

Michael Albright: A Gold Mine of Moving Images

By Bija Gutoff

"We live in a content-hungry world," says BBC Motion Gallery creative director Michael Albright. "BBC customers crave footage that can tell a story or express a metaphor. But that alone isn't enough. They want the ability to look at large previews in gorgeous resolution on their Macs and integrate them right into their digital workflow." To quench that thirst for motion imagery, BBC Motion Gallery is enriching its website with stunning QuickTime clips of footage ranging from vintage airplanes to vampire bats.

"We revolutionized TV programming," says Albright. "And now we want to revolutionize the way customers use our remarkable content — through advances like QuickTime previews on our website."

BBC Motion Gallery has posted tens of thousands of clips in QuickTime 6.5, and it's continually adding more from its remaining 600,000 hours of footage. These will also soon be available in QuickTime 7 for Mac and Windows. Advanced capabilities in Mac OS X Tiger will make the footage fully searchable using the lightning-fast Spotlight feature.

"BBC Motion Gallery fully embraces the digital future," says Albright. "It's essential for our content to be as accessible as today's state-of-the-art technology allows, so nothing gets between people and their ideas."

It's a QuickTime World

Albright understands how important visual quality is to the people who use BBC images. "They need to know what a shot really looks like," he says. "The more resolution you can give them, and the bigger and better-quality the previews are, the more they have the information they need to make a decision. Minor details, even a strand of hair on a person's head, can make a big difference when you're considering a shot — and now we're able to eliminate the guesswork."

"We revolutionized TV programming. And now we want to revolutionize the way customers use our remarkable content, through advances like QuickTime previews on our website."

"QuickTime 7 and the new H.264 standard make all the difference," he continues. "Our users will get almost full-screen previews — we believe they're the biggest in the industry — and really fast downloads." Movie studios including Disney, DreamWorks and Sony Pictures and agencies such as Leo Burnett, Goodby Silverstein and TWBA/Chiat/Day rely on BBC Motion Gallery for the high-end clips that boost the impact of their film and commercial projects.

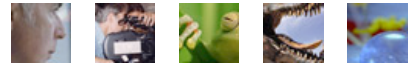
"Creative people have been wanting bigger previews for a long time," adds Albright. "Unfortunately, there wasn't enough bandwidth to offer them. But QuickTime is so efficient, we can deliver huge, pristine previews at amazingly low data rates. Even though the files are small, the results are eye-opening — and it's all about the resolution."

A Gold Mine

It's not just that the BBC's rich library of images has a breadth and depth of content that make it what Albright calls "one of the world's great living treasures." The collection also bears the signature look of the British network's top-flight cinematographers and editors. "Because the material was shot for BBC programs, it doesn't have the staged look of stock footage," says Albright. "And a lot of the subject matter is unique to the BBC — it's stuff you would never go out and commission for stock."

The total collection comprises more than 4 million shots captured by BBC cinematographers around the world. It represents the historical archive of more than 70 years of BBC programs up to today — shows that have made the British network synonymous with quality television.

Gallery



"BBC Motion Gallery fully embraces the digital future," says Michael Albright. "It's essential for our content to be as accessible as today's state-of-the-art technology allows, so nothing gets between people and their ideas."

Quick QuickTime Development

The BBC was eager to convert to QuickTime. Says Albright, "We knew that QuickTime was ideally suited to our diverse and demanding customer base. They work under incredible deadlines and need everything to move seamlessly through their digital production workflow. So when we saw what was possible with QuickTime 7 and H.264, we leaped at the chance to deploy it."

The BBC development team started by re-encoding their entire online library in just four weeks to make previews available in QuickTime 6.5. They used Mac OS X Tiger on Power Mac G5s for sampling and to generate screeners, create promos and add metadata. Their software tools included QuickTime 6.5, QuickTime 7 Pro and Final Cut Pro HD.

They had previously offered Windows Media Format files in two resolution and bit rate options, says Albright. But that hardly satisfied Mac users. "Let's remember that throughout North America the Mac is by far the platform of choice for editing and producing motion imagery," he notes. "By developing for QuickTime 6.5, we were immediately able to offer larger previews with no sacrifice in performance. Moreover, the files are progressive downloads, making it easy for users to control their playback experience and quickly download files to their local drives." (QuickTime 6.5 specs are 480 x 360 resolution, Sorenson 3 codec, 50% quality.)

With QuickTime 7, BBC Motion Gallery will offer previews that are approximately four times larger, with no performance degradation. (Linked progressive download QuickTime 7 specs are 720 x 579 [PAL] or 720 x 486 [NTSC], H.264/AVC codec, 2 Mbps quality.) Notes Albright, "H.264 will give us far superior quality at the same bit rates and suffers less from artifacting."



The BBC Motion Gallery collection comprises more than 4 million shots captured by BBC cinematographers around the world.

Resources

Final Cut Studio
Mac Pro

MacBook Pro
Final Cut Studio Workflows

Seminars

Motion for After Effects Users

Accelerate Your Video Production

Aperture

For people who love photography.



Final Cut Studio

Go beyond mere editing in a Final Cut world.



Logic Studio

Powerful tools for music production and performance.



The new Mac Pro

The fastest, most powerful Mac ever.



Mac Pro Profiles Michael Albright

Considering a Mac
Why you'll love a Mac
Compare all Macs
FAQs
Try a Mac

Find out how
Mac Basics
Photos
Movies
Web
Music
iWork
MobileMe

Macs
Mac Pro
Mac mini
MacBook
MacBook Pro
MacBook Air
iMac

Accessories
Magic Mouse
Keyboard
LED Cinema Display

Wi-Fi Base Stations
AirPort Express
AirPort Extreme
Time Capsule
Which Wi-Fi are you?

Servers
Servers Overview
Xserve
Xsan
Mac OS X Server

MobileMe
Learn more

Mac OS X
Snow Leopard
Accessibility

QuickTime
Movie Trailers
QuickTime Player
QuickTime Pro

Safari
Learn more

Applications
iLife
iWork
Aperture
Final Cut Studio
Final Cut Server
Final Cut Express
Logic Studio
Logic Express
Remote Desktop

Developer
Developer Connection
Mac Program
iPhone Program

Markets
Creative Pro
Education
Science
Business

Support
Where can I buy a Mac?
AppleCare
Online Support
Telephone Sales
Personal Shopping
Genius Bar
Workshops
One to One
ProCare
Certification

Shop the [Apple Online Store](#) (1-800-MY-APPLE), visit an [Apple Retail Store](#), or find a [reseller](#).

[Apple Info](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Hot News](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Contact Us](#) | 

Copyright © 2010 Apple Inc. All rights reserved. [Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)