

4. GETTING THE FILES OUT OF THE NLE AND INTO THE DAW

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AHEAD



The rest of this section outlines recommendations for video editors who are handing off an AAF to be used for audio postproduction

These recommendations are generally for video editors using Adobe Premiere as their NLE. This NLE is chosen because it has proven to create the most stable AAF exports/workflow when delivering to Pro Tools

Consider providing these recommendations to video editors that you work with to help streamline the process of delivering working AAF exports for postproduction work in Pro Tools

4. GETTING THE FILES OUT OF THE NLE AND INTO THE DAW

CONFORMING THE PRODUCTION AUDIO TRACKS

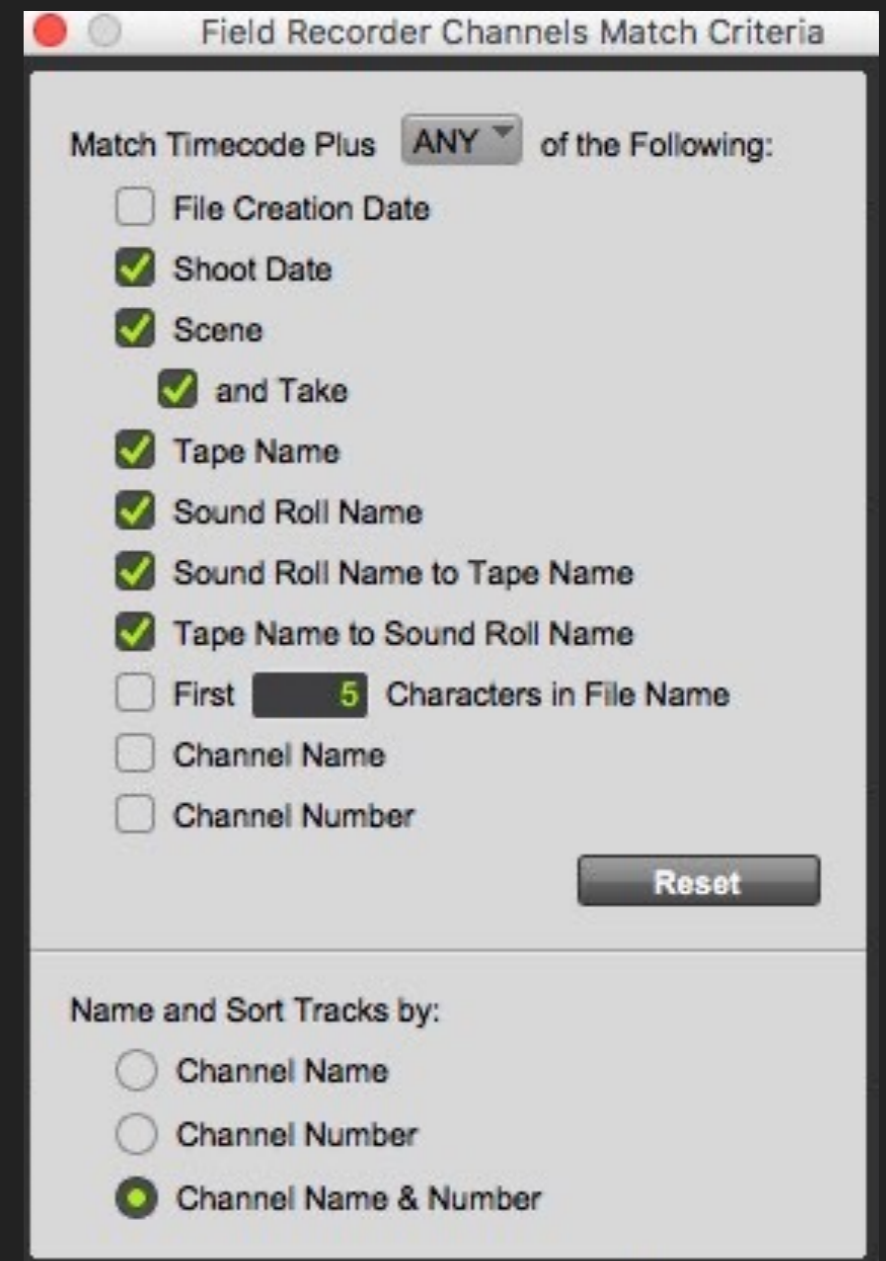
1. Recommended first step is to sync your field recorder audio files in your NLE, not in any other 3rd party software utilities during the transcode
 - Often, these utilities are only good for making “review” dailies and do not pass the original sound metadata into the synced clips, making re-linking later impossible
2. In an ideal workflow, after ingest and syncing, the video editor chooses to use only one track (often the boom or the mix track) from the original production audio. They should remove any scratch audio recorded by the camera in the video file and begin the edit. When the edit is locked, the video editor then exports a Quicktime file with reference audio as well as an AAF with externally-linked WAV files. They send these files to the sound department along with the original field recorder files from the shoot
3. The sound department, usually the dialog editor, then imports the AAF into their digital audio workstation (DAW) and uses it to conform the production audio to the editor’s tracks. This re-creates the video editor’s audio timeline in their DAW using the field recorder files, giving the sound department access to all the tracks that were (lovingly) recorded on set
 - see [Section 5 in these slides called “Importing AAF and OMF sequences into Pro Tools”](#) for details of this process

