

## RECOMMENDED FILMMAKING APPS FOR MOBILE DEVICES

The last few years have seen a veritable explosion in mobile device apps for the filmmaker. Some are great and many are garbage. Drawing from my own experience, and those of my students and my filmmaking friends, I have listed the apps that seem to be the most commonly used and trusted. Most of these are for the iPhone or iPad, but I've indicated a few that are for the Android platform. Clearly, many more apps will be developed every year, a few useful and others useless, but below is a list of the most worthwhile filmmaking apps as of Jan 2020.

### Script and Storyboard Apps

- *Scripts Pro*  
Simple scriptwriting app for portable writing that integrates with Final Draft and Celtx.
- *Celtx Script*  
The popular screenplay formatting program designed for iOS.
- *Celtx Shots*  
Create, manage, annotate, and arrange storyboards from photos or drawings, and create overhead diagrams for blocking or lighting design. Syncs with Celtx studio.
- *Storyboard Quick Direct* (Android)  
Create storyboards from location photos on your smartphone and overlay characters, animations, and screen directions.

### Production Planning and Design

- *Shot Designer*  
Incredibly useful preproduction tool. Allows you to create overhead diagrams for location layout, camera setups, character blocking, camera moves, and lighting designs. And you can incorporate storyboards.
- *Lighting Designer*  
Create overhead lighting diagrams with character blocking and lighting unit functions.

- *Magic Hour*  
Tells you when AM and PM “magic hour” will occur in your location and how long it will last.
- *Shot Lister* and *Shot List*  
Two useful apps for creating, organizing, and managing shot lists and shooting schedules. You can also include storyboards and photos with *Shot List*. Take your pick.

### **On Set Tools 1: Utility**

- *FiLMiC Pro* (iPhone and Android)  
Transforms your iPhone into a viable film production camera by adding many functions found on camcorders and DSLRs like manual focus, aperture, and white balancing, and variable ISO and shutter speed settings.
- *DSLR Filmmaker Toolkit*  
A Swiss Army Knife of film apps. Includes a slate, shot logs, director’s viewfinder (camera specific), DOF calculator, sunrise and sunset times, and spirit leveler.
- *AJA DataCalc*  
Calculates data rates and storage needs for nearly every video format, audio format, resolution, and compression protocol in use.

### **On Set Tools 2: Camera and Lens Related**

- *pCam Film+Digital Calc* and *Toland ASC Digital Assistant*  
There are many DoF calculators available, but David Eubanks’ pCam was one of the first thoroughly useful filmmaking apps available and the *Toland ASC Digital Assistant* app was developed by the ASC. Both of these apps do more than simply calculate DoF for numerous popular camera formats, they will also calculate field of view parameters and exposures based on multiple variables including light intensity, filters, FPS, ISO, shutter angles, and so on.
- *Digital DoF* and *Visual DoF*  
These are more basic DoF calculators than the two mentioned above and are highly useful on the set to determine the precise near and far limits of focus for any given lens, focus distance, and sensor format.

- *Pocket AC* (Android)

Includes many tools, tables, and functions for A.C.s including: DOF calculators, a data rate and storage calculator, exposure tools, field of view previews, insert slates, shutter angle exposure calculators, and information on numerous cameras and lenses on.

### **On Set Tools 3: Director's Viewfinders, etc.**

- *CineScope*

Changes your iPhone's video aspect ratio to 1.85:1, 16:9, 1.33:1, or even to a custom aspect ratio. Very useful for location scouting, shot planning, and informal rehearsal shoots. This app was developed by D.P. Rachel Morrison.

- *Artemis Director's Viewfinder* (iPhone and Android)

Allows you to visualize (and communicate) your shot composition by displaying overlays that correspond to the field of view of various focal length lenses.

- *SL Director's Viewfinder* (Android)

Allows you to visualize (and communicate) your shot composition by simulating the field of view and perspective of different lenses and different camera formats. You can take photos of the final decisions to use in your storyboards.

### **On Set Tools 4: Slate and Logging**

- *Filmslate* (iPhone, iPad); *Movieslate* (iPhone, iPad); *SL Digislate* (Android)

There are a number of film slate/clapperboard apps on the market that allow you to do timecode slating and even logging on your smartphone or iPad. These three are the most commonly used ones. I'm not sure they should replace a physical slate but . . . they're out there.

- *Cinema Forms*

Create and manage your production paperwork including call sheets, script breakdowns, shooting logs, talent releases, location contracts, and so on.

- *Drylab Camera Report*

The digital version of paper camera logs. With this app you can include a wide range of information for every shot, including the usual scene and take numbers, lens, aperture, filter, timing, and notes, but you can also include stuff like focus distance, shot GPS coordinates, angle and orientation readings, and so on.

## On Set Tools 5: Lighting Related

- *Green Screener*  
Helps you determine if your green screen lighting is even throughout by creating bands where exposure is inconsistent.
- *Set Lighting* (iPhone) and *Set Lighting Technician* (Android)  
Complete lighting reference tool for electricians and gaffers. A compendium of lighting units and their specs categorized by source type (Tungsten, HMI, LED, and so on). Information on power needs, lighting accessories, bulbs, power distribution schematics, and so on.
- *The Grip App* (iPhone and Android)  
A database for grips. Includes information and instructions for many commonly used grip items broken down into four general categories: Dollies, Cranes, Hardware (flags, stands, etc.), and Rigs (knots, car rigs, truss, etc.).

## Editing

- *Adobe Premiere Clip*  
Stripped down version of the full NLE software package that allows you to edit on your phone or iPad. Connectivity with the Adobe Creative Cloud allows you to import your edits to the full Premiere Pro version.
- *iMovie*  
A simple and effective app for editing video and audio on the fly. The tried and true original.