

Roxio Creator 2009  
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**Roxio Creator 2009** is a suite of applications providing the tools for capturing, editing, burning, and archiving digital images, videos and music, and creating personalized audio recordings and slideshows to share digital images and professional looking movies from video clips.

**Installation** was simple, but it took 25 minutes. The first time I opened the program, the update manager indicated, that an update, Service Pack 1 released in October 2008 was available. I downloaded and installed the new version. (v1.1.110 SP1)

**Starting up**, the main application window, also called the Project Launcher, opens. On the left side of this window is a list of project categories: **Data-Copy, Video-Movies, Music-Audio, Photo,** and **Online**. When I selected one of the icons, the Project Window linked to the application and task assistant opened to enable me to complete the projects in that category.

### **Photo projects**

Using Roxio's *Media Import*, I transferred pictures from a camera memory stick and a USB flash drive. The program recognized both devices, and the transfer was fast. Unfortunately, importing images via scanner was more problematic. Roxio recognized the scanner only about half the time, and made my system crash the other times.

The *Enhance Multiple Photos Assistant* offers tools to complete very basic changes to multiple photos at once, like rotating, resizing, renaming, converting to other file types.

*PhotoSuite* is the image editing application in the suite. It is designed for making modifications, such as, cropping, rotating, removing red eye, and adjusting sharpness, saturation, brightness and contrast. I found that, the Touchup and the Clone Brush worked really well to smooth out wrinkles, and diminish blemishes, dust and scratches. In my opinion, the program is very basic, lacking some essentials, like selection, drawing tools, and layer support. The only ability to create some artistic projects, like collages, is to use the Mask/Cutout tool to eliminate the background, and/or, cutout people from one picture and place them into a different, more interesting background.

The *create* section of the photo project window has some good ideas for creativity. The *Photo Projects Assistant* offers templates to create scrapbook-like albums, calendars, collages, gift tags, cards and posters.

In spite of my first impression, these projects are not limited to the templates. I discovered that layouts created in *PhotoSuite* use clip art and other images located in the *Roxio Creator* Program Folder. They can be changed and built upon to create imaginative projects.

I tried the *Panorama Assistant* to stitch photos together into a panoramic picture. This process requires that photos be taken consecutively at the same location and same time with a 30% overlap. I obtained much better results when I manually aligned the photos before stitching. Manual alignment was difficult, because it's not possible to change the transparency of the images at the overlapping areas.

*Printing* photos from *Roxio Creator 2009* was easy and productive. The program

recognized all printers connected to the computer without any problem. The print setting dialog box has a good selection of paper sizes and printing layouts, including panorama, multiple photos per page and contact sheets. I printed several letter size layouts for instant photo album pages.

### **Music-Audio projects**

*Roxio Creator 2009* imports music and audio into your computer by *Ripping*, *Capturing audio from your sound card* and *Digitizing LP's and tapes*.

My first audio project was to rip and transfer an audio CD to an mp3 player. Roxio offers two options: *Rip* and *Rip-Advanced*. I selected the *Rip* command first, but it didn't work. Not only the program, but my whole system crashed. I had to do a complete reboot. I tried it three times, and the same thing happened each time. Next, I selected the *Rip-Advanced* command, and successfully completed the task.

My second project was to digitize my LP and audio cassette tape collection. The hardest part of this task was to figure out and find the right kind of cables to connect the source devices to the computer. My solution had two steps:

1. Connect the record player line-out to the tape deck line-in jack via RCA cable;
2. Connect the tape deck line-out to the computer sound card line-in jack via RCA to 3.5 mm Stereo Mini (Y cable)

Once the connections were established, I opened Roxio's *LP and Tape Assistant* to convert analog audio to digital format.

In the *LP and Tape Assistant* window, I could set the file format (iPod, mp3, wma or .wav), and the location of the new audio file on the hard drive. Next, for unattended recording, I set the *recording time* a few minutes longer than the length of my record or tape so the recording would stop when it reached the end. The other important setting is to *Enable auto pause*. The recording will pause if silence is detected for the amount of time specified. This takes care of track separation, since there is usually a few seconds silence between songs.

