

## Newsletters

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Monthly Newsletter!

### Larry's Monthly Newsletter

Editor: Larry Jordan  
Issue #31 - November, 2006

Welcome to the latest edition of my monthly Final Cut Studio newsletter. This is the November, 2006, edition.

The goal of this newsletter is to provide information helpful to the professional user of Final Cut Pro. This newsletter publishes each month. Past issues are not archived. However, key articles are posted on my website for your reference. All software references are to Final Cut Studio unless otherwise noted.

Please invite your friends to visit my website -- [www.larryjordan.biz](http://www.larryjordan.biz). We now have over 135 tutorials to help you get the most out of Final Cut!

Well, this weekend is Thanksgiving in the US - a time to give thanks for all the gifts and talents each of us has been given. It is my favorite holiday of the year. Because of this, I want to say thank **you** for all your interest and comments and contributions to my newsletter over the years -- next month ends our third year of publishing. And we have lots of exciting ideas on the way for next year.

I'm having a great time - thank you for making it so interesting!

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## Larry is Bringing His Power-Up Seminars to the UK!

As we wind-up our [Power-UP Seminar Tour in the US](#) this December in Nashville, Orlando and Honolulu, I am delighted to announce we are bringing our seminar tour to the United Kingdom the first half of February! And, our High-End Seminar has **ALL NEW** content.



We are visiting three cities in England:

- [Birmingham](#) - Feb 8 & 9
- [Manchester](#) - Feb. 12 & 13
- [Bristol](#) - Feb. 16 & 17

[Click here for seminar agendas.](#)

[Click here for testimonials from previous seminars.](#)

[Click here for pricing, venues, and registration.](#)

For everyone in Europe that's written asking us to come visit -- this is an opportunity to see for yourself

what all the excitement is about.

Plus, **SAVE 10%** if you register before the end of the year! Seats are limited, register early.

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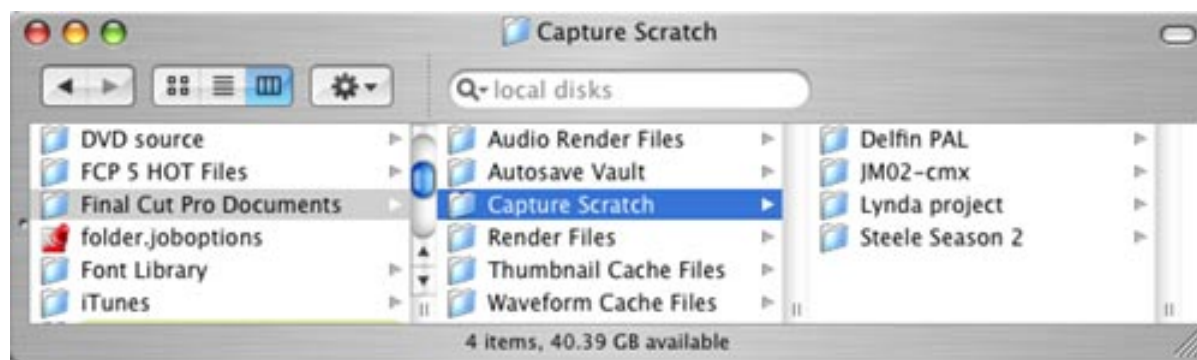
## Technique: Understanding Scratch Disks

**Bill Darst** started me thinking about Scratch Disks again when he asked:

Because I have 5 external drives upon which I have put 6 two hour programs, I am wondering why can't FCP keep track of which Scratch disks have which programs (project files) . Every time I have to open one of the 15 projects, I always have to go and assign the disk it was assigned to. Sometimes I just want to check or add an item, and may open and close 5 or 6 programs, but again, I always have to remember to assign the scratch disk once again to each project file I open. Would it be that hard to create a small program that remembers where that project file was stored and just assume you would always want to use the same storage area each time you open it up?

*Larry replies:* Bill, Scratch Disks are system-specific, not project-specific. However, FCP is designed to do what you are asking without you having to change a thing. The key is in understanding how scratch disks work.

Scratch disks store the media that you capture from video tape, as well as render files and other technical files that Final Cut needs. However, and this is the important part, media files are ALWAYS stored in a folder named after your project.



Here's an example. At the top level of my media drive, I created a folder called "Final Cut Pro Documents" (the exact spelling and capitalization are important). Then, I pointed my Scratch Disks to this folder (**Final Cut Pro > System Settings > Scratch Disks**).

Inside this folder, Final Cut automatically created a series of six folders. All media captured from video tape is stored in the Capture Scratch folder. However, and more important, it is ALWAYS stored in a folder inside Capture Scratch that is named after the currently active project. In this case, I have four different projects all stored in the same capture scratch folder.

So, Bill, in your case, you would create a "Final Cut Pro Documents" folder on each of your five media drives.



Then, in the **Final Cut Pro > System Settings > Scratch Disk** tab, set a scratch disk on *each* of your five disks by clicking the **Set** button and navigating to the Final Cut Pro Documents folder. Do this for every media hard drive you have. Then, make sure all four checkboxes are checked for each line.

These checkboxes tell Final Cut that it can record media on any of the five media drives. Best of all, Final Cut uses what's called "load balancing," which means that it always records media to the drive that is the emptiest. This helps spread your media across all five disks and reduces the wear-and-tear on any single drive.

This system gives you the greatest flexibility, without requiring you to reset scratch disks for each project. As you switch from one project to another in Final Cut, FCP will, behind the scenes, automatically switch media folders so that any new render files or any new captured media are always stored in the folder named after the currently active project. (An active project is the front-most tab in the Browser; it has a light gray tab.)

Best of all, when it comes time to delete a project, the Render Manager can easily delete all unneeded render files because it tracks all render files on *all* current scratch disks. To delete captured media, go into the Capture Scratch folder and simply delete the folder named after the project you want to delete.

Easy, simple and straight-forward.

Here are two articles I've written that can help you learn more:

- [Using Render manager](#)
- [Organizing your System](#)

## UPDATE #1

**Tim Spauling** writes in with an additional comment:

I read what you wrote and generally agree. But I think the intent of the writer's question was a little different.

Since he has several external Firewire drives, I assume he is probably like me and often

needs to switch from project to project. Often times a project gets shelved or set a side, while I work on another project. In order to make quick changes or hand off the project to someone else, all elements of that project need to stay in one place.

Side note: Danger! Danger!... I noticed the way FCP numbers render files the same on drives, so if you don't have everything pointed in the right place, weird things can show up on the screen (Have different names for all your drives. [This means that using Reconnect files to] auto-find render files can cause some serious feakiness, always double check timelines before saving!).

I think what we are looking for is a program or function that will encode into the project file which drives are set for a project and set up your scratch disc the same way they were set for each project. Having to constantly change scratch disc around and remembering to do it every time one needs to change projects is a royal pain!

Project Profiles... Now wouldn't that be cool!

*Larry replies:* Tim, you make some good points. Project profiles is something that FCP does not currently support. Thanks for writing!

## UPDATE #2

**Greta Wing Miller** contributes one more thought on this subject:

I also use at least 3 different external media discs: right now I am simultaneously working on 3 different projects. The media for each of them is captured to its respective FCP Documents folder on its respective scratch disc. The way I get around having to reset each time, is that, once I capture all the media to the correct drive, that drive has to be powered up to edit, of course, but I point the scratch disc pref to an FCP Docs folder on my second (250gb) internal drive (G5). That way, all the render files go on the internal drive, and I never have to reset the pref--unless I have to capture more media.

Thanks so much for everything,

*Larry replies:* Greta, this is a good work-around. Thanks for sharing it.

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## Technique: Working with Auxiliary TimeCode

**Isazaly Modh Isa**, in Malaysia, wrote the following technique on how to sync an external audio source to timecode in Final Cut:

I'm not sure if this can help, but here's a way I would normally get my audio to sync with timecode data on FCP:

1. Add "5-pops" by using TONE GENERATOR AUDIO and place a single-frame "sound pop " every 1 second before the actual AUDIO/MUSIC begins. This duration can be adjusted if you want to create

