HOUR 3

The iMovie Workspace

iMovie is a simple yet powerful video editor that enables you to develop your video project with three main tools: the Monitor, where you look at the video clip; a shelf, which gives you the ability to look at all the clips you have to work with at a glance; and a special area at the bottom of the screen known as the Timeline Viewer, where you can put together your clips, and make decisions about when you want them to start and end. Many people have found the iMovie interface to be so easy to use that the Mac ends up becoming like a helpful friend.

Throughout this hour, we discuss the following topics:

- iMovie Monitor
- Timeline Viewer
- Shelf

iMovie Monitor

You'll find that the iMovie workspace is easy and fun to work with, like a well-planned playroom (see Figure 3.1)—and the iMovie monitor will end up being the center of activity. See Figure 3.2. After you’ve created a new
project, the action happens in the Monitor window, which is used both to capture and preview video in iMovie. The deceptively simple Monitor window is a powerful tool that enables you to switch between looking at video that’s coming from your camcorder and the clips that you already have on your Mac by toggling the import/edit control (labeled with a camera-and-scissors icon) below the window.

**Figure 3.1**
The overall iMovie workspace: the Video Monitor, Shelf, and Timeline Viewer.

**Figure 3.2**
The Monitor window with VCR-style controls to navigate through a clip.
The controls in the Monitor window are much like you use on a DVD player and VCR, enabling you to quickly move through your video or jump to a specific location.

**Shelf**

The value of the shelf (see Figure 3.3) quickly becomes apparent when you connect your camcorder to the Mac for the first time and start capturing clips. It almost seems like alien technology at work as you watch the video clips from your tape start to appear in the shelf. The shelf is like a pantry for video—when you capture video, you load up the shelf with clips and you can take a quick glance to see what you have to work with.

**Figure 3.3**

*The shelf.*

As you’ll see in later hours, the shelf shares space with several additional tools to enhance your video productions, including transitions, titles, and effects, as well as a place to put audio if you’ve recorded it separately from your video.

**Timeline Viewer**

The Timeline Viewer enables you to make adjustments to your video clips, such as adjusting the start and end times of each clip, as well as adjusting effects and other things that you might add to a clip.

The Timeline Viewer (see Figure 3.4) enables you to see things as they progress over time.
The Timeline Viewer makes it easy to make more specific adjustment to your project based on situations in which you might want to go to a specific location in a clip. It also enables you to work easily with multiple audio clips, so if you want to add different sounds that you’ve recorded, it’s as easy as clicking and dragging.

Clip Viewer

The Clip Viewer (see Figure 3.5) is an alternative to the Timeline Viewer, representing another way of looking at video clips that some people might prefer. In the Clip Viewer, video clips are treated more like icons. You can easily click and drag an individual clip to position it differently and thus have a different order for your video production.

Shuffling video clips in iMovie is kind of like playing a card game such as Solitaire, where you lay cards down in a particular order, and then come back later and move them into different positions. We’ll talk more about the Clip Viewer in the next hour.

If you’re new to digital video, try imagining iMovie as your “word processor for video.” You can re-arrange, delete, and add material, but instead of working with paragraphs, you’re working with video clips!

Other Important Controls

At the very bottom of the iMovie window is a row of controls and status indicators, which are visible in Figure 3.1. Some of these controls are visible only in Timeline View.

The first is a slider labeled Zoom that enables you to zoom in on the Timeline to see more detail. As you add more and more scenes to the Timeline, the proportion of the whole that each takes up shrinks, and so do the rectangles representing those clips. Use the Zoom slider to focus in one part of the Timeline by selecting a clip and dragging the Zoom controller to the right.
Next is the Speed slider, labeled with icons of a rabbit (or hare) and a turtle (or tortoise), which might call to mind Aesop’s fable about the fast hare and the slow tortoise. (To refresh your memory, the slow-but-steady tortoise wins the race.) This slider controls the speed of the selected clip. If you want a clip (or other element in the Timeline) to be sped up or slowed down, drag the slider toward the appropriate side.

