

presents

MANUAL OF THE --- LITTLE SMARTPHONE VIDEOMAKER

2020 EDITION

Made in



with love

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BIRTH OF A REVOLUTION

In 2015, with the vital support of the Roi Baudoin Foundation, Slash Prod launches the social initiative Once Upon A Time In Anderlecht.

The project sets up workshops to teach smartphone videomaking to teenagers from the suburbs of the capital of Europe.

The goal is to provide them with creative digital skills, tech-education, and media literacy.

The initial project of social inclusion evolves into distinct entrepreneurial and artistic initiatives.

In 2016 Slash Prod produces The Partisan, the first 30-min documentary entirely filmed and edited with a smartphone.

Few months later, Smart Videos becomes the first mobile video agency across the EU.



JOIN US

Since 2013, Slash Prod has been promoting a radical change within EU communications.

This belief has paved the way to the launch of Smart Videos.

From Brussels, the capital of Europe, Smart Videos produces sexy audiovisual strategies and promote media literacy to fight the dark side of mobile technologies.

We call this mix of digital education and entrepreneurship the SMART revolution and this manual tells you how cool it would be if you joined us.

2013 www.SlashProd.eu

2015 www.OnceUponATimeInAnderlecht.eu

2016 www.ThePartisan.eu

2017 www.SmartVideos.eu





SECTION 1 - Rules

10 ESSENTIAL RULES

Videomaking is a complex discipline that requires a good balance between theory and practice, no matter how expensive your videocamera is and how hard your computer works in post-production.

The purpose of these 10 essential rules of smartphone videomaking is to facilitate your learning process.

The mere respect of these rules will improve the quality of your smartphone video productions drastically.

Any rules has its exceptions, so you definitely have the right to break them.

However, you need to prove that you are capable of following them, first.

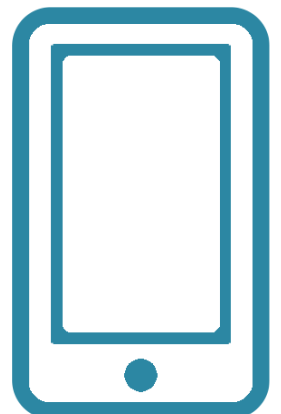
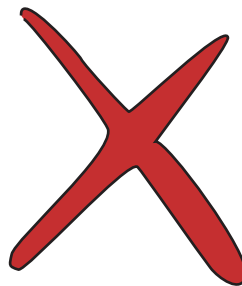


#01 - the orientative rule

HORIZONTAL NOT VERTICAL

With the explosion of vertical videos across many platforms, such as Instagram or Twitter, this rule has more and more exceptions.

For the moment, though, just stick to the rule.



#02 - the stable rule

SHAKY FILMS MAKE PEOPLE SICK

Put your smartphone on a table.

Place it against another object.

Buy a cheap tripod, or - even better - a small “gorilla” tripod, which you can hang anywhere.

If you are serious about mobile videomaking, take a look at a mobile stabiliser, such as DJI Osmo mobile: they are pretty cheap and extremely effective.

Just please, avoid shaky filming.





#03 - the sound rule

SOUND SUCKS? VIDEO SUCKS

Wind, traffic, noisy crowds: be careful when you film. Nothing is more annoying for the audience than hardly understanding what people say in the video.

What are your simplest options?

- 1 Invite people to speak louder.
- 2 Ask the people around to stay quiet whilst you are recording.
- 3 If you have your smartphone's headphones, just plug them to your device and use them as your microphone.



#04 - the light rule

NO LIGHT? NO VIDEO

Because it comes from photography, audiovisuals are nothing but light.

Sometimes you just need to move a little bit or to change side to have a completely different light. But you need some, in particular on people's faces, because faces are what catalyses the audience attention.

This is particularly true for smartphone, as bad lightning makes them underperform significantly.

#05 - the plane rule

FLIGHT MODE SAVES LIVES



If you are in the middle of a shooting and your mom calls you, it does not matter how much you love her: she will have screwed your clip.

Be sure to disable calls, push notifications, and any application that may interrupt your work.

The simplest way to do that is by setting your phone on “airplane mode” and/or “do not disturb,” depending on your device settings.



#06 - the interview rule

YOUR QUESTION, THEIR ANSWER

A video interview is more effective if people do not hear someone behind the camera asking questions.

This is why you should invite people to include your question in their answer.

“Are you happy today?”

Bad answer: “Yes!”

Good answer: “I am very happy today!”

#07 - the zoom rule

DIGITAL ZOOM IS EVIL

Video-editing tools, for both smartphones and laptops, offer a wide variety of filters, effects, libraries of cool animations.

