



Vegas + DVD

Tips, Tricks, and Scripts

Learning and using Vegas 4 and DVD Architect

Creating a Motion Slide Show with Pan/Crop

By Edward Troxel

Everyone is familiar with slide shows. A picture comes up on the screen, stays for a few seconds, then you get a brief black spot as the slides change before revealing the next slide. The typical “snap - blink” boring showing of slides.

As technology improved, so did slide shows. Through the use of dissolve units, multiple projectors could be used allowing the slides to dissolve from one to the other no longer requiring the brief black spot. With variable dissolve rates and programmability, slide shows were greatly improved. However, they still consisted of a series of static pictures.

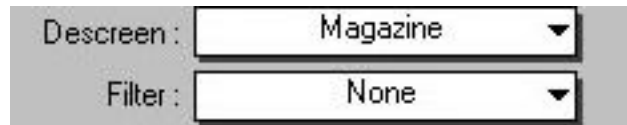
Today, even static pictures can have movement. With Vegas, that movement is easy to create. Plus, you can transition between the pictures using any of the available transitions. However, they still start in the same place: Pictures.

The first step is to get the pictures into the computer. Many people do this in a variety of ways from taping the picture with a video camera or taking a snapshot with a digital camera. My preferred method is to scan the picture with a scanner.

Since video is low resolution, a high DPI rate is not



needed for good results. While higher than necessary, I usually scan everything at 300 dpi - whether an 8 x 10 or a 1 x 1.25. This is simply for the simplicity of not having to change any settings between pictures. However, I do usually choose the Black and White option when scanning Black and White pictures. Also, if a news-



paper or magazine, I will pick the “descreen” option to reduce the “dots” that make up the picture.

When saving these picture, it is best to give them all the same name followed by their numerical order. For example, if you have 20 pictures, name them something like: Pic01, Pic02, ..., Pic19, Pic20. Notice how the single digits got a leading zero. This is so they will be sorted correctly. Otherwise, you would get 1, 10, 11, 12, ... 19, 2, 20, 3, 4, ...

Before placing the pictures on the timeline, verify that the Vegas settings are correct for your needs. Go to the **Options** menu and select **Preferences**. The Editing



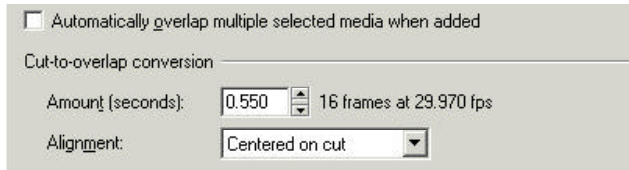
tab has a setting named **New still image length (seconds)**. All pictures added to the timeline will be automatically set to this length of time. Another option you

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may wish to turn on is the *Automatically overlap multiple selected media when added*. Also set the amount of overlap in the *Cut-to-overlap Conversion - Amount*



box. When turned on, all pictures added at one time will automatically have a crossfade of the specified length. For my use, I leave this option turned off.

Now it is time to place the images on the timeline. Select all desired images and drag the first image to the timeline. As it was important to name the files correctly, it is also necessary that the **first** file is the one that you click to drag to the timeline. The file you drag will always be the first one placed on the timeline followed by the rest of the selected files in alphabetical order.