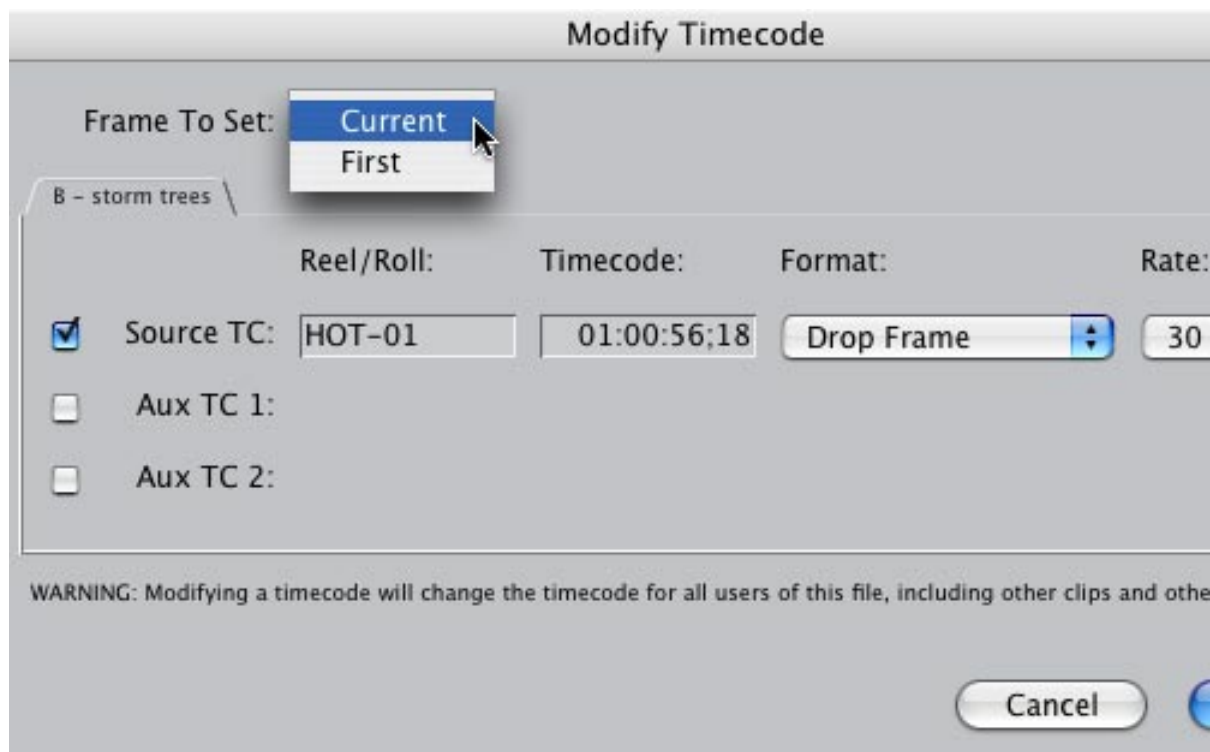
- a "stand-by" mode for cameras to start recording.
2. Add a layer of VIDEO SLUG on the empty video layer.
3. Place a TIMECODE GENERATOR video filter, choose frame-rate (fps) and apply it to the VIDEO SLUG to render a timecode. Adjust the text to the desired size.
4. Output the source onto a MONITOR/TV (or you can export it as an iPod movie!). Output the audio source onto speakers (for music video recordings!)
5. Cameras can easily shoot the monitor (or iPod screen), which provides them with visual timecode before the actual music starts.

*Larry replies:* This is a good technique to use when you need to provide a timecode reference to cameras that don't support external timecode. The benefit of having a camera shoot the monitor is that you can get an accurate visual timecode reference recorded in sync on your tape.

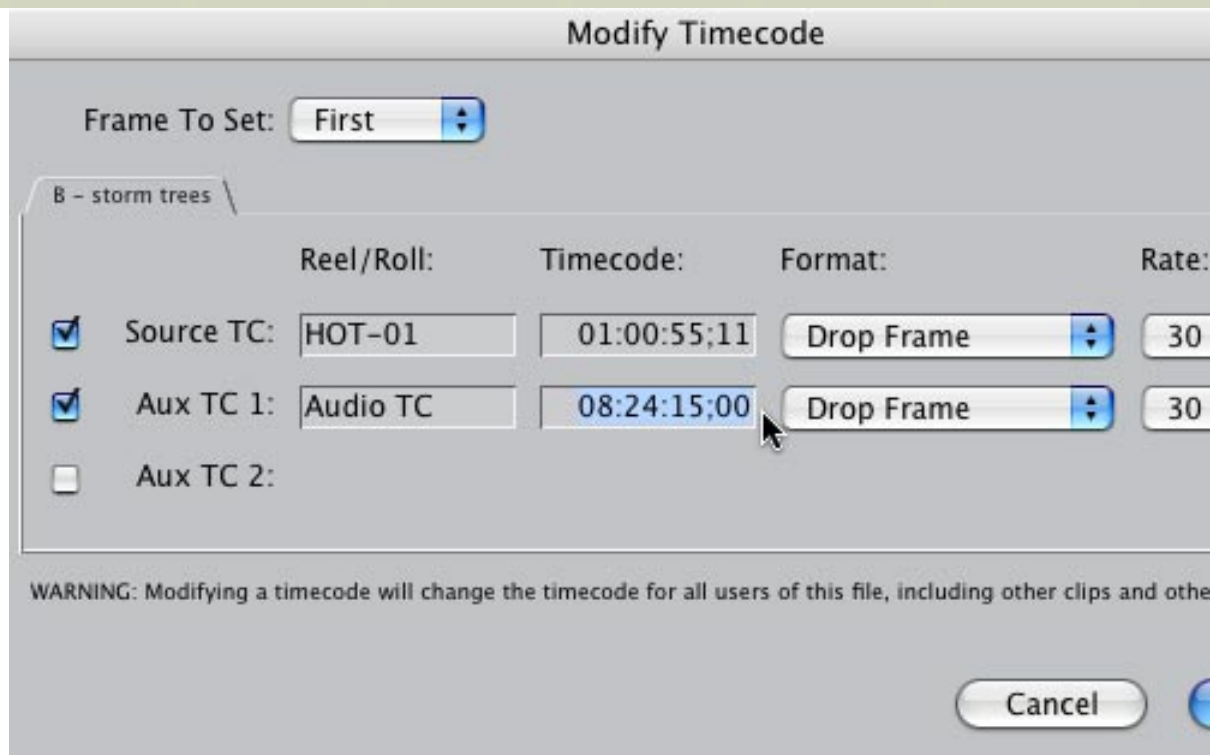
Keep in mind that Final Cut also supports multiple timecode channels within a clip. So, you can add this additional timecode info to your projects.

Here's how:

1. Select the clip on the Timeline you want to modify, or load the clip from the Browser into the Viewer.
2. Choose **Modify > Timecode**

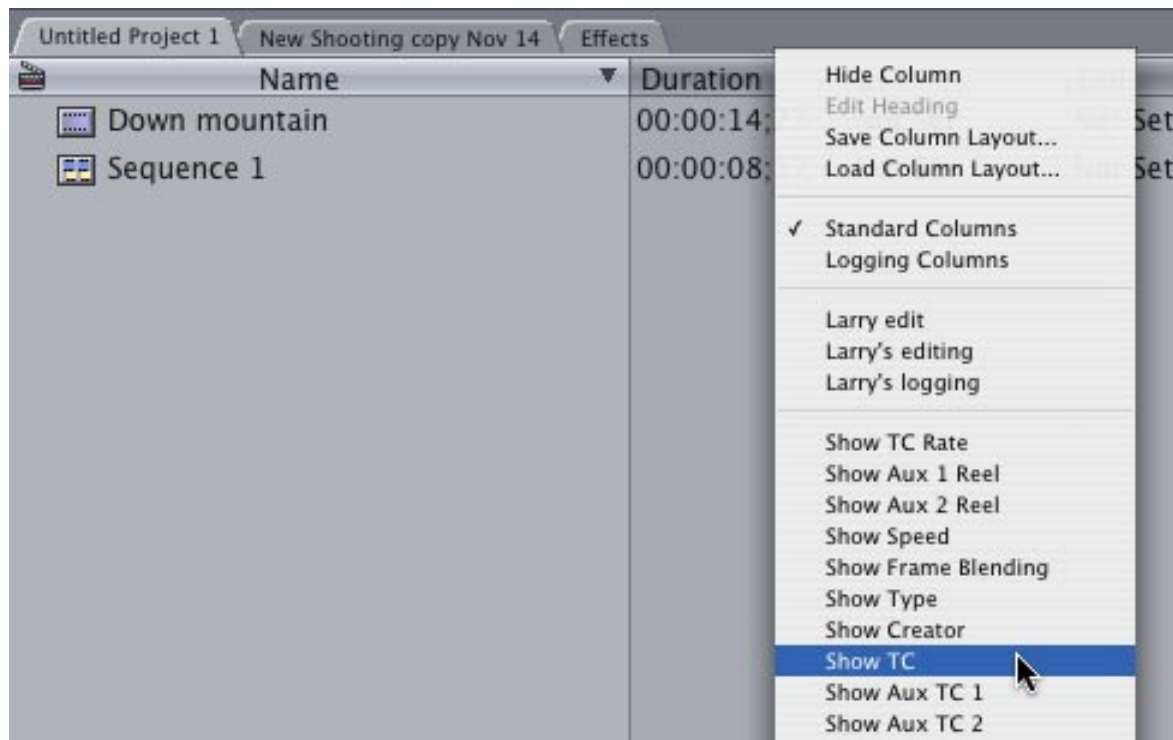


3. Select whether you want to modify the timecode at the current position of the playhead (**Current**) or from the first frame of the clip (**First**).

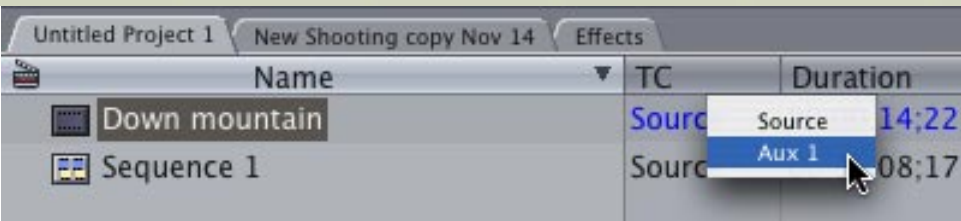


4. Turn on which of the two auxiliary timecode tracks you want to modify
5. Enter the Timecode and any other reference values you want to track.

