



Vegas + DVD

Tips, Tricks, and Scripts

Learning and using Vegas 4 and DVD Architect



Review of Boris Red

Reviewed by Elizabeth Lowrey, Amore Productions, AmoreProductions@mchsi.com

When I bought Vegas 4 +DVD in March of this year, primarily to obtain Dolby AC-3 encoding capability and DVD authoring at an unbeatable price, I had no idea it would become my editor of choice. But after a short time observing Vegas' rock-solid stability, powerful features, and superbly intuitive interface, I all but retired my "other", hardware-accelerated NLE.

I purchased Boris RED 2.5 some eight months before acquiring Vegas, without any knowledge that RED plug-in support for Vegas was on the horizon. RED quickly established itself as my favorite piece of software, and its versatility has helped make it one of my soundest equipment investments.

So I consider it great fortune that the latest release of RED (version 3 GL) now plugs into Vegas, allowing me to integrate these two outstanding tools.

The feature list of RED 3 GL is big enough to intimidate the uninitiated: bitmap, vector, and extruded titling, all with special animation features; a 3D animation environment with the ability to control shadows and multiple light sources as well as image rotation and placement in all 3 dimensions; ability to map images to spherical and cylindrical shapes; animated gradients; particle generators; rain, snow, cloud, and star generators; paint tools; 3D chart generators; animated custom splines and spline primitives; "natural" media generators; sophisticated alpha masking; over two dozen apply modes; and a plethora of other highly useful tools too numerous to list.

Yet a RED newcomer might be most impressed by the ease with which different layers can be moved and keyframed, particularly with version 3's addition of 3D position

"interactors". Combined with RED's advanced filters and 3D environmental features, this friendly compositing interface has caused me to use RED even for many still-image tasks, in lieu of Photoshop. Thus my RED designs are often found on tablecloths, pillowcases, DVD and VHS covers, and other printed media instead of in video files or DV tape.



Which is not to say I neglect using RED for its "intended" purposes – to create stunning-looking animated composites, effects, and titles for video. In this capacity, it's proved nothing short of a revelation. RED is so deep and the visual permutations possible with it are so endless that I will likely exhaust my imagination long before I exhaust the program. I uncover some new capability, some new modality for accomplishing a visual concept with every project.

Using only native RED tools and ordinary media, I've successfully simulated a near-death experience where "life" flashes by as the viewer zooms forward through an outer-space-like tunnel to an explosion of light at the other side. I've created a 3D heart that turns and "beats" in time with music as flashing, shimmering particles seem to magically write text onto the screen. And I've used animated splines to create human silhouettes that dance and cast realistic shadows on a wood floor before morphing into letters that spell the name of a dance company. These animations have already helped win me clients, pledges for repeat business, and lots of compliments, and my evolving demo reel as a fledgling video producer will undoubtedly be filled, when finished, with work performed primarily in Boris RED.

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Despite the above descriptions, however, some Vegas users may wonder exactly what RED can offer them that Vegas can't. Two years ago, I would have been such a person, as I didn't completely appreciate where NLEs end and effects software begins.

What I did sense, even then, was that the evolution and prevalence of effects in video and film had naturally caused NLEs to try to incorporate more and more effects capabilities. Terms like "compositing", "apply modes", "keying" and "keyframing" had crept into the feature set and vocabulary of NLEs, and NLE capabilities in these areas were often yardsticks for comparison or value assessment.

I came to appreciate, however, that NLEs, by concept and necessity, are designed to excel at a specific subset of tasks: capturing, managing, and facilitating rapid, random-order, linear assembly of a lot of different media. RED and other dedicated effects programs are designed to excel at layering, animating, finely controlling, and even synthesizing the media itself in compositions of relatively short length. As was once cogently put to me, NLEs, Vegas included, are built for the horizontal direction while RED is built for the vertical direction.

