

Slide Show Bob Video Mix Tape Generator



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Introduction

At one time, it was popular to create a "Mix tape" or " Mix CD" of your favorite music. People would create them for girlfriends or boyfriends, or for special occasions. Now you can do the same, but, in video format with images!

Slide Show Bob is a Windows utility to use in conjunction with a video editor to produce image slide shows time lines and use your favorite music. Any video editor that can import a Final Cut Pro XML and standard video edit list files (EDL) can be used.

I will now, when talking about SlideShow Bob, I will just call it SSB.

Setup

In DaVinci resolve, on the media page, make sure your frame display mode is set to individual and not set to sequence.

Make sure you have smart bins enabled and have your delivery render properties set. This will make getting to the render step faster.

Folders

- **Image Folders**

Image folders should use the following structure. From the base image folder, you need a least one sub folder. In this sub folder you can have multiple sub folders which can be labeled as categories. As an example, you could have a folder called C:\SomeFolder. Then you would need a sub folder and call it what you want, but, I'll use "C:\SomeFolder\Images". This will make selecting all images in the sub folders easier. So, you could further create sub folders as categories, for example, you could have "C:\SomeFolder\Images\houses" or "C:\SomeFolder\Images\Cars"

- **Audio Folders**

Audio folders must be set up to represent your audio library by artist. So, you need a base folder, like "C:\SomeFolder\Artist". Each Artist would have a sub folder for each album. Inside the album folder would be the songs. An example is "C:\Artist\Album\songs.wav" If the artist has a multi-CD release, then it would have additional sub folders for the CD. In Example, "C:\SomeFolder\Neil Diamond\Live In America\Disk One\songs.wav".

Although SSB supports MP3 files, it is recommended to use WAV files. MP3 Files are compressed and when used in your video editor, rendering the video will compress the audio again, resulting in lower quality audio.

Settings Tab

SSB uses two work folders when generating a slideshow. One for images and one for audio. By default, when you first run the app, it will create these folders in your users documents. You can change this location on the settings tab. It is suggested if you do decide to change this location, use a base folder and sub folders for both. for example "I:\SSB\Image" and "I:\SSB\Audio". Replace "I" with your drive letter.

Also by default, the location of the database files are setup in your user documents folder. It is suggested that you use a different drive other than your documents folder, but, you can leave it there if you want. The database files can become very large, depending on the size of your image libraries. If you have image databases already created, use this to move them. This will move ALL databases to the new location safely. When you click a new database location you will be prompted about what is being moved. Do not manually move the database outside of SSB. SSB uses a relational model database system, and doing so will break the relationships.

Very Important Read carefully

Fixing audio file names

Because of how sometimes audio files are named, it may require those files be renamed to be able to be imported into a video time line, specifically any file that has the "&" character in the file name.

After selecting the audio source folder, of your music, go to the audio tab and click the scan button. This will create the audio database. Once the scan is completed, go back to the settings tab and click "Fix Audio File names". If any audio file has an "&" character in the file name, the time line that is generated will not import into your video editor. This is because in XML, the "&" character is a reserved character for XML. The "Fix File Names" will rename the audio file and replace the character with the word "and". So, a song titled, for example, "Blue Jeans & Poboys" would become "Blue Jeans and Poboys".

So, if you have a library already present, like iTunes, you should use a copy of that library and NOT point SSB to that library as a source. If you did use that library, it would break the library in iTunes, if it has any file names with and & in it. The files that get renamed would not be in iTunes anymore.

Audio Output Device

SSB will use what your OS default audio output is. Use this in cases where it does not work. Just select the correct audio device from the list. Only use this when you cannot hear the audio play back.

Unique Songs List

Also on the settings tab is a check box for "Unique Songs per Multiple Sessions". When this is checked, songs will be included in each video once. Those songs used are placed in a used songs list. The purpose

of this, is, each video would never have the same songs in them twice. Meaning, video 1 would have selected songs, but, video 2 would not have the same songs in them. In example, if you generated several videos, play back of those videos would not have the same song again. It would be annoying to hear the same song again, after just a few minutes, right?

When this setting is on, on the audio tab, the songs list will have "(used)" next to the title if it was previously used. For the Artists or Album views, it will show the total duration used.

Genre Editor

SSB can use genre to select audio for a video. It has a few "built in" genre types, but, you can also create your own. SSB does NOT connect to the internet, so, you have to manually assign the genres to your music. There are two ways of editing genres, on the settings tab is the "Genre Editor" button and if you right click an item in the available list box, (the left box) on the audio tab and select "Manage Genres".

Typically, to create a slide show, you select your music, then select your image library and generate a slide show.