Changing a clip to display auxiliary timecode, instead of its source timecode, can only be done in the Browser. Here's how:



1. **Control-click** on any Browser column heading to reveal all the hidden Browser columns.
2. Select **Show TC**. The Show TC column will appear to the *left* of whatever column head you first clicked to display the menu.



3. **Control-click** the word **Source** in the **Show TC** column and switch it to the timecode you want to display.

Final Cut will then display and use this timecode when editing this clip in both the Viewer and the Canvas.

As a tip, changing timecode is best done at the start of a project on the master clips in the Browser, rather than after all the clips have been edited to the Timeline.

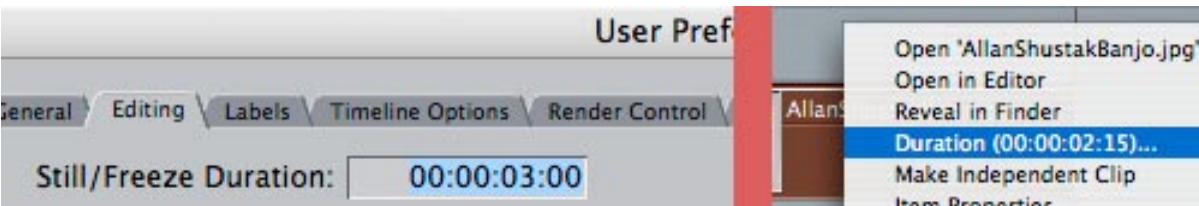
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## Tip: A PAL Still-frame Bug in FCP 5.1.2

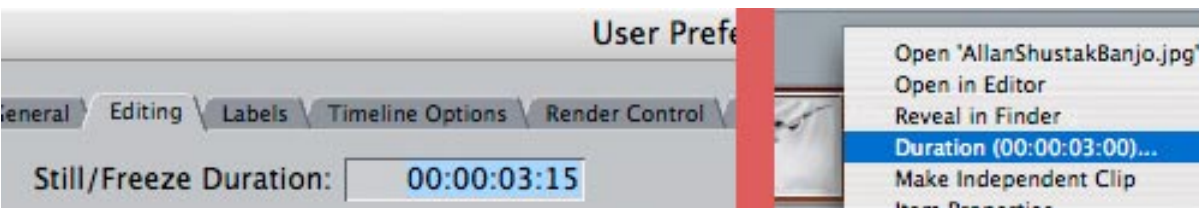
Stuart Page sent in the following tip:

I don't know if this has come up already?

A bug I've noticed when working on PAL projects in FCP 5.1.2, if I set Still/Freeze duration to 03:00, then import a still image, after placing it in the timeline it is actually 02:15 – (i.e. it calculates the number of frames correctly as 75 frames (3 seconds @ 25 fps in PAL) but then gives you enough frames for an NTSC calculation (02:15 @ 30 fps would be 75 frames) but in a PAL project this is actually 65 frames.



A workaround is to set **Final Cut Pro > User Preferences > Still/Freeze** duration: to the number of frames required X 1.2, so if you need 3 second duration stills in PAL, that's 75 frames x 1.2 = 90 frames (or 03:15). The imported still will then be 3 seconds in duration.



This same bug existed way back in FCP 2.x or 3.x and then disappeared for many versions only to reappear, I think, at FCP 5.0.



Larry replies: Stuart, thanks for sending this.

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## Only Three Cities Left on Larry's U.S. Power-Up Tour

Our Fall 2006 Power-Up Tour has only three cities left:



- Dec. 1-2 **Orlando, FL**
- Dec. 6-7 **Nashville, TN**
- Dec. 14-15 **Honolulu, HI**

We are presenting two seminars in each city:

- [Optimize Your Editing With Final Cut](#)
- [The High-End of Final Cut Studio](#)

If you are new to Final Cut, or if your skills are self-taught, at the **Optimize Seminar** you will learn how to optimize your system, improve Final Cut's file management, and faster ways to edit and trim -- including some little known real-time techniques -- plus lots of time to get your hardest technical questions answered.

If you earn your living with your Final Cut skills, you need to attend our **High-end** seminar. We beefed up coverage of High-Def, HDV, HDMI, capture cards, Soundtrack Pro filters and mixing, and added a detailed look at how to improve your video compression for DVD. And, as usual, we've allowed extra time to answer your toughest technical questions.

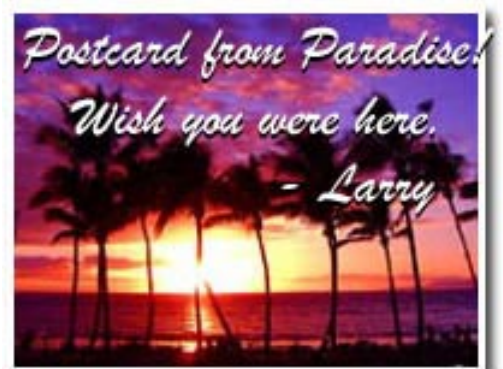
To learn more, visit [www.larryjordan.biz/seminars](http://www.larryjordan.biz/seminars) -- PLUS, everyone attending will receive hundreds of dollars in free goodies -- the list depends upon which seminar you attend.

**SPECIAL OFFER** - Join me in Hawaii for a chance to win a new Blackmagic Design INTENSITY Capture card!

Add the incredible quality of HDMI to your computer. To mark the end of the seminar tour, there will be special giveaways at our Hawaii seminars! One lucky person will walk away with Blackmagic Design's new Intensity card ([www.blackmagic-design.com/products/intensity/](http://www.blackmagic-design.com/products/intensity/)).

Intensity features the latest HDMI technology for the highest quality capture and playback on Windows or Mac OS X computers. Now you can edit using big-screen HDMI televisions and video projectors, or capture uncompressed quality from HDV cameras!

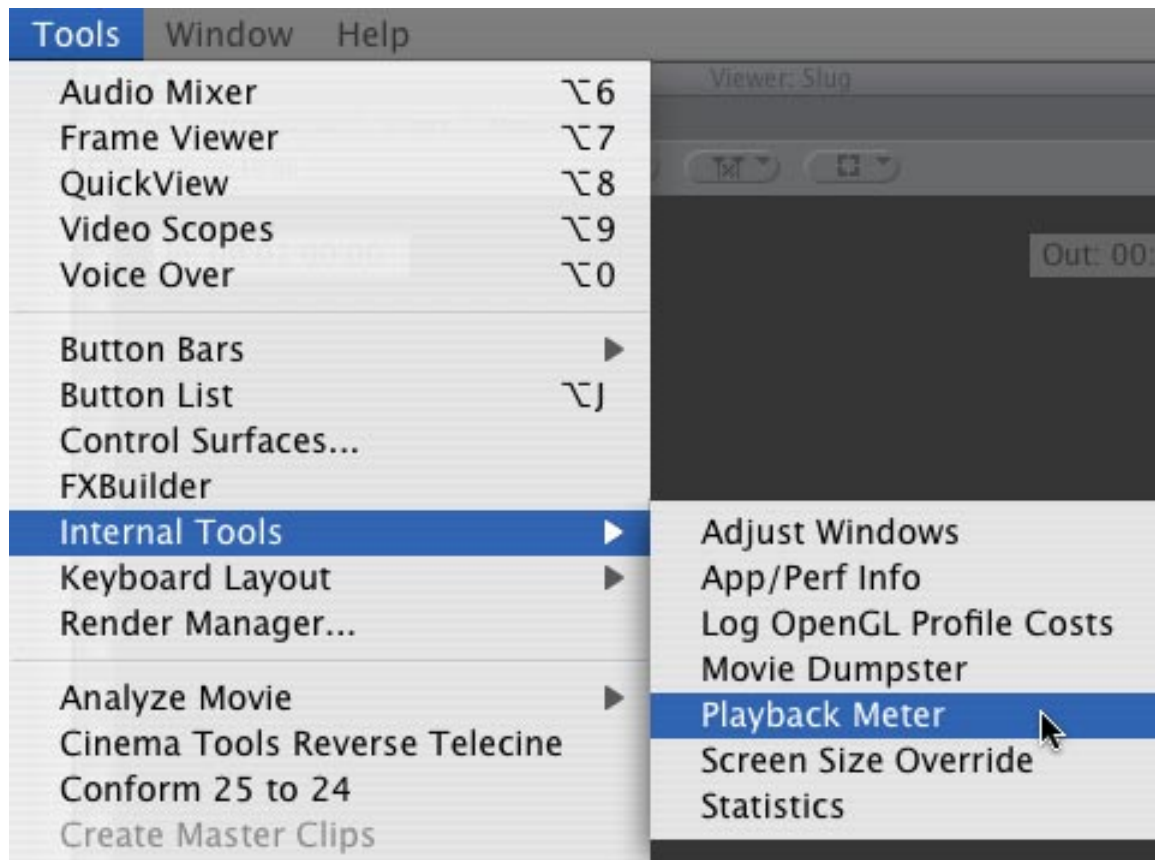
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## Hidden Diagnostic Tool in Final Cut Pro

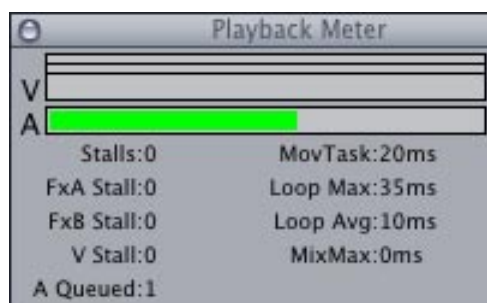
There is a hidden menu item in Final Cut that can help you determine if your hard disk RAID is having a problem keeping up with your video playback requirements.

