

# Video formats briefly explained

## DV

Comes in a few flavours, mini DV, Full DV, DV Cam or DvcPro25, basically the quality is the same. Some broadcast footage is shot with this and as long as the lighting is good the pictures can look great. Some smaller cameras using this format are not great in low light conditions, and as a whole special effects, and green/blue screen work does not work as well as other formats.

## HDV

A cut down high definition format, that often uses the same tape media as DV, and has a similar compression rate, so suffers all the same problems as DV, and 90% of cameras are not good in low light. But the picture sharpness is a far superior to DV. A wide screen format, so best watched on wide screen TV or in a wide screen window on a computer. There are two flavours JVC 720p and Sony and everyone else at 1080i. These figures indicate how many lines across the screen are going left to right. So the 1080i should be sharpest, however that is made up of two pictures of the same subject matter stuck on one the other. So the 720 is a bigger set of unique lines. Basically the 720p has a more soft film look in quality than the 1080i which has a more crisp/harsher video look.

## Digi-Beta

The work horse of UK television. Tape format based on the defunct Sony consumer video format of the 80's Betamax. Good pictures better than DV, more forgiving in low light than HDV, and other difficult situations, however in good lighting conditions HDV can look better.

## HD

The best picture on the market at the moment, but again comes in a couple of flavours, Sony and Panasonic both have their version. Basically the picture is wide screen again with even more lines than HDV. It is also less compressed than any of the above formats, so better in difficult shooting conditions, low light, low contrast, and much better with special effects such as green/blue screen work. Several feature films have now been shot with HD rather than film, the fist notable one being Star Wars The Phantom Menace.