However, even Power Point animations looked good in the '90ies.

Keep it simple.



#08 - the sharing rule

FEEDBACK MAKES VIDEO BETTER



Watching the same images for hours is as necessary as dangerous for the quality of your film: let some people take a look at what you are doing and listen to their feedback.

Their point of view, no matter how stupid it sounds, can help you improve your work.

Critics can hurt your feelings, but they will always improve your video productions.



#09 - the musical rule

GOOD MUSIC = POOR LEARNING

There are two problems with music.

- 1 Most songs have copyrights. Stupid platforms, such as YT or FB, are smart enough to block your contents. Or, even worse, they will use your hard work to sell their advertising. Try using classical music or the copyright-free music that you find online.
- 2 Good music makes good videos, even when the video is not very good. Which makes learning more difficult. So, the more you refrain from applying music, the more you learn about video-making.

#10 - the sharing rule

SHOOT MOVIES, NOT PEOPLE



Keep it short.

Keep it simple.

We are talking about video, we are talking about rules.

In the end, however, it is all about people.

Try to walk in the viewers' shoe and do not fall in love with your work.

Make anything possible so that they can enjoy what they are watching.

SECTION 2 - Methodology



1 VIDEO IN 5 STEPS

Traditional videomaking and Smartphone Videomaking (SV) are two very different arts.

The first one is about making the best video possible.

The second one is about making the best video possible before your battery dies.

The very good and most peculiar aspect of mobile videomaking is its (relatively) democratic nature: most people in the world, even those with very low income, own one.

SV forces all players to respect the same rules and constraints, so that their pure videomaking skills shine more clearly.



The 4 advantages of SV lie in the ability to produce

- (1) short videos,
- (2) in real-time or very close to it,
- (3) using a mobile device for each step of the whole production,

and with the purpose of

- (4) posting the result on social media from any wifi spot in the world.

The 5 steps of this section may apply to videomaking in general, but they target SV in particular, because at Smart Videos we believe that there is no more interesting perspective for the future of digital communications.



STEP #01 - THE CONCEPT

The initial concept is very important at the beginning, because it gives people the right motivation to work.

However, the final outcome is always so unpredictable!

The reason is that ideas do not matter, only execution does.

Smartphone videos work better when a very simple idea or message is the point of departure.

Do not overthink: as soon as you come up with an idea, start filming, experiment with editing, make stupid mistakes!

Ideally, when you start producing a video, you must have the final outcome already in your mind.



#01

STEP #02 - FILMING

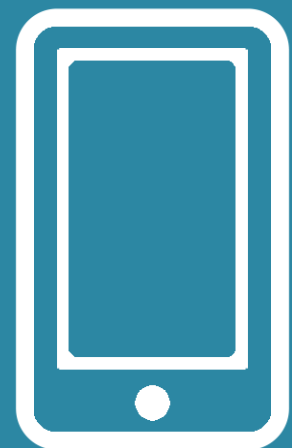
Filming is the action of gathering original footage and sound to use as raw material during the editing process.

You know how to record a video with the smartphone's own camera, right?

Good!

Keep the 10 essential rules in mind, but be sure you do not forget a few more:

- Time is never enough, don't waste your time.
- Check your shots regularly, do you have enough?
- Get rid of bad images as soon as possible, so that you do not waste space on your device.
- If you have time, repeat shots or change angle, light, camera movement.



#02

STEP #03 - EDITING

When you start editing your raw material, there is a simple methodology that you can keep in mind:

- 1 Take the time to watch all your shots once and carefully.
- 2 Eliminate all dark, noisy, shaky shots right away.
- 3 Right after, eliminate all boring, repetitive, long shots.
- 4 Watch this initial selection (and cut more!).
- 5 You can only tell the story that this selection tells, so play with your images (cut, paste, replace, move, invert, accelerate/decelerate) until they tell that story.
- 6 It looks like your video is still too long: cut more!!!



#03

STEP #04 - POSTPRODUCTION

Post-production is all the make-up that you apply to a video to make it look more compelling.

Just remember:

TITLES

- reading takes time.
- your titles need the right contrast with the background.
- take the time to pick a nice font.

