

FILM/VIDEO EDITOR

Kaiwhakatika Whitiwhaitara/Ripene Ataata

Print Page

Description

Film/video editors tell a story by joining together film or video images, graphics and text, usually by following a script or working with directors or journalists.



Laura Williams editing using analogue equipment

He Whakamarama



Ko te Kaiwhakatika Whitiwhaitara/Ripene Ataata mahi ko te whakatakoto korero/pakiwaitara ki te honohono i nga whakaahua me nga pikitia me nga kupu o nga whitiwhaitara - nga ripene ataata ranei. I te nuinga o nga wa ka whaia tetahi tuhi-a-ringa, a, ka mahi tahi me te kaihautu ranei, te kairipoata ranei, te kaiwhakaari auaha ranei.

"Na te rehe!"

Alternative Titles

- Supervising Editor
- Assistant Editor
- Off-line Editor
- On-line Editor
- Video Tape Editor
- Editor (Film/Video)

Tasks and Duties

Depending on what they are editing, film/video editors:

- receive film or video footage from the production department
- convert all footage onto a disk
- match pictures with sound (for film only)
- view video or film with director, journalist or producer
- decide on and mark up shots to be cut out or kept
- link shots into a rough version
- edit film to exact final length
- make sure copy meets with censorship standards
- may supervise final mix of pictures with soundtrack
- may work on soundtrack, adding any music or special effects
- may add graphics and titles
- may collect or copy film for library.

Personal Requirements

Skills

Film/video editors need to have editing and story-telling skills, skill in interpreting ideas, creative ability, some basic maths and technical skills to operate equipment such as a computer editing system, and good planning and organisational ability. Computer skills are also useful for film/video editors.



Computerised editing equipment

Knowledge

Film/video editors need to know how to use film and video editing systems and equipment, including how to convert taped footage to disk, and how to creatively use pictures and music to tell a story. They need to know about special visual and sound effects. It is important to keep up-to-date with editing technology, and to have a knowledge of the production process. If they are working on a film, they need to know how to handle film stock.



"The system editors use are often very complicated, and the people who hire you expect you to be able to run it, and run it well."

Mark Taylor, Film/Video Editor

Personal Qualities

Film/video editors need to be able to work fast while under pressure. They need to be methodical, very well organised, reliable and responsible, flexible, tactful, patient, and self-motivated. It is also very important for them to be able to work well with people, as they often have to spend long periods in editing rooms with journalists and/or directors and producers.



"You have to be good at problem-solving because that is what editing is. You are handed all these tapes and you have to solve the problem of putting them all together, or the computer goes down and you have to solve the problem with it."

Mark Taylor, Film/Video Editor

Physical Requirements

Film/video editors must have normal colour vision. They may also have to spend long periods of time sitting in small editing suites.



Mark Taylor using digital editing equipment

How to Enter the Job

Education

There are no specific educational requirements for film/video editors, but a tertiary qualification involving editing is useful and often needed to enter the industry. However, it is also possible to be trained on the job by entering at a junior position. English and media studies may be useful subjects to study.

Related courses:



[Media and Broadcasting Skills](#)
[Media Production \(General\)](#)
[Video and Television](#)
[Audio, Music and Radio](#)

Take off to tertiary!

[Take off to tertiary!](#) - information and advice to help with study or training decision -making.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority:

[Electronic Media](#)



Film and Television Performance Production

Entry Requirements

There are no other entry requirements to become a film/video editor.

Useful Experience

Experience making amateur films and home videos, or any training in how to use film and/or video editing equipment, especially computer-based packages like Avid, may be useful for film/video editors.

Training on the Job

There is no specific on-the-job training for film/video editors; however, they do continue to gain new skills while working.

Working Conditions

Work Places and Travel

Film/video editors work in editing suites, television and film studios, film archives and libraries, private production companies and in-house video units in companies or government departments. They may occasionally travel within New Zealand or overseas with a film crew while working on location shoots and/or sporting and news events.

Equipment

Film/video editors often use computerised editing suites, and if working in film, they may use gloves, a splicer, trim bins and editing, rewind and pic sync benches.



