



## **ISE GUIDE TO REMOTE WORKING FOR EDITORS AND ASSISTANTS - June 2020 update**

This guide has been compiled by Tony Kearns with help from the excellent work done by Derek Holland for his live remote working workshops organised by Screen Skills Ireland. It is intended to be a gathering of useful information and web links to help editors and assistants deal with our new working reality. We welcome comments and input from our members and from anybody who has experiences of remote working, please send an email to [info@irishscreeneditors.com](mailto:info@irishscreeneditors.com) with Remote Working as the subject. We are particularly interested in hearing from assistant editors about their experiences and views about workflows and software/hardware. Any useful tips and links that we receive will be added to this page.

There are useful Facebook groups to tap into the hive mind about technical information and tips such as the Dublin Editors Workbench and Avid Editors of Facebook.

Please remember that editors and assistants are not alone out there. Post-production facilities, tech companies and producers are all looking for ways to enable us to continue working with them. We are all figuring the new reality out as we go, everybody understands this and want to help. There are many advantages to working remotely - time not spent commuting, better work/life balance and the opportunity for editors to assert more of their own creativity on projects.

Over the last three months a lot of us have had to decamp from facilities and offices to home suites and kitchen tables. All this was necessary to keep working and ensure that deadlines were met. For some of us, this is familiar territory for a decade or more and all that has changed is the tech available to enable this further. We are heading into new territory now though, as productions restart and facilities remain closed. Working from home is not standard and we are the ones who are working to make this happen: we should be careful that productions do not take that for granted.

### **Considerations for working from home**

1. Establish early on with the client if they will want to spend time with you while editing, and be sure that they understand the limitations that working from your home may place on when they are present and for how long. Working from home can be intrusive for those that you live with, and family routines are important; having a director sitting in your kitchen wanting to work until midnight may not be conducive to a happy home.
2. Similarly, if your director or producer wants to spend the day with you it's important to establish things like where they will get their lunch. You are hired to edit, and not to cater an edit.
3. Discuss with the production early on what you will charge for your edit equipment and home suite. This cost will vary from production to production, so you should have a minimum amount in mind that you will be happy with. You should take into account the costs of electricity, data/wifi, software subscriptions as well as machine wear and tear.
4. Be sure that the production agrees to reimburse you for any incidental expenses along the way; drives, usb keys, postage, couriers etc.

### **Security**

1. You should be sure that you have somewhere secure to store rushes drives. A locked press or drawer is often sufficient, and you should lock away any third party material when you are away from the home.
2. Some productions may require additional security measures such as burglar alarms and somewhere more secure than a press to store rushes etc. Ensure that you are au fait with all requirements, and if you cannot comply discuss with the producers to see if an accommodation can be reached
3. It is worth speaking to the production company to ensure that the production insurance extends to drives and footage stored in your home.
4. Where possible make a copy of any third party material and store it in a different secure location
5. Be sure and backup your project every night

### Edit set up requirements

**A comfortable space** in which to spend the working day without interruption.

**A computer powerful enough** to do what you need it to do, run an NLE, compress files in background, download media, run a video chat, email. An extra laptop would really help too.

**Good connectivity** - high speed broadband, wired if at all possible. Keep an eye on broadband plan data usage limits and off peak times. 5G is an excellent option for those living in remote areas but check for monthly data limits, usually 1TB per month.

**Storage.** External preferably - Thunderbolt, USB 3, Raids if you have the budget. Check with production if they can supply drives, particularly Raids.

**Ancillaries** (these aren't necessarily requirements, they're optional extras for those on limited budget) - breakout box e.g Blackmagic Ultra Mini Monitor, AjaT tap - big tv, speakers, small audio mixer, headphones, extra computer monitor(s), web cam for Skype/Zoom if you don't have one on your computer.

It is advisable to have all member of the edit team working from the same version of the NLE software and to double check compatibility if you're thinking of upgrading the computer's OS.

### Acquiring and storing media, sharing and managing projects and media

You need to put a system in place at the beginning with pipelines and workflows worked out and understood by all members of the editing team.

If you have an assistant - have them do all the things they normally do for you - just remotely.

The best workflow for you will largely be decided by two factors:

1. The number of members of the edit team.
2. The delivery timeline of your rushes and how are they going to be delivered.

