

Video Streamer

Description

Many of us work with video often. Most of us see and watch video daily. Video, the electronic moving pictures and sounds that carry movies, sports, music, and news to us every day, is usually viewed full-screen and in full motion. It is a continual stream of images and the information they carry that incessantly flows into and out of our minds. New images are quickly displaced by even newer ones, often inducing a sensation of deluge without lending themselves to full comprehension.

The Video Streamer serves many purposes, ranging from a utility to review and select segments of video for recombination in editing and effects systems, to a dynamic painting of a moving picture stream. It provides alternative ways for one to appreciate the rhythm of colors and motions embedded within video.

The Video Streamer works in two simple modes: flowing for capture, and paused for review. When the Streamer is flowing, the video source, which can come from broadcast, from a camera, or from videotape, is arranged as a three dimensional solid, stacking the picture frames in a block, much like the pages in a flip book. As new frames enter, they push the older frames towards the upper left of the display, further away in distance and in time. The sides of this block, formed by the edges of hundreds of video frames, reveal a number of temporal attributes of the stream. Shot boundaries and editing rhythm are clearly visible along the sides of the block, as are many camera motions.

By pausing the Streamer, the user can review the contents of the block of frames. Using a mouse or a stylus, individual frames are selected for display by placing the pointer over the edges of those frames in the extrusion block. Moving the cursor quickly across many frames displays those frames in motion, similar to thumbing through a flip book. As you stroke across each frame edge in the Streamer block, it's image appears in the viewer and its accompanying sound is played. Some people liken this to "scratch" in hip-hop music, only here you are scratching across both pictures and sound.

The most compelling exhibit form of the Streamer is to feed it with live imagery of visitors. People find it fascinating to sway in front of the camera and create swirling images of themselves as the Streamer flows. Then, by pausing the flow and stroking across the captured imagery, visitors revel in the way a series of distinct still images can create the illusion of motion, especially when their stroking the Streamer volume is what directly induces that motion.

The Streamer also presents an alternative way to view highly polished video. Video, especially television, is not normally very prone to review and analysis. It is barely convenient to record half hour shows, much less ten second clips. The Streamer provides a way to stop the constant flow of broadcast television just long enough to really review it, and then move on.