

A DIY Wedding Video Edit Overview, Tips and Workflow

A brief introductory guide for DIY wedding video editors who are using professionally shot video from a contracted videographer

Publication in association with *Ottawa Wedding Videos*
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Document: SMI-001-1500

1.0 Introduction

There is a growing trend in the wedding video market place where the bride and groom have decided to have their wedding video shot by a professional video agency but not have them deliver any polished production on disc as would be the usual contract. Instead, they want to edit the shot raw footage themselves allowing them to produce their own rendition(s) of their wedding day.

Video editing software tools are now in the realm of ease of use, powerful, yet feature rich for the money, so why not? Besides it's a fun thing to do.

I have compiled a short help guide for the Wedding DIY'er outlining the basics in how to manage and process the raw video footage without going through the *starting from scratch learning curve*.

2.0 Delivered File Format and Media

If SD (*Standard Definition*) has been ordered, the video will be in standard Windows DV AVI format. DV AVI is readable by a MAC in iMovie or Final Cut.

SD DV AVI : 720x480i .9AR, 29.97fps, 13GB per running hour
Audio : stereo, wav, 16bit, 48khz

If HD (*High Definition*) has been ordered, the video will be in standard *.mts file format. *.mts files cannot be readily read by a MAC. Conversion must take place first before the files can be entered into the timeline. See *jihosoft.com* web site.

HD : *.mts compressed file format - 1920x1080i 30fps
Audio: stereo, compressed AAC or Dolby
*.mts file format is the native recording format from the camera itself.

For SD files, a hard drive must be supplied. For HD files, a 32GB SD card or 32GB USB stick would work in most cases. The SD card or USB stick must be formattable to NTFS. Default FAT32 in many instances is a problem. Some USB sticks cannot be re-formatted from default. Please, check this before giving them to me. Windows NTFS formatted hard disks can be read by a MAC.

3.0 Your Working Environment

Just like preparing for any project, you have to gather your resources for the job at hand. Doing your own video edit is no different. You will need a computer, an editing tool and proper software support functions to handle the video files at a minimum.

3.1 CODECs

Ya gotta have this.

So, what's a CODEC? A CODEC or short for **CODer DECoder** or **compressor/decompressor** is a type of video processing code. It comes in the form of plugin libraries that your NLE will use to allow proper import/export your video files and to help process those same video files on the timeline of your video editing tool.

Just download and install one of the recommended CODEC packs on your editing computer platform.

Here is where to find them for download:

Shark007

shark007.net (Windows); caution look for real download button, it's not obvious

For users who have many types of video files on their home media servers. Supports, MPG, MP4, MKV, AVI and many more audio and video formats. Compliant to most NLE's.

Drastic Technologies

Get it from my web site : <http://www.rumblehouse.com/products/yuv-codec-download>

(Windows\MAC compatible)

This codec pack is a more complete and comprehensive in nature for professional results

3.2 Software Tools

To work with the DIY video footage supplied, you will need a software based editing tool, commonly called an **NLE**, short for **Non Linear Editor**. This software application has many other functions than just facilitating simple cuts and joins. It also supports real-time preview, renders, special effects, import/export functions to name a few more.

Here are some recommended NLE tools that will work in a post production environment:

Windows

Adobe Premiere Pro (CSx); fully featured and pricey, challenging learning curve

Adobe Premiere Elements; (lower cost, reduced feature version of Pro)

Sony Vegas; (there is a standard and Pro version, check out what works for you.)

Pinnacle Studio

***MAC** (see immediate **Note** below)

iMovie

Final Cut

Premiere Pro for MAC (CSx)

**Note: Apple NLE's like iMovie and Final Cut, do not readily accept *.mts files. The video files must first be converted to MP4 in order to import properly into the timeline.*

*Using a software conversion tool like **jihosoft** (<http://www.jihosoft.com/video/video-converter-for-mac.html>) is recommended. There are many other conversion tools for the MAC. Some are free (??) while others offer more than just the conversion feature to justify the extra cost.*

To help in completing your video project, you may want to consider finalizing your produced video to disc. Otherwise the final video is only playable on a playback platform, like a computer. To get to a disc version, playable on standard players like DVD or Blu ray, the video files must be encoded, authored and published.

