

Preparing a project for color grading in DaVinci Resolve

Overview

You want to spend the time in your color session concentrating on color and mood, not solving conform problems. We'll look at some options to help you get the most out of your session.

The Easy Way

Render a textless version of your film as a single flat file in an intermediate format such as ProRes 422 HQ or DNxHR HQX, and then export an EDL of your timeline. These files will be used to reconstruct your timeline in Resolve so it can be colored and exported as a single color-corrected file. You can then take this new file back into your NLE and apply any titles, graphics or supers that are required. The advantage of this method is that it eliminates almost any possible conform problem.

Alternate Way: The XML Round Trip

1. Output a self-contained offline reference movie from your timeline. This will be used to make sure everything comes across properly.
2. Make a copy of your timeline for the color session.
3. In the color session copy of the timeline, remove any unused media from your project. Put everything else on the minimum number of tracks and delete any unused V and A tracks. For example, main video on V1, dissolve and composite video on V2, any text such as lower thirds and superimposed graphics on V3.
4. Export an XML and an EDL for the color session.
5. Create a cloned media folder containing all media used in your project. It's best to use Project Manager or Media Manager. Do not include any unique media originals! Backup media only.
6. Include a textless render in a high-quality intermediate format such as ProRes 422 HQ or DNxHR HQX. Remove any color correction filters and all effects from this copy of your sequence before rendering it.
7. The reference movie, high quality render, XML, EDL and media should all be consolidated onto a removable hard drive, preferably USB 3 or Thunderbolt 2, with plenty of room available for renders. Allow at least one GB per minute of content + 10%. 120 minutes = 150GB free space.

XML Round Trip: Unsupported FX, sizing, speed ramps, compound clips

Some NLE tools do not translate directly into Resolve. Discrepancies may arise from speed ramps, sizing and positioning changes, generators (such as color backgrounds), freeze frames, compound clips and titles. You may want to give some thought as to how these are handled. You might choose to render (or "bake in") the effects, or you might want to temporarily turn off effects or place clips having effects on their own track so that effects can be turned off during the color session and

turned on again (or use paste attributes) when you bring your project back into your NLE.

Additional Resources:

Here is a pretty good guide to how to prep your project:

<https://www.premiumbeat.com/blog/davinci-resolve-workflow-how-to-prep-for-a-color-session/>

And there is some in-depth information in the DaVinci Resolve manual, in the chapter titled *Importing Projects and Relinking Media*. The Resolve manual can be downloaded from the Blackmagic Design Support page:

<https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/support/family/davinci-resolve-and-fusion>