



The production process – Editing / final cut

In the classic production, the editorial aspects of the production will have been completed during the first cut, the script will be revised to indicate the precise requirements for graphics, music and effects, and there will be a short pause in the editing process whilst these elements are prepared.

When all elements are ready, the editing process will be resumed and the production completed.

For most productions at Channel 6 Television there is no clear division between these processes, as they are often undertaken in a single extended process.

The only formal divisions are those dictated by any approval deadlines

The scope of the final cut will also depend on whether the production is edited first in low resolution, and later re-digitised to hi-resolution, or whether all post-production is undertaken in high resolution.

Shorter productions with a small amount of raw material and a limited amount of effects and graphics work will often be edited in a single process - often in as short a period as a single day.

This approach is particularly suitable for news and reportage segments, public information spots and similar short productions, and allows for fast editing and immediate mastering and duplication on completion.

For most productions the final cut is completed in low resolution - all effects are designed and built, and the remaining audio tracks are laid and a rough balance between music, narration, dialogue, clean sound and effects is achieved.

The end result of this part of the process is a completed production - though still with low-resolution video.

Usually all decisions relating to structure, content and form are finalised at this stage.

Because every audio and video clip that was recorded has been digitised on a computer, there is a detailed list of all media data in the production.

From the timeline that is created during the editing process, the computer can create a list of exactly which parts of all video and audio clips have been used in the finished production.

Using this list, each clip in the finished production is now re-digitised in the high resolution that has been selected for the mastering process - usually 33 or 55 megabits.

After re-digitising, any effects sequences that involve motion video clips must be re-rendered. This is because an editing computer can play only a given number of video layers in real time, and effects sequences, which use more layers, than can be handled in real time must be rendered - from the effects data of the sequence the computer calculates and builds a single clip, which will be used for playback.

Any effects that were rendered during the low resolution first cut have already been defined, so the computer is able to re-render these with little or no human intervention.

Depending on the available computing power, and length and complexity of the effects sequence, rendering can require as little as 30 seconds and as much as 30 minutes.

When rendering is finished, the production can be screened in its final quality and any fine adjustments necessary may be made. At this stage we usually work our way through the entire production, trimming the audio levels for the last time.

The final editorial evaluation is also undertaken - checking the layout, timing and spelling of all graphics and captions. Although these have been checked several times, this is the last chance to be sure before the production leaves the editing room and is ready for distribution.

By this stage of production, requests for alterations by the client are unusual. Although not quite as simple as in earlier stages, these can usually be accommodated without undue cost or delay.

Approval copies may be pulled immediately - or after the production has been mastered.