

FastCut — User's Guide

Welcome!

This FastCut software is the result of many years of development. It allows you to do advanced real-time video editing.

Please read this user's guide carefully. You cannot expect to learn how to use every feature of FastCut immediately after download. FastCut requires Mac OS X 10.4 or later.

Getting Started

After having imported the movie files by choosing 'Import...' from the 'File' menu, double click a clip in the 'Browser' window to load it into the 'Monitor'. Here you may set in and out points, use the two buttons in the bottom right corner. The clip segment between the in and out point is now prepared to be included into your movie.

Drag and drop the clip *from* the 'Monitor' to the 'Timeline' window. Drop it onto a video track (V1, V2, ...) to include the video media of your source material and once again onto an audio track (A1, A2, ...) to include the audio media. Alternatively use the 'Insert' button (see section 4. Editing). Now, move the playhead slider in the 'Timeline' or press the 'P' button in the 'Monitor' to switch to preview mode. Then start your movie with the space bar... You can inspect the properties of a clip by selecting a clip in the timeline. The 'Inspector' window that appears allows you to change various properties and setup animations etc. Double-clicking a clip loads the single clip in the 'Monitor' window (to set or re-set the in and out points).

1. Project

After application launch FastCut automatically creates a new project at the default location 'Movies/My Great Movie'. Choose 'New Project...' from the 'File' menu to specify the project location on your hard drive for your own. You may open and save a project by choosing 'Open Project...' and 'Save Project', respectively, from the 'File' menu.

2. Preferences

Choose 'Preferences...' from the application menu. The appearing preferences dialog allows you to specify the framesize and framerate for your movie. FastCut is ready for high definition (HD) footage. Choose the movie size depending on your source media, not the desired output (export) size.

You may set the playback quality to low, high or dynamic. Dynamic means that FastCut automatically changes the quality on playback depending on the current framerate for optimal playback performance. FastCut has a highly optimized dynamic RT algorithm under the hood. You may also setup if the 'Inspector' window should show and hide automatically (default).

You can enable motion blur by clicking on the motion blur button in the lower right corner of the 'Monitor' window (if you are in preview mode). The settings for motion blur can be specified in the 'Preferences' dialog.

3. Import

Import audio, video and still picture files by choosing 'Import...' from the 'File' menu or by directly

dragging and dropping files from the Finder to the 'Browser' window. The files ought to be readable by QuickTime. Note that MPEG-2 is not supported by QuickTime. But you may enable demuxed MPEG-2 with Apple's MPEG-2 plug-in. MPEG4, H.264 and Sorenson 3 formats are not recommended for editing on older computers.

FastCut can import TIFF images with an alpha channel. Make sure that the TIFF files have the .tiff file extension or HFS file type 'TIFF'. For some reasons only the TIFF still image format is supported (no technical reasons).

In order to capture audio visual media from a camcorder or a video recorder please use a good tool from Apple called 'QTRecorder' (or other tools from third parties). You can download it directly from: <https://developer.apple.com/library/mac/samplecode/QTRecorder/QTRecorder.zip>.

There is no import conversion process necessary. FastCut creates reference files from the originals and packs them into the movie project file. Your original source media is never modified.

FastCut is currently able to import files with the file extensions .mov, .mp3, .m4a, .aac, .aiff, .mp4, .m4v, .avi, .dv, .tiff and with the HFS file type codes 'MooV', 'TIFF', 'dvc!'. If you want to edit AVCHD files (.mts), download the free RewrapAVCHD utility and wrap your AVCHD files with a .m4v container. This is possible without conversion, thus it is very fast (within seconds).

4. Editing

Before you add a clip to the timeline you can edit it in the 'Monitor' with the standard tools which you can find in any QuickTime-savvy application. Hold down the *shift* key and move the playhead in the 'Monitor' to select a clip segment, then apply menu commands from the 'Edit' menu such as 'Cut', 'Copy', 'Paste', 'Delete', 'Add', 'Trim', 'Undo' and so on to the selected clip segment. Use the 'Save Clip' and 'Save Clip As...' commands to save your modifications. If you want to save a referenced movie clip externally, press the 'External' button in the 'Save Clip As...' dialog.

Use the two buttons in the bottom right corner of the 'Monitor' window to set in and out points for your clip. Now, the clip is prepared for the 'Timeline'. Drag&drop the clip from the 'Monitor' to the 'Timeline' or use the 'Insert' or 'Add' [if you hold down the *shift* key] button to bring the clip in the timeline. Make sure that you have selected the right track (track bar on the left side) and positioned the playhead slider appropriately.

Notice that the selected clip segment and the segment determined with in & out points is not the same thing.

