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Larry Jordan's Monthly Newsletter

Editor: Larry Jordan
Issue #60 - September, 2009

Welcome to the latest edition of my monthly Final Cut Studio newsletter for September, 2009.

The goal of this newsletter is to provide information helpful to the interested user of Final Cut Pro. This newsletter publishes each month, past issues are available in my store. 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 daily tips, the latest industry news, and over 450 articles and tutorials to help you get the most out of Final Cut!

NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

- [Welcome - Happy Birthday To Us!](#)
- [Introducing Larry's New Half-Day Workshops](#)
- [Review: Sheffield Softworks Retouching Filters](#)
- [Digital Production Buzz is Going To DV Expo](#)
- [Workflow: Belt and Suspenders - DigiNovations' XDCAM Workflow Using Drobo](#)
- [Larry's New Video Tutorials and Bundles](#)
- [Technique: Testing Your System for 64-Bit Support](#)
- [News: QuickTime Updated to 7.6.4](#)
- [Observations With Snow Leopard and Final Cut Pro](#)
- [What Are Your Favorite FCP7 Features?](#)
- [Larry's Thoughts on Upgrading](#)
- [A Snow Leopard Question](#)
- [Technique: Setting Up Capture Scratch and Two Grips](#)
- [Tips From The Pros](#)
- [Taking The Pro Out of Macbook Pro](#)
- [Gamma and Chroma Problems ... From Somewhere](#)
- [Moving Stills Using PhotoMotion](#)
- [Monitoring Video](#)

[PASSING THOUGHTS](#)

- iChat Theater Tutorial
- Twittering Shortcuts
- Big Final Cut Conference in New Orleans
- More Storage Options
- Blackmagic is Making News - Again
- Another Great Editing Conference - in Michigan and Indiana
- Free Upgrades to Boris Calligraphy
- PBS Broadcast Specs
- This Just In From Our Edinburgh Bureau

READER MAIL

- Customizing Blu-ray Templates
- Improving Picture Quality
- Replace and Scale a Shot Simultaneously
- Audio Mix-Down In FCP 7
- Can't Link To Compressor
- Converting HDV To SD For DVD
- Transcoding to Prores
- Selecting The Right Signal
- Constant Motion Rendering
- A Question of Media Management
- Better Ways to Export

WRAP-UP

WELCOME - HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!

Today marks the start of the **sixth season** of publishing this newsletter. In actual calendar time, issue #1 was released in January, 2004, to a total of 101 subscribers.

This issue marks the 60th issue (because there were some months I just didn't have time to get the newsletter done) -- and we have grown to almost 20,000 subscribers!

It's been an amazing five years - in our industry and in life in general.

Five years ago, in January, 2004:

- We were still working with Final Cut Pro 4 (Version 4.5 was released in April, 2004)
- OS X 10.3.3 (Panther) was the current operating system
- The Macintosh market share was around 2%
- Final Cut Studio had not been announced
- Compressor, Cinema Tools, Soundtrack, and LiveType were available
- Motion and Color (from Apple) were not.
- Final Cut Pro's installed base was around 200,000
- Final Cut Express 2 was launched
- We principally shot, captured, and output to tape
- Final Cut Pro did not yet support HDV
- *Cold Mountain*, a film edited by **Walter Murch** using Final Cut Pro 3, was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Editing

The last five years have been a wild time.

Today, Final Cut Studio's installed base is approaching 2 million people worldwide. Final Cut Pro has grown to version 7 and was updated within the last month, OS X has moved up to 10.6, and the Mac's share of the market has grown to almost 10% - depending upon how you read the figures.

Through it all, this newsletter has been here to help you make sense of all the turmoil. To get a better understanding of how the software works. And to give all of us a chance to ask, and answer, questions about an industry that changes daily.

I am enormously proud of what this newsletter has turned into - a world-wide forum for sharing ideas. My hope is to continue our growth - in subscribers and content - into the future.

Last month marked our largest issue ever - 50 pages filled with information! (If you missed the issue, you can [read it here for another week](#) or so, then it will be available in [our store](#)).

This month, we have articles contributed by several guest writers. If you have an idea, technique, or tip you want to share - send it to me. And I'll get it into a future issue.

Finally, I want to thank you for subscribing and reading each issue. Every month, for the last sixty issues, our readership has grown. To the best of my understanding, we are the largest Final Cut Pro specific publication on the planet. And that would not be possible without your enthusiastic support - reading, sending in questions, commenting on current issues, and correcting us when we make mistakes.

Its been a great five years - and I'm looking forward to the changes the next five years bring.

Thanks!

[[Go to Top.](#)]

INTRODUCING LARRY'S NEW HALF-DAY WORKSHOPS

One of the most frequent requests I get is to present more workshops, in local areas, and at a reasonable cost.



Introducing a series of 4-hour **MONTHLY** workshops across southern California. Our first seminar was a success in Woodland Hills. Our next is later this week in Burbank, followed a few days later in Anaheim.

HIGH-QUALITY, INEXPENSIVE WORKSHOPS

We set ourselves the following goals:

- Create a new workshop every month
- Offer them in more than one city - and outside downtown LA
- Make them inexpensive
- Go in-depth on a single subject
- Add more time for questions and discussion

So, I'm delighted to announce we've done it - one seminar, three locations, every month:

- Anaheim, CA - starting Sept. 21

- Burbank, CA - starting Sept. 18
- Woodland Hills, CA - next meeting Sept. 30

[Click here](#) to learn more and register. Discover our innovating discount pricing!

I've reserved almost two hours at each seminar to make sure you get your hardest technical questions answered. I'd love to see you there!

Please [register today](#)! I'd love to see you there.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

REVIEW: SHEFFIELD SOFTWARES RETOUCHING FILTERS

For the last couple of months, I've been conducting seminars around California and one of the segments I've been presenting is on filters to improve the look of your video.

Patrick Sheffield, at **Sheffield Softworks**, sent me some of his filters to showcase at my seminars. There are three that are specifically valuable in retouching:

- Electronic Makeup Artist (\$149)
- Digital Coverup (\$79)
- Look Sweet (\$29), which is a suite of three filters

He also has a variety of other filters which are useful in creating cartoon and graphic novel looks. You can see his full product line here: www.sheffieldsoftworks.com,

[[Go to Top.](#)]

DIGITAL COVERUP

Digital Coverup solves the problem of getting rid of facial blemishes without requiring frame-by-frame retouching in Photoshop.

As their website states:

You first select the color of the blemish, then select the skin tone, and it colors the former to match the latter, along with smoothing if specified. The coverup keys on color, so the color of the blemish must be distinct enough from normal skin-tone for DCU to isolate it.

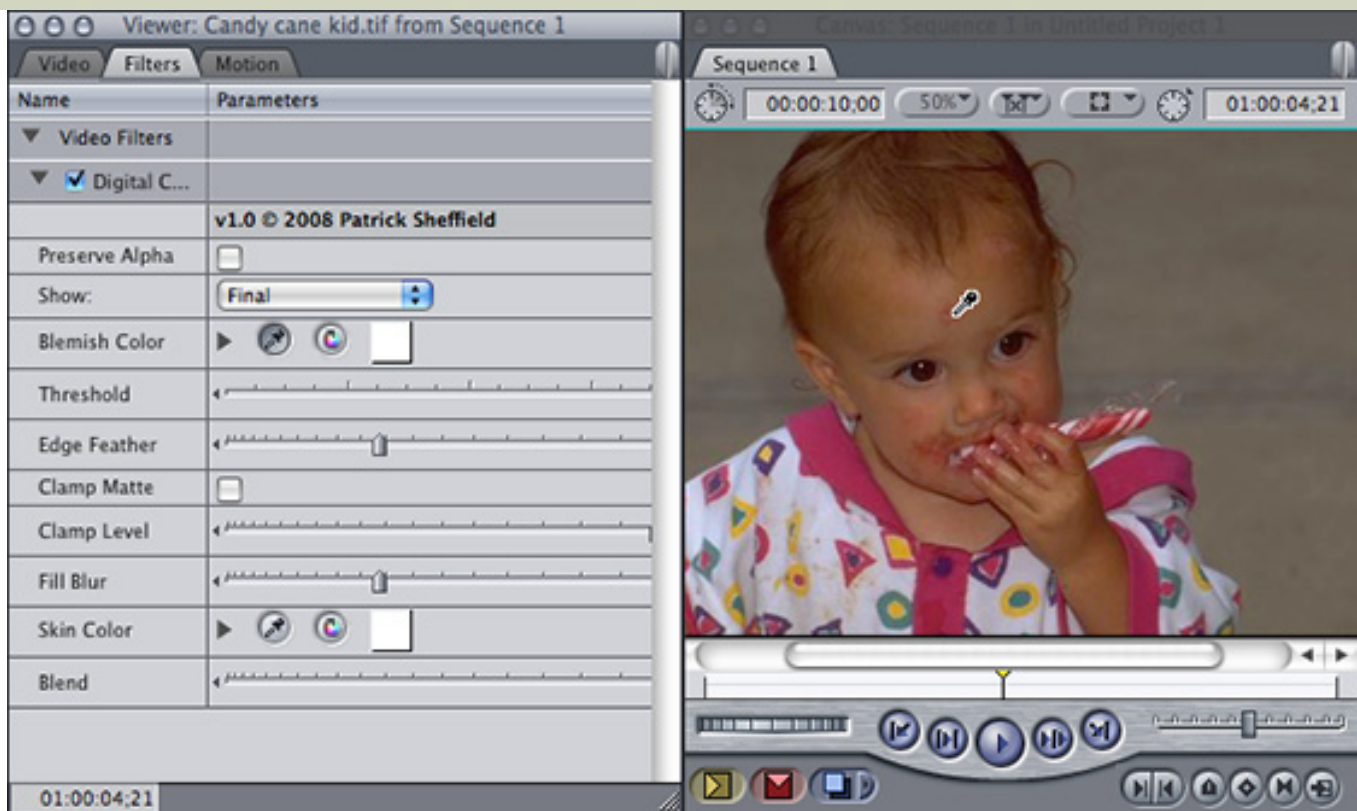
Digital Coverup can be used for changing the color of and/or smoothing anything you can isolate. It's been successfully used to change eye color, tone down the highlight on a bald spot, and change the color of a blanket from pink to blue. Need to make your grass greener?

Here's how it works.



In this example, we have a kid eating a candy cane - with a red bump on her forehead. We want to keep the candy cane, but lose the red bump.

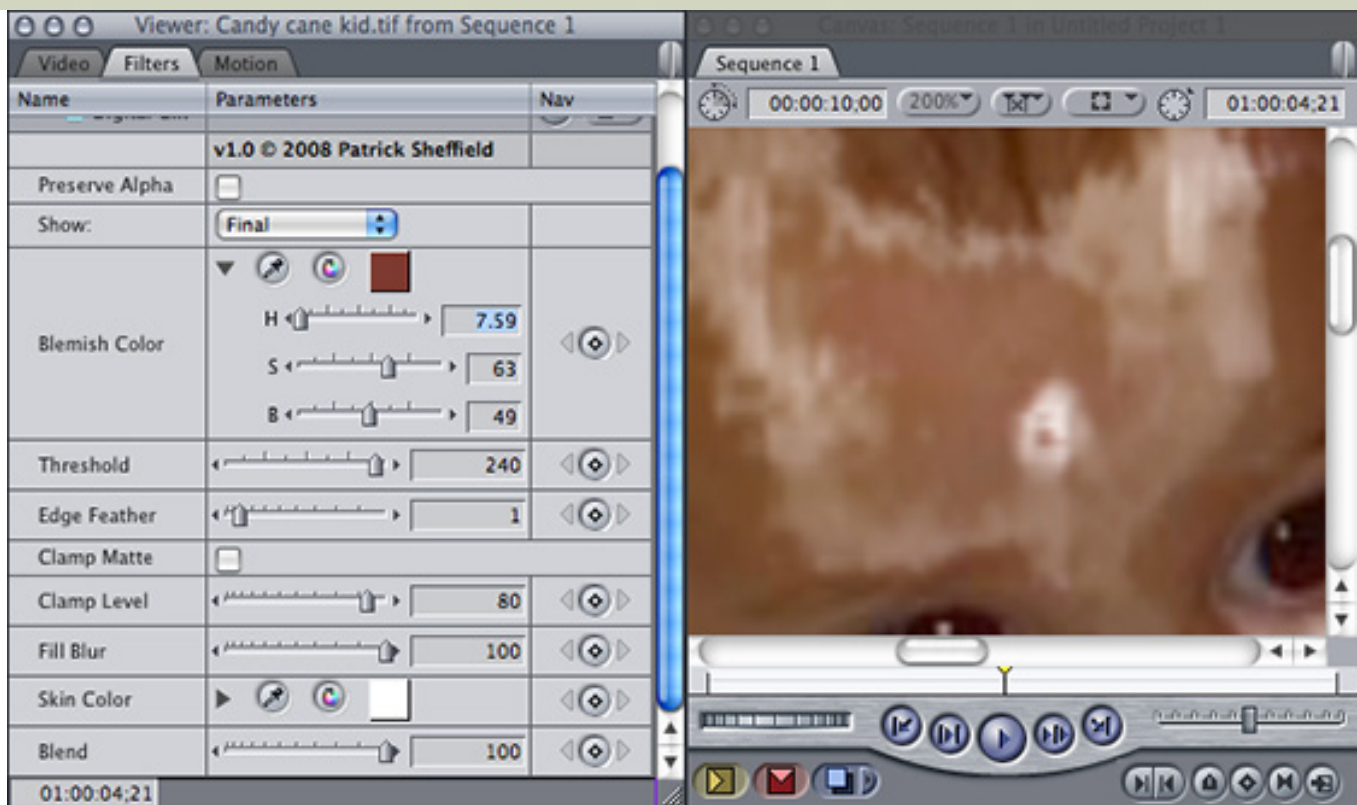
1. Apply the **Digital Coverup** filter
2. Double-click the clip to load into the Viewer and select the **Filters** tab.



3. Click the eyedropper next to **Blemish Color** and click directly on the blemish. Instantly, you'll see a white matte effect that illustrates the colors to be modified.

Your goal is to get the white area to JUST cover the blemish and nothing else.