I've known about this for a while, but a good description of how to use it comes from the AJA Tech Support site.



Here's how to access it:

- Hold down **Shift+Option+Command**, then, while still holding these keys down,
- From the FCP menu bar, go to **TOOLS -> INTERNAL TOOLS**, and select the Playback Meter.



The playback meter monitors the RAID performance during playback. One for Audio, one for Video and

two for Processing. The Playback meter should remain GREEN for all the components it monitors during playback. If any of the performance bars goes to the right, the color will change to yellow or red which signifies that the RAID storage is not keeping up with playback.

*Larry adds* that if you don't have a RAID, only the Audio measure will work. This menu choice remains in effect until you quit Final Cut.

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## Issues with On-lining HD Sequences

**Mike J. Nichols**, who publishes a series of Final Cut filters for professionals ([www.theeditdoctor.com](http://www.theeditdoctor.com)) writes:

[When on-lining HD material, there are several traps to be careful about. For instance,] the blink filter is still old code so in a recapturing to an HD environment the blink filter "freaks out" much like speed changes. I just couldn't make it work in HD 1920x1080 so I had to eyeball and simply cut, cut, cut, cut to make the deadline.

It's part of Final Cut Pro quirks that I call in my own training, *VEGAS EDITING*: "What happens on this computer, stays on this computer (or codec for that matter)." Some things that must be scaled back for offline on one computer to move to an online system. The gradient dissolve is one. Looks great in an offline, but the .pic files it uses don't transfer in a media managed environment AND they just don't work in a 10-bit timeline at all.

*Larry replies*: Mike, these are good tips. It brings to mind the cardinal rule of off-lining: Talk to your on-line editor *before* you start editing and make sure what you plan to do can be replicated in the final on-line session.

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## On-lining DigiBeta Problems

Thinking about on-lining, **John Olivio** writes:

I used your tips for on-lining [[here's the article link](#)], following them to a tee, and everything was great. The only problem was that when I redigitized the material at 10-bit, FCP was capturing more than what I designated when I set up the new sequence with all the parameters for Media Manager recommended in your article.

Are there any workarounds to get the size down, so that FCP will only capture what's used in the TL? I have a two-hour show, mostly D-Beta, and a 1TB RAID. FCP 5.04, QT 7.1.2, TIGER 10.4.8, G5, 1.5 TB RAM, and Decklink Extreme SD.

*Larry replies*: John, the key is to make your clips independent. Keep in mind that it will make at least two passes through the material, one to capture audio and the other to capture video.

If anyone knows of any other problems on-lining 10-bit SD material, please let me know so I can update my article and share it with other readers.

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## Using Composite Modes to Solve a LiveType Problem

**John Gallagher** writes:

I was interested to hear the problems **Don Breinlinger** had in the October edition of your newsletter regarding the alpha channel being pre-multiplied out of LiveType. I myself have been working on a project where I found the same thing. I tried the "Alpha Black" mode but it still didn't seem quite the same as in LiveType, but I couldn't be bothered messing about to fix it at the time. However, Don's question told me that it wasn't just me being silly or not doing something obvious - this seems to be a genuine problem others are having, so with my detective hat on, I tried out a few things in LiveType and Final Cut and I seem to have a solution.

The problem Don cites seems to be linked to the Composite Mode used in FCP. Rather than using "Normal", the mode should be set to "Screen". When I tried this out, to my great joy it replicates the Glow effect applied to the text in LiveType. Problem solved? Well, kind of... I fiddled for some more and found that if the text has a drop shadow like the example Don provides, the Screen mode gets rid of the shadow - it seems to filter out the black. The solution to this? Simply export the shadow separately out of Livetype by duplicating the text track (Apple-D), removing whatever effect is on the duplicate track, selecting the "Style" tab, clicking on the "Shadow" button and setting the "Character" radio button group to "Invisible". Switch the visibility of the original text track off, then export this as a separate movie. When in FCP, layer the movies as follows:

### *Top of Sequence*

- Original text track with effect (either with or without drop shadow - it won't make a difference). Set Alpha to Black as before and set Composite Mode to Screen.
- Shadow track. Set Alpha to Black (although in my example I was using a 100% opaque black shadow, so this didn't make any difference!
- Background image

### *Bottom of Sequence*

Hey presto - the original effect should now be replicated. I've only tried it for the specific circumstances that Don describes - a text track with a shadow and "Experience" effect applied against an "Amber" background texture. With other requirements other tricks might have to be used, but I think the general principle would probably apply.

*Larry replies:* John, this is an interesting solution -- nice work. What composite mode **Screen** does, by the way, combines pixels from the top layer with pixels on the bottom layer **ONLY** if the luminance value of the top layer pixel is 50% gray or lighter. **Multiply** only combines pixels that are 50% gray or darker. And **Overlay** only combines pixels from about 25% gray to 75% gray -- in other words, the middle.

Thus, screen drops out the shadow because it is too dark; well below the 50% cut-off.

I came to the same conclusion you did but did NOT think about exporting the shadow as a separate track. That is the cool part of your solution.

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## Technique: Chroma-keying DV

Last month, we had a discussion about the problems of chroma-keying DV material in Final Cut. I mentioned that the chroma-keyer in FCP was OK, but not great. And that a better option might be the [Ultimate keyer](#).

**Tony Liuzzi**, of Digital Video Dynamix, wrote in with another, and much less expensive, option:

I bought DV Matte Pro about 6 months ago--it works great on DV footage.



Here's a still from a green-screen key I did recently for a client. I still remember the night and day difference in how DV Matte Pro cleaned up and smoothed out the key. Two Thumbs up

*Larry replies:* Thanks, Tony, for the heads-up. You can learn more about DV Matte Pro at: <http://www.dvgarage.com/prod/prod.php?prod=dvmattefc>

... and read a review at: [http://www.kenstone.net/fcp\\_homepage/review\\_dv\\_matte\\_pro\\_douglas.html](http://www.kenstone.net/fcp_homepage/review_dv_matte_pro_douglas.html).

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## More on Chroma-key

**Robert Zolten** adds this comment:

In response to **Stephen O'Brien's** question about Chroma-key, take a look at Serious Magic's ULTRA. <http://seriousmagic.com/products/ultra/index.cfm>

This is an affordable and very precise Chroma-key solution. Look at the other Serious Magic production products as well.

*Larry replies:* The only problem I have with Serious Magic is that it is Windows-only. And, while Boot Camp and Parallels allow me to run Windows on my Intel/Mac, I personally have absolutely no interest in messing with a whole different operating system just to do chroma-key.

Serious Magic does cool stuff, now they need to do it on a Mac.

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## Even more on Chroma-key

**Rich Davis** then adds this:

I spent TOO much time over the years trying to key in 4:1:1 color space... and not long ago I found VKey2 Chroma Keyer from Oak Street Software:

<http://www.oakstreetsoftware.com/gkey>

It costs all of \$60 and does the best green suppression I've ever encountered in 4:1:1-land.

It's a vector keyer, so it's cutting-edge stuff.

Larry replies: Rich, thanks for letting us know.

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## This Month in Edit Well

Here's what's in the **October** issue of Edit Well, the rich-media newsletter for Final Cut Studio:

- A First Look at the new video filters in FCP -- including a Video Tutorial
- A First Look at the new video scopes in FCP -- including a Video Tutorial
- How to use Soundtrack Pro to repair your audio
- How to color correct using masking and vignettes

- Creating an H.264 HD movie using Compressor
- Creating effects in real-time in Motion
- and lots more audio interviews, keyboard shortcuts, and more.

Edit Well is 42 pages of Final Cut tips and techniques that you just can't find anywhere else. Act quickly - the November issue comes out next week. Click here subscribe: [www.peachpit.com/editwell](http://www.peachpit.com/editwell).

Coming in the **November** issue (which releases the week of Nov. 27) are articles on:

- Creating particle effects in Motion
- A detailed look at all the new filter effects in Final Cut 5.1.2
- How to quickly move files between the different Studio applications
- Three Soundtrack Pro audio filters you can use to improve your mixes
- How to create multi-track QuickTime movies for archiving FCP audio mixes
- and all the usual suspects -- video tutorials, audio interviews, and lots of tips and techniques.

I've been teaching, researching and writing about Final Cut for years -- there's nothing like Edit Well; not in print, not on the web, and not in the classroom.

Edit Well is published by Peachpit Press and a subscription is **only \$59.99 per year** -- and well worth it. If getting the latest in tips and techniques is important to you, take a few minutes and subscribe to Edit Well: [www.peachpit.com/editwell](http://www.peachpit.com/editwell).

