

tech note: Final Cut Express (FCE)

OVERVIEW

Final Cut Express (FCE) is an editing program which allows you to edit and combine video and audio from a variety of sources and formats.

Open FCE from the Lab Applications folder. (If you get a window saying FCE is unable to locate the Firewire device, just click 'Continue'.)

Note that the default size for FCE projects is **720 x 480** pixels (also known as DV-NTSC 4:3). Any video and digital stills imported into FCE will be resized to these dimensions; imported graphics (including Image Ready animations) should be **720 x 540**.

PROJECT SETTINGS

Set your scratch disks to your hard drive. Set your scratch disks to your hard drive. Set your scratch disks to your hard drive. This ensures that all Captured footage, Render files and Autosave are saved to your hard drive (and not User Work, where they will be deleted):

Final Cut Express > System Settings > Scratch Disks. Click **'Set...'** to set all of the **Capture** options, **Waveform Cache**, **Thumbnail Cache**, and **Autosave Vault** to your hard drive.

You should also make sure you save your project to your hard drive, and QuickTimes should be exported to your hard drive.

WORKSPACE & WINDOWS

Each FCE Project that you create includes the following Windows:

Browser: The browser lists all of the source files you are using. These are *links* only; the FCE project does not actually **contain** the files. Select source files by clicking **File > Import**. You must always save & back up your source files as well as your FCE project file.

Sequence (or Timeline): The Timeline is composed of video and audio tracks (up to 99 each) in which you organize all of your video and audio clips. When you export the movie to Quicktime format, FCE exports the Sequence.

Viewer: The Viewer window displays individual video & audio Clips. If you double-click a Clip in the Browser or in the Sequence timeline, it will display in the Viewer window.

Canvas: The Canvas window displays the entire Sequence.

HOW DO I...

- **Import (link to) a source file?** File > Import > Files...
- **Add an Audio Track (or Video Track)?** Sequence > Insert Tracks...
- **Add a source file to the Sequence?** Click and drag the source file from the Browser Window to the desired Audio or Video Track.

- **Shorten or Lengthen a clip in the Sequence?** Place your cursor over the edge (beginning or end) then click & drag to shorten (or extend) it. (You can only extend video if you have additional footage in the clip; still images can be set to any length.)

- **...Change the speed (and duration) of a clip?** Select the clip in the Sequence and then click **Modify > Speed** and edit as desired.

- **Make Audio waveforms appear on audio clips in the Sequence timeline?** Command (apple key) + Option + W

- **Change the Volume of an Audio clip?** Double-click the audio clip in the timeline – it will open in the ‘Viewer’ window. To change volume, change the ‘Level’ value. (Use the pen tool to set key frames & set Levels at different points within the clip.)

You can change also audio in the Timeline by toggling clip overlays – type **option + W** or click the jagged line icon at the bottom left of the Timeline window.

- **Render footage in the Sequence?** As you combine video and audio in the Sequence, FCE needs to render the footage. Unrendered footage has a red line above it. To render it, click **Sequence > ‘Render Selection’** or **> ‘Render All’**. The keyboard shortcut to render *all* unrendered footage is Command (the apple key) + R.

Export at Full Quality?

Use **File > Export > QuickTime Movie**

Export at Web/Compressed Quality?

Use **File > Export > Using QuickTime Conversion** with **LAN/Intranet** settings

ALWAYS SAVE YOUR SOURCE FILES *AND* YOUR FCE PROJECT

Your FCE project file does not actually contain the source files, it just links to them.

If you save your FCE project without also saving your source files, you’ll lose your work.