

The logo for Catalyst Production Suite is located in the top left corner. It consists of a teal and red shield-like shape. Inside the teal part is a white gear icon with a film strip inside it. Inside the red part is a white pencil icon with a film strip inside it.

CATALYST PRODUCTION SUITE™

Why Catalyst Production Suite?

You've heard it already: "The Catalyst Production Suite fuses powerful media preparation and fast, focused video editing to provide the backbone for your video productions." What does that really mean to you? Why do you need the Catalyst Production Suite, and what's the workflow?

While every situation is different, all workflows share a general process of moving media from your camera through to final delivery, and the Catalyst Production Suite takes you through that process with critical tools that help you do your work more efficiently.

Let's take a look at that general workflow so we can understand when and why you can use Catalyst Prepare and Catalyst Edit in order to do what you do best. In the process, you'll begin to understand how you will use these applications to cover the details of your unique workflow.

The post-production process

Of course, you have a million things to do to get your production underway. You know how to develop a story, choose the right gear, plan and execute a shoot, and so on. Once you've covered all of that, you need to work quickly and with confidence in your tools to turn your raw materials — footage from a variety of cameras, second-source audio, still images, etc. — into a cohesive story that not only makes sense, but also compels your viewers to watch.

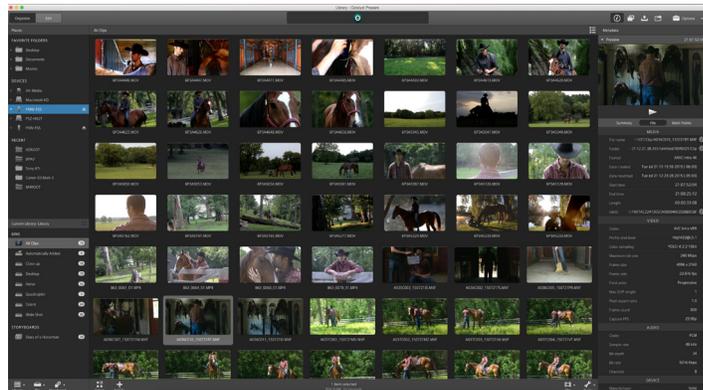
You could just jump right into your nonlinear video editing software and start chopping away at your footage. Sometimes, the deadline demands this exact approach. Sometimes you just have to get that story on the air as fast as you possibly can, but that's not always the most efficient way to work. Other times a project's success requires a more organized approach.





The Catalyst Production Suite can cover you both ways. If you just need to start cutting and deliver at lightning speed, you might feel compelled to jump straight to Catalyst Edit and use its focused timeline cutting toolset to deliver the job. Even in those instances, Catalyst Prepare offers tools that help you quickly get your media into post production. Since the more measured, organized approach that other projects require really encompasses all of the steps of the run-and-gun approach, let's concentrate on that workflow. When you understand that, you'll decide which steps of the process you can eliminate to get the lightning-speed turnaround that those urgent project demand.

Organize your work with Catalyst Prepare



Catalyst Prepare operates under this simple belief: the less time you spend organizing your work, the more extra time you spend to get it done. With Catalyst Prepare, you organize your work up front so that you can avoid the headaches and wasted time that lack of organization causes later.

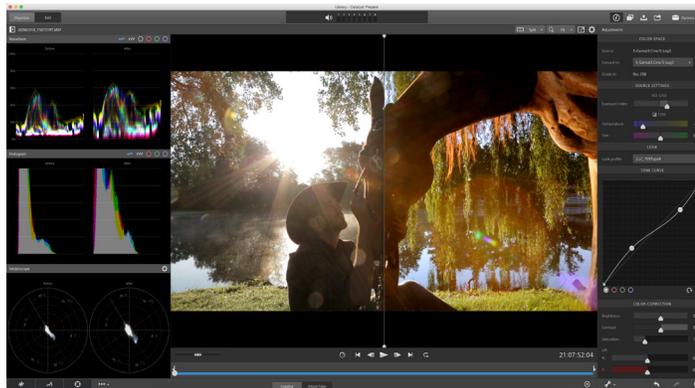
SET YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The first step in the post-production process might actually start before or during the shoot. Catalyst Prepare can help you on set in a number of ways. First, before you even arrive on location, you can create a new Catalyst Prepare library on your laptop that includes bins for all of the shots you plan to take. For instance, you might have a Close ups bin, a Wide shots bin, a B-roll outside bin, and a B-roll inside bin — whatever structure helps you organize. With that done, let's head off to the shoot.

