



# Vegas + DVD

## Tips, Tricks, and Scripts

Learning and using Vegas and DVD Architect

### Excalibur 6 - The Custom Command

By Edward Troxel

The release of Vegas Pro 8 introduced a new type of script - the Custom Command. A Custom Command is more tightly integrated with the Vegas interface and allows unprecedented ease of use. You can take advantage of this new technology today with the new release of Excalibur 6.

What does being a Custom Command mean to you? It means no more waiting for a script to load. It means no more cancelling out of a script to get back to the timeline. It means working the way *you* want to work. As stated by one new user of Excalibur 6:

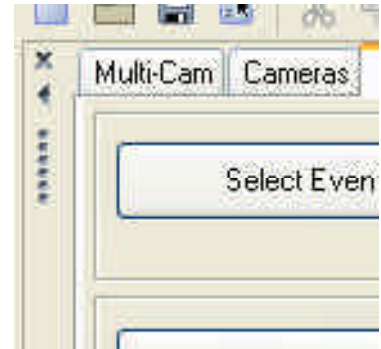
*When a script is run (like older versions of Excalibur, batch render, and other free/fee scripts) I loose ALL control to the Vegas app. I must close the plug-in (by either applying something or canceling out) to get back to Vegas. A big bummer imho. Vegas has always been about doing anything you want, any time, under any condition. The scripting system breaks that. My work flow has stopped. That is THE SINGLE biggest reason I've never bought any scripts.*

*I knew how handy these scripts could*

*be, and were, but having to stop what I was doing kinda killed it. Many things I could do "by hand" with a little more effort. But, for example, I can now have parts of the timeline looping while I use a docked Excalibur 6 window & change the velocity, add fades, strobe, etc. in REAL TIME, just like the rest of Vegas.*

Now you simply need to open Excalibur once and it will open as a dockable window with the other tabs such as Transitions, Video FX, and Media Generators. If Excalibur is running when you exit Vegas, it will automatically be restarted the next time you open Vegas.

As a dockable window, it can also be "undocked" the same way as other Vegas windows and moved and resized anywhere on the screen. It



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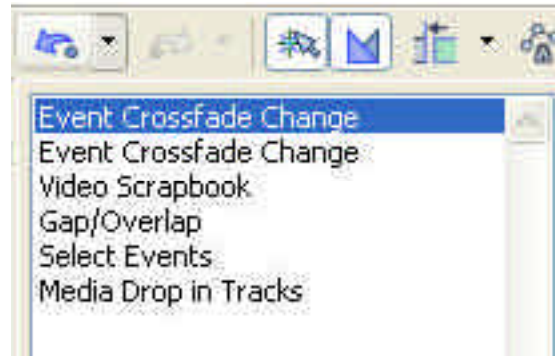
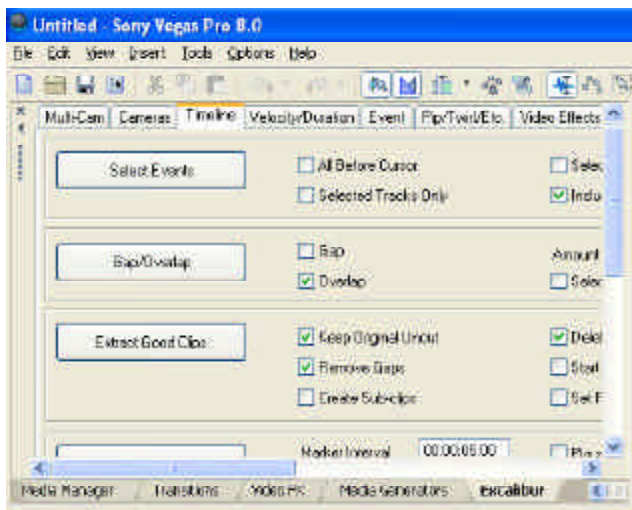
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can easily be moved to a secondary monitor or docked with other Vegas windows in any configuration. Below you can see Excalibur in both the Docked and Undocked configurations. Whether docked or undocked, access to the timeline and other windows is never blocked.

