

# Making educational movies - without a camcorder!

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## Making picture and text based movies

A picture and text based movie uses still images and text, with recorded narrative and sound. Therefore, it is not necessary to include moving images, or to have access to a camcorder.

## What is the educational purpose of making a short movie?

- To summarise a complex learning or assessment process, so students can replay and repeat the information in their own time  
*For example, a complex portfolio assessment can be presented with narrative and images that demonstrate visually exactly what kind of pieces of writing and evidence should be presented. Narrative can include an interview with a previous student about how they have completed a complex assessment successfully.*
- To capture a summary of a core element of the curriculum  
*Key concepts can be demonstrated with diagrams, quotes and even audio interviews with authors or specialist staff. Visual and audio information may aid understanding and can be repeated at the learner's convenience.*
- To support students with a range of learning needs  
*Images and sound can be helpful to students with a range of learning needs, who find particular difficulty with the reliance on text based materials in education.*
- To reduce student reliance on teacher's accounts and text based handouts  
*Multimedia enhances the variety of learning and eases some of the pressures on photocopying paper based materials.*
- To maximise the use of visual images alongside text  
*Research indicates that visual images often enhance memory in the learning processes.*
- To add audio to a static, short PowerPoint® presentation  
*PowerPoint® is arguably the most widely used form of learning technology with its static lecturer summaries saved on thousands of university intranets across the globe. However, it is a limited electronic summary and sound can easily be added to slides to create a more dynamic presentation. PowerPoint® allows the saving of slides as images (JPEG files) that can then be added to a movie.*



## Equipment needed

- A laptop or desktop computer with at least 512MB of RAM and 10GB hard drive
- Simple movie making software, usually provided free with an operating system like Windows® XP, Windows® Vista (Windows® Movie Maker) and Apple® OS X (Apple® iMovie)
- A microphone (3mm jack, or USB)
- A headset (3mm jack)
- A digital camera
- Access to web based resources (image and sound archives)
- A good broadband connection



### Microsoft® Movie Maker

Comes free with Windows® XP and Windows® Vista  
[www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/)



### Apple iMovie®

Comes free with Mac OS X® and higher  
[www.apple.com/software/](http://www.apple.com/software/)



## Project guide – step by step

Before starting a project make sure you have a plan



### Learning principles

- Don't be over ambitious – start with something simple
- Be clear on copyright issues – don't use illegal copies of images or audio files
- Try not to use too much text
- Think mostly about the benefits of visual and audio impact!



### Planning

- Use a storybook planning grid – this can be a side of A4 paper with eight equal size squares on it.
- Each square can represent 15 seconds of movie script, so one side of A4 is two minutes of movie.
- Aim to make your first project four minutes long, so that it is two sides of A4, and 16 boxes.
- In each box make notes of what picture/pictures you will use, and the audio commentary and narrative you are going to record (you might want to write a separate text script in detail).

▶ Project guide – step by step (continued)

▶ **Example of a 15 second planning box**

*Intro:  
Image of city streets x 3, fade from one to another (five seconds each)  
My narrative - text recording of reading from Smith's book about poverty, page 24, para 5  
Text - heading - how can we define poverty? (overlay on first photo)  
Music - short burst and fade at end into next content*

When planning to use your own recorded narrative, aim for about three sentences, or 35 words, per 15 second box.

▶ **Collect materials**

Are there any PowerPoint® files and slides you want to convert and use? If so, use PowerPoint® SAVE AS and choose to save the relevant slides as JPEG files from the PowerPoint® application.

Look for digital photos in image banks like:  
[www.freefoto.com](http://www.freefoto.com)  
[www.freeimages.co.uk](http://www.freeimages.co.uk)  
[www.pics4learning.com](http://www.pics4learning.com)  
[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

You may even want to use a short video clip from a video archive:  
[www.open2.net/creativearchive](http://www.open2.net/creativearchive)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/videonation](http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation)

Use a camera to take any new digital photos you will require, making sure any models or actors in the photos have signed a permission form to be in your movie!

