# LARRY JORDAN.BIZ

## Newsletters

## Larry's Monthly Newsletter

**Larry Jordan -- Editor**
**Issue #28 -- August, 2006**

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

> The goal of this newsletter is to provide information helpful to the professional user of Final Cut Pro. This newsletter publishes each month. Past issues are not archived. However, key articles are posted on my website for your reference. All software references are to Final Cut Studio unless otherwise noted.
>
> Please invite your friends to visit my website -- www.larryjordan.biz. We now have over 110 tutorials to help you get the most out of Final Cut!

It's the middle of the summer and things may seem quiet, but we have a full basket of goodies to share. So, let's get started.

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## Power-Up Seminar Early Registration Discounts End August 15



Early registration **discounts** for my *Power Up with Final Cut Studio* seminars **end** on August 15.

Our tour starts September 21 in Sacramento, CA, and visits 13 cities across North America throughout the fall. While **seats are limited**, you can reserve a seat AND save big if you register by August 15 (www.larryjordan.biz/seminars).

We are offering two seminars designed for both beginning and long-time FCP editors:

- *Optimize Your Editing With Final Cut* -- for new editors
- *The High-End of Final Cut Studio* -- for intermediate to advanced editors

To learn more, visit our website, PLUS, those that attend get lots of goodies -- including free books, passes to Lynda.com, and Final Cut filters -- all designed to help you make the most of your Final Cut system.

If your job depends upon your Final Cut skills, my seminars can catapult you into a whole new level of job performance -- besides, I'd love to meet you.

I am very grateful to Blackmagic Design for their sponsorship of this tour.

Click here to learn more, or to register: www.larryjordan.biz/seminars.

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## Technique: Locating Sequence Audio Levels that are Too Loud

This technique was actually discovered by **Mark**, in one of my Advanced Final Cut classes. But it is so cool, it deserved it's own write-up.

One of the problems with Final Cut is that there is no easy way to see if the audio mix in a

sequence is too hot. During my classes, I stress to my students that their audio levels must NEVER go above 0dB -- indicated by glowing red clip lights at the top of the audio meter.
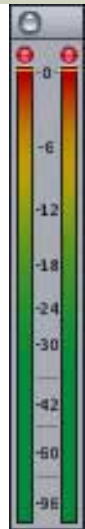
Audio levels that are too loud, also called too "hot," will distort when you export your sequence or output it to video tape. This is very, very bad.

But, the only way to tell if your audio is OK is to play the entire sequence. In real time. And watch the meters like a hawk. Sigh... this can take forever. There's got to be a better way. And there is. Here's how.

1. **Drag** the sequence you want to check from the Browser to the Viewer. Don't double-click it or it will open in the Timeline.

2. With the Viewer selected, choose **Mark > Audio Levels > Mark**.

3. Final Cut will quickly, and I mean quickly, scan your entire sequence...
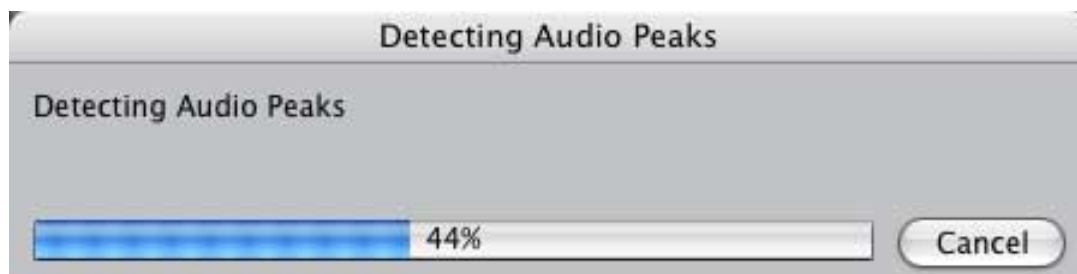
4. ...and put a marker where ever it finds audio levels that are too loud. See the little green markers in the image below? Those are places where the audio is too hot (loud).

Those markers that Final Cut set in your sequence in the Viewer are retained by the sequence. Double-click the sequence in the Browser to open it in the Timeline. See the markers?
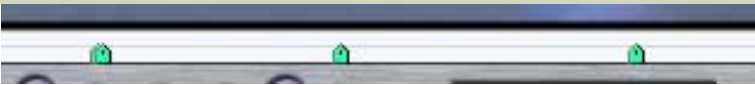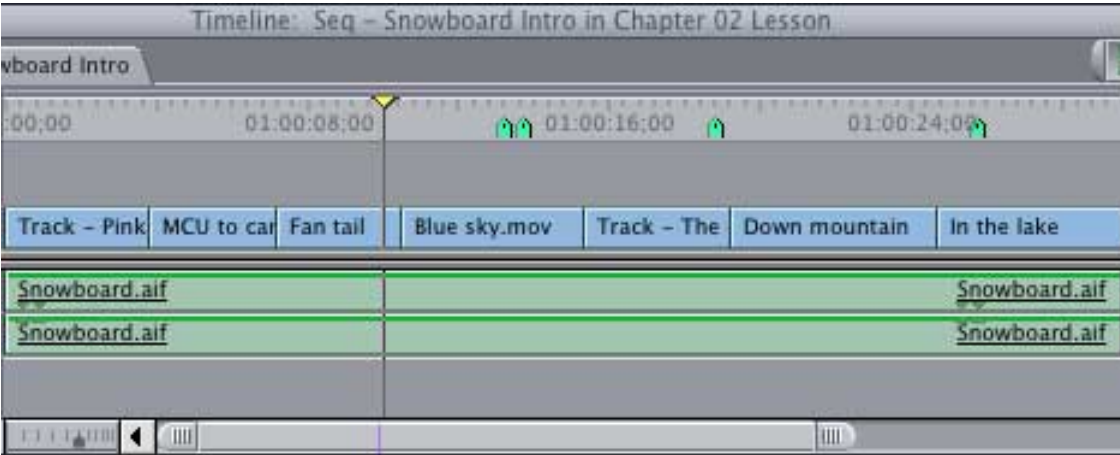


5. You can now quickly jump from one marker to the next (**Shift+M** or **Option+M**) and adjust the levels to keep everything sounding great.