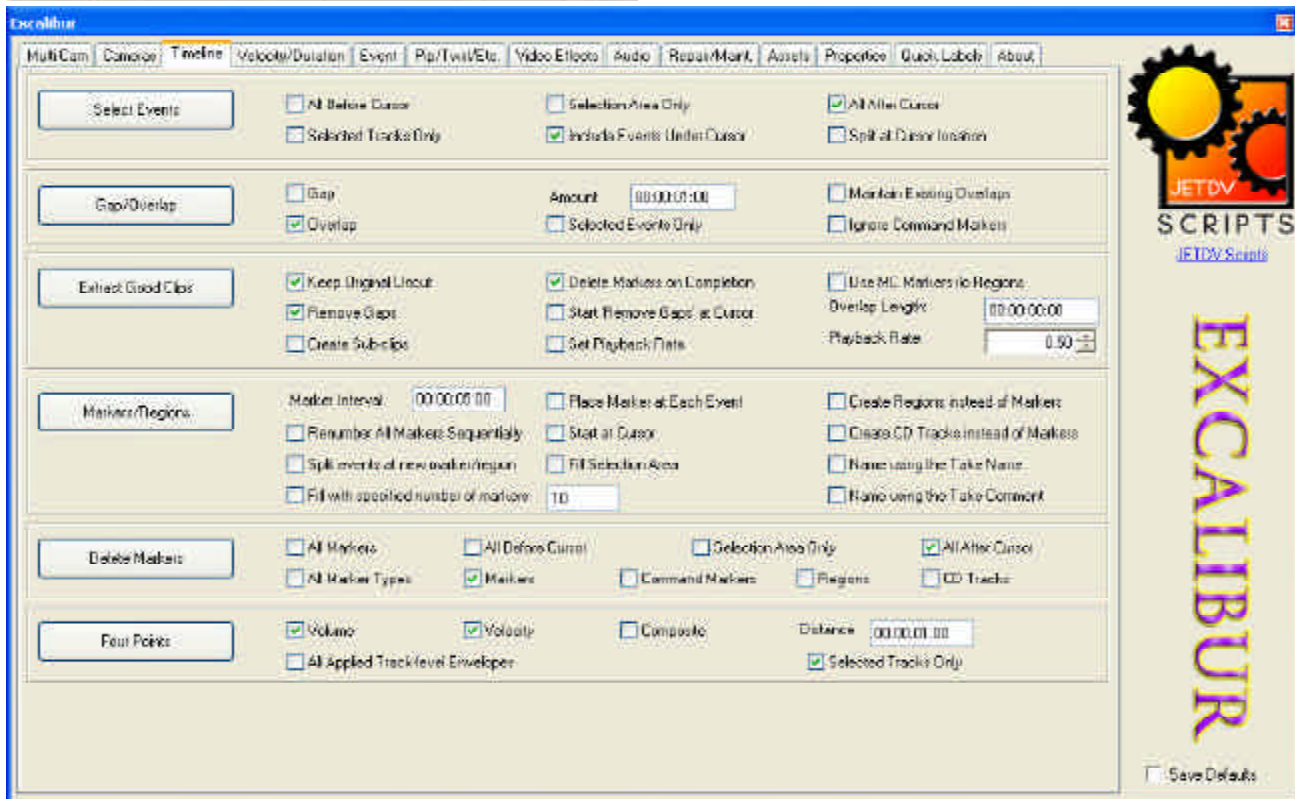
When you need to use the undo tool, you'll find

another nice aspect to the tighter integration. Each undo message is now personalized for each tool. In the example shown here, the following Excalibur tools were



used: Video Scrapbook, Gap/Overlap, and Select Events. This allows you to easily identify effect being “undone” instead of just seeing a series of “Run Script” undo messages.

Many of the tools are also still available as single click icons you can put on the toolbar or assigned to a keypress. The Excalibur tab does not

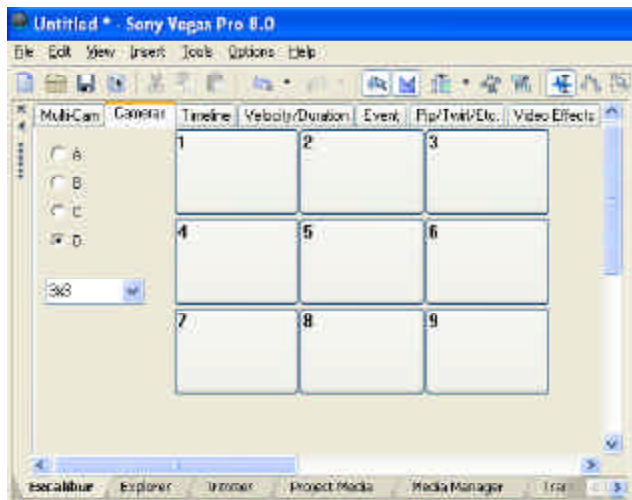


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even need to be visible for these tools to work. They're just a click away.