Notice that the 'Monitor' can be used in editing mode and in preview mode (see 6. Preview). What is the difference between 'editing mode' and 'preview mode'? For instance in Final Cut Pro you have two monitor windows, one for the single clips ('Viewer') and one for the whole movie composition ('Canvas'). In FastCut you have only one 'Monitor' window, but you can use it as 'Viewer' or as 'Canvas'. Use the 'P' button in the bottom right corner of the 'Monitor' window to switch from 'editing mode' (gray 'P') to 'preview mode' (blue 'P') and vice versa. Be aware that FastCut sometimes implicitly switches from one mode to the other. If you move the playhead slider in the 'Timeline' window, the 'Monitor' switches to 'preview mode' (if necessary). If you double-click a single clip in the 'Timeline' to load it into the 'Monitor' and maybe to re-set the in & out points, the 'Monitor' switches to 'editing mode' (if necessary) automatically.

Advanced: if you drag the mouse somewhere in the timeline view while you hold down the *option* key, you can move the playhead without actually dragging the playhead slider at the top of the 'Timeline' window. This might be useful if you have scrolled the playhead slider out of the view.

5. Timeline

The 'Timeline' window shows the movie tracks. By default the first two tracks are video tracks and

the second two are audio tracks. In general video tracks are stacked on top of audio tracks. When you insert a clip by drag & drop from the 'Monitor' window you, will notice that video clips are marked blue for recognition and audio clips red. There are six different clip types.

To select multiple clips hold down the *shift* key. Use the 'Delete' command in the 'Edit' menu menu to remove clips from the timeline.

Choose 'Add Video Track', 'Add Audio Track' and 'Remove Tracks...' from the 'Movie' menu to add and remove tracks. If you have (only) one clip selected, new tracks are inserted below / above (video / audio) the track of the selected clip. If you have multiple clips or none selected, tracks are added above / below (video / audio) the whole track stack.

Let's assume you have put two clips on the same track and you would like to close the gap between them. Hold down the *option* key while clicking in the gap. You may also click in the gap after having chosen the 'Close Gap Before Clip...' command from the 'Movie' menu.

The snapping feature, turn it on by clicking on the snapping button next to the zoom slider, makes a clip you move close to another clip snap. Snapping is not always desired, therefore it is turned off by default.

In order to jump to the start or end point of the currently selected clip choose 'Goto Clip Start Point' or 'Goto Clip End Point'. The 'Move Clip(s) to Playhead' command from the 'Movie' menu moves a clip (or several clips) to the playhead.

Most menu commands in the 'Movie' menu refer to the 'Timeline' window. Bring the 'Timeline' window to the front if the 'Movie' menu items are disabled.

A clip in the timeline can be loaded into the 'Monitor' (editing mode) by double-clicking. The playhead position of the clip is synchronized with the playhead of the 'Timeline' window relative to the start point of the clip. That's a very useful feature! When you re-set the in & out point of a clip that is already included in the timeline the clip duration will change and clips arranged behind this clip are moved appropriately.

FastCut provides native support for fvf (fgrab video format) clips. You can insert/add screen movie fvf files to your movie. Choose 'Insert Screen Movie...' from the 'Movie' menu.

If you hold down the *shift* key, every 'Insert ...' command of the 'Movie' menu becomes an 'Add ...' command. All subsequent clips won't be moved.

You can copy a clip in the timeline by drag&drop and holding down the *control* key. If you hold down the *command* key, the clip properties will not be copied but reset.

All actions in the timeline such as clip movement (that is changing the start point of a clip), setting in & out point, clip insertion/remove or track insertion/remove can be undone. FastCut has unlimited undo & redo support.

6. Preview

If you have turned on preview mode by pressing the 'P' button in the 'Monitor' for instance, then, what you see in the 'Monitor', is the graphical equivalent of the timeline. Single clips from the browser list or the timeline can be loaded by double-clicking in the 'Monitor' — FastCut automatically switches from the preview mode into editing mode (if necessary).

7. Inspector

The 'Inspector' allows you to manipulate clip properties, such as clip size or clip contrast. It shows up automatically depending on the preferences. Choose 'Show Inspector'/'Hide Inspector' from the 'Window' menu to show/hide the 'Inspector' window manually.

The left and right arrow keys allow you to jump quickly to the previous/next keyframe of the selected clip [shortcut works also if 'Monitor' or 'Timeline' window in front].

The 'Inspector' gives you 100 % control for each of the various clip types. Best of all, almost all clip parameters are animatable (with keyframes) over time, not only motion parameters, but also parameters such as sharpness (instant feedback in the 'Monitor' even during playback).

8. Transitions

Put two clips in the timeline on the same track and close the gap between them (see section 'Timeline'). Now select both clips and choose 'Apply Transition' from the 'Movie' menu. A yellow transition clip is created between the two source clips. Note that you need surplus frames at tail and head of the clips, respectively, to apply a transition. Thus, set in and out points appropriately. By default a cross fade transition is created, the most common transition type. In order to change the transition type select the transition and change the type in the 'Inspector' window.

The transition model described above is deprecated. It has been superseded by a new transition model. FastCut projects with old transition clips can still be opened. Since FastCut version 3.0 you can create transitions by setting the transition property of the first source clip. The subsequent second source clip should be placed directly after the first source clip in the timeline.

9. Filters & special FX

The 'Inspector' allows you to adjust hue, saturation, brightness, contrast and sharpness of a clip. These filters are animatable.