▶ **Computer editing**

Before doing this get hold of a good computer guide book or visit a website that supports the software you are using.

Most digital editing software like Microsoft® Movie Maker® (right) works using three key panes, as shown.

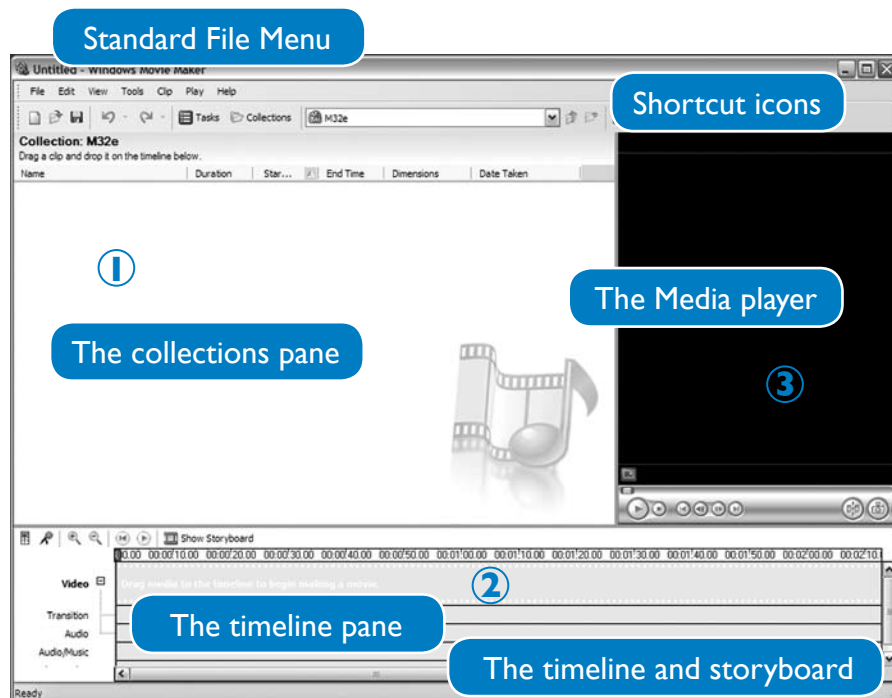
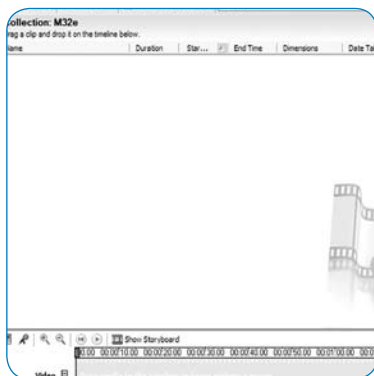


Figure One: Movie Maker® Main Screen

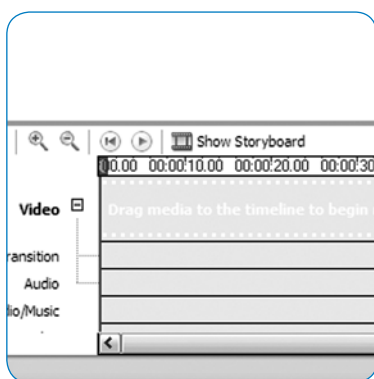
▶ Project guide – step by step (continued)



The Collections pane

First there is the **Collections pane**, where you import files for your movie, like photo files, PowerPoint® slides (saved as JPEG image files) and sound files.

