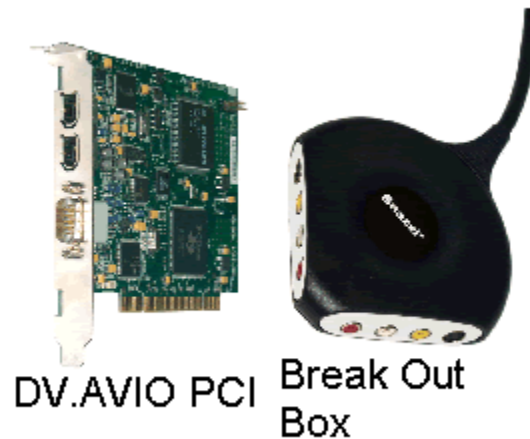


V-One Multimedia's Snazzi DV.AVIO

by John B. Virata

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V-One Multimedia's Snazzi DV.AVIO editing system is a \$199 combination hardware/software editing solution that enables you to capture/convert video from analog and DV sources to MPEG-1 and 2, DV, Microsoft's WMV, DIVX, and Xvid file formats. It is comprised of the Snazzi DV.AVIO software front end, including WinDVD Creator Plus, muveeAutoProducer, moviefactory 2, and WinDVD4; and a combination hardware PCI card with breakout box that connects to the PCI card for connecting S-Video and composite video devices.



In addition to the MPEG decoder chip and the Main Concept Professional codec, the PCI card features a pair of six pin FireWire ports. The benefits of this solution gives you the capability to capture/convert video from the widest array of sources. These sources include S-Video, Composite video, and DV. In addition, when you are finished editing the video, either with the bundled software that ships with the system or your own existing video editing software, the Snazzi DV.AVIO enables you to export that video back out to DV or composite/S-video tape.

Installation:

Installation of the Snazzi DV.AVIO involves plugging the Snazzi PCI card into an

available PCI slot, plugging the breakout box into the back of the PCI card for analog video capture/conversion, and installing the Snazzi DV.AVIO capture software. It is virtually a painless installation. System requirements are a 1.8GHz Pentium 4 CPU running Windows XP, 256MB RAM, a graphics card capable of supporting 1024 x 768 resolution, and an available PCI slot. Figure about 14GB of disk space for each hour of DV video, so factor in a hard disk drive with lots of storage. If you want to save disk space and will be burning to DVD, consider capturing in MPEG-1 or 2, as these formats require much less disk space.



Snazzi setup window

DV Studio AVIO

The Snazzi setup window is where you select the parameters for the video that you want to capture. The DV Studio AVIO software enables you to capture video to MPEG-1, MPEG-2, DV, and Windows Media Format. You can also capture to Divx and Xvid provided you pay for and download the encoders from their respective websites. The setup window is also where you designate where on your hard drive you want the

captured video to be placed, as well as what you wish to name the captured video.

You can have the software generate a name for you, or you can name it yourself. With MPEG-1 selected, you have the option to produce an MPEG-1 file for Video CD (VCD), or Normal quality MPEG-1. You can also select the video's bitrate as well as the video encoder quality. These can be adjusted via sliders in the capture settings window. Selecting the MPEG-2 capture setting enables you to choose between constant or variable bitrates.

Transcoding of 60 second clip in following formats	File Size
DV Clip Type 1	194MB
DV Clip Type 2	194MB
MPEG 1 VCD	10MB
MPEG 2 CBR	38.5MB
MPEG 2 VBR	36.5MB
WMV for LAN/Cable Modem	7MB
WMV for Broadband NTSC 700kbps	4.8MB
WMV for Color Pocket PCs 22k kbps	1.5MB

DV AVIO enables you to transcode to a variety of file formats

Selecting the DV capture format gives you the capability to capture either a DV-Type-1 or DV-Type 2 format. You can also select if you want the video to playback at full or half resolution, as well as change the field order. You can also manually adjust the bitrates for your specific capture session. The advance button opens the video encoder optimization window, which enables you to select either smooth or sharp settings.

Selecting the WMV format enables you to capture video in the various different flavors of the Windows Media video format, including formats for displaying video on pocket PCs, dial up modems, and LANs in various different bitrates.

Video is input via the DV ports on the Snazzi card, or via composite and S-Video by way of the Snazzi break out box that connects to the Snazzi card. Video out capabilities include DV and Composite S-Video. The Snazzi software also enables you to capture still images in BMP, JPG, GIF, TIFF, and PNG formats from video.



DV Studio window

The applications that ship with the DV.AVIO include DV Studio AVIO, WinDVD Creator Plus, muveeAutoProducer, moviefactory 2, and WinDVD4. DV Studio AVIO is where you capture your video, WinDVD Creator Plus and DVD Movie factory are two different DVD creation applications that enable you to create DVDs with the video that you captured or imported. muveeAutoProducer let's you create a music video style video that randomly cuts video up and puts it back together in a fashion like that of a music video. You can add a music track to it and it will cut with the music track. WinDVD 4 let's you playback your completed DVDs on the PC.

First Impressions:

Snazzi DV.AVIO is a nice bundle for those who are just getting into digital video editing and DVD creation. It is definitely an entry level solution, but it has a lot of features that will be of interest to a wide range of video enthusiasts. It outputs decent quality video in a wide variety of file formats and sizes. I did have an issue with stuttering sound on a DV captured clip, but wasn't able to duplicate it in MPEG or any other file formats. I couldn't determine if it was a hardware or software issue, or a computer issue, and I couldn't duplicate it again. Other than that one isolated incident, the Snazzi DV.AVIO works as the company says it does.

If you have a large collection of analog video tapes that you want to transfer to digital for editing, or for archiving to DVD, the Snazzi DV.AVIO is a solution that can do just that. If

you have a DV camera and you want to transfer DV from your camcorder, the Snazzi DV.AVIO can do that as well. You can also capture video straight from the source to a variety of different video file formats without having to re-render to those specific file formats, which is a huge timesaver in of itself. The breakout box offers you a wider range of analog input and output, options, and combining it with the DV ports on the PCI card as well as the real time MPEG conversion capabilities, and you have a pretty compelling digital video editing and DVD creation solution. For more information, visit www.snazzishop.com