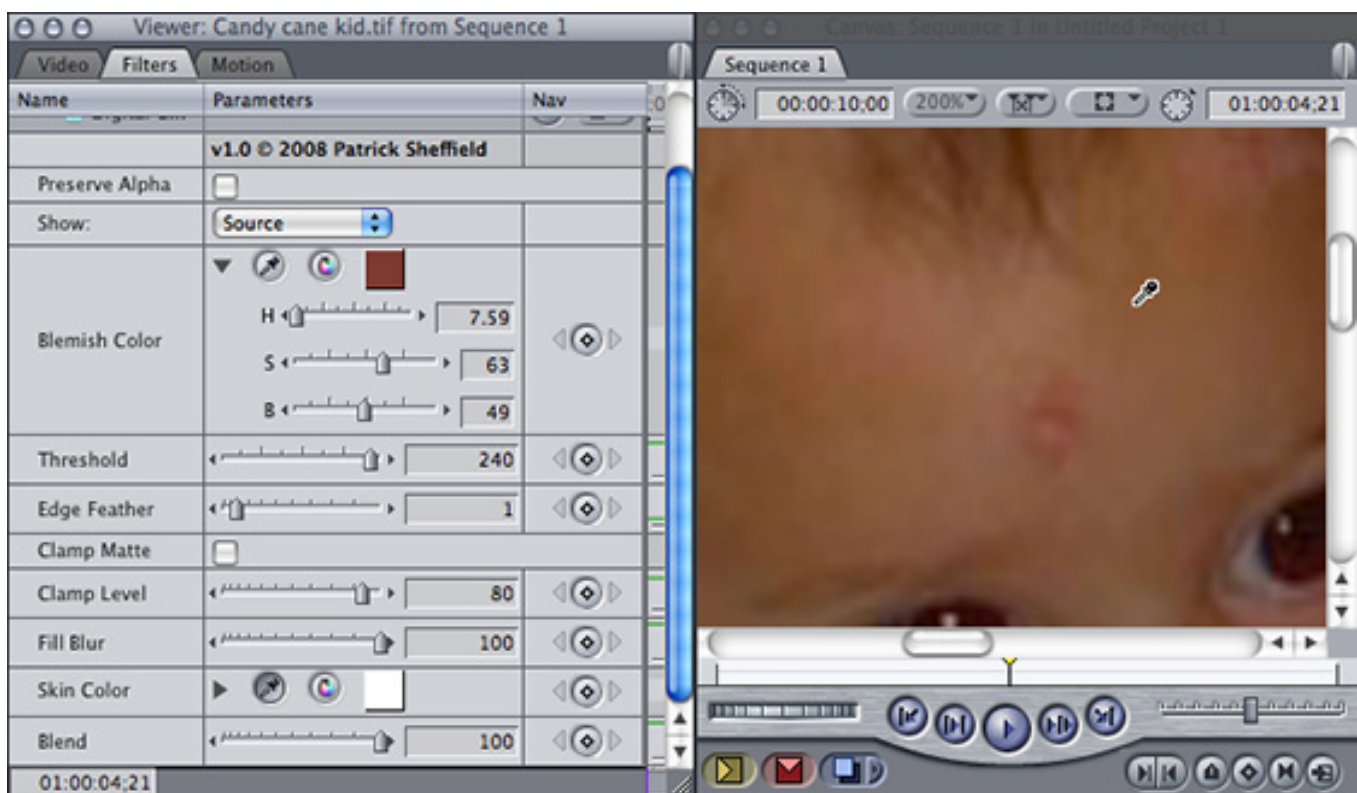
4. In this case, the red of the bump and the child's skin color were so close, that I twirled down the arrow next to Blemish color and adjusted the **HSL** settings until I got the best isolation on the red that I could.



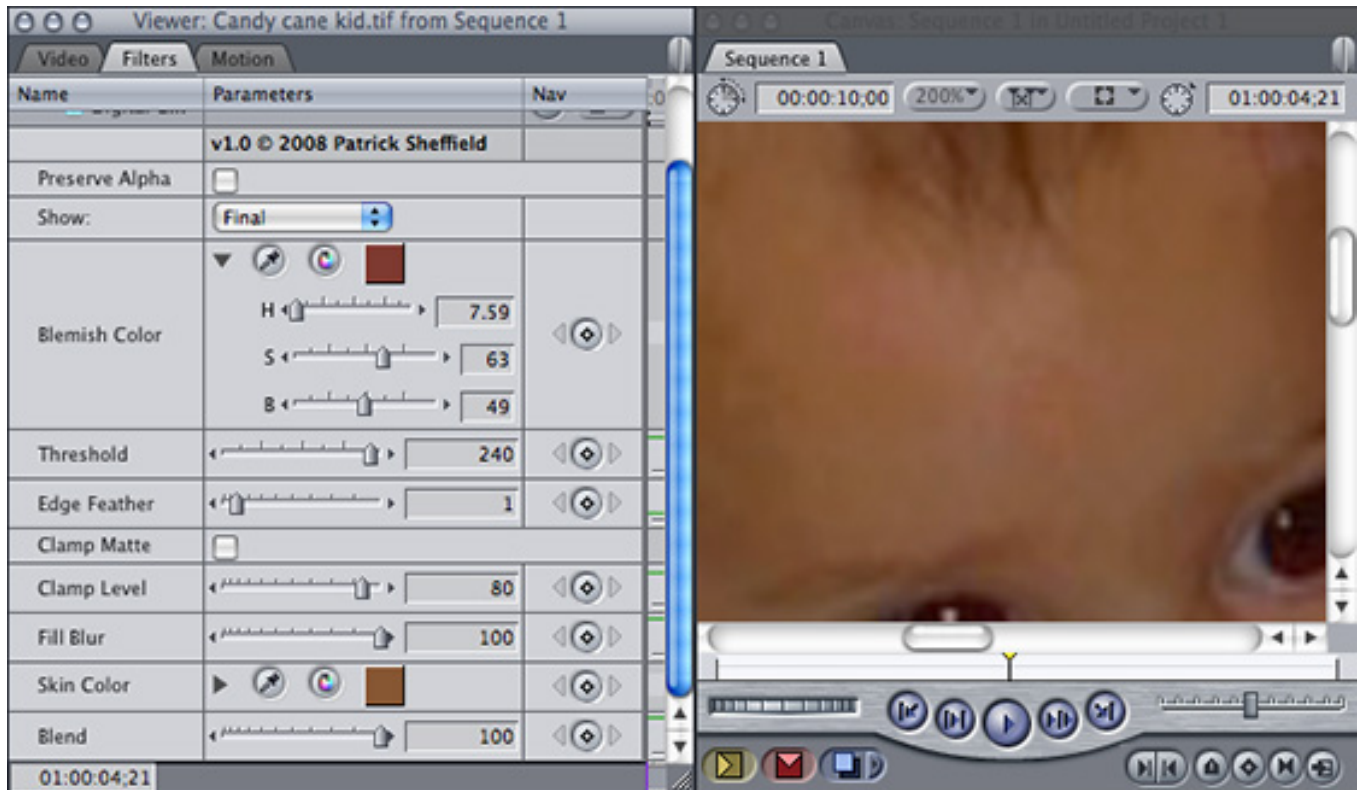
This adjustment took me about five minutes before I was happy.

By the time I was done, I tweaked all three HSL levels, plus the **Threshold** and **Edge Feather**. Fortunately, the filter provides great feedback on the quality of your matte, so you can see instantly what works and what doesn't.

5. Change the Show popup menu to **Source**, to make the matte effect go away.



6. Click the eyedropper next to **Skin Color** and select the skin color you want to hide the blemish with. In this case, selecting a lighter color made the face go too plastic and pasty. I selected a slightly darker color, closer to the temples.



7. Switch the pop-up back to **Final** and - poof! - no blemish.



This beats hours of work rotoscoping a clip in Photoshop!

Adjusting this filter reminds me of using the limit effect in the Color Corrector 3-way filter. It takes time to get the right isolation on color you want to remove. But, as long as you take the time, and are gentle with your replacement colors, this does a very nice job cleaning up faces without rotoscoping.

However, the process isn't instant - so allow yourself 5-15 minutes to get the effect to look right. But the good news is that as long as the color of the blemish doesn't change, as it would, for example, under different lighting, you can quickly fix an entire clip.

LOOK SWEET

Look Sweet is composed of three filters:

- Mr. Fixit
- Vibrance+
- Glamour

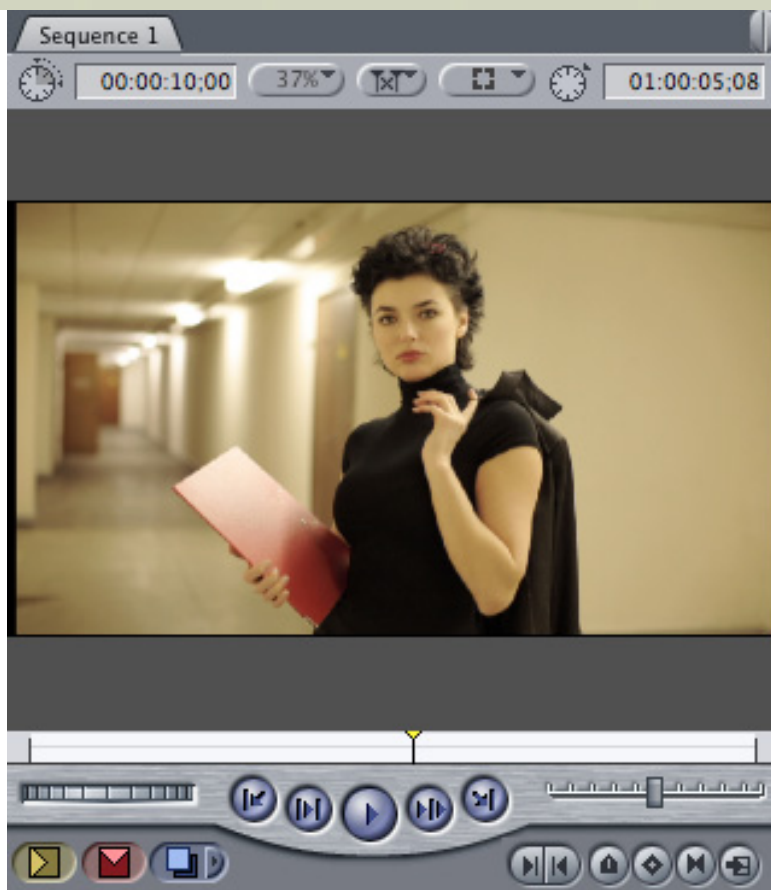
Again, from their website:

Mr. Fixit is the ultimate footage rescue system. What Mr. Fixit does, using some HDR photography techniques, is build the brightest possible shadows and the darkest possible highlights and allow you to mix them back into the original image without affecting the color.

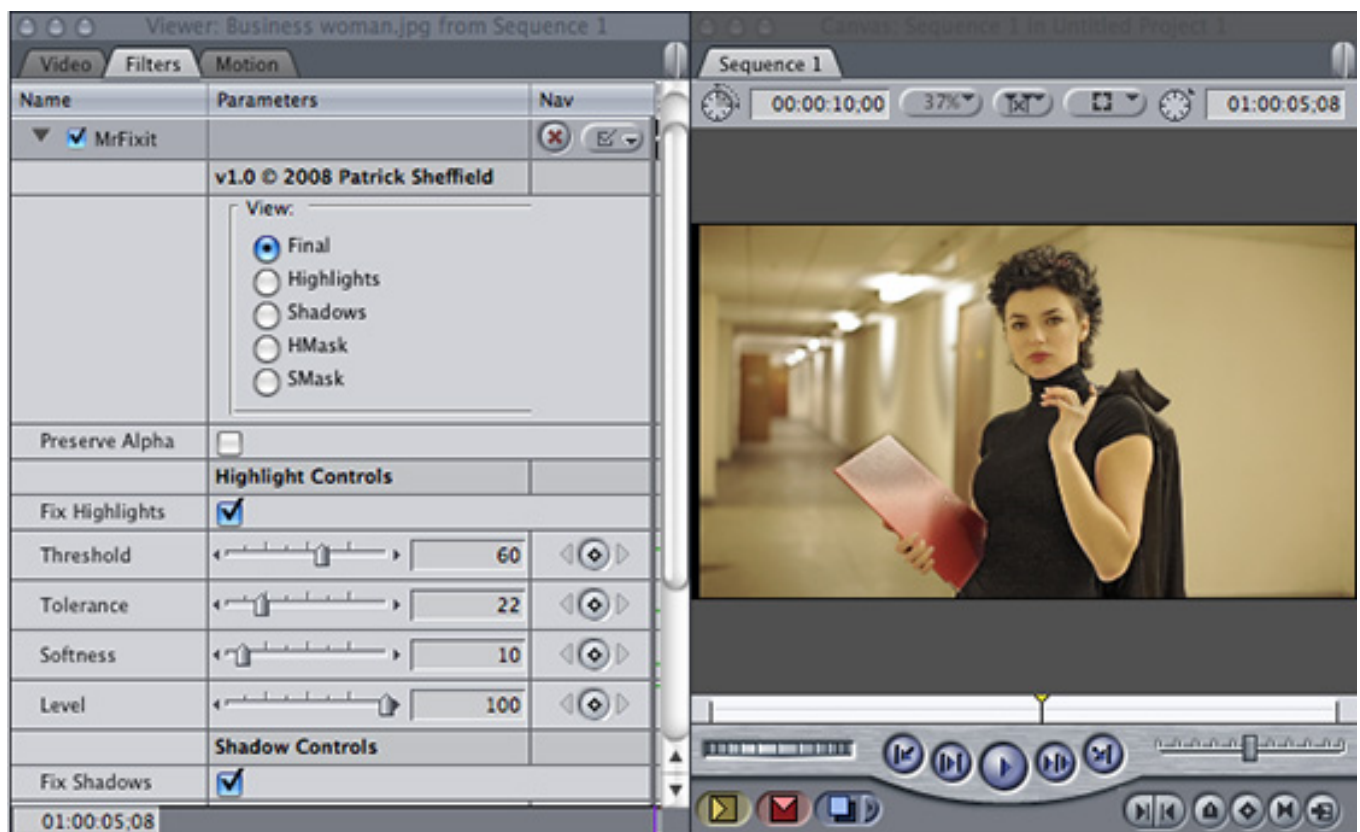
Vibrance+ gives you fine control over saturation and desaturation of your clips - it increases chroma more in the lower saturation areas, so you get a more vibrant image. You can also drag the slider negative to decrease the chroma in higher saturation areas more than lower ones. The "plus" modes are Pastel, which lightens the high chroma areas and makes them pale. And Enhance, which slightly brightens higher chroma areas so can give people an "inner glow".

Glamour gives your footage the final polish. One user described it as sprinkling gold dust on everything. It's a combination of sharpening highlights and softening shadows. It can really bring dull DV footage to life.

So, let's see how these work in practice.