Even though Vegas Pro 8 added a built-in version of Multi-cam, it is still alive and well in Excalibur 6. There's also a new "Cameras" tab which will let you easily add camera switches, specify the dissolve type, and update the tally indicator.

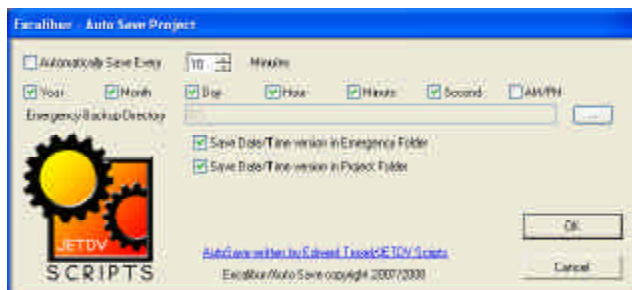
Many have asked which is better for Multi-cam:



Vegas Pro 8 or Excalibur. Both have advantages and disadvantages over the other. I recommend trying both versions and then you can determine which suits your workflow best.

Excalibur also comes with two new additional Custom Commands: Auto Save and Project Inspector. Found under Tools - Extensions, Auto Save does not open in a separate dockable window but remains running in the background. Auto Save is derived from the original "Save Veg" tool in Excalibur but is now completely automated.

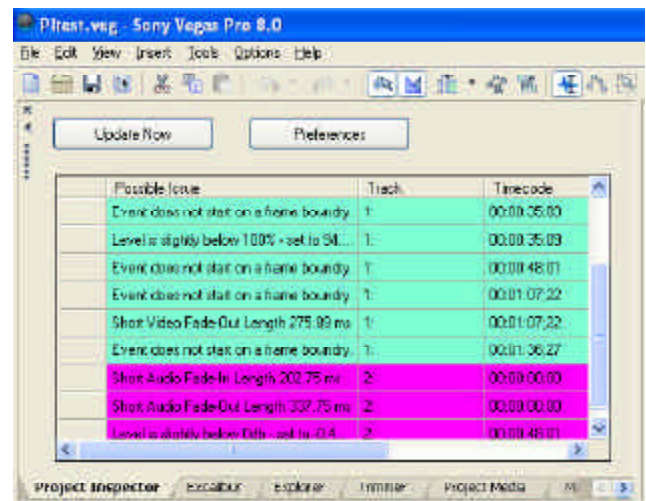
Once turned on, it will automatically save the



project every few minutes as determined by the settings chosen. This will give you a series of backup files save in multiple locations with the date/time appended to the file name.

Suppose you have it set to save every 10 minutes and then walk away for two hours. During that two hour period you will not get 12 new copies of your project as it will not save the project if it has not been modified since the last save.

Project Inspector is found under View - Extensions and also opens up as a dockable window. When open, it will look for many common issues that can occur when working on a project. These issues are then listed indicating the issue description, track, and timecode, and media where the potential problem can be found.



To easily find the issue, you can double-click on the timecode to jump to that location on the timeline. You can then either manually fix the issue, determine it isn't a problem, or double-click on the issue name to let Project Inspector attempt to fix the issue. If you don't like the fix applied by Project Inspector, just click on "Undo".

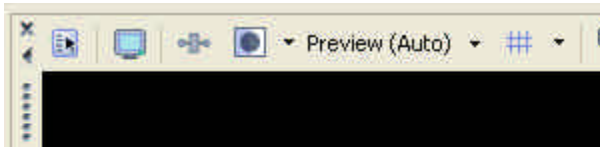
Combined, these three Custom Commands greatly extend the abilities of Vegas, are always available for use, and can speed up your workflow. Be sure and check out Excalibur 6 - The Custom Command at [www.jetdv.com/excalibur](http://www.jetdv.com/excalibur).

