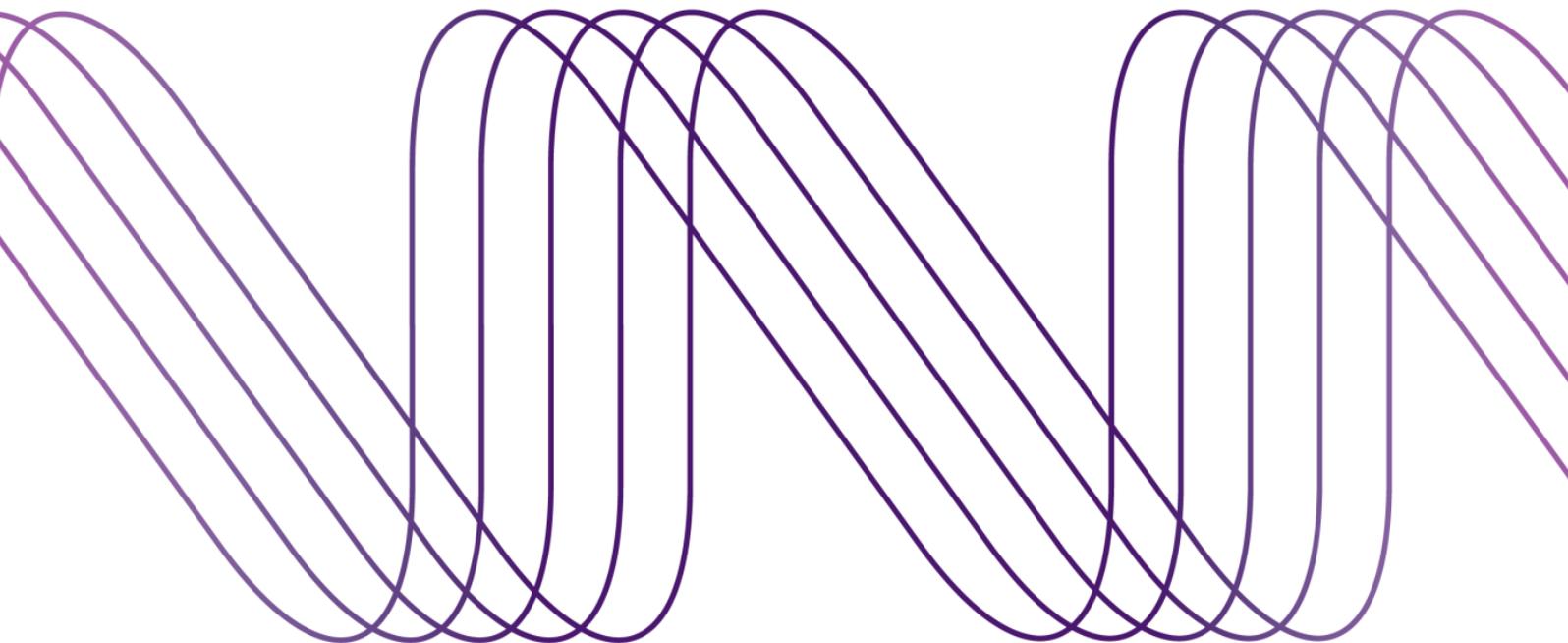

Using WeVideo for Digital Storytelling

A Simple Guide



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Overview

These guidance notes are to accompany Netskills' workshops on digital storytelling. WeVideo is a web-based tool that is free to use. It is ideal as an introduction to video editing as it shares many of the features and ways of working with more expensive pieces of software.

As WeVideo is a web service it is subject to changes in the way it operates without notice. It also needs a reliable and fast internet connection.

The guidance notes assume that you already have all the digital media you need to create your digital story such as narration, images, video and a plan for how they fit together.

How most video editing software works

WeVideo is an example of a cloud-based “**non-destructive**” video editor. This means it works through a web browser and that you can edit clips, add effects and so on but the original image or clip remains unchanged.

It's a **non-linear** system which means that you can move back and forth through the video, making changes here and there.

WeVideo uses **tracks** for video and audio. This means you can overlay lots of different types of media to play at the same time. For video tracks, any object you place in a higher track appears on top of all the tracks below it. For audio tracks, sounds will play at the same time as each other.

Remember...

