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PrimeTranscoder®
Transcoding Application
Users Guide

Version 2021, Released February 2021, Indianapolis, Indiana USA

support@imagineproducts.com

www.imagineproducts.com

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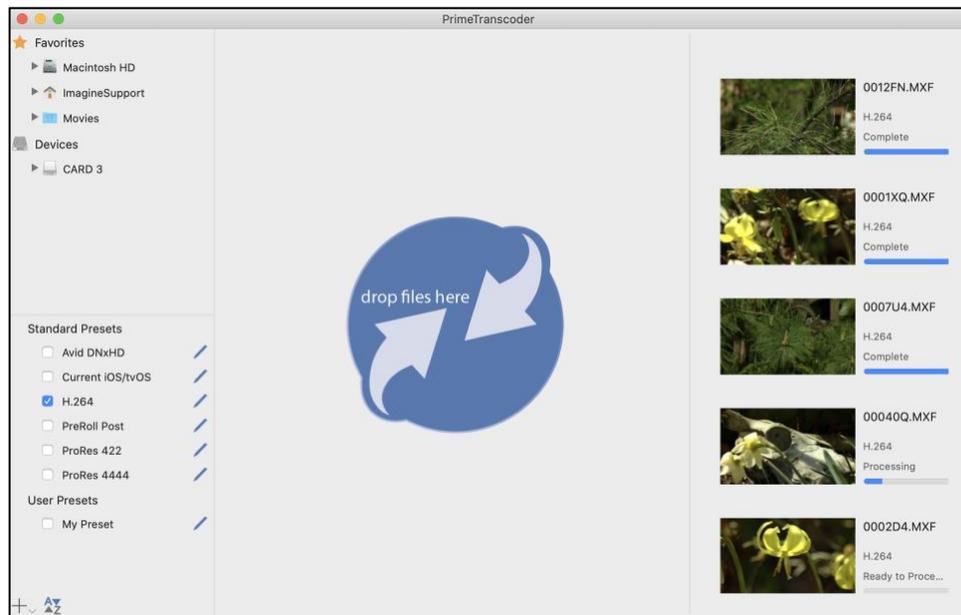
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Welcome

We're pleased that you've chosen **PrimeTranscoder™** to automatically convert your camera footage to movies of various resolutions and types. PrimeTranscoder is fast, and recognizes over 20 different video camera formats including high definition image sequences.

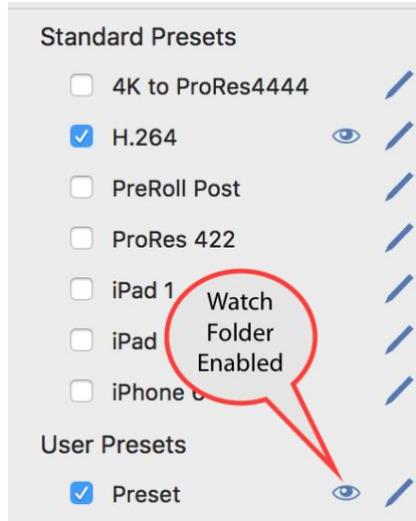


Overview

PrimeTranscoder can be fully automated using watch folders, or you can manually add clips to process. It can simultaneously output edit quality ProRes files while making web shareable, compressed, watermarked clips with burned in timecode saving you time.

GPU Acceleration and CPU core distribution takes advantage of all of your computer's processing power to make transcoding as fast as possible.

Use any of the supplied Standard Presets or create your own customized User presets. All processing options are on the Preset level allowing maximum flexibility. For example, you can have separate Watch folders and output locations for each preset and video type, etc.



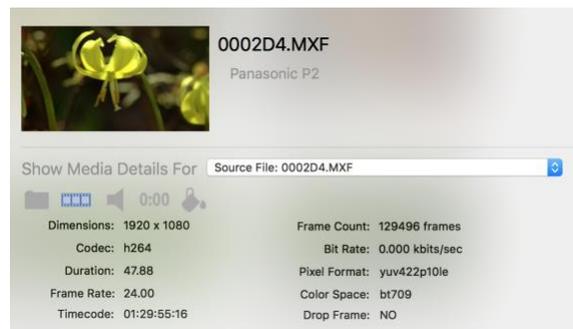
PrimeTranscoder automatically merges camera-spanned clips to create a single output video. Or you can manually choose clips to merge (stitch) together as needed. Easily apply color correction to the output as well as burning in a watermark (such as your company's logo or the file name) and frame accurate time code.

You can also manually drag & drop just desired files or folders of clips into the configuration queue. Begin processing and the files are analyzed according to your active Preset instructions, a list of the movies and the status of their processing is displayed.

Another way to add files is to use the automated watch folder option—it constantly checks designated folder(s) for video files. Watch Folders are specifically designed for use with folders where new files are being dynamically added (such as offloading using **ShotPut Pro™**).

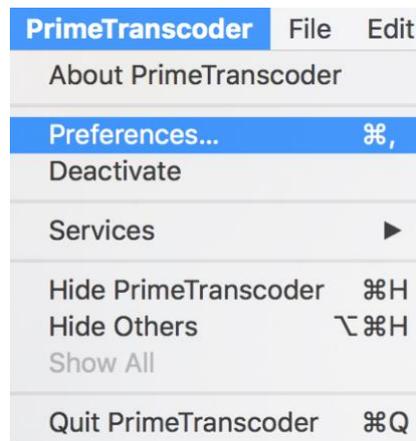
Right click on items in the queue or completed items to open details.

We think you'll agree, PrimeTranscoder is a powerful yet easy to use transcode application.



Preferences

In addition to individual Preset options, there are a few settings that affect overall application performance and usage. Under the Applications Menu click **'Preferences'**.



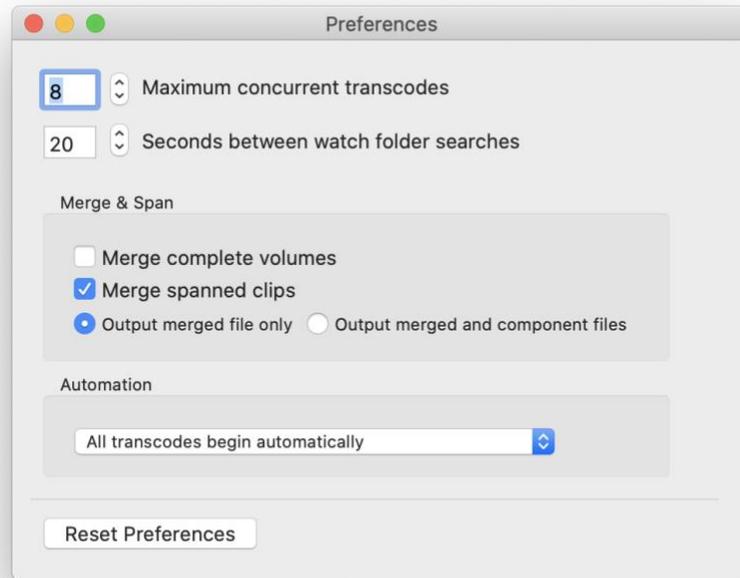
The first setting controls how much of your computer's resources PrimeTranscoder is allowed to use. For optimum results, set the maximum number of concurrent transcodes to your computer's number of cores.

