



PROS COMMENT ON LATEST 'STUDIO' PACKAGE

CUPERTINO, CA - Last month, Apple (www.apple.com) released its latest Final Cut Studio package, which includes more than 100 new features and new versions of Final Cut Pro, Motion, Soundtrack Pro, Color and Compressor. The new version of Final Cut Studio is \$999 - \$300 less than the previous release - and can also be had as an upgrade from earlier versions for just \$299.
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Final Cut Studio features Final Cut Pro 7, which expands Apple's ProRes codec family to support virtually any workflow. It also features Easy Export for one step output to a variety of formats and iChat Theater support for realtime collaboration.

Motion 4 has enhanced tools for 3D shadows, reflections and depth of field. And Soundtrack Pro 3 features new multitrack audio tools that help streamline audio post production. One helpful feature is Voice Level Match, which extracts volume information from the vocal content of one clip and applies it to another without altering any other audio content. This allows editors to easily correct mismatched voice levels.

The latest version of Color - V.1.5 - includes improved Final Cut Pro integration and support for full color resolution. New 4K support works natively with files from cameras such as the Red One and outputs directly to ProRes for HD or DPX for film. Expanded support for new high quality formats includes AVC-Intra, XDCAM 422 and ProRes 4444, for grading with the maximum amount of color information.

Compressor 3.5 adds new features that make it easy to set up and customize export options. Customizable sharing options make it easy to publish to YouTube and MobileMe, or export for iPhone, iPod, Apple TV and mobile phones.

Editor Jonathan Moser (www.flashcutproductions.com) recently placed his order for the new release and commented: "It's not that there are any 'knocking it out of the park' features in the new FCP, it's just well thought out enhancements and new features with increased dynamic interoperability between Studio's different products. Again, Apple scores more in vision and image than Avid, whose new releases also incorporate increased functionality and versatility, but with much less fanfare...and that's been Avid's image problem vs. Apple's the entire time. Avid was and is an editing company, Apple is more of an event creator, though FCP is and will remain a solid product that will continue to get increasing market share."

LA-based television producer Tor Johansen also commented on the new release: "Logistically, I'm excited to see Apple working off of their own timeline with this release. This whopper of an update comes out smack dab in the middle of...nothing. No NAB launch, no surprise announcement at the WWDC, and no 'one last thing' at the MacWorld keynote. It gives me more confidence in the shipping product, that it was put out when it was ready, not according to some fading industry calendar."

Adam Luckwell, CEO of London's Unit is also keeping close tabs on the new Final Cut package. "We are obviously eager to use the latest upgrades and believe there will be great improvement to workflows. With the new Studio, Final Cut Pro brings improvements to some of the most frequently used tools and features, such as the powerful and easier to use speed tool, as well as the new ProRes codecs, offering the ability to create higher quality exports but at low file sizes.

"As well as improvements to existing features it also has the addition of new functions that will make both an editor and client's life more productive. The new easy export function is an example of one of these, allowing users to set exports rendering out in the background while they are able to carry on working. This could seem like such a small change but in the commercials and advertising sector where approval mpegs are common place it will be especially useful."

Luckwell is also pleased to see the tighter integration between Final Cut Pro and Color, which he feel will cut down on the prep work previously required to ensure a smooth transition from FCP to Color. "This will impact positively on prices as it means less man hours getting a project ready for the grade and will be especially useful in the case of long-form."