



for After Effects



shape for After Effects



roto station

Quick Start | Reference

mocha for After Effects
mocha shape for After Effects
motor

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Welcome

Welcome to **mocha** and **motor**, tracking and rotoscoping tools that make your tracking and rotoscoping work much easier. Our tools are based on our proprietary Planar Tracking technology, an awesome approach to 2D tracking which will help you to generate accurate corner-pins and track and transform your roto splines in a powerful way.

Please note that this manual covers **mocha for After Effects**, **mocha shape for After Effects** and **motor**. The feature set varies between the applications, so not all the descriptions in the guide apply to all the products. In general, if you can't find the feature being discussed, it probably does not apply to the product you are using.

For installation instructions, please refer to the release notes at:

http://www.imagineersystems.com/products/release_notes/

For video tutorials, please visit:

<http://www.imagineersystems.com/products/>

Introduction

--IMPORTANT CONCEPT--

The Planar Tracker provides 2D tracking data similar to that obtained from point trackers, but it tracks planes instead of points. It can be used to determine position, scale, rotation, shear and perspective motions and the result can be output as traditional corner-pin data.

Like all good tools, ours require some investment up front to learn and master. Once you have learned to harness the power of the Planar Tracker, you will be able to get spot-on tracks faster and create shapes with less manual adjustments than you probably thought possible, so it is well worth the investment.

There Are No Point Trackers

In our tools, splines are used for both tracking and rotoscoping. You will not find standard 1-point or multi-point tracking tools in our software.

Traditional tracking tools require that you locate “points” that remain consistent throughout the entire shot in order to track movement. This is itself a difficult task, especially when tracking a shot that was not originally designed to be tracked. If you wish to also track rotation, perspective and shear you need even more clear and consistent points to track.

Traditional roto methodology would have you outline a shape with the minimum number of points necessary then either manually move the control points or track the shape with a point tracker to “get it close”. Even when using multi-point trackers to impart rotation and scale to the roto spline, the results are often unusable if there is any perspective change during the shot.

If you have never used Imagineer’s Planar Tracker, you are in for a real treat. The Planar Tracker doesn’t employ point trackers, but tracks an object’s translation, rotation and scaling data based on the movement of a user defined plane.

If you remember your geometry class, a plane is a flat surface having only two dimensions, such as a table top, a wall, or a television screen. Look around you - planes are everywhere. With the Planar Tracker, planes will quickly become your friends. Planes provide much more detail to the computer about an object’s translation, rotation and scaling than is possible with point based tracking tools. Even as an object leaves and enters a frame, there is usually enough information for the Planar Tracker to maintain a rock-solid track of the object, something impossible with traditional tracking techniques.

When you begin working in our tools, you will need to look for planes in the clip. More specifically, you will need to look for planes that coincide with movements you want to track. If someone is waving goodbye, you can break their arm into two planes - the upper and lower limbs. Although not all of the points on the arm sections actually lie on the same two-dimensional surface, the apparent parallax will be minimal.

The Art of Tracking

Tracking and rotoscoping are part of almost any visual effects project. For 2D tracking, point trackers are most commonly used, but to get good point tracks requires a mix of experience and luck. You would often “prime” a clip for optimum tracking using color correctors and other image manipulations. If the point being tracked exits frame, you get into offset tracking, which presents its own set of challenges. If it all fails, you are into hand tracking, which is time consuming and very hard to get accurate.

So obviously the ideal 2D tracker is one that requires less experience and luck to be successful with, one that does not require the image to be primed and one that is less likely to require a lot of tricks or hand tracking on difficult shots. Our Planar Tracker is the answer.

The Art of Rotoscoping

Most often a good matte requires a combination of both keying and rotoscoping techniques. Our products are not keying tools, they are dedicated rotoscoping tools. Good rotoscoping artists often think like animators, reverse engineering the movements, the easing in and outs, the holds and overshoots of objects, and set their keyframes accordingly.

In general, the fewer the keyframes, the better your mattes will look. Too many keyframes will cause the edges to “chatter” and move unnaturally. Too few keyframes will cause the shapes to drift and lose definition. Finding the right number and placement of keyframes often comes with experience but there are a few things to keep in mind when rotoscoping:

--TRADITIONAL ROTO TIPS--

1) There is no such thing as a perfect matte. Rotoscoping is an art form that takes into account the background image, the movement of the object, and the new elements to be composited in the background.

2) Try to start your shape at its most complex point in time, where it will need the most control points.

3) Break a complex shape into multiple simple shapes. If you are rotoscoping a humanoid form and an arm becomes visible, consider rotoscoping the arm as its own element, rather than adding extra points on the body that will serve no purpose when the arm is obscured.

4) Imagine you are the animator who created the shot. What would your dope sheet look like? No matter the medium, whether CG, live action or otherwise, most movements are rarely linear. They normally move in arcs; they normally accelerate in and out of stopped positions. Try and understand the mechanics behind

how things are moving in your shot. This will help you to minimize keyframes.

5) Watch and study the shot before you start working. Where are the changes in directions? These will normally have keyframes. Where are the starts and stops? Are there camera moves that can be stabilized to make your work easier?

6) Don't be afraid to trash your work and start over. Beginning roto artists often make the mistake of trying to fix a flawed approach by adding more and more keyframes. Experienced roto artists learn to quickly identify an inferior approach and are unashamed to trash their work and start over, often many, many times. It is very difficult to get a good matte without a conscious effort to keep the keyframes to a minimum.

Starting a New Project

Overview

Be sure and grab the tutorial files for the examples in this guide from:

<http://www.imagineersystems.com/download/>

The basic tracking workflow in our tools is:

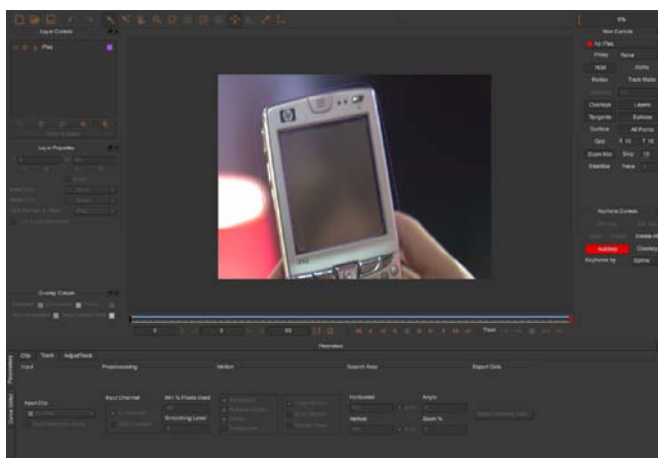
1. Import your footage
2. Draw a loose spline around the shape you want to track. Track the spline
3. Set the 'Surface', or corner pin where you want the inserted image
4. Adjust track if necessary
5. Export the completed track

The basic rotoscoping workflow is very similar:

1. Import your footage
2. Draw a loose spline around the shape you want to track. Track the spline
3. Adjust track if necessary
4. Add new shapes for rotoscoping that are linked to your track
5. Export the rendered mattes or the shape data

Note: **motor** does not export tracking data.

The Workspace



Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the workspace. It is a fairly common layout:

In the center is a canvas, where most of the work is done. At the top, we have a toolbar, where commonly used tools are accessed. A number of dock-able panels are on the left and right sides. At the bottom is a panel

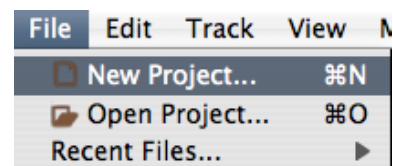
which contains the parameter controls and a curve editor.

Many of the controls will probably be obvious to you, such as Edge Properties, but others like the Layer Controls should be looked at more closely.

Creating a New Project

When you start the application you are presented with an empty workspace. No footage is loaded and most of the controls are consequently disabled. To begin working, you must open an existing project or start a new project.

Choose File -> New Project... or select the New Project icon on the toolbar. A step-by-step wizard will guide



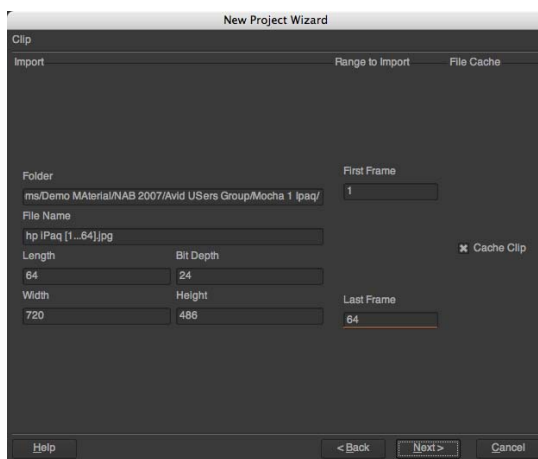
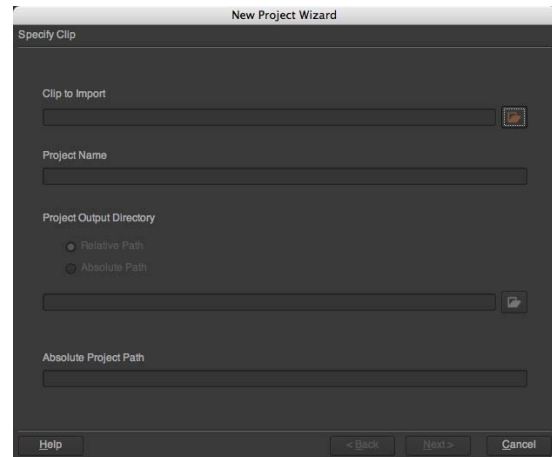
you through the process of getting your project set up properly.

Import your footage

Select the clip to import by clicking on the Open icon to the right of the top line. This will bring up a file browser, where you can select almost any industry standard file formats. Image sequences will show up as individual frames. You can select any one of the frames and the application will automatically sequence the frames as a clip when importing.

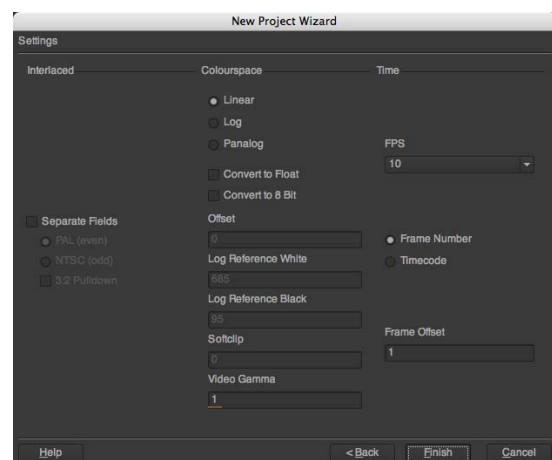
A project name will automatically be generated for you based on the filename of the imported footage, but you can change it if you want by simply typing in a new name.

Also, your project file and cache files will by default be output to a directory called "Results" which will be created in the same folder as your clip is imported from. You can change this in Preferences or on a per project basis by specifying a different relative or absolute path.



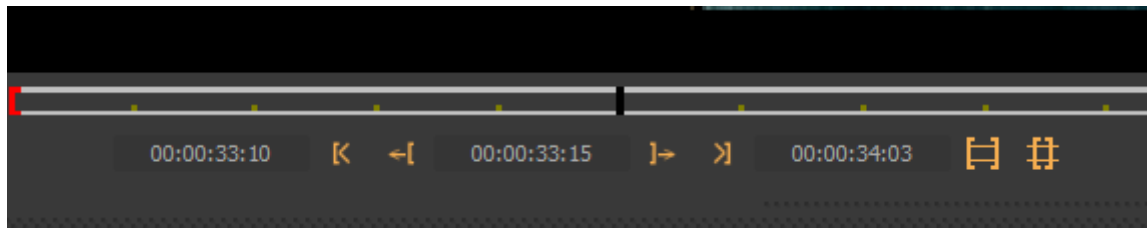
When you click Next you will be presented with options that allow you to adjust the range of frames to import and to decide if you wish the clip to be cached into memory or not. Caching is a good idea if you are working a computer that has fast local storage, but your shot is stored in a slow network location. If your shot is already stored on fast storage, you don't need to cache.

Clicking Next, you will now be presented with important settings such as interlacing, frame rate and color space. Interlacing and frame rate are especially important to get correct if you intend to export tracking or shape data to another application.



Setting the In and Out Points

You may set the In and Out points if you know you will only be working on an isolated section of the shot. Hover over a button and a tooltip will quickly appear describing the button's behavior. Note that the In and Out points affect the range of the Überkey button (see later).



You can zoom the timeline to only show you the part between you In and Out points by clicking the Zoom Timeline button.

