

**Understanding the Workspace panel**

**Placement and alignment tools**

**Adding a still or video background to your page**

**Adding a music background to your page**

**Setting a “Loop Point”**

## Chapter 3

# Build a Menu Page

*Creating a look and navigation for your page*

A menu page serves two purposes – to serve as navigation for your viewer and to set the tone for your disc.

DVD Architect Studio includes simple tools for creating and designing menu pages. It also includes tools for customizing the look and feel of each page in almost any way imaginable!

When you open a new DVD Architect Studio project, a blank, generic, blue menu page will appear in **Workspace** panel.

This is your starting point. From here, you can go anywhere!

Building a menu system is like building a Web site. It can be simple, with a few links to your media, or it can be a massive network of links, sub-menus and features.

But building each page is the same essential process: Adding titles and text, adding links to media or other menu pages – and, of course, deciding how it all looks and behaves.

Since most of the work of designing and building your menu page will take place in the **Workspace** panel, it's important to know your way around this very powerful work area and understand its layout tools.

### Get to know the Workspace panel

Most of your menu page building and designing will likely be done in the **Workspace** panel, the large panel that dominates the center of the program's interface.

The **Workspace** is a very intuitive space to work in. Most of what you'll be doing in this panel involves simply dragging and dropping the elements you'd like to add to your design. Even creating buttons that link to your videos will be done by simply dragging and dropping the clips onto it from the **Explorer** panel. (We discuss this process in more detail in [Chapter 4, Create and Customize a Menu Button](#).)

#### Zoom in or out with view controls

Along the top of the **Workspace** panel are controls for navigating and viewing your menu pages. The **Quick Select** drop-down menu lets you quickly select any menu page or link on your disc. The arrow buttons to the right of this menu can be used to navigate up to the main menu or to the next or previous menu page at your current menu page level.

At the magnifying glass icon on the upper right of the panel you'll find a drop-down menu for setting the **Workspace** zoom view of your menu page. In most cases, you'll likely leave this set to **Auto Zoom**, so that your menu is automatically sized to fit inside the panel. But, in the event you need to see a close-up of a particular area of your menu, you can set the zoom level at, say, 800%, using the scroll bars to adjust the view position so you can focus on a particular area of your menu page.

#### Turn on the Panel Overlays

No two televisions will display your video or your videos exactly alike. Because of something called overscan, all TVs cut off a bit of the edge of a video frame. This is less of an issue with modern flat-screen TVs than it

Create and customize a menu page

### The Workspace panel



was with traditional CRTs, but it is still something to be aware of. There is always the risk that up to 10% around the edge of your video frame will not be displayed.

In most cases, this isn't that big of a deal. Usually what's around the edge of your video isn't vital information anyway. But, if you're creating a DVD or BluRay disc menu page, you certainly don't want the title of your menu or one of your buttons close enough to the edge of the frame that you risk it being cut off. (Otherwise your "Gone With the Wind" video might end up looking like "one With the Win" on some TVs!)

So, whenever you start a new video project, go to the **View** drop-down menu at the top of the program's interface, select **Workspace Overlays**, then **Title Safe Area**. This will place a dotted line box over the menu in your **Workspace**. The box doesn't show up in your final menu. It's just a guide for you to keep your menu navigation and text within in order to ensure that no vital information will be cut off when your menu is displayed on a TV.

Other **Workspace Overlays** will include:

- **Show Grid**, which displays a grid over your menu page, a guide for helping you compose your disc menu's layout, and options for displaying the order that the buttons will be selected when your viewer navigates the menu with his or her remote control.
- **Show Button Masks** displays a preview of the highlights that will appear over your buttons as your viewer navigates your menu.

Create and customize a menu page

### Edit or add text

A text box will become editable if you select it in the Workspace panel and click the Edit Text button.

#### Edit a text box

Text boxes appear on menu pages with generic text (Usually "Menu 1", "Menu 2", etc. or simply the word "Text").

