PD News

Issue

3

July 2017

In this issue:

I've always been a firm believer in what is now called "gender equality", and I have long thought that the PD forum, over the years, tends towards the male technical end of the spectrum. We have had female contributors in the past, but rarely. I have wondered if this is because of the nature and flavour of the forum itself, whether it is actually a real reflection of the user base or if there are other reasons for a seemingly limited participation by female users of PD. Any thoughts anyone?

Contact me here if you have any comments, suggestions or points to raise!

Adrian

Intel Core i9 –7980XE

With 18 cores, 36 threads this is the top of the range. Reportedly shipping in October after the smaller versions in the range. Price is published at $1,999/£1,558.

Read what the press has to say :

Trusted Reviews

Hexus

Bit-tech

Forum running slow?

So, you have an urgent problem and the forum seems to take forever to respond.

It can be really frustrating.

But as well as letting the forum admin know, it might also be worth doing a bit of tracing to check where the delay really is—might well be CyberLink servers, but it might also be somewhere along the way.

The basic building block of internet communications is TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). TCP is the higher layer, looking after packaging and re-packing the file or message into smaller packets for transmission and receipt. IP handles the addressing of each packet to make sure it gets to where it needs to be. So, not all packets of the file necessarily take the same route to the destination, but they are all re-assembled when they get there! No need to go into more detail for us—generally it works, period.

However, on top of those basic layers are others, the web's HyperText Transfer protocol (HTTP), File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Telnet, Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP).

We can begin to see that, to get a file from A to B, life begins to be a bit complex.

Next step, how do the packets get round the globe from your computer in the office or home to CyberLink?

Very simply, via IP Routing :

"IP Routing is an umbrella term for the set of protocols that determine the path that data follows in order to travel across multiple networks from its source to its destination. Data is routed from its source to its destination through a series of routers, and across multiple networks. The IP Routing protocols enable routers to build up a forwarding table that correlates final destinations with next hop addresses. "

Courtesy of metaswitch.com

Life suddenly gets even more complicated!!!

Cont.

So, our neat little text (or massive but beautifully crafted video) is broken up into bits and sent off , using multiple routes and many destinations to be viewed by friends, colleagues and the public somewhere else thousands of miles away.

There is much scope for delays, mix ups and missing bits!

However, as usual, there are a few tools that good folk have developed to help out. Some free, some paid for. Some visual/graphical, some command line. They are easy to find—just google ip routing trace— but I'll just look at one provided on your windows computer courtesy of Microsoft - MS Tracert.

This is a command line program so we must fire up the command prompt to access it. The command prompt is found in the Windows System folder. I use it for several purposes so I have a shortcut tile for it.

Open it up and you will get something like this window.

There are a number of options available when running tracert, but we'll leave those on one side and look at the basics. Let's get a look at how it tracks the IP routing from my computer to Cyber-Link.

Type in tracert cyberlink.com and press enter.

Tracert will then list the hops and routes that lead to the cyberlink servers at IP address 76.52.91.46. it also lists the time taken and any request time outs.
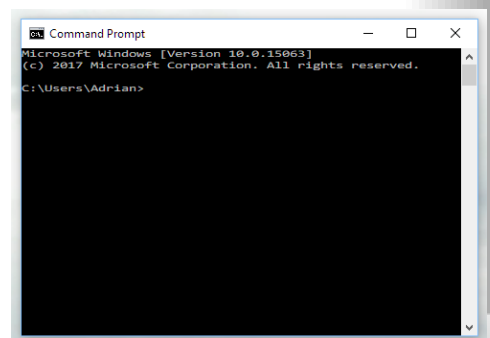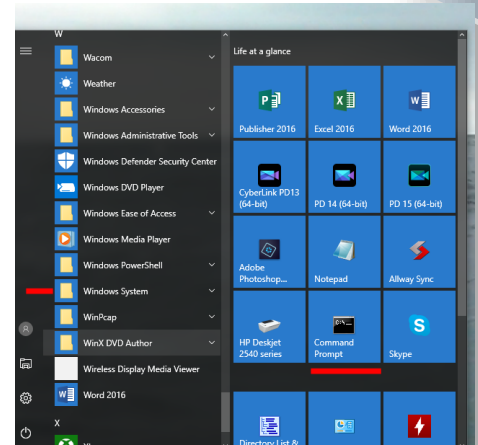
```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.15063]
(c) 2017 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\Adrian>tracert cyberlink.com

Tracing route to cyberlink.com [72.52.91.46]
over a maximum of 30 hops:

  1    <1 ms    <1 ms    <1 ms  dsldevice.lan [192.168.1.254]
  2     *        *        *     Request timed out.
  3     *       12 ms    12 ms  129.hiper04.sheff.dial.plus.net.uk [195.166.143.129]
  4    12 ms    11 ms    11 ms  be3-3100.pcn-ir01.plus.net [195.166.143.128]
  5    12 ms    12 ms    12 ms  195.99.125.136
  6    12 ms    12 ms    12 ms  195.99.127.66
  7    12 ms    12 ms    12 ms  213.137.183.98
  8     *        *        *     Request timed out.
  9    79 ms    79 ms    89 ms  100ge1-1.core1.nyc4.he.net [72.52.92.166]
 10   150 ms   148 ms   148 ms  100ge14-2.core1.sjc2.he.net [184.105.81.213]
 11   166 ms   148 ms   148 ms  10ge1-1.core1.fmt1.he.net [72.52.92.109]
 12   143 ms   143 ms   143 ms  72.52.91.46

Trace complete.

C:\Users\Adrian>
```

