

INTRO

Going mobile

During the Spring semester of 2012 a small group of students at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism enrolled in an eight week mobile reporting course to experiment to see how far they can go only using their wits, drive and the smartphone in their pocket.



Eight weeks tuned into 10, then 15— and finally the only reason the class stopped meeting was graduation and summer break.



Richard Koci Hernandez, Assistant Professor of New Media, surveys the first shipment of mobile gear.

A lot of attention in the news industry has been given recently to the idea of using mobile devices for reporting. This class decided to serve as a case study on how well these devices, apps and third-party accessories work in the creation of multimedia.

We attempted find all the accessories that had potential to aid a mobile journalist in the field, then we bought them all. With shipments arriving every week and students armed with App

Store gift cards, we embarked on a quest to put the apps and gear to the test.

This field guide is the result of the hard work of students, **Casey Capachi**, **Matt Sarnecki** and **Evan Wagstaff**.

Each item is presented with a brief review, followed by Pros, Cons and a final rating. Where appropriate we also included sample videos, images and audio so you could judge for yourself. Our rating system is as follows:



AVOID



RISKY



SOLID



GET IT

NOTE: When presented with audio samples, we strongly advise that you wear headphones in order to accurately judge the examples.

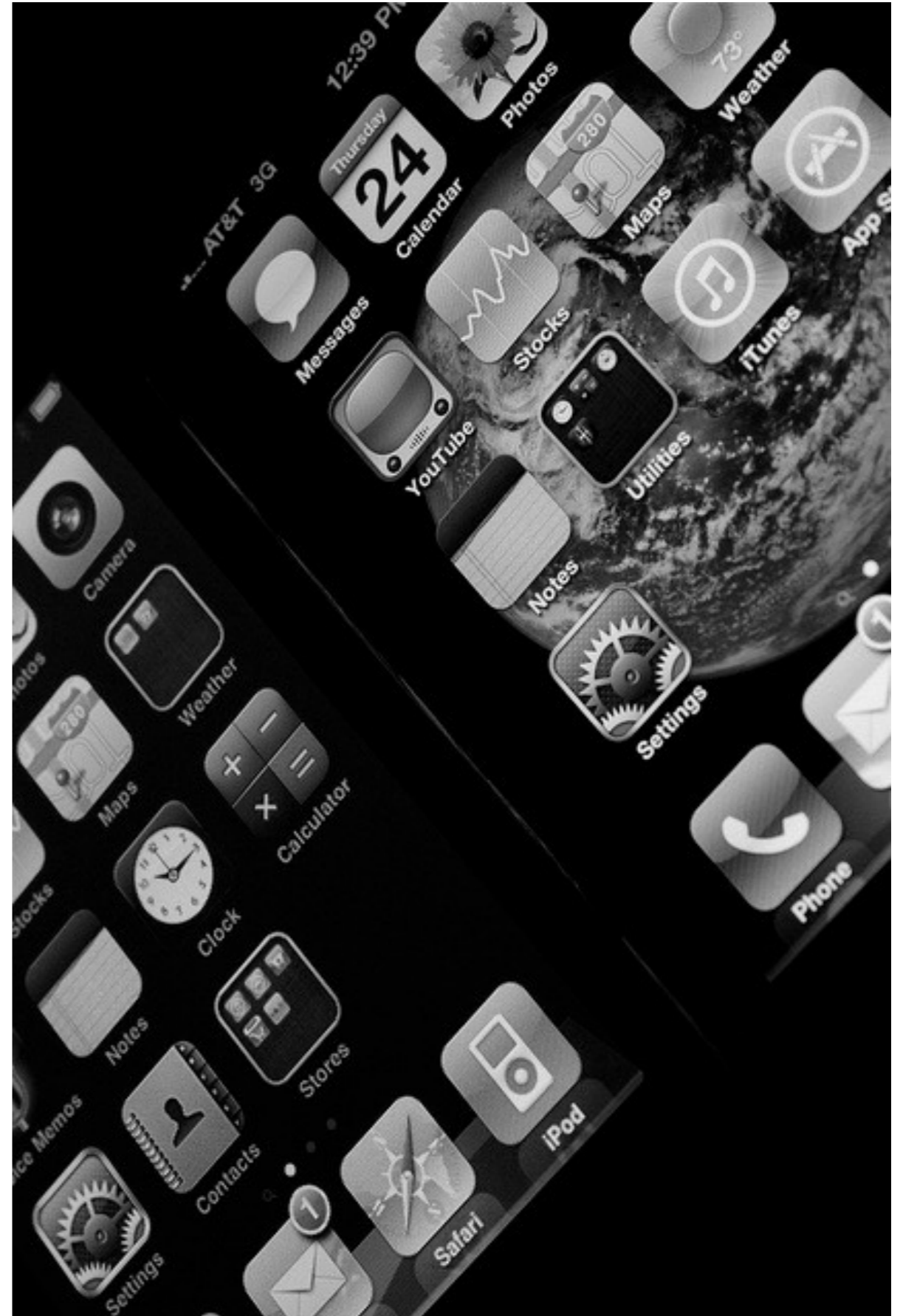
The final chapter is a quick round-up of the gear we found extremely helpful for the mobile journalist working in the field. The kit has everything you would need to cover breaking news or conduct a two person interview.

-Richard Koci Hernandez, Jeremy Rue | July, 2012

NOTE: This was an independent survey, and all applications and tools were purchased by us. We were not given any demo gear or apps from developers or manufacturers.

Apps

Video, Photography and Audio





VIDEO APPS

FILMIC Pro



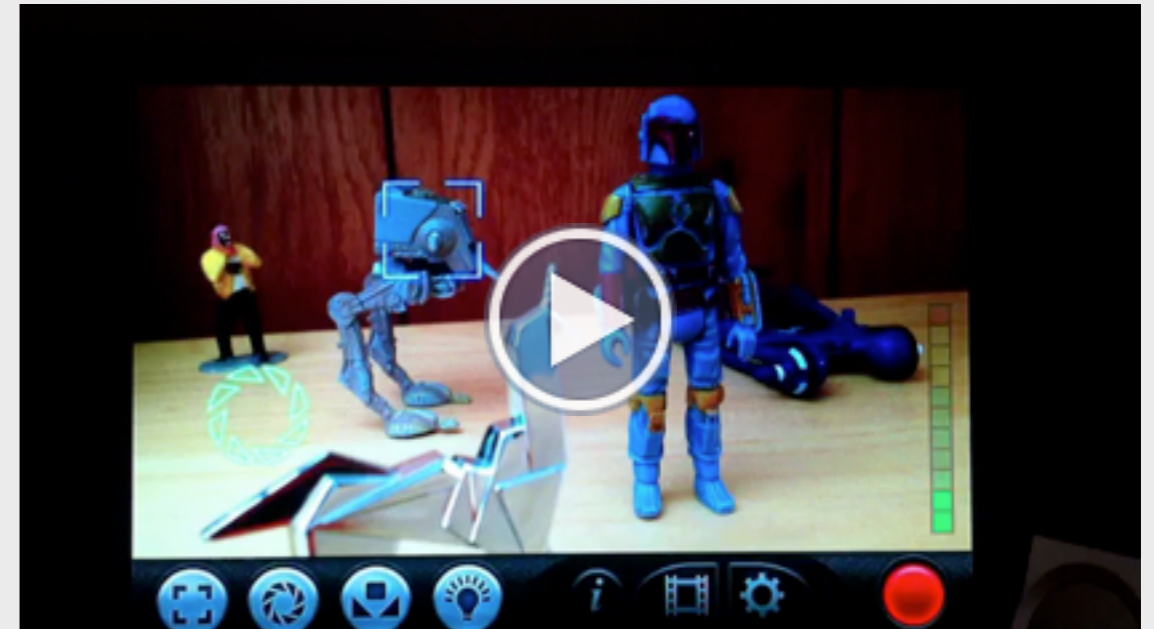
FILMIC Pro is a smartphone application that beefs up the iPhone video camera's native application. It offers independent exposure and focus controls and, most important, an audio meter. However, audio levels cannot be monitored realtime through headphones. We consider this a crucial function, which is found on some audio-recording applications. We encountered a few bugs: when inserting and removing audio equipment through the headphone jack, the focus and exposure can lock, unlock, or cause the app to freeze. And when shooting at 24fps, the captured clips did not consistently play at 24fps; they had to be rendered in video editing software like Final Cut Pro, or converted through a third-party application. For a sit down interviews using a tripod, Filmic Pro still beats the iPhone's native video application. Despite the occasional glitch this is the best video App we tested.

Pros: Audio Meters. Independent exposure and focus control. Constant updates. Responsive developers.

Cons: Still no realtime audio monitoring with headphones. A few minor bugs.

