

## Tutorial: MSP8: Creating and Sharing Smart Compositions

Since the release of the Smart Compositor Creator tool several users have posted questions wanting to know

1. What is a Smart Composition?
2. How do I create one?
3. How do I share my Composition with other Forum Users?

Let us begin by asking ourselves “What is a Smart Composition?”

It is a combination of predefined moving paths, overlays filters, multiscreens, video and audio sound effects. This collection can then be re-used by other users who replace the video and audio content with their own whilst maintaining those combined effects.

Useful link:

Ulead have released a Tutorial relating to the Smart Compositor Designer.

[http://www.ulead.com/learning/msp/msp8\\_05\\_01.htm](http://www.ulead.com/learning/msp/msp8_05_01.htm)

The link also contains a sample DVP file. I suggest that you firstly view the Ulead site and try out their sample file. This tutorial should be considered as a supplement to the one provided by Ulead where I have made a number of discoveries whilst attempting to create a Smart Composition and had to find workarounds.

I formed the opinion that possibly due to pressure from the forum members for a designer tool to be made available, that the tool has possibly been released too early and may perhaps require further development. In creating the following project from the ground up I shall explain difficulties encountered during the making of this project and the workarounds I had to employ. I would also like to give a mention of thanks to Ron (Vidoman) Peterson one of our forum members who has given up valuable time testing out various aspects of this project for me.

The following is an extract taken from page 214 of the excellent book “Getting Results with Media Studio 8” by Charlie Hills

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*The main reason for using the Designer tool is for sharing templates with others.*

*However, if you just want to create quick, re-usable components, there’s no reason you can’t do all the work on the timeline and save it as a normal Video Editor project.*

*The next time you need it, instead of clicking*

*Insert from Smart Compositor click Insert Project File. In order to change clips, use the Replace command.*

Before we create a smart composition we must remember that the video and audio used in that composition is going to be replaced by the end user.

If this were not the case we might as well simply give the end user a ready made video. We must also consider the following

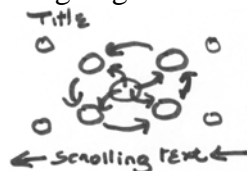
1. Avoid zooming into a focal point of any video or still photograph. The reason is because the end user will be replacing your video and it is very doubtful that a focal point will exist in exactly the same position in that user’s video/picture.
2. Take into account the TV safe area and also the Title Safe Area.

3. When creating a Smart Composition any audio contained in your original video clips will be discarded by the smart compositor. Your Smart composition must include one and only one soundtrack.
4. Consider the TV aspect ratio 4:3 or 16:9 because a composition created in one ratio will work in the other but obviously there will be a stretching or squashing of video windows if the other ratio is used by the end user.

Here are some screen shots of the Smart Composition I shall be creating with you in this tutorial.



Before we begin we have to have an idea. For this grab hold of a pen and a piece of paper and draft out a rough sketch of the Smart composition – sort of like storyboarding. It doesn't have to be elaborate but it gives you an idea of where you are going. This was mine!



Our project starts not in Media Studio Pro but with Photo Impact 11. Don't worry if you don't have Photo Impact or another comparable graphics editor because I have placed a ready made copy of our circular mask here which you can download. <http://www.steve-jones.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/tutorial/circlemask.zip> However this is a tutorial and so I will explain how I made this mask. This knowledge will enable you to create your own masks in your own future projects.

An overlay mask is nothing more than a simple greyscale picture where black areas show the background image, white areas show the foreground image and shades of grey mix both images together.

Let's begin. Open Video Editor and start a new project.

For this simple first smart composition it does not matter if you select AVI or MPEG settings but choose 4.3 format so that the circles we produce further in this tutorial will be the correct shape. We will also be using simple colour blocks, the reasons for this are

1. This will keep the file size very small making it easy to share. It will also take up very little hard drive space when you add it to your library of smart compositions. Remember the end user (which could later be you) will be replacing those blocks of colour with real videos and/or still photographs.
2. The use of colour blocks will make the various videos/pictures easy to identify when the end user replaces those items.