

THROUGH THE LENS OF **SIMON WALKER**

Pro Tips for Great Filmmaking



G-Technology®

SIMON WALKER

Adobe Premiere Pro remains the non-linear editor (NLE) of choice for a huge portion of the video production industry. The software is arguably more critical to the creative process than even the camera, and mastery of Premiere Pro greatly enables editors to concentrate on telling engaging stories, and also to cut them more quickly. For over 20 years, Adobe Certified Master Trainer Simon Walker has worked with a wide spectrum of Adobe-based workflows used by editors and broadcasters worldwide. He knows where people tend to fall down during editing, and he knows the tips to pick them up and help improve their production processes.

Throughout his worldwide travels, Simon fields questions from countless audiences. Some issues keep resurfacing from editors and users, many of them all too conscious of looming deadlines, and we've persuaded Simon to share ten of the most common tips people press him to divulge. As you'll see, these are not the usual pointers for novices. Rather, they span the full Premiere Pro expertise gamut, and several of them reflect recent changes in the software you won't find reflected in older advice pieces. There's something here for everyone.



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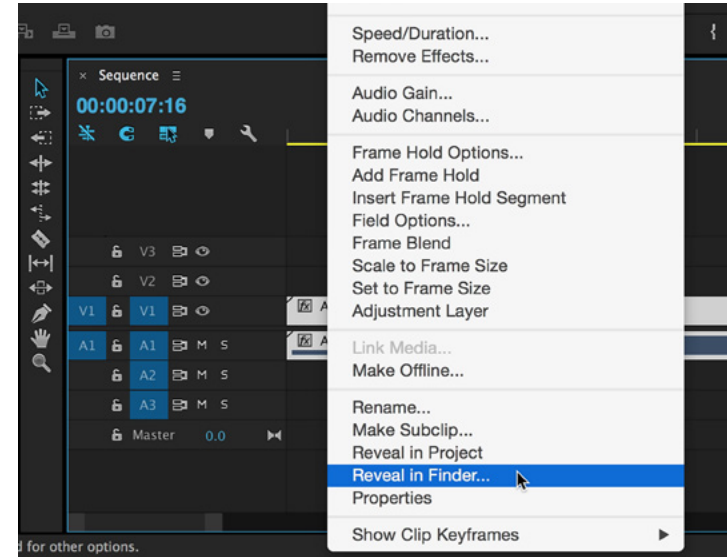


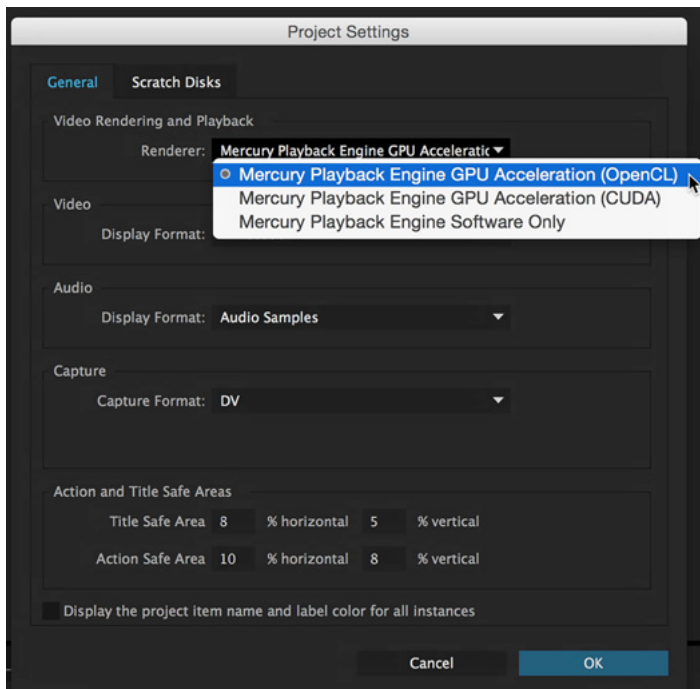
NAVIGATING THE INTERFACE

Premiere Pro allows quick access to functions through right-clicking on the interface or on an item, such as a clip or sequence, revealing contextual menus with commands relevant to the selected item. This is so much faster than having to go searching for them in the main menus! A great example is the ability to right-click on a clip and choose Reveal in Project or Reveal in Finder/Explorer. In fact, taking some time to investigate the controls is also a great way to learn the software.

