



**LARRY JORDAN** FINAL CUT PRO X  
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Video editing guru Larry Jordan conducted an all-day workshop for the GTC on Sunday 2nd March at the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield.

Larry is an industry veteran with more than 35 years' experience in professional video editing and production. His expertise and easy-to-follow teaching style is an invaluable resource for video and film editors of all levels of experience. The workshop was aimed primarily at cameramen wishing to edit their own material.



Following positive feedback from Guild members, workshop organiser Clive North, was able to secure a day with independent film-maker and editing expert, Larry Jordan. This workshop event proved to be an entertaining and informative day, enhanced by Larry's brilliant communication skills and humorous presentation style, exploring the potential of FCPX.

The day was designed around cameramen who need to edit their own material, which is not uncommon these days and is certainly becoming more prevalent in the news environment. More than 70 Guild members and guests attended and there were representatives from major broadcasters, interested in exploring the potential of FCPX for news operations.

Many people in the world of film and video production were surprised when Apple announced, in April 2011, that they would be replacing the popular Final Cut Pro editing program with a totally new product called Final Cut Pro

X, which would involve a completely different approach to non-linear editing. FCPX was redesigned from scratch and is a non-track based 64-bit application, supporting up to 5K resolutions.

One of the application's main features is its so-called Magnetic Timeline, into which footage can be edited without moving any other clips or audio out of place at other points in the storyline. FCPX has been evolving since launch and Larry explained that he's often asked when the application will be ready for professional use, to which he replies: "right now!"

Larry explained some of the advantages of the software: simplicity of the interface; full 64-bit, GPU and multiprocessor support; it's really fast on all Macs, great for ingesting, reviewing and archiving tapeless media; precision trimming; multicam editing; chroma key and colour correcting.

Final Cut Pro X and iMovie might look similar, but that's

like comparing a Ferrari and a VW Beetle as far as Larry's concerned – the performance is totally different. Editors have been making money with FCPX since it first appeared, so it's definitely a program worth exploring to see if it works for you. Larry was eager to stress that as film-makers, we should really define ourselves by the craft we practise, rather than by the tools we use; we love to tell stories through moving images.

Larry started the workshop by explaining the importance of workflow and organising one's footage in the most efficient way. Version 10.1 replaced 'Events' and 'Projects' with 'Libraries', a move designed to make media management easier. Larry explained that the only downside to this is that all 'Events' and 'Projects' from older versions of FCPX need to be updated before they can be used in Final Cut 10.1. Final Cut Pro X uses three different types of media: camera native, optimised (ProRes 422) and Proxy (ProRes 422 Proxy). Camera native files are the file

format shot by the camera and captured to a card, hard disc or tape for editing. These files have four main properties: codec, frame size, frame rate and scanning (progressive or interlace).

When choosing which media to use in FCPX, Larry suggested the following:

- When speed is the most important factor, such as in news (and you're not adding effects), shoot and edit camera native.
- When editing with many effects, colour grading or if you just want the performance, optimise the media (ProRes 422).
- When editing multicam, working with 2K images or larger, optimise the camera native media and create proxy files.

You can transcode media during import and after import, in the Browser. All transcoding happens in the background; when the process is finished, Final Cut automatically



switches from camera native to optimised files.

When editing, Larry's straightforward advice was not to worry too much about precision early on: view your clips, set In's and Out's and edit them into the timeline; fine trimming and crafting can come later. Make basic decisions on which clips are in and which are out. The aim is not to strive for perfection, but to get the ideas you have in your head edited into the timeline - then you can decide whether they work or not. It's only when you have a basic structure on the timeline that you can review, craft and polish the edit. When you have a rough cut, you can make decisions on the order of the clips; the most important thing here is to shuffle clips around to make the story flow better.

Then comes the process of trimming the edit points so that the edits become invisible. Larry explained that there are two reasons to trim: to improve the story, or to get the story to fit for time; he recommended to trim first to improve the flow of the story and then to cut to get everything to fit for time. Cuts, dissolves and wipes – the three categories of transitions, for which Larry explained in his enthusiastic style: "a cut is a change in perspective, a dissolve is a change in time or place and a wipe totally breaks the flow of the story to take you somewhere entirely

different. Be cautious not to overuse dissolves and only use a wipe when you want a complete disconnect between what came before and what comes after."

Larry fondly recalled the moment when sitting in the cinema during a screening of the original Star Wars film in 1977, he nearly dropped his popcorn in disbelief when an 'old fashioned' wipe appeared in all its glory on the big screen (I believe George Lucas may have been influenced by the original Flash Gordon series from his youth, which used wipes quite frequently).

Larry also covered the areas of adding text and effects, warning that effects work will take up all the remaining time you have left for your project, plus a week or so! There were ample opportunities for those attending the workshop to ask questions, both at relevant times during the day and for about half an hour at the end; Larry also generously made himself available afterwards to answer further questions and give advice.

I'll finish with some more advice from Larry: "all we have to sell is our time. The more efficient we are with it, the more money we can make, keep happier clients and rediscover that there is a life outside the editing suite."

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