

Catalyst Content Tips

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Content Preparation

The system is not rocket science but there are a few things pertaining to content preparation that are very important in order for your content to look great. See the Movies and Stills sections below. When working out your production schedule, make sure you include content prep time. It can eat up a ton of your programming time if you do not have it all in place before programming.

Probably the most important thing is to make sure you Deinterlace all movies that need it. If you buy stock footage then it probably won't need it. Importing via fire wire almost always will need to be deinterlaced.

If you need to import an analog source then use a DVCodec box. Sony makes one that costs about \$199.00. There are several companies that make them. For pro gear you will need to pay more but it will be rack mountable.

The Catalyst system is a product that fits the personality of a **Visualist**. A Visualist is an individual that thinks outside of the box. Their skills should include the roles of creator, producer and programmer Audio, Video and Lighting. Visualists have been around for years and if you do a search on the Internet for this you will find communities that have discussions in regards to these types of personalities and talents.

Movies

There are several types of Quicktime movie formats that can be played back. Some are better playback speeds than others

We have found that jpeg Quicktime movies play much slower so to get the most FPS (frames per second) we suggest to convert your movies to Quicktime 29.97 fps DV NTSC.

- There is no need to prep for streaming or any other internet type settings.
- If you can not include the audio this would help.
- Most Digital media stock footage suppliers will have their movies in the JPEG QT format so converting to DV NTSC is recommended.
- DV NTSC will be at 720x480 but if you manually set your size to custom 512x512 you will see even more performance. Although 512x512 sounds bad, the effective resolution when using the Catalyst Head is 512x512 w/ a Mask in place.
- **Very Important:**
 1. We can suggest to import into Final Cut Pro (FCP) via FireWire
 2. Do your editing in FCP
 3. Export as a FCP Movie
 4. Import into After Effects
 5. Deinterlace as well as "adjust/ Curve" for gamma/ contrast (w/ AE 5.0 Delinterlacing is automatic when imported)
 6. Export as a Quicktime DV NTSC high quality 29.97 FPS movie. Understand that video does not look the same as your computer monitor so you may need to have "Echo Fire" which will output your after effects monitoring out the fire wire port. This way you will not be guessing when making "adjust/curve" settings.

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Still Images

Many file types are supported including JPEG, PSD (Photoshop files) and .tiff. Since the MAC is running at 1024x768 then your image should also be set to this resolution.

- **Logos:** Black backgrounds are most effective. Most logos are ready for print but that uses a white background. Make sure you request the artwork in Black background. This will mean that they will swap the colors across the board in order for it to work.
- **Logos:** Request for the art work to be in a tiff format so that it is flattened. I mention other formats, which will work but make sure that all images in PhotoShop format are flattened.
- Anti aliasing is recommend but you will never get all of the artifacts to disappear. A simple game w/ color selections will help immensely
- Understand that video does not look the same as your computer monitor so you may need to have "Echo Fire" which will "export" your Photoshop monitoring out the fire wire port. This way you will not be guessing when making adjustment settings for contrast. Projectors typically require a higher contrast then your computer monitor, but don't go overboard.

Performance

There are several things you can do to optimize performance on your Mac while running the Catalyst application. Each Catalyst Media Server is preset in the optimal configuration for the Catalyst software, however it helps to know what to look for incase something has been changed.

- Catalyst "Device Window" should be closed
- Virtual Memory should be off
- "FBC indexing scheduler" extension should be off
- All 3 "software update" extensions types should be off
- "File sharing" should be off
- "Control strip" should be off
- Any sound settings that alert you while you are computing including the "platinum sounds" should be set to off
- "Apple talk" should be off

Overview

All in all a **successful Catalyst Programmer** will need the skills set of:

- Moving light programming
- Know what the LED video walls need to see from the Catalyst for matrixing your signal
- Understand what a rental(Pro) video projector needs to see from the Catalyst
- Video editing (final cut pro/ Premier)
- Understand the basics of After Effects for exporting your finished movies
- Understanding of different video formats and terminology
- Stills editing (Photoshop)
- Mac OS 9.2 or later and Mac's system settings and control panels
- Know the Catalyst Limitations before you over promise yourself