"Technology in editing is always changing. Video technology is up there with aerospace technology: they put a lot of money into it and it moves along quite quickly."

Mark Taylor, Film/Video Editor

Workplace Conditions

Workplace conditions are usually indoors and may be high-pressure due to deadlines.



Analogue editing equipment

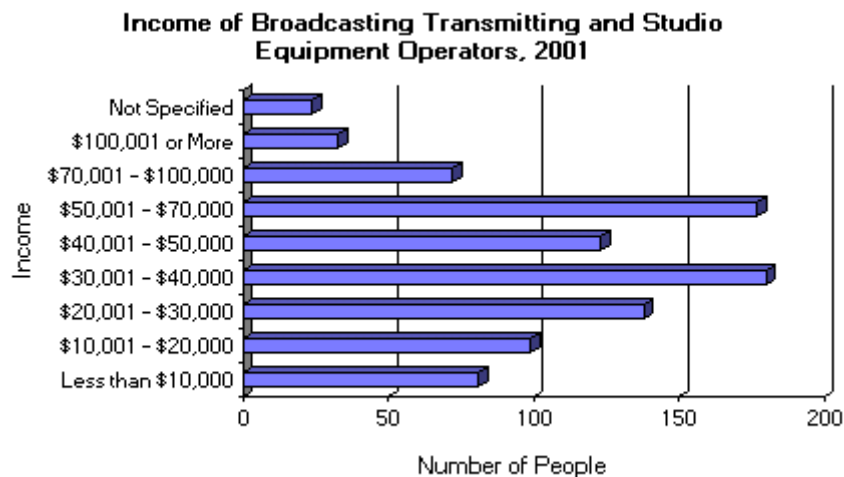
Employment Conditions

Hours

Film/video editors often work in shifts, but may have to work long and irregular hours during evenings, weekends and public holidays to meet deadlines.

Salary

Salary varies, but film/video editors usually earn between \$30,000 and \$60,000 per year. Most film/video editors are self-employed and do freelance or contract work. Editors may earn up to \$4000 per week working on a feature film, \$2500 per week on television drama and up to \$1000 per day on television commercials.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

[Interpreting Charts](#)

Contact with People

Film/video editors usually work on editing independently, but may also work with a team of editors, depending on what they are working on. They often work closely with television news journalists, directors,

composers and other film and television professionals.



Laura Williams working with another editor

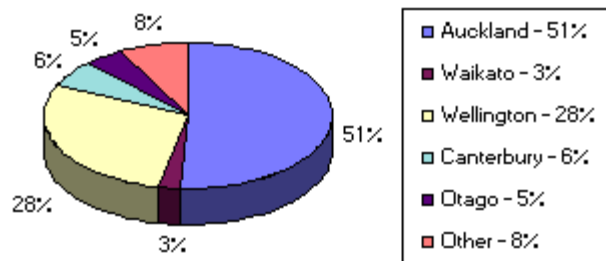
Job Market

Market Details

These statements and statistics are based on information available from Statistics New Zealand about broadcasting, transmitting, and studio equipment operators. Charts and statistics on broadcasting, transmitting, and studio equipment operators include data on film/video editors and lighting technicians.

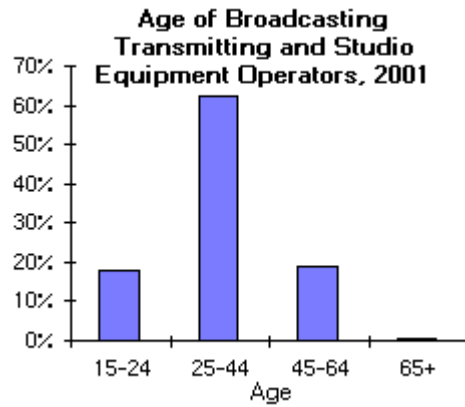
- 927 people were employed as broadcasting, transmitting, and studio equipment operators in 2001
- 89% were employed full-time
- 26% were female
- The highest proportion of people were employed in the Auckland (51%), Wellington (28%) and Canterbury (6%) regions.

