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Digital Living- VIDEO 'software'

Review: WinX HD Video Converter, Deluxe \$39.95

What this does: Converts video files to various video formats.

Allows for separate control over audio and video portions of the file. Takes snapshot or video stills into .jpg or .bmp

What it doesn't do: Rip or burn CD/DVD, Up-Resolution input files.

Who most useful for: Home users who want to down-res their movies for slower computers, load onto Blackberry or iPhones, or convert for play on xbox, PS3, Zune, or extract audio mp3's from a video. [see comments about YouTube on page three.]

The Basics: The Interface is clean, well layed out and easy to read, and is the best I have seen for a video conversion program at this price point. The design is geared toward non video geek types, with a no brainer approach. You browse the file you want, (no drag and drop) it loads your file name into the file list window, and gives you all the pertinent info on the source clip which is great, ie: length of the clip, FPS WxH aspect ratio.

What is unusual about **WinXHD Converter Deluxe**, is that the audio layer information is there as well. One of the best features of this software is that you can adjust the audio seperately from the video, which is the **first time I have seen this offered at this price point**. In other words, controls are

provided to tweek the audio quality, volume and format, seperately from the video. If you want to extract audio only from a clip, you can do that. If you want to remove the audio, this can be done by setting the output volume to 0. If you have a clip were the audio is too loud, not loud enough, you can adjust the volume control accordingly. To the left is a small viewer window with dragable start and stop sliders, which enables you to choose only a portion of the video to convert if desired. This is where you can also grab a quick snapshot of the video simply by clicking the camera icon. The lower portion of the screen has tabs labeled by type of conversion output you want. Default values



in each category are automatically filled in, but you can alter the default parameters as well.

The Output file name will be the same as the input file you choose...the program automatically creates a sub folder which can annoy some users who want to have more control of the file naming. On the plus side, I like that the destination folder automatically pops up when

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your file is completed.

Speed: Running windows XP Dual core processor, I found about a 116% to 120% of clip length is the conversion speed for Downsizing HD video. In other words, an hour long video clip would take 1 hour and 6 minuts to convert to your Blackberry. For converting to high resolution HD formats the speed slowed significantly as you would expect. 600% of clip length is the estimated time it takes for HD conversion. An hour long HD clip would take you about 6 hours of compute time, which makes this program mostly useful to downsize video, or work with very short clips.

If you do wish to convert to HD, I found that you MUST select the two boxes at the bottom of the screen, "Use Advanced De-interlace Accelerator" and "Use High Quality Engine" or your results will be very pixilated and have interlace problems. If the goal is to downsize HD, then of course you will not need to choose these options.

Problems: When outputing to .avi format, this program would only output audio. I don't know if this is a glitch for all users, but several attempts were made. When capturing video stills, you are only offered 1 second increments in which to select footage to capture. Some may want finer control. The aspect ratio of the viewer defines the size and output of your .jpg and .bmp, and cannot be changed. If your source video is any size other than 1440x1080, the capture will "squeeze" your photo to this size, and it will be distorted. Captured pics are a resolution



of 72dpi, very low for Photoshop, but may be ok for the web. There is no way to control these defaults. Converted clips lost time during conversion, which means the compression codec is not completely accurate. A 53 second clip lost 2 seconds in HD conversion, which is significant. The video was also slightly zoomed in as well. This program does not handle custom sizes very well, and during my tests I noticed black bars inserted around the video instead of outputing the video into the new size. Works best if you use the defaults.

**Other notes:**

YouTube: It was nice to see that the company did use the correct defaults for the new HD YouTube format, which should be MP4, 128kbps 44.1 audio, however the program does not allow you to change the "Video Resolution" which is literally the SIZE of your clip in the horizontal and vertical direction. You only have a choice of 1920:1080 or 1280:720. For optimum YouTube conversion, you would want the vertical

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Other notes:

YouTube: Continued: ... direction to be no more than 720 which is the maximum YouTube allows. The width should maintain your aspect ratio, and is not restricted by YouTube. If you submit a clip larger than 720 in the vertical, youtube will convert it after uploading, and the result is usually less quality since it is therefore compressed twice. If your input clip source is say, 1440x1080 to properly convert to YouTube HD format, you would need to take the maximum size allowed in the vertical direction on YouTube, which is 720 , and divide by the width to keep the same aspect ratio...so for a 1440 x 1080 clip you would actually need to convert it to a size of 960x720. There is no option on the YouTube tab for resizing the clip. If you resize the clip using the mp4HD tab, the program inserts black bars around your clip, this is also not desirable for YouTube.

.mov conversion from mpeg with high quality settings did downgrade the resolution by approx 20% conversion to my **Blackberry** - fast, loaded like a dream, and in no time I was playing my video on my phone, and it looked great!

While some users may be looking to take HD footage and convert to SD, the tabs do not list SD, however just go to the HD menu choices, and adjust the video quality output from there, and you will get SD conversion.

Summary: This is not for professionals, but is a handy little tool, and for the price I would say it performs better than many. For me, it's worth the price just to quickly and easily convert videos for my Blackberry, but just don't expect it to do the same things a \$500 professional video converter would. *I would like to see fewer bugs in future versions.*

-by contributing staff writer, LONDON WILDE
<http://www.youtube.com/wildestarr>



**Photo Capture:
Image forced to 1440 x 1080
Aspect ratio**

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