Creative Content

Inside this edition:

table of contents

Cover: John Haenke from FlyFishingMasterClass.com off Hervey Bay in QLD
Shot from GoPro Karma drone (now an ex-drone)

news & information

editorial

Good afternoon / evening

Firstly I'd like to thank all those who have responded so far to my quick survey regarding the web site name and content. So far (anyway), it seems the new name is the more popular by quite a margin, and most respondents are satisfied with the type and level of content.

But I am always happy to receive any feedback, so if there is specific content you'd like to see – more tutorials, case studies, hardware and software reviews, technical explanations, whatever – feel free to *email me*.

And if you haven't responded to the survey as yet, or didn't receive it, to remind you, the questions were:

1. *Is the domain name australian-videocamera.com preferable to "creativecontent.au" ?*

2. *Is the current content of creativecontent.au of interest to you and proving of value ?*

Please reply to my normal email, *david@creativecontent.au* and you'll go into the draw for a *Hollyland Lark M1 Wireless Mic Kit.*

The other thing I wanted to remind everyone about is my new podcast, CreativeSpeak.

It's a great way to keep up to date if you don't have the time to read the website or the e-Magazine. In it, I try and condense the important news of the past fortnight or so into around 10-12 minutes, and also have at least one discussion point.

You can access the podcasts either from the website, or directly at *https://www.buzzsprout. com/2169184/12798820*. They are also accessible via Amazon Music and Spotify, and soon I hope via iTunes.

As always, thanks for the support!

David Hague
Managing Editor / Publisher

Contact Us

Phone:

+61 (0)456952227
Email:
david@creativecontent.au
Website
https://creativeconent.au
Facebook:
CreativeContentAU
Twitter:
@CreativeContent
Instagram:
CreatyiveContent

The Latest News From Around The Tracks

OzHarvest Fundraiser for Community Cookoff

Hey its not really a "creative" story, but it is for a good cause so...

Leaders from Canon including Luke Clark (CEO, Canon Business Services), Raj Khetia (General Manager, Managed Services, Canon Business Services), Nina Spannari (General Manager, Marketing & Customer Experience, Canon Oceania), and Kylie Church (General Manager, Corporate Communications, Canon Oceania) will be cooking up a storm to help feed people in need at OzHarvest's flagship fundraiser, Community CookOff on Monday 22 May 2023.

See more here.

Mandy Walker AM ACS ASC wins Milli Award

At this year's Fujinon Fujifilm Australian Cinematographers Society (ACS) National Awards held at Luna Park in Sydney, it was Mandy Walker AM ACS ASC who won the prestigious Australian Cinematographer of the Year Milli Award. Walker also won a Gold Tripod in the Feature Films - Budget $2m and over category for her work on Elvis.

Winning the Milli caps off an incredible 12 months for Walker who recently also won the gong for best cinematography at the Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Awards (AACTA) and the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) feature-film award for Elvis.

Full story *here*

Major Vegas Outtage After Update. And The Fix

Users of the Vegas Pro video editing system were somewhat – ah – peeved last evening when inexplicably, the software simply stopped working.
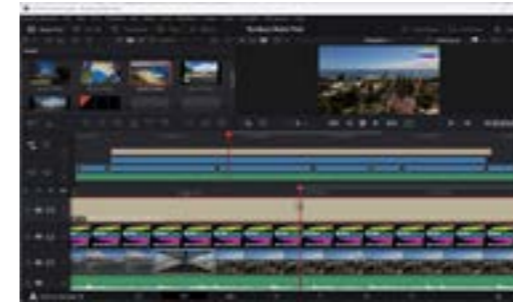
In my case, I had just updated to the latest build, and upon restarting the program, after the splash screen and initialisation, it simply vanished. Windows Task manager showed nothing running remotely related to the program.

More here

DaVinci Resolve 18.5 Beta 2

DaVinci Resolve Studio 18.5 Public Beta 2 and Fusion Studio 18.5 Public Beta 2 have been released.

This software installs DaVinci Resolve Studio 18.5 public beta 2 which adds improvements to beta 1 release features, including better quality when encoding AAC audio, improved consistency when decoding H.264 and H.265 clips on some Windows and AMD systems and more reliable syncing of Blackmagic Presentation markers. For Fusion, public beta 2 includes additional shading options in the Universal Scene Descriptor viewer and better control visibility options when working with uCamera. This version requires a DaVinci Resolve Studio license dongle or software activation code.

All the information available at *this link*

ZHIYUN WEEBILL 3 Wins iF Design Award 2023

Zhiyun's WEEBILL 3 has won the iF Design Award 2023 in the TV/Camera category. The iF Design Awards recognized the WEEBILL 3 is an all-in-one gimbal solution with a unique ergonomic design that delivers light, sound and image-stabilization, while also providing 40% energy savings.

Built from lightweight, ultra-strong materials, ZHIYUN's 3rd generation WEEBILL offers improved ergonomics with an optimized SLING 2.0 system, providing more wrist support for extended use comfort with its new handle design

More information *on the website here*

If you have any news such as a new product, staff appointment, case study, award received (or given) or anything you think my readers would be interested in, please send it to david@creativecontent.au

STOP PRESS
GoPro slashes prices of the Hero Black 11 range. See the *website* for details.