You can adjust how frequently PrimeTranscoder interrogates watch folders to see if anything new has been added. Keep this setting higher to avoid 'time-outs' while the application is scanning the indicated drive locations.

Merge & Span

'Merge complete volumes' automatically stitches all movie files (from a single source Folder) into a single output file in sequence by timecode (if any). Clips may be of various formats and sources.

NOTE: Refer to Timecode section of Presets for options regarding maintaining component timecodes in a merged file or applying a new timecode track to resulting merged clips.



‘Merge spanned clips’ refers to those volume types where clips have been separated by camera file size limitations. With this option, clips are only rejoined if the source material contains instructions on which clips are a continuation.

While the timecode track of the resulting master file for spanned clips should be contiguous, this option does not rely on timecode values to determine whether to stitch together clips.

You may choose to Output only the resultant merged file, or Output converted individual component files plus the merged file.

Automation

Choose how transcodes will be initiated. With the Manual option you’ll click the Begin button at the top right of the Queue to start each transcode.

Watch folder transcodes can be initiated automatically while Drag & Drop items will still require manual begin method.

Or you may choose for all transcodes (watch folder and Drag & Drop items) to begin automatically.

Presets

Presets are a set of instructions on how to transcode video files and where to place them when complete.

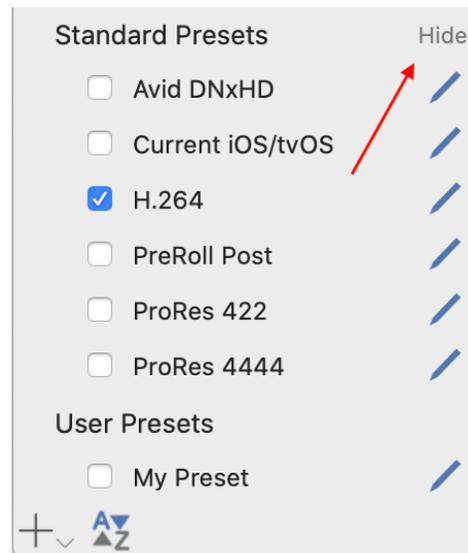
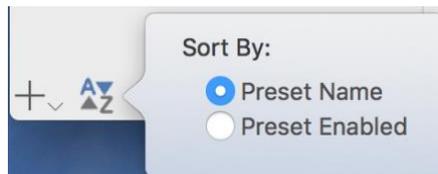
PrimeTranscoder is supplied with several '**Standard Presets**' that we've found balance file size, speed of processing and quality of image.

You may also create User-Defined presets to suit your specific needs. To add a preset, click the **Plus (+)** button below the preset lists.

To enable a preset, check the box beside it. Numerous presets may be active at the same time.

You may '**Hide**' or '**Show**' the groups of presets (Standard and User presets).

Presets may also be **sorted** by Name or Enabled (selected). To sort, click the button beneath the preset lists.



Presets may be duplicated for easier setup of similar configurations. Right click on a selected preset to open the options menu.

A preset may also be exported/imported between computers or users. To remove a User defined preset, select it and press the **DELETE** key on your keyboard, or right click on it and choose Remove Preset.



Standard (Built-In) Presets

PrimeTranscoder comes loaded with a number of handy standard Presets that are configured for commonly used transcodes.

- ProRes4444
- ProRes422
- Avid DNxHD
- H.264
- PreRoll Post
- Current iOS/tvOS

TIP: Standard Presets do not allow certain format changes (video codec, dimensions, etc.).

Editing a Preset

Each Preset has a large number of customizable options. To configure a preset, click the pencil button to the right of the preset.



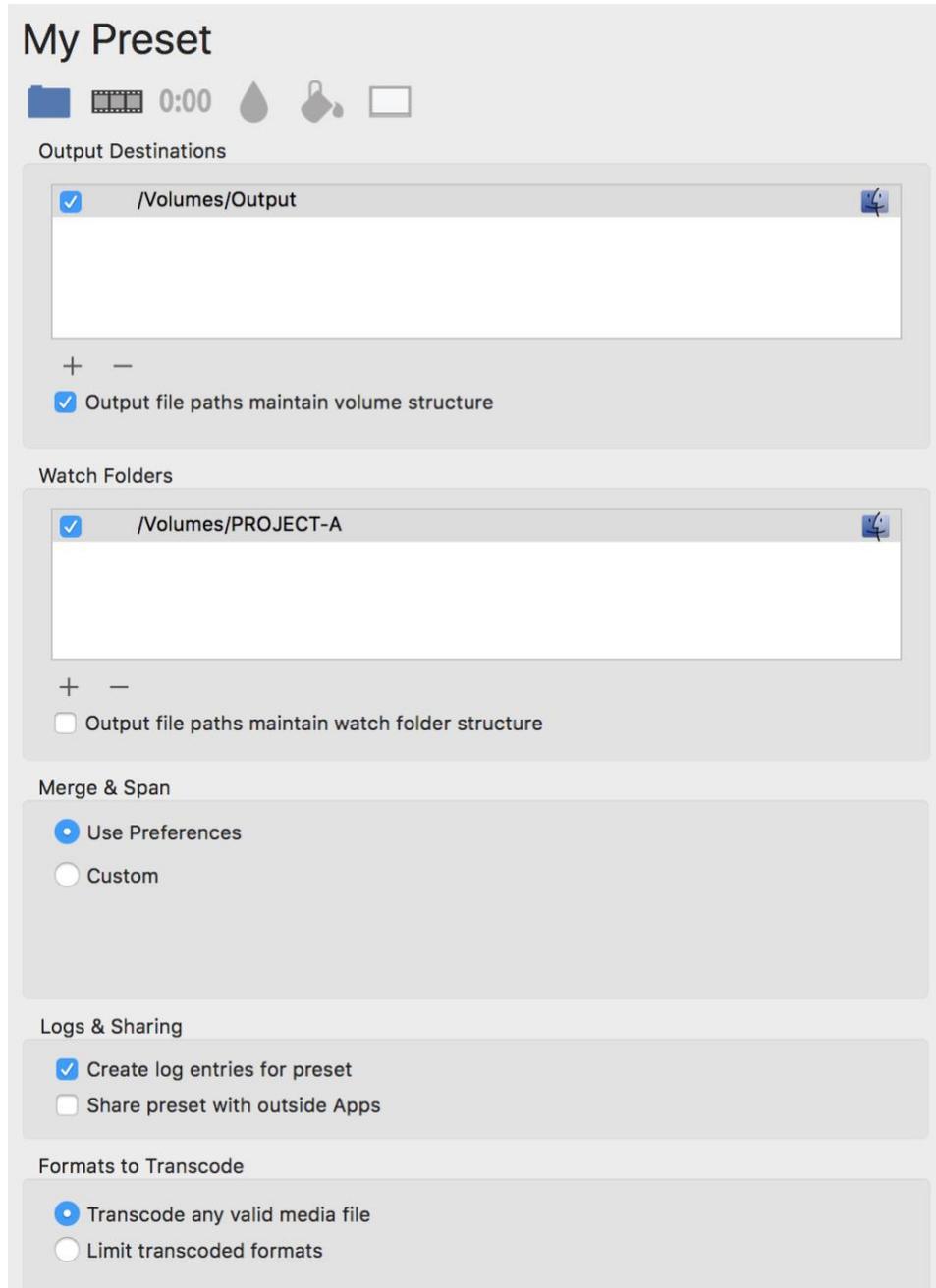
Only one preset may be edited at a time. To save your changes, click the **Close (X)** button at the top of the window. Output format settings in Standard presets may not be edited.