If a slider control button moves sluggishly when you try to drag it, you could instead click on the spot along the slider path where you want to set it. The button will jump precisely to that spot with ease.

Near the middle of the bottom row are controls for audio. Checking the box for Edit Volume makes a volume level appear in each of the elements in your Timeline. You can then adjust the volume of each clip or sound file so there aren’t unpleasant volume changes. The slider next to the check box controls the overall volume of the movie. We’ll some additional features, especially of the Edit Volume check box, in Hour 11, “Adding Sound to iMovies.”

The bottom row also includes a couple of helpful things to manage your iMovie project: the free space indicator, and a miniature trash can so that you can easily get rid of video clips that you don’t need any more. These controls are visible from both the Timeline and Clip Viewer.

**Task: Create a New Project**

Before you can begin working on making iMovies, you must know how to create a new project. iMovie makes this easy by bringing up a special screen (shown in Figure 3.6) if you don’t already have a project started.

To create a new project:

1. Start iMovie. If you get the window shown in Figure 3.6, click the New Project button.
If you don’t get this window when you start iMovie, you can choose File, New Project from the menu bar to get the same thing.

2. When you create a new project, iMovie asks you where you want to put the project on your hard drive by bringing up the Create New Project dialog box (see Figure 3.7). Type in a name for your movie and click Create if you want iMovie to simply save the file directly to the hard drive.

![Figure 3.7](image)

*Figure 3.7*
_The Create New Project dialog box._

When iMovie creates a project, it puts all your video material in one location on the hard drive, sort of like a suitcase, making it easy to have everything for your iMovie in one place. When you capture video, all the clips end up in the project, and even though there are separate files, everything stays together.

3. You might want to switch to a more convenient location than the one iMovie suggests (such as the desktop), by clicking the pop-up menu at the top of the Create New Project dialog box. See Figure 3.8.

![Figure 3.8](image)

*Figure 3.8*
_Switch to the desktop._
Importing Video

In Hour 5, “Capturing Video with iMovie,” we’ll get into the process of actually capturing video from your camcorder into your Mac using iMovie. But in this hour, we’ll import a file that has already been captured into iMovie.

iMovie is designed primarily to work with video that’s captured directly from a camcorder on a Mac, but it’s possible to take video from a PC and use it in iMovie. One way to do this is simply to ask whoever is giving you the video from a PC to save it in DV format (NTSC or PAL or SECAM, depending on what country you live in) to a portable FireWire hard drive, and to import it from there.

Task: Import a Video File

To get to the sample file, you must find the iMovie Tutorial folder, which is located in the iMovie folder on your hard drive.

1. Open iMovie and choose File, Import File. The Import File sheet will appear from the top of the iMovie window.
2. Click the pop-up menu at the top of the dialog box and navigate to the video file you want to import.
3. Select the file and click Import (see Figure 3.9). iMovie opens the clip and you’ll see it in both the Monitor and the shelf, as shown in Figure 3.10.

Figure 3.9
The Import File dialog box.
Moving Around in a Clip

One of the most enjoyable parts about playing with footage in iMovie is the way that you can easily move around in a clip in the same way that you might use the remote control on your VCR or DVD player to find a spot in a movie. In iMovie, as you're editing your creation, you'll often want to move through various parts of individual clips or the overall movie as it takes shape. Instead of playing through the entire movie, you can quickly get to the spot that you want, with a control called the playhead, which is located at the bottom of the Monitor window (see Figure 3.11).

Task: Go to a Specific Spot in a Clip

To go to a specific spot in a clip:

1. Click on the playhead, and hold down the mouse button.
Making Basic Edits

To get a better taste of how the iMovie interface gives you the power of video editing, we’ll take a look at how to make a very basic edit using a combination of the shelf, the Monitor, and the Timeline Viewer.

