

DVD Authoring through MyDVD

Introduction

Despite its short history of less than five years, DVDs have become the most powerful consumer electronics product of all times. Although the successful precedent CD (the Compact Disc) is still the most popular due to its small size, large capacity, low manufacturing cost, durability, and flexibility, there is an area that this CD never succeeded in better than anything that came before, video. DVD, which originally stood for digital video disc, is a bigger and faster CD that can hold cinema like videos. While CDs hold 600 megabytes, DVDs can hold 4.7 gigabytes of information on one of its two sides, which is enough for a 133-minute movie. Beyond its original intention of holding video data, DVDs are now expected to replace audio CDs, videotapes, laserdiscs, and CD-ROMs as the digital versatile disc, another long name for DVD.

One example that this up-to-date technology is practically applied in our daily life can be derived from the desire of preserving our treasured family memories on DVD. In order to support this kind of desire of mundane people, many DVD authoring software programs have been developed – e.g. DVD Workshop, DVD Junior, Impression DVD-Pro, Dazzle DVD Complete, DVDarts, MyDVD, Pinnacle Express, and iDVD and DVD Studio Pro, etc. --. However, the use of DVDs is still limited to a small population, and these programs are much less familiar to even this population. This paper is aimed at introducing MyDVD, one of these DVD creation programs, to the DVD users or the people who are interested in multimedia authoring. The comparison of various DVD authoring tools is beyond the scope of this paper.

Related Links

DVD Workshop (<http://www.ulead.com/store/dws/runme.htm>)

DVD Junior (<http://www.authoringware.com/index.htm>)

Impression DVD-Pro

(http://www.pinnaclesys.com/ProductPage.asp?Product_ID=464&Langue_ID=7)

Dazzle DVD Complete (<http://www.dazzle.com/products/dvdcomplete.html>)

DVDarts (<http://www.dvdarts.net/>)

MyDVD (<http://www.mydvd.com/default.asp>)

Pinnacle Express

(<http://www.pinnaclesys.com/support/products/info/default.asp?ProductID=438>)

IDVD (<http://www.apple.com/idvd/>)

DVD Studio Pro (<http://www.apple.com/dvdstudiopro/>)

Significance of the Topic

MyDVD is the first DVD recording and editing application for personal computers.

This software for PC consumers was introduced in 2000 by *Sonic Solutions*

(<http://www.sonic.com/>), which is one of the world's leading suppliers of authoring

systems for digital media – DVD and CD – production. Just like other software

programs, MyDVD 4, the latest version, was already introduced in June 2002. Since

Dazzle Multimedia (<http://www.dazzlemultimedia.net/index.html>) shipped MyDVD

with its Digital Video Creator (DVC) system in 2000 first, several electronic and

software companies such as *Ricoh* (<http://www.ricoh.com/>), *TDK*

(<http://www.tdk.com/>), and *Sony* (<http://www.sony.com/>), etc. have been bundling

MyDVD with their DVD RW (ReWritable) drives.

The program used for this paper is MyDVD 3 that was bundled with Sony DVD+RW

drive. In the following sections, I will describe the features of MyDVD in the light of its

versions 3, 3.5, and 4, and a brief authoring process. Finally, I will discuss the

advantages and the drawbacks of this program.

Discussion

General features of MyDVD

- Primary functions: MyDVD provides three ways for users to create their own DVD titles.
 1. Direct-to-DVD recording: In this mode, users connect a camcorder either through an analog or a digital, or VCR to the PC and the application automatically converts the video and audio into DVD-compatible formats (MPEG-2 format).
 2. Authoring new DVD project: In this mode, users can create an interactive project by using different types of multimedia elements such as video files, and

audio and graphics data on their own hard disks. MyDVD includes a built-in transcoder that automatically converts all incoming video formats into those compatible with DVD players.

3. Editing an existing DVD project: In this mode, users open an existing project by putting the disc back into the PC, edit it as desired, and record it again. They can delete unwanted footage, refine chapter names, move chapter marks and reconfigure menus and menu graphics. With rewritable media such as DVD+RW or DVD-RW, users can re-record the newly edited version on the same disc.

