



CREATING SUBTITLES

1. INTRODUCTION

In any ordinary film you'll have subtitles telling you what the actors are saying. When you watch a DVD you can of course switch this option off. But sometimes, wouldn't it be nice to include subtitles into your projects? In this tutorial, Video Editing will show you how you can do this taking some easy steps. There is software available that are specially designed for the job, but in VE's experience, it's easier to do this within the program you are using and not export/import your film. This tutorial will show you how to accomplish this using Pinnacle Studio 9 and Adobe Premiere pro.

2. START

When you decide to include subtitles, you need to keep in mind that you should try to write what the individual person are saying (or maybe not if you want to make a funny touch). Timing is essential so that the subtitles appear when the words are spoken.

But before you can insert subtitles, you need to do a couple of things.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

In Fig. 1 I have located the insert point for my subtitle and placed a blank title on the title track. I open the title editor and click on the "Square tool" to insert a background for my subtitle. You can insert the text directly, but having a background can make it easier to read for your audience. Depending on which text you used the last time you entered the title editor, you'll get a box matching this lay-out (Fig. 2).

This can easily be changed by selection the text format button (red arrow). Here you can change the look of your background with simple steps.

3. MAKING THE SUBTITLES

As shown in Fig. 3, I have chosen a plain look for my background. I have also selected the "Custom" button (red arrow) to slightly change the look. Here you can pick your colour from a palette and you can set gradient, drop shadow and which way the shadow should be directed. But to make it look professionally, VE advises to keep it simple and strict.



In Fig. 4 I'm back in the title editor view and I have placed the box where I want it (remember the TV-safe margins). Thereafter I insert the text I want by using the text tool.



Fig. 3

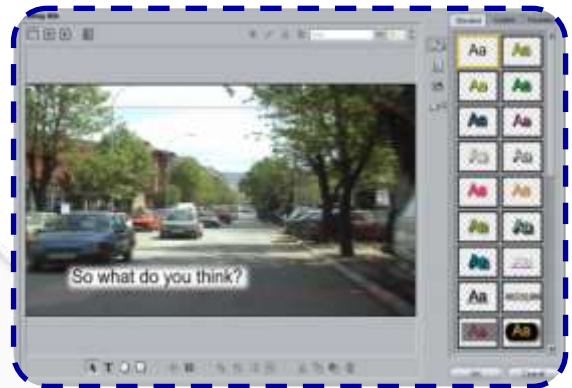


Fig. 4

With the "Text box" activated you can customize your text any way you want. Font, size, colour - just to mention a few. Depending on your motives for making subtitles, you should try to keep the text within the box - at least that's most common.

And then comes the tricky part - adjusting the timing. You set the time for how long you want the title to appear in the upper right corner in the editor view. Here you just have to go back and forth and check with the actual film to see how it turns out. As with TV, I'm sure you have noticed that not everything is included in order to make the timing right. How you want to do it? Well, it's just a matter of trying.

Another option is of course to make the text with a photo editing program and importing the subtitle as pictures.



Fig. 5

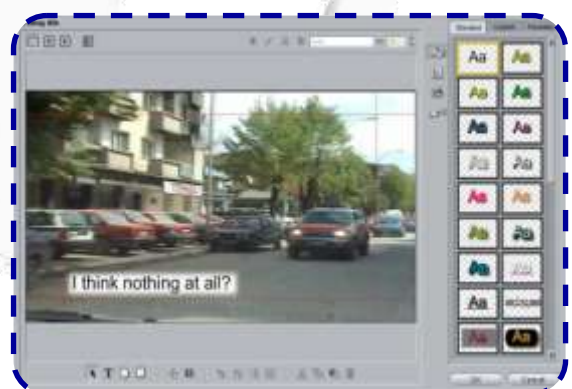


Fig. 6

In Fig. 5 I have copied the first subtitle and copied directly behind in order to make the next subtitle. The process is exactly as outlined above. If you want to keep the original subtitle above the response text, you need to adjust the position so that the next text can be placed beneath without altering the first text. In Fig. 6 I have chosen to simply change the words not changing anything else.



4. USING ADOBE PREMIERE PRO

Premiere is very much alike Pinnacle when it comes to making subtitles, but you have a couple of more options (of course) that I'll briefly address in this chapter.

In Fig. 7 I have opened "New" and chosen "Title editor" in order to insert subtitles into my project.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Click on the "Text tool" in order to insert text and "Box tool" in order to insert a background. The benefit with Premiere is that you have multiple options setting the properties for the text and the box. One nice touch is to make the box slightly transparent for instance. As with the text, you can choose font, colour, shadow and much more using the tool box on the right (red arrow).



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Align the text and box to make it fit the window. You should group the two objects, making it easier for your next subtitle. Before returning to the timeline you should copy the object (text/box).

Save what you have made and go back to timeline view. Click on the title and insert it into your project. Right-click on the title and set the right properties – timing being the most important one.



Open a new title and paste your previously created subtitle in order to make the next subtitle. The same principles as outlined in chapter 3 applies if you want to have two lines running across the screen – make room and don't move the original one.

5. CONCLUSION

Using subtitles can be very useful, especially if you have bad audio and need to let people understand what's being said. Using title editor tools is one option, but can be hard to get right without some training. On the other side, it will make your movie look professional used "correct" – for hey, what is correct? If you feel insecure, VE would recommend using still images containing the text you intend to use. Use any photo editing program, choose you your background, transparency and insert text.

You can of course apply effects to the titles as with any other title, still, footage in your project. It is however the opinion of VE that subtitles should appear in a strict and simply way in order to let the audience have a chance to read it. But what you do and don't in your projects is naturally totally up to you.

Good luck! ■■

