Title of Session: Next Vista
Moderator: Rushton Hurley
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Room: Next Vista Group

RushtonH . o O (wonder if she notices I learned to do the thought bubbles?)

BJB2 smiles....very impressive!

RushtonH bows

RushtonH: Perhaps we'll have more than two people. I'm thinking good thoughts!

BJB2: I'll announce and we'll see who we get

BjB: |** ANNOUNCEMENT: Next Vista for Learning is starting in the group room. The topic is software and hardware for video. To participate type /join Rushton H **|

FredK joined the room.

RushtonH: Hi Fred

BJB2 waves hi to Fred

FredK waves to Bj and Rushton

RushtonH: How's Oklahoma looking? (I remember that right, right?)

FredK: OK is dry

RushtonH does a rain dance of Oklahoma

FredK: You got that right

FredK: Good to see you the other night

RushtonH: That was an interesting program - I'm hoping that I'll catch more like it

FredK: It has potential

RushtonH: agreed

RushtonH: Fred, are you a Mac or PC user?

FredK: Our literacy council is having a physical tutor training next Wednesday

FredK: PC

RushtonH: BJ, how about you?

BJB2: I'm also PC

BJB2 . o O (although Mac at school)

RushtonH: I'll tailor the piece accordingly.

RushtonH: Fred - is the Wed meeting online, or a training you're doing?

FredK: You have an interesting site

RushtonH: thanks!

FredK: It is at our health dept

RushtonH: It'll be better soon.

RushtonH: Please give the group at the health dept greetings from Santa Clara, CA

FredK: OK

RushtonH: Okay, folks - if others join, great, but I'm ready to go. 'Ow about y'all?

FredK: I hope some of them join us on the 30th

FredK: at the council meeting]

MaureenB joined the room.

RushtonH: HI Maureen!

MaureenB waves

FredK waves to Maureen

RushtonH: Maureen, are you a Mac or PC user? (or both?)

MaureenB: both

MaureenB: Mac at work

MaureenB: PC home

RushtonH: Cool. I've got info for both, so we'll cover both sides of the coin.

RushtonH: Everyone ready?

MaureenB: yes

FredK: Ready

BJB2 nods

RushtonH: First thing is what you've got as computer hardware.

RushtonH: Rule 1 - the more RAM, the better

RushtonH: Rule 2 - the stronger the processor, the better,

RushtonH: Rule 3 - Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you.

RushtonH: For those of you using PCs, do you all use XP?

MaureenB: yes

FredK: No. 98

FredK: I use xp elsewhere

RushtonH: I must admit I don't have any real advice for W98

RushtonH: Almost everything I've seen that's free is for XP

BJB2: I use XP

RushtonH: How much RAM do you have on the machine running XP you use?

RushtonH: (if you know)

FredK: I would have to check

RushtonH: no problem

MaureenB: don't know but I never had a problem with anything I needed to do

RushtonH: Do know that with video work, you'll tax your system in ways you may not have before

RushtonH: Having at least 512MB is a good thing, and more is better

FredK: Our baud rate is 26.4k

FredK . o O (mighty slow)

RushtonH: Hang in there!

RushtonH: As a finish to the computer side-o-things, watch for slowness; almost always a sign you need more RAM

RushtonH: Next item is the camcorder - do you have access to one?

MaureenB: yes used it today on my class trip

BJB2: cool, Maureen!

FredK: Mine needs a new battery

RushtonH: Maureen, have you edited video before?

FredK: VHS recorder

MaureenB: a little using IMovie

RushtonH: Good deal.

RushtonH: Fred, have you captured video from the VHS camcorder before?

MaureenB: do a poetry slam at the end of the year and edit in titles and effects but real basic stuff

FredK: I need some kind of wire to do it

RushtonH: There are products that can help you capture from a VHS camera, though you might want to invest the money in a newer camcorder

RushtonH: BJ, how about you?

BJB2: very minimal experience

FredK: That will be included in my next grant request

RushtonH: Get ready to take some notes - I'll give you the info you want!

BJB2 . o O (your transcript will be your 'notes')

RushtonH: There are four things I'd suggest you look for in a camcorder you are going to use to capture video

RushtonH: 'Noteworthy' items. 8^)

RushtonH: The first is an external microphone jack

FredK: Is that on the sound card?