You may also choose from a popup menu to apply a special effect such as the popular 'Posterize' effect.

10. Animation

There are clip properties which are animatable over time: position, size, rotation, opacity, volume, hue, saturation, brightness, contrast, sharpness, cropping, subdivide and title effect state. These properties are marked in the inspector (notice the points on the right side). Use the 'Enabled' checkbox in the 'Animation' section of the 'Inspector' to turn on animation. Then move the playhead slider in the timeline to specify a point in time and press the plus button in the 'Inspector' to add a keyframe. The point in time associated with a keyframe does not necessarily have to be between start and end point of the clip. The keyframes are listed in a popup menu in the 'Animation' section. To set the animatable parameters for a certain keyframe, choose the keyframe from the popup menu (the playhead slider jumps to the keyframe in the timeline) and then set the parameters. The parameters of frames between two keyframes are computed (linear interpolation).

IMPORTANT: When animation is enabled, animatable parameters can only be set if the playhead is over a keyframe. Select a keyframe from the popup menu and the playhead will move (exactly) to the keyframe.

Choosing 'Reset keyframe' from the pull-down keyframe action menu (select a keyframe first) brings the keyframe parameters back to the settings before you enabled animation with the checkbox 'Enabled'.

If you want to save time, setup your animation by choosing 'Animation Presets...' from the 'Movie' menu. The window that appears allows you to choose from an array of presets and allows you to exactly determine the way these presets will be applied. Move the mouse over the controls (checkboxes) for the different options to get tool tips that explain what the individual option does.

You may also save your own keyframe animation as preset for later reuse. Choose 'Save Animation As...' from the 'Movie' menu. Your own animation appears in the popup list of the 'Animation Presets' window.

11. Wireframe mode

If you like to change the clip position and size directly with the mouse in the 'Monitor' window, turn on 'wireframe mode' by clicking the wireframe button in the bottom right corner of the 'Monitor' window, select a clip in the 'Timeline' and move the playhead over the selected clip. The selected clip gets a green wireframe which can be moved by drag&drop, resized by additionally holding down the *shift* key or rotated by additionally holding down the *option* key. Euler angles (phi, theta, psi) set the orientation in the 3D design space. Press '1', '2', '3' keys before the *option*+drag operation to choose which Euler angle (phi, theta or psi) should be changed.

12. Masking & keying

You may attach a mask to each clip in your movie composition. FastCut uses the alpha channel (transparency channel) information of a TIFF image to determine which pixels of the clip to mask out. Choose 'Set...' in the 'Mask' section of the 'Inspector' to specify such a mask TIFF image. The 'Additional Material' package (separate download) contains a few sample masks. Keying allows you to substitute a color in a video clip with a 100% transparent color. You can enable and set up keying in the 'Inspector'.

13. Titles

FastCut has an integrated ATSUI live title editor. Simply choose 'Insert Title Clip...' from the 'Movie' menu. Title clips are purple. When a new title clip is created FastCut automatically brings the 'Title Editor' window to the front where you may type in your text. The title editor built into FastCut uses the ATSUI text technology of Mac OS X. Font and style may be set individually for each letter. Title animation FX [FX = effects] may be set up in the 'Inspector'. Note that the title size (displayed in the title bar of the 'Title Editor' window) and the clip size (in the 'Inspector') are not identical. Set the clip size to the title size by pressing the blue button in the section 'Title Effect'. If you wish, choose a title animation effect and set up keyframes for the title effect state parameter.

Since version 2.1.2 FastCut has the ability to use still image clips which are bigger than the movie size determined in the 'Preferences' dialog without quality loss. To use this feature hold down the *option* key while dropping the image in the timeline. Take a look at the 'Big Title' project example which can be found in the 'Additional Material' package.

14. 3D composition clips

FastCut version 3.1 and later allows you to create composition clips. Choose 'Insert Composition Clip...' from the 'Movie' menu. Position this clip on top of an existing clip setup. E.g. you have created an animation consisting of a few clips in track 1 and 2, then you can add the composition clip in track 3. Everything that would be displayed in the canvas without the composition clip is now captured and shown within the rectangle of the composition clip. If you like to replace the rectangle by a 3D model, choose one further below in the 'Inspector' from the popup menu. One can also select a 3D model not only for composition clips, but also for other clip types. FastCut is capable to read the 3D format .obj if the file is not too big.

15. Export

Choose 'Export...' from the 'File' menu to export your movie. Most QuickTime formats are supported.

By default multi-pass H.264 is preselected in the QuickTime export dialog. Single pass H.264 encoding is faster and might be a better choice. The export dialog lets you set a output size that may differ from the movie size set in the 'Preferences' dialog.

16. Misc

Please visit the FastCut support website at <http://www.timesforfun.de/support.html> to get free email support and additional information (FAQ, screen movies). A shortcut paper (FastCut — Shortcuts.pdf) is available, too. Shortcuts are handy for a variety of editing tasks. Please consider to print the User's Guide and the shortcut paper. Having it next to your computer might be very helpful.

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