FINAL CUT PRO

POWER

TIPS

FASTER - BETTER - EASIER

LARRY JORDAN

VOICES THAT MATTER™

FINAL CUT PRO

POWER TIPS

FASTER - BETTER - EASIER

LARRY **JORDAN**

- To play a clip using the keyboard, use the J-K-L keys.

  - J plays backward.

  - K stops.

  - L plays forward.

  - Press J twice to play backward at double-speed.

  - Press J multiple times to go even faster, up to about 10X.

  - Press L twice to play forward at double-speed.

  - Press L multiple times to go even faster, up to about 10X.

  - Press and hold J and K to play in slow-motion reverse.

  - Press and hold K and L to play in slow-motion forward.

151 Import Photoshop Files with Layers

Final Cut imports each layer individually.

When Final Cut imports a Photoshop document, it imports each layer separately, though still as part of the Photoshop clip. This means you can adjust each layer—even disable it—without affecting any other layers.

To see the different layers, double-click the image in either the Browser or timeline. This opens it in the timeline; see **FIGURE 3.30.** The top image is the multilayer Photoshop document in the Viewer. The bottom portion shows the layers.

Any changes you make to the Photoshop image opened in the timeline are saved with the image in the Browser and travel with it when you edit the clip in the timeline. To close a Photoshop clip opened into the timeline, open any other project.

Here's what you can do with a Photoshop document:

- Hide a layer by selecting it in the timeline and pressing V.

- Animate a layer, for example, to have it slide into the frame.

- Change the timing of when a layer appears by trimming an edge.

- Add transitions to a layer, for example, to have a layer fade in at a specific time.

- Delete a layer by selecting it and pressing Delete.

- Scale a layer.

- Reposition a layer.

FIGURE 3.30 A Photoshop file in the Viewer, with its layers revealed in the timeline.

I often create layered Photoshop files without positioning the elements, as shown in Figure 3.30. This provides more flexibility when animating the elements in Final Cut. You add effects to Photoshop layers the same as any other clip.

152 Import PDF Files

Scale PDF images before bringing them into Final Cut Pro.

When you import a PDF file into Final Cut, it gets converted into a PNG. This causes problems when you scale the image because PDF files, generally, retain image quality when they are scaled. PNGs do not.
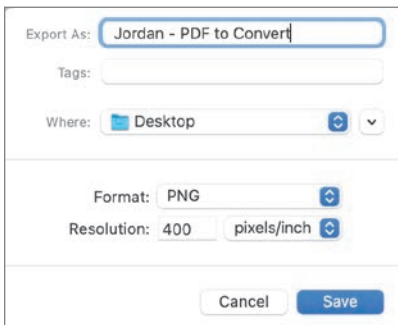
FIGURE 3.31 Exporting a file from Preview as a PNG. Note the resolution setting.

Essentially, Final Cut creates the PNG at 100% of the size of the PDF page after it is scaled to fit within the frame size of your project, not the original size of the PDF itself. This conversion means that we can't zoom in to a portion of the PNG image without seriously losing image quality.

To import a PDF and retain image quality (see **FIGURE 3.31**):

1. Open the PDF in Preview.
2. Choose File > Export and set the export format to PNG.
3. Set Resolution to 400.

This exports the PDF as a PNG at a high enough resolution that you can frame this as you see fit. (An 8.5 x 11 inch PDF page creates an image that's 3400 x 4400 pixels.) You should export each page of a PDF as a separate file. If you need a larger image from the PDF, increase the resolution.

> **GOING FURTHER** There are two types of PDFs: those that originated as bitmaps and those that originated as vectors. Photos, scans, and Photoshop documents do not scale very well, if at all. Text, Illustrator files, or images created using musical notation software should scale perfectly.

153 Import Media Display Options

These icons enable several useful options.

At the bottom of the Media Import window are two icons; see **FIGURE 3.32**. The left icon toggles between List and Thumbnail view. The right icon, though, does a lot more:

- The top slider, similar to the Browser settings menu, changes the height of thumbnails.
- The lower slider, similar to the Browser settings menu, determines how often a new poster frame is displayed. All shows one poster frame for the clip. Sliding this to the right determines how often to display a new poster frame. This ranges from one every 30 minutes of media to one every 1/2 second.
- Waveforms, when selected, display audio waveforms under all clips that have audio.
- Hide Imported Clips hides any clips from this source or folder that are already imported.
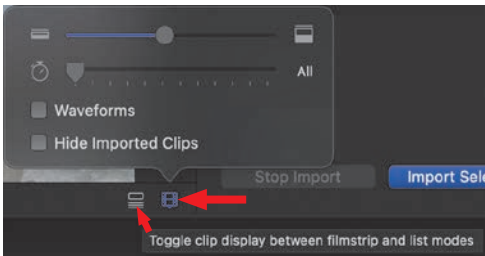

FIGURE 3.32 Clip controls at the bottom of the Media Import window.

154 How to View Timecode During Import

Normally, the Media Import window doesn't show timecode.

Here is the problem: The producer just handed you a sheet of paper with a list of all the clips they want you to import, arranged by source clip timecode. Except how do you see timecode during import?

Easy.

When the Media Import window is open, press Control+Y (see **FIGURE 3.33**) to display skimmer info. As you skim over a clip, the source timecode and clip name are displayed.

FIGURE 3.33 Press Control+Y to display the file name and timecode while skimming a clip in the Media Import window.

> **GOING FURTHER**
> To enable or disable the skimmer, press S.

155 Create Favorite Import Locations

This is my favorite import shortcut.

