

## Defeating Digital Video Demons

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Video editing is really easy if you believe all the ads. Well, maybe and maybe not. There are some great digital video tools available and I have had the opportunity to install two of them recently.

The first was installing the Pinnacle DV 500 Plus capture card and the software that comes with it. This is a really powerful package. The software includes Adobe Premiere 6.0, Hollywood FX Technology, (effects and transitions), TitleDeco (titling software), Pinnacle system DV tools and Pinnacle systems Impression CD-Pro for creating interactive CD's and DVD's.

The hardware comes with Composite, S-video and IEEE 1394 outputs and inputs - just about everything you would need for a significant video editing workstation.

Installing the card and the software was a snap. Getting everything to run properly was another story altogether. A word to the wise-before installing this capture card or any other higher end card for that matter, do extensive research. We ended up having to make significant changes to the workstation including the hard drive configuration (one system drive and two data drives in a striped raid configuration). We also upgraded the RAM to 512 MB SDRAM (the 256 MB RAM stated on the box is not enough). The next upgrade we did was to the hard drive controller. Despite the fact that the controller we had was on the manufacturer's compatibility list, we soon learned that it was inadequate for the task. Again we learned that when you have done your basic research, you have not done enough. In this case we found the information by checking through some of the posts on a users group

The system now runs well and our first video editing project is complete. The software tools are great and we are very satisfied with the results and we see all kinds of possibilities for future use. For those who are looking for a higher end solution, this one is more than adequate. However, at the risk of sounding repetitive - do the research and then do it again. Do not buy into the manufacturer's minimal recommendations, you will just get frustrated and end up spending more money in the long run.

My second experience in setting up a video capture tool went much easier. I recently installed the Dazzle Digital Video Creator DVC 80 system and software for a pastor. This was more of a plug-and-play type experience. The USB video connector has video and audio inputs only. Output is via email, the web, or burning to CDROM.

We installed the hardware and software one Saturday evening and played with it (who reads manuals anyway?) It did not take us long to capture our first footage from TV and a video camera. The software is very intuitive and after a few stutters we had created our first three minute video including transitions and an audio track. This was far more of an instant gratification experience and one that I could see students getting into really quickly. Just imagine those creative video yearbooks on CD! We were working on a one gig system with 256 MB SDRAM and Microsoft XP OS. We had to make sure that nothing else was running in order to complete the three minute video without locking up the system.

So for those potential movie producers out there, I recommend Dazzle as a great starting point at an

affordable price. It is also pretty painless to install. For those who want a more diverse tool and who are willing to spend the money and invest a significant amount of effort, the pinnacle solution works well on the workstation that is properly configured for it.