Rating:

Filmic Pro



ProCamera (for video)



Like FILMIC Pro, **ProCamera** is a smartphone video application that offers independent exposure and focus controls. It also provides a handy balance meter to ensure a tripod is level. Unfortunately it lacks an audio meter.

ProCamera feels like it was designed for still images first, and video is a secondary function.

Pros: Independent exposure and focus control. Doubles as a great photography app.

Cons: No audio meter. No realtime audio monitoring.

Rating: 



CinePro

With the word “Pro” in the title you would expect a lot more than this app has to offer.

CinePro is little more than an attempt at applying stylized Instagram-like filters to a video recording app.

Pros: Live video Filters.

Cons: No audio meter. Confusing User interface.

Rating: 



Multimedia journalist Evan Wagstaff demos iPhone accessories.



Photography Apps



Camera+

Camera+ is a wonderfully designed as both a photo-taking and photo-editing app in one. The “clarity” editing option is extremely handy for the journalist on the go who needs to quickly adjust for non-ideal lighting situations like “backlit” or “cloudy.” Camera+ allows you to instantly share your photo via email, SMS text message, a web link, Facebook, Twitter or Flickr.

Pros: Very intuitive editing menu after taking a photo or viewing it in your “lightbox.” Menu appears with a single tap when taking a picture where you can lock white balance, focus, and exposure. Unique share function allow you to email, text or create a web link for the photo instantly.

Cons: No video function. No levels guides to make sure your image is straight. Zoom function is sudden and not as precise as others.

Rating: 

Camera+ | DEMO



Video by Casey Capachi



ProCamera (for Photography)

ProCamera is the best camera app in terms of quality of photo and video. It has multiple visual guides to ensure a straight and seamless shot for a picture or video. The zoom function uses both fingers at the same time, allowing a smoother and more precise zoom than other apps. ProCamera offers the option to automatically set the white balance or lock white balance on a particular area. It also locks in exposure and focus as you move. ProCamera allows you to instantly upload to Facebook, Flickr, Dropbox and Twitter.

Pros: Amazing clarity in photos. Offers the option to lock in white balance and focus and exposure. Visual guide adjustments are great for taking photos and video.

Cons: ProCamera offers basic editing features and not the most comprehensive assortment of editing options for image artistry.

Rating: 

ProCamera | DEMO



Video by Casey Capachi



Camera Awesome

Camera Awesome, like its name, is both awesome for taking photos and video, best of all it's free!* With filter names like “more cowbell” and loading messages like

“hydrogenating leprechaun zest,” this app adds a bit of levity to the photographic process. More importantly it offers the same adjustable exposure and focus settings as pricier apps. The pulldown menu bar allows photographers to easily choose among multiple visual guidelines, like picture leveling, grids or the golden ratio. There are also an sizable assortment filters, frames and textures for styling the image. There is an “awesomize” button which automatically enhances your photo. You can instantly upload to Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Picasa, Photobucket and YouTube.

Pros: *Free (at the time of writing this review,) fun to use, handy composition/level guides, provides you with more features than most other free camera apps.

Cons: Zoom function hard to find at first (you must tap the bottom of the screen once). Many editing filters are only be available for purchase.

Rating: 

Camera Awesome | DEMO



Video by Casey Capachi



FX PhotoStudio

FX PhotoStudio gives you the most comprehensive import/export options of any app we tested. You can take a photo with the app or import one from your Facebook, documents or photo library. After that you can save it your camera roll, documents, clipboard or export it to Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr, an AirPrint Printer, Instagram or send it out by email. PhotoStudio does not stand out for quality editing but its usability has much utility. The app's design takes you through a step-by-step process of editing, which is very intuitive. The brightness/contrast adjustment settings open together so you can see your adjustments in tandem. Big, colorful buttons help to make this one of the easiest photo-editing apps to use.

Pros: Intuitive design. Brightness/Contrast adjustments at same time. Resize is easy with ratio settings.

Cons: Not the best editing tool for fine details, or for some journalistic purposes (e.g. sharpen tool is too intense for news purposes.)

Rating: 

PhotoStudio | DEMO



Video by Casey Capachi



Photoshop Express

Photoshop Express is a free app, which may be a far cry from the several-hundred-dollar software that inspired it, but still will provide you with basic editing functions in easy-to-find drop down menus. Under the four main menus for crop, brightness/contrast, focus and effects, you can make most basic adjustments necessary to enhance your photo. The process to adjust settings is done by swiping your pointer finger back and forth over the image, without any visible scale indicators. We found this could be troublesome to use, especially for fine edits.

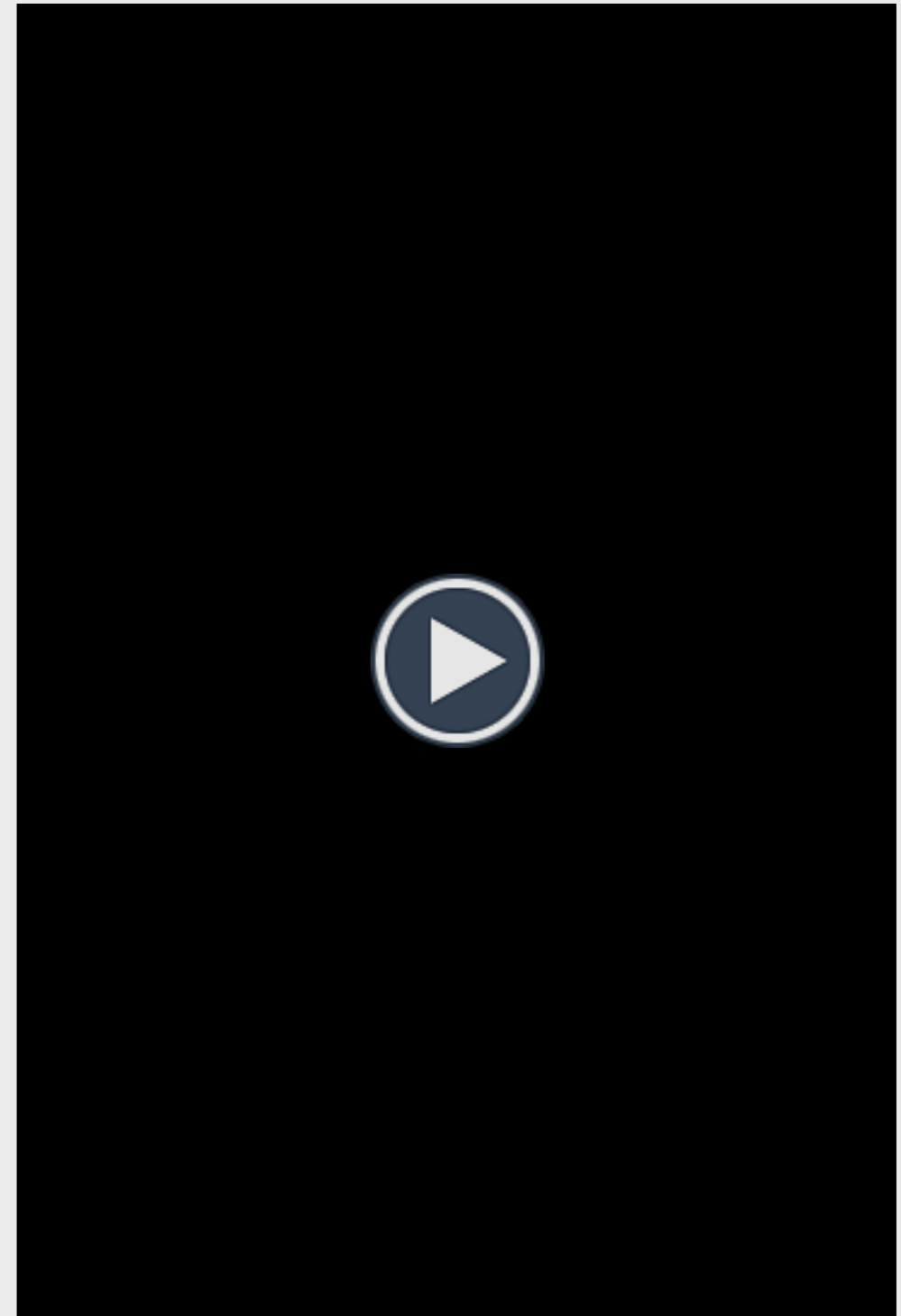
Photoshop Express allows you to export your photo to Facebook, TwitPic, Flickr, email or Photoshop.com.

Pros: Very intuitive design using two main buttons - pencil and export tools.

Cons: Fewer adjustment options available than paid-for apps. Cropping adjustments are limited. Adjusting method using your pointer finger as a swiper is difficult when making careful edits.

