

Converting VHS Tapes and DVD's

By April Owens

Brand Name is ION

Product Name Video2PCHD

*This product has been discontinued and was replaced with Video Archiver and Video 2 SD

Conversion Software

ION uses Power Director with their VHS/DVD Conversion products. I have not purchased the upgrade for Power Director. When you download the software it will give you an older version of Power Director. In order for it to work correctly you have to have a sign-in which you will see at the top right hand corner.

How It Works:

I attach the cords to the VCR player and the computer

I pull up Power Director

I make sure that the VCR tape is rewound

I hit the red circular button on Power Director

I count to 3 and then hit play on the VCR player

I set my cell phone timer for 2 hours and walk away

Sometimes the conversion takes more than 2 hours and there are other times when the conversion only took an hour.

Once Converted

If there are multiple clips on the VHS Tape I start breaking the clips down.

If there are different clips but they go with the same event I keep them together.

The only time video clips are separated is if they are different events.

All videos will be saved onto an external hard drive that are for the video clips only.

File Names

I always put a year first if there is one and then what the video is about. If there is more than one video with the same name I put a letter or number after it.

Example: Thelma's 75th Birthday a, Thelma's 75th Birthday b and Thelma's 75th Birthday c.

This is a great example because as I was converting my families VHS Tapes I came across a few of Thelma's 75th Birthday Party.

This tells me a few things 1) I have multiple videos to put together to make 1 video **OR** edit them individually and upload the videos onto my YouTube Channel separately with a note in the title and description to differentiate the 3 videos.

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Continuation

Editing Videos

I do my best to keep the videos as natural as possible.

I keep the snow/static in the clip if you can hear what is being said.

I take the snow/static out of the beginning or end of the clip or if it is really obnoxious.

Younger generations have not experienced some of this and they really find it interesting to watch these videos.

I have videos that the static/snow is really strong and you can see the clip as well but the static/snow is louder than the people talking. This will require an editing software such as Adobe Premiere Pro will help with this type of issue.

Older Computers

I converted my Great Aunt's VHS tapes and I went to her house and pulled them up on her computer only to see that her computer will not accept MPEG videos. Luckily I had 1 video in an AVI format and it worked on her computer so I went home and converted all of her videos to AVI so they could watch the home movies I had converted for her and her family. AVI files are larger than MPEG files.

Splicing VHS Tapes

If your VHS tape needs splicing in order for you to convert it. You can take it to Video Horizons and they will help you with this.

YouTube

I specifically have an external hard drive just for the videos that I have converted. All videos will eventually be put onto my YouTube Channel.

Main Screen – All unedited videos will be the first thing you see. All file names if possible start with a year. If an unedited video is in a folder that means it will need more attention, such as: copyright, snow/static, and censoring.

Ready For YouTube – These videos are edited and waiting to be put on my YouTube Channel. All videos will be scheduled to air at 8am EST and one video will go live each day. It gets really confusing when you put a large number of videos onto your YouTube Channel waiting to go live so I only do about 10 at a time.

Live on YouTube – This stores all videos that are live or going live on YouTube.

EPSON V600

Converting Slides, Pictures, Negatives and Documents

The Epson V600 is created to digitalize slides, scans, pictures, negatives and documents.

In order for the Epson Scanner Software to come up you have to have the scanner plugged into the computer and turned on.

The scanner will scan up to a legal size piece of paper. Anything larger you will need to scan it elsewhere. I understand that Slover Library in Norfolk, VA has a larger scanner. This may be a great option for the larger items that need to be scanned.

If you are a resident of Virginia you can get a library card at any library in Virginia.

Settings on the Main Screen – Negatives and Slides vs Pictures and Documents

The Settings for negatives and slides are different than the settings to scan pictures and documents. When you use the attachments you have to take the top of the inside of the scanner off and change the settings to Film.

