Slick Vol. 6
Owner's Manual

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Introduction

Thanks for purchasing Slick Effects - Volume 6, the "Ultimate iMovie Toolbox." Slick Volume 6 builds on the tradition set by the first five volumes of Slick Transitions and Effects by offering innovative, easy-to-use, and affordable enhancements to Apple's iMovie. Many of these state-of-the-art plug-ins are not only a first for iMovie, but also not available on any other video editing platform. And of course, the Slick plug-ins preserve iMovie's simplicity and ease of use.

Installation

NOTE: It is recommended to use iMovei 3 or later with Slick 6 Effects. While the software will work in iMovie 2, so of the effects use some capabilities only available in iMovie 3.

❶ Quit iMovie if it is running.

❷ Launch the Slick Volume 6 Installer application. The installer works under Mac OS X and OS 9. You will be asked to enter a serial number.

❸ The Installer automatically places the correct files for either Mac OS X or OS 9 in the correct folders for you.

Under OS 9, if an error message appears saying that a folder can not be found, the iMovie Plug-ins folder has been moved or the name of the folder has been changed. Please make sure that there is a folder named Plug-ins inside the iMovie Resources folder, and that there is an Effects folder inside the Plug-ins folder.

Slick Effects

Using Slick Effects is a fun way to change the look and feel of your iMovie video footage. It's like applying a Photoshop™ filter to each frame.

In the Clip Viewer, select the video you want to change.

Click an effect name, and you'll see a small preview of how it will look. (You can also click the Preview button to see it full-size.)

You can control how the effect is applied over time with the Effect In and Effect Out sliders.

Many Slick effects also have control sliders to adjust their settings. These sliders will appear when necessary as effects are selected, but not all effects have them.

Click the Apply button to apply the effect.

Some effects also have a Configure button. Clicking it brings up a dialog with additional settings.

Color Correction

Apple's "Adjust Colors" effect is pretty basic. For more sophisticated control, Slick Color Correction lets you independently adjust red, green and blue channels for shadows, midtones and highlights, so you can achieve very precise control over your video's color balance. Once you've clicked the Configure button, here's how it works.

Color Correction gives you three different ways to adjust your image's color: by sampling with the Eyedropper tools, by moving the sliders or by choosing with the Apple Color Picker.

Sampling

There are three eyedropper tools: one each for black point, gray point and white point. If you take the white-point eyedropper and click on an area in the picture, you're telling the program, "This is supposed to be white"—that is, very bright and and free from color tints.

Take a look at the picture in the preview pane at right. The snow has a distinct pinkish-purple tint—obviously incorrect. But if we take the white-point eyedropper and click on that snow, Color Correction makes it neutral white:

Sliders

The footage below was shot in a forest, where the light filtering through the leaves gave an unwanted greenish cast to the actor's face (below left). With iMovie's simple built-in color adjustments we could reduce the green—but the adjustment would affect the entire image, making the forest background look unnatural. Slick Color Correction lets us fix just the part that needs fixing: the skin tones, which are midtones.

By adjusting the green midtone slider downward—toward magenta—the color cast can be removed without influencing the rest of the picture:

You may be wondering why we didn't use the gray-point eyedropper tool and click on the actor's cheek. The answer points up an important difference between the color sliders and the eyedropper tools:

The sliders only affect hue, while the eyedroppers affect both hue and brightness.

Using the gray-point eyedropper on this actor's cheek would likely get us an overexposed image like this one, unless we happened to click on an area with exactly the right brightness for midtone gray. That's why the color sliders are so useful; they can be used to correct color balance without changing overall brightness.

Color Picker

To the left of each eyedropper tool is a small square showing the current black, gray and white color. These squares reflect the choices you make with the eyedroppers, but the can also be clicked to open an Apple Color Picker dialog in which you can choose a color directly.

The effects of these choices aren't shown in the Color Correction preview pane until you close the color picker, so it may take some trial and error to hit the color you want. Also, the changes you make here can easily result in extreme color effects in your video. If you're looking for posterized color, this is one good way to achieve it…but more subtle corrections are best left to the color sliders.

