

# 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. Do the Basic Prep steps first, then choose the Easy Way or Alternate Way below.

### Basic Prep - do this before proceeding to either method below.

1. Output a self-contained offline reference movie from your final locked timeline. This will be used to make sure everything comes across properly.
2. Make a copy of your final locked 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. Remove any existing color effects or filters that you may have applied during your edit, unless you want those to be your final color and you do not want those clips colored in your session. If you have clips you do not want colored, be sure to clearly indicate which ones they are.
5. Now you can proceed to either the Easy Way or Alternate Way, described next.

### The Easy Way

1. Make sure you have performed the Basic Prep listed above.
2. Turn off or delete any text/graphic overlay tracks. You will reapply them later.
3. Render a textless version of your film as a single flat file in a high-quality intermediate format such as ProRes 422 HQ or DNxHR HQX, and then export an EDL of each track in your timeline (it's best to have only one if practical).
4. The reference movie, intermediate file and EDL(s) 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 most possible conform problems.

### Alternate Way: The XML Round Trip

1. Make sure you have performed the Basic Prep listed above.
2. Export an XML for the color session. Also export an EDL for each video track.
3. Export a textless render in a high-quality intermediate format such as ProRes 422 HQ or DNxHR HQX.
4. 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.

5. The reference movie, high quality render, XML, EDL and media should all be consolidated onto a removable hard drive with good sustained transfer speeds and plenty of room available for renders. The amount of space you will need is dependent on your delivery resolution requirements. Make sure you have a drive with enough space to contain your graded media!

### **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, transition effects, 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>