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Monthly Newsletter!

Larry Jordan's Monthly Newsletter

Editor: Larry Jordan

Issue #45 -- May, 2008

Welcome to the latest edition of my monthly Final Cut Studio newsletter for May, 2008.

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 archived at the end of each year with key articles posted on my website for your reference. All software references are to Final Cut Studio 2 unless otherwise noted.

Please invite your friends to visit my website -- www.larryjordan.biz. There you'll find over 350 articles, tutorials, and tips to help you get the most out of Final Cut!

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WRAP-UP

Welcome!

Well, the noise of NAB has faded for another year and I'm surrounded by piles of literature and business cards as testament to the people I talked with and the products I saw.

Apple may not have had a booth, but it was everywhere on the show floor. As I reflect on my interviews at NAB, three conclusions seem to be the most relevant to us:

- 1) There is no consensus or, actually, interest, in the industry to support a single HD video standard. Just the opposite -- the industry is splintering into factions, each supporting the benefits of a particular video format. There are a lot of people talking, but very few people listening. Producers and editors need to ask lots of questions before starting any project.
- 2) No one in the industry has a clue about where we are headed. I was interviewing Nick Rashby, president of AJA, for [The BuZZ](#) and I asked him to describe where the industry was heading in the next year or two. He replied that he had no idea - things are just changing too fast. I found his answer reassuring. It means that we need to ask good questions and test everything. Ignorance is NOT bliss. It is ESSENTIAL that you test every step of your workflow from acquisition to final delivery to make sure it works before plunging into production. There may not be an answer for "what's best?" but there are hundreds of answers to "what doesn't work."
- 3) The industry is moving in a head-long rush into tapeless video formats; even though we have not yet solved how to archive all this media. While I'm starting to see some real success using LTO tape as an archive medium, none of the major vendors have an integrated solution about how to backup all this tapeless media we are shooting and editing.

If this were a Hollywood movie, we would have a quick montage to a dissolve into a nicely-packaged solution. However, today, solutions are hard to find. We're all still trying to figure this out.

Change is a constant in our industry. My goal is to help you understand what's going on so you can take advantage of all this latest technology can offer.

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PowerUP with Final Cut Studio 2008 Seminar Tour Opens Registration!

To help you cope with the constant change in our industry, I'm delighted to announce that registration is open for our latest PowerUP Seminar Tour -- **14** cities and **45** seminars across the US and Canada.



We have three all-new sessions in each city:

- [Succeeding in the New World of Tapeless and HD Video](#)
- [Integrating Adobe Products into a Final Cut Studio Workflow](#)
- [Discovering the Hidden Power in Final Cut Studio](#)

The **first seminar** focuses on how to setup, organize, and optimize your system for HD. Plus, we give you answers to the questions you must ask whenever you start a HD project, including equipment and hard disk issues.

The **second seminar** showcases lesser-known features in Adobe's Production Premium suite that provide capabilities not available in Final Cut Studio itself -- such as cleaning up video frames in Photoshop, burning Blu-ray disks in Encore, and integrating Flash with Final Cut.

The **third seminar** highlights the three most popular requests from past tours: showcasing effects and music that aren't in Final Cut Studio, improving the sound of our audio, and understanding video compression for DVD, the web, and Blu-ray. So, we've dedicated an entire day to going into each of these in-depth so you can really get a handle on how they work.

SAVE 15% if you register before June 30 -- just enter "**PREREG**" for the preregistration code.

[Click here for more information.](#)

[Click here for cities, and dates.](#)

[Click here to register.](#)



Adobe

I'm very grateful that [Adobe Systems](#) and [Automatic Duck](#) have joined us as tour sponsors. These tours would not be possible without their help!

There are all kinds of exciting new goodies I want to show you.

Seats are limited - and these are very popular sessions - [register before all the seats are gone!](#)

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Editing Truths Contest Winner



Catastrophic hardware failures never, ever, happen before 2 AM.

Mike Chapman
www.linkedin.com/in/futureink

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Technique - Using Keynote for Animated Sequences in Final Cut Pro

I recently started doing a weekly video podcast for [GIMP-TV](#) on digital production.

To keep this simple, I thought, I decided to shoot this using a Panasonic HVX-200 camera using the DVCPRO

HD 720p video format (720p/60 to be specific). This gave me an image size of 1280 x 720 x 72.

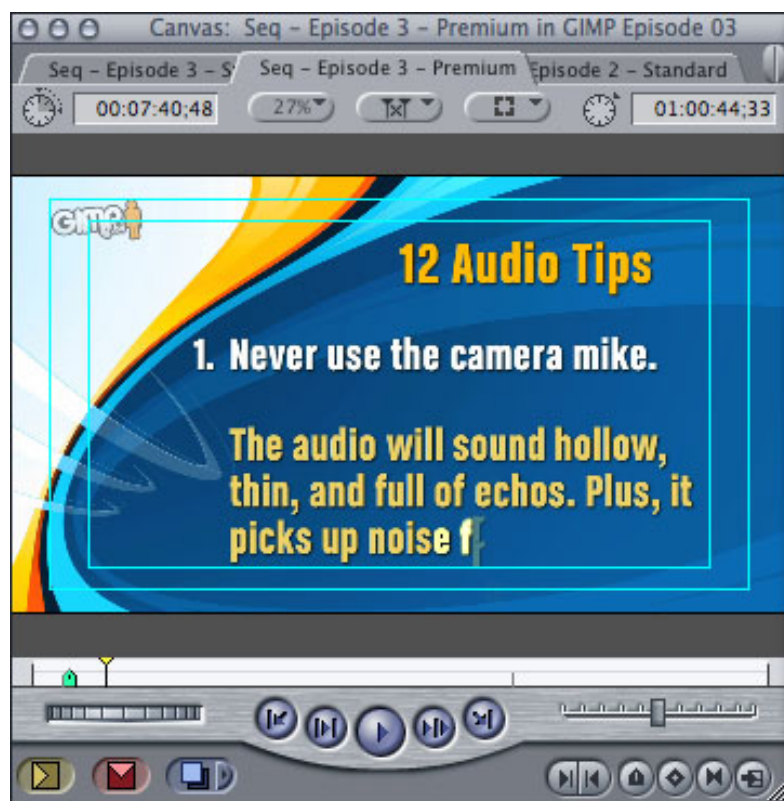
The chroma-key work proved to be trickier than I expected - in fact, I'm currently working on some training outlining different ways to do chroma-keying, what to avoid, and what the results look like.

But, I digress....

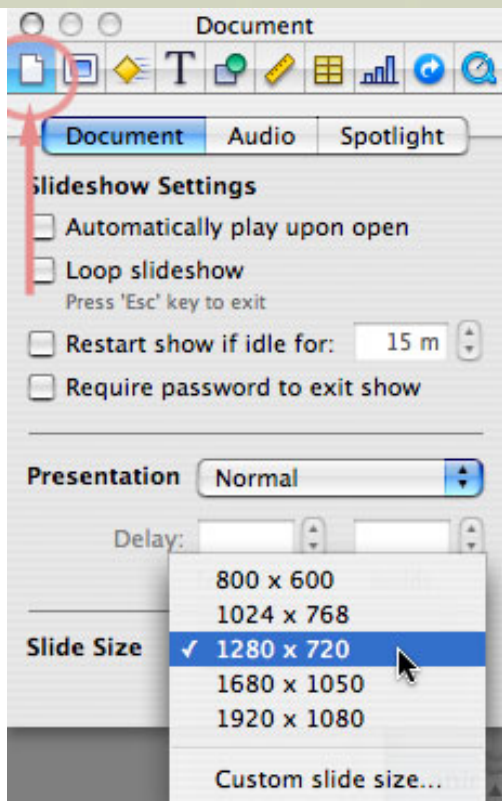
Because each of these podcasts is designed to be a short, information-rich, segment targeted to viewers who are just getting into the industry, I wanted to add some animated text graphics. But, because I had very little time for editing, I needed a system that would be FAST.

Motion had more power than I needed and took too long to setup. LiveType worked fine, but I needed to create a file for each info-graphic. Then, I remembered Keynote.

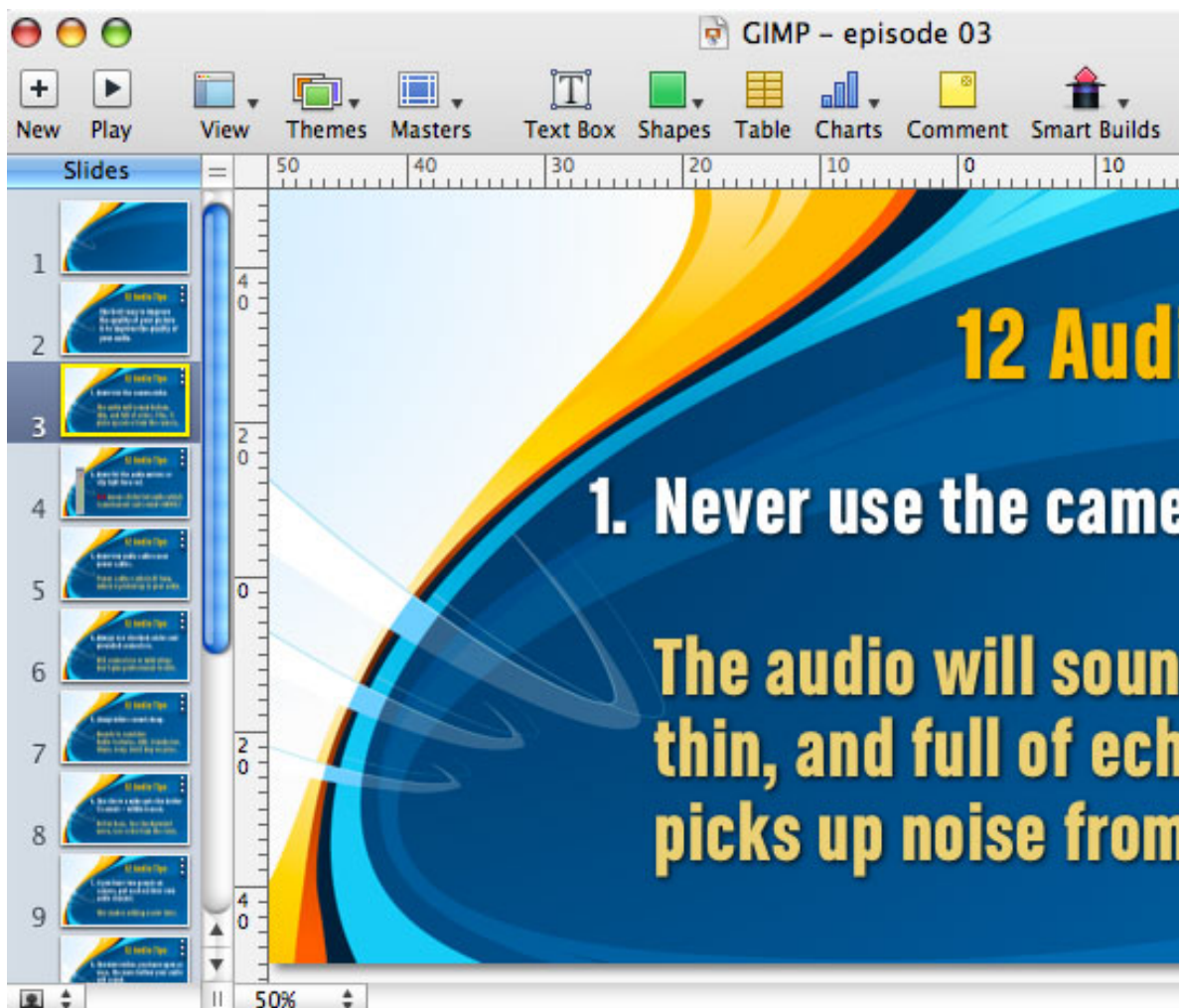
Depending upon your needs, Keynote can create simple text animations VERY quickly and easily integrate them into Final Cut. Each episode runs either three or six minutes and contains up to a dozen graphics.