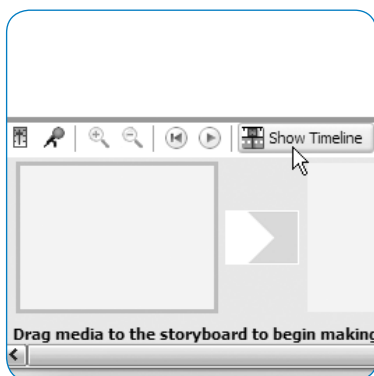
You can then use the mouse to drag these files into the **Timeline pane**. This is where you set the running order of files, where you can add new narration using a microphone to create new sound files, and where you can add title text, either separately or overlaid on images. The timeline can also be switched to a **Storyboard view** that allows you to see the running order of things more simply and easily. But in order to align sound, visual images and any special effects you will need to master the timeline view.



The Timeline pane

To see how your editing is progressing, just click the play button and watch the movie in the **Movie Player pane**. You also see the contents progressing along the horizontal timeline/storybook view.

All editing software will allow you to add text between photos and slides. Text can be added on a plain background, or directly onto images. Be careful not to add too much text to one screen. Remember you can introduce text over time, and you do not have to put too much onto one short screen shot. Give people enough time to read each text screen – at least five seconds per text screen.



The Storybook view

You can create simple technical diagrams in a drawing or picture software package, save them as JPEG files, and then import them into the movie. Using the same method, you can also develop simple animation.

Towards the end of your editing, you can add special effects and transitions, for example, fading one photo into another.



The Movie Player pane

When you come to do your final edit you will need to balance the sound carefully between the narration files and any other sound files, like music, that are used.

When using commercial music be careful not to break copyright law. Get good advice from your own educational institution and check the website of the key copying and performance website at: [www.mcps-prs-alliance.co.uk](http://www.mcps-prs-alliance.co.uk)

▶ Project guide – step by step (continued)

### ▶ Publishing the movie

The most likely method of production is via hard copies on CD or DVD, or via web streaming on the internet.

Small movies can easily be saved and mass produced on CD. If you are planning on copying more than 20, it will take a long time to make copies on your personal computer, you might want to get a commercial quote.

Saved movie files — even short movies — use a lot of hard drive space, so check with your organisation's intranet and computer services, before uploading to intranets, Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and websites. Most higher educational institutions do support such activity and offer guidance on how to do it. Web streaming is preferable to encouraging students to download copies of the movie file, because web streaming allows the movie to be watched without big file downloads that take a long time.

### Placing short movies onto mobile phones

- 1 Save the finished movie file in a standard computer format like .AVI or .MPEG
- 2 Purchase a video file conversion package that can convert digital video files into .3GPP format
- 3 Test the .3GPP file on a mobile phone. The mobile will need a piece of software to synchronise files from your computer to the mobile. You can usually obtain this from the website of the company who produced your mobile phone. You will also need the correct lead (usually USB).
- 4 Discuss with your educational institution the best method for getting the .3GPP file onto the mobile devices of your students. This can be done via the assistance of a phone provider, via a suitable website, or via Bluetooth. Students will need clear instructions about how to download the file onto their phones.





## Other possible projects

Use a movie to induct a student to a different learning activity – a new module, a new work placement, or an educational visit.

Use a movie to demonstrate the basics of a risk assessment process, for example before starting a work placement or social work assessment.



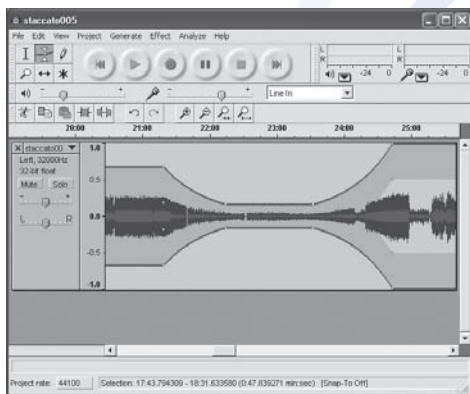
## Capturing and editing sound using Audacity

Audacity is free, open source software for recording and editing sounds. It is available for Mac OS X®, Microsoft Windows®, GNU/Linux®, and other operating systems.