Hilite

The Slick Hilite effects introduce a new capability to iMovie: the power to create a highlight that moves and resizes with objects in the video. For example, you can put a spotlight on someone's face and then keep it there as he moves around, call attention to an object by putting a colored outline around it, obscure the face of an individual who doesn't want to be identified, or even create surreal color-on-b&w effects.

All four Hilite effects share a Configure dialog that lets you assign multiple *keyframes* along your video clip's timeline. Each keyframe defines the size, shape and location of the highlight at a given point in time. At the beginning of the clip, the highlight might be a small oval on the left side of the frame; then ten seconds later it might be larger and over on the right. If you establish these two extremes as keyframes, the Hilite plug-in will smoothly move and resize the highlight across all the frames between.

To create a keyframe, click the ⊕ button and a keyframe marker will appear below the timeline. You'll see a preview of the highlight's shape; the Shape popup menu lets you choose whether it's a rectangle or an oval. You can drag the highlight anywhere in the frame, and resize it by dragging its small, square "handles."

After creating your first keyframe, drag the playhead further long the timeline. If your subject moves out from under the highlight, create another keyframe and then reposition or resize the highlight as necessary.

By dragging the playhead, you can preview the highlight's motion and tweak the keyframed shapes for position and size. If necessary, their markers can be also dragged to get them in sync with the action.

The four Hilite variations are **Obscure**, **Outline**, **Saturate** and **Spotlight**. In the following pages we'll explain how each one works.

Hilite - Obscure

If you're shooting a muckraking documentary (or perhaps working with someone in the Witness Protection Program) and need to interview a person whose identity must remain secret, this is the effect for you. It creates a pixelated area, hiding the details of a face. A Block Size slider in iMovie's effects pane lets you choose the size of the magnified pixels.

And speaking of magnification, you can also use this effect as a virtual magnifying glass to zoom in on a small portion of a video clip—perhaps to analyze the record of an industrial process or scientific experiment, or to more closely examine surveillance footage. To do this, choose a small block size, and make the highlight outline much larger than the area you want to magnify.


Hilite - Outline

Another effect that could be useful in a scientific or industrial setting is this one, which puts a colored outline wherever you want. As with the other Hilite effects, you can track a moving subject with this outline.

You'll find that an Outline Color button has been added to the standard Configure dialog for this effect, letting you bring up Apple's Color Picker and choose a shade.
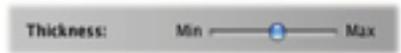
And there's a Thickness slider in iMovie's Effects pane, so you can set the weight of the outline to anything from a hairline to a very fat line.

If your video is going to be shown on a TV screen, you should probably avoid the minimum thickness setting, especially if using a rectangular outline—it can result in flickering horizontal lines in your outline, due to TV's "interlacing" of alternate scan lines.

Hilite - Saturate

If you want to call attention to something in a subtle, almost surreal way, try this one: keep the subject in full color but dull the background to black and white. That spot of color really gets a viewer's attention!

There are no extra controls on this effect—no sliders or color choices. Just the shape, size and position of the highlight…but the end result is certainly striking.

Hilite - Spotlight

What Saturate does for color, Spotlight does for brightness. The subject of the highlight appears as if lit by a tightly focused spot. (In reality, of course, the rest of the picture is dimmed.)

A Spotlight slider in the Effects pane lets you vary the effect's intensity from subtle to stark. At its maximum Bright setting, the effect produces a pure black background with the subject brilliantly highlighted.

If you want to simulate a floodlight sweeping across a prison yard or a burglar playing his flashlight across a room, this is an easy and very effective way to do it.

Film Reel

Slick Effects volume 6 offers several ways to combine multiple video images into one. Here's one of them: Film Reel is a visually exciting effect that scrolls a strip of moving video "thumbnails" continuously across the screen, overlaying the selected video clip. You can choose as many clips as you like—or even use still images—and Film Reel will shrink them, add borders if you like, and slide them across the screen in either direction.

A click of the Configure button brings up a dialog box in which you can choose your video clips and customize their appearance. To add a clip or still image to the list, click the ⊕ button. An open file dialog will appear, and you can select any video or still file. The ⬆ and ⬇ buttons will move any selected clip up or down in the list, allowing you to re-sequence them to your taste. And of course the ⊖ button will delete the selected item from the list.