Tracking Basics

For the following example you need the iPAQ tutorial files available from:

<http://www.imagineersystems.com/download/>

You can also watch a video tutorial covering some of the topics discussed here:

http://www.imagineersystems.com/products/monet/mocha_tutorial.mp4

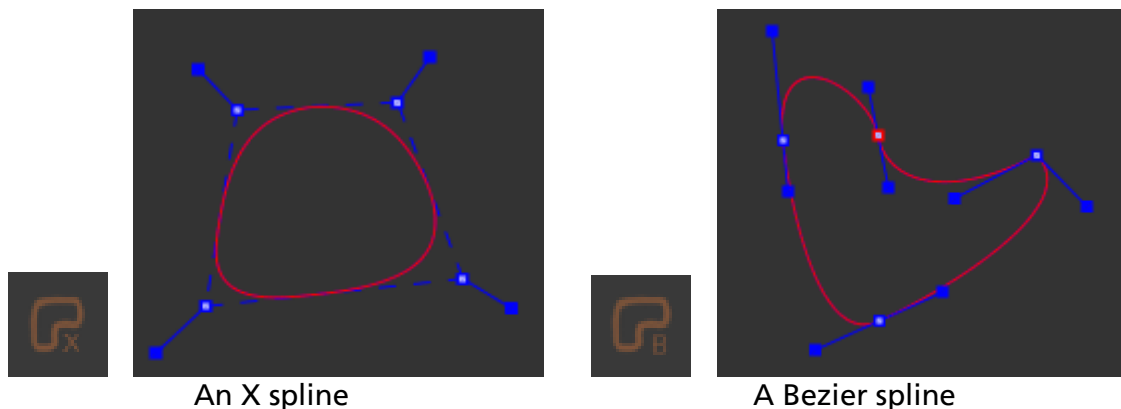
Overview

Imagineer's Planar Tracker technology can provide the same 2D tracking output as a 1-, 2-, 3- or 4-point track, but does so by tracking planes rather than points.

The key to getting the most out of the Planar Tracker is to learn to find planes of movement in your shot which coincide with the object that you want to track or roto. Sometimes it will be obvious - other times you may have to break your object into different planes of movement. For instance if you were tracking a tabletop, you would want to draw the spline to avoid the flower arrangement in the center of the table - it is not on the same plane and will make your track less accurate.

To select a plane you simply draw a spline around it. You can be fairly loose with your spline - the Planar Tracker is intelligent enough to discard the pixel movement that doesn't conform to the movement of the majority of the pixels within the shape.

Our tool feature two spline types, X splines and Bezier splines.



In general X splines work better for tracking, especially with perspective motion. Nevertheless the Bezier Spline is versatile and is the industry spline standard.

Selecting What to Track

Most tracking applications use small rectangular boxes for selecting what to track. Our tools use splines.

For example if you are tracking the position of mobile phone screen, you would normally have to look for a point of high contrast, that was relatively stable, with no significant brightness changes over time etc. to get a good track. You may have to reposition the tracker to another more desirable point half-way through the track if your original point moves out of frame. This makes point tracking very complicated.

With the Planar Tracker you simply draw a spline around the screen as shown below.



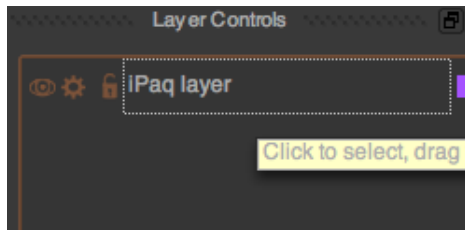
Try this out on the iPAQ demo clip: Use the shape tool to create a shape around the outside edge of the iPAQ. You will notice that the shape is not tight on the edge but actually has a little space to allow for the high contrast edges to show through, as these provide good tracking data.

Start creating your shape by clicking onto the screen. After the third point, the shape will auto-close, but you can continue to add points. After you have added all the points you need, right-click to close.

Dealing With Obstructions or Reflective Surfaces

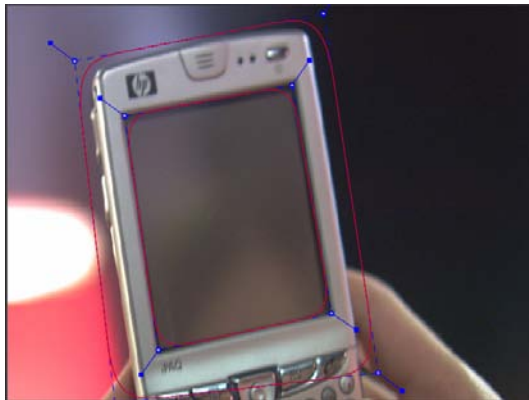
In some cases there are parts of an image that can influence the effectiveness of the Planar Tracker. To handle this, you can create an exclusion zone in the area you are tracking.

For instance, in the iPAQ example we are using, there are frames where there are strong glares on the screen. These glares can make the track jump. So what we need to do is isolate that area and tell the tracker to ignore it. Here's how this is done:



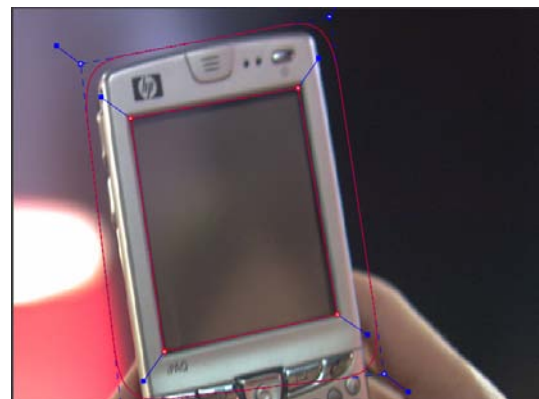
First select the initial layer you created.

Second, select the add shape tool to add an additional shape to the current layer, which selects the area you want the tracker to ignore.



Draw this second shape inside the screen. Note that both splines have the same color, which is an indication that they belong to the same layer. Also you will notice in the Layer Controls panel that you only have a single layer.

Lastly, using the handles at each point, pull them out to create a straight cornered shape.





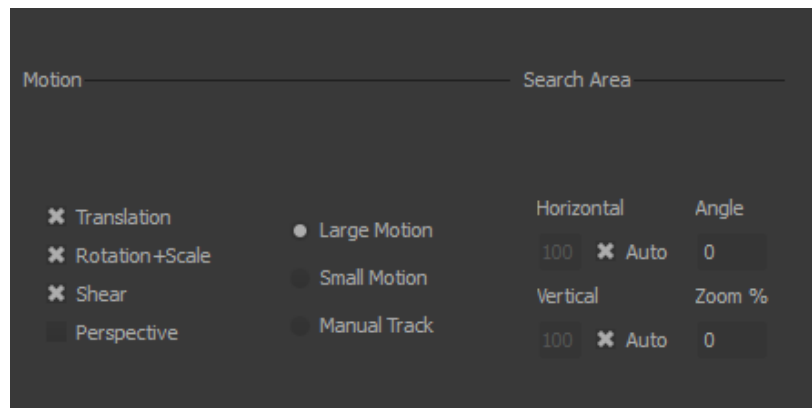
By turning on the Mattes button under View Controls you can see the area that will be tracked.

Before You Track

Various tracking parameters can be accessed by selecting the Track tab. On the left hand side of the Track tab, you will see two sections: Motion and Search Area.

Motion allows you to define the type of motion the tracker should be calculating and whether it should expect large motions (specified in the Search Area) or only small motions (up to about 3 pixels shifts per frame), which is faster and great for tracking small jitters to be stabilized.

The settings under Search Area allow you to control how large a motion the tracker should expect, similar to the way you would increase the size of the rectangle for a point tracker to handle faster motion.

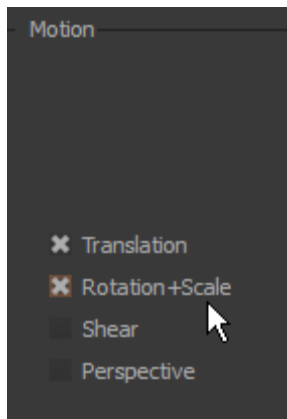


If the object in your shot is moving significantly and you are working on a large 2k-4k image, you may wish to manually enter some large pixel values.

1-, 2-, 3- and 4-Point Style Tracking

If you would like to track just x,y position information, like a traditional point tracker, then select only Translation in the Motion section.

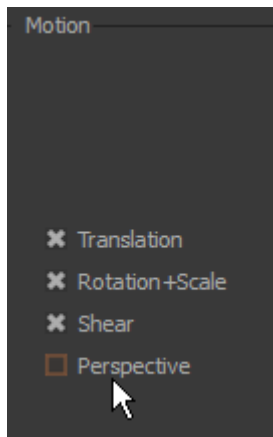
If you'd also like to track the Scale and Rotation, simply check the Motion mode to include Rotation + Scale.



2-point tracking mode

Keep in mind, because this is a Planar Tracker, you do not have to track two separate splines. Unless they are on the same plane of movement, this will actually make for a poor track. Trust the planar tracker to derive the Rotation and Scale based on pixel movement within the spline.

4-point or corner pin tracking is where the Planar Tracker really begins to shine. You can achieve more accurate tracks faster than you would think possible.



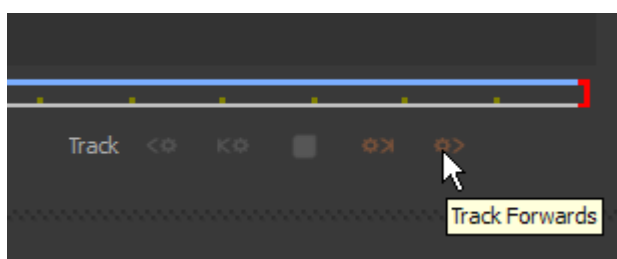
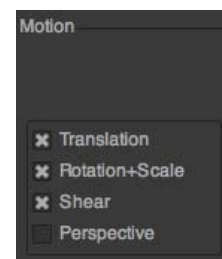
4-point / corner pin tracking mode

Perspective tracking works best on larger objects with severe perspective

Tracking the Spline

Before we move on to performing the actual track, we first need to adjust a couple of settings depending on the movement in the clip.

In this example, keep the default motion settings Translation, Rotation + Scale and Shear, which is the equivalent of a 3-point track.



Track the plane selected by pressing the Track Forward button on the right-hand side of the transport controls section.

Stop the track and adjust the shape if it doesn't seem to be tracking properly. You may keyframe the spline shape so that it tracks only the planar region of a shape by adjusting the shape and hitting Add Key in the keyframe controls menu. Keep in mind that no initial keyframe is set until you first hit Add Key or move a point with Auto-Key turned on.

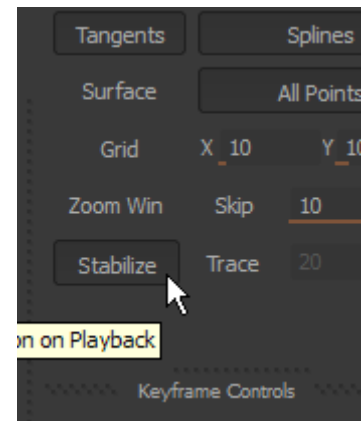
Checking Your Track

The spline should be tracked in addition to the clip being cached to RAM. You can play it back and get an idea as to how the track went. Feel free to change the playback mode in the transport controls to loop or ping-pong your track.

Another trick you can do to check your track is hit the Stabilize button in the View Controls section.

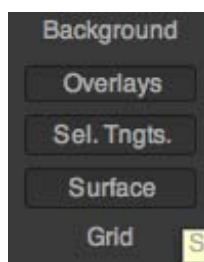
Turning on Stabilize will lock the tracked item in place, moving the image to compensate. Stabilize is just a preview mode and cannot be output in any way.

You can check the accuracy of your planar track by turning on the Surface and Grid overlay in the View Control panel. Drag the corners of the Surface overlay (the dark blue rectangle) to match the perspective of your tracked plane. If you play the clip, you should see the surface and/or grid line up perfectly with the plane you tracked.



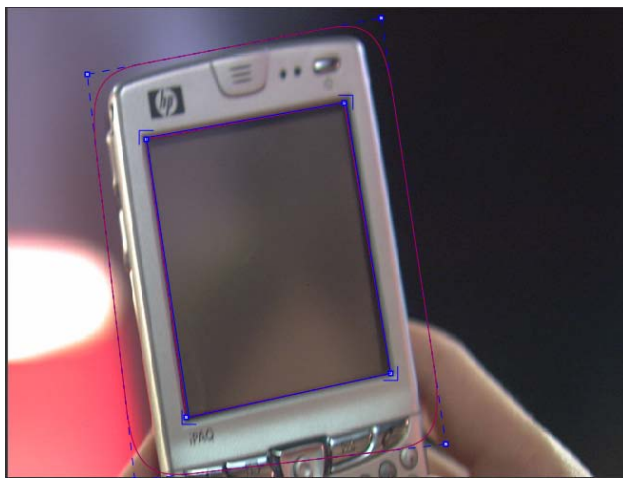
--IMPORTANT CONCEPT--

The Surface and Grid have no keyframes; they are simply guides that let you check the accuracy of your track. Note that the position of the Surface WILL affect the exported tracking data, so you MUST position the corners of the Surface before exporting tracking data.