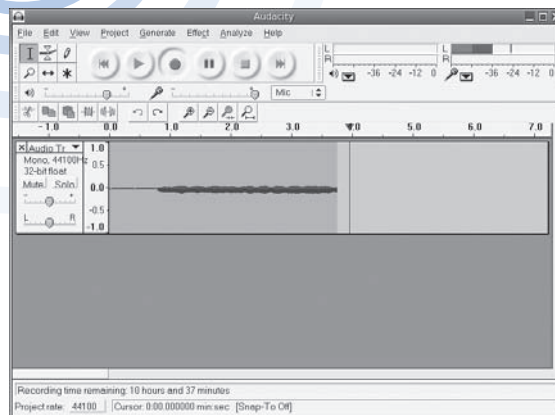


### Features of Audacity

- Record live audio
- Convert tapes and records into digital recordings or CDs
- Edit Ogg Vorbis, MP3, WAV or AIFF sound files
- Cut, copy, splice or mix sounds together
- Change the speed or pitch of a recording
- Record from microphone, line input, or other sources
- Dub over existing tracks to create multi-track recordings
- Record up to 16 channels at once (requires multi-channel hardware)
- Level meters can monitor volume levels before, during, and after recording
- Remove static, hiss, hum, or other constant background noises



Audacity running in Windows



Recording with Audacity

▶ Other possible projects – Capturing and editing sound using Audacity (continued)

▶ **Ideas for using Audacity for learning and teaching**

- You may have video from which you want to extract the audio only and integrate into a Movie Maker project or Power Point presentation
- Students could record directly into Audacity and practice communication skills development (tone, pace, level, language)
- Sound could be extracted from role plays, simulated interviews etc or practice situations (with suitable permissions) and integrated into presentations or assessments
- With this tool you can produce podcasts quickly and easily to provide different media to support students with different learning styles and needs

▶ **Useful Links**

Free downloads for Microsoft Windows®, Mac OS X® and GNU/Linux®  
[www.audacity.sourceforge.net](http://www.audacity.sourceforge.net)

A public resource containing tips, tricks and information about Audacity and digital audio  
[www.audacityteam.org/wiki/index.php?title=Audacity\\_Wiki\\_Home\\_Page](http://www.audacityteam.org/wiki/index.php?title=Audacity_Wiki_Home_Page)

Free CD ripper for Microsoft Windows  
[cdexos.sourceforge.net](http://cdexos.sourceforge.net)



**Useful websites**

BBC Archive  
[www.bbc.co.uk/archive](http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive)

Microsoft Windows® MovieMaker® – home site  
[www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/default.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/moviemaker/default.aspx)

Online learning in Windows® MovieMaker®  
[movies.atomiclearning.com/k12/moviemaker2](http://movies.atomiclearning.com/k12/moviemaker2)  
[www.windowsmoviemakers.net](http://www.windowsmoviemakers.net)

Spoken Word Services: a JISC funded project of audio and video resources. Most are copyright cleared for educational use.  
[www.spokenword.ac.uk](http://www.spokenword.ac.uk)

Teacher's TV  
[www.teachers.tv](http://www.teachers.tv)

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## Further reading

Bounds, J. & Buechler, J. (2003) Windows® Movie Maker: Zero to Hero: 2 (Zero to Hero) APress

Carlson, J. (2006) iMovie HD 6 and iDVD 6 for MAC OS X (Visual QuickStart Guides) Peachpit Press

Haynes, P. (2006) Digital Educational Movies: For Beginners. White Horse Books

## About the author

Philip Haynes is currently a Reader in Social Policy and Acting Head of the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Brighton. He worked as a social worker and probation officer before starting a career in Higher Education. He is a joint author with Shirley Bach and Jennifer Lewis Smith of *Online Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (Open University Press: 2007).



For more details on the project visit the SWAP website  
<http://www.swap.ac.uk> and go to the projects section,  
or email [swapenqs@soton.ac.uk](mailto:swapenqs@soton.ac.uk)

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