To add a preset, click the Plus (+) button below the preset lists.



At the top of the editing dialog are the following tabs:

- General File Options
- Video & Audio Formats
- Timecode Format
- Watermarks
- Color Correction
- Preview



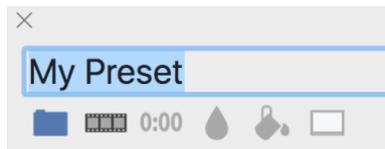
General Tab

The General Tab contains many of the key properties that may be customized for the selected preset:

- Preset Title
- Output Location(s)
- Watch Folder(s)
- Merge & Span
- Logs & Sharing
- Formats to Transcode

Title

The title is the name that is shown in the Preset list. With the preset open in edit mode, select the title text and type in a name.



NOTE: Standard preset titles may not be edited.

Output Destinations

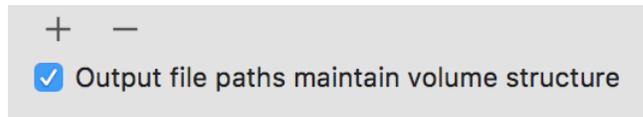
Output locations are the root folders where finished video files will be placed. You may output to several locations at the same time. You can also turn output locations ON or OFF by checking the box beside them.



To add a path, either drag and drop a folder from Finder directly into the list, or click the Plus (+) button at the bottom of the list and browse to the desired folder.

TIP: Click the **Finder** icon to the right of the location to open Finder.

To remove a location, highlight the path(s) you want to remove in the list and click the Minus [-] button at the bottom of the Output destinations list, or click the **Delete** key.



TIP: To place output files into sub-folders named after the SOURCE folders they originated from, check the box '**Output file paths maintain volume structure**'. For example, a file originating from a PROJECT-A folder will have transcoded files placed in a PROJECT-A inside the root output destination.

Watch Folders

PrimeTranscoder's unique automated watch folder option constantly checks designated location(s) for the addition of video files. Watch Folders are specifically designed for use with folders where new files are being dynamically added (such as offloading using **ShotPut Pro™**).

TIP: PrimeTranscoder and ShotPut Pro work well together on the same computer since video processing is CPU/GPU intensive while copying files is I/O intensive.

As video files are identified (based on the Formats to Transcode you choose) they'll begin processing.



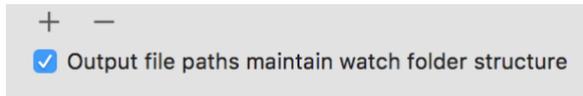
Add Watch Folder locations by dragging and dropping folders, or mounted volumes, directly into the list. Alternatively, click the Plus (+) button at the bottom of the Watch Folders dialog to browse to it.

TIP: Click the Finder icon to the right of the location to open Finder.

To remove locations from the Watch Folder list highlight the item(s) and click the Minus [-] button, or click the '**Delete**' key.

CAUTION! If you **ONLY** want to manually select files for transcoding, remove or uncheck Watch Folders in the list.

To place output files into sub-folders named after the SOURCE folders they originated from, check the box **'Output file paths maintain watch folder structure'**.

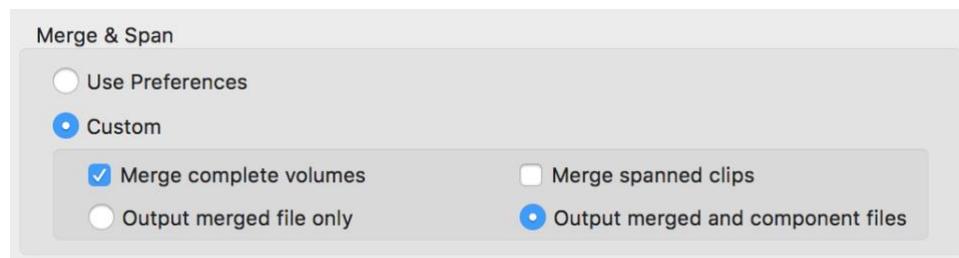


TIP: Watch folders are designed to automatically skip previously processed files, even between software uses. To override this feature and reprocess the entire Watch folder contents, clear the Logs.

Merge & Span

Global Merge options are configured under Preferences. You may use these, or instruct PrimeTranscoder to override them on a Preset level.

Select **CUSTOM** and choose how you'd like *just this preset* to behave.

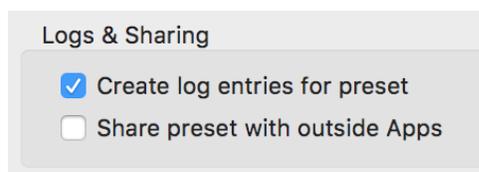


NOTE: Setting custom Merge instructions here DO NOT modify your global Preferences; these are Preset specific.

Logs & Sharing

PrimeTranscoder maintains a history of transcoding activities for Presets with Logs enabled.

Inside each Preset you'd like to track output activities, select **'Create log entries for preset' before processing**.



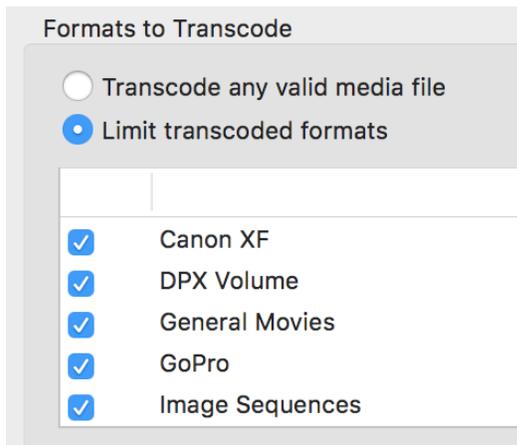
TIP: After transcoding, select **'Logs'** from the **Windows** menu.

External applications (e.g. Axle Video) that have been enabled with PrimeTranscoder's communications module may invoke presets and pass videos to it remotely for processing. To allow a preset to be called externally, select **'Share preset with outside Apps'**.

Formats to Transcode

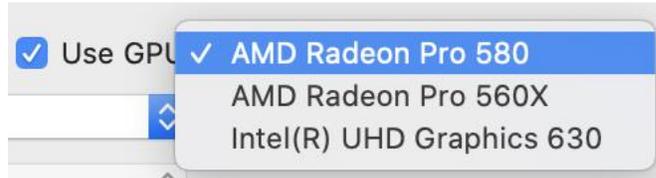
PrimeTranscoder can process virtually any video file format including over 20 camera types. Allow the software to automatically determine and process valid media files, or you may restrict it to look for only specific types.

TIP: 'Limit transcoded formats' may be useful in situations where a designated watch folder contains multiple file types, but you only want to process certain formats.



Video & Audio Formats

Specify video and audio output options including format, data rate, dimensions and audio source channels and tracks.



Select **'Use GPU'** acceleration for best performance. Select from internal GPUs and external GPUs (e.g. BlackMagic Design eGPU).

If you have a **Red Rocket** hardware accelerator the option to enable it will also be shown here.

TIP: Turn off GPU acceleration when other applications running concurrently may require this resource for smooth performance (e.g. video player or editor, etc.).