Rating: 

Photoshop Express | DEMO



Video by Casey Capachi



Snapseed

Snapseed has the potential to give you beautiful images—if you are willing to spend time to learn it. Snapseed employs a non-intuitive design in which you select options by tapping on the photo, then dragging menus on the screen up or down. To make an adjustment, you drag your finger left or right over the photo. There are some helpful free form cropping and straightening tools. The automatic edit option is one of the best when in need of quickly enhancing a photo without overdoing it. When adjusting settings like sharpening, a magnifying tool will allow you to see your edits more precisely. Snapseed lets you export your photo to your photo library, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, an AirPrint Printer or by email.

Pros: Handy magnifying tool for zooming in on your edits. Array of filters, textures, and other artistry settings like tilt-shift.

Cons: Simplicity of the app is beautiful but minimalism of controls make it hard to intuitively edit without first reading instructions.

Rating: 

Snapseed | DEMO



Video by Casey Capachi



Filterstorm

Filterstorm is by far the most comprehensive photo-editing app we tested. The crop tool allows you to move individual crosshairs to see parts of your image that will be removed before you crop it. The scale tool allows you specify one dimension of the image, and it will automatically adjust the other to fit a certain ratio. Artists will love the blending and layer options it allows. Professional photographers will appreciate the IPTC/EXIF settings that allows you to enter in file meta information for the image. Filterstorm lets you export the photo to your photo library or email the image.

Pros: Scale adjustments allow custom size adjustments, easy-to-see crop function, adjustable IPTC settings, allows you to blend layers

Cons: The history option, which allows you to go back and change edits you just made, can be confusing.

Rating:

Filterstorm | DEMO



Video by Casey Capachi



AUDIO APPS



Hindenburg

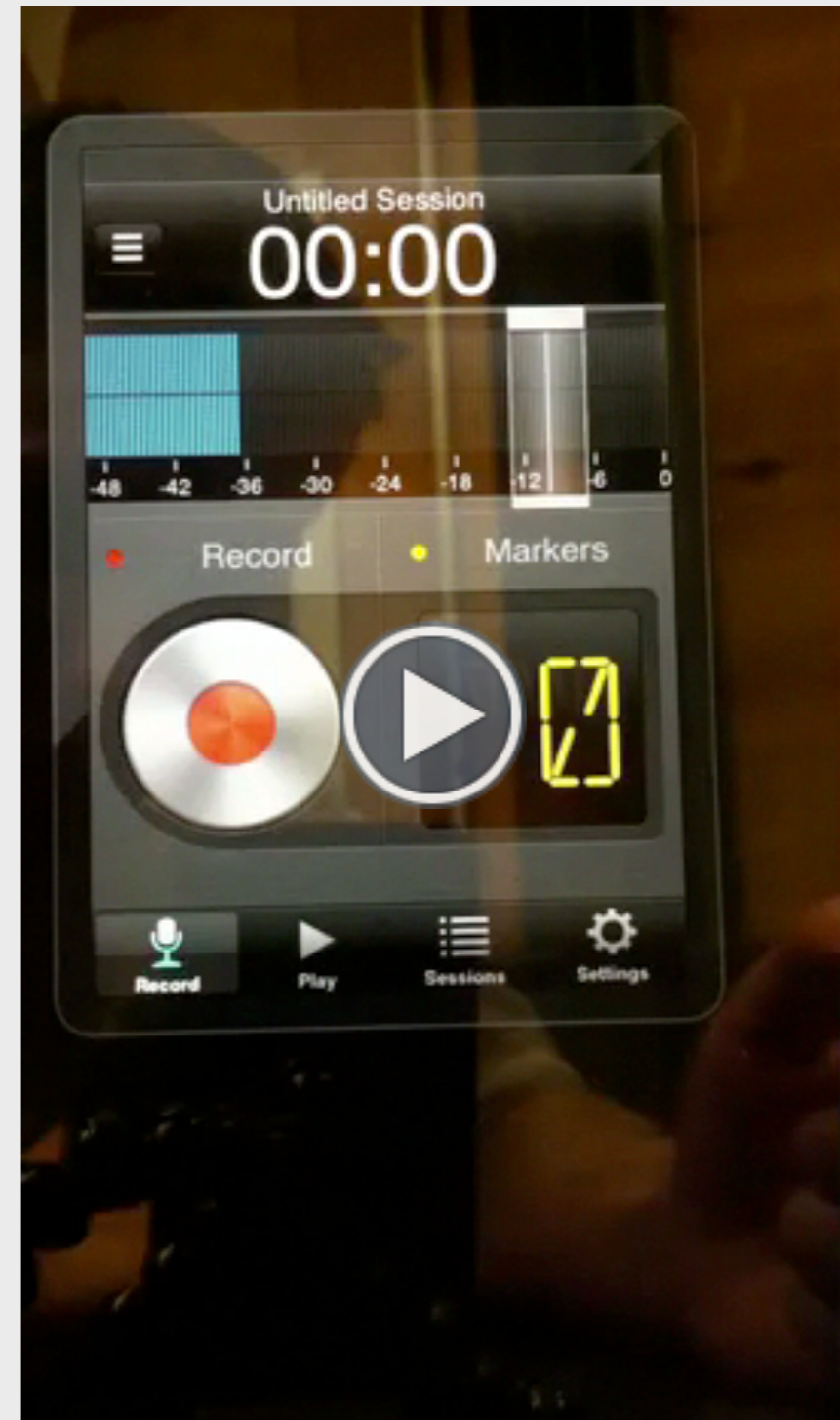
The **Hindenburg app** is one of the few field recorder apps that has tried to establish itself as a tool primarily for journalistic use. That emphasis is reflected in its functionality as it makes tracking, marking and editing a breeze on the iPhone. Level adjustment and flow control are accessible through giant intuitive sliders and buttons. In the playback area, users can easily navigate the timeline by dragging, double-tapping, and pinching. Like the other field recorders, it's a one-track editor, but it's simple enough for fast cuts before exporting, especially if you want to grab that golden soundbite you marked during an interview. Unfortunately, this premium app comes at a premium price: \$30* for complete functionality. But for a mobile journalist who would otherwise buy a piece of hardware for hundreds more, it's a simple decision.

Pros: Large, intuitive controls. Reliable and organized.

Cons: Hefty price tag compared to similar apps. *(At time of this review)

Rating:

Hindenburg | DEMO



Video by Evan Wagstaff

FiRe 2



The **FiRe 2** recorder is the successor to Blue Fire app, which was companion app to the Mikey Microhpone. That hardware setup that was rendered obsolete when the iPhone 4 came out. The menus and transport window are easy to navigate. Recording is a simple process of sliding to prime the recorder, then the press of a button to initiate recording. This functionality mimics that of some physical recorders. For what you forgo in ease of one-click recording, you gain the assurance that the recording won't accidentally begin until you're ready.

