

## Videographers' Forum – February 2, 2016

Hi All, here are some notes from the discussions at our open forum.

**Q:** An attendee showed the group their camera and had a lot of user questions.

**D:** Questions about auto and manual functions operate are always great discussion questions. First off the user had accidentally set the gain control to "H" which gave the camera 18db of gain. Typical settings are L (0 db gain); M (9 db gain) and H (18 db gain). (Gain is a digital function which amplifies the light to the camera sensors at the cost of quality). High or Medium gain is good in low light situations; however the tradeoff is a more "grainier" image. The user commented "I wondered why my images looked so grainy".

The discussion continued to the use of auto or manual focus. Typically a camera will attempt to make a best guess at an auto focus by integrating whatever it "sees" either at the central part of the screen or the whole screen depending upon the camera. If the subject is somewhat stationary, and is distant from the background the best results are found with a manual focus. One trick is to zoom all the way into the subject and then set the manual focus. Then back off the zoom to where you want it. This will guarantee that subject will be correctly focused.

The subject of "white balance" came up and what it meant. The group discussed how various light sources had different "color temperatures". Color temperatures are based on the Kelvin scale where "0" is absolute "0" degrees. For instance a light bulb is about 3,200 to 3,500 degrees Kelvin while sunlight is about 6,000 to 6,500 degrees. The attendees camera has the usual settings: Preset (3,200 degrees); A and B which were adjustable. To set the camera to the correct "color temperature" you can hold a "white card" (a sheet of white cardboard or paper) where the subject will be standing, zoom in to fill the screen with the white card. Then put the white balance selector to either A or B, and press the AWB (auto white balance) button on the camera according to what the user manual says. This will make anything appear white regardless of the color temperature in the scene. Thus, colors in the scene will be correct.

The camera also had an auto/manual Iris control but we couldn't figure how it worked without the manual. These small cameras have buttons with multiple uses and unless you have the manual it is a matter of extended experimentation.

There were several side discussions which I did not keep track of ... sorry.

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