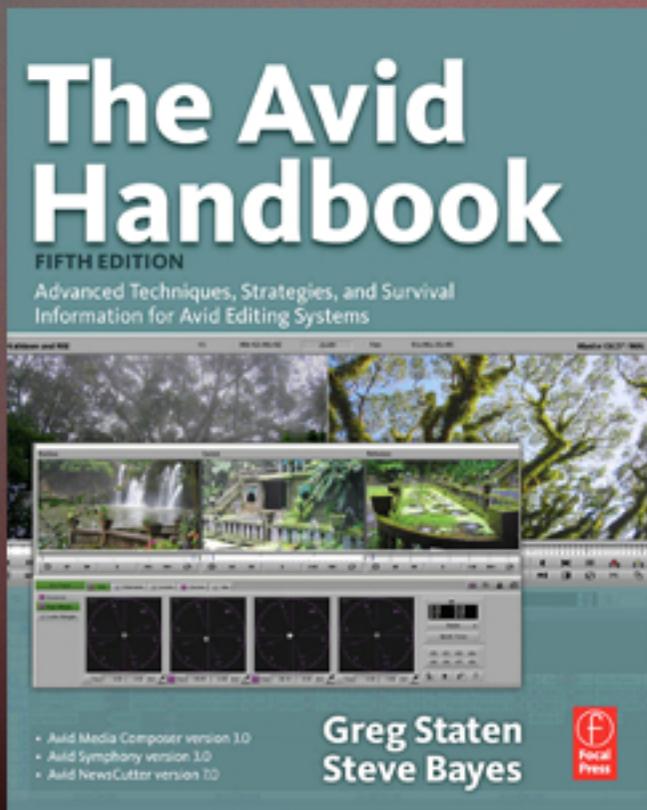


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# 2

## ZEN AND THE ART OF TRIM

*“Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.”*

—Michelangelo

A sculptor has many tools at his or her disposal. Regardless of the medium used there are always those tools used to rough out the shape that remove large sections of unneeded material and finer tools used to refine and give life to small details. I like to think of Trim as the fine sculpting tools. Though you could certainly complete a sculpture using only the large rough removal tools, most mediums require the fine tools to give the sculpture the definition it needs to be truly considered a work of art. Not only that, but using only the rough-out tools makes any fine detail work extremely difficult and inefficient. The same holds for editing. Chapter 1 described and defined the rough to medium tools for sculpting a story. Trim is your set—yes, set—of fine work tools.

I’ve named this chapter “Zen and the Art of Trim” because I firmly believe that Trim is the heart and soul of the Avid editing system and what ultimately continues to set it apart from other systems. I’ve heard many editors over the years proclaim that “nothing trims like an Avid.” They say so not just because of the trimming tools available to you, the editor, but because of the *way* Trim works in Avid. A good friend of mine after learning the “deep” trim approaches in the system exclaimed that it really felt like he was “one with his footage.”

I certainly don’t promise you’ll experience such a revelation, but hopefully by the end of this chapter you’ll have a better understanding of why so many editors feel the way they do about the system. Master Trim and you have mastered the system and changed the way you think about editing forever. Trim is creative, not just corrective. And I will promise you one thing: If you take the time to practice and integrate the techniques in this chapter

into your daily editorial work, you *will* become a faster and more efficient editor.

## Thinking Nonlinearly

Beginners bring linear thinking to the trimming process. This is potentially the biggest mistake you can make, short of deleting all your media. The first place I see this is when beginners misuse the Match Frame button. Think of this really as the “fetch” button because the Match Frame name is too close to the function that linear tape editors have been using since the beginning of computer-controlled timecode editing.

The traditional tape method is to get the edit controller to find the same frame on the source material as where you are parked on the master tape. The source tape cues up, you adjust the video levels to match what is already on the master tape, and then you lay in a little more of the shot, usually a dissolve or another effect. You can do this in Avid as well. This is logical and simple, but it completely misses the point. Every master clip that you add into the sequence is linked to the rest of the captured material. You don't need to go get it because it is already there. Think of the extra captured material as always being attached to every edit in the timeline all the time. Each shot in a sequence is a window onto the original source material. The window can be moved, enlarged, contracted, or eliminated in the sequence, but the original source material is still there. It should be used for reviewing material, not as an integral part of the trimming process. However, if used the incorrect way, it is another dog paddle.

The best way I have discovered to think about trimming is to imagine moving earlier in time or later in time to see a different part of the shot. Coincidentally, as you move earlier you may be making a shot longer or shorter. Any trim that adds or subtracts frames—any trim that is on one side or the other of the transition—changes the length of that track and must have a corresponding change on all of the other tracks in the sequence. Not all trims change the actual length of a sequence, but the ones that do—the trims on one side of the transition or the other—knock you out of sync if you don't pay attention. This means you must look to the tracks that are highlighted when you decide to add a little video. Don't make the beginner's mistake of thinking that just because you are adding a few more frames to lengthen an action, it is a video-only trim. All the soundtracks must be trimmed if you make the sequence longer or shorter in any way.

The main reason that trimming is so much better than just extracting the shot and splicing it back in is that you have the

immediate feedback of seeing the shot in context. When you use Trim to fix a shot while it is in place you get that instant sensory feedback that is so important when using a nonlinear editing system. When expanding your use of the Trim mode, stay in sync as much as possible. Now obviously, there are times when you want to go out of sync, for cheating action or artistic purposes—I'm not talking about that. I'm referring to the skill of understanding the relationship between what tracks are highlighted and what kind of a trim you are doing. Some people get so flustered the first few times they try trimming with sync sound that they abandon it altogether and invent elaborate workarounds that are easier for them to understand. Lots of energy, not much style. This is one of those skills that film editors (those who have actually touched celluloid) have over video editors. It is pretty hard to knock yourself out of sync with a tape-based project, so thinking in terms of maintaining sync is quite foreign. But film editors must learn that whenever they add something to the picture—a trim or a reaction shot—they must add a corresponding number of frames to the soundtrack.

