



Multimedia Storytelling using SoundSlides

by

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“It’s all storytelling, you know.
That’s what journalism is all about.”

– Tom Brokaw, NBC News

SoundSlides is a simple-to-use, fast method, for creating audio slideshows for the web.

•The program is available at www.Soundslides.com

It comes in two flavors(for both PC and Mac):

Soundslides for \$39.95

Soundslides Plus for \$69.95

This handout is based on Soundslides Plus. Its additional features are worth the money. Though all the basics are possible with the regular version.

Here we go:

Before you can create your Soundslides show, you must prepare your content. Soundslides does NOT edit photos or audio. A folder of jpegs and a single, edited, sound file is required **BEFORE** using Soundslides.

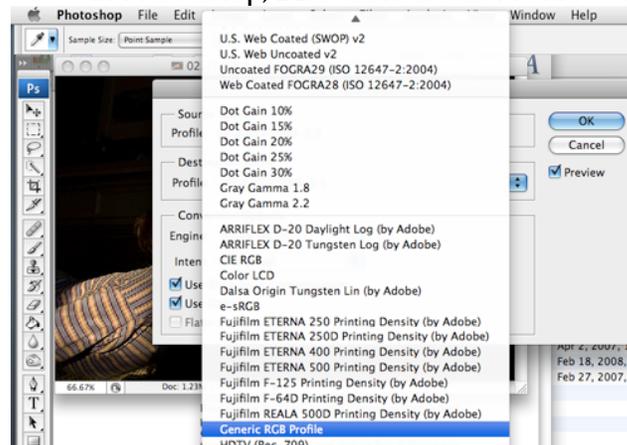
PREPARING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS AND AUDIO

I. THE PHOTOS

A. Toning –

First, convert your images to the generic color profile.

In Photoshop, Edit>Convert to Profile > Generic RGB



Images should be toned for display on the web. Slightly contrasty images seem to work best. Mac users should tone their images to look a little bit light for their PC brethren. PC users should think the reverse.

If you want to check your monitor, I suggest surfing to a good photo site and look at the images. If they look good on your computer, than you're probably in good shape to tone by appearance on your screen. I have used the Best of Photography competition's test image:

<http://bop.nppa.org/calibration+image.jpg>

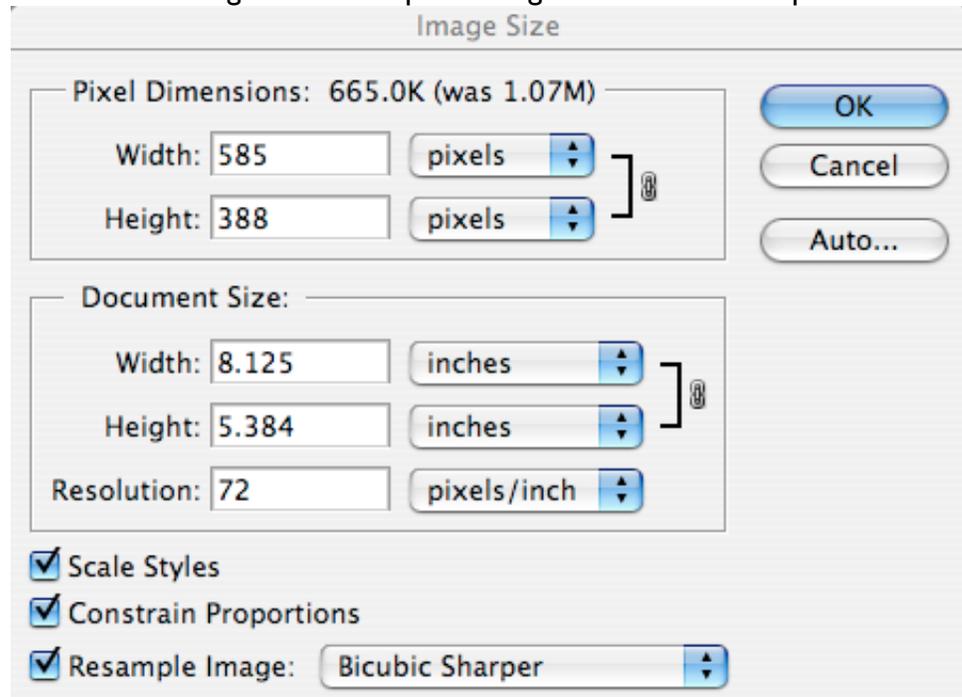
B. Sizing –

Soundslides **WILL** resize your images. BUT, you will have more control and have better quality if you size them close to your final output size at 72dpi.

