

CAR Video Unit – Video Editing Using AVID

Part 3 Putting instructions regarding the captured footage onto a time-line to produce an initial rough-cut.

When we have all the clips we need for our project (or at least enough to make a start – more can be digitised / imported at any time) we can start arranging them on the Timeline to create our finished programme.

We do this using the Timeline Window in the standard AVID interface.

The timeline window is found at the bottom of the screen (RH screen when two monitors are being used). The timeline has one or more video tracks (V1, V2 etc) above two or more audio tracks (A1, A2 etc). Where the video tracks are concerned we can look at them as layers of a cake – if there is nothing on a top layer, then we can see down to the layer beneath and so on.

Where editing factual programmes is concerned, a common method is to put interviews on Video 1 (the bottom layer), cutaways on Video 2, and titles on Video 3 (the top layer). This ensures that the titles will always be seen. To create further Video or Audio tracks on the timeline, activate the Timeline Window (by clicking on the window title bar), then click on 'Clip' on the top AVID toolbar, then click 'New Video/Audio Track' as appropriate.

The way that factual programmes are usually constructed is to arrange interview footage to provide the 'backbone' of the programme (especially where the audio is concerned) and then to place cutaways (with or without audio) into a video track above this. If you intend to use cutaway audio, make sure that you create two more Audio Tracks to hold it.

The AVID interface has two separate monitors, the CLIP (or Source) MONITOR (on the left) and the TIMELINE (or Record) MONITOR (on the right), with the Timeline Window below these. We begin a new project by clicking and dragging (or double clicking) the first clip we want to use from the bin it resides in and placing it into the clip window. As we did when logging the clips, we then set IN and OUT points to delineate exactly which part of the clip we wish to use.

Overwriting

The next step is to place the clip on the timeline. There are two ways of doing this:

- 1) Drag and Drop.

We click in the clip window, hold down the mouse button, and drag the clip to the point we want it on the timeline. This a little 'rough and ready', however, and it can be done much more accurately by...

2) Three Point Editing

This allows us to be far more exact regarding what we put into the timeline and where. First, we activate the tracks in question regarding both the Clip and the Timeline monitors (see previous handout regarding how we do this). Initially, it is best to make sure that ALL tracks in the timeline window are active. Then we designate three IN / OUT points and hit the 'OVERWRITE' button (the red, right-pointing arrow with the solid black line beneath it where Avid Xpress Pro HD is concerned) to transfer the material from the Clip monitor to the Timeline.

We then have four ways of designating what and where material is placed on the timeline.

- 1) We designate IN and OUT points in the Clip Monitor and an IN point in the Timeline Monitor. When we hit Overwrite, AVID matches up the IN points and lays the material forwards onto the Timeline. (This is the most common method when initially laying down an initial rough cut).
- 2) We designate IN and OUT points in the Clip Monitor and an OUT point in the Timeline Monitor. When we hit Overwrite, AVID matches up the OUT points and lays the material backwards onto the Timeline (overwriting anything which was originally in that space).
- 3) We designate an IN point in the Clip Monitor and IN and OUT points in the Timeline Monitor. When we hit Overwrite, AVID matches up the IN points and lays as much material forwards onto the Timeline as the designated space between the In and Out points will allow.
- 4) We designate an OUT point in the Clip Monitor and IN and OUT points in the Timeline Monitor. When we hit Overwrite, AVID matches up the OUT points and lays as much material backwards onto the Timeline as the designated space between the In and Out points will allow (overwriting anything which was originally in that space).

Splicing

After laying down the original material, it often happens that we wish to add a further clip between two existing clips on the timeline. We do this by marking IN and OUT points for the clip we wish to add, marking an IN point on the Timeline, and then pressing the 'SPICE' button (The Yellow, right-pointing arrow with the broken black line beneath it).

NB, make sure that ALL tracks in the timeline are activated before hitting the Splice button, so as to ensure that everything else remains in sync.

Deleting

If you later decide that a section - or all of - a clip on the timeline should be removed, again we use IN and OUT points to do this. Make sure that ALL tracks on the timeline are activated (so as to keep everything else in sync), mark an IN point at the start of the section you wish to remove and an OUT point at the end. (When you have done this, the designated area will turn purple).

You can do this exactly by expanding your view of the timeline window – before marking a point, using the slider at the bottom of the timeline window (the one to the left – the slider to the right just moves you along the timeline itself, like the blue line beneath the Timeline Monitor does).

When the section you wish to remove is marked out, there are two ways to do this:

- 1) Pressing the 'CUT' button (scissors symbol) completely removes the section and joins up the clips to left and right of it to maintain a continuous timeline.
- 2) Pressing the 'LIFT' button removes the section but leaves a space in the area it occupied (which can be filled by a substitute clip you then choose to overwrite the space with).

Cutaways

When your interview footage has been arranged to give the programme some kind of structure (preferably with a beginning, middle and end as with all storytelling), we can begin laying down cutaway footage – either to illustrate the things which the interviewees are talking about and/or to 'paste over the cracks' between the sections of interview – on V2. When using footage to illustrate interviews it is best to pre-empt the information given by interviewees slightly, rather than follow it. Seeing something on the screen then finding out why we are being shown this helps to maintain interest. The reverse often seems a bit 'clunky'.

We put cutaway footage onto the timeline by any of the same four methods detailed above. The important thing to ensure is that it goes onto the correct video track. To ensure this happens, click and hold the V1 button at the left of the Timeline window (which applies to the Clip Monitor), then drag the cursor (an arrow will appear) to the Video Track to the right of it (referring to the Timeline Monitor) where you wish it to appear – usually V2.

If you are using audio with your cutaways, do the same with the audio tracks, making sure that this appears in the extra audio tracks you have created for it (usually A3 and A4).

Important Commands

If you make a mistake at any point, CNTRL – Z will take you back a step. (Probably the most important command in editing 😊)

Whenever you wish to do so, CNTRL – S will save your work so far.

Finishing an Editing Session

When you have finished your editing session, click on the title bar of the Project Window. This will give the white 'X' in the top RH corner of the window a RED background.

Click on this white-on-red X to get out of the project – this will automatically save the project again in the process, so none of your work will be lost.

Then click the 'Quit' button in the bottom RH corner of the 'Select Project' window which will appear, then click 'Leave' in the further window which will appear.

This will close down AVID. Now you switch the system off as described in the previous handout.