RushtonH: Actually, I mean a jack on the camcorder itself

FredK: OK

RushtonH: Some very cheap camcorders come with no jack for an external mic

RushtonH: Just say 'no' to those

RushtonH: You'll find that one of the biggest challenges with video is getting good audio

MaureenB: now I wish I had the camera home

RushtonH: Do know that a simple 'mini' is fine; you don't need some big expensive apparatus

RushtonH: Item 2 for the camcorder you buy: comfort with the media it uses

RushtonH: the one I use now is miniDV (cassettes), which seem to be very common

RushtonH: there are others, though

RushtonH: You can get miniDV tapes pretty cheaply - 10 for ~25-$30

RushtonH: Item 3 is a firewire plug

RushtonH: the technical term is IEEE-1394

RushtonH: USB works as well, and USB 2.0 is as fast as firewire, but...

RushtonH: with firewire, your computer editing program can control the camera, and that's a nice advantage

RushtonH: Everyone still with me? Any questions so far?

FredK: Would a digital camera with memory to make clips do?

MaureenB: ok so far

RushtonH: Lots of digital cameras can shoot some video...

RushtonH: The two main issues there are 1) does it get any audio, and...

RushtonH: 2) is the quality of the video enough for what you want to do?

FredK: I'm not sure

RushtonH: A proper camcorder will give you much more int he way of quality

RushtonH: Item 4 is a nice feature called 'image stabilization'

RushtonH: Keeps things from jumping around too much

RushtonH: Though a good tripod can handle that, too

RushtonH: I have a JVC camera that I bought for ~$320 that works great, and it has all of the above except the image stabilization.

RushtonH: We'll talk more about what else to include in your budgeting for equipment in a minute,...

RushtonH: but before we do, what have I left out in terms of camcorder advice you're wanting to hear?

FredK: Can you put it on a DVD

RushtonH: Definitely - that typically happens after you have it in the computer, though.

FredK: I want to make tutor training DVDs

RushtonH: Good thinking. The first step is to get the footage arranged/edited like you want, then tackle moving the finished pieces onto a DVD

RushtonH: Maureen - any questions about the camcorder?

MaureenB: I have saved my Poetry Slam to quicktime movies and given them to the kids using regular CD's

MaureenB: no have a good one from school but would like to get my own

RushtonH: Good - the disadvantage is that you can't play them in a DVD player, the advantage with a CD with QT files is that you can then easily re-edit them if you wish

RushtonH: Next (though toss in questions any time you want) is the stuff to buy with the camcorder...

MaureenB: and they are small enough to put up on my website

RushtonH: First, most camcorders come with a fairly low-strength battery. An hour charge or so. It's good to have a second battery with longer life. I bought a 5-hour one for about $90, and it is REALLY helpful to have that much time.

RushtonH: Second, you'll want a microphone you can attach to the camcorder...

RushtonH: I've had good success with the ones that clip to a shirt/collar - they're called 'lavalier' microphones

RushtonH: You can get them wired or wireless.

MaureenB: which do you recommend

RushtonH: Audio-Technica (sp?) makes a good wireless set for about $100 - you'll need to have a couple of 9volt batteries, too.

RushtonH: By the way, the prices I'm tossing out are largely from my experience with an impressive vendor call B&H Photo (at http://www.bhphoto.com, I believe)

MaureenB: good to know

RushtonH: Third, having a tripod is nice.

RushtonH: Bit bulky to carry around, but a huge help in keeping things controlled!

RushtonH: The 4' ones can be found for as low as $15-20, and the 5' ones for $25-30

FredK . o O (monopod)

MaureenB: found mine buried in the garage so I am set for this year

RushtonH: A monopod is also helpful, though you certainly can't step away from them!

FredK: right

RushtonH: Finally, budget for lots and lots of media...

RushtonH: That means miniDV tapes (if that is what your camcorder uses)..

RushtonH: as well as plenty of CDs and/or DVDs

RushtonH: For the PCs, if you have a camcorder with a firewire connection,

FredK: Do the "RWs" help editing?

RushtonH: you'll also want to make sure you have a card with a firewire port (~$20)

RushtonH: The RWs (if I understand your question right) are really more about the media itself. Truth is that most people don't rewrite the discs, and you can get cheaper discs that are R only.

RushtonH: If you plan to do a lot of video, or have plenty of students doing projects with your machine, you might also get an external harddrive with as much space on it as you can afford. You can get $250GB drives for less than $100 if you catch a good deal through outpost.com or tigerdirect.com

RushtonH: Before I switch to software, how are we doing? Good? Questions?

BJB2: sounds pretty comprehensive so far to me, Rushton!

RushtonH bows

MaureenB: ok so far

RushtonH: Fred, how are you doing?

FredK: I have "nero" on the literacy computer--good program?

