

How to Prepare After Effects Animations for Mobile Devices

By Marianne Post, Certified Instructor

How much time would you save if After Effects could automatically output animations that play seamlessly on mobile devices?

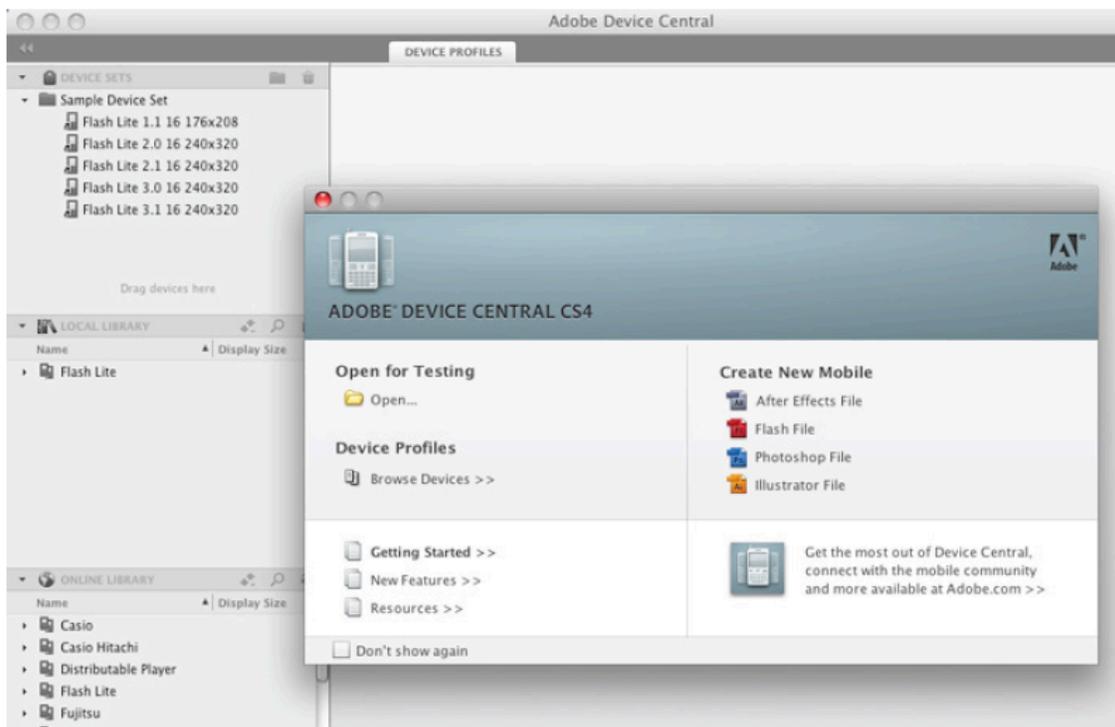
Adobe's Creative Suite 4 comes with a utility that does just that. This application takes the guesswork out of configuring compositions for various hand-held devices.

This tutorial shows how Device Central creates compositions with correct frame rate and frame sizes for output from After Effects.



First, launch Adobe Device Central.