6. To delete all the markers in the Timeline, press **Control+~** (the key at the top left corner of your keyboard).

Very cool.

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### This Month in Edit Well

*Edit Well* is the rich-media newsletter for Final Cut Studio published each month by Peachpit Press that I have the pleasure of editing. A subscription is only $59.99 per year -- and well worth it.



Here's what's in this month's issue:

- A video tutorial showing you four quick motion effects you can do with keyframes
- An interview with **Ed Kaufholz**, an editor who uses Final Cut as part of **ESPN's** live event golf coverage
- **Noah Kadner** showing you how to create a tapeless acquisition workflow for the Panasonic P2 camera
- **Alexis Van Hurkman** starting a three-part tutorial on color correction that I guarantee will show you things about color correction you never knew
- **Graeme Nattress** walking you step-by-step through the process of creating your own

effects using Final Cut's FX Script
- **Bruce Nazarian** illustrating how to create effective motion menus for DVDs.
- **Mark Spencer** covering a host of plug-ins you can buy for both Final Cut and Motion to extend the capability of all their built-in effects.
- And a **secret technique** for working with non-standard video that I now find myself using almost every day.

*Edit Well* is 35 pages of Final Cut tips and techniques that you just can't find anywhere else. Act quickly - the next issue comes out the last week of each month.

Click here subscribe: www.peachpit.com/editwell.

Coming up in the next issue are articles, interviews and tutorials showing you:

- How to trim your clips faster AND in real time
- How to use the Parade scope to improve your color correction
- A detailed article showing you how to get some incredible effects using composite modes
- A step-by-step guide to mixing your projects in Soundtrack Pro
- And details on creating your own filters in FX Script

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

If getting the most out of Final Cut is important to you, take a few minutes and subscribe to Edit Well: www.peachpit.com/editwell. And, if you have any problems subscribing, send me an email.

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### Technique: Slipping a Filter

Mark's discovery wasn't the only new thing we learned in class -- here's a technique that I had forgotten. **Jen** discovered that you can select just part of a clip, then apply a filter just to the selection.

Here's how:

1. Select the **Range Selection** tool on the Tool palette (or type **ggg**)



Range Selection Tool - ggg

2. Drag across the portion of a clip, or group of clips, to which you want to apply the filter. You don't need to select the entire clip.



3. Double-click the clip to load it into the Viewer. Click the **Motion** tab. See how the range of the filter is indicated by the two vertical black bars at the top of the filter tab -- and that it only covers a portion of the the clip?



4. And, what Jen didn't discover but you can, is that if you put your cursor between those two vertical black bars, you can drag the filter earlier or later in the clip.



In other words, you can slip the filter just like you would slip the content of a clip on the Timeline, provided you have sufficient space (called "handles") in the clip to move the filter back and forth.

This technique can be much easier than using the razor blade to cut a clip, when all you want to do is apply a filter to a portion of the clip.

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### Tips from the Classroom

Want a fast way to move the patches on the Patch Panel at the left of the Timeline (I've indicated it here by drawing a red box around it)? You can easily do it with a keyboard shortcut.

To move the **v1** video patch to a specific track, press **F6**, then the number of the track. You DON'T hold both keys down at once, but one *after* the other. For instance, **F6**, then **1.**

To move the **a1** audio patch to a specific track, press **F7**, then, the number of the track. Again, don't hold both keys down simultaneously, press them one *after* the other. For instance, **F7**, then **1.**

To move the **a2** audio patch to a specific track, press **F8**, then, the number of the track. Again, don't hold both keys down simultaneously, press them one *after* the other. For instance, **F8**, then **2.**

To disconnect a patch, press **Shift+F6** (for v1), **Shift+F7** (for a1), or **Shift+F8** (for a2). To reconnect a patch, press the appropriate F-key and the track number you want to connect.

Very slick.

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### Article: Explaining Interlacing

If you are new to video, one of the strange things we deal with is the concept of "interlacing," where an image consists of two overlapping image fields; one containing all the odd numbered lines from top to bottom and the other containing all the even lines.

While it would be great if we could just ignore interlacing, it rears it's ugly head whenever we try to work with fine detailed images, or thin lines, or curvy fonts, or, well, just about anything that isn't rectangular.

So, for those of you who would like to learn more, here's a web link you will want to look at: http://www.100fps.com/ that explains this in much more detail.

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## Working with P2 MXF Files

Recently, on the Apple Pro-Trainer mail list, **Brad Stoddard** wrote in asking questions about the best way to work with P2 MXF files.

**Gary Adcock**, of Studio 37 and a genius with Varicam and P2 video formats, sent the following, which I am reprinting here with Gary's generous permission.