Less is more. Avoid flashy titles and animations. Keep your “Ken Burns” effects and transitions subtle and purposeful. Blackness and silence speak volumes.

If you use extravagant effects, you draw attention away from your story and towards the technology; fun to do but distracting to watch!

1. Starting a project

To start work on a digital story in We Video you'll need to create an account, start a project and then create a video to work on. Once that's done you need to import all your pieces of digital media into your account.

Setting up an account

Start by going to <http://wevideo.com>.

If you already have an account with Google, Facebook or Yahoo which you are happy to use, click on the Log In button.

If you want to set up a separate account for WeVideo go to **Sign Up** and follow the steps. We recommend just setting up a free account. You can change this later if you want.

Creating a project and starting a video

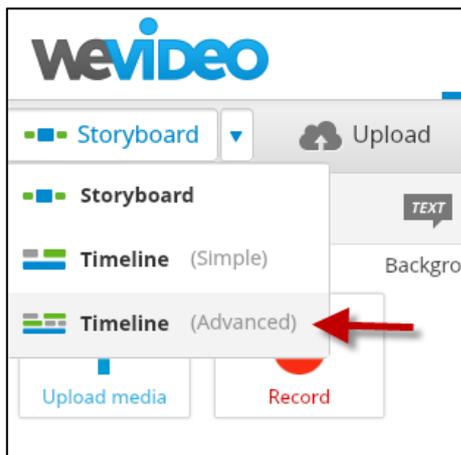
You'll land on your projects list page. Click the new project button and give your project a name.



Create a new project

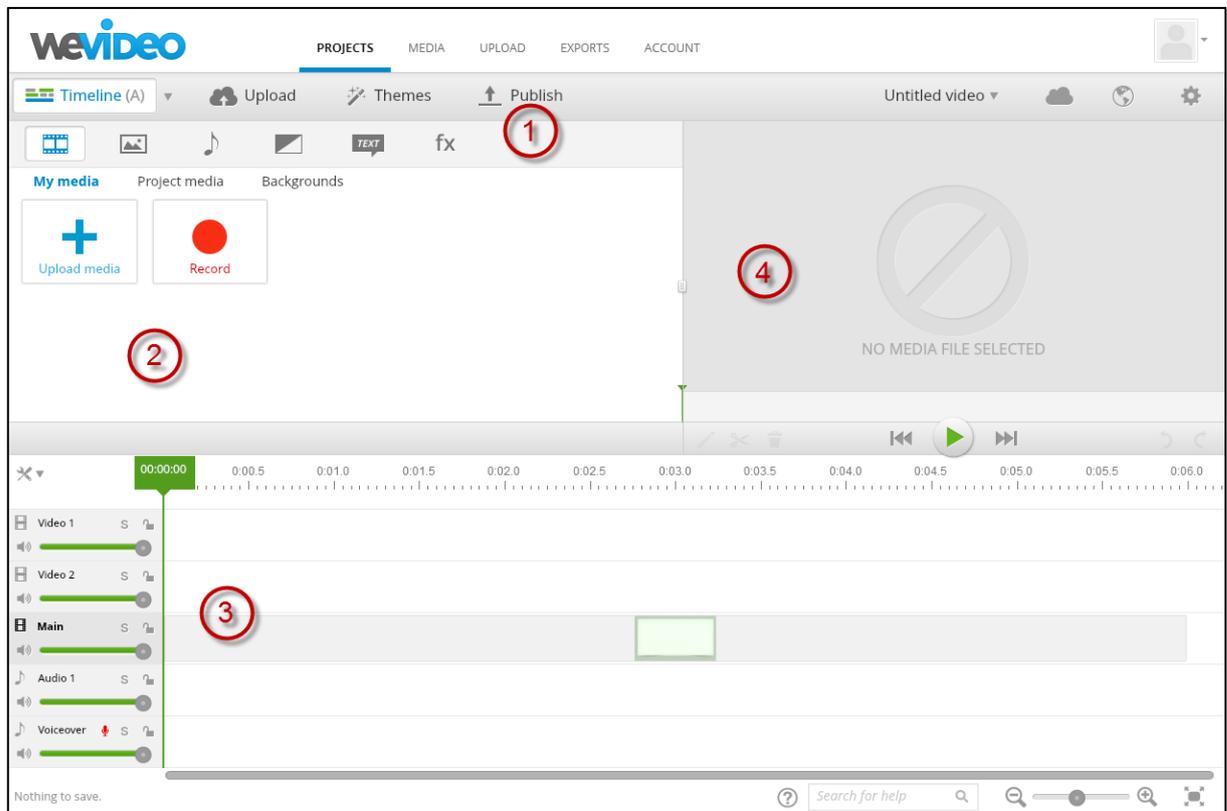
Now click the green **Create new video** button. You might be asked a number of questions the first time you do this. Don't worry about what answers you give, as we'll be setting up the workspace ourselves.

