FIELD GUIDE FOR EDITORS

STOP THE AI THAT IS EATING YOUR MACHINE

Media Composer transcribes every clip in every bin, indexes every word anyone says in your project, and runs a separate transcode and render engine outside the application. All of it is on by default. On a busy newsroom workstation it competes with playback for the same CPU and the same disk, and you feel it as stutter, slow bin opening and lag on the timeline.

This guide explains what each background process actually does, then shows you every place it can be switched off, from a single bin all the way to a setting that applies to every project on the machine. Nothing in it is destructive and every step reverses.

APPLIES TO MEDIA COMPOSER 2023.8 AND NEWER · WINDOWS AND MACOS

TEN MINUTES TO READ · FIVE MINUTES TO APPLY · FULLY REVERSIBLE

WHAT IS RUNNING WHILE YOU EDIT	
PhraseFind AI indexing transcribes audio, builds the transcript database	Heavy
Transcript engine every bin included unless you exclude it	Heavy
Avid Background Services background transcode, consolidate and render	Heavy
Dynamic Media Folders watch folders that ingest on their own	Idle
Avid Link licensing, notifications, feeds, starts at login	Low
Avid Media Indexer shared storage scanning, NEXIS and MediaCentral	Low

Avid rates PhraseFind AI and ScriptSync AI at 24 GB RAM minimum, and background transcode, render and Dynamic Media Folders at 32 GB recommended, on top of what your edit itself needs.

PART ONE

WHAT IS ACTUALLY RUNNING

Six separate things, and they are not all the same animal. Two live inside Media Composer, two run as their own programs beside it, and two are system level. Knowing which is which tells you where to go to switch each one off.

PhraseFind AI indexing

SAFE TO STOP

This is the big one. Since version 2023.8 Media Composer replaced the old phonetic search with real AI transcription that runs entirely on your machine, with no internet connection. When media arrives in a project, the indexer reads the audio of every clip and writes a full text transcript into a database, so that later you can type a word and jump to the moment somebody said it.

Avid states plainly in its own release notes that indexing is a resource intensive operation which may impact the performance of Media Composer. On a newsroom machine receiving fresh material all day, it never really finishes, because more media keeps arriving.

Feeds **PhraseFind AI**, **ScriptSync AI** and the **Transcript Tool**. If you never search for spoken words and never cut from a transcript, you are paying for something you do not use.

The transcript engine, bin by bin

SAFE TO STOP

By default Media Composer will create a transcription for all media in a project. Avid acknowledges this is often wasteful, because music, sound effects and camera media without usable dialogue gain nothing from being transcribed. Every bin you leave included is more audio queued for processing. From version 2024.6 onward you can include or exclude individual bins, and the Bin Container sidebar tells you the state of each one at a glance.

Controlled in three places: **Project settings**, the **Transcript Settings** window, and a **right click on any bin**.

Avid Background Services

SAFE TO STOP

A separate program that starts with the computer and keeps running whether or not Media Composer is open. It is the engine behind background transcode, background consolidate, background render and Dynamic Media Folders. Anything you tick as a background job is handed to this service and chewed through while you edit. You control it from an icon in the Windows taskbar or the macOS menu bar, not from inside Media Composer. The same icon opens the Background Queue window, which is where you find out whether something is silently working through a list of jobs right now.

Process name on Windows: **AvidBackgroundServicesManager.exe**. Formerly called Avid Editor Services Manager.

Dynamic Media Folders

SAFE TO STOP

Watch folders. You point one at a directory, and anything dropped there is ingested and transcoded automatically against a profile, without anybody pressing a button. Useful in a dailies workflow, pure overhead if nobody set it up on purpose. It depends on Background Services, so stopping those stops this too.

Not available on macOS Catalina and later, so on a modern Mac this one is already off.

Avid Link

CHECK FIRST

Launches at login, sits in the background, handles your Avid account, product updates, marketplace feeds and notifications. It is the lightest of the six, but it is also the one most people are surprised to find running, because it offers no visible option to stop starting itself.

Warning: on subscription and floating licences, Avid Link is part of how the licence is checked. Do not remove it on a facility machine without asking your systems engineer first.

Avid Media Indexer

LEAVE ALONE

Scans and catalogues media on storage so that editing systems can find it. On a standalone workstation with local drives it does very little. On a facility connected to NEXIS or MediaCentral it is load bearing, because it is how shared media gets discovered at all.

