

Creating a Digital Story using photos and audio recording

Digital Story telling is the use of new media to give voice to personal, community or cultural experiences. It is generally done as a first person narrative and usually includes an audio narration, photos or video and often music.

A good website to learn more about Digital Storytelling:
<http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html>

For this tutorial, I selected some photos off of my computer from a recent trip back to my father's farm, added my story and put them together with music to create my digital story. It came out a lot more sentimental than I intended, but I think that's what tends to happen in digital storytelling – so be prepared.

Example digital story – Mom's Pond

Tools used:

Digital still camera (Sony ...)

Handheld digital audio recorder (Olympus WS-100)

Applications used:

Adobe Premier Pro (to create/edit photos and audio into video file)

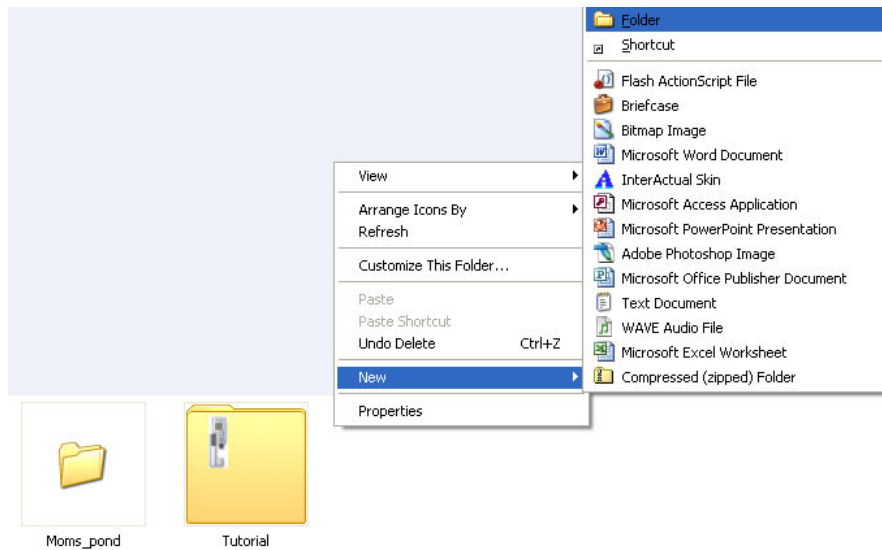
Sorensen Squeeze (to create various video file formats)

Preparing for the Project:

It is important to have good organization when creating projects like a digital story. You'll want to keep your entire project in one folder or risk breaking links and misplacing files. This will also make it easier to reuse pieces and parts of a podcast.

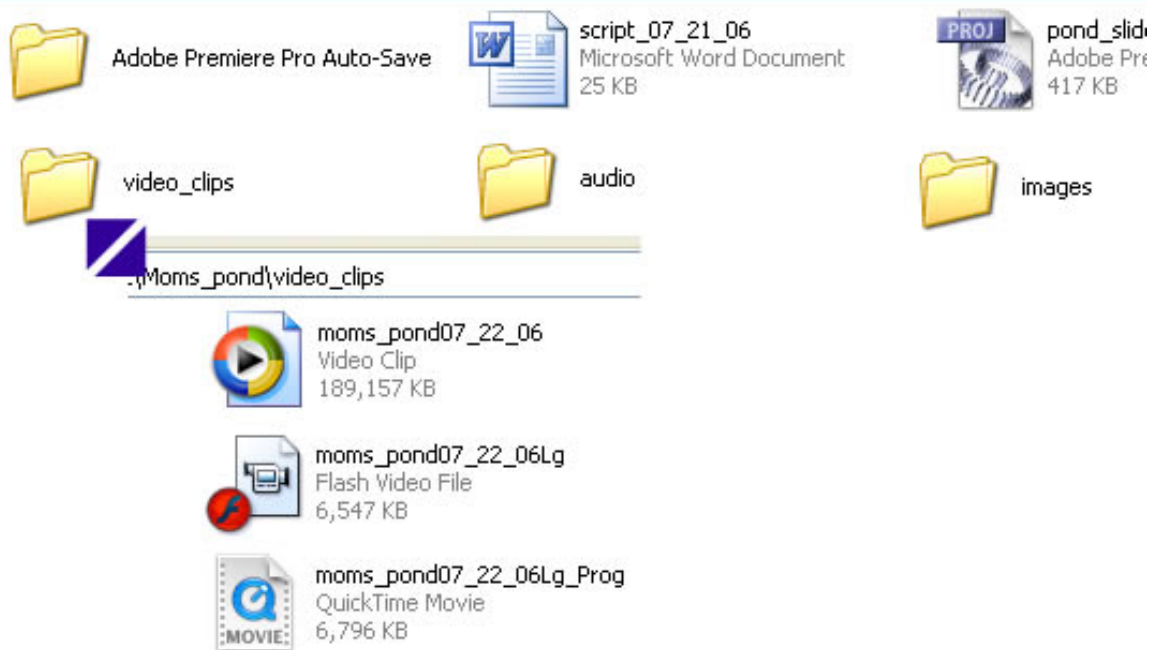
Create a Project folder on your computer:

- On a PC: Open your My Documents folder.
- Right click and choose New | Folder. Name the Folder with your project name. You may want to create subfolders for "audio", "images", etc.