> The best format to use with the P2 is 720p.
>
> it is the native format for recording with the camera, and offers the most usability - the most amount of storage on the cards, and variable frame rates are only available in the 720 format; not to mention that your data rates for the 720p24 materials are low ( 5.75 MBs a second) enough that you will be able to edit from FW 400 drive. This is something you cannot do as simply using the 1080 format ( at 18+ MBs per second)
>
> Shooting SD with the x200 requires tweaking - all of the standard set up files are based on shooting in HD and sometimes create problems with interlaced SD content.
>
> P2 Log is a magnificent tool, and I recommend it highly.
>
> The forums on CreativeCow.net and DVXuser.com are full of useful info.
>
> If you think you have to handle the files in anything but FCP make sure you keep the MXF content intact.
>
> Lastly, plan and test your workflow before going into the field. Then give your workflow to someone else and let them try it. Every problem I get about this camera is regarding something that should have been worked out prior to actually taking the camera out on locations.
>
> Test every aspect of the shoot - this is HD not DV. The camera does not do video pass-thru, and it is not a simple task to record back to the camera, plus, not all mike's are compatible with the camera. You need to consider some 3rd party hardware like a Kona card for monitoring the signal and output to tape.
>
> Oh, and get a lot of storage...

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## Update on XML Export

Last month, **Christian Janson** wrote:

I recently took on a project where I had to out-source the video editing.

This worked great in freeing my time to handle other tasks but became a headache when I found that the editor was using a newer version of FCP. 5.0 or higher. My system is FCP 4.5.

We tried the XML feature but it resulted in frustration and failure. Surely the pro's have thought of this issue, yet I could not find any documentation dealing with any issue in saving to XML from 5.0. It was simply stated as fact. Did I do something wrong... or am I a victim of theory?

**Andres Kiel**, the resident XML expert at Spherico.com, wrote in with the necessary info:

Here is the outline of the steps as you, Larry, wrote them:

- Open your sequence in the Timeline
- Select **File > Export > XML**
- Accept the defaults in the XML dialog box
- Save the file
- Move the XML file to the other FCP system
- Select **File > Import > XML**
- Import your file

Since Christian wants to go back one version in FCP, your point 3 is **not** correct. He has to choose **XML Version 1** and not the default in FCP 5.x which is **XML Version 2**.

There are other issues as well when creating an XML project or sequence from 5.x as well. There is some stuff which can't be translated and other things which won't be translated:

- For example multiclips don't exist in 4.x so he might get into trouble there
- Speed changes
- Scrolling text in a sequence may not convert in many cases.

The bad thing during export/import is that FCP will report some minor errors, but those errors are more related to the problems it gets while parsing the XML than to the actual errors which may occur when building the sequence or project.

He also should make sure that all plug-ins used in the sequence are available on the other system. In case not, FCP just ignores everything which follows the missing plug-in without any error message; this can screw up a lot of things, which had been in the XML before the missing plug-in.

Those errors in many cases are very obvious, in other cases they are not.

*Larry replies:* Andreas, thanks for sharing these comments.

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### A Related XML Question

**Gabi** writes:

> I know this isn't a priority question but I would like to know how to import XML data from media databases such as FileMaker Pro into FCP bins. Also, is it possible to add additional column headings in FCP's Browser window based on that very xml data? I do understand that you can change a few of the column headings in the Browser but it seems like there are only 4 columns that you can change.

*Larry replies:* You can not add additional columns in Final Cut, however, I don't know if it's possible to read XML data from Filemaker. My suspicion is that since XML is a very broad standard that is implemented in a variety of ways, the answer is no.

But, I'll pass on any thoughts from readers that have better knowledge of this than I do.

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### Instant Tip - Setting Faster Durations

Andreas Kiel also sent in this quick tip:

> To get "still" video - generators, slugs, mattes etc. - to have a duration longer than 2 minutes, just select the viewer, press the **TAB** key, and enter the desired duration.

*Larry adds:* This technique works with all video clips, not just generators. The **Tab** key selects the Duration dialog box, where you can type in whatever duration you choose.
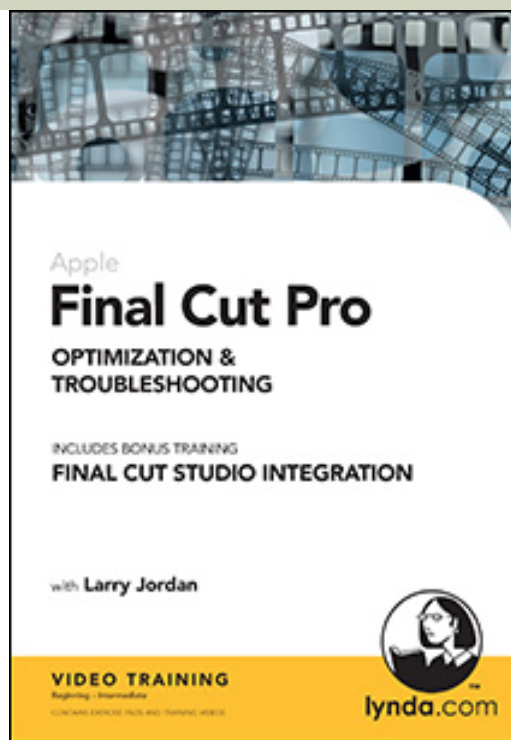
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### *Optimize and Troubleshoot your Final Cut System*
### Training DVD Now Available

My latest training DVD from Lynda.com is now shipping: *Optimizing and Troubleshooting Your Final Cut System.*

This DVD grew out of my experience with hundreds of consulting and support clients to help them keep their systems running smoothly. This DVD is helpful enough on a day-to-day basis that it should be part of your standard Final Cut tool-kit.

