Documentary video on DJ playing techniques in the analog and digital era

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Keywords:	Abstract:
Video, Documentary, DJ, Analog, Digital	This documentary explores the evolving techniques of Disc Jockeys (DJs) from the analog to the digital era. It addresses the shift from the intricate art of vinyl manipulation in the 1990s to the more accessible, technology-driven methods of today, such as auto-sync features on digital DJ software. The production involved comprehensive pre-production, including research, story development, and scriptwriting, followed by a multi-day production phase for A-roll, B-roll, and audio recording. Post-production focused on editing and creating supporting media. The resulting documentary effectively illustrates the differences in DJing techniques across eras, receiving positive feedback for its engaging visual and audio elements, clear messaging, and success in delivering new knowledge to its audience.

Introduction

A Disc Jockey, subsequently referred to as a DJ, is an individual whose profession involves playing, mixing, modifying, and entertaining audiences by continuously playing carefully arranged songs (Callander, 2023; Munthoriq, 2014; Norah AbdelGafur, 2021; South et al., 2024). A DJ's role can be likened to that of an operator, where the DJ acts as a controller, selecting appropriate songs to play according to the mood or genre of music (Husna & Mayasari, 2020; Rukmana, 2015). In selecting songs, a DJ combines specific technical skills with their musical knowledge to create a spectacular and engaging DJ set or live show that resonates with their audience.

In the 1990s, which was predominantly an analog era (Badaruddin & Nugraheni, 2023; Danuri, 2019) , becoming a DJ was not as straightforward as watching a YouTube video and achieving mastery in minutes. Individuals aspiring to be DJs first had to attend a DJ school, then dedicate a significant amount of time to the profession to adapt to playing with various mixers and vinyl records.

In contrast, in the current digital age, becoming a DJ has become considerably easier (Danuri, 2019; Harry Saptarianto et al., 2024; Hidayat, 2016; Timoty Agustian Berutu et al., 2024). In the analog era, collecting and studying vinyl records for musical performance required significant time and patience. An individual can now simply turn on a laptop, open a DJ server program, and press the auto-sync button—which automatically synchronizes one song with another—to perform as a DJ (Rukmana, 2015). It is undeniable that technology greatly assists DJs in the digital age. Previously, learning to be a DJ involved a difficult process (Thompson, 2012), whereas now, people can learn through numerous videos available on YouTube. In essence, "everybody can be a DJ."

In response to the perceived conflict—where analog-era DJs feel their profession has been "overly simplified" by technology, and some digital-era DJs "underestimate" their profession—a documentary video was designed. This documentary explores the differences in DJing techniques between the analog era, which used turntables and vinyl records, and the digital era, which uses more advanced CDJ player technology. The documentary designed is a participatory type, emphasizing the

interaction between the filmmaker and the subjects (Irving et al., 2021). The director—in this case, the author—plays an active role in the film, not as an observer but as a participant, with the director's interactions and communication with the subjects being presented within the film itself.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach to the methodology of creating works. The data collection process was carried out through three main stages of documentary video production: pre-production, production, and post-production (Ascher & Pincus, 2013; Wiston, 2013). During the pre-production stage, purposive sampling was used to select two interviewees: one vinyl DJ and one digital DJ, to obtain contrasting perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the philosophy and working techniques of each interviewee in depth. The verbal data was then transcribed and analyzed to construct the narrative framework of the documentary.

Pre-Production

The pre-production phase is the initial stage of filmmaking, where ideas and film concepts are transformed into a concrete production plan (Ascher & Pincus, 2013). This phase includes several steps such as information gathering, reference collection, storyline design, interview question design, scriptwriting, and the creation of all other pre-production documents like floor plans, shot lists, and call sheets.

Information Gathering

In qualitative research, information gathering can be done through observation, interviews, and document studies (Maesaroh et al., 2025; Putri & Murhayati, 2025; Rifa'i, 2023). For this final project, information was collected through informal interviews with Riza Widyapalapa, also known as DJ DEEPRICH, concerning the search for suitable interviewees to represent DJs from both the analog and digital eras. The data collected consists of primary and secondary data.

Reference Collection

Reference collection for the documentary video was conducted via YouTube, searching for existing documentary videos about the DJ world to serve as content references for the intended production. Previous works with similar themes and techniques include the documentary film "What We Started," which explores the DJ world and touches upon the evolution of Electronic Dance Music (EDM). Other works that served as a guide for editing techniques in the documentary include the music video (MV) for the song "Gold" (Chet Faker), performed by HYUKOH from 88Rising.