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CONFORMING THE PRODUCTION AUDIO TRACKS

In reference to #2 on the previous slide, why do we prefer that the video editor conform from a single production audio track as opposed to using all of the individual boom, ISO, and plant mics from original production audio files directly in their timeline? Assuming all the metadata is intact, there are some very practical reasons to do so:

- Most production audio recorders today can record many more tracks than they have been able to in the past. It can be cumbersome in NLEs to deal with these 4, 8, 16 or more tracks of audio all the while managing a complicated video edit. Using so many tracks can also increase the likelihood that you will run out of track space on your timeline, especially after adding music and sound effects
- Your sound department can link your single mixdown track to the full tracks from the production audio files. This ensures that they have everything that was recorded on set and gives them access to the full metadata that was entered by the production sound mixer. This gives the sound editor the ability to pick alternate mics or takes and gives you more options during the mix
- It also allows the dialog editor to have the full length of the files, not just whatever audio is included in the handles from the AAF. This can be helpful for your dialog editor when looking for room tone or alternate takes



The Pro Tools Field Recorder Channels Match Criteria window allows the sound editor to choose what metadata to match the sequence audio with the field recorder audio

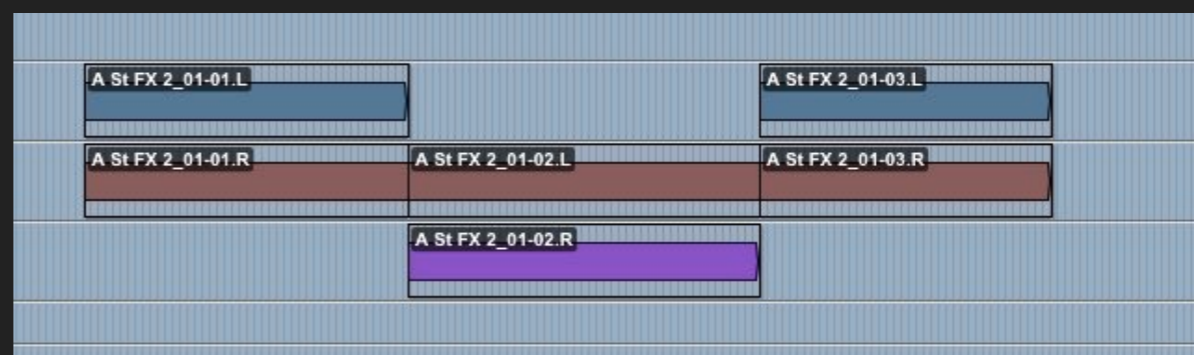
4. GETTING THE FILES OUT OF THE NLE AND INTO THE DAW

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE AUDIO TIMELINE IN YOUR NLE

There's nothing worse than a cluttered and disorganized AAF filled with low-resolution audio. Here are some tips to keep things tidy as possible:

1. Separate temp VO, dialog, sound effects, and music onto their own sets of tracks
 - ▶ This means keeping mono and stereo elements separate as well. Lay them out from top to bottom in the following order:
 - ▶ mono scratch VO
 - ▶ mono dialog
 - ▶ mono sound effects
 - ▶ stereo sound effects
 - ▶ stereo music
 - ▶ With stereo tracks, make sure you remain consistent with which track is left and which track is right

