



Vegas + DVD

Tips, Tricks, and Scripts

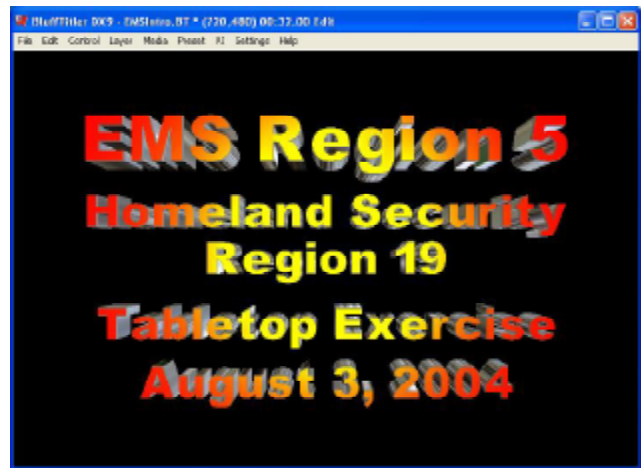
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BluffTitler - Create Dazzling 3D Titles

By Edward Troxel

While the built-in titler in Vegas can create some amazing effects when combined with other features of Vegas, many consider it an extremely weak area. That's where external programs can help fill the gap. If you're looking for an easy way to jazz up your titles and add capabilities that do not exist in Vegas, BluffTitler will make a welcome addition to your toolbox.

BluffTitler uses your computer's 3D-accelerated video card to create animated, 3D titles from any TrueType font installed on your system. Because it uses your 3D hardware, you can see what you're working on in "real time" without having to wait for the titles to render.



Each time you start BluffTitler, a different sample project is loaded illustrating some of the different effects that can be created. By beginning with a sample project, changing the text allows you to quickly create some quick titles. This is exactly how the EMS title screen began.

Titles created in BluffTitler consists of a series of layers. Each layer can be adjusted individually. Similarly, each layer has many different options - all of which can also be adjusted individually over time via keyframes.

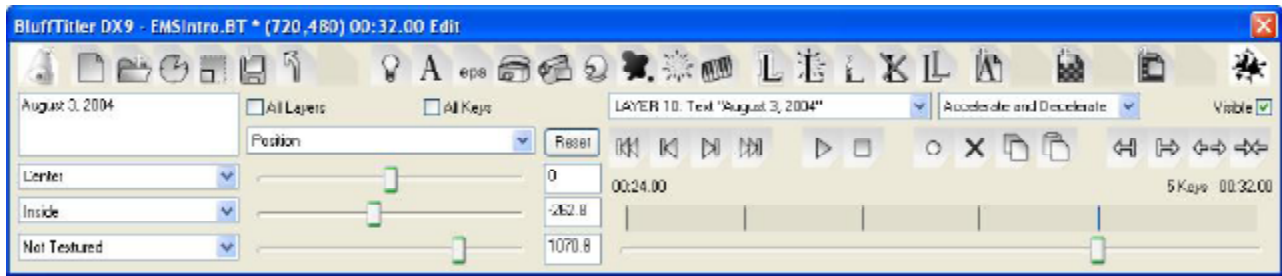
By modifying a few keyframes, I easily modified the preset so the text came in from the middle of the screen and ended at the top. I then copied that layer,



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changed the text, and had it arrive the same way. Since the text was made up of two layers, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that both layers were copied for the next title line.

After getting the title finished, it was time to render to “Uncompressed AVI with Alpha (RGBA)” so I could load it into Vegas. Vegas did not automatically recognize the alpha channel so I had to right-click the clip, choose Properties, and change the Alpha Channel from “None” to “Premultiplied (Dirty)”. Immediately the title appeared over the background video.

Unfortunately, I had a slight segment from the BluffTitrer toolbar appear across the bottom of the AVI. A quick look at the render screen shows a checkbox labeled “use FrontBuffer (make screengrabs)”. Unchecking this box eliminated the problem. I later found this on the BluffTitrer website:

Anti-aliasing

*Anti-aliasing is not the responsibility of BluffTitrer, but it is a global setting of your 3D graphics card. When you right-click on the desktop and select **settings/advanced** you will find an option to choose between performance and quality. When you choose quality the jaggies will be gone. Note that different graphics cards produce different anti-aliasing qualities.*

*When your graphics look anti-aliased on screen, but the AVI files still have jaggies you will have to mark the **use front buffer** checkbox in the **file/export as movie... dialog**. **Warning: in this mode screengrabs are made of every frame so you have to keep the render window completely visible and on top of all other windows.***

It is vitally important to play with the various settings to understand just how powerful this program is. Adding plasma and particle layers allows you to create everything from letters flying away at warp speed to letters that drip blood. Lots of variations exist and you can just keep piling on more and more layers.

