

Clipping media using a script for Windows (and Linux)

ELAN supports the creation of media clips (video and/or audio) by external applications, based on information entered in a text file named "clip-media.txt". Via this script, ELAN can call an external program from the command line and pass the parameters it needs to do the actual clipping. This tutorial shows you how to set-up ELAN such that it can clip video files for you.

1. Make sure you have a program that can do the clipping

In this tutorial we will use `ffmpeg` as an example but it can be any other program that can be executed from the command line.

Download the latest version of `ffmpeg.exe` from www.ffmpeg.org, select the default "static build". (Alternatively, you can search for `ffmpeg.exe`.) Unzip the downloaded file and copy the folder to a convenient place on your hard drive, e.g. to the Program Files folder.

2. Copy the "clip-media.txt" file

In your ELAN installation folder there is a text-file called "clip-media.txt" (see Figure 1). ELAN reads this file to know which program to use for the clipping. If you copy this file to the special ELAN data folder, future versions of ELAN will find it too (see Figure 2).

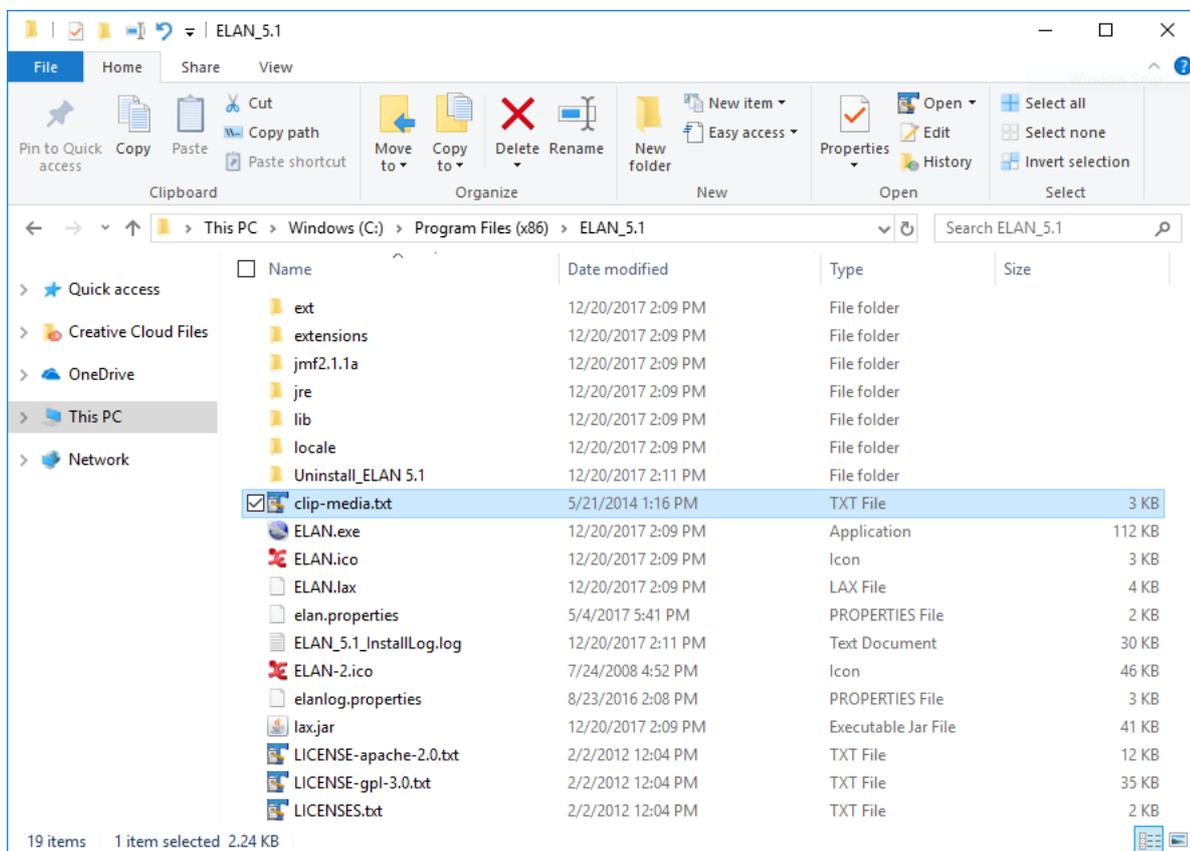


Figure 1 Original location of clip-media.txt

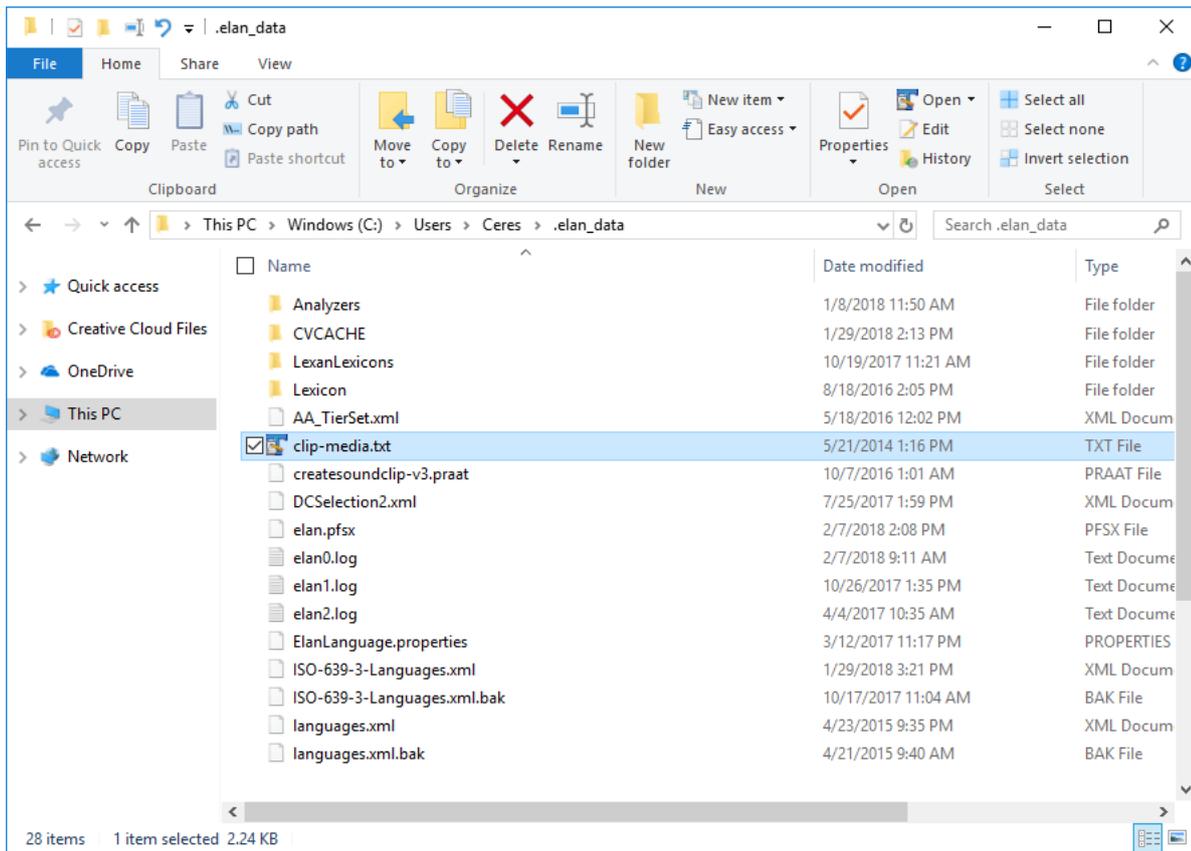


Figure 2 The text file copied to the folder .elan_data

The .elan_data folder is located in <user_home>, on **Windows** this is something like C:\Users\user_login_name\, on **Linux** it is just the home folder of the user.

3. Tell ELAN which program to use for clipping

