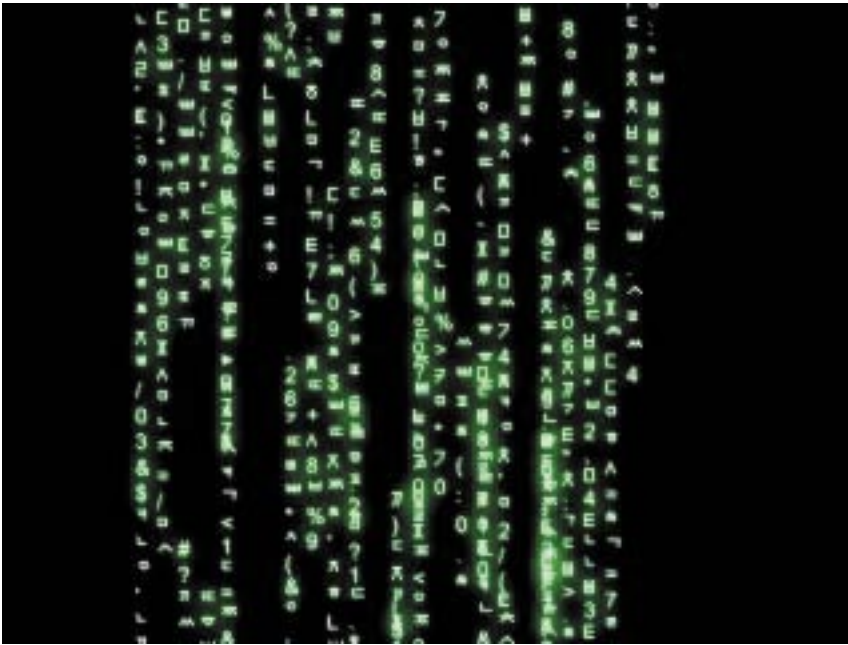


your own matrix

This tutorial shows you how to create a
'Matrix-esqe' animation with Text Matrix.



a tutorial for : [text matrix](#) : from text anarchy

Text Anarchy



cool tools for text in motion.

[from Digital Anarchy]

f/x tools for revolutionaries.



Yup, that's right, your very own matrix, right inside of After Effects. No pills to take, no messy 'ports' on the back of your head, no agents chasing you around. Hell, it's your matrix... you be the agent.

So, let's get going. First check out the look we're going for. This isn't exactly what the Matrix looked like, but what's the point of having your very own matrix if you can't personalize it. [figure 1]



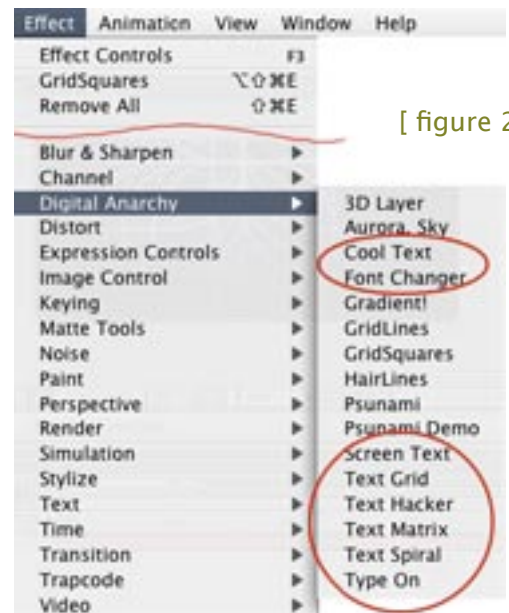
[figure 1]

00- download & install

Before you start this tutorial, you will want to download the [text_matrixTM-tute.zip](#) file from our website. This ZIP file contains an After Effects .aep file and QuickTime example movies.

You also need to install our Text Anarchy plugins into your After Effects/Plugins folder. The set will appear in the 'Effect' dropdown menu, in a 'Digital Anarchy' submenu, as eight separate plugins. [figure 2]

If you are working with the demo version of Text Anarchy, a red 'X' will watermark your footage.



[figure 2]

01- project setup

From your download folder, open up the [text_matrixTM.aep](#) project file in After Effects. The 'Final' comp shows your finished piece.

You can also play the QuickTime movie that's called [text_matrixTM-final.mov](#) to see the final composition that you will create.

The 'Start' comp is a 320x240 project with a new Solid layer. Alternately, you can create a new comp that's 320x240, and a new Solid that's the size of the comp.

[figure 3]



[figure 3]



02- apply text matrix

Apply Text Matrix (Effects> Digital Anarchy> Text Matrix) to the layer. You'll be presented with a dialog box.

You can import an ASCII text do; input specific text; or leave this dialog blank to access random characters. Since we want random text in our project, let's leave the text entry field blank.

03- choose your font

Before we leave this dialog, we need to select a typeface. We are going to use Courier Regular since it's a common font and looks 'computerish'.

Feel free to use any font you like. This will make your screen look a bit different than our examples, but won't interfere with the tutorial.



[figure 4]

04- lock options

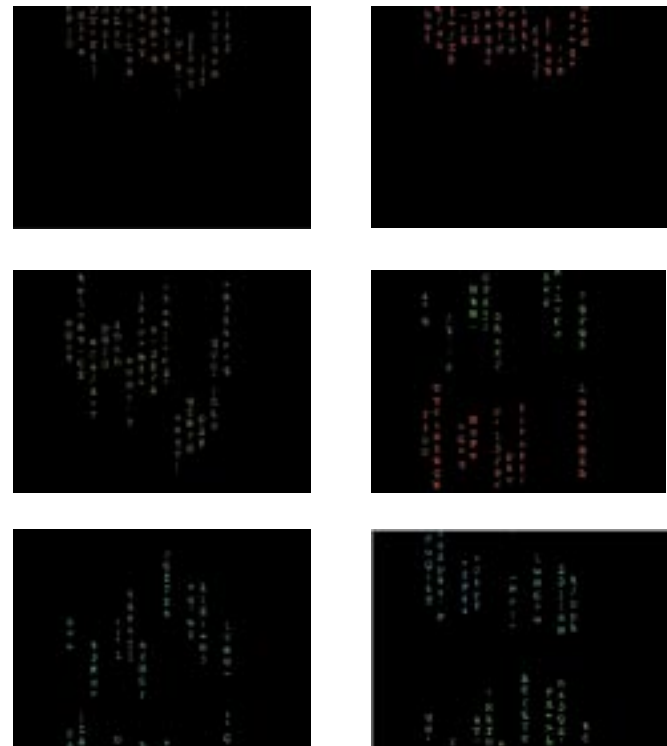
One last option before we move into the main interface. Turn on the 'Lock Speed' checkbox.

[figure 4]

What do the 'Lock' buttons do? They lock the specified attribute onto a stream. What happens, for example, if you animate the 'Color' parameter from red to green to blue, and 'Lock Color' is not selected? Well, all of the streams will change color as the color animates. A stream does not hold its original color. [figure 5a]

If you turn 'Lock Color' on, however, the stream does hold its original 'Color' as it animates. The first streams created will be reddish, and the streams a bit later will be greenish. But the initial red ones will be unaffected; they will stay red. Similarly, when the color turns to blue, the green streams would remain green. [figure 5b]

Now hit 'OK'. We've set up the preferences for Text Matrix, so let's move into its main parameters.



[figure 5a]
Not locked

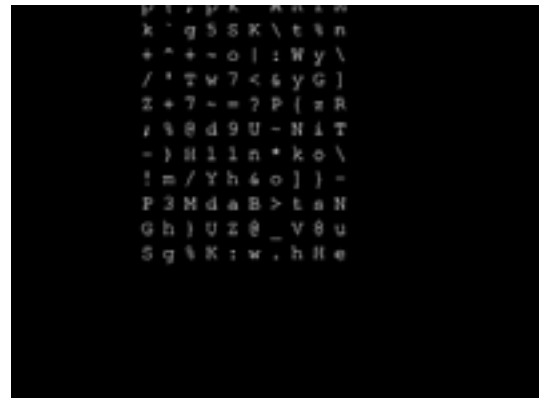
[figure 5b]
Locked color



[figure 6]



[figure 7]



[figure 8]



05- random characters

Moving along. We're past the text dialog box, and what do we see? NOTHING! Glorious nothing. Bah.

Here's a big note to take: If you don't enter anything in the text dialog, and don't click on the 'Random Characters' checkbox, you will not see anything on your screen. This is true for all the Text Anarchy filters, not just Text Matrix.

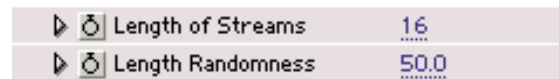
The text that's created by the plugin is actually a particle system. To turn the particles on, just click on 'Random Characters'. You will now see text characters. [figure 6]

06- add character

Twirl down the 'Characters' section to make some typography changes.

Let's change the 'Font Size' to 12. Change 'Color' and 'Leading Character Color' to white. [figure 7]

If both color boxes are not the same, then the leading character of every stream will take on a different color. This is important to know if you'll be animating the color (er, which we won't be doing in this tutorial).



[figure 9]

07- center of streams

Now open the 'Streams' twirly. This is where things start to get interesting.

Click on the 'Center of Stream' positioning point. Position the crosshair that appears somewhere between the top left corner and the center of your comp.

In your Timeline, move the Time Marker forward one second. Your composition looks something like the image at right. Nothing hard about that and we already have text animating. [figure 8]



[figure 10]

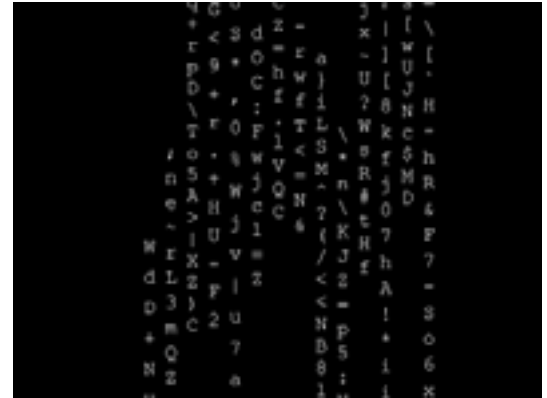


08- increase the streams

Alright, so the evenly spaced block of text isn't exactly what we're looking for. It's a great start, though.

Let's increase the 'Number Of Streams' to 14 and set 'Length of Streams' to 16. 'Length of Streams' is simply the length, measured in number of characters, that the text streams will be.

Next we'll explore what those crazy 'Randomness' parameters can do for you. The Randomness sliders are very easy to set up and a quick, fun way (really!) to create wildly varying animation.



[figure 11]

09- length randomness

Here's what Randomness does:

1. Multiplies the parameter value that it's tied to (Length of Streams, in this case) by some fractional amount.
2. Takes the result and adds it on to one end of the value.
3. Takes the result and subtracts it from the other end of the value.
4. This results in a range of possible values that the accompanying parameter (in this case, length) may get when the particles (in this case, streams) are created.
5. When a stream is created, it is then randomly assigned a value within this range. This value won't change over time, as the stream is always going to maintain the length given at birth.



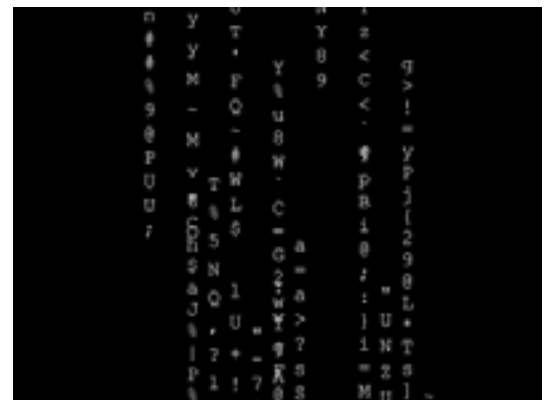
[figure 12]

In this project, we have 'Length of Streams' set to 16. If we set Length Randomness to 50%, we'll end up with a range of 8 to 24. [figure 9]

Now if you scrub the Timeline, you'll see that streams are moving all over the place. [figure 10]

[figure 13]

▶ ○ Speed	5.0
▶ ○ Speed Randomness	50.0
▶ ○ Time Between Streams	90.0
▶ ○ TBS Randomness	70.0



[figure 14]



10- speed randomness

You'll notice that the text streams still have a evenly spaced first row, which doesn't make for an organic start. Move the Time Marker down the Timeline a bit, and you'll see the streams have a very uneven back row.

Move the Time Marker back to 01:00, and set 'Speed Randomness' to 50%. This of course, will vary the speed that the various streams are traveling at.

Instead of an even front edge, now the text is all jumbled. The back end of that orderly text block is completely out of whack. Success! [figure 11]

Our final steps involve the 'Time' parameters.



[figure 15]

10- time between streams

'Time Between Streams' does exactly what its name implies. It controls how frequently new streams are created. If 'TBS' is set to 90 (as it is now, by default) then a new stream comes out every 90 frames.



[figure 16]

This creates a problem for our Matrix animation. Move the Time Marker to 03:03 in the Timeline. Notice that a whole new batch of streams got created at 03:00. This leaves a visual gap between the two batches. [figure 12]

11-time randomness

This is not what we want for our animation. We want streams coming and going, being all sorts of lengths and speeds, so what do we do?

Yup, you guessed right. Set 'Time Between Streams Randomness' to 70%. [figure 13] If the Time Marker is still at 03:03, you should see a pretty big change. [figure 14]



[figure 17]



12- no time offset

Got everything the way we want it, right? Er...
hmm.

Going back to 00:00 in the Timeline, we don't have anything on the screen except for one row, way up at the top. The frame looked great at 03:03, but this frame is disappointing to say the least. Notice the streams just peakin' out from the top edge. [figure 15]

We cannot tolerate boring frames! To the time machine, boys and girls.

13- time offset

To remedy this issue, let's take a look at 'Time Offset'. 'Time Offset' allows you, essentially, to time remap the effect without applying 'Time Remap'. Nifty, eh?

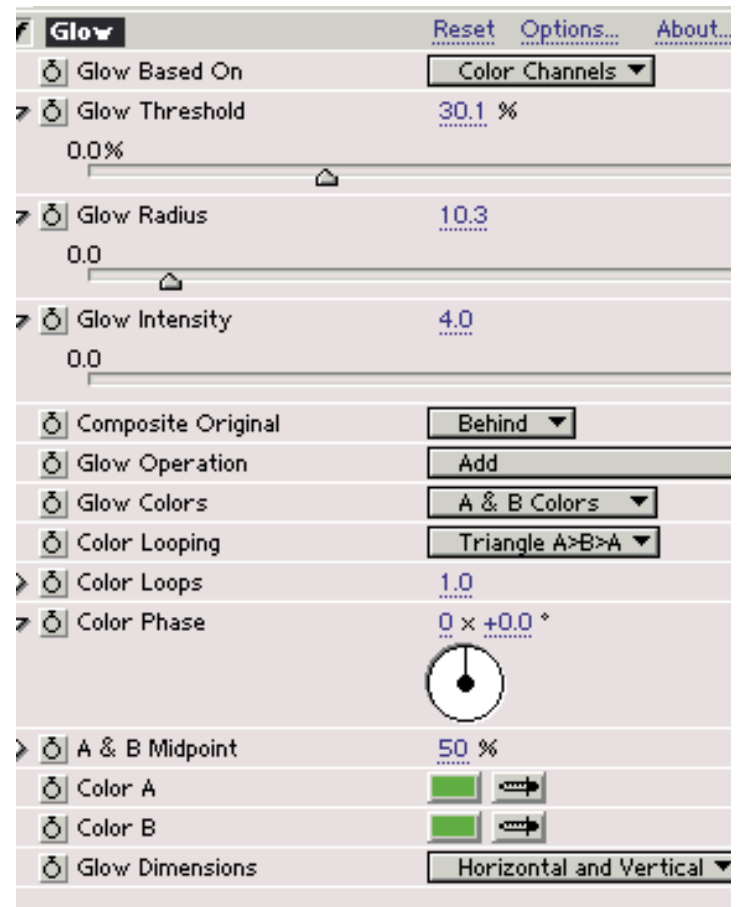
Actually it's kind of cool just to scrub the 'Time Offset' dial around to see how the animation plays out. By moving 'Time Offset' forward, you are moving your animation forward to a different starting point.

If we set 'Time Offset' to 93, we will move forward 93 frames. The Matrix animation will look as it does at Time 03:03, except the Time Marker will still be at 00:00.

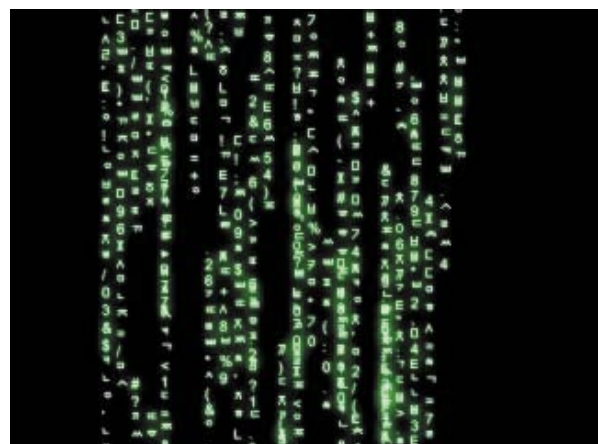
So... set your 'Time Offset' to 93. Compare the Timeline now at 00:00 to the way it looked at Time 03:03, when Time Offset is set to 0. No difference, huh? Pretty cool.

To see your results, RAM-preview out your comp. You can also look at our QuickTime movie [text_matrix-half.mov](#).

[figure 17]



[figure 18]



[figure 19]