After recording is finished, the program offers tools to add *Tags* for all tracks and improve sound quality with *clean*, *enhance*, *equalizer* commands, or for further editing, jump over to the *Sound Editor*. Finally, the audio file or individual tracks can be exported to your hard drive, or burned to an audio CD. This whole process worked very smoothly, and I was pleased with the results. I created a party disk using the *Beatmatching* tool to arrange tunes according to tempo for smooth transition between each song.

### **Video Projects**

I have imported video clips with *Roxio's Media Import* from a camcorder, a DVD disk, and from TV, via my video capture card, without any problem. I also used the *Plug&Burn* feature, (which captures video from the camera directly to a disk) to create a backup disk from my raw video footage.

So far, I have imported and edited images, music and video clips. I was ready to create some multimedia projects.

This was a very difficult, confusing process with more unexplained system crashes. At the same time, I had to figure out which application to use for a specific project. *Roxio Creator 2009* has too many applications doing the same tasks, with different levels of

complexity. For example: What should I use to produce a movie, *MyDVD EXPRESS* or *MyDVD*? Roxio says, I could make a movie faster with *MyDVD EXPRESS*. I say, make it, burn it and forget it, because the project can't be saved for future editing. At best, I could save the disk image, so another copy could be burned, if needed. I wouldn't use this program again, I would just start with the more comprehensive *MyDVD* program..

Another case in point is *Slideshow Assistant* versus *VideoWave*. I could start putting my show together in *Slideshow Assistant*, but if I wanted a better show, I needed to finish it in *VideoWave*, the video editing application.

Then there is *CineMagic* It took me a long time to figure out what it is, and what it does? The way I see it, *CineMagic* is an automatic movie maker. It is not a standalone application, and is only accessible through *MyDVD* and *VideoWave*. The movie it makes can be only a modular element of the production, and the native sound of the imported video clip is stripped down. Do I need it? I am not sure if it gives me anything special, or is just another application in the suite.

It is also confusing that *Roxio Creator 2009* uses two different sound editors. If I worked on an audio project, the available editor was the *SoundEditor*. In *VideoWave*, and also in *MyDVD* I had to use the *AudioEditor*. I don't know yet, if one is better than the other? They seemingly perform the same processes with same result. I know, however, that I can't edit audio in a video clip with the *SoundEditor*. One more application involving sound is *SmartSound*, a music creation application hidden away in the Add Background Audio Dialog box. I don't know how it works, because the system crashed every time I tried to start it.

Numerous reboots later, I reached my goal. I completed a multimedia project. But I had to remember to avoid the problem applications and save the project often. In *VideoWave* I created a *SlideShow* from my images, edited video clips, and used my own recorded music as the background audio. I even found an instance to use a *CineMagic* movie. In *MyDVD*, I put the production together, added chapter marks and created a menu. Although, I had some good results, I still couldn't produce a satisfactory DVD. Besides all the crashes, I had some unsolved issues with my burner. I could not burn a DVD from the *MyDVD* application. My burner is good, because it works with other programs.

**Sources for help.** I am not very experienced in sound or video editing and help was essential for me, but the help that Roxio offered was not adequate. The tutorials are not detailed enough, and I could not play the How-to videos, although I had the required Flash Player. I had to go online many times to search for an explanation to solve my problem.

## **Conclusion**

The greatest attraction of *Roxio Creator 2009* is the convenience of having many media creation tools accessible in one place. Besides the appealing interface, Roxio offers so many applications to do a job that you will likely have a favorite and a least favorite one. Go ahead, experiment with *Creator 2009*. It would help if the company would make its program more reliable, but you will have lots of fun anyway.

**Price:**

The company offers *Roxio Creator 2009* for \$79.99, after a \$20.00 upgrade mail-in rebate. Best deal online at dell.com is \$54.99. Amazon.com list price is \$99.99, sale price is \$74.99. Buy.com: Price after rebate is \$57.99

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**Support tools**

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**System Requirements**

- Microsoft® Windows Vista™ Home Basic, Windows® XP SP2 (32- or 64-bit), 1GHZ processor and 512 MB RAM. 1024x768 Direct X 9 compatible graphics card with at least 16-bit color setting, sound card, DVD-ROM drive. - Hard drive with at least 3 GB free space for installation. - Windows Media Player 10. - Internet Explorer 7.
- For video capture: OHCI compliant IEEE 1394 FireWire card (for use with DV camera) or analog video capture device.
- Blu-ray authoring requires an additional High-Def/Blue-ray disk Plug-In which can be purchased at [www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com)