



**REVIEW: Digital Juice “Video Traxx HD & Composer’s Toolkit”**  
[www.digitaljuice.com](http://www.digitaljuice.com)  
\$499/each

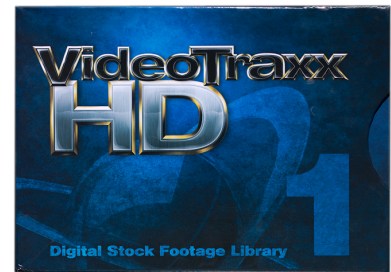
OK, this will show my age a bit, but I was one of the original Video Toaster 2.0 owners a bazillion years ago. My first computer was an Amiga 2000HD with a whopping 40mb hard drive. Shortly thereafter, a company called “Club Toaster” came on the scene offering Toaster owners additional wipes, static and animated backgrounds, and other assorted goodies. I quickly bought in.

Fifteen years later, little Club Toaster has grown from a small business into the multi-million dollar Digital Juice corporation--offering much more than what they used to. Odds are if you watch television, listen to the radio, or read magazines, you’ve probably witnessed their content.

### THE LATEST

As my career has narrowed into motion graphics, there are a few tools of the trade that save me loads of cash and help preserve my sanity. One of those tools is stock footage. Many graphic artists out there think stock footage is just for editors. They’re wrong. Carefully placed stock footage can set your edits and composites above and beyond the competition.

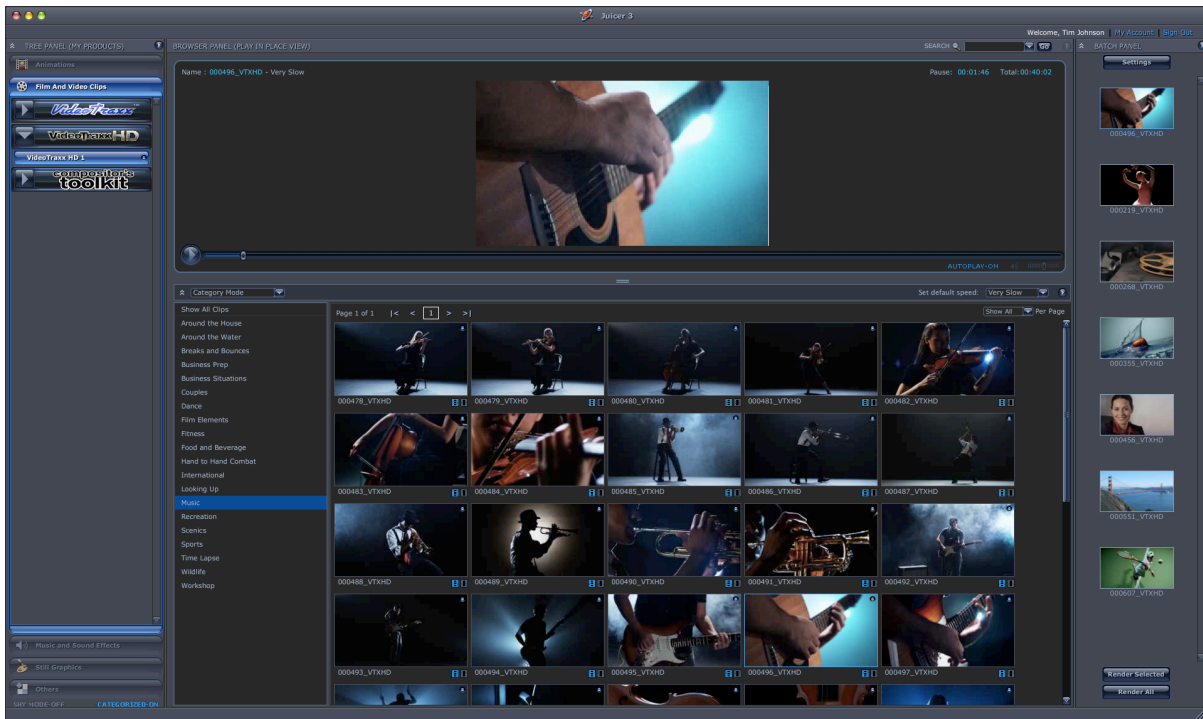
Digital Juice recently released **VideoTraxx HD 1 (VTHD)**, a pretty cool extension of their SD stock footage line. For those editors out there, **VTHD** is somewhat similar to the previous SD libraries from Digital Juice--multiple categories of themed clips. The quality factor in **VTHD**, however, goes way up. Not only do you have well-lit and well-composed HD content, but many of the clips were shot with overcranked frame rates. In other words, you can get both silky-smooth slomo *and* real-time clips based on your output settings from their “Juicer” application. (More on that later.)