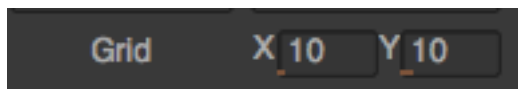
Next click on the Surface button under View Controls.

When you turn on the surface you will see the blue box that represents the 4 points of the corner-pin. Right now you will see that it is not lined up with the screen.



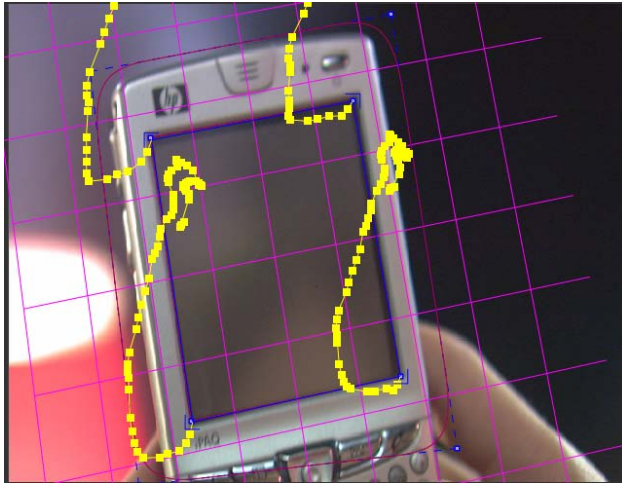
By selecting each corner one at a time you can adjust the surface area to cover the area of the screen.

The Grid overlay should line up with the plane you're tracking and move with it as you cycle through the clip. You can change the density of the grid by adjusting the X and Y grid values.



The grid overlay can give you a quick representation of the accuracy of the track.



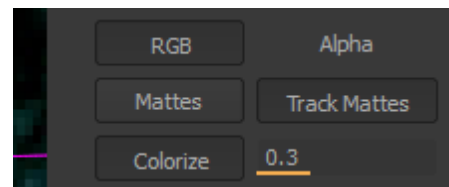


The Trace feature allows you to see the position of the planar corners over time. Skip allows you to work with only every n th frame, useful on particularly long roto shots where the movement is predictable.

--IMPORTANT CONCEPT--

When you track a layer, the mattes of any active layers above the layer itself are subtracted from the matte of the layer and hence influence the area being tracked. To keep your tracking predictable, it is recommended that you keep your tracking layers on the top of the stack unless you specifically wish to use other layers to subtract from the tracking area of layers beneath it.

To monitor what the tracker “sees” as a tracking area, select the Track Matte button in the view control.



Importing Mattes

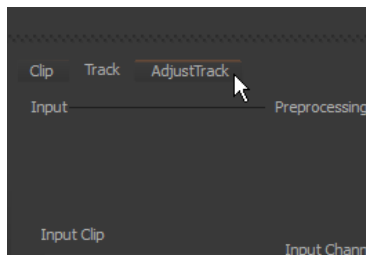
There may be instances where you have already created mattes for one or more objects in the shot, for example using a keyer or another roto tool that would help you isolate areas to track. You can import such mattes by creating a new layer and then using the Matte Clip setting under Layer Properties to assign it to the layer.

Adjusting the Track

Overview

Manual refinements can be made by using the AdjustTrack tool. AdjustTrack is primarily used for eradicating drift. It cannot be used to remove jitter. The concept is fairly simple; it utilizes the four-corner surface area to generate keyframable data which will compensate for tracking drift. To achieve an adjusted track you would ideally line up the surface area where you want to place your insert. In situations where you don't require an insertion you should place the corners of the surface area in distinctive locations, as you will need to refer to these locations when you add keyframes to correct the drift.

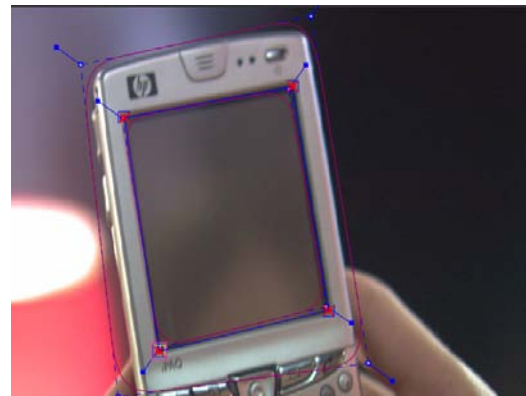
Starting the Track Adjustment



When you have the Surface at a satisfactory location and are ready to refine the track, flip over into the AdjustTrack module by hitting the AdjustTrack tab.

Reference Points

Once you select the AdjustTrack tab, a key frame with four reference points is created. Note: You should be on your desired master frame before selecting the AdjustTrack tab. The reference points can then be positioned on distinctive features, such that any drift in the track can be easily seen and corrected.



As you play through the sequence you will be able to manually adjust the position of each point as drift occurs.

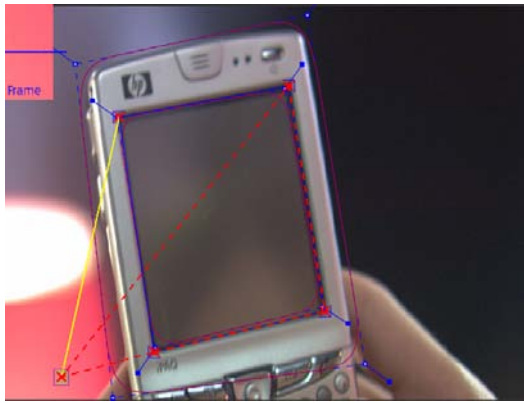
If your track is spot on, these reference points should line up properly throughout the shot. If you see a Reference Point drifting, that will indicate the track is drifting. Find the frame where the drift is worst and move the Reference Point back to the position it had in the Master Frame and the track will automatically be adjusted based on your correction - it's as easy as that!

Reference Point Quality



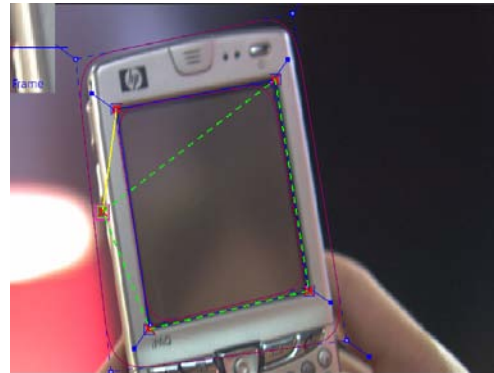
When you perform an adjust track and you begin to move a newly created reference point, you will notice the dashed lines which connect all of the reference points. These lines change in color to represent the quality of positioning of any given reference point. For best results keep reference points away from one another.

When adjusting the track try to always get at least yellow but shoot for green for a more solid adjust track.



The red lines indicate that this reference point position is a poor choice.

The green lines indicate that this reference point position is a good choice.



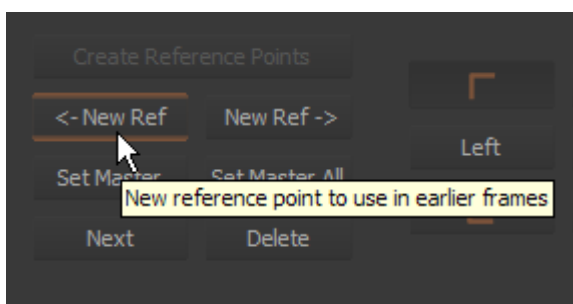
AdjustTrack with More than Four Reference Points

Often there are times where your reference points are either obscured or exit frame. In AdjustTrack you have the ability to create multiple reference points per surface corner that can be positioned in alternate locations to handle these situations. Simply click the New Ref button to create a new reference point for the selected corner.

You cannot keyframe the Surface - only the Reference Points. The original track and any refinements you make in AdjustTrack cause the Surface to move however.

Working Backwards

Every so often a shot will come along that is easier to track backwards than forwards. This is fairly simple when running the tracker backwards, but introduces some rather obtuse concepts when keyframing is involved. This is why there are two "New Ref" buttons provided. If you are working backwards and wish to set a new reference point, you will probably want to use the "<-New Ref" button instead of the forward-thinking "New Ref ->" button.



Because keyframing "thinks" forward, hitting "<-New Ref" will not create new Master Reference points on the current frame, but will go backwards in time, looking for any existing keyframes and set new Master Reference points on the

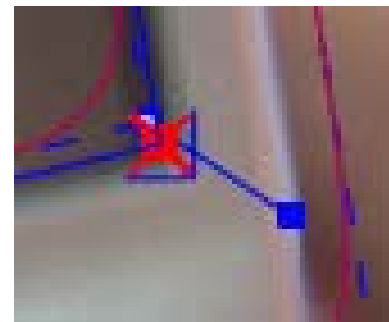
frame directly after. For example, if you decide to create a new backwards reference point at frame 20, a new master reference will be created at frame 21.

Some people may be more comfortable doing this manually by moving the playhead themselves and using the traditional “New Ref ->” button. Others who do a lot of tracking and find themselves working backwards often may find the backwards-thinking New Ref button helpful.

About Master Reference Points (the red X)

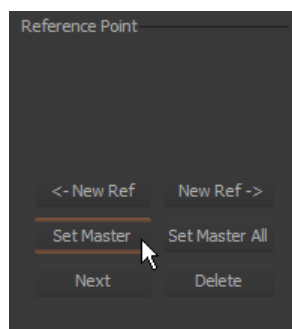
Every Reference Point has one frame in which its initial placement is determined without causing any adjustment to the track. This is called the Master Reference Point; if you step forward or backward in time you will notice the red X change to a red dot.

The red X indicates that this particular frame is the starting point for calculating adjustments. Moving a Master Reference Point will NOT change the tracking data.

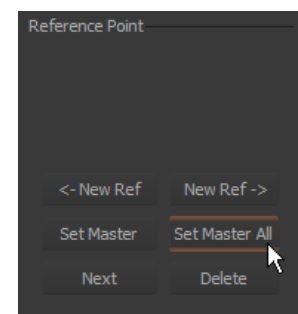


Go ahead and experiment - move the Reference Point when it is a red X (a Master Reference Point). You will notice the Surface isn't adjusted at all. Step forward a frame and move the same point - this time the surface will move because you are now adjusting the track.

Changing the Master Frame for a Reference Point

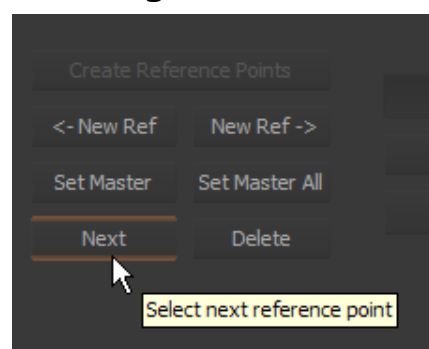


By default, the frame in which you create a Reference Point is its Master Reference frame. This Master Reference can occur on a different frame for each reference point. You can change the Master Reference frame by selecting a Reference Point, going to the appropriate frame and hitting the “Set Master” button.



You may set a new Master Reference Frame for all active points by hitting the Set Master All button.

Selecting Different Reference Points



One method for selecting different reference points is to hit the “Next” button.

The next button simply cycles through the active reference points for that frame. More fine-grained control of reference points can be obtained through the Nudge control panel, described below.

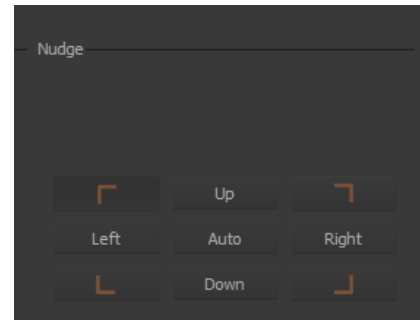
Deleting Reference Points

Deleting Reference Points is done by selecting the point you wish to remove and hitting the delete key. If there are multiple Reference points on a particular corner, the preceding Reference Point will be extended through your time line until a new Reference point is encountered.

Nudging Reference Points

The Nudge section allows you to move Reference points in 0.1 pixel increments, much more fine grained than would be possible by dragging the points manually. You can easily select any active Reference Point by selecting one of the corner buttons in the Nudge section.

