

An Introduction to Adobe Premiere Pro



Photo by Peter Stumpf on Unsplash

Adobe Premiere Pro is a professional video editing software used by professionals in the film industries. It's taught and used here at the university to students studying filmmaking and video editing.

Premiere is an intuitive video editing application. However, without the proper training it can be easy to run into problems. You can save yourself hours or more if you also learn specific workflows and methods of using the software rather than only relying on the techniques you've discovered with your own self-learning. If you are considering a career in post-production, it's helpful to understand that professionals who work together as a team using Premiere will carry out workflows that everyone needs to follow in order to be efficient and keep everything working without issues.

This guide is designed to take you through the fundamentals of preparing a project with the correct file management, setting up a new project, some basic editing techniques, some features of the software and finally a look into an example of the settings you could use when exporting your project.

1 | File Management

It's important to manage your files and folders correctly, but this is a part of the process that is often completed poorly if not left out of the process entirely.

Understandably you might be eager to open Premiere in order to start editing the rushes, but before you launch the software it's important to create an organisational system on your computer in order for your project to run smoothly.

A Premiere project is not just made up of one file, it's made up of many, and the software doesn't organise your folders and files for you. A lot of issues with Premiere projects stem from poor file management.

Create a folder and give it a name.

Create some folders within that folder and name those too. You might want a folder for rushes, exports, audio, project files, even miscellaneous for the items that don't quite fit anywhere else.

Once you have a place for everything, your project will be much more organised and the likelihood of you experiencing problems in this area will be lessened. Remember that proper organisation is a necessity for professional projects, especially when working with others.

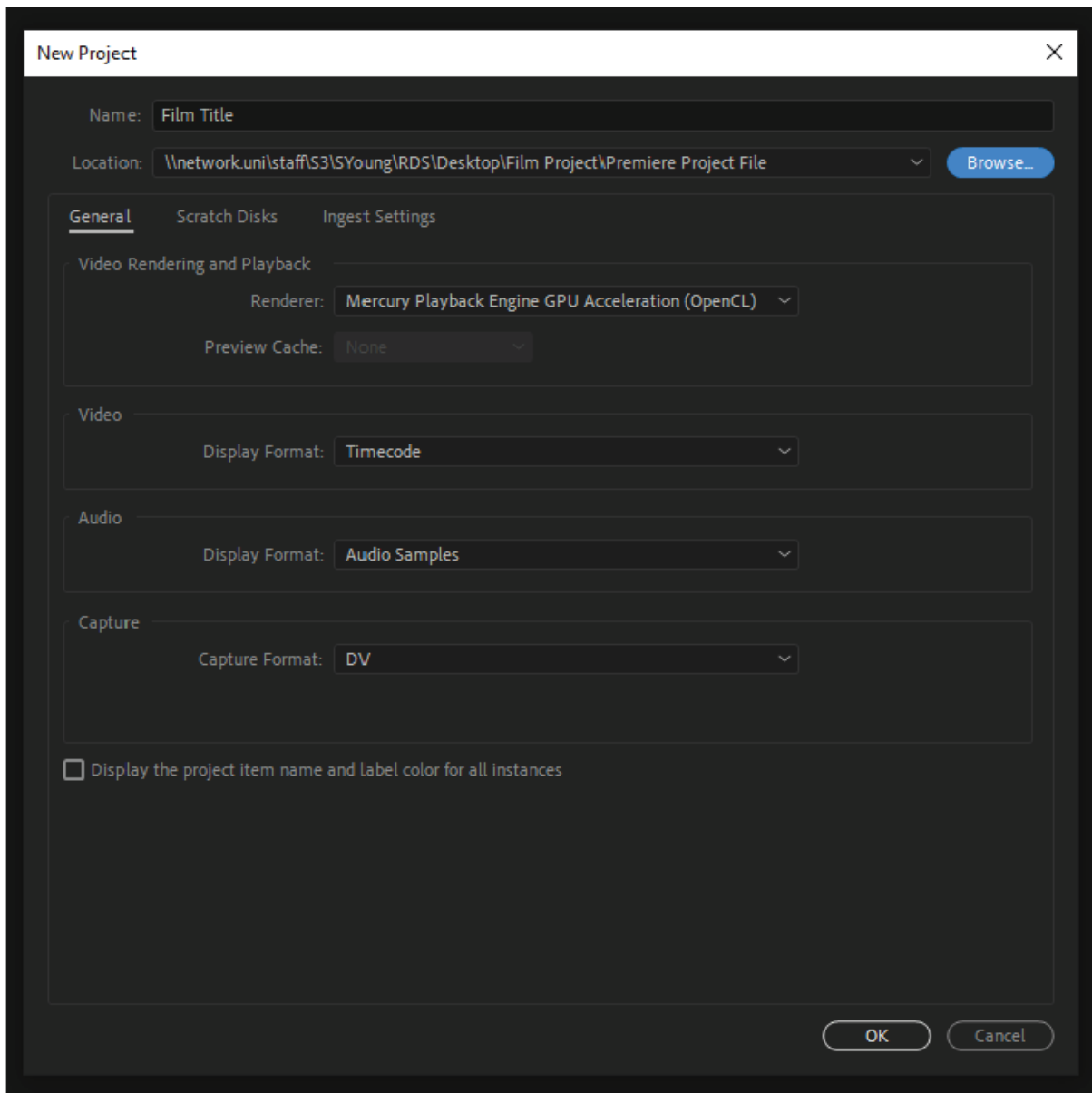
2 | Saving your Rushes

Next, you'll need to save your rushes. It's not a good idea to open Premiere and import the files straight from the SD Card or other storage device used from the camera itself. If you do this, you'll be reliant on the original storage device always having to be present. As soon as you remove it, all of your media will go offline. It's very important to note that Premiere does not create a backup of your media when you import it into your project. So, because of this, it's best to save it somewhere else before you import. A good place would be on one of the folders you've created on your computer. A good name for the folder might be something like rushes or footage. Each new card could have its own folder inside of your rushes folder.