## Staying in Sync

The easiest way out of this dilemma is to turn on the sync locks. The sync locks allow the system to resolve certain situations where you tell it to do two different things: make video longer and don't affect the soundtracks. The system adds the equivalent of blank mag (silence) to the soundtrack. This may be safer than trimming and accidentally adding the director shouting "Cut!" but it will also leave a hole that must be filled in later. Blank spaces in the soundtrack are really not allowed! You will find yourself having to return and add room tone or presence so the sound does not drop out completely.

There will be a time when you tell the system conflicting things. You tell it to make the video shorter, don't change the audio tracks, and stay in sync. This is beyond the laws of physics. In this case, the system cannot make the decision for you where to cut sound in order to stay in sync, so it will give you an error beep and do nothing.

Sync locks work best if the majority of your work is straight assembly with little complex trimming. It is very effective, however, when you are sync locking a sound-effect track to a video track. The crash and the flying brick need to stay together. Also sync locking multiple video tracks together to keep them from being trimmed separately may keep you from unrendering an effect.

Sometimes you will be cutting video to a premade soundtrack. The video and audio parts of the sequence do not give you sync

breaks when you change their relationship. Here, you must be even more conscious of maintaining sync. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you can knock yourself out of sync now and later; when you get a chance, go back and fix it. Believe me, by the time you get the chance to go back, you will have created a situation that takes much longer to fix than if you did it right in the first place.

The most important aspect of trimming is to be aware of when you are going to change the length of the sequence by trimming on one side or the other of a transition and which tracks will be affected. When you grasp these points and overcome the fear of going out of sync, you will have a much more powerful tool and feel much more comfortable with the workflow concept of refine, refine, refine.

## Sync Break Indicators

With the extra power of the nonlinear world (and film was the first nonlinear editing system!), there is the responsibility of keeping track of sync. The Avid editing systems do a pretty good job of telling you if the video and audio you captured together or auto-synced together (matching sound and vision from separate sources after digitizing) have lost their exact relationship. They are the white numbers called *sync breaks*. I think of them as a silent-white alarm that, when I see them ripple across my timeline, tells me I most probably have made a mistake. The only time I want to see sync breaks is when I have cheated action or I am dropping in room tone. Sync break indicators can be turned on and off via the Timeline Fast menu.

V2			
V1		common art ambience	272 whole table.new.01
A1			-272
A2			-272
TC1	01:24:02	00:01:26:02	00:01:26:02

## Trimming Fundamentals

Let's take a moment to look at some of the basic mechanics of Trim. I'm sure that much of this will be review for many of you, but you may also discover something that you didn't know or perhaps once knew but forgot.

## Entering Trim

There are two basic ways to enter Trim mode:

- Park the position indicator near the edit point where you wish to trim and press the Trim mode button.
- Drag a lasso around the edit point where you wish to trim. When you drag a lasso, be sure to only drag it around the edit and not around any complete shots. Doing so will ensure that you enter Trim mode and not Segment or Slip mode (depending on whether you lasso from left to right to select a segment or right to left to slip a segment).

There's a third method worth mentioning, that has a very special use. When doing very complex trims you'll often take a few moments to select and enable the appropriate tracks and edits. If you hold down the Alt/Option key and press the Trim mode button, you can reenter Trim mode with all of the tracks and edits you had previously selected for trimming reselected. If you're doing complicated trimming—which you will at some point, I guarantee you—this technique is a huge time-saver.

## Exiting Trim

Unlike entering Trim mode, there are many ways to exit, including switching to a different mode; but there are two specific ways that bear mentioning here:

- Click on the Timecode track. This is the most typical method used by the majority of editors I know. It has the benefit of not just exiting Trim mode, but also allows you to place the position indicator wherever you desire in the timeline.
- Use the Edit Review button. When you've finished a trim, you usually need to see the adjustments you've just made in context. The Edit Review button allows you to do just that with a single key. When pressed, the system exits Trim, moves backwards one edit plus two seconds, then plays. Think of this button as a predefined macro, similar to the Top and Tail functions mentioned in Chapter 1. This button is not mapped by default, but is available for mapping from the Play tab of the Command Palette.



## Adding and Removing Trim Rollers

There are a couple of different scenarios where you may need to add or remove trim rollers. In the first, you wish to add or change the rollers on a track you've already selected, while in the second, you wish to add rollers to additional tracks in the sequence.

Though there are some common techniques, let's treat each one separately.

### *Adding and Removing from a Selected Track*

Certainly the most common method used on a single track is to switch between A-side, B-side, and both sides trimming. This is easily accomplished using one of three different methods:



- Click on the A-side or B-side monitor to switch to that side or click between the two monitors to select both sides.
- Use the Trim Side buttons to switch sides. These keys are mapped to the P (trim A-side), [ (trim both sides), and ] (trim B-side) buttons, respectively.
- Use the Cycle Trim Sides button to switch between the trim sides. This button has the advantage of performing the function of all three of the Trim Side buttons but takes up only one key on your keyboard. Each key press toggles, in a loop, between A-side only, both sides, B-side only, both sides, and so on. This button isn't mapped by default, but can be mapped from the Trim tab of the Command Palette.

 The Cycle Trim Sides button has the added capability of switching the green Audio monitor bar from one side to the other. If you have both sides selected for trim and want to switch the position of the green Audio monitor trim bar from one side to the other, simply press Cycle Trim Sides twice.