Storyline Design

After gathering all necessary information and references, a storyline was designed based on existing documentary narrative references, then adjusted to align with the message intended for the documentary video. The narrative of the work begins with a character named Richart, stage name DJ DEEPRICH, a senior DJ from the analog era. He possesses over two decades of knowledge and experience as a DJ. His son, Kelso Lineus, intends to share his father's knowledge so that new DJs can learn from him and become successors capable of regenerating the DJ world. This knowledge will come not only from his father but also from Richart's colleagues who also have experience in the DJ world. They will demonstrate how to play using analog and digital turntables, then present all their techniques that new DJs can learn from. It's time for regeneration.

Interview Questions

Once the storyline was finalized, the next step was to design the interview questions. The responses from each interviewee to these questions will determine the content of the documentary video. These interview questions are divided into six chapters, which also correspond to the chapters within the documentary video.

Scriptwriting

What differentiates a documentary script from a fictional film script is its flexibility and adaptability to developments on the ground, whereas a fictional film script typically has a more structured story and plot (Aaltonen, 2017; Taylor & Batty, 2022). This documentary video script is organized into four columns: the first column for scene number, the second for visual elements, the third for audio (music & narration), and the fourth for duration (Rusman Latief et al., 2025). It is important to remember that this documentary script is a pre-production script, meaning it can change based on what occurs during production, especially during the interview process.

Pre-Production Documents

Several documents must be prepared before entering the production phase to ensure smooth operations. These include the production schedule, floor plan, shot list, and call sheets. Creating a realistic schedule is crucial, accounting for the time needed for research, preparing interview questions, and scheduling interviews with subjects. A floor plan is a diagram or layout showing the positions of cameras, actors, and props within a set or shooting location, used by the director and production team to map out scenes and ensure everything is well-organized before filming begins. A shot list is a detailed list of every scene to be filmed, including duration, shot type, and any other special notes that can aid production. A call sheet is a production document containing essential information about the production schedule, location, shooting schedule, cast and crew list, and other important contacts needed for film or video production.

Production

The subsequent phase of this final project is the production stage, which was initially planned for three days but was extended by an additional four days based on the results of the primary filming (interviews). Various lighting methods were used, especially the three-point lighting using the fundamental lighting, which is the key light (the primary and most intense light source in a scene. It's used to illuminate the subject and make it stand out), the fill light (used to soften and "fill in" the dark shadows created by the key light, less intense than the key light and is placed on the opposite side), and backlighting (positioned behind and slightly above the subject, this light separates the subject from the background, creating a three-dimensional effect. The quality of light also determines the mood of the shot; hard lighting is characterized by sharp, well-defined shadows and is often used to create a dramatic and mysterious mood, while soft lighting produces soft, diffused shadows and is often used for a more naturalistic look, especially when the scene isn't intensely dramatic. (Depew, 2022; Peerspace, 2021)

Day one of production involved shooting scenes 3, 4, 7, and 11. Scenes 3, 4, and 7 featured interviews with the subject DJ DEEPRICH. The first day's production took place at DSX DJ Studio, located at Jl. Ngagel 77C. Day two of production focused on scenes 5 and 6, with scene 5 being an interview featuring two subjects: DJ DEEPRICH and DJ Rizki. The second day's production was conducted at Kak Rizki's home, located at Jl. Sidosermo Indah X No. 9. Day three of production included shooting scenes 8 and 9, with scene 8 featuring an interview with two subjects: DJ DEEPRICH and DJ YuliSKJ. The third day's production took place at Vertique Club, located at Jl. Basuki Rahmat No. 23C. Following these initial three days of production, interview transcripts were created and the script was rewritten based on the interview sessions. This was then followed by three additional production days.

Day four of production involved shooting sequences 8A, 13, and portions of sequences 10, 0, 1, 11B, and 14. The fourth day's production took place at Kak Rizki's home, located at Jl. Sidosermo Indah X No. 9. Day five of production focused on capturing the remaining shots for sequence 0, shooting sequences 1, 10, and 15, and a retake of sequence 11B shot 2. The fifth day's production was conducted at Kak Nicholas's home, located at Jl. Ngagel Jaya Tengah No. 52. Day six of production was dedicated to shooting sequence 12B. This day's production took place at the ISTTS campus (specifically in the dance studio), located at Jl. Ngagel Jaya Tengah No. 73-77. The results from this production day were unsatisfactory, necessitating a retake day. Day seven of production involved retakes for sequence 12B due to suboptimal previous shots and fewer talents than anticipated. The seventh day, which was also the final day of production, took place in front of the FIFGroup office, located at Jl. Jemur Andayani No. 39. This location was also used for a dance video project by Origin Dance Crew. After the production days were completed, an additional day was allocated for voice-over recording. Voice-over recording was conducted in a quiet location, ideally not in an excessively empty room to avoid echoes. The recording process utilized a condenser microphone, specifically a Fantech Condenser Microphone with a Cardioid polar pattern.

