

# EDITING



Editing is much more than piecing together fragments, it is the process in which the meaning and rhythm of the final video is constructed. The clarity of your story, its impact, and its emotion depend largely on editing.

Remember that a good editor is not someone who can use the program, but someone who understands the functions and possibilities of putting image and sound together. The main goal of editing is to tell a story and generate certain emotions in the audience. Don't forget your goal and use the tools of editing to achieve it.

You can find free programs for your computer (Movie Maker / Davinci Resolve) and for your cell phone (PowerEditor). Choose one of these programs, you can learn the basic steps of using them with online tutorials. In this class we are not going to focus on any specific

program, but on general editing operations and basic learning that will help you become a better editor, no matter which software you choose to use.

## Functions of editing

There are five basic editing functions that are important to understand before you start putting together the parts that will make up your video. These functions are: information, motivation, quality, formal diversity, and continuity.

**Information:** Each shot provides a certain amount of information, and must be on screen long enough for it to be understood and processed by the audience. The screen time of a shot depends on this information, the scale of the shot and the amount of visual elements it provides. It is important that each shot is on screen as long as necessary, no more and no less, although this is something you will learn over time. Each time we cut to a new shot it must provide new information, and it must be different from the previous shot in terms of what is presented and how it is presented. In general, general shots last longer on screen than close-ups, because they have more information.

**Motivation:** Every shot has a finite duration, even a sequence shot. The moment in which the shot is cut and another shot is taken must be motivated by some thematic or formal element. It may be that the interviewee or the narrator mentions some new subject and it is necessary to give some new visual information. The cut may also be motivated by some formal element (the gesture or movement of a person), or it may be motivated by some sound, which alerts us to a new sequence or moment in the story. Both information and motivation allow us to move the story forward to a new place, with motivated and clear cuts.

**Quality:** In editing, you must select each shot not only for the information it provides but also for its technical quality. You must check if the shot is well focused, well lit, if it has a good composition. The more visual culture you have, the easier it will be to make these choices, because you will learn what works best and what is better to discard. In the case of an interview, you should also check the audio quality, and discard those moments where the audio is damaged for any reason.

**Formal diversity:** In addition to the formal quality of each shot, the editor must be able to achieve great diversity when putting them together. Each sequence must be composed of shots with different information and also, different camera angles, different shot scales, different forms of composition. Remember that, when cutting from one shot to another, ideally there should be a minimum 45-degree variation between them with respect to the position of the camera. If this is not done, the sequence is likely to be boring or predictable, which will cause the audience to lose interest.

**Continuity:** This is one of the most complex aspects of editing, since the aim is to ensure that the cuts between shots are not perceived by the audience, that the video is perceived as a whole from beginning to end, with logical transitions between sequences. The continuity in each scene is maintained in many ways, from the continuity of the location, the lighting, the color and the position of each person within the edited sequence. If an interviewee appears on the left side of the screen, it is better to maintain that position throughout the entire sequence than to see him or her jump from one side of the screen to the other (180 degree

rule). Another aspect that is taken care of is the continuity of movement and speed: if in a sequence a person walks from one side to the other, the same direction of movement must be maintained when joining the different shots. The same goes for the speed of movement (remember that in more closed shots the movements are perceived as faster than in a general shot). Finally, the continuity of sound allows each sequence to be perceived as unified, and for there to be sound changes as the sequences change. The volume of the sound should also be kept the same throughout the video.

## Types of editing

Editing is a technical process as well as an artistic process. There are specific technical elements that determine whether one shot works well with another, but in the end, it will depend on the intention behind the video. There are different forms of editing depending on what aspect is prioritized when creating the video:

**Editing by action:** This is the most commonly used in fiction films with a classic narrative. What is prioritized here is the continuity of movements and action. Its purpose is to tell a story in the clearest possible way. The real actions of each scene are shown, the locations are always clearly presented. All the rules of continuity are respected.

**Formal editing:** it is based on joining shots with similar formal characteristics. Ex: the blades of a helicopter are joined with a fan in a room, a vase in a room cuts to another vase in another scene. Often used in transitions between the end of one sequence and the beginning of the next. It is used equally in fiction film and documentary film. It is an attractive and logical way of linking different moments in a film.

**Conceptual editing:** It is based on joining shots to generate a concept or an association of ideas. It is generally used when two parallel actions or two situations only associated in an abstract way are mixed. E.g.: to emphasize the fight of two people, scenes of two lions fighting can be put together. This form of editing requires imagination and ability to put together situations not directly connected in reality, but through a mental or cultural association.

**Attraction editing:** This is the one usually used in advertising. It looks for aesthetic impact, it is visually aggressive, short shots. It seeks the sensory, the instinctive and physical response of the audience to shots of great value or visual impact. The main intention is not narrative clarity, but to produce a memorable and strong experience in a very short time.

**Rhythmic editing:** This seeks to achieve a certain rhythm or tempo, almost always following a soundtrack. There may be a synchronous relationship with the sound (the rhythm of the music coincides with the rhythm of the image) or a contrasting relationship (the image may be very fast, while a slow soundtrack creates a contrast). This is the type of editing used in music videos, for example. The priority in this case is the sound, and the image follows the rhythm and emotion of the sound.