- Video CD (VCD) support: VCD is a CD that contains moving pictures and sound. A VCD can be played on almost all standalone DVD Players and on all computers with a DVD-ROM or CD-ROM drive. It is also possible to use menus and chapters, similar to DVDs, on a VCD and also simple photo album/slide shows with background audio. MyDVD also allows to create VCDs.
- Template-driven application: This means that users select a style for the menus, buttons and text, and this sets up the look for the entire DVD or VCD. Buttons and text appear in fixed positions on the screen, and MyDVD automatically arranges objects in the menus so that they look great without the need for "creative input" from the user. MyDVD also sets up the menu navigation for the user. In addition, users create a custom project style using their own photos and fonts.
- Adobe Photoshop plug-in: With its own custom Photoshop plug-in, Sonic has made it possible for anyone to create his/her own DVD styles using Adobe Photoshop.

New features of MyDVD 4

- Motion Menus: Full-motion video can be used for menu backgrounds and buttons, simply by selecting a motion menu style or using movies from a camcorder or

the Internet. MyDVD 4 also includes a selection of professionally designed motion menu backgrounds.

- **DVD Slideshows:** MyDVD 4 enables users to create slideshows using scanned photos or pictures from a digital camera. Motion-video transitions can easily be added between slides as well as music or voice narration. Like DVD-videos, photo slideshows created with MyDVD can be re-edited and updated at any time.

- **Photo Archives:** MyDVD automatically stores original JPEG images on the DVD, enabling users to access and print high-resolution images of any picture in their slideshow. This provides the user with the convenience of creating a slideshow for DVD playback as well as a high-resolution JPEG archive on a single disk.

System requirements

The minimum system requirements for MyDVD include Windows 98, ME, 2000, or XP running on a 400MHz Pentium III PC (for authoring), 800MHz for capturing video, 128MB RAM, 10GB free hard disk space, 8MB AGP video graphics adapter, 1024 x 768 resolution display with 24-bit or 32-bit color graphics, and a DVD recorder (CD recorder for burning VCDs).

More support information such as detailed systems requirement, hardware approved and tested for MyDVD, and technical FAQ can be found in the following sites.

System requirements: <http://www.mydvd.com/plus/requirements.asp>

Tested hardware: <http://www.mydvd.com/common/hardware.asp>

Technical questions: <http://support.mydvd.com/faq/default.htm>

Basic authoring process of MyDVD

MyDVD is characterized by its quick and easy use for even beginners. The following process will show you how to create DVD projects especially by focusing on turning an

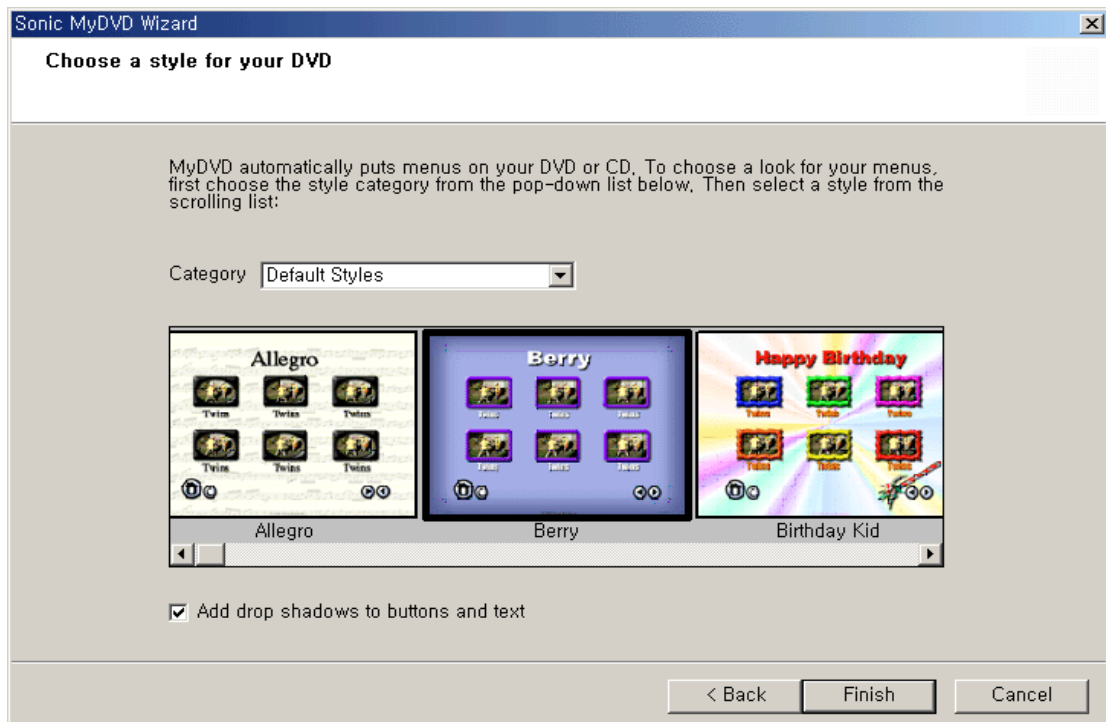
existing video file on the user's hard disk into DVD-Video. In order to describe this process, I used MyDVD 3 with my computer, which is as follows:

Processor	933 MHz Pentium III
OS	Windows 2000
RAM	512 MB RAM
Hard Disk	30 GB
Display	24-bit color graphics display, 1024 x 768 resolution
Other	Microsoft DirectShow 8.0, Firewire/i. Link/IEEE 1394 Card Apple Quick Time for Window 5

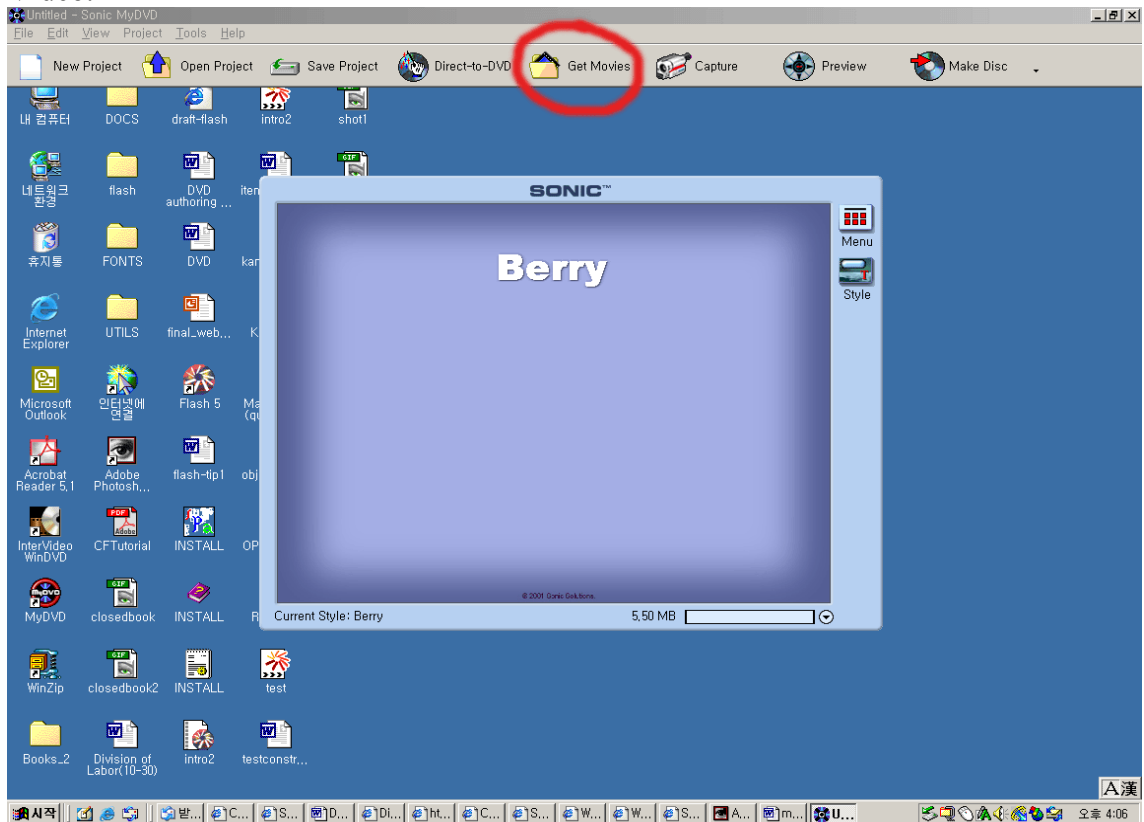
1. Start MyDVD program, and select "NEW MyDVD PROJECT".



