

# POCKET SHORTS SCOTLAND



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## INTRO

With mobile advertising, social networking, and permanent internet access taking off, the next stage in mobile content has begun – and this is your chance to get in from the start.

Pocket Shorts Scotland is a new scheme to encourage filmmakers, animators and content providers to produce video content and game for mobile phones.

With over 2 billion mobile phone users worldwide – and more than half of all handsets expected to have video capability by 2008 – there is limitless potential for this exciting new medium.

But how do you create, shoot or distribute for a screen that's two inches wide? What are the expectations and unique requirements of the mobile audience? And how can you fully explore the potential of a mobile device?

Over the next few pages, we'll bring you up to speed with the fast-paced world of mobile content. But it's important to remember that the information contained in these pages is nothing more than a guide. - just something to get you thinking. The truth is that mobile content is constantly evolving, so it's an exciting field for you to get truly creative.

Surprise us!





## TOP TIPS

**Lesley Keen,**  
**CEO Mixipix**

1. This is the most personal and intimate space in which you can communicate - think of an audience of one
2. In the mixipix experience, people gravitate towards sentimental content - but crazy fun stuff which is off the wall also works well
3. Remember that you are talking to an early adopter market - think edgy
4. Right now this is a download proposition - don't think messaging
5. Above all, keep it simple!

Founder of Scotland's first animation studio and director of this country's first feature length animation, Lesley founded Mixipix in 2002 to provide animated content and services to the mobile market. Mixipix hosts and manages the Mixipix cartoon messaging service for O2 in the UK (<http://o2.mixipix.net>) and has a catalogue of mobile animations which are licensed for distribution worldwide. [www.mixipix.net](http://www.mixipix.net)

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## 1 - AUDIENCE

### Think about the space

The screen is - at best - two inches across  
The speakers are small and puny  
The consumer may not have a headset  
What is going to work in this space?

### Think about the environment

Where will your audience be watching the content?  
In a queue for the bus...  
Alone on a train...  
Walking home after a night out...  
What sort of content would YOU want to watch?

### Think about the device

Mobiles can be interactive  
Content can be shared - via bluetooth, MMS, or simply by showing your phone to mates in the pub  
Content can be viewed anywhere, anytime. Why should the consumer download your film NOW?

### Think about the audience

Who is more likely to watch video or play a game on a mobile?  
Think younger. Tech-savvy.  
What sort of content are they likely to buy?





## TOP TIPS

**John Harrison,  
Canny Lads**

1. Do you really need dialogue and text? Both need localising, (ie. translating for international sales), thereby restricting your market or costing you bigtime.
2. Keep in mind it's YOUR time and YOUR effort - so be as sure as you can that YOUR idea has legs!
3. Keep a handle on costs. You may not be able to establish just how much you are going to make from your movie series... in most cases, **no downloads = no cash.**
4. Keep your idea simple and repeatable. If you have to re-invent your character or story every episode over 26 slots, you will soon dry up.

Canny Lads is a digital media studio, set up in April 2004. The outline plan for the business is to develop original content for general broadcast and game platforms. Curious "Itty" is the first commercial property to be produced by the studio, targeted at mobile phone delivery. "Itty" is now licensed in a number of European countries, including mobile operator 3 in the UK. A Curious "Itty" mobile game is in development.

Visit [www.cannylads.com](http://www.cannylads.com)

[www.pocketshorts.com](http://www.pocketshorts.com)  
[scotland@pocketshorts.com](mailto:scotland@pocketshorts.com)

## 2 - STORY

Tips courtesy of One Minute Movies on the BBC website

### Keep it simple

Sixty seconds is not a long time. How much can you really say in a minute? A lot, if you want, but don't overstretch yourself. It needn't be a heavily plotted saga.

### Three-act structure

Even if you're telling a very simple story, give it a beginning, middle, and end. For example, imagine a one minute movie called Man's Best Friend. The first 20 seconds might be images of a poster about a lost dog. The next 20 seconds could be images of people looking for a dog. The last 20 seconds would be the boy and his dog reunited. Hey presto! You've made a film!