Stated yet another way, Vegas and RED make excellent complements because the relative weaknesses of each program are the strengths of the other. If I want static titles or simple title rolls, I use Vegas and get them almost instantly. If I want titles that have animated colors or that type on gradually in some programmable speed and manner or that extrude and fly around the screen, I use RED with its friendly keyframing environment and numerous title animation time savers. If I want to key a bunch of clips that will simply play end to end over a single background track, I use Vegas. If I want to key and composite a bunch of clips in one environment and have the viewer "zoom" past them in 3D space, I use RED. Static versus animated, horizontal versus vertical, two-dimensional space versus three-dimensional space. Those are the broad parameters by which I've come to understand the complimentary function of the two programs.

Speaking of complimentary function, while I'm happy to be able to access RED via its stand alone "engine", I'm even happier to have the option of accessing it as a Vegas plug-in. In terms of workflow, that means having immediate access to RED while editing within Vegas; being able to save RED creations as part of a Vegas project; having as good a preview of the effect while playing back the Vegas timeline as the given computer hardware, preview settings, and effect complexity will allow; and having the convenience of integral rendering – i.e., of rendering the effect within the Vegas project as a whole. There is no need to separately render an effect in RED, import it into Vegas, and then position the rendered avi

in the timeline, as would be the case with effects created in non-plug-in software.

The specifics of the Vegas/RED workflow are simple. Place a clip on the Vegas timeline (I use a solid color "slug" clip from Vegas' "Media Generators" tab, although any video clip or still could be used); drag Boris RED 3GL from the list on Vegas' "Video FX" tab; and drop it on the chosen clip. Alternately, when using RED strictly to create a transition, simply drag RED from the Vegas "Transitions" tab and drop it on the overlap between the relevant clips. Either method invokes a pop-up dialog, where the RED launch is confirmed, before the efficient RED interface emerges. The timeline greeting you will already contain the Vegas clip(s) to which RED was applied.

After adjusting effect duration to the desired length (an extra step peculiar to Vegas' integration with RED), simply proceed with effect creation. If you don't want to start from scratch, RED's extensive "Keyframe Library" can be invoked with two mouseclicks or a single shortcut, allowing the user to browse through hundreds of high quality preset effects and animations and add them to the RED timeline, after which they can be edited as needed. Thanks to the Open GL technology leveraged in version 3, that editing is more responsive than ever, with previews in RED's composite window sometimes exceeding realtime.

Once the effect is finished, simply hit "apply", at which point Vegas reappears onscreen, complete with the newly applied RED effect. The effect will be saved with the Vegas project and can be reopened from within that project at any time for further editing. It will preview within Vegas (subject to earlier frame rate caveats and general realtime Vegas factors) and will be rendered seamlessly with other renderable material in the Vegas timeline using the normal procedures.

Before hitting "apply" or exiting RED, you can also save the effect as a separate RED composition or project file, which means it can be opened, further edited, applied, and/or rendered in either the RED engine or within another instance of the RED plugin (i.e., within another RED-supported NLE host). This, incidentally, is one of RED's most distinguishing and important virtues, the provision of a single interface for compositing, titling, and effects creation for editors who routinely use more than one supported NLE or who engage in dedicated effect-creation sessions where a host NLE is unnecessary.

Considering its unparalleled flexibility, extraordinary feature set, and plugin availability within Vegas, Boris RED 3GL is a product I enthusiastically recommend to all Vegas users who are looking to elevate their productions to new aesthetic heights. I know it will keep my imagination and creativity busy for years to come.

Beginner's Corner - Adding Text

By Edward Troxel

Adding titles is an important part of any video project and Vegas includes a very capable titler. While there may be times when a different titling program is desired, the built-in titler is able to produce a wide variety of titles.

The first step in adding a title is to add a new video track above the current video tracks. There are multiple ways of adding the text generated media. You can right-click on the video track and choose "**Insert Text Media**" from the menu. You can also choose the Media Generators tab, select Text from the list, and drag any of the presets to the timeline.