- Plan a naming convention for the files you place inside the folder. In this case, I used the project and date, and for video files, a compression descriptor. You often will rerecord or recompress pieces and adding the date will help you identify the latest version. Adding the compression size or description to video files can also be very helpful later in reproducing parts of it.

kelly\My Documents\Enhanced Podcast\Moms_pond



- When you create your video editing project, the Adobe Premier Pro (in this tutorial) project file (prproj) will also be saved to this folder. It is important to keep your files either together or in a consistent location. If you move files after the project is started, you'll have reestablish the links in the Premier Pro project. This can be time-consuming.

After collecting photos for the photo essay and creating a written script, the next step is to create an audio recording. I used a hand-held digital audio recorder. The audio file and photos were edited into a narrated video with video editing software. There are many video editing applications. In this example, I walk through using Adobe Premier Pro to create the video.

Creating the audio file:

Audio recordings can be made directly to a computer using audio editing/capture software and a mic or they can be captured to a device such as a digital audio recorder and then downloaded to a computer.

For this example, I used the Olympus Digital Voice Recorder WS 100 which cost ~\$100. This is a very simple, small device with a USB connector built into the recorder. The built-in USB connector means that you can record on the device and then plug the recorder directly into your computer to transfer the audio recording.



Recording an audio file is a simple process:

(The instruction manual can be found at:

<http://www.olympusamerica.com/files/WS100200Sman.pdf>)

- Switch Power button on back of recorder to “On”
- Click the Menu/folder button on front of recorder
 - As you click the menu button, folder icons A-E appear on the display screen – this shows in which folder your recording will be stored.
- Push the Record button on the side of the recorder
- Talk into the mic on the top of the recorder (or plug in a higher quality mic)
- Click the Stop button on the side of the recorder
- Open the recorder (grasp top and bottom and pull).
- Plug the recorder into a USB port on your computer
- Your computer will probably sense a new device. Choose the option to open folder and view files.
- You should see folders A-E, open the folder that you recorded to. The files are Windows Media Audio files (wma's)
- Right click on file name and choose copy.
- Open your project folder on your computer and choose paste.

You've created a project folder on your computer that contains the audio narration.

Creating the video:

There are many different options for video editing software. Some of the most commonly used applications are:

- Apple's iMovie
- Microsoft's Windows MovieMaker
- Adobe Premier Pro
- Final Cut Pro
- Avid

Two of the simplest video editing applications to use are iMovie and MovieMaker. The Apple and Microsoft websites offer good tutorials on using these.

(PC)

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/getstarted/default.mspx>

(MAC) <http://www.apple.com/support/imovie/tutorial>

For this video I used Adobe Premier Pro. For more advanced editing this is one of the most common video editing programs for PC users. Final Cut Pro is an equivalent program for Mac users.

Create Project

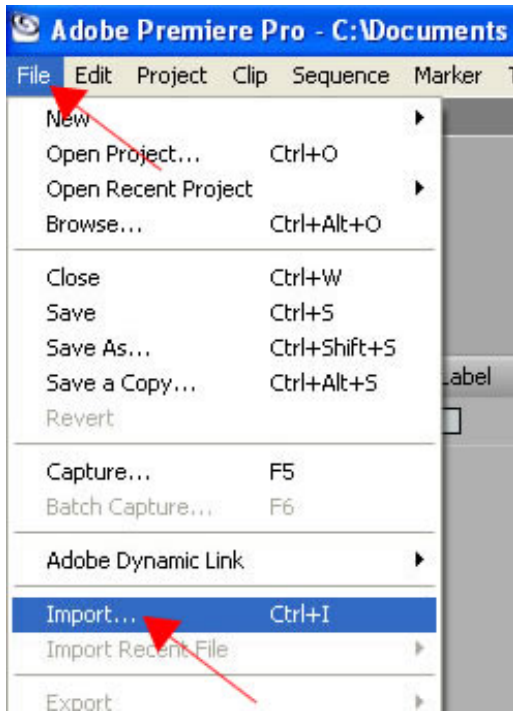
Open Adobe Premier Pro and select New Project.

Use Preset: DV – NTSC; Standard 48kHz.

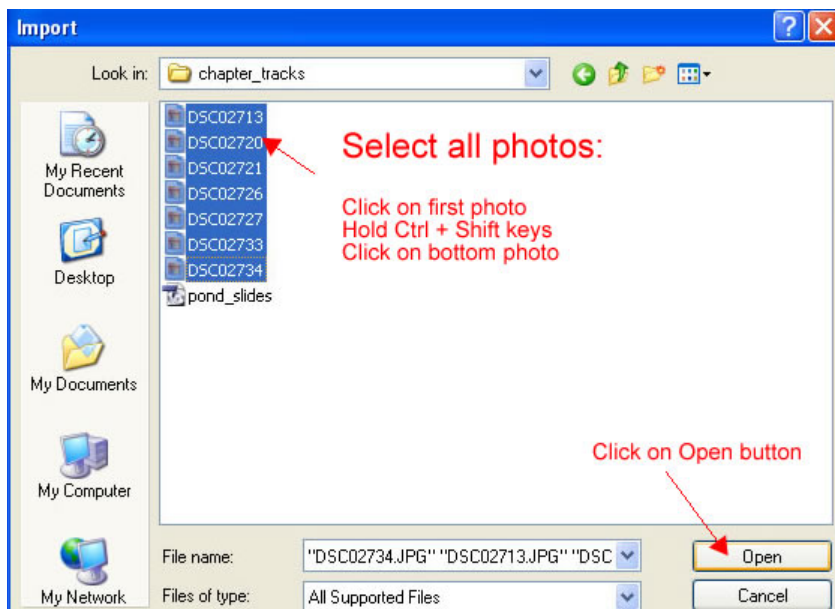
Save to the project folder created earlier.