As to what it means, well that gets a little complicated. Each hop is tested 3 times. Timeouts indicate no response and therefore an alternate router was tried. Tracert can indicate where a break or slow down occurs, and this might help in identifying if the forum really is slow, or if there's a problem along the way!

This article on How to Read a Traceroute is useful further reading. How to use tracert from MS support is also worth viewing for further info.

21:9 Aspect Ratio

What is it?

*"The term "21:9" was chosen as a marketing term, probably first used by Philips. Due to its common denominator, 21:9 is more relatable to 16:9, the aspect ratio of regular HDTVs, rather than the correct 64:27 or 21and a third:9. If it actually were 21:9, the fraction could be expressed more elegantly in the reduced form as **7:3**, as related to the 4:3 of standard-definition TVs. "* [Wikipedia]

Leaving aside the technicalities and the history, the 21:9 Ultrawide Aspect ratio allows viewing of modern films and games without the need for black bar padding.

Here's how the different aspect ratios differ :

2.39:1   **16:9**   **4:3**   **1.85:1**

[Courtesy of www.red.com]

So how do we avail of this Ultrawide view?

This article from the PC Monitors forum gives the outline of what to expect, and this article from Techradar gives a comparison of current displays and monitors that might tempt the video maker?

How does PD fit into this?

Take a look at this forum thread started by ynotfish in February this year and followed up here by tomasc, together with this one from last month to see that PD is not natively able to produce native 21:9 video. However, the varied contributors to the threads have shown that by doing some neat manipulations the same effect is possible.

THE NEWBIE ROOM

The place to come if you are new to PowerDirector, video making and editing.

Visit here to pick up some new, and useful tips.

You've just spent a lot of money on your new video camera so why not try to get the very best results you can. Because you have taken the trouble to read this article, the chances are you have already taken the plunge and purchased a version of PowerDirector. If that is the case, then congratulations upon taking the first steps towards becoming a creative video artist.

TIP1. No matter how new your version of PD is, it is absolutely essential that you install the very latest updates. These updates are referred to as *patches* and can be found here: here. Each patch has a specific number, and each number constitutes a particular build of PD. When you install your version for the first time it will already have a build number. You can check it by opening PD and clicking on "PowerDirector" in the top right hand corner of the screen. The window that opens will clearly show your build number. Go to the above link and see if there is a later version available - it is vitally important that you download and install the latest patch for PD to work correctly. Once installed the new build number will be displayed where you found the original.

So now you are ready to take the path to creativity. Being a successful videographer is technically challenging, and requires the film maker to have an artistic eye as well. It is very, very easy for your project audience to lose interest if care is not taken to maintain that interest. There are a few ways to avoid viewers nodding off during your movie. Some things to consider:

TIP2. Remember the 5 second rule. Generally, the audience will switch off if scenes show no movement for more than about 5 seconds. This can be particularly relevant if you incorporate still pictures into your timeline. Unless you have a good reason to keep stills visible for longer periods - keep them short. The same applies to video scenes - avoid long periods of non movement.

TIP3. Transitions: Use transitions sparingly. If you want to maintain that professional look to your films be careful not to overdo flashes from one scene to another with unnecessary transitions. That's not to say that there isn't room for the odd fade in or out, or even a cross fade now and then, of course there is. If you want proof of the above, just watch any TV program carefully, count the transitions used by professionals, you'll be amazed.

TIP4. Watch this space each month for more tips and tricks to help you make creative, professional looking video films.

Steady Video? Shaky Video? Stabilisation?