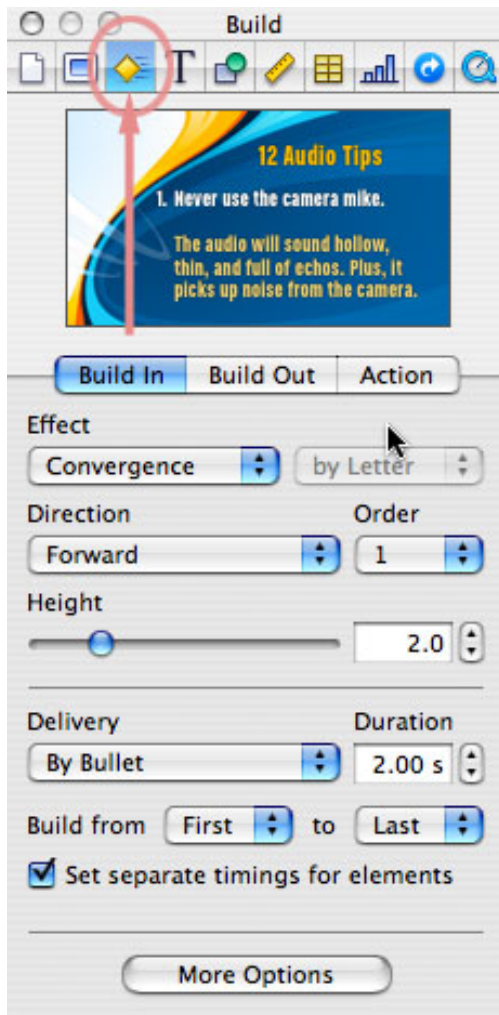
For instance, here is an animated graphic loaded into Final Cut from Keynote. Notice the different font sizes, colors and placement - none of which can be done natively in FCP. Instead, this video was created in Keynote and imported into FCP. Here's how.



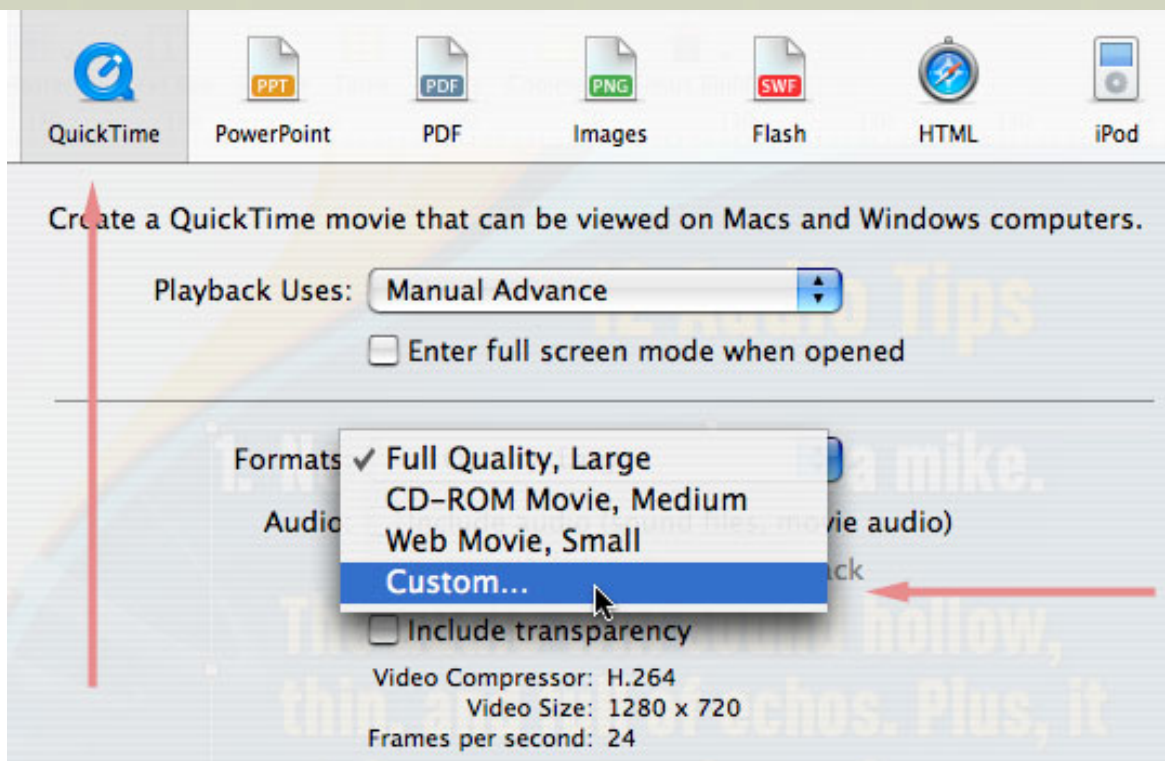
I created a new sequence in Keynote. (I'm using Version 4, but earlier versions will work as well.) Before creating any slides, I went to the Inspector and clicked on the first (**General**) tab and changed the slide size to **1280 x 720**.



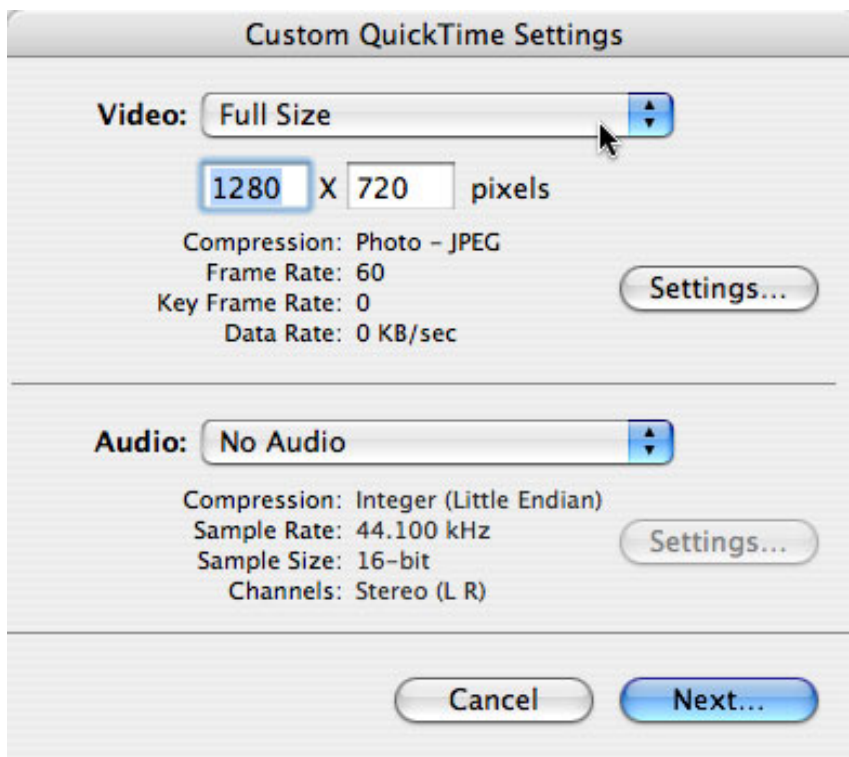
Then, I imported the background graphic into the master slide and formatted all the text. Working on the master slide meant I only needed to do this design work one. Otherwise, each slide would need to be individually formatted -- which would take too long.



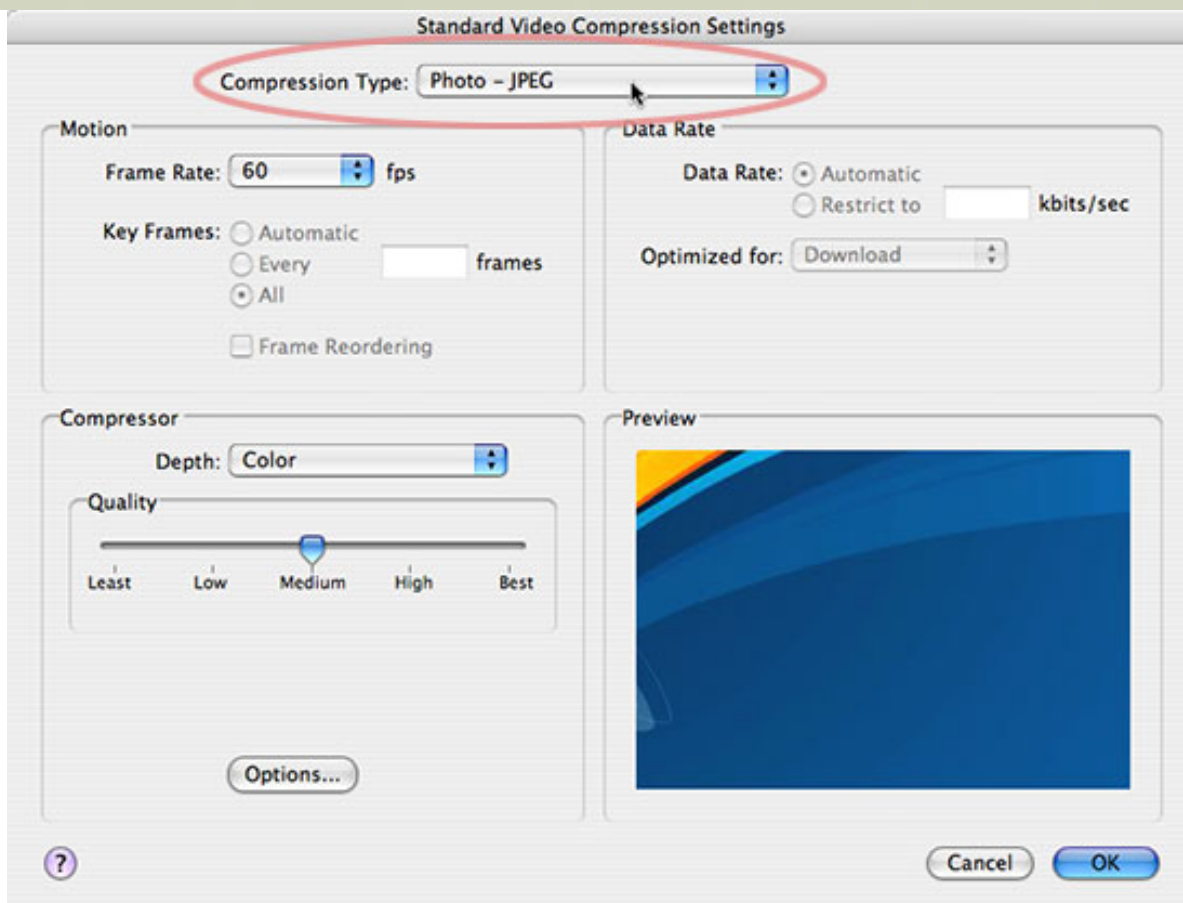
As part of the master slide formatting, I added animation to all the bullets. This is done, like most things in Keynote, in the **Inspector**. This time, I clicked the third tab and adjusted the settings until I had my text moving the way I wanted. Here, I'm animating the text by bullet, with each letter animating individually within the bullet.