SOUND

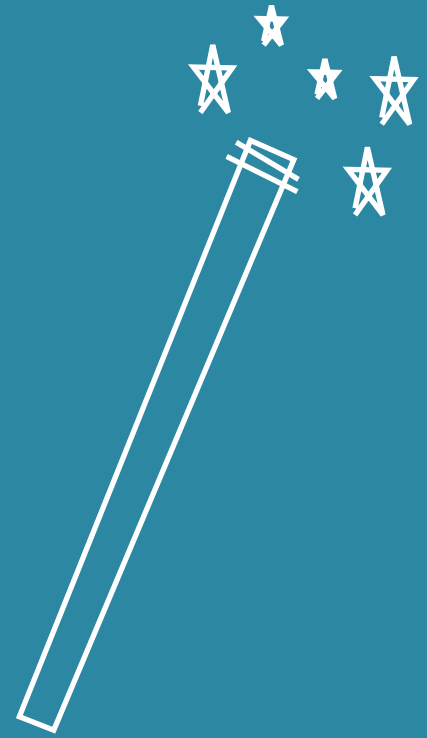
- do not hide your video behind music.
- eliminate noise as much as possible.

VOICE OVER

- record a voice over your images to help people understand.

TRANSITIONS, ANIMATIONS, FILTERS

- special effects look cool, but only if you do not abuse.



#04

STEP #05 - PUBLISHING

What is the point of spending energies and time to make a video if we do nothing to make people watch it?

Today it is pretty easy to make a video available, thanks to platforms like Youtube, Vimeo, or Facebook.

However, millions of videos exist out there: why should people watch your creation rather than tiny little kitties crashing on a window or - even better - some porn?

The last step in videomaking is giving your own answer to this question.

And if you cannot find it yet, just start filming!

Or watch some porn.



#05

SECTION 3 - Tools



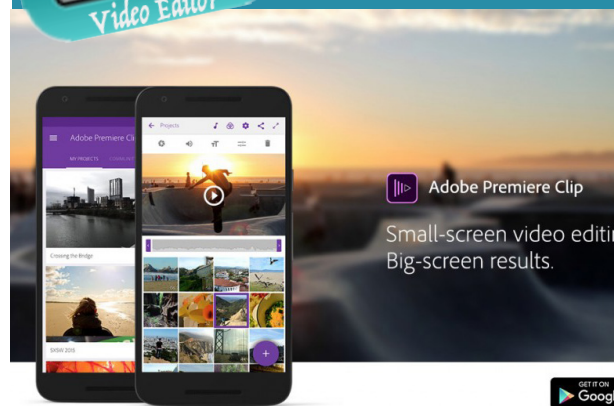
FREE APPs FOR EDITING

A high and increasing number of apps are available for free on both Android and iPhone.

This manual explains how to master Vivavideo, although all these apps apply pretty much the same logics.

In particular, they follow a four-step process:

- 1 select the files with which you want to work
- 2 go to the timeline to refine the structure of your video
- 3 add titles/music/filters and all that make it look better
- 4 export the result as a file that can be posted online



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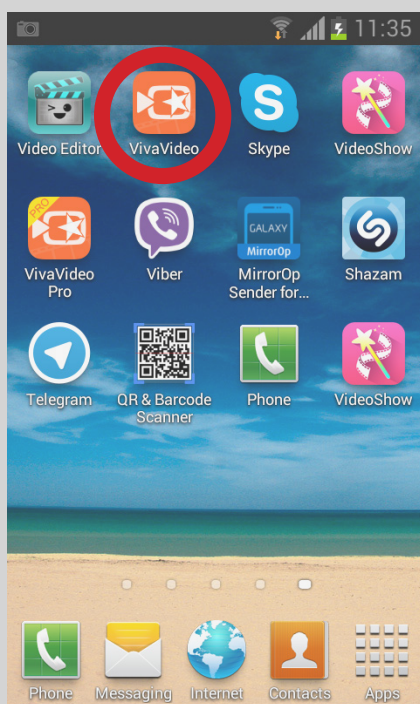
#01 - Select the files

Let's say that you recorded a few videos with your smartphone. Now you want to make a video-summary of your day.

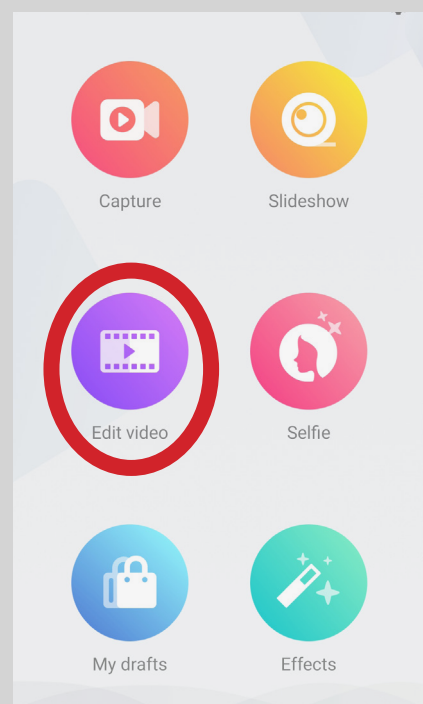
This is the step-by-step process that we recommend to you. It starts with the selection of all elements that will form part of your masterpiece.

