

Bonus Chapter 2

Customizing Your Interface

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- ▶ Saving custom window layouts
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 - ▶ Adding shortcut buttons to a window
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As you get comfortable working in Final Cut Pro, you're likely to want to customize the layout of the various windows and palettes to suit your work style. For instance, if you're working on a PowerBook or iBook, you may want to shrink the Viewer and Canvas windows so that you can work with a larger Timeline and Browser or vice versa, as shown in Figure BC2-1. Or if you have two monitors connected to the Mac (you lucky dog), you can put the Browser window on that second monitor so that you can spread out your work and see all available clips as large icons.

If you work much with keyboard shortcuts, you can also easily customize the keyboard in Final Cut Pro, as well as bypass key commands altogether, by using the new shortcut buttons. The number of ways that you can customize Final Cut Pro continues to grow and make working with the application more efficient and enjoyable. So sit back, and get ready to create your own personal editing experience.



Figure BC2-1:
An alternative window layout (color-correction setup).

Changing the Window Layouts

Because every monitor setup, project type, and editing style can benefit from a little organization, Final Cut Pro comes preprogrammed with a handful of different window layouts you can choose from. These layouts can be exactly the thing you need in order to simplify your life as you edit. You may even think of the layout process as feng shui for your Mac. To use these existing layouts, choose **Window** → **Arrange** and then choose one of the layout options from the Arrange submenu. These options are as follows:

- ✓ **Audio Mixing:** In this setup, the Viewer, Canvas, and Tool Bench (with the Audio Mixer) are at the top of the screen. The Browser and Timeline windows are placed at the bottom, with the Tool palette and audio meters to the right of the Timeline.
- ✓ **Color Correction:** This layout is good if you spend lots of time checking the color levels of clips and making adjustments to them. It places the Viewer, Canvas, and Tool Bench (with tabs for the Video Scopes and Frame Viewer) windows at the top of the interface. As in most other configurations, the Browser and Timeline are at the bottom, with the Tool palette and audio meters to the right of the Timeline.
- ✓ **Multiple Edits:** If you're using a monitor with a screen resolution of 1280 x 854 or higher, you have an extra option available that places three

monitor windows across the top of your screen. These three windows include the Viewer window, the Tool Bench with multiple Frame Viewer tabs (for checking out various edit points), and the Canvas window. The Browser and Timeline windows are placed at the bottom (as in most scenarios), with the Tool palette and audio meters to the right of the Timeline.

- ✓ **Standard:** Just like it sounds, this setup is considered a basic choice for traditional editing duties. In this setup, the Timeline gets priority, and the Browser, Viewer, and Canvas windows are all along the top, with the Timeline at the bottom. The Tool palette and audio meters are to the right of the Timeline window.
- ✓ **Two Up:** This option is also one of the top choices (and one of my favorites) for a basic editing setup, particularly if you're working with a smaller screen and want to get a better view of the monitor windows. In this configuration, the Viewer and Canvas windows are at the top, and the Browser and Timeline are at the bottom. As usual, the Tool palette and audio meters are to the right of the Timeline window.

If those stock layouts don't cut it for you, you can create custom layouts that are always available to you directly from the Window menu. You can even create custom setups for multiple monitors! To do your own thing with the Final Cut Pro workspace, follow these steps:

1. Drag the major Final Cut Pro windows and palettes into a layout that works for you.

You can position and resize the Browser, Viewer, Canvas, and Timeline, as well as the Tool palette and audio meters. Final Cut Pro doesn't save alternative arrangements of other windows, such as Effects or Favorites.

2. Hold down Option, and choose Window⇧Arrange.

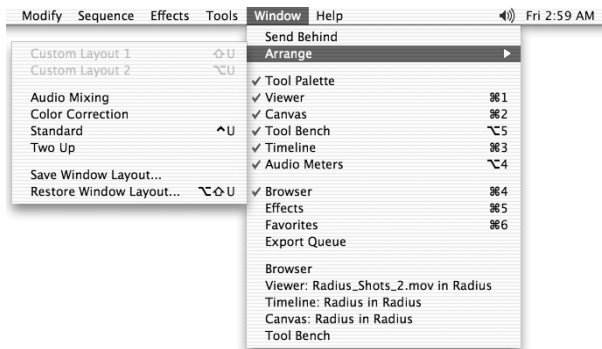
3. From the submenu that appears, choose Set Custom Layout 1 or Set Custom Layout 2.