Preparing a Clip

In this section, we go through the process of making an adjustment to a clip. To prepare the clip, click on it in the shelf and, holding the mouse button down, drag it diagonally down and to the left into the uppermost row of Timeline Viewer, which is where you add video clips to your iMovie. See Figure 3.13.

2. Drag the playhead horizontally to the left or right to find the spot that you want. The number of minutes and seconds are displayed next to the playhead as you drag it, indicating how far into the clip you are, as shown in Figure 3.12.
After you drag the clip, it now appears on the Timeline Viewer instead of the shelf, as illustrated in Figure 3.14.

**Figure 3.13**
Before: dragging a clip into the Timeline Viewer.

**Figure 3.14**
After: the clip as it appears in the Timeline Viewer.

**Task: Deleting Extra Footage**

Now that we have a clip added to the Timeline, we can make an adjustment to it. In our scenario, the adjustment we want to make is to delete some extra footage at the end of the clip.

To delete extra footage:

1. Drag the playhead in the Monitor to somewhere close to the end of the clip—to the point just before the clip switches to another scene. See Figure 3.15.

2. Choose Edit, Split Video Clip at Playhead (see Figure 3.16) to mark the spot so that iMovie knows where one clip ends and the next begins. In essence, you’ve just created two separate clips from one original clip (see Figure 3.17).
3. In the Timeline Viewer, click the second clip and choose Clear from the Edit menu. The unwanted footage will be removed.

Notice in Figure 3.18 how the overall length of the new clip is shorter than in Figure 3.14, as shown by the numbers that appear in the upper-left corner of the Timeline.
Summary

Congratulations, you’ve taken a step further into the world of making your own iMovies by becoming better acquainted with the iMovie interface. In this hour, you took a closer look at the shelf (where video clips are stored), the Monitor (which lets you see the clips), and the Timeline Viewer (which gives you another way to interact with clips).

In Hour 4, “The Clip Viewer,” we’ll ease into things by covering the basic tasks you can accomplish in iMovie using the Clip Viewer.

Workshop

The Workshop consists of quiz questions and answers to help you to develop a better sense of the material as you develop your digital video skills. First, try to answer the questions, before checking the answers. Then check out the explanations, even if you get the answers right. You’ll gain more knowledge this way, and you’ll also be able to help your friends make their own iMovies.

Q&A

Q I tried to drag a clip from the shelf into the Timeline Viewer, but it wouldn’t let me. What did I do wrong?

A To be able to drag a clip into the Timeline Viewer, remember that it must be dropped into the topmost row of the Timeline Viewer. So, when the arrow that you’re moving on the screen with the mouse ends up in that row, let go of the mouse button. You know you’re in the right spot to drop the clip when a + appears next to your mouse cursor.

Q I can’t see the Timeline Viewer. Where did it go?

A To get the Timeline Viewer, click the clock icon on the lower-left corner of the screen in iMovie, just below the film frame icon that represents the Clip Viewer.
Quiz

1. Which area of the interface can contain a video clip?
   A. The shelf
   B. The Clip Viewer
   C. The Timeline Viewer
   D. All of the above

2. What does the playhead enable you to do?
   A. Clicking the playhead starts a clip playing.
   B. Dragging the playhead moves you to a certain spot in a clip.
   C. Dragging the playhead moves you to a certain spot in a clip and it starts playing.

3. How can you import a video file?
   A. You can’t import a video file; you can only capture from a camcorder.
   B. Through File, Import File.
   C. Through Edit, Import.

Quiz Answers

1. D. Any area of the iMovie interface can contain a video clip.

2. B. You can use the playhead to go to a certain spot in a clip.

3. B. File, Import File brings up the Import dialog box. There’s no Import command in the Edit menu.

Exercise

Open iMovie and acquaint yourself with the interface elements discussed in this hour. Be sure to note the location of the Timeline and the Shelf. Also note the amount of free space iMovie says is available on your hard drive.