

FINAL CUT PRO (FCP) BASICS

FIRST THINGS FIRST

1. Hook up your portable hard drive via firewire to the computer.
2. If you are beginning a new project, create a new folder on your external drive and give it a name – may be easiest to name it the same name as the title of your video. This folder is your “Scratch Disk.”
4. Open up FCP and select **File > New Project**, or if you have a project already in progress, open up FCP and select your existing project.
5. Set your Scratch Disk, which is where your project files will go, by selecting **Final Cut Pro > System Settings > Scratch Disks > Set**; select the **folder** you created for your project in 4 areas of the Scratch Disk Menu (follow the menu selection guides) and select **OK**. Note: you must set your Scratch Disk preferences each time you edit. Otherwise, your project files will go wherever the last user designated their project files to go, i.e. not where you want them to go. If you forget to set/re-set the Scratch Disk when you first open your project, you can reset it at any time in the process through the **Final Cut Pro** menu.
6. If it's a new project, save your project at this point, before you do anything else: **File > Save as...** (and give project a name). Final Cut Pro suggests saving the project as soon as you create it in order to activate the FCP auto save function. Save it into the same folder as your Scratch Disk, so everything for your project is in the same place.

If you have already started a project in FCP, **Open** the project. Re-set you Scratch Disk, if necessary.

7. Now it's time to select clips and transfer your footage files into FCP for editing. Insert the SD card containing your video footage into the computer's SD drive, or connect your own SD drive to the computer, or use the camcorder as an SD drive and connect the camcorder to the computer.

To import/ingest digital video files into FCP from a SD, you need to open the **Log & Transfer** window:

File > Log & Transfer; or, **Shift+Command+8** (keyboard shortcut) to open Log & Transfer window. When this window opens, the FCP software reads your SD card automatically and presents thumbnails of your files. They have not been imported at this point, but are only being listed, in thumbnail form.

You will not want to import all of your footage, only the footage you are considering using for your project. Don't import video that you don't want because it will consume massive amounts of memory – both FCP and computer operating memory, and external hard drive memory. Use the thumbnails to select clips (see below).

8. Selecting clips: click on the thumbnail to bring it in the Log & Transfer preview window. You can play it or scroll through it. Select **In and Out** points using the >| (In) and |< (Out) buttons, or using the keyboard shortcuts: **i** (hit the “i” key) and **o** (the “o” key). Use the controls on the preview window to get to your **In** point, and use the In/Out buttons or keyboard shortcuts to make a selection. Select an **Out** point using the same process and click: **Add Clip to Queue**.

FCP automatically imports your selection. Repeat this process through all of your thumbnails until you have finished creating your clips.

Close out the Log & Transfer window – **Command+w**

9. If your video footage is on videotape:

Set up FCP for digitizing your footage based on the video format : **Final Cut Pro > Easy Setup** and scroll to find your tape format, either DV-NTSC (regular miniDV) or **HD**. If working in HD, use the pull-down **USE** menu to select: **HDV 1080i60 Firewire Basic**.

Then open the **Log & Capture** window: **File > Log & Capture/ Command+8**. Use the controls in this window to control the tape as it runs through the deck. Use this window to select in and out points to create a clip. Do not capture more video/audio than you need – extra footage will slow down FCP and take up disk space. Once your footage in brought into FCP you are ready to begin editing.

Set the external tape deck to **HD** setting so that it will play your HD tape. And, very importantly, use the menu to change the **iLink** setting to **‘None’** so that the tape signal matches the FCP settings for HD.

10. Set up your project so it matches the video format of your footage:

In the **Browser** window, select **Sequence 1**. Go to the **Sequence** menu.

Sequence > Settings >

Frame Size: 1920 x 1080 hdtv 1080i (16:9)

Pixel Aspect Ratio: Square

Compressor: Apple ProRes 422 (HQ) —this is the best quality

Quality: 100%

Audio >

Rate: 48kHz

Depth: 16-bit

Other settings OK as is.

NEXT STEP: The Final Cut Pro Windows

BROWSER WINDOW

The Browser window is where your Clips are kept, where the Sequence you are editing is kept, and where you select Transitions and Special Effects to apply to your project in the Timeline.

VIEWER WINDOW

The Viewer window is your workspace, where you will drag your clips from the Browser, to set In and Out points for each clip, creating the particular segment of each clip that you want to actually edit into your Timeline. Drag clips from the Timeline to the Viewer to apply Special Effects and Motion Effects. The Viewer is used to set the parameters of Transitions, Special Effects and Motions Effects.

CANVAS WINDOW

The Canvas window is another view of the Timeline, i.e. what happens in the Timeline happens in the Canvas window. If you move the playhead (the yellow triangle that appears in the Timeline, Canvas and Viewer window) forward or backward in the Timeline, it moves forward or backward in the Canvas window and vice-versa.

The Canvas window allows you to make edits directly from the Viewer, by dragging your clip to the Canvas window, after having set In and Out points in the Viewer, and holding your cursor over the types of edits: Insert, Overwrite, Superimpose.