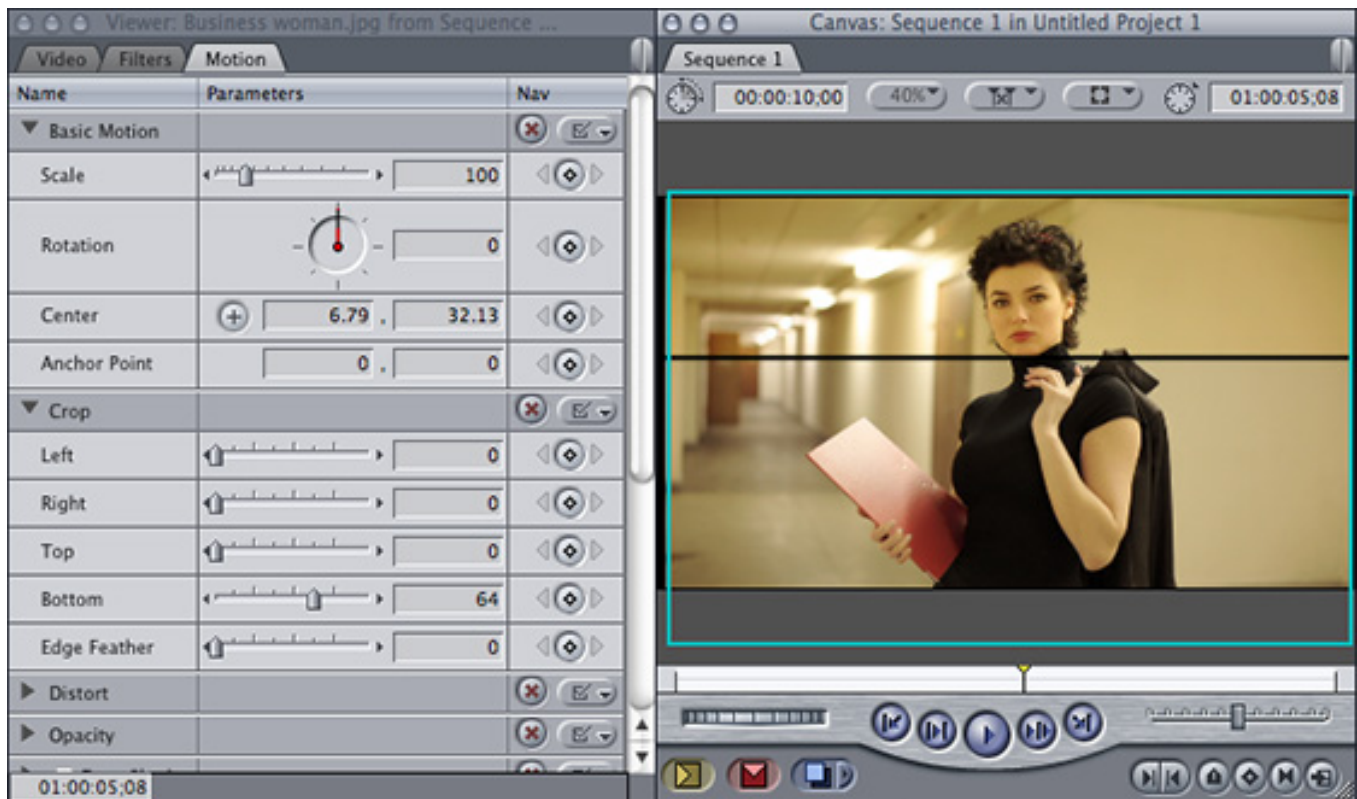
Here's an image where a professional business woman is lit with flat lighting, with a orange color shift, and her skin tone lacks pop.



I apply **Mr. Fixit**, and while it improves the detail in the highlights (notice the wall

under the ceiling lights) and the shadows (notice the edging around her arm), the effect is too pronounced. In this case, we don't need the extra detail Mr. Fixit provides.

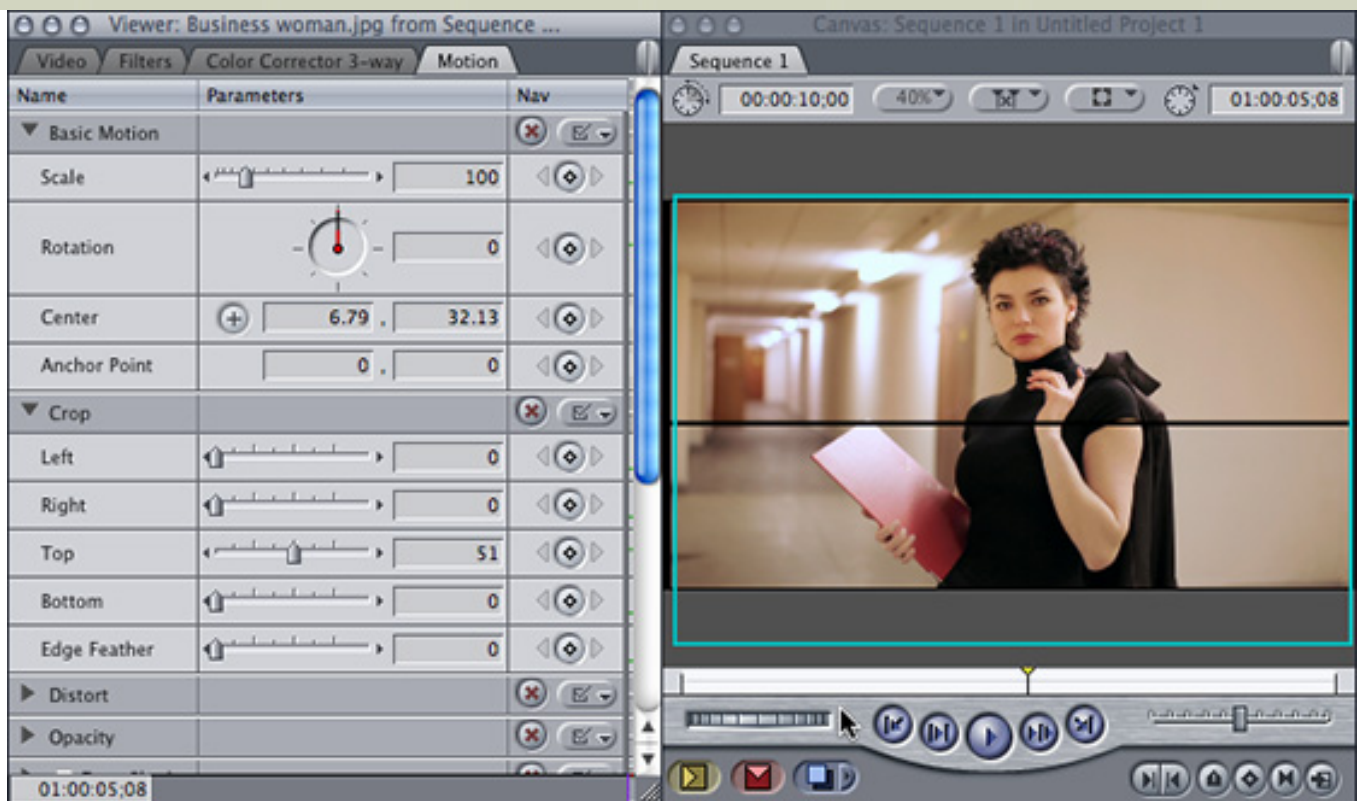
Let's remove the filter and apply **Vibrance+**.



This is a bit more subtle, but much more pleasing.

I created a split screen where the filter effect is on top. Notice how much more saturated and "rich" the skin tones of her face are, compared to her arm.

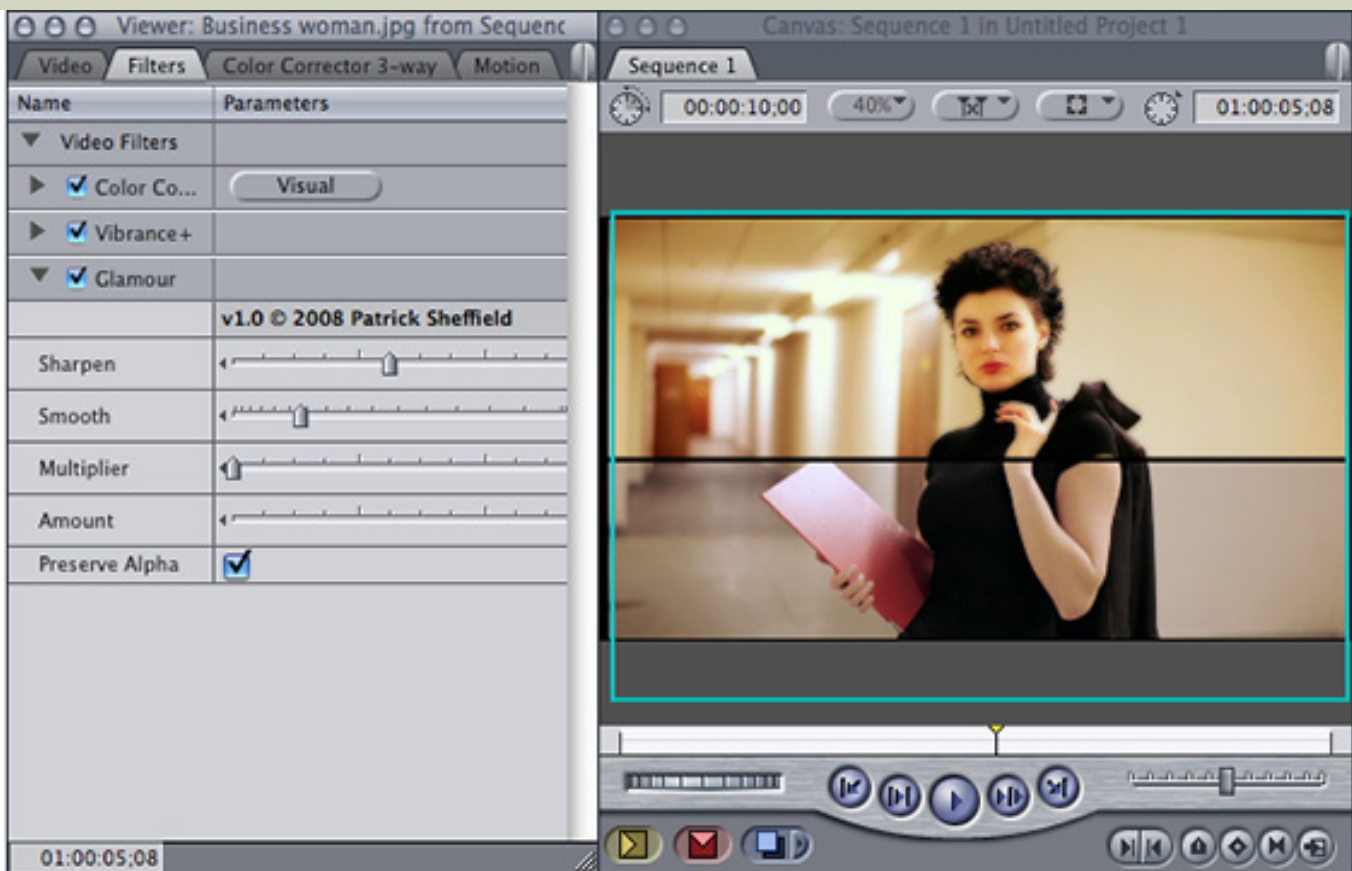
What I need to do, however, is color correct this clip first to remove the color cast, then apply the Vibrance+ filter.



When I do, the image looks like this. (The effect is on the top.) I like what this filter does and, unlike Digital Cover Up, applying this filter is one-button easy.

Clearly, this filter needs to be done AFTER you do any color correction, or the effect would be lost.

Let's apply the last of the three filters - **Glamour**.



This filter sharpens edges, softens shadows, and allows you to darken mid-tones. This is similar to a multi-layer effect using composite modes, but much easier to achieve.

I found the sharpening was a bit too aggressive for my taste, but the **Sharpen** slider made it very easy to adjust.

The amount of softening, what the filter calls "smoothing", is also set to look best for a close-up, but by backing the **Smooth** slider down just a bit, we end up with a very impressive image.

The nice thing about **Look Sweet** is that by breaking the process of final image enhancement into three filters, you can easily pick the filters you need to improve specific shots.

- I can easily see adding **Vibrance+** to every shot with a person in it.
- **Mr. Fixit** would work best, for me, in wide shots, especially landscapes where I want to add some detail to the sky and foreground.
- **Glamour** would be idea for misty, romantic close-ups where you want to make the image as inviting as possible.

ELECTRONIC MAKEUP ARTIST

The third filter in this group is the **Electronic Makeup Artist**.

Again, from the website:

This filter allows the user to select skin-tones and apply smoothing to reduce wrinkles,

blemishes, etc. Using various detection algorithms, enough detail can be retained to avoid a 'blurry', vaseline lens look.

The idea behind this filter is to isolate a particular color - in this case skin tone - and soften it, without losing the sharpness in non-skin colors - like fabrics and backgrounds.

We can adjust this filter several ways:

- * Selecting / limiting on hue
- * Selecting / limiting on saturation
- * Selecting / limiting on luma (gray-scale)

You can also select a range then invert it to select everything except that color.

Again, the process of selection is very similar to the Limit Effect filter in the Color Corrector 3-way filter.

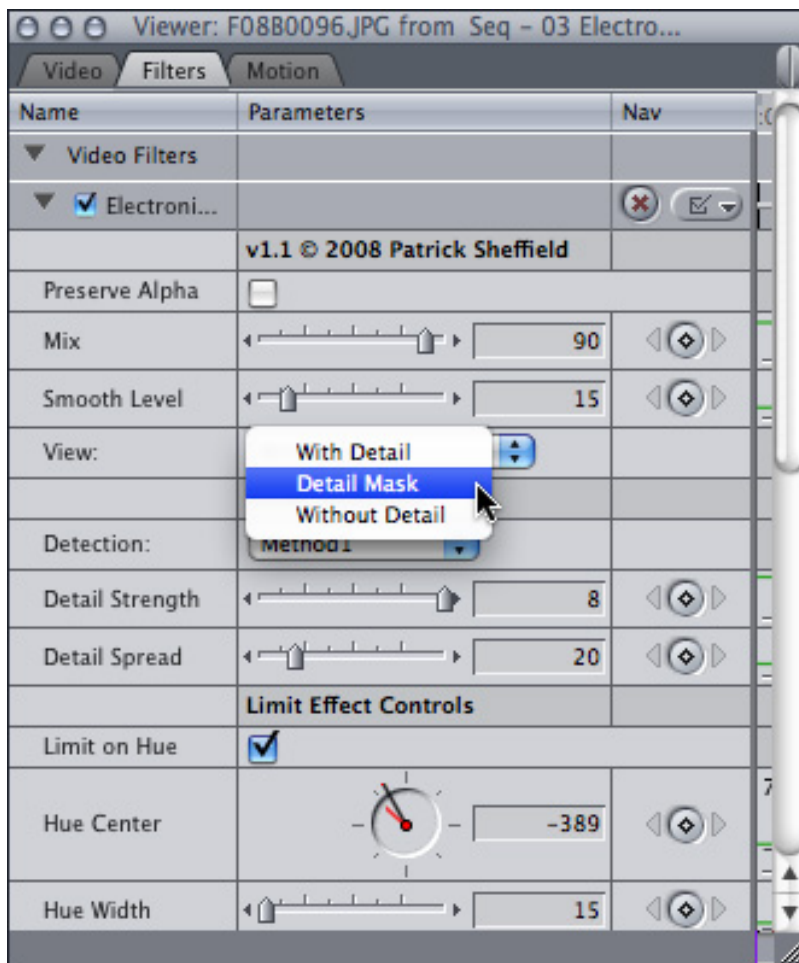


Here's our starting image. I want to smooth the lines in his face, somewhat, without losing the detail in the red fabric of his hat or the hairs in his beard.