Make sure to copy the whole folder from the storage device over to your computer without moving or renaming anything. This folder is sometimes called PRIVATE, but this depends on the camera you have used. It should be brought over in full to the folder on your computer.

It's not recommended to search the storage device to locate the video files and move them out of the folder or rename them. The folder structure that the camera has created for your rushes can be important for a project to work properly and if not kept in its original structure, this can cause problems for Premiere in the edit later on.

3 | Creating a New Project

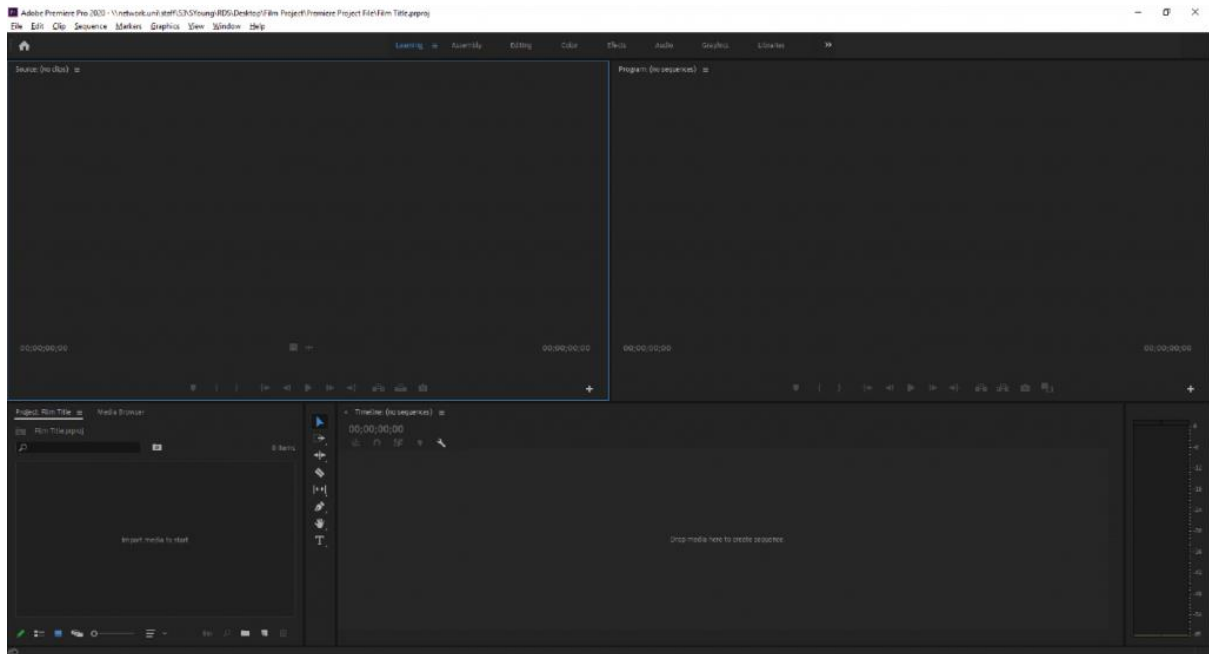


Open Premiere Pro and you'll be greeted with the home screen.

Select **New Project**. When the **New Project** window opens, give your project a name, a location (for example, the folder you created for your project file). Then click the tab titled **Scratch Disks** to make sure everything is going to be saved to **Same as Project**.

Finally, click **OK**. Your new project will open.

4 | The User Interface



When you create a new project or open an existing one, you'll be introduced to the usual user interface of Adobe Premiere Pro.

There are several windows with different names that can be seen at the top left of each one.

The **Project** window is where all of your files and folders are located. In video editing terminology, folders are called bins. This window is where you can organise your rushes and open individual clips.

The **Source** window will display a visual representation of whatever is selected in the project window. You'll be able to view your rushes in this window and select the whole or part of a clip to use in the timeline.

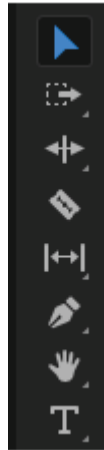
In the **Timeline** window is where you will edit your film using video and audio tracks.

The **Program** window contains the visuals of your edited sequence. Here you can watch what you have edited so far.

You have the ability to change your workspace by dragging and dropping the windows into a different order. If you want to reset your workspace, you can do so by selecting:

window > workspaces > reset to saved layout.

5 | Tools



To the left of the timeline window, you'll see some icons in a small thin window. These are the tools. Using these different tools allows you to go into different modes of working in Premiere.

Some of the tools that are described in this section are contained within one button and will require clicking and holding on the button so that they appear as options. Also note the letter next to some of the titles indicating the keyboard shortcut for that tool.

Selection Tool (V): You can select clips, move clips around on the timeline, trim clips, select menu items and buttons, as well as select many other items within the user interface.

Track Select Forward Tool (A): With this selected, when you click on the timeline, every clip on all tracks from the cursor and to the right will be selected. When you hold shift, every clip from one track from the cursor and to the right will be selected.

Ripple Edit Tool (B) Drag the edge of a clip to ripple-trim the selection. You will see how the clip that will be trimmed is the one you have selected, other clips will not be affected, but will also not leave a gap.

Rolling Edit Tool (N): Drag the edge of a clip to trim incoming and outgoing clips simultaneously. Using this tool will leave a gap if you only trim one clip at a time.