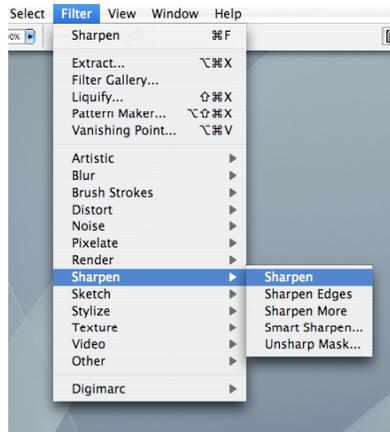
If you know the precise size of your show, I recommend resizing your photos exactly.

If you are looking to develop a workflow for a department, size all photos to, for example, 1000 pixels across the long dimension at 72dpi. And let Soundslides do the final resizing. (assuming that's larger than any show you might produce – you **don't** want Soundslides **upsizing** your images)

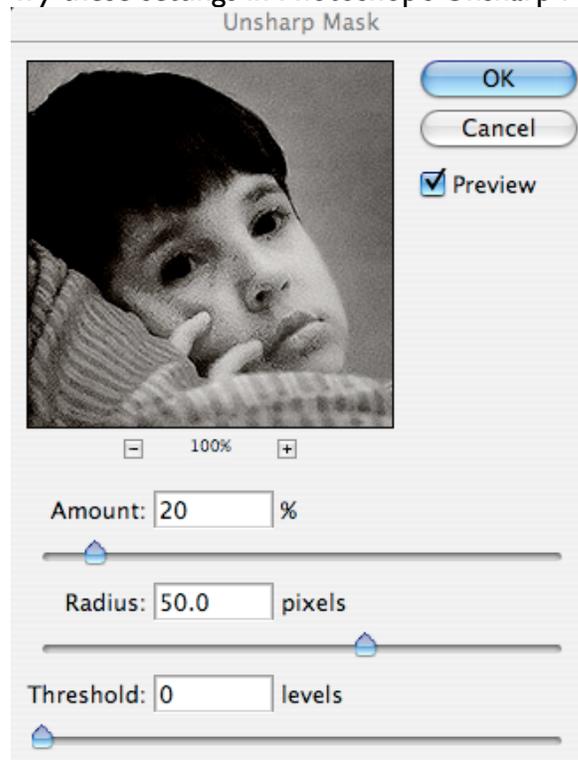
When downsizing in Photoshop use Image Size>Bicubic Sharper.



AFTER sizing, I sharpen the image using the Photoshop 'sharpen' filter.
* Underexposed, heavily toned, noisy images, may look better with unsharp mask.



I have also had good luck using unsharp mask to increase local contrast. This is NOT a sharpening technique, but rather a way to increase the apparent contrast of the image with less chance of losing highlight and shadow detail. Google 'local contrast' for more info. It's pretty amazing. Try these settings in Photoshop's Unsharp Mask dialogue box



- C. Saving – Save your files as jpegs at the **highest** quality setting.
* Soundslides can only import jpegs (NOT progressive). The program WILL recompress your images. So save at the highest quality for the least jpeg artifacting.

D. Naming & Captioning –

- IF you name your photos in sequence, 01, 02, 03..., SoundSlides will import them in order.
- You will be able to rearrange your images manually in SoundSlides.

- **Captions** – SoundSlides will import caption information entered into the IPTC caption field in Photoshop or other programs such as Photo Mechanic.
- Captions CAN also be entered or edited from within SoundSlides.

YOUR PHOTOS ARE NOW READY FOR SOUNDSLIDES.....YEA!

2. THE AUDIO

Audio must be edited in a separate editing program such as Audacity(free), Garage-Band(cheap, Mac only), PEAK, Soundtrack Pro etc.

All your sound **must** be in ONE sound file. A Soundslide show can only have one track. Audio files must be 16bit and have a sample rate of 44.1khz or 22.05khz.

For **best** quality SAVE your audio file in an uncompressed format.

On a Mac use the .aif format

On a PC use the .wav format

***NOTE** - To use aif or wav files SoundSlides requires the **free LAME** audio encoder. (The same free encoder can be used for Audacity to create mp3 files).

In SoundSlides, under the HELP menu, use the LAME audio encoder button. You can either download it and install it automatically, OR locate the file on your computer if it is already installed.