I have known John Haenke for a number of years now, first meeting at his Hervey Bay house / office back in around 2018. I'd booked a fishing charter with him, as his fame as a brilliant guide and fly fishing whizzo had preceded him via contacts I had in the fishing game.

That trip proved to be memorable; not because of the fish we caught, but for two reasons in particular.

I had decided to take my original drone with me – a GoPro Karma – and as fate had it, John was after some footage for his upcoming video / TV show.

So it was in the middle of Hervey Bay, we had completed getting the footage he was after and were chasing some fish on lure when a pod of whales surfaced all around the boat!

We sent the drone up again and got some great shots, but on the second flight after changing SD cards in the GoPro, the dreaded Karma fault reared its ugly head, and at about 2 metres from the boat, it suddenly dropped like a stone into the briny.

Exit one GoPro Karma, never to be seen

John's history includes being very involved as an integral team member on the well known and highly regarded TV show "Escape With ET" where, as a camera man, he has created some of the best footage of fishing seen in Australia and the South Pacific.

Even before that, John was involved with an SBS show he produced, shot and edited called Wildfish, at the time, the network's highest rating show!

I wanted to know more about how John puts his videos together so sat down – well via email anyway – and asked a few questions. The answers may surprise you.

Equipment

Of course, the first thing I wanted know was what equipment John used to create his videos. It turns out there is a combination of cameras, with Panasonic UX series and a Sony A7SIII used for land-based footage, and Go-Pros used for his underwater shots. To combat glare, polarizer filters are fitted and these are

again. A memorable trip to say the least.

Fast forward to the future and John and his wife Peta have relocated further north to Bowen in QLD, and are still hosting guided fishing tours, but additionally, John has used his vast knowledge and experience in both fishing and broadcasting to put together a YouTube series of fly fishing tutorials.

special feature

special feature

an absolute necessity when shooting over or under water.

No gimbals are used – everything is either handheld or tripod based. This might not seem a major thing, but trust me, having shot game fishing from a pitching boat, it takes quite some skill and stamina!

There are risks involved, John told me about one incident where he told a skipper not to back the boat up in big seas, only to have him do so and a huge wave coming over the back drowning his $100,000 camera!

This makes losing my GoPro Karma pale in comparison!

Audio is recorded via a combination of external mics including a Sennheiser boom unit, Sony radio mics and RØDE WiGo II. As well as obtaining the ambient audio, the

Sennheiser is also pressed into use to record the voice over part of the productions.

Editing

Footage obtained is edited on a Mac using Blackmagic Design's DaVinci Resolve NLE

and this combo is also used to do the post-production on the audio; no external packages are brought into play for this, not being necessary as Resolve has, of course, the Fairlight component installed.

Similarly, no special effects packages or pl-

ugins are used either.

And don't think there is some big production unit behind the videos; I asked John about crew and his answer was typically succinct.

"One man, one woman, my wife

Peta helps with shooting and production."

Workflow

I have asked many people about their workflow processes in creating production, and normally I get a very detailed and at times

long winded answer to the question. Not in this case, however.

I previously suggested John was very succinct, and so it was here again. His particular workflow process was simple – Shoot, Edit, Publish.

And that's it!

A subscription is charged to view the resultant videos on either a monthly or annual basis and you can view them via ***www.FlyFishingMasterClass.com***.

If you have any interest in learning fly fishing, it is well worth a look, but even if not, viewing the resultant videos gives an aspiring or even experienced shooter and editor an insight into a professional team at the top of their game.

See the rest of the story and videos ***here***.

FCP and Logic Pro Now on iPad

*A*pple has unveiled Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro for iPad.

Video and music creators can now unleash their creativity in new ways that are only possible on iPad. Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro for iPad bring all-new touch interfaces that allow users to enhance their workflows with the immediacy and intuitiveness of Multi-Touch.

Final Cut Pro for iPad introduces a powerful set of tools for video creators to record, edit, finish and share, all from one portable device.

Logic Pro for iPad puts the power of professional music creation in the hands of the creator — no matter where they are — with a complete collection of sophisticated tools for songwriting, beat making, recording, editing and mixing. Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro for iPad will be available on the App Store as subscriptions starting Tuesday, 23 May.

"We're excited to introduce Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro for iPad, allowing creators to unleash their creativity in new ways and in even more places," said Bob Borchers, Apple's vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing. *"With a powerful set of intuitive tools designed for the portability, performance and touch-first interface of iPad, Final Cut Pro and Logic Pro deliver the ultimate mobile studio."*

Final Cut Pro for iPad

Final Cut Pro for iPad introduces an all-new touch interface and intuitive tools — unlocking new workflows for video creators. A new jog wheel makes the editing process easier than ever and enables users to interact with content in completely new ways. They can navigate the Magnetic Timeline, move clips and make fast frame-accurate edits with just the tap of a finger, and with the immediacy and intuitiveness of Multi-Touch gestures, push their creativity to new heights.