Rate Stretch Tool (R): Drag the edge of a clip to rate stretch the selection, this will change its speed to match the new duration.

Razor Tool (C): Click to split a clip into two. Using Alt will override a link in the clips and using Shift will create a split over all tracks.

Slip Tool (Y): Drag on a clip to slip the selection, this will modify the media in and out points without changing its position in time.

Slide Tool (U): Drag on a clip to slide the selection, this will modify its position in time by trimming the adjacent clips.

Pen Tool (P): Used to create, select and move keyframes, for example when making adjustments in the audio.

Rectangle Tool: This tool can be used to create a rectangle shape in the program window.

Ellipse Tool: This tool can be used to create an ellipse shape in the program window.

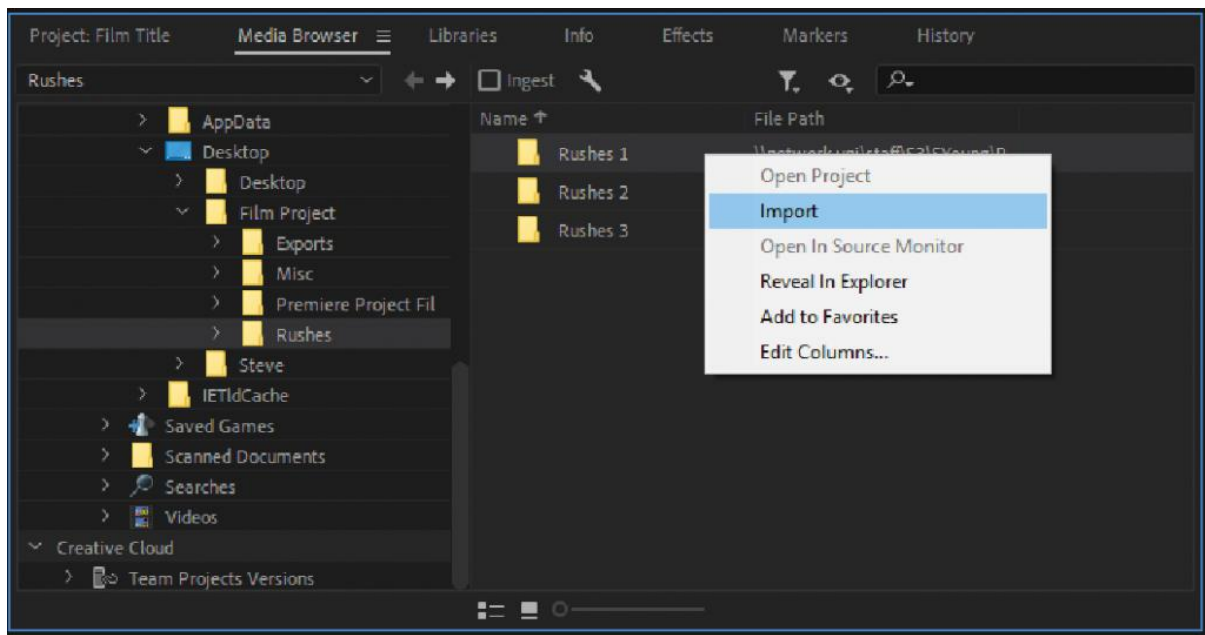
Hand Tool (H): This tool can be used to scroll horizontally in time by dragging.

Zoom Tool (Z): Click to zoom in one level in time and use Alt to zoom out one level in time.

Type Tool (T): Click in the program window and type to create text.

Vertical Type Tool: Click in the program window and type to create vertical text.

6 | Importing



At this point, you should have transferred your rushes/footage to a folder, or you might want to bring something else into your project such as a title sequence, a photo, or a piece of music.

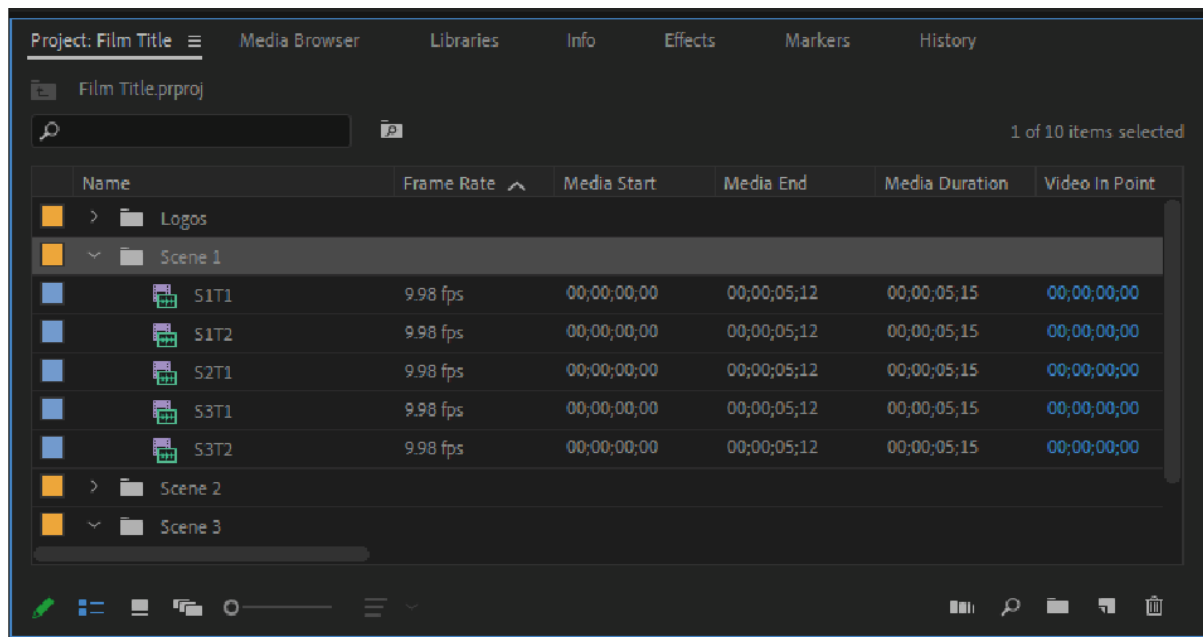
This process is known as importing.