Import Files into Project

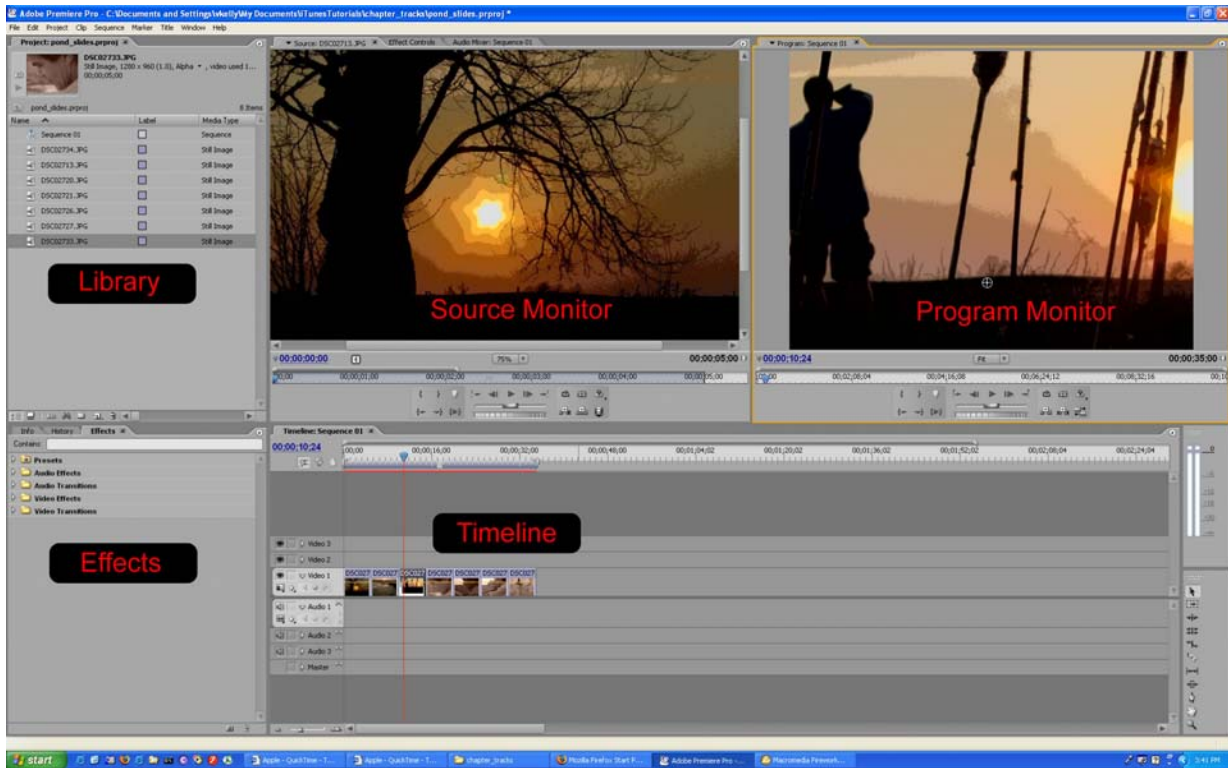
With Project open – from the Menu Bar, click on File | Import.



