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Vegas + DVD Tips, Tricks, and Scripts

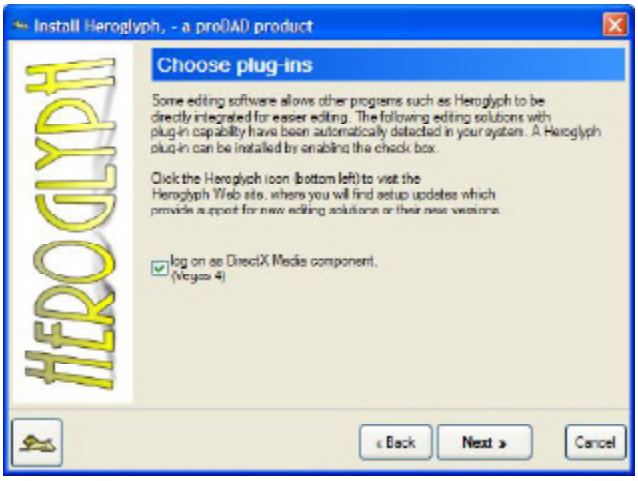
Learning and using Vegas and DVD Architect

Heroglyph - Titling and Compositing

By Edward Troxel

A new titler named **Heroglyph** is now available for Vegas. proDAD (http://www.prodad.de) has made their titling and compositing software compatible with Vegas giving users another plug-in worth consideration.

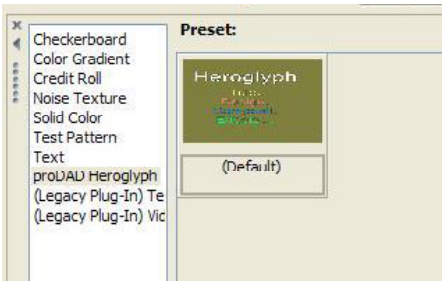
Upon receiving the CD, my first step was to install the program. While installing Heroglyph you are presented with an option to register it as a DirectX Media component. The box specifically mentions this is for Vegas 4 but also works with Vegas 5. While not tested, I suspect it would work with Vegas 3 as well. The advantage of this approach over products such as Cool3D is direct integration with the timeline.



Similar to Vegas, the product must be registered in order to unlock the full program. Registration can be done via e-mail and you will receive a return e-mail with the proper instructions to fully register the program. I asked about the case in which a single copy of Vegas was installed on two computers and was told

that installing Heroglyph on both of these systems would also be acceptable.

Once installed, Heroglyph appears in Vegas as another Generated Media tool. Just click on proDAD Heroglyph and add the "Default" preset to the



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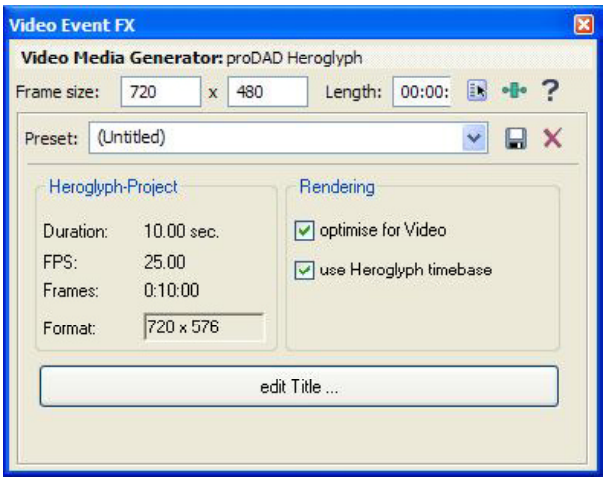
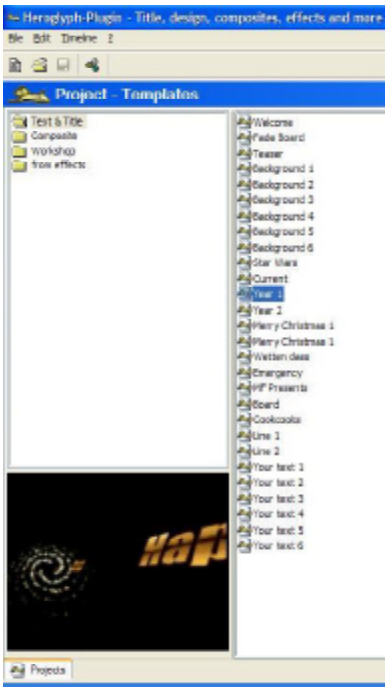
timeline. This will open the standard Vegas parameter dialog allowing you to set parameters and length. This screen also contains a small quirk with a framerate that defaults to 25 FPS even though my project is set to 29.97 FPS. This was easily changed to 29.97 within the main interface. This is also not a big surprise as the company is based in Germany.