There are many ways to import items into Premiere. However, there is a specific method you can use that can stop certain issues from occurring.

To import using this method, go to **Media Browser**, which is located on the second tab in the project window. Locate your files, select them, right click and select import.

Your files should now appear in the project window.

7 | Organising in the Project Window



It's good to review your rushes in Premiere then sort the clips and everything else in your project into some sort of organisational system that makes sense to you.

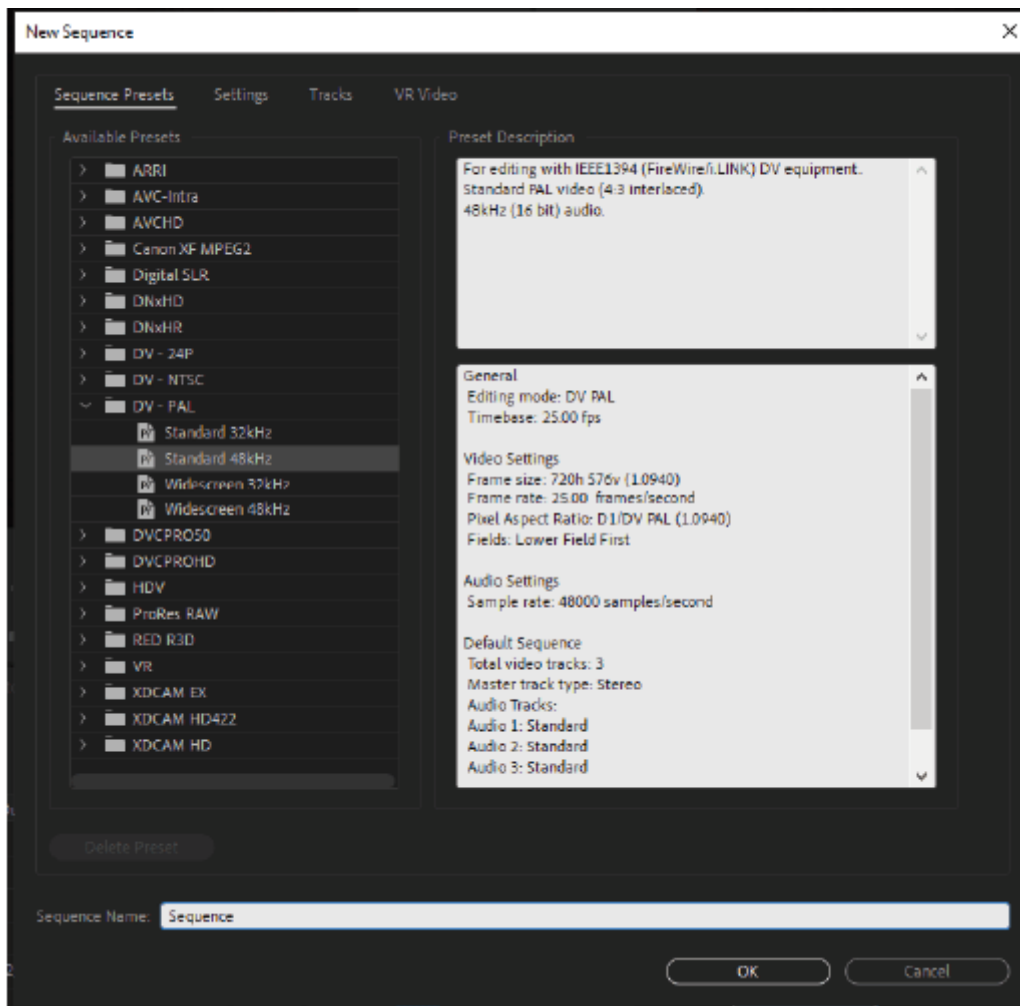
It might seem time consuming to rename clips and place them into bins, however this process can save you a lot of time later on in your project. It's useful to keep to an organisational system inside the project window in order to save time and prevent confusion.

You can rename a clip by right clicking on it in the project window and clicking rename.

You can create a bin by right clicking anywhere in the project window and clicking **New Bin**.

Drag and drop a file into a bin to start organising your project files into bins.

8 | Creating a New Sequence



A sequence is where you can edit a film or video using video and audio tracks. You can work on a sequence in the timeline window.

You can create a sequence by right clicking anywhere in the project window, clicking new item and then **Sequence...**

The **New Sequence** window will open, and from here you can choose the settings you want your new sequence to have.

It's important that the sequence settings are correct. If you're editing with video rushes, you'll most likely want to make sure that the sequence settings match the rushes settings. If you don't the film could end up looking very different from what you wanted.