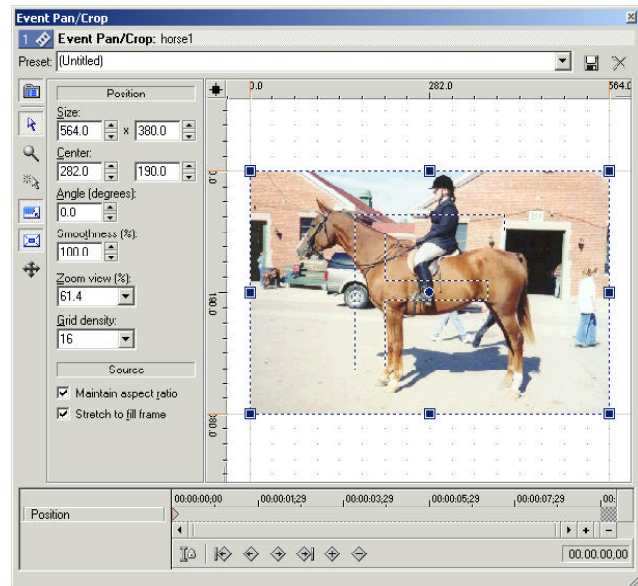
At this point you have a slideshow. Every picture will appear and you will either cut or dissolve between the pictures. However, being video, we need to add some movement to these pictures. To do this, we use the Pan/Crop tool. Enter the Pan/Crop screen by right-clicking the event and choosing *Video Event Pan/Crop...* or by clicking on the Pan/Crop button on the right edge of the picture.



Once opened, the first step is to right-click the picture and choose *Match output aspect*. This is a very important step which will allow the zooming and panning to work correctly. It can be tedious to do this multiple times so a script has been written to pick this setting for the selected pictures. The "matchaspect.js" script can be found at: <http://www.ayizwe.net/VegasScripts/> and will simplify setting this option.

With the proper aspect now set, it is time to start adding movement to the picture. To zoom in on a particular area of the picture, grab one of the corner or side handles (squares) and drag inward. You will see the size of the square get smaller and the picture on the screen get larger. After it is the correct size, move the square to the proper area of the picture. You have now set the beginning position for this picture.

To add movement, we must now do something simi-



lar but at a different "time." Along the bottom of the Pan/Crop screen is a timeline. You can place one or more keyframes along this timeline to indicate different positions and sizes at different points in time. For now, just click on the right side of the timeline and resize the box again to show a different area of the picture. You will notice a new keyframe is automatically added when the box is resized.

With the use of two keyframes, the picture will now have movement. Play the timeline over that picture in order to see the picture move. Now, this process must be repeated for each of the rest of the pictures. At a minimum, you need a starting position/size and an ending position/size for each picture.

I like to place my first keyframe at the very beginning and the last keyframe at the very end but it is impossible to see those frames if the automatic dissolve feature has been used. Therefore, I do not use the *Cut-to-overlap conversion* when placing my pictures on the timeline. This process leaves me with one small problem: I really want my pictures to dissolve. Fortunately, there is an easy solution. After all positioning has been completed, I then use Gap Wizard, in Excalibur, to add the dissolves between the individual pictures.

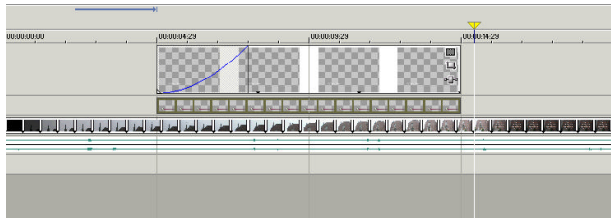
To review, the basic steps for creating a slide show are to scan the pictures, name/number them properly, place them on the timeline, match aspect, adjust placements with Pan/Crop, and, optionally, use Gap Wizard.

Beginner's Corner - Timeline Details

By Edward Troxel

Since most action takes place on the timeline, it is very important to understand the different sections of the timeline area and how they work. With a basic understanding of the timeline elements, editing becomes a much easier process.

The main area of the timeline is where clips are placed. When you start a new project, this area will be



totally blank. As you add clips, pictures, and other media to the timeline, they will be placed on tracks in this area. There are some important things to remember about these tracks:

1. Tracks may contain either Audio or Video events but cannot contain both.
2. Video clips placed on the timeline will automatically use two tracks - one for video and one for audio.
3. You may have as many tracks as you need.
4. Video on tracks above other video tracks will "cover up" the lower video tracks.
5. Titles go on a separate track **above** the video track.
6. All tracks have the exact same functionality.

By having video on upper tracks on top of video on lower tracks, it is possible to create PIPs or other compositions. For example, by using nine video tracks, you can create a "Brady Bunch" style screen.