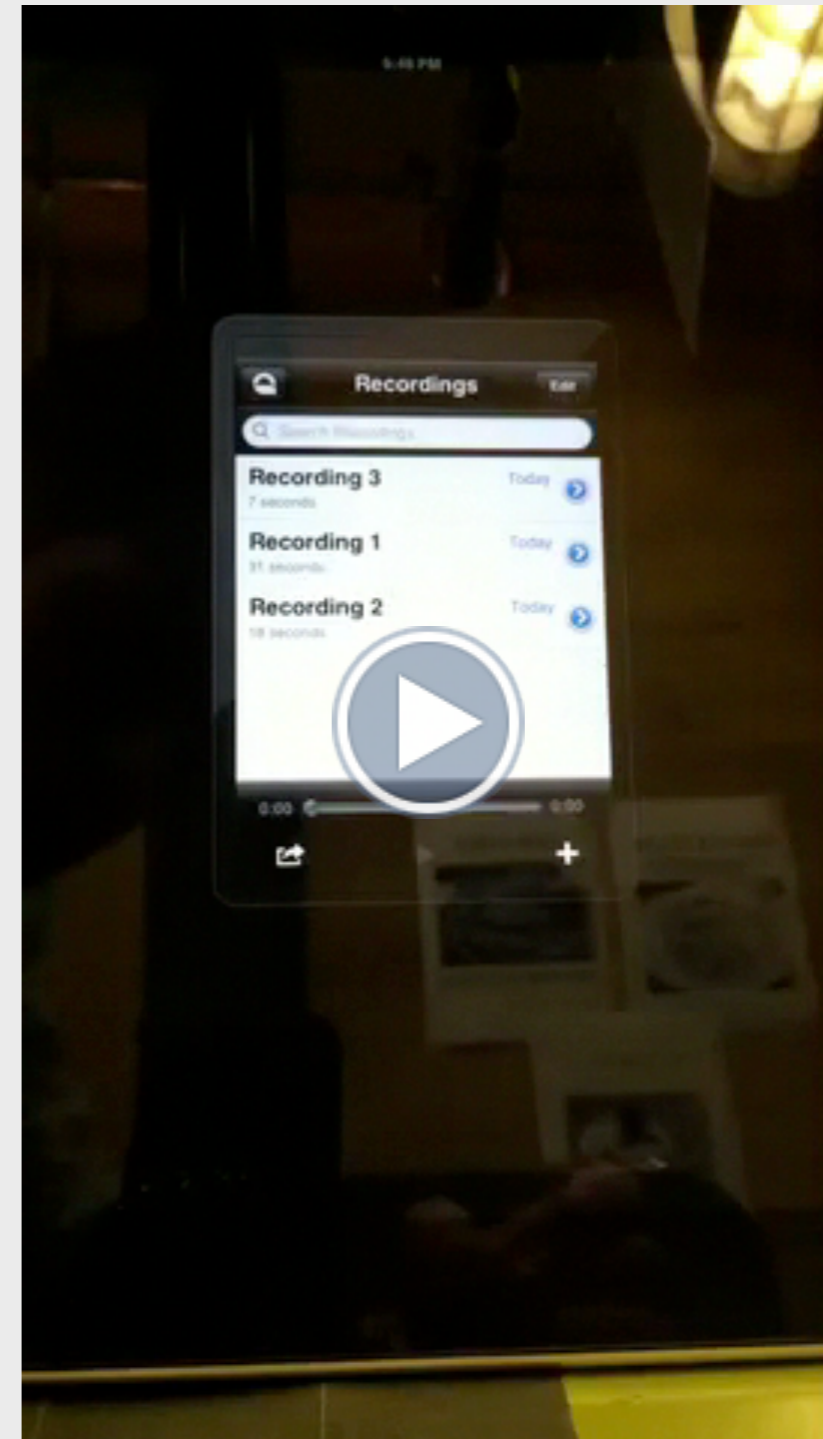
The FiRe editor is superior to that of the iRig, but doesn't achieve the simplicity of Hindenburg's app. Because the same gesture navigates the editor timeline and rearranges clips, we found it difficult to differentiate between the two functions. There are some advanced features like in-app fades, but because you're stuck to one track, it's probably best to save any heavy-duty work for the desktop.

Pros: Simple recording interface.

Cons: Some difficulty navigating the in-app editor.

Rating: 

FiRe 2 | DEMO



Video by Evan Wagstaff

iRig



The **iRig field recorder** comes recommended with the iRig microphone hardware and we consider it a satisfactory app that gets the job done. Levels are easily visible above a big blue record button, but it requires a several taps through setup screens to make adjustments. If allowed, the app can also detect your location, which will be saved with each track. This functionality is a great categorization tool for mobile journalists who travel to report.

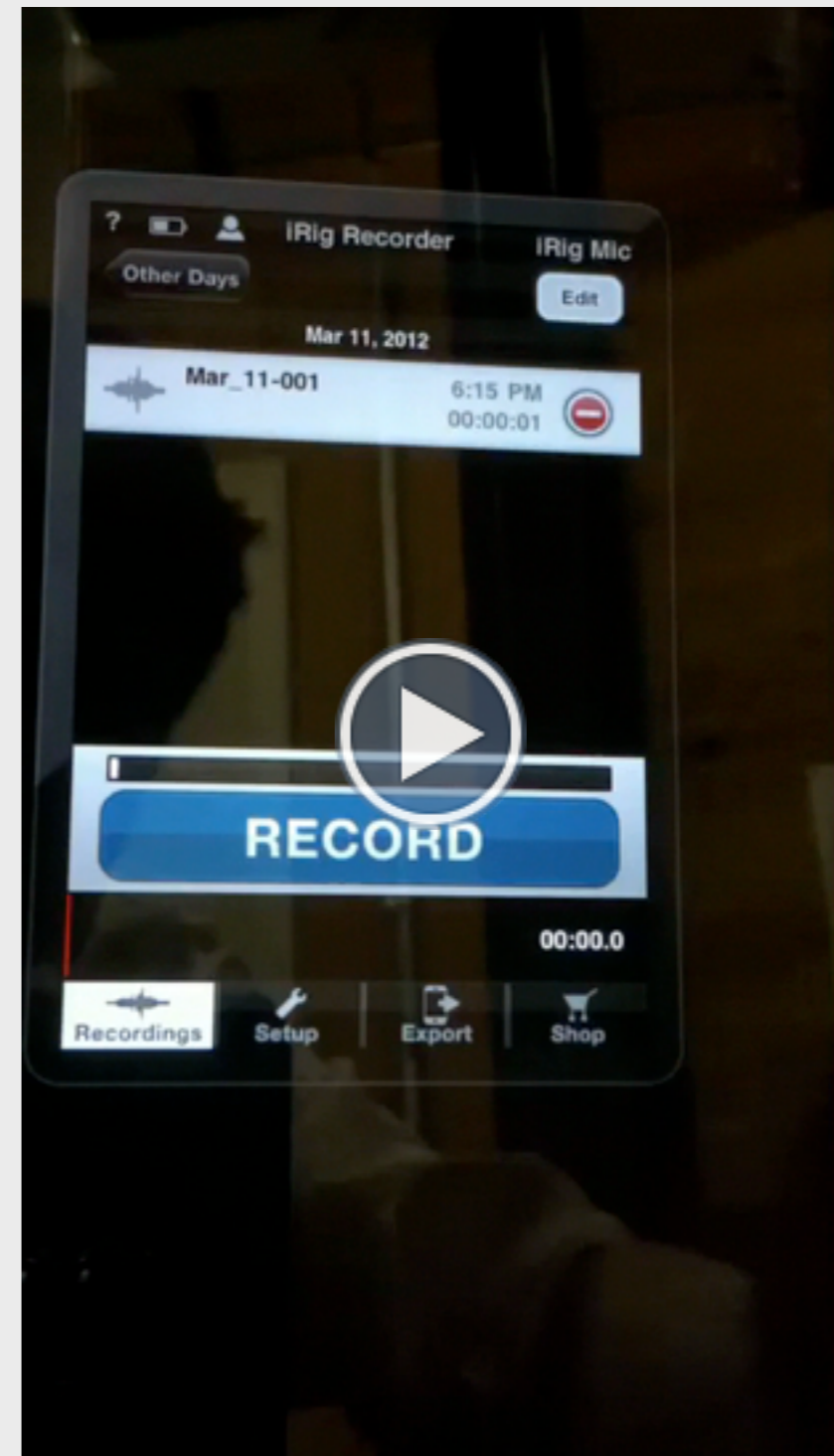
The iRig editor isn't as robust as its competition. You can only cut or crop clips, not rearrange them. It has some useful settings like in-app gain adjustment and buzz reduction, but experimenting with these options sometimes corrupts the resulting audio into an unusable mess. Fortunately, it's a non-destructive editing process, and all edits are saved to a separate clip so no important files are lost. It's best to steer clear of in-app editing with this one and do the cuts on a desktop.

Pros: Location detection and categorization. Simple, effective recording controls

Cons: Poor in-app editor.

Rating: A small orange icon representing a rating, possibly a star or a flag.

iRig | DEMO



Video by Evan Wagstaff



VIDEO EDITING APPS



The **1st Video - Video Editor** by Vericorder is an impressive editing app. If you're looking for a professional level app for the iPhone, this app easily beats its App Store competitors **iMovie** and **ReelDirector**. (NOTE: ReelDirector has not been updated in 2 years and crashed repeatedly. We were unable to properly review it due to its lack of usability.)

The 1st Video app allows you to mix video clips and pictures using the two video tracks *and* mix in two additional tracks of audio or background music. 1st Video can also double as a powerful audio editor, layering three tracks of audio with volume curves and mixer functions. Some other features include the ability to record voice-overs and a script writing feature that plays back the video while you write. All of this *power* does come at a cost and it's not from your pocket book—as the app is reasonably priced—but rather from its steep learning curve. This is not for the faint of heart and does require reading the manual or **watching the training videos**. It's also available for the iPad.

Pros: Multitrack editing. iPhone and iPad versions.

Cons: Intimidating user interface, steep learning curve.

Rating:



Unlike the **1st Video - Video Editor**, **iMovie** is intuitive and easy for the novice editor. If you're looking to slap some video, photos and a quick voice over then iMovie is for you. What it lacks in features it makes up for in ease of use. This app has some significant limitations for serious video editors. Audio editing is practically non-existent. You can forget layering audio and importing audio created in other audio apps. Professional video editors should look to **1st Video - Video Editor** or **Avid Studio**.

Pros: iPhone and iPad versions. Easy to use.