On the right side of the new event is a series of icons. The top icon allows editing the text event. When



adding a new text event, the editing screen is automatically opened. This screen allows entering the desired text, changing fonts, and setting other font parameters such as **bold** and *italic*.

With this simple process a new title has now been added to the video and automatically appears over the video image. This will be true for any of the presets with a checkerboard background which indicate the background is transparent.

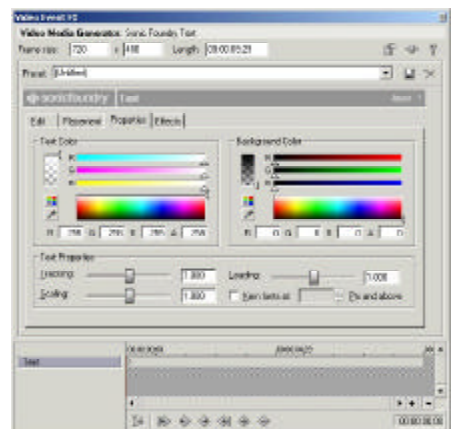
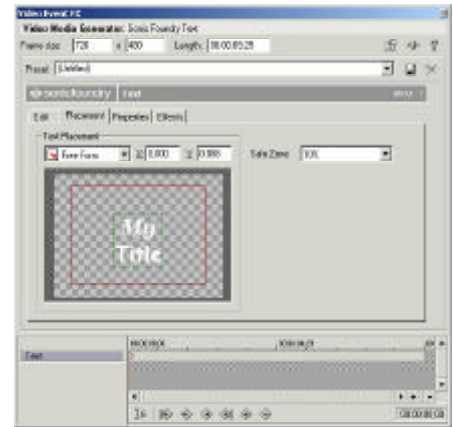


The second tab allows adjusting the position of the

text on the screen. By clicking and dragging the text on the screen mock-up, the text can be quickly placed in the correct area. If more precise placement is desired, the "X" and "Y" values can give you exact placement.

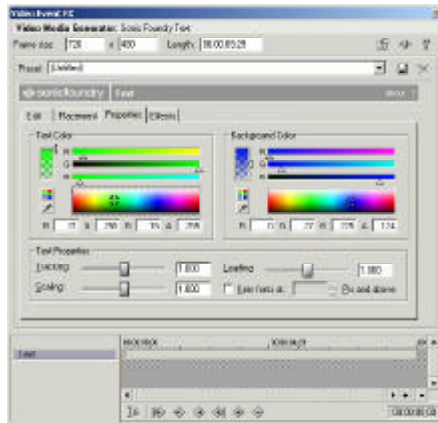
The third tab helps fine tune the text by allowing the leading, tracking, and scaling to be adjusted. Additionally, this is where both the color of the text and the background is adjusted. Just click on a color in the large color box to get an approximate color for the text or background. The exact color can then be fine tuned by either adjusting the three color bars or entering the exact RGB numbers in the boxes.

To the left of the color sliders is another slider with a solid color on the top and no color on



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the bottom. This will allow setting the transparency of the text and background. To allow the video to show through, the color should be made transparent.

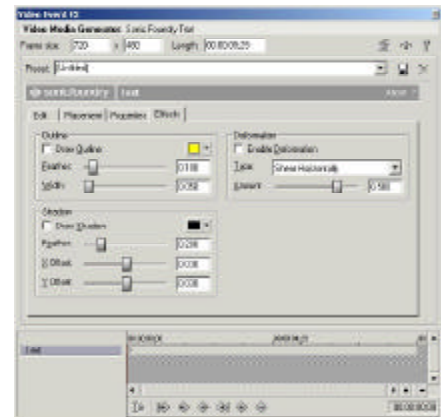


By pulling the background slider to the bottom, the text will appear over the video. If the background color is on the top (a solid color) and the text color is made transparent, the background video will show through the letters.



