

The Best Video Editing Tools When You Are on a Budget

Way back in 2012, when I wrote the initial version of the How to Make Videos for YouTube book (available on Amazon), there were virtually no affordable video editors available for Windows.

How the times have changed. Now there are so many choices that it's actually hard to choose. There are options that are extremely easy to get started with. There is software that will take you a lifetime to fully understand all of their features. Any of the editors below will give you access to special effects that were only available to the big movie studios 8 years ago.

All of that comes for free or very little money. It's a great time to be making and editing videos.

The Big 3

This first set of 3 video editors are all open source and rival most of the commercially available software. They are still in active development, so they will be better every year, and you'll get all of that for absolutely free. They are available for Windows, Mac and Linux and are easy to install.

Kdenlive

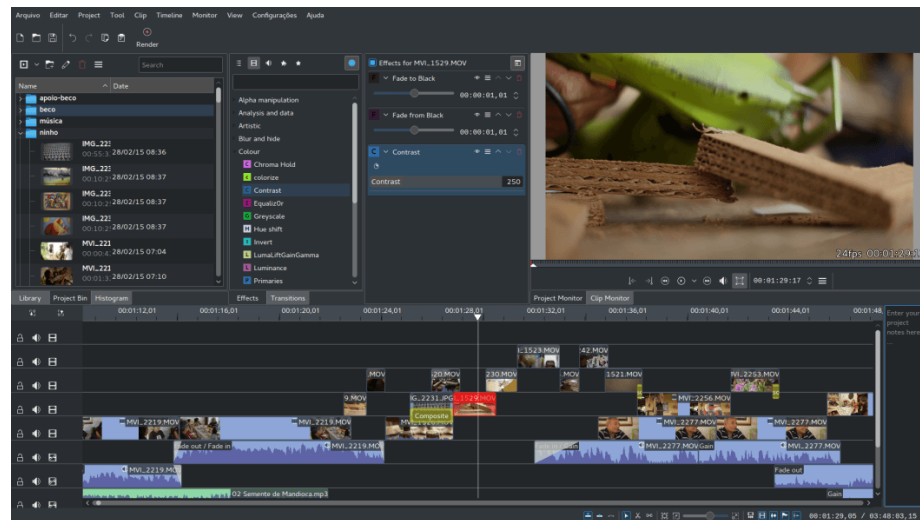


Figure 1: Kdenlive

Kdenlive is the proverbial grand-daddy of them all. It has been around for a long time. But only fairly recently has it become easy to install on Windows.

It has all the features you'd expect from a video editor. A timeline to arrange everything, a big effects library, preview functionality and export to any format you will need.

<https://kdenlive.org/>

Shotcut

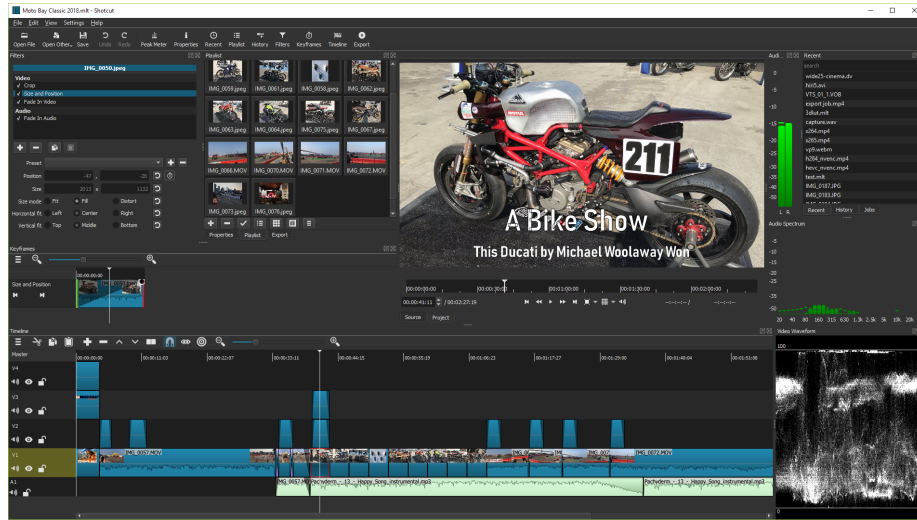


Figure 2: Shotcut

If you know any other video editor, you'll find the Shotcut interface very familiar. Its set of features is similarly extensive as the other video editors. And just as the other 2 editors in this section, it has its own quirks and features that some people prefer. Try it out and see for yourself.

