Vegas Pro 11 Editing Workshop
Douglas Spotted Eagle
Covers Vegas Movie Studio
DVD included
Vegas Pro 11 Editing Workshop

Douglas Spotted Eagle
This book is dedicated to those who create and inspire beauty through their actions and effort.

_Hoo’zoo n’aan’ taa’_ (Fly in Beauty)

I miss you, Joshua
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Anyone who is still wondering when the tipping point of the HD revolution will happen is either living in a cave or simply refusing to look at the realities of modern motion-picture production and the current state of digital technology. Every six months we see more and more advantages and advances, further improving and streamlining workflow and production. If you consider yourself part of the many who feel left behind, this book is a great place to get caught up and discover what is possible.

My own adventure with HD began in 2004, with my first all HD production of a movie for television called *The Librarian* for TNT. Although I had many years of experience with digital special effects, I had never shot with digital cameras. Everything I had heard about the technology warned me that it wasn’t quite ready yet. Still, I felt compelled to try. We all knew it was coming, so why not get on the bandwagon early and begin to learn the new tools?

I had been told that HD never looks quite as good as film. I had been told that it was good for interiors or low-light conditions, but shooting in the sun or making any quick camera movements would quickly reveal the limitations of the medium.

In our first week of production, our initial fears were realized. Shooting in the jungles of Mexico, the bright light breaking through the foliage caused bright white hotspots in our images, a telltale sign of video. When we asked our HD technician for help, he shrugged his shoulders and said, “That’s HD.”

After a few days of shooting, another HD tech arrived to help out on our second unit. Keith Collea had worked with us for years in video assist, but in the months leading up to our production he had become a leading technician in HD cinematography. When he arrived on set, he noticed the hotspots in our images and asked us why we didn’t fix it. We said we didn’t think it was possible. Keith quickly made some adjustments to our cameras and the hotspots vanished.

Alan Caso, our excellent director of photography, quickly asked Keith, “What else can you do with that camera setup?” Keith replied, “What would you like?” Alan asked, “Can you give me grain?” to which Keith responded, “How much would you like?” With a few adjustments we were suddenly giving a grainy film look to our image.
Needless to say, Keith moved over to our first unit and suddenly our limitations vanished. We learned that it wasn’t the medium that had limitations, it was our knowledge of how to use the medium that needed expanding.

Though back in 2004 we did have to work hard to make sure our images were as good looking as film, in today’s world it’s much harder to get film to look as good as the HD images we create. Whether working with arguably the best digital camera today, Panavision’s Genesis, in full 4.4.4 color space, or working in the lowest-end HDV recording, world-class motion-picture creation can be accomplished with greater ease and versatility than ever before.

I first met Douglas Spotted Eagle after I finished making a feature film called Flyboys. It was one of the first films to ever use the Genesis camera, and I had fallen madly in love with the process. It created a hunger in me to learn more about what’s possible in the world of HD.

It was then that I discovered the SonyV1U prosumer camera that recorded in the HDV format. Though completely on the opposite end of the HD spectrum from the Genesis, this was an intriguing format. What was different about this camera from all other HDV cameras was the claim that it could create 24p, 1080i images. Other HDV cameras recorded in a lower resolution, then “rezzed up” to 1080i. I was anxious to put the camera to the test.

However, once I got my hands on the camera, no one could quite figure out how to get it to actually live up to its claim. We called everyone we could think of, each of whom was sure he or she had the answer. Each of them was mistaken and our tests failed miserably. In my desperation to find a solution, the kind people at Sony suggested I meet Douglas Spotted Eagle. Of course, he was the only person with not only a sensible solution but a full grasp of the format.

It was Douglas who suggested I use the Sony Vegas editing software to get me to the finish line. At first glance, Vegas didn’t appear to be professional editing software. I thought it was something more like an advanced consumer product. But after a few lessons from Douglas, I discovered that this was an amazingly powerful tool, deceptively simple but with enormous depth in terms of what you could accomplish with it.

I ended up getting his DVD series on how to use the software and was frankly shocked at what you could do. Just on my laptop alone I was able to create a completely professional edit, with credible sound mixing and color correction. It was stunning.

Since then Douglas has become the person I most rely on for the cutting-edge information on what is happening in world of digital technology. With his guidance I was able to integrate HDV with high-end Genesis HD material in my new Leverage television production, seamlessly and effortlessly. His broad knowledge of the state of technocracy is tempered by his easy manner and ability to explain, in simple language, complex technical information that would otherwise make your head spin.

So sit back and enjoy his book. I’m sure you’ll be surprised at what you’ll learn. There’s no one better to take you on this digital journey.