I have most of my media stored on either a local workgroup server or an attached RAID. In both cases, the media is often buried multiple folders deep. It is a pain in the posterior to keep navigating to the same location in the Media Import window.

Fortunately, Final Cut lets us create favorite locations for importing media. To do so, in the Media Import window, navigate to the folder you want make a favorite, then drag the folder name on top of the word "Favorites." It is instantly added to the Favorites list; see **FIGURE 3.34**.

To remove a location from the Favorites list, right-click the name and select Remove from Sidebar; see **FIGURE 3.35**.
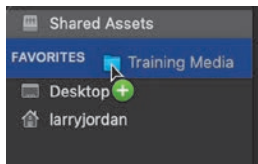

FIGURE 3.34 Create a favorite location by dragging a folder name on top of the word "Favorites."
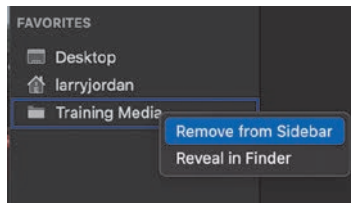

FIGURE 3.35 Right-click the name to remove a favorite location from the list.

MANAGE MEDIA

Once imported, it's time to review and organize media. Final Cut offers lots of ways to do just that.

156 Choose the Right Media Import Settings—Part 1

The options are both impressive and intimidating. Here's what to pick.

The Media Import panel lists all the various import options for your media. There are so many, in fact, that choosing becomes intimidating...what happens if you choose wrong?

Well, um, nothing, really. You may waste some storage space, create files you don't need, or store something in the wrong place. But nothing you choose is going to permanently damage or destroy anything. That is a relief. Still, it saves time and storage space to make the right choices the first time.

So here goes. We'll do this in four parts; see **FIGURE 3.36**.

The first choice is easy. Everything you import or create in Final Cut must be stored in an event. The two radio buttons at the top allow you to select which event you want to use or create a new one.

Selecting where to store files, though, is the most significant decision you make during import.

FIGURE 3.36 The top third of the Media Import settings column.

- **Copy to library**. This is the safest option. This copies, not moves, the media from wherever it is into the library. This option is required if you are transferring media from a camera, MicroSD or SD card, or other removable device. This option prevents losing media or breaking links. However, it also doubles your storage needs and prevents sharing that media between different libraries, unless both libraries are open in Final Cut at the same time.

  This last point is important. Neither the Media Import window nor other applications can see media stored in a library.

  However, there are three good reasons for copying files into your Library:

  - The files are stored within the Library, thus preventing broken links.
  - It's easier to back up files stored in a single FCP library file.
  - It's easier to transfer or archive the library and its media when both are stored inside a single library. If you are a new user of Final Cut, I recommend you use this option as you learn the program.

- **Leave files in place**. This is the most flexible option, provided you copied all media to your hard disk before importing it. This option means that Final Cut imports only a link to that media, not the actual files. This decreases storage requirements, supports media sharing between libraries, and simplifies media management because you can see the actual files on your storage using the Finder.

  The only downside, and it's a big one, is that if you move those files, rename them, or rename a folder that contains them, you break all the path names, called *links*, to those files stored in Final Cut. Relinking is possible, but it takes time and can be tricky.
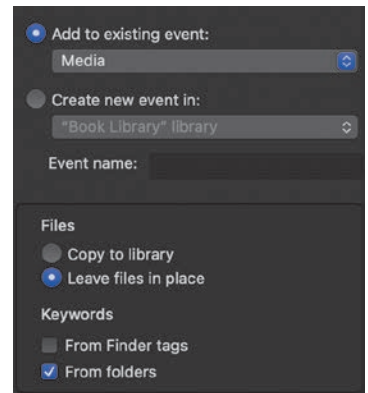
Deciding where to store files is the most significant import decision you need to make.

157 Choose the Right Media Import Settings—Part 2

Keywords make finding media a whole lot easier.

Keywords, which we'll cover later in this chapter, are a great way to organize and find the clips you need quickly. During import, Final Cut can create them automatically; see **FIGURE 3.37**.

- **Finder tags** are assigned to a file, not just a media clip, by right-clicking the file name in the Finder and selecting Tags. The Finder tags menu (see **FIGURE 3.38**) appears. Here you can assign colors and labels to a clip. Final Cut will turn those into keywords during import. Your experience may be different, but I never found Finder tags worth the work, so I don't use them.

- **Folder names**, however, are useful. Although it's generally a bad idea to rename media clips in the Finder, I often rename the folders that hold those clips. When the Folder names option is selected, those folder names are turned into keywords during import. This is a feature I use a lot.
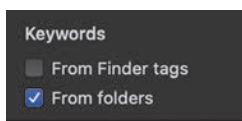

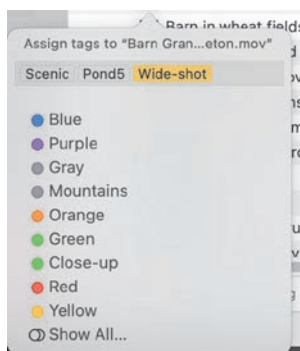**FIGURE 3.37** The Keywords section in the Media Import settings (above).

FIGURE 3.38 Right-click any clip in the Finder to reveal the Finder tags window.

158 Choose the Right Media Import Settings—Part 3

Continuing our discussion.

FIGURE 3.39 shows the next group of settings. Again, one of these decisions is easy, while the other is significant.

- **Analyze Video**. For the details, read Apple's Help files. I've never found these settings useful. "Remove Pulldown in video" refers to film transfers. "Balance color" doesn't work. "Find people" takes too long, and even when it works, you will get better results logging clips manually. So in short, leave these unchecked.