<https://www.shotcut.org/>

Openshot

Openshot is the most recent project. This shows in a sleeker interface and an improved editor flow. That's why you should definitely give it a try and see if it suits your way of working.

<https://www.openshot.org/>

The “Everything and the Kitchen Sink”

One particularly popular option is Blender. You may not know Blender as a video editor, but behind a few tabs, you will find a fully featured editor. On

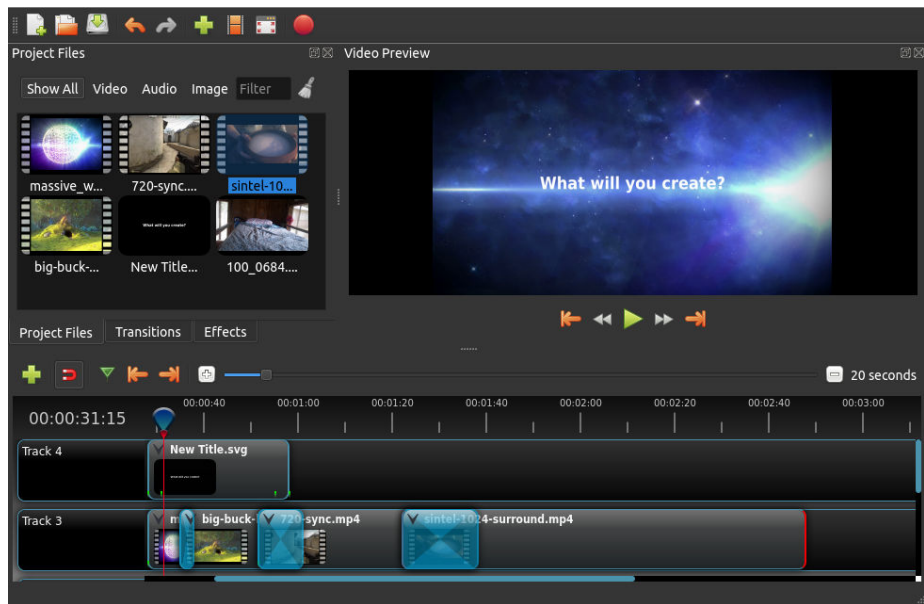


Figure 3: Openshot

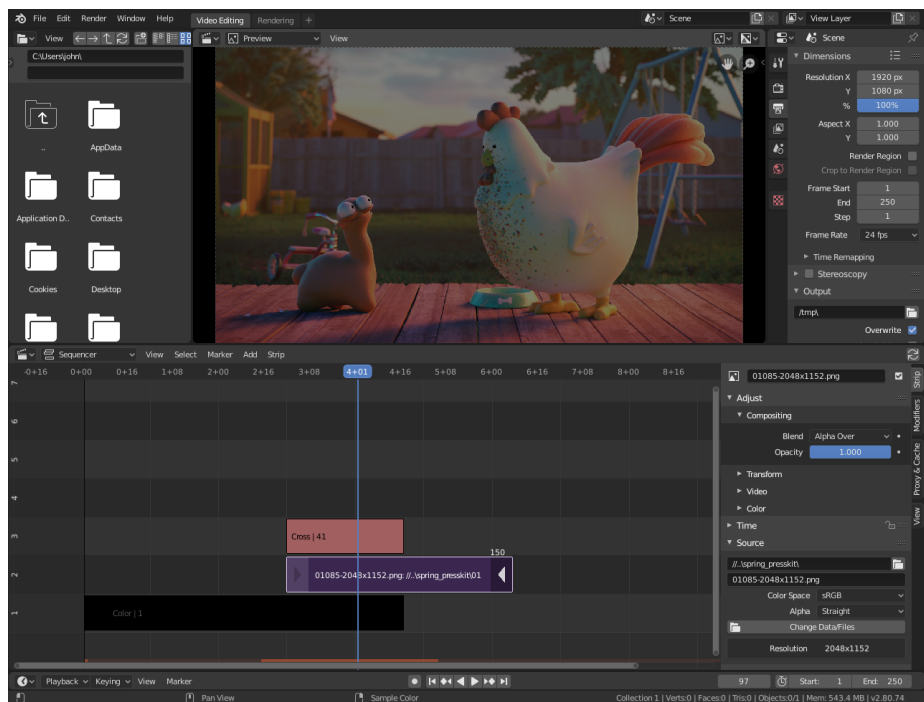


Figure 4: Blender

top of that, Blender also is a 3D modeling environment, a 3D renderer (to make photo-realistic images), an animation studio and much more.

Although the creators of Blender have made great progress in making Blender easier to use and more accessible to novices, there is still a steep learning curve. Once you master Blender, you'll have an incredibly powerful editor at your disposal.

<https://www.blender.org/>

The Runners Up

Although they are categorized as runners up, they are most definitely worth your attention. However, they are not open source, and not always completely free.

DaVinci Resolve