Video Format Options

Choose the **'Video Format'** type (e.g. H.265, Avid DNxHD, H.264, H.265, ProRes, etc.) and the file extension to apply to transcoded files if appropriate. You can adjust the desired **'Frame Rate'** or simply **'Match Source'** in most cases.

Certain video formats (e.g. H.264) allow further customization of **'Video Data Rate'** such as **'Overlay Quality'** and **'Prepare for web streaming'** attributes.

NOTE: H.265 output requires **OSX 10.13** or higher operating systems.

Sizing

Select the **'Dimensions'** of the output file. The options may vary depending upon the Video Format chosen. If you need a very specific size not listed you may choose Custom and set the pixel size manually.

If you choose **'Custom Dimensions'**, you'll need to further define how to scale the frame. **'Match Source Aspect'**, **'Fit to Frame'** via **'Stretch'** or **'Letterbox'**, or **'Crop'**.



To **Crop**, click the icon to a dialog to set an anchor point.



You may also adjust **'Color Space'**, **'Key Frames'** and **'Profile Levels'**.

Audio Format Options

Select the **'Audio Format'** to **'Match Source'** or other format types (which may be restricted based on the video format chosen).

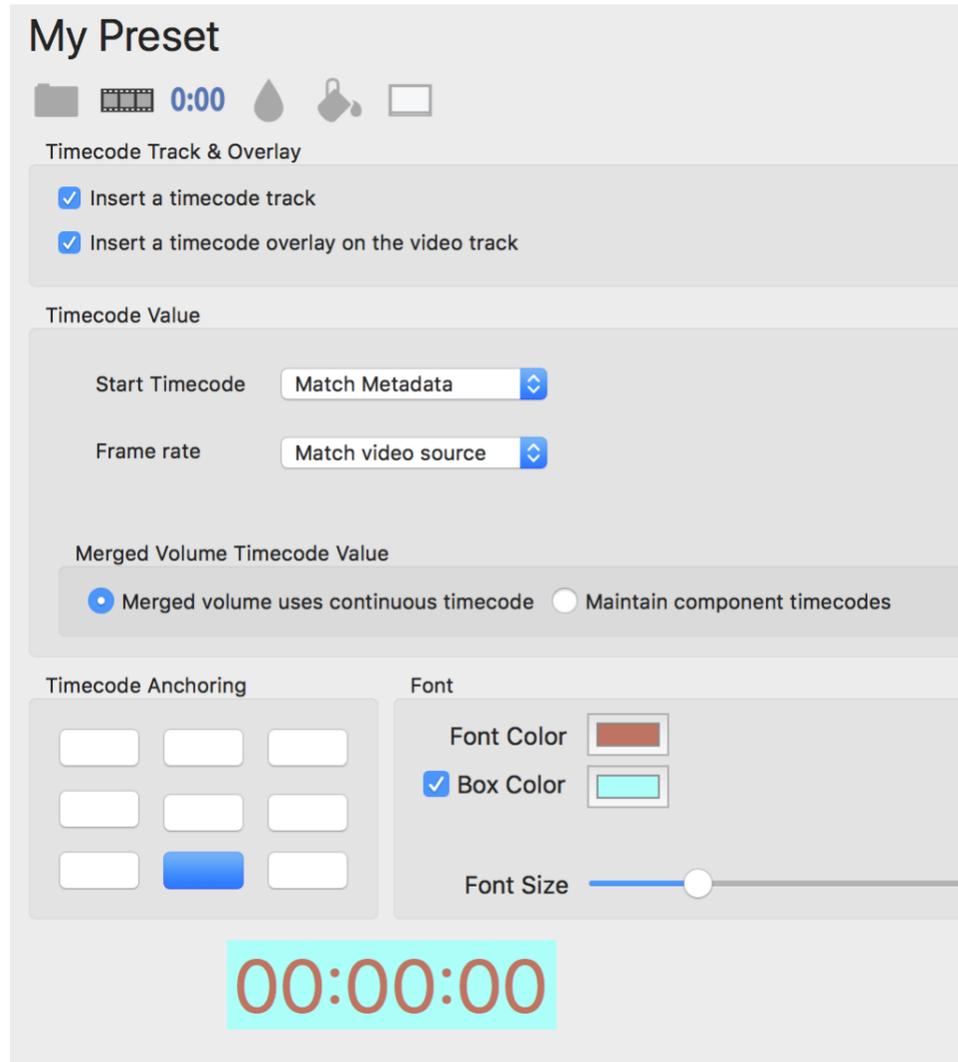
Audio Format	<input type="text" value="Match Source"/>	⌵
Audio Quality	<input type="text" value="Standard"/>	⌵
Sample Rate	<input type="text" value="Match Source"/>	⌵
Track Layout	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Single Merged Track	<input type="radio"/> Discrete Mono Tracks
Channel Layout	<input type="text" value="Match Source"/>	⌵
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Include all audio tracks	
	<input type="radio"/> Exclude following audio tracks	

When you select a specific audio format, also choose the desired **'Audio Quality'**, **'Sample Rate'**, **'Track Layout'** and **'Channel Layout'**.

You may further customize which audio tracks to **Include** or **Exclude**. For example, you may not want the camera's built-in audio tracks included when choosing external audio files.

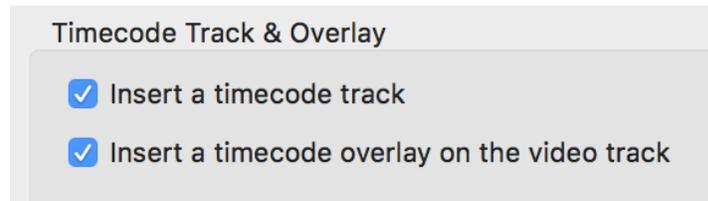
Timecode Format

There are several options for controlling how timecode information is inserted and presented in your transcoded clips.



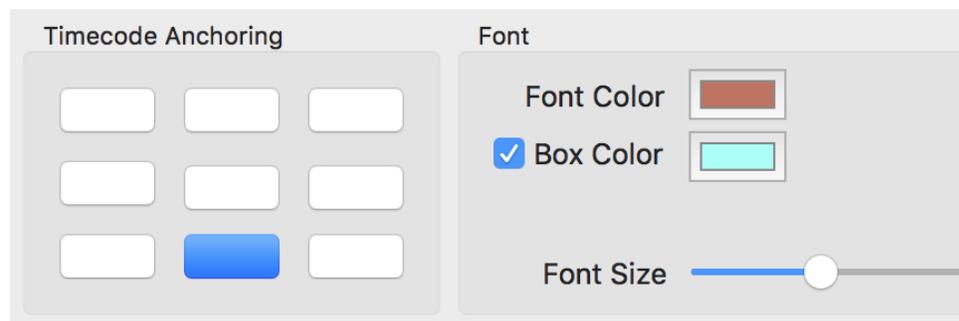
Timecode Track & Overlay

Timecode information is independent of video tracks. While many Mac-based applications generally expect QuickTime timecode tracks, other file types may insert the information into the file header (e.g. MXF files).



Choose **'Insert a timecode track'** option to include timecode in the output file.

'Insert a timecode overlay on the video track' burns visible timecode numbers into the video frames. You can specify how the timecode will appear and where it will be located on the transcoded video.



