

Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by Inprogress - 27 Aug 2011 12:28

Hi there.

I've been struggling with this a bit since all my searches end up with some product page.

What is the post production workflow in general? Reasons I ask is I haven't been able to figure it out yet. If I can figure it out then at least I can get started with searching more specific information regarding each step.

This is what I think I know about the steps involved:

- 1 - Cut the scenes: Looking at all the footage, choosing the best takes, removing scenes that do not help the story
- 2 - Visual effects such as explosions, extra clouds, the humanoid robot walking on two legs
- 3 - Sound mixing - adding the sound channel including voices, possibly music depending on the budget of movie
- 4 - Color grading - more of a film look and less of a "Look mom, I have a steady-cam"
- 5 - Final score - your buddy who plays piano or a famous composer
- 5 - Export to your choice of medium

These are my broad understandings of the workflow. I assume at times its a bit more back and forth with large productions, but the indie guy or the small commercial studio product company, will this be more or less what is involved post production?

Thank you for the help and my apologies for the silly question.

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Posted by ABCRONNIE - 27 Aug 2011 16:17

Hi Inprogress

Firstly your question is not silly. We all started somewhere. You have the very basic idea of what the Post Production workflow is about, but here's a couple of points you might like to consider-:

1. Before "Cut the scenes: Looking at all the footage.." consider the fact that the shots should be logged at the location they were shot. This means you know which ones were good takes and which were not so that when you ingest or capture the footage into your edit system you only capture those takes worthwhile. Not much point capturing footage that you know you can't use. This saves on disk space.

Capturing or ingesting the footage as the editor also means you have a chance to have a good look at the footage and have more of an idea of what you have to work with according to your script before you actually start. You then won't have to go through and "remove scenes that do not help the story";

The basic thing should be to cut the story together and get it right first then think about visual enhancements or Special FX. Sometimes these Special FX are done by another person in parallel or while you're editing the main cut and then dropped in later.

In most cases but not all you will be editing sound and picture together so by the end of your story you should have a rough-cut of audio in sync with picture, along with your added voice overs and perhaps some music. The audio is usually placed on separate tracks so you can adjust them independantly of each other. Scores are generally supplied after the cut has been finished. That way the composer has had a locked off picture to work with for timing his composition etc..

Once you and or the client are happy with the cut then you probably want to refine things namely the sound mix, if it is not going elsewhere to be mixed, and the "Visual effects such as explosions, extra clouds, the humanoid robot walking on two legs.." can be done either by you or the Special FX person and placed where necessary.

Colour Grading would then take place. You would probably by this stage also know what kind of a look you wanted your story to have. Possibly the finished mixed audio including "Final score - your buddy who plays piano or a famous composer" would then be synchronised up to your finished final edit.

You have then simply to Export to your choice of medium. Perhaps it would also be wise to know who your end user is, that is, is it for broadcast on TV or Web? and if so what picture formats do they require. Standard Definition, High Definition, 25, 30, frames per second, PAL or NTSC.

For more information on this there are many threads on this forum that discuss the valid formats for broadcast.

Hope this helps

Regards

Ronnie O

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Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by jwrl - 27 Aug 2011 23:35

Ronnie, **really** good workflow description. You sound like you've done it before! 🍌

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Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by shaunthesheep - 28 Aug 2011 03:55

I think Ronnie's post should be put in the Hints and Tip section.

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Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by ABCRONNIE - 28 Aug 2011 11:14

Hi Jwrl

Yeah! Just once or twice.

Cheers

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Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by Inprogress - 29 Aug 2011 08:09

Hey Ronnie. Wow, thank you so much for that. 😊

I shall go forth and use this wisely.

I also second...no third...um Fourth the Sticky on your post. I couldn't find this at DVXForum either unless I truly suck at searching forums. 🙄

Re: Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by LW_for_Feature - 07 Sep 2011 10:07

Ronnie's description is a very good one.

One thing I would like to add for the sake of "correctness" is that Special FX are practical effects, the effects you get in camera, such as pyrotechnics (explosions and fire on set) miniature shots, double exposures, matte effects.

Explosions added digitally in post would be part of Visual FX, as would any 3D graphics (your robot), particle effects (fog, rain, smoke) and any other imagery created in post.

Transitions and dissolves are called DVE, but they are not considered VFX. So although a corporate videographer or editor may say he needs to add effects to his video meaning transitions for example, in a feature film when you say adding effects one normally mean VFX.

So SFX= practical effects in camera, VFX= added imagery in post (these days normally digitally, but used to be optically).

So the terms are not the same even though they are used interchangeably sometimes.

Having said that, post-production workflow and how many steps it would/should be highly depends on what type of project you are working on; narrative, commercial, music video, corporate, wedding, and also on your budget. Will you have a Sound Editor, a Music Editor, a Final Mixer or will one sound guy do all (Sound Editing, Sound Mix, Music Mix, Music Editing, Final Mix)?

Will you record Foley or use only the sounds you captured on set during the take? If so Foley needs to be done before you can even start thinking about doing sound. Same is true for A.D.R.

Will you need to offline? Then conform has to be added to your workflow too.

Here is a simplified version of the workflow I use:

[This image is hidden for guests. Please log in or register to see it.](#)

*The forum program messed the text formatting so I had to save it as an image instead.

Cheers.

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Re: Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by jwrl - 07 Sep 2011 11:29

LW_for_Feature wrote:

So SFX= practical effects in camera, VFX= added imagery in post (these days normally digitally, but used to be optically).

In sound post SFX means sound effects.

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Re: Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by LW_for_Feature - 07 Sep 2011 15:02

jwrl wrote:

LW_for_Feature wrote:

So SFX= practical effects in camera, VFX= added imagery in post (these days normally digitally, but used to be optically).

In sound post SFX means sound effects.

Yep. But I was using SFX as an abbreviation of the aforementioned Special FX so I didn't have to write the whole term again. Sorry, I thought this was clear.

P.S. Although both use the same initials, in one the S stands for Special and the other the S stands for Sound. So I don't see how it can be confused in this context.

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Re: Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by jwrl - 08 Sep 2011 11:11

I wasn't **correcting** you, I was **adding** to your explanation. If the OP needed that level of information it was also quite likely that they may be confused if they encounter the term SFX with sound media.

I was just attempting to further clarify things.

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Re: Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by John Sprung - 21 Sep 2011 19:29

Attached if it works is a PDF flow chart of how we did things five years ago. That's the last point in time at which it was possible to figure it out to a reasonable level of detail and document it before it all changed beyond recognition. ^o
Leon Silverman's right -- Workflows are like snowflakes now, no two are alike.

-- J.S.

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Re: Post Production Workflow - Newbie - what's the general steps

Posted by nepule - 22 Sep 2011 08:54

Hi John, thank you for the pdf, that is just so interesting,

Anthony

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