The fourth tab allows adding effects to the entered text. The first option will draw an outline around the text. By default, the color is yellow. Click on the color to pick a different color for the outline.

Draw a shadow will add a shadow image behind the text. By default this shadow will be black but can be changed by clicking on the color icon.



The last setting on that tap is Enable Deformation. The various deformation options can add many strange and interesting looks to the text.

The text options in Vegas are very capable of producing an amazing variety of titles. Although we would all like more features available such as 3D text, the existing abilities can meet most needs with a little imagination and experimentation. Examine each of the options to begin understanding the options available.



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Tips for Using Boris Red

By Boris

www.BorisFX.com

For Sonic Foundry's Vegas Video, we have created both a filter and transition (please note, you can also create synthetic media or what Vegas terms a "media generator" - please see below).

To Prep Vegas for a Red Effect:

To view a Boris effect in the Vegas Preview window, you must disable Vegas' video caching by setting the "Dynamic RAM Preview max (MB)" in the Vegas user prefs under the video tab to '0'. It may be left on, but any changes to an effect within Red's UI will not show up until Vegas caching is turned off.

To launch an effect:

Both the Boris filter and transition are applied as any other Vegas effect. After applying the Boris effect, you will find one launch button on the Boris effect property page. Clicking it will launch the RED interface. Note that there may be a pause of a few seconds when an effect is first applied, and when our UI can be launched. When a RED effect is first launched, it must be manually initialized with the following parameters:

1. Project size (in our Prefs)
2. Project FPS (in our Prefs)
3. Video Aspect ratio (in our Prefs)
4. Effect duration (in the upper left hand corner of the RED timeline window is Red's timeline duration. Just click on it and enter the total. Please note: this means that If you change the effect's duration (changing the length of the associated media clip, etc) in Vegas, the duration must also be updated in RED).

Note- If the duration of the effect is less that the clip, the last frame will repeat to fill up the space.

Applying the effect from RED's UI:

It's the same as with all our hosts. Create your desired effect

in RED and hit apply. Once applied you will now be able to see the effect you created in the Vegas Preview window. Vegas will save the RED settings along with their project.

The Media Generator (or synthetic importer):

Vegas, like Premiere, has a concept of a synthetic importer which they term a media generator. We do not have a true Boris media generator but it is a very simple task to emulate one within Vegas:

1. Create a slug in Vegas (the easiest way of doing this is to click on the 'Media Generators' tab in Vegas, select and apply a solid color).
2. Apply to it a Red filter. Voila - a Boris media generator.

Other considerations:

1. The frame Vegas sends the RED UI to display is not necessarily the same as their project size, but rather the size of the frame being displayed in the Vegas preview window. This can result in what appears to be a low rez image in the RED UI. Though any Vegas preview window setting will work, best results within RED can be achieved by setting the Vegas preview window at Best/Full within Vegas before launching RED. (what that translates to is this: even if the Vegas proj size is 720 x 480, if the Vegas preview window is set to a 320 x 240 display then that will be the image size we'll receive.)
2. For the length of the effect, RED can only import the one frame the Vegas cursor (or cti in RED terms) is placed on. To work around, simply import the clip into RED as a reference point.
3. To preview a Boris effect in Vegas, you must first apply out of the Boris UI. You will not be able to preview changes in Vegas while the Boris UI is launched (the frames within the Vegas preview window will appear black).

Combine Sony Vegas 4.0 with the power of Boris Red 3GL, Graffiti 3, or FX 7 and prepare yourself for a whole new realm of 2D / 3D compositing and advanced broadcast quality titling.