You'll only need to do this once.

SoundSlides can also import an mp3 file. But since the program compresses the sound into an mp3, using an uncompressed format will avoid compressing your file twice.

If you do use an MP3 file, it must be encoded to 32kbps, 48kbps, 56kbps, 64kbps, 128kbps, 160kbps or 256kbps.

NOW YOU HAVE ALL THE PIECES TO CREATE YOUR VERY OWN SOUND-SLIDES AUDIO SLIDESHOW

3. USING SOUNDSLIDES

A. Open the program.

SOUNDSLIDES plus

NEW Create a project

OLD Load a project

Recent projects

headline here ...
Tue Feb 5 21:51:34

headline here ...
Tue Feb 5 21:50:37

headline here ...
Tue Feb 5 21:49:23

Select 'New' – Name and Save your project (or select 'old' for works in progress)
*I use 'SHOW' as a tag. But you can name it anything. It is **this** folder you select if you need to reopen and reedit the show at a later date.*

NEW Create a project

Save your project.

Save As: mySHOW

Where: Desktop

Cancel Save

B. Select an output size. This CAN be changed later.
The size depends on your use – custom allows you to set an exact size to fit a particular website design.

SOUNDSLIDES plus

Output sizes

Small - blog embed

Standard

Large

Custom

Full-screen enabled

These settings can be changed later by selecting Output sizes under the Modify menu.



Load a folder of jpgs and an optional audio file.

Image format

Your image files must be RGB non-progressive jpeg files, and must have a '.jpg' file extension.

Audio format

Audio files must be 16bit, have a sample rate of 44.1khz or 22.05khz, and be either an mp3 or aiff file with the proper file extension.

C. Click on JPG and browse to and select the folder with your prepared images.



Load a folder of jpgs and your audio file.

processed image #8 out of 18



Load a folder of jpgs and your audio file.

All images done.

Audio format

Audio files must be 16bit, have a sample rate of 44.1khz or 22.05khz, and be either an mp3 or aiff file with the proper file extension.

D. Click on SND and browse to and select your audio file.

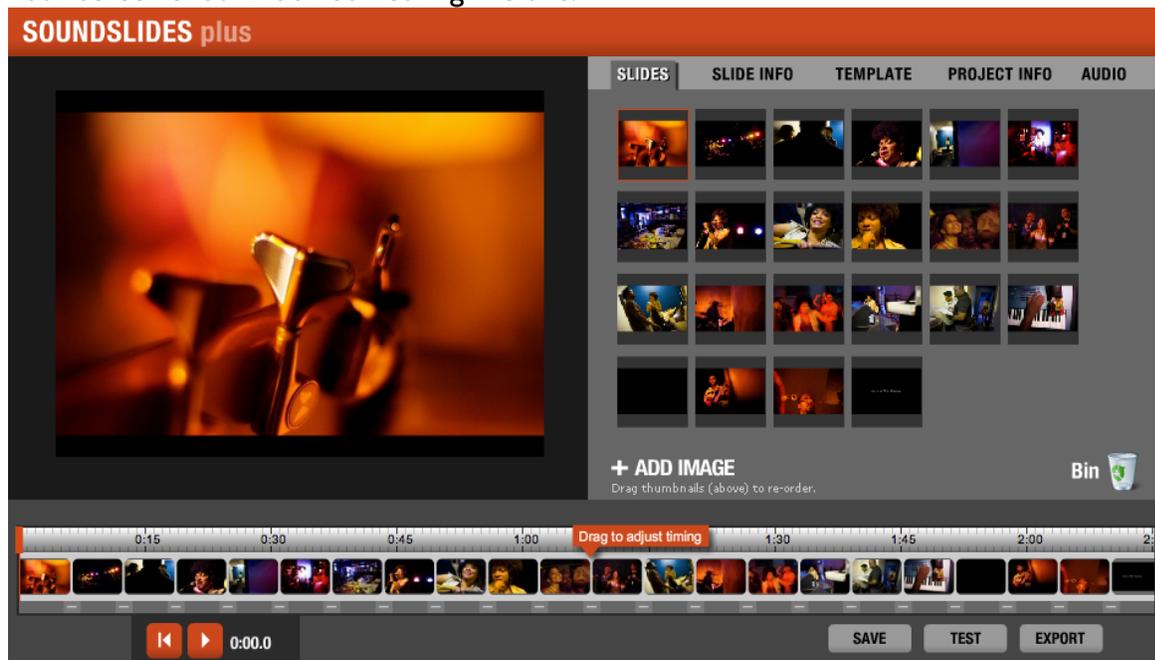


Load a folder of jpgs and your audio file.