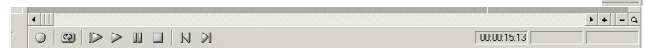
Just above the track area you will see the timeline. This is used to indicate where you are in this particular project. The timeline can be set to a variety of different choices including NTSC vs. PAL, NTSC drop-frame vs. NTSC non-drop-frame, as well as music choices such as Beats and Measures. To see the various options, just right-click the ruler. In the US, NTSC drop-frame is a common setting.

Above the ruler is where markers, selection areas, and other information related to pre-renders and ripple editing appear. By double-clicking in this area, you can

place a selection area over the entire project.

While looking at the timeline area, you will notice scroll bars on the right hand side and along the bottom. The scroll bar along the bottom will move you across time while the scroll bar on the side will allow you to scroll through the various video and audio tracks.

To the right of the bottom scroll bar are "+" and "-" buttons. These buttons allow zooming in and out on the timeline. If you need to see a smaller



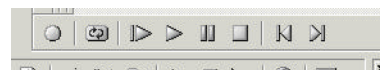
amount of time, press the "+" button. If you would like to see a larger amount of time, press the "-" button.

As is typical of Vegas, there are additional ways to change the amount of the visible timeline. Between the "+" and "-" buttons is a vertical bar. If you click on that bar and drag left or right, the amount of time visible will change. You can also click on the edge of the "thumb" on the scroll bar and by resizing the size of the "thumb" you will change the amount of the timeline that is visible. You can place the mouse arrow in the timeline area and adjust the size by scrolling the wheel on the mouse. As one final alternative, you can select an area of the timeline and press CTRL-UP ARROW to zoom in on the selection area.



Moving to the vertical scroll bar, you will also find "+" and "-" buttons. In this case, pressing the "+" button will make the size of all tracks larger while pressing the "-" button will make them smaller. Similarly, clicking on the bar between the "+" and "-" will allow quickly adjusting all tracks.

Just below the timeline is another important area. Beginning on the left is the *Record* button. When an audio tracked has been set to record, this button will start the recording process. Next is the *Loop Playback* button. When turned on, the area selected will repeat continuously while playing. This is very useful when adjusting settings as the changes are immediately made allowing you to see or hear how the



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changes will affect the final render. The next button will play from the beginning of the project while the fourth button will play from the current cursor location. The Pause (=) button will stop playback at the current cursor location and the Stop button will return to the position where playback started. The space bar can also be used to either Play/Stop or Play/Pause depending on how you configured Vegas. If you use the space bar to Play/Stop, you can use the Enter key to Pause.

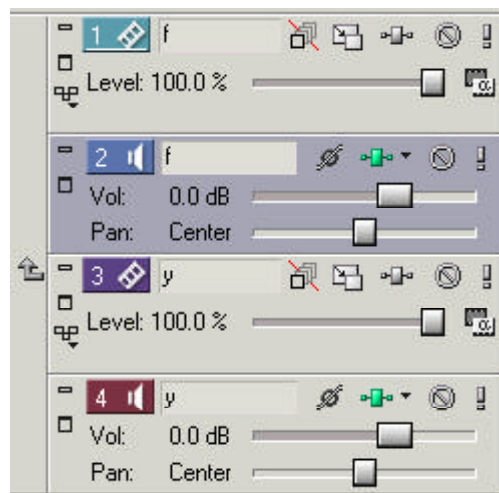
Moving past the stop button is the “Go to the beginning of the project” button. As an alternative, you can press CTRL-HOME. The last button is the “Go to the end of the project” button. Similarly, this can also be done by pressing CTRL-END.

On the right side of this bar is three boxes. If only the first box has a value, that is the current cursor location. However, if you create a selection area, all three boxes will have values: The left box will have the selection beginning position, the middle box will have the selection ending position, and the right box will indicate the length of time covered by the selection area. If you want the selection area to be exactly four seconds, make sure the right box indicates four seconds.