This takes you to the edit window. It may look different depending on what answers you gave the earlier questions. To get started set the window to **Advanced** mode. This will give you access to all the tools you need for digital storytelling.



Selecting the Advanced Timeline

This is what your page will look like:



The Advanced editing window

1. Menu
2. Media library
3. Timeline
4. Preview window

Importing digital media

Click any of the **Upload** buttons you can see in the window. You can upload directly from services like Facebook, Dropbox, SkyDrive etc or browse to the relevant folder on your computer.

They may take some time to upload, especially if the file sizes are big.

Once complete they will appear in your media library (2). These can be filtered by video, image or audio using the buttons in the menu (1).

2. Simple assembly

The “simple assembly” is a very rough version of your digital story. To create it you add your voiceover to the timeline and add your pictures so that they are timed to appear in the right place. You’ll add transitions as you go but no other effects at this stage.

You need to be editing in *Advanced* mode to do this step properly.

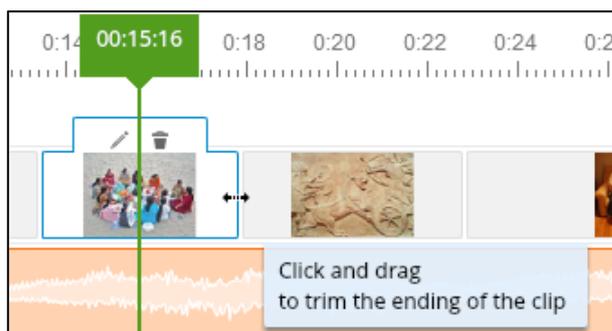
Adding voiceover and images

Use the media filter buttons to find your sound files. Double clicking on a sound file in the media library will let you preview it.



The media filter buttons

5. Drag the sound file for your story from the library into the Voiceover track. Make sure it starts right at the beginning of the timeline.
6. Now filter your media search by **Photos**.
7. Drag your first image on to the Main track in the timeline. It will automatically snap to the start of the video.
8. Play the video in the preview window to see if you need to stretch the length of the image to fit the audio.
9. You can stretch or trim your images in the timeline by hovering your mouse over the edge until a double-headed horizontal arrow appears.



Resizing and image in the timeline

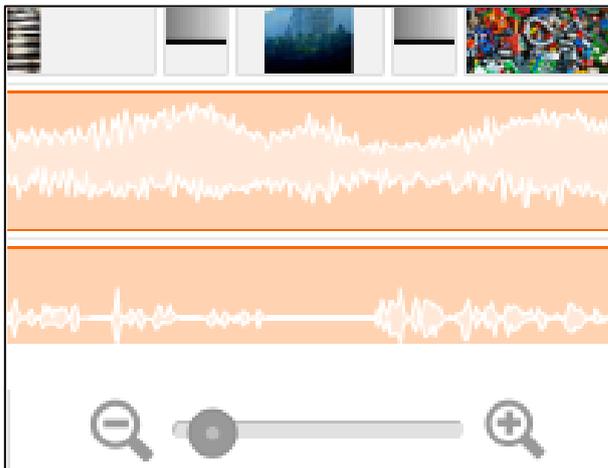
Alternatively, if you select an image in the timeline you can use the blue trim sliders under the preview window to alter the timing.



Resizing an image in the preview window

Zooming in and out

Sometimes it can be difficult to see the timeline in enough detail. Use the zoom function at the bottom of the screen to zoom the timeline view in or out.