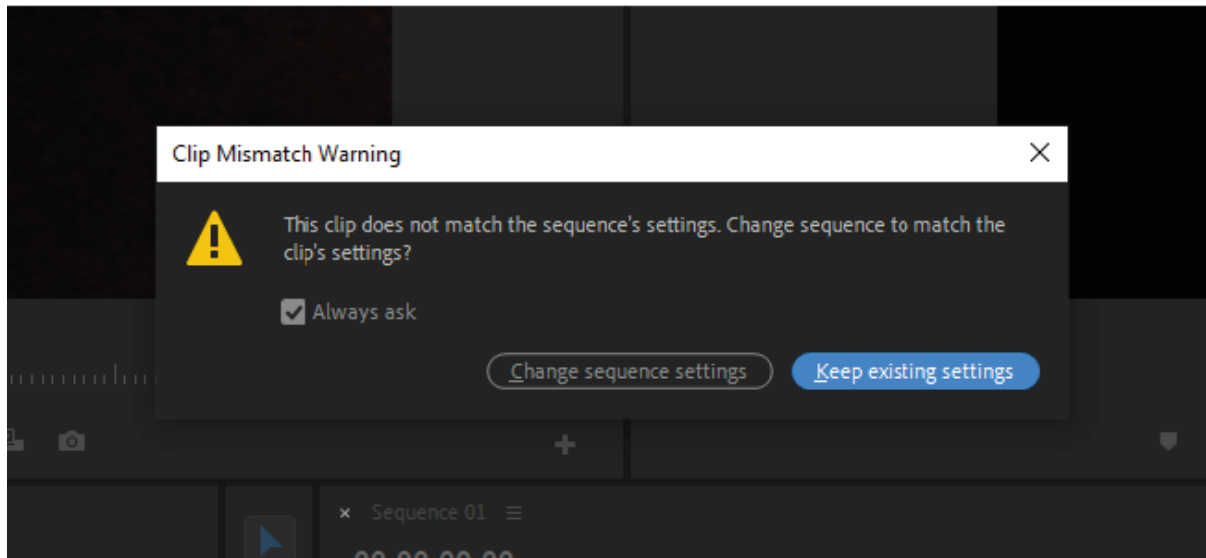
If you're new to these settings, there's a simple technique you can use to make sure your video rushes and sequence settings match.

Simply click **OK** on the New Sequence window, regardless of what settings it has been created with.

The sequence will arrive in both your project window and timeline window.

If your sequence ever goes missing from the timeline, you can double click it in the project window to open it back up again.

Drag and drop a video clip anywhere into your sequence and if the settings don't match, you'll see another window.



If you want your clip and sequence settings to match, select **Change sequence settings**.

The sequence will change to the same settings as your original clip, making sure your film will look the same as your original footage.

9 | Getting Started on your edit

As previously mentioned, Premiere is a very intuitive software. There are often many ways to do the same thing.

If you double click on a clip in the project window, the content will appear in the source window, whether this is the first frame of a video clip, the visuals of a photo or the waveforms of an audio clip.

You'll find that you can drag a clip into the timeline and you'll then see one or a number of bars have appeared on your timeline and sequence.

This is your clip, visually represented as a rectangular bar (or bars) on the timeline.

You can move these by dragging them left or right, so that the clip will play at a different point in time.

If you see two bars, one on V1 and one on A1, this means that your video clip is made up of both Video and Audio. V1 and A1 are video tracks and audio tracks. You'll notice that there are three video tracks and three audio tracks. These can be used for when you start placing more clips and media onto your timeline.

The video tracks are layered on top of each other. V3 is on the top, so a clip that is on this track will be seen above whatever is on V2 and V1. V2 is underneath V3 and above V1. This layering can be useful for a number of reasons, but for now just know that if you are unable to see one of your video clips in the program window, it might be because there is another clip on a track above.

There are multiple audio tracks to give you the ability to layer many different sounds in your film. For instance, you might want the original audio from your rushes on A1, some music on A2, and some extra sound effects on A3. If you place all these on each track at the same point in time, they will play all at the same time.

Press the play button on the program window to watch your edit. As you do so you will notice the blue line in the timeline window (the play head) will start to move from left to right, you will also see the visuals of your edited sequence in the program window, and hear the audio of your sequence.

10 | An Introduction to Basic Editing

Some ways of using the software are more efficient than others. In this section, you'll learn more about these powerful and more effective ways of editing a film.

It's true that you can drag and drop a clip straight from the project window to the timeline window. You can cut this clip down, using the cursor, at either end of the clip to trim and you can use the razor tool to cut clips and delete the parts you don't need.

However, editing your clips within the timeline itself can be difficult, especially if you have already built up a lengthy sequence within the timeline.

There's nothing wrong with editing a film in this way, but there are many more methods of editing a film within Premiere.

Let's say you wanted to include part of a clip into your sequence. One method is that you could drag the whole clip in and trim or cut it in the timeline. But there is also a way you can select part of the clip and only bring in what is needed before it reaches the timeline.

Double click on the clip in the project window. It will show in the source window. On the source window there are a few tools you can use. You can press the play button (space) to watch the clip. Press the stop button (space) to stop watching.

There are also two shortcuts that aren't on the source or program windows as buttons but are very helpful: rewind (J) and fast-forward (L). You can use these while the source window is selected to scrub through the clip. The more times you press either shortcut, the faster it will rewind or fast-forward.

There might be a lot of footage at the beginning that isn't needed, so locate the first frame of the clip that you would like to include in the edit. When you have found it, locate and press the tool on the source window called mark in (I). You will notice that everything from this point onwards will become highlighted.

Find where you want the section of your clip to end, which might be before the clip itself ends. Once you have found the exact frame, press the button named mark out (O).