When all the graphics were done, I selected **File > Export** and clicked the **Quicktime** tab in the top left corner. As I needed this to be sized for HD, not for the computer, I selected the Custom setting.

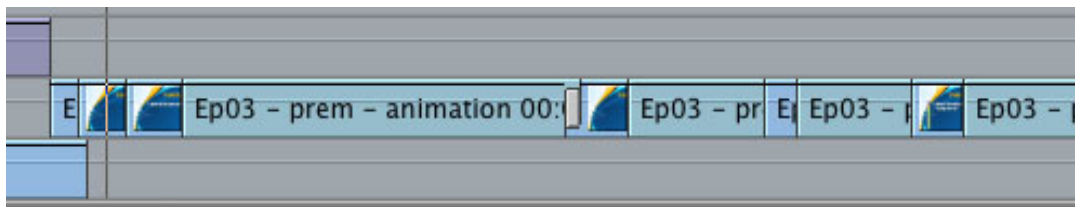


In the **Custom QuickTime Settings** windows, I set the image size to **1280 x 720**, then clicked the **Settings** button to configure the video codec.



In this case, I wanted good image quality with a small file size, so I selected **Photo-JPEG**. You can see the settings I used in this screen shot.

When Keynote exports, it exports everything into a single QuickTime movie. However, and this is the trick, it only exports the animation - it doesn't hold on any slides.



So, after I imported the QuickTime file into Final Cut, I needed to create still frames when ever I wanted the animation to pause. In the final version, I had a quick clip of animation as the text flies on the screen, then a still while I talk about it, then more animation for the next point and so on.

I found this to be a very fast way to create a large number of animated text graphics. Using still frames to separate the animation is a fast way to time the graphics to the audio track.

Consider using this technique yourself when time is short and you need things to move quickly.

Here's a link so you can see the finished effect (the opening title was created in LiveType) -- <http://www.gimp.tv/show.php?episode=166>.

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Hmm... Well, as if that last technique didn't give it away, by now you've guessed that [GIMP-TV](#) has partnered with us to create a series of video podcasts aimed at the self-taught video producer.

The first 16 episodes are shot, and the first six or so are already on-line. A new episode posts every week. Current topics include:

- Picking the Right HD Format
- Choosing an HD Camera
- Shooting in High-Def
- Getting Good Audio
- Lighting is More than Seeing in the Dark
- The Art of Editing
- Getting Organized for Editing



Future topics include:

- When to use cuts, dissolves and wipes
- How to use a soft-light
- Compressing video for the web
- and plenty more

The podcasts are platform-agnostic. They apply to both Mac and PC, regardless of what platform you use for editing. The guys at GIMP are great fun to work with, and the initial viewer response is terrific.

[Take a look for yourself.](#) And let me know if there's a specific subject you'd like me to cover.

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Review - Zoom H2 Handy Recorder



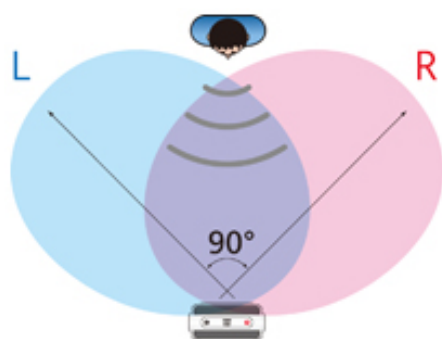
Mark Wilder at [Samson](#) sent me an email a couple weeks before NAB asking if I would be interested in testing the Zoom H2 Handy Recorder during NAB in return for a review of the product.

Since I had over 25 interviews scheduled, the ability to record them was way too good to pass up, so I gratefully

said yes. Plus, I could use the interviews as part of our NAB coverage on [The BuZZ](#).

I met Mark and some of his team at the Samson booth in the North Hall at NAB and had a great discussion on how some of the latest lavalier and boom mikes work. Samson got its start 26 years ago designing wireless mike systems and I learned a lot in a very short period of time. They currently have three major brands: Samson, Hartke, and Zoom.

The Zoom H2 is delightfully small. What is especially intriguing is that it contains four microphones and can record in both stereo and surround sound. Due to the way the mikes are placed, it can record in three patterns: 90-degrees, 120-degrees, and 360-degrees.

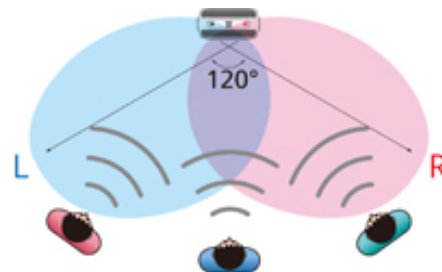


It fits easily in the palm of your hand. And it's dead easy to get it to record - press the red button. Stopping is just as easy - press the red button, again.

Recording is to a standard SD flash memory card. It can record either uncompressed WAV files or a variety of MP3 files. Because I had a lot of interviews with no time to download until the end of the day, I selected a 320 kbps MP3 recording format.

At the end of the day, transferring files is via USB. Just plug in the cable and the unit shows up on the desktop as though it were a hard disk. Each recording is its own file. Transferring is drag-and-drop simple.

With a street price of less than \$200, this is a very attractive unit.



However, I used it for about 15 interviews and I was not particularly happy with the results.

I can't imagine a worse recording environment than the floor of a trade show. NAB is a cacophony of noise. People need to shout just to be heard. And, in this case, the H2 was not up to the task.

It has a slider switch on the side that determines mike gain. The four mikes are built-in and while it does support an external mike, the mike connects via 1/8-inch mini-plug, which means my professional mikes won't work.

The recorder is designed to be hand-held. So, I would look for the quietest corner I could find, hold the mike about 8-10 inches from the speaker and start recording. Even with the Mic Gain switch in the H (High) position, the audio levels were extremely low; between -24 and -30 dB. Noise rejection was also poor. It was very hard to separate the speaker from the background noise; even with the mike held reasonably close.

Now, granted, these are extreme conditions. I have confidence that the unit would sound much better in quieter surroundings. And its surround recording could be invaluable in a musical situation.

For comparison purposes, I also recorded interviews using two Shure SM-58 microphones recorded on a Marantz digital recorder. The quality was excellent. You could easily separate the speaker from the background noise even in the worst sections of the trade show floor.

However, the Shure / Marantz combination costs about three times more than the H2.

If you need a recording unit for general recording, note-taking, or surround work, the H2 is a solid performer. If you need something you can rely on in unfavorable conditions, the H2 would not be my first choice.

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Editing Truths Contest Winner



Never keep a loaded handgun in the edit desk while clients are in the studio.

Shaun C. Roemich
www.gearheadvisual.com

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Blu-ray is Buzzing

With the collapse of the HD-DVD format, I've been getting a lot of questions about creating Blu-ray DVDs.

There are currently two red-hot issues about Blu-ray:

- How do you create them?
- How much does it cost to replicate them?

Currently, Final Cut Studio does not support the creating of Blu-ray DVDs. However, that doesn't mean you are totally out of luck, because Compressor can create Blu-ray-compatible files that look great.

In the next issue of Edit Well, **Brian Gary** writes a detailed article on how to compress and create Blu-ray DVDs using a combination of Apple's Compressor and Adobe's Encore. His article is excellent and I recommend it. The issue containing it will be out the end of this month.

More confusing is the whole issue of Blu-ray licensing. Here **Bruce Nazarian**, president of the DVD Association, has been invaluable. In last month's issue of Edit Well (vol 2, no 9) Bruce wrote a primer on what you need to know to use Blu-ray.

Since then, we've had Bruce on the Digital Production Buzz talking about how this Blu-ray licensing issue is playing out. Currently, if you BURN disks, there is no licensing fees. If, on the other hand, you REPLICATE disks, licensing costs can be significant - amounting to thousands of dollars per title.

You can hear more of Bruce's comments by visiting The BuZZ archives and checking out shows from:

Feb. 14 - a clear description of licensing issues
Mar. 13 - update on industry chaos
April 10 - more updates, more chaos
May 1 - a full segment on Blu-ray
May 15 - review of Primera's Blu-ray burner



Also, just in time for this issue, Harris Interactive published a poll with the headline: "Blu-ray Wins the Format Battle, but Consumers Don't Buy It." [You can read it here.](#) This gets more and more interesting!

Finally, later in this newsletter, in the Reader Mail section, are two more Blu-ray articles.

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Current Issue of Edit Well Sums Up NAB

The current issue of [Edit Well](#) has several articles well worth reading.

Ned Soltz provides an overview of the Final Cut Pro Users Group SuperMeet - along with audio interviews with vendors introducing new products for Final Cut.



Mike Krause has an article on how LiveType dramatically sped up his workflow when he needed to create several dozen multi-lingual versions of the same project.

Scott Martin reports on his tests of HDV shooting video for Princess Cruises.

Stephen Kanter shows you how to do media management in Soundtrack Pro 2.

And **Alexis Van Hurkman** continues his exploration of Color by showing us why using the Desaturate filter in Final Cut Pro may not be the best way to achieve a black-and-white effect.

Here's a link to the [current issue's Table of Contents \(PDF\)](#).

Edit Well consistently delivers outstanding reporting on everything related to Final Cut Studio. If you haven't yet downloaded your free copy, please do so by [clicking here](#).

[Take a few minutes and check it out.](#) There isn't a better Final Cut newsletter available.

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Edit Well Interview Guests Needed

By the way, one of my **FAVORITE** features in Edit Well are the audio interviews with editors around the world each month.

Each interview discusses the projects they are working on, the challenges they face, and some tricks they've learned that can be helpful to other editors.

I need guests! If you have an idea or an opinion you'd like to share with other editors - [send me an email](#).

I'd love to chat with you and share your story with the world.

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Three Interesting Things About Soundtrack Pro 2 I Learned from Apple

One of our major up-coming [seminar sessions](#) is showing how to use **Soundtrack Pro 2** more effectively for mixing our Final Cut projects. (I long ago learned that the best way to improve my video was to improve the quality of my audio.)





To help me get ready for the session, I sent an email to the product management team at Final Cut Studio asking for some tips. They graciously responded and I want to share some of what I learned with you.

Question 1: Is there a way to change the default output from 6 channels to stereo so that it doesn't need to be manually set for each project (this doesn't seem to be a preference setting)?

Answer: Not really. Projects sent from FCP will match the FCP project's settings. You could optionally create a "template" project (really just a blank project) with all your favorite settings, but that's a slippery slope since you can't actually "apply" that template to an existing project. It would give you a nice starting point though.

Question 2: Is there a way to change the name of a clip - i.e. to name sections of a clip, like subclips in Final Cut Pro?

Answer: Yes, you can highlight the clip and change the name in the 'Details' tab. Also, you can rename clips by right-clicking them in the bin and choosing "rename." The details tab is much faster though.

Question 3: What equipment do you recommend to connect to the computer - both laptop or tower - that allows monitoring of surround sound. (The speakers I understand, its the digital interface that I need help with.)

Answer: I personally love the Apogee Ensemble, which is made to work beautifully with Soundtrack Pro. In fact, there is even a special software control panel for the Ensemble built into STP.

Bonus tip: While the conditions and results vary, you are best served by using real-time effects in multi-track projects, rather than from the Process menu in an audio file project. The effects behave much more reliably in multi-track projects.

I have an entire session devoted to making the most of Soundtrack Pro 2 in my upcoming PowerUp Seminars. [Click here for more information.](#)

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An Editorial on Developing Final Cut Studio

For the last year and more, we've had an on-going discussion on developing for the future of Final Cut. We've had interviews with Apple executives, comments from readers and lots of good discussion.

