

# Mobile Journalism 2.0



ALJAZEERA  
MEDIA INSTITUTE



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# Introduction

Mobile phones have been used to document several major events which have shaken the world, rather than journalists using professional cameras. From the horrific Beirut port explosion, to the killing of African American George Floyd at the hands of US police officers, mobile phones in the hands of eyewitnesses were what captured these events.

In 2017, Al Jazeera Media Institute launched the first version of our guide to Mobile Journalism. At the time, mobile journalism was at its inception and reliance on mobile phones to produce stories was still viewed by some journalists as a mere pastime or hobby.

However, the past few years have highlighted the value of mobile journalism and shown how essential it has become in the work of journalists, especially during recent crises including wars, conflicts, revolutions and the global COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, the spread of coronavirus prevented the team of Al Jazeera English's correspondent, Natasha Ghoneim, from reaching her, for example. In fact, the pandemic forced Ghoneim to take on the tasks of an entire team at times. Using only a mobile phone, Ghoneim was able to convey important stories during the pandemic, as professionally as she and her team would have done using a modern camera.

In this second edition of our Mobile Journalism Guidebook, Al Jazeera Media Institute examines the latest developments in the industry as well as explaining how to choose the best device, the use of applications and the best ways to produce content.

**Al Jazeera Media Institute**





# Mobile Phones or Nothing At All



By **Natasha Ghoneim**,  
Senior Correspondent for Al Jazeera English

In February 2020, Al Jazeera held a training session on mobile journalism. It was through this course that I came to understand just how much my mobile phone could do.

A few days after that session, at the beginning of March, I was in the United States for work. I found myself

I had learned in that course, go out into the field alone with my iPhone and try to do what a whole team would do.

I chose to steer clear of breaking news stories because of the tight deadlines, and because I hadn't yet tested my ability to produce a full report on my mobile phone. I didn't know how long it would take. Instead, I turned to producing social stories and character-driven reports. I found that it took twice as much effort to produce a story and the process was full of challenges and obstacles I was not previously familiar with. Still, I had no other choice but to try. It was either a mobile phone or nothing at all!

stuck there. I could neither travel nor move freely, as the coronavirus was spreading and countries around the world were closing their borders.

I needed to continue to produce stories for Al Jazeera, but my cameramen couldn't get out into the field to join me. I had no one to help.

So, I decided to put to work the skills

For example, stories which required interviews in front of the camera took much more time than they normally would. This was mainly because I could not be sure of the sound quality during filming. I had to stop every once in a while to check what I had recorded and re-record what was not usable.

As for lighting, I bought lighting equipment suitable for installation on a traditional tripod I had. I also added a piece to my tripod to make it suitable for carrying a mobile phone.



I became more picky about the best times to film so as to ensure that I could always make the most of natural lighting. I completely avoided filming at night.

To avoid the wind from shaking the phone during filming, I placed sandbags on the tripod, and tightened my grip on my mobile phone.

Producing using a mobile phone also made me reassess what I was capturing. Because storage capacity is limited, I tried to limit the number of

During filming, I treated each video as an image. I made sure each image was taken with various shots; wide, medium and closed, while building the whole scenario in my mind.

I always strived to shoot more footage than I expected to need for a three-minute story. This was to avoid problems during editing.

From my experience as a reporter of 26 years, I have learned that a journalist should always shoot more footage than he or she may need.

questions I put down for interviews or ensured interviews took only a few minutes. I would also pause shooting every once in a while, to upload my content onto an external hard drive so that I could empty my phone storage.

I used a simple approach to filming and recalled some of the filmmaking techniques I learned as an undergraduate at Columbia University's School of Journalism.

Footage you may think was excellent on camera or a mobile phone, can be dreadful when you display it on a computer screen during editing.

And, so, I relied on constant learning and trying to adapt to different circumstances. Whether it was rain, strong winds, or bad lighting, I adapted my methods until I produced complete stories that were suitable for TV using only my mobile phone.

From Al Jazeera's point of view, being able to work with a mobile phone has transformed me from a reporter into a fully fledged team. While I do not advise reporters to work with their mobile phones on a daily basis, or to produce breaking news stories with them, I found mobile journalism extremely valuable during exceptional circumstances thrown up by the global pandemic.

If a camera stops working, or if you find yourself unable to use usual filming gear, a knowledge of mobile journalism will be a lifeline for you.