To edit the text in a text box:

- Select the text box**  
Ensure that the **Selection Tool** (the arrow icon in the upper left of the **Workspace** panel) is activated and click on the text box to select it.
- Click the "Edit Text" button**  
The **Edit Text** button is located in the lower right corner of the **Workspace** panel. (As a shortcut, you can click **F2** on your keyboard.)  
The text box will become activated and the text inside will become editable.
- Customize the text**  
Type over the generic text in the text box.
- Select your text's font, size and style**  
When text is either selected in **Edit Text** mode or a the text box is selected with the **Selection Tool**, its font, size and style can be customized using the tools along the bottom of the panel, as discussed on the facing page.

#### Add new text

There are three ways to create a text box on a menu page:

- Right-click on a menu page in the **Workspace** panel and select "Insert Text" from the context menu.
- Go to the **Insert** drop-down menu at the top of the program's interface and select **Text**.
- Press **Ctrl+t** on your keyboard.

### Set your text's style, size and formatting

When your text is selected (in **Edit Text** mode) or a text block is selected in the **Workspace** panel, the text's characteristics can be modified in a number of ways.

**Font.** The **Font** drop-down menu will display all of the fonts that have been installed on your computer. You can quickly jump to any font on this list by opening this drop-down menu and typing the first few letters of the font's name.

**Font size.** Font sizes range from 8 point (very small) to 90 point (huge!). By default, the Font Size is set to **Auto** – which means that the size of the text changes when the text box is resized (with the **Resizing Tool**). Designating a specific font size locks the text to that size no matter how large – and to a point, how small – the text box is resized to.

The **B** and **I** buttons apply **Bold** and **Italic** styles to the text's font.

The **S** button applies a **Drop-Shadow** to the text. A drop-down menu on this button allows you to set the **X** and **Y** offset distance (how far the shadow falls above, below or to the side of the actual text) and to designate the color for the shadow.

**Horizontal Alignment.** The text in the box can be set to align left, center or right.

**Vertical Alignment.** The text can be set to align with the top, center or bottom of the text box.

**Color.** The color button will change the color of your text, which can be set using **RGB** (red, green and blue) values or **HSL** (hue, saturation and luminance) values. (You can toggle between the two color spaces by clicking the color box above the eyedropper.) Color can also be set by setting the crosshairs on the panel's rainbow palette or by clicking on the eyedropper icon and sampling a color from any place on your computer's desktop – even from the interface of another program you happen to have open!

In addition to color values, the panel includes options for setting the opacity – or alpha level (**A**) – of the text color. The alpha level determines how transparent the text color is.

Several text blocks on a menu page can be selected at once and stylized or colored at the same time.

Note that any settings you make – as far as your font, text size, color, etc. – will be overwritten if you later apply a **Theme** to your menu.

Create and customize a menu page

## The Workspace Tool Set

In the top left corner of the **Workspace** panel are three tools for manipulating the various elements on your menu page.

### The Selection Tool

 By default, the **Selection Tool** (the arrow icon) will be active. With this tool you can click on and drag any element – text box, graphic or button – and move it to any position on your menu page.

Note that buttons, by the way, can not overlap each other even slightly. And, if you position a button so that its live area overlaps another button's live area, a red box will appear between the buttons indicating the overlap.

### The Sizing Tool

 The **Sizing Tool** is used to resize any element on your menu page. When this tool is selected, any element can be resized by dragging on its handles – the little gray squares on the frame surrounding it.

When you drag on a corner handle, the element will resize, both horizontally and vertically equally. When you drag on a handle mid-way along a frame size, the element will resize either horizontally or vertically.

When the **Font Size** is set to **Auto**, the text will resize as its text box is resized. When it is set to a specific size, the text will remain the same size no matter how the text box is resized.

Additionally, when using the **Sizing Tool** to position elements on the menu page, a thumbnail image and text block for a button will move as two separate elements. This allows you to position the button's text so that it is to the side, above or even *overlaid onto* the thumbnail image for the button. However, you should note that your button's "live" area will stretch from wherever the thumbnail is located to wherever the text for that button is located!