Cons: Lack of audio editing features.

Rating:



Avid Studio is a powerful, intuitive iPad video editing app but it lacks the performance stability of iMovie and 1st Video. Despite its occasional crashes, its overall ease of use, multitrack editing and Precision Trimming tools make this a solid choice for the novice and expert.

Pros: Multitrack editing. Relatively easy user interface.

Cons: Rendering can take a long time. No iPhone version.

Rating:

3

Gear

Lenses, Microphones and more



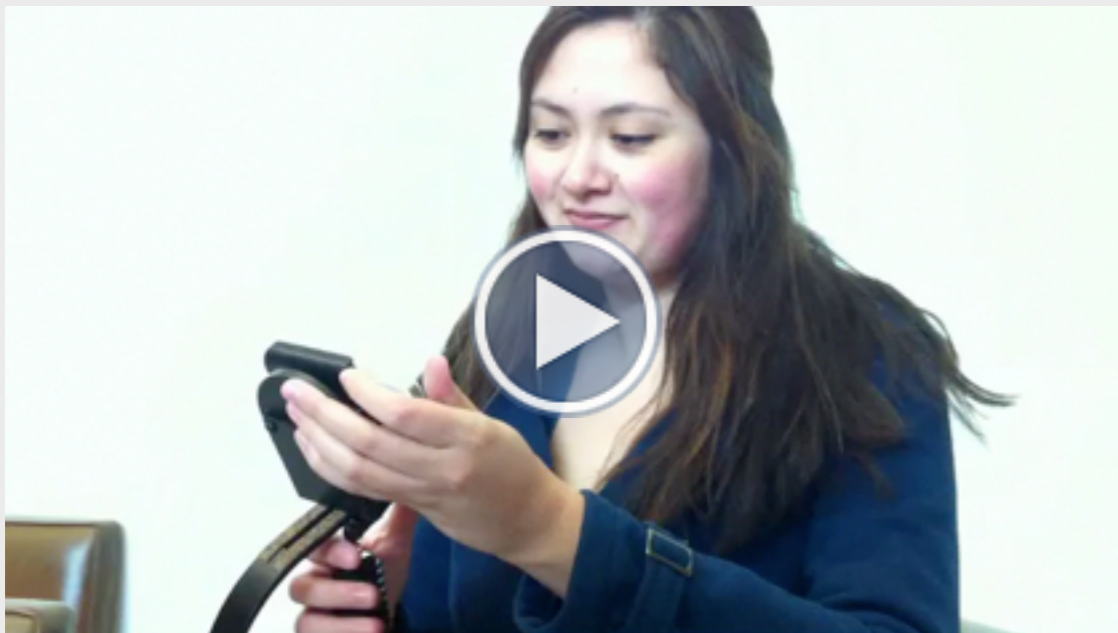
Pico Dolly



The **Pico Dolly** is basically a roller skate with a camera mount, which makes it a great device for capturing smooth video slides on your iPhone. The rubber wheels provide a smooth ride on most surfaces and the adjustable axles allow the user to create a curved trajectory around a subject. The mount itself is on a bendable arm that can be contorted into a variety of useful positions.

Unfortunately, the device relies on the smoothness of a surface to get a steady shot. If the Pico Dolly hits any small crack in the surface, it will be clearly seen in the editing room. The mount perfectly fits devices like the Alm and mCam, but the dolly requires careful balancing with so much weight on top, especially if the shot is on a curved path.

Pico Dolly | DEMO



Specs:

- 2 adjustable axles
- 1 mount
- 1 bendable arm

Pros:

- Provides a smooth shot with a single push
- Adjustable arm allows a variety of shots

Cons:

- Video greatly impacted by small bumps
- Some risk of falling over

Rating: 

Video by Evan Wagstaff

MobiSlider



The **MobiSlider** is a helpful addition to a video journalist's toolkit to get a few sliding shots. While not appropriate for every story, a sliding shot can add a touch of that professional look to a video. The track is lightweight but sturdy, and its rubber feet grip to most surfaces. The mounting pad can expand to fit an iPhone with a case still on.

The quality of the slide relies on the steadiness of the user's hand, and we found we had to do a couple takes before we got a clip that didn't change speed or catch on the slide at any moment. After a few tries, we came away with some quality footage.

MobiSlider | DEMO



Video by Evan Wagstaff

Pros:

- Lightweight frame
- Adds interest and movement to video
- Quick and easy to set up

Cons:

- Requires a steady hand to get a shot without jerkiness

Rating: 

Manfrotto 560B-1

The **Manfrotto 560B-1** is a great monopod that is simple to set up and use. The shaft has three sections that can extend the monopod's length using flip-style latches. It has three small feet at its base that can be lowered to allow the monopod to generally stand on its own, but the feet are not sturdy enough to support any heavy objects without holding onto the monopod. It's stable

enough to hold an iPhone without assistance, but we don't recommend going too far away. A slight gust of wind can blow this over. The feet are especially useful though for stabilization when shooting video.

The main issue is the monopod's size. At almost 2 feet collapsed, it doesn't fit into a small backpack or camera bag. It's certainly light enough to carry, but lacks the convenience of having it as part of a backpack kit.

Specs:

- 5' 2" extended length
- 1' 11" collapsed
- 3 feet at monopod base

Pros:

- Three feet at the base allow hands-free standing support

Cons:

- Difficult to fit into a camera bag

Rating: 





Induro CM14 Carbon 8X CM-Series 4-Section Monopod

The **Induro** is another great monopod that differs from the Manfrotto on a few points. The size is actually a bit smaller, and allows it to fit snugly in a backpack where the Manfrotto could not. Even still, the Induro extends to a comparable size, just short of five feet.

Two counts against the Induro: it doesn't have feet at its base, making steady video difficult while holding it, and its method of extending—twisting knobs to adjust and lock the height—is a bit trickier than the Manfrotto's flip latches.

Specs:

- 4' 9" extended
- 1' 5" collapsed

Pros:

- Compact collapsed size

Cons:

- Trickier extension method
- Cannot stand on its own
- Doesn't come with a Head Mount

Rating: 🍷

Alm mCam Lite

The **mCam** is a great choice for journalists looking to replace some functions of their DSLR. The ergonomic design allows users a comfortable one or two-handed grip while lining up a shot. A cold shoe on top of the camera is perfect for mounting a mic or LED light panel and four screw holes allow simple attachment to a rig or monopod. If you're not ready to say goodbye to your cache of fancy DSLR lenses, fear not. The mCam's default lens can be unscrewed and replaced by a Canon or Nikon brand (using a special Turtleback adapter sold separately.) With DSLR lenses, the picture will appear upside down on the iPhone's native camera app,

but some third-party apps have a “flip” option to correct the inverted display.

If you're worried about not being taken seriously for using an iPhone to report, the added heft of a metal frame and a wide-angle lens shows subjects you're not joking around.

Specs:

- 1 cold shoe
- 1 wide-angle lens
- 1 macro lens
- 1 external microphone

Pros:

- Ergonomically designed
- Allows DSLR lens attachments

Cons:

- Requires users swap iPhone cases
- Power switch inaccessible

Rating: 



ikan | iLED 120 | On-Camera LED Light

The **iLED120** is a portable lighting solution that works great with other recommended gear. It can sit on top of an Alm or mCam and projects just enough light to illuminate the face of a subject for a photo or video. It can also be mounted on a gorilla pod to side light an interview.

Its 120 LED lights are bright enough for short distances and its three-hour battery life is fine for most assignments. Hopefully users won't be on an extended shoot, because once the battery dies, it needs to recharge with an included AC power cord. No quick battery swap to jump back into the action.



Specs:

- 2 filters (diffused white and warm)
- 120 LED lights
- 3 hour charge
- 3 cold shoes

Pros:

- Portable and powerful
- Mounts with shoe or screw

Cons:

- AC recharge instead of a quick battery swap

Rating: 

Generic Wide Angle Lens



We tested a **generic detachable knock-off lens** to see how it held up against the competition. We did see that the lens does function properly in providing a wider angle of view, but also noticed a significant amount of blur and distortion near the edges of the picture. This is also partly attributed to the poor quality of the adhesive for the lens. After one use, the adhesive barely had enough strength to attach the lens and was prone to shifting over the iPhone camera

lens. You'll find these everywhere, and they are enticing due to the price, but be warned that quality is seriously affected.

