

Capture Those Memories

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We will take a look at transforming those old picture albums, cassette tapes, and VHS tapes to digital and then on to a CD/DVD or even to an external hard drive.

Photos to digital

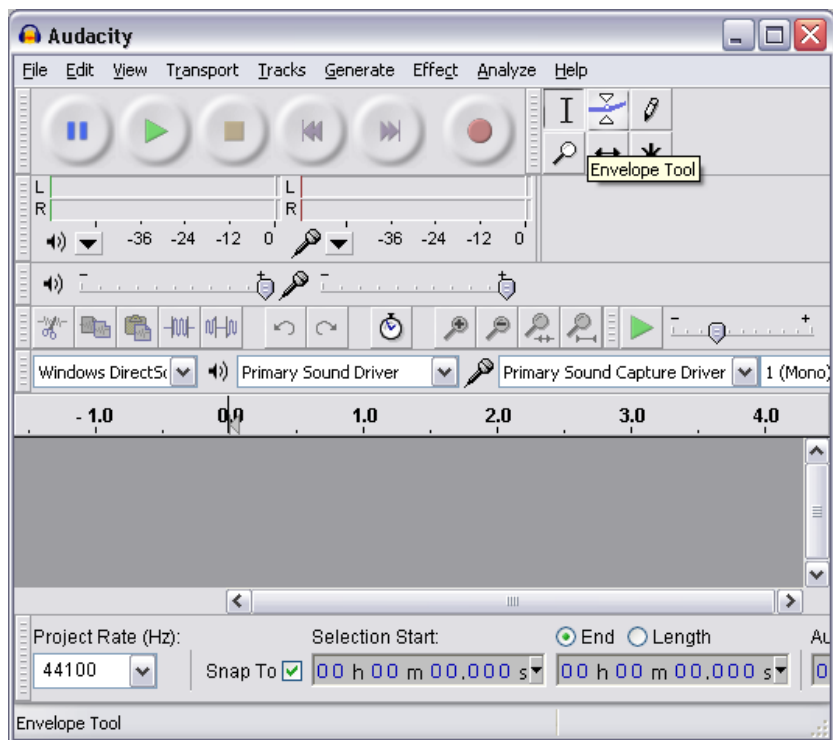
Use your digital camera and snap a picture of the picture. Allows you to go through a large number of pictures in a very short time. Do NOT have the flash turned on or you will get an image of the flash in the picture.

Transfer the images to your hard drive and use editing software to crop and otherwise clean up the pictures. Rename each picture so the name tells you what the picture is all about. You can use Picasa to add captions as well.

If you have slides that need conversion, project the slides on a screen and take pictures of them as well. Again, NO flash.

Cassette tapes to digital

Need a cassette player and a audio male to male cable. Connect one end to the earphone jack on the cassette player and the other end in the microphone jack on your computer. Download the Audacity application. When you run it you see a screen like this:



Click the RED button to start recording and then play on the cassette player. You will not hear

what is being recorded, but you will see it going across the display in the window. When finished click the Stop (square) button. You can then click Play (green arrow) to listen to what you have digitized. To save it on your computer click File > Export and save it to a location you can find later with an appropriate name.

Got an old 8-track? Or perhaps a reel to reel? Use the same method. The only difference is the device to read the old media.

Here is what a male to male cable looks like:



and a link to find it: <http://tinyurl.com/kz4qmff>

VHS tapes to digital

Same technique, different device. You need a VHS (or BetaMax) player to read the old tape. And you need a video capture device that goes between the player and the computer. I used an inexpensive one called "EASYCAP USB 2.0 Audio Video Capture Adapter". With it you can play the tape in the player and see the movie in the software that came with the capture device. You can capture images as individual pictures and/or capture the movie with sound on your computer.

It included a copy of Ulead VideoStudio 10 to capture the video and audio. I got it to work reading the tape and displaying the video and audio on my computer screen. Also could easily capture images off the movie, but when I tried to capture the entire movie I got an error message. Did not have time to get all the bugs worked out before class! Gotta work on it some more.

Here is what the \$8 capture device I purchased looks like:



and a link to find it: <http://tinyurl.com/mh8r7jk>

Getting them onto a CD or DVD

Insert a blank CD or DVD. Open My Computer and then open the CD for writing. Drag and drop the files from your computer to the CD. The resulting CD should work in any other computer. It may or may not work in your DVD player depending on the computer you use and the age of the DVD player. The newer devices should work fine.

When you drag the files to the CD explorer window they are not burned into the CD yet. When

you eject the CD the system pauses while it does the actual burning process. When finished the CD pops out so you can remove it a label it.

What about old super 8 movies?

Best method is to project them on a screen and set up a camcorder on a tripod and tape them. Not any other inexpensive ways I know of to do it.