For music, you can select a genre and only that genre will be used for audio. All audio, artists and albums and songs can have any number of genres assigned to them. So, if you wanted your music to be a mix of selected genres, just create a new genre and assign that to the music you want to use.

Font Settings

The software uses the OS fonts and colors, so, changing the fonts are a hit or miss situation, some fonts will work fine, some won't. Font size can be problematic in that, the buttons do not accommodate the change in font size very well. The larger the font, some leading and trailing characters will become cut off the button face. This is just the nature of the library used to write the app with. So choose a simple font and font size.

Slide Show Defaults

You have settings for the default slide show behavior. You can set a default video duration, the default image duration, the transition mode and transition duration.

Having a default video duration can be a fast way of generating the same length videos, or, if set to 0 duration, can be used to custom fit for the audio duration.

If you set the video duration to 0, you have to click the "Adjust Video Duration for Audio" button on the image tab so the image count can be calculated, after you have chosen the audio.

The image duration is how long the image is viewed in the time line of the video. Shorter times, uses more images. If set to, let's say, 12, then the image is visible for 12 seconds, minus the cross fade duration. A cross fade if, enabled, is applied before and after each image, except the first and last image.

XML only supports cross fades or none. When enabled and imported into your video editor, you can apply custom cross fades over the XML cross fades.

The Trivia Library

SSB offers you a way of generating images from a text files of trivia. SSB will read the text file and build an image file with the text on it. Example trivia text files are provided, but, should follow this rule of thumb, it should have 20 trivia items per text file, with each trivia separated by a new line. In other words, you could have trivia that may be several lines for that trivia item, but, to separate it from the next trivia item, must be separated by a blank line.

SSB will create a default folder for trivia in the user documents folder for "SlideShowBob". You can select a new folder and any files in the user folder will be moved to the new location. You may get a pop-up on start up of the app that some missing folder were created in the new location. It will create a BG folder that can be used to hold custom background images in place of the default black back ground. The percentage Background count is used to generate blank empty backgrounds that would be used randomly to separate trivia image files. So, it would be possible to see a trivia image, then maybe a couple or a single blank image, and another trivia image, and so on, in the video playback.

When you click the "Generate Trivia Library" you will launch a wizard to create the image library. You can select a single text file, or choose to select multiple text files . You would then navigate to the folder with the text files and select them. Once you click next in the wizard, you will be presented with a page to select the output size, the margin, the percentage of blank background images to create, the font and font size. Below the font is the text color. Use this to change the color of the font and not the font color in the dialog when you click to change the font. The subject should be the file name used, if not, set the title there. The position of the text can set to left, right, center or random. The default is random. The randomize per image is used as a random seed for the random placement.

When you click the next button, you will be shown a summary of what will be generated. You would then click finish to generate the trivia image library file.

You will need to add the library on the image tab and scan the library if it is new, or update it if you have generated new image files.

Other settings

The "Asset Export Folder" is the folder that your video editor will use as assets for the video. Again, by default, this is set in the user documents folder, but, can be changed. The assets that are needed to generate the video will be located in sub folders there. The Images, the audio and the FCPXML file and the EDL file, if it was generated.

You can "Remove" image libraries or you can "Delete" image libraries. The difference is, by "Removing", you completely delete the DB files associated to that library. So, it no longer is available to select. "Deleting" a library only deletes the DB file so that it can be re-scanned, if needed.

You can turn off the splash screen and also view the app log, as well as register the app.

Export EDL when checked, will generate an EDL file that has the audio information as a time line marker. It will generate the time line marker at the start of each song with the artist and title of the song. This marker is also the chapter marker when the video is rendered. This allows the playback of the video to jump to the song title and start play back there, if so desired. You can also select the color of the marker, if it is supported in your video editor.

You would import the XML file into your editor, then import the EDL for that time line.

And of course, you save your settings. Most settings, when changed, auto save, but, if a setting did not save, just click this and all settings are saved.

The Audio Tab

Along the top are the buttons for the view modes and sorting. Next to the sort buttons is a search bar. You can search for songs, artist or albums here. You can also click the clear button at any time to reset the view. Below the song view buttons is the genre selector and a "Genre not Assigned Yet" button. When there are items that do not have a genre set yet, this button will be yellow indicating such. When you click this button, it will turn green. The list box then populates with only items that do not have a genre assigned. As you right click items and assign a genre, it removes that item from the list. Once the list is emptied, the button turns white and is disabled.

You can assign a genre to songs, or the Artist, or the Album. You can assign multiple genres to them as well.

