

DVD Authoring: Menu Design

Class Notes

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Creating “Live” Menus with Adobe Encore, Photoshop and After Effects

Adobe Encore has a unique workflow for making menus - Adobe provides powerful integration with Adobe Photoshop and After Effects for creative menu editing while authoring. This session will demonstrate this "Live Editing" capability, and discuss Encore-related Menu issues.

Audience: *Adobe Encore users, basic understanding of Photoshop and After Effects needed.*

Introduction

Nowadays, anyone can go get a DV camcorder and a DVD burner with basic software to make DVDs. One of the things that differentiate an amateur DVD from a professional one is a customized menu. DVDs like the ones we rent from Blockbuster sometimes have some pretty amazing menus. We can easily create motion menus for our DVDs that will quickly separate our work from that of an amateur. All we need is a basic understanding of Encore DVD, Photoshop CS, and After Effects.

Create your menu

The easiest way to create a DVD menu is to open an existing one in Photoshop CS and then customize it. So, start Encore, and choose from one of the menus that Encore already contains. It would be better if this menu has the appropriate amount of buttons, but if you can't find it, don't worry. We will customize this menu!

In Encore, right-click the menu and select, edit in Photoshop.

When the menu opens in Photoshop we will be able to see how exactly the layer sets need to be named in order to work properly in Encore.

Notice, for example that the tile can be a layer set names regularly, but that buttons have to be layer set names with a (+) at the beginning, in order for Encore to recognize them as buttons.

Also notice that each button layer set will have several layers that represent the different states of that particular button. The colors used for the selected and highlighted states are supposed to be flat colors. So, no glows, or feathered edges. So, in fact, each button will have 3 states: One for Normal, one for Highlighted, and one for Selected. You indicate these to Encore DVD by naming the layers, “(=1)”, “(=2)” and “(=3)”

You can also have the button layer set “grab” a frame from the video that it will link to by adding a (%) at the beginning of the layer name inside the button layer set.

Change the design of your menu any which way you desire, modifying images for background, buttons, colors of highlights, etc. until you have an original menu creation (personalized with your client’s logo, etc)

You can make buttons any shape you wish, but the activate area (invisible) needs to be rectangular. You can see this area when selecting the button with the selection tool in Encore. Make sure that the activate areas for your buttons do not overlap.

Once you are happy with the changes, save the file (it will probably have a very long name), and go back to Encore DVD. Your newly created (well, modified) menu will be there, waiting for you!

Link the buttons to the appropriate chapter stops, and preview. Make sure everything works the way it is supposed to. Remember, you can always go back to Photoshop (by selecting “Edit in Photoshop) and make any extra changes.

If you do not like the poster frame that was automatically selected by Encore when you linked the buttons to the chapter points, you can change them. Select the chapter on the Timeline (it will become “highlighted). Then move your CTI until you see a frame that you like. Right-click in here and select (select as Poster Frame”.

Animate buttons in Encore

You can animate the video inside the buttons in Encore by selecting “Animate Buttons”

Select an appropriate length for the animation, add music (if desired), and render Motion Menus (file>Render Motion Menus)

Preview

Animate background (and even buttons) in After Effects

- Select the menu and go under edit> create After Effects Composition. This will ask you where to save the Photoshop file, and once that is done After Effects will automatically open.
- Select an appropriate length for your composition and begin the animation process.
- Make sure that the end position of your layer is the original position where the layer was when you created the menu.
- Render (DV settings, 48K will do), include project link (in case you would like to make changes to this animation).
- Import this newly created movie into Encore
- Create a Timeline for this movie and make it first play

- Make the end action of this Timeline be the original menu that you created. This will make the moving movie “end” in the menu, therefore creating a seamless transition between the two items (the end will be the same as the beginning).

Looping Backgrounds

You can add a video file to an existing menu, which should be a “looping” video (it will be able to play again and again seamlessly). Drag this video file from the Project window onto the menu. The original buttons of your menu will remain, but the background will be replaced by the moving video

To make a moving background of clouds (seamless), create a file in Photoshop - make it 768 X 480. Add the effects Render> Clouds.

Make sure that your background color is contrasting with the foreground color. To make these really look like clouds make the foreground white and the background blue –go under filter> render> clouds. Because of the width of the image these clouds will loop seamlessly in After Effects.

Save this as a Targa file, and import into After Effects

Crte a new composition and make it 720 X 480 – make it any length you desire, but in this case, I guess 8-10 seconds will suffice

- Drag the cloud file in here
- Apply the offset effect
- Place a keyframe at 0
- Place another Keyframe at the end (8 seconds) and make this value 1152 (768 X 1.5 ----- 768 is the width of the file)
- Move the end of your work area to be one frame before the end of the comp (so that it will loop seamlessly)
- Render (DV NTSC – Only render the work area)
- Import into Encore
- Drag the file onto the Menu, and it will replace the current background.
- “Tell” Encore to loop this video
- Choose File>Render Motion Menus
- Preview
- Burn the DVD by going under File>Building DVD>Make DVD Disc

Luisa Winters has been in the professional videography industry for 15 years. A multiple award winning videographer / editor, Luisa believes videographers should attend her workshops because they will add editing techniques to their repertoire that they likely have never thought of before. She will give tips to make editing much more productive, faster, and far more inventive.

An accomplished videographer, editor, 3D animator and graphics designer, her 3D animations of the Naval Academy logo have been seen on PBS as well as in private video productions. She has created and edited scores of video projects for dozens of corporate, government, and educational, commercial and private clients. Since 1999, Luisa has conducted training sessions and master classes for Adobe Premiere Pro, which have helped thousands of videographers learn and master Adobe Premiere and other Adobe software programs.

Luisa has been a featured instructor at training workshops all over the US, Central and South America- She has given workshops in the following cities:

- Baltimore, MD
- Annapolis, MD
- Washington, DC
- Philadelphia, PA
- Boston, MA
- San Francisco, CA
- Sacramento, CA
- San Diego, CA
- Dulles, VA
- Fairfax, VA
- Orlando, FL
- Chicago, IL
- New York, NY
- Las Vegas, NV
- Los Angeles, CA
- San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- Buenos Aires, Argentina

Luisa is a Johns Hopkins University Graduate and is fluent in both English and Spanish.

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