

Lightworks Pro 11.5

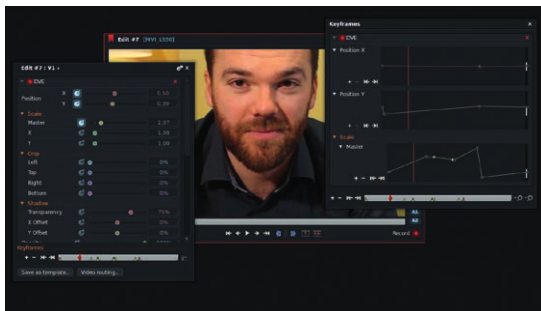
It's taken a long time and a metric ton of development work to get here, but has **Nick Veitch** found the Final Cut Pro for Linux?

Over recent months, we've learnt quite a bit about video editing. From lighting, sound and taking multiple shots, through to getting the best from the software we use. And unfortunately, one of the toughest lessons was that there just wasn't a good video editor for Linux. Lightworks could be our saviour. It's been around on Windows for a long time, and a Linux version was announced way back in 2012 – alongside a commitment to release an open source version, which has yet to materialise. After a beta release last year, 11.5 is the first stable version for our favourite operating system, and is something of a milestone for non-linear video editing on Linux.

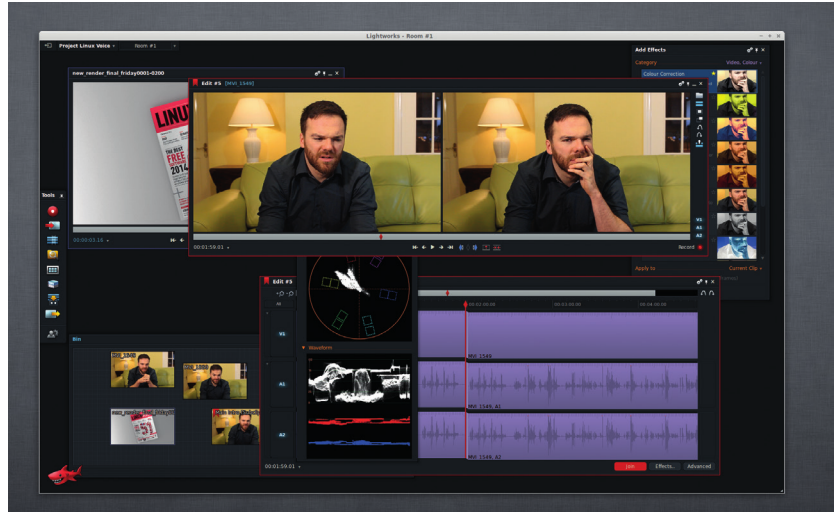
Lightworks has a free version and a Pro version. The free version features the same editing environment but is restricted to web-friendly output formats and a 720p output resolution. The Pro version unlocks broadcast output formats and resolutions, and even 4K and 5K as image sequences. Ubuntu and Fedora derivatives are officially supported, and we installed the 60MB download on 64-bit Mint 16 by simply clicking on it. The recommended computer specification is on the demanding side (see side panel), but that's not surprising. Video editing anything other than cat videos from your smartphone requires as much CPU and memory as you can throw at it, with your GPU in particular used to accelerate many processing tasks.

The Final Countdown

Coming from Final Cut Pro (Apple's market leader), Lightworks takes some getting used to, although many of the same features and facilities are present. Lightworks gives you more freedom to organise clips, create, composite and pull these together into edits, which themselves can be stacked and re-used in a very modular way. Clips can be dragged against one another, changing the time in both, or moved around on a timeline. Selecting Delete will split a clip, and you can drag and drop other clips, transitions, audio and



Keyframes are brilliant for changing parameter values over time. Look at that beautiful face.



Lightworks defaults to using your entire screen, but it can be coaxed into a window.

images. We missed embedded thumbnails, but they're not essential, and it's not always obvious where features hide. The all-important wipes and transitions, for blending from one shot to another, are hidden behind a press of the F8 button, for example, with no menu or icon we could see to indicate its existence. The selection of effects is brilliant, and give the editor a fantastic palette of powerful processing that remains functional rather than over-stylised, which is the problem with many effects in Final Cut Pro. Our favourite feature is the all-powerful keyframes, which can easily be used to change parameters over time, creating slow-pans or focus effects with aplomb. Keyframes can even be edited from a graph, and while we couldn't find an option for Bézier curves, there's more than enough detail here to get exactly the results you need.

There's nothing like Lightworks on Linux. It's a professional video editing suite that really does deliver results. If you make money from editing, you won't begrudge the cost. If you don't, the free version is good enough for many projects – with the 'Creative Cloud' like pricing giving a reasonable entry point for one-off projects. 

DATA

Distros Ubuntu 13.10, Mint 15, 16, Fedora 18, 19
Intel i7 or AMD equivalent
3GB RAM or higher
1GB PCI-Express VGA
NVIDIA or ATI with OpenGL
Web www.lwks.com
Developer EditShare
Price £180 or £49.99pa

“Lightworks is a professional video editing suite that really does deliver results.”

LINUX VOICE VERDICT

It's the only application of its calibre on Linux, and in terms of features, we've barely scratched the surface.