Another typical scenario to add trim rollers is to add similarly positioned rollers on additional tracks. This is most easily accomplished by simply enabling the desired tracks; the system will enable the nearest trim rollers it finds to the currently selected edit. The trim rollers on the newly enabled tracks will have the same side selected as the current track(s). You can also remove rollers from tracks by simply disabling the desired track.

Finally, you may want to simply add or remove rollers at specific edits on specific tracks. In these instances, just hold down the Shift key on the keyboard and click to add the rollers. The Shift key adds a roller to either the A- or B-side. If you want to add two rollers simply Shift+click on both sides of the edit or press the Cycle Trim button once. Similarly, Shift+click on an active roller to remove it.

### *Adding Rollers Where No Edits Exist*

Let's take a look at the following editorial scenario. The sequence contains multiple video and audio tracks but you only want to trim on a subset of those tracks. Perhaps the timeline looks similar to the following illustration. You need to shorten V1, A1, and A2, but maintain sync across all tracks.

Though you could certainly use sync locks to achieve the fix, there is another approach that is extremely useful. If you hold down the Alt/Option key while you press the Add Edit button, edit points will only be added to those tracks that do not contain clips. This gives you an edit point to trim on where none previously existed. And, if you are in Trim mode when you issue this

V2				common art
V1	an interview Dale	Joan interview Dale		
A1	an interview Dale	Joan interview Dale		common art amb
A2	an interview Dale	Joan interview Dale		common art amb
A3				
A4				
A5				
A6				
TC1	00:01:10:02	00:01:12:02	00:01:14:02	00:01:16:02

command, these new edits will automatically be selected for trim, as shown in the following illustration.

V2				common art
V1	an interview Dale	Joan interview Dale		
A1	an interview Dale	Joan interview Dale		common art ambi
A2	an interview Dale	Joan interview Dale		common art ambi
A3				
A4				
A5				
A6				
TC1	00:01:10:02	00:01:12:02	00:01:14:02	00:01:16:02

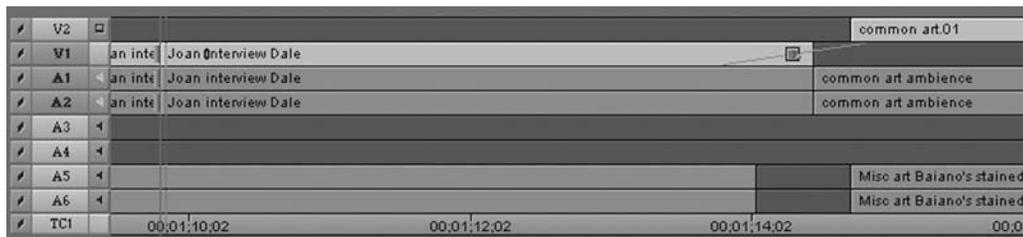
You can now trim in confidence that sync will be maintained across all tracks. At the end of your trim you can choose to either leave or remove these edit points. Personally, I like to remove them as soon as I've finished using them, but they can certainly be left in the timeline. Technically they won't cause a problem in your sequence but you can always choose "Clip > Remove Match Frame Edits" to remove them en masse in your timeline.

If you'd prefer to remove them at the end of the trim, simply press the Backspace key on the keyboard *before* you exit Trim mode. The Backspace key issued from Trim mode instructs the system to remove all selected match frame edits, selected edits being those that are currently being trimmed. You can think of this as a quick shortcut for the Remove Match Frame Edits command.

This function isn't a replacement for the sync locks but merely another method you can take to solve a complex sync problem. One limitation with this technique, though, is when you have a nonempty track without an edit at the same location, as shown in the following illustration.

V2				common art.01
V1	an interview [	Joan interview Dale		
A1	an interview [	Joan interview Dale		common art ambience
A2	an interview [	Joan interview Dale		common art ambience
A3				
A4				
A5				Misc art Baiano's s
A6				Misc art Baiano's s
TC1	00:01:10:02	00:01:12:02	00:01:14:02	00:01:16:02

In this instance, you could still use the Alt/Option+Add Edit command, but you would then need to manually select a trim point on A5 and A6 before trimming, otherwise you would risk losing sync on those two tracks. This example is a great one for the benefits of sync locks. If you were to turn sync locks on for all tracks and then trim the tail of V1, A1, and A2, the gap between the two clips on A5 and A6 would automatically be tightened up for you and the timing between the cuts on A1/A2 and A5/A6 would be maintained, as shown in the following illustration.



In summary, both Alt/Option+Add Edit and sync locks are key techniques to maintaining sync across multiple tracks in the sequence. Each has its distinct advantages and, arguably, disadvantages. (Sync locks really only show their power when you have a complex audio bed and/or lots of video effect composites. In simple timelines they can actually prevent you from making a reductive trim. This is probably where they have gained an undeserved negative impression with many editors. If you discarded them as a tool long ago perhaps it is time to revisit them!)

## Methods of Trimming

Now that we've reviewed—and expanded upon—some of the fundamentals of Trim mode, let's look at all the different ways we can actually perform a trim. As with the previous section some of this will be familiar and hopefully some of it will be new. Every editor has their favorite method of trimming. Perhaps you'll discover a new favorite in this section!