## Editing steps

The first stage of editing requires a thorough review of all the footage, where you will discard what doesn't work on a technical or narrative level, and start choosing the visual and sound elements that are most valuable to the story you want to tell. Organize the footage into folders as you see fit—by days of filming, by subject, by interviewees. The order depends on your project, but it's important that it's always easy to find any fragment.

Save your footage on more than one hard drive (or on an online service if you have access to it). This will prevent you from losing your footage due to a disk accident or breakage.

Choose whatever editing program you are most comfortable with and start the importing phase of the material. You will need all the recorded videos, the sound, and the music you will add to the video, as well as maps, graphics and other visual resources you wish to add. It is important that you decide from the beginning what the final resolution of your video will be (720, 1080, 4k?). The higher the resolution, the more space the materials will occupy, the longer the rendering time and the larger the final file you will have to upload to the Internet. For internet videos 720 or 1080p resolution is usually enough.

Then you will start editing the first version of your story. In this part you will choose the best moments of each interview and link them in a way that makes sense with the narrative of your story. This first cut may be a little longer than the final length of your video. At this point you can also add narration or on-screen text that will help you tell your story. The important thing is that these parts achieve a clear narrative, with new information at each moment. Avoid repetition or elements that take away from the main theme.

After you have the main information organized, you will start editing in a second layer the images (B-roll) that provide the visual information. This is as important as the verbal information. It is not necessary that the words and the image match exactly, sometimes it is more valuable that the image provides some complementary information. You will also add any archival material you need to your story.

Once you have this initial version, you will make a sound correction, keeping in mind that the audio of the interviews and narration should be close to -12db. Then you can add the complementary sounds (ambiances, effects), and music.

It is valuable to be able to show this first cut to other people and listen to their comments. This will help you to make a second cut where you will make all the necessary corrections.

In this second cut you can now add any missing credits and titles, and do the color correction. You will also add any extra transitions and fine tune the cuts. Once you have adjusted the rhythm of the video and corrected any other errors, you will have the final version of your video, ready to share.

Export the final video. Create an H264 file with the following characteristics: Resolution (1080p), Frames per second (30fps), Sound (48kHz). This resolution is sufficient for most online content.

Finally share the video by uploading it to YouTube or any social network you have. Always check that the video looks and sounds good once uploaded.

## Transitions

There are several types of transitions possible between shots: Cut, Dissolve, Wipe, Fade to black or white, and many more. Currently the most used and most effective transition is the cut, while the dissolve is used only at the beginning and end of the video. It is important that you learn how to edit using cuts, before using other transitions.

Remember that an essential part of editing is that your video flows without abrupt cuts and feels like a whole. Next, we'll look at some techniques that will help you make effective cuts in your video, without being too noticeable:

**Cutting on the action:** Action is anything that allows us to maintain some continuity. It can be a gesture, a change in the look, a movement. The correct technique is to cut in the middle of the movement of the foreground and start the next shot in the middle of another movement.

**Shot- Counter shot:** A look-activity of one character towards another. It is used in a conversation or in any sequence where several people participate. In this case what we are looking for is that the conversation flows so that we can see the reactions of each one. The cuts should be made at moments when the person changes the tone of voice, changes the direction of the gaze or changes their attitude.

**Hiding cut:** When one of the characters is hidden by an object or another character. It is cut at the moment of concealment and the next shot begins. This should be planned in the photograph, when making shots that cross in front of trees, walls, and objects that hide the image briefly.

**Frame entry and exit:** The entry into the frame of an object or character is a widely used device to link two shots. So it's important when shooting to start with a clean image and then ask the person to enter the frame - you must direct them to enter and exit the frame. This type of shot will help you a lot in editing.

**Surprise cut:** This is a cut caused by a loud bang or a visual impact, or a sudden movement. This cut is used to highlight a surprise, such as when lightning strikes or something unexpected happens.

## Corrections

**Color Correction:** Whether you're going for a naturalistic tone or a specific hue, it's only right that your entire video has the same color tone throughout. To do this you will need to choose the hue you want and then make independent corrections to each shot until you achieve that unity. This is essential to make your video feel more unified.

**Light Correction:** Similar to the above, but in this case you want the brightness and contrast of each shot to remain constant throughout the film. We generally want people's faces and the most important objects to be seen, so we avoid dark shadows that cover these elements. The contrast level should also remain the same at every point in the video.

**Motion Stabilization:** Ideally you will have filmed using a tripod and/or gimbal, so your video will already be stabilized. But you can always add extra stability using software tools. In image effects there is usually some stabilization correction.

**Sound correction:** You need to level the audio of your film. The most important thing is that the voice is in the foreground (interview, narration at -12db) and all ambient sounds and music are at a lower volume (-22db). The total volume of your video should be between -10 and -14db.

