

iMovie Tips and Tricks — by David Emery

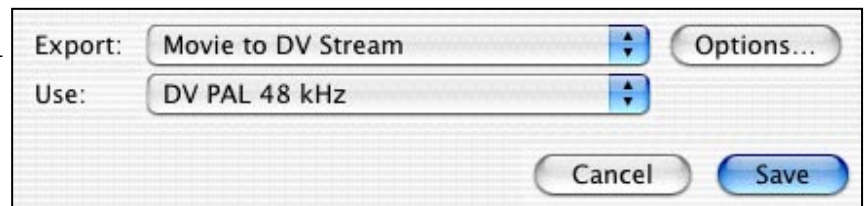
1. WORK IN PAL FORMAT

This can be easier said than done. Unfortunately, iMovie is currently designed to begin all projects in NTSC — the U.S. TV format. You can change the setting to PAL by;

- attaching a video camera when creating a new project
- Opening a PAL defaulted project. This can be a previous project that you have created, duplicated and deleted its contents from. You should keep a copy of an empty PAL project on your 'Shared Folder'. You can download a copy of an empty PAL project from this site.
- You can edit the iMovie application with an OS 9 program called 'ResEdit'. This is not for the faint hearted and not advised by Apple.

2. IMPORTING OTHER MOVIES

To import a movie into iMovie so that you may edit it, you must use QuickTime Player to export the movie as a DV Stream. QuickTime saves the movie at the correct dimensions for iMovie, 720x576 pixels, which is the appropriate movie size of a PAL movie.

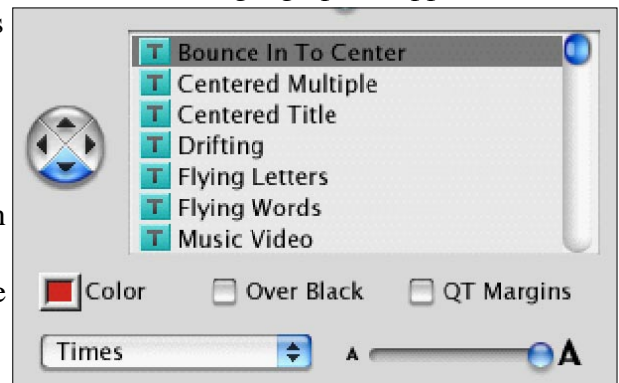


- Place the exported movie, 'movie.dv' into your media folder, and it will be added to the shelf when iMovie is launched.

3. SCREEN TITLES

Instead of using iMovie's 'Titles' to add text to your movies, consider using a graphics application like Adobe Photoshop (Elements) or Macromedia FireWorks to create interesting 'Pictures' with graphics and text.

- Duplicate the title picture, make minor changes, and repeat the exercise as desired. Import all the 'title pictures' into iMovie and display for about 3 seconds each. Use the 'Cross Dissolve' transition between each picture.
- Create a picture in a graphics program, leaving a space for iMovie to position its Text Titles. A good example is to use the 'Flying Words' title which places the text in a position that you leave for it in your picture.
- Try and avoid using the 'Over Black' option for Titles. Placing Text on a Black screen can be considered 'boring'. When using the Over Black option, a new black picture is added to your movie's timeline, instead of putting the text on the existing movie images.



4. IMPORTING PICTURES OR PHOTOS

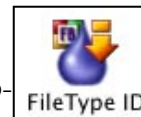
Photos and pictures can work very well at enhancing the quality of a Movie presentation. Before you import photos or pictures, make sure their proportion is in the ratio of 4:3. iMovie is a 4:3 movie editor. The minimum size of a picture for use in iMovie is 768x576 pixels. Pictures can be larger than 768x576 pixels, but must maintain the 4:3 ratio. Hence, photos which are 800x600 pixels will fill the screen appropriately, even though they contain 'extra' pixels.

- Cameras such as the Kodak DX 3900 take high resolution photos at 1800 by 1200 pixels. Even though this is much higher than iMovie's required 768x576, the photos WILL NOT fill the screen as their sides are not in the 4:3 ratio. You would need to crop the photos in order to fill the screen.
- Use a graphics editor to resize and crop the photo. Choose any size in the ratio of 4:3, as long as the minimum width is 768 pixels and height is 576 pixels. 768x576 will always be adequate.