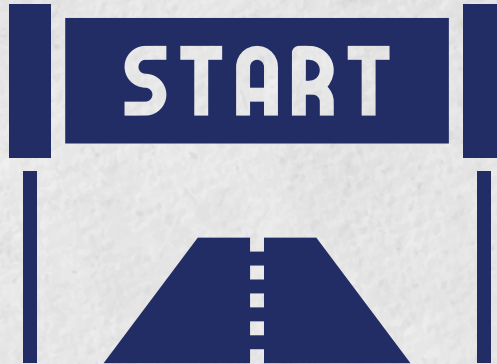
Furthermore, you can also use the mobile as a second camera to capture different angles during your coverage of an urgent event or an ongoing story.

To the untrained eye - and thanks to the editing team that we have at Al Jazeera - my reports filmed using a mobile phone were indistinguishable from those that were filmed using professional filming equipment. This made me realise just how valuable having such a skill set can be.

In the end, it's all about producing powerful stories regardless of the tools we use.







## Before We Begin

**Before browsing through this guide, we invite you to think a little about the following questions.**

- Have you heard news, or seen a report, and thought that it would not have been possible to convey this story without the use of a mobile phone?
- Do you think that using a mobile phone in the production of your stories will improve the quality of your work?
- Or will the quality of your work remain the same with only the tools having changed? Do you think mobile journalism has created a new phase for journalism?
- Do you have concerns about not keeping up with the developments in your profession if you do not possess the skill set needed for mobile journalism?

We hope you'll find the answers to these questions on your own when you reach the end of this guide.

## Definitions later but, first, what distinguishes mobile journalism?

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These words are key phrases that we will analyse later, but let's think about them a little.

---

**The journalist  
is the team**

**The means is  
the mediator**



These expressions may sound vague, and even a bit strange, but the truth is that they are keys to understanding the new reality of journalism.





### **The sender is the receiver:**

The journalist is no longer the only source of information. Everything the public publishes is an essential source of news. This is known as “user-generated content”.



### **The means is the mediator:**

The production and consumption of the message are achieved through one device: the mobile phone. This is a precedent in the field of journalism.



### **Technology is content:**

Every new feature developed on digital platforms forces media platforms to change their own form, content and presentation.



### **The journalist is the team:**

The intent here is to reduce the size of teams to one person. It is in line with the work of a journalist who is able to write, photograph, edit and publish.

# What is Mobile Journalism?

Mobile journalism is a modern form of journalism that allows you to produce multimedia content that is written, visual or audible using only one device: the mobile phone.

The concept of mobile journalism includes the whole story production process including planning, filming, editing and publishing. This process is carried out through the use of applications and technologies on smart phones.

Many journalists agree that mobile journalism has ushered in a new era of news gathering and publishing. Therefore, its definition goes beyond the technical side to include a new phase in storytelling.

The mobile phone is also an important means of consuming content. Mobile phones have become vastly more popular than traditional means of consuming news in many countries, according to many studies. A journalist is therefore required to produce content suitable for both large and small screens.

## A Selection Al Jazeera Experiences

In late December 2019, the digital department of Al Jazeera Media Network launched the “Ijaz” news service - a short bulletin that summarises the most prominent news stories of the day for mobile phone users. The bulletin is prepared and presented daily from the Al Jazeera newsroom.

Watch the report here: 

## What Makes the Mobile Phone a Special Production Tool?

### 1. You can go where others can't

Al-Jazeera Mubasher reporter Mohamed Al-Ramash managed to enter a refugee camp on the Greek island of Samos and film the living conditions of its residents using a mobile phone.

Although the Greek authorities were preventing journalists from entering the camp, Al-Ramash was able to film touching human stories and to document the difficult living conditions of refugees at the camp.

Watch the report 

Mobile journalism is a special opportunity for freelance journalists to produce high-quality stories without the need to purchase or rent professional filming equipment. This provides new job opportunities that were previously reserved for those who own such equipment.

### 3. You can get closer to the story

Euronews reporter Annalize Borges gave her phone to refugees in Jordan's Zaatari Camp to allow them to record their daily lives from their personal perspectives. The perspective presented by the children was very different to what a professional



### 2. Job opportunities

It is no secret that the media industry is going through a difficult time. So why should organisations hire a whole team of journalists when a single mobile journalist is capable of doing the job alone? Why invest in expensive equipment when all that is needed is a mobile phone?

cameraman may have produced. The children's use of mobile phones gave them an opportunity to document their stories as they saw them and without the involvement of an intermediary such as a cameraman. This creates a sense of intimacy between the journalist and the subject of the story.

