



Digital Film School

Getting media onto your computer

Dr Chris High

One of the most basic tasks in digital filmmaking is moving your media from your camera to your laptop so in this tutorial we will be looking at the range of devices that we have and as time goes on as more and more things come onto video so I don't know what you are going to be using but I hope it will give you a little bit of confidence to be able to do it yourself. We have a range of different cameras here, we have a Sony handcam, a Panasonic stills camera and we have an ipod. We are going to have a go at moving the media onto these two laptops here. This particular camcorder comes with its own specialist cable, it is very easy and plugs into the bottom of the camera and there is only one way it can fit so you don't have to worry about breaking anything and it's got a USB cable and that just plugs straight into the side of my computer here. I then check to see if the camera is ready to go, switch it on again and it gives me a bit of a dialogue here and I choose the computer option. So normally this dialogue box opens but I prefer to close that down and I use my own favourite software and control the camera from inside that. There is a dialogue here that calls up the camera and I can just drag and drop files across, it is all very simple.

So next up we are going to look at this iPod and I am going to connect it to the Mackintosh over there. So the iPod comes with its own special cable and it fits in this side here like this and if you are ever in any doubt just look at the manual that came with the device because there is usually a diagram illustrating this. The other end is a USB just like last time there is the USB Symbol and it is placed at the side of the Mackintosh.

So here we are in Final cut pro. I just import the files and because there are iTunes, find iTunes movies and select the one I want. Lastly some devices come without a cable, this one here has an SD card – just pop that out and my laptop has an SD card reader here on the side sometimes it is a stand alone device. Push that in and a dialogue has popped up on my screen and I am going to choose the editing software I want with that.

So we have covered a few different kinds of camera and we have looked at two different kinds of laptop, we could have looked at many other kinds of cameras like mini dv and firewire cables and there will be many more in the market before long. The key thing is to understand how your camera fits to your laptop – they are designed to work together. If you are still stuck get online search on the name of your camera and you will find plenty of help files, plenty of forums where you can post a query and get some help getting connected. The key thing is to give yourself a practice run, hook your camera up to your computer, try moving a couple of files across and you will be fine when you are live on a real project.