CAUTION! A timecode overlay is a physical augmentation of the video track of the transcoded file. Unlike a QuickTime timecode track, a timecode overlay physically burns a timecode sequence into the video frames of the transcoded file that cannot be separated from the video track.

The location of the timecode burn can be adjusted by setting the anchor point to one of the 9 areas of the frame.

You can adjust the **'Font Color'**, **'Box Color'** and **'Font Size'**. Click on the color icons to open the color selection window.

NOTE: All changes in Timecode Overlay Font and position options are visualized in the Preview window (choose **'Preview'** icon and click in on the screen to refresh).

Timecode Value

Select **'Match Metadata'** to set the **'Start Timecode'** based the source movie's properties and available metadata. Alternatively, you may choose a start time of zero, a custom input value, or use the source file's creation date/time information.

'Frame rate' may also be gathered from the video source file, or forced to conform to desirable rate.

CAUTION! Forcing a frame rate will override any existing metadata of source files and therefore should not be used if a match-back workflow is expected.

If you'll be merging clips, the resulting merged file may have a **continuous timecode** track, or '**Maintain component timecodes**' (which may or may not be contiguous).

Watermark Options

Click the Watermark icon to specify an image or text to be overlain (burned) into your transcoded movies.



To add a watermark image, select '**Insert a watermark image**' click the Plus (+) button to browse to the image file or drag the file into the Drop Images Here box.

After adding an image, specify its size by changing the width and height values (in pixels).

Set the anchor point of the watermark image on the video frame.

TIP: You may open the Preview and right click on the image to adjust its desired location.

TIP: Changing one of the scale values (width or height) will automatically adjust the other value to preserve the aspect ratio of the supplied image file if you click in the next box (e.g. change the width then click in the height box).

You may also burn text into the video frames. Select '**Insert text**' and '**Use source file name**' to insert the name of the source file (a handy visual match of proxies to source material).

Alternatively, select the '**Custom Text**' option and type into the textbox. Then specify how the text will appear and where it will be located on the transcoded video.

You can adjust the size, font, text color and background (Box Color). Drag the slider to change the text size. Click on the '**Font Color**' to open the color selection window.

Text may be displayed directly upon the video frame (transparent around the text), or you may specify a '**Box Color**' around it of a contrasting color.

The location of the text insert can be adjusted by setting the anchor point to one of the 9 areas of the frame.

NOTE: Text overlay and position options are visualized in the Preview window (click '**Preview**' tab and click in on the screen to refresh).

Preview

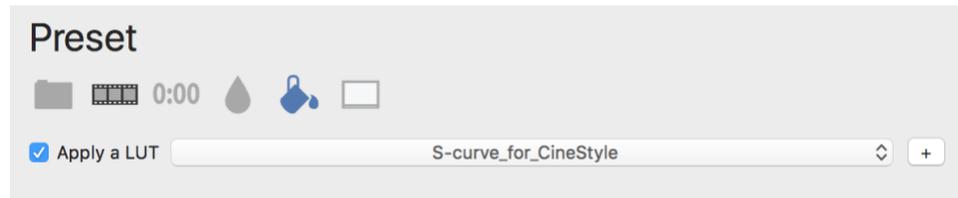
Click the Preview icon to see how all of your watermarking and timecode burn options will appear in the transcoded movie.



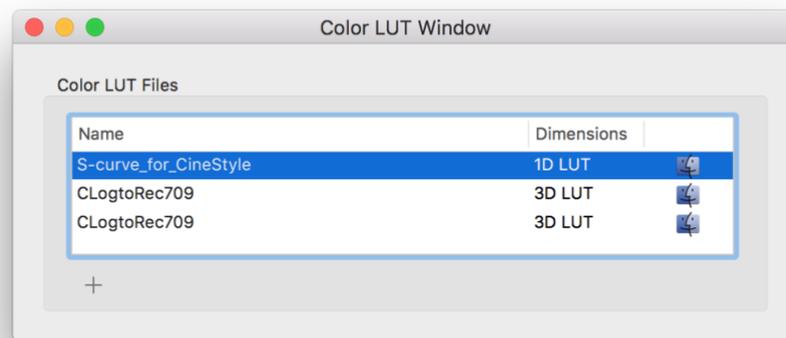
The Preview window aspect ratio matches that of the Preset's video codec, so you can accurately set the relative location of visual items.

Color Correction

You can automatically apply a color correction to output files as they're created.



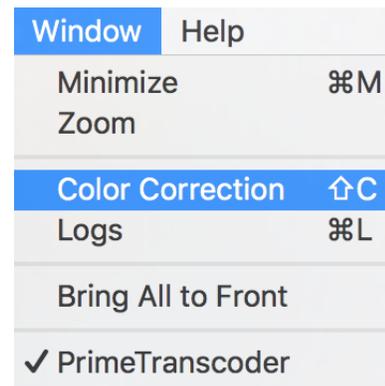
Select from your list a Color LookUp Tables (LUT) to use. To load a LUT, click the Plus (+) button and browse to it.



You may also load LUTs into PrimeTranscoder from the 'Color Correction' menu found under the 'Window' menu.

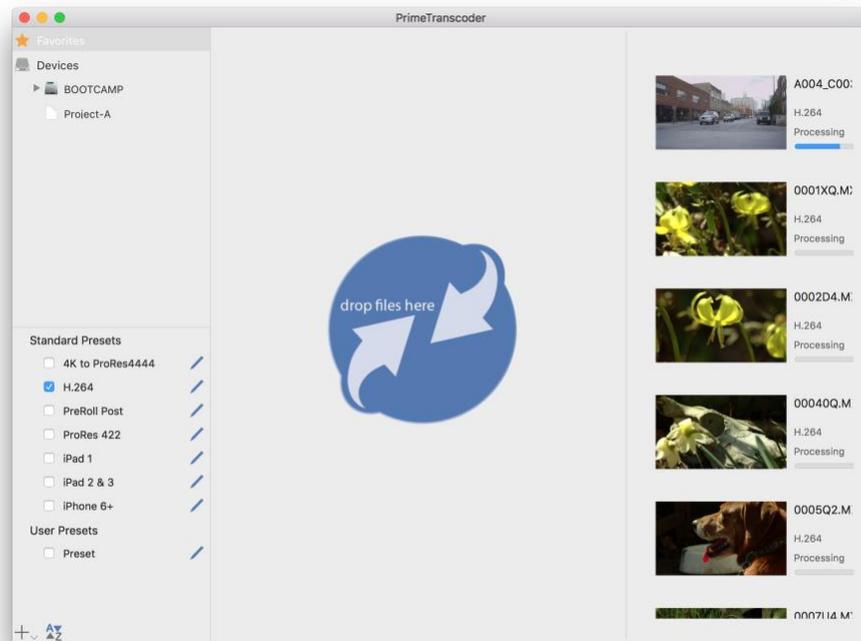
In that window, Drag & Drop a Color LUT file into the list, or use the Plus (+) button to browse to a file.

To remove a LUT from the list, select it and press the 'Delete' key on your keyboard.



Processing

Once you've modified and activated a preset, you're ready to begin processing. Drag and Drop just desired files, or entire folders of clips, into the configuration queue (center work area—'drop files here'). Files may be selected from the upper left column browser, or directly from Finder.