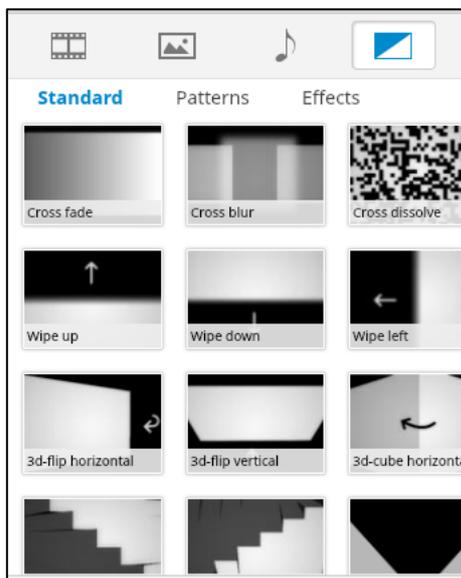
The timeline zoom tool

Adding transitions

You should add transitions between images as you work on this simple assembly step. Work from the start of the timeline to the end.

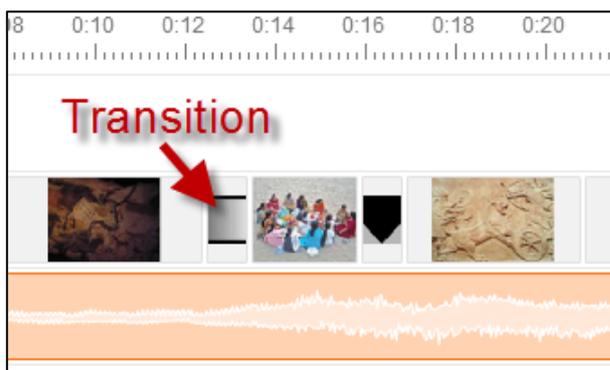
Transitions on WeVideo overlap the images which can affect the timings. When you add a transition between two images, check in the preview window that the timings are still correct and adjust if necessary.

1. Click the transitions button in the menu. We recommend just using the options on the **Standard** page unless you have a good artistic reason to do otherwise. The others are fairly tacky!
2. Drag a transition from the library between the relevant images on the timeline.



Choosing a transition

Transitions look like this in the timeline (see below). You can change the duration of them the same way as for an image.



Transitions are inserted between images or video clips

Keep previewing your video back to check the timings are OK.

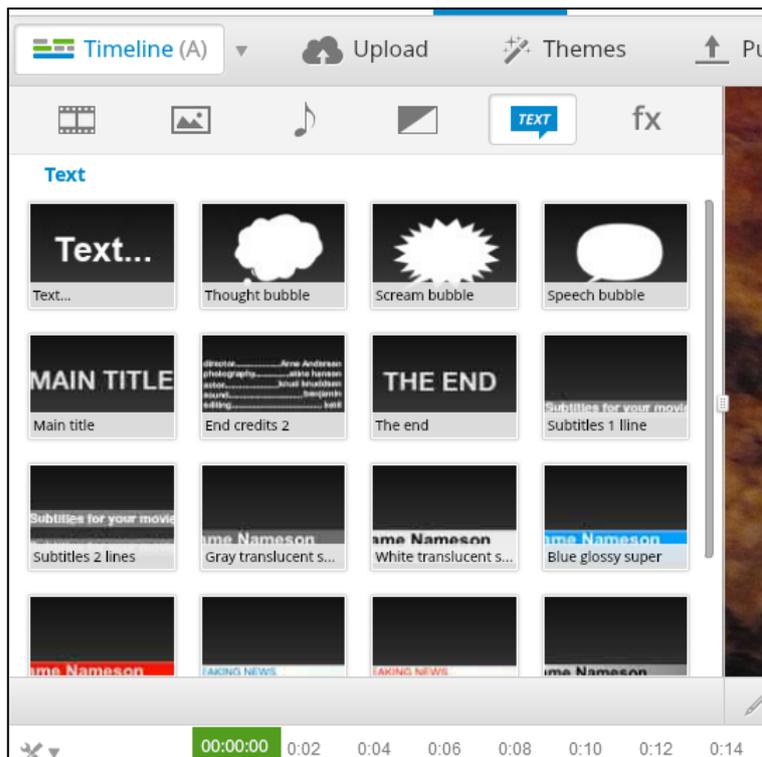
Note

You can't leave space between images in the Main track on the timeline. If you want the screen to remain black for a period of time add a title slide instead but don't have any text on it. Treat this the same way that you would an image. See the next section on how to add text.