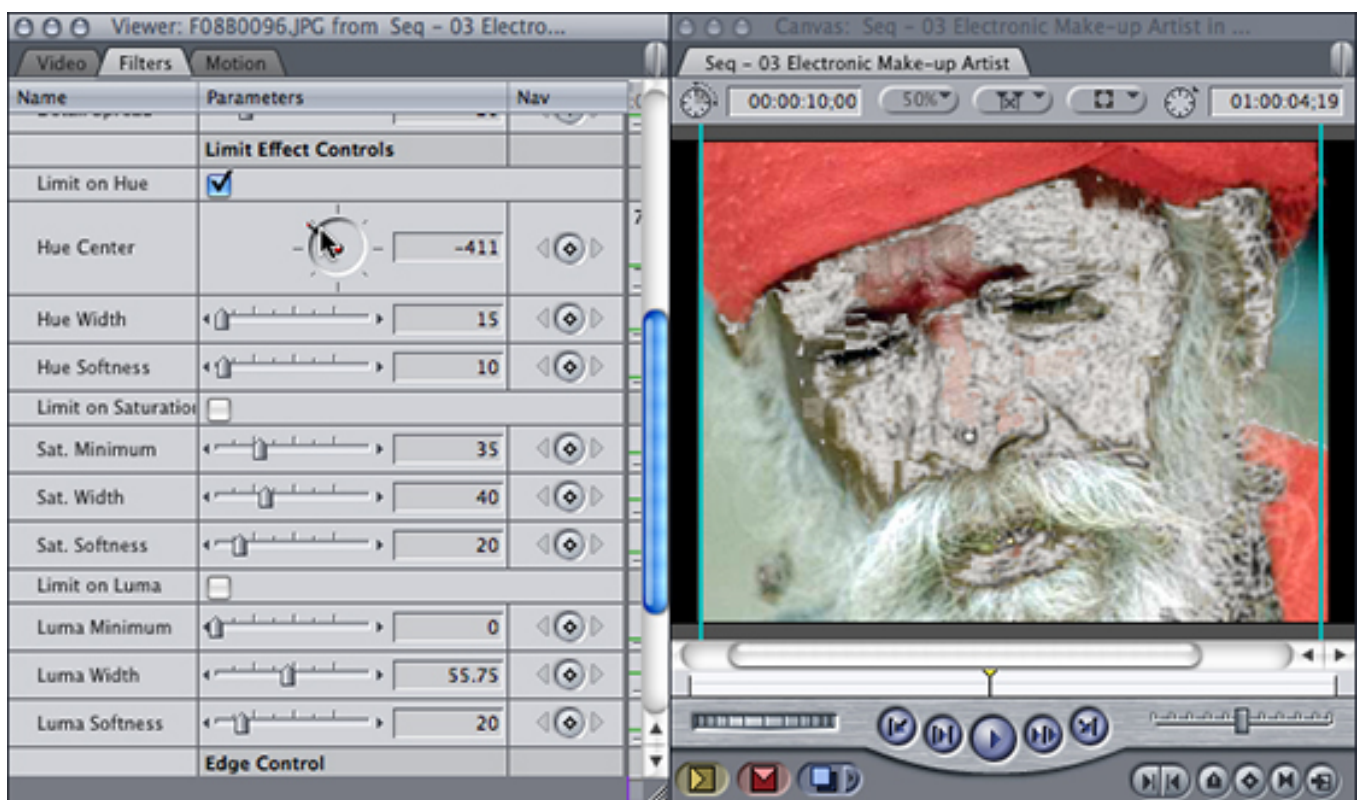
After applying the Electronic Makeup Artist filter, the process of selecting the area to smooth begins.

There are four Method's that this filter uses to determine what to smooth. Labeled Method 1, 2, 3, and 4, you select between them using a pop-up menu. Determining the best method will vary by shot. In this example, Method 1 and 4 yielded the best results.

Here's how this works:



1. After applying the filter, change the View to **Detail Mask**. This colors everything to be smoothed white, so you can easily see what you need to adjust.



2. Adjust the **Hue Center** until you maximize the white covering the skin and minimize it everywhere else.
3. Since every image is different, it will take time to fine tune your settings.



4. After adjusting all the different Hue controls, turning off Luma and Saturation limiting, my final matte looked like this.



5. When I switched the View pop-up back to **With Detail**, my final image, with smoothing looked like this.



As a comparison, here is a before (left) and after (right).

FINAL THOUGHTS

Look Sweet is a no-brainer. It is easy to use, makes skin tones glow and doesn't complicate the process with a lot of controls. It integrates easily with color correction filters. It is very cool and is now part of my permanent filter kit.

Digital CoverUp is a solid repair tool for those shots where make-up wasn't available. Properly used, it can save hours in Photoshop retouching.

Electronic Make-up Artist is a specialized tool. Properly used, it can soften hard edges. But this filter makes it way too easy to over-soften, making skin look plastic, artificial, and stretched. (For example, I really don't like the effect of the filter illustrated on the Sheffield Softworks website. If you have the option, a warm black ProMist filter on the camera will do a better job. If you don't, and the client is screaming that "something needs to be done," this filter is worth a try.

All filters have [demo versions](#) - feel free to try them out and let me know what you think.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

DIGITAL PRODUCTION BUZZ IS GOING TO DV EXPO

This year, DV Expo moves to the Pasadena, CA, Convention Center for three days of conferences, exhibits, and meetings. I'll be taking the Digital Production BuZZ to the event to provide on-going coverage in six shows, starting Sept. 22.

If you are anywhere close to Southern California, you should plan to visit the show. The trade show allows plenty of time to meet with vendors, the conferences provide extensive training on a number of software packages, as well as insight on the industry. Plus, a number of user groups are holding special meetings at the show, including: LAFCPUG, DVPA, Digital Cinema Society, Hollywood Post Alliance, and the Red User Group - LA.

For details on what The BuZZ is doing at the show, [click here](#).

For details on DV Expo, [click here](#).

Stop by - **Booth #130** - and say Hi! I'd love to take a moment to visit.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

WORKFLOW: BELT AND SUSPENDERS - DIGINOVAIONS' XDCAM WORKFLOW USING DROBO

by **Mike Chapman**
mikec@diginovations.com



We shoot and edit on the XDCAM format here at DigiNovations. Shooting with SxS cards offers great flexibility but it also means that we have to transfer large numbers of clips after each shoot; the cards are too expensive for us to archive.

Our suites are connected to a SAN, and until last year the XDCAM clips were transferred to and stored on this very fast and reliable EMC system. But even with 12 terabytes to play with, our SAN was soon filling up with raw XDCAM clips, which then had to be converted to Quicktime for use by Final Cut Pro. That effectively doubled our storage space requirements. Any homeowner knows that even the largest closet in the house will fill to capacity given enough time! The EMC array is fast and extremely reliable, but the price to expand it was prohibitive at the time.

This was distressing to this old-time tape guy for a couple of reasons: First, I had an ever-increasing number of irreplaceable assets (the clips), piling up on a storage system that was constantly nearly full. That hurt performance and drew the wrath of my fellow editors.

Fortunately a reasonably-priced alternative appeared, and we designed a workflow around it.



First, within days of seeing a demonstration at the Boston Final Cut Pro User's Group, we purchased a Drobo storage device (www.drobo.com).

This little box holds four SATA drives of any size (which can be mixed and matched), and it provides RAID-5 protection. We purchased a Drobo with four 1TB drives for about \$1,000. Attaching the device to an accessory called a DroboShare allowed us to network the Drobo over our existing Ethernet.

So now the workflow goes like this: When the SxS cards come in from the field, our assistant editor immediately transfers the XDCAM

clips to the Drobo using Sony Clip Browser. This way the clips are immediately "in the system" and protected against a single drive failure (the Drobo constantly monitors its own health and will display an alarm if a drive needs to be replaced) and the cards can immediately be returned to the field.

The beauty of having the Drobo on the network is that the producers can log clips from their desktops without editing software. All they need is Sony Clip Browser (a free download and cross-platform) and they're in business.

Next, our assistant editor creates a new project in Final Cut Pro, and imports the raw XDCAM clips into the project from the networked Drobo. The converted Quicktime clips are routed to the much faster, fibre-attached SAN. This does two things: It frees up an expensive edit room from the chore of importing perhaps hundreds of clips – which, given the speed of our Gig-E network, can be time consuming. Second, our staff editors can just open the FCP project newly created on the SAN and begin work.

And we now have an additional layer of protection – should anything happen to a master clip on the EMC array, the original XDCAM clip can be recovered from the Drobo. And to really guarantee a good night's sleep, the accumulated clips on the Drobo are backed up onto LTO tapes, which are stored offsite.

As our storage needs increase, we simply add larger drives to the Drobo one at a time. One Drobo has the theoretical capacity of 5.5TB (8x2TB, minus the "overhead" for RAID protection.) And that's a LOT of XDCAM clips, trust me. The DroboShare network adapter supports two Drobos, so when we finally fill up the first one, we'll plug in a second one filled with 2TB drives.

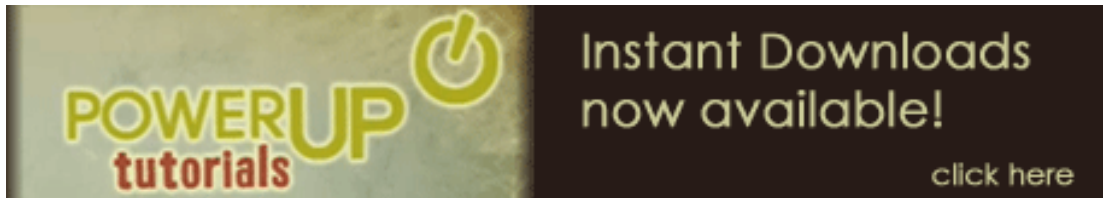
Larry adds: I did a review of the Drobo a few months ago. You can [read it here](#). Drobo is a great concept - expandable RAID 1 storage (which is normally a contradiction in terms) -- but desperately slow.

I was talking with **Mark Fucio**, of Drobo, yesterday about this. he told me that Drobo has released a

new version, called Drobo Pro, that increases storage and REALLY increases speed. He's sending me a unit to review and I hope to talk about it next month.

Thanks to Mike for sharing this. If you have a workflow or technique you'd like to share - send it in!

[[Go to Top.](#)]



CHECK OUT MY VIDEO TUTORIALS - AND NEW BUNDLES!

I'm already working on new tutorials for Final Cut Pro 7, in the meantime, take a look at over FIFTY new tutorials and bundles. These short, focused video training can solve your technical questions and get you up and running faster than anything else.

I have four different bundles - **SAVE 30%** when compared to buying tutorial separately!

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You can find the [complete list of my video bundles here](#) -- **SAVE 30%!**

With almost 50 titles to choose from, and priced at **only \$4.99** each, there's sure to be at least a couple that can help you solve the problems you're having. Each title runs 5-10 minutes and can be instantly downloaded.

More titles coming every month! Take a look and [order today!](#)

[[Go to Top.](#)]

TECHNIQUE: TESTING YOUR SYSTEM FOR 64-BIT SUPPORT

Donald Riley sent me this:

I've been using your training disks for over a year now and would be lost without them, thanks very much. Your newsletter and The BuZZ are superb as well. As just an amateur I'm hesitant to mix with you Pro's, but I thought you might appreciate these two sites to reference others who ask questions about the subject of 64-bit.

<http://www.ahatfullofsky.comuv.com/English/Programs/SMS/SMS.html>

This is a really good discussion of the whole issue of 64-bit applications, written in a very non-threatening, non-technical manner. He also includes a simple tester you can use on your system.

Keep in mind, that the whole issue of 64-bits only applies to Snow Leopard. If you haven't upgraded - and I still don't recommend it - you don't need the software, yet.

<http://seiryu.home.comcast.net/~seiryu/sixtyfourswitcher.html>

This site provides a software switch that allows you to toggle between 32-bit and 64-bits in Snow Leopard.

Larry adds: Donald, these are great. Thanks for sending them! And never worry about being an amateur. Nobody knows everything -- *ESPECIALLY* us "Pros."

[[Go to Top.](#)]

NEWS: QUICKTIME UPDATED TO 7.6.4

Apple updated QuickTime a few days ago.

According to Apple, QuickTime 7.6.4 includes changes that increase reliability, improve compatibility, and enhance security. This release is recommended for all QuickTime 7 users.

What's in this update?

- Support for iTunes 9
- Improved audio device support on Windows Vista

Larry adds: I haven't heard anything bad about this update - I loaded it on one of my systems and things seem to be working fine.

Still, don't upgrade to the latest version of QuickTime unless you are running the latest version of Final Cut Pro. FCP 4, HD, and 5 users should exercise extreme caution before upgrading.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

OBSERVATIONS WITH SNOW LEOPARD AND FINAL CUT PRO

Adam Connell writes:

I'm fortunate enough to have 2 macs, one for editing, and one for personal, and tinkering with new upgrades. So, when Snow Leopard came out 2 weeks ago (Apple has already launched 10.6.1 I see. Just goes to show how something is always left out!) I went and grabbed a copy and rather than push it into my Mac Pro 2008 model main machine, I put it through my MBP 17" 2009 model. I have found that if you "update" to Snow Leopard and have FCP installed the installer app will automatically select that the option to also install QT 7. If, however, you format the drive and do a clean install, you do have to do this manually.

Considering QT 7 Pro version is a very useful tool, (QTX I don't have any time for) I think most editors will want to know this, as, hey, sometimes it is necessary to do a clean install of the system disk. Also, note that when you have an install either from update or clean install of snow leopard, Apple has changed the installer app for their os. there is no longer just an option to do a clean install, you must restart with the installer and use disk utility to format your hard drive manually and then proceed with installing.

Larry replies: Thanks, Adam, for sending this in.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE FCP7 FEATURES?

Last month, I asked readers to send in their favorite features in Final Cut Pro 7.

Mine are:

- * Send to Compressor
- * Markers
- * ProRes 4444

Uli Plank wrote:

- * ProRes 4444
- * Blu-Ray
- * iChat Theater

Grant Harrington wrote:

Chapter markers that ripple. I do a lot of event/multi-contestant-based edits and found it tedious to make sure my timeline was completely edited and I added chapter markers just before sending off to DVDSP. Now I can add my markers as I'm creating transitions between events and edit points (speeding up edit time) and not worry about any last minute edits may effect my current chapter markers. My chapter markers will remain in position!

Larry adds: [eMail me](#) your favorite FCP 7 features are and I'll add them to a future issue.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

LARRY'S THOUGHTS ON UPGRADING

I like Final Cut Studio (3). If you have an Intel-based system, are between projects, and the price is affordable, there are a number of useful improvements in the new version that make it a worthwhile upgrade.

