Vegas + DVD
Tips, Tricks, and Scripts

Learning and using Vegas and DVD Architect

Beginner's Corner - Creating a DVD

By Edward Troxel

The process of creating a DVD has been simplified greatly over the last several years but still requires a significant number of steps. DVD Architect will let you quickly create a DVD but also gives you professional level features. To create a DVD, it is important to start your preparations in Vegas.

The first step is to add markers to the timeline indicating your desired chapter points. After rendering, the markers will be interpreted as chapter points automatically by DVD Architect. At this time you could simply render to a DV-AVI file and let DVD Architect make all the decisions. However, I prefer to render to MPEG2 and AC3 in Vegas as you have more control over the various settings.

To render to MPEG2, it is advisable that you start with the proper DVD Architect preset. Make sure the "Save project markers in media file" option is checked so the markers can be imported by DVD Architect as chapter points. Once the preset is chosen, click on Custom and change the bitrate as required for the length of your video. This process is explained in Vol 1 #7 of these newsletters and that issue also contains a bitrate chart. You can also download one of the many bitrate calculators from the internet. The main difference between then and now is that I usually use 2-pass VBR which was not available in Vegas at that time.

The MPEG2 file will not contain any audio if one of the DVD Architect presets were used. This is by design as you'll be using a separate AC3 file for your audio. When rendering the AC3 file, make sure you render it to the same folder as the MPEG2 file and also give it the same name as the MPEG2 file. For example, if you have created a "MyVid.MPG" file, render the AC3 as "MyVid.AC3."

Many people have noticed that the volume of the AC3 file is lower than in the original project. This is by design and explained on the Dolby website and several other places on the internet. However, this quick change will leave the audio at the original volume. Click on Custom, go to the "Preprocessing" tab, and change both
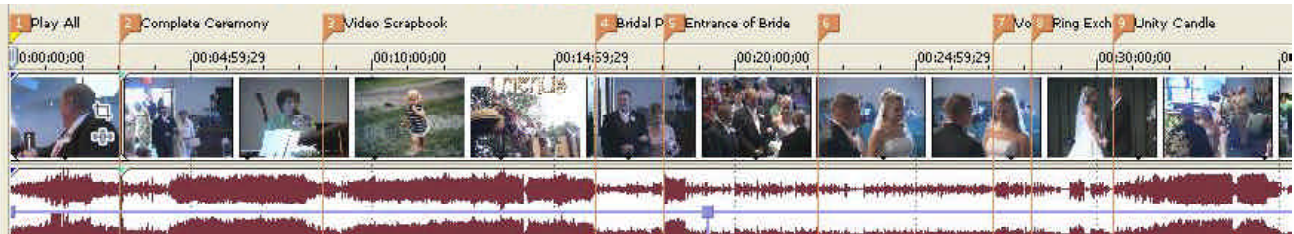
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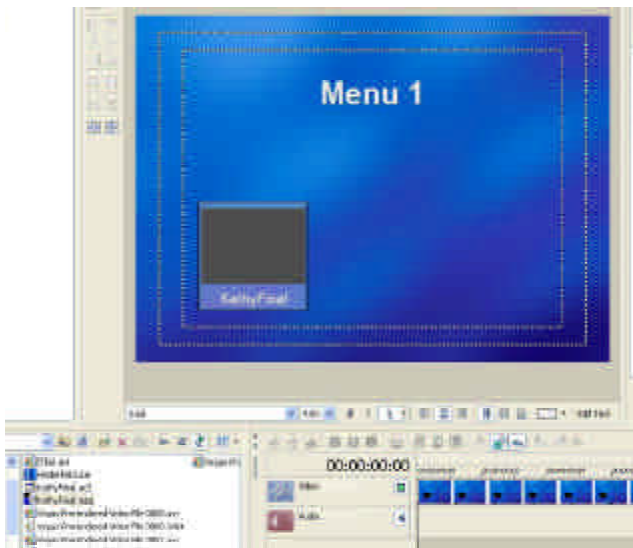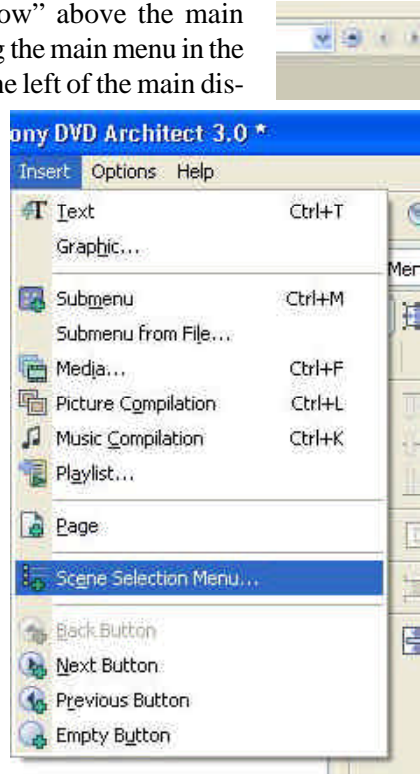"Line mode profile" and "RF mode profile" to None.

