

After Effects projects in Q-Digital

After Effects is a motion graphics program. It is used to create short video pieces using stills, sound and movie segments to be seen alone or to import into *Final Cut Express* as part of a larger project.

As with all video and multimedia projects in Q-Digital first set up a folder with your name on it in the shared folder on your computer *Q > Users > Shared > Your named folder*. Your After Effects project should be saved here along with any other assets (clips, sounds, stills) **before** importing into AFX.

Setting up project

Choose *Composition > New Composition*. Select **PAL D1/DV, 720 x 576**, 25 fps (frames per second). Duration default is 0:00:10:00 (10 seconds) you should change this to your required timeline size.

Importing

Click on your **project.aep** window and select *File > Import > Multiple Files*. Remember to select Photoshop layers individually. Drag your assets from the project window to the *Source Name* column of the timeline. These layers can be dragged up and down as in Photoshop to bring images to the front.

Timeline

Click the Switches/Modes button at bottom of timeline to reveal the inks (as Photoshop again). Expand clicking the drop-down arrow to left of the source name to show the *Transform* options. Set the Playback head at desired position before creating an animation. Select the Clock icon to start keyframes on chosen effect, then move playhead and image in Composition window to new position. This will automatically create new keyframes at the critical points (don't click the clock again - this will clear all your keyframes). Your other options such as scale and opacity can be altered in the timeline. Chunks of video can be moved in the timeline by sliding left and right. The ends will snap to the beginning by pressing shift when dragging.

Playback

Play your animation back by using the Time Control window. The > button will play all of your timeline. The III> button will attempt to play in Real Time. If your animation is too complex it you will need to reduce the resolution in the Composition window to see the entire clip.

Anchor Points

To offset anchor points (for creating eg. realistic arm movements) double-click layer name in timeline to view layer window. Drag anchor point to new position in layer window before creating movement in Composition window. Rotation will now be around new anchor point.

Effects

Special effects can be added by drag/dropping them from the effects palette to the clip in the timeline. The popup window allows you to set amount.

Output

Choose *File > Export > Quicktime*. Select **DV Pal, size 720 x 576 pixels, framerate 25 fps**. This file can then be inserted into a Final Cut Express timeline or written to dvd using iDvd.