Here is where things get fun: try double-clicking on one of the three boxes. You can manually edit the timecode to fine tune the beginning, ending or length values. Need exactly four seconds but keep jumping over it using the mouse? Just double-click and type it in.

To the left of the timeline is the Track Headers. Each track will have a numbered header that also indicates the type of track. As shown here, track 1 is a video track while track 2 in an audio track. The buttons to the left of the track number allow minimizing and maximizing the track. The video track also has a button allowing an “A/B” view of any video track. To the right of the track number is the name of the track. You can specify any name for any track.



Looking at the video track options, there is a “Level” option. This will change the opacity level of an entire track and is normally left at 100%. To the right of the “Level” slider is the *Composite Mode* button. This will let you determine how multiple levels of video interact with each other.

Looking across the top row of buttons you will start with the *Bypass Motion Blur* button. If Motion Blur has been applied to this project, this button will allow video on this particular track to remain unaffected.

Next is the *Track Motion* button. This can be used to create PIPs or any other activity that requires resizing and/or positioning video such as split-screen. Be aware that Track Motion affects the entire track.

Beside Track Motion is the *Track FX* button. This button will let you apply any of Vegas’ effects at the track level. When applied at the track level, **all** clips on that track will be affected.

The last two buttons are *Mute* and *Solo*. Mute will turn off this track while Solo will play only this track. If you have multiple tracks “soloed,” only the tracks with solo turned on will be visible.

The audio track header is very similar. The “Vol” slider will control the volume. If you need an entire track louder or softer, the “Vol” slider will adjust from +12db to off (-inf). The Pan slider will determine whether you hear the audio only in the left speaker, right speaker, or both.

The first button is “*Invert Track Phase*.” The second button is “*Track FX*.” Similar to the video track, it allows adding audio effects to all clips on the track.

The last two buttons are *Mute* and *Solo*. These buttons behave exactly like their video counterparts. Mute will turn off this track while Solo will play only this track. If you have multiple tracks “soloed,” only the tracks with solo turned on will be heard.

Finally, above the track headers is the current cursor location and below the track headers is the scrub control. Use it to play the timeline forward or backwards at various speeds.

DVD Architect - Positioning Menu Items

By Edward Troxel

You are creating a DVD menu and have all of the desired buttons on your menu. So how do you get past the problem that the buttons are all different sizes and the rows and columns to not lined up? It is easy in DVD Architect to make many objects the same size or be aligned correctly.

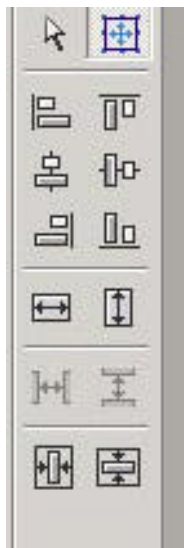
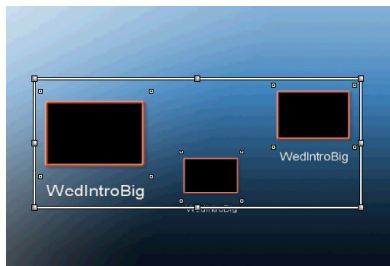
The sizing and aligning tools are located to the left of the menu screen below the arrow (selection) and sizing tool buttons. The alignment tools perform the following tasks: Align all selected menu items to the left, to the top, to the center vertically, to the center horizontally, to the right, and to the bottom.

Immediately below, the sizing tools will resize all selected events to the same width or the same height. The next two options space the objects around the center of the screen while the bottom two will center the selected clips horizontally or vertically on the screen.

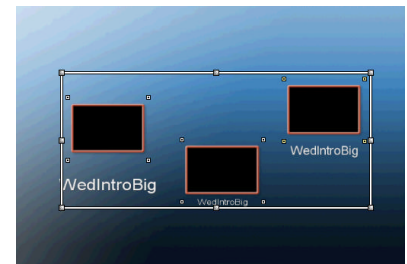
To resize a series of buttons to the same size, all of the buttons must first be selected. Click on the sizing tool and start selecting buttons. Once selected, the *last* selected button will have yellow resizing squares. The button with the yellow squares is the size *all* of the buttons will become once resized. Therefore, pick the button that is the proper size last.

