

May 2005



Gear & Now

BATTERIES & BATTERY CHARGERS

THE AUTHORITY FOR Event Videographers

# shooting

UNDER THE

# Knife

**Medical  
Videography**

The Art of the  
Upscale  
Wedding  
Video, Part 1

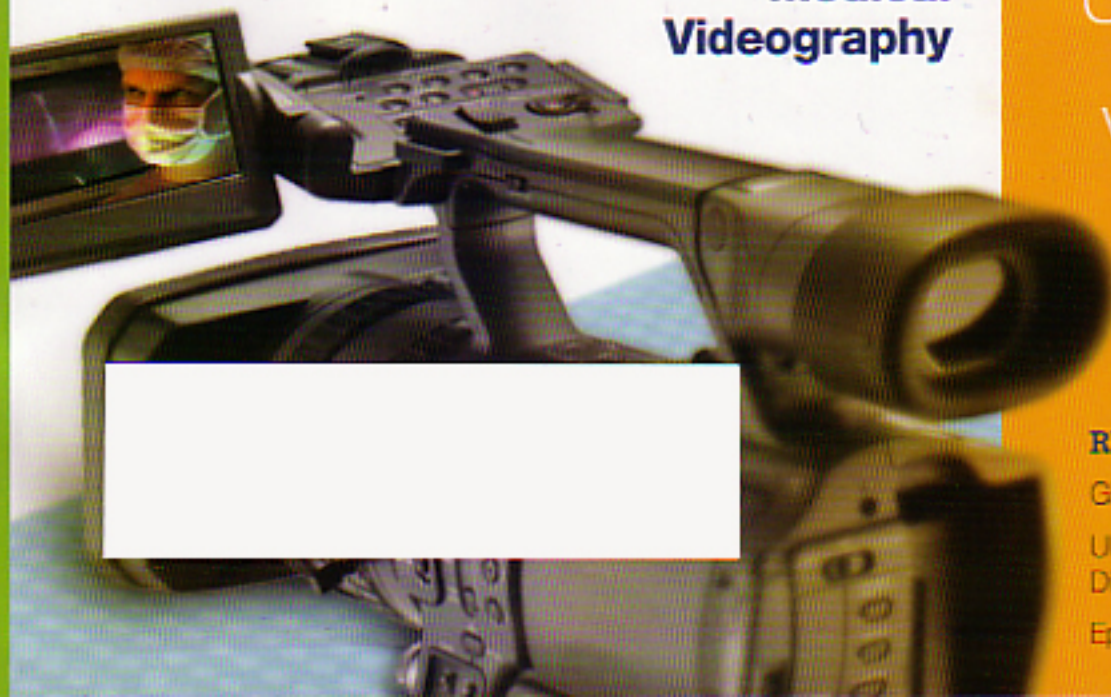
the ROI  
of Streaming Video

**REVIEWED**

G<sup>2</sup> Interactive Directors View

Ulead DVD MovieFactory 4  
Disc Creator

Epson Stylus Photo R800



# reviews

## G<sup>2</sup> Interactive Director's View

David Chandler-Gick

Henry Franz picked up the phone. On the other end was a bride. What she had to say wasn't the best thing for him to hear at the moment: "Henry, I can't view the clips on your Web site."

An isolated incident, to be sure. The clips on Henry's Web site were all in Real Media and QuickTime formats. Surely, in this new century *everyone* had one, if not both players, installed on their computer. Right?

When one phone call turned into two, and two turned into three, Henry realized that for every phone call he received, there were other brides who never even bothered to call him and let him know they couldn't see his demo clips. "I knew I was losing business," Henry said.

Meanwhile, Dave Williams was rebuilding his Web site. One consideration as he mulled over various design and delivery options was that he wanted to get away from requiring clients to download different media players, or having to develop content based on what platform they were using.

Since Dave does frequent "script to screen" work for corporate clients that require reviews every step of the way, getting the latest version online quickly and easily was of paramount importance to him.

It was with this mandate that he approached G<sup>2</sup> Interactive to develop the Web site for DVideography, his Philadelphia-based wedding video outfit. Williams' DVideography.com now sports a wonderfully effective "Samples Theatre." The solution? Macromedia Flash.

Say what?

What enabled G<sup>2</sup> Interactive to drive the smooth operation of DVideography's Samples Theatre was Director's View, which provided a solution to both the cross-platform issue and the "which installed Media Player?" issue. Essential to its effectiveness is its leveraging of Macromedia Flash technology. The Flash plug-in enjoys the distinction of being installed on a reported 95%–98% (depending on who's counting) of all browsers out there. With that kind of user base, it only makes sense to develop online video delivery using Flash. (For more on Flash, how it works, and the end-user experience it delivers, check out *EventDV* STUDIO STREAMING columnist Eric Schumacher-Rasmussen's recent article, "Taking Care of Business, In a Flash" at [www.streamingmedia.com/article.asp?id=8661&c=8](http://www.streamingmedia.com/article.asp?id=8661&c=8).)

