

# CAR Video Unit – Video Editing Using AVID

## Part 2 – Setting Up a Project and Digitising / Video Capture

### Setting Up the Computer

Non-Linear Editing (NLE) systems like Avid have three main components:

- 1) Editing Station
- 2) VTR (Video Tape Recorder)
- 3) Data Drives

The Editing Station is the computer (whether PC, Mac or Laptop) which holds the AVID software and which is used to manipulate the data to create a finished 'film' from the footage available.

The VTR is used to capture footage (both audio and video) from tapes and, if required, output the finished film to tape at the end of the process. Cameras using data cards don't need a VTR and can download media to the data drives directly or via a card reader.

The Data Drives are used to store the video and audio data.

Some systems also have a viewing monitor (separate from the editing station monitor(s)) which gives more accurate colour reproduction than the computer monitors.

The general rule when switching on a system is to switch on all the peripherals (monitors, data drives, VTR etc) first and then switch on the computer (so that the computer 'knows' that all the peripherals are there).

The Lacie drives which we use as external data drives work somewhat differently, however, in that they should be connected to the computer when they are already powered up but AFTER the computer is switched on. So, the way to use OUR editing systems is as follows:

- 1) Make sure that all the peripherals EXCEPT the Lacie drives are connected to the computer – dongle, mouse interface, firewire interface, monitor(s) and VTR.
- 2) Switch on the peripherals you will need (VTR - and monitor(s) if you are not using a laptop).
- 3) Switch on the Computer.
- 4) Switch on the Lacie Drive
- 5) When the Windows desktop appears and the Lacie drive is running, connect the Lacie to the Computer edit station.

When switching off the system, first get out of AVID (having saved your project beforehand, of course), then shut down windows and the computer, and only then switch off the peripherals.

NEVER disconnect the Lacie Drive while the computer is running, as this can lead to file corruption and data loss.

### Setting Up an AVID Project

To get into AVID, double-click on the AVID icon on the desk top.

If you are opening an existing project, the project files should be on Lacie drive you are using, so that both the media files and the work you have already done with them are on the same drive (and you can continue on any editing station which is currently free).

To get to an existing project you will have to click on the 'External' button and then use the Browse Button to find the project you want to work on.

To set up a new project, click on the 'New Project' bar.

Give the project a name and make sure the '25i PAL' line is ticked (this is the format for the DV tapes we will be shooting on).

Click 'OK' to get to the AVID Interface proper.

### The AVID Interface - Dual Screen

When using a system with two screens the convention is to have the Project Window (seen in the top LH corner), any bins you are using video, audio, sequences or titles from, and any tools you are using in the left hand screen.

The right hand screen is then left clear for the Clip Screen on the left (where any clips you are looking at appear), the Timeline Screen on the Right (where the total run of your film so far appears), and the Timeline Window at the bottom.

The Timeline Window is effectively a set of instructions regarding which parts of which clips in which order will be used in the finished film. It has Video tracks (V1 etc) and Audio tracks (A1 etc) for both the clip (left buttons) and timeline (right buttons) screens. These buttons must be switched on (ie appear in colour rather than white) to do anything with the tracks in question, in both screens. To see or hear tracks when the 'play' arrow is pressed in either of the screens, the button to the left (clip screen) or right (timeline screen) of the V or A button must be pressed.

### The AVID Interface - Single Screen

On the laptops (or other systems with a single computer screen) the Avid interface contains the project window, monitors, timeline window and everything else on a single screen.

In practice, the size of the clip and timeline screens is usually maximised as much as possible, with the project, bin and tool windows stacked on the left hand side.

### Logging/Capturing Clips

To capture the footage from the tapes we have shot we must go 'Tools' on the top toolbar and click 'Capture'. Alternatively, we can bring up the Capture Window by clicking CNTR>7.

Looking at this screen from top to bottom, you must first make sure that each track you wish to capture from is activated (usually V, A1 and A2 if you are capturing both video and audio) and also that the Timecode (TC) button is activated.

You can name the clip (see below) in the 'Name' box, and add comments if you wish.

The bin bar allows you to choose which bin to send the footage to. A bin must be activated (by double clicking on its name in the Project Window) before it can be designated here.

Below the Bin Bar is a further bar which allows you designate which media drive the footage is to be saved to. This should ALWAYS be the external Lacie drive – make sure that the default C-Drive doesn't appear here.

Below the 'Delay Audio' button (which we never seem to use) is a window which details the timecode of the tape currently in the VTR. Below this are various buttons similar to those you will find on a tape machine – play, pause, stop, fast forward and so on. The central square is a shuttle. Clicking, holding and dragging this to the right moves the tape forward, to the left moves is backwards.

The bar below these controls gives details of the VTR being used, and the bar below this contains the name of the tape in the VTR. (When you put a tape in the VTR a window appears which allows you to name a new tape or designate the name of a tape which has already been used in connection with that particular project). When naming tapes, always give details of what is on the tape, ie "Arthur Smith Interview" rather than "Tape 1".

The button below the tape name bar (on the right) allows you to set a custom pre-roll. Three seconds is all you will need here.

