



Making the Cut: My Experience with Video Editing

by Jean-Marc Pepin

I am a Canadian living with a spinal cord injury that left me paralyzed from the neck down following a car accident. For the last 14 years, I have been using a Mac. To access my computer, I use an Origin Instruments HeadMouse and a Sip/Puff switch in conjunction with KeyStrokes, an onscreen keyboard, which is indispensable in everyday activities from communicating by email to working with professional applications.

Final Cut Pro, developed by Apple for video editing, is one of these professional applications. I became interested in Final Cut Pro shortly after Apple introduced iMovie 2 for OS X. iMovie was free and included a tutorial with footage to edit, and although I enjoyed using it, it was a limited basic video editing application. Around this time, Final Cut Pro 3 was advertised on Apple's website, and being a Philosophy student at the University of Ottawa, I could buy it at a good price, so I took the plunge. Having just turned 60, I was tired of University and felt a need for change.

However, why did I think I could do video editing when I knew only a little about it, nor how to use Final Cut Pro? iMovie was one thing, but using Final Cut Pro was a huge step. Well, I was fascinated by the idea – I knew I could learn and liked the challenge! Over the last four years, I've spent many hours doing exactly that: learning and meeting the challenge. Tutorials can be purchased

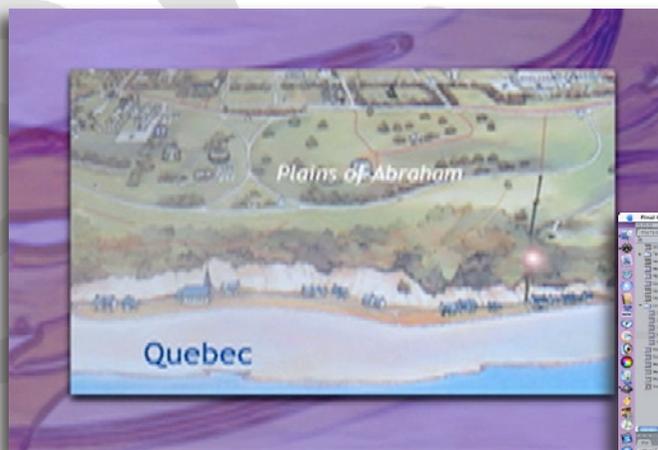
to learn Final Cut Pro, also a number of web sites offer many free tutorials as well, www.kenstone.net and www.larryjordan.biz being two examples.

Of course, doing editing requires material; therefore, shortly after purchasing Final Cut Pro, I bought a Sony TRV 17 camcorder for video and a Kodak DC 4800 digital camera for still photography. This kind of equipment was expensive at the time, but is much cheaper today. As my wife takes all of the video footage and still photography, I leave most decisions to her when it comes to this. However, I

also get video and picture material from friends or acquaintances wanting me to edit something for them. I've done approximately 15 small projects from 5 to 30 minutes in length, including a wedding video, photos in a documentary style, as well as other personal projects. As a hobby, I don't earn money from this and do it for the enjoyment. Nevertheless, it can be lots of work if one wants to do it well.

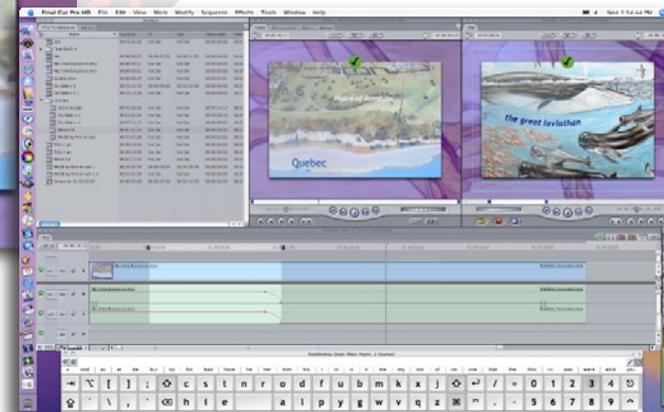
As with every application made by Apple, Final Cut Pro is easy to navigate with the mouse.

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(Left) Featuring a rough sketch of a historical battle site in Quebec called the Plains of Abraham, this is part of an introduction to a personal photo documentary entitled Maritime Excursion that I made for a friend using Final Cut Pro and After Effects.

(Right) With Final Cut Pro and KeyStrokes' Special keyboard configuration at the bottom, I'm editing out the Quebec segment, which is part of the introduction to Maritime Excursion.





Users in Control: A Fresh Perspective on Accessibility

However, continued use of the mouse puts unnecessary strain on my neck and is not very efficient. Navigating with KeyStrokes is sometimes faster and doesn't require much head movement, thus easing some of the strain. For example, locking the control key allows me to simply point and click in specific areas of Final Cut Pro's interface to easily access functions, such as importing footage into

the Browser, without having to select them from each menu. Additionally, KeyStrokes allows me to insert numerical values, such as Timecode, which cannot be entered without a keyboard.

Video editing is fun to learn, but it requires patience and persistence in a field that is continually changing. □

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