In addition, clicking on panel tabs reveals drop-down menus for that particular panel, and clicking on the settings button in the Source Monitor, Program Monitor, and Timeline panels enables you to customise multiple functions and also to save them as presets, which in turn can be easily transferred to different machines, typically via your Creative Cloud account.

There's tremendous pressure in modern production to work at speed, so being able to quickly load layouts, preferences, settings, and keyboard shortcuts saves lots of time when you're starting a project or setting up an edit suite at the start of a shift.





NATIVE EDITING WITHOUT TRANSCODING

Because the Mercury Playback Engine (MPE) in Premiere Pro decodes almost all of the current file formats you're likely to work with, you don't have to transcode your footage before editing. This saves hours of potential transcoding time, as well as leaving you access to the native file formats. This proves useful when working with high dynamic range media.

The MPE uses the system's graphics processor (via OpenCL and CUDA) to decode and debayer footage, providing better timeline playback. It also uses the graphics engine to process effects and resize clips both on the timeline and when exporting. So, to get the best performance, buy the newest, fastest graphics card you can afford. Try to configure your machine with at least 2GB of GPU memory for laptops and at least 4GB of GPU memory for desktops.

Transcoding to an editing codec, such as ProRes, DNxHD, or Cineform, can be useful if you have multiple editors accessing the same storage or when editing on a lower-powered computer. To better accommodate numerous concurrent users, Adobe Prelude offers a quick way to transcode footage to multiple formats whilst copying footage from the camera card.

TIPS FOR IMPORTING FOOTAGE

When importing files, I constantly see editors reaching for the File/Import menu command. Using the Media Browser is a much faster way to work and a technically superior way to import footage.

The Media Browser automatically presents camera formats that have complex folder structures as single clips, including spanned files, ignoring any non-media files. You can then hover scrub through those clips to check their contents before importing. Combine this with the Maximise Frame shortcut (') to see a full-screen virtual 'light table' of footage for a very fast way to preview multiple clips.

Right-click on a panel tab to create multiple Media Browser panels to access multiple file locations without having to navigate through multiple folders every time you go looking for clips. Also, right-clicking on a folder location to add it to the Favorites drop-down menu significantly speeds up searching for footage.

The Media Browser also enables you to look inside other Premiere Pro projects, copy across media and bins, and load sequences from other projects. You can also copy timeline clips, with effects intact, to timelines in your own project.



