

Video Cameras Guide

Sister Helen Sheehan Library currently offers its student and faculty patrons the opportunity to use video recording equipment.

As library staff members, we are called to assist our patrons with the use of this technology. The video recording equipment is fragile and complex, and students will most likely have questions about proper use. We will inevitably need to help them troubleshoot.

The following is a primer on the use of our current video recording equipment.

General rules:

1. Students must call ahead to make an appointment for video recording.
2. Only a senior staff member may make a reservation.
3. Senior staff should write the following on the equipment/room reservation calendar:
 - a. Name of student
 - b. Phone number of student
 - c. Camera requested
 - d. Viewing room (A or B) requested
 - e. Time and date requested for recording
4. Students must reserve equipment and rooms in 2-hour time blocks. Extensions will only be given on the day of recording if there are no conflicting reservations.
5. All recording sessions must end one hour before closing. For example, if the library is open until 10 p.m., the latest reservation possible starts at 7 p.m. and ends at 9 p.m. At the end of their scheduled recording session, students must relinquish the equipment in a timely manner.
6. Recording equipment shall not be taken out of the library by students.
7. Equipment and viewing room keys should be checked out to the student's library account. If the student does not have a library barcode, they cannot use the equipment.

Types of equipment:

1. Panasonic VDR-D210 Mini-DVD Camera

This camera uses a miniature, recordable DVD. It is the most fragile and complex of all the cameras in the library's possession. Located in the security case in Room 101.

2. Canon ZR500 Mini-DV Camera

This camera uses a mini-tape. While complex, it is less prone to data loss than the Panasonic camera. Located in the security case in Room 101.

3. VHS Camera

This camera, although old, is the most reliable and easy to use. It is ideal for students who are uncomfortable using technology. Located in Viewing Room A. Power adapter located behind the reference desk (on the shelf above the Capstone thesis papers).

4. Tripods

A large tripod is attached to the VHS camera in Viewing Room A. Several small tripods are available for students who need to attach them to the smaller cameras. Attach the tripod by screwing it into the base of the camera. Located in the security case in Room 101.

Common issues (Panasonic):

1. Buttons and connectors on the Panasonic camera are small and hard to find.

- a. When students record, make sure they use the power chord to plug the camera in to an electrical outlet. The power connector on the camera is located underneath the battery pack.
- b. The "off/on" switch is located to the right of the eyepiece.
- c. To insert a disc, the student will need to slide the "disc eject" button. This can be found to the right of the battery pack.
- d. In order to start recording, the student must turn the dial (which is to the right of the battery pack) to the red icon. This icon looks like a movie camera.
- e. After the red movie camera icon is selected, the student must press the silver oval button (with a red dot in the middle). This is the record button. Pressing this button a second time will end recording.

2. Students must "finalize" their discs. Otherwise, the discs will not play back.

- a. The dial must be on the red movie camera icon.
- b. The student must then press the "menu" button (underneath the "off/on" slider) and select "finalize" from the menu screen.
- c. During this process, the camera should remain stationary, in order to avoid data loss.

3. Students should test their mini-DVDs *immediately* on library DVD players.

Common issues (Canon ZR500):

1. Although students do not have to “finalize” a recording when using this camera, this mini-tape recorder has similar controls to the Panasonic camera. They are small and not well-marked. Students and staff should consult the instruction manual for guidance on using the controls.
2. Additionally, this camera does not hook up to a computer, due to the lack of a proper connector cable. Therefore, if students record on this machine, they must tell their instructor that the tape can only be viewed on the camera. There is currently no way to convert it to a DVD.

Common issues (VHS Camera):

At this time, there are no known serious issues arising from use of the VHS camera, which is located in Viewing Room A.

1. Give the power pack and accompanying instructions to the students using this camera.
2. Remind students to remove the lens cap before recording.
3. When students are finished recording with the VHS camera, they should test their recording by playing back their VHS tape in the Viewing Room VCR.

If any recording problems should occur, staff should ask the student for their professor’s contact information. Staff should then call or email the professor, notifying him or her of the equipment failure.

Staff should give technical support within reason. Under no circumstances should library staff act as “camera man” during the recording session.

Current prices for recordable media:

Recordable DVD
\$4.00

VHS tape
Not available for sale

Recordable CD
\$3.00

Recordable Mini-DVD
\$3.00

Recordable Mini-tape
\$2.50

Floppy disk
\$1.00