

home delivery

subscriber services

- The Eagle-Tribune
- Gloucester Daily Times
- Daily News of Newburyport

- The Eagle-Tribune
- Weekly Papers

The Eagle-Tribune

online



Home News NH Haverhill Sports Opinion Lifestyle Business Stocks Celebrations Obituaries Wheels Classifieds

HIGH STAKES SAVINGS

Save **\$100** when you sign up for our most popular package with over 165 all digital channels

Starting At **\$29.99** a month

dish NETWORK
Better TV for all.

Published: 10/03/2006

Products to help you make your own videos

Help Desk
Al Gordon

[View as a multiple pages](#)



With much hype Apple Computer, Amazon, and others have rolled out services that let you obtain movies and other programming for your computer or portable player - at exceedingly unattractive prices. By and large you get less-than-DVD quality movies at nearly the same prices as DVDs. More important, for the most part you need to buy rather than rent. Unlike music where you might want to listen to your favorite songs on a daily basis, how many times are you really going to want to watch "Pirates of the Caribbean"?

Fortunately, you can "just say 'no.'" One of the hot trends in multimedia computing is software that lets you make your own videos and cut out the high-priced services.

A couple of things to bear in mind: First, there is a tradeoff in quality because the individual user doesn't have access to the recording masters the commercial services use, but the price tradeoff still is worthwhile. Second, consumer advocates and the entertainment industry have been fighting pitched battles over the legality of some aspects of video transfers, so bear in mind that this is a tech/home entertainment column, not a law journal.

Search the News

Search the Archives:

Search today's news:

MyTown search:

BUS ROUTES **click here**

Where We Live
A Community Handbook For
The Merrimack Valley

Find a business:

Enter name or type of business
Location:

Enter city & state, or zip code

Local Search powered by PremierGuide

There are three basic categories of video to consider: your own videos (or public domain material), TV shows, and movies, each one of which requires different tools and techniques. So we'll discuss those separately. Also, for the sake of simplicity, I am going to confine the universe of portable video players down to the market leaders: Apple's iPod with Video and Sony's Playstation Portable (PSP).

Making a computer or portable device file of video you shot yourself or is freely available can be handled through readily available tools. If you have a video camera, iPod, or PSP the bundled software includes basic tools needed to turn the footage into compatible formats. However, you can do better using basic software for PCs and Macs.

Macs ship with an iLife suite that includes video and photo production tools. The market-leading Windows equivalent is Roxio's Creator Suite, just out in Version 9. This is a soup-to-nuts solution for everything from CD/DVD burning to movie production. Version 9 adds iPod and PSP conversion to its arsenal of tools. Creator is pretty much a must-have for Windows PCs, and the portable player features make it even more so.

TV programs are a slightly more complex problem. You need to add TV tuner and digital video recorder (DVR) capability to your computer. That isn't especially difficult these days - no need to even open up your computer box to install anything as devices that hook up to your PC via USB connections are plentiful. Hauppauge is a leading vendor in the PC world. I also very much like Plextor's ConvertX PVR, which adds to the mix excellent capabilities for transferring videotapes to DVD-recordable formats as well as the ability (with the purchase of optional software) to run on a PC or Mac.

Mac users, though, have a huge advantage in this realm: Elgato's EyeTV. The company makes both tuner components and software that are simple and elegant. The EyeTV 250 unit packs tuner and video processing capabilities into a device about the size of a soap bar and the EyeTV Hybrid is a stick-shaped tuner that is only slightly larger than a USB flash drive. The EyeTV 2 software is by far the easiest way to record, edit, and export TV shows on the market.