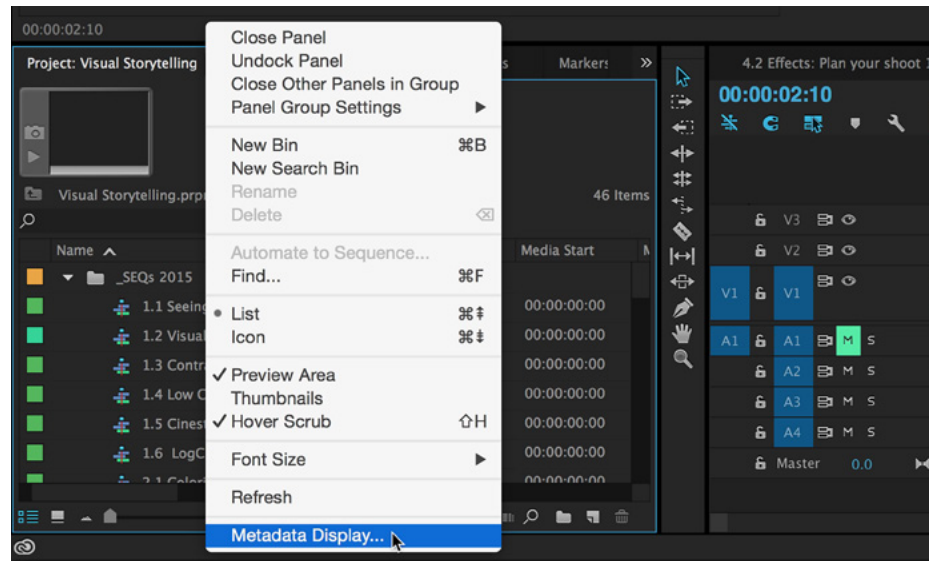
ORGANISING YOUR PROJECT USING METADATA

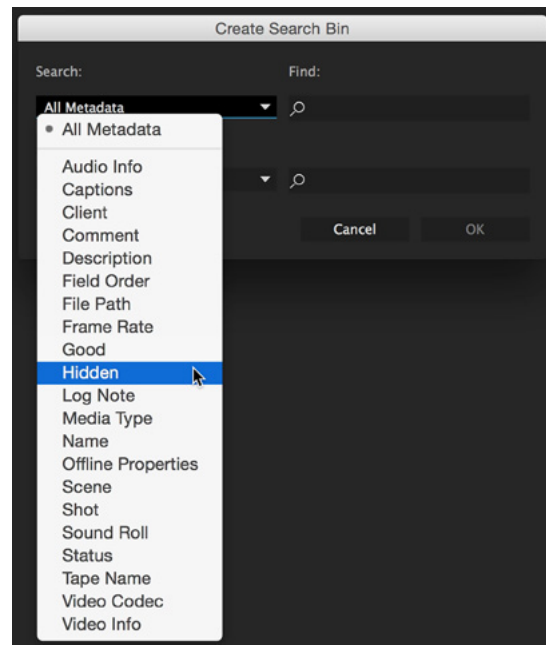
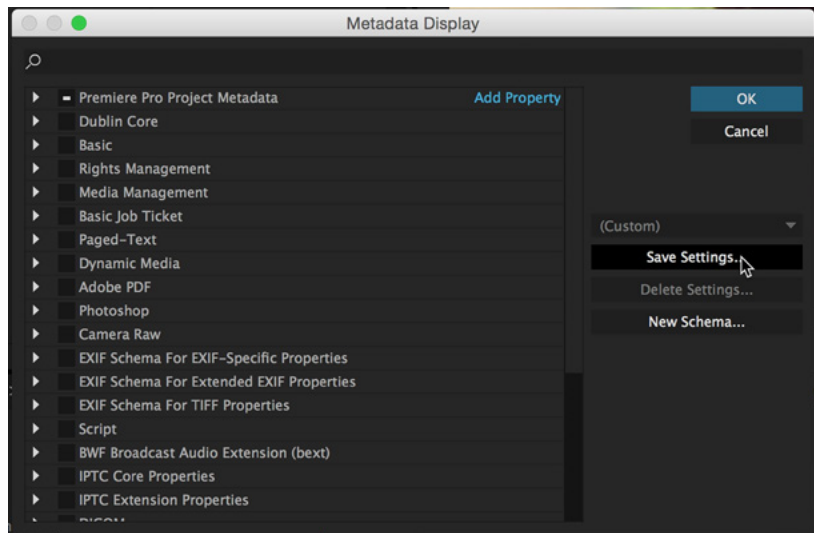
Digital shooting invariably means dealing with huge amounts of footage, photos, and audio files. Sorting through them and making edit decisions can be extremely time-consuming. Producers and directors often need access to all of the shot rushes ASAP, so getting your project organised is vitally important.

For many editors, organisation means embracing metadata — using the ability to customise columns and sort footage according to multiple file parameters, as well as file description and other comments.

Click the Options menu in the Project Panel to bring up the Metadata Display, which controls which properties get displayed and allows you to save custom collections, or schema, of properties.

Perhaps the most powerful method of sorting and searching through files is to use Search Bins, which dynamically update according to metadata search criteria. One of my favourite Search Bin techniques involves having an automated bin set only to reveal files that I've selected to be hidden. This reduces clutter in the Project panel but still leaves quick access to any hidden files.





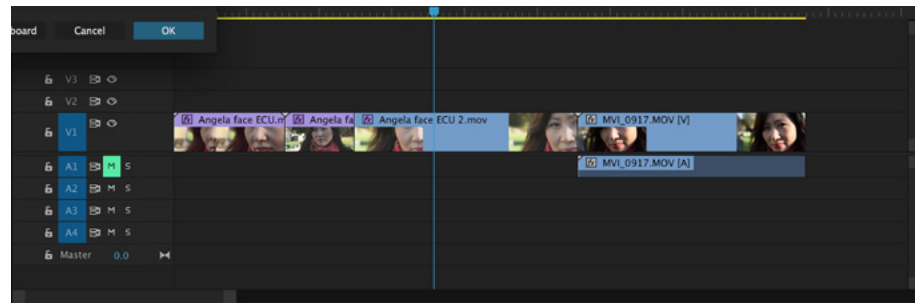
SPEED UP EDITING WITH TRIMMING SHORTCUTS

People always want fast ways to trim clips, and controlling edits with keyboard shortcuts is an essential route to efficient editing.