- Launch the application Vivavideo! (1)
- On the first screen, click on **Edit Video** (2).

1.

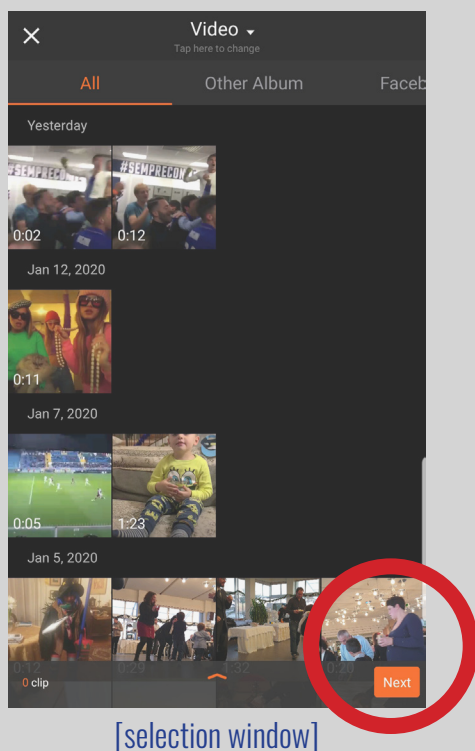


2.

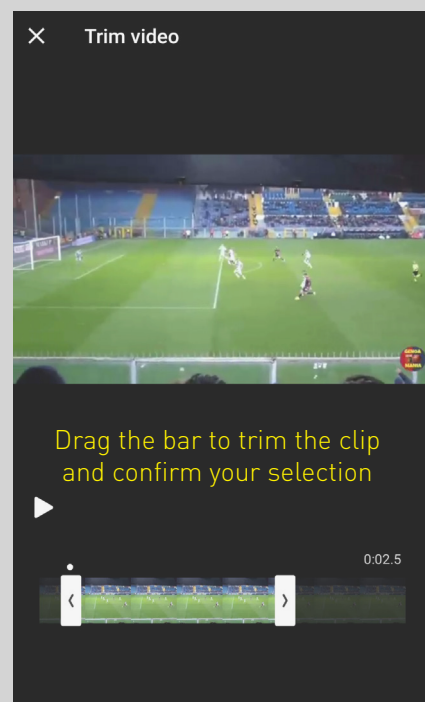


- A new window appears [selection window] (3) and gives you the power to select videos and photos from your smartphone's gallery.
- Each time you select a file, the app also gives you the possibility to trim it and cut the unnecessary parts away (4), because long files (>5sec) make editing harder
If you have a long clip, use the bar to select small parts of it and then add them to your project with the **Add** button.
- Once you have added all the files you need, click on the orange button **Next** (3) to validate your selection and to import it on the timeline [main window] (5).

3.



4.



#02 - Go to the timeline

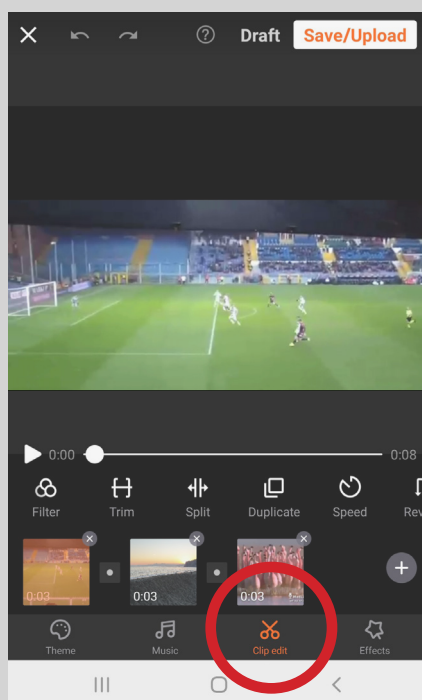
Once you have confirmed your selection, a new screen appears [main window].

On the top bar, you will find all you need to **save** your project and to **undo/redo** actions: the app also includes a **?** button to watch very useful video tutorials.

In the middle, a video player will show the whole selection from the beginning to the end.