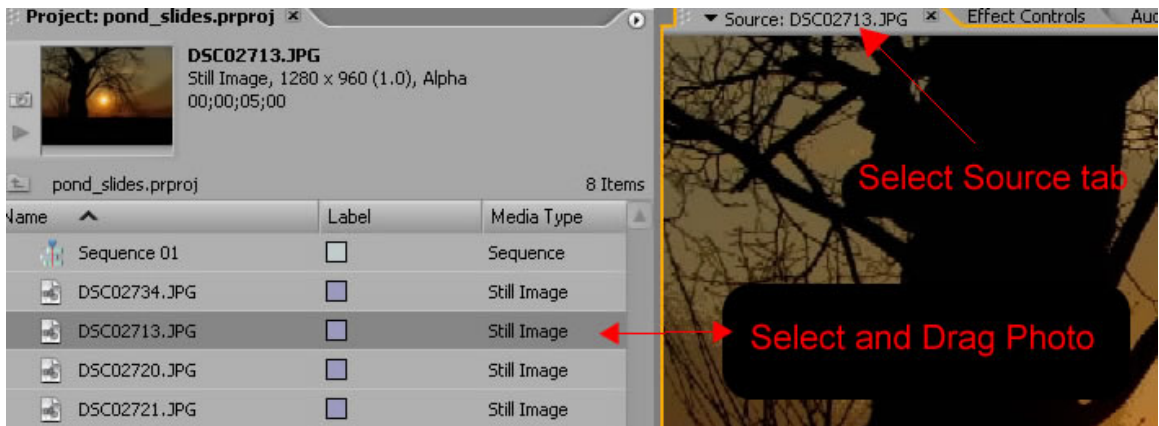
Browse to files on your computer



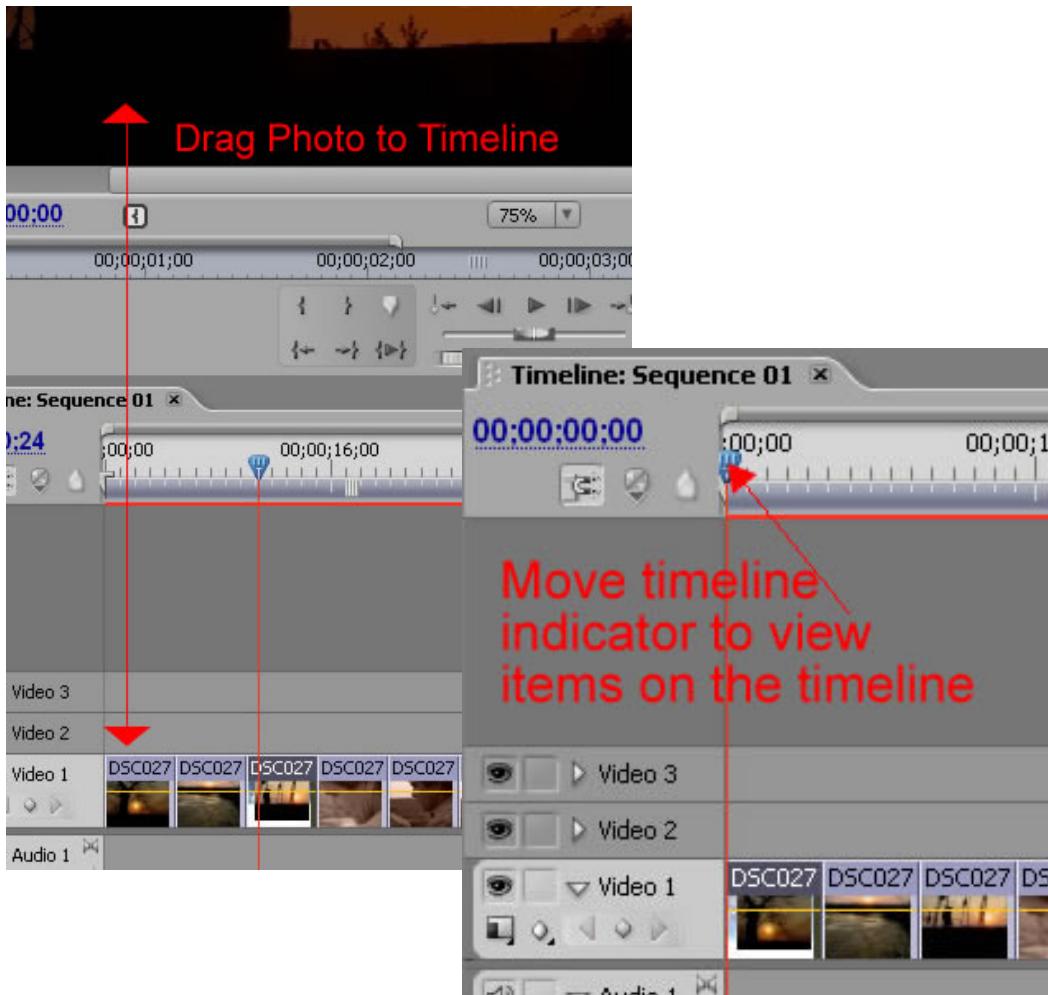
Premier Pro Workspace



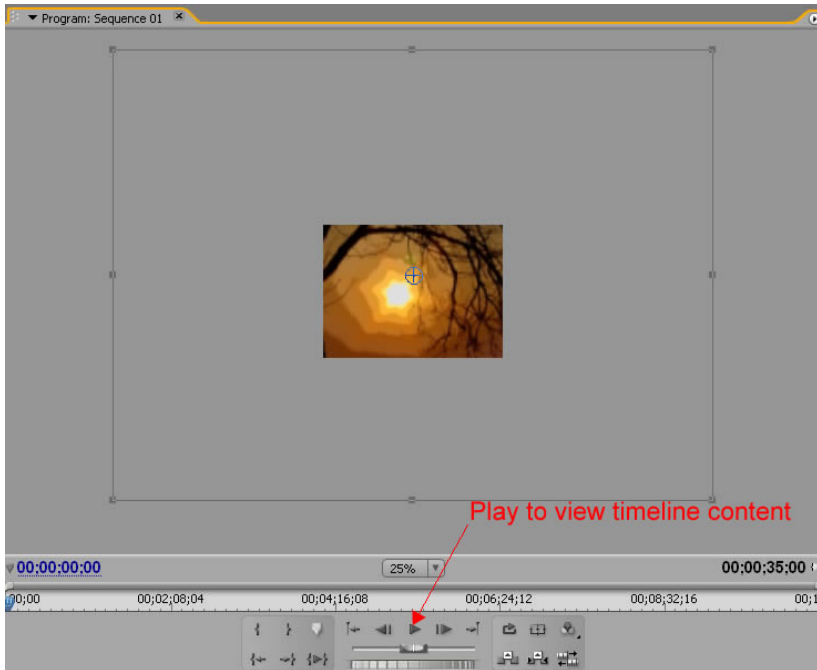
Move photo from Library to Source Monitor window
 (If this were a video clip you could edit video here, selecting just the portion that you desired by setting clip in and out points.)