If you've EVER been frustrated trying to get Final Cut to work, this DVD is designed to answer all your questions. Plus, it shows you ways to get more out of your system. And, as an **added BONUS**, we added a second title to this DVD: Round-tripping Files in Final Cut Studio.

Best of all, this has a **GREAT price: $49.99.**

Click here to read a one-page PDF of the Table of Contents.

Click here to order: www.larryjordan.biz/store/index.html

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## A Faster Way to Rename Reel Names

**Sean Lander**, of Rednail Media in Australia, writes:

> Recently I was working on a feature film that had a lot of camera and sound reels. Because the sound reels were recorded on an disk recorder the reel names that FCP was assigning to the audio files were not what I wanted.
>
> Easy I thought, just re-name one clip and then lasso and right click on the rest to bring up a list of all the reels and select the correct one. Well at first this worked well. The only problems were that, first, Final Cut Pro has a very odd way of displaying the list of reel numbers to choose from. I cannot figure out the logic of it. Second, there were over 150 reels associated with the project. So right-clicking on the reels to be changed would bring up a massively long list that was in no particular order.
>
> It was quicker just to rename each clip individually.
>
> Until I remembered an odd thing about Find Results. When you do a **Find** command, **Command+F**, and then **SHOW ALL** the results are displayed in a new window that acts almost like a new project. What is handy about this list is that these clips in the Found Items bin seem to be independent from the

project from where they were found.

So if you want to rename all the clips with say **MX80** in the reel name to **A045** just do a search for the name **MX80** in the reel and select **SHOW ALL**.

Then when the resulting bin appears with all the clips, all you have to do is rename the reel name for one of clips manually, select the rest, and right-click on the reel column. The list will only contain two items: MX80 and A045.

Changing the reels in the Find Results Bin changes **all** the found clips in your project, saving you a lot of eye strain trying to find the right clip number in a very long list.

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## A Better Way to Boost Audio Levels

**Markus Wernig**, of Los Angeles, writes:

Your tip lost month to stack audio clips is one way of boosting low audio levels. But I have a much cleaner and simpler solution, since stacking tends to clutter a timeline, especially if you have to do this again and again. I do movie trailers, so my timelines always have way more than 20 tracks of audio.

The AVID has a nice "GAIN filter" that can boost your volume another 10 dB. FCP doesn't have that, but there is a work-around. Under **Effects > Audio Filters > Apple** there is **AUDynamicsProcessor**. This filter can be turned into a simple gain booster.

I set the first slider (**compression threshold**) all the way to the right (**+20**) which basically disables the compressor. Now, I am free to use the second to last slider (**master gain**) to boost the audio of that clip -- up to a maximum of +40 dB!!!
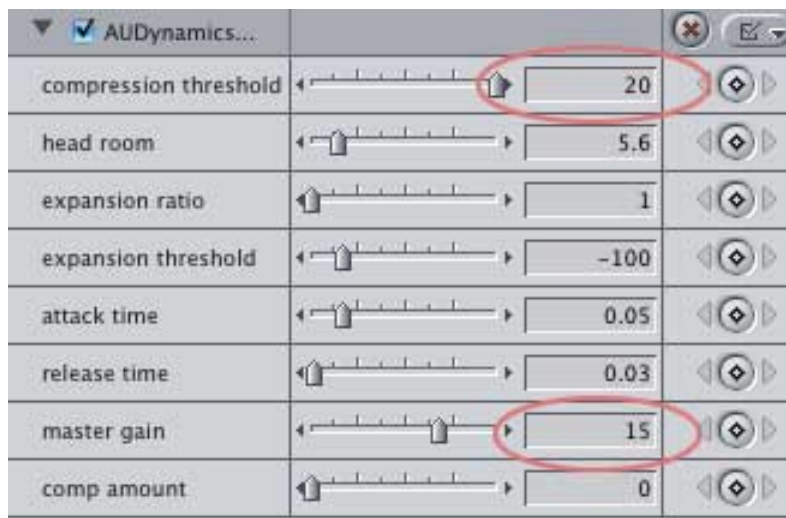
I keep "presets" of that filter (+10 dB, +20 dB, +30 dB) in my favorites effects bin. It's a real easy way to boost low audio and it keeps your timeline clean. Also, should you later decide to add audio keyframes to your boosted audio clips, it's much easier if they are not stacked.

Love your new *Edit Well* mag, by the way.

*Larry replies:* Markus, I haven't spent any time studying the AU audio filters. Your very cool tip gives me a reason to go back and look at them. Thanks.

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## New Video Disk Space Calculator Released

Jason Feinberg has created a very easy to use disk space calculator to help you estimate how much space your video files will take.

It's **free** and you can download it here: http://www.rabidjackalope.com/vdsc/

Thanks, Jason, for letting me share this.

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## Last Month's Survey - LiveType and Motion

In last month's survey I asked whether you were using LiveType and Motion. Here are the results.