If you hit the Auto button, a tracker will attempt to line up the selected Reference Point based on its position in the Master Reference frame. The Search Region Size and Maximum Motion parameters can be set in pixels in the Auto Nudge section.



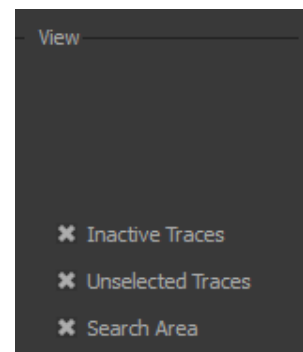
You can quickly select any corner by using the Corner selector buttons in the Nudge control panel. In the image below, the user is selecting the upper right corner in preparation for nudging operations.

View Options

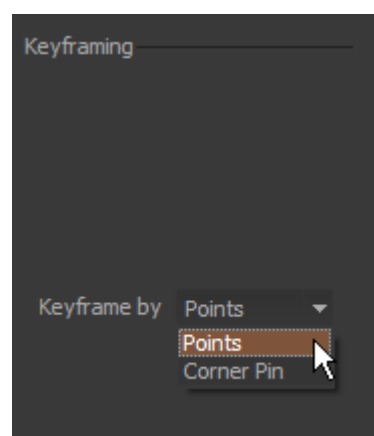
The AdjustTrack tab has a View section for cleaning up your AdjustTrack workspace. Deselecting the Inactive Traces button will cause the display to hide the traces of the inactive Reference Points. This is helpful if you have a corner with numerous Reference Points offsetting it.

Deselecting the Unselected Traces button will hide any Reference Point that is not selected.

Finally, deselecting the Search Area button will hide the Search Region Size (in Yellow) and the Maximum Motion search area (in Pink).



AdjustTrack Keyframing



The AdjustTrack tab has a setting that determines whether keyframes are per corner point or per surface.

Normally, you would want to keep your corner adjustments discrete, so that adjusting one would not automatically set a keyframe on another corner. In this case, you would want to keyframe by points. There are some special cases where you want to create a keyframe on every active Reference Point when any one of them is manipulated. For this case, choose the Corner Pin keyframing method.

Rotoscoping Basics

For the following example you need the BMW tutorial files available from

<http://www.imagineersystems.com/download/>

You can also watch a video tutorial covering some of the topics discussed at:

http://www.imagineersystems.com/products/monet/000_motor_quickstart_z.mp4

Overview

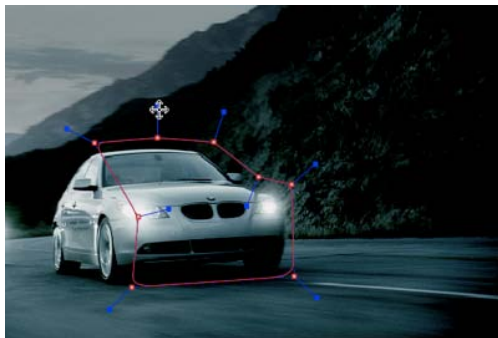
As you have seen, the Planar Tracker is a great 2D tracker. Now let's look at how we use the tracking data to roto a shot.

The workflow will feel familiar to most artists, but there are a few fundamental differences.

Rather than starting out with an accurate shape, we start out with a loose tracking shape, then we track that shape. We then add the accurate roto shape and link this shape to the tracking data of the loose tracking shape.

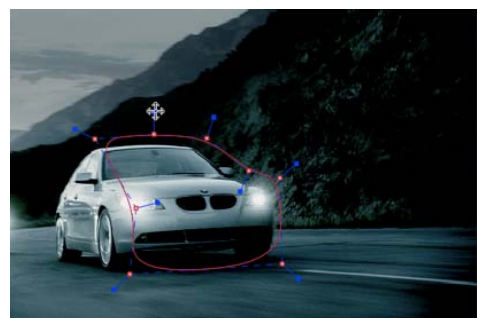
Adding Your Tracking Spline

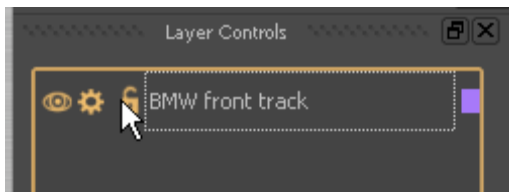
Create a new project using the BMW tutorial footage using default import options.



Move to frame 1 and draw a very loose spline around the bulk of the front of the BMW.

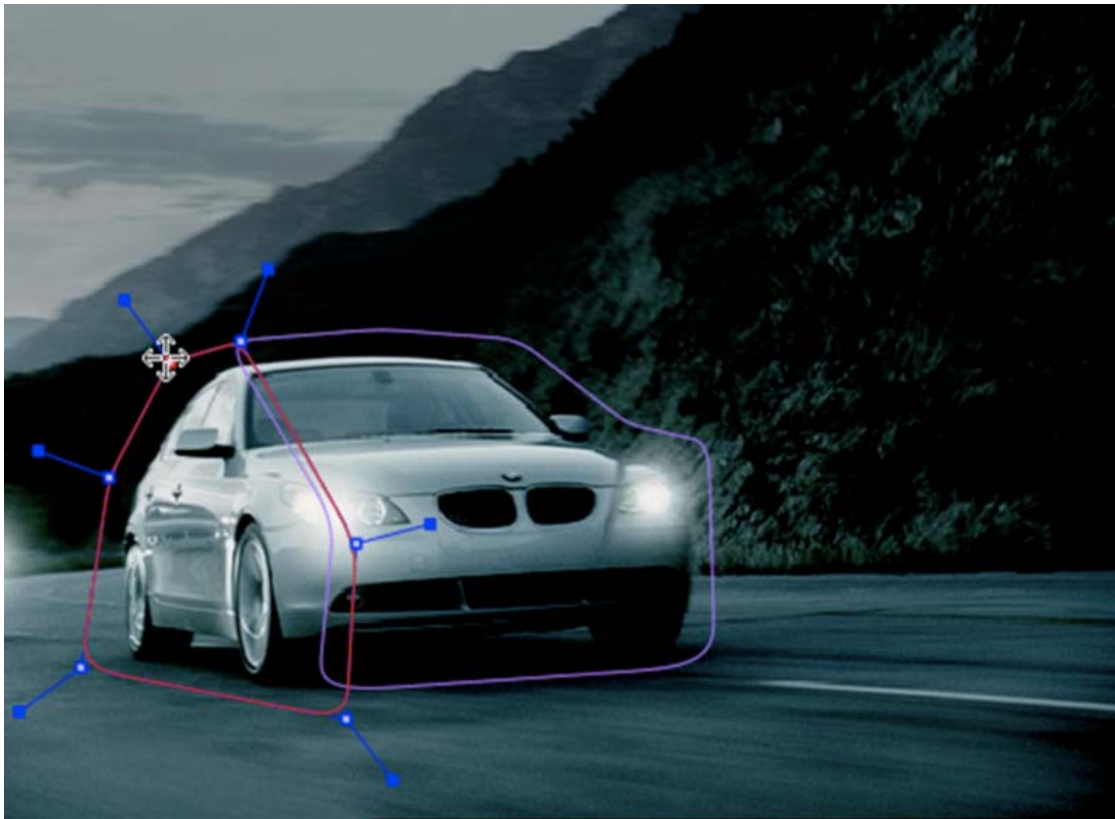
When you are done, select all the points on the spline using Ctrl/Cmd+A, then adjust the weights for all the control points simultaneously in order to round the shape.





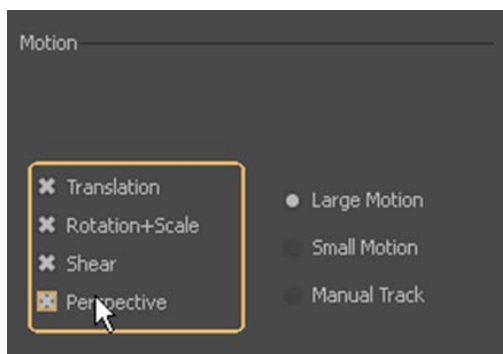
Now double click the 'Layer 1' entry in the Layer Controls panel and rename the layer 'BMW front track'.

Similar to traditional rotoscoping approaches, we subdivide objects that are three dimensional or non-rigid into multiple layers. In this case we add a new layer to select and track the side of the BMW. Let's name this layer 'BMW track side'.



Choosing Tracking Parameters

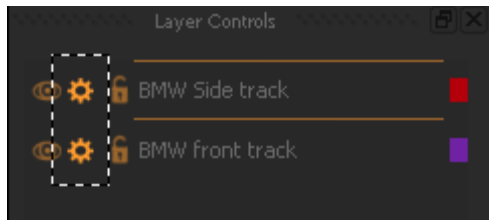
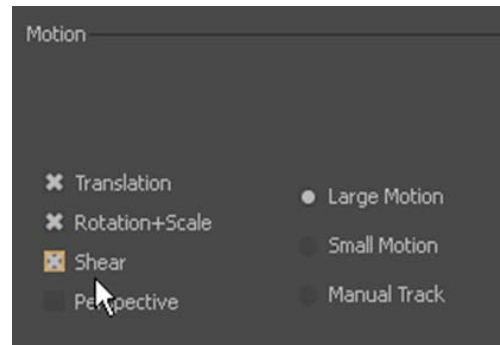
Next we choose our tracking parameters, specifically making sure we are tracking the right type of motion, for example we need to select Perspective for the side of the car as there is a reasonable amount of perspective change on this plane.



Select Perspective motion model for the 'BMW side track' layer.

Select the Shear motion model for the 'BMW front track' layer.

Note: The Track | Motion parameters work in a hierarchical order i.e. selecting Rotation + Scale forces Translation to be selected and subsequently selecting Perspective forces all Motion parameters to be selected. Additionally it's worth mentioning that the Motion parameters are keyframable as it can be useful to change the settings for part of the clip.

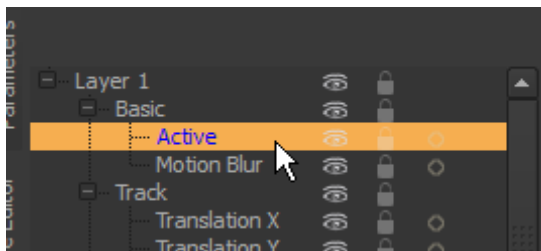


Ensure that tracking is enabled for both layers, then click the Track Forwards button.



Turning Layers On and Off

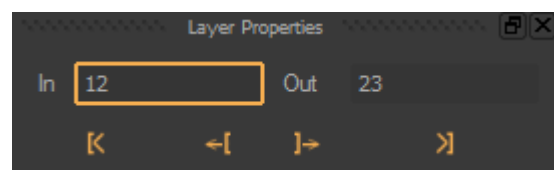
Once tracking is complete and we have a satisfactory track, we deactivate the mattes of the tracking layers as we do not want them used in our renders.

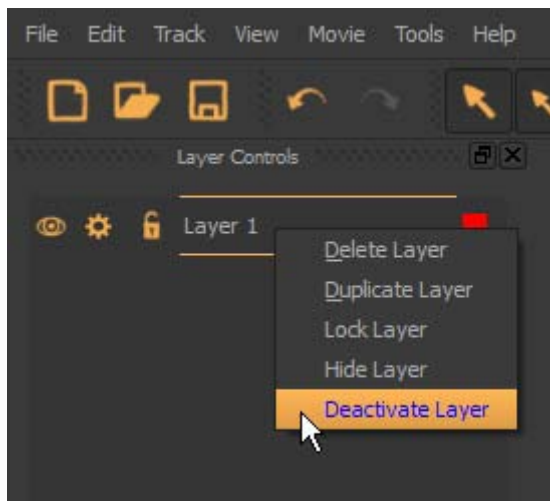


One method is to keyframe the Layer Active/Inactive state in the Curve Editor. The layer curve in the curve editor is a constant value of 0 or 1. 0 indicates that the layer is inactive and 1 indicates that it is active. Keep in mind that the Layer Properties allow you to turn off layer visibility in the canvas, but don't affect

the layer Active/Inactive state in any way.

The second method is to set the In and Out range of that specific layer in the Layer Controls panel. The layer will become inactive automatically before and after the In and Out points (though you won't see any keyframes created in the Curve Editor).