Clearly, Apple can't do everything. But it seems to me what it does is balance three competing demands:

- Adding new features
- Fixing existing bugs
- Enhancing the current interface and operation

Based on the emails I've received, editors who live with the program for hours every day clearly feel that enhancing the interface is the most important of the three.

Recently, **John Bertram** sent me a long email outlining his view of this discussion. I thought his ideas were interesting enough to share with all of us.

You can read his article here. [Let me know](#) what you think.

http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/jb_future_fc.html

Also, last year around this time, I ran a contest inviting readers to send in their ideas on improving the Final Cut Pro interface. I received over 300 suggestions from dozens of readers. I put it all into a report and hand-delivered it to Apple.

You can [read the report here](#) - it's a PDF file, so it will take a few seconds to load (500 KB)

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Editing Truth Contest Winner



The best shot is always three seconds too short.

Bob Hirschfeld
www.llnl.gov

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Technique: Everything You Never Knew about PPMs

When I was in the UK, I ran into an audio system I'd never heard of -- PPM. Apparently, it is all the rage at the BBC and points east. However, Final Cut Pro knows nothing about PPMs.

Thanks to the ever-resourceful **Martin Baker** (www.digitalheaven.co.uk), I recently got a quick update on this format and want to share it with you.

Martin writes:

In a nutshell, the BBC PPM scale is numbered from 1-7. Each number on the BBC PPM scale is an increase of 4dB, tone at -18dB corresponds to PPM4. The maximum allowed peak level for broadcast is PPM6 (i.e. 8dB above than the tone level of -18dB).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peak_programme_meter

[However, all is not lost for Final Cut Pro users, because there's **PPMulator** from Raw Material Software (<http://www.rawmaterialsoftware.com/ppm.php>). Their website says: PPMulator+ is a cross-platform VST plug-in meter for digital audio workstations which exactly mimics the look and feel of a professional broadcast Peak Programme Meter (PPM).]

PPMulator is cool because it is available as a standalone app, VST plug-in and Audio Unit plug-in so can be inserted into an output bus in Soundtrack Pro. Sadly because FCP still doesn't support custom audio plug-in UIs (we still live in hope for that one!) it is not usable directly.

So in FCP you can either run it as a VST plug-in inside Audio Hijack Pro (works fine except the PPMulator window doesn't float over FCP) or do the Edirol technique (didn't know that trick) with the standalone version which does have the option to be a floating window.

Apart from the fact that they're very easy to read at a glance and easier on the eye, the coolest thing about PPMs is that they've actually managed to become and remain a true standard for all radio and TV broadcasting in the UK. Imagine that. Audio level utopia!

Larry replies: Thanks, Martin, for the update.

By the way, for those of us you need better audio meters, but don't need PPM, I've recently been using a

program called **ProLevel**, from Katsura Shareware (<http://www.katsurashareware.com/pgs/prolevel.html>) , for my podcasts. It does a really nice job of measuring external audio source levels prior to recording. However, it can't be used inside Final Cut Pro.

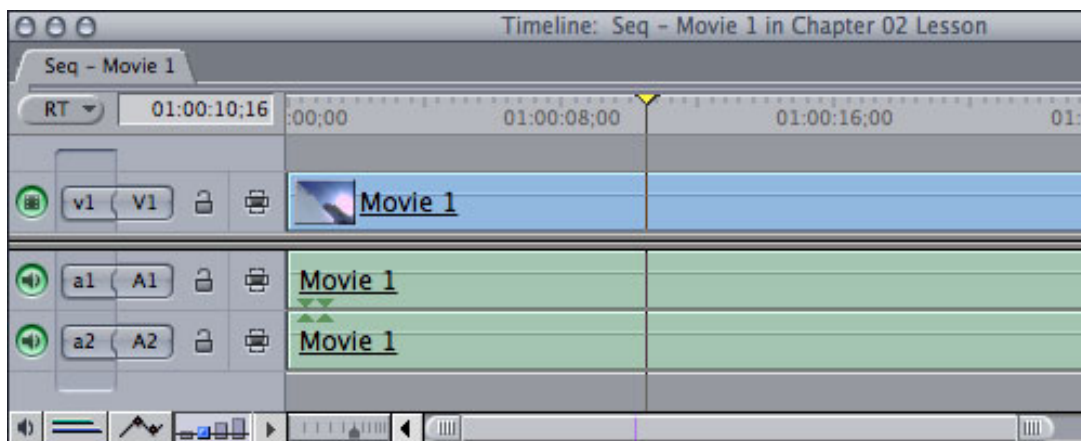
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Technique: Rolling Two Different Movies in Sync in Final Cut

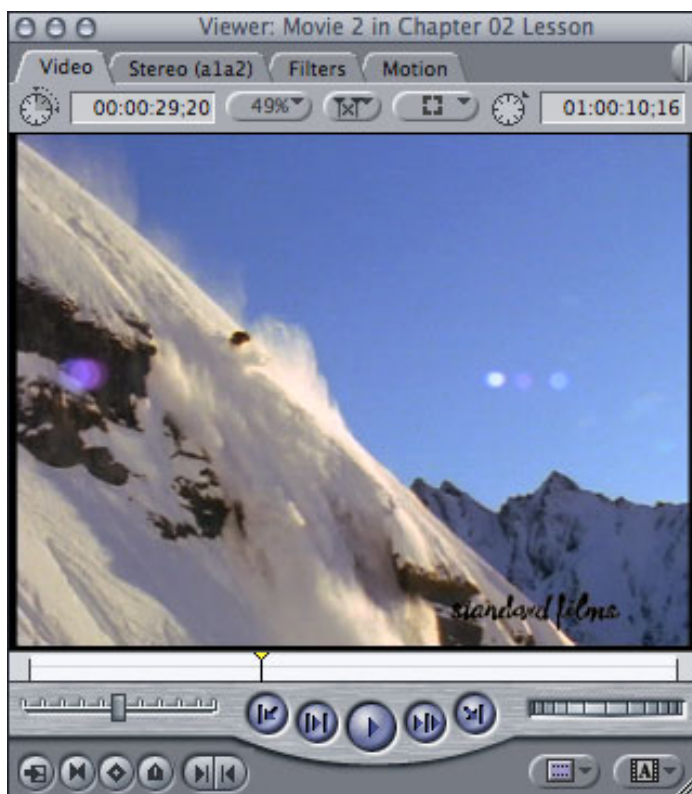
Multicam does a great job of syncing multiple cameras into a single clip for editing.

But, sometimes, you don't want to edit the two movies, just compare them. For example, this is a very fast technique to compare an off-line version with an on-line master.

Here's how to do it.

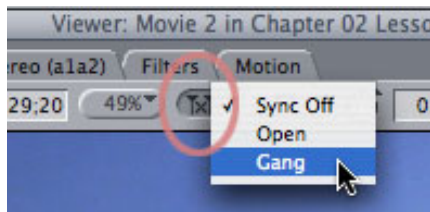


1. Edit the movie, or clips, you want to compare into the Timeline. In this example, I've loaded a clip called "Movie 1."

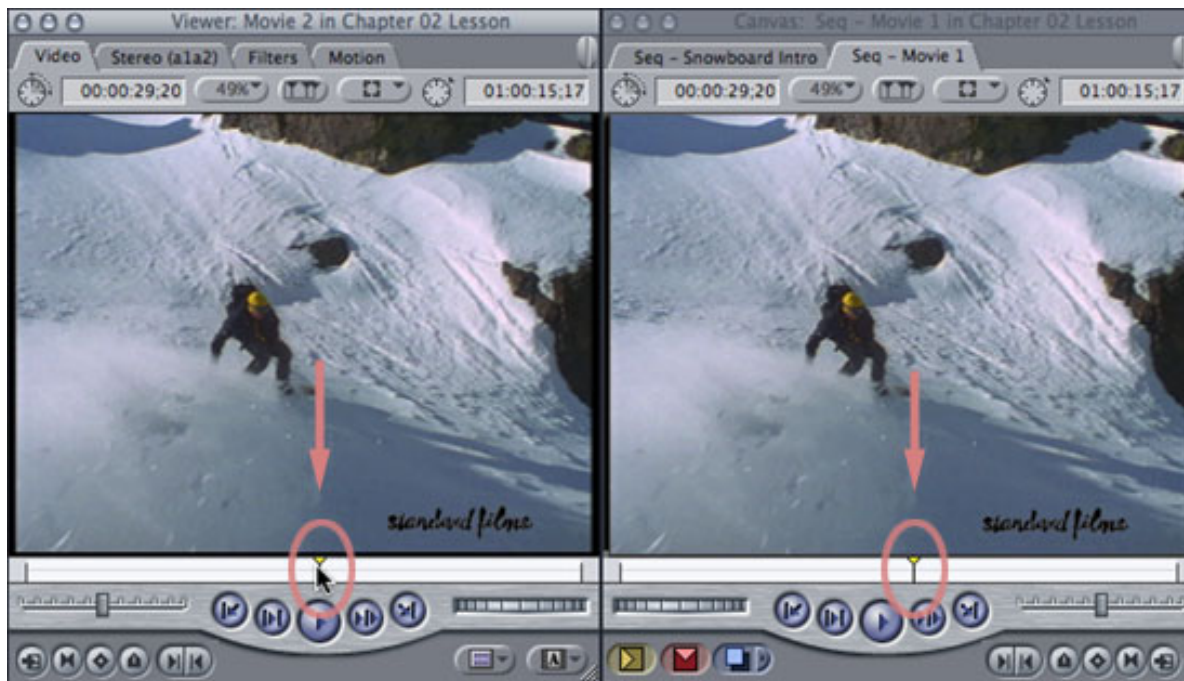


2. Load the other clip you want to compare into the Viewer. In this case, I've called it "**Movie 2.**" Since the Viewer only holds one clip at a time, if you want to compare a completed sequence with a collection of clips, the clips will need to be in the Timeline, while the finished sequence is in the Viewer.

3. Position the playhead in the Viewer and the Canvas on the frame you want to use as the sync point. In this case, I'm using the first frame after a shot change.



4. Go to the small, pop-up menu in the top-center of the Viewer or Canvas (they both do the same thing). Select "**Gang.**" This locks the Viewer with the Timeline based on the position of the two playheads.



5. Now, where ever you move the playhead in the Viewer OR the Timeline, the playhead in the other windows moves exactly the same amount.

To reset the Viewer back to it's normal operation, just change the top-center pop-up menu back to "**Sync Off,**" which is the default position.

I've used this technique a lot when I need to match one edit to another. And, once you play with this, I suspect you'll find other uses as well.

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Editor's Story: There's High-Def and REALLY High-Def!

Recently, I got an email from **Steve Sebban** about a movie he recently created using Final Cut Pro. I asked Steve to tell me about this project, because the movie is designed for a 12 meter by 2 meter (36 x 6 feet) space - a 48:9 aspect ratio! His final movie is almost 13,000 pixels wide!

I thought you'd be interested in his reply. (By the way, he originally sent this in Hebrew, but as my Hebrew is a tad weak, I asked him to rewrite it again in English.)

Steve writes:

This project was made for a museum named Massuah. They decided to renew their content and build a new space into the current walls. The creator of this new museum, Nava Schreiber, looked for something quite special and unusual that can speak directly to teenagers. She decided she wanted a huge movie on the main room. The dimension of this movie must be around 12x2 meters.

With Yally Bergman, the director of the movie, we looked for different options of projections and styles of movie, all of them unsatisfying. Everything was revolving around a traditional 3 projectors movie with 3 different windows.

