Adobe Production Suite is rock solid

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Adobe seeks to reclaim the title of best of breed PC Video application with the release of their new Adobe Production Studio Premium -- an almost dream suite of applications, but at a stratospheric price. The old adage you get what you pay for certainly applies in this case.

This new suite of applications is loaded with all of Adobe's top line editing tools including Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0, After Effects 7.0 Professional, Photoshop CS2, Adobe Audition 2.0, Adobe Encore DVD 2.0, and Adobe Illustrator CS2 software with the workflow features Adobe Dynamic Link and Adobe Bridge.

The top line headline with this set is Premiere Pro 2.0 finally supports MPEG editing and encoding right out of the box. No longer do you have to go out and purchase a plug-in -- that barely worked, in order to edit in Premiere. Adobe's adherence to the .avi uncompressed video codec always stopped me from using its applications. While .avi is the codec for true professionals, its large file sizes makes it impractical for the video enthusiasts.

What Adobe is selling, isn't just a suite of applications, but a "way of life." Workflow is the buzzword for all of Adobe's various bundles and this video bundle is no different. It boasts seamless and intelligent integration between each other.

You can open up Photoshop, create and clean up a group of images, click a button and turn them into video composites in After Affects, then import them directly into a Premiere Pro timeline to manipulate the

video, then export into Adobe encore to create a professional level DVD, complete with animated motion menus that you can create from templates or use original images created in the rest of the applications.

At any point in the process you can clean up the audio track or create new audio for your projects by simply clicking the audio timeline, it'll open up Adobe's excellent audio editing application Audition.

With an application this large and diverse, it's hard to kick the tires on everything, so the application that I spent the most amount of time with was Premiere Pro 2.0, and it's almost worth $1,700 admission price, alone. Oh Premiere, how much do I love thee?

Beyond finally adding support for Mpeg editing, Premiere 2.0's performance has increased 100 fold, the product is now rock steady and not bug infested like the previous version. It also features software based live timeline previewing. On my Pentium 1.8 machine I was able to easily and consistently watch my project on the fly, with almost no stutters or jerkiness. This meant that when I went to do the final render, I didn't have to worry about mistakes getting into the final output.

Premiere 2.0 now features multi-camera editing so you can view different angles and switch between multiple tracks on the fly. It now supports complete native HD editing along with HD capturing, support for Macromedia flash files (which the entire package now supports) and includes a few minor other enhancements. Beyond the major MPEG support upgrade and performance improvements this version is essentially the same as the previous, but these two new enhancements makes 2.0 the editing app to get.

I was a little disappointed that it includes the same text templates and lower 3rds as before; I love how Premiere makes creating themes easier. I just wish they would improve the quality of them. Most of them are

fairly simplistic and cheesy, but with the integrated theme editor, you are really only limited by your imagination.

Using any Adobe product isn't for the weak at heart. It's very intimidating, not a tool for novices and the learning curve is steep, but once you invest the time and pick up on the Adobe way of doing things then migrating and learning new and other tools from Adobe becomes fairly simple and easy. The trick is finding the time to sit down and learn that first application. Once you do you are in for powerful and fairly simple tools -- again, it's only "simple" once you figure out Adobe's icon based interface, which is standard across all of Adobe's product line. To help you along the way, Adobe includes very nice tutorials, easy to follow manuals that include big images, step by step instructions, and videos.

Adobe's Creative Production Studio is probably the best video production suite you can purchase for a Windows based machine or any machine really. It's available for both Windows and Macs.

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