## Beginner's Corner - "Split Screen View"

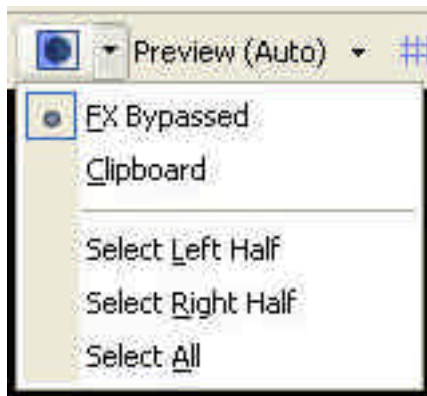
By Edward Troxel

One question that has been asked dozens of times in the various fori is like the following: "I have been working on a complicated (for me) title sequence and now suddenly my Event FX and Track FX do not work. I have tried to use these features on several tracks and nothing happens. I can only think that I must have inadvertently clicked on a button somewhere that would disable these effects, but have been unable to find it." The answer is almost always related to one of the very important features of Vegas - the Split Screen View.

The Split Screen View allows you to split the video preview window so that you can see both the affected and unaffected video side by side, bypass all effects, or compare to an image on the clipboard. This is useful when doing color correction and applying other effects. However, the default setting is "Bypass Effects" which causes the above question. Let's take a look at this effect and see how the various options can help instead of hinder.



The Split Screen View button is located just above the preview screen. It is a circle that's half light and half dark with a dropdown arrow just to the right. If you click on the dropdown arrow, you will see the various options available. Here you see the "FX Bypassed" option is chosen. Therefore, when you turn on this option, all effects will



be bypassed and when you turn off this option the effects will appear as expected.

Let's see how this tool can be used to your benefit as well as explain how it can cause so much confusion. Here you can see an unmodified image from a video before any correction is applied. When the Split Screen option is turned on, it is set to "FX Bypassed", and you also "Select All", it will appear exactly the



same as you see here no matter how many affects you add. Turn off Split screen, and you'll then see the clip as it has been modified via the color corrector.

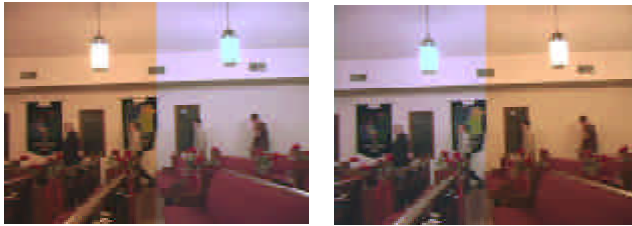


While this may appear confusing, It can actually be a very powerful tool in your editing arsenal. By using the other options it can help see how

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a particular effect might be affecting your video or even compare how two various clips look to each other. Let's look at the other Split Screen options to see how this can be helpful.

With the Split Screen option turned on, take a look at the "Select Left Half" and "Select Right



Half" options. As shown here, the "Select Left Half" option will show the untouched video on the left and the corrected video on the right. Similarly, the "Select Right Half" option will show the untouched video on the right while the corrected image is shown on the left side. Seeing the before/after side by side can show you how much the image has changed and which you like better.



What if you don't want either the "Left Half" or "Right Half" to show uncorrected but instead some other area? That can be easily accomplished with a simple click and drag over the preview screen. As seen here a smaller area out of the middle of the screen is now showing the original image. This allows you to pinpoint any area where you wish to compare the before/after effects.

Another powerful option of the Split Screen

view will let you do all of the above comparisons between two separate video segments. This will allow you to compare the colors/effects

The first step is to find the frame you wish to compare with the current video clip. Put the cursor on that frame and click on the "Copy To Clipboard" button just above the preview screen. Now return to the original video clip so the two can be compared. Next click on the dropdown arrow beside the Split Screen view button and change the mode from "FX Bypassed" to "Clipboard". When turned on, you'll see a screen similar to below where the left half (which previously showed the unchanged image) shows the contents of the clipboard while the right half shows the video with effects applied.