5. PHOTOS CAN NOT BE SELECTED WHEN CHOOSING IMPORT

Often iMovie in OS X is unable to import photos that have come from a digital camera or other Windows formatted devices. This is because the file's 'File Type' is not known, and iMovie uses it to determine if the image can be imported. There are a few ways of fixing the problem.

- Use iPhoto to catalog all of your pictures. When you want to use a selection of these pictures in iMovie, create a new album, move the necessary pictures into the album, and export the pictures into a folder for use with iMovie. You **must** select a new size for these photos when exporting to force the 'File Type' to be filled-in. Export photos at 720x540 pixels.
- Programs such as File Buddy can patch the photos with the correct 'File Type' information.
- You can download our 'Photo patch Droplet'. This is little program I created that you can simply drop your pictures on and it 'fixes' their 'File Type' ID. iMovie can then import these files. (iMovie must be quit and relaunched if it was left running whilst using the droplet.)



6. USE THE FAST MOTION

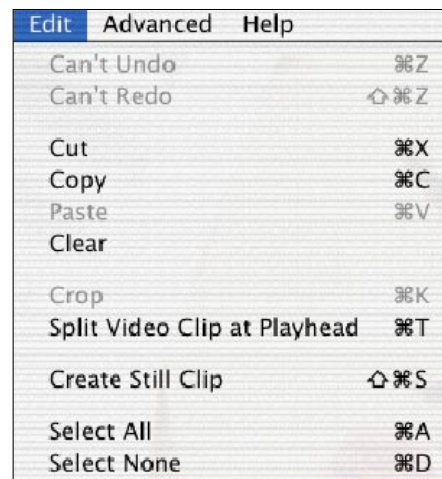
When using video footage such as 'students getting off a Bus on an excursion', or 'students walking about on an excursion' speed up the video to add character to your movie.



7. USE THE SLOW MOTION

Effectively highlight specific parts of your movie by replaying them in slow motion. Try this to **replay** a part of your video in slow motion (Timeline view);

- Place the play-head at the beginning of the footage that you want to replay in slow motion. Make sure the video track is selected (clicked on).
- Choose 'Split Video Clip at Playhead' from the Edit menu.
- Go to the end of the video piece that you wish to replay slow and make sure the play-head is at that spot.
- Choose 'Split Video Clip at Playhead' from the Edit menu again.
- Click the mouse elsewhere on your screen to deselect the two split tracks, then click on the video track that you want to replay (the one on the left of the split).
- Copy it (from Edit menu or Command C).
- Paste it immediately (from Edit menu or Command V).
- The pasted (copied) clip is now on the right of the original. Select it and use the speed slider to slow the video down.



8. PLAY THE CLIP IN REVERSE

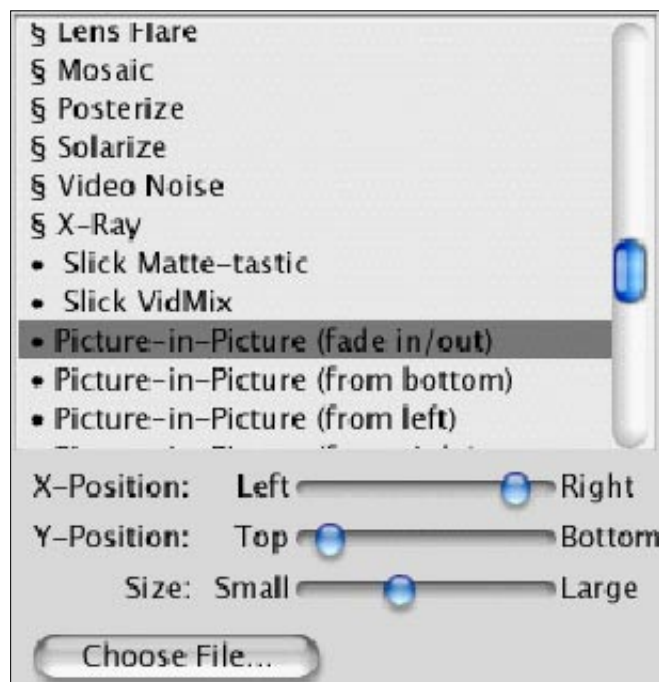
It can be a good idea to play the clip backwards before replaying it in slow motion. Using the example above (7);