Open the “clip-media.txt” file in a text editor. All lines starting with a # are comments, examples and/or documentation lines.

```
# Lines starting with a # (dash) are considered to be comment lines.
# ...
```

Edit the first line without a # to include a reference to the location of your ffmpeg.exe file, as follows (*this should all be on one line without line breaks!*):

```
"C:\Program Files (x86)\ffmpeg\bin\ffmpeg.exe" -i $in_file -vcodec copy
-acodec copy -ss $begin(sec.ms) -t $duration(sec.ms) $out_file
```

Some versions of ffmpeg.exe don't support the “-vcodec copy” (video codec) and “-acodec copy” (audio codec) options anymore. In that case these options can be left out to create clips with the same format as the original, or an existing, supported codec can be filled in, e.g. (*this should be one line without line breaks!*):

```
"C:\Program Files (x86)\ffmpeg\bin\ffmpeg.exe" -i $in_file -vcodec h264 -acodec aac -ss $begin(sec.ms) -t $duration(sec.ms) $out_file
```

Some notes on the above:

- The `$in_file` and `$out_file` keywords represent the input and output file and will be filled in by ELAN when the script is run.
- The `$begin(sec.ms)`, `$duration(sec.ms)` and `$end(sec.ms)` keywords will be filled in by ELAN based on the selected time interval.
- The parameters and time format to use, are determined by the application that performs the clipping. Please consult the documentation of that application for the supported parameters and their syntax and for the supported file types, codecs etc.

Save the file and (re)launch ELAN to test the settings.