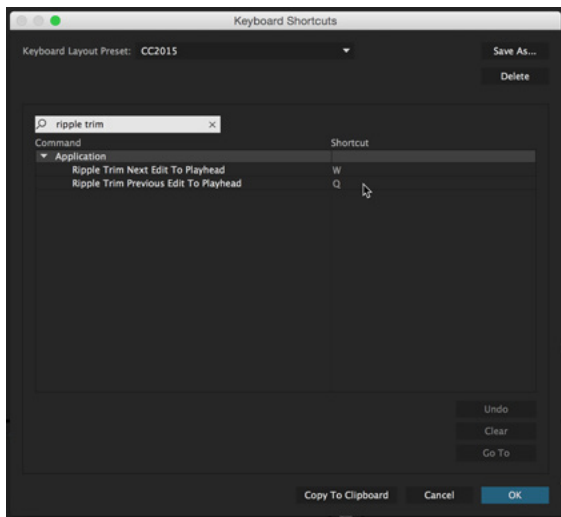
Pressing the T shortcut selects the nearest edit point, and T also toggles the Trim Preview in the Program Monitor. CTRL+T (SHIFT+T on Windows) will cycle through the different types of edits. Then you can use ALT+ ←/→ arrow keys to control trim, ripple, and roll edits one frame at a time.

A quick way of selecting multiple edit points is to CMD/CTRL+drag (with a marquee selection movement of the cursor) over an edit point. You can then trim multiple edit points simultaneously.

I've also found it very useful to add the Revert Trim Session button to the Transport Controls, as well as mapping it to the ALT+R shortcut. This reverts the entire trim session back to the original edit in one command, saving multiple undo presses.



But my favourite trim commands are the Q and W shortcuts for ripple trimming the previous or next edit to the playhead. These can be used without selecting an edit point, making extremely fast work of topping and tailing clips.



USING AFTER EFFECTS WITH PREMIERE PRO FOR FRAME BLENDING

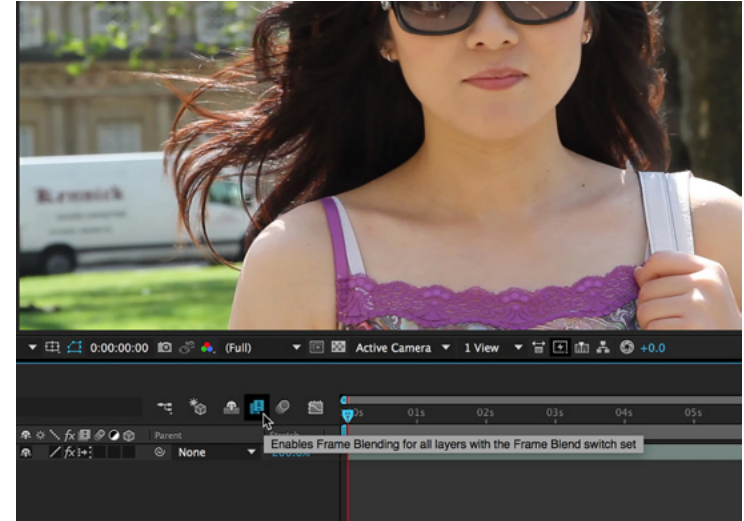
When slowing down footage, Premiere Pro clips can be sent via Dynamic Link to After Effects to utilise its advanced frame blending options, especially when there is significant movement in the shot.

Right-click on a clip in PPro and choose 'Replace With After Effects Composition'. You'll be prompted to save the file. AE will automatically set the comp to the correct resolution and timebase, and it will inherit the speed setting you previously applied in PPro. Usefully, any clip markers set up in PPro will show up in AE.

Make sure frame blending is switched on for both the layer and composition in AE by clicking twice on the layer icon and once on the composition icon. This engages the PixelMotion algorithm, which intelligently creates new interpolated frames.

Alternatively, use the Timewarp effect in AE, which also has PixelMotion, but adds many more adjustable parameters.

Additionally, the Optical Flow algorithm introduced in Premiere Pro CC 9.1 is a fast method to create intelligently interpolated frames from within Premiere Pro itself, accessible from a drop-down menu in the Speed/Duration dialog box, yielding high quality results. This is particularly suited to fixed-camera shots or footage without considerable movement in the frame.

