

Welcome to Software Video Camera



Software Video Camera is a powerful utility that allows you to record videos of screen actions and save them as standard AVI files which you can add to WinHelp or HTML Help systems. Software Video Camera works on all major Windows Operating Systems (Windows 3.1, 95, 98, NT 4.0, and 2000) and provides smoother videos than competing products.

The videos you record can be used in many ways including:

- To visually explain complex procedures
- To teach applications
- To demonstrate product features

Not only can you show your end-users exactly what is happening on the screen, but you can also provide narration, if your system is equipped with a sound card and microphone. Software Video Camera is ideal for creating training and tutorial files, as well as demonstrations.



Click the video camera above to watch a video demonstrating how to use Software Video Camera!

Using Software Video Camera

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System requirements

Software Video Camera allows you to create standard AVI files that you can incorporate into WinHelp or HTML Help systems.

- Software Video Camera works on applications running under all major Windows Operating Systems (Windows 3.1, 95, 98, NT 4.0, and 2000)
- The video files you create with the Software Video Camera occupy space on your hard disk. The exact amount of space required depends on the number of recordings and type of recording activity that takes place (such as recording time, size of recording area, and screen resolution). If you include sound with your videos, the size of your files will increase accordingly.
- A sound card, with a microphone, is required if you want to include sound in your video files. (If you have a multimedia computer, you already have a sound card.)

See Also


[Starting Software Video Camera](#)

[Preparing your Help authoring system to capture video](#)

Starting Software Video Camera

You can start Software Video Camera from RoboHELP Office or if you have RoboHELP open, you can start it right from within RoboHELP.


WinHelp 95, 98, NT 4.0, or 2000 systems, starting Software Video Camera from RoboHELP Office

- 1 From the Windows 95 or Windows NT **Start** bar, click **Programs**, **RoboHELP Office** then **RoboHELP Office Tools**.
- 2 From the **Tools** tab double-click the **Software Video Camera** icon . Software Video Camera opens in the upper-left corner of your Windows desktop.

Windows 3.1 systems, starting Software Video Camera from RoboHELP Office

- 1 Open the **RoboHELP Office** program group. The RoboHELP Office starter appears.
- 2 Click the **Tools** tab.
- 3 Double-click the **Software Video Camera** icon. Software Video Camera opens in the upper-left corner of your Windows desktop.

To start Software Video Camera from within RoboHELP:

- 1 In RoboHELP Explorer, click the **Tools** tab.
- 2 Double-click the Software Video Camera icon . Software Video Camera opens in the upper-left corner of your Windows desktop.

See Also

[Preparing your Help authoring system to capture video](#)

[Setting the capture region](#)

Preparing your system to capture video

Before you dive right in and start recording videos, make sure that your Help authoring system is configured to capture videos in the proper manner.

Setting up your system

Software Video Camera only records videos that are captured in 16 or 256 color mode. Adjust your system settings so the video is recorded using the recommended settings. These settings ensure that all end-users will be able to view the video on their systems.

16 colors vs. 256 colors

- 16-color mode systems do not adequately display videos recorded in 256 colors. If your end-users are running their systems in 16 color mode, record all of your videos in 16 color mode.
- If all of your end-users are running their systems in 256 color mode, you can record your videos in 256 color mode.
- Do not record videos using color modes other than 16 or 256, because they are not supported by Software Video Camera.

Use the Windows Control Panel to set these Display properties:

- **Color Palette:** 16 or 256 colors
- **Appearance:** Solid background color
- **Background:** Wallpaper and patterns will be included in the video if you make them part of the capture area. If you do not want them included in the video, set these options to None.



Be sure to close all applications that are not needed before you capture a video.

See Also

[Setting the capture region](#)

[Recording and saving videos](#)

[Software Video Camera options](#)

Setting the capture region

Before Software Video Camera creates a video of screen actions and cursor movements, it needs to know where these activities will take place on your desktop. You do this by setting the capture region.

To set the capture region:

- From the Software Video Camera's playbar, click **Area** . The Set Recording Area dialog opens.