## How are you using LiveType and Motion?

| | | Percent | Votes |
|---|---|---|---|
| I use LiveType a lot | | 14% | 75 |
| **I use Livetype a little** | | **17%** | **92** |
| I don't use Livetype | | 6% | 32 |
| I don't know Livetype well enough to use | | 5% | 27 |
| -- | | 0% | 2 |
| I use Motion a lot for text animation | | 9% | 48 |
| I use Motion a lot for backgrounds | | 7% | 37 |
| I use Motion a lot for all types of animation | | 7% | 42 |
| I use Motion a little | | 12% | 66 |
| I don't use Motion | | 7% | 37 |
| I don't know Motion well enough to use | | 9% | 52 |
| Other | | 3% | 16 |
| | **Total Votes** | | **228** |

While many of you are using LiveType and Motion, very few are using them a lot. The majority answer for both was that they were used only "a little."

A minority of users said that they were using After Effects, principally, so there was no need to learn a new software program. (The Other category were principally responses from After Effects folks.)

Both LiveType and Motion have a lot of unique features -- especially if all you need is to create some interesting animation quickly. The trick is to learn how to use them.

I'm currently working on two new DVDs, one that teaches the basics of LiveType and the other that shows how to use Motion. These should both be available in my store by the end of August. I've also added a section in my fall seminar that showcases how to create fascinating LiveType effects in a very short period of time.

Thanks to everyone who provided answers. These surveys help me figure out what you are doing and what new training material we need to provide.

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## Update on Green-Screen keying

Last month, **Chris MacDonald** wrote:

> I am looking for a method of Keying-green screening that give me the alpha channel to export to Flash. What I need is to convert green screen to alpha. I currently use After Effects 7 Pro with Keylight. Is that my best option?

**Matt Davis** sent in the following:

> If you are using KeyLight in AE, simply render out your composition with the transparent background set to the Animation codec using Millions+ (The PLUS sign is important.)
>
> The Alpha channel is then stored as part of the QT file - but it needs 'switching on' using the Cmd-J panel inside QuickTime Pro.
>
> Open the movie in QuickTime Pro, press Cmd+J, and check (turn on) the Alpha channel setting. With this method, you can make 'cut out' movies in apps such as KeyNote, too.

*Larry replies:* Thanks, Matt, for helping out with this advice.

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## Exporting DVCPROHD to HDV

A client contacted me recently about problems they were having in getting DVCPROHD to export to an HDV QuickTime movie. (They were archiving their DVCPROHD video on HDV tape, because they couldn't afford a DVCPROHD deck.)

After some experimenting, here is the process we came up with:

1. Select the sequences you want to convert to HDV. These need to be DVCPRO-HD in format.
2. Select **File > Batch Export**
3. Click the **Set Destination** button and select where you want the HDV movies to be stored
4. Set the Format to **QuickTime movie**
5. Set the settings to **HDV 1080i/60**
6. Leave **Naming** blank
7. Make sure the pop-up is set to **Audio/Video**

8. CHECK **Recompress all frames**
9. CHECK **Make movie self-contained**
10. Click **OK**.

All selected sequences will be compressed using these settings. To start the export process, click the **Export** button in the lower center of this dialog box.

Files will take about 3.5 times longer than real-time to export.

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## Exporting from FCP to Flash

As long as we are on the subject of exporting, **Sharon**, from Picture This Video, writes in:

> I found some info on the Adobe site on how to export to Flash -- it's pretty extensive, but here's the process (tested and works!):
>
> 1. Export out of FCP using Quicktime conversion, and choose the Macromedia Flash file as the file format. I used Flash 8, at high quality, and changed the size to **320 x 240**.
> 2. Then, open Flash. I have Flash 8 on my computer (they will offer you a free 30 day trial).
> 3. Select **File > New > Flash Document**.
> 4. Choose **File > Import > Import Video.** A wizard will open. I used **Progressive Download**, and chose one of the pre-made skins to incorporate play, stop, volume controls (if you use any skin they have with **External** in the title, it won't cover up your video, it will place the controls below the video).
> 5. Video will start encoding after you are prompted to save the .fla file. I put this in its own discreet folder.
> 6. Go to **File > Publish**
> 7. Then, when you open the folder, you'll see a **.fla** file, a **.swf** file, and a **.flv** file. You need all three files to publish to the web---I left that part up to my web designer, and just sent all three files to her, so I can't help after that point.
>
> I'm glad to finally give BACK some advice to you.

*Larry replies:* And I'm glad you did. Thanks!

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## Archiving Follow-up

**Philip Fass** writes:

> Larry, that was a GREAT article on archiving. Thanks!

Just an FYI: Sony makes one Firewire AIT-2 drive for Mac that's only about $1200. The tapes are 80GB native. The few comments I've read on it seem pretty positive.

Here's a description:

http://b2b.sony.com/Solutions/product-detail.do?prodId=32081&catId=32049&pageName=B2bUnified:Home:Storage:AIT-2%20Turbo%20Tape%20Drives

*Larry replies:* Philip, thanks for the heads-up. I haven't heard anything about this deck, so its nice to learn of a less expensive solution.

For those that missed it, you can read the archiving article here.

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## More thoughts on Archiving

**Eric Siegmann** comments on last month's article on archiving:

Really though, I would hesitate to archive to DVD at all, at least for long term, and opt instead for AIT, DLT or other professional tape archive for data, and professional tape media digital clones (or safeties) for video. DVD media is easy to damage, there are many different formats so compatibility may still be an issue (go figure!), usually people burn and (try to) read them on the cheapest of no-name mechanisms, if you stick a label on it the disc can self-destruct over time, and most importantly their capacity is too small for most projects. Heck, you can get USB flash drives with 8GB.

BTW, I agree with your assessment of dual layer and Blu-Ray/HD-DVD: don't even think about it! I think these formats are dead on arrival, but that's another topic.

