

Edited highlights

We tested 12 video-editing programs. Here we reveal our Best Buys and why a free program is a good choice for video-editing beginners

Video-editing software helps you make the most of your home movies, so you can create something spectacular to share with family and friends. But which is the best program for you? We put the latest releases through their paces to find out.

Video-editing packages enable you to import video footage to your computer, edit it and create a new and improved piece of video – most programs will also help you create a DVD. Digital video can be captured (transferred to your computer) from a DV camcorder (see our camcorders report, p52), mobile phone or a digital camera – simply plug the device into a firewire or USB connection on your computer.

When editing, you can delete sections of video, move parts around, add special effects and transitions between clips, and more.

You can also add a soundtrack or narrative to your video, and even create a DVD complete with a menu for easy navigation on your TV.

Many packages offer tools to publish your creations on video clip websites, such as YouTube (www.youtube.com), and most allow you to edit high-definition footage from your camcorder. Three of our Best Buys (all except the Sony Vegas Movie Studio 8) enable you to edit HD footage and to create a Blu-ray disc.

Now you know what video-editing software can do, use this report to help you pick the right program for your needs.

The full results of our video-editing software test can be found at www.which.co.uk/video-editing and in the July 2008 issue of *Which? Computing*.

Insider information

Our top tips to help you make the most of editing video

- Before you buy a video-editing program, check that it's compatible with the file formats produced by your camcorder. Also make sure your computer meets the minimum specifications of the software.
- To share video, either create a DVD to give to a friend or post footage on a video-sharing site like YouTube (www.youtube.com) – you can change privacy settings so that only family and friends can view them. Don't email your video clips – the file size can



be huge and will clog up the receiver's inbox.

■ It's worth choosing a video-editing program that can edit high-definition (HD) footage. Even if you don't currently film in HD, it's likely that you will in the future (see p52 for the results of our camcorders test).

Finding your way around

Get to know the Best Buy Adobe Premiere Elements 4 program

Tabs to toggle between different editing stages

Preview screen

Video bank of your captured video

This timeline shows clips that you have dragged from your video bank

You can insert transitions (fade in or fade out, say) between clips

Contacts

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www.adobe.com/uk

Corel www.corel.com/uk

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www.magix.com/uk

Sony 0870 511 1999
www.sonycreativesoftware.com

WE TESTED

Adobe Premiere Elements 4, Apple iMovie 08, Corel Ulead Video Studio 11.5 Plus, Cyberlink Power Director 6, Focus Select Video Studio, Magix Movie Edit Pro 14 Plus, Nero 8, Pinnacle Studio 11 Plus, Pinnacle VideoSpin, Roxio Easy Media Creator Suite 10, Sony Vegas Movie Studio 8, Windows Movie Maker



70% Adobe Premiere Elements 4 £50

Installing and setting up this program is easy, but its menus and tools are not particularly intuitive to use at first. The image-stabilisation tools that get rid of camera shake aren't as good as other Best Buys. The final image quality, however, is great. Need an image-editing program too? You can save about £35 by buying Adobe Premiere Elements 4 bundled with the Best Buy image-editing program Adobe Photoshop Elements 6 (see *Which?*, June 2008, p54).

WORTH KNOWING If you already have the Best Buy Adobe Premiere Elements 3, it's not worth upgrading – particularly as your version is already HD-compatible.

Available Online Minimum specs Windows XP, 512MB RAM, 4.5 GB available hard disk **HD-compatible** Yes **Compatible file formats** AVI, DivX, HDV, Mpeg 1, Mpeg 2, Mpeg 4, QuickTime, WMV

which?
BEST BUY



68% Sony Vegas Movie Studio 8 £50

This package comes with a wide variety of features and effects and a good choice of DVD menus and music. However, it is best suited to those with some experience of video editing, as we found that it was one of the more advanced programs on test. The quality of the DVD we created using this Sony software was the best on test and transitions between scenes were smooth. Installing the software was a straightforward but lengthy process. It's cheapest online. There's a platinum edition for editing HD footage (not tested).

WE LIKE Lots of features keep advanced users happy.

Available Online Minimum specs Windows XP, 256MB RAM, 260MB available hard disk **Compatible file formats** AVCHD, AVI, HDV, Mpeg 1, Mpeg 2, QuickTime, WMV

which?
BEST BUY

The quality of the DVD created with the Sony software was the best on test

VIDEO-EDITING SOFTWARE



66% Corel Ulead Video Studio 11.5 Plus £40

This Corel package is easy to use, particularly as clips are automatically named and shown on screen once transferred (captured) from your camcorder. A range of advanced features will keep more ambitious users satisfied, too. It has a good-sized preview screen and the picture quality of the DVD we created was sharp and well defined. It's cheapest online.

BE AWARE Although easy to use, this program crashed during testing.

Available Online Minimum specs Windows XP, 512MB RAM, 1GB available hard disk **Compatible file formats** AVCHD, AVI, HDV, Mpeg 1, Mpeg 2, Mpeg 4, QuickTime, WMV

which?
BEST BUY



65% Magix Movie Edit Pro 14 Plus £50

The Magix software offers many handy features – for example, it can remove adverts from TV programmes that you've recorded on your computer and has an effective filter for removing camcorder noise. It created a great DVD, too. However, some of the features are tricky to locate, so you may need to spend time finding your way around. Also, we had trouble publishing content online – we were unable to send our video to YouTube using Magix. It's cheapest online.

WE LIKE This program comes with lots of special effects – you can even add sunglasses to people's faces.

Available Online Minimum specs Windows 2000, 512MB Ram, 1GB available hard disk **Compatible file formats** AVCHD, AVI, DivX, HDV, Mpeg 1, Mpeg 2, Mpeg 4, QuickTime, WMV

which?
BEST BUY

Which should you choose?



Best free software for PCs

WINDOWS MOVIE MAKER VISTA VERSION free This comes free with Windows Vista. It doesn't have as many features as the paid-for packages, but it's HD-compatible, is easy to use and gets the job done.



Best for beginners

WINDOWS MOVIE MAKER (PCs) free / iMOVIE 08 (Macs) free/£55 These two programs are easy to use, as is Cyberlink Power Director 6, £55. Version 7 has recently been released and we'll publish test results on www.which.co.uk/video-editing.



Best for Mac

APPLE iMOVIE 08 free/£55 This good all-rounder narrowly missed out on Best Buy status. It comes with all new Macs for free and with Best Buy iLife 08, £55 (*Which? Computing*, November 2007, p11).

Best for experienced users

SONY VEGAS MOVIE STUDIO 8 £50 As well as being a Best Buy, this Sony program comes with plenty of advanced features to keep more experienced users busy.