The first step is to modify the Length property to be

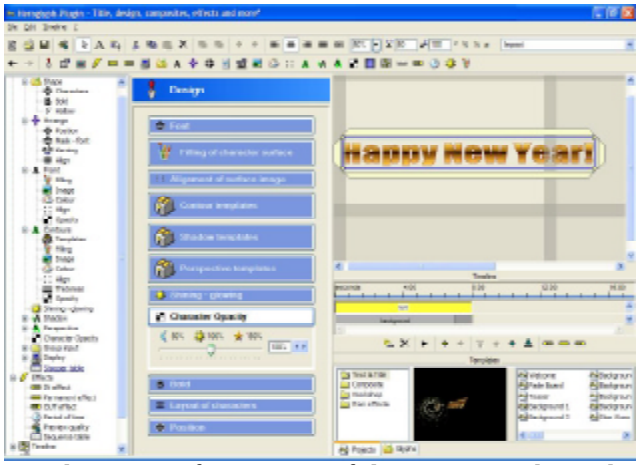


the desired amount of time for the title. The "***use Heroglyph timebase***" option, when unchecked, will automatically adjust the Heroglyph timeline to play for the duration specified in "Length". If checked, it will simply play based on the Heroglyph internal timeframe and repeat as necessary. This allows the timelines to be locked together or remain totally independent.



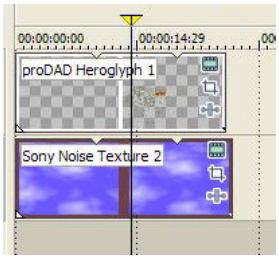
To enter the Heroglyph interface, simply click on the "***edit Title...***" button. The first screen will show you a series of templates. Using the templates will definitely get you up and running very quickly. A plus is that they can be easily modified to meet your exact needs. While templates can help speed up the creation of your title, they are not a requirement. Using File - New will allow starting a title with no default selections.

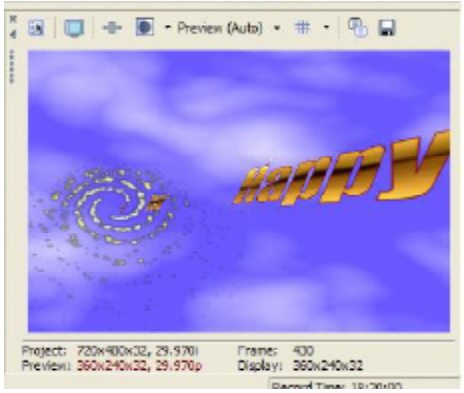
There are a multitude of options available for creating and adjusting your title. The manual that comes with the program is a series of tutorials. It is strongly recommended that you go through these tutorials as they illus-



trate how to perform many of the various tasks in the program. The included help file contains a more thorough explanation of the individual options.

As you can see with the Heroglyph title added over a generated media cloud, the alpha channel is properly interpreted. With a multitude of options available, many complex titling effects can be quickly created. While it will





take some time and experimentation to fully learn to use the program, many interesting effects can be quickly and easily created.

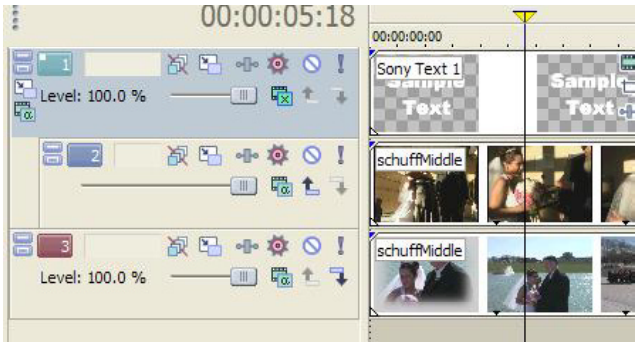
Beginner's Corner - Text Compositing Reprised

By Edward Troxel

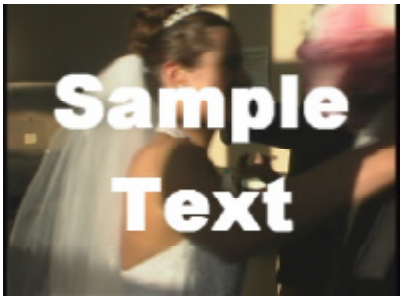
A couple months ago we learned how to composite text and create the effect used in the intro of Spin City. With the new compositing tools in Vegas 5, this process has changed slightly. Although the process may appear slightly harder, it is, in fact, much more powerful.