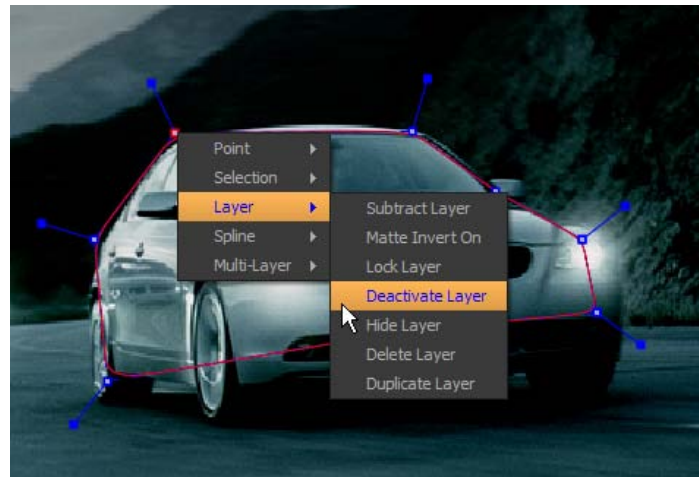


The final method is to right click on the layer in the Layer Controls panel or to right-click on the actual spline itself.

If you right-click on the layer in the Layer Controls panel you can select to Deactivate or Activate the layer.

Right-clicking on a spline brings up a contextual menu, giving you the ability to Deactivate the layer directly from the canvas.

Once a layer has been made inactive, it will not be visible in the canvas. To make it active again, you must either right-click the Layer in the Layer Controls panel and activate it or change the active value in the Curve Editor.



Keep in mind that if you have multiple splines on a single layer individual splines cannot be made active and inactive independently - only the layer on which they reside has this control.

--COMMON ERROR--

Deactivating the layers is not the same as merely hiding the layers using the 'eye' in the Layer Controls menu; it literally switches the layers off. This is a keyframable parameter so make sure the value is set for the entire project.

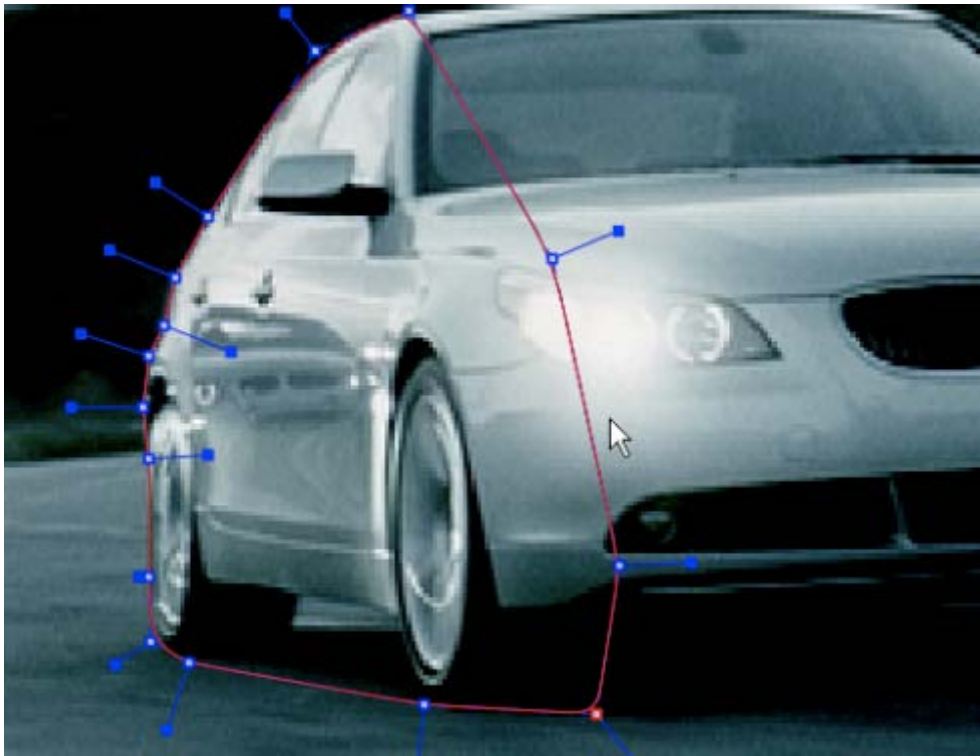
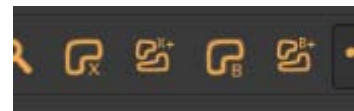
Adding Your Roto Spline

Once you have a track for a layer we recommend that you add a new layer to use for the actual roto spline, rather than refining the spline you used for the actual track as you might need to do more tracking with it later.

NOTE: Autokey should be on such that we are creating a keyframe for the spline on the frame we add the spline on. This is relevant as we will be refining the

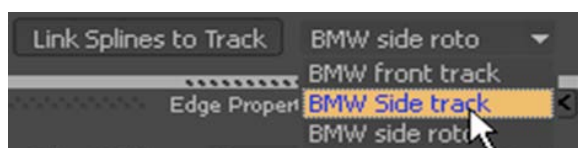
spline on other frames and need to ensure it is locked off on the frame we start on.

Select the X spline or Bezier spline tool and draw a tight spline around the object you are roto-scoping. Ctrl/Cmd+drag the Bezier tangents if you wish to break them. You will see that a new layer is automatically created.



Tip: You don't want to inadvertently track with this layer, so disable tracking for the layer by turning off the tracking button (the cog) for the layer in the Layer Properties panel.

You can also hide the spline used for tracking by turning off the display button (the eye) for that layer.



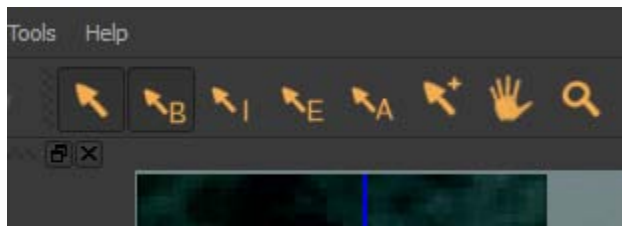
Rename the new layer 'BMW side roto' and link it to the movement of your already tracked 'BMW side track' layer by selecting 'BMW side track' in the Link Splines to Track

drop-down list.

Your newly created roto spline will now follow the motion of the side of the car.

Feather your edges

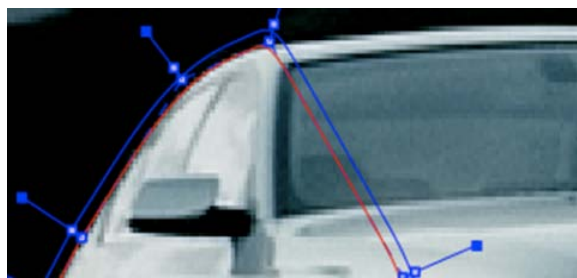
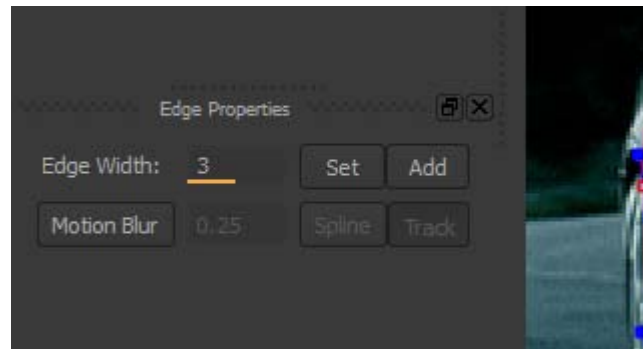
Edges can be feathered either by dragging out feathers point by point using the edge pointer tools in the toolbar or by using the parameters in the Edge Properties panel.



In the toolbar you have four different pointer tools. The pointer tool with the 'B' will move both the inner and outer spline point ('B' = 'Both'). The 'I' pointer will only move the inner, and the 'E' pointer will only

move the outer spline point ('E' = 'Edge'). A feathered edge will occur between the inner and outer spline points. The 'A' pointer will remove either the inner or outer point depending on which is selected ('A' = 'Any').

You can also use the Set button under Edge Properties to feather the edge at the selected point(s) an exact amount or use the Add button to increase/decrease the feather by the specified amount



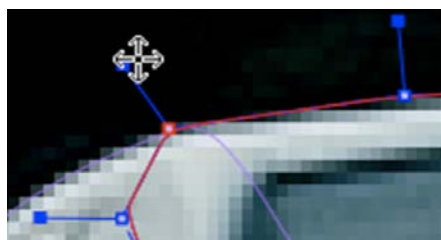
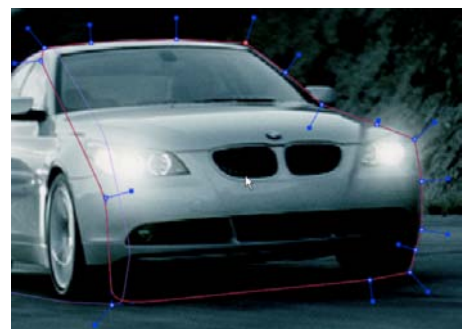
In this example, deselect all points by clicking anywhere on the canvas and use the Set button to apply the default 3 pixel edge width. Because no points are selected the value is applied to all points. Now tweak the position of all spline points to ensure that the inner (red) spline is inside

the edge and the outer (blue) spline is outside the edge.

Adding more roto splines

As many roto splines as required can be added using the steps above. Note that multiple roto splines of course can be linked to the same track if required.

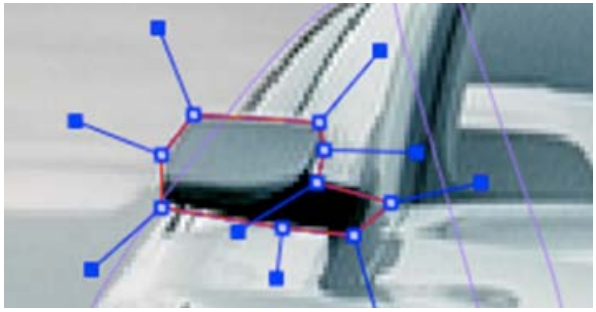
For the car, add a spline around the front of the car, name the new layer 'BMW front roto' and link it to the track of 'BMW front track'. Remember that Autokey should be active when you first add the frame to ensure that we automatically get a keyframe on that frame. This spline needs to be very accurate as it is the final roto spline for the front of the vehicle. Once added, feather the edges.



Ensure that the front and side splines overlap 100% such that the join will not be noticeable in the rendered matte.

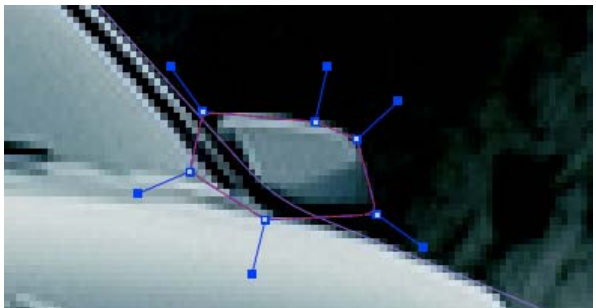
For the side mirrors, you may want to create a single new layer that has two splines, one for each layer.

To achieve this, add a new spline as usual for the left mirror. Feather the edge and position the spline accurately.



Now select the spline tool with the '+' sign next to the B (or X if you are using X splines) and draw a spline around the mirror on the right.

You will notice that both splines appear selected (red) at the same time because they belong to the same layer. Now rename the layer 'BMW mirrors'. Don't forget to link the layer to the track of the 'BMW front track' layer.



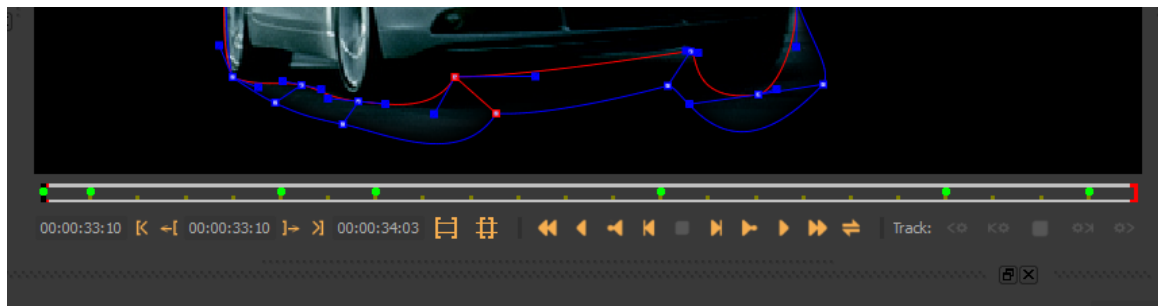
Creating Keyframes

After having added your roto spline(s), cycle through your clip and identify any areas that need manual refinement. You may turn Autokey on and adjust points at will - keyframes will then automatically be added whenever you adjust a point.



You may want to add keyframes only to those points which you move. This is accomplished by switching the Keyframe By radio button to Points instead of Spline. When this switch is on Spline, moving any point will create a keyframe for every point in the spline.

Green keyframe markers will be added to the timeline to indicate the presence of a keyframe on that frame. Only keyframes of the selected point will be shown.



