

Final Cut Tips

Suggestions from Larry Jordan's Newsletter

There are three groups of preferences in Final Cut Pro:

1. Those that configure FCP to your tape machine
2. Those that configure FCP to your computer
3. Those that configure FCP to you

Configure to your capture machine (format)

Since we are using DV your first choice should be **Final Cut Pro > Easy Setup**
Select **DV > NTSC**

Next go to **Final Cut Pro > Audio/Video Settings**

Make sure the *Video Playback* and *Audio Playback* settings at the bottom reference the same place. If you are watching the video on the computer screen or want to use the satellite speakers *Video Playback* should be set to None and be sure the *Audio Playback* is set to Built-in Audio.

If you are watching the television monitor via Firewire make sure the *audio* is set Firewire DV. These settings frequently get changed with the Audio editing class' use of ProTools. If these settings are mismatched the synchronization of audio and video maybe off as much as 3-9 frames.

Configuring the computer system (Setting the media scratch disk)

It is recommended that on your media storage drive (internal or external) you create a folder with your project's name on it. Click on your Media Drive and select new folder. Give it a unique project name.

Go to the menu **Final Cut Pro > System Settings** and select the **Scratch Disks** tab. Then "point" your scratch disk to your project folder using the Set command. Final Cut automatically records media and other associated files to this folder. You should also point the Waveform, Thumbnail and Autosave to this project folder.

Finally set the *Minimum Allowable Free Space* to 10,000 MB. This makes sure your hard drive doesn't get too full which slows down playback and recording.

Never record media to the system drive. This complicates using the computer for everyone. If I discover media captured on the system drive (accidentally or otherwise) I will erase first and ask questions later.

Playback Control tab. Set *RT* to Safe and *Video Quality* and *Frame Rate* to Dynamic. This decreases the time spent rendering effects during editing. The effects will have to be rendered before final output to tape. Other settings can be left to the default.

External Editors tab

General tab:

Set the limit tab to 22 MB/sec for firewire drives. This will reduce the “dropped frames” error messages and place a red render bar over effects that exceed the ability of you hard drive.

Other options under this tab include the number of Undos. This is best left at 25 because it uses up RAM memory. You may want to change the Autosave Vault to save about every 15 minutes and reduce the number of copies per project to about 20 to save space.

Two other settings under User Preferences > Editing tab that you may want to set. Preview Pre-roll set to 4:00 and Preview Post-roll to 3:00. Then when you press the back slash key to preview an edit you can view your edit easily and efficiently.

Keeping Final Cut Running Smoothly

- Don't allow your hard disk to get too full. It should never be more than 85% full. Be conservative on the footage that you capture. Eliminate bad takes and dead roll footage as much as possible.
- Do a “Save as” at the end of each day's edit. This will automatically clean up any potential problem in your project file before they get serious and will give a reliable back-up each night. You might try using version numbers such as “Batman v1, v2, v3”, etc. Or you might use dates such as “Batman 0915, 0916, 0917 . . .” You should also back-up your projects as data on a CD-RW or a DVD-RW. This will allow you easily recreate your project in case the computer drive or the external drive crashes as long as you have your footage. (This happens an average of about 1 per semester)
- Avoiding creating Browser nests that are two deep. Eight layers are possible but you should avoid going more than 4-5 deep.
- Don't have too many sequences open at a time. This uses memory and will slow down the operation. Sequences in the Browser do not use memory.
- If you have a sequence that is acting flakey try the following:
 1. Create a new sequence
 2. Go back to the flakey sequence and choose Edit > Select All
 3. Copy the entire sequence (Edit > Copy)
 4. Go to the newly created sequence
 5. Move your playhead to the start of the sequence

6. Paste (Edit > Paste)
7. "Save as" a new version of your sequence.

Often moving sequences from one sequence to another fixes problems.