

Custom Transitions and Slideshows

With RICHARD M. HARRINGTON



Richard M. Harrington

Author's Bio/Description

A certified instructor for Adobe, Apple, and Avid, Rich is a practiced expert in motion graphic design and digital video. His producing skills were also recognized by AV Multimedia Producer Magazine who named him as one of the Top Producers of 2004.

Rich is a member of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals Instructor Dream Team, and a popular speaker on the digital video circuit. He is also an instructor at the Art Institute of Washington and the American University in Washington, D.C.

Rich is an internationally published author. His book, Photoshop CS for Nonlinear Editors, was the first of its kind to focus on Photoshop's application in the world of video. He is also a contributing author for Final Cut Pro On the Spot, After Effects On the Spot, Broadcast Graphics on the Spot, After Effects at Work, and The Photoshop World Dream Team Book, Volume 1.

A Masters Degree in Project Management fills out Rich's broad spectrum of experience.

RHED Pixel – www.rhedpixel.com

Photoshop for Video – www.PhotoshopforVideo.com

Make it Mine... Everytime

It's very important that you customize your DVD designs. While Apple offers you several well made templates, you are meant to customize these and come up with your own look. Your clients will expect that their projects are unique. By harnessing custom transitions or slideshows, you can get one step closer to a unique design.

Do you DVD?

Chances are you do, or soon will be. The Digital Versatile Disc or DVD format has helped jump-start several industries. It is also the hottest way for designers to distribute their content. Getting your still images sized for a DVD slideshow can be an easily automated step. Creating great menus will also keep your viewer's attention and invite them to explore.

For many, the world of video production can be a confusing place. It is common to come across conflicting information (even the software companies disagree, sometimes they even contradict themselves). Let's dispel a few myths, teach a few tricks, and get some immediate results.



Why Does it Have to Be So Hard?

Hey, if DVD were easy, everybody would do it... so it'd be just as cluttered and unrewarding as your email inbox. With that in mind, accept that there are some new 'rules' that you must follow and that you are going to have to learn to thrive under severe limitations. The DVD format is one of many compromises... for all its coolness, it's remarkably low-tech. You're going to need to think of creative ways to stay inside of the box (and get your audience to come in and join you).



notes

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Design specifications & constraints

When designing for DVD, you must keep a few key specs in mind.

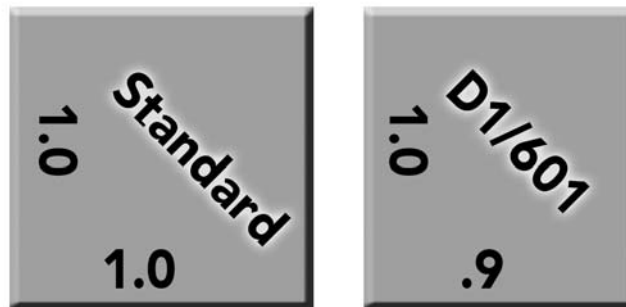
- **Square vs. Non-Square Pixel Aspect Ratio:** DVDs use non-square pixels. If you are building in Photoshop CS, this is no problem. If you are using an earlier version of Photoshop, you will have to resize your graphics.

- **The Screen is Smaller than You Think:** A certain portion of the menu design will be lost by consumer TV sets. To counterbalance this, we reserve a bleed area. Title safe is 80% of the screen; action safe is 90% (but the background goes edge-to-edge however).

- **Final File Ends Up**

720 X 480 Pixels:

Whether its widescreen or standard, you still only have an area that's 720 pixels across and 480 pixels tall to design for. Extra ppi (often called dpi) are as useless as an elephant at a backyard barbeque.



Custom Transitions for DVD Studio Pro

For our transitions we are going to use Motion which is part of the Final Cut Studio software package. These transitions can be created with any version of Motion. You can also use another motion graphics tool like After Effects.

The Specifications

- When designing for NTSC Video
- Final image should be 720 X 480 non-square pixels
- Render movie at 29.97 fps or 24 fps
- Render lower field first for smoother motion on TV
- Stick with progressive if the computer is your primary output

Gather Your Assets

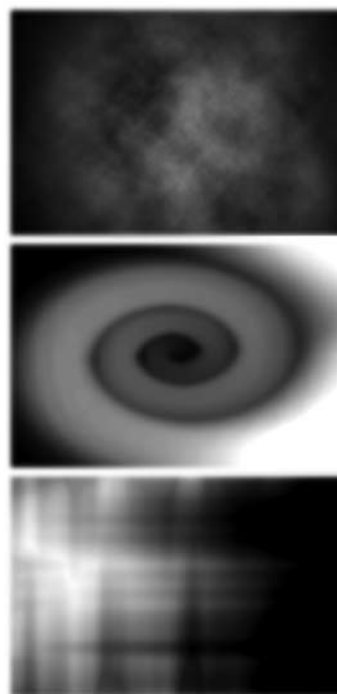
Motion and DVD Studio Pro can work with a variety of assets. You'll need to make sure that your files are prepped.