Settings on the Main Screen - Color Restoration

There are a number of options to help improve the image that you are trying to digitalize. Any photos or slides that are brown or green or have a discolored look to them I will click on the box that says Color Restoration to see if the image will improve. This is the only option I use when improving a slide, document, picture or negative.

DPI Settings

DPI means Dot Per Inch. The number you choose will determine the quality of the image. The larger the dpi the larger the file size will be. The majority of the images I scan are up to 2500 dpi. If I am putting two images together to make 1 image I will bring the dpi down so when I combine the two files I don't have a really large file.

*The reason I say this is because anything I digitalize is going into a Private Facebook Group or on Ancestry's website. Websites have limits on downloading the size of the images. If the file size is too large you may not be able to download it.

**If you're putting any images that you digitalized into a Private Facebook Group Photo Album please understand that you cannot put a PDF File into a Facebook Photo Album. If it is important to you to keep everything together you will need to convert the PDF file to JPG.

I use a website <http://pdf2jpg.net/> to complete this task.

Once your item is on the glass of the scanner you want to close the lid and click on the Preview Button.

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Converting Slides, Pictures, Negatives and Documents

Preview Button Screen

The Preview Screen is an amazing screen because you get to see what the image looks like and if you need to do anything.

*When digitalizing multiple photos at the same time you will need to create a square over each photo. Once everything is the way you want it you're going to have to click the ALL button in the upper left hand corner so all of the items will be scanned together. If you don't do this then only one item that you have selected will be scanned.

**There will be times when you're resetting the photo/document on the scanner many times to get it to be straight enough so you can scan the image

***I scan each slide separately because I have trusted the scanner only to have the frame of the slide in the picture or people's heads cut off. To ensure that this does not happen I scan the slide and click the zoom button in the upper left hand corner and then set my border to what will be scanned.

You can bring your image in but please keep in mind how much of the image is brought in because the more you bring the image in the more pixelated the photo will be. When the majority of the image is sky or ground I will bring those images in a little so the people are brought forward.

Once the scanned image is in my folder I will open the file to see if the image looks fine or is pixelated. I don't open the scanner lid for this reason in case I need to reshape the item being scanned. Sometimes I will look at the file size to see if changing the dpi will help as well.

Once everything is well with the Preview Screen you click the Scan Button and another screen will pop up with more settings.

The Second Screen with Settings

You decide where your scanned image will be saved. All of my scanned images are saved to a thumb drive named Projects.

File Name – REALLY IMPORTANT

The file name will begin with img plus 3 digits.

When the file name img999 is done it will roll over to img000 and start all over again.

***Before you start scanning you need to make sure that the folder you're going to be scanning your photos into does not have any files with img at the beginning because they will be deleted and replaced with the image you just scanned, if both what your scanning and the existing file in your folder, have the same file name.

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Converting Slides, Pictures, Negatives and Documents

When I finish up scanning the group of images I then go through them, change the file name if need be and transfer them to their permanent location. That ensures that nothing will be deleted and my next group of images to be scanned will not delete existing images.

You will hit Scan on this screen as well and then allow the image to be scanned and show up in the designated file you chose.

Renaming Your Files

This is something that you do once you're done scanning. Here are some tips and tricks to help you.

Slides – I change the digits after the img to reflect a running total. This helps with each slide having its own number so I can use OneNote for notes on a specific slide or if I need to look for a specific slide.

Pictures – The file names for pictures varies. I rarely keep the img file name. I use letters or numbers when it comes to pictures with the same file name. Example: Fred Humphrey 1, Fred Humphrey 2 and so forth. I always put the year first for the file name if there is one. If there is writing on the back of the photo I type exactly what is on the back of the photo and that is the file name.

Documents – All documents are renamed with a D at the front. D means document. Example: D Fred Humphrey Diploma. If I keep all of the documents together it is easier to find them then not. Some of my ancestors have hundreds of images like my Great Grandfather Fred Humphrey and putting a D helps keep these documents together to make it easier to find what I am looking for.