Watch the report 



#### 4. Staying up to date

It is not possible to keep up with the latest developments that mobile phones bring to the industry without using a mobile phone for production. New media content often requires portrait photography, rather than landscape for compatibility with digital platforms such as Instagram. It also allows for interviews to be covered live. Such material will take longer and more effort to produce with traditional equipment.

“If you really want to be a journalist, and your goal is to reach the audience and tell stories, then the mobile phone is no longer just an option. With its apps and equipment, it has become a necessity for your work.”



**Glen Mulcahy**

lead trainer in mobile journalism



## What are the Limits of Mobile Phones?

### 1. Remote shooting

When filming wars and natural disasters or when it is difficult to be in the middle of an unfolding event, mobile phones will not be the best equipment for obtaining clear footage. Smartphone lenses are very limited compared to professional camera lenses.

### 2. Evening photography

One of the main drawbacks of the mobile phone is its limited effectiveness for night photography and filming. While tech companies have succeeded in improving this feature in their latest versions, the quality remains limited compared to professional cameras.

### 3. Being authoritative


Some guests, especially high-profile ones, may belittle the use of a mobile phone during their interview. Conventional equipment with its large size gives a sense of how massive and important a production may be. On the other hand, however, the mobile phone can make people more comfortable with speaking to the camera.

### 4. Multi-tasking

Some experts question the ability of a single journalist to perform many tasks simultaneously. Photographing, writing and editing single by a single person may, in their opinion, reduce the quality of the final product.

#### Al Jazeera Experience

Al-Jazeera broadcaster Zain Al-Abidin Tawfiq presented a complete news bulletin from his home after recovering from COVID-19. This was the first time that Al-Jazeera had broadcast a news bulletin using a mobile phone.

Watch the report. 



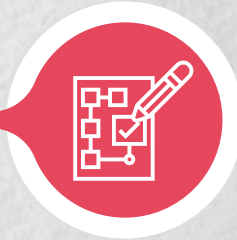
# Roadmap

To be able to produce content using mobile phone content, you must build a particular skill set.

Defining the platform, audience and content type



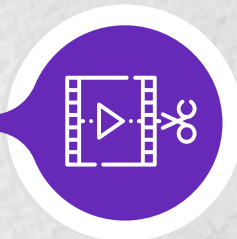
Researching and story planning



Filming and sound recording



Editing and story building



# Getting Started

## 1. Choosing a Mobile Phone

**The camera on your mobile phone is at the heart of mobile filming so it is important to consider its specifications when choosing a phone.**

**You will need the following:**

- ✓ 1. A minimum quality of 12 megapixels.
- ✓ 2. At least 8 megapixels for the front lens.
- ✓ 3. Ultra-high-quality 4K or full HD imaging.
- ✓ 4. Large display screen size. The larger it is, the easier it is to film and edit.
- ✓ 5. Large storage capacity. For enabling quick work and enough storage space.
- ✓ 6. Optical Image Stabilisation which helps to stabilise shots in motion photography.

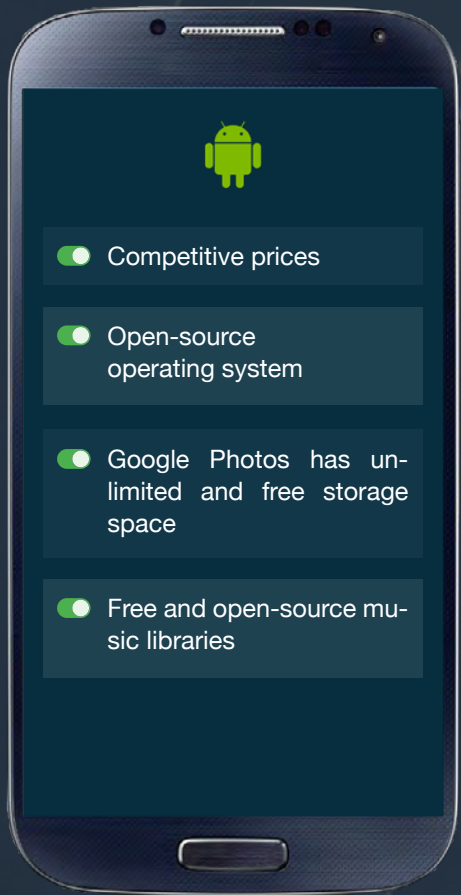


### **Tip:**

If your current phone does not have these features, no problem! There are many applications and pieces of equipment you can use to make up for this. We will come to these later in this guide.