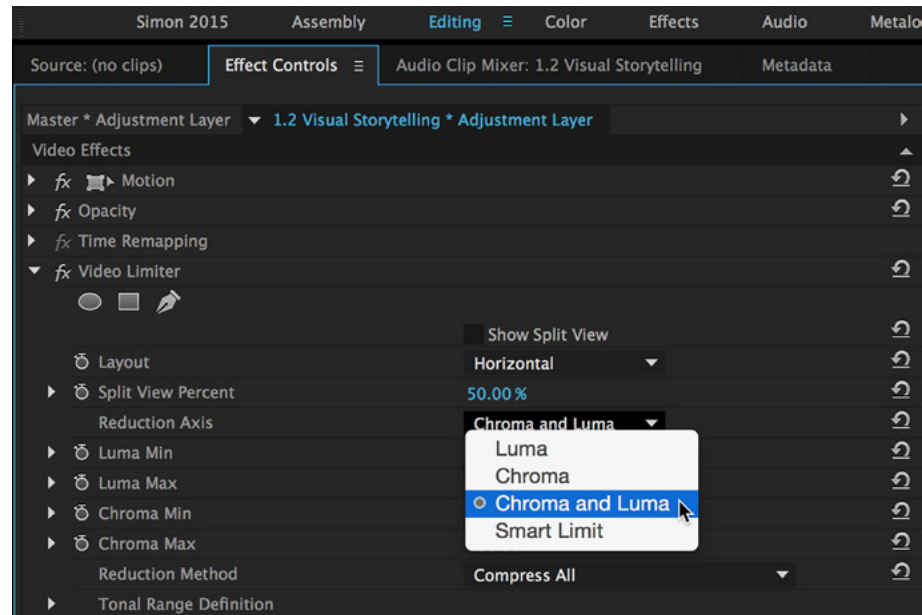


LEGALIZING THE TIMELINE

In my experience, Premiere Pro's Video Limiter effect proves very useful for keeping luma and chroma levels legal for broadcast. The trick is to set the Reduction Axis parameter to Chroma and Luma rather than the default setting of Smart Limit. It's also useful to apply the effect to an adjustment layer set to the duration of the sequence. Video Limiter is an Accelerated Effect, and therefore GPU-enabled, so it won't slow down playback or final output.

However, Video Limiter is only really meant to catch stray illegal pixels. It's no replacement for proper colour correcting of clips, which is the best method to adjust luma or chroma levels. Even so, I've seen it used successfully on time-sensitive projects.

Note that if you're dealing with bright, saturated colours (especially in sports production), the limiter can affect final colour output, so be prepared to adjust the Chroma Max setting to compensate.

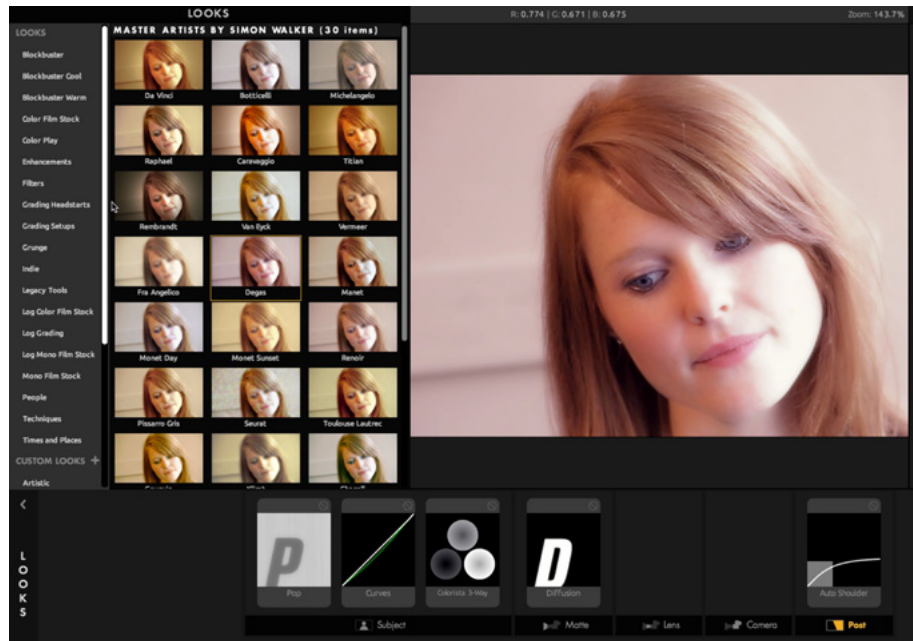


USING PLUG-INS TO HIT DEADLINES

As a freelance editor, I'm constantly challenged to come up with an interesting treatment or effect whilst on a tight timeframe. My large collection of plug-ins helps me to hit those deadlines.