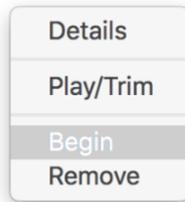


Begin Processing

If you've configured Preferences to '**Manually begin all transcodes**', thumbnails of the clips waiting processing will appear in the queue area. You may add as many clips as you like or begin processing them at any time.



To start processing all files in the queue, click the '**Begin**' button at the top right of the application. To '**Clear**' the queue, click the eraser icon.

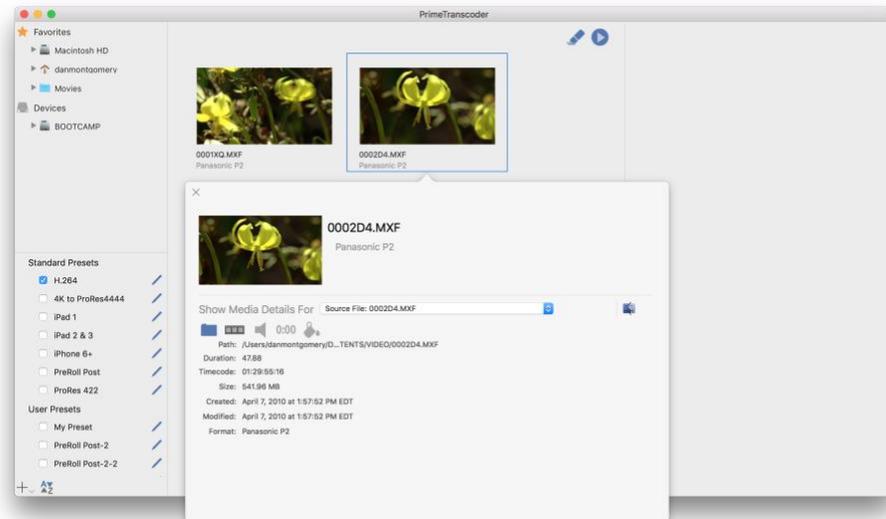


You may begin processing individual files by right clicking on the file in the queue and choose **'Begin'**. Just that clip, instead of the entire queue, will begin processing.

Manual processing gives you the opportunity to examine the details of source files added to the queue. You can select just a portion of the file to process using the **'Play/Trim'** dialog or select various clips to manually **'Merge'** (stitch) together.

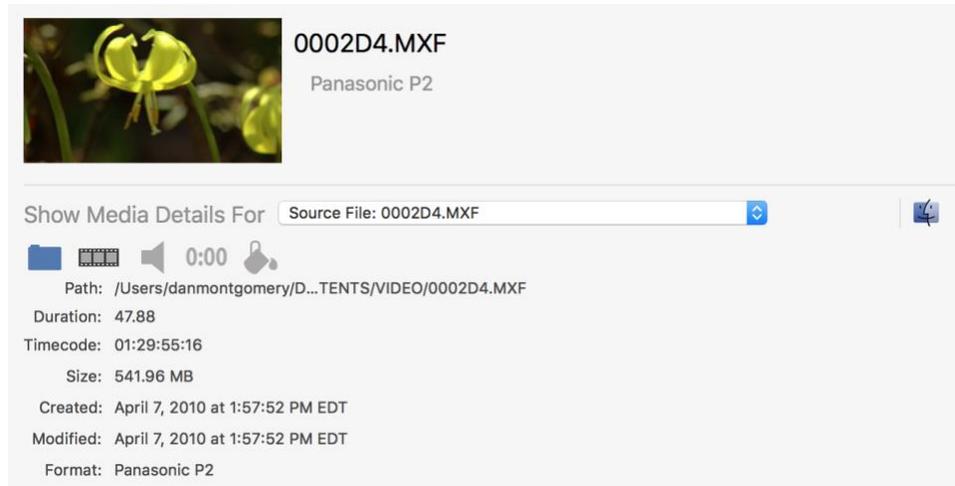
Adjust Details

Right click on the clip and select **'Details'** to open the information panel.



In the Details panel, you can examine its metadata such as duration, timecode, size, date and format, etc.

TIP: Click the Finder icon beside the file path to browse to the source file location.



On the Details panel, click the Video icon for video information such as codec, frame rate, dimensions, color space and pixel format, etc.

Select the Audio, Timecode or Color Correction icons to **override Preset settings with custom ones for just this clip**. For example, you may manually exclude certain audio files or add external ones.

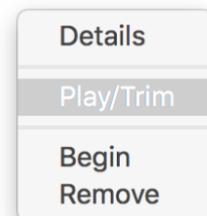
Start Timecode and frame rate can be customized for just this clip. And you can apply a loaded LUT (color look up table) to just this clip.

Play/Trim Clips

PrimeTranscoder has a built-in player function. You can play clips in their native form (before processing) as well as output files (after processing) to ensure they have the desired properties.

To open the player, right click on the file in the queue and choose **'Play/Trim'**.

Click the **'Play/Pause'** button on the lower left of the Player Window to begin playing the clip. You may also use the **'Spacebar'** for Play/Pause, or the drag the **'Jog/Shuttle'** to scrub.



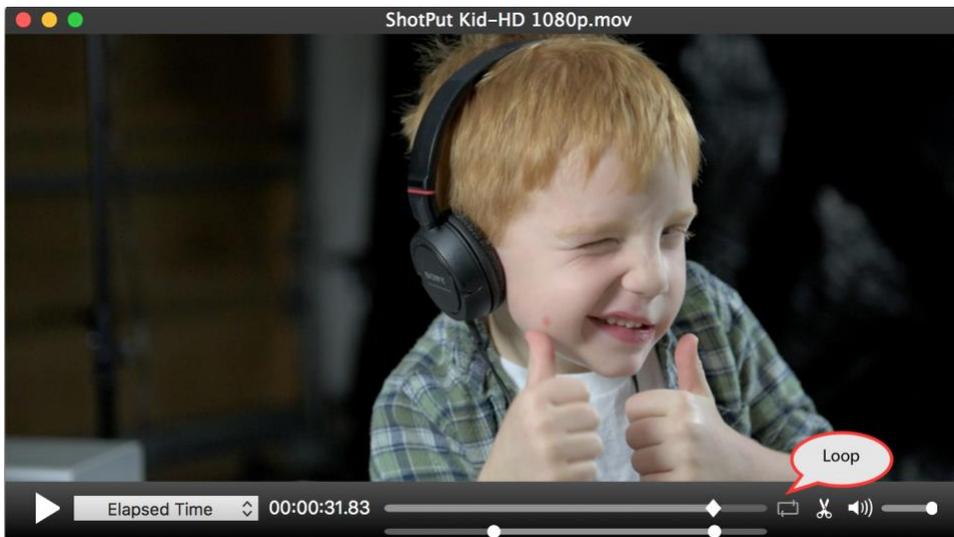
From the **VIEW** menu you can **'Enter Full Screen'** to maximize the player window.



Click the **'Trim'** (scissors) icon to open the trim selection bar. Select IN and OUT points within the clip to instruct PrimeTranscoder to only process that portion of the clip.