## 1- Which is better - Android or iOS?

There is a lot of competition between smartphone companies. Each system has its own advantages and disadvantages.



## 2. Basic Rules for Mobile Phone Photography & Filming

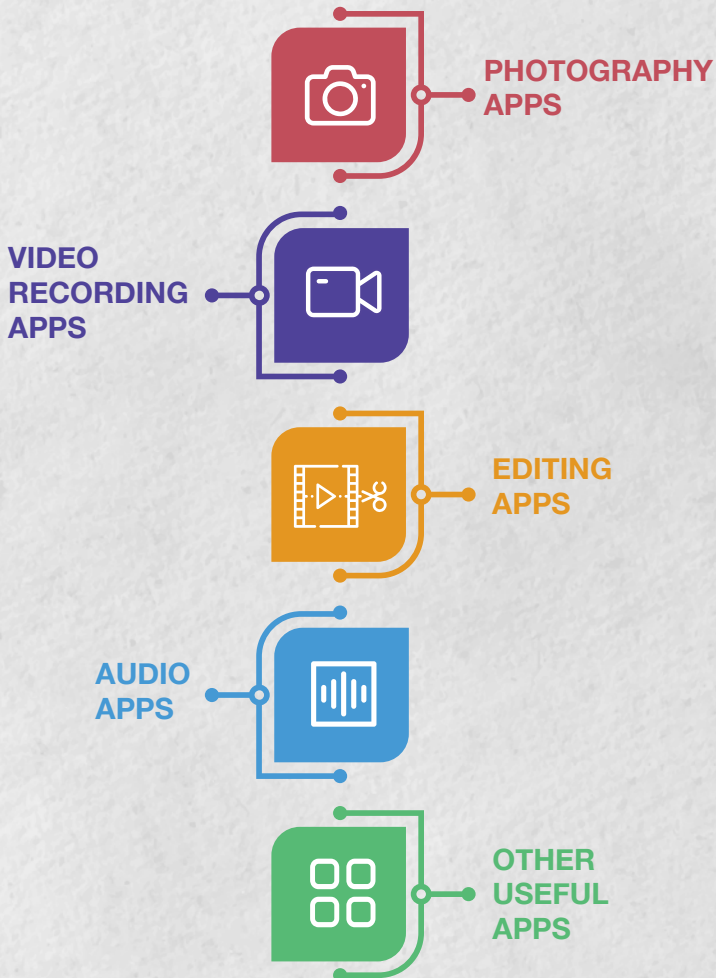


- ✓ Avoid dark places. Natural light gives better image quality.
- ✓ Avoid the zoom-in feature. Approach the subject yourself. Modern phones have up to three camera lenses. You use the one for close-ups if you cannot get close enough to the subject you are filming.
- ✓ Rely on the rear-facing camera as much as possible. Its quality is better than the front facing camera.
- ✓ Keep your fingers away from the lense while filming to ensure clear video quality.
- ✓ To ensure better sound quality, avoid blocking the microphone input when shooting a video.
- ✓ To achieve the highest possible level of stability, keep your hands close to your body when photographing or filming.
- ✓ Use additional clip-on lenses to expand the capabilities of the camera to focus on small items or for expanding shots.



### 3. Applications

There are hundreds of applications available to use for mobile video production. We will highlight some of the more useful ones and help you find the best selection for your style of work.







## PHOTOGRAPHY APPS

**Lr**

### Adobe Lightroom Mobile


**Lr**


#### System:



Android



iOS



#### Pricing:

Free

(paid advanced features)



#### Features:



Equipped with a powerful application that allows you to control advanced filming settings such as lighting, focus, and white balance. The images are transferred directly to the application's library for editing.


**Lr**


The ability to work on the same image across all your devices, including your computer.



The application includes a section dedicated to displaying your photos, which is powered by Adobe Portfolio.



Free and advanced features to adjust frame size, light and white balance.



Paid-for advanced features that allow you to modify specific points of the image, such as adding light to a face or controlling the geometric dimensions of an image.

You can learn more about how to use this application from our Mobile Journalism training course which can be found on the e-learning platform of Al Jazeera Media Institute.



## Snapseed from Google



### System:



Android



iOS



### Pricing:

Free



### Features:



Unique display interface that facilitates access to tools.