Plug-ins extend the host software's capabilities, or help you to perform certain tasks faster. The best plug-ins do both. Following are three of my favourites:

- Magic Bullet Looks. Colour grading presets can be customised and shared on a wide variety of hosts. They also work with Premiere Pro's built-in trackable masks.
- Red Giant Universe Suite. Extremely useful for distressing and grunging-up footage, especially the Glitch and VHS effects.
- PluralEyes. For dual system audio, its algorithm for analysing and synchronising waveforms works brilliantly for low level and noisy clips, and I love its ability to adjust for clock speed drift when using portable audio recorders.

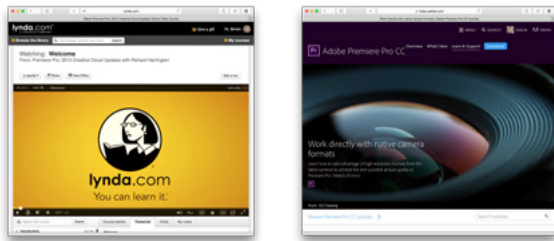


WHERE TO LEARN MORE

I'm frequently asked by editors for useful online Premiere Pro learning resources.

The Premiere Pro Facebook group (www.facebook.com/groups/premierepro) brims with hugely helpful users posting questions and answers about a variety of workflows. I've found it invaluable to see the shared experience, tips, and workarounds of many professional editors here.

tv.adobe.com has many helpful free video guides for performing specific editing techniques, and lynda.com has a whole range of Premiere Pro tutorials within its subscription, with one of my favourites being the Premiere Pro Creative Cloud Updates, hosted by Rich Harrington, which delivers great information about new release features in an easily digestible format.



SPEED UP PLAYBACK AND BACKUP WITH SSD

My favorite drive on the road remains G-Technology's G-DRIVE® ev SSD. Its 400+ MB/s throughput over USB 3.0 helps eliminate bottlenecks when playing back high-resolution video files. Fast drives help speed up the rendering and output stages of jobs, especially when using Adobe Media Encoder in the background to transcode, whilst still editing in Premiere Pro.

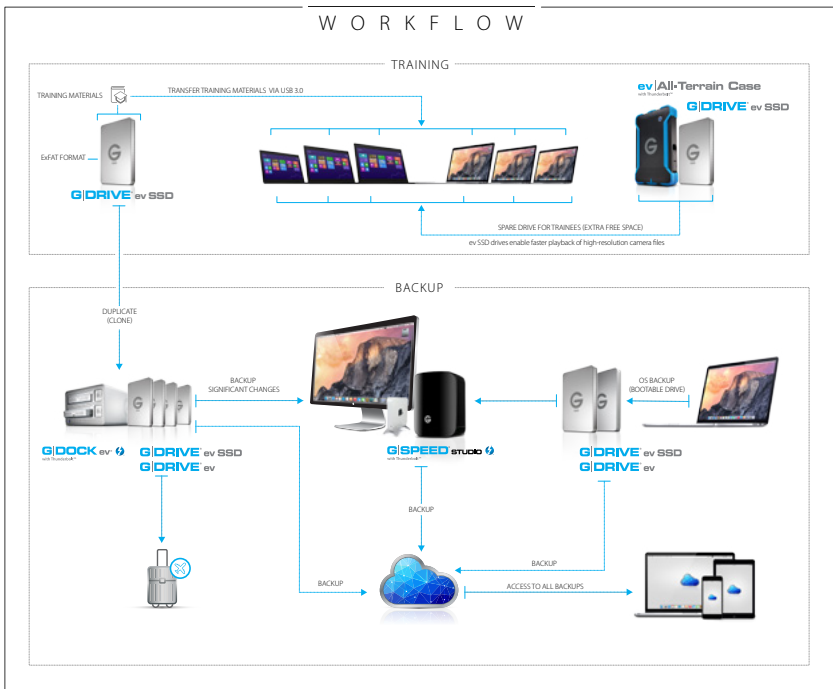
SSD speed also helps when setting up training sessions. I typically have to transfer 25GB of training files to each system, and there's not much time to transfer the files. Also, formatting the SSD to ExFAT means I can easily transfer files to both Mac and Windows machines.

I love pairing the ev SSD with G-Technology's ev All-Terrain Case (ATC) rugged case. Apart from being waterproof and resistant to dropping, the ATC enables me to turn a USB 3.0 drive into a Thunderbolt drive, freeing up valuable USB ports on my MacBook Pro.

When I plug the ev SSD into the G-DOCK ev®, I get even faster speeds (over 480 MB/s). This makes cloning drives and making backups lightning quick. And, as anyone who knows me will confirm, I like to have multiple backups!

SIMON WALKER

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