If you have *any* problems subscribing, [send me an email](#).

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## Update: Using Broadcast Wave Audio with FCP 5.1.2

**Andreas Kiel**, of [Spherico's FilmTools](#), has written an update on how Final Cut Pro 5.1.2 handles the Broadcast WAVE format.

It makes for interesting reading -- if you have a bit of an engineering bent. Here's the link:

<http://www.spherico.com/filmtools/BWF2XML/BWF512.html>

Thanks, Andreas, for sharing this with us.

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## Working with XDCAM Footage

**Björn Adamski** has written an article detailing a workflow for Sony's XDCAM video. He recently had it translated into English, from his native German.

If XDCAM is of interest to you, you will want to read this article:

<http://www.aulich-adamski.de/en/perm/sony-xdcam-workflow-with-final-cut-pro>

Björn adds:

We didn't want to wait any longer for the 1.1 release of Sony's Transfer software so we will update our documents when updates are available.

*Larry replies:* Björn, thanks for making this available.

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## Understanding the Panasonic P2 Workflow

**Ben Balzer**, of [Wolf Digital Media](#), writes:

Here's a **video** tutorial that covers the whole FCP 5.1.2 Panasonic P2 import window stuff. It's a freebie I slapped together really fast and compressed the heck out of. It's an 8.8MB download. I'll work on a better compression job when I have time. It's actually the tail end of the comprehensive video tutorial I'm doing about the FS-100 and all it's features. When the 3.0 firmware update comes out for the FS-100, this tutorial will be updated with more details, close ups, examples, etc. Enjoy!

<http://www.wolfdigitalmedia.net/tutorials/fs100fcp.mov>

and **Dan Berube** also wrote a tutorial in the September issue of Studio Monthly:

<http://www.studiodaily.com/studiomonthly/searchlist/7018.html>

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## Renaming the Panasonic P2 MXF

**Björn Adamski** wrote:

Hey, Larry! Did you know that:

Take any DV, DVCPRO or DV50 based MXF clip out of the holy and untouchable P2 CONTENTS folder ...

Rename the file extension .MXF to .DV ... you can open those clips now in any QuickTime based application ... Two channels of audio are included ... no timecode, no metadata of course ...



Don't take it too serious as this is no official "workflow" ... But some users who messed up the CONTENTS folder could access their media again.

I got this tip from a QuickTime guru here in Germany ...

He said there is also a way to make this with DVCPRO HD ... do you know how? It's not .DV as this is not the file format for DVCPRO HD ...

And I also try to find a way to make it with the audio files. Couldn't get it work yet, tried WAV, AIF, AIFC, AU ...

Larry replies: Thanks for this tip - I don't know how to access the audio files, but I'll see if anyone else has any ideas.

## Update

Björn's "German QuickTime Guru" contacted me to say:

Something Björn forget to mention is that those renamed files are DV-Stream format, so the audio needs to be rendered in FCP.

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## Join Larry at HDFest - Los Angeles

I am Moderating a panel at [HD Fest - Los Angeles](#), Dec. 3, starting at 4:30 PM and I'd love to see you there!

The session is titled: "Surviving the Low-End of HD - Issues and Solutions for HDV," and joining me will be Nathan Adams of the DR Group. We'll be talking about how HDV has captured the attention both the independent film-maker and the video professional looking to make an inexpensive jump into HD. However, a format that was originally designed for the hobbyist has significant problems when used at a professional level. This session will present the limitations of this video format regarding shooting, editing, effects, and distribution; provide clearly defined solutions a professional can use to work around these issues and provide ample time for answering questions.

HDFEST is an exclusively high-definition film festival event which presents touring events in multiple cities each year. HDFEST features screenings of high-definition films, panel discussions on HD technology and digital cinema, the HDFEST Deffie Award Ceremony, and parties for industry professionals.

Tickets will be available on the HDFEST website [www.hdfest.com](http://www.hdfest.com) or at the door the days of the event.

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## Archiving Video Tape from the Experts

**Philip Leake** sent me an email entirely in Spanish -- a language in which I can not read one word.

However, from what I gather from the context, he read my article on archiving video tape:

[http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj\\_videotape.html](http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj_videotape.html)

So he sent me a link to the Association of Moving Image Archivists, who have an interesting website devoted to archiving video tape:

<http://www.amianet.org/publication/resources/guidelines/videofacts/about.html>

Thanks, Philip, for sending me the link. It was very interesting.

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## Soundtrack Pro Audio Questions

**C. Scott Woodings**, of Twin Palms Productions, writes:

Hope you are doing well and that your road trip is going well. Just got the latest issue of Edit Well. What a fantastic job you are doing. Let me tell you, what I get every month is well worth the money. I hope lots of people are signing up. It is a great source of new information. Thanks for doing it. I do really appreciate it!!!

Larry, here is my problem. I am finishing sound design on a low-budget independent film and I need to fix some of the audio. There is a truck scene where there is too much road noise that interferes with the dialogue.

The audio track that needs help was obviously a mono track. I duplicated the track so that it is on both A-1 & A-2 and made them a stereo pair. I tried to send that stereo pair over to STP (to test it out) as an "STP Audio File Project", but only one track of audio appears in STP. Should there not be 2 tracks like that which appears in FCP? When I look back over in FCP, I only get the left channel of audio. What am I missing here?

I also tried selecting all the audio and video tracks for the entire scene and send it over as a "Multi Track Project". The only time it actually showed up in STP, the video was there and the audio track labels were there, but no audio was in the tracks.

When I tried to send it again as a Multi Track Project, I got this message: "Error sending selection to STP". I tried this numerous times to no avail.

I looked back in your book and Apples STP Book to see what I might be doing wrong, but could not find an answer. I submitted my question on a forum yesterday. I did get a response from this guy. Here's what he said:

Perhaps the fact that you mention a stereo track L-R instead of two mono tracks has something to do with this. In my experience it is always using mono audio tracks because that is what is on the FCP timeline. When a camera records, it does it in mono.

Have you tried trashing the STP preferences to see if that changes anything?

So Larry, can you PLEASE tell me what I am doing wrong?

*Larry replies:* First, the forum response you got was wrong - so ignore it.

STP has two types of files: An Audio Project and an Multitrack project. Multitrack projects are used for mixing. Audio projects are used for audio repair.

Since you want to remove noise, you need to use an Audio Project. However, audio projects only work on one clip at a time. The problem is you duplicated the clip. STP won't recognize the duplicate, so you need to work with only one clip. This is OK, as the clip started out as monaural in the first place.

What I suggest is removing the duplicated clip. Make sure the first clip is panned center (which means it appears equally on both speakers) then use File > Send to > Soundtrack Pro Audio File project to send it to STP Audio File and remove the noise.

To get it back into FCP, simply save the file. It will be automatically updated in FCP and the noise will be reduced.

*Note:* You can't remove the noise, but you can make it quieter relative to the voice. If you need to remove the noise totally, you will need to re-record.

**Scott** then wrote back:

I did what you said below and created single mono dialogue tracks with them panned to "0". I select the track I wanted to work on and selected Send to: "Audio File Project" to STP. I saved it by the default name of the track. Made the changes I wanted. Then I hit CMD-S to save it and a dialogue box pops up called "Save audio file project preference". The default is: "include source files". So I selected OK. Was that the correct choice? Then another error box appears that says: The document "track name (sent).stap" could not be saved. So I am not able to save the changes I have made. Any suggestions?

*Larry replies:* In this case, you should save the file under a different name and "Include the Source files." Then, import it into FCP and re-edit it to the timeline.

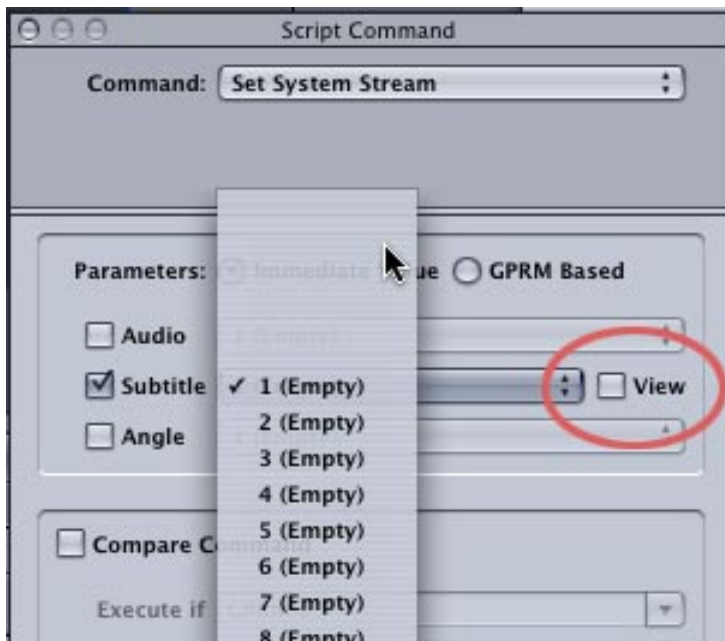
Generally, what I do is edit it to the track immediately below the source track, then turn off the clip visibility (**Control+B**) of the *old* clip. That way I have both the source and revised clips on the timeline, but am only listening to the new version.