ON-SET CONFIDENCE

Once on set, particularly if you shoot in RAW or S-log, you want to make sure that each shot looks the way you want it to look before you strike the set or dismiss the actors. Before you move on to the next shot, connect your camera media (either from the camera directly or with a card reader, etc.) to your laptop and use Catalyst Prepare to view what you just shot. Sony CineAlta and newer XDCAM cameras embed metadata into the files that contain look-up table information to define the color space you shoot in. Catalyst Prepare automatically reads that color information from the clips so you instantly see your footage in all of its high dynamic range and wide color gamut glory. In other words, you see what you shot exactly as it will look so you know immediately whether you got what you were after. Of course, you can experiment with other color look-up tables and make other color adjustments to clips to get what you need.

If you have a color reference monitor on set, send the video feed from Catalyst Prepare to your monitor to get a true view of what you just shot. If you're not happy with the colors or the shot for some reason, it's a lot easier to adjust the lighting or your camera now — with everyone still in place — than it will be to reconstruct the scene later if you realize then that you have a problem.





Now that you're happy with everything you shot, you might run into another problem: you might fill up your camera media completely. Before you move onto the next shot, you might want the safety of a secure backup of what you already shot in order to cover for you if you mistakenly record over your keeper footage. Use Catalyst Prepare to copy one or more files from your camera media to a safety hard drive, or — for the ultimate safety — quickly save a backup of your camera media image onto your hard drive, complete with the confidence of checksum verification. After you have a backup, you're free to wipe the camera media clean so that you can shoot more footage.

The on-set confidence that Catalyst Prepare provides can not only make your shoot a lot less stressful, it can start your post-production process before anyone else on set even realizes that they're done shooting a scene, and that translates to less work you'll have to do later.

ORGANIZE, LOG, APPLY COLOR ADJUSTMENTS, AND SPECIFY AUDIO CHANNEL MAPPING

With the shoot complete and you back at the shop, the post-production process really kicks in. You probably have a variety of camera media or hard drives that contain the footage you shot and now you need to get organized. In fact, you might start this process while still on set, especially if you have a dedicated Digital Imaging Technician on set with you to help manage all the media you create, but for this discussion, let's assume you've waited until you're back from the shoot to start this. Now you can start populating all of those bins you created earlier.

Use Catalyst Prepare to navigate to your assets. If you still have the footage on your camera media or a temporary hard drive, back it up to the location you want to pull it from while you edit. Copy the footage to the new location in bulk, or preview each clip to find the ones you want and copy just those. With copies of all the assets you want, drag the footage into the bins you created earlier. Now you're getting organized!

Once you have your footage in the proper bins, use Catalyst Prepare to log the keeper portion of each clip. If a clip has more than one important section you need to use, create subclips for each section. Pop into Adjust Color mode and tweak the colors of any clips that need help. Need to change the exposure, tint or Kelvin on S-Log or RAW clips? Check. Need to change brightness, contrast or saturation? Check. Need elegant tone curve, lift/gamma/gain controls, and color wheel controls? Catalyst Prepare covers you there, too.

Now, map the audio channel structure for each file. If the files contain more audio channels than you used, disable the unused ones. Then, name the audio channels you did use with names that make sense to you, such as Overhead Mic, or Lav Mic 1 and Lav Mic 2.