With Live Drawing, users can draw and write directly on top of video content using Apple Pencil. On iPad Pro with M2, Apple Pencil hover unlocks the ability for users to quickly skim and preview footage without ever touching the screen.[1] They can also speed up their workflows by adding a Magic Keyboard or Smart Keyboard Folio to utilise key commands.[2] Creators can view and edit stunning HDR video — taking advantage of the Liquid Retina XDR display on the 12.9-inch iPad Pro — and apply colour grades with accuracy using Reference Mode.

Pro Camera Mode and Multicam Video Editing

Pro camera mode brings even greater control to the creation process on iPad. Video creators can shoot high-quality video in portrait or landscape orientation, monitor audio and available recording time, and manually

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control settings like focus, exposure and white balance. Creators can capture, edit and publish from a single device while in the field, and on iPad Pro with M2, users can even record in ProRes.[3] With multicam video editing, clips can automatically be synchronised and edited together, and users can even switch angles in a multicam clip with just the touch of a finger.

Fast Cut Features with Machine Learning

Final Cut Pro for iPad harnesses the power of Apple silicon and machine learning to speed up time-consuming editing tasks. With Scene Removal Mask, creators can quickly remove or replace the background behind a subject in a clip without using a green screen.

The rest of the story is availabl e on the Creative Content website and is **_available to read here._**

Review: Vasco daGama 16 HD Ultimate

By Dr David Smith

Creating professional quality travel animations and beautiful maps with 3D-rendered tourist features has long been the domain of two software packages from Motion Studios, founded in 1999 in Bremen, Germany.

With its origins in the brilliant AMIGA platform Motion Studios gained an impressive reputation in the world of video and animation processing and effects. Travel animations are handled by Vasco Da Gama, mapping by Street Maps.

I have reviewed both packages for more than a decade and have always been impressed by the fact that each new release
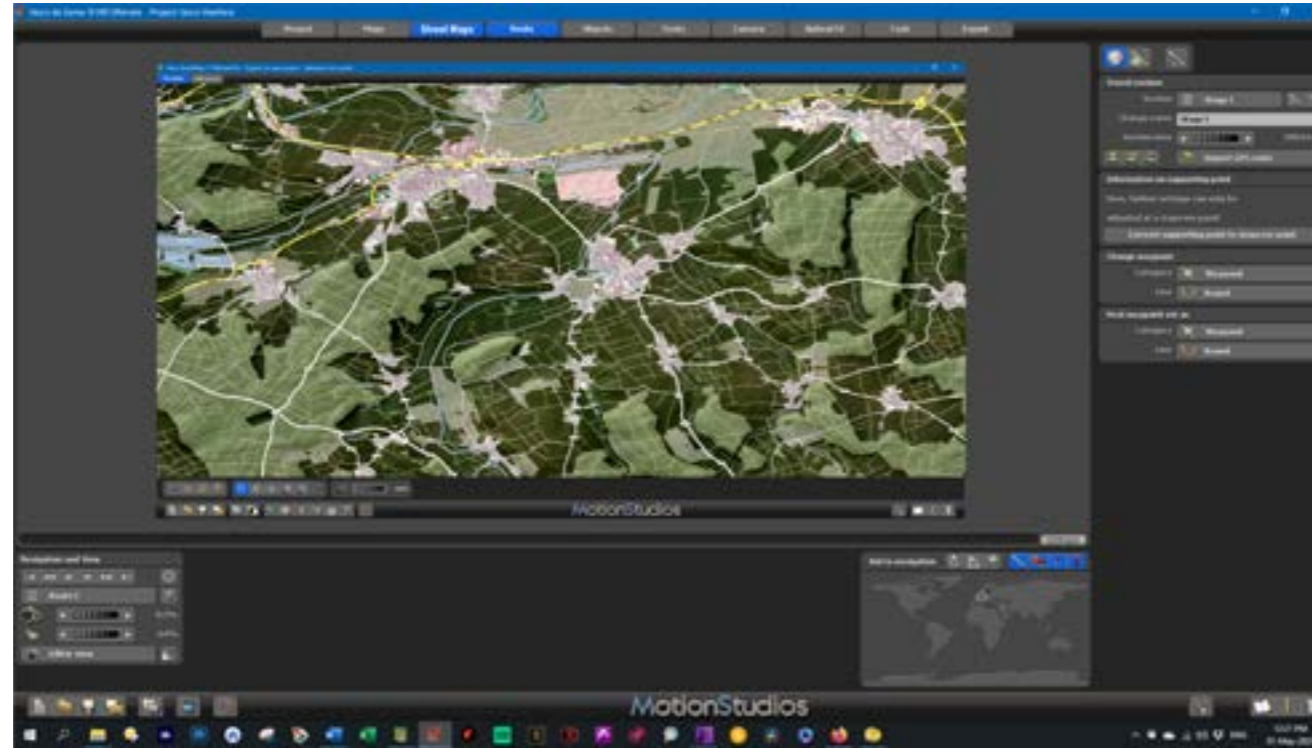
represents a significant improvement in both the speed and efficiency of the internal workings as well as important improvements in the user interface. Each year the programs become more powerful and easier to use.

