

technology today

By Dr. Alan J. Pierce
pierceaj@optonline.net

Saving Precious Video Moments

Many technologists and futurists fear that an archeologist working far into our future will one day find a stash of recordings that might have been produced toward the end of the 20th or beginning of the 21st century. The significance of these tapes will be discernable from the pen or typed inscription on the box. However, the equipment necessary to view the tapes will no longer exist.

Many fear our methods of communication today are less transferable to the future than the messages that were once left by our ancient ancestors on stone tablets. So much of our current recorded messages are hardware specific that they can't be unencoded if the hardware ceases to exist.

Keeping the hardware in pristine condition isn't the answer since the medium that is used to make these recordings has a limited lifespan of perhaps five but not much more than seven years. Your current precious moments are sentenced to death if you don't take the time to save them.

To save your video moments you need more of a plan than a specific piece of hardware. Your plan needs to take into account that every few years new hardware and recording technologies will usurp current technologies. On the hardware side of the equation you must be prepared to transfer your precious

moments from one recording medium to another as technology evolves.

Remember the clock is ticking on all of your current recordings so you can't wait for new



technological breakthroughs before you start to re-record your old video tapes to DVDs. When I first wrote about transferring video to DVD in *TechDirections* back in 2003 (a digital copy of this print magazine column can be found at www.techtoday.us) there weren't many products on the market dedicated to performing this type of transfer.

Today you have choices and if you are just starting to research

products that you can use for the transfer, you should look at available products at Honestech (www.honestech.com), ADS Tech (<http://www.adstech.com>), Pinnacle Systems (www.pinnaclesys.com), and Magix (<http://site.magix.net>). You might want to purchase a product that can do more than just transfer your old video tapes onto DVD's. You will find at these websites hardware software combinations that can record your old videos and also turn your computer into a HDTV and a digital video recorder where you can time and place your TV viewing.

If you are planning on purchasing a new computer that will be running Microsoft's Vista OS you should definitely make certain that your purchase is Vista compatible. Since older CDs and DVDs aren't much safer than your video tapes you should also plan on duplicating them to fresh blank disks every few years. These disks can be duplicated rather quickly using software such as Sonic's Record Now which probably came pre-installed on your computer.

Dr. Alan J. Pierce is co-author of Introduction to Technology Glencoe McGraw-Hill 2005 and a TechDirections Magazine Columnist. Visit www.techtoday.us for past columns and resources.