4. Running the script from within ELAN

With a document open in ELAN, make a selection and from the main menu choose:

File->Export As->Media Clip using Script...

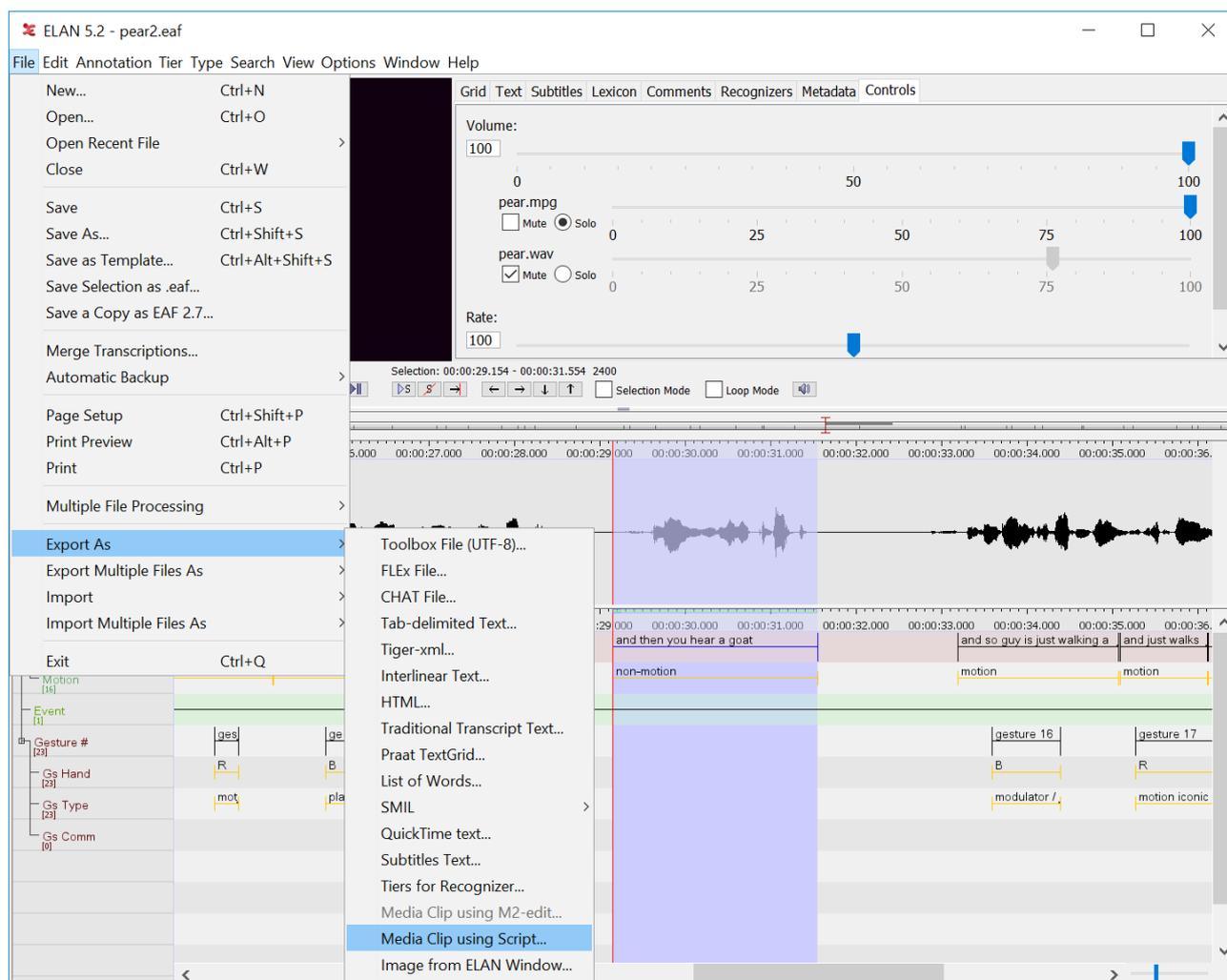


Figure 3 Calling the script

The result will either be saved in the same location as the original video (the output file name will be constructed based on the input file name and the start and end time of the selection), or in a location specified by the user. This depends on a preference setting in the Media panel in Edit->Preferences->Edit Preferences...