Having a graphics production tool like Photoshop, along with other video processing tools like, transcoders, disc authoring and disc printing tools would be necessary. You will have to do your own research on what is out there and what you are prepared to pay. Seriously consider any of the more expensive stuff if you plan to do more video post work outside your wedding project.

3.3 Operating Computer Platform

To review and work with your footage, make sure your computer platform has the CODEC pack installed and provides the necessary processing power to handle the raw video files at hand. You don't want to work with a machine that chugs along and seems to slowly creep along or even stall with every edit request; all very frustrating. In this vein, working with SD files are not a big deal, but doing post work on HD files do. Speedy multi-core machines with lots of RAM and fast hard drives will make the editing process yield faster renders and file compiles making your editing cycle smoother and more rewarding. Windows 7, 8 running 64 bit or XP Pro 32 bit operating systems are highly recommended if you are a Windows user.

As pointed out above, any software tools you plan to use should be the latest version and work in the operating system recommended.

4.0 *The Edit Pass*

The first step in your editing plan should include a very basic procedure, in what I call *passes of edit*.

First Pass: The first pass is a gross removal of obvious junk or content of no importance to your production. Organize your timeline.

Second Pass: The second pass is the main production effort. This is where most of the work will be done.

Third Pass: The third pass is the polishing run: the tweaks, the timings and the critical assessment, a process where the finer details are defined and fixed. eg: any timing issues or audio or video transients to fix, scenes that are great but somehow seem disjointed. You always must ask yourself, does this sound or look right in the flow of things upon playback. Be self critical. Don't skip this step

5.0 *Workflow Definitions*

There will be mention of terms (my lingo) within this document that needs explanation.

5.1 *Mini Productions*

These are simply taking any media asset or combination of media assets (photos music, video, animations etc) and creating a defined short stand alone video clip. The minimum is using just the short raw clips of the DIY video content I supply. You can create these mini's in the same software working environment as your main production or as a separate project where you just import the finished clip into your main project.

5.2 *RAW Footage*

When I mention the term raw footage, it simple means the uncut unabashed video footage recorded by the camera during the wedding event. It will be a mix of junk and nice working footage.

5.3 *Establishing Shots*

Part of the message to bring to your story is to ensure you document where all of these events take place. Any time an event is held at some location, there should be well a defined shot(s) of where you are. Signs of the street, a recognized logo, the front of the building where your event takes place, an address, well known land marks, even a simple text overlay on the video stating where you are should be the first scene one sees. I supply a number of takes with different views and styles in mind. You choose which one suits you best.

6.0 **Working with your Footage – Plans and Workflow**

Ok, so let's have at it. Here's my take on helping you get to where you wanna go:

6.1 *Preparation*

First, get organized. You need a place to store stuff. Setup a folder arrangement on your editing computer that works for you.

6.2 *The Basics of What to Expect from your RAW Footage*

When initially reviewing the raw files in the NLE timeline you will see a mix of multiple clips of what appears to be the same scene. Some clips are outright junk. The scenes could be just testing the 'take' or turn out to be a bad composition after all or it may be a recording of an unfinished scene – 'cause I just didn't like it. Yes, it also includes jittery/unstable shots, focus issues or video subjects out of frame. **Don't panic.** It's all perfectly normal to see this in the raw footage. Throw these bad apples out completely or if there appears to be an iota of content to salvage you feel is useful, then cut it out and save the clip of interest. An exception is scenes where it appears the camera is shooting a static scene for periods of time with music playing in the background. Hold off on tossing these specific clips; more on this later.

This is all normal stuff. Any junk footage represents a very small portion of the total raw footage. It will be quite obvious on what is and what is not junk. Your job is to sort out what you feel is useful for your production and brings value to the viewer.

6.3 *Transitions and Other Effects*

When gluing the many clips together, the clip join point is a form of *transition* which represents the shifting from one visual context to the next. Many NLE's come with a lot of built-in transitions that can be used easily on the timeline; wipes, dissolves, fades etc.

Do not get carried away with all of the choice. Choose your transition wisely for your wedding video. Never overdo the use of a transition or pick different ones throughout your production just because they are available and they look neat. Don't be **cheesy** in your choice. Be concise and simple; very powerful messaging.