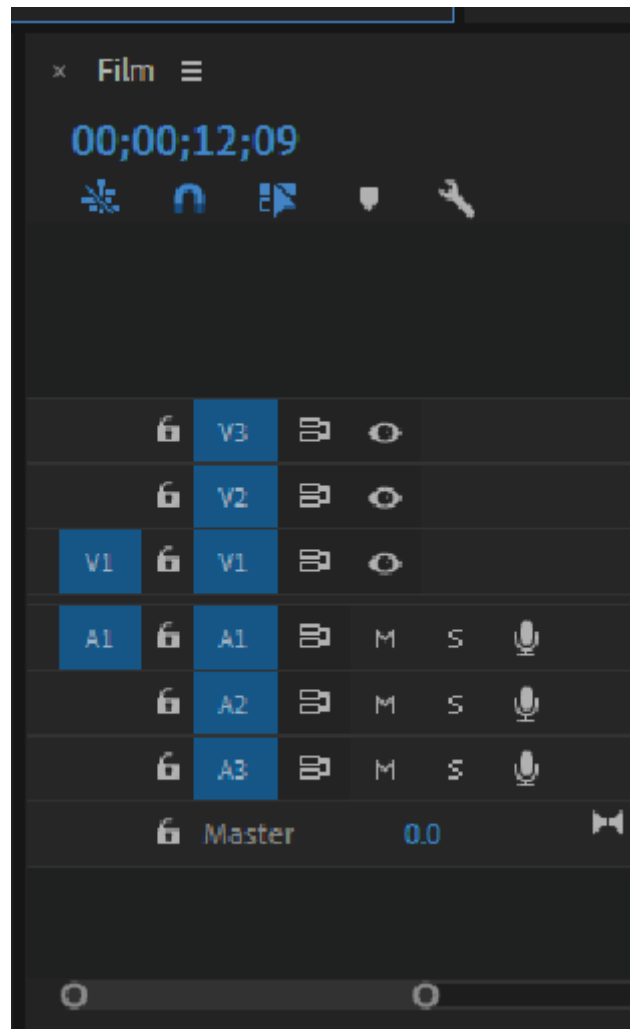
You'll notice now that you have selected a part of the clip between the in and out points you have made.

If you were to drag and drop this into your timeline, it would only bring in the part in between the in and out points, meaning that you don't have to do any editing of the clip inside the timeline itself.

You can go one step further and completely skip the drag and drop method by using the insert (,) and overwrite (.) buttons. I'll be going into more detail about insert and overwrite in later sections.

11 | Tracks on the Timeline

Before moving on to using the insert and overwrite buttons as powerful tools to use for editing, we should take a brief look at the left section of the timeline window where information on the tracks are located.



There are two sets of tracks next to each other.

The ones on the left, might show two tracks, V1 and A1. These are the tracks that belong to the source. For example, if you click on a clip in the project window, and it appears in the source window, you'll also find that the tracks for this clip appear.

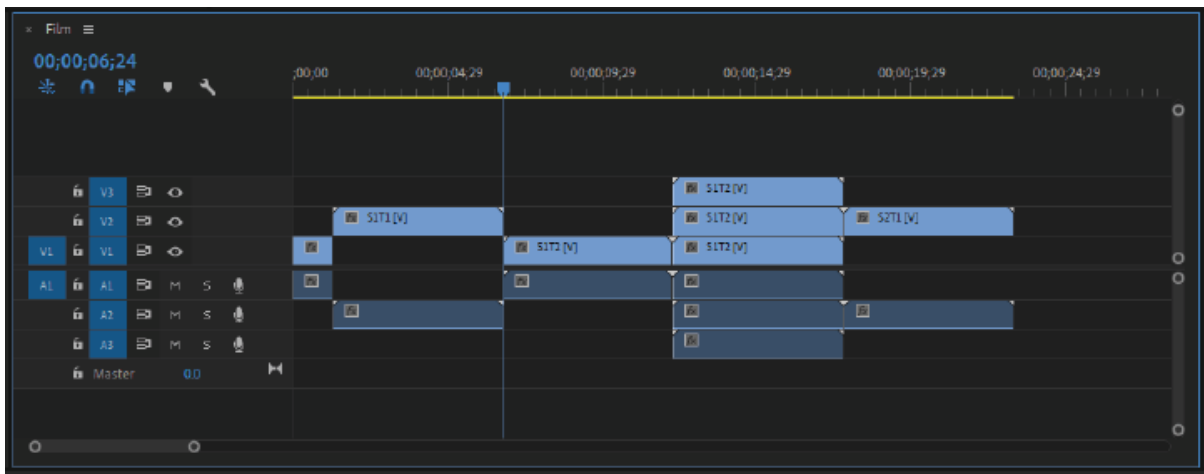
Next to these, just to the right of the source tracks, you'll find the tracks for the sequence. When creating a new sequence, by default, three video tracks and three audio tracks are created. This is what V1, V2, V3, A1, A2 and A3 are.

You can create more tracks for the sequence by clicking anywhere in the empty space around the tracks and selecting add tracks.

This information on tracks is important to know for the insert and overwrite method of bringing clips into your sequence, which we will be looking into in the next two sections.

12 | Insert

Let's say you have a sequence with at least two video clips.