I am not yet ready to recommend upgrading to Snow Leopard. The latest update - 10.6.1 - was just released. It fixes a number of problems, including one with Motion 4. However, we still need to wait for the third-party community to catch up.

For now, I still recommend waiting before upgrading to Snow Leopard.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

A SNOW LEOPARD QUESTION

Warren Nelson writes:

I have a MacBook Pro with a Core 2 Duo processor. Will Snow Leopard significantly enhance Final Cut performance? And/or will Snow Leopard and the new version of Final Cut make a difference?

Larry replies: Not particularly - aside from the benefits that Snow Leopard provides outside of Final Cut Studio.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

TECHNIQUE: SETTING UP CAPTURE SCRATCH AND TWO GRIPES

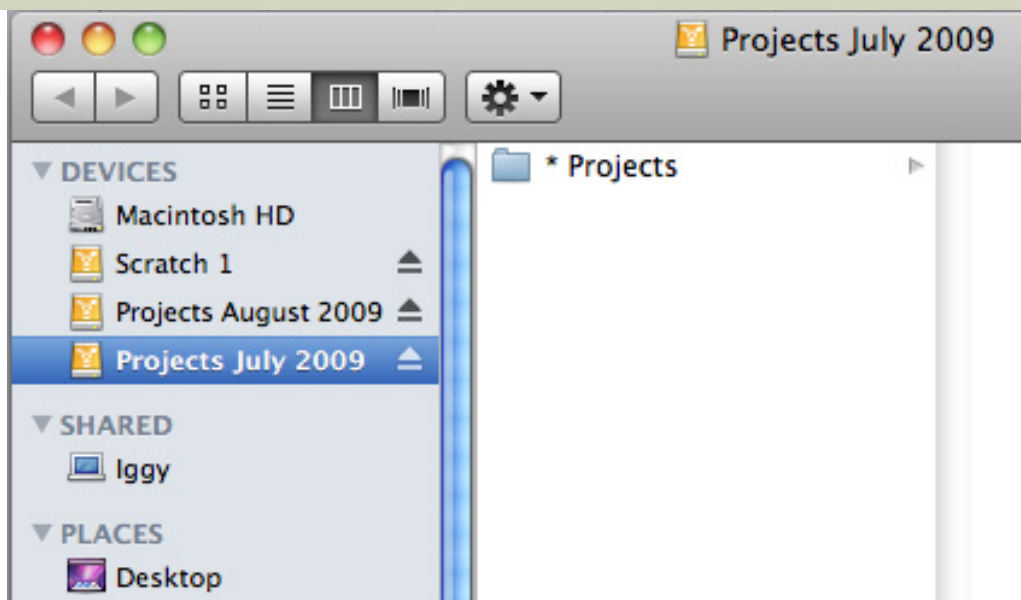
Lachlan Coles sent this in:

I've observed many different ways of setting up Capture Scratch, and having worked in a busy production environment where many different editors used the same machines, I came up with a system that works well and could be worth consideration by others.

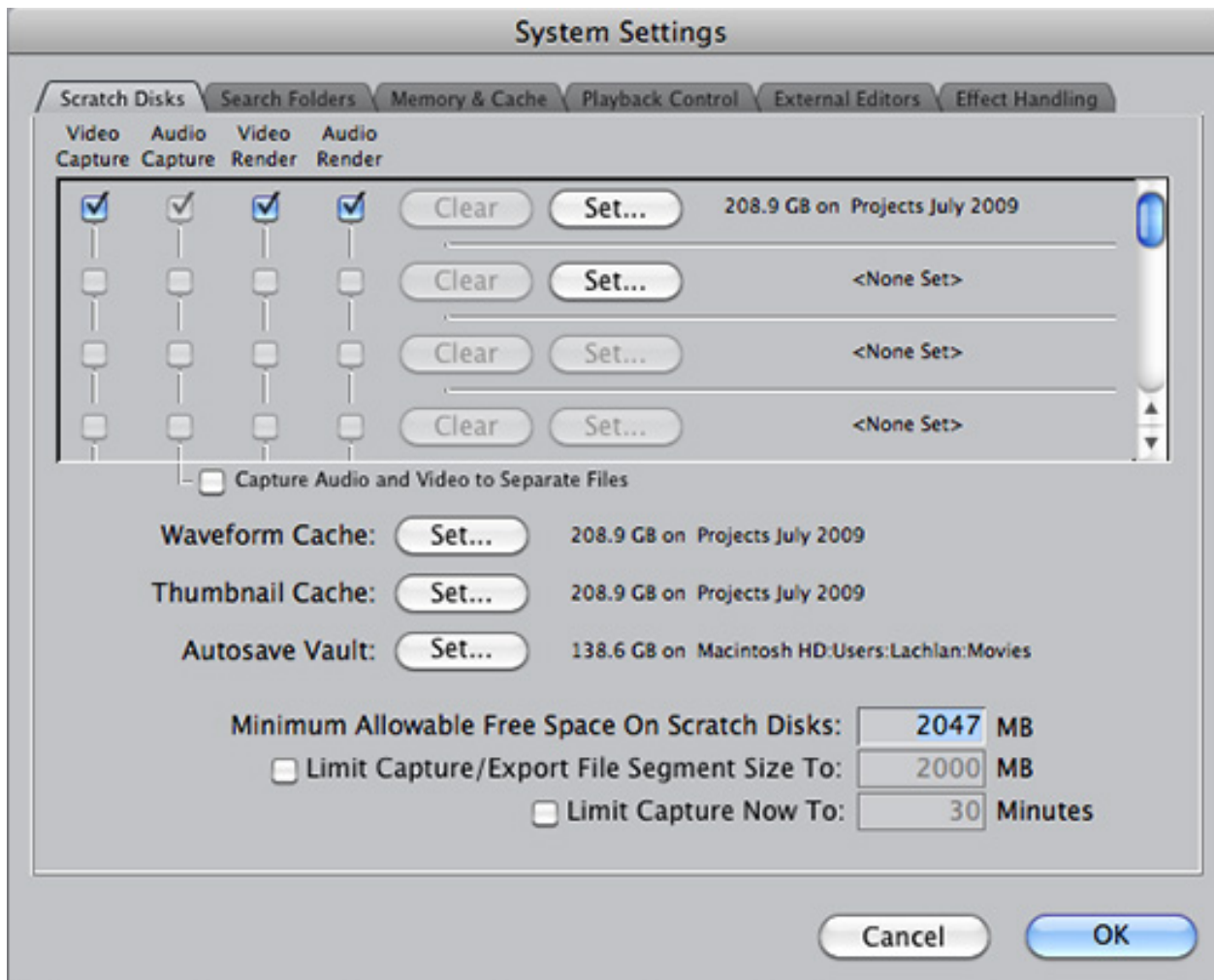
I settled on this system after wondering where all our drive space had gone and then finding files within a Capture Scratch which was within a Capture Scratch which was within another Capture Scratch within etc. (I've skipped about 5 nested Capture Scratches for brevity) - all of the afore-mentioned Capture Scratch folders containing media captured by different editors, relating to different projects with no easy way of determining what media was for what project.

Aside: many of the clips in those days were "Untitled1" etc.

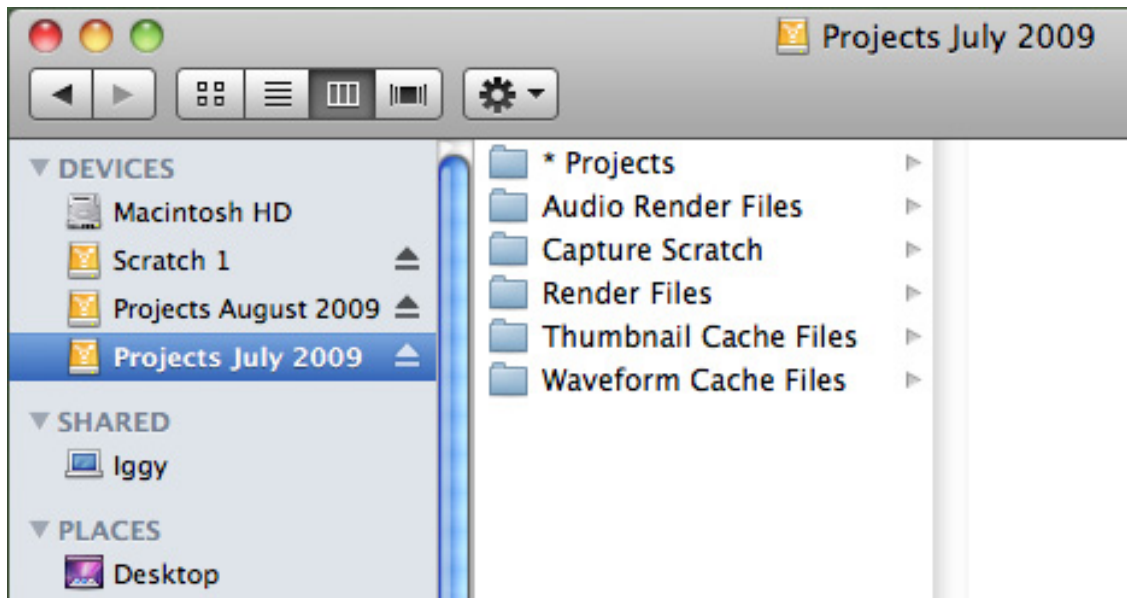
On any drive I use these days, I create a Projects folder for my project files (usually prefixed with an * so it appears first in an alphabetical directory listing on the drive), and then I set Final Cut Pro's Scratch Disk settings to the root level of the drive.



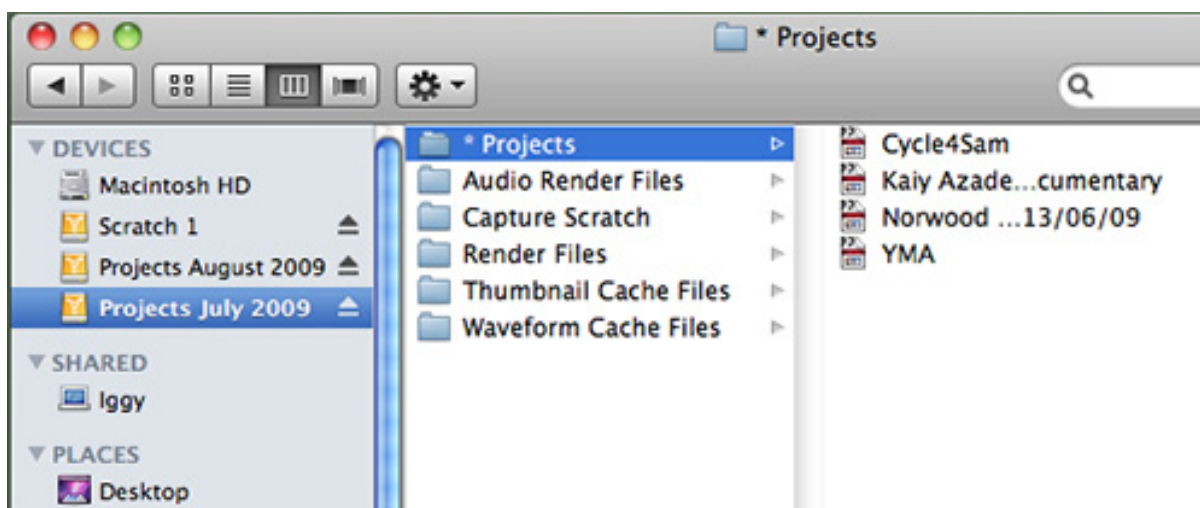
For example, if the drive is named "Projects July 2009", under System Settings... in FCP, I click Set... for Scratch Disks, and then select "Projects July 2009" - likewise I do the same for Waveform Cache and Thumbnail Cache.



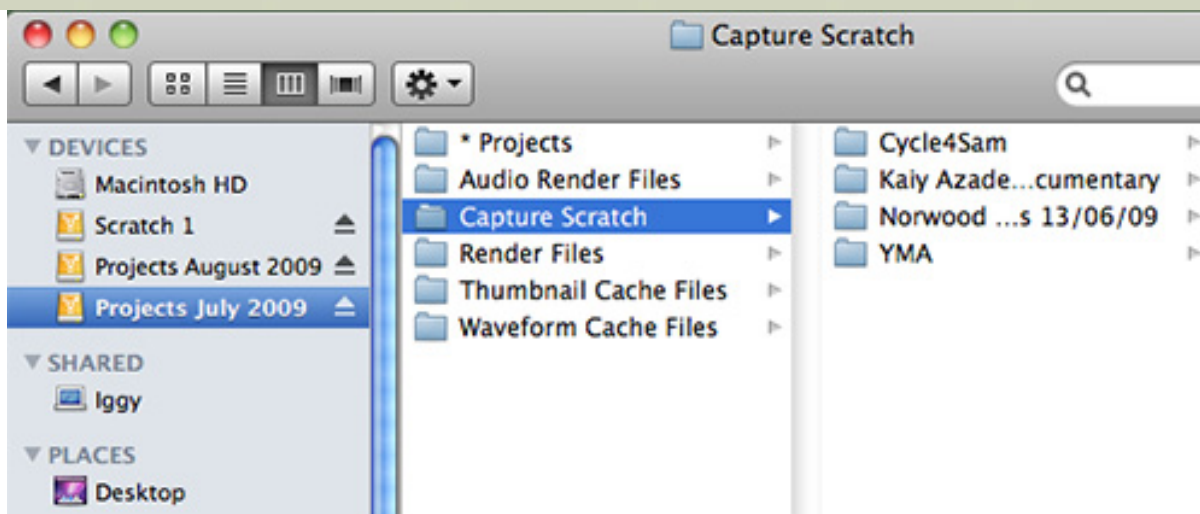
This creates Audio Render Files, Capture Scratch, Render Files, Thumbnail Cache Files and Waveform Cache Files folders on that drive at the root level. (I set Autosave vault to a different drive than the current project drive as I prefer not to lose my Auto-Saved project file copies if a drive fails ...)



The main advantage of this system is that each new project I create and capture footage in, gets its own folder within the one Capture Scratch folder - so I have no need to create a folder for each project and nest a Capture scratch within it, leading to numerous nested Capture Scratches and media going everywhere when other editors forget (no!) to set the Scratch Disk to the appropriate folder.



I've provided screenshots to give a clearer idea of how this works.



The system makes it easy to keep all files organized as there is only one place for them to go - the Capture Scratch folder of the project's name. All media relating to the project, whether captured or not - such as stills or audio files - are added to the project's Capture Scratch folder. It's that simple.