3. Adding titles

You'll need to include a main title at the start of your story as well as credits at the end.

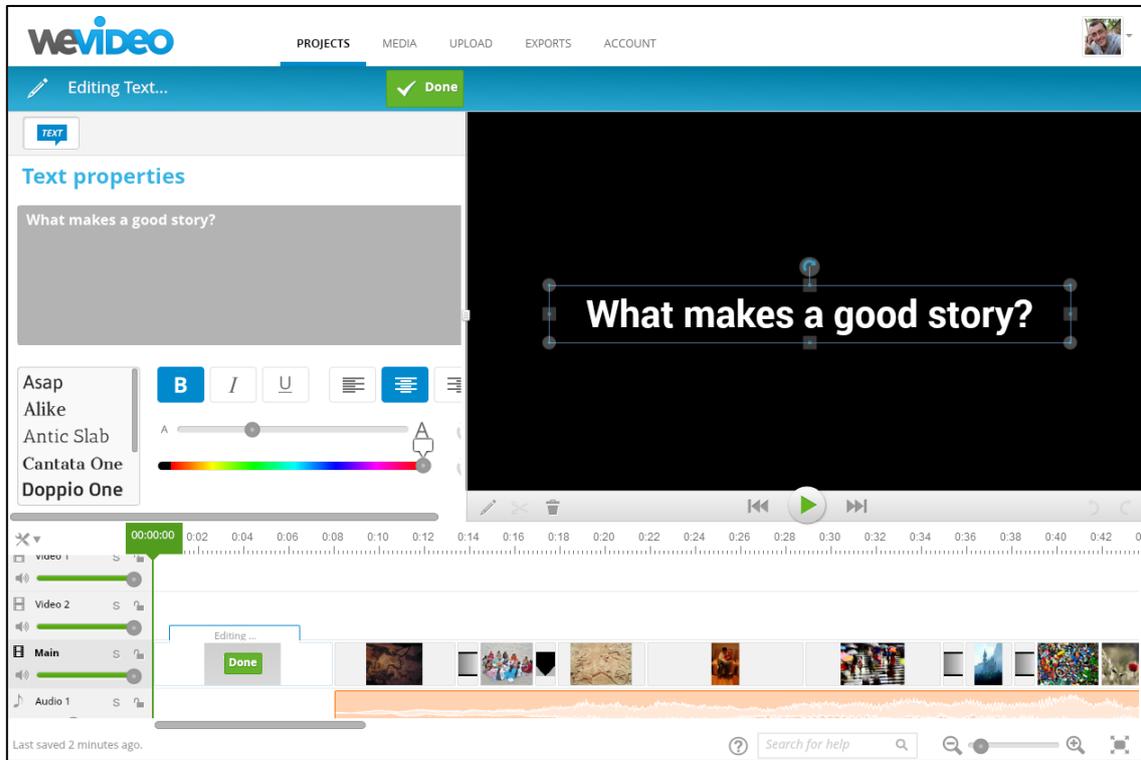
1. From the menu buttons choose **Text**. You may have an additional **Themes** and **Text** choice once you've done this step. Choose **Text** again to see the window below.



Choosing a text template

2. Drag the format of text you want to the relevant place on the timeline. If you put a title in at the start of the video the rest of the timeline will shift up to accommodate it.

- To edit the text, select it in the timeline and click the **Edit** (pencil) button in the preview window.

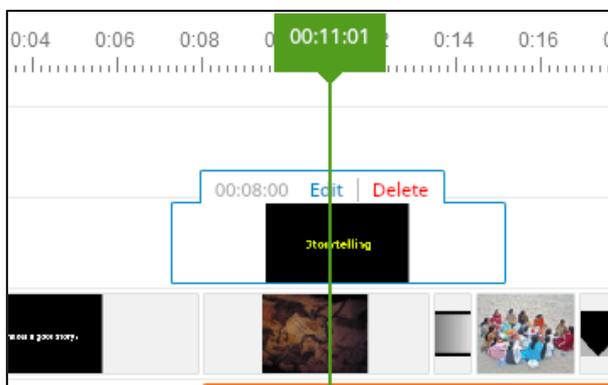


Editing text

- Enter the text you want in the big grey box and apply any formatting you want to it.
- You can move and resize the text box by clicking on it in the preview panel.
- Click **Done** when you're finished.
- Resize the text box in the timeline like you did with images and transitions to alter its timing.