Equipped with 30 modifiers controlling light, colours, framing among other features.



Offers professional editing options – such as controlling geometric layout of images – for free.



Offers a unique feature that allows you to isolate the subject of the image from the background using blurring techniques.



You can save the final image and export it after modification, without compromising on quality.



Making the image adjustments is simple, which facilitates and speeds up the editing process.



Canva



### System:



Android



iOS



### Pricing:

Free

(paid advanced features)



### Features:



One of the most useful applications for graphic design on mobile phones.



Includes thousands of templates of pre-made designs that are easy to modify.



Easy selection of sizes for images and their designs, according to the type of platform you are using.



Download images and icons from the Internet directly onto the application.



Share designs in their final format with other designers to follow up.



The ability to incorporate animated images into the design.



## VIDEO RECORDING APPS



### Filmic Pro



#### System:



Android



iOS



#### Pricing:

Paid



#### Features:



One of the most widely used applications by mobile journalists and video producers. A large number of films and documentaries have been produced with it. For more on this topic, see the [mobile cinema guide](#).



Contains all the basic properties related to light control, colour warmth and focus.



The ability to specify the dimensions of the image with the press of a button, whether you require square, landscape or portrait layout.



The application scans in detail the amount of light in the shot. When the indicator is green, it means that the level of light in the image is appropriate. The red and blue colours indicate the places where light intensity needs to be altered.



Remote shooting can be done using another device to preview the image and operate the camera.



## Movie Pro



### System:

 IOS



### Pricing:

Paid



### Features:



A professional application that includes useful features at a competitive price.



It is limited to basic features of photography and filming, and does not overwhelm the user with options.

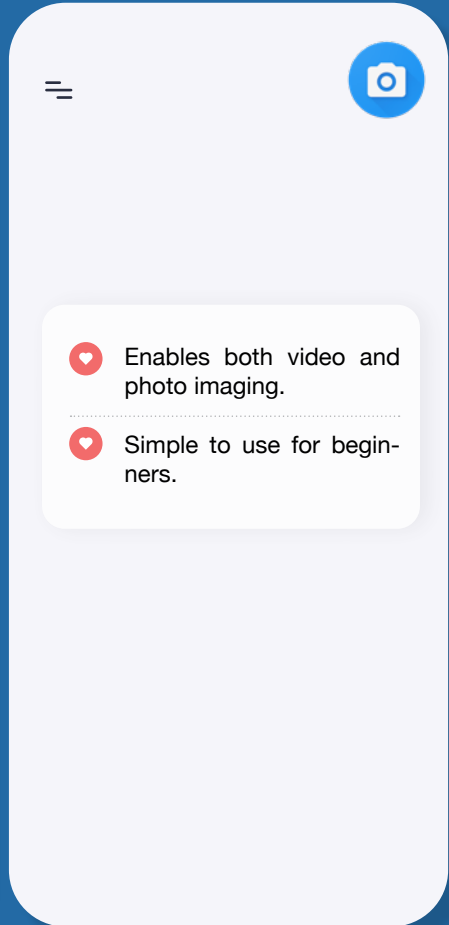
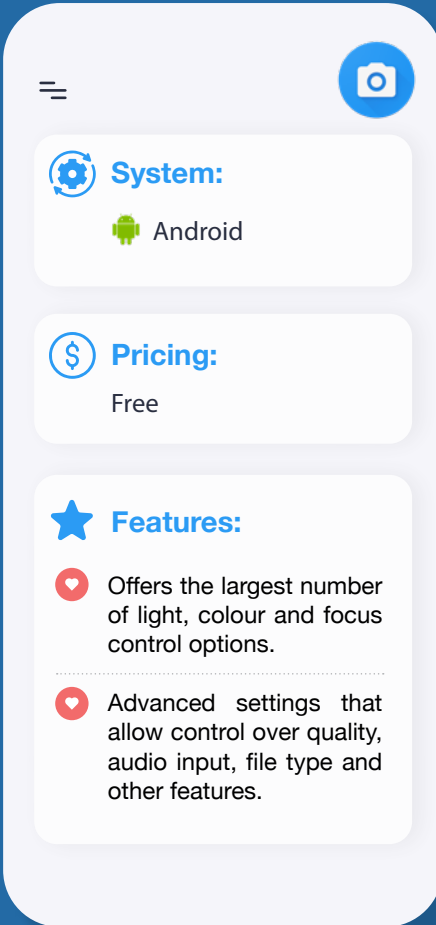


Control icons are presented in a smooth and accessible manner on the screen.





