



Introduction

Go Tell It at the Quilt Show! is a project of the Quilt Alliance designed to capture the stories of quilts where quiltmakers and quilt lovers gather.

The protocol for Go Tell It! is simple: one person talking about one quilt in front of one video camera for three minutes, recording the essential and compelling details of the quilt according to the "teller."

An ideal GTI video is: a **high quality, easy to watch video** in which you can **see the quilt and the "teller"** and **hear the story** that lasts about **three minutes**. There are no questions asked, we usually set up the video by saying:

"Okay, I'll point to you when it's time to start. You'll have three minutes to say whatever you want about your quilt--something about why you made it or how, its significance to you, or whatever else. I'll give you a 30 second warning when you have 30 seconds left, but if you don't make it to that point, don't worry, just stop whenever you're ready"

This guide contains tips for ensuring that your Go Tell It video best captures these quilt stories.

Equipment

Go Tell It subject and their quilt

Anyone with a quilt story to tell can be part of the Go Tell It project. Whether they made, bought, inherited, found, or sold the quilt, they're invited to share.

Location

Go Tell It videos are designed to be captured anywhere there are quilts—this can include the floor of a quilt show or a museum on a busy Saturday. However, it's important to find a location with limited:

-ambient noise that distracts from the "teller"

-lots of activity or other visual distractions in the background

Camera

Any video camera with enough resolution to create a YouTube video (our camera makes a video that's 1920 × 1080 pixels). It doesn't have to be a very fancy, expensive camera. For best results, we recommend a camera with a fold-out screen, the ability to zoom, and a good built-in microphone/port for an external microphone. Our camera is a Canon Vixia HF500, but a DSLR with video would also work.

Tripod

It's always best to use a tripod if you have one. Three minutes can be a long time to hold still!

Quilt Stand

If the featured quilt isn't already hung in a show or exhibition, you'll need a quilt stand or other display method to ensure that it's visible behind or next to the "teller". If it's a large quilt, it's okay if they stand in front of it, as long as viewers can see most of the quilt. Make sure your quilt stand is level and not crooked--this really stands out on video.

Microphone and headphones

Go Tell It videos depend on being able to hear the story as it's told. For locations with a lot of background noise, a lapel mic is useful because it'll primarily pick up the teller's voice, though it can also pick up the rustle of clothing and hair if the speaker moves around too much or gestures. In quieter locations, you may be fine with your camera's built in microphone.

You'll want to listen to the audio through headphones so you can monitor the audio levels and make sure everything sounds correct.

An assistant, if possible

A pair of extra hands can be very useful for hanging quilts, collecting forms, and keeping track of time during filming

[Before](#)

Get forms signed and prep your participant.

Before you get started, ask your participants to sign the GTI consent form and explain where and how the video will be used, and when they can reasonably expect their video to appear online.

Explain that they have three minutes to talk, which can feel like a long time, and that it's not an interview--they can just talk. Make sure participants know they can share whatever they like about the quilt--what inspired them, where they got it, a bit about the family member or friend that owned it, what it symbolized, what techniques they used, why they like it... whatever compels them. Let them know that they'll get a 30-second warning, or, if you have a timer assisting you (or you're a great multi-tasker), a warning after each minute has elapsed.

Set up the frame

You'll want to feature as much of the quilt as possible, but you'll also want to feature the speaker. Don't be afraid to move the camera, tripod and all, further back or closer in so that you can see the whole quilt or focus in on a detail.

If it's a smaller quilt or you can't get far away, try to truncate the speaker at a natural breaking point (at the waist, for example) instead of cutting them off at the knees or ankles. Below are a few examples of good and not-so-good camera set-ups.



Good -- the whole quilt is visible and there's no distracting background



Not so good -- Too much space around the quilt, distracting background movement, quilt is not straight in the frame

Do an audio test (and listen back to it)

Record your speaker (with mic, if applicable) stating their name and saying a few sentences, and ask them to gesture to the quilt. Play it back and make sure they're audible and the microphone doesn't echo, click or pop.

During filming

Be encouraging

Even one minute can be a long time to talk. It's a good idea to make eye contact and let the 'teller' feel like they're talking to you, not the camera. Nod, smile, and encourage them (silently!) to keep talking. If they pause, you can give them a little symbol to let them know they still have time, if they wish.

Give time warnings

Let your speaker know you'll give them a 30 second warning. If you have a volunteer you can ask them to give a one and two minute warning in addition to a 30 second warning.

After you're done

Thank your teller!

Let them know they did a great job (especially if they were nervous) and an expectation about when they might be able to see their video online.

Save your video at the best resolution you can. Your software may allow you to save it as "good for web" or even HD (high definition). It may be a very large file, but should still be uploadable.

What can go wrong?

Your power source could fail We've found that batteries can be fickle, so *if you can plug your camera directly into a power source, do!* If you have cords snaking across the floor, tape them in place so no one trips or accidentally unplugs the cord during filming.

Your camera's memory could be full Check your memory card or internal memory! Always have a blank back-up, just in case. Make sure you know how much space you have available, and about how much you'll need for one three-minute video.

Your audio may not be audible-Before you start, film a 30 second test run. Ask your

participant to say a few words—their name and location, for instance—then play it back with headphones to ensure you can hear everything clearly.

Once you've filmed the video, it's always a good idea to play back a portion and ensure everything worked *before* the teller wanders off or leaves for the day!

Your participant can be nervous Some folks are nervous in front of a camera and tend to pause after the first part of their story is told. Providing (silent) feedback to their story is a good way to encourage them to keep speaking. If they stop in the middle of the video and pause or say "do I keep going?", it's okay to keep filming—this is easy to edit out.