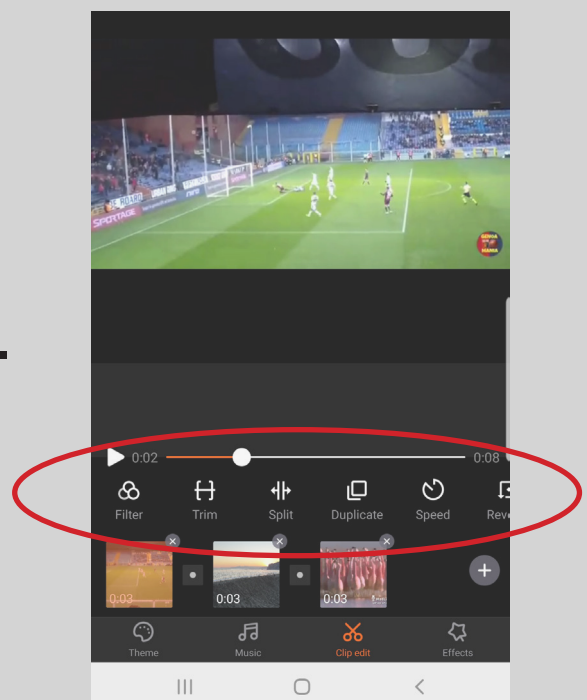
Below the player you will find four menus (**Theme, Music, Clip Edit, Effects**).

5.



[main window]

6.



Each menu has multiple submenus [6].

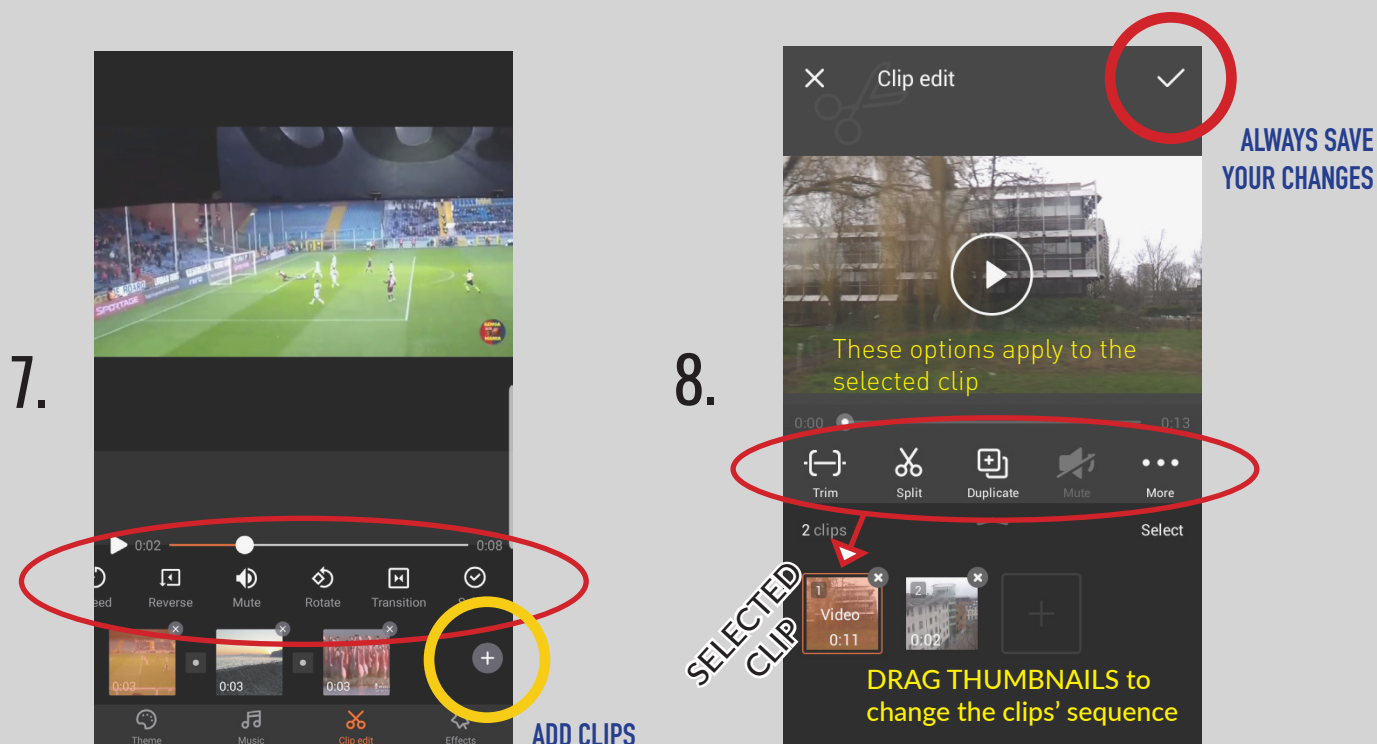
Click on the 3rd menu [**Clip Edit**] to activate it.