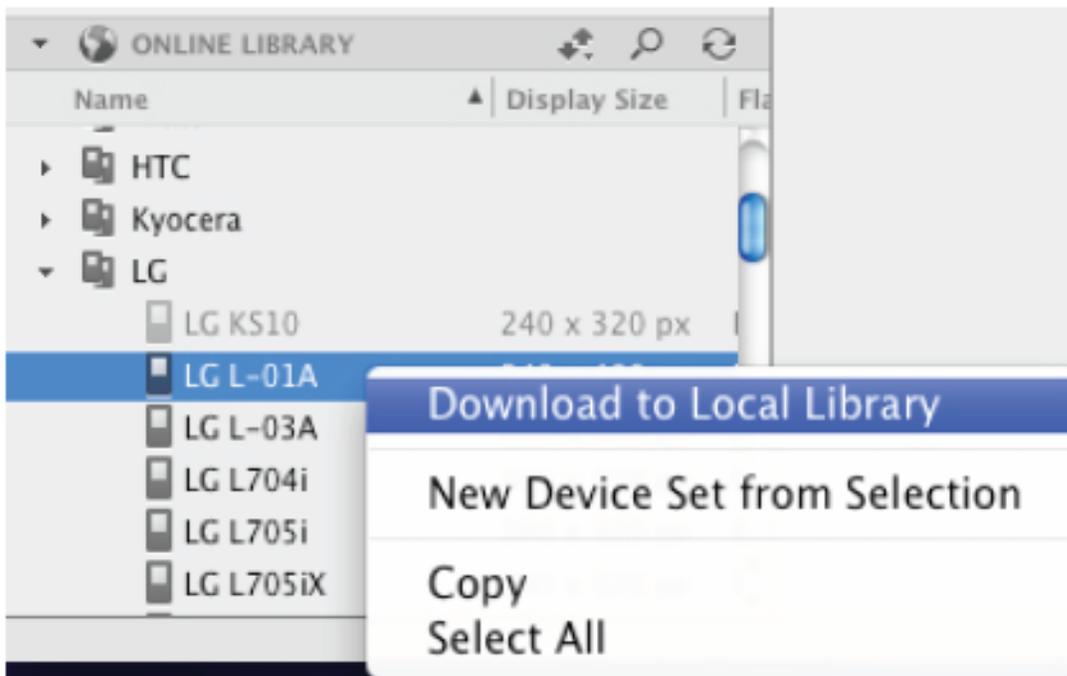
When the Welcome Screen appears, click the After Effect File icon. If the Welcome Screen doesn't appear, go to File > New Document in > After Effects.



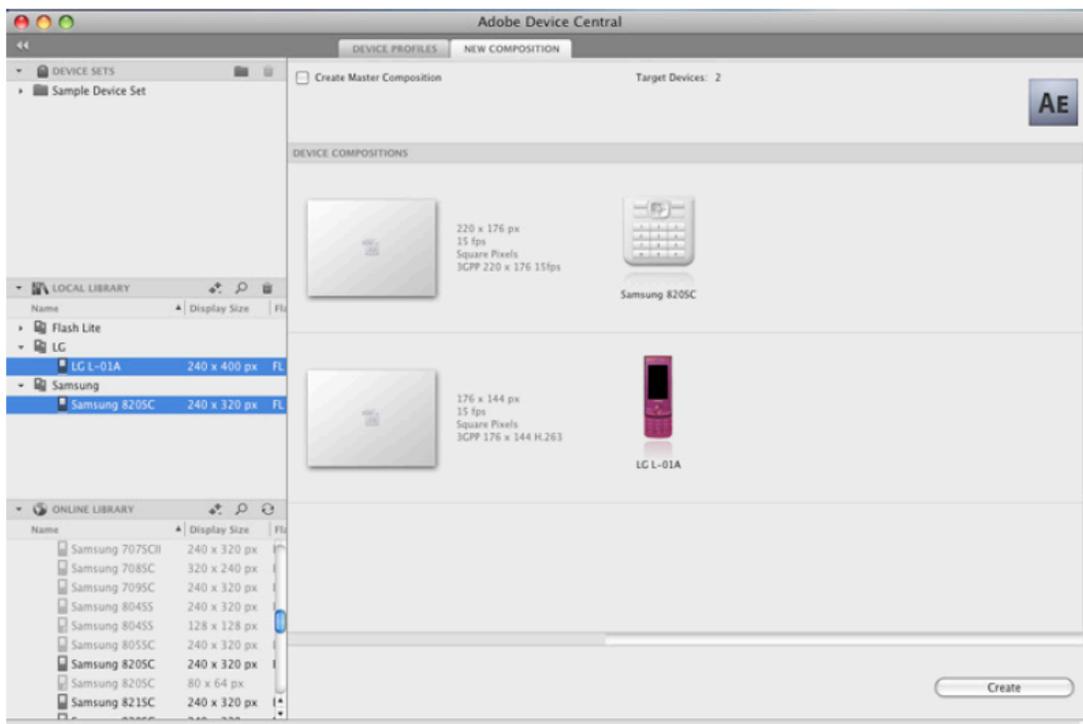
You'll add device templates from the Local Library to the Device Compositions area. Since the Local Library only contains Flash Lite templates, additional devices need to be added first.