Specs:

- 1 wide-angle lens
- 1 macro lens
- Prices range from \$2.00 to \$8.00

Pros:

- Inexpensive
- Relatively clear macro

Cons:

- Distortion around edges on wide angle lens portion
- Adhesive peels off easily and lens is impossible to use without it

Rating:



Digital King: Lens Kit

The **Digital King 3-in-1 camera lens kit** provides you with three lenses: wide-angle, macro, and fisheye. For news photography purposes you will probably be using the wide-angle and macro lens, which come as one unit. The wide-angle lens separates to form a smaller macro lens. We ran into a problem as the lens shifted with the adhesive magnet whenever we moved. For a news situation in which you will be capturing a lot of action and needing to make quick turns, the lens may not stay consistently centered with the magnet. If you are looking for a relatively inexpensive lens to add clarity to your mobile photos and don't anticipate a very active shoot, this lens may be for you. It did perform slightly better than its knock-off competitors.

Digital King Lens | Sample Images



Digital King Lens Kit. Watch out, there are many knock-off brands. While this wasn't highly rated, it's better than its cheaper counterparts.

Specs:

- 1 wide-angle lens
- 1 macro lens
- 1 fisheye lens
- Several adhesive magnets to attach lenses

Pros:

- Relatively inexpensive
- Easy to mount adhesive-magnet to various case
- Provides back-up adhesive magnets in case you lose one

Cons:

- Distortion around edges
- Adhesive peels off easily, and this lens is impossible to use without it

Rating:



Turtleback SLR Mount

Are you experienced with DSLRs? Do you love bokeh and using your SLR lenses? If so, a **Turtleback adapter** could be your answer. This adapter allows you to use your standard Canon or Nikon SLR lenses with your iPhone 4. The unit comes with a metal case similar to the ALM— in fact it can also screw into an ALM case which we found generally better quality. There is a steep learning curve to using this adapter however. Advanced photography experience is required to navigate the SLR focusing ring

simultaneously with the built-in iPhone focusing mechanism—all while looking at the image inverted (the way photographers used to back in the day). Some photo apps have a “flip” function that will correct the upside down picture. The SLR lens weighs so much that balancing it on a tripod is a challenge, or impossible.

For journalistic purposes, this adapter is pretty much unusable in everything but setup or portrait shots.

Specs:

- Metal Turtleback case
- UV Filter
- Adapter for either Canon or Nikon lenses

Pros:

- High depth-of-field shots when you are far away from subject

Cons:

- Images are inverted, making it difficult to find the subject quickly
- Requires time to screw on lenses (helpful to use a coin)
- Inability to focus clearly on subject close-up
- Heavy and requires you to remove any current iPhone case

Rating: 📱

Turtleback SLR Mount | Sample Images



The Turtleback SLR Mount Kit



Schneider Optics iPro Lens System

The **Schneider** system gives you exactly what you need for capturing beautiful news photos. It includes a wide-angle lens that, of those we tested, has the least amount of distortion around the edges. It also includes one of the sleekest cases around with a screw hole located in the center of the case for easy tripod mounting. The case is very snug, and while sturdy, it is quite difficult to remove (Hint: the secret is to push up on the hole opening in the back of the case while wriggling it side to side). The iPro lens system takes the best wide-angle photos we found, but for macro shots you may need to look elsewhere, since this kit only includes a wide-angle and fisheye lens set. We have news they will be coming out with a new telephoto lens soon.

Schneider iPro Lens | Sample Images



Schneider iPro lens system includes a sturdy metal handle which can be replaced with a tripod.

Specs:

- Schneider Optics case
- Wide-angle lens
- Fisheye lens

Pros:

- Least amount of distortion around edges
- Sturdy screw-on lens
- Thinnest lens, best feel

Cons:

- Difficult to get iPhone quickly out of case
- No macro lens
- No lens caps
- Requires you to remove any current iPhone case

Rating:



Olloclip 3-in-1 Lens

The **Olloclip** is the most intuitive design for mounting onto your lens we've seen so far. Simply clip it on like a paper clip onto the top left corner of your phone and you're done. However, the best lens on this camera may be the fisheye. We found a slight rounded distortion around the edges when taking photos with the wide-angle lens. While this may not be the widest lens, reporters who are looking for a middle ground between adhesive lenses and pricier interchangeable lenses that require a case may consider the Olloclip as an easy and quick to use alternative.

Olloclip | Sample Images



Olloclip 3-in-1 Photo Lens



Specs:

- wide-angle lens
- macro lens
- fisheye lens
- lens caps

Pros:

- Easiest design by far to get lens on and off without hassle

Cons:

- Slight distortion near the edges makes it appear almost fisheye, requires you to remove any current iPhone case

Rating: 

Manfrotto ModoSteady



The **ModoSteady** is a fascinating device that can twist and turn for a variety of balance purposes. The three-in-one product folds out into a steadicam-like counterbalancing system, a table tripod or a shoulder support (as the leg of the ModoSteady can be flipped up to rest on your shoulder to provide another point of balance.) While the ModoSteady offers you three functions for the price and portability of one, those looking to invest in quality may want to buy each product on its own. The ModoSteady displays a visible jerkiness when shooting video using the stabilizer or shoulder support while moving. For those one-man-band journalists who are looking to spend less, and have all your balancing tools fit in a backpack, the ModoSteady may be for you.

Manfrotto ModoSteady. Below, it's being used as a stabilizer:



Video by Casey Capachi

Specs:

- Manfrotto ModoSteady can be transformed into a stabilizer, a shoulder mount or a table tripod.

Pros:

- Light and portable (folds up), three-in-one product, weight adjustments

Cons:

- ModoSteady's ability is limited as it has difficulty absorbing motion when you move and displays shakiness in video.

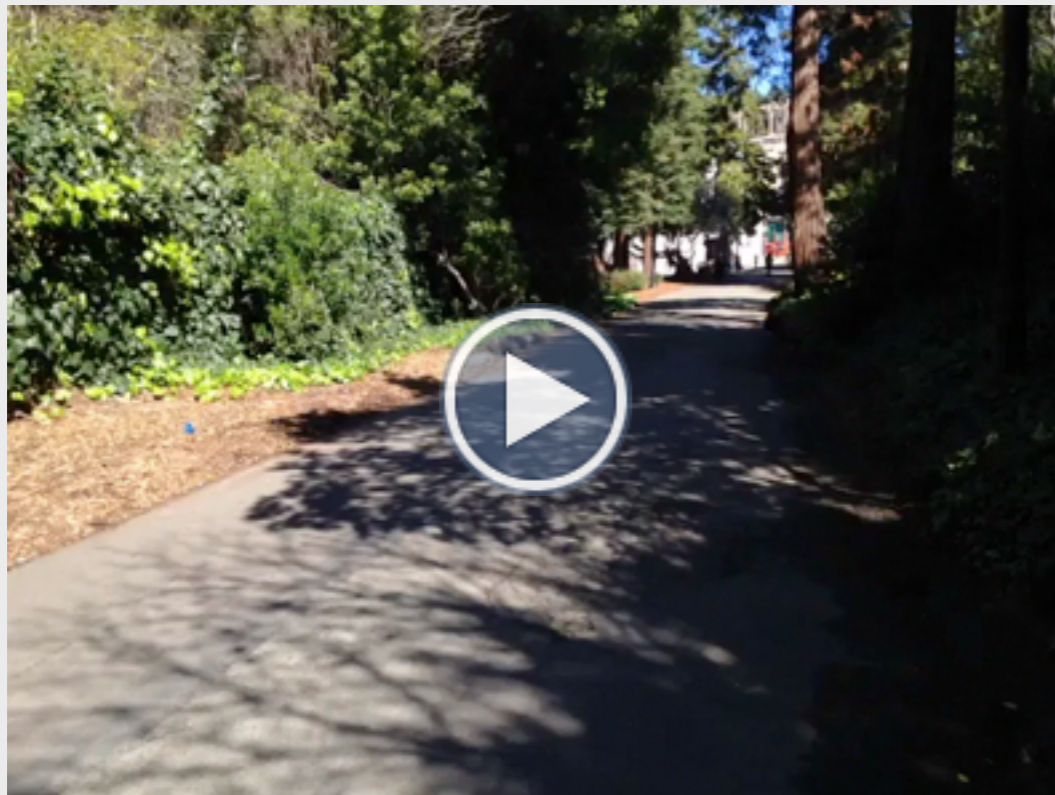
Rating:

Hague Steadicam



The **Hague Steadicam** is a wonderful option for those who cringe while watching shaky video and are willing to spend a little more to capture the dream-worthy shots that only a Steadicam can deliver. The secret to the Hague's success (like in life) is balance. It comes with a special weighted case that mounts to top of the Hague Steadicam. It requires very fine tuned balancing adjustments. You have to move the counterbalance from side to side while adjusting the phone's position on the top of the device. Expect to spend a half-hour or longer balancing it the first time. Even when it's perfectly balanced, the Hague can sway with the wind. The trick is to use the thumb of your dominant hand can act as a third point as you walk with the Steadicam, especially when going up or downhill. It doesn't work well in windy situations, as the Steadicam can spiral out of balance too often to be effective.

