Alan Pierce
pierceaj@optonline.net

Video Production

Not too long ago, video production involved the use of analog cameras, video recorders, television monitors and, to a small degree, computers. The technology of the day required editing a videotape between video recorders through the use of a switcher/fader. The creativity of the filmmaker—not the sophistication of the equipment—determined the quality of the final project.

The artistic abilities of the people involved still determine the quality of videos, but 1 suspect that very few people still use VCRs or bulky switcher/faders to create their video productions. When it comes to professional or consumer video production, computers, video editing software and digital cameras now rule.

New video production hardware and software are constantly being introduced. Hardware and software manufacturers often control the direction the technology takes through top down innovation and product development. The manufacturers of consumer hardware and software are now focusing on upgrading products so you can use them to produce high-definition DVDs to view on your new HDTV.

But not all innovations in video production are top down in nature. A new video production method called Machinima is a grassroots technology (bottom up innovation) introduced by video gamers who have found a way to make movies, without using a video camera, by manipulating the characters and scenery generated by video game software. You can now view hun-

Ulead Systems Inc.

Music & Narration

Duotone — Clouds

Charcoal — Lens

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Video Filters

dreds of Machinima videos on the Internet. This grassroots technology has grown so popular that some Hollywood studios have already adopted it to create special effects for some feature films.

Ulead System Inc. has just released a plug-in for its Video Studio 9 software that allows individuals to produce high-definition video (HDV). HDV will require more storage space, and two competing recording systems will hit the market this year. Blue-ray DVD will hold up to 50 GB of storage, and HD-DVD, a noncompatible competitor, will hold 30 GB. At last year's Consumer Electronics Show, Ulead demonstrated how its HDV software will work with the new blue laser recorders. 1 asked Andy Marken, a Ulead spokesperson, if we should expect a separate Machinima software package or new Machinima plug-in for Video Studio 9 in the near future. Although he responded "not at the present time," his e-mail left me with the feeling that Ulead is looking into future possibilities.

Video Studio 9 is a very powerful software package that you can now use to turn your old videos into digital productions and your new HDV camcorder movies into true 1080i high-definition videos. Your videos can be saved in all kinds of

formats, as web movies and/or burned to DVD.

The video authoring process starts with you transferring video from its source to your computer using the Video Studio capture mode. It works best to capture video in segments to reduce the complexity of editing the different scenes. (I recommend that you save often when using this or any software package to prevent loss of information if you make a mistake or have to restart the program.) You drag video clips from the library to the software's timeline and perform multiple or single edits to the clips depending on your own specific needs. (See photos.) You can add title and voice overlays, background music and video clips from the software or your own video library. You can even combine different video projects into a final production.

When ready to complete your video production, you select the format that you want to use to share the project and create your primary and chapter menus. Menu pictures that identify each video scene can appear in your final video as full-motion video clips. Your final project resembles a commercial DVD in every way, including the option to start the video at a particular scene by selecting it from a menu.

Recalling the Facts

1. How has the technology used to create video changed over the years?

2. In your opinion, is it the people or the technology employed that determines the final quality of a video project? Why?

3. What is Machinima? **TG**