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**Sue Sie** wrote:

I'm almost finished with your instructional DVD for DVDSP. It's been very helpful so far. The only problem is that in the subtitle part of the instructions, I believe I am following all your scripting and instructions to a 'T' and for the life of me can't get the simulator to run and shut off the subtitles. Is there anything you can think of that I might have missed, maybe in preferences. I've gone through it 3 times fastidiously with no positive results. I am working with version 4.0.3.

*Larry replies:* Sue, the secret is the **View** checkbox, which is in the Simulator and part of the Subtitle script command in the Inspector.



You turn on, and set, subtitle tracks through scripts; generally attached to buttons. So, to change subtitle tracks:

1. Create a menu with a button for each subtitle language on your DVD.
2. Set the button target to jump to a script when clicked.
3. Set the Script to use the "Set System Stream" command to select the subtitle track you want to display, or hide.
4. If you want subtitles ON, turn **ON** the View checkbox in the script command menu.
5. If you want subtitles OFF, turn **OFF** the View checkbox in the script command menu.

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**Reader Mail**

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**New Product: ZbornToy**

I got an interesting email from **Yariv Newman** about a new effect his company has created. He writes:

I'm working with my friends [fruishluft] to help them create documentation their products etc. I needed to learn Final Cut to edit some stuff together for them, so I purchased Lynda's series on editing with Final Cut narrated by you. Phenomenal work!

If you ever get chance check out our plugin ZbornToy at the following address.  
<http://www.taronites.com>.

If you have time download the demo of ZbornToy for AfterEffects and if you like it enough perhaps you might want to do a project with it and train people to use it.

*Larry replies:* Yariv, thanks for sending me info on ZbornToy. It can certainly create some interesting effects -- I only wish I knew what to use them for.

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## **Another New Product: FxFactory**

**Niclas Bahn**, from Noise Industries, writes:

I was wondering if you have given FxFactory a spin yet? I imagine you are super busy with Lynda.com and everything else, but I figured I would drop you a line anyways. We worked very hard for many months to make a worthwhile product for FCS, and I would be very thankful for any feedback.

*Larry replies:* Niclas, I must confess I have not paid any attention to FxFactory. Where can I learn more about what it does?

Niclas continues:

There is info about FxFactory on our website:  
<http://www.noiseindustries.com/fxfactory/index.html>

Including 7 small introductory/tutorial videos (20mins total) that I made. You can also download the trial, but be sure that you have FCP 5.1.2 installed, otherwise it won't run.

I hope you enjoy it, but don't hold back, any criticism is most welcome.

*Larry replies:* Thanks -- I'll share this with everyone.

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## **New Concept: Film School in a Box**

A few months ago, **Dave Kebo** wrote me about a new product he was developing called "Film School in a Box."

Dave writes:

Six months ago, I came to you with an idea for our film, "The Confession" which was shot on 11 security cameras in real time. We talked about making this footage available on a FireWire drive to help teach Final Cut Pro 5 users how to use Multiclip. Well, I am pleased to tell you that as of today, we have not only succeeded in creating Film School in a Box, but we have launched our website!

Thank you so much for all your openness, honesty, guidance and advice.

I invite you to come and check out the site, and the videos demos we've posted. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated.

[www.filmschoolinabox.net](http://www.filmschoolinabox.net)

*Larry replies:* Thanks for the chance to help with this project, Dave. I look forward to seeing what the reactions are.

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## Capturing Video from VHS Tapes

**Tony Hannon**, from Sydney, Australia, writes:

As usual an amazing newsletter for September.

I noticed that one of your readers, **King Dexter**, a long-time reader, wrote about wanting to get some old VHS tapes into Final Cut Pro. I do this all the time with a very simple set up using an old VCR patched to a camcorder, an old Sony Digital 8. They were very clever pieces of technology and one of their tricks is to convert analogue-in to digital-out using the standard audio-video cable, mini-plug to 3 RCA plugs, which comes with all camcorders. The results are excellent.

King should check his camcorder to see if the audio-video socket goes both ways. If he has a mini-DV of fair quality it should be a through path for analogue and digital signals, in and out. If so, he can turn on the DV-Out through the menu. My D8 is hooked to the Mac through the firewire cable of course. On FCP, in the Log and Capture window, under the Capture Settings tab I select, Non-Controllable Device. This greys out the Clip and Batch buttons allowing the capture Now to the selected scratch disk. Of course, if he wants to use this method for long tapes for archiving or for converting to DVD's, he should check to see that under the menu item, Final Cut Pro-System Setting, the Limit Capture Now To item is unchecked. There is no danger that the sound will drift out of synch using this method. By the way, I was in Adelaide, where I learned from your seminar, why my long Capture Now files slipped gradually out of synch. I use your method of capturing the whole tape in one go by marking an Out, rewinding the mini-DV tape to the start, marking an In, then logging the clip and capturing using the Batch button. No more out of synch sounds! Thanks for that. It

was worth the price of admission alone.

*Larry replies:* Thanks, Tony, for writing. I appreciate the tip.

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## Capturing Video, Period

**Corbin Saleken**, from Vancouver, BC, writes:

I recently took one of your Final Cut seminars in Vancouver, and I was wondering if you could clarify something that I asked you that night.

I'll quickly set up my situation. In the next couple months, I'm going to start editing a feature-length documentary. This will be the first major project that I've done on Final Cut (I've done a number of smaller ones).

In total, there are 65 MiniDV tapes of raw material. Obviously, I won't be capturing all of this, but it's possible that I may need to capture half or more of it. I'm going to be editing this on a Mac Book Pro, hopefully the latest version that will have both a FireWire 400 and 800 port.

My question is, what kind of external drive should I get, FireWire or SATA (and I'm a little unclear on the benefits of SATA)? Also, how big a drive would you recommend? Is it better to get a 500GB drive, as opposed to two 250GB drives daisy-chained together?

Any advice you could offer would be very much appreciated.

*Larry replies:* Corbin, DV video requires 13 GB per hour to store. So, if you capture all 65 tapes, and each tape ran one hour, you would need 845 GB (65 \* 13) for storage. PLUS, each hard disk needs about 25% free space for temporary files and other stuff, so you would need about 1,000 GB to store everything.

Obviously, if you capture less material you would need less storage.

For standalone drives on the Mac, there are two broad categories: FireWire and SATA. FireWire are easily connected to any Mac because all Macs have FireWire ports on them. However, SATA drives are much faster and cost about the same. However, a SATA drive requires a card installed in your computer to connect the drive. For your project, I would recommend a SATA RAID (a collection of hard drives all in one enclosure that act as a single large hard drive). A RAID gives much greater performance and storage than a single drive. A single, large, FireWire will work, but it won't be as fast or store as much.

In order to connect a SATA drive to your computer, you need a SATA card (Sonnet, and others, make them) either for the PCI bus of your tower or to plug into the card slot on the side of your laptop computer. For the MacBook Pro the card slot is called an Express 34 slot, which is descriptive of its size.

So, you can use FireWire, but it is not as fast. It is, however, easy to move the hard drive from one computer to another. SATA is much faster, but requires a card in each computer it will connect to. If you only have one computer, this is not a big problem. Given the amount of media you hope to capture, using a RAID makes the most sense.

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## **PAL HDV Problems and Workarounds**

**James Moran**, from the UK, writes:

Reading your news letter this month I noticed the article Technique: Converting Compressed Audio Files into AIFs and the user having bad stuttering audio. Unfortunately I have noticed the same "feature" in my 1080i50 sequence several months ago and had already run through the steps you had provided correctly to no avail.

I don't really remember finding a clear solution however a workaround was to lay a video slug down onto the timeline and then cut on the the track V2 and upwards. Remco pointed out that as soon as he added video down onto his timeline the problem went away, you may want to suggest him doing these steps for a temp workaround.

Hurrah for HDV (not)

*Larry replies:* That's an interesting use for a slug. Thanks for suggesting this.

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## **Alpha Frames in FLV Files**

**Rowan Morrigan** writes:

Regarding the question about the FLV files that have 1 extra frame of alpha, which the editor can "see" on his computer but the assistant "can't see" on her computer: I don't know if I have an answer so much as a clue. In the browser, if you control-click on a media file, you know that one of the choices is Item Properties, and under that are several choices, one of which is Format. Most editors know this. What a lot people don't know is that many items in the various columns for format are also control-clickable. Relevant to the assistant's problem is the row for how to treat the Alpha channel for that media file. Usually, it's set to "None/Ignore" but, if it's set to something else, especially "black" then it might be the answer as to why she can't see that frame of alpha on her computer but he does on his.

More clue than answer but maybe that might help or even provide fodder for future newsletters.

*Larry replies:* Rowan, thanks for sending this in. We'll see if anyone else has some ideas.

## **UPDATE**

**Lauren Krueger** writes in with an additional comment:



I'd just like to point out both the editor (myself) and my assistant happen to be female. I'm sure no disrespect was intended on anyone's part, but I'd hate to think anyone was assuming only men edit. Obviously not. Secondly, the alpha row in both my set-up and hers have the clips set to none/ignore. So that's not it. But I definitely do appreciate the suggestion.

*Larry replies:* Lauren, thanks for writing -- sorry about getting the gender wrong, no offense was intended.