If you’re looking for a good program to expand your titling capabilities, BluffTitrer is certainly worth a look. Download the demo version and give it a try.

System Requirements

- Microsoft Windows 98, 2000, Me or XP
- DirectX 9
- Intel Pentium compatible processor (Pentium III 800 MHz or better recommended)
- 128 MB RAM (256 MB recommended)
- 25 MB available hard disk space
- Hardware accelerated 3D graphics card with hardware vertex shader support (NVIDIA GeForce 2, ATI Radeon 9200 or better recommended)

For more information about BluffTitrer, visit their website at <http://www.blufftitler.us> where you can download the free demo version and buy the project online. For further questions, contact Keith R. Crosley at keith@blufftitler.us.

Contact Information

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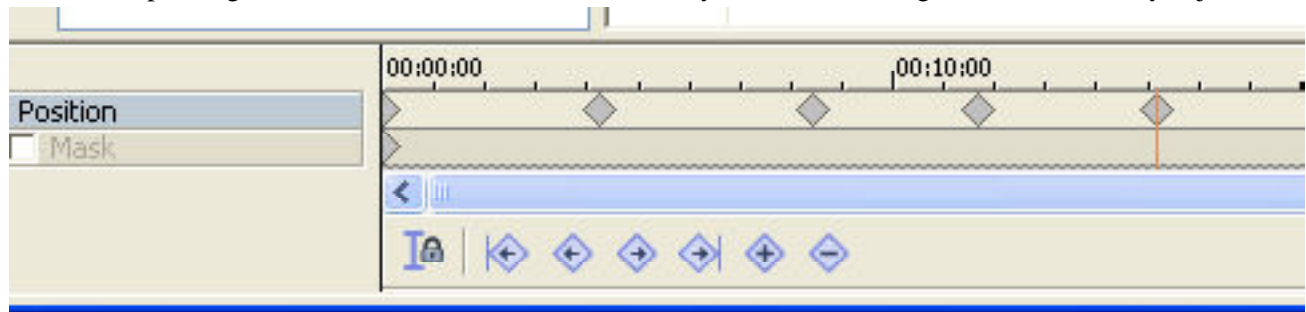
Thank you, Edward Troxel

Beginner's Corner - Using Keyframes

By Edward Troxel

When editing video, it is frequently desirable that things like position, size, effect level, or any other setting change over time. To set changes over time, keyframes are used. Using keyframes is easily one of the most important concepts to learn in Vegas.

Everytime any Effect, Media Generator, Transition, Pan/Crop, or Track Motion is opened, the bottom of the associated dialog will contain a timeline similar to what is shown in this image. This particular timeline is from the Pan/Crop dialog box.



On the left side is the timeline header which will indicate what is being affected. The “Position” line in this case will allow modifying the size and position of the Pan/Crop window. New to Vegas 5 is the “Mask” checkbox. When that is checked, the new Bezier Masking tools become available.

Below the timeline is a series of diamonds. Each keyframe on the timeline is also represented by a diamond. The first diamond below the timeline will take you to the first keyframe. The second one takes you to the previous keyframe. The third one takes you to the next keyframe, and the fourth one takes you to the last keyframe. The remaining two diamonds will allow you to add a keyframe at the current cursor position (+) or remove the currently selected keyframe (-).

To the left of the six diamonds is the “Sync Cursor” button. When selected, clicking on the Vegas timeline will also adjust the position of the cursor on the dialog timeline. Similarly, moving the position of the cursor on the dialog timeline will also adjust the position on the Vegas timeline.

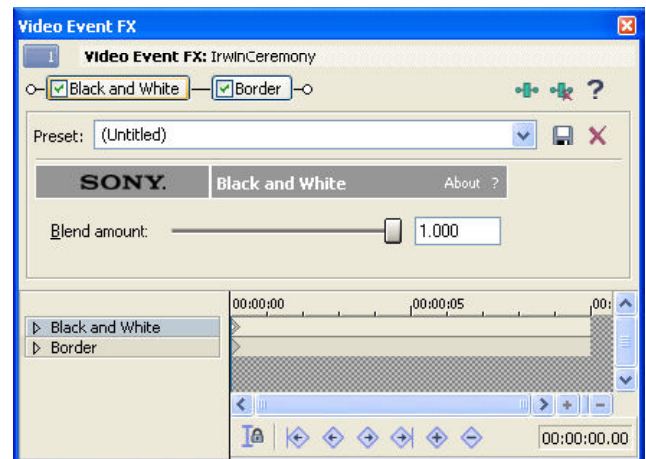
The Sync Cursor button can be a powerful aid in many cases, but can be a hinderance in others. There-

fore, you have the option of turning it on or off. There is also one exception that must be noted: Sync Cursor does not work with Generated Media objects.