### Drag Trim

This is the most fundamental method of trimming. After selecting the appropriate trim tracks, edits, and sides, simply grab a roller and drag it to its new position. The video monitors in the Composer window will update as you drag, showing you the result of your trims. Be careful, though, to always drag *from* an existing roller, including the correct side! If you try to drag from

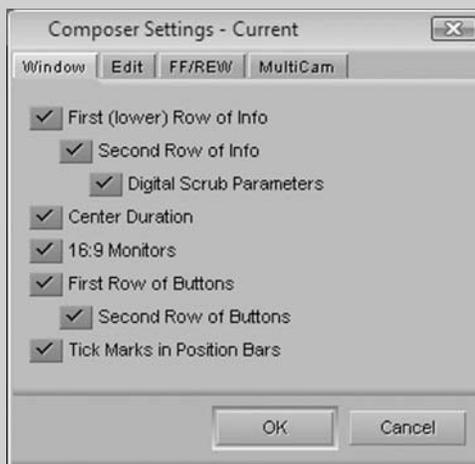
an edit or side that does not contain a trim roller you'll remove all existing trim rollers and create a new one. Usually it only takes a few times of doing this to remember the rule. If you do a lot of drag trimming and don't want to be endlessly frustrated be sure to learn it and live by it.

Remember that the total number of frames you have trimmed on both the A-side and the B-side is indicated via the Trim numbers in the center of the Composer window, just above the command buttons.



One disadvantage to drag trimming is that you only see the picture change. If you want to hear the audio change you must hold down the Shift key (or use Caps Lock) to activate Digital Audio Scrub. Remember that this technique will play the frame of audio you are trimming as you drag the rollers. If you are trying to drag right up to the beginning of a sound bite you can use Digital Audio Scrub to hear the beginning of the bite—and perhaps even the breath before it. In addition, you can enable the audio waveforms by selecting “Timeline Fast menu > Audio Data > Sample Plot.” As this is a relatively awkward menu command to get to, I strongly recommend mapping it to a key. If you don't already know how to do this, we'll discuss it in Chapter 3.

## Power User: Defining Which Frame's Audio Is “Scrubbed”



When you move the position indicator by one frame, there are two possible frames you might want to hear the audio from: the frame you park on or the frame that precedes it.

To see and modify the frame heard, you must display the Digital Audio Scrub parameters in the Composer window.

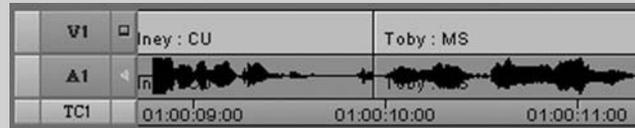
Once enabled, you will see either a 0/1 or a 1/0 in the outside corner above the Source and Record monitors.



- 0/1: You hear the frame you are parked on.
- 1/0: You hear the frame to the left of the frame you are parked on.

You will almost always use Digital Audio Scrub in the default (0/1) configuration, especially when you're scrubbing and marking. But when you are trimming on the tail of a shot, it may be preferable to hear the preceding frame instead. This is especially true if you are trying to remove a blip, breath, or similar sound at the end of a shot.

Let's take a look at the following scenario. The timeline below shows an undesired sound at the end of the clip.



When you select the A-side of the edit and trim backwards you want to hear that the undesired sound is gone *when* it is really gone. If Digital Audio Scrub is set to "0/1" you will hear the sound from the frame you just trimmed away (and is therefore no longer in your sequence), but if it is instead set to "1/0" you will hear the frame that remains at the end of your edit. Give it a try and you'll see what I mean. I know editors who do tight audio editing all day who swear by this option and are switching it back and forth as they move through the editorial stages.

*Note:* If you want to use this in Trim there is a critical fact you must be aware of. The Digital Audio Scrub parameters above the Source *also* set the scrub configuration for the A-side in Trim. Likewise, the Record monitor *also* sets the scrub configuration for the B-side in trim.

### *Snapping to an Edit or Mark*

When using drag trim you may often want to snap your trim position to another edit in the timeline or a mark. Both of these can be easily accomplished by holding down the Ctrl/Command key while dragging. When the command is held down the trim rollers will snap to all edit points on all tracks in the timeline. It will also snap to In and Out marks, making it easy to premark a position for trimming prior to dragging.

For example, if you were splitting an edit, you could play through that section of the timeline and mark an In or Out at the point where you wanted to split. Then simply enter trim on the video track, hold down the Ctrl/Command key, and drag to the mark you placed. Release the mouse and you will be trimmed exactly as you desired. (Be sure to hold down the Ctrl/Command key through the entire mouse movement, including the release, or the system will ignore the snap to command.) As we'll see later, there are arguably more efficient ways of doing this type of split edit, but this technique works very well if you are most comfortable with drag trims.

## Keyboard Trim

Dragging is fine, but it tends to be a bit inaccurate, especially if you are trying to trim in or out a *beat* or trim a specific duration of time. For these instances, you might want to use the keyboard to trim instead. Two different types of trims are available: offset trims and directional trims.

### *Offset Keyboard Trims*

These types of trims use the numeric keypad on your computer. Naturally, these types of trims are easy to do if you have a full keyboard but they are a bit harder to do on a laptop or other reduced keyboard, at least with one hand. To perform an offset trim you type the number of frames you wish to trim, indicate the direction you wish to trim using a + or – symbol (a “+” indicates a forwards trim while a “–” indicates a backwards trim), then press Enter. You can issue these in any order, as the commands “+15” and “15+” will both accomplish the same thing: a 15-frame forward trim. You can even change your mind and switch from forward to backward or vice versa by typing the other modifier before you press Enter.

Be sure to remember the rule from Chapter 1 regarding numeric keyboard entry: one or two digits equal frames while three digits equals seconds and frames. If you want to trim backwards by, for example, 120 frames, you need to type “–120f” then press Enter to tell the system to count by frames, not by timecode (seconds and frames). Unlike the “+” and “–” modifiers, the “f” modifier must *always* follow the numbers.

### *Directional Keyboard Trims*

These trims use the trim keys on the numeric keyboard. These keys will trim the selected edits one or ten frames backwards or forwards. You can also use Digital Audio Scrub in conjunction with the trim keys, just as you can with drag trimming, or turn on the audio waveforms. If you are using the single-frame trim keys this method can be very useful in trimming up to the beginning or end of a sound or breath.