*Larry replies:* Thanks for your comments. The archiving situation, currently, is a complete mess. I'm looking forward to the situation improving in the future.

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## Using XDCAM as Archive Media -- Updated

**Bill Call**, of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, writes:

I have a large collection of Betacam tapes to archive and I have decided to go with XDCAM. The XDCAM format was introduced by Sony to replace the hole in the market left by Betacam being dropped from their line. The fact that

many News agencies ( CBS ) are adopting this new format leads me to believe that it will be around for awhile. XDCAM has a shelf life of at least 50 years, a "real time" transfer rate, and is very economical. The low res files that are automatically generated in combination with Sony's PDZ-1 Proxy Browsing Software makes archiving very easy and organized.

I have switched to XDCAM as my acquisition format so that everything I shoot from now on will be have a shelf life of 50 years from the date shot. Sony and Final Cut Pro are combining efforts and are offering free workshops nationwide.

I am writing you after reading your article on archiving in July's Monthly Newsletter. What are your impressions of this format as a archival solution? Will you be doing any articles on XDCAM and Final Cut Pro in the future?

*Larry replies*: First, I think it is WAAY too early to know if XDCAM will be around for the long-haul, which is what you need to be certain of before committing to an archive format. Sony has a habit of throwing lots of different video formats out there to see which ones "stick."

Second, Sony only released the plug-in which is needed to import XDCAM into Final Cut in mid-July. Worse, this plug-in only supports the two lower quality levels of XDCAM.

Third, XDCAM uses a method of compression similar to HDV, which is a very challenging tape format to edit. Also, XDCAM uses three different compression schemes, and the two lowest don't offer significantly better quality than HDV.

My main concern is that you are adopting a media which is brand-new, barely supported, and essentially untested for archiving all your old footage. This is a bit more of a gamble than I would be willing to take. XDCAM may end up being perfect. But at the moment, we don't know whether that is true or not.

**UPDATE**

**Andy Mees** wrote in after this newsletter was released to say:

With respect to your reply to the Using XDCAM as Archive Media question. Whilst I fully agree with the main thrust of your reply, there was one specific point which I believe was factually incorrect.  Hope you don't mind me pointing it out. You wrote: "this plug-in only supports the two lower quality levels of XDCAM."

Actually the XDCAM Transfer tool/plugin itself supports all XDCAM SD and HD formats (DV, IMX and Sony's MPEG HD at 18, 25 and 35 mbps).  It is FCP however, which currently does not support import or export to/ from Sony's MPEG HD at 18 and 35 mbps.  As and when Apple introduce support for these codecs in FCP/QT then the plugin should be ready.

**Jody Eldred** also provided the following update. Jody is an Emmy-winning director/ cameraman who also owns an F900 HDCAM. Sony and Apple both asked him to test the XDCAM HD and Final Cut Studio's editing capabilities for it, and he's been presenting those observations on the multi-city Apple/Sony Tour which just concluded in Chicago last week.

Apple is supporting the XDCAM HD transfer software quite well and thoroughly. Regarding the 35 mbp/s, all I can say is that Sony is very pleased with how aggressive Apple has been supporting all aspects of the XDCAM HD. (Extract from that what you may...)

XDCAM has been around for two years already, and has proven its robustness. I do believe it is the new Betacam, and the major news networks are all seriously considering it. The CBS O&Os have already bought it. Even Discovery HD has approved utilization of the 35 mbp/sfootage.

A 2/3" version of the camera is likely set for next year. I own the camera and am shooting on it constantly. XDCAM HD will be huge and not discarded anytime soon.

I'm not saying this as a salesman or a Sony shill, only as an informed colleague.

*Larry replies:* Jody and Andy, thanks for writing. I always want to provide accurate information and appreciate your feedback.

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## Reader Mail

## Motion's Motion Blurs

**Scott** writes:

> I attended your recent DVD Studio Pro Class in Santa Monica (which was very helpful, btw). Anyway, you recommended that I should just import Motion documents into FCP and render inside FCP instead of exporting a QT from Motion. However, I lose my motion blur if I don't export a QT from Motion. FCP does have a motion blur filter under the motion tab, but it doesn't yield results as nice as the one utilized by Motion's export function. Do you have any suggestions on getting FCP's motion blur to look as nice as Motion's?

*Larry replies:* I had to do some research on this. You are correct. According to the Motion manual, Motion Blurs are added in Motion during export. So, if you want to include a motion blur in your output, you'll need to export it as a Quicktime movie.

- - -

## Cruising the Vault

**Ted Langdell**, of Ted Langdell Creative Broadcast Services, writes:

> Just breezed through the newsletter. Lot of good stuff I'm going back later to digest.

The videotape life span item prompted me to write. You've said that the life of videotape is 30-35 years. That's probably a good figure for a lot of reasons.

On July 17, I hope to see the Oct. 13, 1957, 2" Quad West Coast time zone delay tape of "The Edsel Show." It's a historic piece of tape... aside from being old.

Maybe you know Kris Trexler? Here's the story about what happened to the tape between 1957 and 1987:

http://www.ev1.pair.com/edsel/edselshow1.html
http://www.ev1.pair.com/edsel/edselshow2.html
http://www.ev1.pair.com/edsel/edselshow3.html

Should be fun to see what happens when Play is pressed on the AVR-1 at Television City.

I'll let you know how it looks... another nineteen years after it was "found" and copied to one-inch. Maybe someone will have thought to roll a tape on a digital format like D5 while the Quad is playing.