You will see that a wide range of functions appear on top of it (6): filter, trim, split, duplicate , etc.

Use your finger to scroll right and to be able to see them all (7) .

If you want to change the order, in which the clips appear, just select them one by one, keep the finger pressed, and drag them until you obtain the desired sequence [8].

You want to insert additional clips? Just click on the **+** symbol.



#03 - Add titles/music/filters

The submenu that you find under **Effects** offers many options of post-production: if you understand how Text works, you will be able to use the other options as well.

First of all, click on Text from the menu Edit (9)

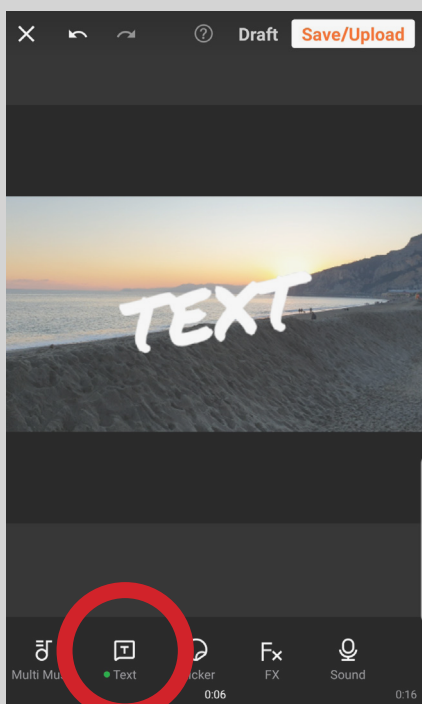
A new window will open [\[text window\]](#).

Click play and then stop when you reach the point, in which you want your title to fade in.

When you get there, stop the video and click on Add (10).

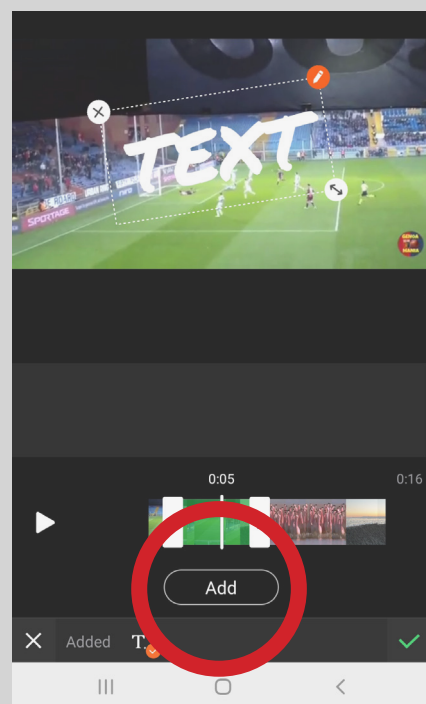
A new window will open [\[text graphics window\]](#).

9.



[\[effects window\]](#)

10.



[\[text window\]](#)

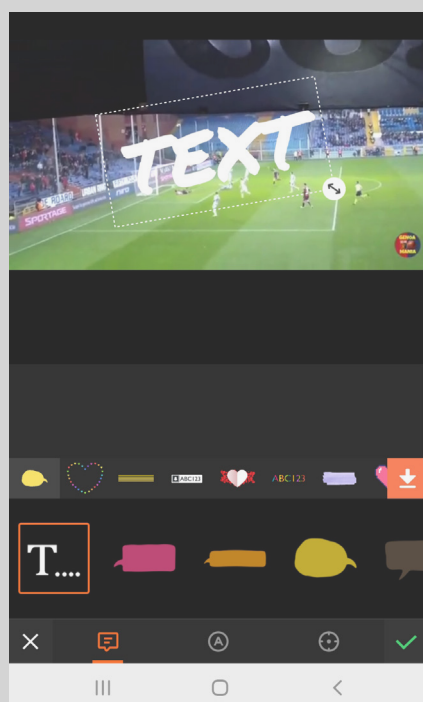
On the bottom you will see two Cancel (x) and Confirm (✓) buttons. Above them, you will find the player and some graphical options for the title (11) : play with these options until you like what you see.

When your title is ready, click ✓ on the right bottom to go back to the [text window] (12)

Automatically, the video will play and keep generating a **green bar** until you click stop on the player: this green bar represents the length and the position of your title on the timeline.