Please wait, we've processed 115 secs of the file.
Taking longer than we thought.
Hold on, it's still working.

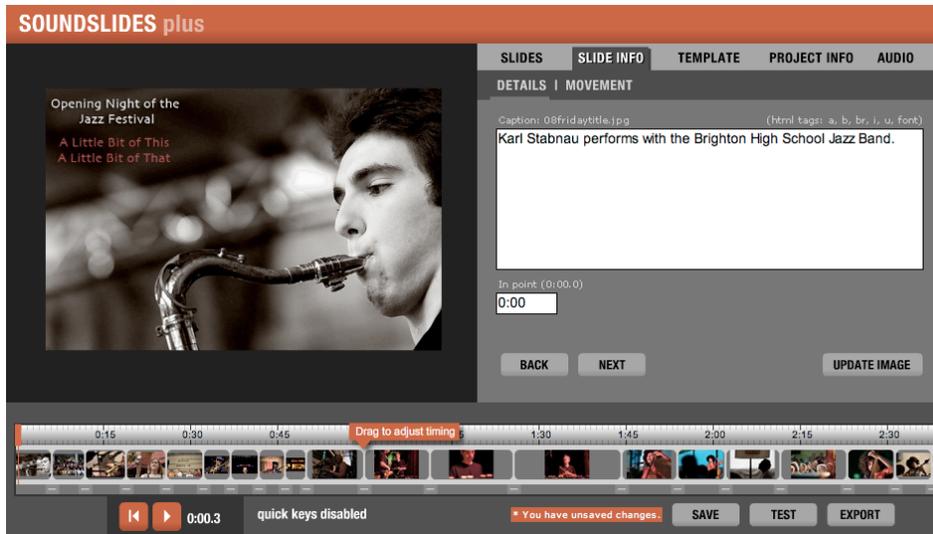
Your screen should look something like this:



CAPTIONS

Double click on a thumbnail on the right OR select SLIDE INFO to edit or input caption information:

New to Plus - Under SLIDE INFO - set the In Point for this image - the time the photo appears. Also new to Plus, the Movement option - this allows the Ken Burn-like affect of panning and zooming on still images. Perhaps the most **overused** feature of Soundslides.