TIMELINE

The Timeline shows the placement of clips, transitions, effects, layers of video and audio, the total length of your Sequence and time code. You can edit directly from the Browser to the Timeline, or from the Viewer to the Timeline, as well as from the Canvas to the Timeline. The Timeline contains your video and audio tracks. You will be spending most of your time editing in the Timeline, while using the Viewer to create clips and apply Effects and Filters.

Use the controls at the bottom of the Timeline to set your thumbnail sizes (the larger the thumbnails, the more memory they use but larger thumbnails may make working in the Timeline easier), your track sizes, and to zoom in and out on your project.

Final Cut Pro Functions

TRANSITIONS

1. Transitions are how you move from one clip to the next – Cut, Fade, Dissolve, etc. Transitions are always applied between clips. The default transition is a Cut edit – when you bring a clip into the timeline, it creates a Cut edit automatically.
2. To set up a different transition, go to the Browser window and select the Effects tab to see the video and audio transitions you can apply between clips.
3. To create and apply a transition, double click on the transition name in the Browser window. The transition will open up in the Viewer.
4. Grab the end of the transition and drag it to create a longer or shorter transition, or go to the transition length window at the upper left-hand side of the Viewer and write in the transition length you want. If you want to create a 5-second dissolve, for example, key in 5:00.
5. Then use the hand icon on the transition window in the Viewer, at the upper right-hand side of the transition window, to drag the transition **to the edit point between two clips**.
6. If you do not have large enough handles (enough media) on the clips where the transition

is applied, e.g. if you do not have the extra media to accommodate a 5-second dissolve (2.5 seconds additional media needed on each clip), you will not be able to create a 5-second dissolve. There are other options that we will discuss in class. In the meantime, FCP will automatically adjust the transition length to fit the available media.

FILTERS/EFFECTS

1. Select the Effects tab on the Browser window and select Video Filters. This folder contains all the effects that come packaged with the FCP software.
2. An effect or filter is applied to the selected clip. It changes the way the clip looks in the Timeline but not in the Browser. It can change the speed or direction (forwards or backwards, e.g.) of the clip, or the clip's opacity level, etc. You can apply more than one effect to a clip.
3. Some effects need to be rendered (encoded) before you can play them in your Timeline, others can be played before rendering. To render an effect: **Sequence > Render All**; or **Sequence > Render Selection** to render an effect. If rendering is required for playback, you will see a red line above the clip. On occasion FCP will un-render a previously rendered clip. In this case, simply render it again.
4. You can view the effects before rendering, however, by **scrubbing** through them, i.e. running the playhead over the clip.
5. Effects/Filters parameters are set in the Viewer. Double click on the clip in the Timeline to bring it into the Viewer so that you can work on it, apply effects and filters, change In and Out points etc. Double click on the effect or drag it over the clip in the Viewer.
6. Click on the Filters or Motion tab in the Viewer to see the Effect's parameters and to change them. Use the Viewer window to see the changes by clicking the Video tab in the Viewer.
7. To delete an Effect or Filter, select the clip and hit the Delete key. In this case the Delete key deletes the Effects but not the clip itself.
8. When you apply a filter to the clip in the Sequence, it is only that clip at that particular point in your sequence that has the effect applied. The master clip, which is in your Browser remains unchanged.

IMPORTING OTHER DIGITAL MEDIA

1. You can import these Graphics files: PSD, JPEG, TIFF, BMP, FlashPix, GIF, PICS, PICT, PNG
2. You can import these Video files: AVI QuickTime Movie, Macromedia Flash (video only)
3. You can import these Audio files: AIFF/AIFC, Audio CD, Sound Designer II, System 7 Sound, WAVE, MPEG4. Please note: MP3 files must be converted to AIFF in iTunes before importing to FCP.
4. In FCP select **File > Import** and locate your file for import, or drag the desired files directly from your desktop/hard drive into the Browser

SCALING IMPORTED STILLS

If your graphic is not properly scaled for HD video – if it looks squashed or stretched – select the still in the Browser, select **Modify > Scale to Sequence**. Later versions of Photoshop include presets with guides for HD scale.

WHEN FINISHED AN EDITING SESSION

1. **Save** your project. Close FCP application.
2. If you have been editing with your project files on the computer hard drive, download your complete file (i.e. your entire Scratch Disk file – whatever you have named it) to an external hard drive. Don not re-name it, however. This will make it impossible for FCP to match up the actual media files with the media file names. This way you can be certain that you do not lose your project and all its related media files when you are ready to work on it again. Do not leave your files on the Media Lab computer – they are all deleted on a regular basis.
3. In your next editing session, start the process again by uploading your Scratch Disk to the Work File and opening it up in Final Cut Pro.

Good luck! Have fun! Try out new things!

MORE TO COME:

Exporting your video to Quicktime Movie formats and burning it onto a DVD.