By chance, Yally met the band "Shakatak" who took the project in an unexpected angle and they started to work on the soundtrack (it's actually a lot of old song from the 30's remixed to our years flavours). This changed radically the design of the movie. A few meeting later with the designer, Ethan Bar-Tal, the cameraman Ofer Einov (the one who shoot Bofort from the last Oscar), Yally, Nava and myself, we got a first storyboard. It was my turn to find the technical solution to make it happen.

This movie was started around January 2006. I had then 2 choices for the video format SD or HD. SD was too small for such a screening and HD was beyond our budget and too small and too big at the same time... All the editing (both off and online) must be done on my home video equipment (a G5 2x2Ghz with 2GB RAM). After a lot of hesitations, I decided to go for a 3x16/9 anamorphic SD format and ask to build the screen around this format. We made a 10x1.7m screen. The projection options we had was for 3 independent projectors or a seamless screen based on 3 projectors (in this case it looks like you have only 1 screen instead of 3)

We shoot everything on anamorphic 16/9 digibeta, especially because of the heavy chroma key work I had to do afterward.

After all the hard pre-post work, I found myself in front of a lot of problems (beside the artistic ones): a very suspicious client (this kind of work is not usual in museums and she was very scared by the results), a desperate need for speed (we couldn't afford any new computer but my current one that was only one generation behind), my low skills in compositing (i'm an offline, online editor and colorist), a very tight budget, almost no post-prod facilities, no producer and a lot of bugs in the compositing department of FCP.

I made all of the digitize in a post-prod house using a FCP workstation with a blackmagic card. SDI all the way, uncompressed 1:1 8 bits.

The beginning was a lot of try-and-miss task: I started to edit the first scene in offline jpeg mode. I immediately found myself confronted by the problem of photoshop files and how FCP handle them. Since everything is 1/4 resolution, all the layers in .psd got messed up in their positions. I had to resize and replace everything by hand. The speed was ok, the offline resolution was ok. To be sure the online will only be a rendering task and no more, I made a test and move the sequence from offline to online. Horror! All the layers, all the keyframes, everything stayed into this 1/4 resolution. No full screen! I had to re-do every animations to match the screen. At this time, i had a sequence for each screen plus a "big" sequence with the nested other sequences showing the 3 screens side-by-side.

I understood I cannot use this offline-jpeg technic. I switched to full SD resolution screens with a lower codec. Everything was edited in DV to be fully rendered at the end in uncompressed 8 bit like the footage. And to simplify the compositing and animation process and to give us a lot more freedom in the creative department, i moved from the 3 anamorphic 16/9 screens to one huge anamorphic 48/9 screen (anamorphic 2100x576-> almost 3000x576 pixels at the end!) I was happy to have chosen FCP for this project as any other editing software of my knowledge would have gave me this option (and especially not Avid Media Composer nor After Effect)

I had to deeply understand what FCP sees and uses from Photoshop files: which modes and effects. And I have to say, it's less than perfect with a lot of unexpected results. The worse was to work with compositing mode into the timeline. The results were very different from what I was getting with Photoshop or After Effects. Even between codecs, the results were not constant. Some mode were impractical in DV and were rendered the right way under the uncompressed codec! (took me a while to understand this one) Even more, adding dissolve effect would give me different mode result to return to the expected result at the end of the fade (!). You can see it happen from time to time on the movie. All the textures on some scenes appear as cut instead of

fade because of that. I wasn't unable to solve this matter.

The most ambitious scene is the 1st scene: we have a one minute-long traveling with tons of layers, graphics, keyed video. Because the dancers are also singing, I had to be in sync all the way. After a lot of tries, I decided the best way to do that was to lay all the layers into a very huge sequence (a whoopy 13,000x576, resolution and that's not a typo) and to nest it into my "regular" sequence which will play the role of a window or camera on this huge seq. But to be in synch with the music I had to begin from the end and set the traveling movement and then place all the players and layer into the stripe. I'll let you guess the rendering time of this scene alone (more than 30 hours).

As you can see, this project was indeed huge and took almost 1.5 years to finish (90 shifts during this time) and pushed FCP to it's limits I think.

Larry replies: Thanks, Steve, for sharing your process with us. You can see the opening segment (at 1/4 final size) here - click the "Shakatak" button: <http://homepage.mac.com/mchenry/shakatak/>

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Editing Truths Contest Winner



Only a good editor can rescue a project from a bad script.

Darren Ley
<http://delta.ncsu.edu/video>

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NEW Video Training DVD! HD Workflows in Final Cut Studio 2

Confused about HD?

High-definition video is today's fastest-growing platform for video content, and it's used by professionals and hobbyists alike. The demand to acquire, edit, and deliver HD content is always increasing. In HD Workflows with Final Cut Studio 2, I provide a comprehensive explanation of what HD is, how to work with the many forms it comes in, and how to use the most common formats and codecs.

This video training is for anyone wishing to learn more about HD—from distribution formats and transcoding to hardware requirements and editing in Final Cut Studio. The second half of the training teaches a variety of specific techniques and workflows for successfully handling high-definition video in Final Cut Pro.

Exercise files accompany the course. (Duration: 2.75 hours)

Click here to learn more or to buy it: http://www.larryjordan.biz/app_bin/Store/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=69

PLUS, from now till May 30, purchase more than \$100 in products and **get FREE shipping!**

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Converting Slides and Film

When it comes to persistence, **Chris Force** has few rivals. Chris works for a company called Home Movie Depot (www.homemoviedepot.com).

According to Chris:

Based in Ashland, Missouri (Servicing the US) with a location in Xalapa, Veracruz, (Servicing Mexico) we are the largest on-line provider of digitization of analog media services. We work with 8mm, Super8, 16mm, camcorder, VHS, betamax, and still images; both positives and negatives. We turn orders around in about 5 business days.

- We recently started an affiliate program marketing to videographers and retail photography stores across North America. In less than one year we have signed 100s (soon to be 1,000s) of retail outlets across North America.
- With our tens of thousands of customers and hundre's of affiliates, editing is a real issue.
- We currently offer digital transfers to hard drives. Many of our clients edit using Final Cut Pro.

Home Movie Depot recently exhibited at PMA this past year, which is where I met them, and do tons of work with professionals across the country.

To see a sample of their work go here: www.homemoviedepot.com/archive/.

To learn more about becoming an affiliate, email: Chris_Force@HomeMovieDepot.com.

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Larry Needs Your Help!

I'm creating **new training on how to improve chroma-keying** using Final Cut Pro and Motion. Not just using their built-in tools, but third-party software as well. This project grew out of my [video podcast](#), where I've been struck by how hard it is to get clean keys using either Motion or Final Cut Pro.

To make this training as useful as possible, I need two things:

1. Short - **TWO-second** - green screen (or blue screen) video clips that I can use for testing.
2. Your opinions on which chroma-key software you like or want me to test

Please email me **FIRST** so I can tell you where to FTP files. I need as many different file formats as possible - HDV, DV, SD, XDCAM H, XDCAM EX, DVCPROHD - and in as many different image sizes and frame rates as possible.

[Send your email to me here.](#)

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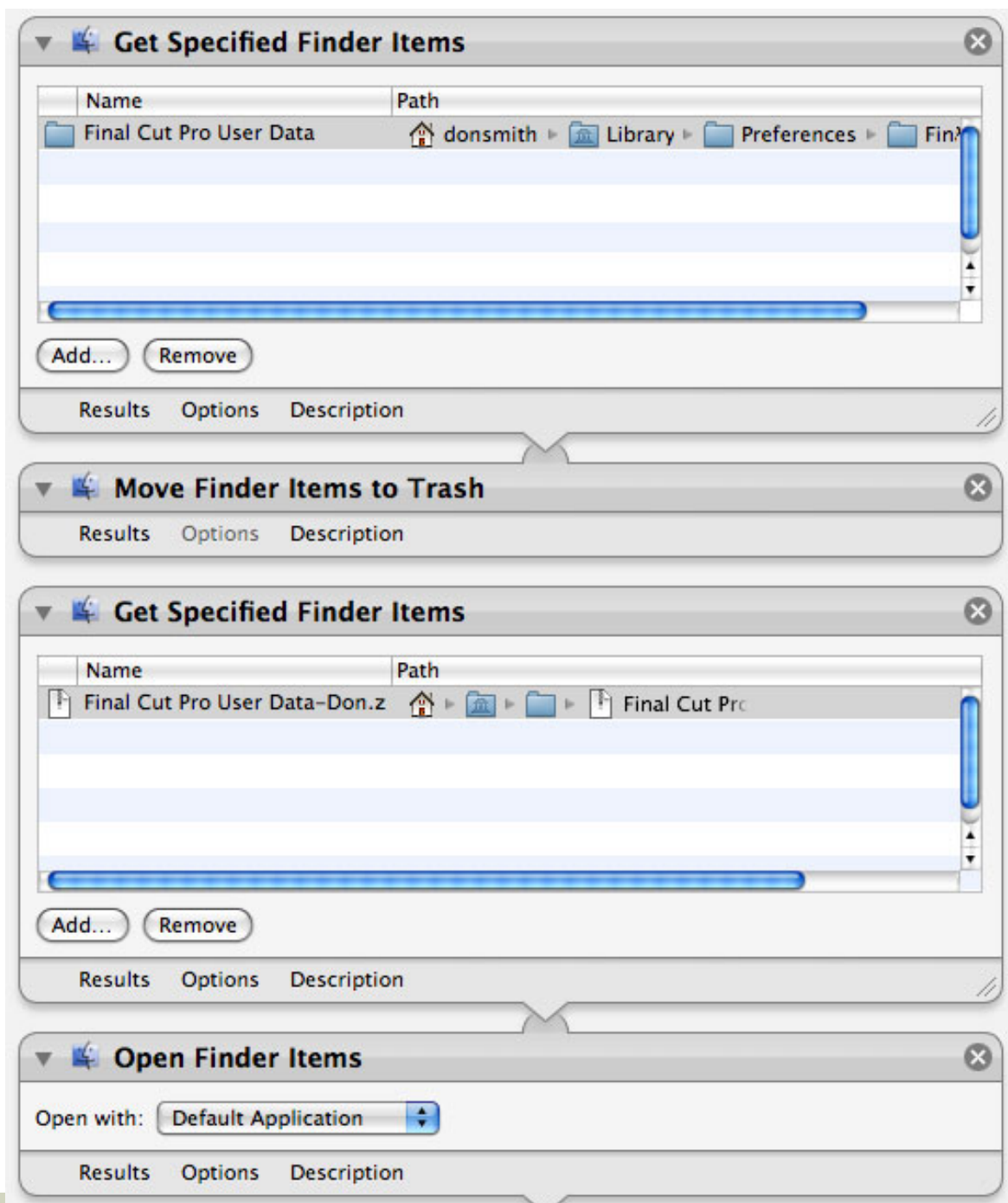
Technique: Creating Customized User Preferences Using Automator

Don Smith, of Newsvideo.com, sent me the following technique. As with any scripting program, make backup copies of your preferences and test this first, before running it on a production system.