Don't know whether David plans to play the whole tape or just part of it. I'd make a safety dub of the whole thing while it was out of the vault.

Perhaps instead of sending "tapeless" material from P2 to DLT, would it be simpler and less expensive to send it to tape on a DVCProHD deck. Same codec. Do the same thing with FCP projects done in DVCProHD. Output to DVCProHD tape from FCP.

Glad to see you'll be in Sacramento in September. Hope to be there if my schedule permits. (Unless I'm in the repurposed garage checking the tip protrusion, upper drum eccentricity and tape tension on my BVH-2800's with the gauges I just bought on eBay. Want to play some 1987 Ampex 1".)

*Larry replies:* Ted, thanks for writing. I just spent the last half-hour wandering around these links and enjoyed the history. The QuickTime open for the Edsel Show is incredible.

Your comments on quad video tape also brought back memories. For those readers younger than, oh, say, 100, quad video tape was the be-all and end-all tape format for many, many years. The tape itself was 2 inches wide, and ran thru the deck at 15 inches per second. The tape deck alone was the size of a refrigerator -- lying on it's side. Sigh... sometimes I miss those days.

The successor to Quad was 1" helical scan tape. The successor to 1" was Betacam.

Oh, and in answer to your question, the only problem with sending P2 video to a DVCProHD deck is the cost of the DVCProHD deck.

- - -

## Comments on Importing Images

**Marc Levine** writes:

> First, thanks for all the help you provide in your newsletter, lynda.com videos and books.  I am a regular user of them all.
>
> I have a question about using still images in FCP5.  I am working on a DV NTSC video in which I will be using 300-400 images taken with a 10.2 MP DSLR as well as lots of video clips. I read everything I can about the square vs. rectangular pixel issues, as well as your recommendations for cropping still images to be imported into FCP.
>
> In the interest of time, however, I tried importing the .JPG still images right out of the camera, which of course are significantly larger than the 1800x1350x72 crop you suggest.  (It would take me a long time to crop 400 images to those dimensions).  I understand I am probably working in overkill mode to say the least, but I notice that FCP automatically resizes my images to about 17% and there does not appear to be any distortion when they are displayed.
>
> Again, realizing that I am not using the best technique, what I want to know is: is FCP automatically compensating for the square/rectangular discrepancy and displaying the images correctly, or is there probably some distortion that I am just not sharp enough to notice?

*Larry replies:* FCP is NOT compensating for pixel size. Worse, you are feeding it hundreds of images way larger than it needs. At best, things will slow down drastically, at worst, FCP will choke as you put more images into it.

I recommend you crop first, import later. PhotoShop allows you to easily crate automated Actions which can crop all 400 pictures in less than a minute -- I strongly recommend you use it.

Here's an article you can read that helps explain what's going on.

- - -

## More comments on importing images

**Martin Baker**, of Digital Heaven, writes:

> Regarding the importing stills issue from **David Scott**:
> Yes FCP has an internal table of common video sizes and if you import an image at one of those sizes then the Pixel Aspect is automatically set. For the 1440x1080 frame size of HDV, the Pixel Aspect is set to "HD (1440x1080)" which produces a 16:9 image. However it is possible to override this by selecting the still in the Browser, pressing Cmd-9 (to bring up Item Properties) and then setting the Pixel Aspect to "Square" under the Format tab. No need to use non-video sizes for stills if you do this.

On the second part, the reason that the 720x540 pixel image retained the proper aspect ratio wasn't due to the increased DPI but because the frame size was no longer one of the standard video sizes, therefore the Pixel Aspect was set to "Square". There's a common misconception that FCP cares about the DPI value of an imported image. If this were true then there would be a browser column available to check the DPI value of imported images but there isn't! That's because the only thing that FCP cares about when a still image is imported is the pixel dimensions. DPI only matters when scanning or printing images, not when using them in FCP.

*Larry replies:* Martin, I agree completely. When working with stills in Final Cut the most important dimensions are total pixels across by total pixels down. Thanks for your comments.

- - -

## Exporting Stills

**Michael Grenadier** writes:

Regarding your tip last month on exporting still frames, if you make a subclip of an individual frame you don't have to drag to the bin. I duplicate my sequence and put it in a new bin and then park on the frame, mark in, mark out, make subclip.

*Larry replies:* Thanks, Michael. I'll add this to the list.

- - -

## Converting DVDs to DV

**Brian Crowdson**, of Crowdson & Company, writes:

Thanks for your newsletter - I love it and I'm really looking forward to reading *Edit Well*.

Regarding DVD to DV conversion, I use MPEG Streamclip ([http://www. squared5.com](http://www.squared5.com)). It may not be as full-featured as DVDXDV, but it's free. I don't need to convert very often and so far it's done the job.

**Chris Roberts**, of the UK, agrees:

I generally recommend MPEG Streamclip by Squared 5 for this sort of task....

Not only does it allow you to extract and convert Video and Audio from a DVD to whatever QT format you require, I often use it to extract M2V and AC3 streams directly from the DVD to the reuse in another DVD SP project without the re-encode (obviously if no editing is required). Not only is it easy to use, but also free, providing you have the QT MPEG2 playback component which I believe is still part of the FCS package.

*Larry replies:* Thanks, both of you, I'll pass this along.