NMAE HERE |Sample Movie



Video by Casey Capachi

When it works though, it produces video that looks like the camera is floating.

Specs:

- Stedicam with gimbal arm.
- Multiple weights for different sized cameras
- Heavy 1-2 lbs. iPhone 4 case to attach to the top

Pros:

- When perfectly balanced, camera looks as if it was floating in midair.
- Great for events where you need to walk while capturing video ie. marches.

Cons:

- Tricky to balance. Also expensive.

Rating: 

Comprehensive, XLR-to-Mini Adaptor

The Comprehensive Brand XLR-to-Mini Adaptor Cable is a short cable that gives the iPhone compatibility with professional audio equipment. For example, the cable can connect an iPhone to a wired or wireless lavalier microphone that only contains an XLR outputs. With the Comprehensive cable, we experienced crisp audio, but the levels came in extremely low. Levels can be increased in postproduction, but the noise increases concurrently.

- Pros:** Good audio; Minimal native static.
Cons: Low audio levels.

Rating: 

Comprehensive XLR | Indoor Audio Sample



Vericorder, XLR-to-Mini Adaptor

The Vericorder XLR-to-Mini Adaptor Cable is a short cable that gives the iPhone compatibility with professional audio equipment. For example, the cable can connect an iPhone to a wired or wireless lavalier microphone that only contains an XLR outputs. We found that both indoors and outdoors, the Vericorder outperformed the rivals. While not quite as crisp as a straight XLR-to-XLR connection, the audio held up for professional reporting.

- Pros:** Crisp audio; Natural audio levels; Minimal static.
Cons: Expensive compared to rivals

Rating: 

Vericorder, XLR | Indoor Sample



Sescom, XLR-to-Mini Adaptor Cable

The **Sescom, XLR-to-Mini Adaptor Cable** is a short cable that



gives the iPhone compatibility with professional audio equipment. For example, the cable can connect an iPhone to a wired or wireless lavalier microphone that only

contains an XLR outputs. We found the sound quality a bit muddled, and the levels came in quite low. Also, the Sescom suffers from a intermittent buzz, as the metal tip can make contact with the top of the iPhone jack. A trick is to pierce through a piece of electrical tape when connecting to the iPhone.

- Pros:** Decent audio, minimal static
- Cons:** Mini jack can make contact with iPhone metal band

Rating: 

Sescom XLR | Indoor Sample



KV, XLR-to-Mini Adaptor Cable

The **KV, XLR-to-Mini Adaptor Cable** is a short cable that gives



the iPhone compatibility with professional audio equipment. For example, the cable can connect an iPhone to a wired or wireless lavalier microphone that only contains an XLR outputs. We did not like this cable. The level of noise easily exceeded that of the other adaptor cables we

tested. While it's enticing for it's price, we found this cable nearly unusable.

- Pros:** Cheap
- Cons:** Disturbing noise, even when it's quiet

Rating: 

KV Connection XLR | Indoor Sample



MicW i266 Cardioid



The **MicW i266 Cardioid** is a microphone intended for use with the MicW accessory kit (a mini-to-mini cable), which makes it a wired lavalier for the iPhone. We found the audio quality good and the levels satisfactory. However, the actual microphone is bulky and unsightly in an

interview, compared to professional lavaliers. Comes with a splitter for monitoring audio, which can't be used in video apps.

Pros: No need for XLR-to-Mini adaptor.

Cons: White, distracting cord. Awkward, bulky lavalier microphone and clip; not ideal in the frame of an interview.

Rating: 

MicW i266 | Indoor Sample



MicW i456 Ultra-Sensitive Cardioid



The **MicW i456 Ultra-Sensitive Cardioid** is very similar to the MicW i266. However, outdoors we found the audio quality and levels superior to the i266. Again, the actual microphone is bulky and unsightly in an interview.

Pros: No need for XLR-to-Mini adaptor.

Cons: White, distracting cord. Awkward, bulky lavalier microphone and clip; not ideal in the frame of an interview.

Rating: 

MicW i456 | Indoor Sample



Edutige EIM-001 i-Microphone

The **Edutige EIM-001 i-Microphone Voice Recorder** is a small



microphone that can be attached directly to the iPhone headphone jack or to the head of a mini-to-mini cable to make a lavalier. We found this microphone extremely sensitive, but with decent audio. However, this microphone generated more noise than the MicW cardioids when used as a lavalier.

Pros: Great Sensitivity, Crisp Audio, Cheap

Cons: If you wish to use this as a lavalier microphone, there is no native cord (we tested with the cord that comes with the MicW system). Tends to peak.

Rating: 

Edutige EIM-001 | Outdoor Sample



Fostex AR-4i

The **Fostex AR-4i** is a complete audio interface that fits an



iPhone. When we first tested this device it was only good with the iPhone 4. Recently, Fostex announced the device is now compatible with the 4S as long as you are running IOS 5.1 or above.

Additional device settings can be obtained by downloading **Fostex's FREE app**.

Pros: Stereo, Adjustable levels. Ability to plug-in additional mics like two Lavs for multiple interview situation. Cold Shoe. Included Pistol grip. Optional 3rd input.

Cons: Audio a bit noisy (slight hiss.)

Rating: 

Fostec AR-4i | Indoor Sample



Rode Video Mic (with mCAM)

The Rode is a small shotgun microphone that fits nicely onto an iPhone with the support of a shoe or rig (not included). For recording action and scenes this microphone is great. However, for an interview, this mic cannot rival a lavalier. If you find yourself in a quiet



place the microphone will suffice. **Note:** Additional **Sescom iAdapter** needed to connect to iPhone.

- Pros:** Portable, Clean sound
Cons: Need a rig (mCAM Lite) or cold shoe to attach to iPhone.

Rating: 📶

Rode Video Mic | Indoor Sample

Note: Additional Sescom iAdapt needed to connect to iPhone

iRig Handheld Microphone

The **iRig** is a conventional handheld wired microphone with a cord that connects directly to an iPhone. We found the audio surprisingly crisp with decent levels even when keeping the microphone out of frame. However, this microphone is intended for handheld use and lacks the discretion of a lavalier.



- Pros:** Cheap and good sound
Cons: No mounting options

Rating: 📶

iRig Mic | Indoor Sample

iRig Mic | Outdoor Sample

Audio Technica AT831-iPHONE Lapel Mic

The out-of-the-box sound quality of this **mic** is astounding. It was hands down the best microphone we tested. It has a deep, rich sound and *very* little noise, requiring no post production clean up. The only downside is that it's only sold at

soundprofessionals.com. It's a custom modification to an existing Audio Technica mic. It comes in different cord lengths. It's a *bit* pricey, but worth every penny.

Pros: Deep and rich sound. Little to no noise. Clip and windscreen included.

Cons: Only sold online at **soundprofessionals.com**

Rating: 

AT831 | Indoor Sample



Audio-Technica ATR-35S Lavalier Microphone

This **mic** sounds surprisingly good considering it's \$30 price tag. It has a crisp sound, but a bit on the 'tinny' side. There is also a slight hiss during any silent periods. The other notable mention is that you need the **Sescom iAdapt cable** in order to connect it

to the iPhone. The addition of the extra cable and the bulky power module make it a bit cumbersome, but definitely things you'll look over considering its price.

Pros: Cheap.

Cons: Bulky. Sound a bit thin and metallic.

Rating: 

ATR-35S | Indoor Sample | **Note:** Additional Sescom iAdapt needed to connect to iPhone



Sescom iAdapt

Sescom i-Adapt is a one-foot adapter cable. It allows you to plug virtually any microphone that has a mini plug into an iPhone, iPad or iPod.

While iPhones appear to have standard audio jacks for headphones, those jacks actually require

this special cable to plug in microphones that are not meant for iPhones. (You can tell by counting the number of rings on the plug: the iPhone requires three) This cable is a must for people who already own microphones that have a “mini plug” (also known as a 3.5 mm or 1/8 inch TRS plug) and want to use them on their iPhones.

Pros: Solid build

Cons: None

Rating: 

Belkin LiveAction mic

We had high hopes for this first-of-its-kind **short shotgun mic** for the iPhone.

The mic attaches to the headphone jack and easily adjusts to the phone, even over many cases. That’s where the joy stops. Despite two directional settings, it sounds

bad, both near and far. Despite having enabled Airport mode on the phone we still got repeated digital ‘blips.’

Pros: Nice concept.

Cons: Noisy overall inferior sound quality.