Begin the project placing the text on track 1, the video to place inside the text on track 2, and the background text on track 3. Just like before, track 2 must be made a "child" of track 1. However, the position of the

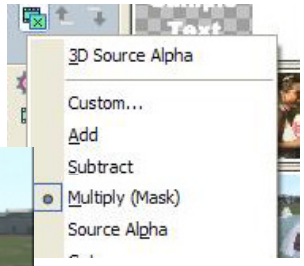
button has moved. In fact, there are now two buttons - one for "Make Child" and one for "Make Parent". Click on the "Make Child" button on track 2 and you will have a display similar to what is shown here.



In Vegas 4 you were finished at this point. However, in Vegas 5 your display will now look like this image. It appears to be exactly the same as if there were no Parent/ Child relationship applied.

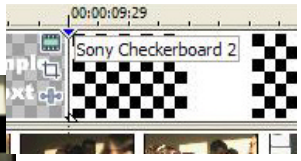


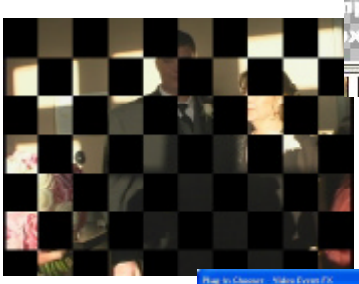
In Vegas 5 you have to apply the "Multiply (Mask)" Compositing mode to Track 1. This must be applied to the ***Track*** compositing mode and not to the ***Parent*** compositing mode. This is the button to the right of the level slider. Click on that button and choose Multiply (Mask) from the menu that appears. This selection will now give you the video in Track 2



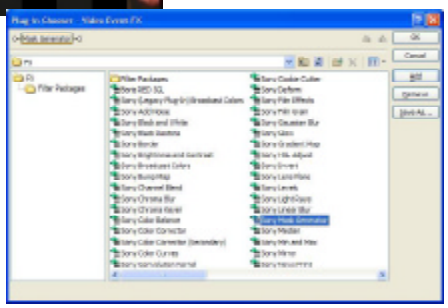
showing in the letters and Track 3 appearing in the background.

Traditionally this same technique has been applied to use black and white images as masks as well. If you add a black and white mask now, the image on track 2 will show through the white areas but black areas will





show black. Fortunately there is a simple method to allow the video in Track 3 to show through the black areas. Click on the effect button on the mask or on the track header and add the "Sony Mask Generator effect". This will allow the Track 3 to appear in the black areas.



While this may appear to be a more complicated process, there is a lot more compositing power available in Vegas 5

Network Rendering, One Man's Experience...

By Jeff Basch

One of the features that really got my attention in Vegas 5 was the network rendering feature. I know I am not alone in that opinion as the forums have several postings on the subject. This article gives my personal experience from the setting up of network rendering to some example renders, and even a few quirks along the way.

My experiment is by no means truly scientific, but it is, in many ways, a real world example. I, like many computer enthusiasts, have managed to assemble several machines over the years. Since they are always worth more to me than on the open market they never seem to leave my house. Before getting into the setup, I should probably give a little bit of information regarding my set-up. My set up has three machines. Machine A (my primary editing machine) is an AMD Athlon 2500+ with 1 GB of DDR RAM. For this experiment, machine B is an Athlon 1333 with 512MB PC 133 SDRAM and Machine C is an AMD Slot A 700 MHz machine with 512MB Pc 100 SDRAM. All machines are connected to the network via 100 MB Ethernet cards. These are currently the only machines on my home network and there is no file server.