Transferring a movie to a computer, iPod, or PSP is less a technical problem than a legal one. As with music, if you don't own the disk, making a copy of it is stealing. You do have general rights to make copies of content that you do

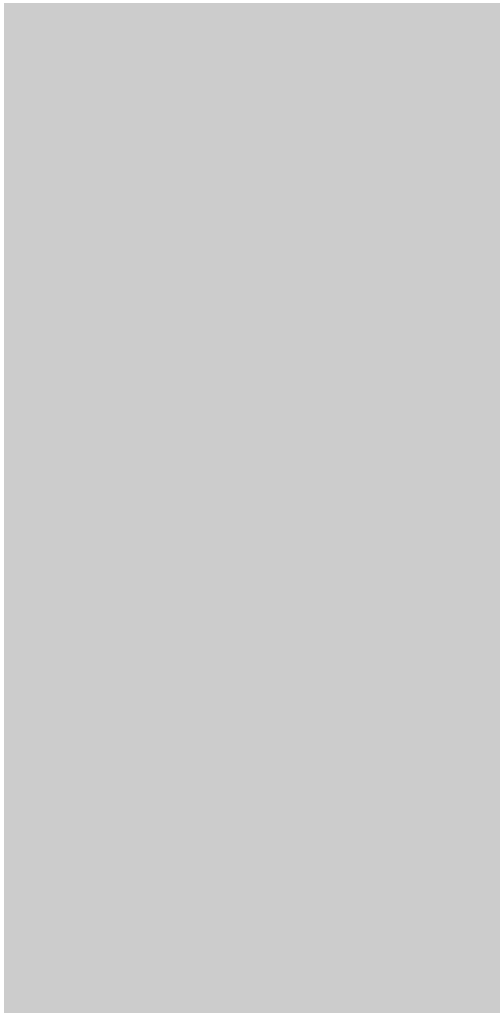
own. However, virtually all movie DVDs have anti-copying encryption - and bypassing it is illegal under federal law.

The consequence can be seen in products such as Roxio Creator (or Roxio's Popcorn 2 Mac software) where you can convert un-encrypted files for computer, iPod, or PSP use (or burn a backup DVD), but you are on your own in finding decryption tools. I will note here that you can find them on the Internet, but because they make stealing too easy, I am not going to point you to them.

I feel more comfortable recommending a couple of Mac software packages - HandBrake (freeware) and Forty-Two DVD-VX Plus (\$20) from Ronin no Sakura Kai Softronics - that let you convert a DVD to computer, iPod, or PSP-capable files. These products do not allow direct clones of a DVD and thus limit out-and-out theft. While HandBrake is free, it also is very geek-oriented. DVD-VX Plus's user friendliness makes it well worth the money. There are a multitude of similar programs, both free and commercial, for Windows. A little web searching should get you pointed in the right direction there.

Properly equipped, you, too, can be a media mogul.

Al Gordon is a Massachusetts-based media and political consultant who also writes about technology. You can read more of his articles at www.algordon.com/techblog.html and e-mail him at eagle@algordon.co



SHE MARRIED HIM??!!

AND THEY'VE GOT 7 KIDS??




[Find Your Old School Here](#)

- City -

- State -

Search



Resources: [Homes](#)[North](#) [Help](#) [Wanted](#) [Legal](#) [Notices](#) [MA](#) [Lottery](#) [NH](#) [Lottery](#) [Maps](#) [Movies](#) [Phonebook](#) [Stocks](#) [TV](#) [Weather](#)

[About Us](#) [FAQ](#) [Advertise](#) [Subscribe](#) [Submit Ad](#) [Submit Story](#) [Contact Us](#) [Careers](#)

© Copyright Eagle Tribune Publishing Company. All rights reserved.
100 Turnpike Street, North Andover, MA 01845 978-946-2000

[Community Newspaper Holdings, Inc.](#) • [CNHI Classified Advertising Network](#) • [CNHI News Service](#)

Associated Press content © 2006. All rights reserved. AP content may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Our site is powered by [Zope](#) and our [Internet Yellow Pages](#) site is powered by [PremierGuide](#).

Some parts of our site may require you to [download the Flash Player Plugin](#).