Move the photo down to the Timeline

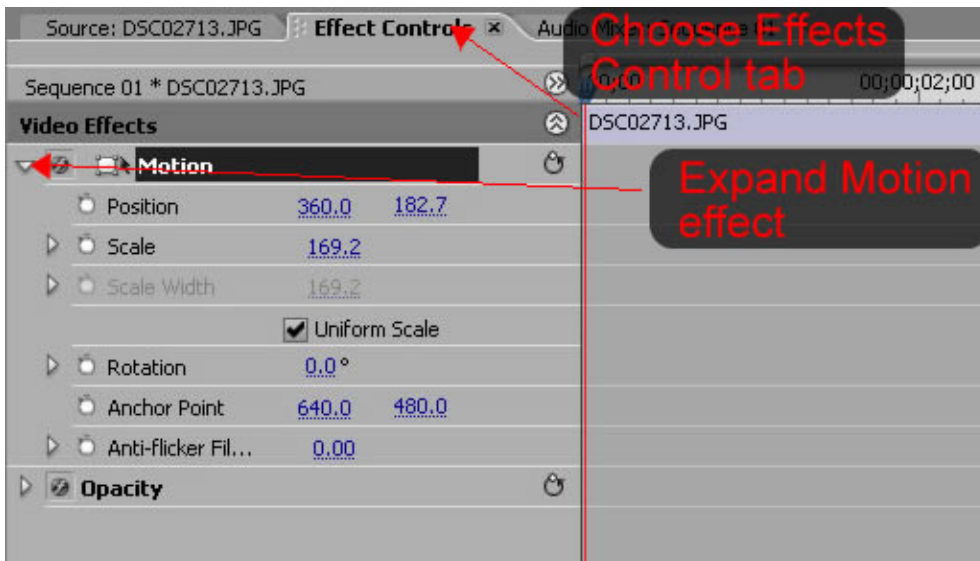


Content on the timeline will play in the program monitor
(Notice that, in this case, the actual photo is much larger than video viewing area.)



Resize the photo to create sense of movement within photo clip as photo transitions from one size to another.

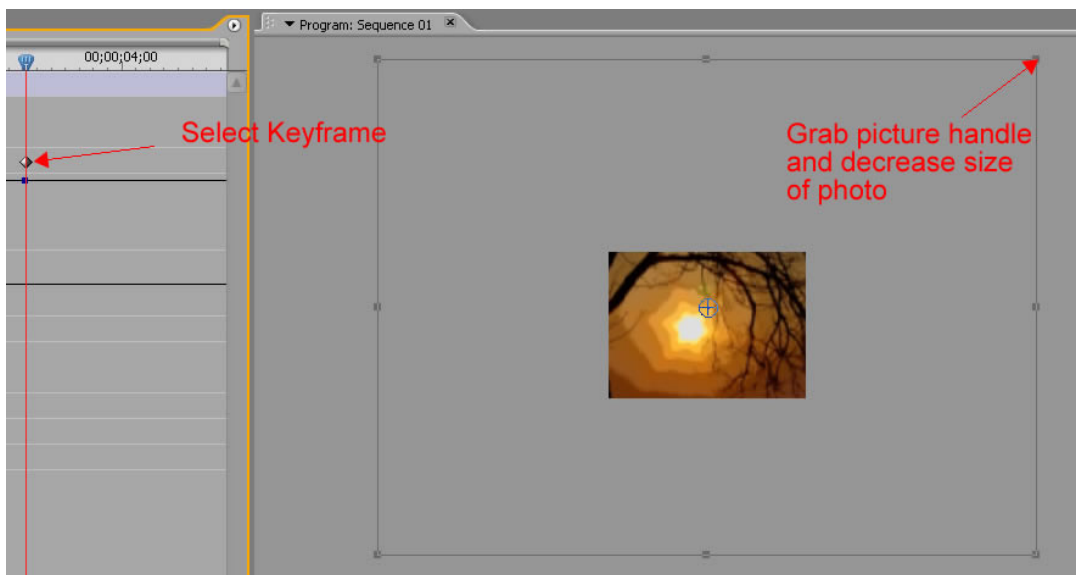
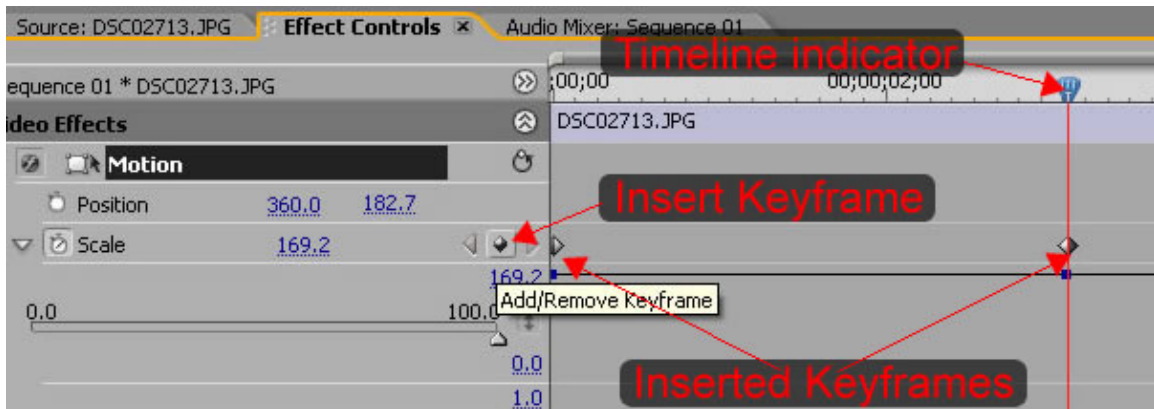
- Move the timeline indicator to the beginning of your photo clip
- Select the photo clip on the timeline by left clicking on it
- Select the Effects Control tab in the Source Monitor
- Expand the Motion Effect to view Position and Scale options