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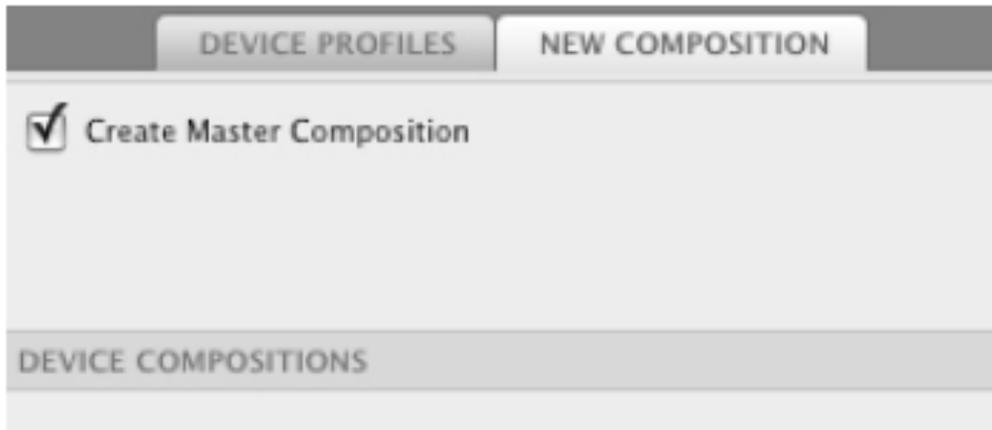
From the Online Library, locate a manufacturer and reveal its available models. Right-click a device and choose Download to Local Library.



In the Local Library, select the desired device (command-click to select more than one). Selected devices appear in the Device Compositions area.



Enable the Create Master Composition checkbox and click the Create button.



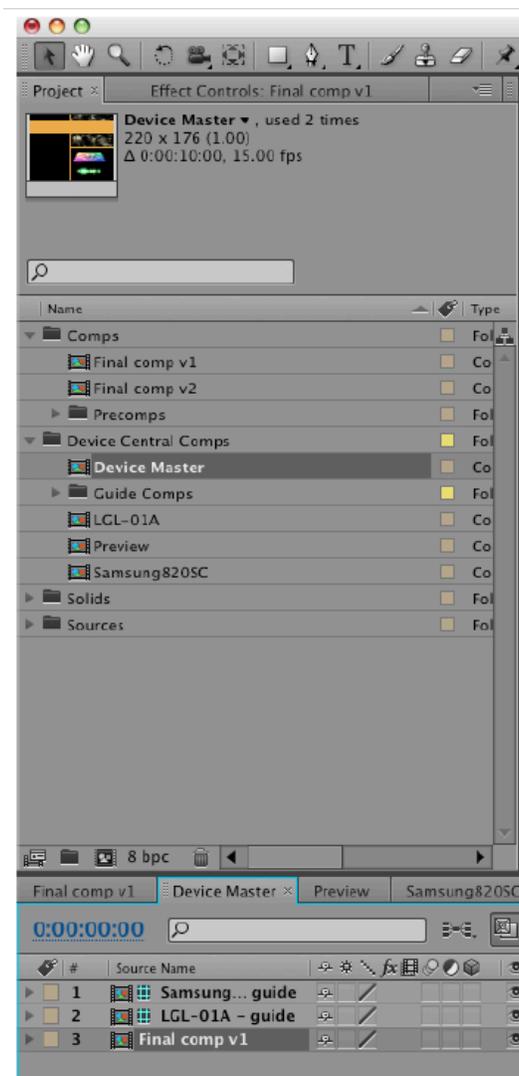
Note: If After Effects is running, Device Central adds a new folder of compositions to your project. If not, Device Central launches After Effects and adds the new folder of comps to a new project.

Switch to After Effects. Double-click the Device Master composition located in the Device Central Comps folder.

The composition contains pre-composed guide layers for each mobile device.