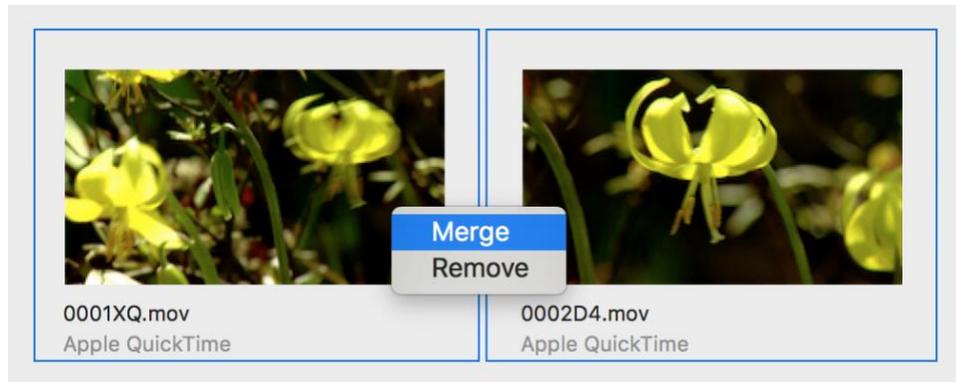
NOTE: Trim is only available on Source files, not clips already output.

Choose the Time, Frame Number or Timecode format to display. The player also offers a **'Loop'** option and adjustable volume control.



Merge (stitching)

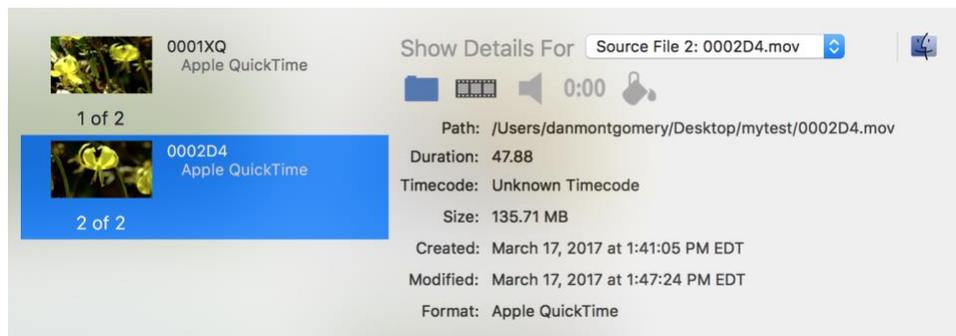
Select two or more clips in the queue and right click to **'Merge'** (stitch) them together. The files can be from any sequence of clips, volume or format.



Merged clip sequences will be indicated by a stacked video icon in the upper left corner.

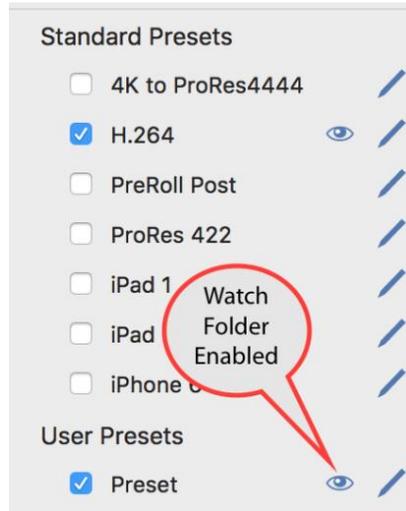


You may adjust the order of files to be merged. Right click on a merged clip and open its **'Details'**. Then drag the clips in the left column into the desired order.



Watch Folder Processing

Another way to add files to the queue is to use the automated watch folder option. Watch Folders are specifically designed for locations where new files are being dynamically added (such as offloading using **ShotPut Pro™**).



To use Watch Folders, open the preset and add one or more location to monitor and check the box beside them to enable.

Presets containing enabled Watch Folders are indicated in the preset list by an eye icon.

Begin Watching

Click on the **'Watch icon'** to **'Begin'** watching. The icon will turn **blue**.

TIP: In Preferences select **'Watch-Folder-based transcodes begin automatically'** to turn ON watching while manually starting only Drag & drop items in the queue.

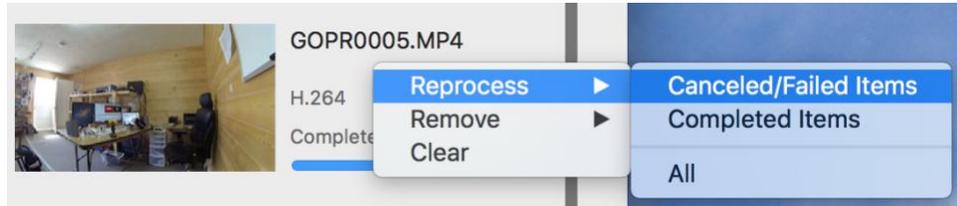
Adjust the frequency of watch folder interrogation under Preferences. Typically this should be several seconds apart to avoid processing slow downs.

IMPORTANT: Watch Folders use Logs to track the history of completed files. You must have **'Create log entries for preset'** enabled in the preset Logs & Sharing section in order to skip previously processed files when next launching the application.

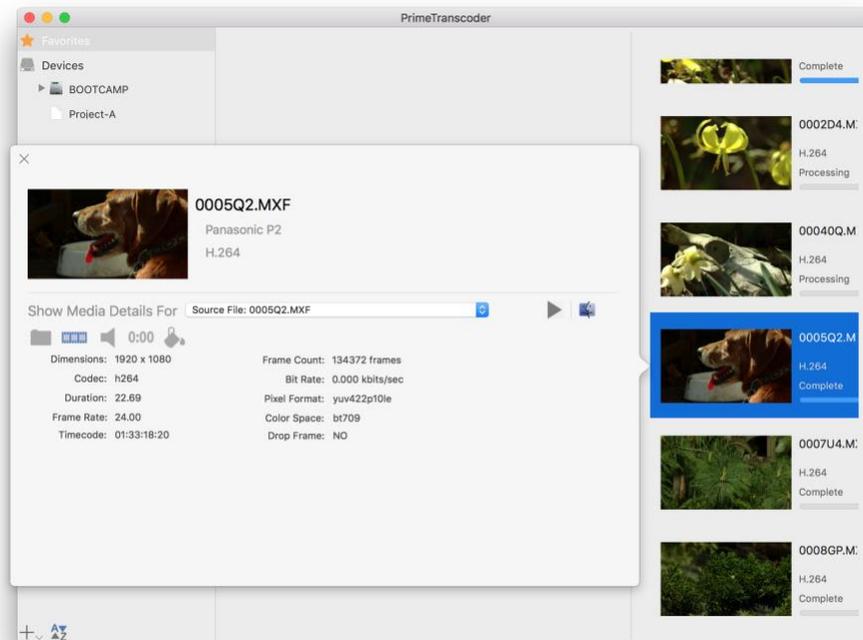
NOTE: **'Clear Logs'** in under the Logs window resets Watch folder history, so any enabled Watch folders will be processed again in their entirety.

Processed Clip Details

Processing status is indicated in the right column list. Right click on a clip for options. If the file is still in process, you can cancel it, or all items in process.



You may **'Reprocess'** or **'Remove'** Canceled or Failed Items. Once processing is complete you can open the clip's details by right clicking on it.



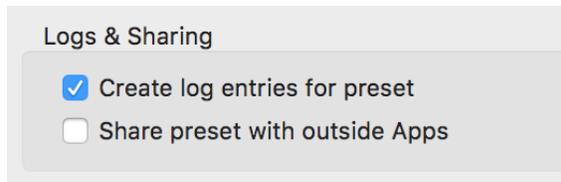
NOTE: Choose between details for the source media, or transcoded movie.

