

Wycliffe Associates studio setup guide for DOT

Setting up studios

The following is a brief look at choosing rooms for the studio and simple instructions for setting up the equipment. The space available and the exact equipment present at a workshop may vary from this list but the guidelines should remain.

1. Choose a room
2. Look at materials list
3. Mount the frame
4. Iron green screen/ mount green screen
5. Set up lights
6. Set up tablet stand/ mount tablet
7. Arrange set up/ test

1. Choose a room

The bigger the better for the studio rooms. The translator will need to stand roughly 6-10 feet (or 2-3 meters) in front of the screen to prevent shadows on the screen and “bleeding” from the green screen. There will also need to be space between the translator and the tablet for the proper framing.

It is best if there are few/no windows. The lighting in the studio will need to be controlled so all light from windows may need to be blocked. Choose a place where there can be privacy and few distractions. This should be a separate room from where other translators are working.

2. Look at the list of materials

Here is a typical list of equipment that will be needed for setting up a functioning studio from scratch at a DOT workshop.

- Green screen with frame and clips
- Light stands with softeners and bulbs*
- Extension cord*
- An iron or a steamer to remove wrinkles from the green screen
- Tripod with tablet stand
- Final filming tablets with PowerDirector installed**
- Masking tape to mark spots on the floor or for labeling

*Don't forget to check the voltage of the country that you will be working in before buying extension cords and light bulbs.

****Partners who are holding their own events are not limited to the exact equipment used by WA. It is fine if they would rather use cameras and editing software than tablets with PowerDirector.**

If there are bright windows, it will also be necessary to get materials to block them. Thick curtains can be used, or sheets or trash bags can be taped over the windows. Anything that allows you to control the light of the room rather than compensate for the light of the windows.

3. Mount the frame

Place the frame against a large wall. The green screen dimensions are 9x15 feet, but the height can be adjusted on the frame by adjusting the stands and the width can be adjusted by leaving out one of the extension poles for the bar across the top. The filming all needs to be in landscape orientation, where the shot is wider than it is tall, and the screen setup needs to allow for this without the sides of the screen being visible.

4. Iron/mount the green screen

If the green screen is wrinkled or folded, straighten out wrinkles using an iron or a steamer. If ironing, it may be easiest to use a firm mattress underneath because of its large surface area. If there are heavy wrinkles, use a spray bottle with water to help iron out wrinkles.

Mount the green screen with clips, making the screen as flat and wrinkle-free as possible. If you need additional clips, clothes pins work as well to help pull the screen flat and minimize wrinkles. To also help with wrinkles, you can put something heavy, for example, water bottles, on the bottom of the screen to pull it tight. If the wrinkles are too bad, and ironing doesn't work, you could wash the green screen, hang it to dry and then iron. Using the steam function on an iron is also possible once mounted.

5. Set up lights

The lighting in the studio can be challenging, and each situation may call for a different set up with the lights. Here are the most important rules for the lighting:

- Make sure that the green screen is lit evenly across. Make sure that one side of the screen is not brighter than the other, that there are no shadows, and that there are no focused points of light.
- Make sure that the translator will not create shadows on the screen. The easiest way to do this is to ensure that they are at least two meters in front of the screen when filming, but the light placement can hurt or help the effort to eliminate shadows no matter where the translator stands.

The lights will either come with a 'softbox' or umbrella. The umbrella, and the diffuser that goes in the front of the softbox are used to soften the lights and spread it more evenly

so the central point of the lighted area is not brighter than the surrounding areas. Don't forget to use those!

There are usually three lights in the studio kits. It is recommended that two lights are used to light the green screen and placed on either side of it at an angle. The third light is used separately to light the translator, also at an angle.

6. Set up tablet stand/mount tablet

Set up the tablet stand. Extend all the legs of the tablet stand. It should rest on an even surface. Mount the tablet clip, then mount the tablet and secure it firmly. Place the tablet a good distance away from the green screen and translator being filmed.

7. Arrange set up/test

Use a test subject, at best use someone who is a deaf translator. The person should be two or three meters from the screen to avoid "bleeding".

(This means that if the subject is too close to the green screen, the light bounces off the green screen and makes a green halo on their skin, which will be distracting if the green background is ever replaced with a different background in editing)

When there is no bleeding, and the person is far from the screen, mark the floor where they should stand with colored tape (make sure it can be easily removed). If the lights are in a good place, place tape to mark where the lights stand so if they are moved, they can be easily placed again. Find the best place to put the tablet stand, then mark on the floor for each leg.

Test this arrangement each time to see the best way to film. Adjust the green screen, lights and tablet when necessary.

Now you are prepared to do final filming.

Note: since the translators are different heights, there will most likely need to be adjustments made to the tripod and the light that shines on them as different people come in to film. It is still good to have the tape on the floor as a guideline for where the equipment should generally be.