## Movie Pro





## Promovie



### System:

 IOS



### Pricing:

Free

(with watermark)



### Features:



Provides the opportunity to explore professional settings for free before buying them.



Displays basic control features in a simple format.



Ultra-high-quality 4k imaging feature.



Displays information about the image, storage space and battery in a clear way.



## EDITING APPS



### Imovie



#### System:

Apple iOS



#### Pricing:

Free



#### Features:



Provides basic features for producing video content including cutting, arranging scenes and adding music or audio recording.



Superior quality 4K and HD photography.



Has some advanced features, including slowing down movement and adding text.



Provides a stability feature that reduces shaking in the shots.



# Kinemaster



## System:



Android



iOS



## Pricing:

Free

(with watermark)



## Features:



Provides professional features that are easy to use for beginners.



Allows for multiple layers of video clips and audio clips.



Provides an extensive library for visual and audio effects.



Allows for modification of sound waves at specific points.



Provides a feature for recording audio and using photography within the application itself.



Allows for adjustment of the level of light and contrast in the shots.



Exports in high-quality 4K and provides the ability to specify the number of frames per second.



Exports one project in different sizes such as vertical, horizontal or square.



**Inshot**



### **System:**



Android



iOS



### **Pricing:**

Free

(paid advanced features)



### **Features:**



Useful for producing content dedicated to social media platforms. Its features are characterised by speed and ease, with professional grade quality.



Wide choice of tools for adjusting light and colour in the image.



The ability to work on more than one video layer.



An extensive library of free music.



The ability to adjust more than one video clip at the same time – a feature that is not available in most applications.



## Lumafusion



### System:

 iOS



### Pricing:

Paid



### Features:



The application is considered similar to professional editing programmes and comparable to Adobe Premiere and Final Cut.



Includes all the tools a journalist needs to produce a professional report.



An advanced feature to improve image quality by controlling colour and light, in addition to sound purification features.



The user has the ability to locate tools and screens in the application.



## Voice Record Pro



### System:



Android



iOS



### Pricing:

Free (You must sign up to stop ads appearing though).



### Features:



Powerful audio recording that saves high-quality "WAV" files.



Provides basic cutting tools and sound wave adjustment.



Allows for exporting of the project to Google Drive, Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive, Box Cloud, iCloud Drive, and Soundcloud.



## Ferrite



### System:

 iOS



### Pricing:

Free

(paid advanced features)



### Features:



An application for recording and editing audio.



One of the most widely used applications by radio reporters and podcast specialists.



## OTHER USEFUL APPS

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### System: Android and iOS systems

#### **Microsoft office**

Includes Office programmes such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

#### **Skype**

An online platform that enables you to conduct remote interviews, which you can record and use later in your reports.

#### **Dropbox**

Allows you to share files with your colleagues and with the newsroom.

#### **WeTransfer**

Allows you to share files between one device and another, and between you and your colleagues. Up to 2GB in a single transfer.

#### **Unfold**

For creating stories for videos and photos. It provides 25 free templates and dozens more if you subscribe to the application.

#### **Phonto**

Allows you to add text to your images and to download and use fonts.

## 4. Equipment

**Tips:** A great feature of mobile phone photography is how light your equipment is, so think twice before purchasing add-on equipment for your mobile.

### Choosing extra equipment

#### 1. Type of content

If you specialise in photography, the type of equipment you will need will be different to documentary producers or video content makers for digital platforms.

#### 2. Budget

The market for mobile equipment is very large and offers varying prices. So determine your budget before purchasing your equipment.

### Basic equipment - stability and sound

**Stability** - To achieve the required stability, you should buy a mobile phone holder to avoid shaking during filming.

#### 1. A small foldable tripod

- Lightweight and cheap.
- Helps you take creative photos by anchoring it anywhere - like a steering wheel, a desktop, or a door handle.



## 2. A large tripod

- Useful in filming long interviews.
- Useful for producing news reports.



## 3. A holder

- Allows you to use several pieces of equipment simultaneously, such as lighting and a microphone.
- Helps you avoid unsteady moving shots.



## Audio

### 1. Wired Microphone

- One of the least expensive audio options which will help improve quality.



### 2. Wireless Microphone

- Useful at times when there is a need to remain at a distance from your interviewee.
- Allows you greater freedom of movement while maintaining good audio quality.