### INTRODUCING DIRECTOR'S VIEW

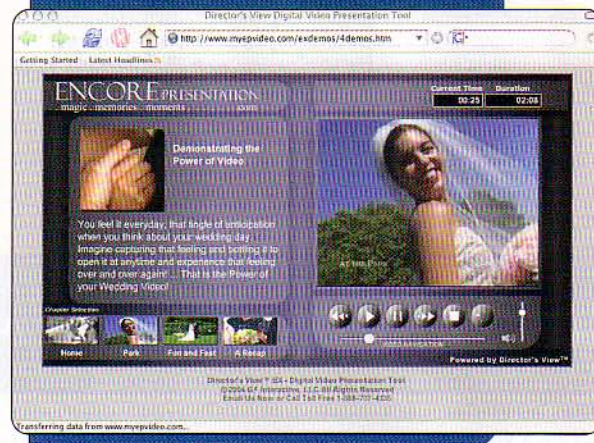
The first thing you need to understand about Director's View is that it's not a program. It's not a production tool. It's a collection of pre-built files that will allow you to present video content easily and effectively on your Web site.

### SYNOPSIS:

Director's View provides a quick and efficient way to leverage Flash video on your Web site and deliver samples and other content to clients without fear of player conflicts. It's ideal for the producer that has only the one limited goal: to get video online, without having to develop any Web video expertise. Pros include its ease of use and presentation; cons are its cost and lack of user customization.

PRICE: **\$525 (ST version);**  
**\$725 (EX version)**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
**G<sup>2</sup> Interactive**  
[www.directorsview.com](http://www.directorsview.com)



In other words, it's a delivery tool. Nothing more. Nothing less.

### HOW IT WORKS AND WHAT YOU'LL NEED

The first step is to download the necessary components from G<sup>2</sup>. Then you open the Manual file and follow each step.

You will need an FTP program (the manual suggests a couple of options), an image editing program like Photoshop or PhotoImpact, and of course, an NLE. Additionally, you will need Sorenson Squeeze for Flash MX, which can be ordered along with Director's View.

Once you have all those pieces in place, you upload a completed project (e.g., demo



reel or video sample) to your Web site and update your site to point to the new content.

**DIFF'RENT STROKES FOR DIFF'RENT FOLKS**

There are currently two versions of Director's View. First came ST and now there's EX. Aesthetically speaking, ST has a cleaner look than EX, but EX does offer a bit more functionality, most notable being the ability to link up to four "chapters" from a single interface. EX also allows you to change the color tone of the backdrop image, a feature sorely lacking from ST. EX requires Flash 7, and delivers video in FLV format; ST uses v. 6 and the SWF format. Finally, EX allows you to control and vary the frame rate of your video. Naturally, reducing the frame rate during video compression degrades video quality, but it's one effective way to get video to clients with lower-bandwidth Web connections.

In either case, you pay a one-time fee to purchase a Director's View "theatre," and can fill it with as many clips as you like (with unique titles and thumbnails), based on the server space you have available. Director's View essentially provides the wrapper and the Flash player, plus a straightforward interface for assembling your content. Sorenson Squeeze is also available at an additional cost if you need to purchase it to do your Flash codec compression.

When you order your Director's View theatre, you can supply artwork of your logo. G<sup>2</sup> will this make part of your theatre package, forever embedding it in the files you receive. If you ever change your logo, you have to go back to G<sup>2</sup> to have your theatre updated. Fortunately, this is a free service that G<sup>2</sup> offers. If you ever have a client that wants to have video on their Web site, but doesn't want your logo plastered all over it, then they will have to purchase their own theatre directly from G<sup>2</sup>.

Now, I can understand the need to protect intellectual property, but (and this comes back to the "this is what it is, not what it isn't" thinking) for the price tag associated with Director's View, what it is isn't enough. The EX version costs \$675 (\$725 with Sorenson Squeeze), while the less full-featured ST version runs \$525 (\$575 with Squeeze). You can purchase both versions for \$840/\$890 (with/without Squeeze). Existing ST users can upgrade to EX for \$275.

For that kind of pricing, I would expect more than just a glorified template. For about the same price, you can purchase Macromedia Flash MX Professional for yourself and spend a week learning to create your own online theatre. What's more, you will then have a powerful creation tool that allows you to do much more.

in the Spotlight

**DVideography**  
www.dvideography.com

**Henry Franz Productions**  
www.henryfranzproductions.com

**Encore Presentation**  
www.encorepresentation.com

**THE GLASS HALF FULL**

Back to "what it is." Director's View is ideal for the producer that has only the one limited goal: to get video on their site, without having to develop any Web video expertise. We're shooters and editors first and foremost (not to mention people with independent businesses to run, in many cases), so the ins and outs of Internet delivery aren't necessarily something we want to concern ourselves with if we don't have to do so.