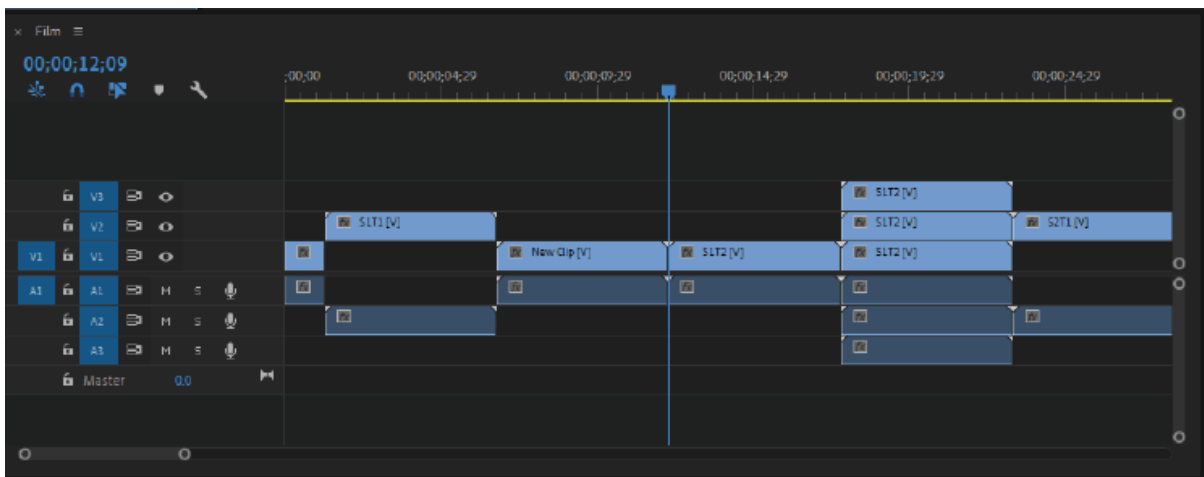


Let's also say that you wanted to insert a third clip in between two clips.

Using a method of moving every other clip out of the way, dragging and dropping the clip into the timeline, and then bringing everything back together again might be one way to do this, but it requires many steps to do so.

What might be easier is using the insert (,) button on the source window. First put the play head (the blue line on the timeline window) where you want the clip to go. (Holding shift while moving the play head will snap it to the beginning and end of clips.)

With the third clip selected and visible in the source window, press the insert (,) button.

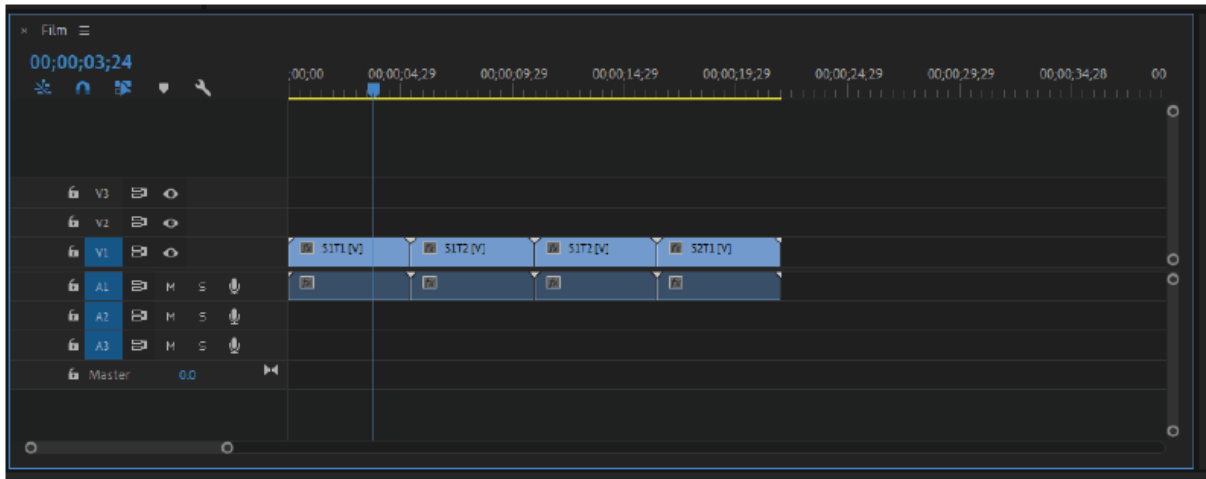


The new clip will be inserted in between the two clips on tracks V1 and A1. Nothing will be destroyed because of the inclusion of the new clip. Instead, everything after the clip after will be pushed further along the timeline to make room for the new clip.

This is a simple method of inserting a clip into your sequence.

13 | Overwrite

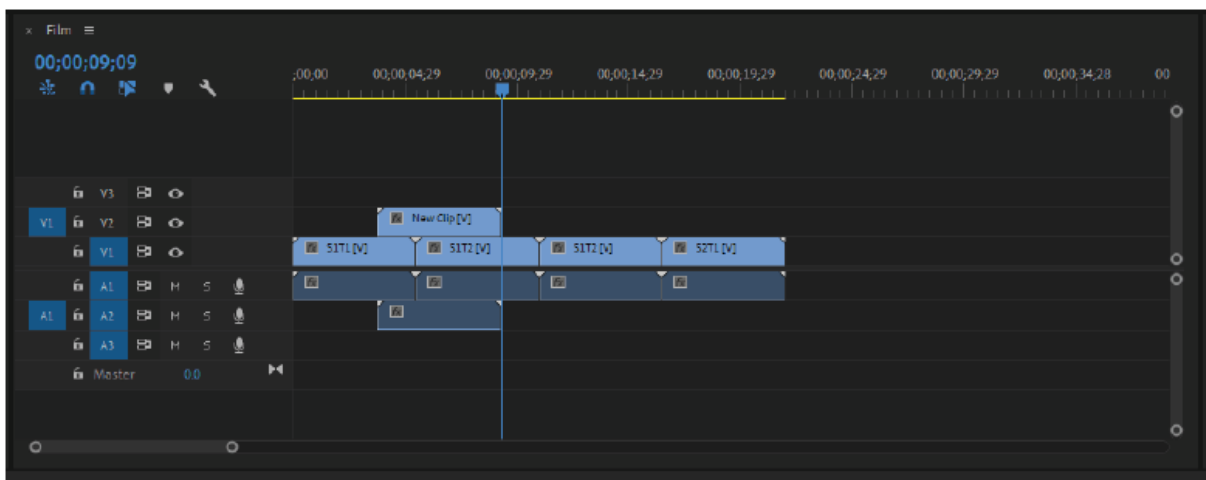
Let's say that you wanted to use V2 to place a clip. You can do this by using the overwrite tool.



