How to import files from Canon Vixia into FCP X (10.0.1)

In short – it’s super easy.

If you’re using a newer Apple laptop that comes with an SD card slot (right next to all other ports on the left side of your computer), then do this:

1. Take the card out of Canon, place it into the SD slot on your computer, make sure it fits all the way in. Skip to point 3.

2. If you’re using one of the older computers that don’t come with an SD slot, leave the card inside the Canon. Turn on the camera. Close the card slots’ door, switch the camera into Playback mode – the switch button is to the left of the card slots.

Connect the camera to the computer using a USB cable (ask a TA for one if it’s not in the camera bag).

In the screen prompt that appears on the camera, choose Computer/Printer option.

The next prompt will tell you to keep the camera connected, etc. – this is normal, despite the red font in the lower part of the screen 😊

3. Launch FCP.

4. In the Event Browser’s Library in the upper left side of FCP X interface, you will see your computer’s built-in drive represented by a Home (or “house”) icon: 🏡

(If you have an external hard drive with a Firewire connection, then you could plug it in and it will show up in your Library as well.) Right-click on the drive icon
(“house” icon if you don’t have any other connected drives), and select New Event from the menu that appears. Change the name of the event to make sure you can easily find your work later.

5. In the Event Browser’s window, you now see two options – Import Files and Import from Camera. Click on Import from Camera.

6. You will see the clips appear in the Import from Camera window. If you click on a clip, you can drag the yellow handles to select portions of a clip you want to import. You can preview the clips by hitting the space bar or skimming using the mouse.

7. Hold CMD and click on the clips you want to import to add them to your selection. Or you could click in the space between clips to deselect them and import all of your clips. Click on the button to “import all” or “selected clips” in the lower right of the Import from Camera window.

8. In the Import from Camera settings window that appears next, choose to optimize media, create proxy files and remove silent channels. (NOTE: If you have an earlier version of FCP X, you might see an option to “copy files into FCP Events Folder”. If so, select it. Then upgrade your FCP X when you get the chance!)

9. You will be able to disconnect the camera after the import is finished. It might take a while, depending on how much media you’re importing.
And... a footnote about Import Files vs. Import from Camera:

The Import Files feature will allow you to bring FCP X-friendly files saved on your computer, external hard drives, network and online locations, etc. Import Files will also allow you to bring video clips from certain types of still photo cameras (DSLRs like Nikon, for example) that shoot video in addition to still pictures. Still camera cards will not be treated by FCP in the same way as video cameras and their cards, instead, you will be able to import DSLR video clips via Import Files. This is because the procedure for digesting these media is different.

You will also notice that your Canon SD card and Cannon camera will show up on your desktop as with an appropriate icon once you plug in the SD card or connect the camera. Do not try to use Finder and copy/paste or drag folders or files from the card. This is not the same as FCP’s Import from Camera and your files simply won’t work in FCP. It’s like trying to add raw eggs into your potato salad, or trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

Simply put, use FCP X Import Files option to bring stills, sound files, video files that come from everything except dedicated video camera or its cards you plug into the computer. For video cameras or the cards that were formatted (initialized) and recorded in a video camera, choose Import from Camera option.

Happy Editing!