Catalyst Prepare logs all of these adjustments and settings into the active library automatically as you make them, and the time you take to do it here saves you significant time later when you get to Catalyst Edit to cut your story together.



CREATE A ROUGH CUT

If you have an idea that you want to quickly cut together, create a new storyboard, add clips and subclips to it, and rearrange the clips to the order you want. You can further log and make color adjustments to the individual clips in your storyboard and these adjustments remain independent of the adjustments you make to the clips outside of the storyboard.

TRANSCODE AND EXPORT

At any time during your process, you can transcode your library clips to a wide variety of important formats. This “bakes in” all the logging decisions and color adjustments you made so you can use them in another tool down the production process line. The Catalyst Production Suite offers you a huge advantage here because you can skip this transcode step entirely if you use Catalyst Edit to cut your video together later. Catalyst Edit automatically recognizes and uses all of this nondestructive information.

You can also transcode your storyboards either to separate files (one for each clip in the storyboard) or to a single file that contains all of the clips in the storyboard sequence. You can also send your storyboard up to the Sony Media Cloud Services Ci network and invite your clients or collaborators to review your work and provide feedback. If you plan to use a different tool than Catalyst Edit to work further on your project, export your storyboard as an EDL for various tools.

Create your story with Catalyst Edit

With all of this organizational work done in Catalyst Prepare, it's time to create your story. You can use Catalyst Prepare regardless of the tool you use to edit your project, but to take full advantage of your organizational and prep work, fire up Catalyst Edit. As we discussed above, when you use a different tool, you need to transcode all of your media in order to “bake in” the logging decisions you made, the color adjustments you decided upon, and so on. When you use Catalyst Edit as your nonlinear editor, all of the work you did in Catalyst Prepare comes over “for free.” In other words, you don't need to spend the time and storage space that an extra transcode requires. Catalyst Edit seamlessly — and instantly — recognizes your Catalyst Prepare library including all of the bins, logging decisions, color adjustments, audio channel mapping, and storyboards that you created. This requires no transcoding, so it saves you significant time and hassle. Since Catalyst Edit supports the same wide range of formats from Sony and other camera manufacturers as Catalyst Prepare, you can always add clips directly to your timeline in order to mix and match the best clips from any camera.



Use the Catalyst Edit Media Browser to navigate to your Catalyst Prepare library just like you would navigate folders on a hard drive. Browse into each bin and preview your media. When you find what you want, notice that the in and out points you logged in Catalyst Prepare appear here, and you can adjust them further if you need to. Add the file to the Catalyst Edit timeline. All of the color adjustment work comes along and only the material you included between the in and out points you logged come into the timeline. Of course, if you change your mind, you can change the in and out points of the clip on the timeline to include more or less of the clip.

Your project's main timeline properties automatically match the properties of the first video clip you add to it, including the audio channel mapping you completed in Catalyst Prepare. Naturally, if again you change your mind, use the tools in Catalyst Edit to make the adjustments you need.



Navigate to one of the storyboards you created and add it to your timeline. The storyboard appears as a single clip on the timeline you added it to, and Catalyst Edit automatically creates a new nested timeline that you can drill into if you need to access each individual clip within the storyboard to trim clip length, rearrange clips, or any other edit you want to make.



Finish and deliver

Now you're on your way to finishing your project. If you need to, you can easily bounce back and forth between Catalyst Edit and Catalyst Prepare as you work. When you're done with your edit, you can render your project into the delivery formats you need.

Hopefully, this gives you a solid understanding of the Catalyst Production Suite and your workflow when you use it. Of course, you'll find your own ways to make the tools work more effectively for your specific project or working style, and that's the beauty of a system: the pieces work in a tightly integrated manner that enables you to change the process as little or as much as you need to so that you can get your job done. The tools in the Catalyst Production Suite work together seamlessly to take the necessary practical tasks out of your way so that you can explore fresh ideas on your creative journey.