The latest versions reviewed here are Vasco Da Gama 16 HD Ultimate and Vasco Street Maps 11 Ultimate Pro. These are the bells and whistles releases which come replete with all of the specialist options such as 3D modelled ships and aircraft all with

Review: Vasco daGama 16 HD Ultimate (cont'd)
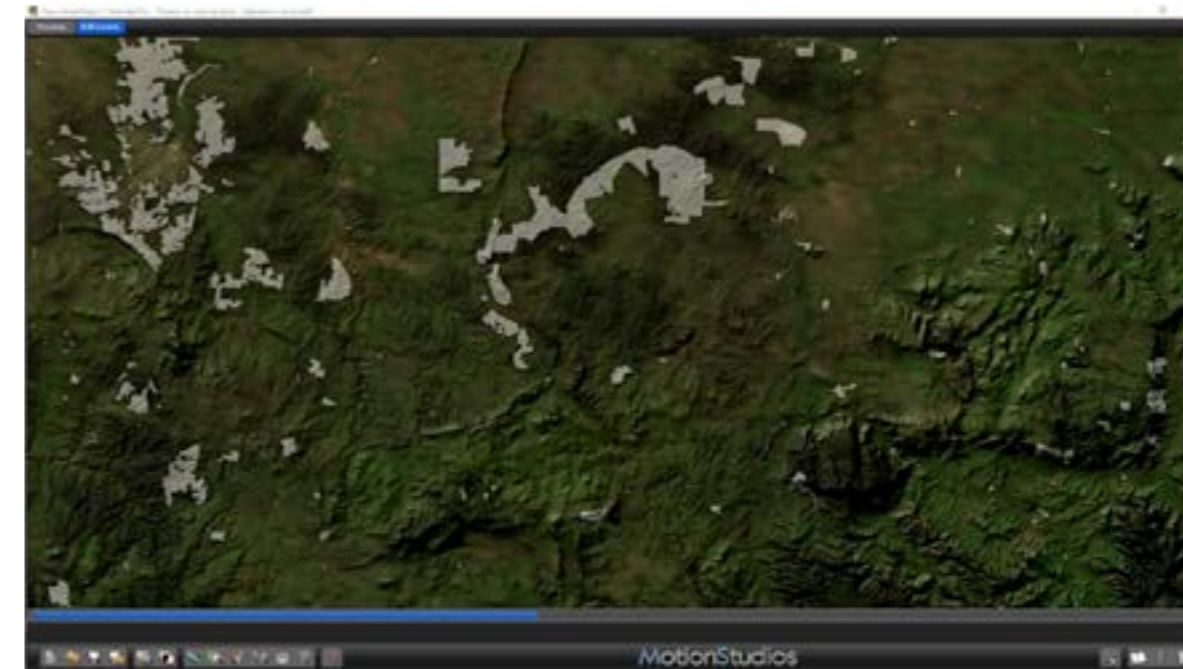
the correct company liveries and a vast range of vehicles, wild animals and cartoons.

The most significant improvement comes with the switch of both programs to 64-bit architecture. Coupled with the ability to spread the computational load between all available CPU cores, as well as the use of the high-efficiency JPEG XL format for elevation data leads to greatly increased loading and processing speeds. In practise, this means that working with maps feels more lively and fluid, so your creative flow of ideas is not interrupted by lengthy loading delays.

There are so many new features in both programs that you are well advised to head off to the website at https://motion-studios.de to explore all the examples and sample videos available there.

A novel idea – combine both programs

Having worked with these products for years, I would like to make the point that the programs are now so tightly integrated that I foresee a new combined package in which, for example, you would open Vasco Da Gama and have an option of a Street Maps tab on the main program interface. That way you could specify and edit each map as required all within Vasco Da Gama.

Of course it's very straightforward to work with both programs open now but Motion Studios have always listened to user sug-

Review: Vasco daGama 16 HD Ultimate
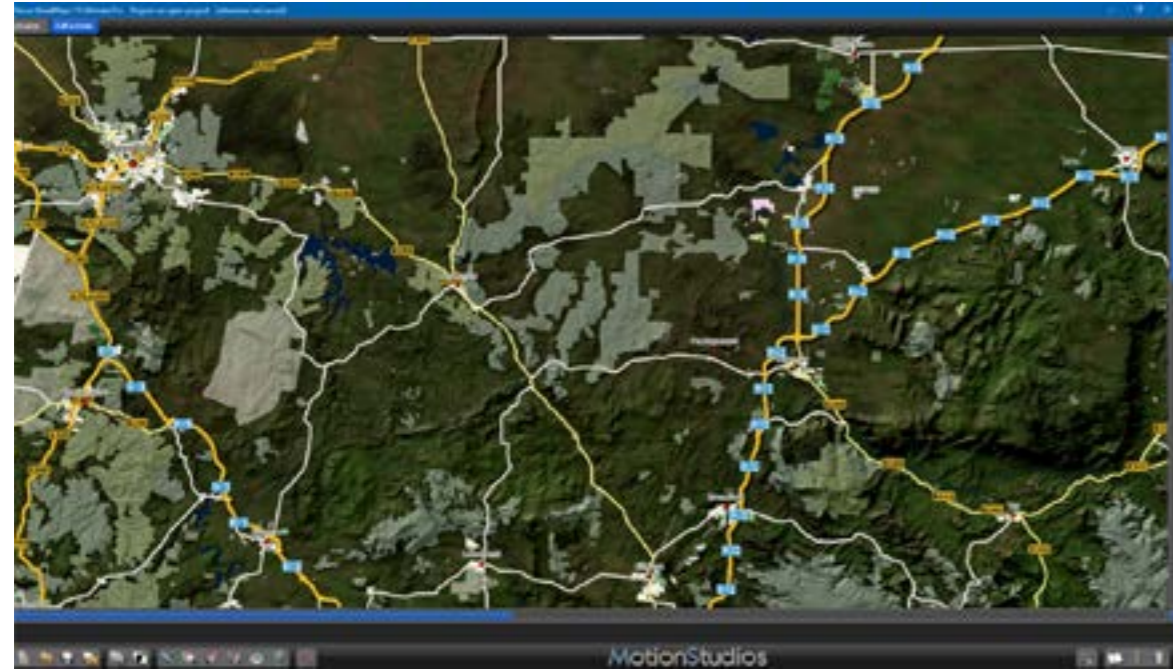
gestions which is why the software evolves so rapidly and effectively over time.