In these instructions, I've listed the Automator steps and then included a graphic of the Applescript so that you'll see it's not as scary as it sounds. I've never done Applescript before. I've never done Automator before either, for that matter. :-)

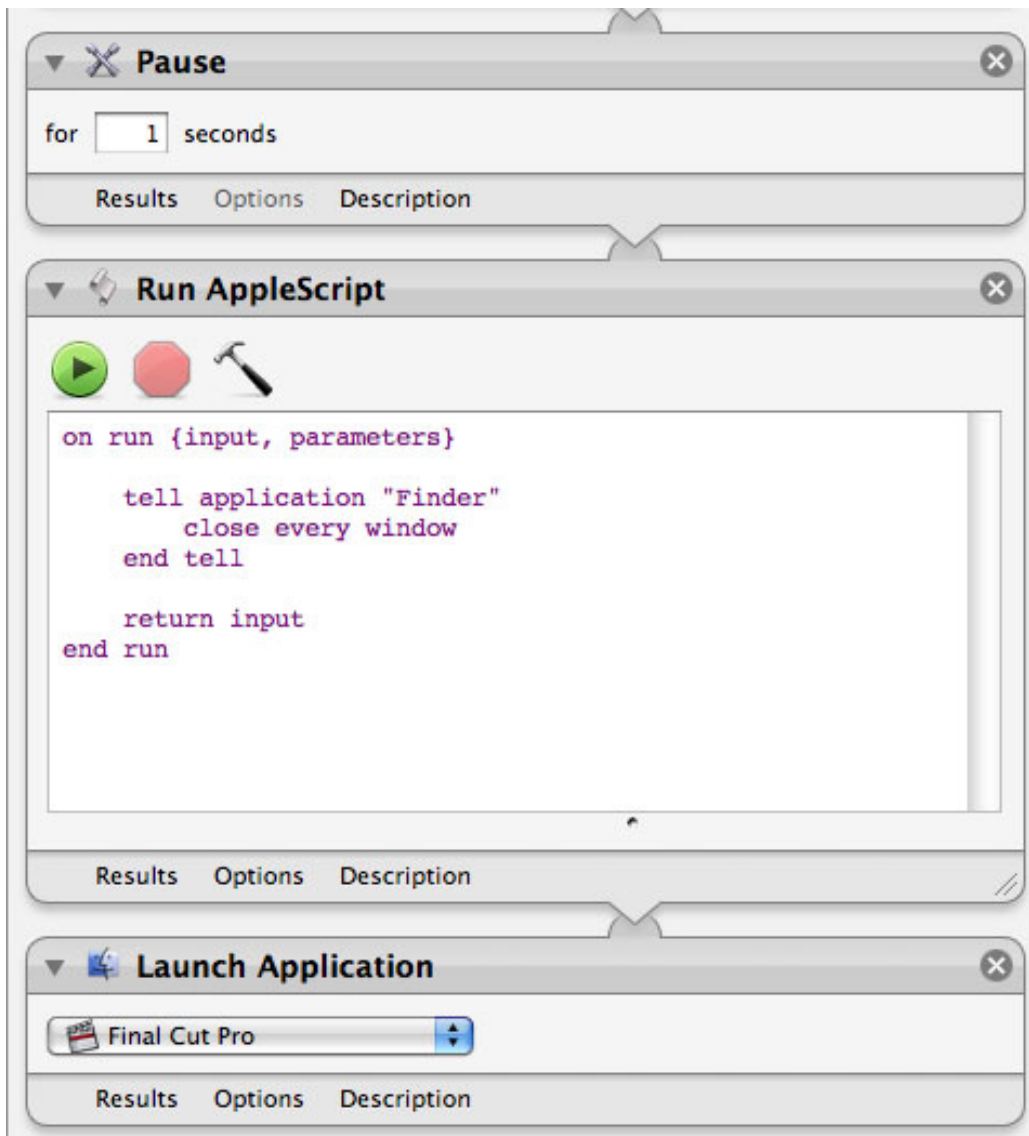
First, set your FCP Prefs as you like.

1. Right-click on the prefs folder and compress them into a **ZIP archive**.
2. Name the compressed file something unique to help you remember what the prefs were set up for or for whom.
3. Run **Automator** and start stacking its big window on the right.
4. Drag the FCP prefs folder into the big window on the right side of Automator.
5. From the Actions column, drag over "**Move to trash**"
6. Move the compressed file now into the big Automator window.
7. From the Actions column, drag over "**Open Finder Items**"
8. From the Actions column, drag over "**Pause**". Set it for **one second**.



9. From the Actions column, drag over "**Run AppleScript**" Within the window, erase the place-keeper words between and including the parenthesis and insert:

```
tell application "Finder"
close every window
end tell.
```



10 Finally, from the Actions column, drag over "**Launch Application**" Set the drop-down to launch Final Cut Pro

11. Save this as an application. Change the name of the application to reflect the purpose of that set of FCP preferences. Now, double-clicking on that application resets the FCP prefs for that purpose and launches FCP at the same time. One stop shopping.

This movie tells how to make an Automator icon to both refresh your FCP prefs and then, at the same time, launch FCP. It also includes my expansion of the idea to create different versions of FCP for different users to simulate FCP having a "User" function.

View the movie here: <http://newsvideo.com/prefs/>

Larry replies: Very cool. Thanks for sharing this.

READER MAIL

A Cool Audio Tip

Shane Ross writes:

Let's say you have a source file with 8 tracks of audio, and you mapped a1 and a2 to A7 and A8 on the timeline, and a5 is next to A6...the track assignments are ALL over the place. And to get them back to the proper order takes like 15 clicks...TIME CONSUMING.



Well, if you simply RIGHT-CLICK in the gray area below the audio tracks, there is an option to RESET PANEL...click that and everything pops back into order, and everything is connected.

Larry replies: Shane, this is very cool. Thanks!

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Final Cut Studio Reset

Jeff Greenberg, of Future Media Concepts, sent me the following:

Ever come across something on the web that helps you teach? And you've forgotten it? One particular item that's valuable to me as a Pro Trainer: ProApp Reset.

It moves ALL of the ProApp prefs to the trash...and. optionally, the FCP Color documents.

Link here: <http://www.instructorassets.com/2007/09/pro-app-reset-v.html>

Larry replies: Jeff, thanks for sending this. Other readers, please keep in mind that this utility will reset Final Cut Studio to it's default setup. It's like a "Master Trash Preferences."

For those of us that need to continually reset classroom systems, this utility is great. For regular editors, use with caution.

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Exporting from DVD video

Ruju Mehta writes:

I have a question regarding importing video footage from a DVD. I have a footage on DVD and I am ripping it by using MPEG Streamclip. I wanted to know:

1. Which format should I export the footage. Quick Time or export to DV
If I use Quick Time
2. Which compression should I set - Apple DV/DVCPRO - NTSC?
3. What frame size should I select? - 640 x 480 (4:3) OR 720 x 480 (DV-NTSC)

Looking at the DVD, how can I determine the aspect ratio & frame size? Looks like it might be 4:3 aspect ratio. Also what setting should I choose for my FCP sequence.

Larry replies: Ruju, QuickTime is best for anything you want to edit in Final Cut Pro. Use the **DV/DVCPRO - NTSC** codec, assuming your video is NTSC. Otherwise, use **DV - PAL**. The image size is **720x480**, again assuming it's 4:3 video. And your Final Cut settings would be for **DV NTSC - 48K**.

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Improving Render Times

Brian Pshyk, from Calgary, Canada, writes:

I'm going crazy here recently with render times in FCP 6.

I have a short video of 2 minutes (2V+4A) I added a Motion 3 project to the head and tail (250Kb each) and now the render time of the video has jumped to 4 hours! I must have a conflict in my settings somewhere. Could it be the way I'm saving the .motn projects? I save all the media in the same folder on an external drive (the same way I have doing for months now) in a projects folder with all the other elements. This system works great for me because I'm never really done with a project, they keep getting updated so I have to keep them on the system.

Larry replies: Brian, it isn't the size of the Motion project, it's the complexity. Here are just some of the things that significantly increase render times:

- Image size - HD takes about 6 times longer than SD
- Motion blurs
- Soft-edged drop shadows
- Soft-edged anything
- Filters that generate glows
- Image bit depth - 32-bit images take lots longer to render than 8-bit.
- Number of elements in the shot

Clearly, a motion graphic with only one element that doesn't move and doesn't have any filters applied isn't very interesting. Just keep in mind that the more complex you make it, the longer it will take to render.

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More on Color

What follows is a dialog between **Glen Hancock** and **Alexis Van Hurkman** about Color. Glen sent in a series of questions, which I forward to Alexis. Because his answers can help all of us, I've included the entire dialog here.

Glen writes:

I have recently starting trying to get Color worked into my processes and have a question related to file management. To explain, let me describe my particular projects layout. When filming a specific sequence, we took multiple takes. Then, when downloading to the computer, I selected the in and out around the entire sequence as I wasn't really sure what we might use and what we might not. On the timeline in FCP I had selected multiple in and outs on a specific clip that was 2

minutes long and sprinkled them throughout the time line.

Here is where things get strange though, when dumping to Color, I end up having to enhance each in and out for that clip separately as if they are individual clips, yet when rendering the clips, it renders the same clip 4 different times applying the separate changes to each one. This duplicates that 2 minute clip 4 times, plus takes a lot of extra time rendering when each take included in the time line was only a few seconds long.

Alexis responds:

This is how Color works, by design. If you need to apply the same grade to multiple instances of the same clip, then Chapter 13 of the onscreen Color User Manual covers different ways of copying corrections and grades. However, the overall expectation is that most clips will have individual grades (often, even a bit of camera movement in a clip from the same angle of coverage will change the lighting enough to require a small tweak to make a better match with the scene).

Because Color is rendering a new set of media in preparation for the color-corrected sequence's return trip back to FCP, and because each clip's correction will likely be individually tweaked by a careful colorist, rendering out of Color creates one media file for each and every clip in the Timeline, regardless of whether any clips were originally linked to a shared piece of media or not. This is also by design.

Glen continues:

The next issue is that these rendered files are then pushed back to a sequence line in FCP, but they are linked to the Color project render folder, which has a rather strange layout.

Alexis responds:

The graded media that the new (color corrected) sequence is linked to are the alternate media files that were generated by Color, since that's how the corrections were baked in. The directory structure of the render files is deliberately designed to manage multiple render files per shot (up to four, corresponding to Grades 1-4 that you can switch among for each shot in the Timeline), and to accommodate image sequences as well as QuickTime files. While this may seem odd, this is by design.

Glen continues:

So my question is, what specific process do you use to keep a hold on all these files and to limit the amount of time you have to spend rendering color changes? Also, what naming convention do you use when dumping to color to prevent having things overridden by other projects?

Alexis responds:

Media management is a challenge, no doubt about it, but I generally back up the render directory intact, as is. That said, there are colorists who've created shell scripts and other tools for consolidating the rendered media into a single directory for more convenient long-term archival.

As far as naming conventions to avoid overriding other projects, each Color project's render directory is created using the name of that project, which is usually that of the original sequence you sent from FCP, so unless you're sending identically named sequences from FCP (which I don't recommend), this should be a non-issue.

... These questions stem from a fundamental lack of understanding of how the FCP to Color round trip is supposed to work. In general, I'd recommend that he carefully read p.40-43 of the onscreen Color User Manual (available in the help) as it should clarify how Color is supposed to work.

Larry replies: Thanks to both Glen and Alexis for this discussion.

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Color Work-around

Francis Chee writes:

I've just done the Color 101 Certified Pro course. After doing the course, I'm aware of all the things that one should not send to Color, like no speed changes, no filters on any kind, etc., for things to run smoothly; or so I thought.

Still the same old smeared-looking images. These are just standard SD PAL footage 720 X 576.

The really frustrating thing is that the color graded/corrected stuff looks great while it's still in Color, it's that send back to FCP where it seems to go haywire.

Any advice would help greatly.

Then, Francis wrote back:

[The problem is the Send to FCP function.] I took HDV material down converted to SD PAL anamorphic (using the output from the Z1 -- I know this is not the best way) edit in FCP (6.0.2). Send sequence only i.e. no effects of any kind to Color (1.0.2). Color correct/grade, Export as an XML (to desired location).