Figure 5: DaVinci Resolve

DaVinci Resolve is free, but not open source. Many people like it because it more polished than some of the choices above. Keep in mind there is also a “Studio” version with extra options and you may feel some pressure to upgrade to that (not-so-cheap) version.

<https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/products/davinciresolve/>

Animotica

If you are looking for a quick and easy way to get started. Look no further. Animotica looks deceptively simple, but it can do pretty much anything all the other editors can. And once you get used to its slightly different way of working,

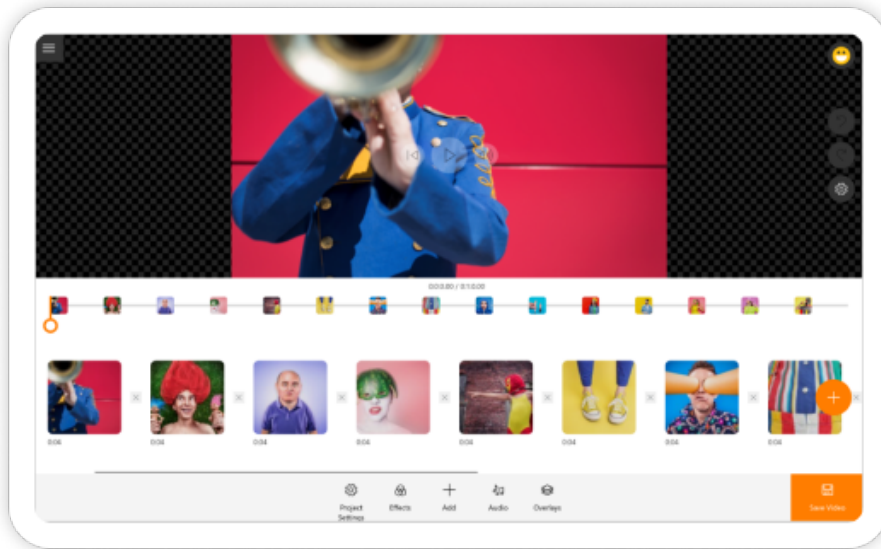


Figure 6: Animotica

you can do it just as fast. The only downside: Animotica is not free and only available for Windows. It's currently \$15.99, which is absolutely worth it.

<https://www.animotica.com/>

Movavi Video Editor

Similar to Animotica, the Movavi Video Editor also looks like a dumbed down editor. But, again similar to Movavi, it also packs quite a punch. If you prefer a more traditional video editor look, you may want to check out the “plus” version that also has more features.