### Use What's Around You

Unless you're VERY well connected, chances are you won't have access to a movie set of your own. But don't let that put you off! Use what's around you. If you work in an office, set your story in an office (but ask the boss first). Everything in your life can potentially be part of your film.

### No story?

No problem! If you'd rather make a montage of images, we're not going to stop you. There's no reason why you can't take a more artistic approach to a film. You may even find a story, however simple, emerges from your images.



## TOP TIPS

**Richard Morris,  
PlayerX**

"My biggest piece of advice to all would be think about the mobile separate to any other media.

Make content specific to the device and think about more than just entertainment - think personalisation and think 'service' to user - i.e: mobile entertainment needs to be an experience. Trigger an emotion. Do not think how can I make it work for TV, and cinema and mobile!"

Richard Morris is head of video content for Player X, a mobile media company that publishes and distributes mobile entertainment content. They specialise in games, video, TV and gambling. They have direct distribution deals with more than 75 global operators that offer their partners a potential reach of more than one billion customers.

[www.playerx.com](http://www.playerx.com)

## 3 - SHOOT

### Picture

Simple clean background can optimise small screen experience

### Frame

Wide shots reduce images. Think close-ups

### Sound

Don't rely on in-camera. Use external source for optimum result. (NB: Language can negate universal distribution).

### Motion

Keep camera steady. Slow movements reduces pixilation in compression

### Lighting

Clean and crisp egg: Snow and blue sky. ( Darkness, nightclubs, flashing lights not recommended)

### Innovate

Multi-camera shoots, micro-cameras etc



## TOP TIPS

**Paul Farley,  
Tag Games**

"Mobile phones are not standalone video game consoles, PC's or TV's, in fact they are no longer just devices for communication! The convergent nature of the mobile phone offers users multiple entertainment options in one small package, therefore if a game designed for the mobile phone doesn't provide strong initial appeal it is likely to be abandoned for something else.

The challenge to the game creator is to ensure that the player is hooked within the first minute of play. Some of the best ways to do this are based upon keeping the mechanics of the game simple – ensure controls are easy to understand without the need to read extensive text instructions, reward the player quickly and extravagantly for success, don't punish failure too much, maintain clear and consistent game aims, objectives and rules, ensure that interaction with the game feels fun and most importantly of all make sure the game is very easy, especially early on!"

Paul Farley is Managing Director of Tag Games, a company founded in April 2006. They are a stable, self-funded, rapidly expanding and rather talented development studio based in Dundee. Tag is founded upon the principles of placing game-play first and always innovating.

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## 4 - PLAY

**Mobile games are expected to generate over \$17 billion in revenue by 2011. How can you tap into the huge financial and creative draw of mobile game development? Paul Farley offers some clues:**

### **Know your audience**

Mobile players are not traditional gamers! Think about who is going to play your game, when, how, and for how long. Your end-user isn't your only customer - you will also need to please publishers and distributors. How will you tailor and market your product to them?

### **Understand your limitations**

Mobile game design has many challenges. Your concept must translate across a massive spectrum of device form factors, and be scalable and modular. You will have limited memory for art resources, low resolutions and colour depths, and multiple screen sizes to support.

### **Audio**

Audio can add another dimension to your game but has its limitations on the mobile platform. Music and sound effects can quickly bloat the size of your game, and not all phones provide the same audio functionalities.

### **Innovate**

With all these limitations, it is vital to focus on the experience of the game. What makes your game stand out from the crowd? Keep it simple, but make it fun.

### **Play it!**

Play your own game as much as possible. Be your biggest critic. Don't be afraid to change and don't be precious about 'great ideas'



## TOP TIPS

**Mark Dando,**  
**ShortsTV (TM)**

Mark Dando is Head of Mobile Entertainment, for Shorts International.

Mark's career spans 10 years in the mobile industry. Previously with BT in Europe and NEC, Tokyo, he has pioneered 3G mobile TV and corresponding revenue strategies since 1995. In 2000 he was a member of the UK Government's 3G Advisory Group.