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## Reading Timecode from an Audio Track

**Martin Baker**, from [Digital Heaven](#), writes in with a follow-up to a reader's question about how to read timecode stored on an audio track.

I hope you're busy and the seminars are going well.

Regarding the question about reading TimeCode from an audio track, I have no experience with the software myself but I know that Gallery has an app called TimeTools which seems to do what they're looking for. Not cheap at \$900 but I guess it's a specialist product: <http://www.gallery.co.uk/timetools.html>

*Larry replies:* Thanks. If anyone has any experience with this software, please let me know.

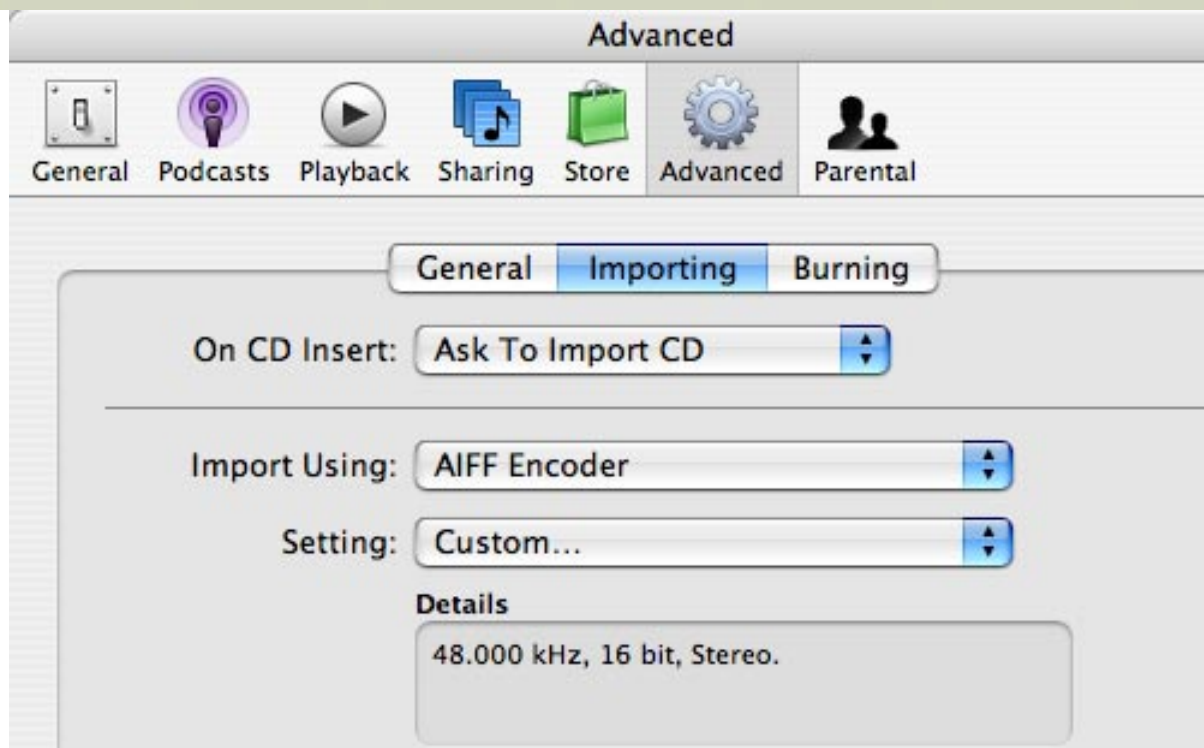
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## What Sample Rate for FCP Audio

**Stuart Page**, of Brilliant Films, writes:

Larry, in last month's newsletter, you describe how to convert Compressed Audio Files into AIFs.



Isn't it also necessary in iTunes/Preferences/Advanced/Importing to select Setting/Custom 48.000kHz, 16bit, Stereo? The default AIFF encoder for iTunes is 44.1kHz, and FCP likes 48.0kHz.

*Larry replies:* Nope. It isn't necessary, as FCP can easily convert between 48 and 44.1 sample rates in real-time on the same timeline. For my projects, I don't worry about it and let FCP handle it.

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## Creating a Variable Speed Change for an Audio Clip

**Billy Miller** writes:

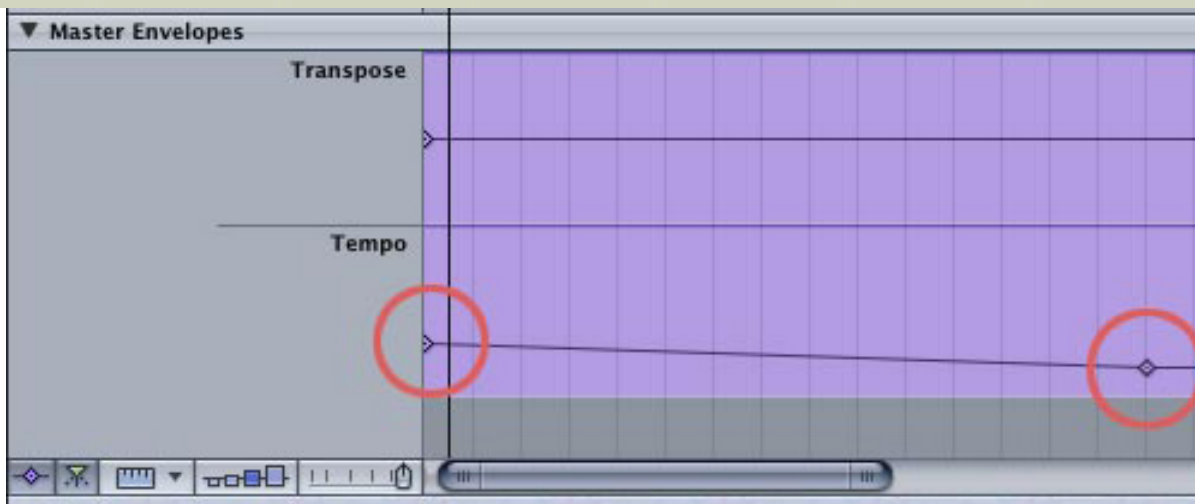
I am trying to do a gradual slow down of a piece music.

I thought Time Remap would work but it is not an option with a sound clip.

Can't seem to find anything in Soundtrack Pro either

Any ideas?

*Larry replies:* Maybe. First, variable speed changes in Final Cut are *always* video-only.



Second, in Soundtrack Pro, you can keyframe a tempo slowdown (twirl down the **Master Envelopes** triangle), but this only works if you are using loops, not a self-contained piece of music.



Third, you could load the music into an STP Audio File project and use the time-stretch tool, however, this slows down everything equally. There may be third-party filters that slow audio down over time, but I don't know of any.

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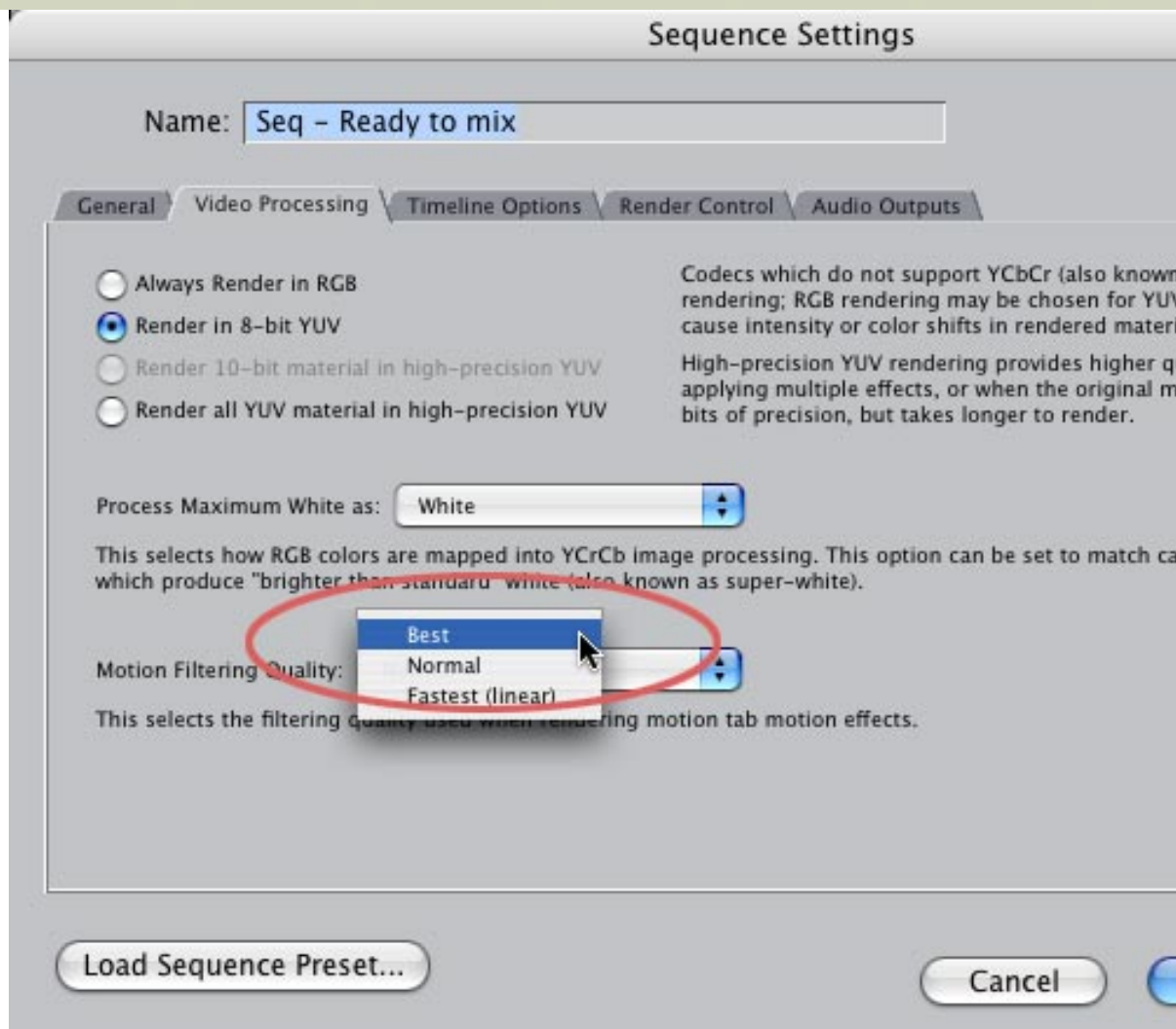
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## Down-converting HDV to SD