I have personal experience of this, having suggested at one time it would be great to be able to switch off federal borders over water. After brief discussion with Ingo Kleefeld at Motion Studios the new option was fully implemented by the time the next release appeared. That was impressive!

Great new features

Vasco Da Gama 16 HD Ultimate

Here is a small selection of some the most powerful new features in Vasco Da Gama 16 HD Ultimate.

- GPS database 4.5 million locations to choose from

- Fly In and Fly Out Automatically choose from 23 preset Fly in/Fly out animations to add a pro touch to the beginning and end of your video.

- SatMapPro 2 This subscription option (free for the first year) provides an ultra-clean satellite view of the earth. All distortions originating from clouds, thermal effects and aircraft contrails have been meticulously removed resulting in an unusually clear and detailed view of the entire planet.

- Cloud and wave animations are now more adjustable for wind direction

image editing

Review: Vasco daGama 16 HD Ultimate (cont'd)

and strength, cloud type and wave reflections.

- Dynamic sun angle adjustments allow you to set up the most photogenic arrangement to suit the mood of your video. Having adjusted the sun's position at key moments in time, all of the other times of day are calculated automatically.

- Easy flight mode is now extended to Easy Motorcycle mode which tilts the motorcycle realistically when cornering. This also works for bicycles. I love this mode!

Overall the amount of data included in Vasco Da Gama has been significantly increased in all versions. There is a table in the *website version* of this story displaying this.:

Vasco Street Maps 11 Ultimate Pro

- A total of 300 GB of map data includes satellite and elevation data and 40 GB of additional vector data.

- JPEG XL format for all elevation data for smaller files and higher detail. This new format also supports an alpha channel Extremely large maps of more than 100,000 pixels can now be stored as a single TIFF file.

- Change from Overview to Tile map mode and back again at any time in your project. Even huge maps can now be prepared for instant import into Vasco Da Gama.

- Multi-GPS selections will automatically generate a map section that includes

all of the points. Similarly, this also happens when GPS tracks are imported into Street Maps.

- Colour schemes can be selected from a wide variety of loadable colour schemes. You can also modify and scheme to suit your needs and save it for later use. As in Vasco Da Gama, everything is customisable to help you save time in future projects.

Traps for the unwary

Vasco Street Maps is an immensely complex piece of software. There are thousands of options available to tailor your maps to precisely match your needs. Inevitably, with so many variables available, you may sometimes find that seemingly strange things are happening.

The rest of the review and pricing information etc is *available here.*

Review: PRODAD Hide

Those of who started at the original coal face of digital video editing may remember the tedious art of manual rotoscoping.