When resizing the button images, it is important that you do not also select the text box. If you do, the text boxes will also be resized. So, plan on resizing the text boxes separately - usually by editing the text and adjusting the font sizes. I find that the text boxes usually only need to be aligned.

Click on one of the button pictures and then CTRL-



CLICK the remaining buttons making sure the last button clicked is the target size. In this case, the right-most button has the yellow "handles" so by clicking on the "Make Same Width" and "Make Same Height" buttons, they all change to the same size.



Now, using the same setup shown above, we will examine how all of the adjust position options work. The first button is "Align Left." This button will make

sure the left edge of all selected objects is aligned. The

"Align Horizontal Center" button will align the selected buttons according to their horizontal center. The

"Align Right" button will align all selected objects by their right edge. Since all of the buttons are the same size, in this case all of these options will produce the same result.

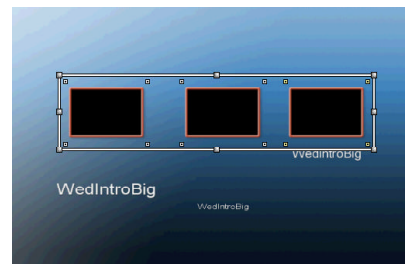
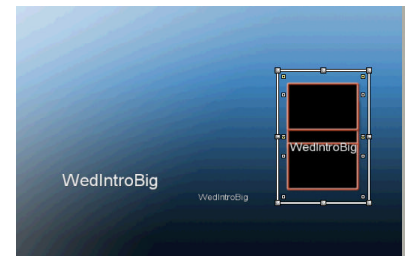
Moving to the other three buttons, we will see that they perform in a similar manner. The first button is

"Align Top" which will make sure the top edge of all selected buttons are aligned. Also available are the

"Align Vertical Center" button and the

"Align Bottom" button. Once again, since these buttons are all the same size, they all produce the same result.

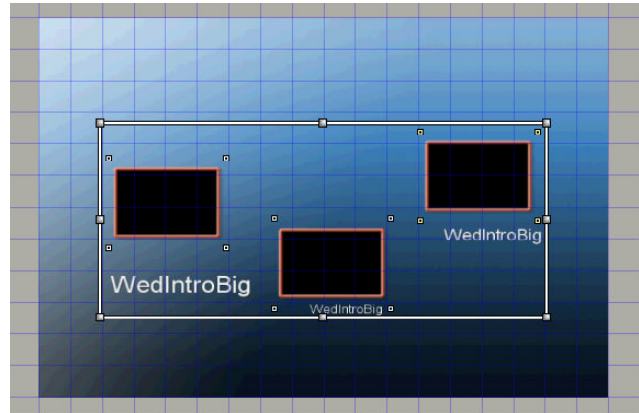
By selectively choosing the buttons to be affected, it is easy to resize all buttons and then align multiple rows



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and columns of buttons. The same techniques can also be applied to the text of each button. While resizing of the text boxes is not needed, the alignment tools can be used to make sure each row of text boxes are aligned by their top, bottom, or middle. As the final step for aligning text, you will want to select the text and its corresponding button and use the “*Align Horizontal Center*” button. This will ensure that the text is centered properly under the button.

To aid your alignment process, you can also turn on the Grid pattern. The grid is toggled on and off by pressing *CTRL-G* or selecting *Grid* from the *Options* menu. The grid settings can also be modified by choosing *Options - Grid Settings* or by pressing *Shift-CTRL-G*. Here you can determine the width and height of each square in the grid. You can also choose whether you wish snapping to the grid squares enabled.



Through the careful use of the resizing and positioning tools, you can create buttons that align perfectly, are evenly spaced, and are all the same size. Experiment with the various options to make your DVDs look the way *you* want.

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Thank you,
Edward Troxel