### The Navigation Tool

 When you click on any buttons on your menu page with the **Navigation Tool** activated, an array of arrows will display around the button. These arrows illustrate the order the buttons will become active as your viewer navigates this menu page with his or her remote control.

Although, the selection order of these buttons will go from upper left to lower right of your menu page by default (and probably by preference), you can drag on the horns that appear on each side of your button with the **Navigation Tool** and arrange the buttons to activate in whatever order you'd like.



When the **Navigation Tool** is active, selected buttons will display arrows indicating the order of their navigation.

## Automatic Alignment, Sizing and Spacing Tools

Along the left side of the **Workspace** panel are sets of tools for aligning the individual elements on your menu page.

Which tools are active and how they behave depends on which and how many elements are selected in the **Workspace** panel. (Most of these tools will only function when more than one element on a menu page is selected.) To select more than one element at a time, hold down the **Shift** or **Ctrl** key as you click to select.

### Multiple element alignment tools

 **Horizontal Alignment Tools.** Selected elements will all align to either the left, right or center on the same point.

 **Vertical Alignment Tools.** Selected elements will all align to either the top, center or bottom on the same point.



### "Make Same Size" Tools

 **Make Same Height.** Automatically sizes all selected elements to the same height.

**Make Same Width.** Automatically sizes all selected elements to the same width.



### "Even Spacing" Tools

 **Evenly Space Down.** Spaces three or more selected elements evenly between the top and bottom selected element.

**Evenly Space Across.** Spaces three or more selected elements evenly between the left and right selected elements.



### Individual element alignment tools

 **Horizontal Centering.** Positions the selected element in the horizontal center of the menu page.

**Vertical Centering.** Positions the selected element in the vertical center of the menu page.



Create and customize a menu page

## Add a menu button to your page

A button is automatically added to your page as you add media or a new menu page link to it:

- For information on adding a video clip to your disc project and adding a menu button linking to it, see **Chapter 4, Create and Customize a Menu Button**.
- For information on adding buttons to your menu page that link to other menu pages, see **Chapter 5, Build a Disc Menu Structure**.

## Apply a Theme to your menu page

A **Theme** adds a look to your page, complete with text styles, button frames and a background.

For information on using **Themes** to create a look for your menu page, see **Chapter 9, Work With Themes, Backgrounds and Button Styles**.

## Add a graphic or animated video clip to your page

In addition to buttons and text on your menu, you can add purely decorative graphics to your menu page, including animated video clips.

To add a graphic or video clip to your menu page:

### 1 Select Insert Graphic

Go to the **Insert** drop-down menu at the top of the interface, or right-click on the menu page in the **Workspace** panel, and select **Insert Graphic** from the context menu.

This will open a screen in which you can browse to and select any still, graphic or video clip on your computer.