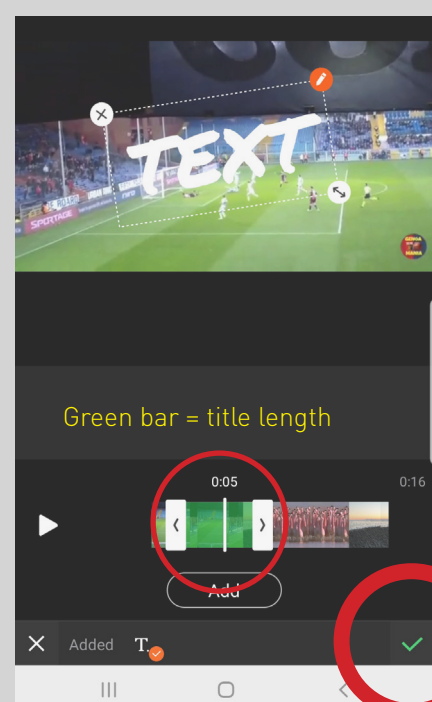
Confirm by clicking ✓ to go back to the [main window].

11.



[text graphics window]

12.



[text window]

ALWAYS
CONFIRM
to avoid
losing your
changes!

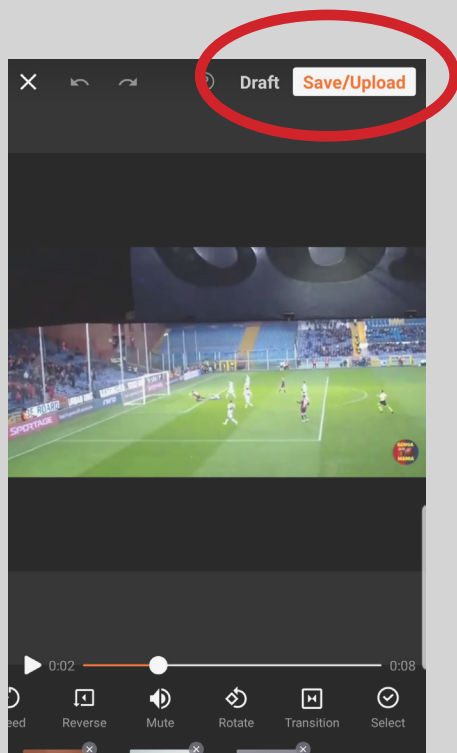
#04 - Export your video

Each time you need a break or simply wish to save your work for later, you can click on the **Draft** button on the right top (13): it will take you to saved projects library (16).

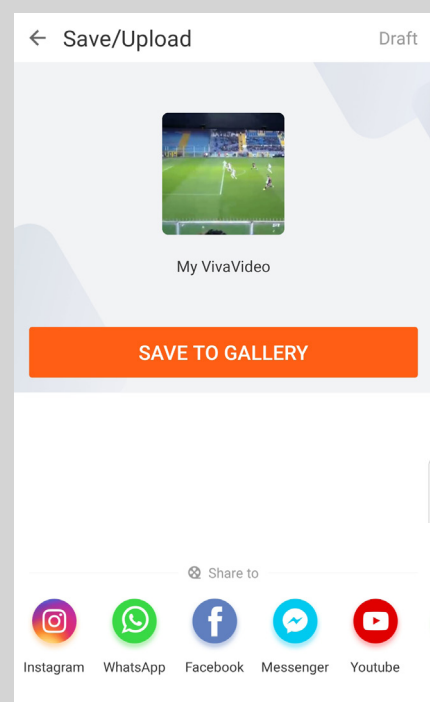
On the other hand, if you have finished adding clips, titles, music, voice-over, filters, animations, etc., and you believe that the world is ready to see your masterpiece, use the Share button on the right top (13) to be able to export your video to Gallery.

You can choose many social options, but it is good to Export to gallery your video, first, so that you have it as a single, compressed,

13.



14.



and transferable file on your smartphone (14) .

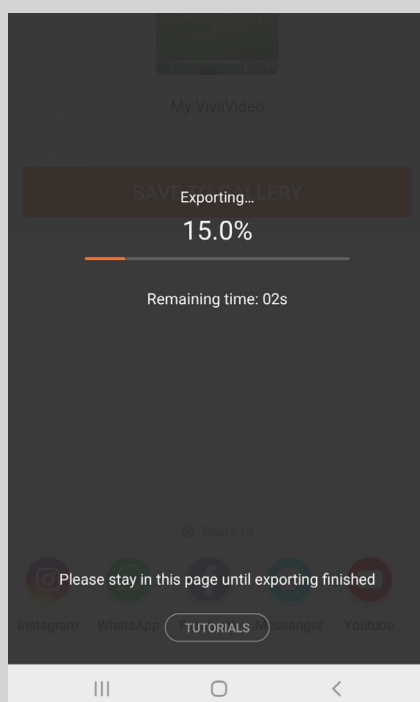
Now the **video export** begins (15) .