**Graeme Nattress**, of [Nattress Productions](#), writes:

Thanks for the plug about my Standards Converter, but it's not really for down-converting HD video. FCP will do the downconvert all of it's own without any help :-)

With the HDV camcorders, the in-built downconvert is rather poor, and you will get the best results taking the video into FCP then using it's scaling to bring it down to uncompressed SD res.



Also, because you are changing the size of the video, in the **Sequence > Settings > Video Processing** tab, I'd turn **on** high quality scaling.

*Larry replies:* Graeme, thanks for letting me know.

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## Real-Time Audio Mixing

**Tom** writes:

I have another question if you have the time.

Occasionally, (like right at this moment!), when I am doing an audio pass on a showbuild, (about a 30 minute timeline), final cut will get very sluggish and not update the track volumes in the audio mixer in real time. I like to mix this way, and it gets frustrating when I have to keep stopping, and sometimes even selecting a clip on the timeline to force it to update. always 8 tracks total audio, no more, no less. I have perused the user settings to no avail. Is there something I am missing? A setting maybe? Thanks!

Larry replies: Tom, I don't have any specific ideas, but here are some things to try:

- Make sure you are working with the latest versions of FCP -- either 5.0.4 or 5.1.2.
- Turn **off** the display of audio waveforms in the Timeline (Option+Command+W)
- In **Final Cut Pro > User Preferences**, set Audio Playback quality to **Low**
- In **Final Cut Pro > User Preferences**, set Real-Time audio tracks to **10**
- Make sure both Viewer and Canvas are set to **Fit to Window (Shift+Z)**
- Do a Safe Boot and Repair Permissions on your system
- Minimize the number of sequences you have open in the Timeline
- If all else fails, trash your FCP preference files

Here's an article that will help with the trouble-shooting part:

[www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj\\_trouble.html](http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj_trouble.html)

With luck, those should help make a difference.

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## Turning Spotlight Off

**Pete Hoare**, from the UK, writes:

Larry, I remember you mentioning that you could not turn spotlight off in Os X and this can stunt the performance of FCP. Well, good news, I found an application that will turn it off.

It's called TinkerTools system and under system setup, spotlight you can disable spotlight.

Larry replies: Thanks for writing, Pete. You can find TinkerTools at: <http://www.bresink.com/osx/TinkerToolSys.html>

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## Removing a Camera Glitch

**Harry Verschelden** writes:



Can you please take a look at the QT movie (A detail from it is shown above.)

There is a bright spot on the monk his robe (shown inside the circle). This spot runs on the complete movie at the same place .

I don't think that it is a dead pixel because I tried to remove it with DH-Reincarnation and can't get a good result.

Do you have a solution for removing this spot in Final Cut 4.5?

*Larry replies:* As we studied this, it became obvious this was created in the camera, when the image was recorded, rather than a problem in editing or compression.

**Harry** writes again:

This is how I fixed the problem:

- Copy the clip and paste it in v2

- Crop the v2 clip as close as you can get around the spot
- Render and apply a Gaussian blur

In v2 there is now just the little blurred spot on top of the clip in v1, when I play the clip the spot is gone and the blur is hardly to see!

*Larry replies:* Harry, this is a simple solution to a tricky problem. Thanks for sharing it.

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## Shooting NTSC to End Up on PAL

**Matt Pennington** writes:

I emailed you about a year ago with a question regarding my Final Cut/Mac setup, I was experiencing weird freeze-ups and you recommended I try DiskWarrior. Well, I did and it worked. Thanks!

Anyway, I've learned a lot about Final Cut from studying your Final Cut Pro 5 Hands-On Training book, but I have a question regarding PAL output and I was wondering if you could shed some light on the subject.

Specifically, I'm about to shoot a music video for an English video contest. I'll be shooting NTSC video, but I have to end up with a PAL compatible DVD. I realize I can export my footage as a PAL QuickTime file, but will that give me better or worse or the same quality as if I took my finished DVD to a production house and got it professionally dubbed to PAL?

Obviously I want it to look good, so I don't mind spending the money, but if Final Cut will make acceptable results I'll just do that.

Also, I'm shooting on a Panasonic DVX100A, and I have the option to shoot straight interlaced video, or Progressive 24 fps or 30 fps. Would 24 or 30 be better for the end result, considering that I know it will be converted to PAL?

Thanks for any light you could shed, it's much appreciated.

*Larry replies:* Matt, there are two key differences between PAL and NTSC video: the frame rate (25 vs 30) and the image size (PAL is bigger).

The BEST thing to do is rent a PAL DV camera, shoot PAL, edit PAL, and output PAL. Final Cut can handle PAL editing and that way you get the highest quality.

Assuming that's not an option, shooting progressive (all lines at once) will make later conversion to the larger frame size easier.

Finally, the way most films are converted to PAL is that they are sped up by 4% so that a 24 fps film plays at 25 fps. For this reason, I'd recommend you shoot and edit at 24 fps.

Finally, as to whether hardware or software conversion looks better, using a hardware conversion process will be faster and cost more. Using a utility like Graeme Nattress' [Standards Converter](#) will take longer and cost much less. I would use Graeme's utility before letting Compressor convert it.

## UPDATE

**Thomas Fritscher** writes in with an additional comment:

From my experience, 30p is the worst way to shoot if you're going to PAL, unless you want your footage to run significantly slower in PAL. This is because there is half as much motion information recorded compared to 60i which makes it harder to interpolate the frames to go to 50i.

If you don't mind the 4% speed up I would recommend shooting in 24pA (the "A" being important!), remove the advanced pulldown, conform the footage to 25p using Cinema Tools and then import into a 25p PAL sequence to resize to 720x576. This will give you very good quality 25p PAL which is 4% faster than the original, but since no one knows the original, hardly anyone will notice.

If you don't want the 4% speedup, or need interlaced video, shoot 60i and use Nattress or Compressor 2 to convert to NTSC.

*Larry replies:* Thomas, thanks for sharing these tips.

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## Viewing Interlacing

**Pete Hoare** writes:

The interlacing in FCP is starting to annoy me. The interlacing seems so drastic its unnecessary and quite frustrating. I know it looks fine when it is shown on a TV but it makes editing quite a frustrating experience. Is there any way I can turn off this interlacing simulator?

Also, how do i stop interlacing showing when I play the outputted file in QuickTime? It still seems to show it no mater how zoomed in or out i am?

Thanks very much for any advice,

*Larry replies:* Pete, you only see interlacing when the Canvas or Viewer is set to **100%** view. Change the magnification and interlacing is not displayed.

Also, QuickTime will always display interlacing if your video uses interlacing. This can be fixed by deinterlacing your QuickTime movie. However, doing so will cut your vertical resolution in half, because half the lines in your picture are removed and/or duplicated.

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## Potential Logging Bug in FCP 5.1

**Tim Wilson**, from Canada, writes:

I've discovered something that may be a glitch in FCP 5.1's logging procedure, or maybe I'm just not doing it right.

If I happen by mistake not to have checked the audio box in the clip settings for log and capture, but log the clip anyway and then, before going ahead to capture, try to go in and check the box (by right-clicking to get "clip settings" for the logged, still uncaptured clip, and checking audio then), it *\*still\** captures without the audio. Meaning that I have to go back, re-log with same in and out points, being sure to check audio box *\*before logging\**. Am I missing something?

*Larry replies:* Tim, I have not heard of this before, but will share it with everyone to see if there's a solution.

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## Wrap-Up

Well, that's it for another issue. Please take a few minutes and:

- [Register for one of my \*\*US\*\* seminars](#)
- [Register for one of my \*\*UK\*\* seminars](#)
- [Subscribe to Edit Well](#)
- [Visit our store and buy a DVD or two - remember, gift season is FAST approaching!](#)

Your support for our seminars and products keeps our website, and this newsletter, free.

Thanks for all your comments and questions. I love hearing from you because when you share your ideas and suggestions, we all learn.

Take care, and edit well.

**Larry**

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