Both the offset and directional techniques are great if you know—or feel—the amount of frames you need to trim, for it is far quicker to press the M key once to trim backwards by ten frames (or type “–10” from the numeric keypad) than it is to drag exactly ten frames. These techniques are great for opening up or tightening by “beats.” Of the two options I often find myself using the numeric keyboard more than the trim keys, but that is possibly because I use the trim keys for on-the-fly trimming, as I’ll describe in the next section.



## Trimming with J-K-L Scrub

This is my second-favorite method of trimming on Avid. Just as J-K-L is a great way to find points in your source material, using it in Trim is a fantastic way of fine-tuning an edit. Indeed, many “old-school” editors like to think of J-K-L Scrub as “rocking reels” for the analog audio sound is analogous to the sound and precision one got by manually scrubbing on an open-reel audio tape deck.

J-K-L functions in Trim identically to the way it functions in Source/Record, with the exception that you are actively trimming material while playing. To review, Table 2.1 lists how to access the various play modes. (*Note: If you have remapped these commands, press those keys instead.*)

**Table 2.1** J-K-L Trim Functionality

Operation	Key Usage
Trim forward at sound speed	Press L key
Trim backward at sound speed	Press J key
Pause playback	Press K key
Trim forward at faster than sound speed	Press L key twice for 2×, three times for 3×, four times for 5×, five times for 8×*
Trim backward at faster than sound speed	Press J key twice for 2×, three times for 3×, four times for 5×, five times for 8×*
Trim forward at quarter-speed	Hold K key, then press L key
Trim backward at quarter-speed	Hold K key, then press J key
Trim forward one frame	Hold K key, then tap and release the L key
Trim backward one frame	Hold K key, then tap and release J key

\*The sound only plays at speeds up to 3×. Once you hit 5×, the sound, thankfully, cuts out.

Just as is the case with J-K-L play, the real power in J-K-L trim comes from the fact you can dynamically switch between all of the above trim. When using this technique it isn’t unusual for an editor to “overtrim” slightly more than required then use J+K or K+L to roll back and forth until he or she has nailed the desired edit timing.

### *Trimming a Split: The Watch Point*

If you wish to trim an already split edit, you can use J-K-L to trim either at the video edit or at the audio edit. Your decision will affect whether you are more interested in the picture or the sound transition. When you’ve selected a split for trimming, the

blue position indicator will be positioned on the edit that will be used as the center point for your J-K-L trim. By default the position indicator is aligned with the video edit. I typically find that when I'm trimming a split I need to fix an audio problem, so I prefer to center my J-K-L trim at the audio edit.

Doing so is quite easy. Simply click on the trim roller you wish to center on and the position indicator will jump to that position. Unfortunately, there is no keyboard-based method of doing this—you must click with the mouse to move the position indicator. Moving the position indicator to the audio edit in a split also changes the center point around which trim loop play is performed.



## Trimming On-the-Fly

In my opinion, the best way to trim on an Avid editing system is to trim on-the-fly. Indeed, this is the very trimming technique that the editor I mentioned previously was referring to when he said that trimming made him feel one with the footage. When I trim I often start with J-K-L to get close then switch to on-the-fly to really nail the edit.

Trimming on-the-fly is a technique used during trim loop play. During the trim loop you can use the Mark In, Mark Out, or the keyboard Trim keys to trim the selected edit or edits. The Mark and Trim buttons operate differently while trimming on-the-fly, so we'll cover them separately.

### *Mark In and Mark Out*

While the trim loop is playing, you can press Mark In or Mark Out to immediately update the edit to the point you marked. For example, if you are trimming the A-side of an edit and wish to cut out on that side immediately after a specific word in the dialog, simply press either Mark button at the desired time. The trim will be immediately applied and the play loop will begin again, looping through the newly trimmed edit. You can press either Mark button again to further refine the edit then see your changes in the next loop. And you can even open the edit up by pressing the mark button either past the edit (in the case of an A-side trim) or prior to the edit (in the case of a B-side trim).

As you can imagine, the interactivity is what makes this technique so fantastic and powerful. Instead of dragging, playing, stopping, dragging again, playing, stopping, and so on, you simply play, mark, immediately review your change, and continue to revise while playing as required. If you do the majority of your trimming by either dragging or entering numbers on the keyboard, then give this technique a try. You may well find your new favorite method of trimming!

If you are trimming on a single edit point the Mark In and Mark Out buttons have the exact same function. But if you are trimming a slip or a slide, the two buttons operate differently:

- Use the Mark In button to change the edit timing of the first, or left, edit.
- Use the Mark Out button to change the edit timing of the second, or right, edit.

### *Keyboard Trim Keys*

As opposed to the Mark buttons, when you press the Trim keys on the keyboard the key presses are *not* immediately applied, but are instead accumulated and applied at the end of the trim loop. This enables you to press, for example, the comma three times to trim backwards three frames without interrupting the loop playback. When the loop completes, Avid will apply the three-frame trim and begin the loop again.

In my opinion, this technique is the finest “tool” in the Trim toolbox for it lets you trim away frame by frame and instantly see the result. When you’re trying to fine-tune a dialog edit I believe there is no better tool to use. J-K-L would be a close second, but, as I mentioned earlier, I often begin the fine-tune process with J-K-L then switch to keyboard trim on-the-fly to really nail the edit.

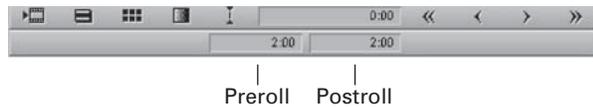


Only the keyboard trim keys will work with this technique. If you try to use the onscreen trim buttons, playback will immediately stop.

