your subjects.
- 9.** Look for shadows, and reflections. Also consider symmetry when composing your photos. Look for variety, including both symmetrical and asymmetrical images.

Pulitzer Center's Guide to Audio Slideshows

If possible, please watch our video tutorial on how to create, export and upload an audio slideshow using Soundslides.

My terms say audio slideshow. Can you help?

An audio slideshow is a slideshow with sound on top of it. We've found it to be very helpful in giving an overview of the work you are doing.

Feel free to use whichever editing software you already have. If you do not have your own editing software, we recommend using Soundslides for audio slideshows. It is fairly straightforward and user-friendly, and we could help answer any questions.

Soundslides offers Pulitzer grantees discounted rates. For each purchase, you can download Soundslides onto two computers. Visit these special purchase prices to receive the discount:

Soundslides Plus (\$49.95, regularly \$69.95): <http://store.soundslides.com/order/pulitzerplus/>

Soundslides (\$29.95, regularly \$39.95): <http://store.soundslides.com/order/pulitzer/>

Here is an example of a Soundslides audio slideshow on our website:

<http://pulitzercenter.org/video/gold-guns-and-garimpeiros>

Important: Although you can create captions and credits in Soundslides, we ask that you do not use this function. When you export the slideshow as an MP4 using the online video converter, credits and captions will not appear.

Audio

Before opening Soundslides, you will need to record audio. You should record your audio narration and save it as a single mp3 before you start. Let us know if you need instructions or suggestions for audio editing software. You can use your mobile phone with a free app like WavePad. Generally, the fewer words of narration, the better. Do not feel obligated to cram your slideshow full of narration from start to finish.

Here's how to use Soundslides:

Step 1: Save all the photos you would like to use into a single folder. You can save this folder on your desktop or on an external hard drive. Just remember where you have saved them! All photos must be saved in .jpg format.

Step 2: Open Soundslides Pro (make sure you are opening the actual program and not the demo version) and create a new project. Save the new project to your desktop or external hard drive.

Step 3: Once you have done this, Soundslides Plus will prompt you to upload your photos or audio. First select the output size for your slideshow on the left side of the first screen. Click "large" and "full-screen enabled," but you can also change this later by clicking on modify in the Soundslides tool bar that will appear at the top of your desktop screen (select output sizes).

Step 4: Click the JPG button to upload your folder of photos. Note: All photos must be in .jpg format. Soundslides will automatically resize your photos to fit the slideshow. However, if for some reason Soundslides is rejecting your photos, try resizing them manually or use Adobe Photoshop to change the resolution to 72 pixels (this is a web friendly resolution).

For instructions on how to resize/modify the resolution of your photos in Adobe Photoshop, visit this link:

<http://www.jtoolkit.com/photojournalism/ssphoto2.html>

Step 5: Click the SND button to upload your Audio. **NOTE:** Audio must be in .mp3 format only. If you don't want to upload an audio file yet, click the Skip button. Soundslides automatically lines up your photos with the audio track. The number of photos you upload and the length of your audio file determine the speed of the slideshow. In other words, the photos are synchronized to the entire length of your audio file.

Step 6: You can change the length of the photos by clicking on the gray bar in between each photo and dragging it left or right. You can use the orange bar to jump through the timeline. Pressing your space bar will both play and pause the slideshow. One tip is that it is helpful to transition from image to image on pauses or punctuations in the audio, rather than in the middle of words.

Step 7: Slides Tab: Click on a photo thumbnail and drag it to rearrange its order on the timeline.

Step 8: The Slide Info tab: The details section allows you to write captions for each photo. **FOR PULITZER CENTER PURPOSES YOU DO NOT NEED TO WRITE CREDITS FOR SLIDESHOWS.** For other purposes, set the in- point so your caption will play at a specific time. For instance, if you would like your first caption to appear at the 15 seconds point in the timeline, type in :15 into the in-point box. Click next for the next photo or back for the previous photo and go through the same procedure.

The Movement section allows you to set motion such as pan or zoom for your images. Drag the scrolls to set the motion start point and end point for your photos. Click next to proceed to the next picture.

Step 9: Template Tab: The Display, Font and Transition and Shell sections allow you to customize the slideshow. For Pulitzer Center purposes, leave this on the Default setting of plain_white.

Step 10: Project Info Tab: Allows you to create a title and credits for your slideshow. **NOTE:** Credits will not be saved when exported to video so do not use this option for your Pulitzer Center audioslide-show.

Step 11: If you chose to skip uploading audio when you started the project, you can click on the Audio Tab to upload it now. If you are re-uploading audio, it will affect the timing you have chose for your images. Under the Lower Thirds section, you can create a title to identify someone or something that appears in the lower section of your slideshow, called the "lower thirds."

Step 12: Click the play button at the bottom left corner under the timeline to watch the slideshow. Or click the Test button at the far right bottom corner to see how it will appear online. By clicking Test, you will be able to see your captions and motions in action. The space bar will both play and pause as well.