6.4 *Highlights of Doing the Main Line Work*

Here is a description of the very basics of what to do with managing the raw footage.

6.4.1 *The Rough Edit*

Determine what you **don't** want. Cut the obvious stuff you don't want out and delete it from the time line. This keeps the timeline clean of junk. On the other hand, a clip for the most part may appear to be junk but there is some content of value upon a second look see. If so, you may have to trim and cut to the frame of the clip(s) segment you want to keep and toss the rest. Keep the trimmed stuff on another track on the timeline to be used later - MAYBE. It is better to have extra content than not enough. If you don't need it after all, toss it after the post process is done. Equally, look for and assemble potential B-Roll as fillers during this rough cut phase.

6.4.2 Handling Multiple Takes

Review the *multiple take* scenes and keep the one of that scene grouping you want. It will be obvious when you see them. Example might be the *establishing shot*. There could be several versions of the shot. Choose the most stable and of good composition; your judgment call here. Toss the other similar takes from the timeline. Review, edit and choose the best clip from all of the other multiple take groupings this way. Trim out any camera instability to the frame at both the start and end of the clip. Many scenes or takes have what appears to be camera instability at the beginning of the clip. DON'T PANIC. I am getting ready for the shot. My camera at times keeps running, even though I'm not shooting anything of interest. Play the raw clip until the scene is steady, count one or two seconds and cut and keep the clip prior from that point to the end of the clip. Do the same at the back end of the clip. Toss out the unstable parts of the clip. You now have a useable stable clip to insert into your production.

6.4.3 Producing Mini-Productions

Your editing cycle should produce a series of mini-productions and stretches of relevant 'as it happens' contiguous events. **Keep things in context.** Sew your mini-productions together with optional dissolves to show time passage of the events. Remember your production is a whole lot shorter than the actual time consumed during the wedding day. Dissolves for example will allude to this forward time compression effect. Join your mini-productions and main events together in chronological order. Some mini-productions could be joined by butt edits to show rapid simultaneous or sequential events and dissolves to show time passage, but not always. For example; joining the mini-production of the opening social happenings at the church or place of ceremony to the production of the introducing the wedding party entering the church with a dissolve should suggest a time lapse between these events. Alternatively, a butt edit strongly suggests very little time has past and that the two events were occurring in similar or sequential time frames. Choose your joining effect wisely and keep your story moving.

You must do the same with the associated audio track.

6.4.4 Using the Built-in Sound Tracks

My raw footage will always have some built-in sound tracks for your production, in the event you don't want or have your own sound tracks. Look for clips that have what appears to be long running segments of a static shot of absolutely no interest but has an awesome sound track. The video portion may look like the grill of a PA speaker – it usually is. Only the audio portion of these clips is needed. The video portion is discarded. The audio not only has the music played that day but has a lot of background ambience; chatter, laughter, dinnerware clinking etc. These clips are meant to be used as background tracks in mini productions like

your opening video sequence, dinner summary or social gathering scenes.
You choose.

7.0 *Exporting Your Final Render*

Once you have finished PASS 3 (*described in Section 4.0*), and you are happy with the entire production, you are ready to export your work to a single working video file ready for DVD or Blu ray post production. You should playback the final render from your NLE timeline before export to be sure you catch all of the gotcha's. Be critical, fix those annoying bugs. It will assuredly come back to bite you if you don't.

In Closing...

I have just described the very basics in helping to expedite a wedding video editing project for professional looking results.

If you are hungry for more information on video editing I have a more complete guide for DIY editors "*Wedding DIY Edit – "I Shoot you Edit"*", where I discuss advanced concepts with more examples, more tips and more in depth explanations. Additional information like what are J and L edits and how to use them, slideshows, photo insertion into the timeline, using the slo mo effect, artwork creation and more.

This more comprehensive guide is available as a download for only **\$3.99CAD** plus applicable taxes. Easy payment is made using PAYPAL. You don't need a Paypal account.

Look for the URL link or a reference to the link on the home page located at:
<http://www.ottawaweddingvideos.ca>

I can offer document formats in PDF, epub (Kindle) and mobi (mobile devices).