I remember a tutorial for a program from a mob called Puffin Software that allowed this, but you had to work frame by frame – in this case removing a seagull flying past a marker buoy with a ship in the background as I recall. I can't for the life of me remember the name of the package (I think it was snapped up by BorisFX) but a price tag of over AUD$1000 rings a bell – a lot of money back in 1998.
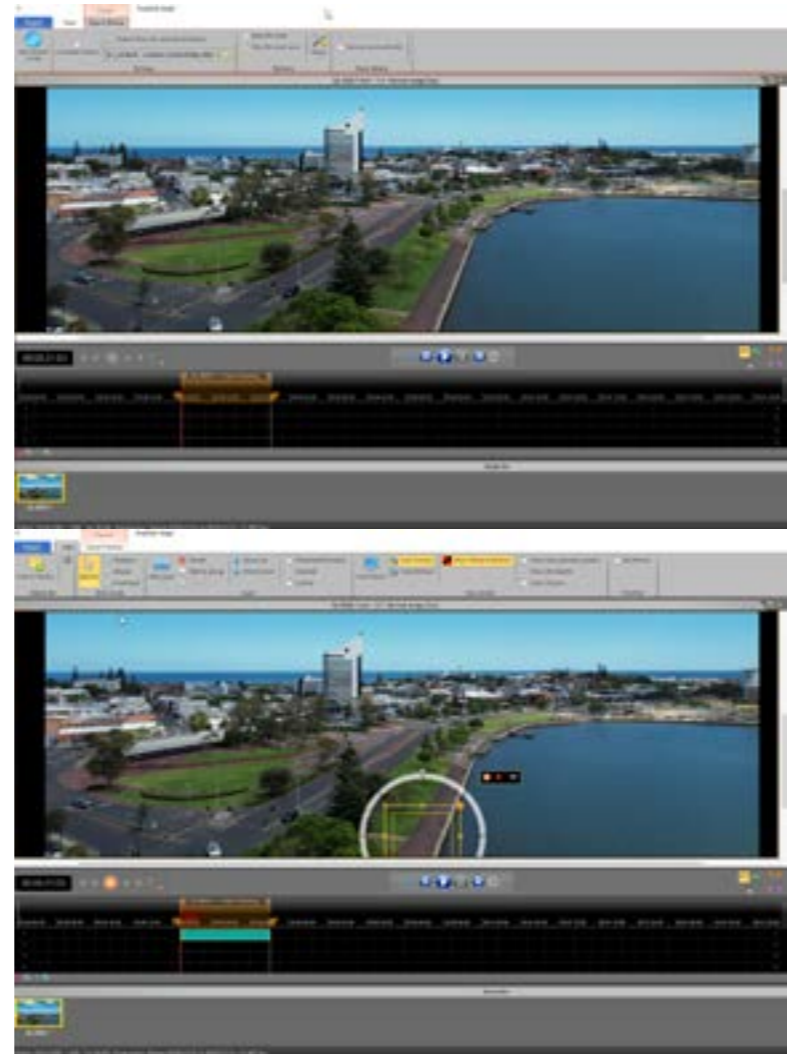
Over time, with memory becoming cheaper and computer processors getting faster and faster, thankfully things have improved dramatically.

Today you can buy ProDAD Hide, which was originally called Erazr, for a fraction of that (on subscription admittedly although you can get the full version). If you have a shoot that has a major error in it where something needs removing for example, this is a small price to pay for the labour saving it offers.

In order to better explain this, here is a sample of what can be achieved in minutes not hours. The example is pretty straight forward in that I wanted to remove a pair of seagulls from a drone video, but it gives you a fair idea of how the application works and how easy it is to use.

The first step is to load the video into Hide and then set in and out points if required to create a working area of the clip you want to correct.

(As I quickly discovered, you need to create a working area regardless or the whole thing does not work. In other words, if you have a clip and only extract the portion you need using your video editing program, after loading into Hide you still need to set a Working Area).

Review: PRODAD Hide (cont'd)

The second step is to choose (mask) the area to be removed and then, as you scrub through the clip, correct the mask's position You need to make sure your object(s) stay within the mask's boundary at all times. The mask boundaries can be manipulated as you go, including increasing or decreasing its size and rotation as necessary.

For small objects you can also set the size of the grid the processing works on inside the mask for better results.

Additionally, there is an automatic tracker you can use and then later go back and fine tune the masking it creates.

Once you have the masking and tracking correctly in place, clicking the 'Show Results' button starts the processing and makes a version ready for export.

Easy as that in its basic use.

One thing I did notice when exporting the file is that it is best to send the corrected file to a new folder, otherwise you'll overwrite the original file. This seems a bit of an oversight that there is no option to save as a different file name and I am checking ProDAD on this unless I have missed the bleeding obvious...

Another thing I noticed is that on my original test file, one of wind surfers at Margaret River in WA's southwest, whilst I could remove a specific surfer, the resultant file showed a lot of artifacts in the area the surfer would normally have appeared. A quick 10 second think as to why this would be giving the obvious answer; programs like this replace the removed image with a previous background, but of course with an ever moving ocean, it will NEVER been the same and therefore will look odd.

Finally, prior to processing to get the final video, you also have available access to various effects including fading and exposure. An im-

portant setting also here is 'Filling' and this relates to my ocean comment above.

To quote the manual,

"As Hide examines the material in a defined area and checks what was previously at the point where the masked object is now or what will be there afterwards. And from this information, the area of the mask is then filled. The set area is marked red in the timeline. Under "Method" you can select between "Pixel tracking (GPU)", "Stamp", Colour filling "and" Edge fill-in ". With the first two, the image is filled with actual image content. Whereby "Pixel tracking (GPU)" gave the best result in my tests. But it is also slowest in the calculation."

To see the complete review and a video sample of ProDAD Hide before and after, please go to the full article on the website by **_clicking here._**

Case Study: "Country Is Coming"

*S*ydney based production company Studio Goose used DaVinci Resolve Studio for grading, editing, VFX and audio post production, along with Blackmagic Cloud, to help create the "Country Is Calling" commercial campaign for the Northern Territory Tourism Board.

With production and post production talent spread around Australia, Studio Goose used a Blackmagic Cloud and a DaVinci proxy workflow to create a collaborative workflow.

Studio Goose is an innovative production company based in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales. It has driven creative and technical innovation on numerous produc-

tions since 2005 and is led by Founder and CEO Keaton Stewart.

