

# Snazzi\* VideoMaker

Web: www.voneem.com  
 Price: \$5249  
 Videos: MPEG-1, MPEG-2, MPEG-4, WMV  
 Images: BMP, PNG, TIFF, JPEG Audio: PCM (WAV)  
 Input: Composite (Y) and S-Video Output: mini-USB  
 Min. System Requirements: Pentium 4 1.6GHz or higher/Windows 2000 or XP/256MB RAM, CD-ROM drive, hard disk space of at least 1GB, AGP video card or PCI graphics card with 4MB video memory, sound card and USB 2.0 port.

V One's Snazzi\* VideoMaker is a great follow-up to the SnaZio Pocket PVR we reviewed in February 2004. While the Pocket PVR is also USB 2.0-powered, it supports direct TV capturing since it came with a built-in TV tuner. The VideoMaker on the other hand, does not come with a TV tuner. It is a small and lightweight square box with inputs for composite, S-Video and stereo audio. The only output is a mini-USB port to a full USB port on either your notebook or desktop PC. This also means that the VideoMaker is USB 2.0-powered and you can use it anywhere without needing AC power.

The premise is simple. You connect your video sources from your TV, video player, console system or camcorder via composite or S-Video to the VideoMaker and stream the video into your PC via a USB 2.0 connection. With the bundled Snazzi\* Movie Studio VideoMaker software, you can capture these videos in MPEG-1 (VCD), MPEG-2 (DVD or SVCD) or MPEG-4 (DivX). You can also record in Windows Media Video.



The Snazzi\* Movie Studio VideoMaker has a familiar yet simple interface which lets you playback or capture video or still images from external sources.



The Snazzi\* Movie Studio VideoMaker configuration window lets you choose the encoding format and also have separate captures for audio and video.

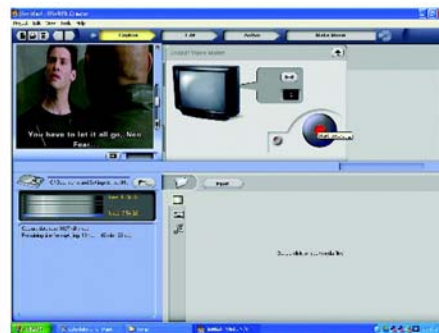
While many video purists among us felt that using composite or S-Video was a poor choice (as some level of video quality would be lost in the transmitted video signal), this connection type is the most popular and universal when capturing video from analog sources (VCR players, old TV sets). In other words, when you travel overseas, chances are that the TV set in your hotel room will have a composite video-out, which you can use to capture videos from.



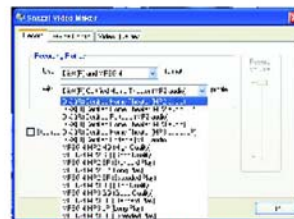
While the Scheduler in MS VideoMaker has three time slots for your scheduled recordings, you can only set one day for the week or have it on "Daily".

### Configuring to Capture

Besides MS VideoMaker, there's also Intervideo's WinDVD Creator 2 and MuVee Autoproducer 3. The former program is a full-fledged video-editing software that follows a capture → edit → make movie process. You can author your captured videos and audio into beautiful menus and movies, before burning them into VCD, SVCD or DVD.



Intervideo's WinDVD Creator 2 works in sync with the VideoMaker device so that you can directly capture videos here without needing to use MS VideoMaker.



Like MS VideoMaker, you can also encode your captured video in DivX based on many different settings.

MuVee AutoProducer 3 on the other hand, allows you to compile and produce photos and short video clips into thematic styles without needing to do much editing on your own. Basically, you pick the clips you want to toss in, the audio track, editing styles (pacing and mood) and off you go. At the end of it, you can even burn it into a classy disc.

While WinDVD Creator 2 and Autoproducer 3 are great video-editing programs, the real deal is the MS VideoMaker, as it captures and encodes your videos into the various formats of your liking. It also comes with a scheduler, which records your programs based on certain timings on a daily, weekly or specified timing. There are slots to enter two other additional timings but because you can only specify one particular day, all three timings follow that specified day (ie. three different timed recordings for the same day).



The best part with WinDVD Creator 2 of course, is that you can edit your captured videos and put them into a VCD or DVD complete with background menu and audio.

### Recordings with the VideoMaker

We did several video captures with the VideoMaker. What we did was to record videos from various sources, such as a DVD player, console system and camcorder. Initially we had some trouble getting MS VideoMaker to recognize the video and audio signals via the VideoMaker box but after pressing the 'reset' button on the box and reinserting the USB connector into our notebook, MS VideoMaker was able to capture the video without any dropped frame-rates. DVD movies like The Matrix played well on-screen. While there seemed to be a slight delay in the subtitle appearance compared to the spoken audio, the video itself is smooth, albeit slightly pixilated (due to the nature of composite video transfers to the PC).

All in all, the VideoMaker makes a good device to carry with you for potential captures in the future. It doesn't require any AC power and it's fairly light. The best part is that it's affordable. ☺



Snazzi\* VideoMaker supports composite video and S-Video. It has a reset button and connects to your PC via USB 2.0.