With either Director's View version, you receive two folders of files, Templates and CoreFiles. You do not need the Templates folder as you can simply take the corresponding files from CoreFiles instead. In addition, you will receive a User Manual in PDF format, and Sorenson Squeeze if ordered.

Step one is to export your video from your NLE. For best results, you should save a 2-4 minute clip as a self-contained movie without further compression. Once you have the clip (or clips) exported, it's time to create the content for your Web site.

The first thing you will want to do is make a copy of the CoreFiles folder. For example, you can name this copy



With either Director's View version, you receive two folders of files, Templates and CoreFiles. You do not need the Templates folder as you can simply take the corresponding files from CoreFiles instead.

## System Requirements

- PC:** Pentium 3+ running Windows 98SE/Me/2000/XP with 128MB RAM; 20MB available HDD space; DirectX 8.1+; QT 5.0.2 for use of MOV files; FTP program; Sorenson Squeeze Flash Version.
- Mac:** G3+ PowerPC running Mac OS X with 128MB RAM; 20MB available HDD space; QT 5.0.2 for MOV files; FTP software; Sorenson Squeeze Flash Version.

Theater01. In Theater01, you will edit FocusImage.jpg and photo.jpg and replace the content with imagery representative of the content of the video, most likely from screen captures from your NLE. In EX, there are also up to four additional images for each chapter.

Using Sorenson Squeeze, load the exported video clip(s) and choose the appropriate Flash format to compress to. Depending on system performance, this step should take only a few minutes. Take the resulting files, name them appropriately, and place them with the other files in your Theater01 folder.

Using a text editor, modify the configuration files as needed. In ST this file is simply clientname.txt, in EX it's admin.xml. This is where your theater gets the information to display chapter names, client name, and the like. In EX, you also have control of the overlay color.

```

admin.xml
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" standalone="yes"?>
<Theatre>
  <VideoInfo>
    <Title>Your Theatre Title</Title>
    <Description>Simply add your theatre description here and it will automatically appear in your Director's View theatre!</Description>
  </VideoInfo>
  <chapters>
    <chapter1>
      <title>Intro</title>
      <length>425</length>
      <filename>video1</filename>
      <tn>ch1tn.jpg</tn>
    </chapter1>
    <chapter2>
      <title>Ceremony</title>
      <length>40.07</length>
      <filename>video2</filename>
      <tn>ch2tn.jpg</tn>
    </chapter2>
    <chapter3>
      <title>Reception</title>
      <length>90</length>
      <filename>video3</filename>
      <tn>ch3tn.jpg</tn>
    </chapter3>
    <chapter4>
      <title>Recap</title>
      <length>75</length>
      <filename>video4</filename>
      <tn>ch4tn.jpg</tn>
    </chapter4>
  </chapters>
  <bgcolor>0xFFCC66</bgcolor>
  <Thumbnail>photo.jpg</Thumbnail>
  <FocusImage>FocusImage.jpg</FocusImage>
</Theatre>

```

Using a text editor, modify the configuration files as needed. In EX the resulting document is called admin.xml. This is where your theater gets the information to display chapter names, client name, and the like.

Interactive  
Director's View



"With Director's View, my work is on a bride's computer screen quickly and delivered in a professional, customized theater," says Henry Franz of Henry Franz Productions.

Once everything is named properly and in the Theater01 folder, all you have to do is simply upload that folder to your Web site and add the appropriate links so visitors can find it. Once you do a couple, you'll forget the user manual even exists. It's really that straightforward.

### OUTSIDE THE BOX

Delivering video over the Web is not the only task you can accomplish with Director's View. Sheila Orsi of Encore Presentation has taken her theatres and built interactive CDs with them. "I can put my DV theater on the CD, and not only can my clients reach me," says Sheila, "but the DV files take up less space than the MPEG files I was using. Which means I can fit more video on my CDs."

And Henry? He's never looked back. "With Director's View, my work is on a bride's computer screen quickly and delivered in a professional, customized theatre," he says. "I can easily upload video to my Web site and show a potential client any wedding I have done while on the phone with them."

**David Chandler-Gick** ([echoes@infoday.com](mailto:echoes@infoday.com)), co-founder of Dynamic Media Group and owner of a devereaux film, has been producing event and corporate video since 1987. Recipient of multiple awards including the AVP Prova and WEVA Creative Excellence Award, David is also founder of the Indiana Professional Videographers Association.

If you have a problem, question, or idea you'd like to share, email [echoes@infoday.com](mailto:echoes@infoday.com).