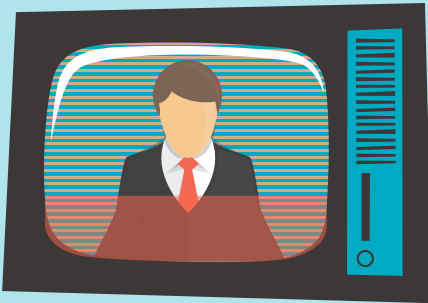


SHOULD WE RETHINK LOWER THIRDS?

In video production, a lower third is a graphic overlay placed in the lower area of the screen. In simple form, it is just text overlaying the video, but to improve readability, graphic elements such as boxes are added. The thing is, “lower thirds” came about during the broadcast era—when the ratio was 4:3. Now that the standard is 16:9, should we rethink this?



In the days of old, TVs were a 4:3 ratio. The term lower third described graphics that occupied the lower 3rd of the screen, usually a name graphic.

What was left above the graphic was a nice ratio, something close to 16:9, our current standard.



Today, 16:9 is the standard ratio. Continuing to use 1/3rd for graphics on bottom leaves little room for talent on top, creating a “Muppet effect”.



What works better for 16:9 production is a lower 4th, leaving more room for talent above. With TVs much larger today, the loss of vertical text space isn't an issue.