Moving to the main timeline area you will notice what appears to be a half diamond at the beginning of the timeline. Every effect will have a minimum of one keyframe with the initial settings. If it is necessary for the settings to change over time, you must then add at least one more keyframe. As time passes between two keyframes, the settings will automatically adjust from

the original setting to the new setting providing a smooth change over time. Let’s take a single clip, modify it in three ways, and then point out one of the best kept secrets in Vegas.

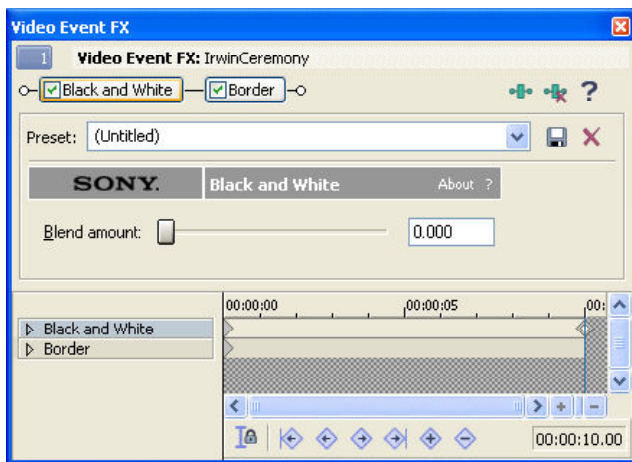
First of all, begin by loading a short clip, or image, on the Vegas timeline. Click on the “Event FX” button on the event and select the Sony Black and White effect and the Sony Border effect and then click on OK. This will open the dialog where you need to make sure the Black and White effect is selected. Make sure the



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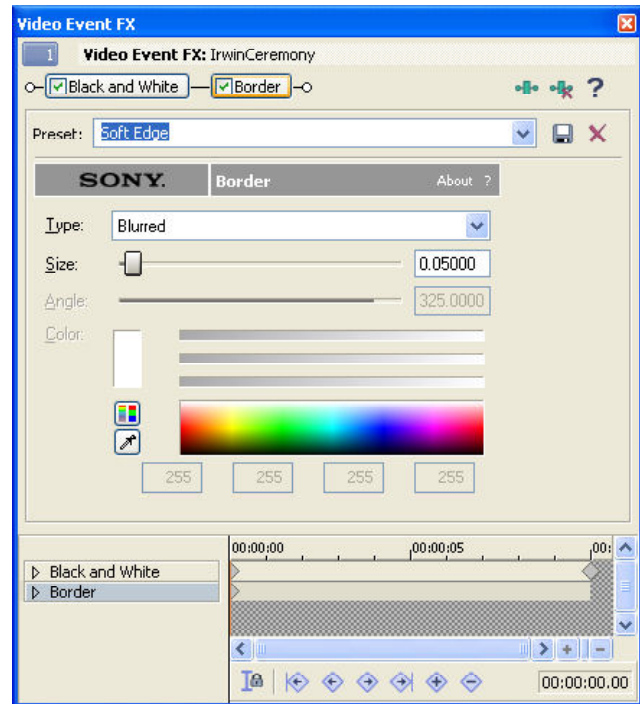
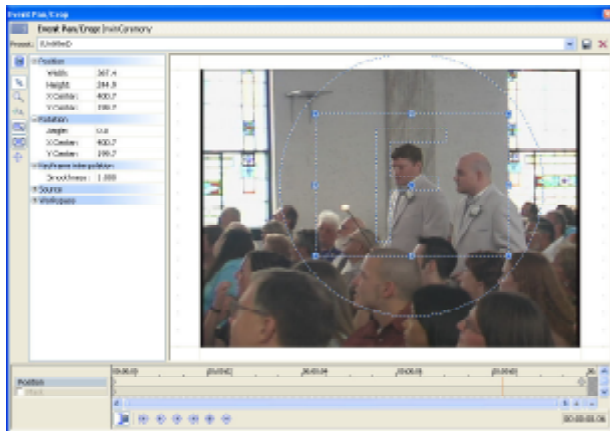
first keyframe is selected and change the “Blend amount” to 1.000. This will give you a black and white image for the entire period of time.

Now supposed we wish for the image to slowly regain color over the length of the clip. Now click on the end of the event timeline (or just click on the “last keyframe” button) to move the cursor to the end. You can press the “+” diamond to add a new keyframe. However, it is easier to simply adjust the settings which will automatically add a new keyframe. So now adjust the “Blend amount” back to 0.00.



Next, we'll adjust the border effect. Select the border effect and click on the “first keyframe” button. Select the “Soft Edge” preset which will give us a nice fading edge all around the image. In this particular case we'll just set a single keyframe so that the same border is applied across the entire length of time.