2. Select your favorite style from templates on the menu screen.



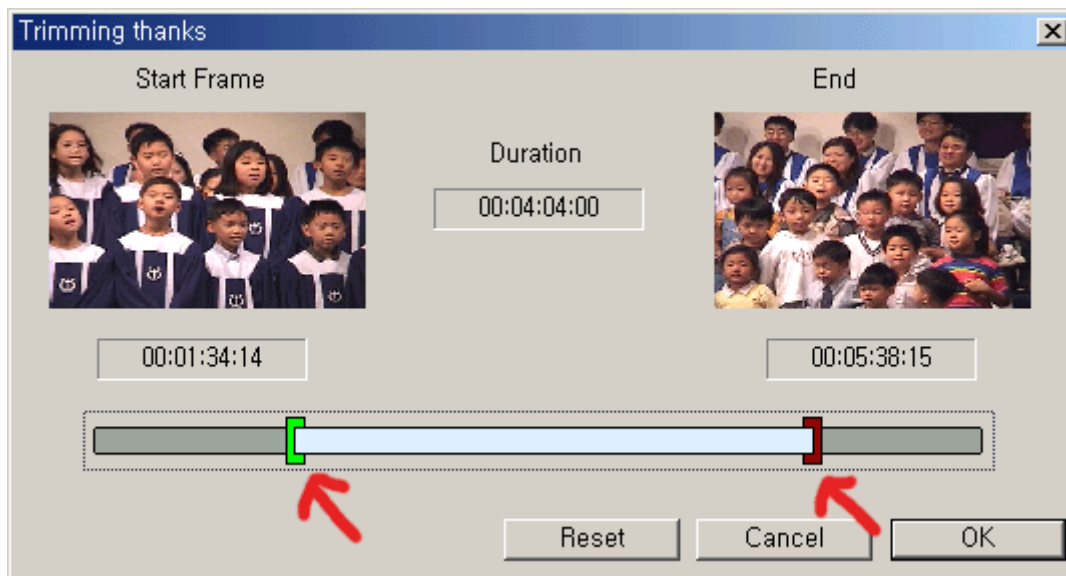
3. Click on the "Get Movies" button and select a movie file to turn into DVD-Video.



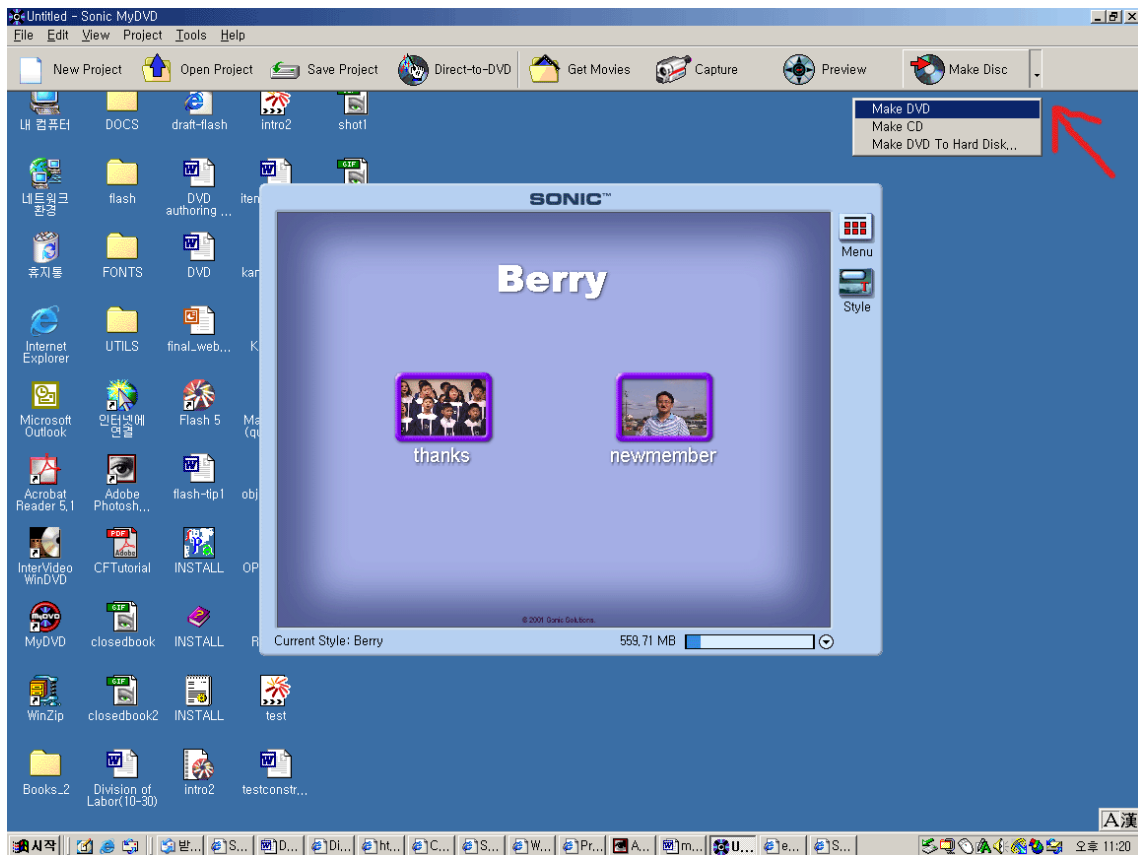
4. Double click on the icon for a movie you want to trim.