Try to switch on Autokey mode and go to the last frame of the shot. Refine both the front and side roto splines by moving any points that have drifted away back into position.

Now go to a frame in the middle of the shot, say frame 12. Again, reposition points as needed.

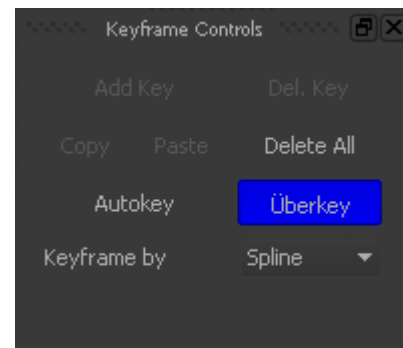
Note: The idea is to refine the spline on as few keyframes as possible and instead depend on the tracking to drive the interpolation of the point positions between keyframes. The approach we describe here is 'divide and conquer', where you continually insert keyframes halfway between two existing keyframes until the spline is accurate enough between two keyframes for any further refinement not to be necessary. Another approach is to start at the first frame and skip, say 10 frames, forwards for each keyframe.

What's the Überkey? Powerful. And Dangerous.

The Überkey is a powerful tool that allows you to offset the positions of control points without destroying their keyframe data.

Use this tool with care, as it is not setting any keyframes per se, it is offsetting any and all keyframe data on the points you move while it is on. Überkey will save your life one day, but don't let it ruin your day. Use with care.

Überkey affects only those frames between the timeline's In and Out point. If you wish to make adjustments to a particular range, set the In and Out points to that range.

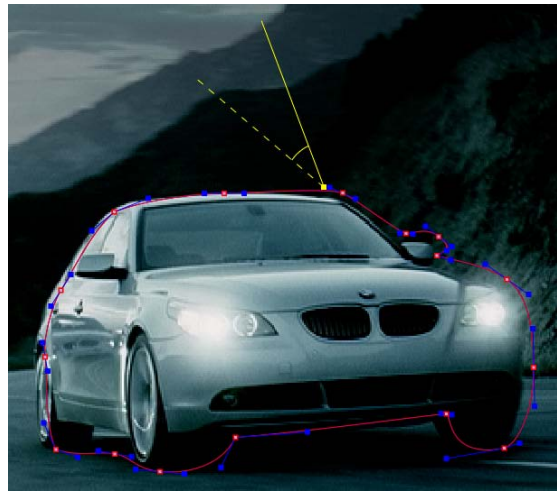


Translate, Rotate and Scale your Splines



You can translate, rotate and scale selected points as a group by using the corresponding tools listed in the toolbar.

An overlay shows the delta change. The center or anchor point of these movements appears where you first click your mouse. Keep in mind that these three tools do not work in conjunction with the Überkey function.



Turning On and Off Points

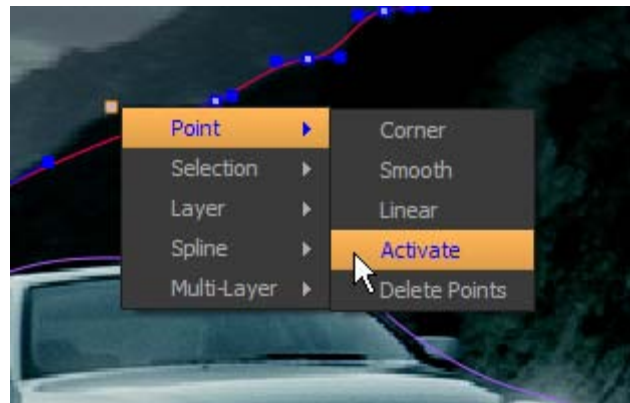


You can turn on and off individual points in a spline. When they are off, you can still see the points, they can still be animated, but they are not contributing mathematically to the spline. This allows you to have a complex spline only when you need it, rather than having to deal with superfluous points in parts of the shot when they are not needed.

To turn off points, select the points on the spline and hit Shift+Delete. You will see the curve change shapes, but the points will remain.

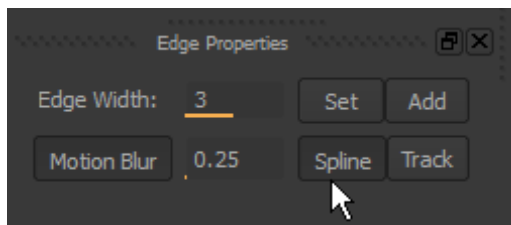
To turn a point back on, right-click on it and select Point->Activate.

If the Autokey button is enabled, a keyframe will be created when you change a point's active status.



Add Motion Blur

There are two ways of adding motion blur to your mattes. If your roto splines are tracked to something, either directly or through linking to another tracked layer, you can use the motion vector from that track to determine motion blur.



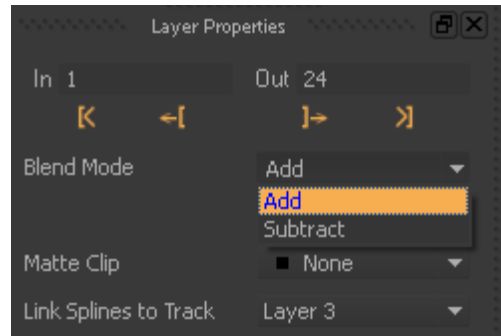
Alternatively, you can use the movement of the individual spline points to determine motion blur. Any movement in the spline, whether through simple X/Y translation or by shape deformation will cause motion blur.

In either case you can control the amount of blur by changing the motion blur value in the Edge Properties panel.

Changing the Matte Blend Mode

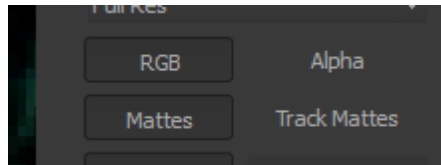
Although not necessary in this example, note that you can change how mattes are blended in the Layer Properties panel. You may make each layer's matte Add or Subtract and you can also invert the matte.

Note that this can't be keyframed and that these settings apply to the entire layer, not to individual splines of the same layer.



Viewing your Mattes

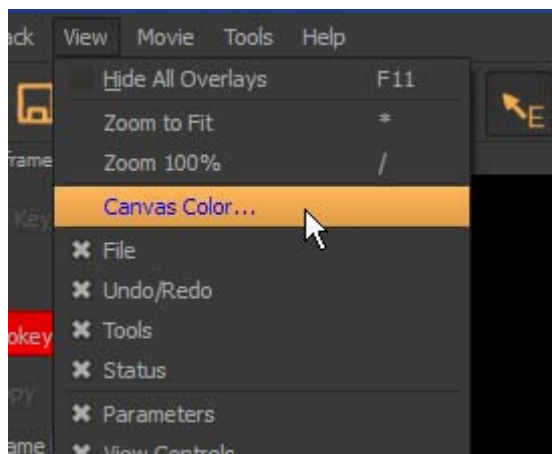
In the View Control panel, several options are offered for viewing your mattes. The Matte button is a tri-state button which allows you to view all mattes, just the mattes you have selected or no mattes.



Select the Matte button and you will see your rotoscoped object against a flat background.



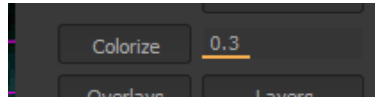
Changing the Background Color



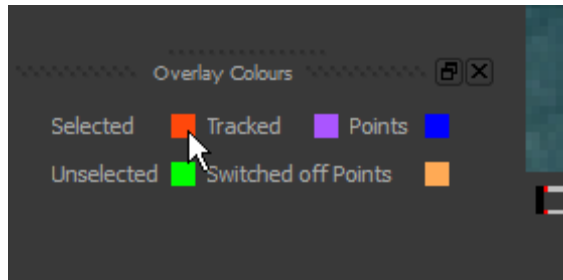
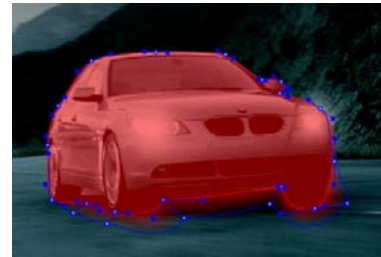
You may wish to rotoscope against a particular color. Select View -> Canvas Color... and a color picker will allow you to choose a particular background color.

Colorize your Matte Overlay

When you have your Mattes turned on, you may choose for the matte to be filled with a color instead of cutting out the object, using Colorize.



You can adjust the opacity of the color fill by changing the blend value to the right of the Colorize button.



The color used by Colorize is derived from the Selected and Unselected properties of the Overlay Colors panel, which can be changed per layer.

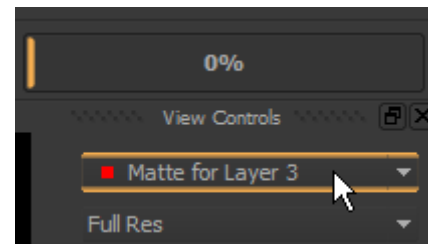
This is only a preview and will not affect how your mattes are rendered

when exporting.

Preview Rendered Mattes

In the View Controls panel, you will find a drop-down menu for selecting the clip to view.

This allows you to view the actual rendered mattes, which can be especially useful when tweaking motion blur. The motion blur you normally see in your canvas is an OpenGL preview and can differ slightly from the actual render.



If you'd like to see what the actual motion blur render looks like, switch to viewing the layer whose matte you wish to see.

Because you can choose specific layers for export when you render, a render pass is created for each layer.

Switch the View Clip drop-down back to your source clip to continue working with that clip.

To actually render your matte for use in a composite, read the instructions in the chapter on exporting mattes.

Exporting Tracks

Exporting Tracks to Adobe After Effects

It is important that the clip length, frame rate, frame size, interlace mode, pulldown mode and pixel aspect ratio in the project match the corresponding settings in the After Effects project where you plan to use the data. You can change the frame rate and pixel aspect ratio settings in the Film and Time sections of the Clip tab.

This example illustrates how to export tracking data in a format readable by Adobe After Effects, how to import and create a corner pin using this data in After Effects, and how to stabilize a shot using the same data.

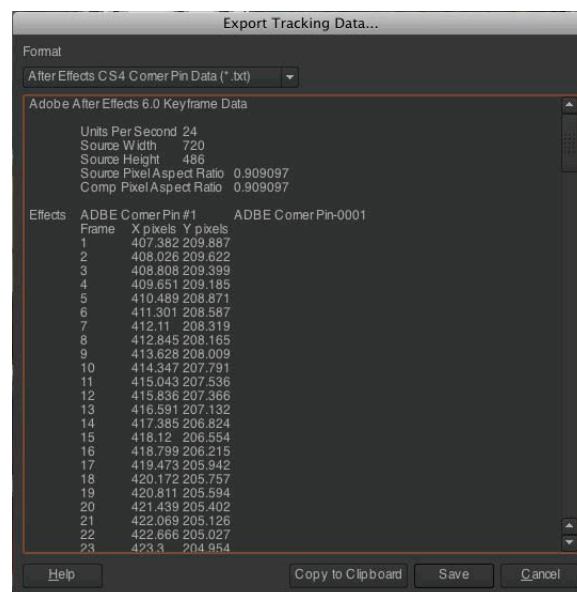
It is important that the clip length, frame rate, frame size, interlace mode, pulldown mode and pixel aspect ratio in the project match the corresponding settings in the After Effects project where you plan to use the data. You can change these settings in the Film and Time sections of the Clip tab.

Track an object in the usual way, and use AdjustTrack to correct for any drift if necessary. The exported tracking points will be the four corner points, so you should position these appropriately.

Press the Export Tracking Data button on either the Track or AdjustTrack tabs. Next, choose either the After Effects Corner Pin Data or the After Effects Transform Data.

After Effects (CS4) Corner Pin Data:
The corner pin data records and exports the 4 point x, y information from either the adjusted track or the raw track. There are two exports – one for CS4 and one for older versions of After Effects.

After Effects Transform Data:
The transform data exports x and y positions as well as the scale and rotation for the whole surface.