In 2022, Studio Goose worked with production house Global Headquarters, based in the Northern Territory, and Writer/Director Justin Schneider to finish 10 digital engagement packages highlighting Australia's Northern Territory's iconic natural wonders, ancient Aboriginal culture, and spectacular wildlife. The "Country Is Calling" campaign ran alongside the groundbreaking kids show "Barrumbi Kids," which was produced and broadcast on NITV, with the show's main characters, Tomias and Dahlia, highlighting the wonders of the Northern Territory.

Case Study: "Country Is Coming" (cont'd)

The Northern Territory, the town of Katherine and the communities of Beswick and Barunga, where the campaign was shot, are remote and stunning locations to feature. The campaign included production and post production talent spread around Australia, and Studio Goose needed a solid remote workflow that was immediately active and location flexible. Using DaVinci Resolve Studio for its complete post production workflow, Studio Goose was able to collaborate with the project's data wrangler, assistant editor, editors, colorist, sound designers, mixer and online editor using Blackmagic Cloud and a DaVinci proxy workflow.

The DaVinci proxy workflow meant Studio Goose could get the data to each artist within minutes of the rushes being ingested. Without this integrated proxy workflow, it would have taken days to either ship back the rushes or upload large files via slow internet in the remote regions of the Northern Territory.

"*The big advantage of using Blackmagic Cloud is greater creative collaboration. Every artist was remote from the others. Data wrangling happened in the Northern Territory managed by Global Headquarters, assistant editing in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, editing by Daniel Oates based in Sydney, grading in Sydney by Shane Dunne, and sound design and mixing in Queensland by Walmsley Audio, which was then thrown back to Sydney for the final online and master at Studio Goose. With Blackmagic Cloud, we have faster turnarounds on high quality projects that need to go between different departments*," explained Stewart.

Campaign creator and Producer Monica O'Brien said, "*Keaton and I have always been early adopters to intuitive systems. The Resolve workflow is so smooth. I will never produce a show on any other platform.*"

For two of the content packages, Studio Goose had only a few days to complete them in order to meet a screening deadline at the Darwin International Film Festival. Using DaVinci Resolve Studio and Blackmagic Cloud, the team was able to create proxies and use Dropbox to send assets out to each artist, so they could easily start working while only having to download a small amount of data.

"*We ingested, edited, graded, sound designed, mixed and finished inside of Resolve,*" Stewart explained. "*The truly outstanding thing about having the central creative fields of post, including edit, sound, VFX, compositing and grading, inside of one unified program and project is the seamless creative collaboration that can happen in real time. I can't overstate this enough; this should be the standard.*"

The rest of the story and more details on its creation can be read in full on the website by *clicking here.*

Question: Should You ALWAYS Pay Cast & Crew?

O ne of the big contentious issues facing the filmmaking fraternity is that of cast and crew procurement. In short, it revolves around the recompense they get – or not – for their involvement.

If you are coming into this without a clue of what the hoo-ha is about, it is very common to see posts where a filmmaker is touting for cast and crew with a request such as:

I am making a new short film about (subject) and need a camera operator with own gear, a soundie (own gear), makeup artist and director. Suit student film maker or similar.

This is a no budget film so no pay available (food supplied) but it will be ideal for your showreel and to gain experience.

Contact (person) for more details.

There are two camps of opinion on this. The first says that this is a great way to get into the biz and learn the ropes, gain experience and network for the future.

The second says if you want people to spend their time and use their equipment for YOUR film, then they should be paid. And of course showreels and experience don't pay the bills or put food on the table.

Question: Should You ALWAYS Pay Cast & Crew?

I wanted to know what people at the coalface thought, so asked the question in a number of filmmaking-oriented Facebook groups and LinkedIn.

What I specifically asked was, *"My question is quite simple; where do you stand on asking for freebie crew and actors for movies? Is it an absolute no-no? Is Ok at any time or only under certain circumstances and if so, what circumstances? Should there be conditions?"*

I must confess, I was a little surprised at the response, as across the board it was very, very equal with the 'No' camp on 36%, the 'Yes but conditional' on 35% and the 'Yes, no problem at all' on 26%.

The respondents on the 'No' side were actually quite adamant in their responses.

Typical of the answers I got were *"How does the fuel station, the supermarket or your landlord feel about freebies? If you don't value your production then why should anyone else?"* from Bron I, and *"If someone is making money of the fruits of volunteer work it's a NO from me "*, from Terry R. James C was even more blunt; *"Pay your actors and pay your crew. They will respect you in your future endeavours. Very simple."*

The direct opposite of this came from Amy T who said *"As someone who isn't studying film in any way and doesn't really have any film credits, unpaid work is technically essential for me to prove my capability, grow a word of mouth, prove my worth and be credited for it so then I can be paid and become someone in the industry. I definitely have qualifications in other areas but I need to prove how they can translate, free work gives me the opportunity"*.

And from Shane McL, *"Any student film or low budget (say under 10k) I think it's fine because the money just isn't there to spend. It's also not going to reap thousands in profits so everyone is making a sacrifice. You could ask for profit share though on the off chance it does become a raging success. Otherwise it's really a learning experience for the actors and crew and a chance to get some credits and maybe some showreel footage."*

Those voting conditionally had this sort of thing to suggest, *"I see no problem at all, on the condition it is clearly stated it is an unpaid job. It is then a free choice whether to respond or note."* from Dave H.