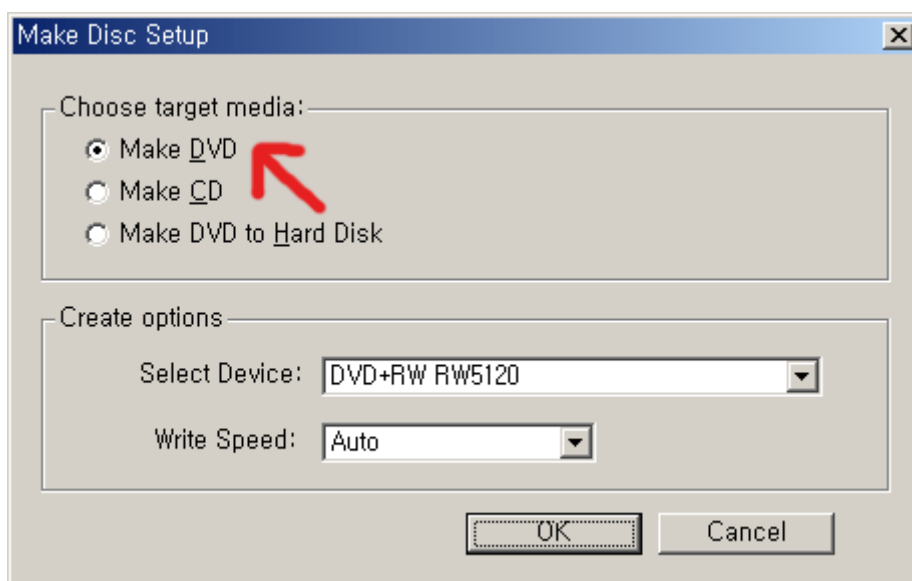
5. While looking at the preview screen, determine the section you want to leave in the movie by dragging the indicator. Then, click on the “OK”.



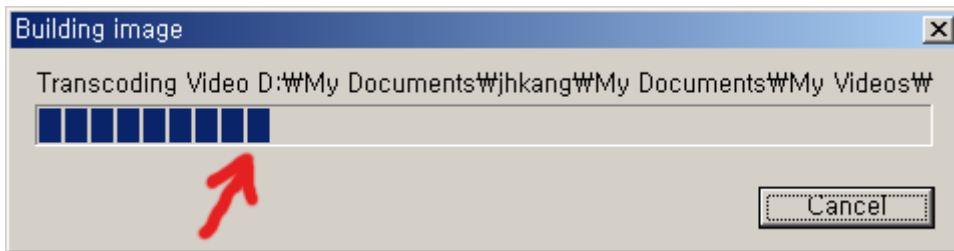
6. After setting DVD+RW media in your drive, select “Make DVD” on the top toolbar option.



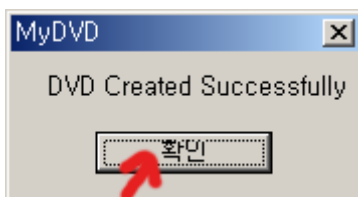
7. Select “Make DVD” in “Make Disc Setup” window, and click on “OK”. If the write media is CD-R/RW, select “Make CD”.



8. Then, you will see that the encoder in MyDVD performs build process and the write operation to DVD+RW media will be completed.



9. Your DVD-Video has now been created.



Advantages of MyDVD

- Ease of use and simplicity: Once the user starts the program, MyDVD's wizard screen immediately pops up and takes the user through the DVD creation process. Even the beginner can create his/her own professional-looking DVD video. In addition, especially the following features of MyDVD enhance its simplicity.

