

Do It Yourself Editing 101

“Inexpensive software makes home editing possible.”

by: Brock Ray

If you have a decent home computer and the desire to edit your raw video footage it is possible to do so. The toughest part of videography is capturing great images accompanied by excellent sound. The next step to turning your videography efforts into the enjoyable viewing experience possible is editing.

Editing is work done after the taping is complete. Editing can be as simple as re-shuffling various scenes to give them better order with smooth transitions or it can infinitely more creative to include a wide array of special effects and other tricks of the trade. Just as learning to master the ways of the video recorder, video editing is not a skill many are likely to learn without spending time learning.



Although it has been around for several years, the Adobe Premiere 2.0 video editing software package remains largely an unknown mystery to most videographers. It is not an expensive investment, costing under \$200 if you shop around. All you need is a good home computer, and if yours is three years old or newer, it probably qualifies for this application. Before you make the mistake of chiding the Adobe Premiere 2.0 being a “Mickey Mouse” approach, consider this. The recent made full length movie, “Napoleon Dynamite” was completely edited on a home computer using Adobe Premiere 2.0. The total cost of making this odd ball comedy was approximately \$6,000. To date it has brought in almost \$50 million.

We have used the Adobe Premiere 2.0 for several years. In response to requests of students attending the **Brock Ray’s Outdoor Videography School**, this year we are offering editing classes. This new curriculum includes each student receiving a copy of Adobe Premiere 2.0. Although the information and hands-on provided at my school will only introduce students to editing, it will accomplish the most important aspect of this task which is becoming acquainted with this program. Like many computer programs, at first glance Adobe Premiere 2.0 can be overwhelming to some people.

There is a free internet download of Premiere 2.0 if you want to look at it before buying the actual software (www.adobe.com). As likely as not, when you sit down with it to try your hand at video editing you will see that it's not as easy as it looks. When you open Adobe Premiere 2.0, the first thing you see is the initial dialog box. What you need to first understand are the basic concepts of this editing program. Once understood the whole process is surprisingly easy.

To get started, there are four basic concepts you need to understand. The first concept is called capture; the process of moving your video footage out of the camera (or tape) onto your computer's hard disk. There can be done three ways. You can capture all of the footage in a single file on your hard disk. You may choose to capture footage in five or ten smaller files. You can also bring in the images shot by shot.

The capture process will create AVI (on the PC) or MOV (on the Mac) files on the hard disk of your computer. These files contain the video footage you shot. It is stored in frame by frame, in the maximum resolution that your camera produces. So these files are huge and can quickly fill up available hard drive space. For example, three minutes of footage fills approximately one 1 gigabyte of hard drive space. If your computer has many programs on it editing will be slow due to the dedication of hard drive space to editing and other applications. PCs work well enough when it comes to editing with video footage using Adobe Premiere 2.0, but this is one time you may wish you had a Mac.

After you have loaded all of your video footage into your home computer, the next step is selecting the parts that you are going to use in the final version of your outdoor production. For example, let's say that you want to include a scene in your walleye fishing video that shows your son spiking a leech onto the point of a fish hook prior to him casting out the first time and catching a four pound walleye. You video recorded this activity from four angles and have a total four minutes of raw video footage for this sequence. However, according to your notes, you have budgeted only 30 seconds of your final production to the first fish caught on a weeklong trip to Quebec.

Here is how the four shots might be arranged:

- A 3-second shot showing your son picking out the squirming leech from the bucket
- A 5-second shot showing a close-up the leech launched onto the hook
- A 7-second shot of your son casting out and waiting as his bait settles into the water
- A 10-second shot of your son battling in the fish to the boat.
- A 5 second 'hero' shot of your son and the first walleye of the production

Out of the big file of all the footage, you need a way to mark the beginning and end of these three little clips so that you can move them around as individual image/sound segments and bond them together into the uninterrupted scene. This is done by looking at your raw video footage and marking an "IN" and "OUT" point for the exact sections that you desire to have in the edited scene onto the timeline. The timeline is where you have lined the shots up in sequential order so you can view them as a sequence.



Next comes what some like to call the fun part. Using the Adobe Premiere 2.0 features you can dress up your scene transitions by using a number of options. Of course there are times that simple cuts from one clip to the next will make you happy enough. However, at other times you might want to use fancier transitions from scene to scene. For example, you may wish to make a visible difference in the days of your fishing trip or moving from fishing on the water to eating supper that evening in camp. For this chore the

Adobe Premiere 2.0 has a variety of options that fall into three primary categories. These are dissolve, fade and wipe. You make the scene changes look like turning pages in a book if you wish. Doing this is as simple as choosing one from the transitions area and dragging it to a spot between two clips on the timeline. There are many other effects you can use that are too numerous to note here, since I need to address sound in this space.

Failure to get good sound, and especially voices, is the biggest shortfall of up and coming outdoor videographers. Relatively few budding videographers have invested in microphones and transmitters. Luckily, when editing using the Adobe Premiere 2.0, you can fix many of these problems. Also, there are reasons why you might want to supplement or replace the existing sound track picked up by your video recorder. Most movies and TV shows have a musical background during all or part of the action. Music gives the viewing images a certain feeling. An additional sound track can be used to handle narration, such as we see in documentaries. In outdoor videography, many times the sounds we record are unusable, or not quite right.

You can make up your own music and record it yourself or you can buy a CD or two that are of royalty-free music loops and sound effects. You can import many different types of sound files (including WAV, AIF, etc.) into an Adobe Premiere 2.0 by positioning them on the timeline in Audio Track #2. Now when you play your edited video footage, the Adobe Premiere 2.0 automatically mixes the original sound track of your footage with the new audio track and plays it.

Narration or voiceover is also simple to do at this point in the editing process. One of the easiest ways of doing so is to simply read your script into the camera, and then capture the video footage as you normally would. The next step is separating the narration sound track from the video track. The sound track is then dropped into the raw narration footage onto the timeline, right-click on it and select "Split Video and Audio." Click on the video portion and delete it. Now you have the narration sound track that you can lay on the timeline at the proper point.

This is home computer video editing using the very available, inexpensive Adobe Premiere 2.0 program in a highly compressed nutshell. If home editing is your cup of tea, it will have opened your eyes on how to get started. If you want more instruction, join me this summer at one of the **Brock Ray's Outdoor Videography Schools**. They begin this month and are held throughout the summer in Alabama, Pennsylvania, and Colorado and Michigan. You will learn enough about video recording and editing to get started making a living in the outdoors