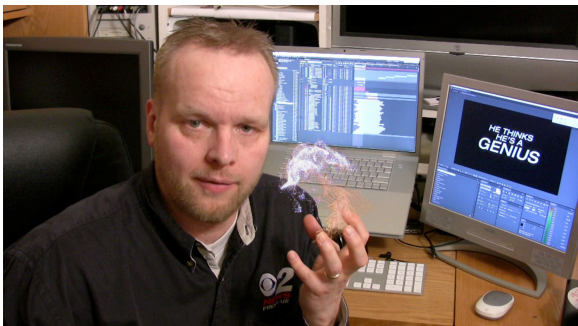
Also, Digital Juice released **Composer’s Toolkit (CTK)**--a package that is pure heaven for motion graphic artists. It’s a collection of backgrounds, keyable particle effects, fabrics, ink chambers, smoke, paint splashes, shattering glass, and lots more. (Heck, the water textures alone were worth the price of the entire package.) The content was shot in 2k resolution, so there’s room to move and zoom even in your HD projects. Similar to **VTHD**, the footage was shot with ultra high frame rates to give you the option of incredible slomo shots. It’s amazing.

### BROADCAST NEWS

Right out of the box, I had an immediate need for clips from both libraries. The first project was a tight turnaround feature story for a local television station. I installed the latest version of the Juicer, and after loading up the previews from both **VTHD** and **CTK**, I was able to quickly browse and compare all clips in both libraries. The ones I wanted to use in the news story I simply dragged to the right side of the screen. After choosing the clips, I was able to quickly and easily output all clips at 1920 x 1080 resolution within a couple of clicks. I then selected the ones I wanted to slow down, and output at a higher frame rate. All of this was very simple within this handy app. Cool program. All clips came back into After Effects without a hitch.



One shot in the news package called for pixie dust to magically appear between in the outstretched hand of the talent. It was very simple to drop the pre-keyed **CTK** clip into the timeline and position accordingly. Very quick. Solid alpha without issues. Later on, we switched gears mid-package with a montage of NFL highlights set to classical music. The ultra slomo water clips from **CTK** worked out fantastic as a backdrop.



## OPRAH

Another project at the station required us to find b-roll for a news promotion that promoted both The Oprah Winfrey Show and the local news that follows it. Again, it was off to the Juicer to quickly browse and pick the clips. After output from the Juicer, we assembled the clips into the edit/composite within After Effects. The results were fantastic. Using similar clips from stock footage companies would have crushed our budget for SINGLE USE only. With **VTHD** and **CTK**, we have unlimited usage of all the clips in our productions. These libraries work great with long-term budget strategies.



## LDS CHURCH

The last project needed some family-based clips that supported a message from the leader of a worldwide church. We found about a dozen clips that were a perfect fit for the project. And in some cases, multiple clips in the same environment allowed us to use them as cutaways. These extra shots of the same scene were lifesavers. Shooting these clips on our own would have cost us considerably. Another big savings for client and production house.



## COMPLAINTS

Not much to complain about here. My only *gripe* is more of a *plea*--for more volumes of this content to come out. For instance, there is a sports category within VTHD that

includes shots from volleyball, basketball, baseball, and tennis--but nothing for football, track, or racing. I just wish there was more!

As with many stock footage collections, [VTHD](#) and [CTK](#) may be of more benefit to certain types of productions. Make no mistake, the clips in these libraries cover a pretty wide range. Before you buy, however, browse Digital Juice's website to make sure the clips fit your productions.

## **OVERALL**

I was able to use both products in multiple projects within a few days of getting them in the mail. In fact, compared to stock footage rates we'd received before, these products paid for themselves within a half hour of opening the box they came in. And due to the nature of the way these were shot (progressive/high resolution,) we were even able to use some still shots in print pieces. Whatever your production needs may be, it's worth a look.

*Tim Johnson is an Emmy Award-winning artist for KUTV 2 News in Salt Lake City. He and his wife are the proud parents of five daughters. On the side he helps run a small production company to help pay for the impending five weddings. He can be reached at his website [www.grafficjam.com](http://www.grafficjam.com).*