### 3. Directional microphone

- Useful for field interviews and vox pops.
- Useful in the event you are interviewing two or more guests at a time.



## Additional equipment

### Camera Light



### Lenses



### Windshield Bundle



### Power bank



### Memory stick



### Best-in-class Handhelds



The DJI Osmo Mobile Handheld kit will enable you to take amazingly stable shots –even when walking. Its ActiveTrack feature will follow any object you tap on the screen while filming.

Use the DJI app to adjust settings such as the shutter.

<http://www.dji.com/osmo-mobile>

### Ready-Made Kits





## Tip: Preparatory list

Live broadcasting might be one of the strongest advantages of mobile journalism. You can go live through your newsroom or through social platforms.

With apps such as Periscope and features like Facebook Live, journalists can easily tell stories on the go, while at the same time boosting audience engagement and interaction.





## Best live streaming applications

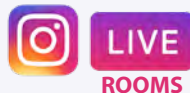
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- Click on the camera icon to the left of the search bar.
- Give Facebook access to your camera and microphone.
- Click on the «Live» icon at the bottom of the camera screen.
- Choose your privacy and publishing settings.
- Write a catchy description of the topic for the broadcast.
- Adjust your camera frame.
- Add filters, text or graphics to your video if you want them.
- Click the blue «Start Live Video» button to start broadcasting.
- Interact with viewers and commentators.
- Click the «End» icon to stop the broadcast.
- Share the broadcast video on your page.



- Click on the (+) icon at the top right.
- A number of options will appear, including sharing post or «IGTV video». Choose «Live».
- The number of viewers appears at the top of the screen. You'll also see all viewer comments as they come in.
- At the bottom and top right of the screen, you have several different features: add photos, questions, new guests, videos.
- When you are finished shooting live, click the (X) icon in the upper right corner.
- Once your video is finished, you will be able to share it on IGTV, download it to your camera roll or delete it.



- Follow the same steps as the live broadcast.
- Once you start broadcasting, click on the video icon at the bottom of the screen and select your guests.
- You can add up to 3 guests per room.

# Tips:

## Checklist for Getting Started



### 1. Enable Airplane mode

- Stops calls and app notifications coming through while you shoot.
- Disables 3G/4G connection. You will need to use Wi-Fi if you require an internet connection.
- Battery will last longer.



### 2. Switch on Do Not Disturb mode for doing live video

- Stops calls and app notifications coming through while you live stream.



### 3. Clean smartphone camera lens

- Dirty lenses will affect your shooting.
- Clean your lense with a tissue or dry cloth.



### 4. Fully charged battery + spare battery

- Choose according to your needs
- could be a battery case or an external battery that you can plug into your smartphone.



### 5. Free memory + external storage device

- Evaluate if you need to free memory from your smartphone.
- A wireless or mobile flash drive will give you extra storage and allow you to transfer files between devices.



### 6. Use headphones and external microphone

- To get better quality audio, use an external microphone and headphones without a built-in mic.
- Always test your mics before recording or broadcasting.



### 7. Make sure your shots are uniformly formatted.

- One of the most common mistakes is alternating between horizontal and vertical image layout. The type of shot should be determined by the platform you intent to publish on. For example, YouTube requires shooting horizontally while Instagram stories require shooting vertically.

# Tips: Photo and Video



## Stability

- Always carry equipment that will allow you to take stable shots (i.e. a tripod, selfie stick, handheld).
- Use the slow motion feature of your smartphone to shoot as you walk or to capture moving objects, as this will help get more stable images.
- If your budget allows it, look out for handhelds designed to stabilize footage, such as the Dji Osmo Mobile Gimbal.



## Control Your Settings

- Whether you are using a specialized app or just your smartphone camera, check and lock focus and exposure, and adjust color balance before taking every shot.



## Zoom

- Try not to zoom, even if your camera has a digital zoom.
- There are optical zoom lenses that can be attached to your smartphone.
- To get the best image quality when not using any add-on, it's best to move your smartphone closer to your subject.



## Always Consider Light

- If it's not possible to use natural lighting, illuminate the subject with a LED lamp.



## Audio

- If you are using the smartphone microphone, make sure you aren't blocking it with your hand or gear.
- Get close to your subject or hold the device close to you (but not so close as to distort the audio).
- If using an external mic, plug it in before opening any app so that it's detected.
- Check the recorded audio while you are still on location or with your interviewee.