> *Film Reel requires stills and video clips to have a 4:3 width to height ratio. If you import a tall, portrait-format image, its top and bottom will be clipped off to fit the Film Reel frames.*

Once you have your clips or stills selected, popup menus let you choose horizontal or vertical strips, set the direction of scrolling and choose a plain border, a film-like border with sprocket holes, or no border. Clicking the Border Color button brings up a Color Picker dialog, so you can customize the border color (which defaults to black).

The Configure dialog offers one more option. Normally, as the effect begins, the strip of images will push into the frame from one edge and continue scrolling as it reaches the opposite edge. But if you turn on the "Start reel inside movie frame" checkbox in the Configure dialog, the effect will begin with the strip already spanning the frame (and of course scrolling).

To help you further customize the Film Reel effects, you'll find three sliders in iMovie's Effects pane. These let you set the speed, change the scrolling strip's location and set the size of the thumbnail videos.

Stopwatch

Time flies when you're having fun—and with this effect, you can see just how fast it's flying! Stopwatch lets you overlay a real-time clock display on your video, so you can time sports events, scientific observations, industrial processes and more.

The Configure dialog gives you considerable flexibility. You can choose a font, text color and optionally a background color for better contrast. The Title Safe Margins checkbox will ensure that your time display doesn't get cut off when your video is viewed on TVs, which don't show the whole picture.

You have lots of control over the format of your time display as well. You can choose video-style timecode (hours: minutes:seconds:frames), or hours:minutes: seconds, minutes:seconds or just plain seconds. A checkbox allows you to display fractional seconds (e.g., 10.3 instead of just 10). And the From and To boxes let you decide when to start and stop counting.

If you type a larger number into the From box than the To box, Stopwatch will count backward.

Finally, back in iMovie's effects pane you'll find three sliders that give to control over the time display's location and size.
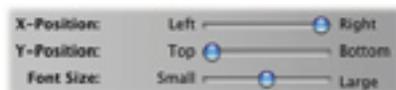
Video Wall

Here's another way to pack a lot of images into a single video frame: Video Wall lets you create a montage of moving or still images that overlay your selected video clip.

Start by choosing the number of images horizontally (X-Frames) and vertically (Y-Frames). Although the sliders are uncalibrated, as you drag them back and forth, iMovie's preview pane will show you how many images you're going to get. (Don't worry about the frame size now; you can set that later.)

Once you've chosen the number of images, click the Configure button to bring up the dialog where most of the fun happens.

First, you'll want to choose the layout of your images. Video Wall doesn't limit you to an array of identical rectangles; you can mix and match large and small, tall and wide images. The popup menu near the top left of the Configure dialog is the key; it offers nine different layouts. In reality, though, you have a choice of scores of layouts, because the X-Frames and Y-Frames sliders let you vary the number of images within a given layout.

The Configure dialog's preview pane shows you roughly what your clips will look like. When it first opens, of course, there's nothing chosen, so you see empty boxes. But if you click on one of the buttons, an open file dialog will appear and you can choose a clip or a still image for that part of the layout.

Below the preview pane are some options that let you tailor the appearance of your montage. Checkboxes let you make certain the aspect ratio (width to height) of all images is maintained—or not. You can choose to have a border around each frame, and pick a color by clicking the Border Color box to bring up an Apple Color Picker.

The "Use the same graphic in all frames" checkbox does just what its name implies. When turned on, this checkbox activates a Choose Graphic button that lets you pick a single video clip or still to use in all the frames of your layout.

The graphic chosen in this way overrides all the individual choices made for frames. But those choices are remembered, and if you turn off "Use the same graphic," they'll return to the various clips and stills you had chosen previously.

When you've gotten things looking the way you want them in the Configure dialog, click the OK button to close it and return to iMovie's Effects pane. Your last step is to set the size of your montage's images using the Frame Size slider. A minimum setting will allow quite a bit of the background video clip to show between the images, but pushing the slider all the way to "Max" will completely cover up the background video and fill the screen with the montage's images.