- - -

## Automatically Adding Subtitles to DVD Studio Pro

**Robbert-Jan van der Does**, from the Netherlands, writes:

> I really enjoy reading your monthly newsletter. It helped me tremendously in migrating from PC/Adobe Premiere Pro to Mac/FCP, as did your book 'Hands On Training for Final Cut'.
>
> Last six months I've been working on a DVD for the medical industry. There are about 20 tracks with interviews and operations on the DVD, most of them are in English, some of them in Dutch and in German. The client wanted all the tracks to have subtitles.
>
> So I had all the sequences translated by a facility house in the Netherlands. When they were ready they sent me a .txt file and after approval I received a .890 file.
>
> In my search for software which was able to convert the .890 file to a DVD Studio Pro-readable file, I came across a very nice program, called Lemony Subtitler.
> You can buy and download the program ($ 175,- or € 135,-), (or a trial version that is fully functional except that it inserts random characters) at http://www.jorgemorones.com/lemony/ .
>
> This program runs on Windows machines but I guess it will also work on an Intel Mac running Bootcamp and Windows.
>
> Lemony can convert almost any subtitle file into almost any other file type, including export to all kinds of graphical files, with or without alpha channel, compressed or uncompressed.
>
> I have used it to convert to DVD Studio Pro subtitles, but I could also batch export a .PNG file for every subtitle together with a corresponding FCP EDL, all from within Lemony. (I used this because the client also wanted to have a smaller Quicktime with burnt in subtitles available on the internet.)
>
> It was amazing to see all the subtitles being placed on the correct timecodes without any problems. It saved me lots of work.
>
> The program is a little hard to master but there is a tutorial file included which can help you to get up and running.

*Larry replies:* Robbert-Jan, thanks!

- - -

### Eliminating Flickering in Still-frames

**Don Azars** writes:

> Forgive me if someone else has asked this question in the past.
>
> But I have found that when using Freeze Frames and then using the exported sequence to make a DVD (iDVD) the Freeze frames jitter as if it's fighting with two fields of video.
>
> Since I can't find a way to tell the Freeze Frame Modify command to deal with one field etc., I have to export all desired freeze frames as a still frame and reimport them.
>
> Is there a better way?

*Larry replies:* Yup. Apply the **Effects > Video > Deinterlace** filter to each still frame in your Timeline. Problem solved.

- - -

### Exporting for PC Email

**Scott Bunke**, of Alive Communications, writes:

> What is the best method for exporting a short 2-3 min. video from the FCP sequence to make an email-able video for PC users to view.
>
> Most FCP codecs require some third party media player to watch them i.e. Quicktime, etc.
>
> What works with legacy Microsoft Windows Media Player? Many of my clients don't have the latest and greatest computers.

*Larry replies:* Buy a program called Flip4Mac - it allows exporting WMV files from FCP.

- - -

### Things I Don't Know -- That I'd like to Learn

There are two subjects that I'd like to learn more about:

1. Given today's DVD burners, whether it makes any difference what speed you burn at, or if simply matching media to burn speed is enough?
2. Whether anyone has a DV, or video, logging software that they like that's affordable?

I'll share your comments next month.

- - -

## It's vs. Its

Yes, folks, this debate refuses to die. **Brian Dart**, of the (self-proclaimed) Grammar Police, writes:

> Last month, **Ben Balser** wrote:
>
> > "The subject if 'its' vs 'it's' gets confused very often. Technically, you can use either. 'It's' can be used as a contraction or as possession. 'Its' can only be used as a contraction and not as possession. So the way you used it is perfectly legal according to the rules of writing."
>
> I'm not sure I agree with Ben or his mother on this subject. William Strunk Jr., in his fine book *The Elements of Style*, writes:
>
> "A common error is to write it's for its, or vice versa. The first is a contraction, meaning 'it is.' The second is a possessive."
>
> If I were writing a paper for school and I needed to choose a side on this issue, I would go with Strunk Jr. because then, at the very least, I would have a widely used book to use in my defense.

**Judd Volino** chimes in with:

> Looking in my good old *Webster's Ninth New Dictionary* and at Dictionary. com, the definitions seem clear:
>
> **IT'S** is a contraction of IT IS or IT HAS.
>
> **ITS** expresses possession. To say it "can only be used as a contraction" is completely wrong by these sources, and certainly according to my own years of writing experience. In fact it's the opposite: While "it's" can be used for possession, you can't use "its" as a contraction. Perhaps this person made a mistake in expressing the rule.
>
> See http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/its

*Larry replies:* Brian and Judd, thanks for writing. I'm working very hard to get this through my head. It's very hard as its very hard.

- - -

## And it doesn't stop there...!

**Rob Howard** writes to say that he is shocked, SHOCKED...! to discover that:

> ...you would use the word "premiere" (see your first article last month) between the covers of a respectable FCP publication like your own.

I hope you will take this (tongue in cheek) admonition to heart. In the meantime I will try to summon my strength again to peruse your latest treasury of wit and wisdom.

*Larry replies:* Rob, if you hadn't used the word "respectable" in that first paragraph, I'd almost take offense. As it is, we are very ecumenical here. My feeling is that a good editor can start anywhere, they just end up at Final Cut!

- - -

## Wrap Up

And on that note, we come to the end of another issue. I'm heading off to curl up with my *Strunk & White* and study its plot structure.

You, on the other hand, can rest easy knowing that gimlet-eyed readers are watching out for the slightest grammatical missteps in this newsletter.

And while you are resting easy, please take a few minutes and:

- Register for one of my seminars
- Subscribe to Edit Well
- Buy my Trouble-shooting Final Cut DVD

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

Thanks and edit well.

## Larry

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