Photoshop Files

- Flatten Any Layer Styles
- Name All Layers
- Remove Groups or Nests

Movie Files

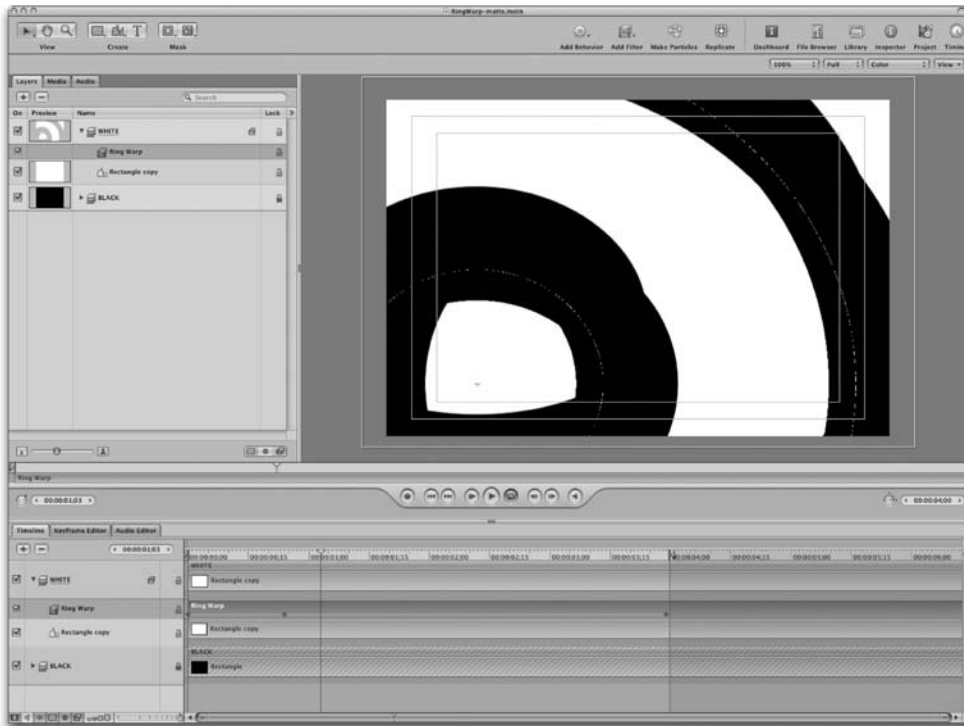
- Pre-Render Effects
- De-Interlace Footage
- Gather Your Assets
- Encode to MPEG-2 or bring into DVD Authoring as QT



notes

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Creating Alpha Transitions

- Must Transition from Pure White (255) to Pure Black (0)
- Place a White Layer on top of a Black Layer
- Set up a transition starter
- Duration 2-6 seconds
- Build 720 X 480



Creating Transitions

- Create a folder with name of transition
- Place two identical copies of transition in folder
- [Title] "-matte.mov"
- [Title] "-backgroundMatte.mov"
- Hard Drive /Library/Application Support/DVD Studio Pro/Transitions

Using Round Trip Production

Apple uses XML to round trip production between Final Cut Pro HD and Motion, and DVD Studio Pro 3 and Motion. With Final Cut Pro Studio, you can integrate projects between these applications. You can create motion menus and transitions for your DVDs in Motion and bring them directly into DVD Studio Pro. Make any changes in Motion and the updates are automatically reflected in DVD Studio Pro.

notes

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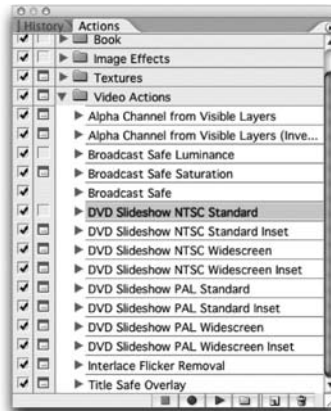
Creating a DVD Slideshow

DVD slideshows are also a mainstay of DVDs because they take up very little space on the disc. This is an excellent way to showcase a large print portfolio and make it easy for the viewer to navigate.