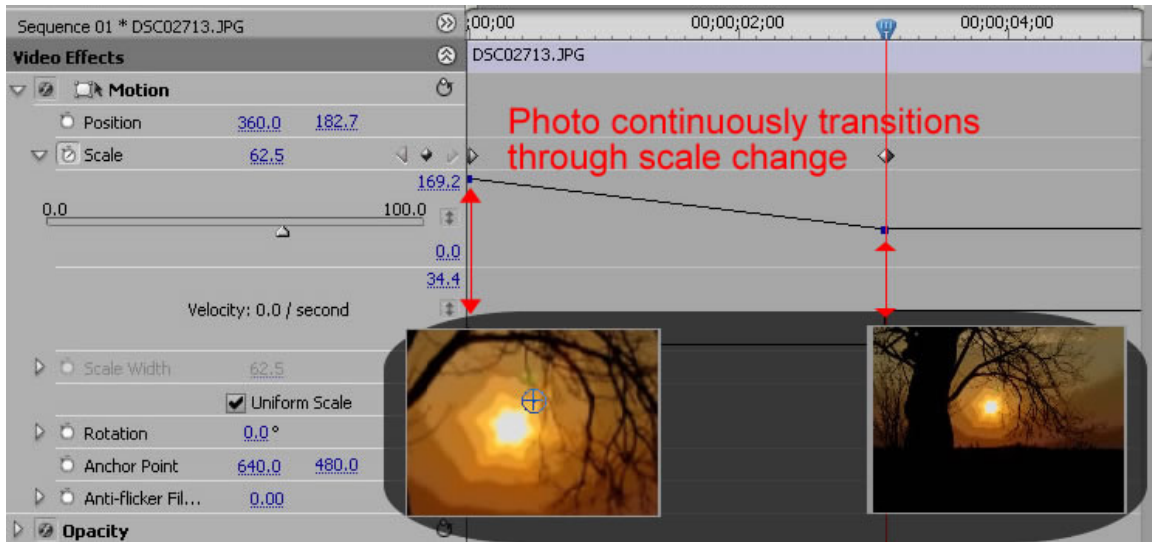
Change the size of photo to create video transition of photo

- Expand the Scale option
- Move the timeline indicator to the beginning of the photo clip

- Click on the Keyframe insertion button
You've just created a keyframe with the photo full size (in this case, the photo is much larger than the video viewing area).
- Move the timeline indicator to a latter portion of the photo clip.
- Click on the Keyframe insertion button
- Change the size of photo, either by grabbing the photo size handles seen in the program monitor or by sliding the Scale slider to less than 100.0.
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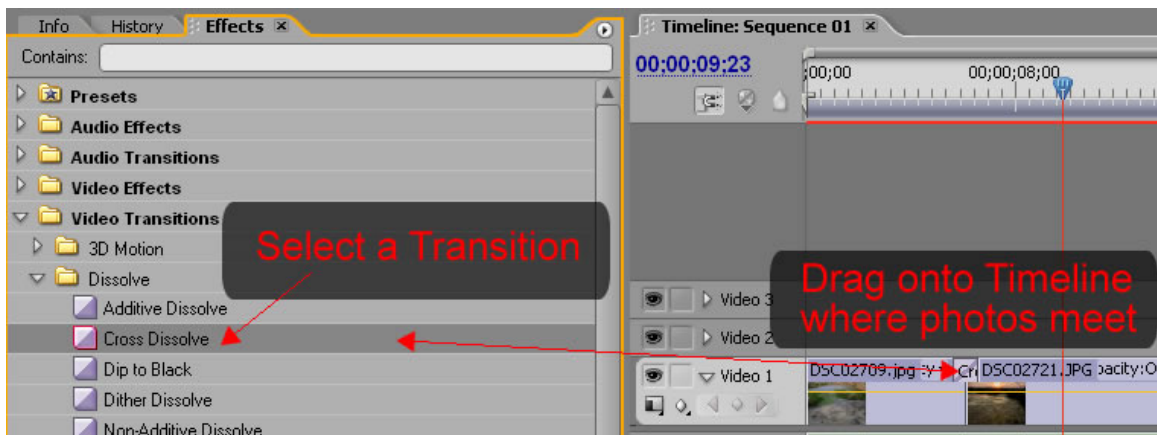
In the Source Monitor, you can see the scale declination. I have inserted screen shots from the Program Monitor so you can see how your photo will look at the beginning and end of the transition.



You can use these same general instructions for changing Position and Opacity, etc. The Motion Effect is one of the most used techniques in creating digital stories with photos.