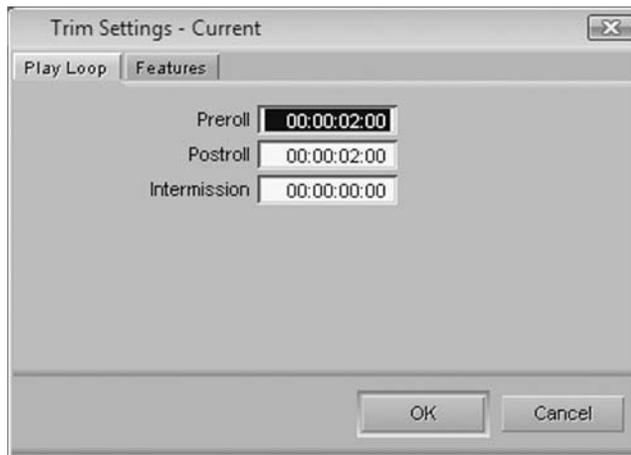
### *Changing the Trim Loop Duration*

By default, the Avid system uses a four-second trim loop and plays from two seconds before the edit being trimmed, known as *preroll*, to two seconds after the edit, known as *postroll*. (In the case of a slip or slide, the loop plays two seconds before the first edit, through the slip or slide, then two seconds past the second edit.) This can be modified two different ways.

The first way is to use the preroll and postroll fields in the left side of the command region of the Composer window. These fields are displayed if you have both rows of buttons displayed. This is easily accomplished using the Composer setting. (We’ll discuss configuring the Composer window in Chapter 3.) Simply enter the duration desired for the preroll and postroll and you’re set.



Another method—and one that can be accessed completely via the keyboard—is available via the Trim settings. The first tab in this setting provides not only the preroll and postroll settings, but also an intermission setting that can be used, if desired, to pause the loop. One possible use for the intermission is to give the client a chance to digest the loop before beginning it again. Personally, I don't use this setting, but I do know editors who do.



So how do you access and modify the Trim setting completely from the keyboard? Simple! Just press Ctrl/Command+4 to select the Composer window, then press Ctrl/Command+= to open the Composer window settings. Once the dialog is open you can use the Tab key to move through the three fields to enter the desired duration (in seconds and frames). Finally, just hit the Enter key to close the settings dialog.

As this is a user setting, your preferred trim loop preroll and postroll settings will be stored with your user setting.

### *Switching Trim Types On-the-Fly*

While in trim loop play you can use the Trim sides or Cycle Trim keys on the keyboard to toggle the trim between an A-side, B-side, or both sides trim. After pressing the key, the trim will

update and the loop will immediately restart. You can also use the keyboard track buttons to enable or disable tracks, but using these buttons will stop trim loop play.

## Types of Trim

Now let's take a look at the various types of trim. We'll start with a quick review of single- and dual-roller trim then move onto the more advanced types of trim.

### Dual-Roller Trim

Dual-roller, or center, trim is usually the first type of trim an editor discovers because it has the lowest risk of knocking a sequence out of sync. But it is also the least-useful type of trim as it always does two in-kind edits. I've watched beginning editors roll back and forth over an edit with dual-roller trim as if they were trying to decide which "wrong" sound edit was the least offensive. That is because the chance of revealing undesired material while removing other desired material is so easy to do when you're trimming both sides simultaneously. If you're stuck in dual-roller land, it is time to step out and use single roller.

This isn't to say that dual roller trim is useless. Far from it! If you are trying to split or unsplit an edit, dual roller is the perfect trimming tool to use.

### Single-Roller Trim

This is the most fundamental type of trim in the Avid system. It is also the type of trim that often scares beginning editors away from trim. Unlike other editing systems, the Avid system is "sync unlocked" by default. If you want to perform a single-sided trim on just the video or just the audio of a sync sound clip, the system will let you—even though doing so will knock you out of sync. Remember that, at the very minimum, you can press Undo to get out of any situation.

### Slip

Beyond the basic situations, most of the difficult sync problems are fixed by using the Slip mode. First you have to ignore the "fact" that trimming a shot must make the sequence longer. Trim in the center of the transition, basically not affecting the sync, then use the Slip function. Many people have a difficult time grasping slip trim because it is so tied to the nonlinear, random access concept.

You can enter the Slip mode by multiple methods. With Media Composer and Symphony you can double-click on a clip once you are already in the Trim mode (as long as the timeline view allows you to see a black arrow cursor). In all models you can also get to slip trim by lassoing the entire clip from right to left. You may need to hold down the Alt/Option key to select the exact clip in a complex timeline. I generally get there by double-clicking in Trim mode because I use it as a second step in a difficult trim situation.

Think of slipping as a shot on a treadmill. The shot slips forward or backward, showing an earlier or later part, but the place in the timeline never changes. A slip will change the content of a shot by revealing new material, but leaves the duration of the shot and location in the timeline the same. Because you usually have more video linked to any shot used in the sequence, you can slip that entire shot back and forth.

So if you trim the beginning of the shot ten frames as part of a center trim, you can slip the shot back into position so that it still starts with the same frame. If the first ten frames of shot B are important, then slip them back into place. Your center trim moves the frames viewed in the A and B shots of a transition to be ten frames later. Although shot A gets longer and shot B gets shorter, the length of the sequence is not affected and the sync is not disturbed. Shot B has gotten shorter, but after you slip, it still has the same starting frames. I have worked with producers who have edited their programs on Avid systems for years who had never seen slip trim! Although it seems complex at first, it is truly a powerful tool when used in the right place.