## Visual effects

In some cases your story will need some basic visual effects. Don't abuse any visual effects and don't use any unless your story certainly demands it. Most software usually has these tools:

**Changes in speed:** Fast motion & slow motion. Slow motion helps accentuate a key moment in the story, whether it's an action or a gesture. / Fast motion can help you create a time-lapse effect in a still shot, for example, a sunset.

**Reverse image:** Can be used to highlight something going back or returning to its start or origin.

**Split screen:** Can help you show two actions at the same time. It is rarely used in videos designed to be viewed on cell phones, because the information is too small.

**Cropping or Resizing:** Used when you want to crop a part of the image. It is only recommended when the final video will have a lower resolution than the filmed image. Ex: if the video was filmed in 4k and the final video will be in 1080, then the video can be rescaled without losing quality. This effect is also used when you add a photo within the edit, and you want to add it to the whole screen or create a smooth motion effect.

There are many other visual effects available, it's a matter of checking them out and trying them out. Just don't overuse these effects, generally the cut and full screen image is enough to make your story effective.

## Texts and credits

All programs allow you to add text to your video, on top of your image.

When adding text, make sure that it is legible (that it has a good size, that it has a shadow and that it is on screen long enough to be read).

When adding credits at the end of your video make sure it is legible, and add the logos and names of all the people and institutions that helped you in the making of your video. Make this list throughout the filming so you don't forget anyone. For most of them, seeing their name in the credits will be thanks enough and they will surely not hesitate to support you for your next video.

## EDITING ON THE SMARTPHONE

CyberLink [PowerDirector](#) is a free software. It can be used on a PC or a smartphone. PowerDirector offers a familiar timeline interface, where you can combine videos and add multiple special effects, still images, audio, voiceovers, speed adjustments, music and more. You can output at up to 4K resolution and share on social media networks. Let's see the basic steps to edit on this app.

### **Drag and drop videos, photos and audio to timeline.**

PowerDirector Mobile provides an intuitive timeline interface. Easily locate video, photo, and music content on your mobile device, and then simply drag and drop multimedia content onto PowerDirector's timeline.



### **Arrange Scenes**

To set the sequence of timeline objects, simply tap to select a video or photo object on the timeline, and drag it to the desired location. You can also replace a timeline object by dragging a media library item, and dropping it onto a timeline object.

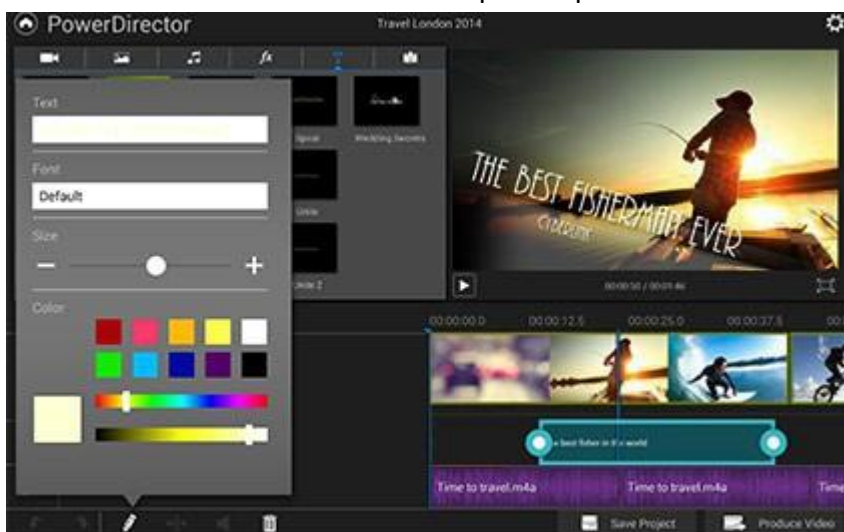


### Trim Footage

To trim a video clip, tap to select a video object, and swipe the green control points to adjust the clip's starting and ending points. You can use the same method to trim audio, or to adjust the display duration of photos.

### Add titles, transitions and effects

PowerDirector includes over 50 animated titles, transition effects and video effects. Choose your desired effect from the effect library, then drag-and-drop titles, or overlay video and transition effects on timeline video clips and photos.



The software also includes over 15 animated titles that can be arranged anywhere on the title track. To modify the title text, tap the edit button, and then customize the font type, size and color.





### Transition Effects

To overlay transitions between timeline objects, simply drag-and-drop a transition effect between two video or photo objects. You can also try out different transitions by dragging and replacing a transition on the timeline to see how it looks.



### Video Effects

To instantly alter the look and feel of footage, you can choose from over 10 video effects, such as water reflection, TV wall, sepia and radial blur. Effects can be applied to both photo and video content, and you can instantly view the effect in the preview window.



### **Share your video**

You can export a video file in MP4 format, or upload your videos directly to Facebook & YouTube. If you wish to edit your video on your PC, you can choose to export your project to CyberLink Cloud, and download the project to your PC to continue editing.

You can see a video tutorial of PowerDirector [here](#).

You can find more lessons on how to edit with this program [here](#).

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