VidMotion

If you've ever wanted to "fly" a logo around the frame, you'll want to try VidMotion. But this versatile effect can do much more. For example, "attach" a label to an object and track it as the object moves around…bounce and spin a video clip on top of another clip…the sky's the limit!

Start by clicking the Configure button to bring up VidMotion's dialog. You'll see a large preview pane and work area; an Info area with text fields for location, size, rotation and opacity; and a time-line with keyframe markers below it. (See the description of **Hilite** on p. 6 for an explanation of keyframes.)

At the lower right is the "Choose" button, which lets you pick a video clip or still image to work with. Any DV video clip will work fine, but if you're planning to fly a still image, you'll want to save it as a 640 x 480 Photoshop document with transparency. Once you've chosen a clip or still, it will be shown at the upper left corner of the work area, outside your base clip. Now you can have some fun—you can move, resize, spin and change its transparency. On the next page, we'll see how.
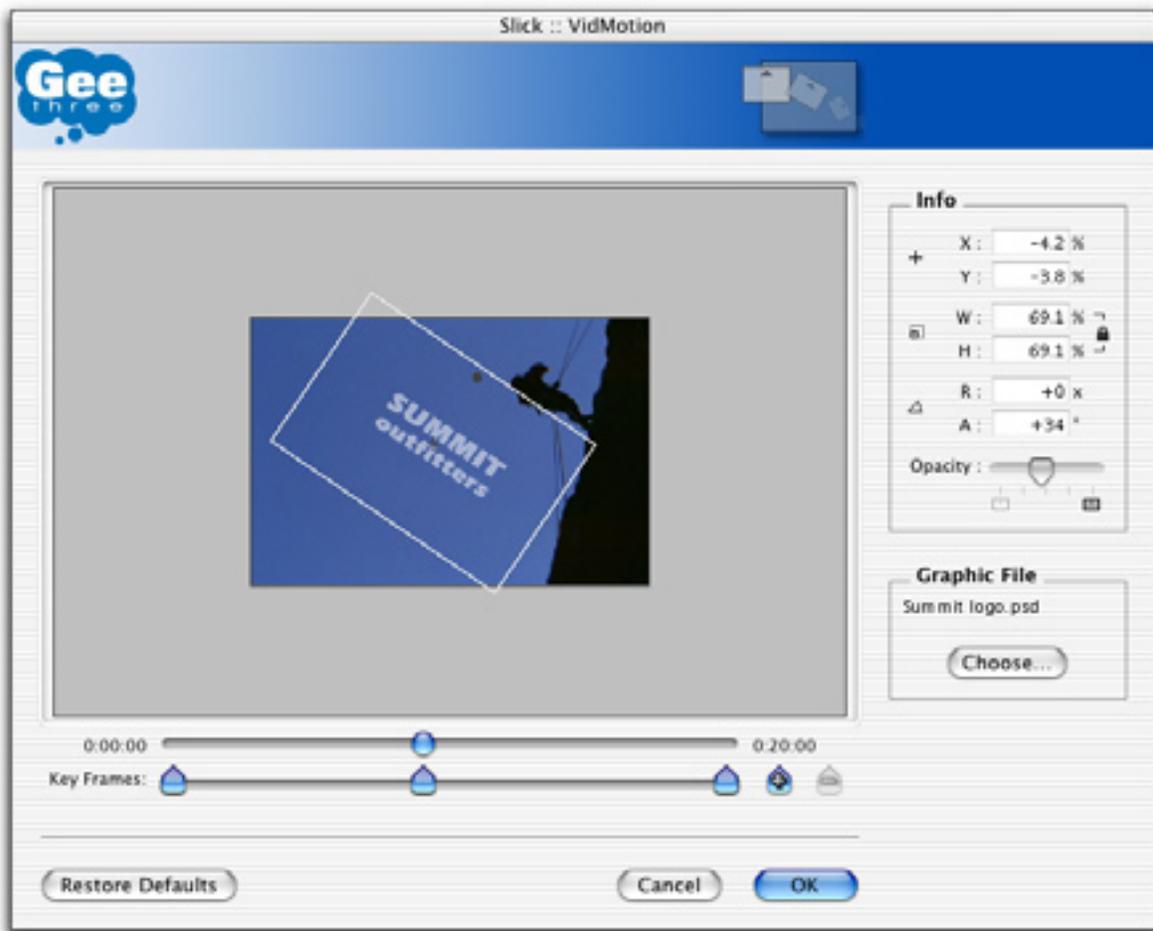
Let's try an example. We'll start with a logo, a Photoshop image with the company name "Summit Outfitters." Our plan is to fly the logo in from the upper left side of the video, enlarging it until it reaches full size at the middle of the frame. Then we'll spin it as it flies off to the right, fading it out as we go.