Now open up the Pan/Crop dialog for that clip, leave the first keyframe alone, and add a second keyframe at

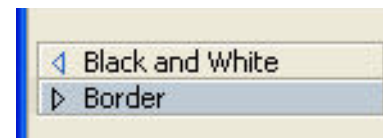


the end so that it zooms in on the clip as time passes. Play this clip back and you will see that it slowly changes from black and white to color while zooming.

Play back the timeline over that clip and you will see that it slowly zooms in while changing from black and white to color over time. The border remains constant as zooming occurs - except it may remain at the full outside of the frame instead of staying with the displayed image. Here's where one of the best kept secrets in Vegas comes into play.

Open the Event FX of the clip again and look at the headers to the left of the timeline. Looking carefully you will notice small triangles to the left of the name. These triangles are the “Pre/Post Toggle” and will indicate whether the effect is supposed to be applied before or after the scaling has occurred. If you are not seeing what you want, try changing this toggle.

Keyframing is a vitally important concept in video editing as you'll frequently want settings changing over time. Spend some time playing with keyframes and learning exactly how they can improve your skills.



Scripting - Introduction to JScript (Part 2)

By Edward Troxel

Last month we began looking at the basics of JScript programming, specifically looking at comments, variables, and while loops. This issue we will continue on to some more common commands.

for loops

For loops are very similar to while loops – both allow you to look at a number of objects. However, they *do* perform differently. While loops will allow looking at a list of events in a forward sequence. For loops are a little more flexible because they will allow you to look at a list of events either forward *OR* backward. In some cases it is necessary to go through a list backwards instead of forwards. Here is an example:

Say you have a track with five events named ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, and FIVE and you want to delete all five events from this track. Using a while loop, we start with ONE and delete that item. However, this process moves TWO into the position formerly held by ONE so when we go to the next event, we are now at THREE. Now we delete THREE and FOUR moves down. Going to the next item gives us FIVE. After deleting FIVE, events TWO and FOUR are still left on the track.

Using a for loop, the list can be traversed backward so that first FIVE is deleted, then FOUR, then THREE, then TWO, and finally ONE. Using this method, the desired results have been achieved. However, that does not mean that the while loop is useless. Both have their uses.

The for statement is used to perform some action a specific number of times. The basic layout of the for command is:

```
for (initial variable setting; condition for ending; how to
change the variable) {
    stuff to do each time through the loop
}
```

The following loop would run ten times with *i* being set to all values from 0 through 9 in the process. Once

the for loop has completed, *i* will contain the value of 10.

```
for (i=0; i < 10; i++) {
    // stuff to do
}
```

In this example, the variable “*i*” is initially set to zero. The loop will continue as long as “*i*” is less than ten. At the end of the loop, “*i*” will be modified by incrementing it by one. Naturally, the initial value, condition, and modification method can be changed to meet the needs of your current script.

if statements

Sometimes it is necessary to limit the execution to command based on whether some other condition is true. For example, if the script is designed to modify all selected events, it must not work on all events that are *not* selected. To limit the execution of commands, the *if* command is used.

The *if* command is, fundamentally, very simple: If some condition is true, execute this command. For example, when searching for the selected track, if the track is not found, the following statement could be used:

```
if (track == null)
    MessageBox.Show("Track was not found.");
```

Frequently it will be necessary to execute multiple statements if a condition is true. In this case, curly brackets are used similarly to the while and for loops. To run a series of commands on an event only if it was selected, the code would be placed in the curly brackets.

```
if (event.Selected) {
    //Multiple commands here
}
```

Finally, it may be necessary to execute some commands if a statement is true while executing others if

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the statement is false. This is accomplished by adding the else modifier to the if statement.

```
if (event.Selected) {  
    //Commands to execute if true  
} else {  
    //Commands to execute if false  
}
```

As with the while loop, the condition must be placed in parentheses. By checking conditions with the use of if and else, full control over when or if a command is executed is gained.

Boolean Operators

To determine whether a value is true or false, boolean operators are used. In the simplest case, like shown above, a true/false condition is checked (i.e. event.Selected). In other cases, a condition must be compared to some other condition. Following is a list of boolean operators and the meaning of those operators.

=	Equals
>=	Greater Than or Equal To
>	Greater Than
<	Less Than
<=	Less Than or Equal To
&	AND
	OR
!	NOT

Lets look at a few examples using these conditions:

(track.Name == "Master")
Does the track name = "Master"?
(MyNum > 74) Is MyNum > 74?
(!(event.Selected))
Is the event NOT selected?
(event.Selected & (track.Name == "Master"))
Is the event selected AND the track name "Master"?

As you can see, the combinations are limitless. You should be able to create conditions covering any situation.

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