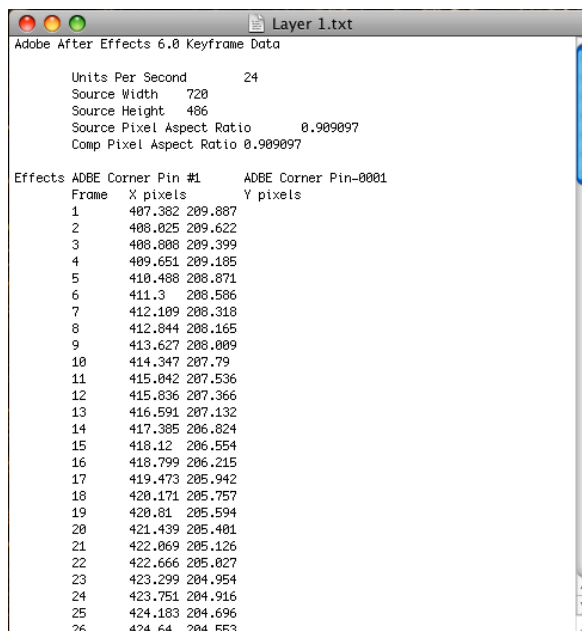


Now click Save. This will display a file browser; you need to select a filename and directory for the files to be saved. By default, the files will take the name of the layer, so for a layer name Track_Layer this export produced a file named:

Track_Layer.txt

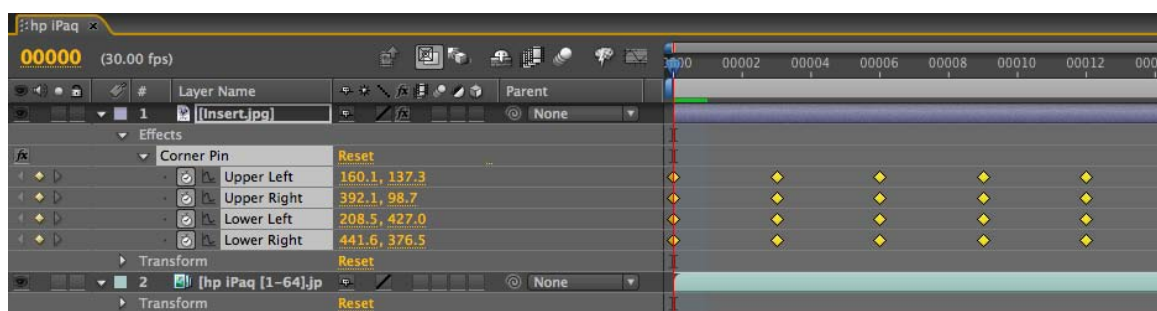
Taking this approach means you have a backup of your tracking data saved to disk. However, you can skip this step by pressing Copy to Clipboard, and going straight to pasting the data into After Effects.

Now open After Effects and load the footage you tracked and the footage you wish to apply the tracking (corner pin data) to. Thus, your timeline will look something like this:



Next open the text file you saved with the corner pin data, select the entire body of text and copy it.

Switch back to your After Effects window and locate and select the item on the time line that is the insert object. Paste the data to the selected layer. You can do this by selecting the 'paste' option in the edit menu or by typing "command-v" (Mac) or "ctrl-v" (Windows).



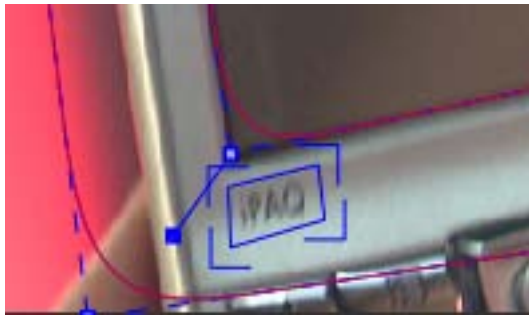
With the layer's information expanded you can see the 4-point tracking data now applied to the insert layer.

The result is the image scaled and inserted correctly.



Using Tracks For Stabilizing In After Effects

You can use the tracking data created to stabilize a shot in After Effects. The process is simple.



Track your footage as normal, then turn on the Surface button and center the surface box on the area you wish to use as the stabilize center.

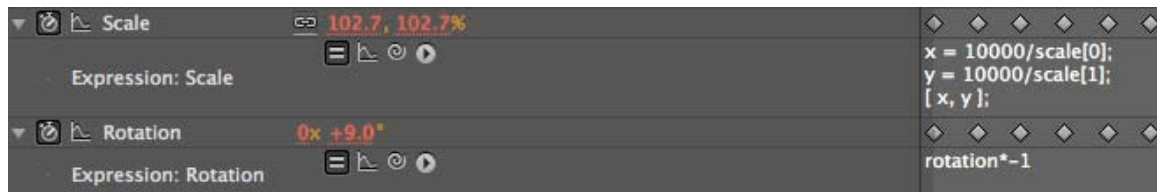
Export the tracking data in the After Effects Transform format. Switch to After Effects, select the layer you wish to apply the stabilize data to and paste it to that layer.

Now delete the Position key frames. You can skip this step if you first delete this information from the saved text file before copying it to After Effects.



Notice that only Anchor, Scale and Rotation have keyframes.

Select the Rotation channel and click Animation | Add Expression. In the expression box enter the formula *rotation*-1*.



Scale and Rotation expressions

Select the scale channel and click Animation | Add Expression. In the expression box enter the formula:

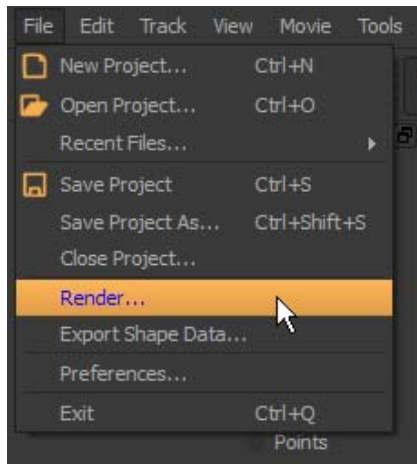
```
x = 10000/scale[0];  
y = 10000/scale[1];  
[ x, y ];
```

You should now have a stabilized image.

Exporting Mattes

Exporting Rendered Mattes

Note: This feature is only available in some applications

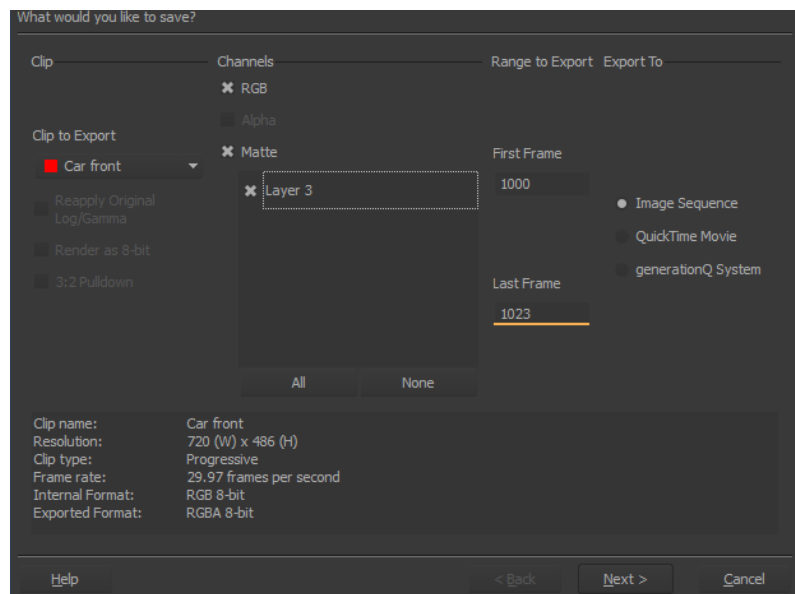


When your roto work is complete and you'd like to export your mattes, choose the menu item File -> Render... to be guided through the rendering process.

The Render Clip Wizard offers various settings to help you export the render that you need. Because your mattes are always being rendered internally, they will show up as an option in the drop-down menu. The first thing you'll want to do is to set the Clip to Export. If you wanted to export a single matte you could choose it as the Clip to Export and then simply click Next.

However, most often you will want to export multiple mattes rendered into a single clip and maybe even render it into the alpha channel with the background plate in the RGB channels. This can be achieved by leaving the Clip to Export set to the background clip, then selecting Matte under Channels and finally selecting the layers you wish to include in the render.

If you deselect RGB you get a single channel grey level clip rendered, if the format you choose to export in supports it. If you select RGB, the background clip will be exported in the RGB channels. Selecting Alpha, which will only be available if the background clip had an alpha channel, will add the alpha channel to the mattes.



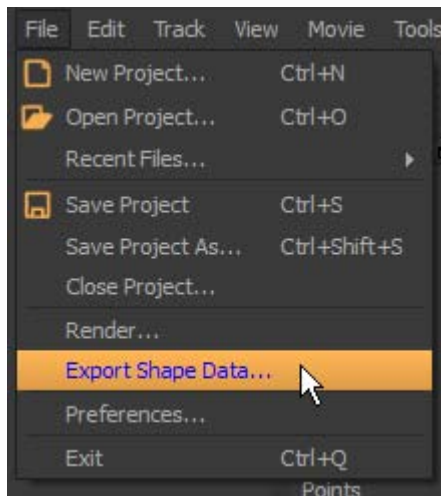
Exporting Shapes as Data

Another option is to export shapes as data.

Note: Some applications do not support all the export formats described below.

You can export Autodesk Combustion G-Masks, Autodesk Flame/Flint/Inferno G-Masks, Apple Shake Rotosplines and **mocha shape for After Effects** (requires the **mocha shape** plug-in to import) formats.

Exporting as G-Masks and Shake Rotosplines



Choose a shape (not a layer) and select Export Shape Data... from the File menu. A dialog will show with a drop-down containing 3 different saving options.

Choose the target application and hit Save. The data going into the file is not binary, and is shown in the dialog so that you may copy and paste it directly into a text editor if you prefer to work that way.

Because of differences in the way Splines are handled in the applications (Combustion and Flame handle splines differently), maintaining accurate keyframe interpolation between our

software and the other applications requires that the exported shapes have a keyframe on every frame. This is not a bug but required to ensure your mattes look right once they've been imported into your compositing application.

Exporting as mocha shape for After Effects Data

It is important that the clip length, frame rate, frame size, interlace mode, pulldown mode and pixel aspect ratio in the project match the corresponding settings in the After Effects project where you plan to use the data. You can change the frame rate and pixel aspect ratio settings in the Film and Time sections of the Clip tab.

The **mocha** shape plug-in will import the following data into After Effects:

- One or more shapes, which may be either Bezier or X-Spline
- The 'plane' that was generated by the Planar Tracker. This defines the overall movement of the shape(s)
- Shape point keyframes set in the project
- Per-point feathered edges

If you wish to export a single layer, select it before proceeding with the export.

When you are ready to export, select Export Shape Data button. On the dialog that opens, choose if to export the selected layer, all visible layers or all layers.

When you have made the right selection, click Copy to Clipboard, then switch to After Effects.

In After Effects, import the same footage and ensure that the frame rate and pixel aspect ratio are the same as those used when generating the shape. You can change these values in After Effects by selecting File | Interpret Footage | Main....

Bring the footage into a composition, then select Edit | Paste to add the shape effects to the composition. Each shape exported will come across as its own plug-in effect.

In the plug-in controls you can change the following parameters:

Blend mode

You can choose to change the blend mode from the one assigned to the shape by selecting Multiply, Add or Subtract from the dropdown menu.

Invert

When checked, inverts the matte.

Render soft edge

If you have created the shape with feathered edges but wish to switch these off, untick this parameter. Note that if you have not created feathered edges this will have no effect.

Render type

This setting allows you to choose between various render effects. The default is the 'Shape cutout' which uses the matte to cut out the corresponding area in the background footage. 'Color composite' will apply a single color to the area within the matte, useful when wanting to preview the positions of multiple layers. Note that the Opacity setting affects this color fill, allowing you to blend it with the background footage. 'Color shape cutout' combines the effects of the previous two.

Shape color

Defines the color of the color fill applied when selecting the 'Color composite' render type.

Opacity

Defines the opacity of the color fill applied when selecting the 'Color composite' render type.

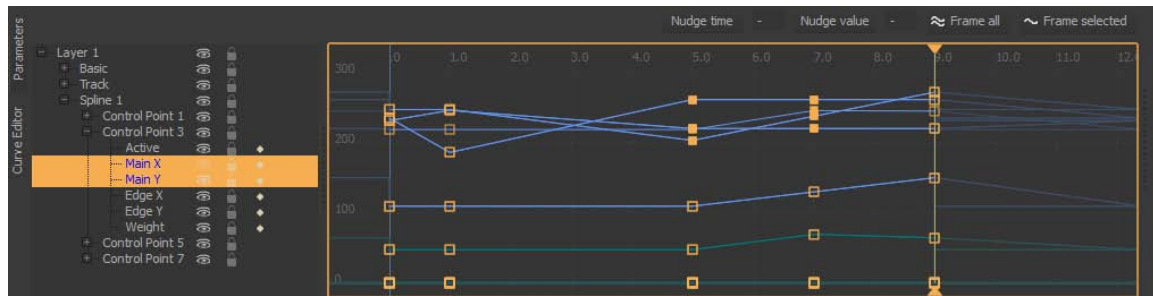
The Curve Editor

Navigating the Curve Editor

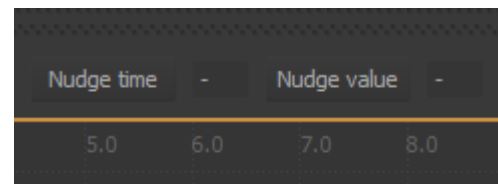
You may navigate the Curve Editor space by using the middle mouse button to Pan and the mouse wheel to zoom. Alternately, you may pan using the 'x' key on the keyboard and zoom using the 'z' key on the keyboard. When zooming with the 'z' key, left/right mouse movements will zoom in/out horizontally and up/down mouse movements will zoom vertically.