Rating: 

Belkin LiveAction Mic | Indoor Sample



Mophie Juice Pack Air Case and Rechargeable Battery

Extra power is an absolutely essential for the working mobile reporter. The



Mophie Juice Pack is a rechargeable external battery concealed inside of a protective case for the iPhone. It offers the protection of a hard-shell case while providing *almost* twice the

battery life of the iPhone alone. **TIP:** Avoid the inclination to let your iPhone run out of power and then turn on the Mophie. The best practice is to ALWAYS keep the Mophie in the ON position and charge the phone and case at the same time, you'll see longer battery life.

Pros: Thin, light-weight, low-profile design.

Cons: Side protection a bit delicate.

Rating: 

INCASE Combo Charger

The ability to charge while driving to an assignment is crucial.



This device, while a bit expensive is a great accessory. The best feature is that it doubles as a wall charger.

Pros: Charges any USB device. Wall and Car charging options

Cons: Expensive.

Rating: 

iPhone Telephoto Lens

Sometimes you can't *zoom with your feet* and you need a little

help from a telephoto lens. The quality of this plastic attachment has a lot to be desired, but the resulting images are surprising usable in a pinch. I like the comfort of having it in my bag, 'just-in-case.'



Pros: 8x closer view

Cons: Burry edges and vignetting, Must use the case provided in order to attach lens.

Rating: 

iPhone Telephoto Lens | Sample Images



San Francisco skyline, photographed from the window of an Oakland bound flight. (Processed into B/W)



Promaster FW20T Featherweight Tripod

This **Promaster tripod** is a perfect addition to your mobile kit.



Weighing-in at only two pounds and expanding to a height of 54" this tripod is small and light enough to fit in a backpack and sturdy enough to hold the iPhone or iPad. It includes a quick release and ball-head. The multi-position legs and built-in short column allow very low angle shooting while the lever lock legs allow for a fast setup.

Pros: Small, lightweight, sturdy.

Cons: Intended for small devices only.

Rating: 

SnapMount

We found the **SnapMount** to be an extremely handy device to



have on hand. This device, made of “living hinge” plastic, allows you to connect to any tripod in either landscape or portrait using one of two mounting options. The case easily allowing you to insert and

remove your iPhone while still providing the necessary secure hold. All iPhone external controls available, including headphone jack, volume up/down buttons, speakers, and 30-pin dock connector; and no portion of the screen is blocked. Additionally, it works as a stand—stands upright on any flat surface without needing a tripod.

Pros: Small, lightweight, sturdy. Inexpensive.

Cons: iPhone 4/4S cases will need to be removed before using SnapMount.

Rating: 

BARSKA Pistol Grip

Easily mounted to any case with a standard tripod mount, such as the mCAM lite or the SnapMount, the **grips's** non-slip finish provides a sturdy grip along with a greater range of motion and additional stability.



Pros: Adds stability

Cons: Single use

Rating: 



Vello Triple Shoe V Bracket

If you're planning on building a small *rig* for mounting multiple accessories then a **Y-bracket** is an often overlooked necessity.



Pros: Sturdy. 3 mount points.

Cons: Expensive

Rating: 



Joby Gorillapod Magnetic

You'd be hard-pressed to find an excuse not to have this in your kit. The **Gorillapod** is the most versatile table-top tripod on the market. The wrappable legs and super strong neodymium magnetic feet allow you to hang the tripod upside down from the hood of your car or wrap around a chair. On the downside we've read reports of legs snapping off, but after several months of continuous use, ours is still going strong.

Pros: Sturdy. Flexible

Cons: Reports of legs snapping

Rating: 

DOT 360° video

The **Dot** pocketable 360° (panoramic) attachment and app (**Looker**) for the iPhone 4/S. The Dot lets you capture, fully navigable, panoramic video in real-time—and share on Facebook, Twitter, or streamed online using the company's web player. Overall we were extremely disappointed in the video quality. While it's a great concept

and its use during a parade or spot news event would be novel, the image quality distracts from the experience.

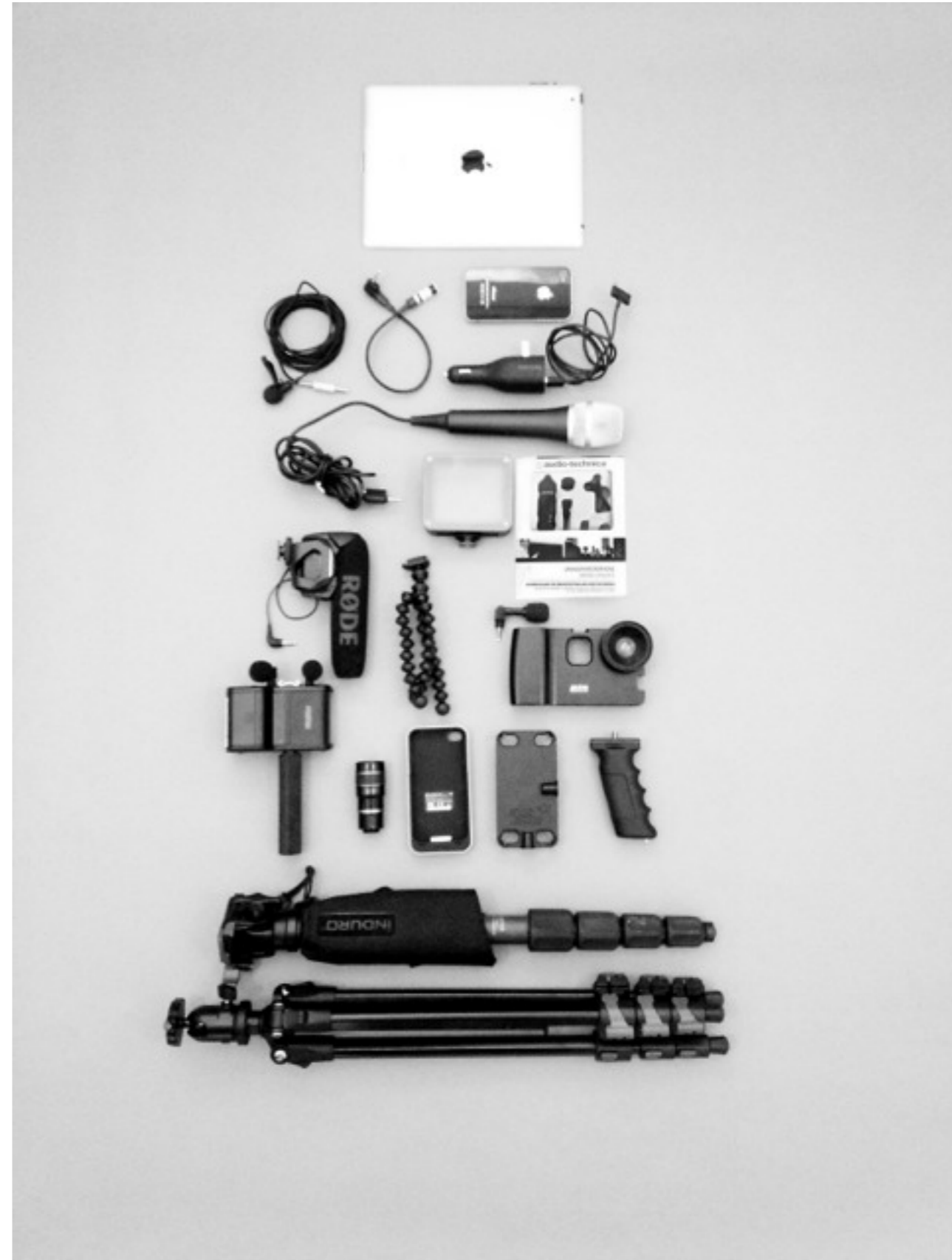
Pros: Great concept. Easy to use and share.

Cons: Poor video quality.

Rating: 

4

The Kit





1. **iPad** - Great for video editing
2. **Audio Technica** AT831-IPHONE Lapel Mic | [LINK](#)
3. **Sescom iAdapt** | [LINK](#)
4. **iPhone4s**
5. **INCASE** Combo Charger | [LINK](#)
6. **iRig** Handheld Microphone | [LINK](#)
7. ikan | **iLED 120** | On-Camera LED Light | [LINK](#)
8. **Audio-Technica** ATR-35S [great back-up] | [LINK](#)
9. **Rode** Video Mic | [LINK](#)
10. **Joby** Gorillapod | [LINK](#)
11. **mCAM** lite | [LINK](#)
12. **Fostex** AR-4i | [LINK](#)
13. iPhone **Telephoto** lens | [LINK](#)
14. **Mophie** Juice Pack Air | [LINK](#)
15. **SnapMount** | [LINK](#)
16. **BARSKA** pistol grip | [LINK](#)
17. **Induro** CM14 Monopod | [LINK](#)
18. **Promaster** FW20T Featherweight Tripod | [LINK](#)