- Paste the copied clip again and work on the middle clip (you can actually copy it, then paste twice)
- After selecting the middle clip, choose 'Reverse Clip Direction' from the Special menu.
- Now you will have; this clip playing in your movie, it then plays backwards, then repeats itself again in slow motion. An excellent way to add creativity and interest.

9. PLUG-INS ADD FLAIR

iMovie Plug-ins are being created in abundance. They can be used to add features to your movies that otherwise wouldn't be available in iMovie. These include additional transitions, Title effects and Screen effects, some of which create Picture-in-Picture capabilities. Get your plug-ins from;

- Apple — iMovie Plug-in Pack 2.1.1 is free from www.apple.com/imovie. Put this folder in your Home Directory/Library/iMovie folder. Create the iMovie folder if necessary.
- Gee Three has the slick Packs 1 – 4 at www.geethree.com. They also have a few free effects at www.geethree.com/slicksampler.html
- Virtix also have a number of Plug-in packs including some sample effects at www.virtix.com.



- eZedia have a number of Plug-in packs including some sample effects at www.ezedia.ca.

10. CUTTING SOUND IN AND OUT

Although iMovie appears to only have two sound tracks as well as the video/sound track, it allows you to overlay sound on those tracks. So a good idea for cutting-in voice over while dimming the background music is to;

- Turn off all audio sound by unchecking the tick on the right of the tracks.
- Record your voice over as desired, placing it at the appropriate position. Ensure it is at full volume.
- Copy your music track and paste it onto the other sound track. Hence you now have the same music playing on sound tracks one and two. Make sure they are in sync.
- Select the music track on track one. Reduce its volume to half or less.
- Locate the part of the movie where you want to add an audio commentary. Making sure the Audio track two is selected, ensure the playhead is at the right point.
- Choose 'Split Audio Track at Playhead' from the Edit menu.
- Move the playhead to the position where you want the audio to recommence (after you have finished the commentary).
- Choose 'Split Audio Track at Playhead' from the Edit menu again.
- Dim the sound on the audio you have sliced by selecting and adjusting the volume to very low. Include Fade and Fade Out. The usual abrupt break in sound will no longer happen as the track one audio will continue the smooth playing.



11. EASY EDITING WITH THE ARROW KEYS

When editing your movie, its easiest to use the right and left arrow keys to advance and go back one frame at a time. Since a PAL movie is basically made up of a series of frames or pictures, you can view each of these frames/pictures one at a time with the arrow keys. There are 25 frames per second in PAL format.

12. EXTRACTING AUDIO

Suppose you video your school choir singing a song. Consider having your movie;

- Show the choir beginning the song
- Then keeping the music/singing, show other video footage around the school
- Cut back to the Choir
- And repeat the process 2 more times.

This is done by separating you video and audio tracks, so the audio which is in the video track gets extracted to say, Audio track 1 — the video and audio tracks are automatically locked in sync. To do this;

- Select the video track and then choose 'Extract Audio' from the Advanced menu.
- Now set the playhead to the start of where you want 'swap' the video out.
- Choose 'Split Video at Playhead' from the Edit menu.
- Advance the playhead to the end of the piece you want to swap out and split again.
- Now all you do is get a piece of video footage that goes for exactly the same length of time — it should be on your video shelf. Select it and copy (or cut) it.
- Click on the piece of video you split for replacement, and choose 'Paste over at Playhead'. Refer to the next item for tips on 'matching video length'.



13. LET'S DO MATHS — PASTE OVER AT PLAYHEAD

If you intend on replacing a piece of video for another and keep an audio track synchronised, the replacement video must be the exact same duration. To replace a piece whose of video, click on it and its duration will be revealed. The time displayed reads 9 seconds and nineteen frames. To trim another piece of video over it you would;

- Cut six (6) from a ten (10) second clip.
- Cut 3:01 from a 12:20 clip. That's 3 seconds and 1 frame.
- Cut 2:16 from a 12:10 clip. That's 2 seconds and 16 frames.