Dean Devlin
Electric Entertainment
Editor’s Note

Well, here we are again. This is the third Vegas book I’ve edited for Spot, and you would think it gets easier each time. It does not. Each outing presents its own set of challenges and opportunities. But this one was different. This one was a near-total rewrite from the ground up. The focus as I see it was not on creating a Vegas reference that details exactly what each menu item does. You have the program’s help for that. Instead, you get more of the experience of attending one of Spot’s workshops. A really, really, long workshop where you get to pick the teacher’s brain and ask all sorts of questions. Want to know Spot’s exact rendering template for the Web? It’s in here. We made sure that the book is full of nuggets like that.

If you’re a more casual user of Vegas Movie Studio, Section One is for you. It’s a FASST start to get you up and going. Once you’ve mastered the basics, move on to Section Two for a deeper understanding.

Editing a tome of this size is an unbelievably tedious process. I’m very thankful to have had lots of help, including my wife and partner Christie, as well as Leila, Randy, Dave, and Mannie doing the lion’s share of screencaps over many late nights. This can’t be anyone’s idea of a good time, yet somehow we seemed to enjoy it.

We’ve worked hard to bring you the most up-to-date and error-free information possible. But on my best day I’m human and have a hard time pronouncing Bezier, or for that matter Favre. If you do find mistakes in the book, please let us know via email or on the forums and we’ll do our best to provide explanations or corrections as needed. In addition, there are bonus chapters that could not be included due to publishing constraints. Refer to the DVD that accompanies the book and the author’s Website at www.vasst.com.

You hold in your hand the bible when it comes to learning Sony Vegas. But more than that, this book provides a solid foundation of audio and video production techniques, image compositing, and camera technology, regardless of which NLE you’re using. I urge you to absorb this book in small bites, and I challenge you to take the time you can to learn it all. Douglas is a fantastic teacher for any level of user, from novice to expert, as well as a great friend. Poring over the manuscripts for this book once again has made me a better media professional, and I know it can do the same for you.

David McKnight
December 2011
Acknowledgments

It seems like only yesterday that I authored the *Vegas 3 Companion* booklet; now here we are at Sony Vegas 11 Pro and Vegas Movie Studio 11. The stack of Vegas books and guides that have sprung forth form a huge stack of books at this point, and with every book, I feel as though I’m “worded out.” I also swear I’ll never do another book again.

The *Vegas 4 Editing Workshop* book was a great springboard, and much of that early writing laid the foundation for the subsequent books. Over time, I’ve become dissatisfied with the foundation and felt it was time to start anew.

*Vegas Pro 11 Editing Workshop* is a new effort, written from the ground up. It was a monumental task that was begun long before Vegas Pro 11 was released, ending around Christmas 2011.

All the words in this book are mine, and I am responsible for them and any inaccuracies. However, to say that I wrote this book entirely in a vacuum would be the greatest inaccuracy of all. Many people are deserving of mention. I’m sure I’ll forget someone (I always do), but it’s an error of memory and not one of respect.

The first person to thank is you, the reader. Without your interest in the software and the book, there would be no purpose in writing it.

Above anyone else, I need to recognize and express gratitude and appreciation for my best friend, my business partner of many years, and the guy that keeps me grounded. Mannie, thank you so much for your patience with me as my writings and skydiving keep me in the air so much. I’m proud to wear “VASST” on my tailwing and have you as my wingman for so many years.

David McKnight produced this book. Although he is credited as only a technical editor, he served to push me harder, questioned every comment and tutorial in the book, and provided a great deal of guidance for tips, notes, and “Spot Sez.” David, words cannot well enough express my gratitude. If it weren’t for you and Christie helping with screenshots late into the night, we’d still be producing this book on the delivery date. Randy Stewart, thank you for your tremendous help in tech edits and correcting less than perfect grammar.

Ray Schlogel, Underground Planet, and the band AlphaRev: Ray, Casey, I’m grateful, as are the readers of this book. I hope this book helps propel “Black Sky” to the heavens. David Paul, thank you for the “Spot Sez” icon! Donald Schultz, thank you for the sweetness you’ve added to this one!
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Randy, Leila, Dave, of the VASST team, thank you for helping deep into the night with screenshots and DVD matter. JR Rofrano, thank you for your untiring efforts with the Media Manager chapter, help in the FX section, and the awesome plug-ins we create together!

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Jarno, thank you for the 3D help and the 3D models of myself found in this book. You’re not just a great creative, you’re also a great friend.

And of course, to the people at Sony Creative Software: Dave Chaimson, thank you for helping me fly. Thank you, Sony, for the great tools you offer editors around the world.

Fly in beauty!
Introduction

I’d never intended to be a writer. I’m still not a writer; I’m merely a musician and multimedia producer who happens to write about multimedia. Multimedia is an articulate beast; anything combining the eye and ear is bound to sorely display any errors, whether you or others discover them. Hopefully this book will teach you to avoid some of the pitfalls that you otherwise might step into.