But making slideshows isn't as easy as you might think. Sure, the authoring side is pretty straightforward, most DVD authoring applications support drag-and-dropping folders of images. But, if those images aren't sized right, you'll have problems: strange cropping, bad aliasing, and softening. Sounds like you've got a lot of work ahead of you... or not.

The Power of Automation

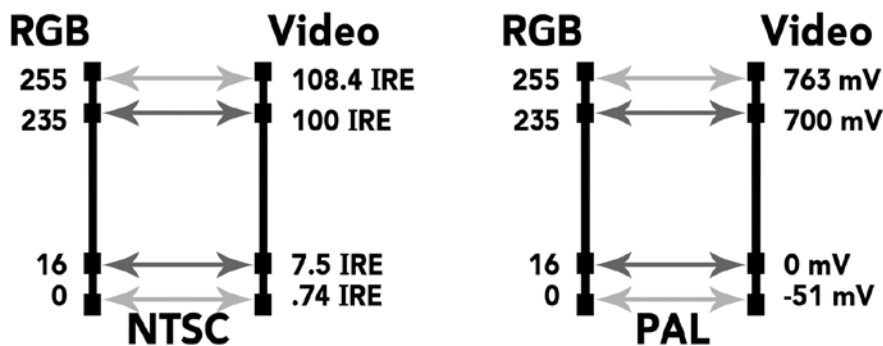
By harnessing the several of Photoshop's automation features, as well as Photoshop CS's support for non-square pixels, building a slide show will be easier than making a pot of coffee. You can use a new built-in action in Photoshop CS2 to create your slides. Just load the video actions in the Actions palette (click the submenu) and pick the right size and format.



Why does the Picture Flicker?

Video is a low-resolution medium. Plus, television sets are interlaced, which is a leftover problem from when television was invented. It took 60 frames per second to get rid of flicker and get the smoothest motion on some of the first television sets. The problem was that the broadcast signal couldn't hold that much information without significant softening. So a compromise was struck where interlacing was decided upon by the first National Television Standards Committee in 1940. By showing half an image 60 times per second, both goals could be met. The electron beam would scan across the tube, painting every other line. It would then return to the top and paint the remaining lines. These alternating lines are often identified by field dominance, and are referred to as upper (or odd field first) or lower (or even field first). This solution solved the problem between bandwidth, flicker, and smooth motion.

It's important to note that only analog televisions are interlaced. If your video is intended for traditional output, you need to keep this in mind. Very small details, such as lines thinner than three-pixels will frequently jitter. This is because the pixels are literally flickering off and on as the scanlines redraw. Just use the Interlace Flicker Removal action in the same Video Actions set.



notes

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Broadcast-Safe Color Concerns

Whenever you adjust an image, you have to be concerned about modifying its colors to the point where they are no longer “broadcast safe.” Even if you have a video frame grab that was legal, any of the previous image adjustments could push its white levels too high or blacks too low.

The key is to adjust the output levels to pull things into the 16–235 broadcast safe range. In doing so, however, you don’t want to overdo it, so you must monitor the adjustment. Add a Levels adjustment or an adjustment layer and set the output levels to 16 and 235. The colors are now in the safe range. You can leave the adjustment layer floating and modify it at any time within Photoshop.

Files for Slideshows

- DVD Studio Pro scales if necessary, to fit the show’s resolution. Photoshop’s scaling is better.
- If images do not fit the 4:3 or 16:9 aspect ratio specified for the show, a background color in the General pane in DVD Studio Pro Preferences.
- Do not to mix 4:3 and 16:9 stills in a slideshow.

Creating a Slideshow

- You can create a slideshow and a link to it. Drag a group of stills to the Menu Editor and select Create Button and Slideshow from the Drop Palette.
- You can also create a slideshow by clicking the New Slideshow button in the Toolbar. You then select it from the Outline tab.



Working With Slides

- Slides are added in alpha-numeric order.
- Name them for the order you want or rearrange after import.
- You can add audio to individual slides or to the entire slideshow.
- Select the checkbox in the Pause column if you want the viewer to be able to advance slides manually.
- Each slide has its own transition settings that you can access in the Transition tab.
- To view a slideshow, choose File > Simulate Slideshow.

Copyright: RHED Pixel

Acknowledgments: Abba Shapiro, Gary Adcock

Web site Info: www.rhedpixel.com, www.photoshopforvideo.com

Contact Info: RHED Pixel for production services, Creative Cow for technical questions.

For more - check out Final Cut Pro on the Spot and Photoshop CS for Nonlinear Editors