If you want steady video there is no getting around the fact that :

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">You need a steady platform. Really, you do!</p>

First thing to do is invest in a tripod. Doesn't necessarily have to be incredibly expensive, but it should have a fluid head. Cheaper tripods usually have a friction head, and, whilst some are good and progressive, many are jerky and really frustrating. A fluid head allows a pan and tilt to be started smoothly and completed smoothly. No jerks or vibrations.

Tripods come in all shapes and sizes from heavy studio versions to lighter travelling versions. Most consumer cameras are light and small so this brings two factors into play. Lightness means easy to handle, faster response etc. but, crucially, this also means much less inertia. And this in turn means much more vibration, more shakes and less stability. Just try holding your camera out at arms length and watch it move—even if you're really good your heartbeat can result in movement!!

For my steady platforms I have two (now, like me, ageing gracefully!) tripods—a Velbon Ultra Luxi F with a FHD 52Q quick release head, and a Manfrotto 190 with a 128LP head. I also have a Gorillapod and a Hague Mini Motion stedicam. Depending on your proposed tripod uses, you can choose carbon fibre, lightweight aluminium, heavy aluminium etc. etc.

My Velbon is neat and small, weighs in at 1.2kg and travels with me on my extended stays to the Philippines, Egypt and anywhere air travel is involved. The Manfrotto, weighing in at 2.4kg, goes in the car!

The Manfrotto is more substantial and steadier, but the Velbon is fine for my purposes when travelling. The key thing is that they both have fluid heads! Have a read of this article to get an overview of options and hints.

So, despite spending a few (or more) dollars, pounds or whatever on your tripod, you get back and your video is still a bit unstable—because you were on a boat or truck (which is inherently unstable, fluid head tripod or not!), or even an earthquake! - what next?

Post Production Stabilisation now enters the equation. However—BIG HOWEVER—how effective this can be, is very variable. Many forum questions over the years revolve around a misunderstanding of what is possible. Let's think about what is involved.

The software (specialised or not) has to somehow calculate and adjust the movements captured in the video. Very simply put, the central point of any frame moves least, the outer edges move most, so the simplest stabilisation uses a form of zoom to reduce the amount of movement perceived by the eye. The most complex stabilisation uses significant processing to track and calculate the movement of reference points and move, rotate and adjust each frame accordingly. This can be done automatically, or the user can choose reference points, depending on the software used. Go to this article to get a basic explanation of the principles involved.

If you've got the basics, now is the time to introduce the big misunderstanding. Enter the cameraman's favourite action—a nice pan to capture all the scene. Hmmmm! What reference points to use? Basically there may be none sooooo……….??? We may be stuffed!

Hence, stabilisation of panning and planned large camera movements is a really complex task and the results offered by different software vary a lot. This continuation of the first article does some explaining, but for most of us, post production stabilisation of a panning shot might well be unsatisfactory, or at least not as good as we wanted, because it is a really complex task to achieve. So, wherever possible try to avoid having to use it.

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">Moral:</p>

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">Use a steady shooting platform, especially for panning and large movement shooting.</p>

Places to visit

Tutorials

Official CyberLink Tutorials

PD University

Hans van Kempen's Starter Course [for Dutch users]

Also many of PDtoots tutorials are useful to PD15 users.

Members Resources Websites

GodfreyZA's Templates:

http://oneclickmobi.com/powerdirector-templates/

Barry Gill's resource page:

http://www.bgillcyberstudio.com/barry_gill_cyber_studio_002.htm

Eric Matyas music page:

http://soundimage.org/

Useful Documents

Future Suggestions:

Q2 2017 wishlist
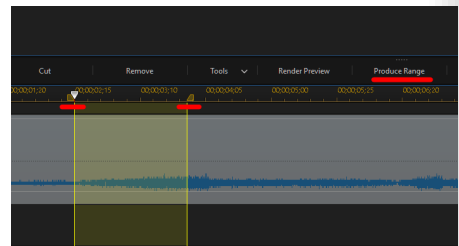
Guide to Good Posting

Before Posting

Resources

DirectorZone

Effects, particles etc.

Range Selection and Produce Range

Use the yellow/orange Range Markers on either side of the timeline scrubber to select a range.

The Produce Range function allows you to produce the selected range as normal .

Hot Keys

Don't forget that Alt-H brings up the Keyboard Hotkeys for customising.

Your favourite sets can be saved and reused to maximise your editing comfort (or efficiency?)!

Director Zone

Always worth a look to see if you can find that effect, particle, title etc. that might make the difference.

Also, check out the new Blending section, and remember DZ also includes sound clips and lens profiles.

Hot tips