One of my favorite sayings is, “I’ve screwed up more times than most people attempt to try.” And I feel this is true. I’ve perhaps made every mistake that can be made in audio and video, multiple times. This book is a result of the knowledge that I’ve gleaned in the process of discovery. It’s not a book of articulated mathematical expression of the editing process, it’s a book of my experiences and my love for the craft. The sands of our industry are constantly shifting, and one must constantly be on a journey, attending to the forks in the road and the whimsy of technology.

When I wrote the Vegas 2 users’ guide and, later, the much bigger Vegas 3 Companion, we were struggling with this new format called DV, and delivery to a DVD was far and away too expensive and unreachable for the average small business. Today DVD is nearly dead, the Internet is the primary delivery mechanism, and we’re delivering to cell phones, tablet computers, and wireless distribution devices. We’ve moved from DV to HD, and from 2D to 3D. And still Vegas continues to stay ahead of the game. Vegas has been a part of every production I’ve been involved in since 1998, including Emmy and Grammy-winning productions and recordings, and has been used to deliver for feature film, broadcast television in SD/HD, and virtually any kind of device one can imagine. Most people would be surprised to learn that the most profitable film in the history of Hollywood was edited, color corrected, and pulled down in Sony Vegas using VASST Ultimate S plug-ins.

If this book seems too technical, I’d ask that you go back and reread the passage. I’ve done my best to keep descriptions and explanations as simple as possible in this book for the purpose of getting information across, not to demonstrate my technical skills (or lack thereof).

David McKnight, John Rofrano, and I have labored to share our knowledge with you throughout this book; we’re competent in Vegas, but we’re creative first and editor/recording engineers and producers second.
As you read through the book, I’d urge you to take the initiative to go beyond the projects laid out for you. They are merely springboards, places from which your flight of fantasy takes off, not where it lands. Vegas is merely a tool to bring life to your imagination and your message.

It’s not difficult to reach the point of intuitive harmony with Vegas. When this happens, cutting the story takes focus as the technology fades into the background in the creative process, and that’s what it’s truly about. Telling stories, using technology as the vehicle.

It is my hope that if and when you, the reader, and I meet at a video, audio, or skydiving event, you’ll have a story to tell me about a dog-eared book that rarely sits on the shelf due to the number of times you’ve pulled it down and referenced it. I’m honored and grateful to be on your shelf.

Thank you,
~Douglas
PART ONE

Plugging In
THE FASST START GUIDE: Introduction and Importing Video

In this first section, we're going to go through a speed-session on using Sony Vegas. Only basic information relevant to setting up Vegas, importing media to Vegas and the timeline, basic editing features, and output will be covered. If you’re an experienced Vegas user, you may wish to skip forward to “Turning Up” (Going Deeper in Sony Vegas).

This chapter assumes that Vegas is already loaded on the computer, either by the user or as an included application in a software bundle. If Vegas isn’t installed, install Vegas and DVD Architect now.

Let’s get started!

Open Vegas for the first time, and you’ll note that there are three predominant areas in the graphical user interface (GUI): the Docking windows, the Preview window, and the Trakspace/Timeline.

Vegas Movie Studio Users will see a pop-up window suggesting different methods of using the software. For this exercise, please select “Start using Vegas Movie Studio.”

The Docking windows are where the Vegas Explorer, access to FX, Transitions, and other editing tools may be found. These windows are called “Docking windows” because they are moveable and user-definable as to how they are laid out. See the “Turning Up” section for more information on how Docking windows may be configured for user-defined layouts.

The Preview window is where Events on the timeline will be viewed in their current state. This is where you’ll visualize the finished video as it is being edited. There are several controls in this window. For purposes of getting started in Vegas, please choose the Preview Quality of “Preview (Auto)” in the drop-down menu. Learn more about Preview window settings in the “Turning Up” section of this book.
You’ll get the best editing performance if you set the properties of your project to match the media contained in the project. In the upper left corner of the Preview window, there is a small white box. Click this box to open Project Properties. Project Properties is where you’ll find settings to best match your media. If your media comes from a typical HD camcorder, you’ll want to set the Properties to match this screenshot.

Figure 1.4

HD camcorders can only shoot either 1280 x 720 (less common), 1440 x 1080 (somewhat common), or “Full HD,” 1920 x 1080. However, regardless of what kind of camera was used, Vegas will create the correct project settings when the “Adjust Source Media to better match Project or Render Settings” tickbox is checked.

With these settings out of the way, now we can bring media into the application. This assumes you are using a file-based camcorder (one that records to HDD, Flash media, or DVD). If you are using a tape-based camcorder, please see the section at the end of this chapter.
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