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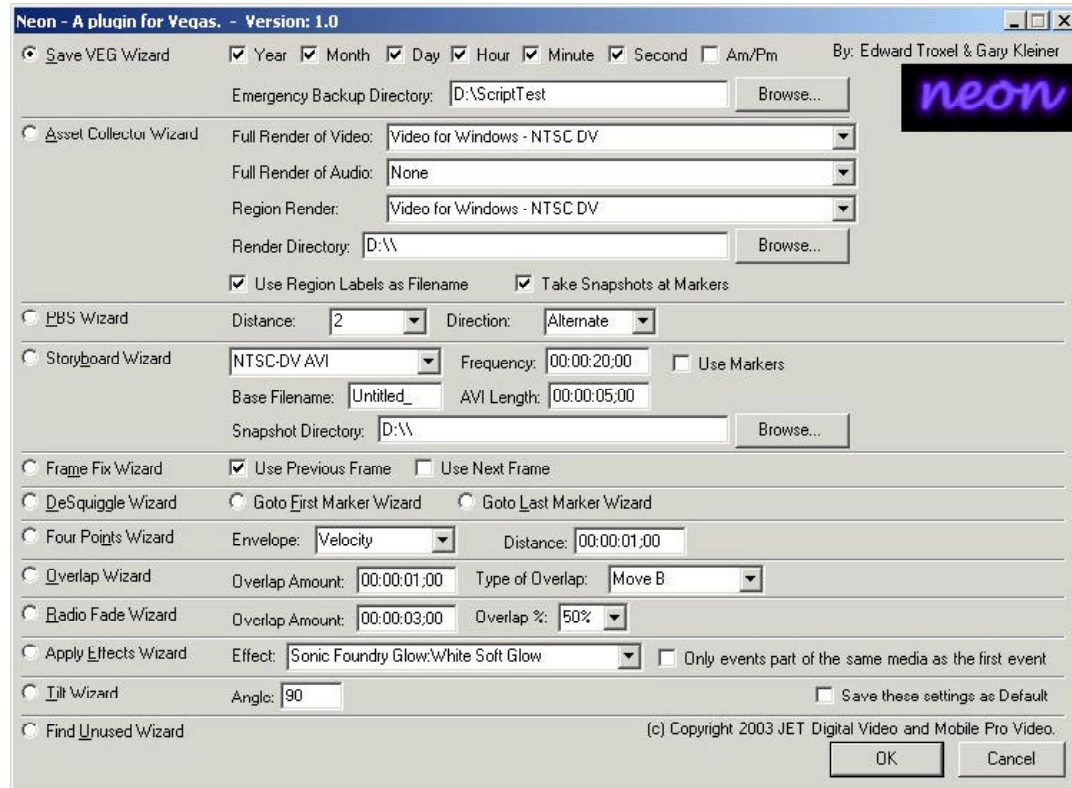
Introducing Neon - A Plugin for Vegas

By Gary Kleiner

www.VegasTrainingAndTools.com

The minds that brought you Excalibur have done it again. Neon features 14 new Wizards that will make your editing easier and faster than ever before.

Storyboard Wizard gives you a whole new way for you and your clients to see the flow of your project.



Overlap Wizard finally gives you a way to quickly overlap events with a specific duration. You also get a stand-alone version so you can overlap with one key-stroke!

Radio Fade Wizard is perfect for montages. It takes any set of audio events and realigns them with great sounding

cross fades.

Here is a quick overview:

Save VEG Wizard: saves your project in several places and automatically names each successive save. No more hunting for your VEG directory!

Asset Collector Wizard handles all the rendering and still capture you need to create DVDs: Mpegs, AC3, AVIs and Still Frames....all in one operation!

PBS Wizard instantly turns your boring photo project into a TV-style montage with gentle zooms on all selected images.

Also included are **Desquiggle Wizard**, **Frame Fix Wizard**, **Goto First/Last Marker Wizard**, **Find Unused Wizard**, **Apply Effects Wizard**, **Tilt Wizard**, **Four Points Wizard**.

Price is \$48.50 via direct email, \$55 on CD with printed manual and .NetFramework.

For more information go to www.VegasTrainingAndTools.com. A free demo is available for download. You will be able to look over the manual and use the program 15 times.