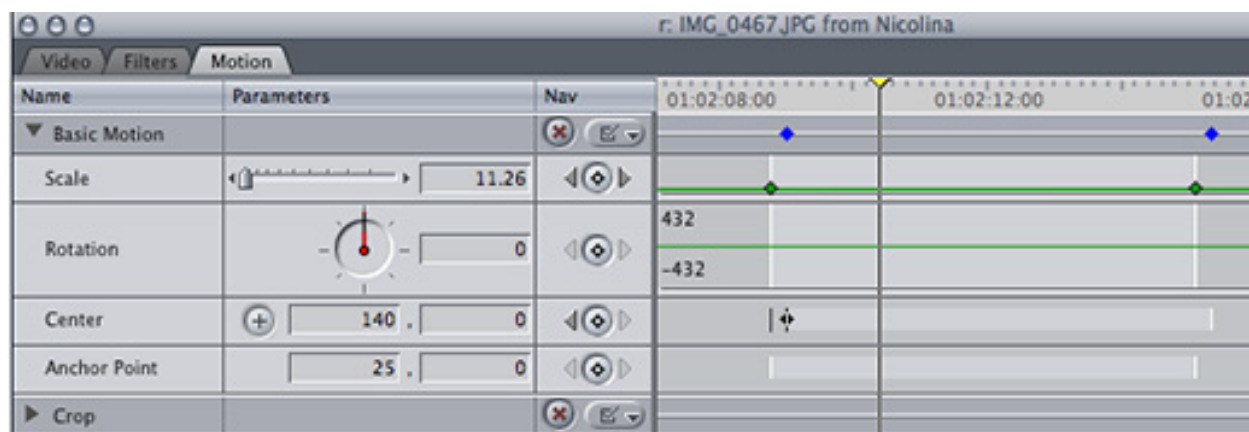
A massive sign urging editors to check their Scratch Disk settings before commencing their session does not go astray - and naming clips when capturing them always helps too. ;o)

AND NOW MY TWO GRIPES

Lachlan continues:

Keyframing

Keyframing in the Motion tab in Final Cut Studio 3 is still as crusty as it was many, many moons ago. I'm talking about when you click on a keyframe to drag it to a new location within the motion tab, i.e. for scale or position, and the field you are adjusting slips in position. In the screenshot below, I'm dragging the Center keyframe to the start of the clip after having extended the clip in the Timeline and double-clicked it into the Viewer.

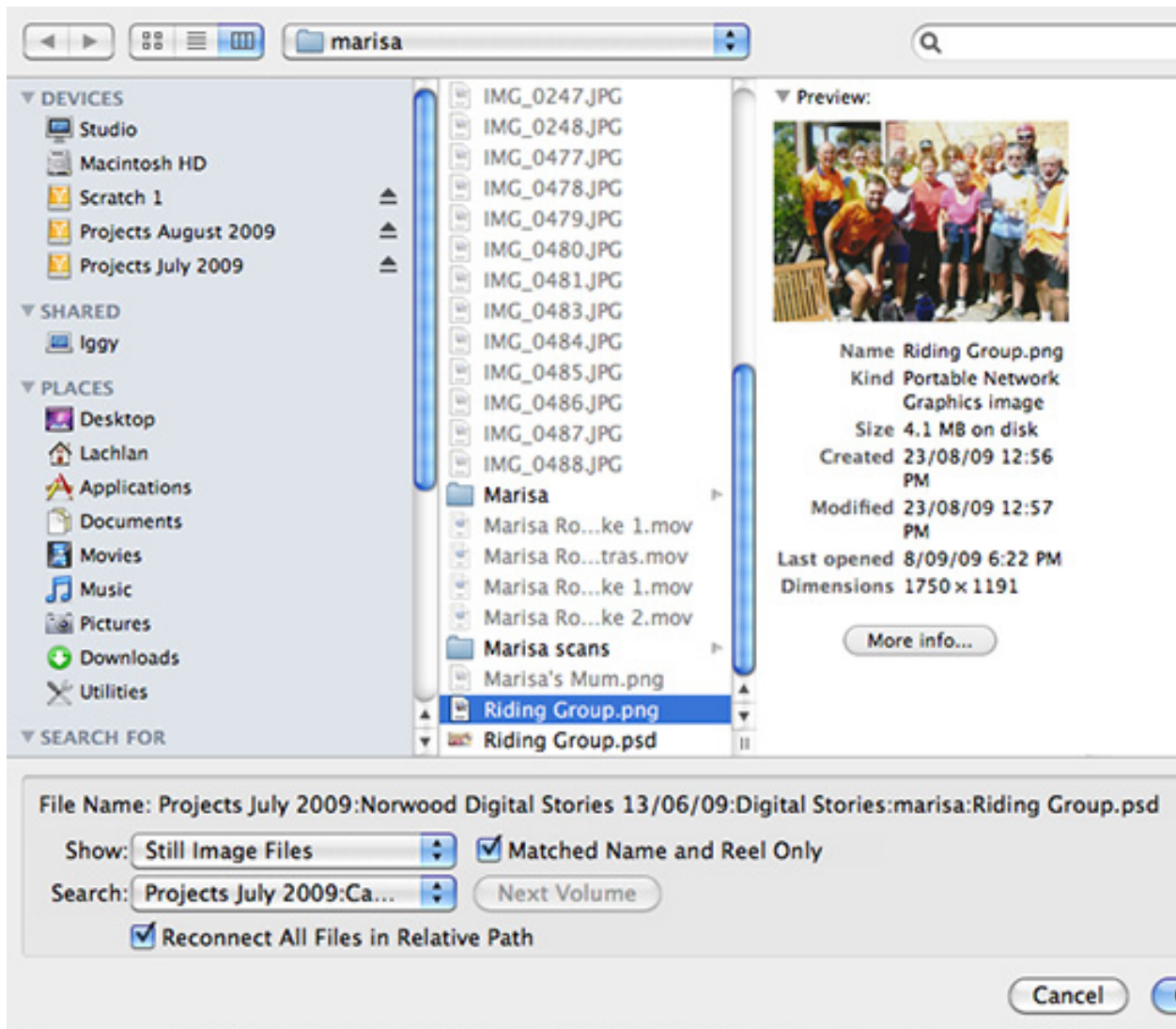


It's annoying and I'm stunned that it is still a "feature" of the new release. (Maybe it has been left like this to encourage us to use Motion for all keyframing ...)

Reconnecting Offline Media

FCS 3 still doesn't seem to be able to tell the difference between file types when reconnecting offline media.

i.e. if you have a picture called Riding Group.png and another called Riding Group.psd, FCP will decide that the .png file is the .psd file and present the .png file for reconnection, EVEN when it is supposedly looking for the .psd file.

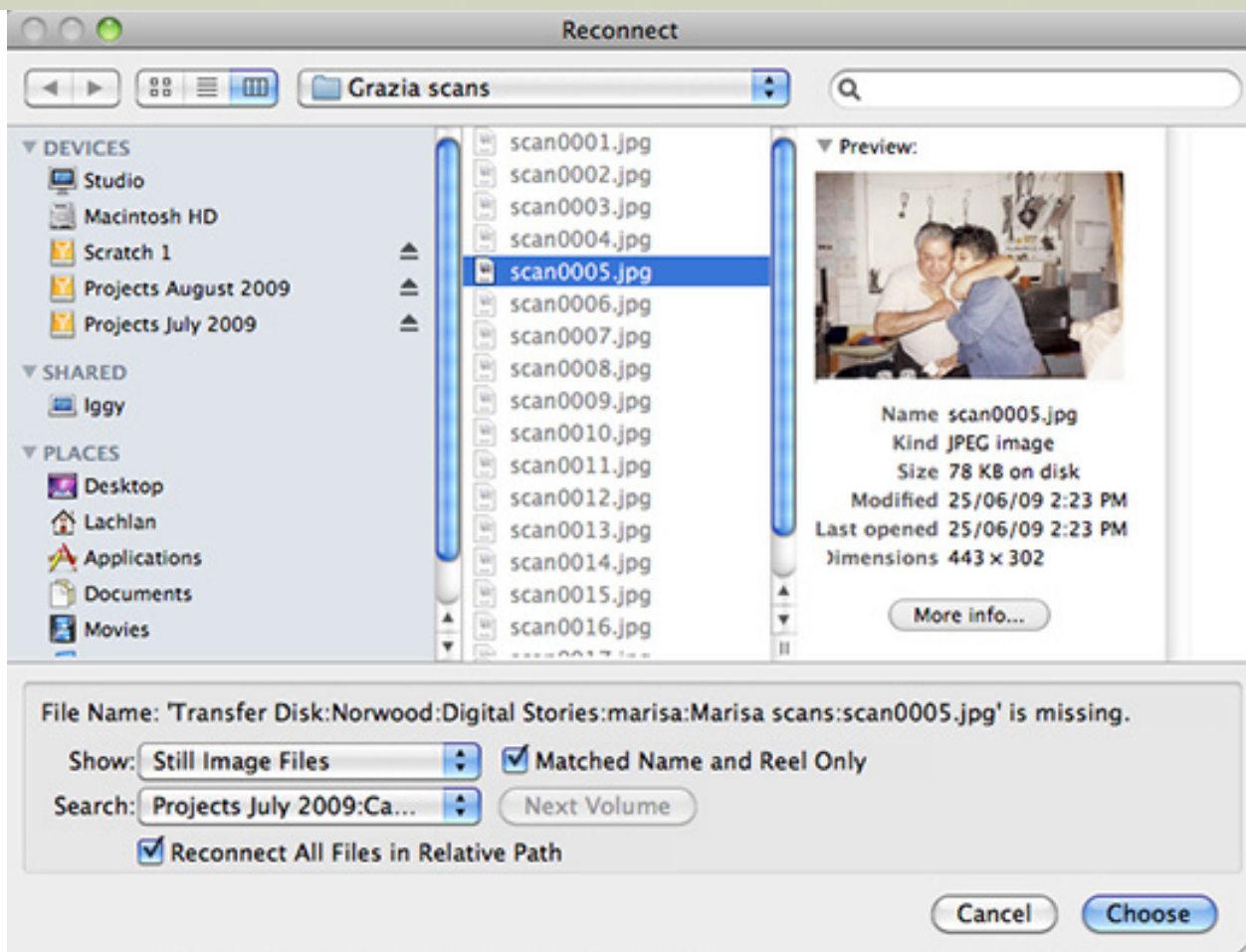


It gets worse.

Recently I needed to transfer a project I received from an external drive with a bunch of scans in four separate folders. The scans were titled scan0001.jpg, scan0002.jpg etc. (not my preferred naming convention I must admit ...)

All four folders had a scan0001.jpg, scan0002.jpg and so on ... After duplicating the media and the project file, Final Cut decided that scan0005.jpg in the folder Marisa was actually scan0005.jpg in the folder Grazia. If I had not been concentrating, all files in this path would have replaced the original files in the timeline.

i.e. when reconnecting a file that is now on a different disk, FCP presents files in a completely different directory path, even when it appears to know the correct directory path. In the example below, the project which was on Transfer Disk is now on Projects July 2009. Even though the file structure of the two disks is identical, Final Cut cannot find the correct media by itself.



I guess this is a compelling argument for giving all files individual and distinctive names and perhaps for using the Media Manager when moving projects around, though I do find there are situations where the Media Manager is not appropriate.

For a PRO level application it's a little disappointing that Final Cut is still so easily flummoxed.

Perhaps the Studio bundle needs a Leopard to Snow Leopard style makeover where existing code is refined and made to work properly. I'm sure if you asked any editor, they'd have a list of pet peeves and gripes that they consider long overdue for fixing. Perhaps we can BUG Apple to fix outstanding issues in the next release - surely a full 64 bit Cocoa version of the Application(!)

Larry adds: Lachlan, thanks for sending these in.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

TIPS FROM THE PROS

John Magin, of Pro Video Services writes:

* The biggest issue people have is Project file sizes. I can't tell you how many calls I've made at sites where people have brontosaurus sized project files and then wonder why they won't open, or take forever. My rule of thumb(nails) is under 100 MB. A lot of times these people (often indie feature and documentarians) are on a

budget and their systems aren't up to handling the load. Add to that any renders they might want to do and it will spike the RAM/CPU activity. 4 GB these days is bare minimum. I'm building out systems with 10 to 32 GB of ram.

* Also, as far as the FCP prefs go, I've never had an issue with trashing the whole User Data folder w/ caveat of losing setup/window prefs- as FCP auto-generates the whole shebang.

* I'm also a strong advocate of Anders Holck's FCP Rescue and Applejack - but don't run Applejack on SAN mounted volumes(or disconnect) as it can screw with umask/permissions on the LUNS.

* And as far as capture drivers go- always go to the website. The disks they provide are usually 6 months out of date as they've been sitting in the box for who knows how long. I really wish AJA would just save on plastic and print a link to their website. Same for BlackMagic.

Larry replies: John, thanks for writing.

I agree completely that if project files get bigger than 100 MB, trouble is just around the corner.

I disagree on the need for more RAM. FCP 7 and earlier can NOT access more than 4 GB of RAM. This will change with Snow Leopard AND an upgrade to Final Cut. More RAM helps when running multiple applications simultaneously, but not FCP itself.

The problem with trashing the entire User Data folder is that you run the risk of losing custom keyboard, button, timeline, browser, and window settings. Since I have never known these to corrupt, trashing the entire folder seems a bit draconian.

I am a fan of Anders Holck's FCP Rescue, EditGroove Software's Usermatic, and Peake Professional Systems Final Cut Assistant

I also agree that downloading drivers from a website is always a better idea than from a DVD.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

TAKING THE PRO OUT OF MACBOOK PRO

A couple of months ago I wrote in my blog about my distress at Apple's removing FireWire and ExpressCard/34 ports from MacBook Pro laptops.

David Morgan sent me this as a follow-up:

I also find myself wondering about the missing firewire (second port) and Xpress 34 slot on the newest Apple products. I currently use a MB Pro (earlier model with 2 firewire and the xpress 34) and I own a Mac Pro tower. As I see it, the "Pro" can be removed from this product line. Apple will then just have a MacBook. Basically, combine the best of both laptop models into one. Alarming as it is, Apple just saved a boat load of money by eliminating the extra hardware and all the complication that goes with it. The MB Pro is now a high end "fun" computer just like the new Dell XPS Studio laptop I use at work. The Dell machine even has more variety in I/O than the Mac. It sports an HDMI port, the SD card slot, FW 400 (4 pin), e-sata/USB combination port, Display port, VGA, USB, Express 34 slot, and a few more.

So what's up with Apple? How does one person like myself communicate to this corporation that they just cut me off at the knees? Maybe they've been studying the market research too carefully and decided that video editors who use laptops don't constitute enough of a user base to justify the expense of the added hardware. "Let em' buy a Mac Pro if they want to edit video". Apple can make and maybe sell the laptop cheaper to compete with other companies.

However, here's a thought that occurred to me and it points to one more nail in the tape based acquisition coffin. Is this a sign that compact flash card technology and the like (sony s x s) is where the Apple product line is heading? Probably so. You don't need more than one firewire port on a laptop if your shooting to cards.