If your workstation sees shared workspaces, treat this as untouchable and let the engineering team decide.

PART TWO

EVERY PLACE YOU CAN SWITCH IT OFF

Work outward, from the narrowest setting to the widest. The first four are ordinary settings inside Media Composer and are yours to change. The last three reach outside your project, so read the caution on each before you touch them on a station that is not your own.

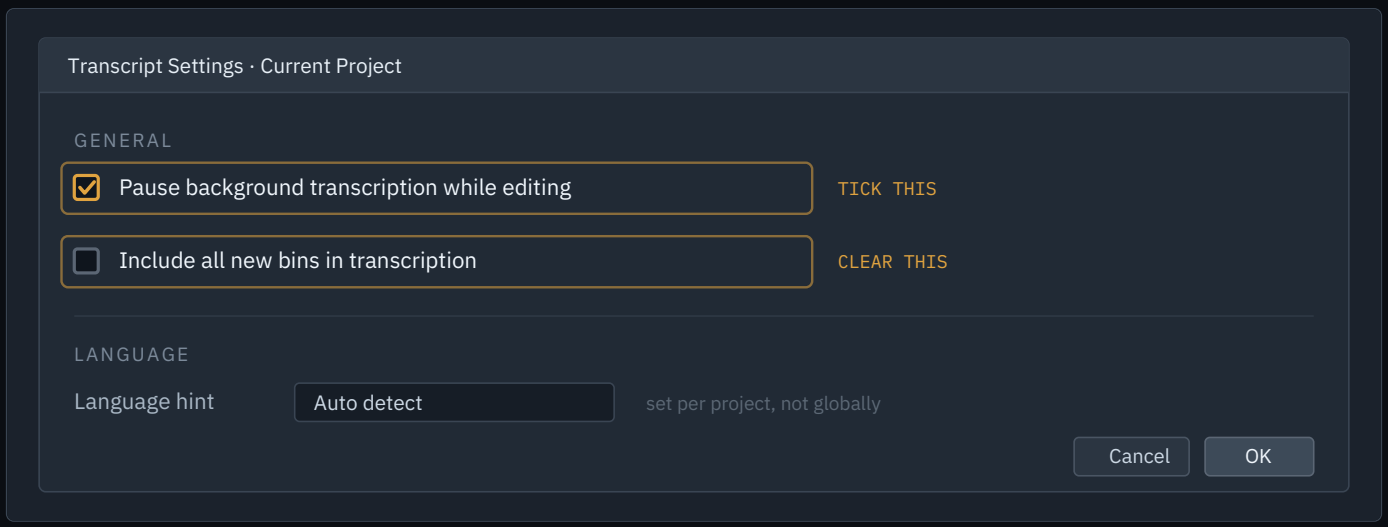
LOCATION ONE · IN THE PROJECT

Stop new bins being enrolled, and pause while you cut

Two checkboxes here do most of the work, and they survive for the life of the project. The first stops transcription from stealing cycles at exactly the moment you need them, which is while your hands are on the keyboard. The second stops the pile of work growing every time somebody makes a bin.

1. Open `Settings` then the `Project` tab, and choose `Transcript`.
2. Tick `Pause background transcription while editing`. Transcription now halts as soon as you start working and only resumes after roughly ten seconds of inactivity.
3. In the same Transcript Settings window, untick `Include all new bins in transcription`. New bins are no longer enrolled automatically.

> **Worth knowing.** These are project settings, not application settings, so a brand new project starts with Avid's defaults again. Location five shows you how to make the choice stick for every future project.



Settings > Project > Transcript. Drawn reconstruction, exact wording may shift slightly between releases.

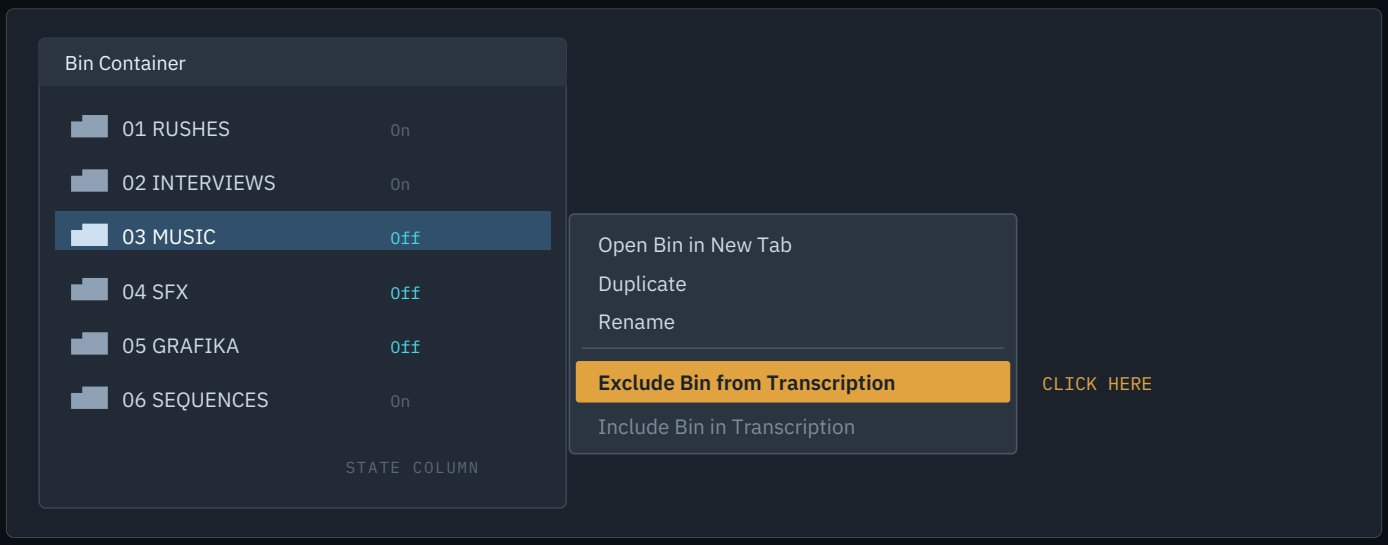
LOCATION TWO · IN THE BIN

Exclude the bins that will never need a transcript

Music, effects, graphics, mute camera material, archive and stock. None of it benefits from transcription, and all of it queues by default. Excluding a bin is instant and the sidebar labels the result, so anyone sitting down at the station can see the state without opening a menu.

1. Right click the bin in the Bin Container sidebar.
2. Choose `Exclude Bin from Transcription`.
3. Check the label beside the bin name. It reads `Transcription Off` when the bin is excluded.
4. To put a bin back later, right click and choose `Include Bin in Transcription`.

> **Fastest habit to build.** When you create a bin for music or effects, exclude it in the same breath as naming it. It costs one second and saves the machine an hour.



Right click any bin. The sidebar keeps a visible record of which bins are excluded.

LOCATION THREE · IN THE FIND WINDOW

Stop the indexer itself

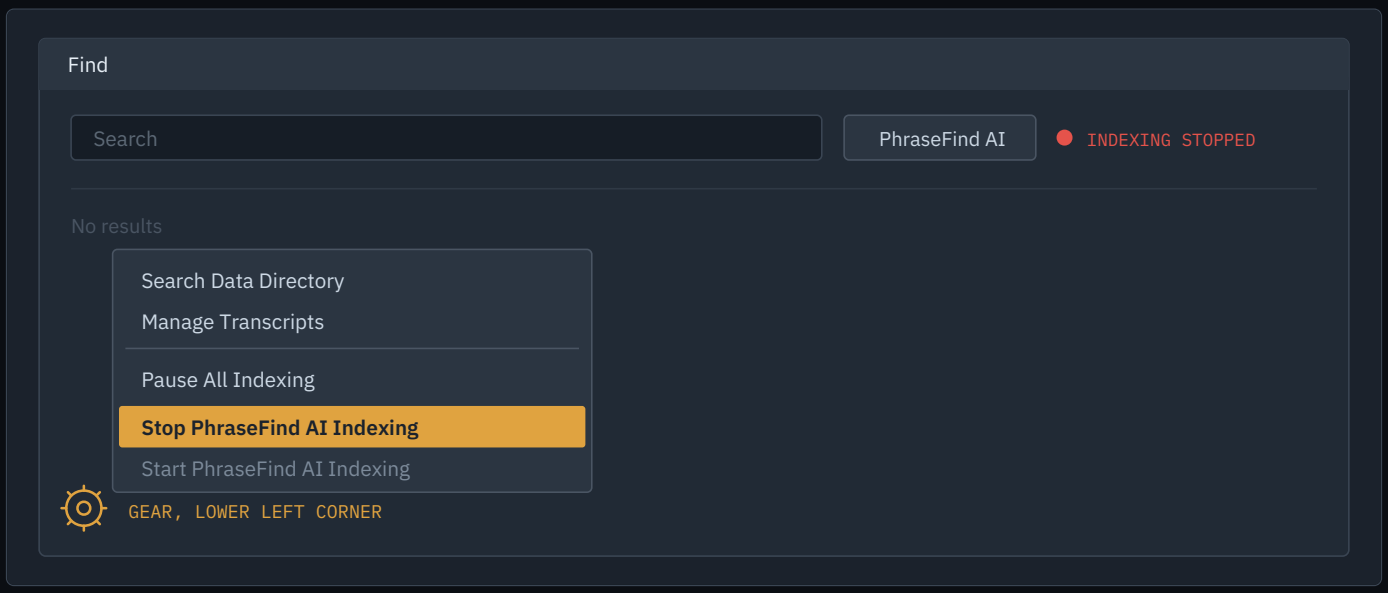
This is the switch Avid points to in its own release notes when performance suffers, and it is the one most editors never find, because it hides behind a small gear in the bottom corner of a window nobody opens. Stopping the indexer halts transcription work without touching any other service.

1. Go to `Edit` then `Find`, or press `Ctrl+F` on Windows and `Cmd+F` on macOS.
2. Click the `gear icon` in the lower left corner to reach Search Settings.
3. Choose `Stop PhraseFind AI Indexing`, not Pause. Stop holds until somebody deliberately starts it again. Pause only halts indexing temporarily and it will come back on you.
4. Confirm it worked. The indicator beside PhraseFind AI Index turns red when indexing is stopped.
5. From version 2025.6 the same start and stop control is also on the Transcript Tool Fast Menu.

Stop, not Pause. The two commands look interchangeable and are not. Pause All Indexing is a temporary hold and indexing resumes by itself. Stop PhraseFind AI Indexing holds until a person restarts it. If you want the machine quiet for the rest of the shift, Stop is the only one that does that.

This one is per project. Stopping the indexer applies to the project you have open, so on a station that opens a different project every shift you must repeat it, or set it once as a site setting.

While you are in there. The same gear menu holds **Manage Transcripts**, which deletes transcripts already written for a project and reclaims the space. There is also a Search Data Directory setting controlling where index data is written. Switching it from Default to Local Default keeps that traffic off shared storage.



Edit > Find, then the gear in the lower left. The red indicator is your confirmation that indexing has actually stopped.

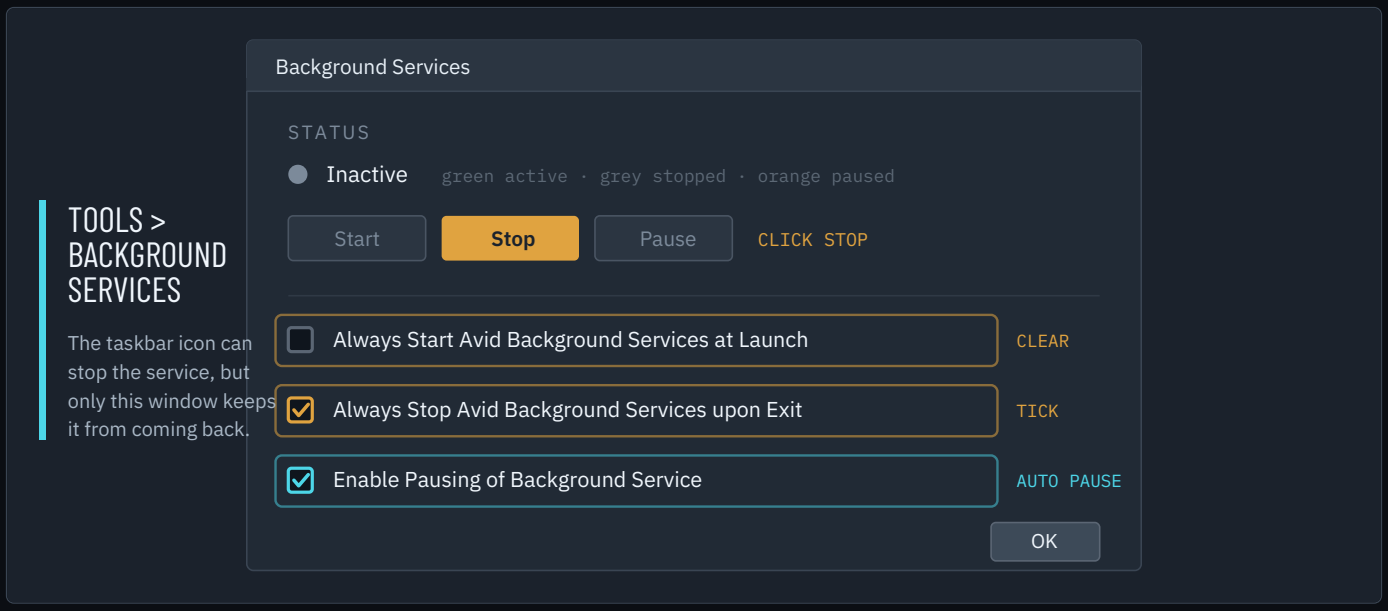
LOCATION FOUR · BACKGROUND SERVICES

Stop Background Services, and stop them coming back

Transcode, consolidate, render and watch folders all run through a service that lives outside the application. Because it is a separate program, quitting Media Composer does not stop it, and it will happily keep working through a queue while you think the machine is idle.

There are two ways in, and they control the same service. The taskbar route works even when Media Composer is closed. The in application route is the one that matters here, because only that window holds the checkboxes that decide whether the service starts again tomorrow morning.

1. Before stopping anything, look at what is queued. Click the `Avid Background Services Manager` icon in the Windows taskbar or the macOS menu bar and choose `Open Background Queue Window`. Avid warns that stopping the service kills a job in progress, so check whether a colleague queued an overnight transcode.
2. In Media Composer, go to `Tools` then `Background Services`.
3. Click `Stop`. The services halt immediately.
4. Clear `Always Start Avid Background Services at Launch`. This is the one that stops the service coming back every time you open Media Composer.
5. Tick `Always Stop Avid Background Services upon Exit`, so nothing is left chewing CPU after you go home.
6. Click `OK`. The status now reads Inactive.



Tools > Background Services. The taskbar icon stops the service today, the checkboxes here stop it tomorrow.

CONTROL IN THAT WINDOW	WHAT IT DOES
Start	Immediately starts the background services if they are currently stopped.
Stop	Immediately stops the background services if they are currently running.
Pause	Pauses the services for a set length of time. If the pause runs out while you are playing, Avid extends it. Quitting the application clears the pause and the services resume.
Always Start at Launch	Starts the services whenever Media Composer opens. Clear this one.
Always Stop upon Exit	Stops the services when you quit Media Composer. Tick this one.
Enable Pausing of Background Service	Lets the services pause automatically during critical operations, which Avid lists as playback, capture and use of an Artist surface.

The setting almost nobody knows about. If your room genuinely needs background transcode and you cannot simply switch the service off, tick **Enable Pausing of Background Service** and leave it ticked. The service then steps out of the way by itself during playback and capture, which is exactly when stutter hurts most in a newsroom. It is the middle setting between losing the feature and losing your playback.

If the label reads differently, you are still in the right place. Avid renamed Avid Editor Services Manager to Avid Background Services Manager, and its own documentation still uses both names in the same document. Depending on your version the checkboxes may say **Editor Services** or **Background Services**. Same controls.

Do not leave this off and forget. If you later tick the background option in a Consolidate or Transcode dialog, the job will simply sit in the queue and never run. When somebody reports that a transcode is stuck, this is usually why.

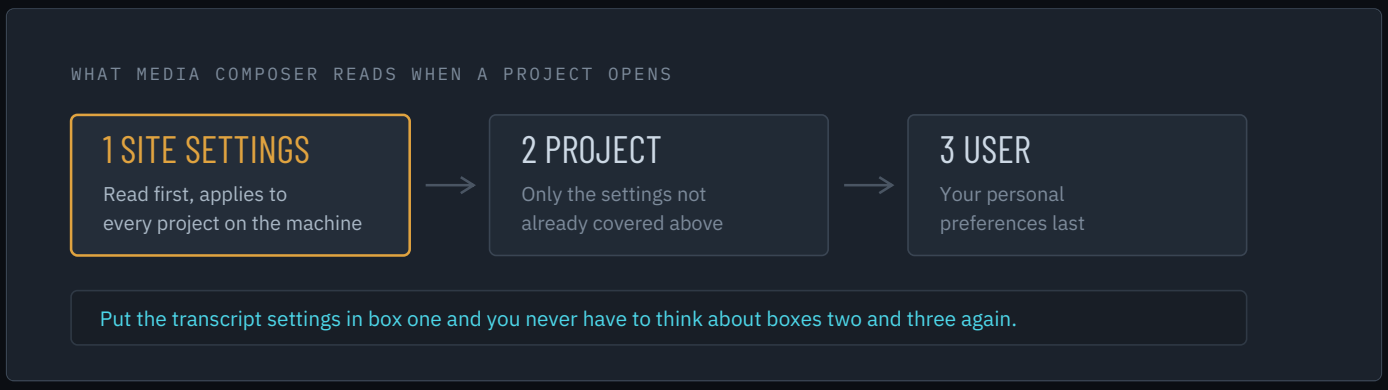
LOCATION FIVE · MAKE IT STICK

Site Settings, so every new project starts quiet

Everything above is per project or per session, which is why the problem keeps coming back. Media Composer solves this with Site Settings. When the application opens a new project it reads the Site Settings file first and loads whatever it finds there, and only then loads the project and user settings that were not already covered. Put your transcript choices in Site Settings and every project created on that machine inherits them.

1. Set up one project exactly the way you want it, with the transcript settings already applied.
2. Open the `Settings` tab in the Project window.
3. Select the settings you want to make permanent, then copy them into the `Site Settings` window.
4. The Site Settings file lives in the Settings folder at the root of the Media Composer installation. Copy that one file to the other workstations and they all behave the same.

This is the answer to doing it once. For a room of edit suites, a single Site Settings file distributed by the engineering team beats twelve editors each remembering to click a gear.



Site Settings load ahead of project and user settings, which is what makes them the permanent fix.

LOCATION SIX · THE NUCLEAR OPTION

Physically remove the index plug-in

If you want a guarantee rather than a setting, you can take the plug-in out of the application so there is nothing left to run. Media Composer loads its AVX2 plug-ins from a folder on disk, and a plug-in that is not in that folder cannot be loaded. Quit Media Composer completely before you start.

1. **On macOS.** Go to `Applications` and find `Avid Media Composer`. Right click `AvidMediaComposer.app` and choose `Show Package Contents`, then open `Contents`, `SharedSupport`, `AVX2_Plug-ins`.
2. **On Windows.** Go to `C:\Program Files\Avid\Avid Media Composer\AVX2_Plug-ins`.
3. Find the file named `PhoneticIndexNN.avx`.
4. Drag it to your desktop rather than deleting it. That is your backup, and putting it back is how you undo this.
5. Relaunch Media Composer. The plug-in is gone and cannot consume anything.

> **Three things to know before you do this.** First, it is a whole machine change, not a project change, so it affects every editor who sits down at that station. Second, a Media Composer update or repair will usually put the file back, so this is not permanent in the way people expect and the station needs rechecking after every upgrade. Third, this file is the phonetic index plug-in, which is the engine behind the older phonetic PhraseFind rather than the newer AI transcription, so on a current release treat the Find window and Background Services steps as the real fix and this as a belt and braces extra.

> **Cleaner alternative on a facility.** If the room never uses dialogue search at all, simply not licensing the PhraseFind AI option achieves the same thing with none of the file surgery, and it survives updates.

LOCATION SEVEN · AT THE OPERATING SYSTEM

The last resort, and when not to use it

If a station still shows background activity after everything above, the remaining levers are at system level. These are heavier, they are the ones most likely to cause a support call later, and on a facility machine they belong to the engineering team rather than to you.

1. **Startup items.** On Windows open Task Manager and use the Startup tab to stop Avid Link and Background Services launching at login. On macOS use System Settings and Login Items.
2. **Services.** On Windows, `services.msc` lists the Avid services and lets you set a startup type of Manual instead of Automatic. Manual is far safer than Disabled, because the service can still be brought up when something genuinely needs it.
3. **Licensing.** If the PhraseFind AI option is not activated on the machine at all, the indexer has nothing to do. On a facility that never uses dialogue search, not licensing the option is the cleanest possible fix.

> **Read this before touching anything above.** On a workstation connected to NEXIS, Interplay or MediaCentral, the Media Indexer is how shared media is found, and stopping it will make media appear to go offline. Avid Link is part of licence checking on subscription and floating licences, so removing it can stop Media Composer launching at all. Removing a plug-in from the application folder will usually be undone by the next update. None of this should be done on a shared edit suite without your systems engineer agreeing first.

PART THREE

CHECK THAT IT ACTUALLY WORKED

Do not trust a menu click. These checks tell you whether the machine is genuinely quiet.

CHECK	WHERE	WHAT QUIET LOOKS LIKE
Indexer state	Edit > Find	The indicator beside PhraseFind AI Index is red, meaning indexing is stopped.
Bin state	Bin Container sidebar	The bins you excluded read Transcription Off in the column beside the name.
Background queue	Taskbar or menu bar	The Background Queue Window is empty and the service reports stopped.
Services status	Tools > Background Services	Status reads Inactive. Taskbar icon grey means stopped, green active, orange paused.
Processes, Windows	Task Manager	No sustained CPU from AvidBackgroundServicesManager.exe while you are not exporting.
Processes, macOS	Activity Monitor	Search for Avid and confirm nothing holds CPU when Media Composer sits still.
Real world test	Your timeline	Import fresh rushes and scrub immediately. Before the change the machine hesitates, after it should not.

PART FOUR

PUTTING IT BACK

Nothing here is destructive. If a documentary job arrives where searching an interview by word is genuinely worth the CPU, turn it back on for that project and leave the rest of the room alone.

TO UNDO	DO THIS
Indexing stopped	Edit > Find, gear icon, then Start PhraseFind AI Indexing. Indexing resumes and works through the backlog.
Bin excluded	Right click the bin and choose Include Bin in Transcription.
New bins not enrolled	Transcript Settings, tick Include all new bins in transcription again.
Background Services stopped	Tools > Background Services, then Start.
Services no longer start at launch	Tools > Background Services, tick Always Start at Launch again. This is also how you bring back a taskbar icon that has vanished.
Plug-in removed	Quit Media Composer, put PhoneticIndexNN.avx back in AVX2_Plug-ins, relaunch.
Transcripts deleted	They regenerate from the media, so this costs processing time but no data.
Site Settings changed	Remove the copied settings and new projects go back to Avid's defaults.

PIN THIS ABOVE THE DESK

THE FIVE MINUTE VERSION

QUIET MACHINE CHECKLIST

DO THESE IN ORDER AT THE START OF EVERY PROJECT

01

Stop the indexer

`Edit > Find > gear icon > Stop PhraseFind AI Indexing`

Red indicator beside PhraseFind AI Index means it worked.

02

Pause transcription while you cut

`Settings > Project > Transcript > Pause background transcription while editing`

Tick it on.

03

Stop new bins being enrolled

`Transcript Settings > Include all new bins in transcription`

Clear the tick.

04

Exclude the bins that will never need words

`Right click bin > Exclude Bin from Transcription`

Music, effects, graphics, mute material. Sidebar shows Transcription Off.

05

Check the queue, then stop Background Services

`Tools > Background Services > Stop`

Check the Background Queue Window first. Then clear Always Start at Launch, tick Always Stop upon Exit. If you must keep the service, tick Enable Pausing of Background Service.

06

Make it permanent

`Project window > Settings tab > copy into Site Settings`

Site Settings load before every new project on that machine.

Two things never to touch on a shared station without asking. The Avid Media Indexer, because it is how NEXIS and MediaCentral media is found, and Avid Link, because it takes part in licence checking. Everything else on this sheet is yours to change and reverses in one click.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Written from Avid's own release notes and knowledge base articles, cross checked against the published What's New documents for versions 2024.2 through 2025.6 and against facility guidance from post houses that hit the same problem. Menu wording moves slightly between releases, so if a label reads differently on your station the location will still be right.

kb.avid.com, how to disable indexing for Transcript Tool, PhraseFind and ScriptSync
resources.avid.com, Avid Editing Application ReadMe v2024.6, on pausing and stopping background indexing
resources.avid.com, What's New in Media Composer v2024.6, on including and excluding bins
avid.com, What's New in Media Composer 2025.6, on transcript settings and the Fast Menu
resources.avid.com, Settings and You, on Site, Project and User settings

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