Also, the Capture window, a window with scrolling red and white striped borders, opens. (The capture window will always appear in its last used position.) These window borders can be dragged in any direction with your mouse to visually reduce and enlarge the capture region.

To visually set the capture region:

- 1 Place the mouse pointer over any border of the Capture window. The pointer turns into an arrow. When you drag the arrow in any direction (including diagonally), the capture region is resized.
- 2 Drag the border in the appropriate direction.
- 3 Release the mouse button when the capture region is suitably sized.



You can also move the capture window by clicking within the borders and dragging it to the suitable location on your desktop.

To set the capture region to an exact measurement:

- From the **Set Recording Area** dialog, enter specific values in **Left**, **Top**, **Width** and **Height**. The capture window resizes itself with each value that you enter.

Note: Increasing the size of the capture area increases the amount of disk space required for recording and delivery, and may reduce the frame rate of your videos.

See Also



[Recording and saving videos](#)

[Software Video Camera options](#)

Recording and saving videos

After you instruct Software Video Camera to record a video, everything you do in the application(s) and on the desktop will be recorded until you stop the session. It's a good idea to "rehearse" your videos before recording them to save time and disk space. Before you record a video, plan the steps and commands you want the video to perform and practice doing them. If you record several versions of the same video, you can also remove the AVI files that you do not need.

To record a video:

- 1 From the Software Video Camera's playbar, click **Record** .
- 2 Perform the actions you want to include in your video.
- 3 To stop recording your video, click **Stop** . The Save As dialog appears.
- 4 In File name, enter the name of your video file.
- 5 If you want to change the folder where the file will be stored, browse through the Folders list and open the one you want to use.
- 6 Click **OK**. Software Video Camera creates an AVI file that you can insert into your Help topics.

Tips:

- You can include sound in your video files if you have a sound card and a microphone. For details, go to [Setting up audio features](#).
- You can streamline operations by specifying "hotkeys" (keyboard combinations) that start and stop recording sessions. (Current hotkeys appear in the status bar at the bottom of the Software Video Camera window). For details, go to [Selecting and using hotkeys](#).

See Also

[Editing videos](#)

[Software Video Camera options](#)

[Viewing videos](#)

Software Video Camera options

You can set properties for the Software Video Camera that specify how the program should function when you are using it to record videos.

To set Software Video Camera options:

- From the Software Video Camera's playbar, click **Setup** . The Software Video Camera Options dialog appears.

The options you can set include:

- **Hotkeys.** Hotkeys are keyboard shortcuts that you can use with Software Video Camera to start and stop video recording.
- **Software Video Camera.** You can set Software Video Camera so it is not displayed while you are recording and you can specify that it is always on your desktop, on top of any other applications that are open. You can also specify the maximum number of frames to use per second while recording the video (to control the video quality's smoothness).
- **Audio.** Software Video Camera's Audio options enable you to specify different sound styles for the Audio Compression Manager (ACM). Your system must be equipped with a sound card and microphone in order to work with this feature.

What do you want to do?

[Select and use hotkeys](#)


[Set Software Video Camera options](#)

[Set up Audio features](#)

Selecting and using hotkeys

Hotkeys are keyboard shortcuts that you can use with Software Video Camera to start and stop video recording. Hotkeys consist of keyboard combinations that you specify. Before you assign hotkeys, make sure the applications you are recording do not use the keyboard shortcuts you want to assign as hotkeys.

To specify the hotkeys:

- 1 From the Software Video Camera's playbar, click **Setup** . The Software Video Camera Options dialog appears. You can use any combination of keys available in Hotkeys to set up your keyboard shortcut.
- 2 In Start Recording, select **Alt** or **Alt + Shift**. From the drop-down list, select **Num Lock**, **Scroll Lock**, or **Caps Lock**.
- 3 In Stop Recording, select **Alt** or **Alt + Shift**. From the drop-down list, select **Num Lock**, **Scroll Lock**, **Caps Lock** or **Esc**.
- 4 Click **OK**.

To use the hotkeys while recording:


- 1 When you are ready to record your video, press the hotkey combination you assigned in Start Recording.
- 2 Perform the actions you want to include in your video.
- 3 To stop recording your video, press the hotkey combination you assigned in Stop Recording.

