

# THE VIDEO LAUNCH CODE

Special Supplement  
Selecting Your Editing Program  
*The Pluses and Minuses*



Visible  
Authority

## Introduction

Video editing programs today fall roughly into two camps:

1. The do-it-all-for-you consumer program that takes your vacation footage and turns it into a fun movie for your friends and family to watch.
2. The professional editing interface that gives you total power and control, but at a steep price.

This document lists the programs that are most suited for you, the person who straddles the middle portion of the market: a business professional who needs control over the editing process, but lacks the video professional's desire to learn editing for its own sake. These are the only programs I recommend for the kind of video marketing you will be doing.

Fortunately there are a few programs that fit this bill. This document will outline them and you can make your own decision as to which is best for you.

## For the PC: Camtasia



### Pluses:

This is a do-it-all program that can also record your screen movement. It's very fast to work in and does our kind of video very well.

### Minuses:

Greenscreen. Techmith has only just introduced a keying filter and at best it's pretty crude. If Greenscreen is in your immediate future, I would steer clear of Camtasia for now, but it's OK for everything else.

**Price:** \$299.00

## For the PC: Pinnacle Studio 19.5

### Pluses:

This is a basic, do-everything program that can also turn your video into a fun "movie" by using themes that drop your footage into buckets and output it as something else.

However, if you choose not to use the themes, you have a decent amount of control over the timeline. You can choose a variety of cool text effects for lower thirds and other kinds of text, and it's easy to change from one to another.

### Minuses:

Once a piece of video is sitting on the timeline, it can't be moved. This makes it difficult to add transitions and to do match-cut editing at the first piece of video, but only if you insist on being able to move the clip internally. We have found that the system works quite well. You do have to be careful to tell the program what kind of footage you have. But otherwise, it's a nice interface.



**Price:** About \$50; \$99.95 for Plus

## For the PC: Sony Movie Studio Platinum 13



### Pluses:

This is very similar to Pinnacle in functionality. The big difference is in what the interface looks like. Video clips can be moved around with ease, so score one for Vegas here. They also have an excellent text generator that's the easiest to work with of all of them. And the Greenscreen keyed works.

### Minuses:

Other than text, there are too many steps to go through to do anything else. It does the job overall, but will probably drive you a little crazy while you're learning. It didn't recognize the format of the footage I imported.

**Price:** \$79.95

Note: The software was recently sold to Magix Software GmbH.

## For the Mac: iMovie

Before we get to Pluses and Minuses, we have to acknowledge that iMovie is quite different than any other editing program. (Where have you heard that before about Apple?)

It doesn't use a timeline. It basically has no tracks. Instead, it uses a unique system of layering sound and images to achieve the same ends as a traditional editing program.

While this makes for a compact interface, it doesn't always lead to the results you'd like. This program is intended for consumer use only, and as such, it lacks the traditional control features we normally expect. On the other hand, it can make a basic video very quickly, so just be aware of what you're getting into.



### Pluses:

- ▶ Fast interface and your work never needs to be saved.
- ▶ Works seamlessly with iPhoto and iTunes to pluck out the items you need.
- ▶ Themes can make your video cool-looking, if you're wanting to go viral with a vacation video.
- ▶ It recognizes your video and displays it properly.
- ▶ Previewing is faster than on any other editing program, sometimes too fast.
- ▶ Output options are convenient and perfect for sharing on the web.
- ▶ The interface is unique and ultra-modern with a completely different editing paradigm that for some simple videos, is more than adequate.

**Minuses:**

- ▶ Working with graphics is kind of a nightmare. There's no other way to put it. It took 8 tries to build a simple graphic that the other editing programs would have had no problem with.
- ▶ You can't move graphics on the timeline. Period. Every operation other than simple trimming has to be done out of the timeline in a separate interface, so you never really know in an interactive way how what you're doing is affecting your footage. Imagine a program like Microsoft Word if, when you wanted to change fonts, you had to click on the word, open a brand new interface, check several boxes and sliders, then close the box and play back your word on the page. This may sound like a little thing, but it can be a horror show.
- ▶ The precision editor is difficult and confusing to work with, if you can find it. You'll be tempted to use the more interactive default trimmer that's right in the clip itself, and you'll be guessing the whole time as to whether you got your timing right.
- ▶ You can only trim up to 1 second's worth of material at a time. The only saving grace is that preview is so darned fast, you can get this done pretty quickly.

**Price:** \$0 if you have a Mac. About \$40 with a new version of iLife. Download from the Mac Store which is a part of your Mac.

## For the Mac: Final Cut Pro X

This program does everything we need done with the kind of videos we make, and does it intuitively and with great speed.



### Pluses:

The track system is similar to iMovie, so if you're familiar with iMovie, this program is a logical next step. Some of our students are using the program with very good results.

It has the most advanced and simple-to-use greenscreen capability I have ever seen. It's the one against which all the others could be measured.

There are oodles of plug-ins that have been developed for it, from transitions, to filters, to audio plugins, to mattes and pretty much whatever you can think of.

### Minuses:

It doesn't work like other editing programs, so if you're coming from the PC world or are used to using Premier Pro, there will be an extra learning curve.

At \$300, it's more pricey than its stablemates.

Download from the Mac Store which is a part of your Mac.



## For the Mac: Screenflow



### **Pluses:**

If you're on a Mac, this is indeed a simple package to use. From recording your screen to changing screen size to adding content, this is one easy-to-use program.

### **Minuses:**

Lacks a magnetic timeline, which makes editing a little slower.

The Chroma key is still pretty crude at this point.

**Price:** \$99