If you were attempting to color balance these two clips, obviously one or the other would need to be modified. Either the right half would need to be made



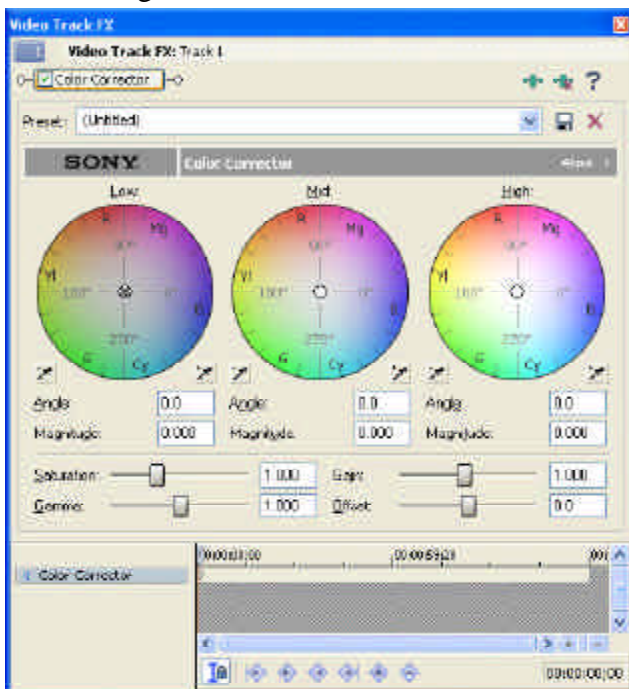
more blue or the left side would need to be made less blue. Being able to compare the two side-by-side makes the comparison process much easier. Using this method will allow you to get a very close balance on the colors between multiple cameras and easily compare multiple video segments.

While this feature has caused much confusion over the years, it is really a powerful editing tool to add to your toolbox. Test out and study how the feature works. Being able to compare multiple clips and before/after versions can really aid your editing.

## Missing Timelines In Dialogs

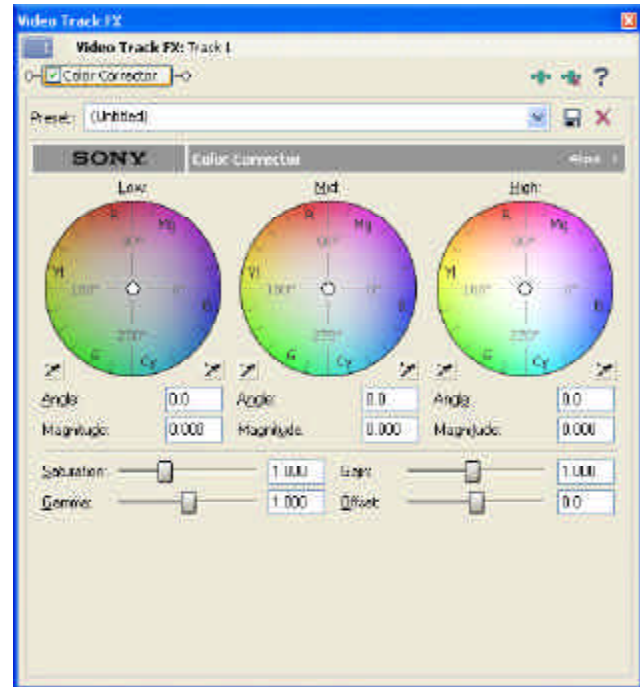
By Edward Troxel

Any of the Effects, Track Motion, or Pan/Crop dialogs allows keyframing the settings so they can change over time. To do this, a timeline is included at the bottom of each dialog where the keyframes can be easily added. Here's an example of the Sony Color Corrector effect with the timeline shown at the bottom of the dialog.



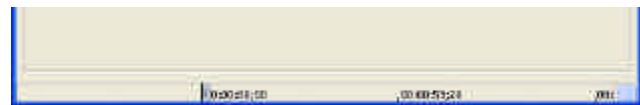
While this is the normal view of the dialog, some installations of Vegas seem to have this timeline hidden by default as shown in the second dialog image. I have seen this happen on one installation of Vegas but not on several others. If yours is missing, and you're expecting it to be there, it can be a shock to see it missing. If this happens to you, here's how to get the timeline back.

Since the timeline area is resizable, it's not actually hidden but has, instead, simply be "resized to noth-



ing" making it appear to be missing. To get it back, slowly move the mouse toward the bottom of the dialog box as indicated by the red arrow below. Once you hit the resizing line, the mouse will change to a small arrow pointing up and down with what appears to be an equal sign between them. At that point simply click and drag upwards to bring the timeline back into view.

This image shows the timeline being slowly resized back to normal. As it appears, just continue to drag upwards until you get it to the size you desire.



Hopefully this issue won't affect your various dialog boxes. However, you can now return them to normal if they do appear hidden.

