Choosing the Correct Layer Break Position in ImgBurn
A guide from MyCE

Introduction

Following some queries on the DVDFab sub-forum regarding layer break positions I thought I'd do out a short guide for the benefit of all the DVDFab users since ImgBurn is the officially recommended burn engine for DVDFab.

I've attempted to keep things as non-technical as I can, since I recognise that not all DVDFab users are expert ImgBurn users, and I want this guide to be useful to all users regardless of skill level.

There are other more technical aspects relating to choosing of layer breaks and I may add some stuff in for the hardcore ImgBurn users later but for now that's outside the scope of this guide so I'm keeping things as simple as possible.

Background Info

As most of you are already aware the layer break is the point on a DL DVD where the laser has to switch between layers.

While the laser re-focuses a slight pause in playback occurs which can be quite noticeable depending on where the pause occurs.

Contrary to popular beliefs the layer break can't be positioned just anywhere and only be located in a limited number of positions towards the middle of the data since the data has to be spread across both layers.
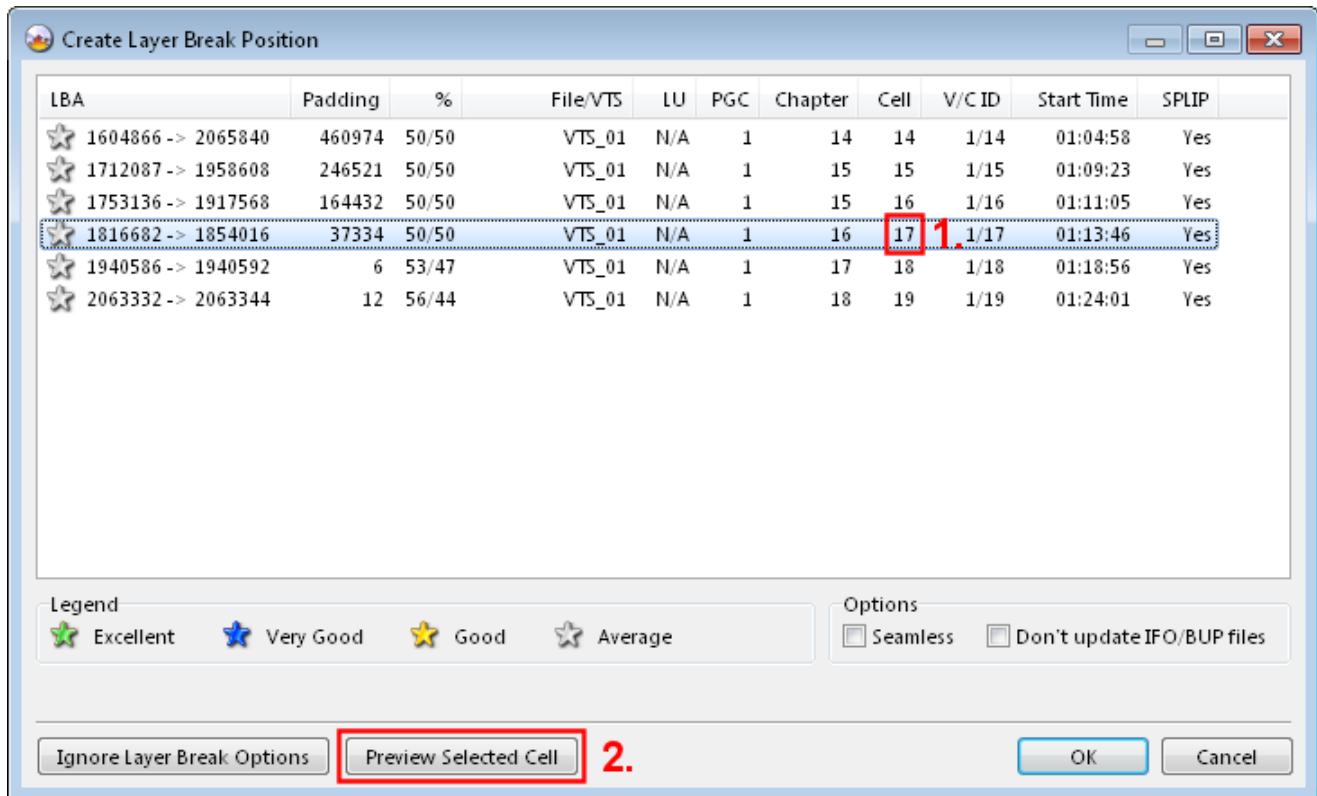
The more data you have the less choice you have in relation to layer break positions until eventually (if you have a completely full disc) there's only one place the layer break can be (very close to the middle of the data).

ImgBurn automatically identifies potential layer break locations and unless it's a very full disc there are usually several to choose from, any one of which can be used.

So the obvious question is "how do I find the best one?" and that's what this short guide seeks to explain.

I'm assuming that users are already familiar with the rest of the burning process in ImgBurn so I'm only detailing the specifics relating to selection of the layer break.