You're assigning a window layout to one of two custom Final Cut Pro layouts. Now whenever you launch Final Cut Pro, it opens into the layout you set last. And you can always choose a different layout by choosing from the submenu of the Window⇧Arrange command (see Figure BC2-2).



As you scientifically contemplate the most precise, optimized layout for Final Cut Pro windows, consider this: Not all those windows need to be visible at one time! When you have limited screen space (for instance, if you're running Final Cut Pro on an iMac or laptop), you may want to overlap the Timeline, Viewer, Canvas, and Browser so that each window can be bigger when you're using it but disappear under another when you're not. The trick to making this strategy work is using the keyboard shortcuts to quickly call up the window you want to work with — use ⌘+1 for the Viewer, ⌘+2 for the Canvas, ⌘+3 for the Timeline, and ⌘+4 for the Browser. With some practice, you can get quite good working this way.

Figure BC2-2:
The custom layout options on the Arrange menu (without the Multiple Edits option).



You can always hide the entire Final Cut Pro interface by pressing $\mathbb{A}+H$. OS X uses this simple key combination to let you quickly hide applications so that you have easy access to other applications, such as Photoshop or Logic Audio, that you may have open in the background.

Resizing windows

In addition to changing the position of windows with the window layout features in Final Cut Pro, you can manually resize windows by dragging their borders. You can also resize multiple windows in Final Cut Pro simultaneously by moving the pointer between two windows (where they intersect) until it changes to the Resize Window pointer and dragging the edges to make the windows bigger or smaller. Both windows you select should be resized together in any direction you choose. (Watch the video scale at the same time!) This technique can come in handy, for instance, if you need to resize your Timeline without covering up your Viewer and Canvas windows. Start by resizing the monitors, and then adjust the size of the Timeline accordingly. If you're working with several tracks of video, audio, and effects, you should make room for a taller Timeline window.

Creating custom columns in the Browser window

For many users, the column layouts in the Browser window are sufficient the way they are. However, this window can get a bit cluttered for large projects, especially with the several columns you don't regularly check. After all, for most projects, you just want to grab clips from the Browser and perhaps check a couple of bits of timecode — that's it. To change the columns that are displayed, Control+click at the top of any column in the Browser and select Hide Column to make the column disappear or to select another column to display in its place. You can also expand or contract the size of columns to show more

or less information by resizing the column as you would any other window in Final Cut Pro (grab the top of each column to resize). After you have made all your alterations to the types of columns that are shown, you can save the layout by Control+clicking once more and selecting Save Column Layout.



The only column you can't change in the Browser window is the Name column, although you can resize it like any other column.

Using the Keyboard Layout

Final Cut Pro also includes a few new ways to easily change the layout of your keyboard and locate shortcuts, as well as ways to use new shortcut buttons for increased productivity. After working with the application for a while, you quickly realize the advantage of using keyboard shortcuts to accomplish common tasks. In fact, keyboard shortcuts are the fastest and most efficient way to work in Final Cut Pro. Of course, apart from the simpler commands, who has the time (or long-term memory) to memorize hundreds of commands? Most of us have a hard enough time remembering a grocery list, much less a seemingly endless number of key combinations. Fortunately, the wise engineers at Apple recognized the need for a tool that lets you easily locate a command's shortcut, customize the command's position on the keyboard, and place buttons on the various interface windows to trigger commonly used functions.

Some people prefer to create their own keyboard layouts for different tasks, such as editing, color correcting, or audio mixing. Customizing a keyboard layout and saving it as a preset make it easy to access setups at a later time.

Follow these steps to assign a command and customize a keyboard shortcut:

1. **Choose Tools⇨Keyboard Layout⇨Customize.**
2. **Click the Lock button in the lower-left corner of the Keyboard Layout window (see Figure BC2-3).**

You cannot make changes to the current keyboard layout until you have unlocked it.