Time: 09:19 Recorded: 2

Can you see the valuable mathematics in that — move into minutes and we have base 60 for seconds and base 25 for frames! See how the arrow keys can help find the spot??

14. EXPORTING YOUR MOVIE

iMovie provides some reasonable options when it comes to exporting your project. Exporting options include;

- Export to QuickTime

Can be considered the most complex of choices. Inexperienced users can just select an option from the QuickTime list. By registering QuickTime and gaining QuickTime Pro status, you gain more flexibility when choosing the Expert QuickTime options.

Generally, the Sorenson 'codec' is best for reducing video size and maintaining high quality and QDesign Music is one of the best music codecs.

- Export to Video

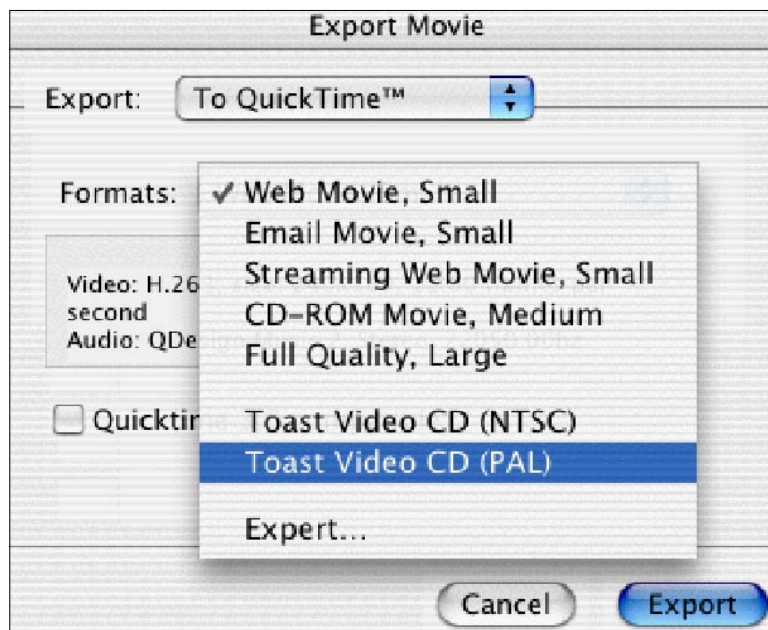
This exports back to your digital video camera, which can then be used as an intermediate link to copy the movie to a VHS video.

- Export to iDVD

This is a convenient option for those who use iDVD or DVD Studio Pro. It is just an option which presets the export to DV-PAL 720x576 @ 25 fps no compression, and uncompressed audio @48khz. Please Note: It is best to export several small movies for iDVD rather than one long movie, as one of the features of iDVD is the menu/navigation menus and screen designs.

- Export to VCD using Toast

If you have installed Toast 5 or higher to author CDs, the installer should have added a few Toast VCD plug-ins into the iMovie plug-in folder. So, when choosing Export to QuickTime, select the Toast VCD PAL option. VCDs are VHS video quality movies that are recorded onto standard blank CD media, so are very cheap. These can be played back on most house-hold DVD players and both Mac and Windows computers. 'Free VCD' is a Mac VCD player available for both OS and OS X.



15. HOW TO CUT A LONG QUICKTIME EXPORT INTO SEVERAL SMALL MOVIES FOR iDVD

Unfortunately this tip requires the registration of QuickTime so that you have QuickTime Pro. So, you have created a 20 minute movie, exported to iDVD, and want to break this movie into 4 five-minute clips so that you can create a nice menu system using iDVD. It is also easier for a viewer to watch short clips at their discretion rather than one long clip.

- Open the Video in QuickTime Player.
- Drag the triangle selection icons along the play bar.
- Highlight pieces of the movie and delete them. Save the remainder as Part_1.mov, etc.
- Continue the sequence, reopening the original movie, cutting pieces out and saving the remainder as a new name.

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