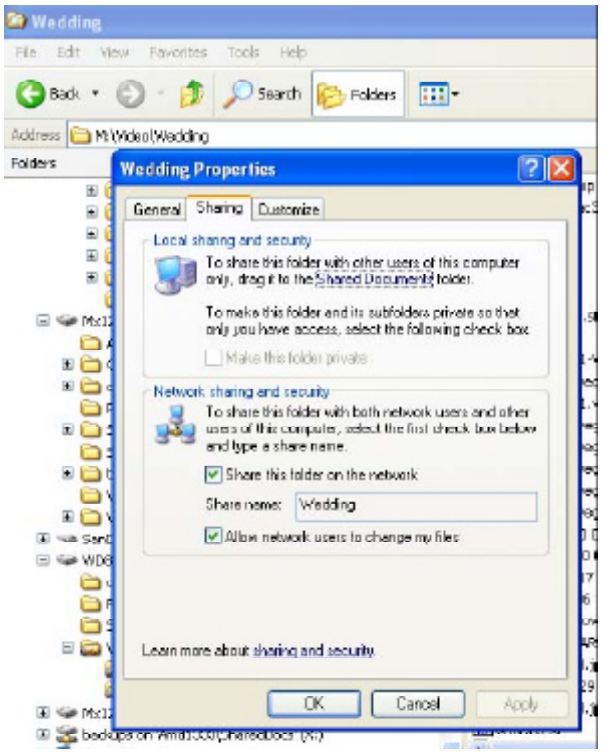


Figure 1: Setting up a shared folder

To utilize Network rendering you must first install the full Vegas 5 on the host machine. Prior to installing the render clients on machines B and C, I recommend you set up a share drive. There are a few ways to do this. My personal preference is to right-click on the folder you wish to share within the Windows Explorer program and select properties. Once you have done this, you should end up with something like figure 1. You must check the "***share this folder with others***" box, give the share a name (Wedding in this case) and select "***Allow network users to change my files***" to allow the other computers to change the files in the directory. From here, you can select OK and the folder is all ready for the other computers. Remember this Share name as it will be important later.

You can repeat this process as many times as needed until all project files are in some form of share drive. For this example, all my files are in two shares: *Wedding* and *RenderOut*). I also found it helpful to set my Temporary files folder under tools to a shared drive.

Now that the Operating System is changes have been made, I recommend starting the Vegas Network render service. This is where you will need to set up the file mappings for each share (see fig 2). You can set up a new share by selecting clicking in one of the fields for the row that starts with a *.

For each drive mapping, you will need to set the local folder name as well as the network name or *Universal* mapping. The local name, usually starts with a drive letter and the Universal mapping usually starts with a machine name. In figure 2 you can see I set up two file folder mappings. The first has a local file folder location of M:\Video\Wedding, where M is the local drive letter, and a Universal mapping of \\AMD2500\Wedding, where AMD2500 happens to be the machine name and wedding is the share name we set up earlier. The generic universal mapping format is \\<Machine

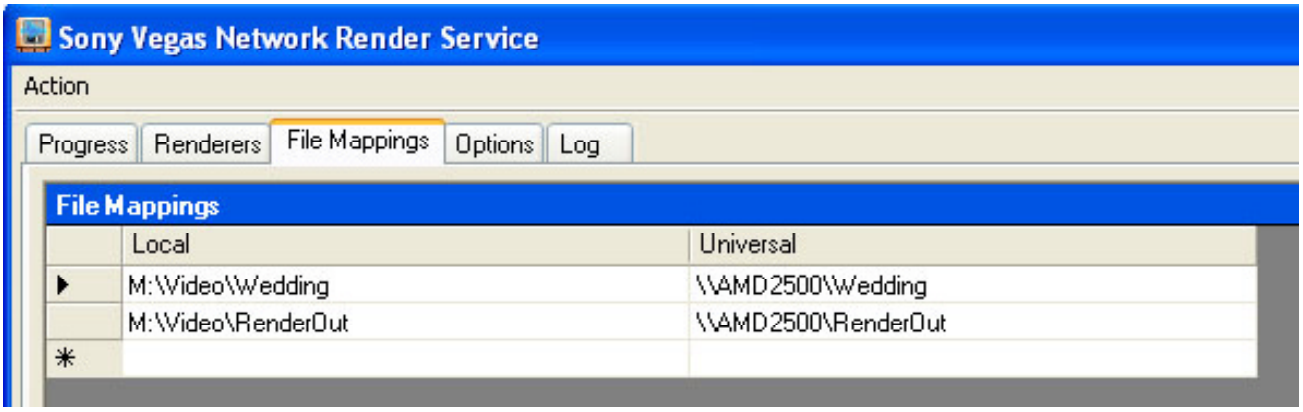


Figure 2: File Mappings with Local and Universal names

Name>\<Share>. Now we need to tell our host machine (the machine the jobs will be initiated from) what other machines on the network are possible renders. You do this by entering the adding new machines similar to the way you added drive mappings except you just enter the machine name. In figure 3 you see 2, AMD 700 and AMD 1333.