Import the XML back into FCP with "Reconnect Media" selected and "Auto" checked for the sequence settings. The "Override settings" box is also checked for XML.

This works for the above work flow. Do not use "Send to FCP."

Larry replies: Thanks for this workaround.

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Down-converting HD to SD

Randall Kazarian, of Santa Barbara, CA, writes:

I'm wondering why more people aren't talking about transcoding (or down-converting) HD footage to standard definition DVDs? After all, for those of us currently shooting HD and using Final Cut Studio on the Mac, is this not our only choice for DVD distribution.

In my case I shoot a lot of 720p24pN clips on Panasonic HVX-200 cameras and want to export edited sequences from FCP v5.1.4 timelines by way of Compressor v2.3 to DVDSP v4. I'm working mostly with clips from 5 to 29 minutes in length.

Larry replies: Because you are working with Final Cut pro v.5.1.4, the workflow you outlined in your email is OK. However, Compressor was significantly improved in Final Cut Studio 2 to support better down-conversion from HD to SD.

My recommendation is to do your down-conversion in Compressor by importing your HD footage, then selecting one of the DVD High-Quality compression presets. Compressor will run your footage thru it's own optical flow analysis and figure out the best way to downconvert your image to SD.

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PAL vs NTSC DVDs

Eric Svendsen writes:

I have a client who needs DVD's converted for playback on DVD players in the Middle East. I see that DVD Studio Pro does not have a format setting for this. Is there any way I can facilitate their needs?

Larry replies: You'll need access to the source files, not the MPEG-2 compressed files. Then, using Compressor, convert them from NTSC to PAL. This will take a LONG time.

For a faster conversion, use Graeme Nattress' Standard Converter (www.nattress.com).

Then, you'll need to create an entirely new DVD using PAL menus and video, rather than NTSC. In other words, you need to do everything twice.

However, something I just recently learned is that many PAL DVD set-top boxes can play NTSC video, so you may get lucky where you client can play your existing NTSC disc.

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More on PAL vs NTSC

Simon Hustings recently starting a discussion on converting between formats. By the time we were done, **Graeme Nattress** had also added comments, as you'll see below.

Simon writes:

I work for Crewhouse Media, a production house here in Cyprus that covers the Middle East for Breaking news, Features and Docos, and being the small island that it is, there are only a hand full of us who know anything about FCP so finding advice can be a little tough. There is no Apple store here, no Apple warranty and no training facilities either so I've had to learn a lot of things the hard way. And now I find that I am the first port of call for a lot of the other editors.

I have an 80 minute doco shot in PAL DV which I need to convert to NTSC for an American Client. I was watching your Compressor video about converting DV PAL 4:3 to DV NTSC 4:3 using Compressor, and you mention that Graeme Nattress' Standards Converter is good but Compressor is fine too. I've done tests with Nattress' Standards Converter and have trawled the COW forums for advice on which is the best method.

Everyone is saying that Nattress' is the best method, and having done a one minute test clip using both Compressor and Nattress, I cannot see a visual difference between the two, I was just wondering what your thoughts were on the subject? Are we talking swings and roundabouts here or are there subtle differences that really make one stand out from the other?

Larry replies: When Compressor first came out, Graeme's utility was far superior for both quality and speed.

Compressor has continued to improve to the point where the quality each generates is about the same. However, from what I have been told, Graeme had the edge in performance. I'm sending a copy of your question to Graeme so he can speak in support of his program.

Graeme Nattress adds:

If you set the settings to the very highest quality in compressor, it will out-perform my plugin visually. However, it would take around 40 times as long to render, a disparity so great, that even a move to intel and a processor farm would find it hard to compete against.

Larry replies: Thanks, Graeme and Simon, for helping to explain this.

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Determining if a Clip was Used or Not

A couple of issues ago, I wrote that there was no easy way to determine if a clip or subclip was used in a sequence.

Claes Krokeide, in Norway, wrote in to provide the following:

There is an easy way - select all the video clips in the timeline, drag them to a bin. Then, while they're still selected, change the label to an unused color and hit the delete button. This will change the label of all their brothers and sisters, but not their mothers. :-)

Larry replies: Cool! Thanks.

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Creating a Blu-ray DVD

John Weinstock, in Austin, Texas, writes:

I don't think I've seen this covered in your Final Cut Studio newsletter and it might be of interest to readers. I have a HD film produced in FCP. I would like to compress it into mpeg4.AVC (H.264) and then use DVD Studio Pro to make a DVD that will play on a Blu-ray player.

I've used Compressor with the H.264 setting to compress the film and then made a DVD. It plays beautifully on my Mac, but when I tried it on the latest generation Sony Blu-ray player it wouldn't work. Any ideas?

Larry replies: Yes. It won't work.

Currently, there's no way to create a Blu-ray DVD using DVD Studio Pro. However, **Brian Gary** has done some research and discovered that you can create some lovely compressed video in Compressor using MPEG-1, then use Adobe Encore to create your DVD.

He's written an article detailing this technique in the next issue of [Edit Well](#).

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Another Blu-ray Question

Philip Fass writes:

I'd like to know what's required (technically and financially) to author individual BR discs. For example, I know Adobe Encore can author BR on a Mac, but it's only available in an expensive bundle with software that's redundant for FCP users.

Are there any other options? Would you expect the next version of FCP to support it? And do the licensing fees apply if you're simply burning one BR disc on your computer?

Larry replies: While much of Adobe's Production Premium software suite has software similar to Final Cut Studio, the fact that Encore can create Blu-ray discs and DVD SP can't makes it very attractive for some.

Keep in mind that the total installed base of Blu-ray is very small -- even counting the Playstation 3 - when compared to SD DVD players. Also, according to news reports from last month, Blu-ray player sales *dropped* after the format wars were resolved.

There's also a lot of debate on whether Blu-ray DVDs or digital downloads are the future. The jury is still out on all these issues.

For the short term, consider creating both SD and HD discs.

In answer to your second question, there are NO license fees when you burn DVDs, only when you replicate. Keep in mind that you can not burn a Blu-ray disc with AACs content management. AACs requires replication - and an extra fee.

Here's a recent article that can help: http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj_blu-ray.html

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Action Safe, Title Safe, and HD

Lucy Newman, of Brighton, UK, writes:

Absolutely loved your Digital Video Principals Lynda.com training course. I thought you were charming, you made me laugh, and it was well paced and easy to understand.

One thing I was wondering about is with TV sets increasingly being flat-screen LCD and similar - does that mean that we will now see almost full frame of our video source, unlike the old CRTs? And, as LCDs are actually more like computer monitors - do they still make the picture by interlacing or do they "fake" it when the source is interlaced?

Surely interlacing will die out soon?

Larry replies: Lucy, NOTHING in this industry looks to be dying anytime soon. We have more formats kicking around than we know what to do with.

That being said, as we move to LCD and plasma monitor displays, we will be working with an image that goes edge-to-edge. However, projection HD systems generally use over-scan to fill the screen. Also, if your HD project gets down-sampled to SD, you are back in an over-scan world, as well.

So, at least for the medium-term, it is wise to continue to use Action Safe and Title Safe as boundaries for all your essential on-screen data.

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A SmoothCam Success Story

Charlie Wilson, from BBC America, writes:

I have some video shot from a sticky-pod DVcam mounted on a motorcycle. It's for a piece we are doing next month on the "Marlboro man" the Marine from Fallujah that was the front page photo a few years ago. We are showing how he lives now in northern Kentucky. The video was a little shaky but not too bad so I assembled a timeline of the most interesting of the 30 minutes down to about 9. I then picked a very small clip, split in half (about 15 seconds) to use as a before-after test. When I dragged the smoothcam filter over the second half I saw the background process box come up saying "analyzing clip - 2 hours remaining". So I did other editing while this was in process thinking that if it takes 2 hours for that short clip, it must take a day for 9 minutes.

The shot was from the handlebars showing the rider offset to the left with scenery passing to the right. I was surprised that I did not have to make any adjustments and the result was nothing short of amazing. He was rock solid and you could see the motorcycle parts shaking back and forth. So I thought I would have to wait overnight for the rest of the 9 minutes but to my surprise, no background process box popped up and I had red render stripes in the timeline, so i hit render

and about 20 minutes later the whole timeline was smoothcamed even though the clips were not continuous. There was about 20 different parts strung together but it didn't matter that these were separate clips. It "remembered" what it did to the small sample and repeated the computation to the rest of the sequence. Truly remarkable.

Larry replies: Smoothcam is very, very close to magic. I continue to be amazed at what it does.

When Smoothcam analyzes a clip, it does not analyze from the In to the Out. It analyzes the ENTIRE clip. This means that you can change the In or the Out, or even pull other shots from the same clip, without needing to reanalyze.

Also, the analysis is stored with the clip, so that if you use that clip in other projects, it won't need to reanalyze.

This "entire clip analysis" does take longer initially, but the flexibility it provides after the analysis is complete is worth it.

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Faster Timecode Burns

Brian Pshyk is back with another tip.

I run a small video production department for a Christian charity and we have to be good stewards with our donor's money, so I'm always looking for a work around. Recently I stumbled across a way to do timecode burns to a DVD for viewing.

As you are all aware of HDV and DVCam don't do timecode burns well (unless you move up a couple of notches in playback decks) Find yourself a consumer DVD recorder (HDD-DVD is better) with a "composite in" record capability.

Take the composite out from your camera or deck and insert it into the line input of the DVD recorder. If you acquisition in HDV, remember to set the output to HDV-DV convert. Make sure the counter/date is showing and record the signal! If your videographer did a complete job in the field, and set the hours timecode number to correspond to the tape number then you can have up to 24 tapes with their own distinctive number. If not just remind your person doing the logging or transcribing to mark the DVD number with the timecode number and you are good to go!

Simple fast and cheap!

Larry replies: Thanks, Brian, for another great tip.

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When Red Turns Ugly

Matt Holt, from Leicester, England, writes:

My problem is simple, the colour (or should I say color) RED. Whenever I use the color Red in text for an edit, something strange happens. The edges become aliased and look as though they have been eaten into once the timeline is rendered. I realize that this is something to do with working on a DV timeline (PAL as I'm from the UK), but no matter what I do, if I render an animation loss-less codec in After Effects, if I use a high quality pict etc. as soon as I hit that render button, the text looks nasty!

I've tried drop shadows..the same happens... It's just my luck that many of my clients logos are bright red in color and their budgets only stretch to DV timescales! Is there a way of achieving crisp red text in Final Cut Pro on a DV timeline?

Larry replies: The problem is that your red is outside the YUV (YCrCb) color space used by digital video.

Computers use RGB, printing presses use CMYK, and video uses YUV. The color red you want to use isn't supported by the color space, which is why it looks so bad.

The ONLY option is to desaturate the color so that is within the YUV color space - and to determine that, you'll need to use the vectorscope to make sure the saturation of the color doesn't exceed the red target in distance from the center point.

Here's an article that explains how to read scopes and how to determine if a color is over-saturated:

http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj_scopes.html

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Archiving Redux

Kim Barry Brunhuber writes:

Thanks again for your excellent tips, which I'm enjoying. Your recent newsletter alludes to a discussion you've had on archiving... is that discussion 'archived' somewhere because you also mention the evils of Media Manager, which I've experienced ad-nauseam... it has more than once quit in the middle of consolidating/archiving a project and I've lost the original material without getting the archived version, so I have to redigitize the entire project! Do you have a solution somewhere... I have lots of video projects which I'd like to delete the unused media but am scared to do so for the aforementioned reason.