The only disadvantage of Movavi, is that it's not free and you may feel nickel-and-dimed at one point or another, because Movavi has a large number of tools available that they will try to sell you.

<https://www.movavi.com/>

Something Special

All editors that were discussed up till now have a very similar interface. The videos are organized on a timeline and most editing happens on that timeline.

However, there are other ways to edit video. One where you organize everything in a tree like structure (nodes) and connect these in various ways. It's difficult

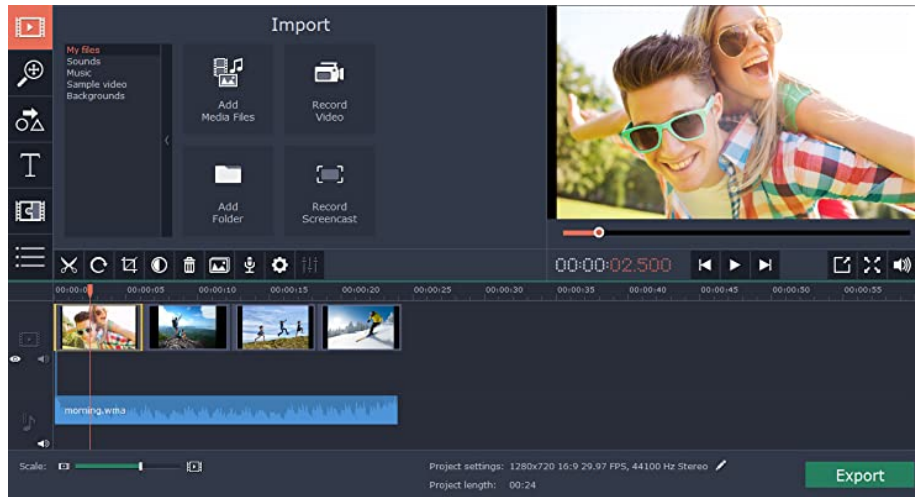


Figure 7: Movavi Video Editor

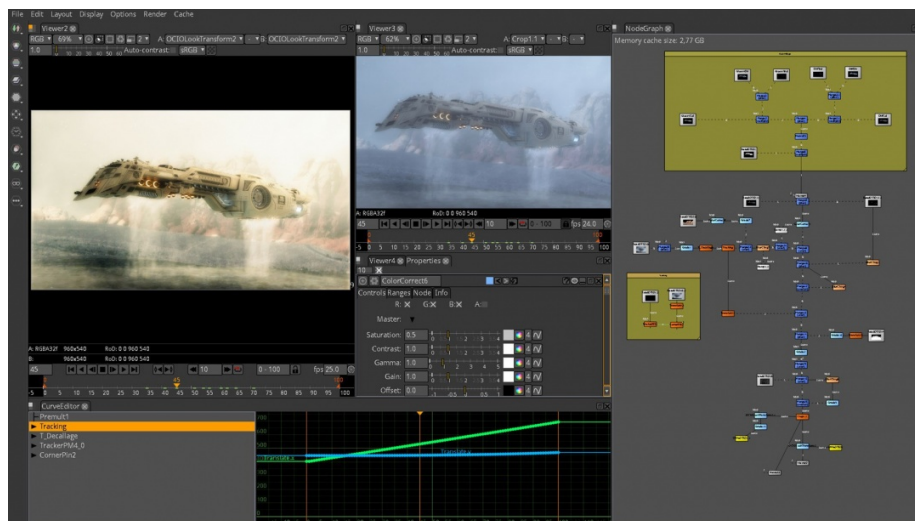


Figure 8: Natron

to explain without showing and it's a completely different way of thinking, so it's not that easy to get into.

This way of thinking is especially useful if you want to do very very advanced compositions of different videos and images. It's typically very useful if you want to do things like complicated special effects.

<https://natrongithub.github.io/>