When you select an item or multi select items and right click, you have a context menu that allows you to select all, deselect all, play the song, add the song to the used song list, view the genre, assign genre, which has a list of all the genres that can be used. The context menu also has create and remove genre, manage genres, which is the same as clicking the genre editor in settings. It also deletes selected and open file locations.

When you delete a selection, you have to also click the "Empty Trash" button in the middle of the tab.

If multiple selections are selected, only the first item is opened for the file location.

The list box on the left also has these properties when double clicking an item. When viewing songs, double clicking will add that song to the list on the right, which is called the "Generated List". If viewing artists, double clicking will show all the albums for that artist. If viewing Albums, then double clicking will show all the songs on that album.

You can also right click a song and play it. It will play till the song ends or by clicking the stop button at the bottom of the tab page. You can also just select another song and right click to play that newly selected song.

Audio Play Back

The audio player is a very simple player with no bells and whistles. It's main purpose is for previewing your audio before making selections, if needed.

The play back does have a precedence when clicking the play button. If there are items in the generated list box, then those will be played, even if you have items selected in the available list box. To play those selected in the available list box, you have to use the context menu play.

Besides the play, pause and stop buttons, you also have volume control, play next and play previous buttons.

You can clear the generated list by clicking the big yellow button at the bottom of the generated list box.

The middle column of Buttons

Here, you have scan, update music and empty trash. Scan should be used for the initial scan of the source folder. Use the update if you add more music to your library at a later time.

Empty Trash will remove the items marked for deletion in the database. You can open the source folder with the "Open Source Folder Button".

If you have items selected, you can click the Add selected button. Currently this will only work when viewing by Songs. You can also remove selected items from the generated list with the "Remove Selected" button.

Random Select Audio

When you have a video duration set and a genre selected, clicking this button will randomly select audio and populate the generated list box with that audio. You must have a video duration for this to work.

Use Generated Audio

When you click this button, it will copy the contents of the generated list box into the audio work folder, ready for slide show generation and empty the generated list box. If you select new audio and use the new audio, it will replace the audio in the work folder.

Working in this manner is called "manual" slide show generation. You will have to also click image generation on the image tab. Once you "move" the project to the export folder, the audio is then added to the used list, if you have the unique songs enabled in settings.

Misc Buttons

You have the open audio work folder button which opens your file explorer to the work folder.

The view used song list will show all the songs that have been used so far. You can remove or clear this list from the pop up viewer.

Delete Audio DB

It is recommended that you use only one database for all of your audio. If you change your source folder, then the genre list and used songs list will become out of sync and not work correctly.

If you choose to delete your audio DB file, you will be prompted to try and save your genre information, if possible. Or you can do a complete unrecoverable delete. To recover genre information, you must re-scan the same source folder. At the end of the scan, it will try and rebuild the genre information.

EDL Helper

The EDL helper is used when you have imported your time line into your video editor. You would use this if you plan to also use lower thirds to identify the songs being played. It allows you to quickly copy the song title and artist name then pasting that into your editor, rather than typing it all out. Click this to open the helper then navigate to the project and open the root project folder, then click select folder. You should see two folders when you do this, the audio folder and the image folder. If you do see these, you are at the correct level. The EDL file is in the root folder of the project.

You are then shown a list of the songs in the project and at the bottom of the dialog is the song title and artist name of the item that is selected. Just click the copy button and the information is copied to your clip board for pasting into your video editor. You can the click next for the next item.

The Image Management Tab

At the top of this tab, the first row of buttons are for database management. You can add a new database, remove a database, or delete the image database, empty trash and open the library source folder. The same rules apply to remove and delete like in the settings page, but, this only applies to the selected database. Remove will remove the database by deleting the database and removing it from the database selector. Deleting will just delete the database, but, can be re-scanned.

When you delete item in the tree view, they can be removed from the database by clicking empty trash.

The next row of buttons are for scanning and updating. Both the scan and the update support batch scans. If you add several image libraries, you can scan all of them in one click. This also applies to updating the image libraries. If you add new images to the libraries, it can batch update all of them.

If you cancel a scan, you can resume it by clicking update scan. You can view the scan log and if there were problems during the scan, they would be listed here in the log.

Video Duration

Video duration can be calculated in two ways. You can set the length of the video duration, or you can

base it on the number of images you want to use. Either way, it will use the settings for the image from the settings tab to make the duration calculation. The spin boxes will have the actual video duration and the duration next to the "calculate Duration From Images" button is the image duration including the use of cross fades. This will always be a bit shorter than the actual duration of the video. You always want less images than total duration, to make the video look correct. The formula used will always keep one less image than that of total duration, hence the difference in values of these two items.

