

I signed up for a Korsakow workshop!

Now what?

This short guide is designed specifically to help you prepare for a Korsakow workshop. If you have questions after reading it, please visit www.korsakow.org for more help, or ask your workshop leader.

**Open source means anyone can look inside the program and modify or adapt the code that was used to build it. In other words, the source code is openly accessible. Other examples of open source applications include Open Office, The Gimp, Blender, and Wordpress.)*



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The Korsakow System is an exciting, free, open-source* application for creating special films that are sometimes described as database documentaries, interactive as database documentaries, interactive films, or nonlinear stories.

There is already a Korsakow website with lots of content, written to help you make Korsakow films. You'll find answers to many Frequently Asked Questions; a Quickstart Guide; a Manual, explaining every single feature of Korsakow; and, a Discussion Forum where you can talk to other makers.

In preparing to attend and participate in a Korsakow workshop, the best thing you can do (apart from downloading the application and taking it for a test run) is to very carefully prepare your media assets. This takes time!

What are media assets?

Korsakow films, unlike other kinds of stories, do not have a beginning, middle and an end. Rather, they're made up of smaller sections that can be viewed in different sequences each time the Korsakow film is played.

While books are divided into chapters and a regular movie is made up of scenes, a Korsakow film is made of Smallest Narrative Units, or SNUs. These are usually short videos, each one with a duration of anything from a few seconds to many minutes. Experience suggests that having, *at a minimum*, twelve SNUs in your Korsakow film will create a reasonably engaging viewing experience. Some of us use many, many more.

All the SNUs in a Korsakow film are related in terms of the overall theme, but each one may be 'about' something different; they may also be shot and edited differently. Some SNUs might be designed to introduce a theme or a character; others might be montages or talking heads, or combinations of these things. (I like to think of SNUs as 'mini-movies'. Each one has been shot and edited with a suitable soundtrack. I make sure each one 'works' in its own right, before I even begin using Korsakow.)

Since Korsakow is **not** a video editing application, your media assets must be edited before the workshop starts. The chief job of Korsakow is to turn those

media assets into SNUs, which means adding 'in' and 'out' keywords. (After that, we can think about designing the interface for the k-film, adding text and subtitles, and so on.)

Whether we call them mini-movies or media assets, we need to make sure they're ready to import into Korsakow before the workshop starts. The chief reason we sometimes 'lose' people at workshops (which is something we really don't want to happen!) is because they get distracted doing video- or sound-editing or compressing their media assets.

Prepping your media assets.

All your media assets (or 'mini movies') should be the same proportions in terms of the width-to-height ratio of the frame. This will usually be 16:9 or 4:3.

All your media assets should be the same size in terms of pixels, eg 720x480.

All your media assets should be exported and saved as .mov files, using the H.264 codec. (As a rule of thumb, your media assets should be no more than 20-60MB in size *per minute of video*.)

You will also need some media assets to act as previews for each of your SNUs. A preview can be a still image or a (very) short video. If it's a still image, it can be a screengrab - like the ones you see on YouTube before you press play. If it's a short video, it can be an excerpt from the SNU it previews. These will generally be about a third smaller than their associated SNUs. For example, if your SNUs are 720x480 pixels, your previews should probably be around 240x160 pixels. If they're stills, their resolution should be no more than 72 dpi.

File formats - required

Video files: .mov (codec: H.264)
Previews: .jpg, .gif, .png, .mov (H.264)

File formats - optional

Startscreen (still image at beginning): .jpg, .png, .gif
Audio files (background sound): .wav, .mp3
Subtitles files: .srt