See Also

[Setting Software Video Camera options](#)

[Setting up Audio features](#)

Setting Software Video Camera options

- 1 From the Software Video Camera's playbar, click **Setup** . The Software Video Camera Options dialog appears.
- 2 In Software Video Camera, set the options you want to use.
 - **Hide during recording:** Select this option to hide the Software Video Camera window during recording. When you stop recording, Software Video Camera reappears. If you select this feature, make sure you know the hotkey assigned to Stop Recording so you can stop the recorder and save the video file.
 - **Always on top:** Select this option if you want the Software Video Camera window to always be "on top" of all other applications that are open on your desktop, even when it is not the active application.
 - **Maximum frames per second:** Use this option to specify the number of frames that are captured each second while the video is recording. The default value is 10. If you record at a high frame rate, your video will have a smoother quality, although it also increases the size of the your AVI file.
- 3 Click **OK** to save the new settings.


See Also

[Selecting and use hotkeys](#)

[Setting up Audio features](#)

Setting up Audio features

To set up Audio options:

- 1 From the Software Video Camera's playbar, click **Setup** . The Software Video Camera Options dialog appears.
- 2 Select **Capture Audio with Video**.
- 3 Click **Audio Settings**. The Sound Selection dialog appears. Use this dialog to specify different sound styles for the Audio Compression Manager (ACM). These sound styles are comprised of different combinations of audio compression techniques and formats. When you select an audio format for your video sequence, you can use one of the existing styles or define a new style to match your specific needs.
- 4 In **Name**, select a format, or enter a new name and then click **Save As** to create a new format.
- 5 In **Format**, select the sound compression format. Standard formats include:
PCM: Standard waveform audio format, without compression.
Microsoft ADPCM: Compressed audio format, using the Microsoft ADPCM format.
IMA ADPCM: Compressed audio format, using the IMA ADPCM format.
- 6 In **Attributes**, select the audio data quality and size format.
- 7 The attributes that are available depend on the sound formats that you select. For example, if you select Microsoft ADPCM as the audio format (22.050 kHz, 4 bits, Stereo, 21K/sec). This audio data has a sampling frequency of 22.050 kHz, uses a sample size of 4 bits per sample, and uses two channels of sound (stereo). This combination requires 21K of storage space per second of audio.
- 8 Click **OK** to save the sound selection.



To use Audio options, your system must be equipped with a sound card and microphone. If your system does not have a sound card, this option is unavailable.



See Also

[Selecting and use hotkeys](#)

[Setting Software Video Camera options](#)

Viewing videos

To view a video:

- 1 From the Software Video Camera's playbar, click **Play** . The Open dialog appears.
- 2 Select the AVI file to play and click **OK**. The Video Player opens.
- 3 Click **Play**. The Video Player runs the AVI file. When it reaches the end of the file, the Video Player stops.
- 4 If you want to interrupt the clip before it finishes, click **Stop** .

Video/Sound Player Options

The video/sound window includes these options:

Play/Stop button

The Play/Stop button acts like a toggle switch. When you first open a video, the **Play** button is available. After you click it (and while the video is running), the **Stop** button is available.

Properties button

When you click the Properties button, a menu appears where you can select a variety of options for viewing and setting properties for the video clip.

- **View** allows you to select three sizes for viewing the video (Normal, Half Size, Double Size).
- **Volume** displays a control so you can increase or decrease the sound.
- **Speed** displays a control so you can increase or decrease the speed at which the video is played.
- **Open** displays the Open dialog where you can select to open a different AVI file to play.
- **Close** closes the current AVI file. The Video Player remains open so you can select a different video to open and play (using the Open command above it).
- **Copy** displays the XXX dialog so you can save a copy of the current video using a different filename.
- **Configure** opens the Video Properties dialog. From here, you can select to view the video file in larger or smaller windows.
- **Command** opens the Send MCI String Command dialog. From here, you can enter an MCI string command to include with your video. For details on using MCI String commands, refer to the Microsoft Video for Windows Developers Kit.

Progress indicator

The Progress indicator scrolls from left to right as the clip is running. You can also move to a particular place in the clip by manually sliding the indicator.

