

Sony Vegas +DVD Production Suite

Audio's standard-bearing package for the video world has changed hands and undergone a number of refinements. **ROB JAMES** looks at Vegas V5 and DVD Architect 2 Plus AC-3 Encoder and judges it a cost-effective way to get a postproduction suite.

THE MIDDLE GROUND nonlinear editing market is moving on apace. Neatly mirroring the DAW experience, prices are falling and the feature count is rising. Although necessarily there are common factors to all the big players' packages, there is one wild card that has always managed to go its own way. Adobe's Premiere, Pinnacle's Liquid Edition and even the new Canopus Edius all follow the model set down by the phenomenally successful Avid Media Composer to a greater or lesser extent. Vegas Video, on the other hand, began life as Vegas Audio, developed by Sonic Foundry, and these audio roots arguably make for an easier transition to video for people who are more used to audio workstations. For example, there is no twin-screen source-edit window but there is an excellent trimmer.

When Sony Pictures Digital Networks bought Sonic Foundry, it was the cause of some consternation among the existing user base because of worries about the future development directions that Sony might impose. This is the first major release since the take-over and should successfully allay any remaining fears and win plenty of new adopters.

The standalone editing part of the package, Vegas 5 is now priced at a very reasonable UK£424.68 (+VAT) and includes Boris Graffiti 3.0 LTD for 2D titling. But the real steal is the whole package, complete with DVD Architect 2 and 5.1 Dolby licensed AC-3 encoder for a mere UK£638.30 (+VAT). To put this into perspective, a few years back, when I reviewed Sonic Foundry's earlier AC-3 encoder, Soft Encode, the price was the same or more than this complete package.

Vegas 5 has been given on-the-fly, punch-in recording. This will be useful for recording commentary to picture and, of course, ADR as well as



music. It has also gained envelope automation recording. This can be written using the on-screen faders for audio and further adjusted using the usual

'rubber-band' technique. Vegas also has support for a single Mackie Control Universal or up to five generic MIDI controllers. Continuing with the audio