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Re-Recording the Past or Present into New Digital Formats

Communication technologies continue to evolve, and this evolution—when it turns revolutionary—kills older technologies that once performed the same task. To prevent equipment obsolescence from destroying memories stored in old film, someone in your family probably had old home movie films converted into VCR tapes. Since the VCR is now being replaced by DVD players, game consoles, and digital video recorders (DVRs), your movies that were once saved as video tapes will soon need updating into a digital format.

Many of the technology press conferences that I attend are chock-full of products designed to convert old media recordings into new digital files and formats. This column looks at some of the devices specifically designed to transfer old or new recordings into digital formats that can be archived, listened to, or viewed using the latest technology.

Do you have a large, yet almost forgotten record collection? If you do and want to convert each record into an MP3 file, check out Audio-Tech-



Photo 1

nica's new record turntable (Photo 1). Vinyl-record conversion projects once required the expertise of the techno elite. Audio-Technica has now automated vinyl-record ripping into a simple plug, play, and transfer process.

You just plug the Audio-Technica AT-LP2D-USB stereo turntable into your computer, load the included software, and let your computer con-



Photo 2

vert each vinyl record from analog music into a digital file. It will take you only a few minutes to chop this file into individually named songs and save them as MP3 files to your computer's music library. You can also use the included software to clean up the noise found on old records or keep the background sound for its nostalgic value.

Pinnacle's new Dazzle DVD Recorder (Photo 3) does for old and new video recordings what Audio-Technica does for old vinyl records.

It allows you to transfer videos from any video source, with analog outputs, directly into DVDs without the need to use complex, time-consuming video-editing software. It is the perfect hardware-software combination for converting old VCR tapes or new video camera recordings into DVDs. Dazzle uses your computer but performs this process on the fly without ever copying your original or converted files to your computer's hard drive.

My old video camera records on small DV tapes. To turn these tapes into DVDs was a major process. I would first run the video through the camera to record its contents to my computer hard drive. Next, I would

use video-editing software to convert the file into a movie. Finally, I would leave my computer running most of the night, converting my movie frame by frame into a formatted DVD. Dazzle performs a 1:1 conversion in real time removing all of the above hassle. It took 1 hour and 7-1/2 minutes to convert an analog video into a finished formatted DVD. The only drawback: some voice-video synchronization errors may occur.

What can you do to transfer old or new video files without a computer? Pinnacle's Video Transfer Press & Go is a small (2-1/2" × 4-3/4" × 3/4") block with a click wheel at its center (Photo 3). To use it, simply plug in the video



Photo 3

source at one end and the video output at the other end. Turn on the unit by pressing one edge of the click wheel and click this location to change and set the video quality of your final product. Pressing the opposite edge of the click wheel starts and stops the process recording. When you stop a recording, it takes some time before the recording light changes from red to blue. During this time, the unit finishes its 1:1 conversion and finalizes encoding the file for playback.

Recalling the Facts

1. How does advancing technology affect the playability of older music and video recordings?
2. Do you think that CDs and DVDs will still be in use 10 years from now? Why? ☺

Alan Pierce, Ed.D., CSIT, is a technology education consultant. Visit www.technologytoday.us for past columns and teacher resources.