### **There are three main ways of acquiring rushes.**

The first is via **delivery of drives to the editor/assistant**. This will be cumbersome if these are deliveries from each day of the shoot (drama, features) as it involves couriers, receiving and sending back transport drives, copying from the drives etc. This will work best when all or most of the rushes are on a drive at the end of the shoot or the editor and/or assistant are working near the set.

The second method is **via the cloud**. If a facility is handling the post they will acquire the rushes and upload transcoded files to their servers. The editor can then download via the facility's bespoke file transfer software or by using secure and fast filesharing software such

as [Aspera](#), [Fileshare](#), FTP apps. An hour of DNxHD36 Avid footage is approximately 15GB. Proxies for Premiere Pro or FCPX will vary depending on the nature of the codecs.

[Cirrus Media](#) is an Irish digital rushes delivery service who capture, transcode, copy and upload to the cloud the day's rushes while on set.

[DejaEdit](#) is a set up that allows a number of remote Avid work stations to be synced, connecting the DIT, assistants and editors. The DIT uploads the transcoded rushes and all other users' machines will download them with their bins. The DejaEdit software is integrated into the Avid project so syncing of media and bins happens automatically in the background or can be initiated by the user. This is ideal for projects where there will be more than one editor involved such as episodic TV shows/dramas.

The third is by **remotely accessing the rushes** from the post facility's servers. If you are remotely controlling a machine in a post house and using their storage then you don't have much media managing to do. It's like how it used to be except you are not in the facility's building. There are basic remote access software Logmein, Teamviewer, RealVNC - none of these were built for video streaming and they aren't adequate. More sophisticated applications such as Teradici and HP Remote Graphics Software are much better.

Please note that software and services mentioned above such as DejaEdit, Aspera, Fileshare, Teradici, HP Remote will be costly and will need to be provided by the facility or production.

Here is a [video](#) that explains five possibilities for accessing media while working remotely on Avid.

Avid are developing an all-in-one cloud-based remote editing solution called [Avid On Demand](#) which will have a virtual desktop, Media Composer software and media accessible to teams large and small.

### **Create a sustainable workflow**

You need to be more organised than ever before. It will be important to have access to a comprehensive library of sound effects, audio transitions, temp music, library music. It will be helpful to automate repetitive tasks such as backing up locally and/or to the cloud. [Kyno](#), [Postlab](#), [Goodsync](#) or [Chronosync](#) are good options for this or you can run a script in Automator. Another local back up option is to use the [SyncTwo Folders](#) app (Mac only) which allows automated back up between folders on different drives or from your Dropbox folder linked to the web.

Create an empty project template for every project - same folders and structure everytime. You can customise later depending on the nature of the project.

Create a finder folder structure that you use on every project too, e.g. assets/graphics, music, sound fx, exports, VFX etc.

Use Google Drive, Microsoft Teams, Slack for all your documents. It's shared, safe, all in one place.

In Avid - never link to media - transcode everything and try and use the same codec for all media. This will be more stable and will speed up work and also exports later on. It is advisable to transcode for Premiere Pro, FCPX (transcodes and proxies rendered in the background with minimal intervention from editor) or Resolve on productions that will be generating large amounts of footage.

Always ensure that there are at least three separate copies of the project and media with one drive being off site.

### **The big challenge is managing new media and sharing it.**

Store your NLE project in a shared Dropbox folder with separate folders for each member of the team.

It is important for Media Composer editors to know and understand the Avid MediaFiles folders structure. You will need to have a folder management and naming convention set up within the MXF folder to keep track of the media files. When using Premiere Pro and FCPX it is essential to have a rock solid media folder structure as you don't want to have files go offline due to being accidentally renamed or moved.

### **Sharing media.**

Manually syncing new media is the most basic way to share new media but it's techy and time consuming as the following outline explains. The editor and assistant have the same media on their systems. At the end of every day or before every export each copy their media created that day into Dropbox or an FTP site. The other pulls it down and places it in their media folder(s). Once this is done they are back in sync. It is worth considering using [SFTP](#) with your FTP software as it is more secure.

There are automated software options for syncing media such as [Kyno](#), [Postlab](#), [Goodsync](#) or [Chronosync](#) as mentioned previously although it should be mentioned that Kyno and Postlab have Premiere and FCPX integrations but not for Media Composer.

