Final Cut Pro X - The Basics

Professional editors use Apple's Final Cut Pro to edit some of your favorite TV shows and movies- now YOU can too! Final Cut Pro X has a very similar interface to iMovie, but offers many powerful options, effects, and plug-ins that iMovie lacks. There are many ways to control Final Cut Pro; this guide will mostly explain how to control the interface using menus and buttons. As you get more comfortable with the interface, you will probably find it useful to learn the keyboard shortcuts.

IMPORTANT NOTE

In the Student Multimedia Design Center all files saved to a computer will be wiped away once the computer is restarted. In the event that there is a power failure or if the computer freezes and requires a restart, files will also be unrecoverable. As a result, students are encouraged to save all files to an external hard drive. To work with Final Cut Pro X directly from a hard drive, it is STRONGLY recommended that the drive is formatted as a *Mac OS Extended* drive. If you have a new hard drive, Macs have a built-in utility called "Disk Utility" that you can use to format the drive correctly. Hard drives for loan are available for checkout at the Center's service desk.

GETTING STARTED

- Restart computer.
- Attach a hard drive to the computer.
- Open Final Cut Pro X.
- In Final Cut Pro X, your projects and media are stored inside of a Final Cut Pro library. The library consists of a collection of one or more events. An event is a grouping of footage based on the date and time the clips were recorded, as well as the projects you create with them. Often you will only need one library and one event, although there may be cases where you would want multiple libraries and events. Like iMovie, Final Cut Pro X will automatically create a new library for you when you start the program. This automatic library is stored in the "Movies" folder on the Mac you are working on. It is recommended that you manually create a new library, so you can pick the save location.

FCPX Library

Create a new library

1. Go to the File menu and choose New->Library...
2. In the Save dialogue, type in a name for your library in the "Save As" field, and from the "Where" drop-down choose your save location, such as your external hard drive, the click "Save".
3. You should now see your newly-created library in the sidebar on the left-hand side of the interface. You can now right-click and "Close" any other libraries that are open. This is always a good idea to avoid confusion.
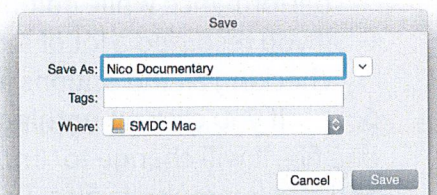
Import Media

1. If importing from a camera: connect the camera, turn it on, and put it in playback mode.
2. Click the Import Media Button. ↓
3. In the window that pops up, look on the left-hand side for places to import media from. This will include connected cameras, connected hard drives, and places on the computer. Click on one of these to find your media.
4. Click on any file to preview it in the viewer. Hover and move your mouse left or right to skim. Right-click where it says "Name" to see column options, and optionally add useful columns like frame rate, and frame size, if desired.
5. On the right-hand side of the window there are many import options. From here you can create new events, decide on a media management strategy, create transcoded media for faster editing, analyze clips for problems, create smart keyword collections, etc. Many of these are advanced options, and as a beginner, I would recommend leaving them all "as-is" for now. *Additional notes about these options:*
   - In the "Files" option, if you want Final Cut Pro X to manage your media (recommended) leave it on "Copy to library". If you want to manage your own media (like Premiere Pro), choose "Leave files in place".
   - If disk space is not a big issue, I would recommend checking "Create Proxy Media" for faster performance while editing.
   - If you recorded a lot of interviews or are working on a large project, you might also want to try checking all the options for "Keywords".
6. If you click on nothing in the list of files, you will get an option to "Import All". If you click on one file, it will change to "Import Selected". To select more than one file, hold the Command key and click on multiple files. To select a long list, click on the first file you want, hold the Shift key and then click the last file you want. When ready, click "Import Selected".
7. The Import Media window will disappear, and your media will start importing as a "background task". This means you can keep working while your media is importing.

Final Cut Pro   File   Edit   Trim   Mark   Clip   Modify   View   Window   Help

Background Tasks

Import Media

Keywords

Library Panel

Event Browser

Inspector

Viewer

Timecode

Transitions

Audio Meters*

Tools

Magnetic Timeline

Connected Clip

Primary Storyline

Connected Audio

*Turn on Audio Meters from the Window menu

Start a new project

1.   A "project" is what Final Cut Pro X calls a sequence, i.e. your edits on the timeline. To start a new one go to File->New->Project...
2.   If you want the project settings to be determined by the first clip you add to the timeline, leave it on automatic, by just giving your project a name, and clicking "ok".
If you want to manually decide on project setting, click the "Use Custom Settings" button, and manually set the frame size, frame rate, etc. This might be desirable for instance when shooting 4K, but finishing in 1080 or 720.

Making a range selection on a clip

Marking a range is similar to setting an in and out point in Premiere or Final Cut Pro Legacy, but with a few added twists. You can still use the i and o keyboard shortcuts if you are used to that, but you can also just click and drag to create a range selection, which will appear as a yellow box. However you do it, marking a range is the first step in the editing process. You are indicating which part(s) of the clip you are interested in using. Final Cut Pro X adds some new twists. For instance you can mark more than one range selection on a clip at once on a clip by holding the Command key. The program will then remember these selections until you clear them using the mark menu or Option-X.

