



Media 100 doesn't remind me of my broadcast-television days; it reminds me of my cable-television days. The program has been around that long.

Previously, it had been part of a hardware/software package—back when turnkey systems were all the rage. Media 100 was one of the market leaders, but times have changed. Video editors started to become unbundled from hardware once the use of FireWire, OpenGL GPUs, and standard hard drives became commonplace. This all left Media 100 systems in the dust—sometimes literally, and the turnkey systems moved to secondary small-room editing suites. Meanwhile, new Macs with Apple Final Cut Pro marched into the main studios.

Although Media 100 might have fallen off your radar, it never quite went away. Boris FX purchased the company in 2005, and it has since seen the NLE through several major revisions—all while unbundling the software from expensive hardware video-card options. Media 100 Producer is now standalone Mac-based software, but it still has an uphill climb as it searches for its target market. Final Cut Pro is now entrenched, and Adobe Premiere Pro is back in swing for the Mac and set to carve out its own market share. Still, Media 100 seeks to hold its own while expanding its share to include newly minted media artists.

I tested Media 100 Producer 12.6 software (the company just released version 12.7 in July) on an eight-core Mac Pro and captured and edited a few HD podcast shows as I familiarized myself with an interface I had not used in so many years. There is a slight learning curve to figuring out where everything is, but the editor has a built-in PDF manual and Quick Start section that's accessible from within the program. Media 100 works with just about any codec and format directly in the timeline—including 8-bit/10-bit uncompressed 4:2:2, DVCPRO, DVCPRO 50, and DVCPRO HD. The 12.6 and 12.7 versions support HDV, which is a welcome relief and a glaring omission from the previous updates. In fact, the latest update of the program now allows deferred HDV capture, meaning it will keep capturing even if you are on an older system that cannot keep up in realtime with the HDV ingest.

One great feature of Media 100 Producer is the software's ability to transcode and import different file formats. Some desktop editors ei-

The Media 100 Producer 12.6 interface can start to get a little cluttered with multiple windows open. It would be nice to have a more streamlined workspace with everything contained in one window.



Media 100 Producer 12.6

New version of standalone Mac-based editing software adds support for HDV.

REVIEWER: FRANKLIN MCMAHON

ther support a format or they don't. Media 100 takes a different route by creating a separate import section within the program. You can load various types of files and then scale the video and process the audio to match your timeline. Or you can let the files' frame rates and audio specs stand as they are.

The program allows importing of Panasonic P2 files as well as, with version 12.7, integration of the Sony XDCAM transfer software. It also supports Apple's XDCAM codecs, allowing for an even more streamlined way to get P2 files into your Media 100 timeline. HD capture in my tests went great, and desktop video looks sharp

Really, I find few faults with Media 100, but there's also little to entice me away from other desktop editors.

and just like it should—with audio playing back perfectly in sync. As you work with Media 100, you begin to appreciate how lean it is. Some desktop NLEs for the Mac use a lot of resources when capturing, so much so that frame rate drops to draft mode. Worse yet, you might see the captured video only on your deck/camcorder, with the capture window blacked out on the desktop. The only drawback to Media 100 is that you need to set some preferences to get ready for capturing: finding the decks, choosing the frame rate, setting the resolution, specifying the locations to save the video files, etc. But after that, things go smoothly.

The timeline is fairly standard, with your video clip bins, overlay track for titles, audio tracks, transitions, and video effects. Everything you need to edit is included here. The 12.6 and 12.7 versions allow for 24 tracks of audio, so you can definitely do multilayered sonic mastery. There is now support for Apple ProRes 422. In fact, you can actually import your footage and transcode it to the Apple format if you wish to stay in the ProRes domain. The latest version also supports QuickTime 7.5, and it is optimized for Mac OS X Leopard; however, the 12.7 version of Media 100 is not supported under Tiger anymore.

Titles and special effects are where Media 100 can really shine, but it takes some getting used to. Media 100 is a svelte editor because it does not have a large amount of built-in effects and titling. It offloads them to the included Boris Red, which allows you to create just about any digital effect, composition, or title sequence you can imagine. You simply create a new title or composition, and Media 100 loads up the included Boris FX software. In fact, when you consider the price of Red on its own, you are getting quite a bargain by purchasing Media 100.

The problem, however, is the ensuing strain on your screen real estate. Not only is Media 100 a large batch of separate windows, Boris Red is as well. So you might get overwhelmed unless you have a large monitor.