To read the complete feature and more comments,

The Perfect Hardware Setup? These Are Mine.

I am luckier than most in that I get to play with a lot of gear, ranging from cameras to camcorders and action cams to gimbals, drones, microphones of all types and even tripods.

There are some "off-beat" gadgets too like the MSM for astrophotography and the brilliant little Pluto Trigger that has a multitude of uses depending on your photographic styles and subjects.

But, with all this 'stuff', if I had the chance to put together a kit that covered the hardware I wanted it to, without being ridiculously excessive, what would I put in it?

It got me thinking. So here goes.

Cameras

This was the hardest part of course.

Do I go full on with my Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera 6K Pro which I love? Or opt for a more versatile camera that also does stills? Would a top-of-the-range action camera cover all bases at a pinch?

In the end, I have opted to choose a **Fujifilm X-10** body and have a combination of a fixed 27mm and a 70-300mm zoom lens that cover everything pretty much I shoot from astro shots to motor sport.

I also decided to add a GoPro Hero 11 Black with a MediaMod and full underwater housing into the mix. I ummed and aah'd about the DJI Pocket 2, but finally concluded that would be overkill in terms of camera numbers versus versatility.

Drones

After being introduced to the possibilities of drone shooting via the ill-fated GoPro Karma (see page 6 for details), I now find having a drone available an indispensable part of the arsenal. Over the past years I have had access to models from GoPro, Parrot and of course DJI (there has been a number of cheapies in there too, but these I discount as not worth the effort in the real world). Recent units I have had – all DJI – have been the original Mini, a Mini 2, FPV, Avata, Air2S and recently a Mini 3 Pro.

And I'd opt for the **Air2S**. It is easy to fly, has all the avoidance trickery you need and importantly, takes fabulous footage.

Gimbal

These have become another 'must-have' item, whether it be for camera, camcorder or smartphone. For me, when it comes to bang-for-buck, Zhiyun rates the best and I have decided on the **Crane M2S**. It supports the Fujifilm XS-10 in its firmware, and at a pinch I can also put the GoPro on it as well as a smartphone. A bonus is its light weight and smaller size.

Microphones

Here for me there is little contest. For a camera mounted unit, the **Sennheiser MKE600** is hard to beat on the Fujifilm XS-10, or the **MKE400** on the GoPro. It also doubles as a handheld, or even as a boom mounted unit if needs be. If I need a wireless mic, then the **XSW Digital** system is hard to top.

Tripod

This was a bit trickier; do you opt for a small travel one or a larger sturdy unit? Most of my tripod work would be in motor sport, so I decided the best compromise is the one I chose for this very purpose, a **Miller Solo 75**. It's very versatile and can even "splay" almost down to ground level such is the cleverness of the design. It also works well with the MSM astrophotography star tracker I use.

Carry Bag / Case

I have yet to find anything that satisfies all my needs perfectly I am sad to say, so if anyone – user or vendor – has any ideas, I'd be pleased to hear them!

Storage

The only thing left really is what media do I use to store my footage on? Like many, I have been through the gamut of the many suppliers out there and have settled for two distinct brands for different purposes.

For SD card, after trying everything, I have opted to stick with **Verbatim**; I have never had one fail, which is not something I can safely say of all other brands. The only recommendation I would make apart from that is stay away from cheap ones – they are just not worth the risk.

For mass storage, as the Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera 6K Pro is VERY picky about what it can write to, as is the Blackmagic Design ATEM Mini Pro, I have stuck with a recommended drive, the S**amsung T5 2TB** .

For the rest of the story, please **click here**

Review: Jabra Talk 65

*S*ometimes something becomes invaluable for the simplest of reasons.

And so it is with my Jabra Talk 65 headset.

The reason why needs a little preamble.

When we moved from the middle of the southwest forest here in WA to Australind, just out of Bunbury (WA's second largest city), we went in theory from sparse communications options to full city access. In the forests (Quinninup to be exact), the nearest mobile tower was about 20Kms away and stuff like TV and internet were all satellite based. It really was the middle of nowhere (which the locals love).

This was pre-full scale NBN, but when we moved into the new house in Australind, we expected (and had booked 6 weeks before) ADSL. When we arrived there was nothing and it took a number of phone calls to Telstra to confirm this had happened as NBN was DUE to go in, but not completed as yet. Expected date? They didn't know.

But in recompense, they gave me a terabyte free of mobile data, which would have been fine except the wireless modem couldn't connect to it nor could any mobile phone we had. So it sort of defeated the purpose. Once again it turned out, despite now living in suburbia, the nearest tower was kilometres away.

We eventually got our NBN thanks to IPSTAR (who were also our satellite provider in Quinninup and have been brilliant) but mobile reception whilst a lot better, is still patchy throughout the house.

My office / studio at the front for example has no phone reception at all.

If my phone is in the kitchen (where there is a signal) and someone calls, the time to get to it from the office is enough that it is guaranteed to ring out.

See where I am going with this?

With the Jabra headset in place on my scone and Bluetooth connected, I can leave the phone in the kitchen and answer it when it rings no matter where I am. And of course make calls. It supports voice assistant too.

To read the rest of the review, please **click here.**

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