Image folder structure

The image library should have the following structure. It should be a base folder with at least one sub folder. In this sub folder can be more sub folders. Think of the sub folders as "categories". As an example, if you have a set of images that are of boats, cars, and flowers. Your folder would be "C:\MyPics\Stuff\Boats\image.jpg" and "C:\MyPics\Stuff\cars\image.jpg", and so on. This folder structure is then replicated in the treeview for the library.

You would then click the folder node in the tree view to select all the images in that folder for a slide show.

If you select the root folder, then all images in the library could be used. You can also multi select folders to use. Just hold down the control key while making a selection.

Image preview

When you scan the images into the database, it also adds a smaller version of the image in the database. If you select an image, it will be shown in the preview box to the right of the tree view. You can also right double click the image to open it into a viewer. In the viewer, you can rotate the image left or right as needed. This is only for use in SSB. SSB does not change or edit your images. If you have images in your slide show that appear sideways, or the wrong rotation, you have to make that correction in OS file explorer. Select the image and adjust the rotation there.

The tree view has a right click context menu. The menu allows you to delete items from the tree view. After you delete the items, you can then empty the trash to remove them from the database. Please note that if you update scan the image library, those items will return to the tree view. Again, SSB does not delete your images on disk.

Generating a Slide Show

There are three ways to generate a slide show. Manually, or semi-randomly, and single file.

In manual generation, you need to have the duration set, either by setting a duration, or using the audio duration adjustment.

For semi-random, you must set a video duration first.

In manual generation you select the songs first by adding them to the generated list and using them, then on the image tab you select the library and the image folders. The second step is to click "Create a Slide

Show" button. The last two steps are to then move them to the export folder and then generate the XML file.

For semi-random, all you do set the video duration, select the genre of the music you want to use, then select the image library and folders and then click the "Random Slide Show" button. This will generate the audio, the images, move them to the export folder and create the XML and EDL file in one operation. You are now ready to import into your video editor.

You can have less images than required for the duration of the video. In this case, the images are reused, but, the same image will never appear side by side more than once, or never appear in a row more than once. For example, if you only have 10 images and the image duration is set to 10 seconds, then you need 112 images total, but, only have 10 for a 15 minute video, each image would be selected, but, never would image-01.jpg then again image-01.jpg would appear in the sequence selection. When it selects an image, it remembers that image for the next selection. If the next selection is the same as the last, it picks a new image, so, there are never back to back same images.

Random Single Songs

Random Single Song is the ability to generate a video time line using one audio file. Select the folder node for the images and just click the "Random Single Song". You can batch many single songs by first selecting audio and adding that audio to the "selected audio" list box. Just populate that list box and don't click anything else on that tab. Switch to the Image tab and when you click the "Random Single Song", it will use that list and generate an image slide show for each song. In this mode, it will generate a slide show and then show a dialog to allowing you to either continue to the next song, ("Yes") or finish using the already selected images ("No"), or cancel the process ("Cancel").

Some useful Tips

The image library database was tested with very large data sets. It was tested with about 500,000 images. It will and does work with that large of a database, but, the app will lag some what.

Library scan times can be fast, but, a very large library will take a while to load and scan. For about 1000 images, it should take about a minute or two to scan and a few seconds to load.

For very large image libraries, like the 500,000 example I mentioned, it took about 2 hours to scan and about 3 to 4 minutes to load. You should probably keep the libraries at or under 10,00 images for best performance.

For large libraries, you can also break them down to smaller libraries, if you need too.

It completely depends on your hardware and the size of and resolution of the images you scan, how SSB will perform.

SSB was designed to create the databases fast and to be able to generate slide shows fast as well.

If you haven't noticed, nothing has been said about video resolution. This is because your video play back will handle the resolutions. So, using just an 1920 x 1080 video format will suffice, even if played back on a 4k system. A lot of the time, you will have mixed resolution images anyways. I have tested playback on a 4k TV and it was just fine, even when rendered at 1920x1080.

In DaVinci Resolve, I use a 6k Kb/s setting in H.264 MP4 format. This works great as I usually just play back on my Plex server and on any TV in my house. If you have a Plex Server, just put the videos in the Home Video area and they can be played and create play lists.

When I have guests over, I can play these videos for background music, and show off some neat pictures.

Also note, you are only limited to your system hardware how long of a video you can create. I generally make short 15 to 30 minute videos with various genres. If you wanted to, you could do one video per song and use a play list to randomly play the videos.

For a 15 minute video, it takes about 10 to 15 minutes to edit and ready to render. This includes the time it takes to generate the time line, then the rest of the time is editing and adding cross fades and the lower 3rd information.

Just some fun facts about the software. Since this is based on a nostalgic idea, the software was written with a nostalgic library in C++. Bob was my cat.

Have fun!

Gene Brown