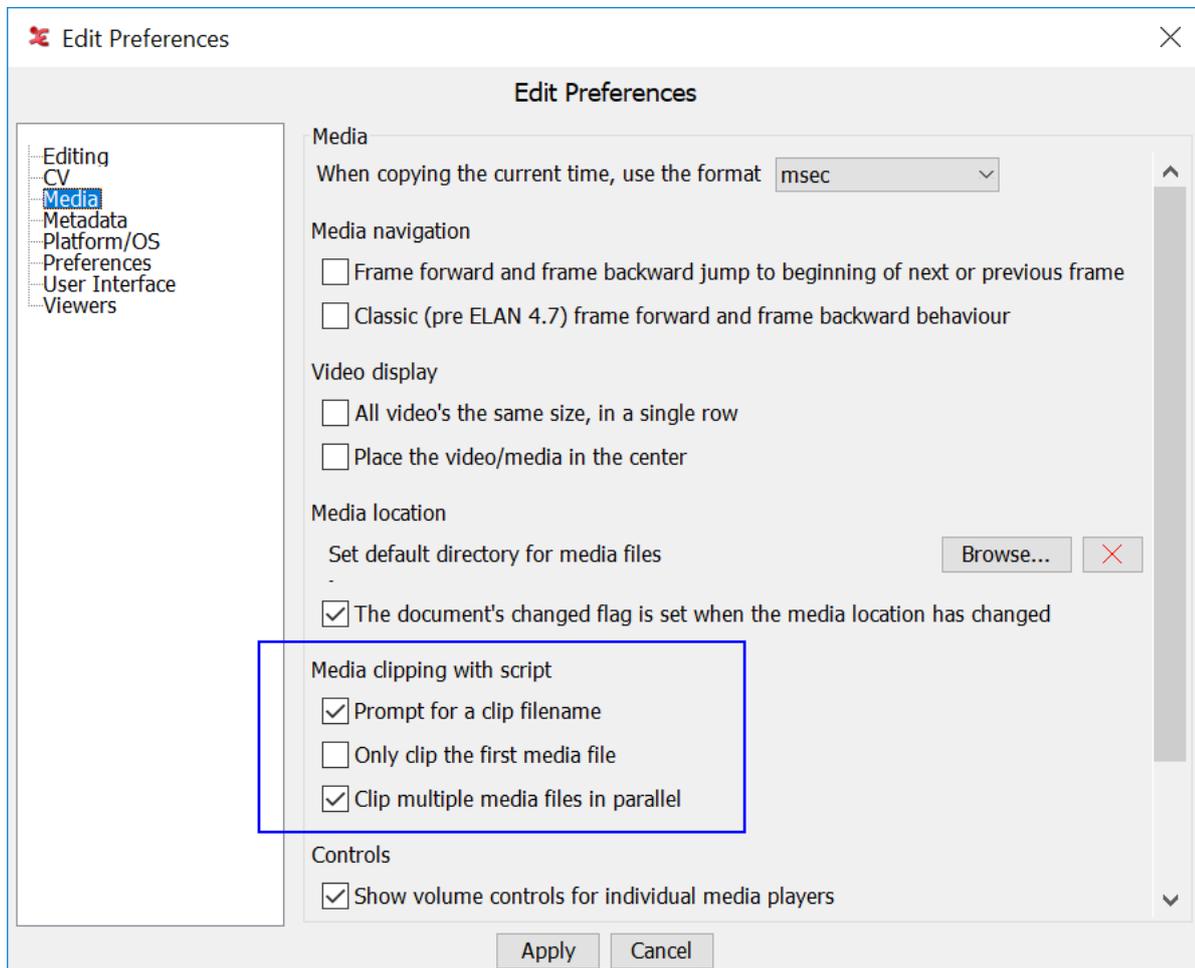


Figure 4 Settings related to clipping

If the option `Prompt for a clip file name` is selected, a `Save as` prompt will be shown when the menu item of Figure 3 is selected. A file name without extension can be given, the extension will be copied from the input file. If you want to export the clip in a different format, you can specify a name and extension for the clip.

Because the external application runs in a separate process and because it can be any application, it is hard for ELAN to determine when the clip is ready and to show a message. Therefore the File Explorer should be inspected to see if the clip(s) is/are already there. The log (`View->View Log...`) might also contain information about the clipping process.

Appendix – supported keywords or “placeholders”

```
#
# $in_file - will be replaced by the absolute path of the input file
# $out_file - will be replaced by the absolute path of the output file
#
# $begin(format) - the start time of the selection in the source file
# $end(format) - the end time of the selection
# $duration(format) - the duration of the selection
#
# where format needs to be replaced by one of the following formats:
#
# hour:min:sec.ms
# hour:min:sec:fr
# hour:min:sec:fr_NTSC
# sec.ms
# ms
# fr
# fr_NTSC
#
# when frames are specified PAL is assumed, for NTSC use
hour:min:sec:fr_NTSC or fr_NTSC
#
# Examples:
#
# C:\Program\ffmpeg\bin\ffmpeg.exe -i $in_file -vcodec copy -acodec copy
-ss $begin(sec.ms) -t $duration(sec.ms) $out_file
# M2-edit-cl /in:$begin(fr) /out:$end(fr) $in_file $out_file
```