

EDTEC 561: Advanced Multimedia Development  
Multimedia Tools Assignment #1  
ReelDirector for iPad

Diane Main

A few months ago, I got an iPad, primarily with a mind for seeing how it could be used effectively in education, both by students and instructors. The early buzz had a lot to say about how this new device was primarily an information consumption device, intended for users to have content delivered to them. Critics reported that you could not create on the iPad. This is not entirely true. In the workshop I attended where I got my iPad, the leader mentioned ReelDirector, citing it as a near-iMovie for mobile devices. I immediately downloaded the app, but it was not until this past weekend that I finally began playing around with it.

Since I have used iMovie hundreds of times, I figured the learning curve would not be too steep with ReelDirector. I was correct in one sense: the concept of importing still images, sound, and video clips is similar, and the idea of putting transitions between such elements or text subtitles is quite like iMovie. It's just the interface that's really different. But the built-in online help is excellent and brief. If someone had never used iMovie before, they would probably want more detailed help, but the brevity was perfect for me.

Importing pictures to the iPad can be done a number of ways. For my first video experiment, I used images I already had on the iPad from another app called Wallpapers. I later taught myself how to transfer pictures from a digital camera to the iPad using the camera adapter kit you can buy for iPad. A few things were not totally intuitive, so I had to click around a bit to find out how to increase the length of time for each clip so that I could use transitions more effectively and put titles on a few of the pictures to advance the "story" idea. Putting in a title at the beginning and credits at the end is done in a settings-type box, separate from any other titles or changes you want to make to individual clips.

For this project, I did not import any video clips. However, I did use a Beatles song, which involves an interesting set of steps to import. I had the song in my iTunes on both my MacBook and my iPhone, but not on the iPad. That would not matter, anyway, since you can't bring songs into ReelDirector from iTunes directly. Instead, I had to get into the Import Music function in ReelDirector on the iPad while also opening a browser and going to a specified IP address on the MacBook – with both the iPad and MacBook on the same network concurrently. The directions for doing this are easy and straightforward; I had just never done this before.

There aren't as many features available in ReelDirector as there are in iMovie, but it still has enough to make it a great tool for video creation on the go. Unfortunately, the only way to view your work in progress as it will appear when finished is to render it. This takes quite a while, and can be frustrating if you keep finding things you want to change after rendering. The one part that stumped me for a while was exporting the video. I was able to save it to my Photo Album on the iPad, so I can view it from in there. But I wanted to post it online. It gave me the option of posting to my MobileMe account, but then it would not work. I finally decided to post it to YouTube, which worked just fine and was quite a relief.

See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAn2MABeBGM> to view the finished product yourself!