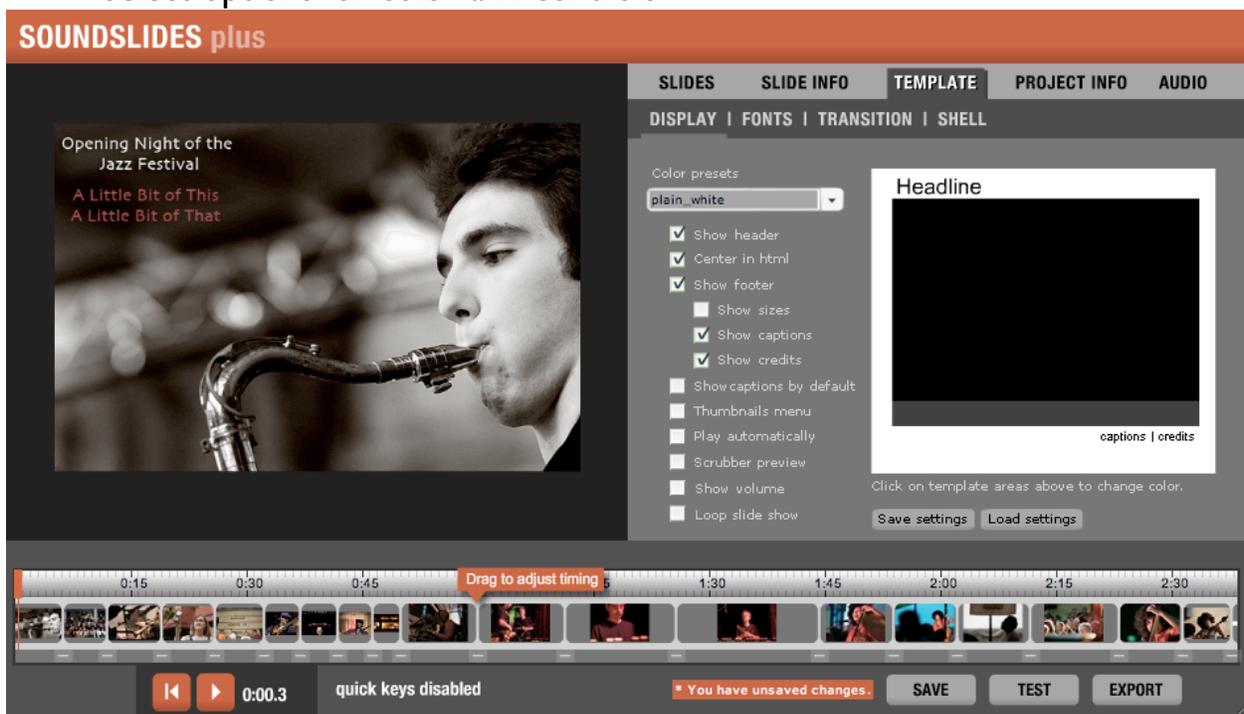


TEMPLATE

This tab allows you to set various parameters for the show:

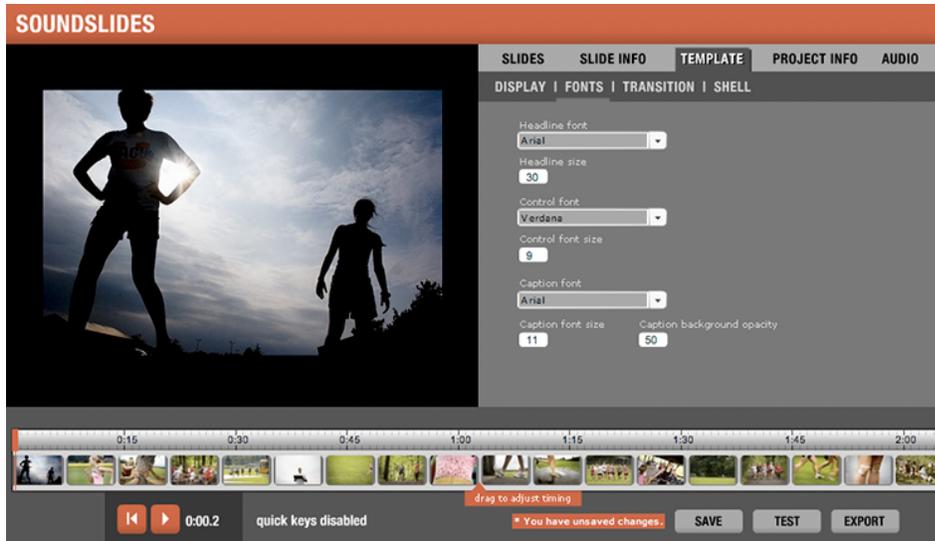
Display

Select options for color and controls



Fonts

Set size and fonts for display



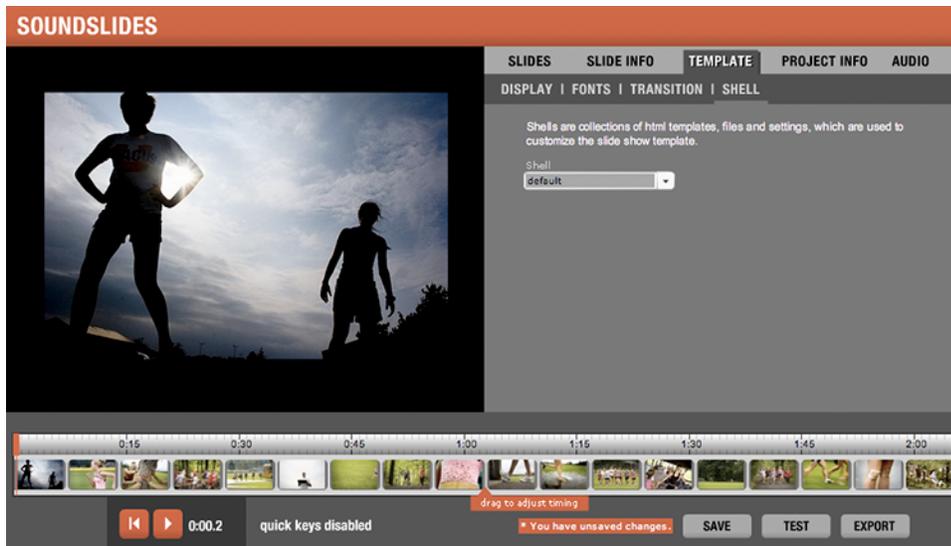
Transition

Set the style and length of transitions between images



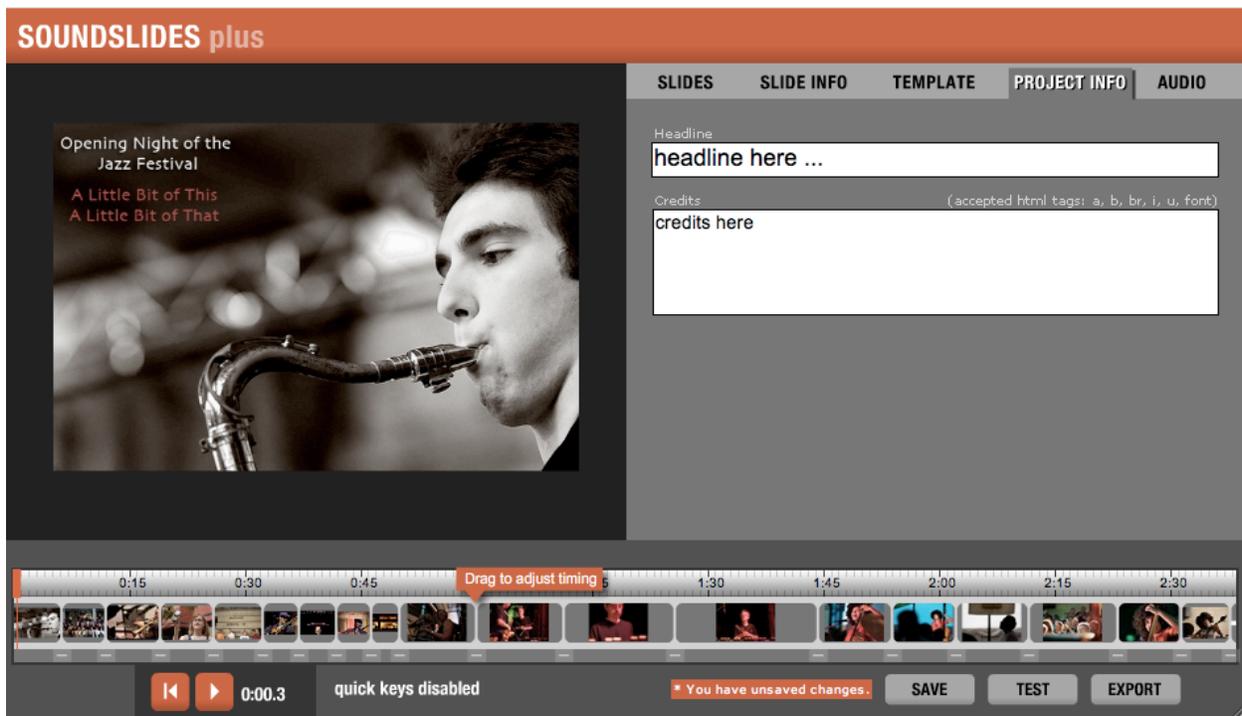
Shell

Select one of several 'shells' that can customize the show's appearance and functionality.