On the next level up are [DejaEdit](#), [Resilo Sync](#) and [DNAFabric](#). DejaEdit is an Avid only application that enables bin and media syncing within Media Composer in the background and it automatically creates media folders for each user on all connected systems. TK has used it on his home system recently for an episodic TV drama project with directors/co-editor in Sweden and the assistant in Berlin and it works extremely well. DNAFabric works on Media Composer and Premiere and, as well as syncing media, it also understands metadata (e.g. Adobe AAF files, Avid bins, etc.) Another media asset management (MAM) option would be [Evolphin](#) which has integration with Adobe apps including Premiere as a feature. Again, these higher level options will be more costly so they need to be considered by the facility or the production company as a viable tool.

**The main thing is knowing where all your media and assets are, using a logical system and keeping in sync with the other members of your team.**

### **Communicating remotely, sharing cuts, getting feedback and approvals**

#### **Live collaboration**

The ease of working with directors remotely will depend on how strong the relationship is with the editor. Obviously it will be easier when both parties know each other well and have worked together frequently in the past. With a new relationship, both parties will have the difficulty of trying to get to know each other remotely so it is important to build trust as well as you can, as soon as you can. Directors will have to be more precise and concise in their communication with the editor to avoid misunderstandings occurring during the edit. It will be very useful for the director to have exports of the rushes with burnt in timecode and shot info on their computers to be able to reference particular takes or detailed parts thereof. The best aids for live communication are Skype and Zoom; you may have to pay a monthly charge for Zoom if you are going to be running group meetings as free calls to more than two people are limited to a forty minute duration.

A very handy app for creating a shared shot board is [Miro](#) - reference stills of each take can be loaded to a 'wall' to be able to describe takes visually.

If you can afford it, it would be a good idea to invest in a web presenter interface device such as the [Atem Mini](#) from Blackmagic. It enables an editor to connect an output from their break out box so that sequences can be played live during a Skype or Zoom call, allowing for swift changes to be made and presented during the call for example. One can switch between the onboard camera and the NLE output for the chats (in Skype preferences switch between webcam [NLE input] and computer cam - not sure about Zoom). They can be ordered from [camerakit.ie](#) - it's actually cheaper than the next best option from Blackmagic which is their [Web Presenter](#) also available from camerakit.ie [here](#). Even though it costs more, the quality of its output is not as good as the Atem Mini due to the Web Presenter being a previous generation device. However, it would be worthwhile seeing if there are any second hand Web Presenter units knocking around. Other wise you can use Frame.io to send sequences for feedback - see next section.

### **Non live file sharing for reviews, notes**

[Frame.io](#) is arguably the best platform for sending cuts for review and notes as it has excellent features built in for adding notes and also for [integrating](#) with the editor's NLE, especially Premiere Pro. It also has a watch folder system so it can look at a folder on your computer and keep it updated with a folder on the cloud. You could use this for your newly created media each day for example. This [video](#) gives a good introduction.

**Vimeo** and **wetransfer** are good, if basic, options for working on smaller sized productions. Make sure to use transfers with passwords each time so you'll need to have the pro versions of each app.

Facilities may have their own file transfer set ups, such as **Eggstream** from Egg Post in Dublin.

For larger budget productions, you may find that a particular file sharing/review app or service has been engaged by the facility or production company such as [Pix](#) (required on Netflix shows), [Evercast](#), [Cinesync](#) and [Sohonet](#), the latter offering [ClearView Flex](#). These are high quality, high cost services. [Streambox](#) is a hardware and cloud based service which is expensive for the lone editor but worth knowing about. [Bebop](#) is a cloud based service worth looking at too. It's hard to assess the costs of some of these high end services as they don't give pricing tables on their websites - Evercast and Cinesync are the exceptions.

### **Delivery, turnovers, exports**

On large productions these are tasks for the assistant editor whether they are freelance or facility based. On smaller productions the editor will sometimes have to handle these tasks themselves so it is important to get the delivery specs from the post production department for EDLS, exports, VFX, audio etc. This can be done remotely from your machine, sent on a drive or filesharing service or consolidated to the cloud depending on the editing set up and post facility's needs.

Sound and VFX spotting sessions would be done over video calls unless the post facility has adequate social distancing space in their suites.

On a general note, it would be advisable to check with your accountant or employer about your eligibility for tax allowances for working from home.

ISE hopes that the information given here will be of great benefit to our professional community and that it will help us to get through this difficult period safely. Remote working will be a permanent part of our working lives and it is up to us to make it work well and even better than the old normal.