

The P2 Workflow

from the perspective of a Mac user. The P2 experience on the PC platform is a bit different than on the Mac.

How much storage will you need?

- If shooting native, you'll generally get 2.5 minutes per GB
- If shooting in any other format, you can expect 1 minute per GB

After you shoot and fill a P2 card, assuming you are continuing on with shooting and not using the camera as a transfer device, you eject the card from the camera and either download the P2 card to a Panasonic P2 Store or to a laptop/hard drive. An on-set DIT tech is a HUGE help and having back-up drives is also recommended.

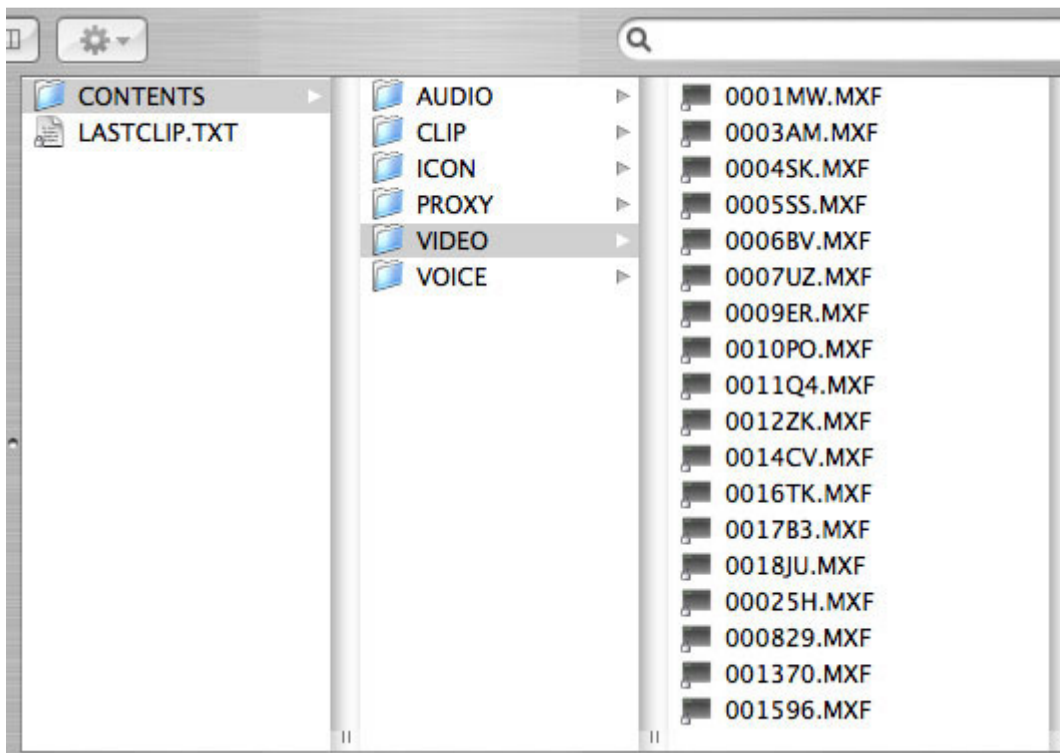
The **Panasonic AJ-PCS060 P2 Store** is a rugged, simple to use storage unit for the P2 cards that features a shock-resistant 60GB hard drive.

NOTE: When downloading, your DIT will need to **select BOTH the lastclip.txt AND the CONTENTS FOLDER** and drag them both to a **unique folder named for that card** on your back-up drive(s).

- **Date** If a multi-day shoot.
- **Scene Number** Putting the scene number onto the P2 tracking sheet can prove to be a lifesaver in post.
- **Camera Number** If a multi-camera shoot.

Once you have ingested the P2 cards and filled the P2 Store to its capacity (you can do this as you shoot, instead of waiting till the P2 Store is full), you then hook up the P2 Store to your computer via a USB 2.0 connection. With a full P2 store, seven or eight different "drives", each labeled "No Name" will appear on your desktop.

The P2 cards are not merely dumped directly to the hard drive in the P2 Store. If they were, you would discover a random assortment of folders containing a very confusing array of sub-folders, .TXT files, .MXF files, .XML files. Below is an image of how the P2 file system lists and categorizes its various components. P2 cards utilize a relatively new file format called .MXF. Because of the IT oriented workflow of P2, the .MXF files and their supporting other files all combine to become your "camera master".



As of today, Final Cut Pro does not natively support MXF media, it converts media to Quicktime, but I still always recommend archiving the HVX-200s original .MXF files as your "vault master tape" since FCP may someday support native .MXF.

The P2 Store actually ingests and stores each P2 card as an individual drive. Because of file allotment issues relating to FAT32 disk allocation, you will only be able to fit seven to eight P2 cards per P2 Store, regardless of how much content you have written to each of the cards. This is a limitation of how the P2 system and the file formatting system for hard drives are designed.

Once you have transferred the media from the P2 store, it is a simple and quick operation to scrub the hard drive clean (see image sequence below)



Download Time:

The P2 Store so far has been functionally bulletproof and very reliable, but for some reason, downloading media from the P2 Store to a Mac, any Mac, has been very slow. The P2 Store only has a USB 2.0 interface available, no FireWire 400 or 800. There is a small switch on the back of the P2 Store that chooses whether or not the P2 Store verifies the data. Even with the switch turned off, transfers from the P2 Store to the Mac take more than twice as long as just inserting the P2 card into the PCMCIA slot on a Powerbook G4.