Adding text over images

If you want the text to appear superimposed on an image drop the text box into Video 1 or 2 track. Make sure that you choose a text colour that stands out over the image beneath it.



Adding a superimposed title

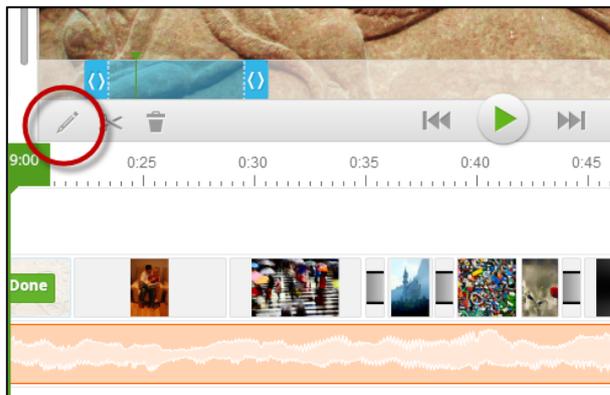
4. Adding special effects

You can add polish to your digital story with the careful use of special effects, especially the *Ken Burns* tool. It will add movement and help you get rid of black bars round the edges of your images.

Feel free to experiment with other effects but remember to keep them subtle otherwise they become distracting.

Opening up the “FX” window

1. Select the image you want to add effects to in the timeline.
2. In the preview window click the **Edit** button (pencil). The edit panel will appear on the left.

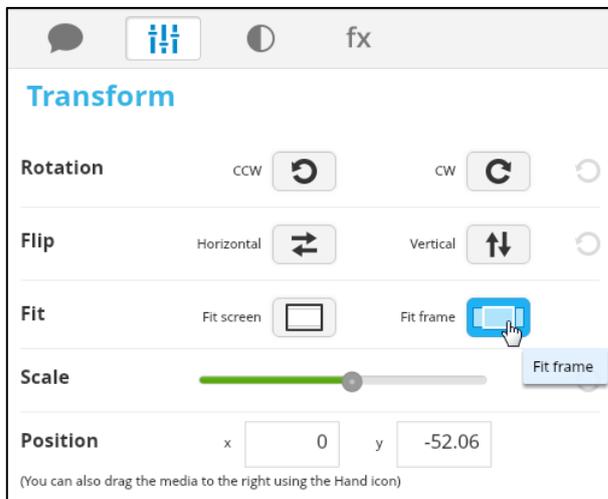


The edit button opens the effects window

Rescaling your images

Most photographs are not the same shape as a video screen. This means that some of your pictures will have black bars on each side. Filling the screen with the image makes it more immersive and professional-looking.

3. Click the **Transform** button in the menu (looks like a set of sliders).

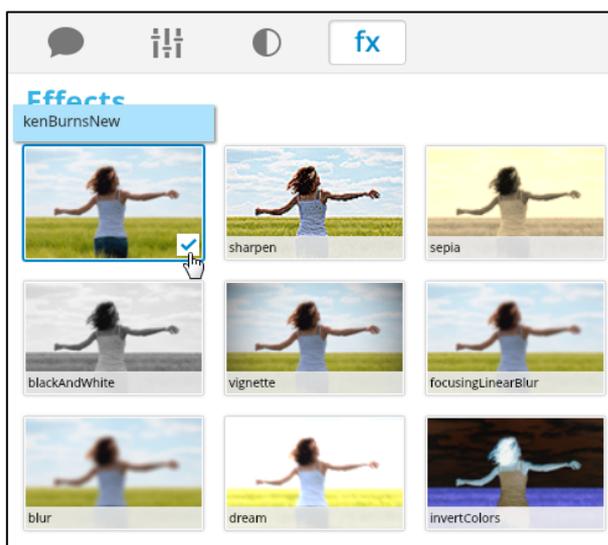


The image Transform window

4. Click the **Fit Frame** button to resize the image.
5. Use the **Scale** slider to make fine adjustments.
6. If you need to reposition the image you can click and drag it in the preview window.