Regional Location of Broadcasting Transmitting and Studio Equipment Operators, 2001



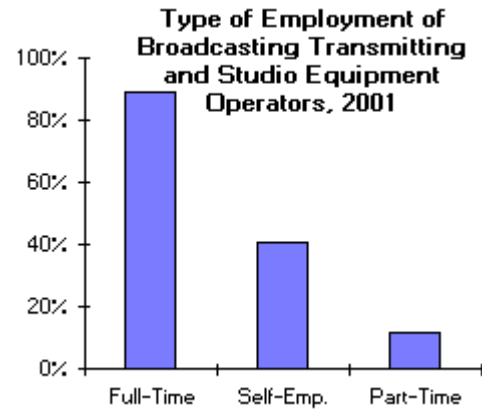
Gender of Broadcasting Transmitting and Studio Equipment Operators, 2001





Source: Statistics New Zealand

[Interpreting Charts](#)



Job Outlook

The number of jobs available for film/video editors is expected to remain stable or grow moderately over the next two to three years. However, competition for positions is expected to be high due to the large number of people doing or completing tertiary training aimed at this work.

Much of the work for film/video editors tends to be focussed in the main cities, where editing work outside of film and television editing, such as for editing business, music, advertisement and promotional videos, can be found.

Although there has been a rapid growth in television stations (especially regional) in New Zealand over the last few years, the film and television industry is still small. Many film/video editors are self-employed and work freelance, although there are some opportunities for full-time work at production companies and television stations. Networking with people in the industry continues to be one of the most important factors in getting work.

Government funding from a \$22 million grant to the arts may impact on the outlook of this job by providing more money to make films and television programmes. New Zealand is also being marketed as a production base for overseas film and television series makers, and tax incentives offered by the Government is a major factor in attracting feature film production to New Zealand. This has the potential to increase job prospects as international production companies use New Zealand workers.

(Updated 05/12/2002)

Regional Market Details

Northland / [Auckland](#) / Waikato / Bay of Plenty / Gisborne / Hawke's Bay / Taranaki / Manawatu-Wanganui / [Wellington](#) / Tasman / Nelson / Marlborough / West Coast / [Canterbury](#) / Otago / Southland

Auckland:

The number of broadcasting, transmitting and studio equipment controllers employed in the Auckland region is expected to grow moderately over the next three to five years. Employment opportunities are growing due

to more radio and television broadcasting channels becoming available and a current shortage of skilled technicians. As a result of this shortage, some larger companies are considering recruiting technical staff from overseas.

Turnover among broadcasting, transmitting and studio equipment controllers is low to moderate. Many are employed full-time and change positions between broadcasting stations rather than move out of the industry. Due to the current skill shortage, competition between businesses is high and people with experience and knowledge are being actively sought which may affect turnover levels.

(Written 20/12/2002)

Wellington:

The number of film/video editors employed in the Wellington region is expected to remain stable over the next three to five years. Employment opportunities are influenced by large film projects in the region, such as Lord of the Rings, and government funding for film or television productions. While many government ministries based in the region commission programmes, job numbers are also being effected by other private and public sector companies moving their head offices away from the region. Currently there is a shortage of on-line editors, and computer skills are considered vital. However, the number of training courses being offered to people wanting to be film and television editors may decrease this shortage.

Turnover among film/television editors in the region is low as they are generally satisfied with their employment conditions. Film/television editors in the region may be employed full or part-time and some work on contract.

Canterbury:

The number of lighting technicians employed in the Canterbury region is expected to remain static over the next three to five years. Employment opportunities are influenced by the number of entertainment venues in the region. Currently the market is competitive as no new entertainment venues are likely to open and the television networks are not producing any major productions. Job numbers may increase in the entertainment industry as local lighting technicians are often hired for touring events although some lighting technicians travel with the event.

Turnover among lighting technicians in the region is low and this trend looks likely to continue over the next three to five years. Generally they are satisfied with their work and employment conditions, however turnover can be variable as many lighting technicians are self-employed or work on contract.

