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# Chapter 5: Session Data / Video

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Pro Tools

App 2

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## Overview

By the end of this chapter you should understand the basics of handling video in Pro Tools

## Importing Session Data

Another option for pulling in premade data is to import session data. The most common use of importing session data is for mixing. When mixing an album that contains similar elements from song to song you can import your routing and mix information from one session to another so that you don't have to fully mix each song. Importing session data allows the engineer to spend more time finessing each mix rather than rebuilding the same mix a dozen times. In my regular workflow for mixing an album I will spend 6 to 8 hours building a mix for the first song then approximately 3 hours for each additional song once I have a base mix from which I can import session data.

To import session data select File > Import > Import Session Data or use the Quick Key!

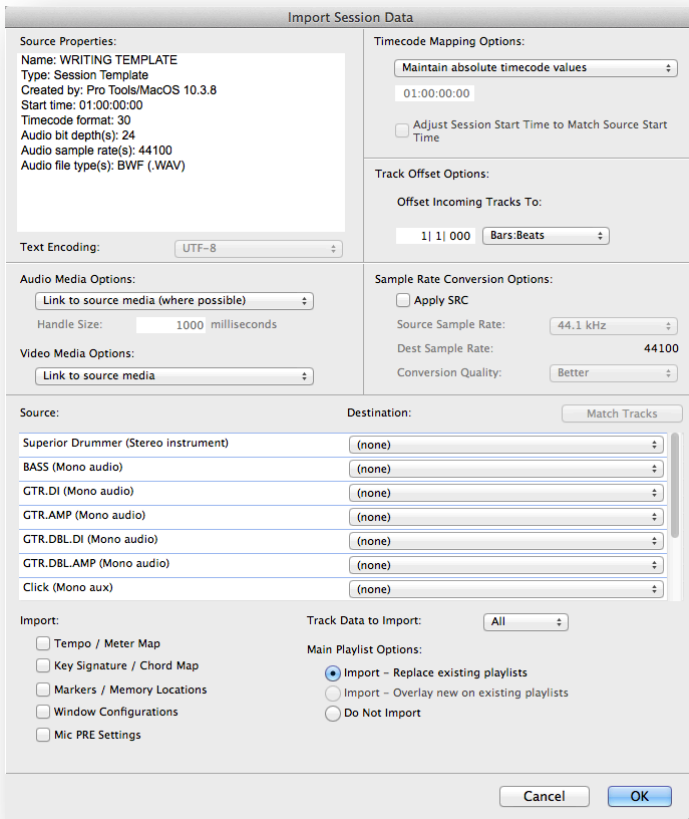
You will be presented with the normal open session dialogue box, select the session you wish to import session data from then select open.

Now you will be presented with a large number of options.

## Quick Keys

Import Session Data

Option + Shift + i



**Source Properties:** describes the session settings in the session that you are pulling session data from.

**Timecode Mapping Options:** Identifies how you would like to handle any differences in timecode from the source session to the destination session.

- Maintain Absolute Timecode Values: Puts your imported tracks at the same time location as the source session. As long as your start times in both sessions are identical then this is the ideal option.
- Maintain Relative Timecode Values: Puts your imported tracks at the same location relative to the start time of the current session. This is a good option if your timecode values are different in both sessions but the audio has a similar position relative to the start of the session.
- Map Start Timecode to: Allows you to remap the starting timecode in the source session to whichever value you manually input directly below.

**Track Offset Options:** This option allows you to offset the imported tracks by a relative value. So say you need the imported tracks to start 4 bars later you can set your track offset to 4 bars.

**Audio Media Options:** Identifies how you would like pro tools to handle the audio files from the source session.

- Link to source media (Where possible): Will leave the audio files in their current place and only link the clips in pro tools to the audio files in their current hard drive location. This option saves on hard drive space but can be dangerous when moving files to another computer. All audio clips in the session may not be in the audio files folder. Some files may be forced to copy into the session if they are stored on a device set to transfer only in the workspace.
- Copy from source media: This is the most ideal option. Copy from source media will copy all audio files needed into the current audio files folder. Now the files are stored with the session and available exclusively for the new session.
- Consolidate from source media: This option copies and consolidates audio eliminating any unnecessary audio from the session. This option saves you some hard drive space by consolidating audio clips into new audio files to be moved into the new session. This option may not be ideal if you need alternate takes or hidden clips.
- Force to target session format: This session is much like link to source media except it will copy and convert audio files that do not match bit depth or sample rate.

