

# More than a shot in the dark

*Shotlisting and accounting for footage usage has never been up there with the favourite production tasks, but it provides a target-rich environment for the software developers who have produced Tokishot.*

It has long been a dream for anyone working with acquired content to be able to account for its use in a time based format like a TV programme using computer analysis of shots to take away the drudgery of analysing the video from this viewpoint in realtime. This French-produced software which derives from the audio world, offers just that possibility. If you can put the DVD or movie video into Quicktime format - using conversion software or taking the output from popular edit programs like Avid or Final Cut Pro - this file can be imported into Tokishot. Once the detection settings are calibrated to define the sensitivity of the shot analysis, you simply leave the program to do its work. Miraculously, a complete shot breakdown appears in the main panel, with thumbnail images of the in and out points of each clip, the corresponding timecodes and even the durations. If the software has defined too many individual clips (and you can go down to a frame-by-frame analysis of changes in the video if you need that closeness of detail), you can change the sensitivity of the breakdown, even after the initial analysis has been run.

There is now room to add text descriptions in a special field as you run down the analysis from the top of the screen. It is pretty important to add these details at this stage. There is space for shot and scene descriptions, so one field can be used for descriptors and another the source of the footage.

The most useful way of working with the software in its current form, to achieve tallies of archive used is to add descriptive tags such as the source, specific



bulletin, stockshot number etc in the scene description, then print a PDF of the whole document with the thumbnails - but also output a shot EDL and text file. It can be fiddly doing all this and the user needs a set routine to maintain accuracy because the text export relies on the calculated durations inside the analysis for the individual shots to generate accurate outpoints and therefore logged durations. However with all three documents open, it is straightforward to run through the EDL which should always be accurate, marking key shots with the descriptions from the text file. It's a pity these do not currently appear capable of being combined. The job of pruning the shot analysis down to leave just the relevant shots is still a long and tedious task that has to be done manually, so the first analysis is best left as the master reference document for the cut that includes everything, then the text file which helpfully lists all the shots to which you have attached descriptors, usefully placed at the head of its running order, can be mapped out to edit the EDL into a proper reflection of the relevant data.

All of this may sound a bit of a workaround the houses, but as with most of these kinds of systems, once the software is set up and the routine is settled, it works rather well. The analysis takes a few minutes to run but then the three outputs provide a concise picture of the cut with the acquired elements listed. With a bit of judicious editing in the EDL list, a comprehensive breakdown of these components is shown. Durations can be added from the master document either in Tokishot itself or from off the PDF. That sounds complicated admittedly, but believe me, it has the ring of good news for anyone logging usage, who has had to sit down with a DVD, a stopwatch, an EDL and a pile of shotnotes to work these things out. The next incarnation of the program may nail some of the inconsistencies and make the software even better for this purpose. Imagine being able swiftly to delete the non-relevant cuts in the breakdown and export into an Excel spreadsheet or Filemaker database all the important data, to be retrieved by source, timecode, cost base or whatever is needed for compliance with all the licensing issues involved in using the material in the production. There are a good few production managers, editors, producers and archive researchers round the world who would eat their timelines to have that.

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