Activity Logs

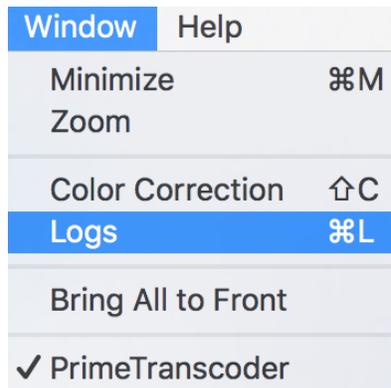
PrimeTranscoder maintains a history of transcoding activities for Presets with Logs enabled.

IMPORTANT: These logs are also used for Watch folder history (tracking what's been processed previously.)

Inside each Preset you'd like to track output activities, **turn on Logs before processing.**

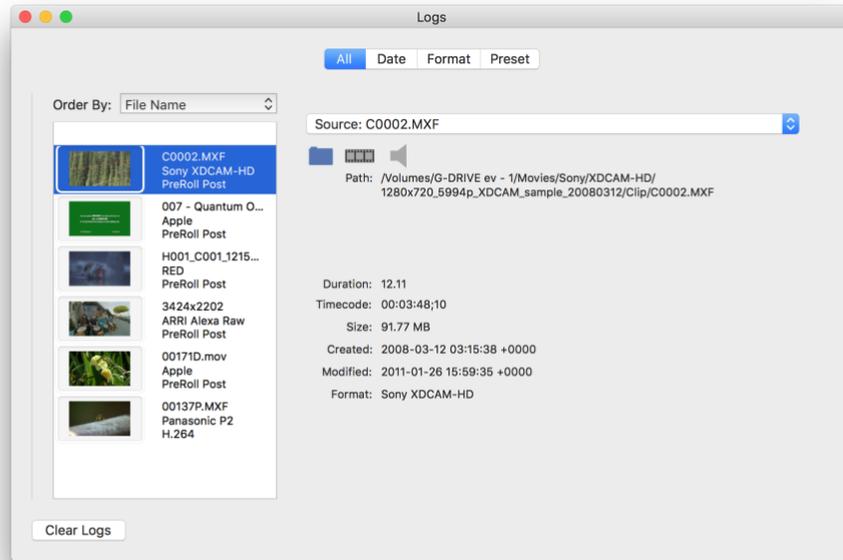


After transcoding, select '**Logs**' from the '**Windows**' menu.

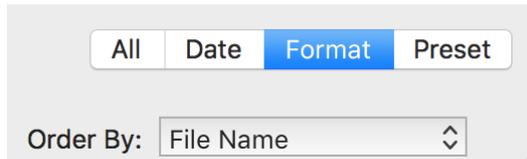


Each time PrimeTranscoder finishes processing a file it chronicles all major details of the activity.

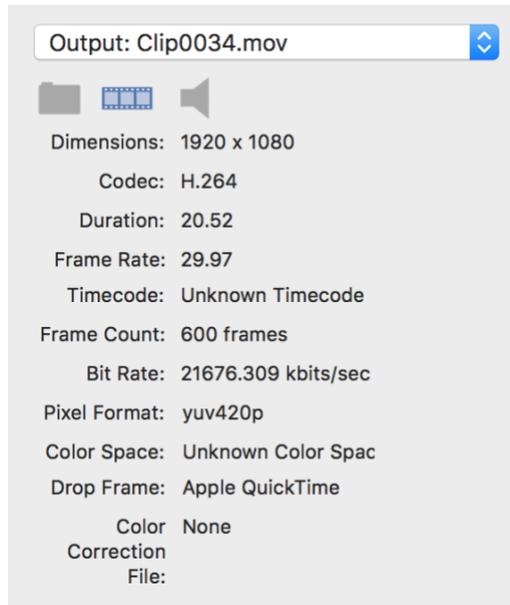
Here you can review recently completed tasks.



Filtering options help locate specific transcodes out of a potentially large list. Sort by File Name, Preset used, Status Date range or output Format.



Select a clip from the log list to expose its details. Choose **'Source'** or **'Output'** files to display. File information, Video format and Audio metadata are available for each.



TIP: Frequent use of PrimeTranscoder can result in a very large activity log.

It is recommended that the logs be regularly purged ('**Clear Logs**') to remove irrelevant entries.

CAUTION! Clearing Logs also deletes **Watch Folder history** so any enabled Watch folders will be entirely processed again!

Appendix A – Installation

This section details the initial required steps before using PrimeTranscoder. Included in this section are instructions on installing the program, system requirements and registration. Skip this section if a registered copy of PrimeTranscoder is already installed on your system.

You may be asked for the administration password for the computer. The default location is the Applications folder.

Activation

PrimeTranscoder activation requires web access to our server to register the software for use. When you purchased the application, a PrimeTranscoder seat was added to your account on our website. Upon first launch, the software will attempt to connect to our server and prompt for you to activate.

TIP: Activation information is stored on the system level independent of user preferences, so multiple profiles on the same computer may access the application as long as you install under the **ADMIN** user profile for your computer.

Just enter your account email and password for fast, easy activation, or enter the individual serial number.

If you don't have an Internet connection on the target computer perform a manual activation. You may use a QR code reader app on your smart phone to quickly go to the appropriate page on our activation site to receive the manual activation code, or use the link provided to type in the computer ID.

PrimeTranscoder is a single user license. If you're upgrading to a new computer, or need to transfer the software, be sure to **'Deactivate'** from the **'Application menu'**, just above **'Quit'**.

System Requirements

The minimum Macintosh configuration is:

- Mac OS 10.15 - 10.11
- 4 GB RAM
- 16 GB free disk space

How to Register

If you've purchased from our webstore, you're already registered in our system. If you purchased from a reseller or other method, the reseller or Imagine can transfer ownership to you. You must have an account on our website to run the software and receive customer support.

Upgrades are released from time to time and the only way you'll get these is to be registered.

We may also send you periodic electronic news. Generally we notify of new products and trade shows, commentary and stories of interest from other users just like you. Let us know what you're up to (publishing your stories is an inexpensive way to network within the production community).

Follow us on Social Media for timely and helpful information.
On Twitter: @imagineproducts

Appendix B - Trouble Shooting

Throughout the program, reminders and error checks help to anticipate trouble spots in the program while preventing inadvertent data loss. If a message appears that is unclear, check the Help topics or refer to the appropriate section of this guide for further explanation.

Technical Support

This product was designed to be easy to use and we want you to feel at home as you navigate through it. This guide should address the most often asked questions along the way.

Before asking for Technical Support, please be sure your software is up to date. The problem you're experiencing may have already been reported by another user and already addressed.

Check for Updates

From the application's menu, select **CHECK FOR UPDATES** to connect to our site and determine whether a newer version of the software exists. You may also download updates from the **ACCOUNT>VIEW LICENSES** page of the website.

TIP: It's a good idea to keep PrimeTranscoder up to date for best performance and to get support for all the latest camera types.

Frequently Asked Questions

From the **Help** menu, click **FAQs** to quickly go to the list on our website.

Contacting Imagine Products

If updating the software and FAQs haven't addressed your problem, from the **Help** menu click **Feedback** to initiate a support ticket, or send an email to support@imagineproducts.com. Please also include the **Diagnostic Log** found under the **Help** menu.

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