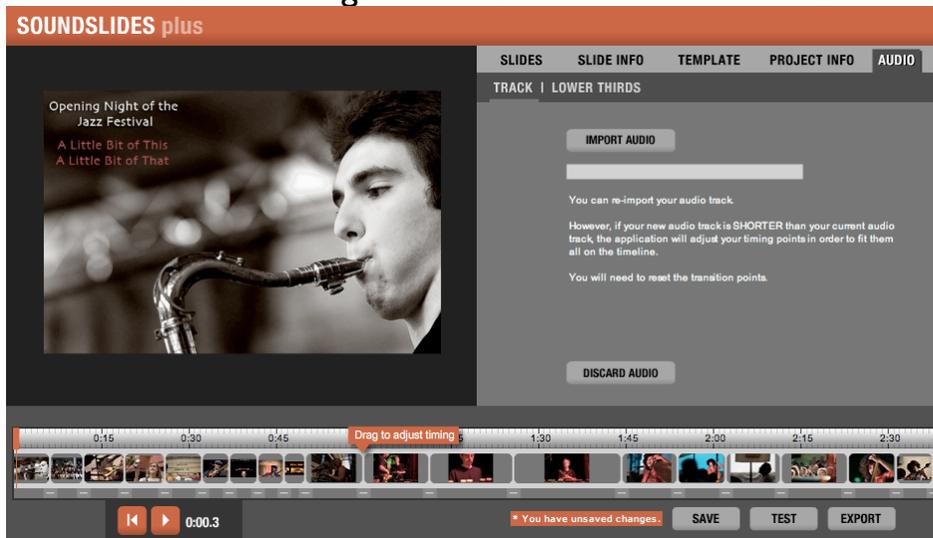
PROJECT INFO

Enter the headline and credits for the show



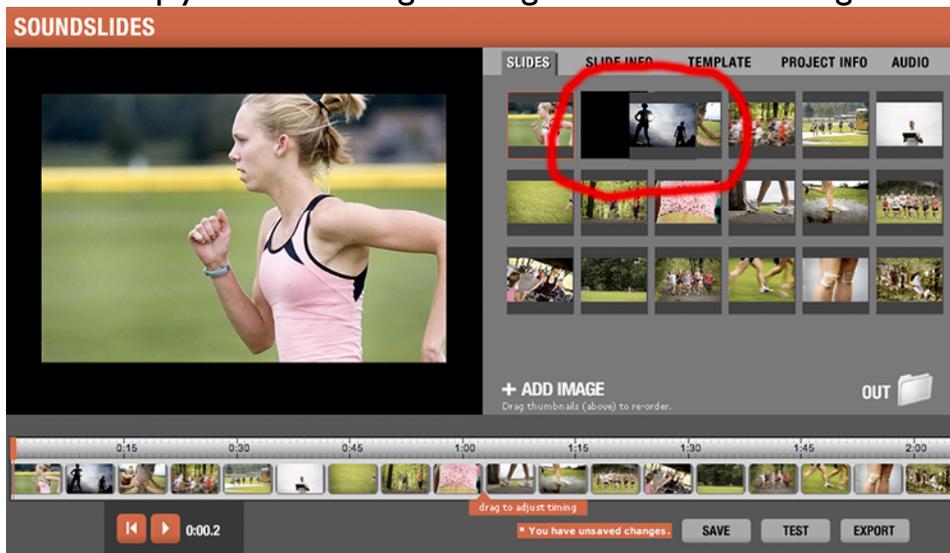
AUDIO

Reimport audio file. This will automatically replace the current audio track.
Discard Audio to change to a slideshow without sound.



REARRANGING PHOTOS

Simply click and drag an image thumbnail to change the sequence.



ADJUSTING THE TIMELINE

Change how long a photo is displayed by clicking and dragging in the timeline at the bottom. Click on the bar BETWEEN the images, not the images themselves.

When you click and drag, a time marker will be displayed.

You can adjust the timeline WHILE the audio is playing.



Two other ways to change the timing:

1. Manually adjusting the "in point" via the Slide Info tab
2. Drag-and-drop timing. You can drag a thumbnail down to the timeline. This will insert the file without altering any of the other image timings.

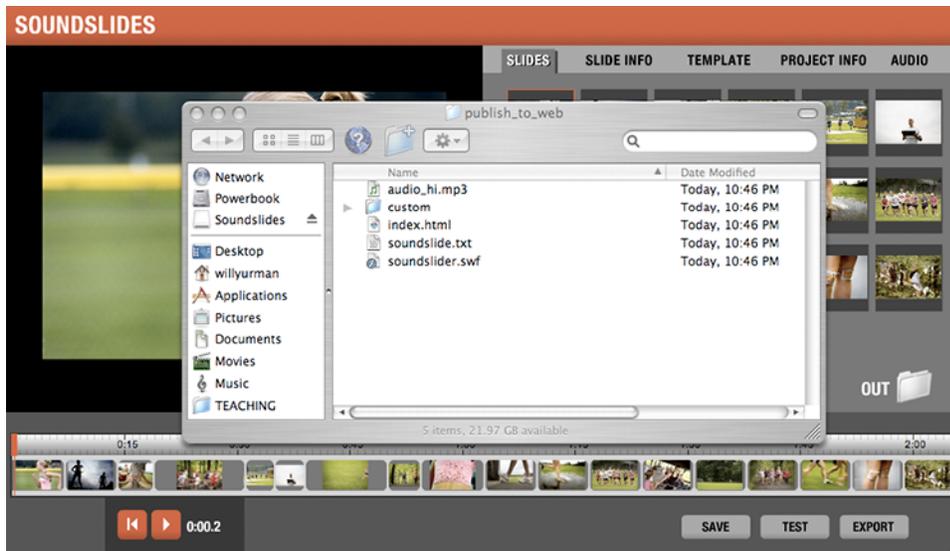
Also:

1. click on the white dashes under a photo to change an individual transition. (fade in, cross fade, straight cut)
2. Under the menu Timeline you can spread all the images equally, or spread the remaining images, from where the cursor is, equally.