First make sure the play head is placed where you would like the new clip to begin.

Select the new clip in the source window. Then make sure V1 of the source is aligned to V2 of the sequence in the section left of the of the timeline window. If there is audio on the clip, make sure A1 of the source is aligned to A2 of the sequence. You can do this by dragging and dropping with your cursor.

Click the overwrite (.) button.



The new clip will be added to the sequence on V2 and A2 and no other clips will move.

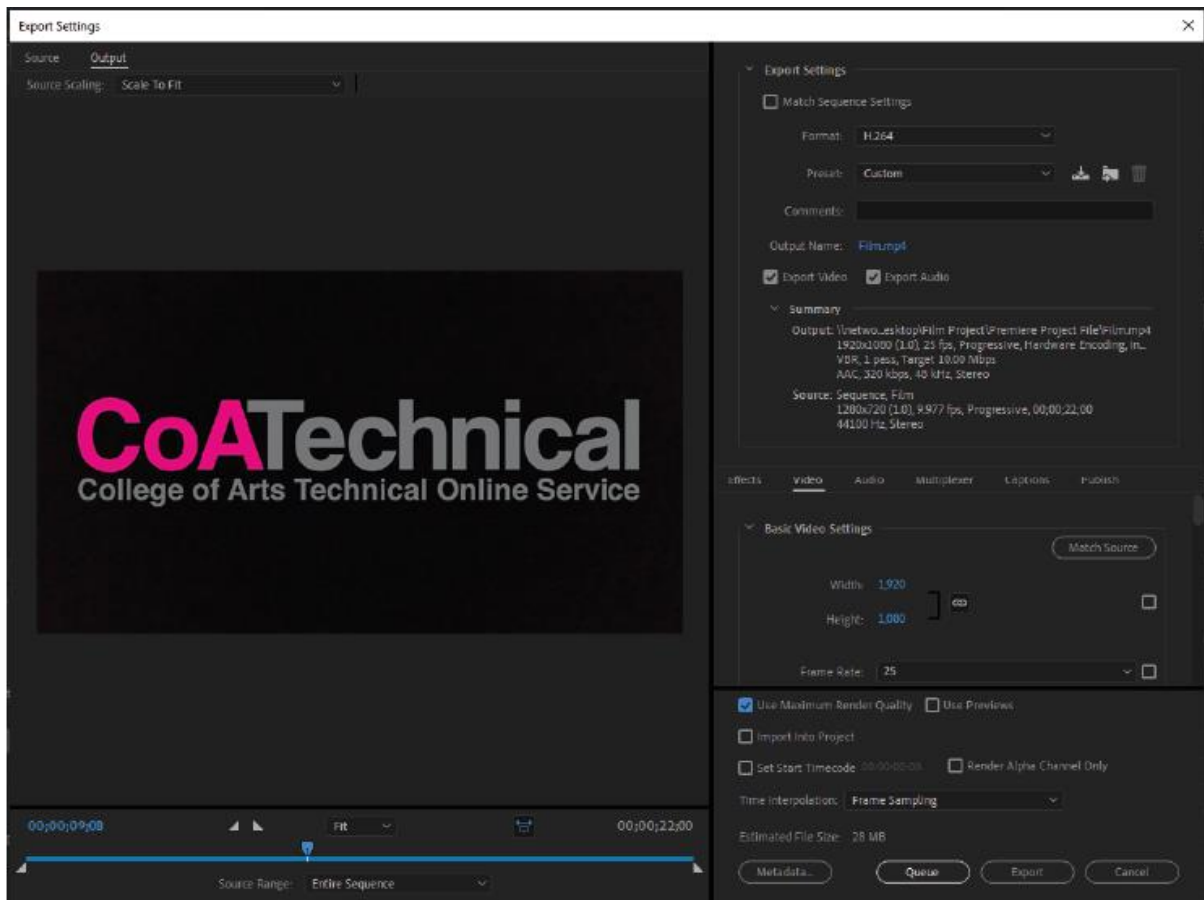
14 | Exporting

Once you have completed your edit and are ready export, creating a file of your film or video, you'll need to go through the exporting process.

When you have finished your edit, click on the timeline window to make sure it is selected. Go to:

file > export > media

You will see the export settings window.



There are many options for you to choose from and it entirely depends on what you are doing as to what settings you should choose. However, if you have edited your footage with Full HD rushes and your sequence settings are 1080p and 25FPS, the following settings might be useful for you to know.

The next section will show you how to make an MP4 file. The MP4 container is a widely used one within the industry and is usually able to play and be viewed on many devices.

15 | Export Settings

First of all, make sure **Source Range** is set to what you need it to be. If you want to export your entire sequence, make sure this is the setting you choose.

Below are the settings I would recommend to produce a **1080p 25FPS MP4 file**:

Format: H.264

Output Name: Make sure you give your film a name and place it in your exports folder or a place where you will be able to find it.

Export Video and Export Audio: Both need to be checked.

In the Video Tab:

Width: 1920

Height: 1080

Frame Rate: 25

Field Order: Progressive

Aspect: Square Pixels

Render at Maximum Depth: Checked

Bitrate Encoding: VBR, 2 pass

Target Bit Rate and Maximum Bit Rate: At least 16 (be careful that you don't put the bit rate too high, for example, the target bit rate for the preset named High Quality 1080p HD is 20)

Use Maximum Render Quality: Checked

Then press export. There will be a progress bar and your film will take some time to export. The result will be an MP4 file of your final film in the folder you selected.

This concludes the introduction guide for Adobe Premiere Pro. If you have any questions or would like further guidance on the software or video editing, please feel free to email at syoung@lincoln.ac.uk.