

Preface

Welcome to *Getting Results with VideoStudio 9*: The essential, no-nonsense guide to video editing with Ulead's software. This book has been designed to be your guide to learning and using VideoStudio effectively. Whether you're just starting out or you're an old veteran, the goal is for you to discover everything you need to improve your video editing skills with VideoStudio.

Why "Getting Results"?

Because getting results is the whole point. Software is a means to an end, not an end in and of itself. I'm sure very few of us started using VideoStudio just for the sake of pushing clips around a timeline. No, we all wanted to produce videos. We all wanted to use the software to achieve a specific goal. We all wanted results.

While software documentation generally does a good job of describing the functionality of an application, it rarely ventures much past the basics. *Getting Results* goes far beyond that. Your standard documentation typically succeeds at explaining *how* to do something, but it rarely tells you *why* to do something. As you've probably already guessed, there is much more to video production than "this is how you create a title clip; this is how you change the volume of an audio clip." Mastery of the mechanics is only the beginning. There's an art to video editing which you will never be able to get out of the standard documentation. This isn't to say that documentation is worthless—quite the contrary. The documentation is an important first step. But it's just that: a first step.

The Goal of this Book

Don't believe the marketing people. Flip through any video magazine and you'll see countless ads of how "easy" video editing has become. (I am not singling out Ulead; it's the entire industry. Nor can I blame the perpetrators. I mean, how many products would ever be sold if advertising actually told the truth?) "Simply capture your clips, place them on the timeline, click 'Make My Video' and you're done!" How easy! While they may not be telling outright lies, they're certainly guilty of leaving out a thing or two. They might as well say, "Just get some paper and a pen, start writing, and before you know it you'll have your very first novel!" We all know there's more to it than that.

The goal of *Getting Results* is to get past all that. The goal is to present the material in the most useful manner possible. It's not written by the company, or their marketing department, or the magazines dependent on advertising revenue. I wrote it and I don't have to answer to anyone except you. There will be no careful picking and choosing of words. I will tell it like it is, because I won't help anyone by doing it any other way. When you're done with the book, you'll possess the knowledge necessary to accomplish whatever you set out to do with this product. And if VideoStudio isn't capable of what you want to do, you'll be able to recognize this too. True mastery means knowing everything the product can do as well as everything it can't.

Intended Audience

Video Experience. While the knowledgeable video editor can certainly get helpful information from this book, it's really aimed towards the new VideoStudio user. Further, it's assumed this new user is also completely new to computer-based video editing in general. VideoStudio is, after all, an entry-level product, so we'll keep that in mind throughout the book.

Also keep in mind that VideoStudio is only one part of a three-part process: 1) you start with your source footage; 2) you process this footage with VideoStudio; and 3) you deliver your finished product. While I can assume that everyone reading this book is using VideoStudio for the second part, I cannot assume that everyone will be using the same formats for the first and last parts. Your source footage may be old 8mm home movies or Hi8 camcorder tapes. You may wish to deliver your final video on VHS or upload it to your web site.

Most of the time, the various starting and ending points won't matter—meaning, I will present the material in as much of a “format independent” manner as possible. With that said, a very common path nowadays begins with DV and ends on DVD, and the book recognizes this fact.

Computer Experience. A basic working knowledge of Microsoft Windows is assumed. You should already be familiar with and comfortable using the computer's operating system and performing common tasks. Launching programs, creating folders, using the mouse, accessing menus, and dragging and dropping are just a few of the key skills needed to successfully use VideoStudio.

You should also feel comfortable handling hardware. For example, if you haven't already installed some sort of video interface, well, you'll probably need to do that. You shouldn't be afraid of plugging in cables and moving devices around from time to time. That's all part of the desktop video game. Once you're set up, you will be less likely to move things around, but it never goes away completely. There will always be cameras to move, VCRs to plug in, and other peripherals to swap. Be ready to get your fingers dirty once in a while!

Conventions

There are a few conventions used throughout this book that you might want to make note of. Doing so now will give you a heads up and might help avoid a puzzler later.

Menu Commands

When the text refers to a specific menu item it will be written like this: [Menu | Item](#). The vertical bar (“|”) represents menu hierarchy.

For example, [File | Insert Media File to Timeline | Insert Video...](#) means to click the “File” menu on the top menu bar, followed by the “Insert Media File to Timeline” menu item, and then finally the “Insert Video...” menu item.

The Library is made up of Galleries that you access from a drop down menu, directly under the “VideoStudio 9” logo. It’s not explicitly labeled as *Library*, but we will call this the Library menu, and refer to galleries just like menus, such as [Library | Color](#).

Drive Letters

Another convention is the use of drive letters. Certain exercises will use a complete file name, including the drive letter (for example, `e:/projects/shuttle/0005.mpg`). I use three drive letters as examples throughout the book:

- c:** refers to your primary or system disk.
- d:** refers to your video disk. It’s optimal to have a separate drive just for video.
- e:** refers to your CD drive.

In all cases, you must substitute your actual drive letter for the drive letters in the examples. Let’s say you are doing all your editing on one drive. In *your* case the drive letters would be **c**:, **c**:, and **d**: respectively (your system and video drives are both **c**:).

Exercises

Most exercises list both an Objective and a reference Project. The *Objective* is just that. It answers the question, “What’s the purpose of this?” or “What do I hope to get out of this?” The *Project* is the name of the corresponding project file on the CD. You can open these projects to view the end result of each exercise. It’s recommended you do the exercises on your own first, and then check your results afterwards.

The location of these projects is in `e:\projects` where **e**, as you now know, is your CD drive! Subfolders under this folder contain the projects, clips, and everything needed to complete the exercises.

You will find all the files and material needed for each project in that project’s folder. There is one exception: the first exercises (`e:\projects\exercises`) all borrow from the Space Shuttle project. When you are prompted to relink files, look there.

Use of Color

Certain illustrations or diagrams require color to be properly viewed. If you are reading a black-and-white printout of this book and something doesn’t look quite right, be sure to refer back to the original PDF for a full color view. Doing so should make things more clear.

Margin Icons

Throughout the book, you will find small pictures in the margins of the pages. I use these to draw attention to a certain subject being covered at that point, which otherwise might not stand out on its own.



This icon means an important piece of information is being given, and you should make special note of it. It is typically information that is critical to the given task. Skipping over this would likely mean not being able to finish the task correctly.



Like the hand icon, this “thumbs up” represents an important piece of information. It is not critical for continued processing, but is simply something to take note of—something that might be helpful later on. You’ll live if you happen to skip it.



This icon is used to visually identify the beginning of an exercise or project. Scanning through pages is easier with a visual indicator at the beginning of each exercise. Make sure you don’t skip over these. They’re the whole point of the book!



This icon identifies an online link or resource. For example, if someone else has written a good tutorial on the given topic, then a link will be placed in the document and noted with this icon.



While this book is aimed at beginners, I have to admit that I sometimes forget that and will at times find myself going a bit too deep. Some readers may eat this stuff up. Others might not care at all and just want to get on with the task at hand. For this reason, we have the *Geek Alert*. If you see this symbol, you can safely skip to the next section. If you’re like me, however, and love the nitty-gritty details, read on!