Steps to ameliorate this problem include the addition of new title templates. You can now access a smaller gallery browser of title effects without completely launching Boris. This

is a very welcome option, and it brings the program more in line with competing desktop editors. Testing on two podcast projects I had been working on, I was able to cut and do minimal titles very quickly without leaving the Media 100 timeline interface to go to a completely different compositing screen. I had no problems editing my projects; in fact, I added several

video effects in realtime. Again, HD capture went smoothly. There was one instance that required me to bring in SD footage. Media 100 imported it quickly, up-converted it to the right resolution (the program is threaded to use multiple processors, so it's fast), and I was able to drop SD footage right into my HD timeline. Other notable features: the ability to add up to 99 video tracks; Adobe After Effects (AE) timeline support (export your Media 100 project and

import into AE); legacy support for loading older Media 100 projects; timecode burn-in options; and lots of Boris FX transitions—many that work in realtime.

Media 100 is a spry and robust editing system with just a few quirks. While the software engine supports Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard and Intel processors, the actual interface is dusty-looking Tiger with brushed metal. For a program that strives to appear up-to-date, it's unclear why the interface design has been left so old-school. In addition, the interface is a disconnected series of windows, which might be disorienting to new users. It lacks the polish of other desktop editors. Add to this the completely different nonstandard interface of the Boris compositing tools that you'll be loading often, and the screen can get messy quickly.

The company points to a couple external message boards, but it would be great to see an official Boris forum with some tech people roaming around. After 30 days of free support, you can purchase support for the day for \$195, 9-to-5-work-hour support at \$595 per year, or 24-hour support for \$795 per year. The plans are not that cheap, but they line up pretty well with comparable options from other companies such as AppleCare Professional Video Support.

Really, I find few faults with Media 100, but there's also little to entice me away from other

▶ bottomline

Company: Media 100

www.media100.com

Product: Media 100 Producer 12.6

Assets: Transcodes and imports many formats, low resource use results in high-quality video in the NLE, includes Boris Red, threaded to use multiple processors.

Caveats: Have to set preferences before you capture, multiple windows result in cluttered workspace, lacks the polish of other desktop editors.

Demographic: Compositing professionals.

PRICE: \$995 (INCLUDING BORIS RED); \$295 (12.7 UPGRADE INCLUDING BORIS RED)

desktop editors. The Media 100 users still out there will obviously want to upgrade, but I think the target market might be compositing professionals. The Boris FX digital effects create synergy with the editing program, and the real bargain is all the effects you are getting standard with Media 100. If you have had your eye on Red, why not just get Media 100 Producer?

If you already have Final Cut Pro or Premiere Pro, you still might want to down-

load the free Media 100 demo from the website and give it a try. I think what needs to happen next is a dramatic price reduction that makes Media 100 cost much less than the competition. This could really drive adoption. Otherwise, the pricing structure is pretty much in line with that of other editors. Of course, if you want the power of Boris Red and plan on doing a lot of effects and compositing work, then Media 100 becomes much more compelling. □

Audio Ease Speakerphone

Let me risk being repetitive and say once again that the tools being placed before the audio-post community keep getting better, easier to use, and less expensive. Software designers such as those at Audio Ease understand that in order to maximize their customer base, the products must balance power and ease of use. In the past, we've discussed Altiverb, Audio Ease's flagship convolution-reverb product (see digitalcontentproducer.com/soundforpic/revfeat/audio_ease_altiverb). This month, we'll take a look at Speakerphone, the company's latest application. If you'd like to increase the chances that you'll be able to keep your audio-post work inhouse, this is a product you should know about.

Speakerphone ships with more than 5GB of ambience samples, 500 presets, and one goal: to help you place your audio files in almost any virtual space imaginable. You recorded a pair of actors directly to a hard drive in your studio, but according to the script, they're speaking on the telephone? No problem. Not only is there a classic phone preset, there are others that will place the actors in a variety of environments—and you can choose from multiple land-line and cell-phone connection types.

Speakerphone is a cross-platform product. I installed it on a Windows XP computer. For some reason, my first attempt did not properly execute the installation; the plug-in installed, but the associated samples did not. Running the installer a second time solved the problem.

The Audio Ease Speakerphone features an easy-to-use interface that is full of samples and presets to place audio in virtually any environment.

Cross-platform audio post tool possesses real processing power.

REVIEWER: GARY ESKOW