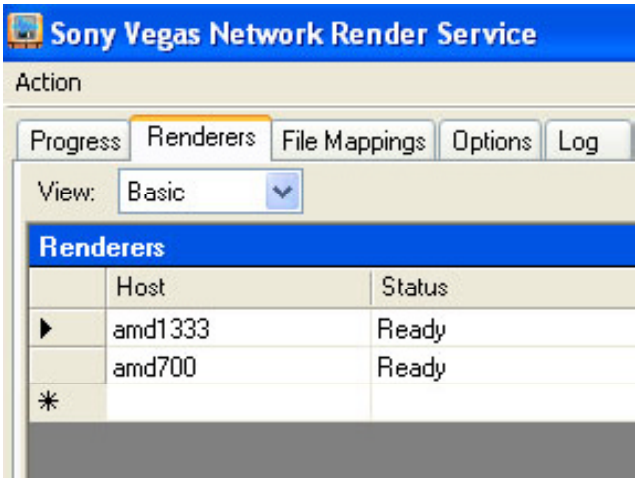


Figure 3: Rendering Computers Specified

You can now go to each machine that you plan to use for network rendering (Vegas allows 2 for each purchased license) and install the client software along with the file mappings. I also recommend setting up a local drive letter mapping to the universal share. Do this by selecting Map Network Drive option under the tools menu in Windows Explorer. Here you select a drive letter not used and set the mapping up as the universal mapping previously used (e.g. \\AMD2500\Wedding). Once this is done on each client that you are going to use for network rendering, you are ready to network render a file.

To tell Vegas to use network rendering, you start like you would any other render except in the Render As dialog you must select the "***Render using Network computers***" option. Once you press save you should get the box shown in figure 4. You may get an option to save the project prior to getting to figure 4. From here you have a few options:

1. You can select the host to render the job. If you do

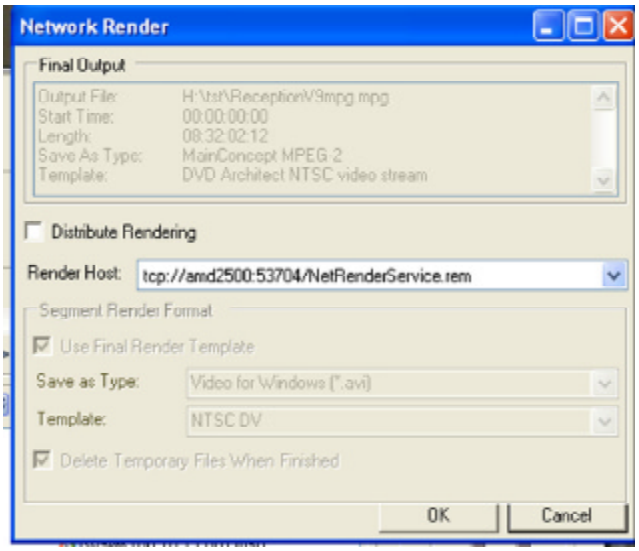


Figure 4: Network Rendering Dialog

this, the entire job will be rendered by the machine selected from the drop down list box

2. You can choose to distribute the network job. If you select the Distribute Rendering option, the job will be distributed to all machines in the Renders list as their capacity allows. You will also need to specify the machine that will be used to stitch all the smaller job segments back together.

The Quirks

Earlier I indicated that there were a few quirks that one needed to be aware of. The first is that jobs like MPEG2 and AC-3 can not be distributed. You must distribute an AVI type job and then convert it to a MPEG2 separately if your project is going to DVD. This is something I hope that Sony will address in future releases. Another quirk to be aware of is that if you happen to have Quicktime files in your project, the Quicktime Authoring component must be installed on each machine used for rendering. I found this one out the hard way.

The Test Cases.

For jobs that have few pans, crops, or compositing, I find my AMD2500+ renders at just over real time in the highest video settings. I recently had a 21 min. video that was taking nearly 9 hours (8 Hours 42 Min) to render to MPEG2 because of the panning, composting, etc I was doing. This is why network rendering really grabbed my attention. With this job I ran a couple of additional tests and the results were as follows:

A. 3 PC's with the AMD 1333 as the Stitch host. Test Time = 5 Hours 44 Min.

B. 3 PC's with the AMD 2500 as the Stitch Host. Test Time = 5 Hours 37 min.

C. AVI to MPEG conversion Test Time 55 Min. which Needs to be added to the above times to get the same file as the base line.

You can see from these test results there is savings using network rendering with complex files. Even though it may not be as significant as many would hope, it is still a savings.

What I find more useful is to simply have the remote machine render the job. This way, while one remote machine is pegged at near 100% CPU utilization, the main machine can be used for editing other videos with limited performance impact. Granted the render may take a touch longer in this case and I have added process of rendering the AVI file to MPEG after the initial process is complete. However, when taking into account that I can be productive on my primary editing workstation during this time, the benefits far outweigh the cost.

The more complex the project, the bigger the payoff. This will become even more significant when Sony addresses the network rendering of file formats such as MPEG2 and AC-3. The bottom line for me is that I plan to make significant usage of network rendering and, over time, it may be my favorite Vegas 5 improvement.