## Panning

- Move as little as possible if you are using your smartphone without any stabilizing add-on.
- If you want to pan, use a tripod or a handheld stick. Do it slowly.



## Mobile-Shooting

- Smartphones allow you to go where bigger, heavier cameras don't.
- Shoot close-ups of people and surroundings.
- Shoot in short blocks (20-60 seconds) so that you can easily send your footage, if needed.

## TIPS: WHAT IF THE 4G NETWORK IS NOT WORKING?

If the 4G network is down or too busy, try finding a public Wi-Fi connection nearby. If that fails too, there are still options for sending data to the newsroom or even sharing updates with the audience:



### 1. Use text messages to send audio and video to the newsroom.

- Keep your pieces short so they don't take too long to send.



### 2. Use Twitter/Facebook via SMS

- To post and receive via SMS, you have to activate the feature—if you already are a Twitter/Facebook user— or sign up for a new account. Make sure you do either before covering a story. Details here:

<https://goo.gl/2obG4H>

<https://goo.gl/xZjMqX>



### 3. Turn on and off the Airplane Mode.

- This may work when 4G is overloaded. Once you come out of Airplane Mode, your smartphone might be able to reconnect to the network.



### 4. Look out for a better signal

- Apps like OpenSignal and Sensorly—both available for iOS and Android—can be of great help in finding a strong signal. They both show signal maps and allow running a speed test of your network.
- OpenSignal also tests Wi-Fi, locates free Wi-Fi spots for you, and shows the best carriers in your area.



### 5. Carry a SIM card from a different carrier

- One carrier can provide a better signal than another. Find out the two best so you can have more than one SIM card when facing difficulties to get data connection. This will only work on an unlocked smartphone.



### 6. Extract the video/audio and use another device to send it

- There are several solutions to transfer material from your smartphone. A cost-effective one is getting a couple of wireless flash drives or mobile memory sticks to transfer footage from the smartphone. You can then send the drive to the newsroom or use another device to share the story.



# Tips: Before Going Live

Although each option will require a different approach and some adjustments to your process, there are common issues that you should always reflect on before going live with your smartphone:



## 2. Be prepared for trolling

- The best way to deal with trolls while live streaming is to ignore them.
- Sometimes, trolls take things to a point where they break a law, in which case you should report them to the authorities. This is especially common among female journalists, who can be targets for harassment and threats.



## 3. Ethics

- Always stick to your organization's ethical policy. The same ethical considerations you have as a journalist apply to mobile journalism. Here are some issues to reflect on:

*i. Respect privacy: When applicable, ask for permission before you film or photograph, especially if minors are involved.*

*ii. Think about your audience: Bear in mind that when live streaming breaking news, you can't warn the viewers what they are about to see—you don't even know that yourself. Be prepared for every possible scenario.*

*iii. Copyright: Ask yourself if you can face copyright issues because of what you will film or stream.*



## 1. Your safety comes first

- Assess risk. Usually mobile journalists work alone and don't have a crew to watch their backs.
- Establish an exit strategy from location, in case it's needed.
- Avoid putting yourself, the people you are shooting, your sources and your audience in danger.

# TIPS

## GOING LIVE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

### Preparation Checklist

- 1 Check your gear – make sure you have everything you need to go live. This includes having a fully charged smartphone and an extra battery pack.
- 2 Test connectivity – use apps such as Speedtest or OpenSignal to assess 3G/4G.
- 3 Locate a hotspot in case you need it – check your surroundings for a free Wi-Fi connection.
- 4 Define an exit strategy from the location, in case you need it.
- 5 If you are broadcasting through your newsroom:
  - Notify them of your intention to live broadcast.
  - Note that having a protocol in place with the Assignment Desk will make the task easier, especially when covering breaking news. The protocol should include, among other considerations, establishing communications and IFB, and testing mics and studio sound check.
- 6 If you are live streaming through an app or Facebook Live:
  - Notify your social or online team for promotion, monitoring and even assistance with audience interaction.
- 7 Start live streaming.

If your live streaming is planned ahead, it will produce better outcomes. You should always define the angle of your story and once on location, you can pick your background and shots. If you can't plan ahead –i.e. for breaking news— just make sure you can follow as many of the steps listed above. Remember that your safety is the top priority.



**ALJAZEERA  
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# **Mobile Journalism 2.0**

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Special thanks to Al Jazeera English senior correspondent  
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General information about the applications and their characteristics were taken from official websites, the iTunes Store and Google Play (last updated August 2021).



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