

Video Editing Applications

Choosing a video editing application is an important first step toward structuring successful visual influence projects in your classroom. While some teachers are drawn toward feature-rich desktop solutions, others are primarily interested in ease of use and availability. Here are some popular solutions that might be worth investigating.

Adobe Premiere Elements

One of the most feature-rich video editing applications available, Adobe Premiere Elements (www.adobe.com/products/premiereel/) allows users to create and share professional final products. Premiere Elements users can create sophisticated graphics and animation for their videos, easily add popular effects like slow motion to clips, and easily publish their final copies to customized online albums. Premiere Elements can also automate several common editing tasks—stabilizing shaky videos, fixing poor contrast issues, balancing audio levels across an entire movie—and can instantly sync developing projects across multiple computers.

The challenge with applications like Premiere Elements, however, is that they are rarely free. For classroom teachers, this means finding funds to purchase—and getting permission to install—new programs. What's more, while the additional features of programs like Premiere Elements can enhance final products, they also require a level of advanced digital moxie to master.

Solutions like Premiere Elements are the best choice for teachers with a high degree of digital competence or teachers working in advanced video production settings.

Microsoft Movie Maker

Microsoft's Movie Maker (<http://download.live.com/moviemaker>)—the video application spotlighted in this chapter's handouts and materials—is one of the most approachable video editing applications. Available by download to your PC for free, Movie Maker makes importing content and organizing project folders easy. What's more, assembling content, adding audio, and inserting images is a simple drag-and-drop process that students of any age can handle. There's nothing intimidating about Movie Maker, regardless of whether your students are working with video content that they've captured or digital kits that you've assembled.

The challenge with applications like Movie Maker is that students with advanced levels of digital proficiency may find them limiting. Often, working with more sophisticated programs beyond school—or hoping to model their work after the more sophisticated videos that they are watching online—these students are likely to be dissatisfied with or frustrated by Movie Maker.

Solutions like Movie Maker are the best choice for teachers with an average degree of digital competence or teachers introducing video projects to their students for the first time.

Animoto

The most approachable editing application available to teachers and students is Animoto (<http://animoto.com/education>)—an online application that allows users to create interesting videos built from still images. Students simply upload pictures, sequence them logically, and select an audio track from Animoto's large collection of Creative Commons music. Animoto automatically adds professional transitions and generates an embeddable online video in minutes.

For teachers interested in a quick, unintimidating solution for classroom video projects, solutions like Animoto are a fantastic choice. For teachers interested in giving students more control over video content creation, though, solutions like Animoto may come up short.