Final Cut Pro for Avid Editors

By **Diana Weynand**

If you're an Avid Media Composer user who's been hesitant to pick up Final Cut Pro, here's help from someone who understands. Diana Weynand has been a producer, director, editor, and now the author of *Final Cut Pro for Avid Editors*, which teaches Final Cut Pro from an Avid user's point-of-view. You already know the craft of editing. What you want to know is, How do I do that in Final Cut Pro? With the help of these excerpts taken from Diana's hot new book, you're about to find out!
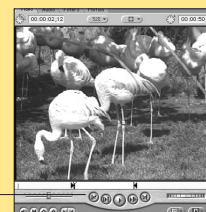
Using Play Commands

You will find many similarities in how Avid and FCP play your clips and sequences. In fact, if you take a close look at the play buttons, you will see that they look very much alike.


Avid play buttons in the Source monitor.

FCP Viewer play buttons.

Avid Play Buttons	FCP Play Buttons	Function	FCP Keyboard Shortcuts
		Play	SPACEBAR (starts and stops a clip or sequence)
		Previous/Next Edit	UP and DOWN ARROW keys and the ; and ' keys next to the L key
		Play In to Out	SHIFT+\
No button		Play around playhead position	\
	No button	Play Here to Out	SHIFT+P
	No button	Step	LEFT and RIGHT ARROW keys; K+J and K+L
	No button	Ten frames	SHIFT+LEFT or RIGHT ARROW key (moves one second); shuttle control moves desired number of frames

NOTE The HOME and END keys work the same as they do in Avid.

FCP also uses the J, K, and L keyboard shortcuts. The only difference is that in FCP, if you have pressed the J or L key multiple times to increase the speed, pressing the opposite key will reduce the speed in increments rather than reverse it. To use this shortcut as you would in Avid, press the K key first and then the opposite key. The direction will reverse.

Q & A with Avid Editors Who Made the Switch

Sharon Rutter: Feature Film—"Rules of Attraction" Directed by Roger Avary, Lions Gate Films

What features helped you the most?

I loved the audio within FCP. I was able to play with the tempo easily and reverse audio tracks. Also the rubberband feature enabled a strong mix within FCP. The other advantage of working in FCP was that we could easily and quickly export 24-fps QuickTime files to use to create digital effects.

Robert Moore: Hi-Definition Short film—FoxSearch Lab "The Mezzo"

How did Final Cut Pro work with Hi-Definition video?

I have found that Final Cut Pro with CineWave easily performs as well as Avid Symphony, except that FCP gave me the advantage of uncompressed HD. It allows me to work with all HD formats and all SD formats.

Steve Swersky: U.S. Navy SEALs documentary—Discovery

Why did you switch to FCP?

For the biggest bang for your dollars, you can't beat FCP. Look how far the program has come, and it is still very young compared to the Avid software. The fact that you can configure the system any way you want is great. Whether you are working in offline resolution, DV, or online uncompressed, one system can do it all. And FCP is extremely powerful; it can do about 95 percent of what an Avid 9000 can do.

Final Cut Pro and Avid: A Feature Comparison

Basic Editing

	FINAL CUT PRO	AVID
EDITING TYPES		
Overwrite	YES	YES
Insert	YES	YES
Overwrite/splice	YES	YES
Replace	YES	YES
Fit to fill	YES	YES
Superimpose	YES	YES
Overwrite with transition	YES	NO
Splice with transition	YES	NO
Drag and drop to timeline	YES	NO
Keyboard shortcuts for edit	YES	YES
SEQUENCES		
Work with multiple Timelines open	YES	NO
Set sequence render qualities	YES	NO
Nest sequences within other sequences	YES	NO
Label sequences	YES	YES
Mix sequence formats	YES	NO
DUPLICATING SEQUENCES		
Easy to duplicate	YES	YES
Nest sequences	YES	NO

Titles

	FINAL CUT PRO	AVID
TITLE TOOL AND TEXT		
Create titles	YES	YES
Title tool	YES	YES
Effect title alpha in title tool	YES	NO
Resize titles on the fly	YES	NO
Rescale titles on the fly	YES	NO
Title drop shadows	YES	YES
Title fonts	YES	YES

Lifting and Extracting

Lift and Extract work the same way in FCP as they do in Avid, though some of the terminology differs. The FCP terms are Delete (Lift) and Ripple Delete (Extract). FCP also provides some helpful selection tools you can use to choose the area you will lift or extract.

Avid Lift and Extract buttons.

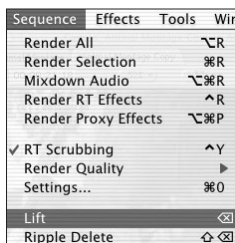To lift material from the Timeline:

1. Select the clip, group of clips, or material range.
2. Press the **DELETE** key or choose **Sequence > Lift**.

FCP Sequence > Lift option.

To extract material from the Timeline:

1. Select the clip, group of clips, or material range.
2. Press **SHIFT+DELETE** or choose **Sequence > Ripple Delete**.

Compositing

	FINAL CUT PRO	AVID
KEYING AND COLOR CORRECTING		
Chroma key with multiple filters	YES	YES
Visual interface for effect editing	YES	NO
Built-in blue and green screen keys	YES	NO
Built-in spill suppressor	YES	YES
Luma key	YES	YES
Real-time color correction	YES	NO
OTHER EFFECTS		
Photoshop-like composite mode	YES	NO
Image control	YES	YES
IMPORTING GRAPHIC FILES		
Import Photoshop files with discrete layers	YES	NO
Import After Effects plug-ins	YES	NO
Import After Effects discrete layers	YES	NO
Set alpha channels	YES	YES
Output alpha channel	YES	YES
Open Photoshop within program	YES	NO
Open After Effects within program	YES	NO

Transitions

	FINAL CUT PRO	AVID
TRANSITION INTERFACE		
Edit transition directly in Timeline	YES	NO
Edit transition in other interfaces	YES	NO
Trim and edit under transition	YES	NO
Create transition from scratch	YES	NO
Customize existing transitions	YES	YES
Modify existing transitions	YES	NO
Set default transitions	YES	YES
Overwrite and Splice with transitions	YES	NO
Drag effect icons and save in bins	YES	YES
Apply transitions to multiple edits	NO	YES
Re-center transitions	YES	YES
Import After Effects plug-in transitions	YES	NO
DISSOLVES		
Film and video dissolve abilities	YES	YES
Real-time dissolve capabilities	YES	YES