RushtonH: Nero is a good program - there are, I think, a number of different versions which do more and more stuff if you paid more, but what you have is probably what you'll need.

RushtonH: Sofware!

FredK: I think I am keeping up with you

RushtonH: For Macs, iMovie is a great program to start with...

RushtonH: but you'll eventually want a program that allows you more than one video track...

FredK: ????

RushtonH: that gives you the ability to more cleanly switch between your clips

RushtonH: I'll explain...

RushtonH: If you take several shots during a vacation, for example

RushtonH: you'll want to put those together in a variety of ways.

RushtonH: At first, you might want to just line them up and transition from one to the next

RushtonH: Perfectly good thing to do, and iMovie is perfectly good at it.

RushtonH: However,

RushtonH: You may decide at some point that you like the audio from one clip, and you want it to play over a different clip

RushtonH: That's a step into the intermediate world, but once you know how to do it, it's something you'll want to do frequently

RushtonH: It's a bit of a bulky process in iMovie.

RushtonH: We'll come back to that if you wish.

MaureenB: I've tried that and was a tad off on the timing

BJB2 . o O (or save it for a future discussion?)

RushtonH: Exactly. It's very hard to get it just right. The quick advice..

RushtonH: is to cut back and forth when no one is talking - limits the problems.

RushtonH: On to PCs (cut in if you wish, though) -

RushtonH: With XP, you can download Windows Movie Maker for free from microsoft.com

RushtonH: and you might find with a newer machine that it is already in your list of programs

RushtonH: Windows Movie Maker (WMM) is even simpler than iMovie as an editor, though it can't do as much.

RushtonH: The key with any of these programs is to try the tutorials...

RushtonH: I thought iMovie was going to be hard, and when I finally got the courage to go through the tutorial...

RushtonH: I was amazed at how quickly it came together.

MaureenB: good to know my son is doing a video for the volunteer fire department and works only with the PC

RushtonH: There is also a program for the PC called Photo Story, which allows you to string photos together in interesting ways

BJB2: http://www.midgefrazel.net/video.html

RushtonH: That creates what I'll call slideshow videos..

BJB2 . o O (Midge led a discussion on photostory)

RushtonH: Very cool link - thanks!

RushtonH: I'm thinking I'll do a piece on slideshow videos in general next month

BJB2: sounds good, Rushton

FredK: Yes it does

RushtonH: Mostly it has to do with how to add audio, transitions, and motion (sometimes called 'Ken Burns' effect)

FredK: Do you use flash?

RushtonH: I don't personally, though I've seen good stuff done with it.

RushtonH: One beautiful thing about video work done in flash is that...

RushtonH: the file sizes are much more manageable than you get from quicktime or wmv (Windows standard)

RushtonH: It's almost always playable in a browser, too

RushtonH: I'll add one bit about what to do six months into your editing on a PC...

RushtonH: A very, very good program for editing is Adobe Premier. It's also complex and expensive.

RushtonH: But,

RushtonH: Adobe sells 'Premier Elements' which is less complex and extremely reasonably priced

RushtonH: The academic price is ~$70, I think

RushtonH: Best deal I can think of on the video editing front.

RushtonH: You can get the program bundled with Photoshop Elements, which is also a great program

MaureenB: that does video as well as stills

RushtonH: Yes - it does most of what regular Premier does, and is much more powerful than WMM or iMovie

RushtonH: Have any of you done any work building audio pieces - podcasts?

FredK: No

BJB2: nope

MaureenB: no

BJB2 . o O (might be another good future topic   )

RushtonH: One piece of software you might try downloading and playing with is Audacity. It's free, though you have to be persistent in making your way through the download process. Try getting it from download.com

BJB2: we're about out of time, Rushton.

RushtonH: A final piece of software advice is a program (also available from download.com) called Irfan View

RushtonH: It's free, and does lots of good things with graphic files.

RushtonH: Whew!

RushtonH: Any questions? Was this helpful?

FredK: This has been great and fits in with my vision for the literacy program

RushtonH: Cool. Feel free to send any questions you want my way. If I can answer them, I will! If not, I'll let you know. 8^)

FredK . o O (neat)

MaureenB: thank you my head is swimming

FredK: The transcript will help

RushtonH: Please let me know (now or by e-mail at rh@nextvista.org) if you want me to address any of these topics in more depth.

MaureenB: when I edit my class trip video I just may be asking

RushtonH: Feel free!

RushtonH: BJ - think you're ready to give some video editing a try?

BJB2: thanks, Rushton

RushtonH: you are most welcome, amiga.

FredK: I'm a little ways off yet

FredK: Thanks