Step 13: Click Save to save your project.

Step 14: If you are finished editing your slideshow, click the Export button at the bottom right corner. Soundslides Pro will now create a new folder within your saved project called publish_to_web. If you want to upload the slideshow to your personal website, you can do this by uploading this "publish_to_web" folder via Filezilla or another FTP program.

For Pulitzer Center purposes, however, you will need to export the slideshow as a MP4.

The Soundslides Converter (<http://tools.soundslides.com/converter/>) will convert your slide show to an MP4 file that can be viewed with Apple QuickTime and other video players, or uploaded to YouTube, Vimeo or other video-hosting sites.

*Important information: the Soundslides MP4 video converter does not support viewer-controlled elements like captions and credit fields. In other words, if you created or inserted these elements while you were editing the slideshow, they will not appear in the final exported version.

Here's How to Use Soundslide's Online Video Converter

Step 1: Create a zip file of the "publish_to_web" folder:

Windows: Right-click on the "publish_to_web" folder and select "Send To" then "Compressed (zipped) Folder." This will create a ZIP file, which will now be ready to upload to the converter.

Mac OS X 10.5, 10.6: Right-click (Ctrl+click on a single-button mouse) on the "publish_to_web" folder and select "Compress 'publish_to_web.'" This will create a ZIP file, which will now be ready to upload to the converter.

Mac OS X 10.3, 10.4: Right-click (Ctrl+click on a single-button mouse) on the "publish_to_web" folder and select "Create Archive of 'publish_to_web.'" This will create a ZIP file, which will now be ready to upload to the converter.

Step 2: Next, you will need to open the online video converter:

<http://tools.soundslides.com/converter/>

Select an output size (DV-720x480 is standard) and, optionally, enter an e-mail address for the converter to send a download link to. If your slideshow includes motion or lower thirds (Soundslides Plus only), you can check the box to include them in the video.

Step 3: Click the "Continue ..." button to go to the upload page, where you will need to click the "Select file ..." button to upload your "publish_to_web.zip" file. The converter will then begin uploading your "publish_to_web.zip" file.

Slideshows are placed in a queue and processed in the order in which they are received. Once your slideshow is at the front of the queue and begins processing, most slideshows are processed in less than 30 minutes.

If you entered an e-mail address, the converter will e-mail you when the conversion is complete. Otherwise, you will need to wait until the converter notifies you that the conversion is complete. Then you will see a download link.

Step 4: Download this link and you will have your newly converted slideshow MP4! You will then need to upload this MP4 file to us. Please do not send us the "publish_to_web" folder. Rather, download the MP4 file from the link provided to you by Soundslides, and then upload that file to us.

You will need to upload the MP4 to the website in the "Submit Content" page, under video. Do not send us the `publish_to_web` folder.

Here's How to Upload the MP4 to the Pulitzer Center Website

Step 1: Go to <http://pulitzercenter.org>. At the top right, click "log in." Use the username and password that was emailed to you prior to going into the field.

Step 2: At the top right, click "My account."

Step 3: Next, at the lower left of this landing page, click "submit content." This will call up a page for you to create a post with your content on the Pulitzer Center Website.

Step 4: Fill out this page.

First, click whether or not this content has already been published.

Second, create a content title, for example Congo's Children.

Next, upload a Word document that has an introduction to your project. This text will accompany the video on the website in the actual post. This should be around one paragraph long.

Next, fill in the space for External URL to include a hyperlink of this material if it has been published somewhere else. If it has not been published elsewhere, leave this blank.

In the box below Teaser, you will write a brief statement that is one or two lines long, up to 200 characters, about what this video is about. This teaser will show up with your post on the homepage but the text included in your Word Document will actually appear on the post with the video.

Under media categories, select Video.

Every post must have a horizontal image attached to it. Click Choose File and upload an image to accompany your video.

Next, you will need to upload the video file. Click "Choose file" and select your video file for upload. There is no progress bar for the upload. If the button reads "uploading" then it is working.

There is a place for you to import audio but you will not need that with your video post.

Next, click location and zoom in to find the country covered in this post. For example, this video is from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

If you need to tell us anything about your post, you can include it in a Log message. This will only be viewable by Pulitzer Center staff. When you have everything filled in, save the post.

Once you press save, we will receive a notification. **Please check everything thoroughly because you will not be able to return to the post once it has been saved and we have received it.** In the case that you want to make a change, please let us know. **Do not create multiple posts of the same content.**

In some cases, revisions will be advised. Once we have the video, we will email you if revisions are necessary.

Here's How to Upload Revised Videos to the Pulitzer Center Website

When uploading revised videos, **do not create a new post.** Upload the video file directly to us.

Use pulitzercenter.org/dropbox to upload the new video file.

THEN SEND US AN EMAIL SO WE WILL BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR YOUR VIDEO.