To simplify the process of creating both the MPEG2 and AC3 files, you can also use scripts. For the MPEG2 you will need to create a preset at the proper bitrate but a script can then automatically create both files with the same name in the same folder. Excalibur has the DVD Asset Collector tool designed to simplify the rendering process.

Now that the two files have been created, it is time to open DVD Architect and start creating the DVD. By default, DVD Architect will open to a new menu based project. In the DVDA Explorer window, locate the MPEG2 file you create and simply drag it to the menu. By default, DVDA will automatically pick up the


AC3 file for the audio but I always double check just to verify it was properly chosen. Double-click on the new menu option you just added to open the video. Look at the properties on the right side to determine where DVDA is getting the audio. If the audio line does not

already show the AC3 file, drag the AC3 file from the DVDA Explorer window to the audio line.

Now let's add menu options for the chapter points. Click the "up arrow" above the main display or selecting the main menu in the project screen to the left of the main display to return to the man menu. Either right-click the menu item we added or go to the Insert menu and choose "Insert scene selection menu." You will then be asked how manu links you want placed on the added menu pages. By default, this value is 6. I have changed mine to 24 because I only want a

single menu page created instead of getting several sub menu pages.

You will now see a new menu item has been added to the main menu. Double-clicking on ths new menu item will open the scene selection menu. A new menu option will
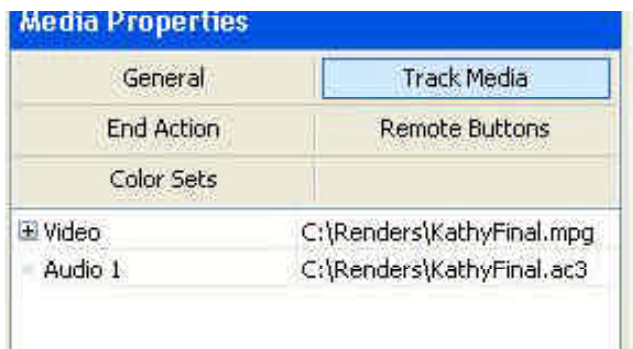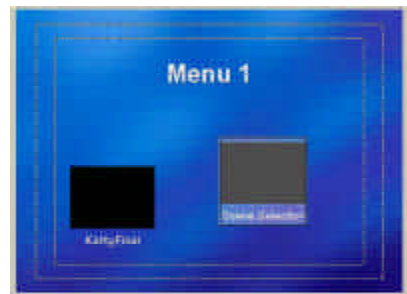
be added to the scene selection menu for each chapter point. You can now copy these menu items to any other menu page as desired. For example, I frequently copy the handful of chapter points I wish on the main menu onto the main page and then simply delete the scene selection menu.

If you want a video thumbnail, you can simply leave the chapter button alone. If you don't like the image being used, you can also specify which frame to display in the button and even choose to animate the button. Other options include having video only and text only. For this example, I have changed all buttons to text only and moved the desired chapter points to the main menu.