Another very powerful way to use Slip mode is to use it to search through B-roll footage. Let's say that a piece of B-roll you've edited into your sequence just isn't working for you. You know you want to use B-roll at that point in the timeline, but the shot just isn't working. Before you go digging through your bins looking for another shot to use, select the shot and enter Slip on that shot. Then press the L key (or J key) multiple times and start whipping through the B-roll clip. You may find another section of the same B-roll clip that works better than what you cut in. And the beauty of searching through your clip via Slip mode is that once you've found the footage you're happy with you're basically done. A little fine-tuning to get the right first frame is all that is required.

## Slide

The corollary to Slip mode is Slide mode. You can enter Slide mode by Ctrl/Option dragging from right to left, or Ctrl/Option double-clicking in Trim mode.

Slide mode moves the shot neatly through the sequence by trimming the shots on both sides of the selection. It affects the location of the shot in the timeline, but not the content or the duration. It is a good alternative to dragging a shot with the segment mode arrows if you are making a smaller change, but not nearly as useful as Slip mode.

## Trimming in Two Directions

Trimming in two directions, an asymmetrical trim, is a subtle and very powerful technique. I typically use it when joining two scenes together as it allows you to easily tighten up the transition between the two scenes while simultaneously carrying over audio from the first scene into the second. It also is useful when you must trim a video clip longer, but don't want to add extra material to a sound effect or music that would keep you in sync but ruin an edit. To help you grasp this technique, let's look at an editing scenario.

You are joining two scenes, B and C, together. To marry them so they appear to be part of a continuous story you want to overlap the audio from scene B with the video and audio from scene C. You don't want, however, to extend the audio from scene B as the director yells "Cut!" almost immediately after the last frame you used. To prepare for the audio overlap, you move scene B's audio to a separate track, as shown in the following illustration.

V1	B/1-B	B/1-A	C/3-X
A1			C/3-X
A2	B/1-B		
TC1	2:00	01:00:54.00	01:00:56.00 01:00:58.00

Now let's analyze what we want to accomplish via Trim. We want to shorten the tail of shot B/1-A's video but not affect the video (or audio) of shot C/3-X. This suggests a single-roller A-sided trim on the tail of B/1-A. But we don't want to remove any frames from the audio of B/1-A. We have to perform some sort of reductive trim, though, on A2 or we'll break sync downstream.

An asymmetrical trim means that we can trim on the head of one edit and the tail of another. The two trims will both either trim out or trim in footage, but roll in separate directions to accomplish this. Since we don't want to affect shot B/1-A's audio, we can select a B-side trim on the filler just past the audio clip.

Finally, we need to consider A1. We know we don't want to trim away any of C/3-X's audio but we need to perform a reductive

trim on this clip as well or we'll lose sync. If we had sync locks on, this trim would be handled for us automatically. But if we want to do it manually all we need to do is select an A-side trim on the filler preceding shot C/3-X's audio on A1. These trim rollers are shown in the following illustration.

V1	B/1-B	B/1-A	C/3-X
A1			C/3-X
A2	B/1-B		
TC1	2:00	01:00:54:00	01:00:56:00 01:00:58:00

Now that the trim rollers are properly configured we're ready to trim, right? Well, if we are going to use drag to trim, the answer is "yes." But if we want to use any other trimming technique the answer is "not necessarily." Why? Simply because we will have trim rollers moving in two different directions. Take, for example, the concept of a J-K-L trim. If we were to trim backward using J+K on V1 and A1 the shot would be shortened. But if we were to trim backward using J+K on A2 the filler would be lengthened. It is critical that we tell the Avid system which roller we want to "control" so the trim operates as we expect it to. To tell Avid which roller you wish to control simply click on the desired edit. Clicking on either V1 or A1 means that a J+K trim will be a reductive trim. Clicking on A2 means that a J+K trim will extend the edit.

Regardless of the roller you select, when you actually perform the trim you'll discover that the system will move all rollers in the correct direction so that the overlap is created and everything stays in sync.

V1	B/1-B	B/1-A	C/3-X
A1			C/3-X
A2	B/1-B		
TC1	2:00	01:00:54:00	01:00:56:00 01:00:58:00

## Trim Two Tails (or Two Heads)

Version 3.0 introduces a powerful new method of trimming: trim two tails or two heads. To help you grasp this technique, let's look at an editing scenario.

You are well into the edit and need to shorten clip B/2-X in the sequence illustrated below. Unfortunately, the duration of the



scene is already locked. What are your options? Well, you could use a dual-roller trim at the edit point between B/2-X and B/1-A, but that would change the head frame edit on B/1-A, which is undesirable. Alternatively, you could slide B/1-A, but that would change the head frame edit on BA/3-X, which is also undesirable.

V1		B/2-X	B/1-A	BA/3-X	B/1-B
A1		B/2-X	B/1-A	BA/3-X	B/1-B
TC1		01:00:15:00			01:00:20:00

Since neither single trim approach really works for you, you'll likely do an A-side trim on the tail of B/2-X, write the number of frames trimmed on a piece of paper, then find the tail of another shot in the scene that you could extend. It works, but hopefully you won't get distracted by a panicked producer while you're searching for that other clip.

In Media Composer 3.0 we've provided a new trimming technique that not only solves this problem, but many other similar problems. Indeed, I may never do another slide trim again. You can now select two A-sides (tails) or two B-sides (heads) anywhere in the timeline and perform an asynchronous trim on those two edits! In this scenario let's select the tail of B/2-X and BA/3-X, as seen in the timeline below.