Lighting technicians in the region may be employed part-time, full-time or on contract. However, they are generally employed full-time and work on contract for special events.

Current Vacancies



[Physical Science and Engineering Associated Professionals](#)



[KiwiCareers Job Vacancy Links](#)

Personal Profile

Laura Williams



Laura Williams works as a preparation editor for a television station. "I got into this work through a friend who was working in the industry and told me about the job." She had no editing specific qualifications, but did have a Bachelor of Media Studies. "The degree did involve a bit of editing, but not much. I didn't have the experience in the practical area, so I just started where I could get in and worked my way up. I had three weeks' formal training for the work I was doing, but I learned all the technical stuff by sitting in with people that knew how to use it. I also read manuals and practised on the machines after work."

The work Laura does mainly involves editing in ad breaks to shows that are going to air, and editing interviews and sports shows. Because she is still relatively new to the work she says she is still learning, by getting as much practice with editing equipment as possible. "I have done some titles and intros for videos and also edited a music video. It was all good experience for me - the more work I can do, the better." Laura says that starting out in a junior position meant she wasn't paid much at first, but "you just have to be really positive and be a quick learner. The good side of starting at the bottom is that you learn all the levels of the production process." Talking to people who work in the job has also helped Laura because "they have done what you are doing, so you can talk to them about where you can go next and how they got to be doing their job."

Eventually Laura wants to work as a freelance editor and perhaps even move into camera work. "You get lots of contacts working in television and it soon gets around the industry that there is an editor looking for work. Once you do a few jobs your name gets circulated and it leads to more work. At the same time, you really have to market yourself well." Despite learning on the job, the advice Laura gives to people who want to be an editor is to do a course. "If people want to do basic editing (on-line) then it is fine to learn on the job, but if you want to be the person that works on a production right from scratch, I think it would be easier to do a course. That way you learn everything that is involved with editing, like all the technical equipment and what makes an image good or not good."

Mark Taylor



Mark Taylor is a freelance editor. He has always had an interest in editing. "As a kid I spent an awful amount of time hooking up VCRs and chopping things together just by pause and record."

To train as an editor Mark did a one-year course at a film and television school. "The good thing about the course is that it's pretty much all practical work. Within the first week of being there I had my hands on a full-size professional camera and an editing suite. In the first and second term you are forced to do everything, from camera work to presenting to acting, and eventually you choose an area you want to specialise in. Editing was my major area of specialisation, and directing my minor. I hated acting, but because I was forced to do it I learned a lot about it, and now, when I am editing, I am better at picking good takes because I have been there."

After completing his course Mark started working in a junior position and very quickly worked his way into editing roles. "There are so many people who want to do this work, you have just got to be prepared to start at the bottom. Some people come out of film school and think that they are editors now and won't take a job in the tape room, but I did and actually learned a lot. At first you have to be prepared to work hard and for

long hours, and spend time outside of work learning how to use all of the different systems." Putting in the work and time meant Mark was offered a job as an editor, which he did before going freelance. "I didn't go freelancing until I had been editing for three years, and the previous full-time job I had was at a big advertising agency. I wouldn't say freelance work is secure work, but I have never had a problem getting work. I have worked full-time since I went freelance.

Mark says he really enjoys the work because "it is a nice mixture of creativity and technical knowledge, and you really have to have both to be an editor. I get quite a good sense of achievement when I know I am up against a tight deadline; you have all these tapes and no one is giving you any input, but you manage to come up with a really good storyline, you cut the pictures well and you sit back and really enjoy watching your work."

Further Information

Relevant Contacts

- Production companies
- [Film New Zealand](#)
- [NZ Film Commission](#)
- [TV3 Network Services](#)
- [TVNZ](#)

Related Jobs

- [Artistic Director](#)
- [Broadcast Technician](#)
- [Director \(Film/Television/Video\)](#)
- [Publishing Editor](#)
- [Radio/Television Sound Operator](#)
- [Record Producer](#)

Industry Overviews

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