Create a transition between photos

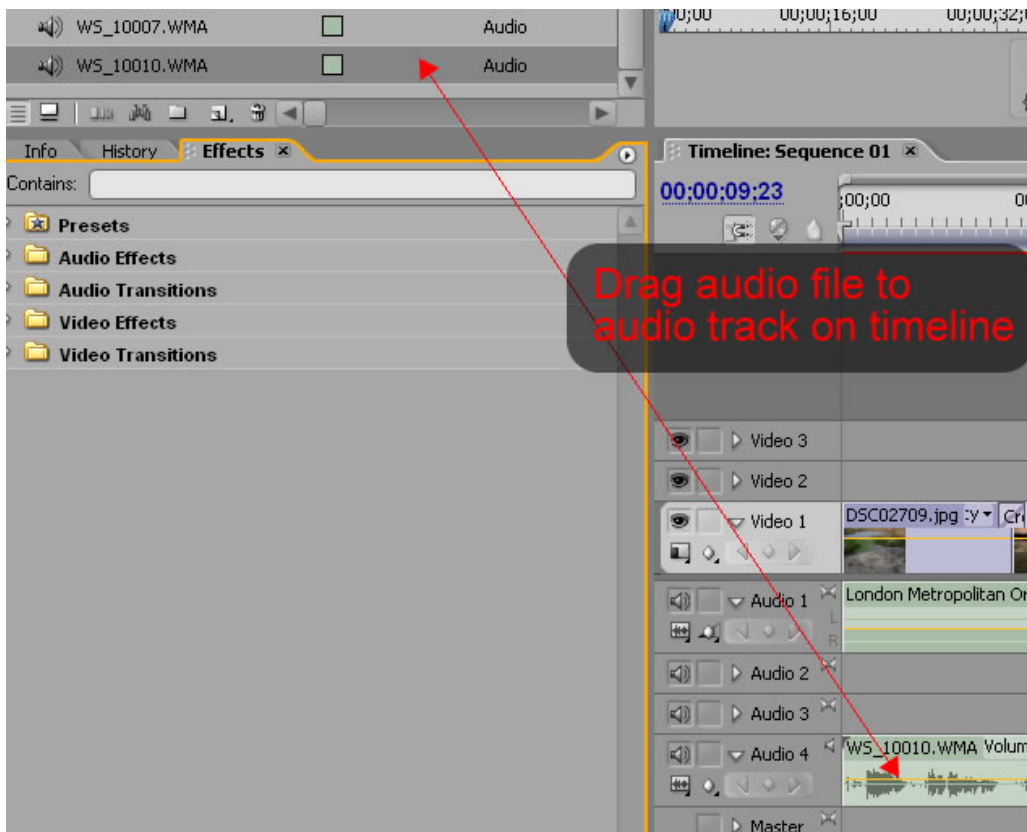
- From the Effects panel, expand Video Transitions
- Select a transition, in this case, Cross Dissolve
- Drag transition effect to the point on the timeline where two photos meet
- The transition can be resized by dragging the ends of the transition



Add the Audio Narration and Music

- Import the audio files (see instructions for importing project files)
- Drag the audio file into the Source Monitor if you wish to edit the audio or directly onto the Audio tracks on the timeline if editing isn't necessary. Add

narration to one track and music to another track. The top track as you look at the monitor is the track that plays over the top of the lower tracks i.e. if the sound is loud on the top track – that may be all that you hear.



Audio can be edited much the same way that the photos were edited for size.

- Select the audio clip on the timeline by clicking on it
- You can then adjust the audio levels in the Source Monitor by inserting keyframes and adjusting levels at those points. (Refer to the Resizing photos section for instruction on inserting keyframes.)

Saving your project

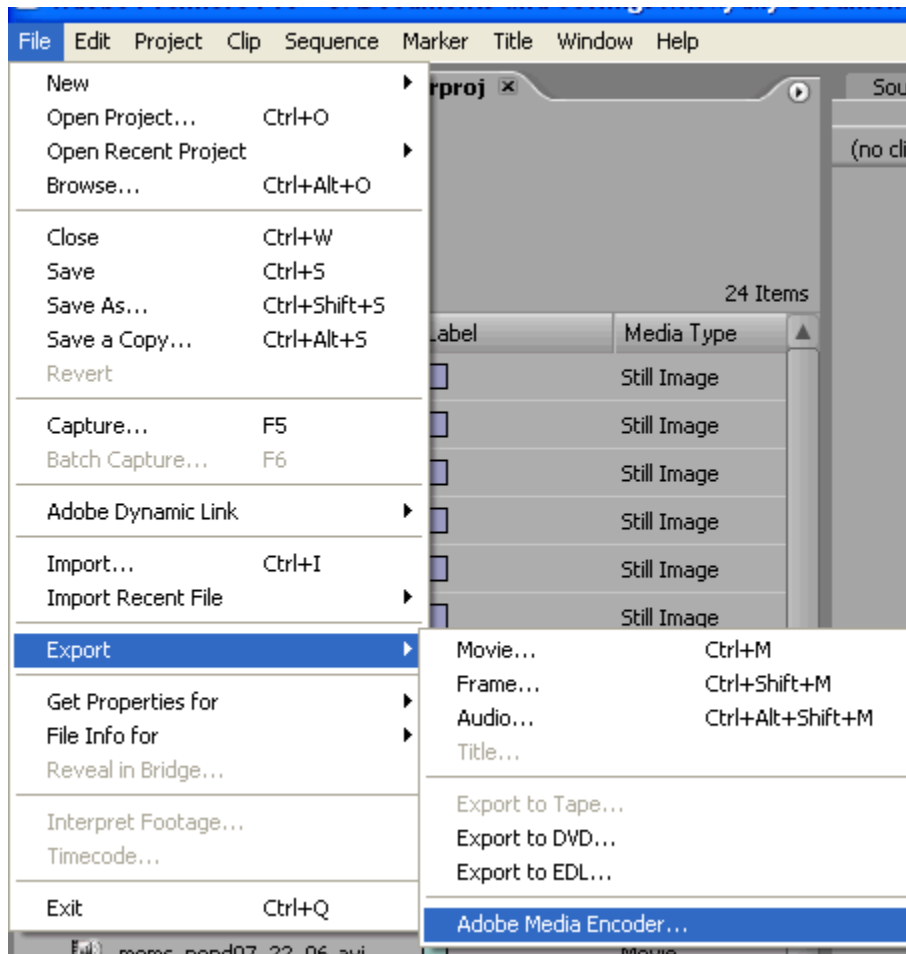
- Make sure you save your project as you build it. Select File | Save from the menu bar. The Premier Pro project file is saved with a prproj extension.