Apple led the way when they dropped the floppy disc drive and introduced USB to their systems. Let's see what they do with the next generation of laptops. They dropped the firewire 800 port for one series of laptops only to re-introduce it on the next. For us tape based editors, I certainly hope to see at least an additional FW port in the lineup.

Larry replies: Thanks, David, for sending this in.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

GAMMA AND CHROMA PROBLEMS ... FROM SOMEWHERE

Dean Isaacs began his conversation this way:

As you discuss in your August newsletter, I was hoping Snow Leopard would solve the gamma shift issue. It does not. I did some tests at the Apple store on a machine running FCS 3.0 and Snow Leopard. H.264 rendered quicktime files still look washed out.

Larry replies: Hmmm... Washed out is not necessarily a gamma problem.

Dean continued:

I just got back from the Apple Store. Ran tests using FCP 7 running on snow leopard. H.264 rendered movies are desaturated, as always. Animation codec shows no desaturation.

For me, this is a fatal flaw. I bought into Steve Jobs vision of tapeless/no disc delivery based on H.264 and cheap storage. I have many hours of movies I want to cut and preserve for the future, and I'm very disappointed Apple has not seen fit to fix the QT gamma shift problem.

I know others are adjusting the gamma in Compressor. I may try this, but this may result in the movies playing way to dark on windows systems, or being too dark in the future if Apple fixes QT.

Larry replies: Dean, as we discussed last month, archiving footage is not what H.264 is for. Photo-JPEG at 1009% is much better for archiving. The files are bigger than H.264, but there's no loss in quality from the original and the files, unlike H.264, are easily editable in FCP.

Dean concluded:

Is it possible we all have it backwards? Is it the canvas that is too saturated and the H.264 more realistic?

Everyone says the H.264 is washed out. But maybe it's the canvas that is too saturated.

I am going to do tests by taking video with good lighting with nice colors and see which appears more accurate: the canvas or the H.264.

This reminds me of the story about a guy talking to his kid. He asks the kid why he would rather eat apple candy than an apple, and the kid says because the candy tastes more like an apple than an apple does.

I'm pretty sure Apple is going to fix final cut and the other pro apps so that movies look the same in the canvas and running in QuickTime and in web browsers. What is not clear is whether the h.264 gets more saturated or the canvas less so.

As usual, I may be completely wrong.

Larry wraps up: Then, again, you may be completely right.

I'm interested in what others have to say.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

MOVING STILLs USING PHOTOMOTION

Neil McLeod, from Aberdeen, Scotland, writes:

This may prove useful information for you. When we set up DVD Studio to load the compressed files from the PhotoMotion project it rejected them as being NTSC not PAL. We checked settings and they seemed to be fine. GEE Three have been extremely helpful and by return provided an update plug in set which now allows a selection of frame speeds. It also allows for the reconnection of unlinked images if the source has been moved. The original software left you trapped if you had messed up.

I can't speak too highly of the speed and efficiency of their response. They even phoned me from the States to discuss the problems.

Since you had introduced PhotoMotion on your UK tour you may want to mention the NTSC situation in your next newsletter.

Larry replies: Thanks, will do.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

MONITORING VIDEO

Bob Hughes writes:

My question is; "how can I watch the editing process on a TV which is connected to my computer, I have a G5 PowerMac Dual 2.7 GHz G5, with a 1TB H/D plus an

external 1TB H/D" I am also using a Sony DCR-TRV950E video camera

I logged and captured my video into my Browser (which I could watch on my TV as it happened) but now I am editing from my Canvas onto my Time Line I am unable to watch the process on the TV. The image on the Canvas is a lot darker than what it was on the TV during capturing, it also makes it a little difficult to edit properly using the Canvas window.

Can I watch the whole editing process on my TV, if so how do I do it?

Larry replies: This is easy for SD, harder for HD.

If you are shooting SD, connect a camera to deck to your computer via FireWire, then connect your monitor to your camera or deck.

With HD, FireWire isn't fast enough. So you'll need to use an AJA, Blackmagic or Matrox card to connect the computer and monitor. While this is possible, it isn't cheap.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

PASSING THOUGHTS

ICHAT THEATER TUTORIAL

Ken Stone continues to publish great tutorials on his website. This week, he's written an article on the new iChat Theater in Final Cut Pro 7.

Ken writes:

In FCP 7 we have a new feature called iChat Theater Preview, this feature makes it possible for someone who is running FCP 7, to use iChat to play FCP video and audio to another Mac user anywhere around the world.

Found in the Final Cut Pro section.

http://www.kenstone.net/fcp_homepage/fcp_ichat_theater_stone.html

Larry notes: Also, iChat Preview only runs on Macs that have OS X 10.5 or later installed, video cameras on both systems, and FCP 7 on the host computer.

TWITTERING SHORTCUTS

Eric Maierson writes:

I'm a big fan. I'm wondering if you could post my twitter feed in your next newsletter. I'm tweeting one FCP shortcut key a day. The address is:

<http://twitter.com/fcpkeystrokes>

BIG FINAL CUT CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS

Ben Balser is hosting a Final Cut Conference in New Orleans. He writes:

Looking to get more from your Final Cut Pro and other Pro Applications? Then come join us at the kick off of Final Cut - Crescent City (FC3)! This new annual event for the Apple Final Cut Studio user community and other professionals in the film and video post-production industry is being hosted at the lovely New Orleans Westin Hotel from October 22 through 25. At FC3, attendees can enjoy a weekend of learning tips and tricks with Final Cut and other Pro Applications, networking with peers in the industry, and enjoying the unique atmosphere and culture of the New Orleans French Quarter.

Learn from the some of the most knowledgeable and versed professionals in the industry, such as Larry Jordan, Alexis Van Hurkman, Bruce Nazarian, and Ben Balser.

Visit here to learn more: www.finalcut-crescentcity.com

Larry adds: I had a great time on my last seminar visit to New Orleans. Ben has picked a great group of speakers and I'm looking forward to returning in October for this event.

MORE STORAGE OPTIONS

Katie Khor from iStorage Design sent me this:

I would like to take this chance to introduce our new product lines that are specially designed for Video and Audio.

<http://www.istoragepro.com/it4ufer.html>
<http://www.istoragepro.com/it8sae.html>

This is the newest SAS Expander Technology of the year. 8 Bays Desktop SAS Expander, Allow You to Daisy Multiples boxes together with Single Host RAID Card. Compatible with most video hardware cards AJA, Blackmagic Design, Bluefish 444 and Maxtrox Video.

Also compatible with most popular Video Software such as Apple Final Cut Pro, Adobe Premiere Pro, and many more. Application support includes General Purpose storage, 4K, 2K, 1080i HD, 720PM HD, HDV, SD and VFX compatibility.

BLACKMAGIC IS MAKING NEWS - AGAIN

Grant Petty at Blackmagic Design sent me this:

As you might have heard, Blackmagic Design purchased the assets of DaVinci Systems LLC last weekend. We have been very busy this week getting up to speed with the details of their wonderful Resolve color correction systems and amazing Revival film restoration software.

As well, BMD announced new versions of DeckLink, HDLink Pro, VideoHub, and OpenGear Converters.

Get more information here: www.blackmagic-design.com

ANOTHER GREAT EDITING CONFERENCE - IN MICHIGAN AND INDIANA

Steve Julin reminds me that I need to mention Postapalooza:

Postapalooza: Workshops for Editors by Editors.
Join us for 2-days of pure post training. This Oct. - Mt. Pleasant, MI and Florence, IN.

Michigan: Oct. 15th-16th
Indiana: Oct. 19th-20th

Workshop topics include:

- Introduction to Final Cut Pro
- Title Effects in After Effects
- Motion: Getting a Grip on 3D
- After Effects: Getting Started
- Photoshop for Editors
- Advanced Editing Techniques: FCP
- Color Correction in FCP
- After Effects: Rendering Order
- Sixty in Sixty (60 tips in 60 minutes)
- The Art of Compression
- ADR is Soundtrack Pro
- Motion - Getting Started

Speakers include: **Trish Meyer** (AE Guru), **Jem Schofield** (Apple Trainer) , **Michele Yamazaki** (Toolfarm) and **Steve Julin** (Apple and Avid Trainer)

Visit: www.cleverscope.net to learn more and register. Register early and save money.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

FREE UPGRADES TO BORIS CALLIGRAPHY

Boris Calligraphy text generators are installed, free, inside your copy of Apple Final Cut Pro 7. An updated version of Boris Calligraphy, Version 2.2, is now available for free download from the Boris FX web site. Boris Calligraphy Version 2.2 includes improved compatibility with Mac OS X Snow Leopard and support for ClearType fonts that are bundled with the latest version of Microsoft Office for Mac OS X, including the popular Calibri font.

Download the Free Update at <http://www.borisfx.com/updates/>.

PBS BROADCAST SPECS

Greg Kruszewski sent this in:

For your readers than want to get a better understanding of broadcast specs, here's a white paper from PBS' website.

http://www.pbs.org/producers/redbook/TOS_2007_Submission_8_20_07.pdf

THIS JUST IN FROM OUR EDINBURGH BUREAU

Neil McLeod, from Aberdeen, Scotland, writes:

It's never mentioned in the official histories of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company (3M™) but the idea in 1925 for a masking tape came during an after-work heavy-drinking session in a pub in Edinburgh and the name "stuck." Need I even mention they were drinking... Scotch.

Larry adds: Sheesh...!

[[Go to Top.](#)]

By the way, we publish all the latest industry news on our sister website: **[DigitalProductionBuzz.com](#)**. Get the latest news every day right here:

<http://www.digitalproductionbuzz.com/news.php?newsid=0>

[[Go to Top.](#)]

READER MAIL

CUSTOMIZING BLU-RAY TEMPLATES

Alex MacLean sent this in:

We met briefly at your recent seminar in Folsom, CA.

Anyway, I've noticed a lot of talk here in the bay area and online about not being able to customize blu-ray dvd menus in FCPFCP 6.5, I mean 7, ha.

Well, this is not the case... They are in fact very customizable. So I figured, I'd send this link your way, since you probably get 10 whiney emails a day about this:

<http://developer.apple.com/mac/library/documentation/AppleApplications/Conceptual/CustomizingFinalCutStudioBlu-rayDiscTemplates20090629.pdf>

I have not had a chance to try this out myself since I don't have FCS (3) yet, but I look forward to it.

Larry adds: This is a 40-page PDF document from Apple that:

Describes how to customize Final Cut Studio disc publishing templates in order to create a unique Blu-ray Disc™ experience beyond what is provided by the templates included with Final Cut Studio.

This document is intended for Final Cut Studio users, developers or support personnel that have some experience with development (e.g. HTML editing), are comfortable with editing Property List (XML) files, and have some understanding of the concept of video encoding, e.g. that MPEG-2 and H.264 are different video compression standards.

I have downloaded this, but not yet read it. Thanks, Alex, for letting us know.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

IMPROVING PICTURE QUALITY

Philip Fass writes:

I was very unhappy with the PQ of HDV converted to SD by FCP and Compressor. Very blurry, and text pixelated. Oddly, Toast 10 somehow did a much better job, but offered very limited and unprofessional DVD menu options.

Then I tried this fairly unintuitive approach from [Ken Stone](#), and was able to get the PQ I wanted without using Toast:

http://www.kenstone.net/fcp_homepage/hdv_timeline_to_sd_dvd.html

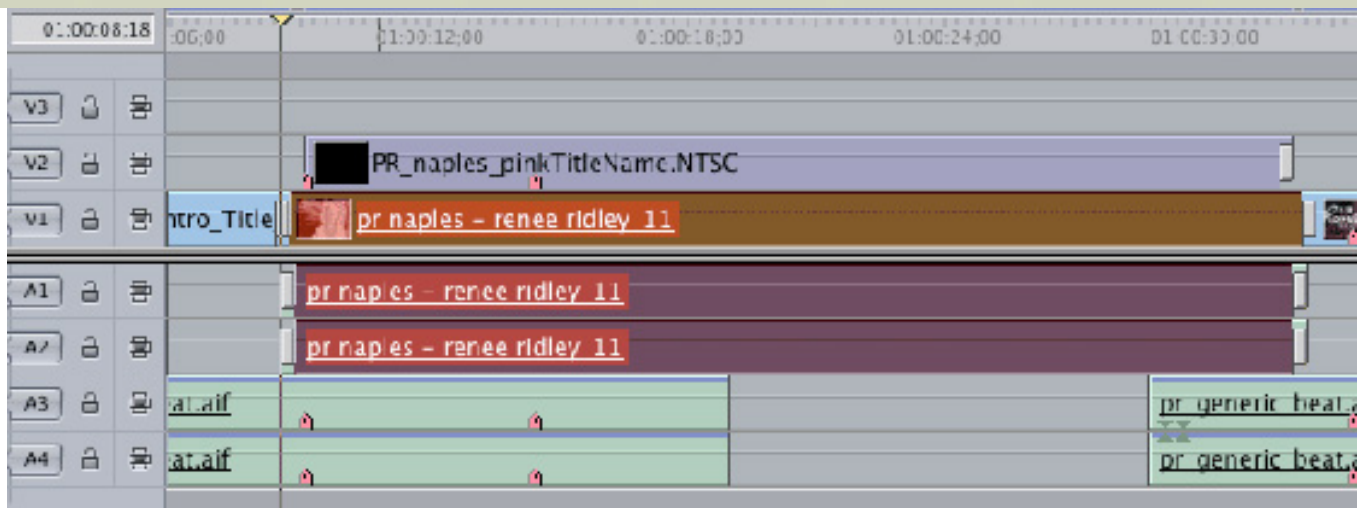
Maybe others are familiar with the technique, but it was news (good news!) to me.

Larry replies: Thanks for sharing this. Ken Stone's website is a great resource and can not be recommended highly enough.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

REPLACE AND SCALE A SHOT SIMULTANEOUSLY

Adam Bowen writes:



I'm a huge fan of your newsletter and Lynda.com video tutorials. I have a question about a work flow issue. I have been working with a company who was training that happens every 4 months. the highlighted clip in the photo is the one I need to replace. the clip i need to replace it with is either longer or shorter. i've been searching for a plug-in that can replace this clip and preserve the transitions. I don't mind rolling the video title on V2 by hand, that is quick. Its just a repetitive action I would like to speed up. I currently just delete the clip, make enough room for the new clip and drop it in. I have the default transitions defined in favorites so i can pop those on quick enough. Maybe you know of another way. I wish the replace edit had a command key you could apply that would vary its effect. Love the resources man, keep em coming.

Larry replies: Thanks for writing!

By definition, a replace edit uses the In and Out of the clip on the Timeline to determine the duration of the clip being edited. However it does allow you to keep the transitions.

An insert edit allows you to vary the duration, but loses the transitions.

There is no way to keep the transitions, but automatically adjust the duration of the shot, AND keep the transitions.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

AUDIO MIX-DOWN IN FCP 7

Ben Balser writes:

If I use **Cmd+Opt+R** to mix down my audio, it renders my audio, just like in FCP6. And in FCP6 if I did that first, then used **Opt+R** to Render All (which includes mixing down audio), it'd render my video, the audio was already mixed down, done.