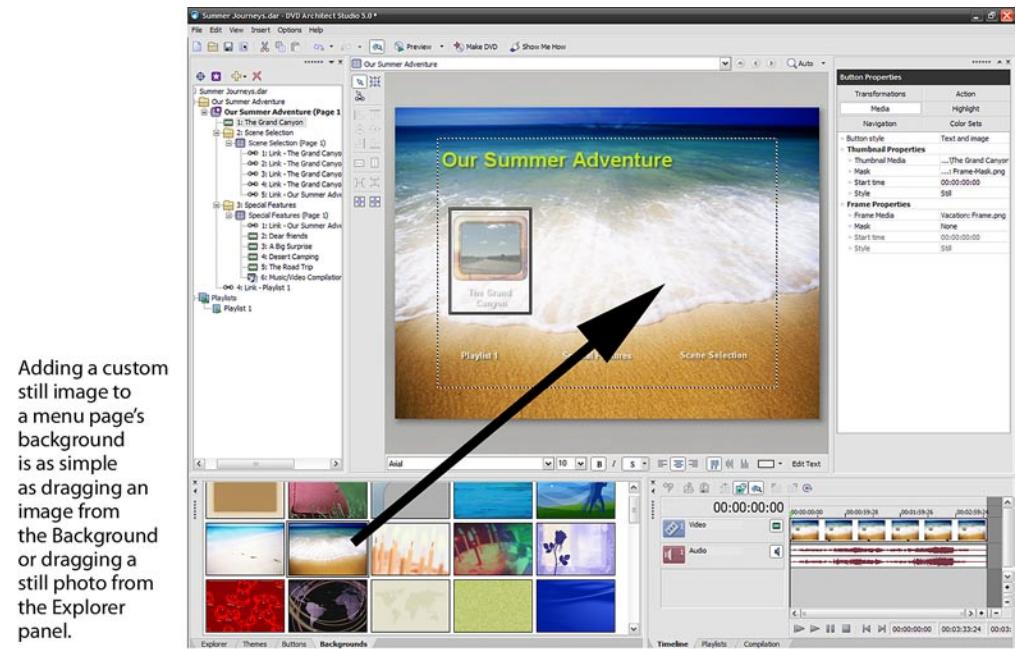
Click **OK**.

### 2 Position the graphic

Once you've placed the graphic on your menu, you can move it to any position or, using the **Sizing Tool** (see page 36), resize it.

If you'd like the graphic to go behind your buttons or layered with other graphics on your menu, right-click on it and select **Object Order**. Selecting the options to **Move Forward** or **Move Back** brings the graphic ahead or sends it back behind one item at a time on your menu page; Selecting **Move to Top** or **Move to Bottom** sends it directly to the front or directly behind all other items on your menu page.

If you are using a video clip as your graphic, you can set its looping **Start Time** in its **Graphics Properties**, on the **Media** pane.



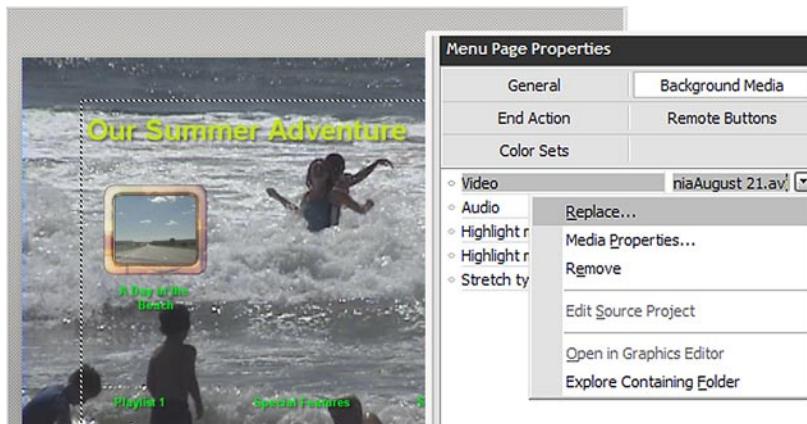
## Add a custom image background to your menu page

There are a number of ways to add a new background image to your menu page.

- Drag a background from the Backgrounds panel.** DVD Architect Studio includes over 60 backgrounds, from realistic to thematic to abstract. To add one to a menu page displayed in your **Workspace** panel, drag it onto the page from the **Backgrounds** panel, or simply double-click on the image in the **Backgrounds** panel.
- Drag a still photo from the Explorer panel.** You can also use any photo or graphic on your computer as a custom background image for your photo. To add it to the menu page displayed in your **Workspace** panel, drag it onto the page from the **Explorer** panel, or simply double-click on the image file's listing in the **Explorer** panel.
- Browse to a photo from the Menu Page Properties panel.** When a menu page is displayed in your **Workspace** panel and no elements are selected, the **Properties** panel will display **Menu Page Properties**. On the **Background Media** page of this panel, click on the box to the right of the **Video** listing. This will open a browse screen in which you can locate and select a still image for your menu's background. (For more information on the **Menu Page Properties** panel, see **Chapter 11, An Appendix of Advanced DVD Architect Studio Tricks**.)