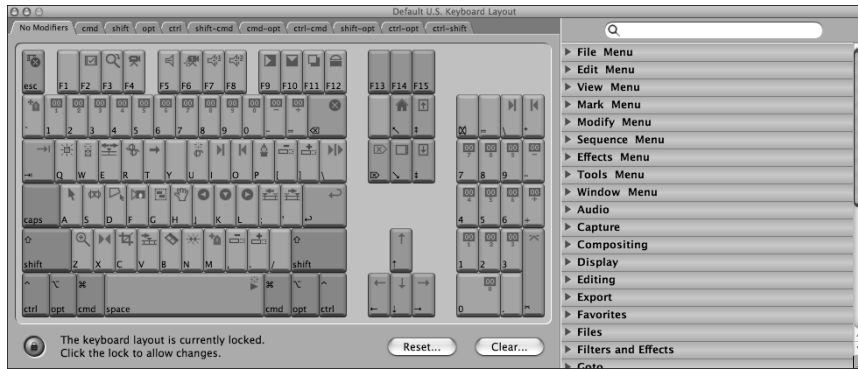
3. **Click a tab to choose a set of modifier keys.**

Each tab in the Keyboard Layout window shows the commands that are available for that particular modifier key (for instance, ⌘ or Control).

4. **Locate a command by using the search field to enter a name or by manually searching through the categories that are accessible on the right.**

All the commands you can use are listed on the right side of the Keyboard Layout window. You can use the search field by entering a name or keyword (you don't have to press Return — it checks as you type), or you can click one of the triangles to reveal more choices under a specific category (such as Capture or Compositing).

Figure BC2-3:
The
Keyboard
Layout tool.



5. Drag the command that you want to assign from the right onto the appropriate key on the keyboard layout to the left.

After you have selected a command to assign, you can also press the specific key or key combination to reassign its key command. Continue selecting and assigning new combinations until you have the keyboard layout you're most comfortable with. You've just created custom keyboard commands!

6. Click the Lock button to prevent changes to the current keyboard layout.



You have another quick way to assign a new keyboard shortcut to a Final Cut command. Just click the command on the right side of the Keyboard Layout window to select it and then press the keys on your keyboard that you want to assign to that Final Cut feature. For instance, you may select Deselect All (it's under the Edit heading) and then press Cmd+D to add that shortcut to the Deselect All feature.

Adding Button Shortcuts

Shortcut buttons are a really cool and much-appreciated addition to the Final Cut Pro interface. By clicking a button, you can skip complicated shortcuts and avoid searching through menus to accomplish a task, which is particularly useful for frequently used functions. You can easily place these buttons in any of the main Final Cut Pro windows, including the Browser, Viewer, Canvas, Timeline, and Tool Bench. Simply open the Keyboard Layout or Button List window, and drag a command's icon to the top of a window. It's as simple as that! Of course, the temptation is to place several buttons in a window to avoid using key combinations altogether. Still, you should keep your windows as uncluttered as possible, so try to stick with the buttons and commands you use the most.

The following steps demonstrate how to create your own shortcut buttons:

1. Choose Tools → Button List to open a window with a list of commands (see Figure BC2-4).

You can also use the right side of the Keyboard Layout window to locate commands, which uses an identical list.

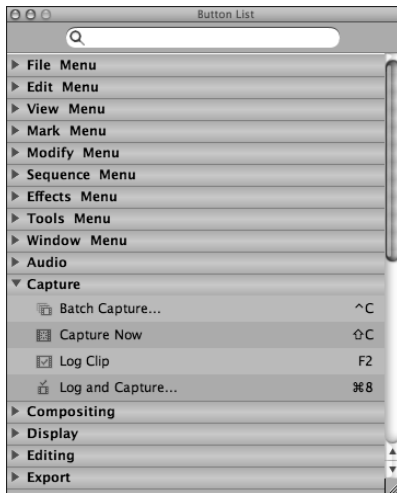


Figure BC2-4:
The Button List window.

2. Search for the command you want to make into a button.

Typing a keyword into the field at the top should yield a few related options. For instance, typing **batch** in the search field displays any commands that have the word *batch* in them, such as Batch Capture, Batch Export, Export Batch List, and Import Batch List. If you would rather browse through different categories of commands, you can click the arrows next to an existing category to access a tree of more options. Searching in this way may not be as fast as entering keywords, but it lets you check out the available choices.

3. Drag the symbol that’s next to a shortcut into the top portion (the tab area) of any interface window, such as the Browser or Timeline (see Figure BC2-5).

After the new button is in place, just click it, and the command is automatically executed. It’s that easy!



You can rearrange the order of button shortcuts after they have been added to a window by clicking and dragging one of them to a location in between other buttons.

Figure BC2-5:
The Browser window with
button
shortcuts.