ShortsTV(tm) is a 24/7 short film channel by Shorts International that went live in the UK in August 2005, alongside ITN and CNN on MobiTV. ShortsTV (TM) is now live across the world on many major carriers, including Orange and 3 in the UK.  
[www.shortcutsinternational.com](http://www.shortcutsinternational.com)

## 4 - MARKET

The Seven Secrets to Making a Mobile Short Sell

**7. KEEP IT SHORT** - For downloads Mobile operators are insisting on less than 120 seconds (including credits!) For streamed mobile TV films can be a little longer (3 to 10 minutes) - however when watching on a mobile the average viewers attention span isn't very long!

**6. SHOOT IT SHARP** - Put yourself in the viewers shoes. Where might they be watching it? Will the sound be clearly audible? Will any words be legible on a small screen? Avoid very fast panning or zooming. Make sure your film has a clear beginning, middle and end.

**5. FEATURE STARS** - Films will be promoted more and sell well because they have stars in them. They don't have to be actors - just famous for a cameo role. It's up to you to work out how to get someone to agree.

**4. THINK TOPICAL** - What does your viewer want to watch? If it's relevant to what large number of people love - there is a good chance they'll want to watch it. Football, "Make Poverty History", Christmas, ...

**3. MAKE IT PLAYABLE** - It's simple, if your film has a theme that is internationally recognisable, and has minimal spoken dialogue, we can sell it in more places around the world. If it's full of swearing, violence, sex - we'll be limited

**2. NAME IT WELL** - While conceiving your new film think carefully about the title for it, rather than just naming it when it's born. Sometimes the title is all a potential viewer has to go on before deciding to pay to watch it!

**1. GET IT WELL DISTRIBUTED** - Now that you've gone to all that effort, only sign rights to distribute your film to a reputable international distributor.



## TOP TIPS

**Jason Hall,**  
**Pocket Shorts**

My tip is simple .... get to know the market.

Read up as much as you can about what's happening in the world of mobile video. There are lots of great **online resources** - Moconews is excellent, for example.

Watch as much video content on mobile phones as you can. If you don't have a video-enabled phone already, then **consider upgrading** if you're really serious about this. If you shop around, you'll find it's really not as expensive as you might think - and it doesn't have to be 3G to play video, (although 3 have some great deals). The best way of finding out what sort of content other people will want to watch on a mobile is to discover what **sort of content YOU want to watch.**

Try experimenting with creating films for your own phone. Export your files in 3gp format and transfer to your phone via bluetooth or USB cable. Look out on the Pocket Shorts website for more info on how to do this or - better yet - subscribe to our newsletter and we'll keep you updated.  
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## 5 - LINKS

### [www.pocketshorts.com/scotland](http://www.pocketshorts.com/scotland)

Sign-up for our e-newsletter to stay up-to-date with the latest information about the scheme and other tips, advice and opportunities in the mobile space

### [www.scottish-enterprise.com](http://www.scottish-enterprise.com)

Support and advice for those wishing to set up their own business. See also [www.bgateway.com](http://www.bgateway.com)

### [www.scottishscreen.com](http://www.scottishscreen.com)

The home of the screen industries in Scotland - news, film funding schemes, training schemes, opportunities, project development and distribution advice

### [www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk)

NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) investing in innovators and working to improve the climate for creativity in the UK

### [www.bbc.co.uk/films/oneminutemovies](http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/oneminutemovies)

Dozens of 60 second films available to view online

### [www.bango.com](http://www.bango.com)

Mobile phone billing service for setting up your own content portal, with variety of package options to suit everyone from home businesses to major corporations

### [www.moconews.net](http://www.moconews.net)

Online resource for mobile content news. Subscribe to their regular newsletter

### [www.innovationcentre.org/hillingtonpark](http://www.innovationcentre.org/hillingtonpark)

Scotland's National Centre for Wireless & Mobile Communications.. Wireless Innovation is a Scottish Enterprise initiative focused on the economic growth of Scottish Companies developing and selling products within the Wireless Space.

