

Chapter 8 - Compressing movies

Compress

After settings have been selected for a movie, the final step is to compress it. You can either click on the Compress button on the toolbar, or select Compress from the File menu to start the compression.

Suspend

You can suspend compression by selecting Suspend from the Movie Cleaner Status toolbar (see Chapter 12 - Suspending and Resuming Compression for more information.)

During Compression...

To make compression more efficient, Movie Cleaner does very limited event handling while it is compressing. Whenever the compression cursor (a vise) is visible, events such as key presses are ignored. Once you move the mouse, Movie Cleaner will temporarily pause compression and turn the cursor back into an arrow. Depending on several factors such as your processor speed, it may take up to a minute to return to the arrow cursor, because Movie Cleaner must first finish compressing the current frame.

As long as the arrow cursor is visible, compression is paused and you may move windows around, go to the Finder, etc. Once you leave the mouse idle for a few seconds, Movie Cleaner will resume the compression process.

Monitoring Compression

During the compression process, you can monitor the current compression information by watching the Output Movie window. See the next section for more details. While the compression is in progress, you cannot actually view the movie, but you can see the current frame. If you suspend the compression, you can play back the partially compressed movie in this window. Refer to Chapter 12 - Suspending and Resuming Compression for more information.

Minimize Preview

Movie Cleaner Pro offers a faster display mode that further reduces your compression time. Select Minimize Preview in the Preferences dialog to take advantage of this speed increase. This option makes the movie show up as a thumb-nail instead of full screen, thereby reducing screen draw times. Minimize Preview also deactivates the "Before/After" preview, and the screen dither, to further save time.

This mode is very useful for batches and other uses where you have already fine-tuned the settings, and want to save as much time as possible.

Getting More Information on Your Movies During Compression

Under the movie in the Output Movie window are several sections containing information about the movie being compressed. When you pause compression, or it is finished, the standard QuickTime controls appear. You can use these controls to view the movie. Below the controls are three status sections.

Amount of Compression Completed:

The first section shows you with a progress bar how much of the movie compression is completed. The elapsed compression time and remaining time until compression is complete are displayed next to the progress bar.

If you click on the "more info triangle" the status line will expand to show you details on the amount of the original movie written and remaining to be written, as well as minutes of material which have been compressed and are remaining. Times refer to the running time of the movie, not the time remaining to finish the compression. Clicking on the more info triangle a second time will "close up" this section.

Average Data-Rates:

The second section contains information on the average data-rate during the movie compression. Expanding this section will show the average video and audio data-rate. It will also show the size of the current frame, and indicate if it is a keyframe.

Compression Rate and Performance Chart:

The third section gives you information on the compression rate of the movie. Expanding this section will show you how many seconds per frame each process takes.

Before/After Preview

During compression, a special Before/After slider appears underneath the output movie. The image to the left of the slider is the uncompressed original source. The image to the

right of the slider is the compressed final movie image. The slider may be moved back and forth to see how any particular area looks before and after compression. This feature lets you see exactly what the selected codec is doing to the image quality of your movie.

It takes Movie Cleaner a little while to respond when you first move the mouse. While you are moving the Before/After slider, Movie Cleaner will pause compression. When you stop moving the slider for a few seconds, it will start compressing again.