Once you reach the appropriate stage in the burn process the following screen appears which basically is a list of all the potential layer break locations that ImgBurn has identified.

I'll explain the numbered areas later in the guide.

So which one do you choose?

Here's a direct quote from ImgBurn's author.

"The coloured stars will give you an idea of the best place (technically speaking) for the layer break position, but just remember, you're the only one that knows what's going to work best for your movie."

There is no automatic way of choosing the perfect layer break position and all of the options are technically valid so the user has to select where they personally think is best based on the content of the cells.

When you select a layer break position you are better going for one that doesn't have fast action on either side as this will accentuate the pause.

Regardless of where you chose though, the layer break is always located at the division between two successive cells and the cell number selected is the one that will play immediately after the layer break.

In the example given I've selected cell 17 (1) so if I eventually decide to burn the disc with that selection the layer break will occur between cells 16 and 17.
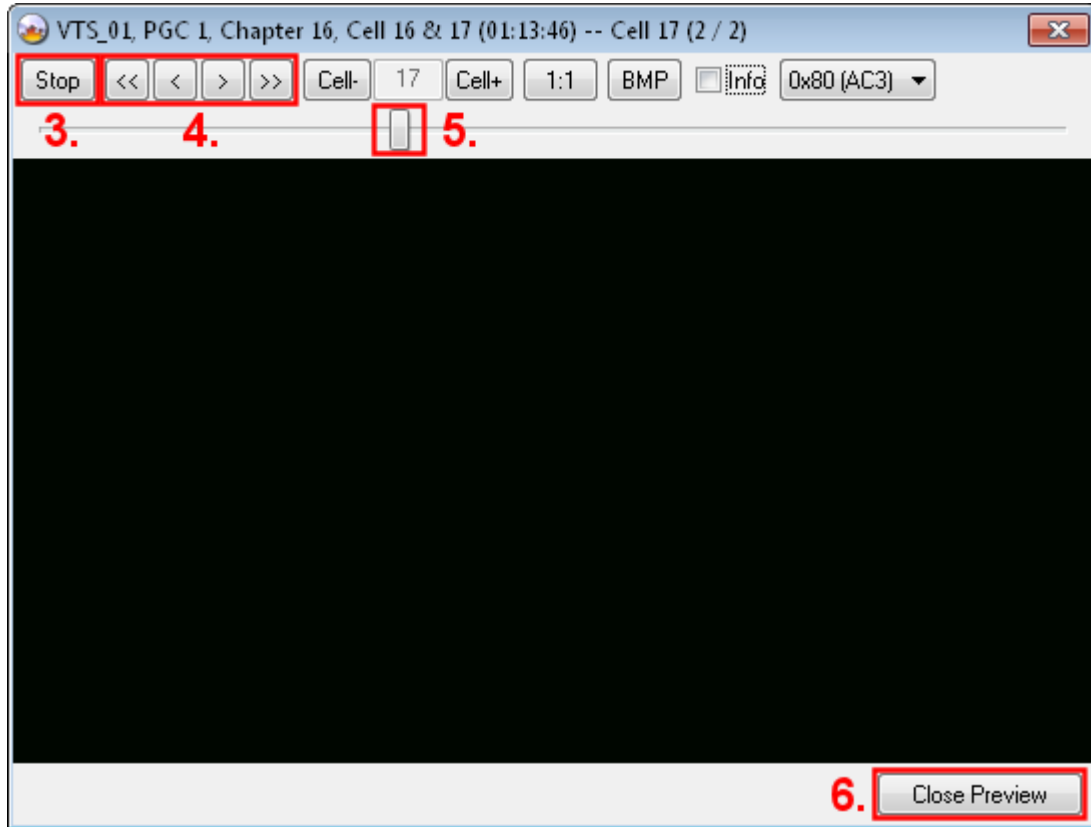
The disc I've chosen for this guide is a particularly good example since as you can see, none of the potential locations for the layer break on this disc are rated above 'average' and there's apparently very little to choose between them.

So in order to be sure we make the correct choice we need to preview each of the potential layer change locations until we find one that works or potentially (as a compromise) the one we're most happy with.

How to Preview the Layer Change

To determine which position you want to test, highlight one of the choices (1).

Click the 'Preview Selected Cell' button (2) and the preview window appears.

Playback of the cell immediately after the layer break will begin automatically when the preview window launches which is not what we want so hit the 'Stop' button (3).

Then use either the slider (5) or the arrowed buttons (4) to move the playback position until the cell number displayed (just above (5)) changes to the previous one (in this case cell 16).

Hit the 'Play' button (3) and watch the transition, complete with simulated pause.

Close the preview window (6).

If you're unhappy try another position.

Once you've located and chosen the position you're most happy with then continue the normal burn process.

Now you know how to make your own decision based on the cell contents and this is the officially recommended way of doing it.

Happy DL burning folks!

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