**Sample Rate Conversion Options:** If the source session is a different sample rate or bit depth the sample rate conversion options will become available. The SRC settings allow you to decide how you would like pro tools to convert the audio into the current session settings.

## Source/Destination:

Here you can select which tracks you would like to import session data from.

**Match Tracks:** Match tracks will automatically match tracks from your source session to your destination session by track name. Match tracks is a very powerful tool but also very dangerous if you do not have your settings correct!

Alternatively you can manually select which tracks you would like to import and if you would like to import them on top of a current track or import them as a new track. Be aware that your source session is on the left and your destination tracks exist within the dropdown menus on the right.

**Import:** gives you options of global settings you may want to import into the destination setting. Tempo/Meter Map, Key Signature/Chord Map, Markers/Memory Locations, Window Configurations, Mic PRE Settings. **WARNING:** by selecting these you will overwrite the values in the destination session.

**Track Data To Import:** This identifies which track data you want to import. For example: If you are importing session data for a mix of a different song you will NOT want to import clips and media or alternate playlists. There is an extensive list of track options to import all of which should be carefully considered.

**Main Playlist Options:** Tells pro tools how to handle the main playlist when importing session data.

- Import – Replace Existing Playlists: This option will import overtop of your current session and remove all current playlists in the destination session. NOT ideal for a mix data import.
- Import – Overlay new on existing playlists: will copy the session data overtop of the current playlist. This option is ideal in the event you receive fresh edits from an editor, or a new vocal session from the client. You can import the playlists overtop of your current mix while leaving all of the routing options intact assuming you've set the appropriate track data to import options.
- Do Not Import – Ideal for mix session importing. This will leave the current audio intact while importing only plugins and audio routing.

## OMFI (OMF) / AAF and MXF

OMFI and AAF are cross platform file exchange formats. They allow users to share sessions with each other across a wide variety of DAWs without having to manually export audio and document plugin settings. Clips, midi information, volume and pan automation as well as a plethora of other options can be transferred via OMF or AAF files without any additional work on the users part.

MXF (Media Exchange Format) is a standardized wrapper created by EBU (European Broadcast Union) and has the ability to transfer video as well as audio. However MXF does not include edit information.

### Open Media Framework Interchange (OMFI)

OMFI was originally developed by Avid Technologies in order to allow other platforms to deliver sessions to Pro Tools more effectively.

### Advanced Authoring Format (AAF)

AAF is the newer open standard format for production and multimedia file transfer.

**Essential Data:** Core digital multimedia data including audio, video, midi, text.

**Metadata:** Non essential data such as descriptive and formatting information, date created, location, time code sync.

Most platforms contain an export to OMF or AAF option.

In logic it can be found under File > Export > AAF File...

In Cubase it can be found under File > Export > OMF File...

Ableton currently does not support OMF or AAF.

### Using Cross Platform files in Pro Tools:

There are two ways you can use cross platform files in Pro Tools, the first is to simply open the OMF or AAF file with Pro Tools. This will automatically create a new session and pull the data in from the source file.

The second way is to create a blank session, or use an already existing session and then import session data from the OMF or AAF file. Importing session data allows you a lot more control over what gets imported into the new pro tools session. Simply opening the file will pull everything in and that may not be always ideal for cross platform automation information.

## Importing Video

To import a video file select File > Import > Video... from the dropdown menu or use the quick key!

Note: Pro Tools is NOT a video editing software. In the latest versions it has offered a few simple editing tools but it is not meant to handle any real video editing. Editing video shouldn't be your job anyway! What this means is the available codec compatibility in pro tools is very limited. So prepare your video files either with quick time or any other professional video editing software to work with pro tools.

The most common formats of QuickTime movies being used in Pro Tools are:

- MJPG-A (Use for best performance of Pro Tools playback)
- PhotoJPG (Similar to MJPG-A with improved movie quality. Use high quality settings.)
- DV25 (Use for larger movie size and improved quality. The file size will be larger than MJPG-A. Required for sending video out firewire)
- H.264 (Can be taxing on the CPU. Issues with backwards nudging/scrubbing)

All of these should be wrapped within a .MOV container to be compatible.

Once you've converted your video appropriately outside (QuickTime, Toast, Final Cut, Handbrake) of Pro Tools it should import without any issues. It will also give you the option to import the audio from the video file as well.

After importing a video make sure that your session matches your video settings by setting the appropriate Feet + Frames and Time code rates in the session window as we discussed earlier in this chapter.