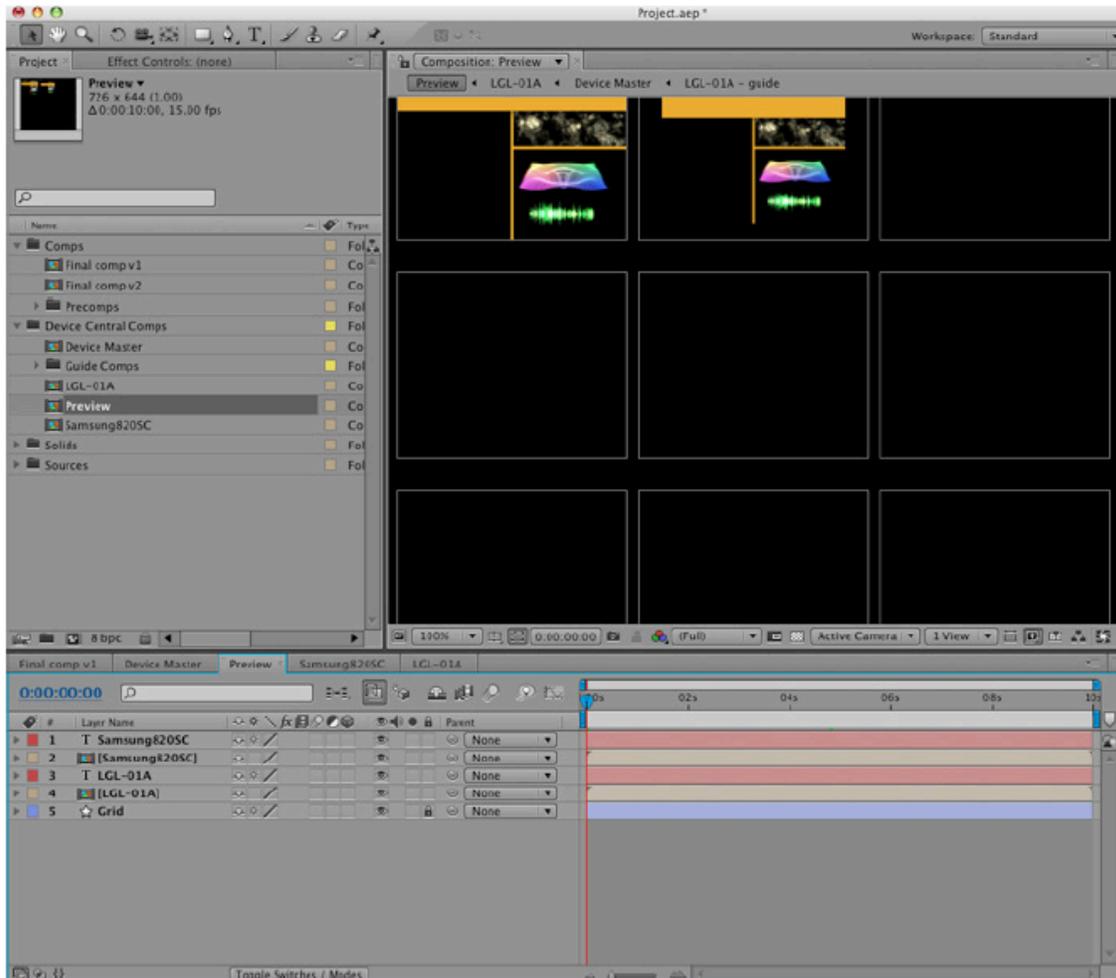
Add design elements or a finished composition to the Device Master comp. If necessary resize any added elements so they fit the dimensions of the Device Master composition.

NOTE: If you change the Device Master comp's duration, you must also change the duration for each individual device comp.



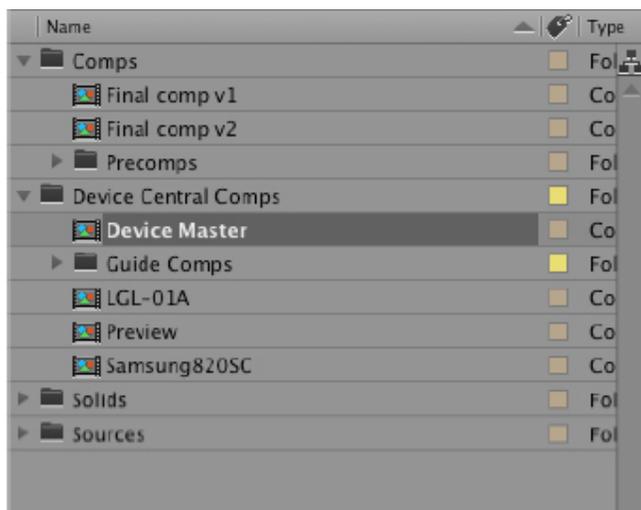
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Open the Preview Composition. Use this comp to compare how each mobile device will play back and display an animation.



The Device Central Comps folder also contains a composition for each mobile device selected in Device Central.

If necessary, tweak the nested Device Master Composition's size and duration before rendering or exporting a mobile device's comp.



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That's how Device Central takes the guesswork out of creating comps for Mobile device output.