Post-Production

The post-production phase encompasses several stages, including interview transcription, paper editing, the editing process itself, visual effects, sound mixing, and the creation of supporting media. The following elaborates on each of these stages.

Interview Transcription

After completing all interview sessions (a total of three), transcription of the interviews was performed. This facilitates easier identification of usable and discardable sections of the footage.

Paper Editing

The next stage is paper editing, or the creation of an edit script. This new script is developed based on the existing interview transcripts and then refined into a scenario with a more concise, dense, and engaging storyline that is compelling from beginning to end.

Offline Editing

Following that is the offline editing stage, where the editor selects and organizes the footage material to be used in the film. The chosen footage is based on the previously designed paper edit. Several editing techniques applied during offline editing include cutting, transitions, key-framing, and split-screen.

Online Editing

The next stage is online editing, where the editor works directly with the original video source using video editing software, manipulating raw video data and adding desired visual or sound effects. This editing process is carried out using specialized software to finalize details such as color adjustment, audio arrangement, visual effects integration, and audio-video synchronization to produce a high-quality final product.

Creation of Supporting Media

The supporting media for this final project include: a 1-minute trailer video to be posted on Instagram Reels by the DJs who participated as subjects in the documentary, promotional posters for the documentary (whose assets can also be used for YouTube thumbnails), and merchandise in the form of hoodies and caps that can be worn by DJs during their performances.

Audience Reception Evaluation Methods

A questionnaire was distributed to measure the effectiveness of the video in conveying the message, understand the audience's perception of the contrast between analog and digital DJs, and evaluate the most impactful cinematic elements. The questionnaire used closed-ended and scale questions. The research was conducted by distributing an online questionnaire via Google Forms to 100 respondents from various age groups: high school students (ages 16–18), college students (ages 19–23), graduate students (ages 24–29), and adults (ages 31 and above).

Result and Discussion

This section presents the final outcome of the Documentary Video on Disc Jockey Playing Techniques in the Analog and Digital Eras. This section begins with a technical analysis of the documentary video produced. The results of this analysis will be compared with the results of the questionnaire collected from respondents to measure the success of the video.

Cinematic Description of the Documentary Video

The main plot is Kelso's quest as the director to understand his father's passion and the evolution of DJing from his father's analog roots to the modern digital landscape. The central themes are the contrast between generations and technologies, the importance of heritage and passion, and the ever-changing nature of creative expression. The film successfully humanizes the technological shift by telling it through the personal stories of the three DJs, all of whom represent different perspectives on the craft. As the primary narrator and guide, his personal connection to the subject lending the documentary its emotional weight. The interviews with Richart, Rizky, and Yuli are a cornerstone of the film, providing deep insight into their motivations and experiences. The tone is generally serious and reflective during the interviews but punctuated with moments of lightheartedness, such as Kelso's kitchen scene and the humorous after-credits stinger, which brings the film back to its personal and familial core. For the video, it is accessable via Youtube, with the title "DJ 101: How We Play | A Short Documentary Which Bridges the Analog-Digital Divide in DJ Culture" on DJ DEEPRICH's Youtube account himself, as seen in Figure 1.

Figure. 1. Video interface on Youtube.

Key Findings

The first key finding is the core philosophy of a "Disc Jockey"; the documentary emphasizes that the term "DJ" fundamentally means "disc jockey", and that a true DJ must be able to handle a physical disc. According to DJ Rizky, this skill is a "certified" and "fundamental science" ("ilmu fundamental"). DJ Deeeprich and Rizky both assert that DJs who can't work with vinyl are not "real" DJs. DJ Rizky sums this up with the statement: "Disc means disc! Not digitized. Not frequency. It's about disc!".

The second key finding is the analog DJ experience; the documentary highlights that being an analog DJ in the 90s required a specific set of skills and a significant amount of effort. In the 90s, DJs had to rely solely on their "pure talent" and skill to mix music, as there were no modern digital tools like sync buttons, digital screens for BPM, or graphical displays for songs. Analog DJs had to carry heavy vinyl record bags, with each bag weighing about 10 kilograms and containing 50 vinyl records. If they played a long set, they had to carry two of these bags. Unlike today, where DJs and MCs are separate roles, a DJ in the 90s was expected to be a "multitalent" and act as an MC as well.