Here's the final menu with a background image added
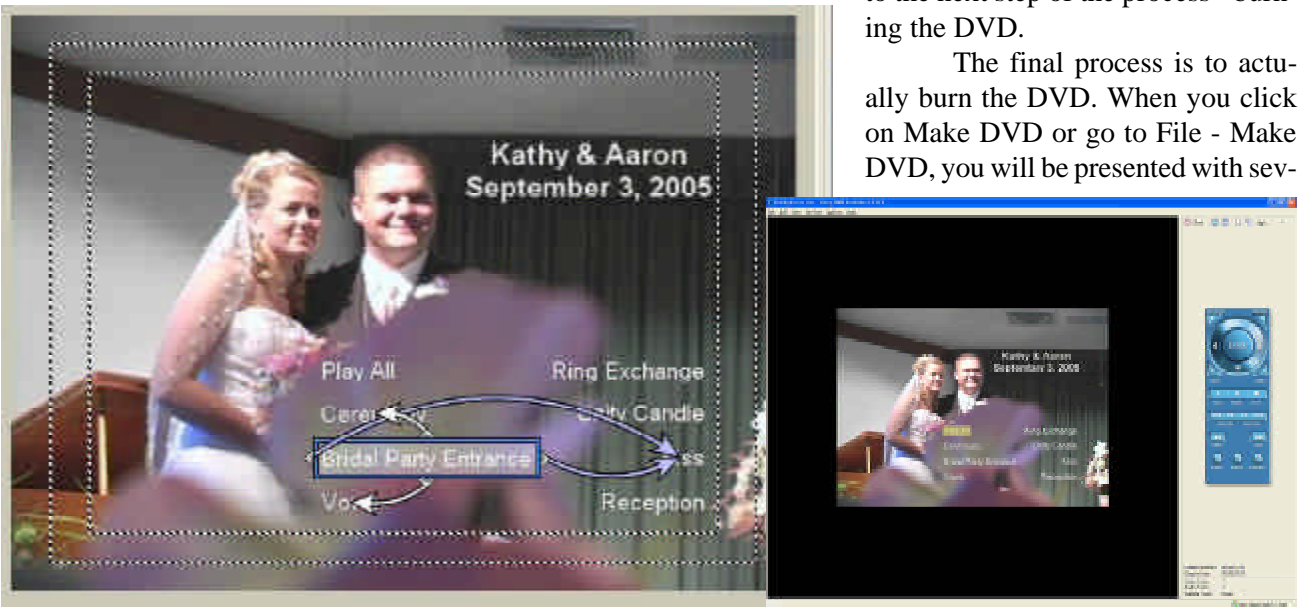
and the text chapter links on the main menu page. To edit the text, simply select the menu item or title and press F2. You can then change the text and font information as desired. The menu items were aligned using the techniques illustrated in Vol 1 #8 of these newsletters. The menu background is simply a snapshot from the video. The picture file was added by dragging the image to the menu page.

A new feature in DVD Architect 3 is the navigation tool. In this image you'll see a menu item has been selected with the navigation tool. You can visually see where pressing the various arrows on the DVD remote control will take the viewer. You can also easily change where each arrow points. In this case, I have set both left and right to point to the other column while the up arrow goes to the menu item above and the down arrow goes to the menu item below.

After the DVD design has been completed, it is wise to see if everything works as desired. DVDA includes a preview mode complete with a DVD remote control for testing the various options. Simply click on Preview (or press F9) and you will be taken to the preview of the current location you are editing. If you use the drop down arrow and choose Preview Disc (or press CTRL-F9) it will show the project as if you had just put the DVD into a DVD player. Make sure everything looks and operates fine and then you will be ready to proceed to the next step of the process - burning the DVD.

The final process is to actually burn the DVD. When you click on Make DVD or go to File - Make DVD, you will be presented with sev-

eral options. The first option is Prepare. Use this option if you are ready to make the DVD files but, perhaps, don't currently have a DVD burner attached. You can also use this option if you are ready to prepare now but would prefer to burn the DVD at a later time.

