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Sony Vegas Movie Studio 8 - PC

Does the latest version improve on the last?

by Stephen Patrick published on 28 February 2008

Home movies are slowly becoming all the rage but what turns a bunch of clips into an enjoyable experience is a good video-editing suite. The two market leaders are Adobe with its Premiere Elements and Sony with this, the eighth take on its Vegas Movie Studio series.

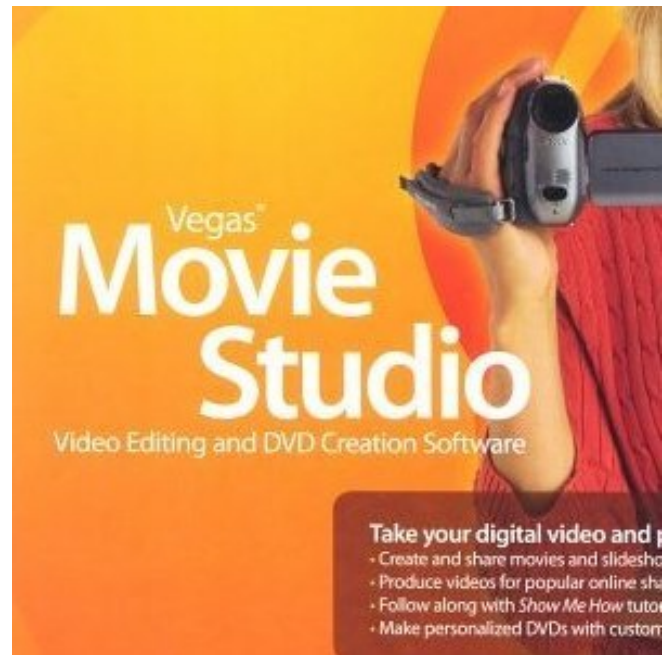
With even the most average of notebooks now being able to edit video without too much trouble, Vegas Movie Studio offers a "lite" version of what you'll find in the professional edition. More importantly, this beginner's suite is a good deal cheaper too.

However, Sony hasn't made any compromises for the first-time user. We found the installation process to be quick and easy but the same can't be said for the interface. Sony hasn't made any attempts to simplify the interface. Sure, there are plenty of features and it's packed with tools but where to begin?

Thankfully, there are 30 How To videos included that help you get at least started with the package but we'd have preferred a cleaner interface and to be guided into the package instead.

Like similar packages, it's broken down into three separate sections, capture, edit and share. Capturing footage is simple enough as you can either import direct from a camera, hard drive or disc. The suite also makes a good job of organising your digital content, including audio files if you want it to.

Editing is the meat of the suite and it follows the traditional timeline method of allowing you to drop clips into a timeline and then either cut or transitional effect into each clip. Once you get to grips with the basics, you can start to play with the 185 transition tools and well over 300 special effects that some bundled.



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One area we noticed that was surprisingly lacking is support for high-definition video. With the price of such camcorders falling, this is an oversight that limits the lifespan of this package. Especially considering it's already supported in the rival package from Adobe.

If you want to incorporate still images into your video clip, this is as easy as dragging and dropping it into the required place. If the image needs editing, you can do so before hand as there are now basic but comprehensive editing tools included.

Sound editing is a little basic, as you can only mix on four channels and the controls are simple, offering little more than volume sliders over the timeline itself.

Outputting your videos can be done using any of the 40 DVD Themes included, or you can develop your own using the Sony DVD Architect tools. You can output to DVD or to hard drives.

VERDICT

Sony Vegas Movie Studio 8 offers a wide array of tools to get to grips with and while it's a steep learning curve, once you understand the fundamentals you'll find of plenty of growth in the package.

However, we're just not convinced there are sufficient reasons for the first time user to use this package when there are easier suite on the market.

At a glance

What is it?

Video editing suite

Good

Powerful editing, plenty of effects

Bad

Complicated interface, lack of HD support

Verdict

It works exceedingly well but be ready for a steep learning curve as the interface isn't as slick as rival versions

Price £60

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10