

MAKING TITLES for YOUR PRODUCTION

How to Use Live Type

Making Animated Text

1.

Live Type is a program that is included with Final Cut Express and is used to create animated title and text sequences for your film project. These would include title cards and text slates identifying a person, and are of a higher calibre than those typically found in your editing software.

When using a program like Live Type, it is first important to understand the layout of the program.

The display for Live Type is divided into four parts.

The upper left window is called the **Canvas**, and is where you can actually see the text you are working on. Though you do not actually type the text here, you can see the changes appear when you add words and effects. It is where you can the size and location of the text.

In the middle of the display is the **Inspector window**, where you select the basic characteristics of your text, such as color and style. There are several tabs in this window that affect things like the timing of the text movements and the listing of the effects you have already placed on the text. This window can be seen as the record of the text you are working on as it appears.

The window that rests in the upper right corner is the **Media Browser**, which controls all of the fonts, transition effects and animations.

The lower part of the display is the **Timeline**, where you see the actual video clip you are preparing. With Live Type, you are creating a movie file that will eventually be imported back into your editing program. This is where you can change the length of the clip and the effects/transitions you have placed on it. When you play the text animation, it will be seen in the Canvas.

2.

Where you are creating a text slate, you first have to decide how animated and customized you want it to look. Go to the upper left-hand box in the Inspector and **enter your text**. The text will appear in the Canvas as a white, hollow-looking interpretation of your words. It will also appear as a bar in the Timeline, representing the length of the clip. From here, you can go to the tabs in the Inspector to adjust the nature of the text, such as its opacity and width. In the Canvas, you can reposition the text to where you would like it to appear on the screen. In the Timing tab in the Inspector, you can change how long the clip will stay on the screen.

3.

Now you have to make the big decisions as to which **font, effects and backgrounds** you would like for the text. You can only apply one font, so you have to decide if you would like it to be one of the standard fonts or one of the animated fonts. Double-click whichever font you choose, and the text in the Canvas will immediately change to that font. You may want only the text to be on the screen, but if you are using “lower thirds,” as in a documentary or news piece, you may prefer to have a box background for the text.

Click on the Texture tab and select a texture from one of the many available styles. Select the style you want from the Category menu, highlight the specific texture you want, then select Apply To New Track at the bottom of the Media Browser. The texture will then appear as a block in the Timeline; make sure that its track is below that of the text. On the Canvas, you will see that the texture is behind the text. Go into the Canvas and resize the texture as you desire.

The Objects tab works in the exact same way, but the result is more animated and often stands out more than the text does.

4.

Effects are one of the best aspects of Live Type, and often the main reason to use the program. You will again be given a Category menu, which, once you select it, will give you a variety of options. Double-click the ones you want; they will be applied to your text or background, depending on which block track you have highlighted in the Timeline. These effects range from the activities of the text while on the screen to simple transitions such as Fade In and Fade Out.

Go into the Timeline and decide exactly how long you want the text, backgrounds and effects to last on the screen.

There should be a nice synergy between all three. Make sure the transition effects do not take up too much of the text’s screen time, otherwise the audience will not be able to read it fully. If you are using a background texture or object, make sure they appear a little before the text, and not the other way around.

5.

Once the clip is the way you want it, make sure to play it several times, watching the text video in the Canvas. When you are satisfied, go to **File and Render Movie**. In this menu, you give the text movie a name and set its location for export. Make sure you select both the background and the text to be rendered; otherwise, it will just render one or the other. Live Type will export the file to your specified location, and you will have a **QuickTime file** you can then import into whatever editing program you are working with.