SEPTEMBER 2001
WWW.PRESENTATIONS.COM

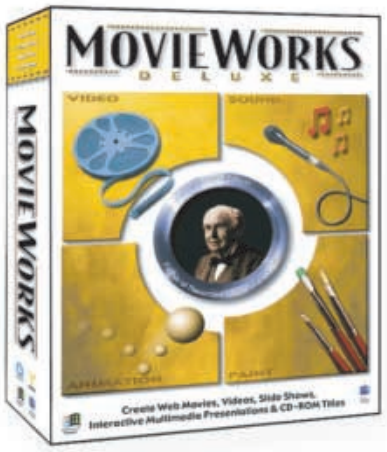
Presentations

TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

RANDOM ACCESS

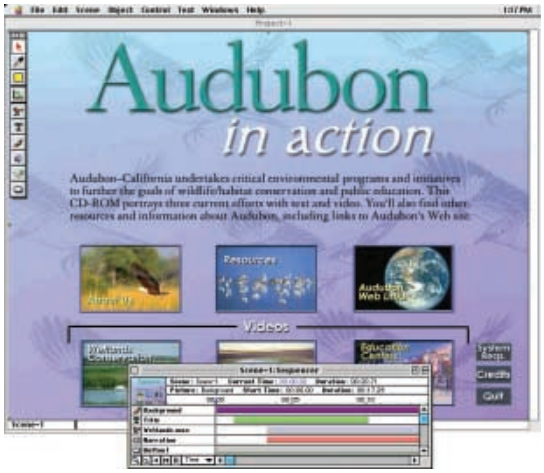
IN REVIEW

INTERACTIVE SOLUTIONS MOVIEWORKS DELUXE 5.1



For the average presenter, **multimedia** can be a scary word. We like what it represents, but actually diving into the complex creation programs — that's another story. Interactive Solutions MovieWorks promises to provide presenters with a simple multimedia-authoring program that has a number of helpful features.

The program is a suite of five applications (video, sound, animation, paint and MovieWorks) that work together to create multimedia projects of any length. After production, these projects can be exported to the Web or a CD and used for personal videos, slideshows and interactive presentations. I put the program to the test to see whether I, an average computer user, could create a multimedia slideshow as advertised.



MovieWorks Deluxe relies on four stand-alone programs for creating content and the sequencer, in which objects and frames can be assembled via drag-and-drop.

Removing the complexity

The MovieWorks application is where all your work comes together, but first you use the four stand-alone programs — video, sound, animation, paint — to create the content. After you have edited an object that will be a component of your presentation, you move it into the main MovieWorks program with a single mouse-click. This ability to drag and drop frames, templates, video clips or music files directly onto your project window is a nice touch. After you drop any piece into your project, you can click on the sequencer window to tweak each object's starting point and duration. Upon completion, the project is then output as a QuickTime file.

MovieWorks can do some amazing things considering its simplicity. In the sound application, you can record AIFF voice narration with a microphone. You can delete unwanted sound waves, adjust the volume and apply some standard audio filters. Import the audio clip to the MovieWorks area and it is automatically placed into the sequencer window.

The sequencer is the heart of the program and has some surprising power. If you want to put together a slideshow with hundreds of clips, for instance, you don't have to import such a torrent through the file menu. Instead, the program lets you drag an entire folder from the desktop to the open application. MovieWorks loads each clip into the sequencer, and after you click the autosequence button, the program automatically shifts the clips into succession.

Climbing the wall of ease

Going through the program, I found the interface comfortable for the multimedia beginner. The help window was a good place to turn for answers, but balloon help is not an option — a big drawback for less-advanced users. Navigating the menus does take some getting used to, especially when toggling between application windows that look similar.

I also had problems with some of the program's functions. While trying to add transparency to eliminate the white background surrounding irregular-shaped objects, for example, I found the program left jagged white edges. The function worked fine, however, when the rectangle shape was used.

The little annoyances are minor, though, and after you take some time to travel through the program, any confusion settles into ease. After some practice, I was able to create a MovieWorks presentation in less than an hour. If you want to dip your feet into the multimedia pool, MovieWorks offers a low-cost, user-friendly way to do so.

(MARK MERRITT)

Price: $150.

Contact: Interactive Solutions Inc., 925.734.0730, www.movieworks.com.

RATING

Interactive Solutions MovieWorks Deluxe 5.1

PROS: Low learning curve. Compatible with Windows and Macintosh systems. Easy to import from other packages.

CONS: Included clip-media is cheesy. No help balloons.

1 2 3 4 **5**

Posted with permission by Bill Communications, a VNU Business Media Company, from Presentations. For subscriptions, please call: (800) 707-7749.
#253804 Managed by Reprint Management Services. (717) 399-1900 www.reprintbuyer.com