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132 Windows XP Q&As



Easy video editing

New features and over 130 extra titles, effects and transitions have elevated the status of Movie Maker from a Windows XP also-ran to a flexible filmmaking freebie

These days we all have bigger and better PCs. We have lots of gizmos, lots of software, lots of ambition. And just when you thought you were getting a bit blasé about the PC experience, something comes along that blows your socks off.

It's Windows Movie Maker 2.0 and it's one of the easiest ways to make movies. True, you don't get DVD burning integrated into the product and it could do with a built-in spellchecker for titles, but it's free, it's fun and it's the best video editor you'll find this side of the professional packages.

While all the above is true, Movie Maker's not all that new – something it's not that hard to guess from the version number. It first appeared in Windows Me and was tweaked into version 1.2 for release with Windows XP.

Now officially in its second incarnation, Movie Maker's got a lot more to offer. It's still a basic video editor compared to the standalone packages from the likes of MGI and Adobe, but Movie Maker's main selling point – apart from the fact that it's free –

is its ease of use. Microsoft's cleverly included features which make movie editing an intuitive drag-and-drop affair and, if you're completely bereft of inspiration, the software can even make a movie for you.

There's no confusion when it comes to saving finished films, either, thanks to the Save Movie Wizard. Want to email your masterpiece?

Choose 'Send in email' from the taskpane. There are similar options for posting movies to the web or burning them to CD as well as, fairly obviously, saving them to your hard disk.

If you have Windows XP, download the update from www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/moviemaker and then follow our workshop starting on page 126. ■

If you're bereft of inspiration, the software can make a movie for you

Get back the desktop clutter

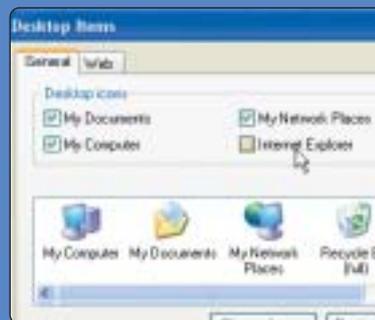
By default Windows XP doesn't provide desktop icons for My Computer, My Network Places and My Documents. They're on the Start menu, but if you prefer the more familiar, cluttered look of Windows 98 here's how to put them back in plain sight.



↑ Right-click on an empty area of the desktop and select Properties



↑ Under the Desktop tab, click on the Customize Desktop option



↑ You can now tick any or all of the four icons on offer, including Internet Explorer