But, I'm noticing in FCP7 that even if I mix-down my audio first, when I do a Render All, it mixes down (renders) my audio AGAIN, and even more slowly than simply mixing down my audio. Not to mention there is already nothing but the normal blue render lines, showing everything has been rendered out. Do you have any idea what is going on in 7 to cause this redundant audio rendering? I never noticed it in any previous version of FCP.

Larry replies: I haven't noticed this, but I haven't starting mixing down my projects.

Anyone care to comment?

[[Go to Top.](#)]

CAN'T LINK TO COMPRESSOR

Bob Hughes writes:

When I drag a source file to create a batch then click the settings button for a thirty minute movie, then click submit I get this message: Cannot submit batch unable to connect to background process.

I am on version 2 using FCP 5.1.4.

Larry replies: Yeah, this one is nasty.

Compressor doesn't compress your file, a background daemon does. And for some reason Compressor can't find it. My first suggestion is to reinstall both Compressor and QMaster. I had this problem myself and reinstallation fixed it.

However, feel free to check online forums for other suggestions.

Bob followed-up:

Thanks for replying to my Compressor question so quickly.

Hopefully I have overcome the problem now. I got this link from Ken Stone (I live in the UK so I wanted to make sure I got an answer from somewhere ASAP) it seems to have fixed the problem. But I also remember one of your tutorials on lynda.com about being careful about where you install your FCP application.

I have two internal hard drives (one 1 TB and the other 250 GIG) and two external hard drives (one 1 TB and the other 160 GIG). I did not have the FCP on my start up hard drive (the one with the 1 TB), which could have accounted for the problem I was having. I also installed the Compressor repair kit which seems to have got Compressor on line again.

it's published by **Digital Rebellion**:

http://www.digitalrebellion.com/compressor_repair.htm

Sometimes I find myself agreeing with one of your comments on FCP "it's enough to make you wanna do drugs" This Compressor can really get your head into dark places...

[[Go to Top.](#)]

CONVERTING HDV TO SD FOR DVD

Steve Bowers writes:

I recently recorded a short wedding ceremony in 1080i on a Sony Z1U.

I imported it into FCP using the easy setup for HDV 1080i60, did some edits on it and then exported it using the compressor settings in the tutorial.

The problem I am having and I don't know if it is compressor related or not but when I play it back on a HD television set from FCP timeline, it displays properly.

After I compress it and create a DVD using DVD Studio Pro, the resolution defaults to 720x480 in studio pro even though I exported it in compressor using 16:9 best settings. The settings in the inspector show it to be 1440X1080.

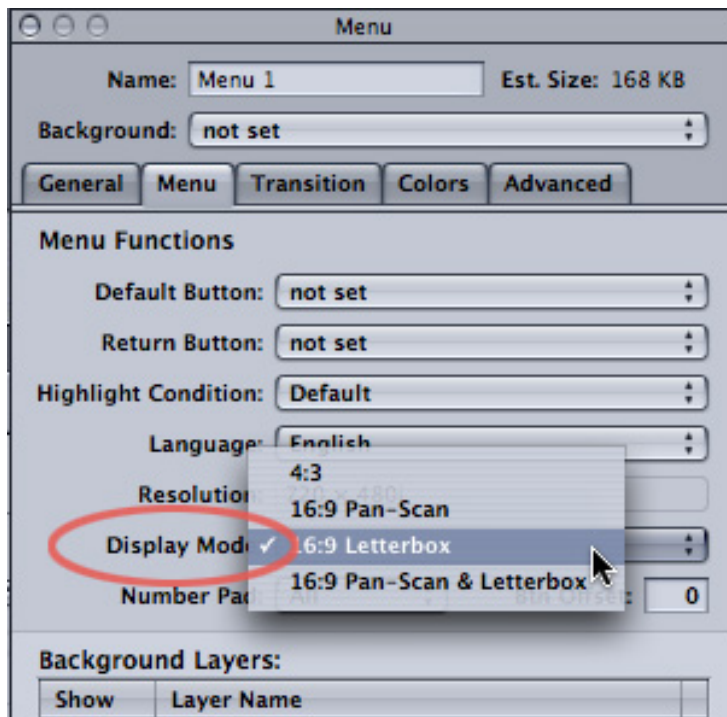
After creating the DVD I played it on a DVD player and the video was degraded and the video was actually pulsing to the point it would pixelize at every pulse. The pulse was about every second.

I am lost because this is the first time this has happened since I made changes to compressor recording in HD. I have recording in HD before and created a DVD but have never had this problem.

Larry replies: Steve, thanks for writing.

The problem is that you are reducing HDV footage to SD for your DVD. If you are compressing the video in DVD Studio Pro, it won't work. DVD Studio Pro creates an older, out-of-date format called HD DVD.

If you are compressing the video in Compressor, you need to change the output settings in the Geometry tab of the inspector. It defaults to 320x240.



By the way, 4:3 and 16:9 DV are BOTH 720 x 480 (weird but true) when displayed as video. Be sure to check the 16:9 checkboxes for menus and tracks in DVD SP when building your title.

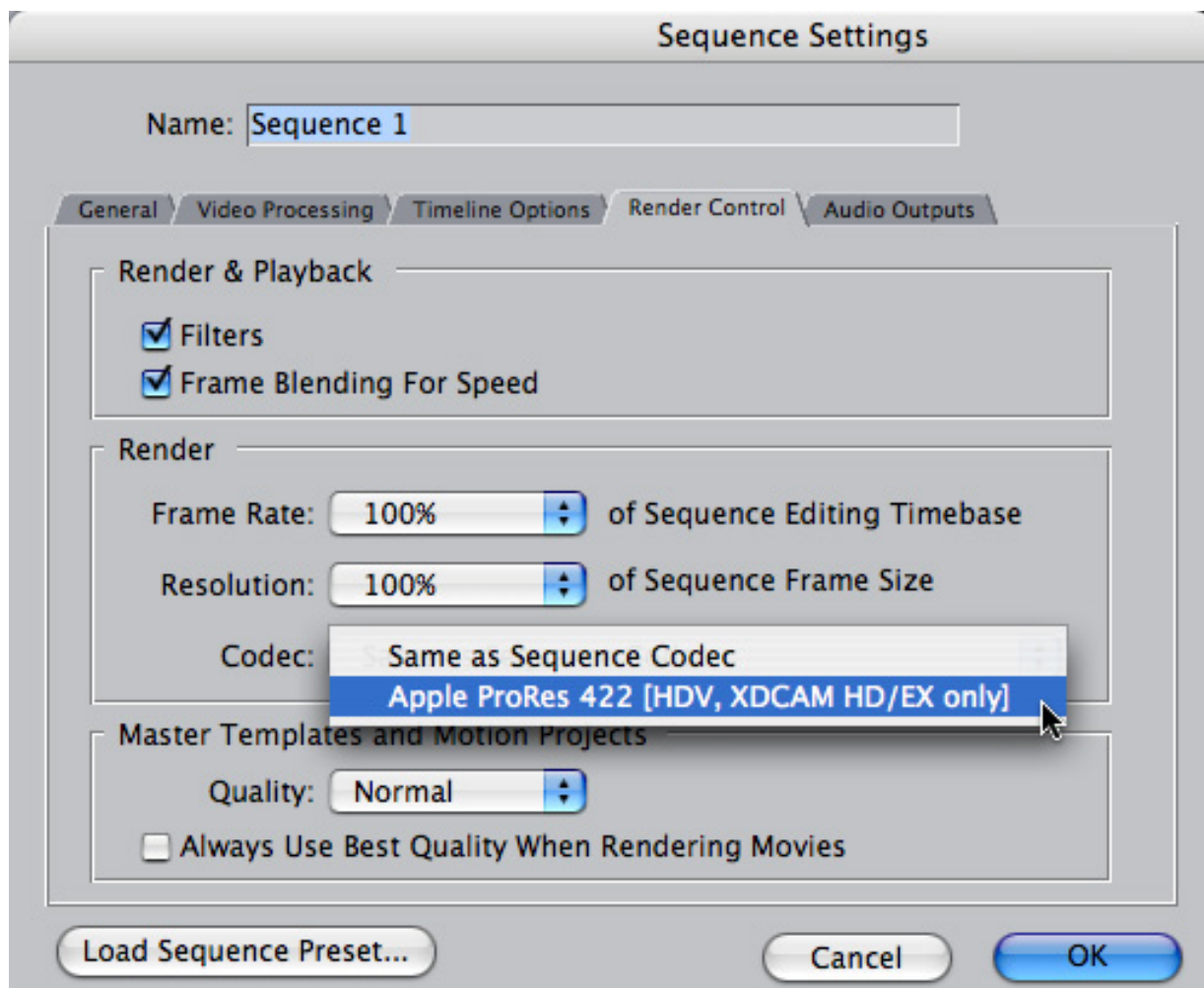
TRANSCODING TO PRORES

Andrew Mula writes:

I was reading your article "Understanding ProRes 422" and had a question. You mentioned that transcoding your footage to ProRes when capturing was a good workflow. But how do you transcode while capturing from XDCAM 1080i via firewire. Is it impossible?

Also, is using native XDCAM in the timeline but rendering in prores actually make the timeline prores?

Larry replies: When you capture XDCAM media via FireWire, Final Cut imports your media in its native format -- XDCAM HD, or XDCAM EX.



Changing your render settings (**Sequence > Settings > Render Control**) does not turn your Timeline into ProRes, just your render files.

By the way, I find that rendering using ProRes significantly improves the speed and quality of my render files. I recommend it.

SELECTING THE RIGHT SIGNAL

Bob Rydeen writes:

I have been reading the ads regarding the AJA Ki Pro which has a variety of inputs. I am wondering which type of interface would provide the best quality from my cameras especially for green screen work.

My Canon HV30 (a small HDV camcorder) has DV, Component and HDMI outputs. My Panasonic HMC150 (an AVCHD camcorder) also has Component and HDMI outputs.

I don't really have specs. on the color parameters from these cameras so I don't know if the Component or the HDMI would provide the best signal.

Larry replies: Bob, thanks for writing.

- **Component** gives the highest quality analog signal.
- **HDMI** provides the highest quality digital signal.

However, you'll also need to use FireWire to carry the timecode and machine control signals.

CONSTANT MOTION RENDERING

Bruce Weaver writes:

Im using the Motion to FCP round-tripping. Im wondering why FCP keeps wanting to re-render all my clips. I've got a 20-minute clip with lots of compositing and layers.

Every time I open my .motn file in Motion then save/close project in motion. FCP keeps showing up as all my clips need to be rendered. I cannot figure out.

Larry replies: All Motion projects need to render once. If you are needing to render the same thing over and over, there's a problem with your scratch disc settings.

Bruce wrote back:

I'm not sure yet, but the culprit might be that when I have a project I use a black matte throughout the whole sequence. Just something that I do has regular habit.

I'm wondering if I have it unlocked and bring save my motion project save, that its because of this black matte that covers the whole 20 minutes.

Larry adds: Yup, that would do it. Because you are using the Black matte, every time you change the Motion project, FCP tosses all existing render files, and needs to re-render everything.

Ask yourself whether that black matte is really necessary, or can you create your effect another way.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

A QUESTION OF MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Sky Helwig asks:

I'm working in a DV offline, 720x480, 29.97 sequence. The online will deliver 1080i, 59.94 (which is really 29.97 because, as I understand it, the only thing that's truly 59.94 is 720p). Our offline sequences consist of:

- 1080i/60 HDV that's scaled down and rendered out DV (this will be rescaled/unscaled back to 100% for the online).
- HDCAM footage, both 1080p/23.98 and 1080i/59.94, that was captured as DV over the deck's SD downconversion output and kept faithful to the source tapes' frame rate.
- Various other QuickTimes sent by the client, stills, etc.

My goal is to be able to media manage this sequence in such a way that all the HDCAM-sourced footage is knocked offline normally, (waiting to be recaptured in HD), but the HDV footage remains intact and online. We have about equal amounts of HDCAM and HDV footage. In the past, I've always had to take every instance of HDV from the offline and manually copy/paste it into the online, because FCP knocks those clips offline in the media manage step. I want to be able to tell FCP, "Hey, those HDV clips are not gonna be recaptured like the HDCAM clips will be, so just leave them alone!" I realize why this is happening: when you tell FCP you want to recapture over Blackmagic as 1080i/59.94 10-bit, it deduces that your HDV footage is not using the same compressor, therefore it believes it must recapture it.

Is there such a way to selectively media manage a sequence? Or am I stuck with the back-and-forth workflow that entails manually copying all the HDV back in? Sometimes that can get cumbersome when there are transitions used between one format and another; this makes a blanket, one-step, select-all copy/paste impossible.

Larry replies: Sky, thanks for writing!

First, there is no way to selectively media manage a sequence. It is all the clips in the sequence or none. As for recapturing, if you don't need 23.98, I would capture everything at the same frame rate and simplify your life.

Sky writes back:

That's another suggestion I'd have for Apple: they should add an Exceptions parameter to the Media Manager's window where you can select types of footage that would be ignored by the process. I'll have to see where I can send them feedback/suggestions for future FCP versions.

Larry ends: Thanks, I'll pass the word along.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

BETTER WAYS TO EXPORT

Eric Brodeur writes:

First time writer, long-time reader. Thanks for the great newsletter.

The current issue had a question from Michael Cooper about "Picking the Best Codec." Your closing paragraph:

"In general, if you are not applying effects, the highest quality you can get is the quality that you shot. For that reason, I recommend exporting from FCP using File > Export > QuickTime movie and settings set to Current Settings."

I had an interesting experience related to "the highest quality you can get is the quality that you shot." That has always been my understanding but one of my projects shot on XDCAM-EX was being exported for color correction. The exported QuickTime was self-contained and the audio and video settings were "Current Settings."

A day later our post house called to request another output. They sent a still image which showed significant aliasing (on a bedside lamp) which I confirmed. They suggesting exporting as Uncompressed 8-bit, which I did, and the aliasing was gone. The post-house had one other comment which stated that "self-contained QuickTime movies are being re-compressed despite the "Recompress All Frames" setting." That contradicts everything I have read but they said an on-site Apple engineer confirmed this.

Larry replies: I have a very hard time believing the double-compression. My experience is that this is not the case. If you export using **File > Export > QuickTime Movie**, source files are being digitally copied and not re-compressed. Render files, too, are being copied, not re-compressed.

However, if there's a problem with the render format - for example, banding in 8-bit video, that problem will be carried through to the QuickTime movie.

If someone has better guidance, I'm happy to include it here.

[[Go to Top.](#)]

WRAP-UP

Well, that's about it for this month.

For current news and in-depth interviews on what's happening in our industry, be sure to listen to the [Digital Production BuZZ](#) every week. In fact, you can put the free player on your website!

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Also, please continue [sending 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.

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