- Direct-To-DVD recording mode: Since MyDVD has a capturing program built in, the user can take video from his/her camcorder or VCR and bring it in to his/her computer. The capturing program encodes directly to MPEG2 (the format of DVD). This is unlike some other DVD-authoring programs, which capture one's file to AVI and then convert it to MPEG. This feature allows the user to save his/her time.
- Preset styles for menu design: Creating a menu system is an important part of DVD authoring because these menus make the video interactive. MyDVD comes with 27 preset menu styles so that the user can just select without concern about his/her creativity. These preset menus respectively have thumbnail pictures of the video files they link to.

- Ease of customizing one's menus: If the user wants to make the DVD nicer, (s)he can choose among the customization options. The user can add his/her own background, and select the button style for the thumbnails for each clip from 15 pre-made buttons.
- Support VCD: This feature reflects the estimation of the consumers, who are equipped with camcorders, DVD players, and CD recorders, but haven't taken the DVD+/- RW drive yet.
- Motion menu capabilities: The latest version 4.0 makes it easy to add a movie to play behind one's DVD menu by clicking the "Edit Style" button, select "Choose Background", and pick one's movie.
- Ability of adding slide shows: The version 4.0 also gives the user controls to select music to use with the slide show. In addition, this new MyDVD stores all the user's original, high-resolution digital images in a folder that the user can access from any DVD-ROM drive.

Limitations of MyDVD

- Unsatisfied video quality: After creating my DVD movie in New Project mode and watching it on my computer first, there were very noticeable square blocks in the image that were especially jagged when there was a motion change in the scene.
- Long transcoding process: For example, it took about 30 min. in order to transcode the AVI (audio video interleave) format of only 5 min. movie into MPEG 2.
- Limited design aspects: As stated above, MyDVD allows the customizing menu design in some aspects, but there are other limitations that make this program rigid. For example, while the user can change the text style on a DVD menu, (s)he can't reposition where that text is displayed on the menu screen. The forward, back and home buttons are also automatically placed on the user's DVD and (s)he can't customize them.

Moreover, the user can't select which frame in his/her video the user wants to set as the thumbnail picture because it is always set to the first frame.

- Limited support and documentation: The MyDVD package comes in a DVD box with only a four-page quick start guide inside, and this guide allows only half of its space for this software program. Most information from this guide consists of installing the software. All other documentation about the usage of the program itself is found online. Moreover, the user can get technical support by using phone, but it costs a \$30 per incident. This is in contrast to Dazzle DVD Complete that offers 30 days of free technical support by phone.

Summary

In order to support the DVD users who want to create their own DVD projects, this paper introduced one of the DVD authoring programs –MyDVD— through its features and the process of use, and discussed its several advantages and drawbacks.

MyDVD makes it easy to capture video and audio directly from computer-attached camcorders or VHS decks, automatically create menus, buttons and navigation based on a user-selected style, and then record everything to DVD+RW discs that can be played on home DVD players or DVD-equipped PCs.

However, the low quality of the video made by MyDVD is considered the most serious drawback. In addition, the features of simplicity seem to limit the possibility of creating a more different look for the project.

Since this program has a relatively short history, just like DVDs, as compared with other multimedia authoring programs, and since many leading manufacturers of computer hardware and software have been increasingly interested in DVD authoring programs, I expect to see the upgraded MyDVD that makes up for the weak points before long.

References Used (all retrieved October & November, 2002)

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<http://www.creativepro.com/story/news/10074.html>

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http://www.hp.com/hp-at-home/sg/softwareforsummer/video_mydvd.html

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http://www.beststuff.com/article.php3?story_id=3505

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- TDK Chooses Sonic MyDVD and CinePlayer (2002, August 22).
http://biz.yahoo.com/bw/020822/220093_1.html

This is the site provided by Yahoo to announce TDK's selecting MyDVD 4.0.

- Sony Bundles Sonic MyDVD 4 Video Suite with Dual RW Drives (2002, October 3)
www.dvdcreation.com/2002/10_oct/news/sonic_sony2.htm

This is the site provided by CustomFlix to announce Sony's choosing MyDVD 4.0.

- VCDHelp, SVCDHelp & DVDRHelp.com: <http://www.vcdhelp.com/>

This site provides the definition of VCD and its features.

- whatis?com: http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/0,,sid9_gci213923,00.html

This site provides the information of DVD.

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