There are a number of ways to capture footage. The most basic is to capture a single clip, using the top two buttons to the left of the four which bars in the bottom RH corner. Bring the tape to the place where you want to start capturing and click the top (in-point) button. Run to the tape to where you want the clip to end and click the (out-point) button below this. You will see that the white box below this now tells you how long the clip is. Then, rewind

the tape to about five seconds BEFORE the designated in-point, stop the tape, and click the red button in the top left hand corner of the Capture Tool screen. Your designated clip will now be digitised onto the Lacie Drive in real time.

Capturing one clip at a time like this is very tedious, however, so AVID has a 'Batch Capture' facility (so that clips can be logged and then captured all together while you go for a coffee). Unfortunately, batch capture tends to halt half way through a lot of the time, leading to wasted time and hair-pulling etc

Fortunately, there is a third way of doing it which is much more effective...

Until relatively recently, it was important to capture ONLY the footage that had a chance of being used in a project, due to the constraints of Data Drive space. Now, however, hard drives are both cheaper and have much bigger capacities – the Lacie's we use cost just over £120 and offer 1000 gigabytes of storage, which is enough to store almost 80 hours of DV video (and audio).

Consequently, there are no constraints on digitising EVERYTHING on a tape as one or more 'Master Clips' and then 'Sub-Clipping' (see below) the footage we might actually use. There are a number of distinct advantages to this. Firstly, digitising everything is more time efficient since no time is taken logging clips initially. Secondly, there is always enough material to cover any transitions you may wish to use (something we'll be covering later) and to accommodate any trimming you may wish to do (ditto). Finally, when a project is completely finished and the footage shot does not need to be archived, there are a minimal number of files to wipe off the Lacie to provide space for the next project.

So, the way we are going to be digitising our footage is as follows:

- 1) Bring the tape to the start of the section we wish to digitise
- 2) Hit the play button
- 3) Immediately hit the red button in the top left hand corner of the Capture Tool Window.
- 4) Go and make a coffee while the material is digitised in real time

Two things to note with this method, however.

The first is that this will only work if the tape has a continuous timecode – another reason NOT to view footage in the camera.

The second thing is that the maximum amount of footage which can be digitised into one clip like this is 30 minutes, which means that tapes with more than 30 minutes of footage on them need two bites at the cherry.

### Organising Your Clips

The better your clips are organised, the more easily you will be able to find them and the less time will be needed to edit the project. We organise clips by

putting them into a series of BINS – separate folders which serve the same purpose as the bins in the early days of film.

The 30-minute Master Clips we have digitised are difficult to manipulate. They need to be split up into sub-clips (see below) before we start editing proper. This requires the creation of a number of different bins to put the sub-clips in.

To create a bin, go to the Project Window and click on 'Bins' in its top toolbar. Click on the 'New Bin' button and name the bin you have created. The file icon at the bottom of the project window (fifth icon from the left). We can then physically drag and drop the sub-clips we create into it.

Generally speaking you will want to have at least a separate bin for every tape. You may also wish to store the clips from a single tape into a number of separate bins. Say, for example, on one day's shooting, we first go to location A to film some cutaways / general views (GVs), then we go to interview Mr Smith, then we go to location B to film some more cutaways. We do all this on one tape which we may want to organise into three bins as follows:

- 1) Location A cutaways
- 2) Mr Smith Interview
- 3) Location B cutaways.

If we filmed some establishing shots of Mr Smith's house and some close-ups of objects in Mr Smith's house, we may want to put these into a separate bin:

- 4) Mr Smith House Cutaways

Similarly, if we took a lot of different shots at Location A, we might want to split these up too:

- 1) Location A Cutaways – Establishing shots (LSs)
- 5) Location A Cutaways – Medium Shots (MSs)
- 6) Location A Cutaways – Close Ups (CUs)

As a general rule of thumb, your finished programme will be much more interesting if sequences are arranged so that each shot is followed by one of a different type of shot (CU => LS => MS for example) and, this being the case, it is sometimes useful to group different types of shots into different bins, as above.

### Sub-Clipping

We create sub-clips from the 'Master Clip' we have digitised.

First we get the Master Clip into the Clip Screen by double-clicking on the icon to the left of its name in the bin it resides, or by clicking on this and dragging and dropping it into the Clip Screen.

To make sub-clips from the Master clip we again use in-points and out-points. We 'play' the clip, or click and drag the blue line immediately below the screen to point we wish to be the beginning of the clip. Then we click on the 'in-point' button to the left of the 'play' (right-pointing triangle) button. Now we get to the point which we wish to be the end of the sub-clip and press the 'out-point' button to the right of the 'play' triangle button.

When the in-point and out-point have been designated, we press the ALT key, put the cursor in the Clip Screen, click and hold down the Left Mouse Button and drag the clip into the bin we wish the sub-clip to reside in. Then we release the LMB.

Now we have to name the sub-clip – and the more descriptive this is, the easier it will be to find afterwards.

For example, if the sub-clip is a question and answer from an interview about how long the interviewee has worked somewhere, we could call it 'How Long Worked'.

Where Cutaways are concerned, for the reasons given above, it is a good idea to begin the name with the type of shot it is, for example 'WS Mr Smith House'.

Then we continue through the whole of the Master Clip, sub-clipping all those sections which we feel we might use in the finished film.

Please note that creating a sub clip does NOT create a new media file. It just tells AVID which bits of the Master Clip media files we wish to use at that point. This means that if a Master Clip's media files are deleted for any reason, all media relating to the sub-clips taken from it will disappear also.