See Also

[Sending MCI commands](#)

Sending MCI commands

Media Control Interface (MCI) is a standard control interface for multimedia devices and files. By using MCI command, an application can control a variety of multimedia devices and files.

To send an MCI command:

- 1 From the Video Player window, click **Properties**.
- 2 From the menu, select **Command**. The Send MCI String Command dialog appears.
- 3 In Command, enter the MCI string command syntax.
- 4 Click **Send**.
- 5 Click **Close**.



The MCI string commands are described in the Microsoft Video for Windows Developers Kit. Refer to the Help system included with the kit for details about MCI string commands.

See Also

[Viewing videos](#)

Editing videos

Editing video files is a complex process. There are several applications available for doing this. Before you purchase other products, it's a good idea to practice the actions you want to capture, and then record the video a few times using Software Video Camera. You might find that writing a script and practicing a few times before you record is all that you need to create videos that are suitable for your Help projects.

See Also

[Recording and saving videos](#)

Troubleshooting while creating videos

Here are some helpful tips for effective troubleshooting, in case you encounter system messages or situations that you want to quickly resolve.

Audio data lost during capture

If you were not recording sound with your video you can ignore this message—it is a warning that there is no sound with your file.

- If you were recording sound, the system could not capture all of the sound using the current settings. Try reducing the Frame Rate in Preferences.
- You can also change the **Audio Settings** (click **Change** in **Preferences**), **Format** setting to capture at a slower speed.

This AVI file is too big to be played in the selected VGA mode

The system cannot accommodate the user's request to change the display. The settings at the time the video is captured determine whether the video can be displayed in different modes. For example, a user cannot "zoom by 2" on a video that was captured using the full screen—there isn't anywhere for the image to display.

- View the video on a different system or record the video.

Cannot open the AVI or WAV file

The Video Player cannot find the file referenced in the Help system.

- Check the location of your media files. The media files must be located the same directory as the Help system or the directory specified in the previous instance of the VideoPath macro.

This program has performed an illegal operation and will be shut down

This message appears any time the sound or video file cannot be found.

- Check the location of your media files. The media files must be located in the same directory as the Help system or the directory specified in the previous instance of the VideoPath macro.

Frames are dropped during capture

Check for data transfer bottlenecks. The following lists presents some scenarios to consider.

- If your capture board uses hardware compression, lower the quality setting of the compression. When you lower the quality, you decrease the amount of data being written to your hard drive.
- If you don't need to capture sound, turn it off. Audio data can be a significant portion of a captured file.
- Check the data rate of your hard drive to make sure it can accept the data rate required by your capture card.
- If you have a fast hard drive, check the data rate of the hard drive controller.
- Reduce the frame size or the frame rate of the captured video.

Multimedia Samples

We have included several multimedia samples in this Help system. Since this Help system is compiled for WinHelp 3, we used the WinHelp Video Wizard and the RHMMPLAY DLL to add this functionality.



If you are creating a WinHelp 4 Help system, you can use WinHelp 4's built in multimedia capabilities or you can use the WinHelp Video Wizard and the RHMMPLAY DLL.

[Hotspot example](#)


[Autoplay example](#)

Hotspot example

This example demonstrates adding the video or sound macro to a jump or graphic. The video will start when the jump or hotspot is clicked. Since this Help system is compiled for WinHelp 3, we used the WinHelp Video Wizard and the RHMMPLAY DLL to add this functionality

Hotspot example:

One way to include videos is to use a hotspot graphic that runs a macro that displays the video. When the user clicks the hotspot graphic, the video is played.

Click  to see a demonstration.

Jump example:

Another method is to start the video clip from a [hotspot](#) in the content of a Help topic. When the user clicks the hotspot text, the video clip is played.

See Also

[Autoplay example](#)

Autoplay example

This example demonstrates using the WinHelp Video Wizard and the RHMMPLAY DLL to add multimedia capabilities to a WinHelp 3 Help system.

By putting the video or sound macro command inside a topic definition, the video will start automatically when the topic is opened.

See Also

[Hotspot example](#)