The last option is Write Master. This option would be used to create a DLT tape to send to a replication service to have your DVDs pressed instead of manually burning them.


In this case, I chose the Burn option. This will also do a prepare if needed or can use an already prepared folder. Make sure to browse to the desired build location which needs to be an empty folder. When completed, this folder will contain the Audio_TS and Video_TS folders.
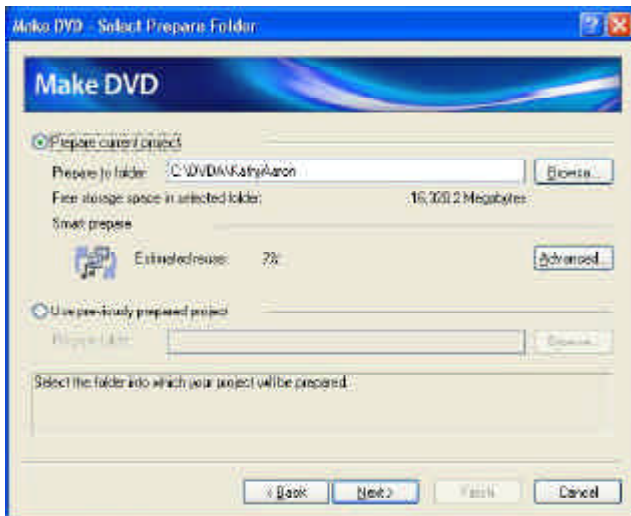
Clicking on Next will take you to the Review Messages List. In this case it says "No messages to display" which means all the files are valid for the DVD project. This screen will tell you if files will need to be recompressed, if the audio will be compressed, or if menu items may be outside the safe area.
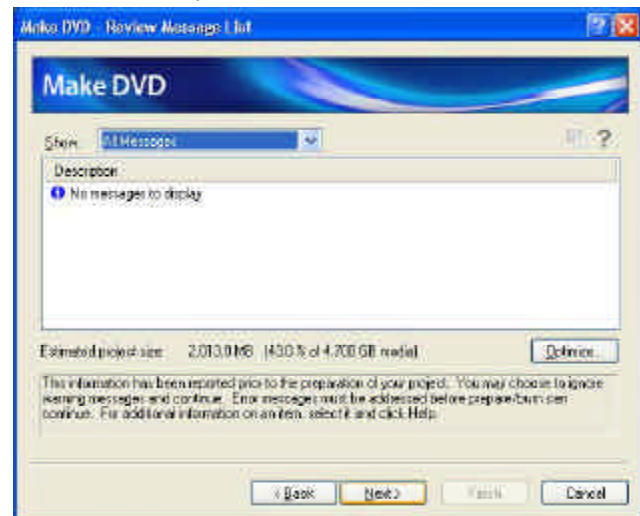
The final screen lets you pick the various burn options. Once this step is completed, you will have a DVD ready for viewing in any DVD player that is compatible with burned discs.
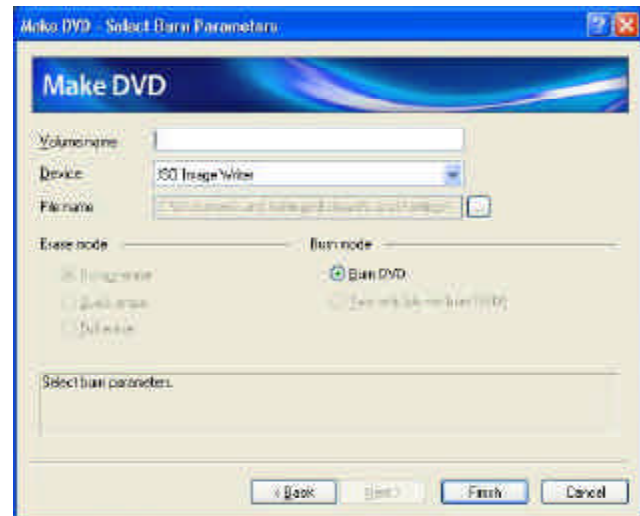
While there are a number of steps that must be completed, creating a DVD has become much easier. Follow these steps for creating a simple menu DVD. Then start looking over the many features in DVD Architect to build more and more complex DVDs.

