

How to Make a Family History Video

Using your Home Computer

Mark Heckman

30th IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy

July 2010, Los Angeles, California

What Does this Talk Cover?

- Ways to digitize sound and video recordings
- A demonstration of inexpensive or free software for the home computer that can be used to create professional-looking videos
- This talk does not teach you how to use that software



Why Video?

- Video combines music, voice, still images, and motion
- Grabs people's interest more than a book or simple sound recording can
- Compare the experience of watching a vacation video with that of looking at a photo album



What Kind of Video Can I Make?



- Reunion, birthday, wedding or other special event
- Family history – trace the generations from the old country to the present
- Documentary about a shtetl
- Trace a person's life

What Can I Put in My Video?

- Still pictures (use “pan and zoom” effect to add movement)
- Film clips (movies, home movies)
- Transitions between clips
- Interviews (audio or video)
- Narration (your own voice-over)
- Music
- Titles



Steps in Making a Video

- Collect the pieces:
 - Import (digitize) components (film, pictures, music)
- Create story-line, put components in order, and adjust their timing
- Add titles
- Add audio: music and voice-over
- Make DVD, Video tape, or computer file to share with others

Repeat as
necessary

Collecting the Pieces

- Scan images and documents (jpg format)
 - DVD has only 720 lines of vertical resolution (HD has 1080) = low resolution
 - E.g., if 8x10 photo, can scan at 72dpi, which gives $(10 \times 72 =) 720$
- Digitize analog tape recordings (e.g., using *Audacity* program)
- Capture video (using video capture device)

Audacity, for Capturing Audio

- Free audio capture and editing software
- Available from <http://download.com/>
- Use a patch cord from your audio device (e.g., cassette tape player, iPod, etc.) to audio input of your computer

Capturing Video

- Many modern cameras record directly to digital file format (e.g., mpg, mov, avi)
- If digital tape (digital camcorder), use “Firewire” or USB connection
 - Need cable and connector in your computer
- If analog (e.g., videotape), need a video capture device
- Can pay someone to do it

Video Capture Devices

- PCI card (internal, faster) or USB2 (external, easier to install)
- Approx. \$10-\$100
- Some computers (Macs, Sony VAIO) may come with capture device installed



USB2 Video
Capture Device

Converting 8mm to Video

- Old home movies usually 8mm (silent) or Super-8 (with sound)
- Need projector, screen, and video camcorder
- Project movie on screen, record with camcorder
- Capture video as previously described



Other Hardware Requirements

- Video editing is very hardware intensive
- Most modern home computers are powerful enough to capture and edit video
- Need lots of memory (2GB minimum)
- Need lots of disk space (40GB?) for captured video and final video

Video Editing Software

- Lets you put the pieces together: video clips, still pictures, titles, sound, etc.
- Some also do video capture (need device)
 - Most capture devices come with some kind of video editing software
- Will produce DVD or other video output formats

Video Editing Programs

- Some good programs (\$0 to \$150)
 - Corel VideoStudio
 - Pinnacle Studio
 - Adobe Premiere Elements
 - Apple iMovie (for Macs)
 - Windows Movie Maker (free for Windows, but not as powerful as the others)
- Some have 30-day free trials

Before you Start

- Video editing can take a lot of time
- You will save a lot of time if you prepare a *script* and *storyboard* ahead of time
- Figure out what you want to say – the story that you want to tell – ***before*** you start using the software
- Write the script so know what materials you need and can perform narration

Storyboarding

- Outline of video, shows order of pictures and clips
- Do this before you start to save lots of time when making the video!
- Write it as a list, or use thumbnail images
- Make script and storyboard changes together, to keep in synch

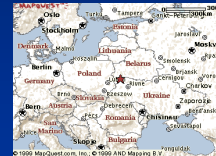
Sample Storyboard



Opening



KK distance
shot, pan



Map



“Town made
of wood”



Majority Jewish



Home movie,
video clip

Script

(Title - The Story of the Heckman Family; overlay Coney Island picture)

Opening Music

(Pan on distance view of KK)

According to family legend, the Heckman family originated in "Austria", probably Galicia.

At some point in the early to mid 19th century, an ancestor of the Heckman family moved to Kamen Kashirsky in what was then Imperial Russia. (cross-fade to map)

...

Lets Try Out VideoStudio

1. Story board and write script first
2. Split captured video into scenes and cut unwanted
3. Insert video and still images into timeline
4. Adjust timing of images while reading script
5. Apply "Ken Burns effect" to images
6. Insert transitions and readjust timing
7. Add titles
8. Add music ("auto music" adjusts to timing)
9. Add narration
10. Adjust sound levels
11. "Render" video file/DVD/VCD

We've Reached the End of the Talk

- Free trial of Corel VideoStudio:
<http://www.corel.com/>
- Mark Heckman email:
mrheckman@yahoo.com