The third key finding is the digital DJ experience; the documentary explains that modern digital DJing is far more convenient and versatile, despite criticism from some traditionalists. With digital tools, DJs no longer have to carry heavy vinyl bags; they can simply "plug in a flash drive" ("flashdisk tinggal colok"). Modern DJs are not limited to one genre and can play a wide range of music, including R&B, EDM, trance, and even TikTok songs. This is made possible because they can easily search for and find songs using a laptop. According to DJ Deeeprich, modern digital tools simplify a DJ's work with new features that were not available in the 90s, such as digital screens for BPM and graphical displays.

The fourth and last key finding is the future of DJing in coexistence; The documentary concludes by presenting a balanced view of both analog and digital DJing. The two styles are not framed as a conflict but as different approaches that both have pros and cons. The final statement from DJ Rizky and DJ Deeeprich suggests that what truly matters is whether the DJ can successfully entertain the crowd and make them happy. The film ends on a note of unity, with Kelso, Richart, and Rizky all agreeing that both methods are valid, and Kelso embracing the analog method by asking to try the turntable himself.

Audio-visual Technique Analysis

Various methods and techniques were used to create various moods required to deliver the message to the audience. For example, the opening sequence which is a close-up of Kelso wearing headphones and a master shot of him "DJing" in a dark room sets up a dreamlike fantasy, then immediately contrasted by a pan right to reveal that he is merely washing dishes in the kitchen. This sequence depicting fantasy and reality quickly establishes the film's playful and personal tone, showing that Kelso's DJing dream is still a childhood aspiration.

Figure 2. The opening sequence.

The editing technique used, the split screen, is primarily used for direct comparison and juxtaposition. It is used to show Kelso as a child on one side and his father as a young DJ on the other, visually linking their journeys. Later, it is employed to show the two sides of the DJ debate simultaneously—with Om Yuli (digital) on one side and Om Rizky (analog) on the other—during their interview responses.

Figure 3. The split screens.

One of the most important shots to take were the interview shots. The use of medium close-ups (MCU) and close-ups (CU) on the interviewees (Kelso, DJ Deeprich, DJ Rizky, DJ Yuli) is meant to create a sense of intimacy and focus. The audience can focus on the subjects' facial expressions and non-verbal cues, making their stories and opinions feel more genuine and personal.

Figure 4. The interview shots.

Motion graphics played a big role here. These visuals are used to convey abstract ideas and external information in an engaging way. Motion graphics are used to show negative comments from netizens about digital DJs, providing context for the debate. They are also used to present questions like "How does it feel to be an analog DJ in the '90s?" to structure the narrative.

Figure 5. The motion graphics.

The demonstration shots also played a big role here. The POV shots and close-ups of hands on turntables and mixers serve to immerse the audience in the technical aspects of DJing. These shots are crucial for visually explaining concepts like "DUG" and "TAK" and demonstrating techniques like "backspin" and the use of the mixer's knobs, which would be difficult to explain with words alone.

Figure 6. The interview shots.

The concluding shot, which is the handheld shot of Kelso finally playing the turntable represents the successful culmination of his journey and his acceptance of the craft. The handheld shot of Kelso playing the turntable gives the scene an intimate, raw, and personal feel, creating a moment of personal triumph and a final, affirmative statement on the value of the analog method he has just learned about.

Figure 7. The interview shots.

Audience Reception

To understand how this work was received by the audience, data obtained from questionnaires completed by 100 respondents was analyzed. The findings from the audience's perceptions illustrate how the audience perceived the message conveyed in the documentary video. 73% of respondents considered the documentary highly engaging, while 23% found it engaging. 59% of respondents understood the documentary's message very clearly, and 41% understood it clearly. The documentary concludes that the DJ profession exists to entertain the audience. For this question, 65% of respondents correctly identified this message, while 30% were less accurate in their understanding of the intended conclusion. The remaining 5% selected other incorrect options. 100% of respondents gained new knowledge after watching the documentary video. On a scale of 1-10, 40% of respondents gave a score of 10, 30% gave a 9, 26% gave an 8, 2% gave a 7, and 2% gave a 6.

Conclusion

Most respondents found the visual and audio aspects to be a significant draw for the documentary. The majority of respondents grasped the information very clearly. However, aspects of

scriptwriting and final editing need attention to ensure all viewers can comprehend the documentary's message even better. There was some ambiguity in the intended message. While most respondents understood the core conclusion—that DJs exist to entertain the audience—a segment of respondents drew a different conclusion. This was likely due to several statements made by interviewees suggesting that DJs also enjoy the music themselves. The documentary video serves as an effective learning tool for all viewers, even those with expertise in the field. This documentary successfully kept viewers engaged from start to finish, achieving an impressive average rating of 9.04.

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