Organizing with Keywords and/or Favorites (optional)

Depending on the size of your project you may choose to skip this step. Final Cut Pro X uses a metadata approach to organizing. There is no need to create bins and sub-clips anymore. Instead you just mark selections as favorites or with custom keywords to create faux sub-clips which are more flexible.
Using Favorites
1.   Make a range selection(s)
2.   Press the F key
3.   View your favorites using the smart collection
Using Keywords
1.   Make a range selection(s)
2.   Press Command-K or the Keywords button
3.   Type in a new keyword
4.   Now you can apply that keyword to other selections by clicking the keyword button again, or apply it directly with the auto-generated keyboard shortcut (Control-1, Control-2, etc.)
5.   Twirl open your event to see your keyword collections in the Library Panel.

Basic Edits

After making a range selection on a clip, there are number of ways to make an edit. The easiest is just to place your cursor in the middle of the yellow box, click and drag it down to the timeline and let go. Using this drag and drop method allows you to make 3 of the 4 basic edits in Final Cut Pro X. You can also make edits using the button, from the Edit menu, or using keyboard shortcuts.

Basic Edits (Continued)

|	
Connect to Primary Storyline	Q
Insert	W
Append to Storyline	E
Overwrite	D
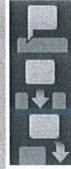
The most basic type of edit is the Append to Storyline edit. This will add the current range selection to the **E**nd of the Primary Storyline no matter where the playhead is parked. The Insert edit is for **W**edging a clip between two other clips on the Storyline. The Connect edit will connect the current range selection to the Primary Storyline. This is similar to "track 2" in legacy FCP, and is useful for cutaways, overlays, chroma key footage, etc. Lastly, the Overwrite edit is a throwback, it will simply overwrite whatever is on the Primary Storyline with the current range selection.

## Adding and Modifying Effects/Titles/Transitions

The first two buttons seen above are on the far right hand side of the interface in the middle, and open the Effects and Transitions browsers. The next two buttons are in the upper left corner of the interface and open the Photos/Music and Titles/Generators browsers. Simply, click a button to see your options, and then click and drag to add to your timeline. For instance, I can add a "Color Correction" effect to a clip.
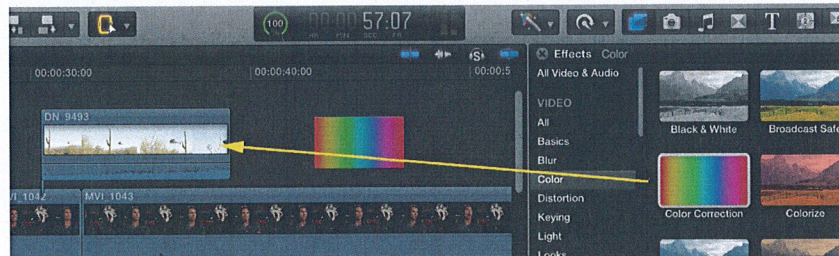
On its own the Color Correction effect does not do anything. I have to manually alter the effects properties and I do that by click on the clip and the then looking in the "Inspector". The inspector is the catch-all place for lots of actions you might want to take while editing in Final Cut Pro X. You can toggle the Inspector open and closed with this button:

You should now see lots of options for that clip, and right at the top, you will see the options for any added effects. In this case, the Color Correction Effect is controlled through the Color Board.
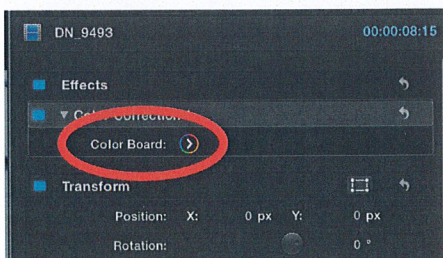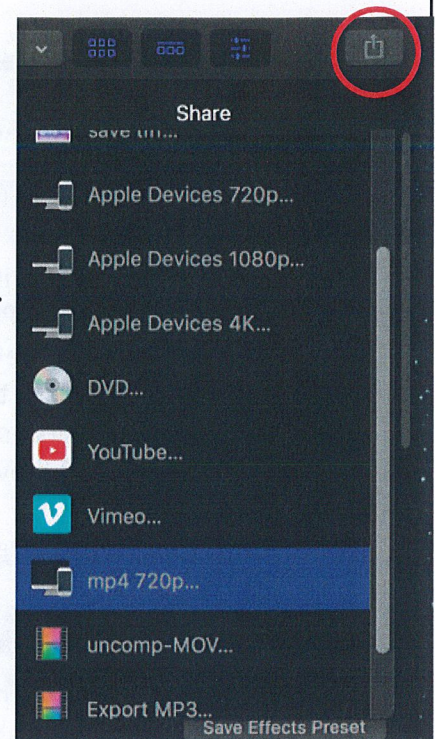
One advantage of Final Cut Pro X over iMovie is the plethora of video and audio effects, especially when you consider you can make them yourself in Motion, or find them online as "plug-ins".

5

Exporting

Exporting from Final Cut Pro X is easy. Just click the Export button and choose a destination like YouTube, Vimeo, Master File, etc. Or click "Add Destination..." to create a custom export. For instance, I have added one to make a quick, medium quality MP4 for a quick preview of my project.

Like importing, exporting will happen as a background task. You can click on the Background Tasks percentage meter, to get time estimates.

NOTES: