

Lights, computer, action!

Use your computer to add style and substance to your movies.

By Joseph O. Legaspi

Do you have the filmmaking aspirations of a Scorsese, Kubrick or Ed Wood? Or do you simply want to make more sophisticated home movies? There are two major software packages that can make you the film auteur you aspire to be: iMovie 2 for Apple Macintosh, and Windows MovieMaker for PC. iMovie 2 comes standard with the Power Mac G4, G4 Cube and iMac DV (Digital Video), and is available as a download on apple.com. Windows MovieMaker is included in Windows ME, and can be downloaded from the Windows Media Player web site (microsoft.com) onto any PC running Windows 95 or later.

There are numerous advantages to movie-making software. Eliminate the clutter of your VHS library by editing and compiling a "highlights" video of all your vacation footage. Editing software also gives you an edge in class or work presentations. If you're a member of a service organization, club or fraternity, a film of your group's activities is a persuasive recruiting tool.

iMovie 2 automatically transfers video and audio from your camcorder to your Mac through a FireWire cable. You can then edit your video clips, arrange them in sequence, trim unwanted footage and add special effects like fades and dissolves. You can also create your own title page and closing credits. For emotional depth, apply

a sepia tone or use soft focus—Barbra Streisand and Warren Beatty don't have monopolies on this.

As a next step, enhance your desktop movie with musical soundtracks or sound effects imported from MP3s or your CD collection. You can do voice-over narration with your computer's microphone or an external one. When the fruit of your cinematic labor is realized, view it full screen, or transfer your movies back to your camcorder and watch it on TV. Saving your masterpiece as a QuickTime file will enable you to email it to friends and family, place it on a CD-ROM or publish it on your web site. (To post on the Internet, you need iTools, available free at apple.com.)

Windows MovieMaker possesses many of the same features as iMovie 2. It's able to transfer, edit and store videos. With its



high-compression features, it's possible to store more than 20 hours of video per gigabyte of hard drive space. You can also incorporate audio files into your desktop films, view your movies in Windows Media Player (a feature of Windows ME and a free download from microsoft.com), send them via email and post them on the Internet.

iMovie 2, however, offers more sophisticated special effects. Editing clips on iMovie 2 is more precise. While Windows MovieMaker strengths are in trimming and cleaning up your pre-existing video footage, iMovie 2, a more user-friendly system, encourages play and experimentation. Besides, iMac with iMovie 2 is less expensive.

If you're ready for the next level, Final Cut Pro is the latest rave of digital movie enthusiasts. The Macintosh-only software is capable of performing the same tasks as Avid, the standard film-editing system. Keep in mind, this software is for advanced

users and takes time to learn. There are also older programs like Premiere, Film Composer and AfterEffects.

The Internet is replete with sites providing information and assistance: start with cyberfilmschool.com, moviemaker.com, indiewire.com or filmlogic.com. Embark on a digital movie-making journey. No class or film degree necessary. •

System requirements for Windows MovieMaker:

Pentium 150MHz processor or better
32MB of RAM or better
295MB free hard-disk space
CD-ROM drive
IEEE-1394 interface adapter (same as FireWire)

For Macs:

300-MHz or faster Power PC (G3 or G4)
Built-in FireWire Port
FireWire 2.4 or later
At least 64MB RAM (128MB recommended)
CD or DVD drive
200MB available disk space

For web links to iMovie 2 tutorials, go to www.steamtunnels.net and search using keyword "iMovie 2."

Related web sites

Filmfilm.com

Calling all budding filmmakers and directors: Do you have what it takes to be the next big shot? Filmfilm will host your film's web pages, create links to your film's web site, and if you're really ahead of the game, post a crew call. Now's your chance to get that worldwide audience you've been dreaming about.

Camcity.com

Web cam mecca. From straight and narrow business web cams to the downright weird, this site represents the whole cyber-stream spectrum.

Top ten American films of all time

1. *Citizen Kane* (1941)
2. *Casablanca* (1942)
3. *The Godfather* (1972)
4. *Gone with the Wind* (1939)
5. *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)
6. *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)
7. *The Graduate* (1967)
8. *On the Waterfront* (1954)
9. *Schindler's List* (1993)
10. *Singin' in the Rain* (1952)

Source: American Film Institute/variety.com

Apple products courtesy of Apple.com