V1		B/2-X	B/1-A	BA/3-X	B/1-B
A1		B/2-X	B/1-A	BA/3-X	B/1-B
TC1		01:00:15:00			01:00:20:00

Note the trim rollers. To make the above selection I lassoed the edit between B/2-X and B/1-A, switched to an A-side trim, and Shift + clicked on the other two rollers. Once selected, you can use any trim technique you desire (drag, J-K-L, on-the-fly, etc.). After trimming the tail of B/2-X, the timeline looks like the following.

V1		B/2-X	B/1-A	BA/3-X	B/1-B
A1		B/2-X	B/1-A	BA/3-X	B/1-B
TC1		01:00:15:00			01:00:20:00

Notice that the position of shot B/1-B (and everything afterward) has not changed. You made your adjustment in one

interactive trim without changing the duration of the scene. As you can see, this is a very powerful trim technique and one that will likely change the way you approach some complex trimming situations, especially late in the game, editorially.

## Trimming in Filler

There will be times when you'll encounter a trimming situation when you want to remove material from only one side of an edit but you want to maintain the duration of the section of the sequence. For example, you may have a synced clip with some undesired audio—such as an audio pop or an off camera thump—at the head or tail of the edit. You're happy with the duration of the cut, but need to get rid of the audio. If there's no obvious sync in the clip, then you can often solve this problem by slipping just the audio—but sometimes slipping is just not possible.

In these instances you can hold the Alt key down (Windows) or the Ctrl key down (Macintosh) while performing a single-sided trim. Instead of simply reducing the duration of the selected clip, frames of filler are edited into the sequence for every frame of footage removed from the clip. You can use any trimming technique desired with this technique, but be sure to hold the modifier down until you complete the trim—especially when using J-K-L trim.

If you use this technique with audio you may find yourself with a location in the sequence where there's no audio playing. This absence of sound will be very obvious to the listener and you should replace the filler with recorded silence from the environment of the shoot (often referred to as “room tone”) so that any atmospheric noise present when the sound was recorded carries over to this region of your soundtrack.



Once you've begun this trim you cannot reverse direction while maintaining a single-sided trim selection. Doing so will knock you out of sync. You will need to switch to dual-roller trim to adjust the edit.

## Multicamera Take Names

In the previous examples the clips used a common naming convention for multicamera live sitcoms or dramas. The clip names break down as: Scene/Take-Camera. Scenes are numbered alphanumerically starting with A. If there is a camera reset and a scene continuation, the scene number is usually given a second digit (e.g., scene B and scene BA). In a four-camera stage shoot the cameras are typically labeled A, B, C, and X (for eXtra). Depending on the director the cameras can be positioned audience left to right in A, B, C, X or X, A, B, C order.

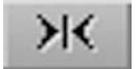
## Trimming Outside of Trim

Let's conclude our discussion of trim by looking at two techniques you can use to trim outside of Trim mode. Some folks like to refer to these two methods as "trim unplugged," which is certainly an apt name.

### Extend

As I mentioned earlier, the most typical use of dual-roller, or center, trim is to perform a split edit. As split editing is a very common technique, Avid includes the ability to do this outside of Trim using a function called Extend. Extend uses either a Mark In or Mark Out to indicate the direction for the Extend. The key to remember is that the edit you wish to extend must be contained *within* the mark. Therefore, if you wish to extend an edit backwards, mark an In point prior to the edit, and if you wish to extend it forwards, mark an Out point after the edit. Then simply turn on the tracks you want to extend, and press the Extend button. It will not knock you out of sync because it is a center trim and it trims both sides of the transition simultaneously. I find it most useful for mechanical trims that go to a direct and easy-to-mark point. It is best used, for instance, to extend a B-roll shot to the end of a sound bite. If any finessing is needed, I go to the Trim mode.

The Extend button is not mapped by default, but is available via the Trim tab of the Command Palette.



### Slip in Source/Record

As slipping is also a commonly used function, especially to align disparate video and audio in sync, this function is also available outside of Trim. If you wish to slip a shot outside of Trim, simply park on the shot you wish to slip, turn on the tracks you wish to slip (and turn off those you don't), and use the keyboard Slip keys to slip the shot either backwards or forwards.

It is important to note that the trim keys in this type of slip function opposite to the way they do in Trim mode. Table 2.2 lists their functionality in Source/Record slip.

**Table 2.2** Trim Key Slip Functionality

Key	Function
Trim left one frame	Slip forward in time one frame
Trim left ten frames	Slip forward in time ten frames
Trim right one frame	Slip backward in time one frame
Trim right ten frames	Slip backward in time ten frames

Notice that I use the term “in time” to describe the direction of the slip. If you were to park on a locator and slip the track containing the locator you would see the locator move left when you use the Trim Left keys and move right when you use the Trim Right keys. But in order for that locator to move left, the shot must slip *forward* in time. Think about it. For a locator to move to the left, the shot must start later in the original source. Starting later in the source means that you are trimming forward in time. I’ll admit that it can sound confusing, but the best way to understand it is to try it yourself.

A typical way this is used is to park on an audio sound cue then slip the video until it aligns with the cue. I use this technique quite often when adjusting the timing of inserts. If the insert must be synchronized to a sound on the main audio track, such as, for example, the clinking of two glasses, I can drop the insert in over the sound, park on the sound, then slip left and right until the action in the insert is synchronized.

I’ve also used this to realign individual shots that drop out of sync and even to force audio out of sync to remove an undesired sound. Remember that you can always break sync if the sync break won’t be noticeable to the viewer. If there isn’t lip flap or other obvious examples of sync you can slip the audio and video out of sync to remove an undesirable sound, such as an off-camera tap or thunk.

## Conclusion

As you can see, Trim is an extremely powerful set of tools that you can use to refine and fine-tune your edit. If you aren’t using Trim yet, by all means jump in head first! And if you’ve only just begun to trim, use this chapter as the impetus to dive into the deep end of the trimming pool.

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