Think You're Done?

- To preview your show, use the "TEST" button.
- To save your show, use the "SAVE" button.
- When you **are** done, use the "EXPORT" button to create the files you will need for your website.

Clicking "EXPORT" will create, and open, a publish_to_web folder INSIDE your project folder.



This folder CAN be renamed. But the entire folder must be uploaded to your site. This often confuses people. Your overall project folder is what you edit and build. The publish_to_web folder is what you post. Every time you click export, you overwrite your publish_to_web. (Unless you've renamed or moved it.)

DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO SEE YOUR WORK?

The next step is getting your show on the web.

Once you have your publish_to_web folder created, and renamed, you have many options for getting it on the web.

This will depend on what system you use for displaying your work:

- self-hosted and custom-built website
- self-hosted using Wordpress.org
- one of many blogs such as, blogger, tumblr, etc.
- a hosted site such as Wordpress.com

Other things to consider:

Multiple platforms – computers, phones, tablets

This is not a comprehensive list, but may help get you started.

A few terms:

Domain Name: This is the URL of your site – <http://www.WillYurman.com> for example. This can be an address anywhere. You buy your Domain Name, but still need to **point** it somewhere – to your blog, tumblr, personal site, etc.

FTP: (file transfer protocol) -- an application that allows users to send and receive files between remote computers. This is a common way of getting your work from your computer on to the Internet. Applications range from free (FireFTP for Firefox) to inexpensive (Transmit for example @ \$34)

Host – The computer or computer company that acts as a server for your website. Also used as a verb as in 'to host a site.'

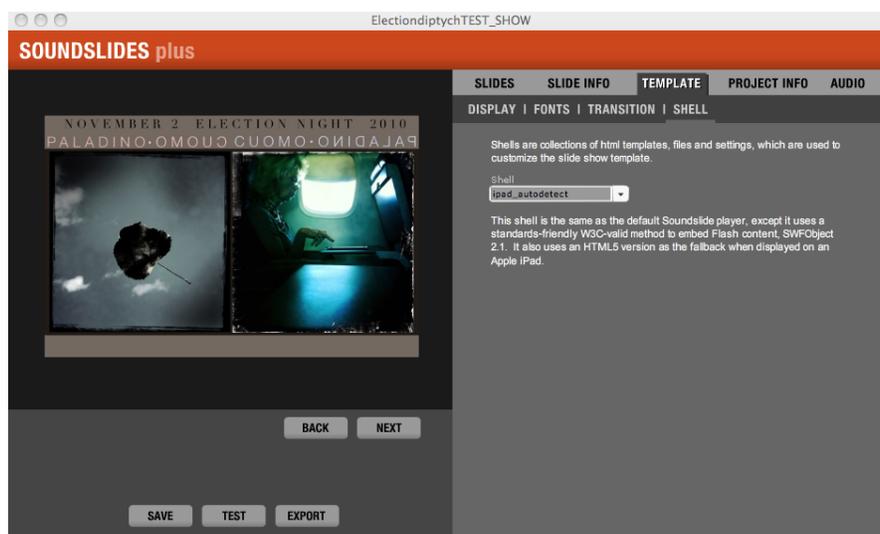
When you have your own website you contract with a company to 'host' your files. I use **Dreamhost**, there are many many many many others.

Things to know:

By default, Soundslides exports a series of files designed to play in a browser, using the Flash plug-in.

The **newest** version of Soundslides offers an additional option of creating a HTML5 compliant package that will play on the iPad.

To create this option in Soundslides go, you Soundslides Show to Template/Shell and select iPad autodetect. (I'm sure this will evolve quickly in Soundslides updates, the exact procedure may change)



Create a link to the index.html page inside the publish_to_web folder OR consult with your company's web folk for a method specific to your system.

You're Done!

“The universe is made of stories,
not of atoms.”

– Muriel Rukeyser