❶ We'll start with the imported image at upper left, and shrink it a bit by dragging its small, square handles. Notice that the playhead is at the far left side of the timeline. (Clicking on any keyframe marker snaps the playhead to that point on the timeline.)

❷ Here's how we want the logo to enter the frame, enlarging as it goes. To accomplish this, we need to…

❸ Edit the keyframe in the middle of the clip. (VidMotion gives you three keyframes to start with, but you can create as many as you like by clicking the ⊕ button.) First we'll drag the image to the center, then enlarge it to the full frame. Finally, to get the rotation we want next, we'll set the "R" box to +1. We could also hold down the option key while dragging on the image's handles to rotate it, but the Info boxes let us set its location, size, rotation, angle and opacity precisely—"by the numbers."

❹ Here's the image beginning to spin out of the frame, with the playhead three-quarters of the way across. To finish the effect, we need to…
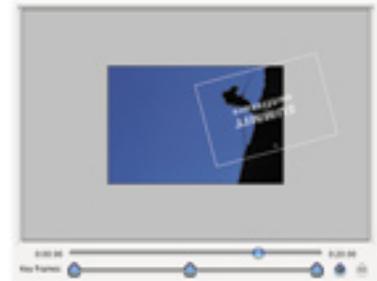
❺ Edit the third keyframe. All we have to do here is drag the graphic to the right, out of the frame, shrink it down a bit, and set its opacity to minimum. And that's it!

A little experimentation will uncover lots of possibilities for this powerful plugin. Go ahead, have fun with VidMotion!

Whiteboard

Here's something cool: a way to write all over your video! Whiteboard lets you write anything you like on the video frame, and your scribblings aren't just displayed as a still image—they're actually *drawn* over the video clip, as if by an invisible hand.

Using the effect is simple: select a video clip, click the Configure button and up pops a dialog with a preview of your clip. Choose a color with the Marker Color box, then start writing.

If you don't already have a graphics tablet such as Wacom's Graphire, this could be a good excuse to get one. It's much easier and more natural to sketch or write with a stylus than with a mouse.

You can use the In and Out sliders to control when your writing will begin and end within the video clip. And they have another important function: controlling the speed of the animated writing. Put them close together and the animation speeds up; pull them far apart and the pace is more leisurely.

Back in iMovie's Effects pane, you can set the animated writing's thickness with the Marker slider, so you can simulate anything from a pencil to a fat Magic Marker™.

Troubleshooting

When iMovie is launched, the error message "Something is wrong with the plug-in XXX" appears.

This error happens when iMovie can't find the support file for the Slick software. Please reinstall the Slick software.

When iMovie is launched, the error message "The plug-in XXX is too old" appears.

This error message appears when an OS X version of a Slick plug-ins is used under OS 9, or an OS 9 version of a plug-in is used under OS X. Remove the plug-ins and reinstall the software.

When iMovie is launched, none of the Slick plug-in appear in the effects panel.

If there are multiple copies of iMovie on your hard drive, when you double-click an iMovie project it may launch a copy of iMovie that doesn't have the Slick software in its plug-in folder. Search for and remove the extra copies of iMovie.

Why do the effects' names start with odd characters like "◊"?

These characters are used to distinguish the Slick Volume 6 plug-ins from the ones provided by Apple.

Can a transition or effect that I don't want to use be removed?

Yes, just go to the Slick Volume 6 folder and remove the transition, effect or title plug-in file.

For other questions, please send email to support@geethree.com.