Rendering the video

After you've assembled the clips on the timeline and you're pleased with the video as it plays in the program monitor, you are ready to export your video.

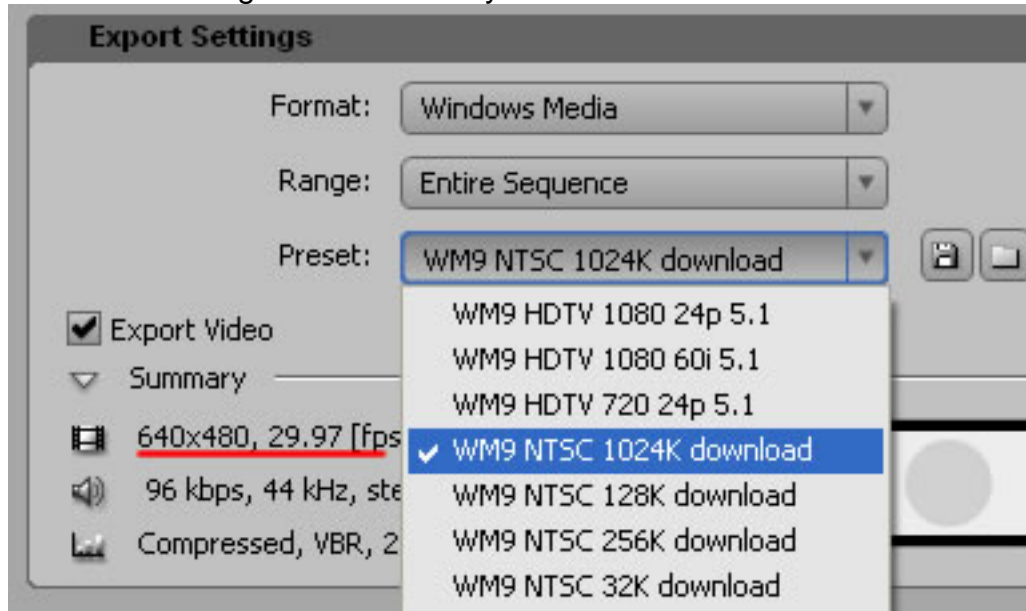
- Click on an open space on the Timeline area of the screen (not on a clip)

- From the menu bar, choose File | Export | Movie to export the movie as an avi file. This will be a large (probably 720 x 480 frame size), high-quality video. This will be the raw file that you'll want to save and perhaps save to DVD, but it will be too big to use on the Internet.
- You can also compress the video upon export to make a smaller sized video in various formats. From the menu bar, choose, File | Export | Adobe Media Encoder.



- At the Export Setting screen, expand the Format options. You can choose to render the video in a variety of formats. MPEG1 is often a good choice as it is platform independent and plays on a variety of players. In this example we'll export as Windows Media (viewers will need a Windows Media Player installed on their computer to view movie).
- Set the Range to "Entire Sequence".
- Expand the Preset option.
- Choose from among the WM9 NTSC presets (PAL and NTSC are the two predominant video formats. They differ in resolution and frame rate. In the United States NTSC is generally the default format.)

- Notice as you select different presets that the frame size and frames per second change in the summary.



- The WM9 NTSC 1024K download sets the default frame size of the video to 640 x 480. This is fairly large for Internet viewing and is really meant for those with broadband. If we were to choose WM9 NTSC 256 download, it would render a smaller frame size of 320 x 240, but would still render it with a frames rate of 29.97 (fps). When you get down into the 128K download preset, the fps is also decreased. You will select the preset based on who you think your audience is, how long your video is (if it is very short, you can render it in higher quality without the file size getting too big), and what impact you are hoping to accomplish (if the audience needs to read something on the screen, you'll need a larger viewing area).
- In this tutorial, I'm leaving all of the settings with the preset defaults. There are so many options of formats, codecs, etc. that you can only learn by experimenting and adjusting for different applications. In general, for the Internet, you'll want to choose a common format, such as MPEG, WMV or MOV or SWF (Flash).