Larry replies: Yup. There are several articles:

- http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj_archive.html
- http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj_backup.html
- http://www.larryjordan.biz/articles/lj_media_mgr_delete.html

We also have a detailed article on archiving in the next issue of [Edit Well](#).

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More Thoughts on HDV

Ben Balser, from New Orleans, LA, has been following our on-going discussion of HDV and sends in the following:

I don't use HDV in my productions, but I have many students and consulting clients who do. These are folks editing on G5s. Maybe Intel systems are different, but not every one can afford to upgrade whole studios at the drop of a hat.

Their biggest complaint to me is the "conforming" process window that pops up when they drop in transitions, do compositing, etc, and how fast RT falls apart with text, overlays, etc. I'm told that although it's only a few moments to wait for this "conforming" window to disappear and free FCP back up for more editing, there's dozens and dozens of those "few moments" in their productions. I can't speak for myself, again, I don't shoot in HDV, but I would like to pass along the complaints of real folks using HDV native in the real world trying to make a living with it on older G5 Macs.

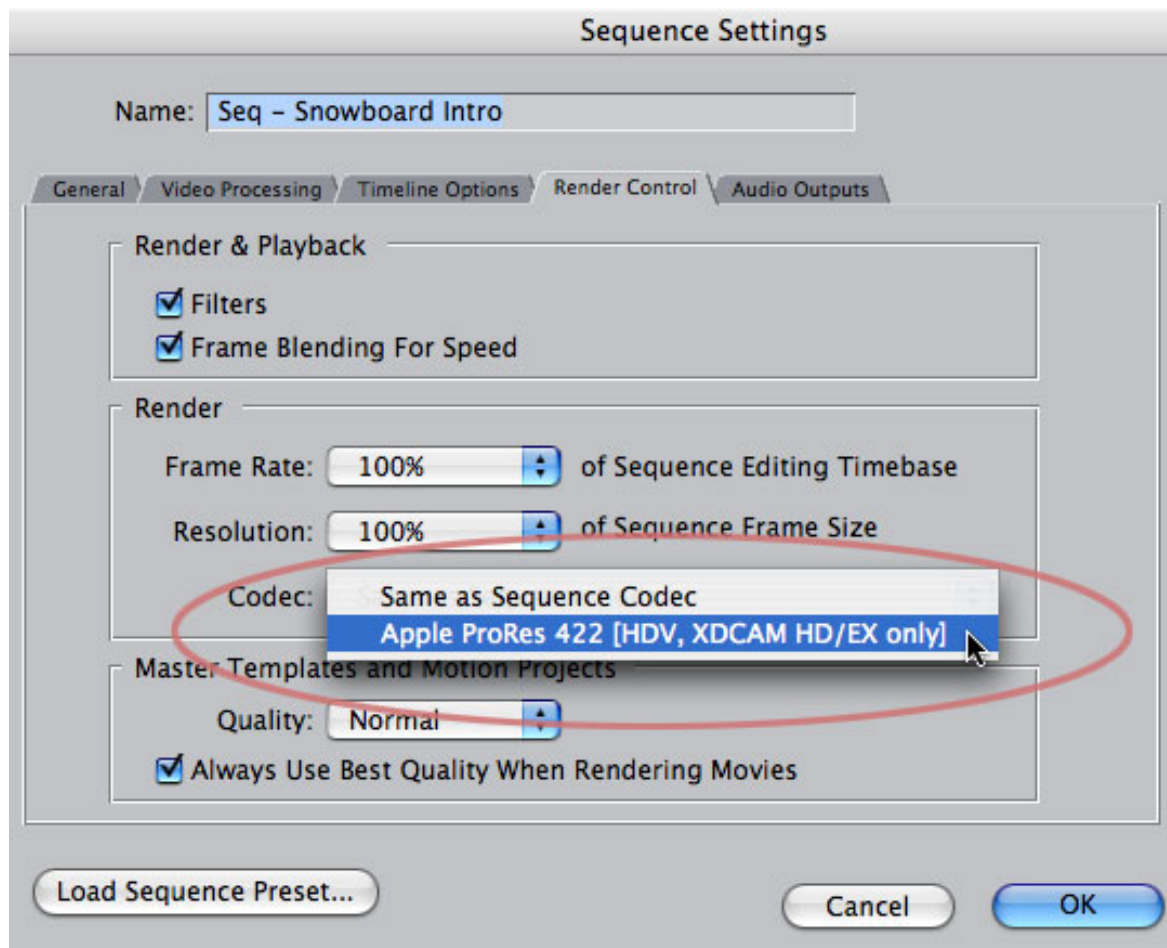
When I suggest trying to capturing in AIC or Pro Res, I always get the response a week later that they are MUCH happier and can work faster in AIC or Pro Res. Almost all of these productions are not going back to HDV tape (something I think is rare in the "real world"), but going to QT

files for web and computer viewing, and to DVDs. Thus, the extra time it takes for HDV to transcode to anything else is much longer than an all I-Frame codec. I'm not sure what you'd actually do with a Mini-DV tape that has HDV on it, anyway. The folks I'm hearing from tell me they have no use for a final project printed back out to Mini-DV in HDV. None of our local broadcast stations will accept that, but they'll accept QT files, Beta tape, and DVD!

The folks I know who capture as Pro Res claim they find the 4:2:2 space doesn't reduce the HDV image quality in any manner, and preserves the quality of CG's (when do you NOT use CG these days?) and DVCPRO-HD (it's super popular with our local broadcast studios) footage in the Timeline, they tell me, better than bringing it into 4:2:0 HDV. And the majority of them are using Color for polishing things up, and really want as much color space to work with as they can when CG or DVCPRO-HD footage is added into the production.

Larry replies: I've long been a fan of transcoding HDV into ProRes. ProRes offers much higher quality, however, file sizes are also about 5 times bigger.

As an interim step, if you are editing HDV, XDCAM HD, or XDCAM EX, change your render preference to render in ProRes. This gives you about 35% faster renders into a higher quality color space, without having to convert all your files from HDV native.



To do this, go to **Sequence > Settings > Render** tab.

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Creating Better Credit Rolls

Paul Harrill writes:

I recently dealt with creating scrolling credits in 1080i for television (a short produced for ITVS),

and it is, indeed, a headache as you and your readers described. The person who mentioned the 120 pixels/second issue is correct. That's what you need, but the issue is that I've not found a way to adjust to this speed (or something divisible by it). It would be great for Apple or Boris to build this into their titlers, but until then I've found a solution.

It's a free 3rd-party preset for After Effects called "Mercury Jones FlickerFree Credit Roll." (I can't take any responsibility for it -- I just read about it on Creative Cow.) Basically, the preset computes how long your credits are and the duration (roughly) you want them to last. Then it makes them scroll at an appropriate speed. Hallelujah!

The link to it is here: <http://www.mercuryjones.com/aepresets.html>

Larry replies: Paul, thanks for the tip!

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More Credit Success

Grant Harrington, from Fargo, ND, writes:

I've been using CHV-Electronics Text-Collection, <http://chv-plugins.com/cms/Fx-Script/Text-collection/Credits.php>, Credits 4.1 for several years and am very happy with the results.

You can have up to 9 different font settings and 9 different images in your credits. There are lots of other user-defined settings that make this yet another tool for Credit Rolls.

Larry replies: Grant, thanks for the tip!

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Problems Getting Motion to Run

There have been a lot of reports recently about problems in installing Motion. **Ron** sent me the following tip, based on advice he got from **Mark Spencer**.

I have managed to get Motion running,

This is the order of installs I followed. I specifically did another order from Alex did to try and find a way. This has worked for me:

I have done a Leopard erase and install (to make sure..) and did all the updates of the MACOS first (iLife 8.2, QuickTime 7.1.4, iTunes 7.6.1, FrontRow 2.1.2, AirPort Util 5.3.1, MacOS Update 10.5.2).

Then I installed FCS2 (and Motion worked!).

Then ran software update (ProKit, ProApps 2001-1, Safari 3.1, Leopard Graphics update, Security Update 2008-002, Time Machine & Airport update).

After that; ProApps 2007-2, and then all the upgrades from FCS2, to FCP 6.0.2 etc. All following 'Software Update'.

Everything now works as it should, presets, FXPlugs, Master templates and what have you.

So Mark Spencer was right all along, I only needed some time to get to terms with the complete reinstall....

Larry replies: Thanks, Ron, for allowing me to share this.

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Thoughts on Shooting 24 fps Video

Frank Jonen wrote about my recent articles, and discussion on The BuZZ, about shooting 24 fps video.

Frank writes:

I shot parts of the 17th Annual Los Angeles Music Awards with that in 24p mode. No jerky motion. Philip Hodgetts digitized it in 23.976 straight into FCP. Then using the free JES de-interlacer (<http://www.xs4all.nl/~jeschot/home.html>). It looks clean and all I hate about it is the pisspoor color performance of that cam. I needed to do some grading to get the look that we wanted so that required some work in Nuke via Furnace to create a working RGB instead of that YUV crippled grandpa format.

And to weigh in on the 24p issue in general. It's always about what helps to tell the story at hand. We wanted a stylized impression that looks more intense with longer motion blur trails in the faster action shots. So 24p was the way to go.

For my next movie we're likely shooting at 100 fps for the slomo and 60p for the main feature. Because it's about a window to another world, and in 3D which draws the audience in even more. That's what's delaying cinelooks.com btw :)

The reason for 60p is just that the human eye has a flicker fusion frequency of about 60 'images' so if we just go a little over that it'll look like reality, then we mess with the grading and really mess people up :)

But the reason I like 24 is that it takes you out of reality for that moment in time. Showing something that's NOT real and NOT TV.

Larry replies:

I appreciate your comments. I think my basic point is that too often 24 fps is a knee-jerk reaction that solves the wrong problem.

The reason film looks the way it does is not due to 24 fps. However, explaining to someone who wouldn't recognize good lighting if it landed on their foot how to use camera filters or ND to create depth of field can be a challenge.

Frank replies:

Does it look like film because it's 24p and has some nice DOF (depth of field)? Not at all. Film has about 5 to 8 correlating coats that aren't aligned perfectly creating its own dynamic range which is so chaotic and organic that it currently would take an unjustifiable amount of time to replicate.

And yes: Shoot it in 24p mode, it'll look just like film! - makes my knee jerk. ;)

Larry adds: Thanks, Frank, for taking the time to write.

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Using Photoshop Video Presets

Tucker writes:

The question I have is about the Photoshop Presets. I have seen you and he both describe these methods, but neither have ever said anything about the Photoshop presets (since CS1, I believe) that let's you pick "FILM & VIDEO" and then "NTSC DV". If you choose this, then you'll notice that under "advanced" photoshop is actually displaying the pixels to rectangular. My guess is that it is creating a 720x540 Photoshop file, but then displaying it to you "squished" so you can design correctly.

Larry replies: My understanding is that you are correct. Photoshop always works and stores in square pixels. The Film/video option is just a display preference but does not change the actual file itself. In which case, this is not particularly helpful for creating files for import into Final Cut.

WRAP-UP

Well, that's about it for this month. For current news on what's happening in our industry, be sure to listen to the Digital Production BuZZ every week.

- Save 15% and register now for our PowerUP seminar tour. Enter **PREREG** as the registration code.
- And don't forget to visit our store and check out our latest training titles - like HD Workflows.

In the meantime, please continue sending me your comments and questions. I love hearing from you and enjoy the conversations that develop around these stories.

Until next month, take care, and edit well.

Larry

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