Damaged Goods

By Edward Troxel

Video cameras today create great looking video. Whether shooting DV, HDV, or any other current format, you can get great results. Unfortunately, there are times when you do not want great results. For those times you still have several options available.
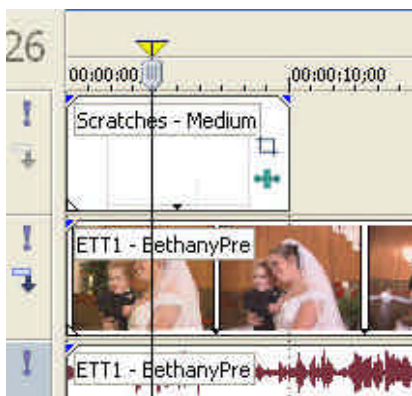
Here's a couple of examples recently posted on some various forums:

1. Looking for 5-10 seconds of old analogue interference with tears, etc., to use as a bumper. All our TVs are clean when switching channels...

2. How do I achieve an 8mm film look in Vegas?

The typical answer to both of the above has been to use the FilmFX effect built into Vegas. This will let you add things like Dust, Flicker, Scratches, Jitter, and Hair. These various pieces can be barely present or very pervasive. (***NOTE: In early versions of Vegas 6, this effect did not automate. Make sure to update to Vegas 6.0c where this effect works fine.***)

Today there is another option - a new product called "Damaged Goods." Damaged Goods has a collection of damages such as scratches, lines, hair, and stains that can give similar looks to the FilmFX effect. In addition, Damaged Goods also contains countdowns, leaders, TV noise and effects, and tints to add even more effects to your arsenal of tools.

To use Damaged Goods files in Vegas, simply add a new track above your current track and put the appropriate clip on that track. Now add a Mask effect to that new clip and check the "Invert" checkbox. This will allow the damage to show over the video.

In this example, I added the "Medium Scratches" effect. Notice how the output now has white scratches in various places. Simply extend the scratches clip for

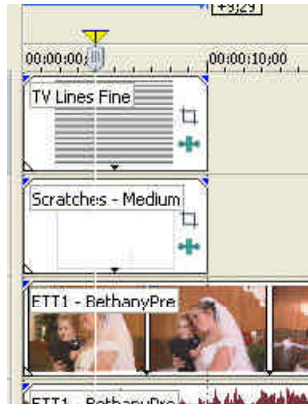the entire distance the scratches need to appear.

For testing purposes, I then removed the Mask effect from event and then change the compositing mode of that track to Multiply (Mask). This also worked fine and change the color of the hairs from white to black. It was interesting to also check out the various compositing modes with and
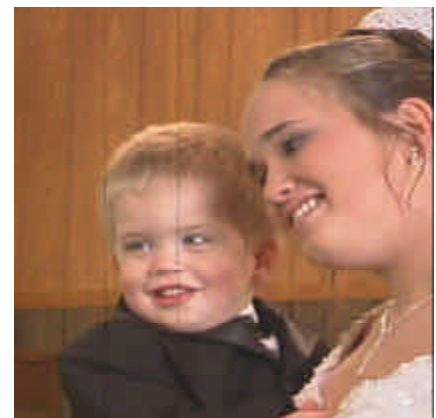
without the Mask effect added.

Multiple effects can be added using the same methods. Simply add another video track to the project, place the proper "damage" on that track, and add a Mask effect. This example shows the "TV Lines Fine" clip added to the hairs.

In addition to the various damage effects, there are also several countdowns and leaders available. These clips also come in various colors and amounts of damage as well.

All of the files are in Quicktime MOV format and work quite well in Vegas. The files can simply be extended for the length desired and will seamlessly loop. They are also available in both 720x480 NTSC DV and 1280x720 HDV.

To find more information about the various products, go to http://uvtvproductions.com/damaged.html and see all the options. This product can easily help add damage to your video when it just needs that specific look.

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