Note that you can *not* add a video loop as a menu page background by dragging and dropping it from the **Explorer** panel. Dragging a video to a menu page will only create a button on the page. For information on adding a video background to your menu, see the following page.

Create and customize a menu page



A video clip can be used as a menu background by setting it as your Background Media in the Menu Page Properties panel.

### Add a custom video background to your menu page

Adding a video background to a menu page is a little different than adding a still image. If you drag a video clip from the **Explorer** panel onto the menu page in the **Workspace** panel, a button will be added to the page.

A video clip, therefore, must be added as a background to your menu page through the **Menu Page Properties** panel.

#### 1 Go to the Menu Page Properties Background Media pane

When your menu page is displayed in the **Workspace** panel and its background is selected (no page elements selected), **Menu Page Properties** will be displayed in the **Properties** panel.

Click on the **Background Media** button in this panel.

#### 2 Replace the current video.

When you click on the box to the right of the **Video** listing on the **Background Media** page, a drop-down list will display several options.

Select **Replace**.

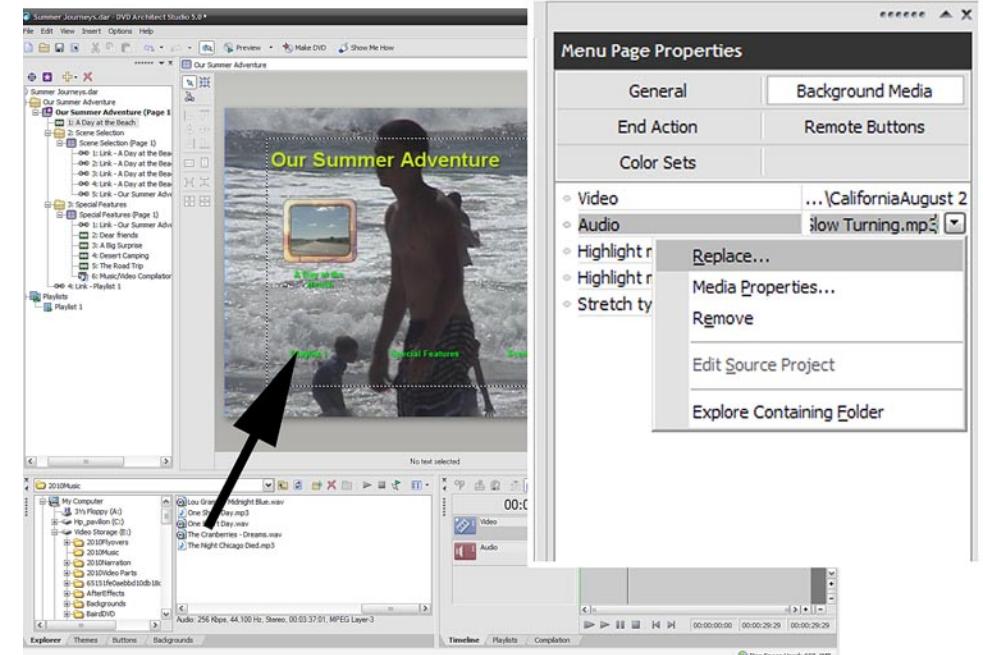
#### 3 Select a video clip

Browse to and select a video clip on your computer.

Click **OK**.

Your video clip will become the menu's animated background.

By default, this clip will play in its entirety as a menu page background and then hold. (For information on setting your background to loop, see page 45.) Additionally, if you have included a music clip as well as a video background, the menu will continue to play for the duration of the *longer* of the two media clips! For information on setting this duration manually, see *Set the menu loop length for your background media* on page 42.



A musical or other custom audio background can be added to a menu by dragging the audio file from the **Explorer** panel onto the page in the **Workspace** panel or by browsing to the file from the **Menu Page Properties** panel.

### Add a musical background to your menu page

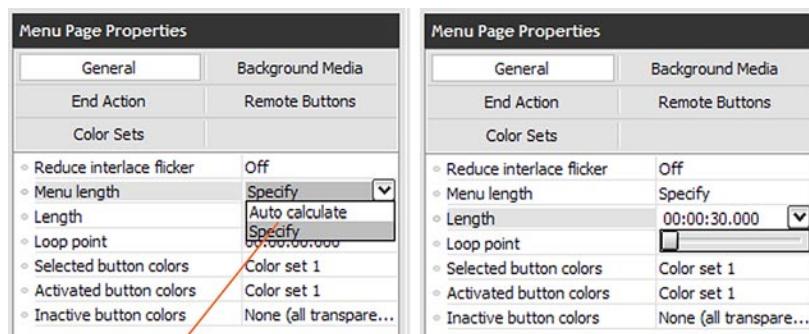
As with adding a custom image as a menu background, there are a number of ways to add background music to your menu page.

- Drag an audio file from the Explorer panel.** To add music or any audio clip background to the menu page displayed in your **Workspace** panel, drag it onto the page from the **Explorer** panel, or simply double-click on the audio file in the **Explorer** panel.

- Browse to the photo from the Menu Page Properties panel.**

When your menu page is displayed in the **Workspace** panel and its background is selected (no page elements selected), **Menu Page Properties** will be displayed in the **Properties** panel. On the **Background Media** pane, click on the box to the right of the **Video** listing. Selecting **Replace** from the drop-down menu that appears will open a browse screen in which you can locate and select your background image.

As with a video background, this music or audio will play, by default, in its entirety as a menu page background and then hold. (For information on setting your background to loop rather than hold, see page 45.) Additionally, if you have included a video clip as well as an audio background, the menu will continue to play for the duration of the *longer* of the two media clips! For information on setting this duration manually, see *Set the menu loop length for your background media* on page 42.



To change your menu background's playback length, you must change the Menu Length setting to **Specify**.

### Set the menu “loop” length for your background media

By default, DVD Architect Studio uses a menu length that is the longer of either the video or audio clip you have added as your menu page's background. This means, for instance, if you add a 45 second video clip and a 3-minute song as your menu page's backgrounds, the song will play in its entirety, even after the video ends—displaying a blank background as the audio continues!

It's best, then, to manually set a **Menu Length** for your page's media.

As a rule of thumb, most disc menu backgrounds are set to loop after about 30 seconds.

(By the way, you should note that, by default, your disc will *hold* rather than loop after your background has finished playing. For information on setting your menu background to loop or to replay continuously as long as the menu page remains onscreen, see page 45.)

To set your background to end its playback after 30 seconds:

#### 1 Open the Menu Page Properties General pane

When your menu page is displayed in the **Workspace** panel and its background is selected (no page elements selected), **Menu Page Properties** will be displayed in the **Properties** panel.

Click on the **General** button.

#### 2 Specify Menu Length

By default, the **Menu Length** property is set to **Auto Calculate**, which automatically allows the background media to play entirely through before looping.

Click on the box to the right of the **Menu Length** listing and select the **Specify** option.

### 3 Set the background media loop Length

Set the length of time you would like your menu background to play either by clicking on the numbers in the box to the right of the **Length** listing and manually typing in new values or by using the slider which appears as a drop-down when you click on this property's box.

Note that this length is displayed as **hours:minutes:seconds.fractions-of-a-second**. So, in order to change the media loop **Length** to 30 seconds, you will need to type in the value “30.0” (thirty and zero thousandths of a second).



Prior to reaching the Loop Point, your menu page will display the background video but won't show buttons or text.

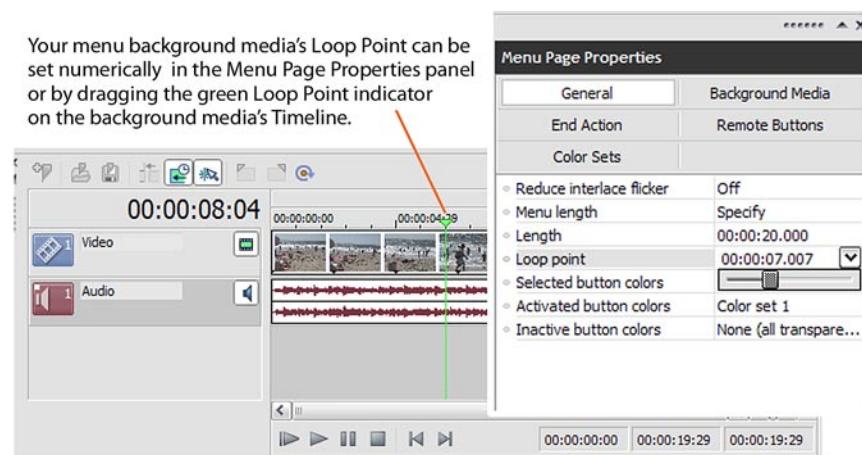
### Set a Loop Point for your background video

The **Loop Point** on your **Menu Page Properties** indicates two things:

- It is the point in your background video's playback in which your menu buttons appear over your menu page's background video. (By default, this is *immediately*, of course.)

Prior to this **Loop Point**, the background video will display with no other elements over it. This is useful if you'd like to include some introductory video before the actual menu page's navigation appears. (Another way to add a video clip before your navigation pages is to **Add Introduction Media**, as we discuss in **Chapter 5, Build a Disc Menu Structure**.)

- Once your background media playback reaches its end, the menu page will loop back *only to this Loop Point* (it will not go all of the way back to the beginning of your background video) so that your menu buttons and other elements remain on screen continually after the initial video's play-through.



The menu page's **Loop Point** can be set in one of two ways: By setting it manually in **Menu Page Properties** or by positioning the green **Loop Point** indicator on the **Timeline** panel.

To set the **Loop Point** in the **Properties** panel:

- Open the Menu Page Properties General page**

When your menu page is displayed in the **Workspace** panel and its background is selected (no page elements selected), **Menu Page Properties** will be displayed in the **Properties** panel.

Click on the **General** button.

- Set the Loop Point**

Set the **Loop Point** of your video loop either by clicking on the numbers in the box to the right of the **Loop Point** listing and manually typing in new values or by using the slider which appears as a drop-down when you click on this property's box.

To set the **Loop Point** using the green **Loop Point** indicator on the **Timeline** panel:

- Locate the Loop Point indicator**

When a menu page is displayed in the **Workspace** panel, the page's **Audio** and **Video** (or still) will appear in the **Timeline** panel.

The **Loop Point** indicator is the fine green vertical line on this **Timeline**.

- Drag the Loop Point to a position on the Timeline**

This location will correspond with the settings in the **Menu Page Properties** panel, and you can use one tool to fine tune the location of the indicator in the other.

## Set your menu background to loop

Whether you've added a musical background or a video background to your menu page, the background clip will, by default, play to the point you've specified and then hold.

To manually set your menu page background to replay continuously:

- Open the Menu Page Properties End Action pane**

When your menu page is displayed in the **Workspace** panel and its background is selected (no page elements selected), **Menu Page Properties** will be displayed in the **Properties** panel.

Click on the **End Action** button.

- Set Command to Loop**

By default, the **Command** property is set to **Hold**, which means that, after your background audio and/or video finishes playing, the menu will hold until your viewer clicks on a button.

To set the page background to repeat continuously, click on the box to the right of the **Command** property listing and select **Loop** from the drop-down menu.

The page background will then play, according to the loop length you've set (as on page 42) and then will repeat from either the beginning of your video and music clip or from the **Loop Point** you've set (as on page 44).

## Additional Menu Page Properties

Definitions for more **Menu Properties** and a reference sheet for the entire **Menu Page Properties** panel can be found in **Chapter 11, An Appendix of Advanced DVD Architect Studio Tricks**.