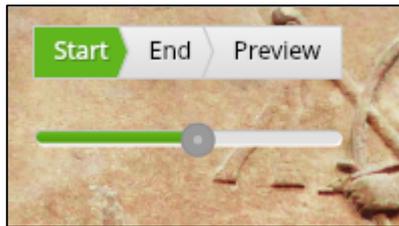
Adding Ken Burns animation

1. Still in edit effects mode, click the **FX** button in the menu.
2. Click the thumbnail for the *Ken Burns* special effect.



Selecting the Ken Burns effect

You set the motion of the image by telling WeVideo where to position the image for the first and last frames. The software then interpolates the frames that go in between.



Changing the Ken Burns settings

3. Click the **Start** button that is superimposed over the image in the preview window.
4. Use the slide to scale the image. Click and drag the image in the preview to reframe it.
5. Click the **End** button. Repeat the process
6. Click **Preview** to check you are happy with the result.

Tips

- Watch out for black side bars creeping back into the images.
- To change the speed of the animation either alter how long the image is in the timeline (longer duration = slower animation) or make the changes in scale and position less dramatic.
- Keep it subtle. Sometimes even the smallest movement can be enough to make the image come alive.
- You don't have to add *Ken Burns* to all your images. Just add it to ones where it will help you tell your story more effectively.
- Think about how you could enhance the feeling of objects moving using *Ken Burns*.

5. Adding and editing sounds and music

This isn't a necessary step but you can add an extra dimension to your story with the addition of music or sound effects.

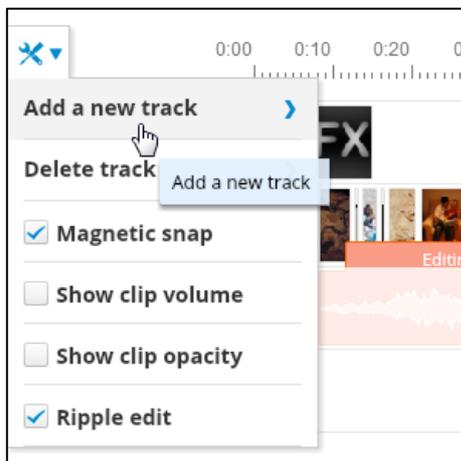
Editing audio in WeVideo can get complicated.

We recommend doing all the editing for your voiceover in Audacity *before* importing it into WeVideo.

Adding new tracks

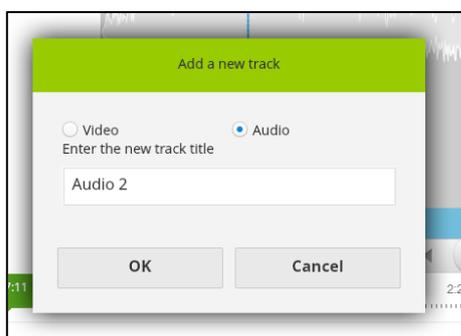
Sometimes you may want to layer many different sounds together. By default WeVideo displays two tracks.

1. Click the **Timeline Settings** button to the left of the timeline.



Timeline settings

2. Choose Add a New Track.
3. Select Audio in the dialogue box that appears and name it if required.



Naming the new track

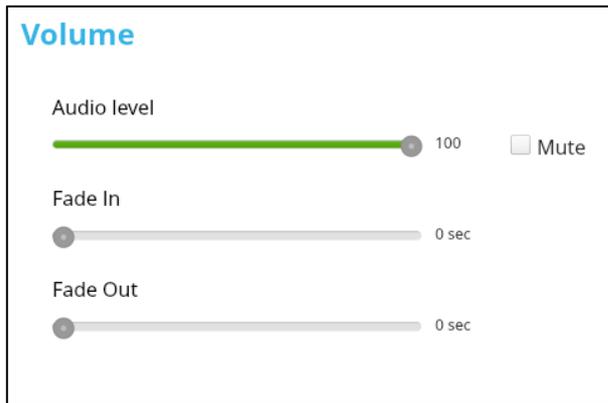
4. Click OK.

Editing Audio

Once in the timeline, sound files can be trimmed the same way you trimmed images.

If the volume is too high each track has a separate volume slider on the timeline.