In other words, don't do this:



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BEST PRACTICES FOR THE AUDIO TIMELINE IN YOUR NLE

2. Avoid using Adaptive Audio tracks in Premiere as they can create duplicate tracks when exporting the AAF
3. You never know what audio that you put into your edit will make it to the mix stage so make sure you have the best possible quality from the beginning
 - ▶ Use the highest quality VO, sound effects, and music you can get. This means no MP3s or AAC encoded files
 - ▶ See if you can record your scratch VO on anything other than a smartphone. Yes, I know... I said temp VO. It never really is temp audio, is it? I can't tell you how many times a director has asked me to try and make the temp VO (which they recorded on their iPhone in the edit room) match audio recorded in a professional studio
 - ▶ Get high quality WAV or AIFF files from your sound effects or music source whenever you can, as opposed to an MP3 or AAC. You might not hear a difference in the edit room, but you will definitely hear a difference on the mixing stage

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BEST PRACTICES FOR THE AUDIO TIMELINE IN YOUR NLE

4. Be sure there are no muted audio regions on your timeline

- ▶ If you want to keep a region on the timeline but you don't want it audible, pull the volume on the region all the way down. Muted audio can often cause errors when exporting the AAF

5. Whenever possible, avoid using keyframe (volume automation) for fades as this can cause unwanted clicks and pops

- ▶ Use the dissolve/fade tool instead. All other automation is welcome and encouraged



The dissolve/fade tool is your friend

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BEST PRACTICES FOR THE AUDIO TIMELINE IN YOUR NLE

6. Start your sequence at 00:58:00:00 and to help maintain sync, place an audio 2-pop (generally 1 frame of 1k tone) on each track of your sequence corresponding to a visual cue, such as an academy leader

Depending on your project, the 2-pop should fall on either 00:59:58:00 with **FFOA (first frame of audio)** at 01:00:00:00 (TV) or 01:00:06:00 with FFOA falling on 01:00:08:00 (film)

If splitting out to reels, make sure the reel number corresponds to the hour of the timecode. As an added safety, place an additional 2-pop at the tail of the project or at the end of each of the reels



See the 2? That's where your 2-pop goes

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EXPORTING THE AAF AND REFERENCE VIDEO

After finishing the video edit, the editor will need to export an AAF of your NLE's audio timeline. Here are some suggested best practices for producing this AAF:

- ▶ Duplicate your sequence and delete any video tracks. Copy any audio clips that have effects on them to another track and render them, as most audio effects don't translate over AAF. Then turn the volume all the way down on the original clips. This gives the sound department access to not only your effected audio but the original audio as well
- ▶ Export an audio-only AAF with consolidated external WAV files (embedding can strip out needed metadata from the audio)
- ▶ Export 48K/24 bit with at least 10 second handles
- ▶ Often an assistant editor will export an additional AAF with only the production audio tracks referenced directly to the field recorder files. This saves the sound editor from having to do their own conform, but take great care that you include all tracks and that the sync is spot on

4. GETTING THE FILES OUT OF THE NLE AND INTO THE DAW

EXPORTING THE AAF AND REFERENCE VIDEO

Now you need to export a reference video file for the sound department:

- ▶ Make sure there is a timecode burn-in window matching your sequence timecode. Make it as small and as unobtrusive as possible while still being easy to read, preferably outside the video frame
- ▶ Pick a computationally efficient codec such as DNxHD or Apple ProRes Proxy at 1920×1080. You'll want to pick something that will result in an approximate 2 to 8 gigabyte file per 20 minutes of program material
- ▶ Be sure to include the rough mix from your NLE on the Quicktime. This is useful for the sound department to check sync against the AAF. If the Quicktime will also be used for ADR sessions, pan the production audio to the left side and everything else to the right

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DELIVERY FOR AUDIO POSTPRODUCTION

Here are some final delivery suggestions for video editors who are handing off an AAF to be used for audio postproduction:

- ▶ Copy the exported AAF(s) and its folder of media files to a separate hard drive for delivery. Include the Quicktime reference file as well as ALL the production audio files from the production sound mixer and their notes
- ▶ Ask for picture and sound EDLs (CMX 6300), a list of the director and/or the editor's notes, a list of character names and the actor's names that played them, and an up-to-date lined script

5 IMPORTING AAF AND OMF SEQUENCES INTO PRO TOOLS

5. IMPORTING AAF AND OMF SEQUENCES INTO PRO TOOLS

IMPORT DETAILS

- ▶ Pro Tools lets you open AAF and OMF sequences as new Pro Tools sessions or projects, or you can import AAF and OMF sequences into existing Pro Tools sessions and projects. Pro Tools can import AAF and OMF sequences exported from other Pro Tools sessions or projects, from Avid Media Composer, or from third-party applications (such as Final Cut Pro, Logic Audio, Adobe Premiere Pro, and Nuendo)
- ▶ When importing AAF sequences generated from an Avid video editing application, Pro Tools can import mono, stereo, and 5.1 and 7.1 surround audio tracks. Mono tracks with 5.1 or 7.1 surround panning can also be imported, with panning information intact. (Greater-than-stereo multichannel formats are supported with Pro Tools Ultimate only)
- ▶ When opening and importing an AAF or OMF sequence, a modified version of the Dashboard window opens and prompts you to name and save the sequence as a new session or project. Once you name and save the new session or project, the Import Session Data dialog opens

5. IMPORTING AAF AND OMF SEQUENCES INTO PRO TOOLS

IMPORT DETAILS

To import AAF or OMF sequences into Pro Tools, do one of the following:

- ▶ Use the File > Import > Session Data command
- ▶ Use the File > Open Session command
- ▶ Drag and drop them from any Workspace browser or the desktop

To import individual Avid MXF or OMF video files into Pro Tools, do one of the following:

- ▶ Use the File > Import > Video command
- ▶ Drag and drop them from any Workspace browser or the desktop

5. IMPORTING AAF AND OMF SEQUENCES INTO PRO TOOLS

IMPORTING AN AAF OR OMF SEQUENCE AS A PRO TOOLS SESSION

The easiest way of using Pro Tools to edit a sequence exported from an NLE is to open it as a new session or project.



Pro Tools cannot play video files embedded within an AAF or OMF sequence

To open and import an AAF or OMF sequence in Pro Tools:

1. Choose File > Open Session
2. In the Open Session dialog, navigate to the AAF or OMF sequence you want to import
3. Set the project details (Type, Name, Audio File Type, Sample Rate, Bit Depth, Interleaved) then click OK
4. Click Save. The Import Session Data dialog opens
5. Select an option for importing audio from the Audio Media Options pop-up menu
6. Select an option for importing video from the Video Media Options pop-up menu
7. Change other settings and options as necessary then click OK

5. IMPORTING AAF AND OMF SEQUENCES INTO PRO TOOLS

IMPORTING AN AAF OR OMF SEQUENCE AS A PRO TOOLS SESSION



You can open and import OMF or AAF sequences that reference audio files with mixed sample rates or bit depths

Pro Tools creates a new online project or a new local session file in the location you specified, along with the following new items:

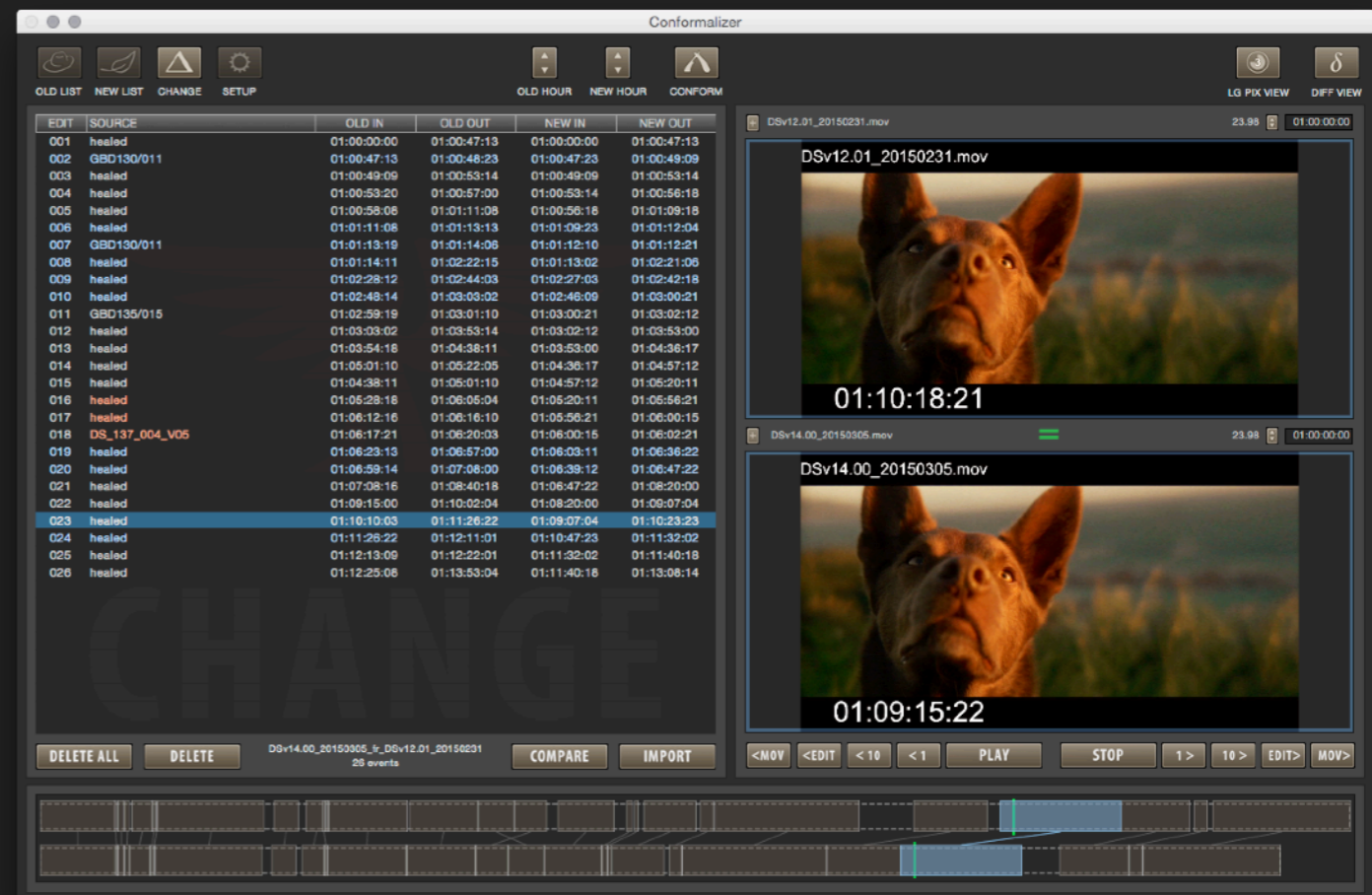
- ▶ Audio Files folder
- ▶ Clip Groups folder
- ▶ Session File Backups folder
- ▶ Video Files folder
- ▶ cache.wfm file

Pro Tools does not import video embedded in a sequence

5. IMPORTING AAF AND OMF SEQUENCES INTO PRO TOOLS

CONFORMALIZER

- ▶ Conformalizer is an audio post production tool which allows sound editors to automatically conform and rebalance audio data to match a changed picture cut
- ▶ It works by comparing picture EDLs, XML, cutlists or change notes and creating a new "change EDL" which reflects the difference between two versions of the picture
- ▶ Conformalizer can then automatically conform your Pro Tools sessions, databases and mix automation to match the new version of the cut



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prPNYSzjw1c>

5. IMPORTING AAF AND OMF SEQUENCES INTO PRO TOOLS

EDILOAD

- ▶ [EdiLoad](#) is an application that allows sound editors and mixers to perform a variety of crucial and time-saving tasks. From re-conforming (re-cutting) a Pro Tools session when picture changes occur, to conforming (assembling) location WAV files in Pro Tools, EdiLoad can streamline the workflow of any film or television sound-post production
- ▶ At its heart EdiLoad contains powerful functions that can manipulate edit lists through its filter, batch modify and cleaning controls. With its unique ability to import and export Pro Tools sessions, new workflows can be created to automate repetitive tasks, or enable new processes on custom productions