Newspapers – NA is at the beginning of each file name for Newspaper Articles, Example: NA Fred Humphrey Colorado Greeley Tribune February 13, 1965. The newspaper articles are kept together with NA at the beginning to help make it easier in searching for a specific article.

Tips and Tricks

Slides

You want the shiny side of the slide down and the side with the sketching facing up.

This will ensure that the slides are not backwards.

The slides that I convert get their own folder and that folder goes into the person's file that the slides belong to.

I purchased a blower off of eBay (XPOWER Airrow Pro Multi-Use Electric Computer Duster) to help clean up the slides before I scanned them. This really helped a lot. I even use the blower to keep my glass clean on my Epson scanner.

Negatives

I try to find a letter or number in the negative to help me figure out if the picture is backwards or not.

If I can't find a number or letter I try to find something on the negative to help guide me to make sure I am not scanning the picture backwards.

If I cannot figure it out I scan it backwards and forwards and ask the person if they can tell which one is backwards so I can delete those files.

Photos

Photos that I will scan: You can tell who is who, the photo is not blurry, and the photo compliments everyone.

Photos that I will not scan: damage on the photo, the people are too far back, the photo is blurry, too busy, or not complimenting the people in the photo.

Make the photo count. I understand if this is the only photo you have of a specific ancestor. Then scan it but when you have hundreds of photos be more mindful of what you scan. I have no intention of having hundreds of photos in a person's file because I wanted to scan every single photo. That will make it harder when I have to go into their folder to search for something.

Documents

I just scanned a 50 page biography that my Great Great Grandfather Augustus Reed Humphrey Jr put together. That is a lot of pages and I don't want this to get all mixed up in his folder so I created a folder and named it Grandpa Gus' Life and each file Says Grandpa Gus' Life plus the Page Number. I made sure that the file was put in his folder with all of his other files. This helps keep everything together and it doesn't get intertwined with everything else in his folder.

How I Researched Conversion Kits

Trying to find what will work best for you is not always as easy as it sounds. I am learning as I go.

Remember what works for you may not work for someone else. Everyone is on a different foundation.

Facebook Groups

Technology for Genealogy

Technology Genealogy! Just Ask!

Other Sources

Amazon Reviews

Basic Google Search

Products website

Video Horizons

They are by Witchduck Road where the church and 264 are.

The address is 5029 Corporate Woods Drive, Suite 130.

Their phone number is 757-464-6262

Their website is www.videohorizonsmedia.com

Video Horizons has spliced a VHS tape and converted a MOV DVD for me because my conversion software would not recognize the MOV file.

Other

Don't make room for regrets down the road. While your family is here think about what you may regret when they are gone. Take those photos, make those memories, ask those questions.

You're never going to be able to get enough information from your family. Work on what pops into your mind as it appears. Write things down if need be.

Clean out a closet and store VHS tapes, Slides, 8mm, Super 8 and whatever else you convert. There have been times when I have had to go back and redo something. It was really easy when I could pull it out of the guest bedroom closet and deal with the situation verses borrowing that specific item again to redo was harder.

There are a few things that I will not be able to convert again because the family member lives out of state. This will remind you why you need to have a back-up.

When it came to technology I make mistakes or deal with situations and as I learn I make corrections or deal with the situation.

There are times when I will walk away (short and long term) from a task to give myself a chance to think about it and a lot of times when I returned I had a much better outcome.

I have come such a long ways BUT I still have so much to learn. This is true in every aspect of life so don't get stressed out or accumulate more gray hairs over this. Everything is going to work out in the end.

Selling Your Conversion Software

If you know you're done and don't want to keep the product. Put it on eBay and sell it.

Expect Great Surprises

As family gives you their stuff to digitalize you're going to be surprised at what you're receiving. I had 1 aunt who gave me a storage Rubbermaid container filled with documents and photos. I never know what to expect and I am so thankful for what I can get from my family.