Selecting and Moving Keys

To select keyframes, you must first select the curve, then the keyframes. Keyframes of unselected curves are not selectable.



You may move the keyframes manually by dragging them with the mouse, or you may type in a "Nudge" value at the top right of the Curve Editor.



Entering a negative value in the "Nudge Time" field and hitting the button will move selected keyframes backwards in time by that amount every time you hit the button. Entering a positive value in the "Nudge Value" field and hitting its button will move selected keyframes up in value by that amount every time you hit the button.

Changing the Interpolation of Keys

Interpolation describes the method of how values are calculated between keyframes. It defaults to linear interpolations between keyframes but you may wish to convert them to Bezier for easing in and out.



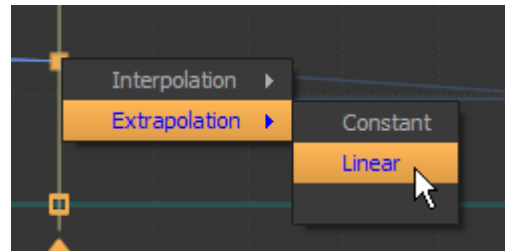
Or if you wish them to hold their position until the next keyframe, you may wish to select Constant as the mode of interpolation.

Right click on a selected keyframe and choose Interpolation->Bezier. Bezier tangent controls will appear on your keys and you may adjust them for easing in and out.

Changing the Extrapolation of Keys

If a keyframe is the first or last keyframe on the curve, its extrapolation can be chosen. Extrapolation describes the method of how values are calculated “off into space” before the first keyframe or after the last keyframe. It defaults to Constant, which simply holds the value steady.

Choose linear extrapolation and the curve editor will continue the value on its current slope (sometimes called Gradient Extrapolation in other applications).

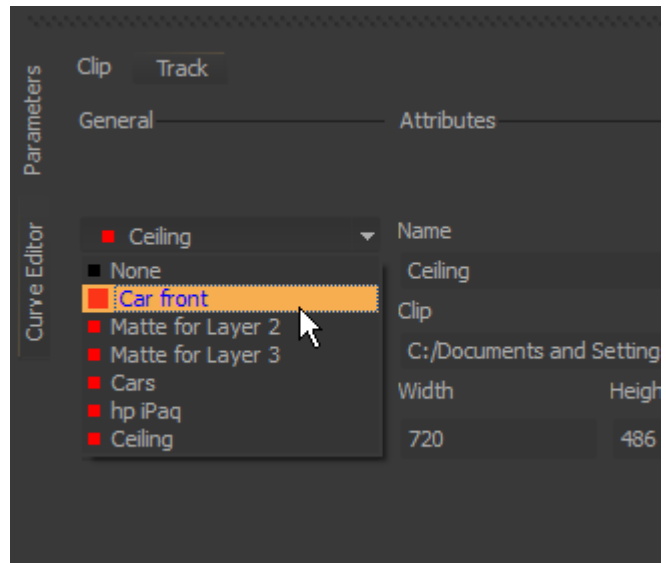


Clip Management

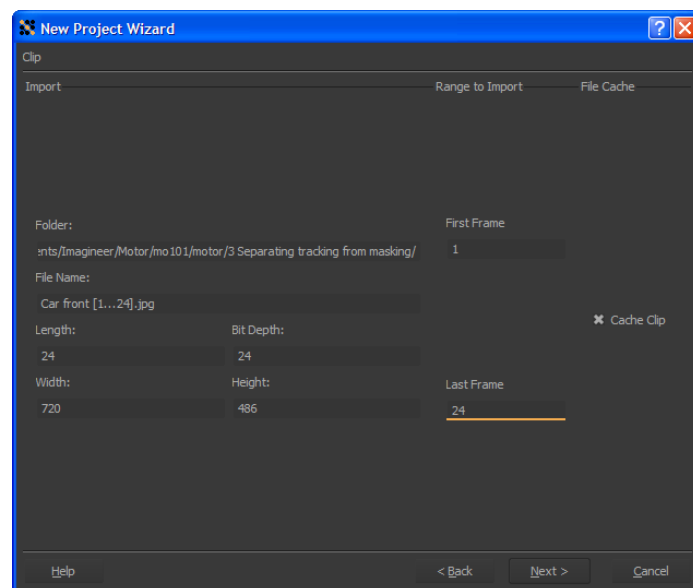
About Clips

You can import any number of clips into the workspace. Much like a compositing application, you can have a multitude of assets in the application you may wish to work with at any given time. As clips are imported into the workspace, they populate Clip list drop-down menus found throughout the application.

Above is shown a list of clips that have been loaded into a workspace.



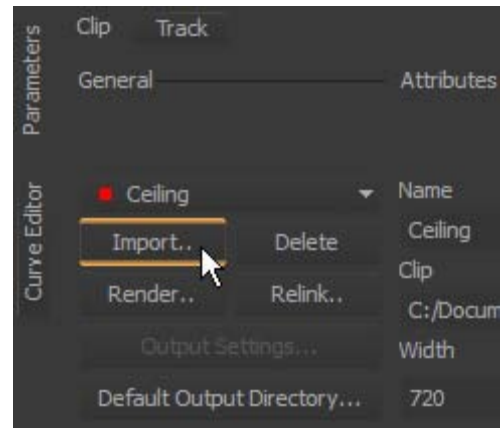
Importing Clips



The first clip is always imported when you start a new project. Once you import the first clip, the base resolution for that particular project is established.

Additional clips can be imported into the workspace through the Clip tab.

The clips must match the base clip resolution set for the project (the resolution of the first clip you imported when you started the project).



Removing Clips from the Workspace

You may clean up the workspace by deleting clips you no longer need. Select the clip in the clip drop-down list and hit Delete. That clip will be removed from the workspace.

Relinking Clips in the Workspace

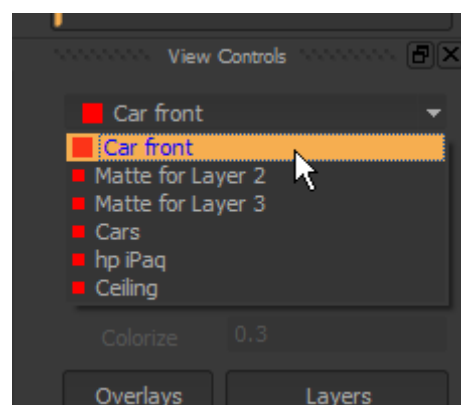
You may wish to relink a clip in the workspace. Select the clip from the clip drop-down list and hit Relink. You will be presented with a traditional file browser and asked to select the clip you wish the original to be replaced by. Make sure they have the same resolution as the project base clip.

Selecting a Clip to Track

Most often, the first clip you imported will be the one you wish to track. There are times when you may get an updated shot with color correction or some other enhancements to make tracking easier. To use this new clip, you must first import it into the workspace as described above.

To select to track on this new clip, you must choose it in the Track tab's Input drop-down.

Selecting a Clip to Rotoscope



Rotoscoping can be done on any of the clips you have imported. To change the clip you are viewing in the canvas, select the clip in the View Controls drop-down list. You will notice that any clip you've imported into the workspace will appear here.

Preferences

Preferences are accessed through File | Preferences on Windows or Linux and Application Menu | Preferences on Mac.

Output Settings

File Storage

The Output Directory settings specify the default location of the directory in which the project file and rendered clips are stored. There is a choice between:

Relative Path: The project directory is a subdirectory of the directory containing the original project clip. By default, the subdirectory is Results. If you often load your project clip over a network, it would be best not to choose Relative Path, because the performance of project and clip I/O will not be as fast as the local disk.

Absolute Path: The project directory as an absolute path. For the best performance choose a folder on a fast disk, with plenty of disk space available.

Disk Space Available

If Absolute Path is specified, the available space in the given disk drive.

Cache Directory

Specify here the folder to use for caching image data and storing auto-saved project files. For the best performance, choose a folder on a fast disk with plenty of disk space available. A lot of data is written out in the background while you work, approximately three times as much disk space as the taken up by the original clip will be used.

The Cache Original Clip box is selected by default. This will cache the original clip to the File Cache when a project is created or opened for a more efficient playback and workflow.

RAM Player

The Use Textures box is selected by default. This will use textures when rendering, so set Amount of Texture RAM to Reserve to the amount of memory that you want to be reserved for textures. This determines how many frames can be played back in real-time. A reasonable setting would be $\frac{3}{4}$ of your graphics card's memory.

Using textures will usually result in faster rendering, but may not work on all graphics cards. Textured rendering is not compatible with Microsoft Windows Remote Desktop Connection.

System

Autosave

The Enable box is selected by default. This will automatically save the project you are working on. Set the interval between saves by increasing or decreasing the value in the Interval (minutes) box. The default is 5 minutes. If Save Images Every Frame is checked, rendered frames are saved to disk as soon as they are created in memory; otherwise the render to disk only occurs when rendering a sequence of frames.

UI Color

This decides the color of the user interface. You can choose if you prefer the user interface to be dark or light. If you choose to change from dark to light or vice versa, you will need to re-launch the application for the change to take place.

UI Look and Feel

This decides whether the user interface is displayed Full Screen or within a Window. If you are working with multiple applications, you may wish to set the UI Look to Window, as you cannot minimize the main window with Full Screen selected.

By default, the application uses Rotational Controls to change parameter values. You drag with the mouse or pen away from, and then around, the parameter being changed. For those users who prefer traditional linear controls, switch to Linear Controls, which change the value of a parameter by dragging a handle underneath the parameter edit box. If Invert Mouse Wheel is checked, dragging the mouse wheel down will move up the timeline or reduce the value of a chosen parameter, and vice versa.

History

The Maximum Size of the history is the number of user interactions stored in the undo/redo command list. The limit is used to conserve memory.

Default Clip Settings

If you are working on a number of shots that share the same clip attributes (the same video standard, frame rate and colorspace), it can be useful to set a default clip setting. Then you will not have to re-enter the same clip information each time you load a clip.

Format

This is the default file format for rendered clips, when the format is not transferred from an input clip. This should be a format that supports all internal pixel formats and types. Currently the choice is between DPX and TIFF.

Colorspace

Select Linear if your source clip is stored in linear color space, possibly with gamma applied. Select Log if your source clip is stored in log color space. Select Panalog if your clips originate from a Panavision Genesis camera, and are stored in the native Panalog format.

Convert to Float

Convert to Float causes imported clips to be generated internally as 32-bit float, increasing the precision of compositing operations but using more memory.

Time

FPS - Choose a default clip speed in frames per second (FPS) from the pull-down menu. You can also select here whether to show Frames or Timecode for the frame numbers shown for the in/out points and current frame. Choose Timecode if you usually work with clips with DPX timecode or QuickTime clips containing timecodes. With the Frame Offset you can choose to apply a positive or negative offset value to each shot that you import should you wish to make the clip you are importing begin earlier or later by slipping the start point forwards or backwards.

Interlaced

Select the Frames button when importing a clip that is frame-based. This will usually be a film clip, CG clip or a graphic. Select the Separate Fields button if you normally use field-based clips. This will usually consist of a video clip with options for PAL (upper field first, also used for SECAM) or NTSC (lower field first) field ordering. Separate Fields will de-interlace the clip and display both fields. When a clip is rendered, the fields will automatically be interlaced back together again. There is also a 3:2 Pulldown option if you mainly work with 3:2 pulldown material.

Log**Enable Error Logging**

This is selected by default. The file generated is useful for Imagineer engineers to diagnose error messages and fix any problems. You can view the log by selecting View Log from the Help menu. You can also change the location of the Log File from its default.

Error Detection

This is set to Comprehensive by default. If you are working on a labor-intensive project, you can switch to Normal only logs errors as they occur, rather than constantly checking. This provides less information in the event of an error, but can marginally improve performance.

Help

Here you find default settings for the:

- Web Browser, used to access the online tools in the Help menu;
- PDF file reader, used to open the manual.

Key Shortcuts

Select a module from the pull-down menu to reveal a list of keyboard shortcuts for that module.