1. Click the sound in the timeline and click the **Edit** (pencil) button for more options.



Sound editing options

2. You can use this window to set the volume as to what extent the sound fades in and out.

Note

The voiceover is the most important part of the soundtrack. Make sure all other sounds are the right volume so that they don't distract from it.

6. Publishing the finished movie

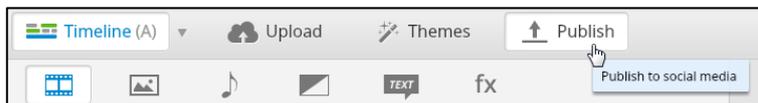
Now your movie is finished you need to publish it so you can upload it onto a video sharing site or save a copy on your computer. You can create a low resolution copy with a watermark for free or pay extra for something with better picture quality.

If you have a free account you are limited to 15 minutes of published video a month so only publish when you are happy with the video.

Free WeVideo accounts have limited options. For the full range of features you will need to pay for an account.

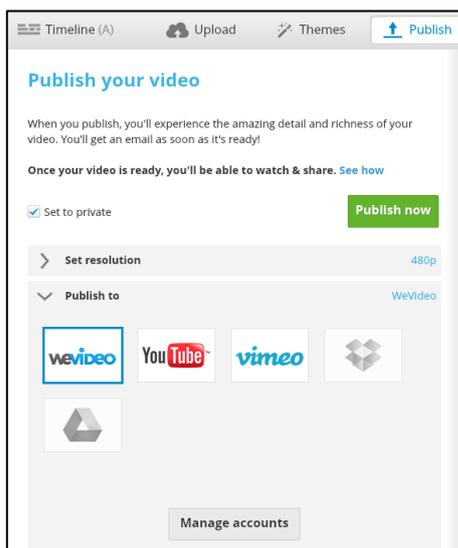
Publishing the finished video

1. Select the Publish option in the menu.



The publish menu option

2. Set the video to **Private** if required
3. Set your preferred **resolution**. The 480p version will be low resolution and have a watermark on it. If you want a higher resolution you can pay per video.
4. Select where you want to **publish to**. It will automatically publish to your WeVideo account. For paid accounts only, if you have YouTube, Vimeo, Dropbox or Google Drive accounts then you can link to them using the Manage Accounts button.



Choosing the publishing destination

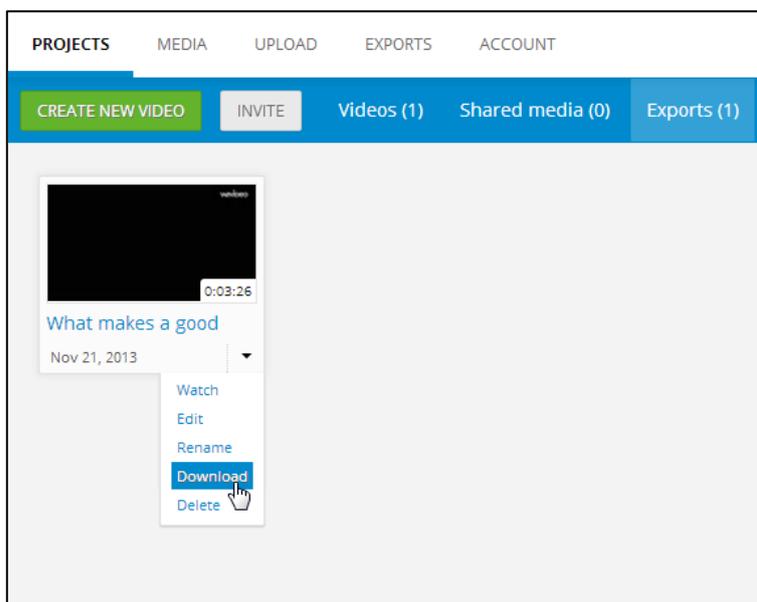
5. When you are happy, click **Publish Now**.

Downloading the video file

If you want a copy of the video to upload onto another site you can download it as an MP4 file. You need to sign up for a paid account in order to do this.

1. Click **Projects** at the top of the screen
2. Click **Exports** in the blue bar. You should see your published video.
3. Click the drop-down arrow and choose **Download**. Depending on your browser it should automatically start the process or ask for confirmation.

Where the file is stored will depend on whether you are using a PC or Mac and how your browser is configured.



Downloading a published video