Try to keep the video below two minutes, as this operation (like the editing in general) may take long on not-very-powerful devices. The longer it needs, the higher the possibilities that the app crashes or that your battery dies!

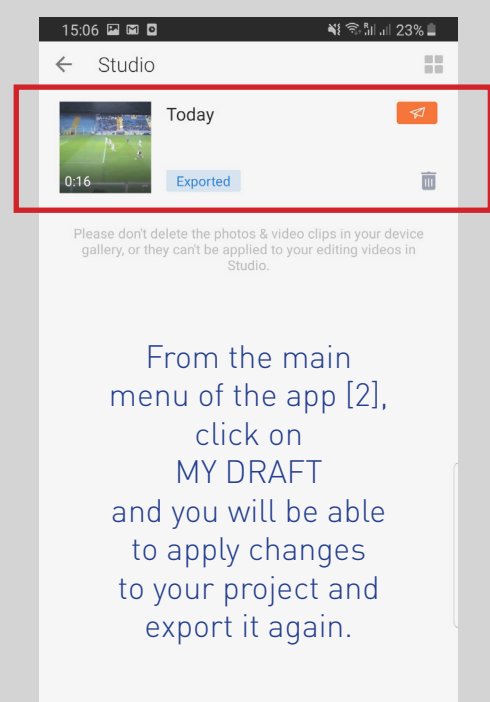
The next time that you launch the app, you will find your saved project by clicking on **My Draft** (2) .

The saved project gallery opens [16] and you will simply have to click on your project to go back to the [main window] and to continue your work.

15.



16.



SECTION 4 - Practice



6 WAYS TO GET STARTED

Now it's your turn!

Try out these 6 simple exercises, so check if you are ready to join the SMART revolution.

Once you are done, share your homework on our FB page!

1 FRAMING grab your camera // find a friend // ask him-her to repeat one simple sentence 3 times // each time start-stop recording a new video file // each time film from a different angle.

Then launch the app // import the 3 video files // cut them in pieces // merge those pieces together, as long as we continue hearing *that same sentence once*, but from 3 different points of view.

2 INTERVIEW grab your camera // find a friend // ask him-her 3 questions // be sure that their answers include your question.

Then launch the app // import the files // cut your voice away // check what the video looks like now.

3 TEXT grab your camera // record a set of heterogeneous images (landscapes, talking heads, whatever).

Then launch the app // import the files // place some text (title, subtitle) on each image // play around with colors and position // show the result to a friend // check if he-she manages to read it without efforts.

4 SHORT grab your camera // find a friend // let him-her talk about his-her job for 5 minutes.

Then launch the app // import the file // cut it and shorten it until you get a 1minute video // be sure that the new version makes sense to those who have not watched the 5min version.

5 SYNC grab your camera // film a friend singing the chorus of his-her favorite song // do it at least 3 times, each time from different angles.

Then launch the app // import the files // place the song on your timeline // cut and merge the files with care, so that sound and image are always in sync.

Did you find that too easy?

Then, try to do the same exact exercises with half of the time!

CHECKLIST

It's only, when you think that all is under control, that you realize you forgot something. Too late. The night before going filming, check this list:

- 1 My camera(s) seems to work regularly.
- 2 The batteries are fully charged.
- 3 The memory cards have enough free space.
- 4 Battery chargers and card reader are in my bag.
- 5 All people involved have confirmed their presence.
- 6 I have checked the wheather conditions.
- 7 I made a written list of all the shots that I have in mind.
- 8 Some tape, paper, pens, food, and/or money are in the bag.
- 9 My ID and all required papers are in the bag, too.
- 10 Although I am not a believer, I pray God to make me lucky for once.



THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!

Voilà, this is it. Hope you enjoyed the free ride.

Now you know all that you need to know in order to launch your big career in the smartphone videomaking (SV) world.

A few final considerations:

- no matter how cool this manual is (and it is, right?), you will learn with practice.
- the more you practice, the easier learning becomes.
- the easier learning SV becomes, the easier digital learning, in general, will be.
- SV does not replace laptop videomaking's quality.
- SV only makes sense if you need (and manage) to be quick.
- problems with SV? Ask Google.

MANUAL OF THE

LITTLE SMARTPHONE VIDEOMAKER

- mobile version -

A very open initiative by
Alessandro Cozzutto
www.alecozzutto.info

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as part of the
Smart Videos initiative
www.smartvideos.eu

that is part of the
Slash Prod initiative
www.slashprod.eu

Please drop a message to

hello@slashprod.eu

in case you spot typos,
or have improvements to suggest,
or want to translate the manual
into another language,
or simply want to say
“hey, thanks for all the work!”