KICKING the TIRES

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PRODUCT: CUBEMOVIE V1.5
COMPANY: BENOÎT JOOSSEN
<HOMEPAGE.MAC.COM/GETCLOCKWORKS/
CUBEMOVIE>
REQUIREMENTS: MAC OS X.2.x OR LATER
PRICE: (US) $8.00
TEST RIG: POWERMAC G4/DP 1.42GHZ/
1 GB RAM
REVIEW DATE: 01 JULY 2004

iMovies. You love making them and hopefully your friends are thankful for their brevity. (You are cutting out the deadwood, aren't you?)

You've amazed them with all your transitions and the ever popular 'Ken Burns Effect.' In fact, they're ready to string you up if you use that effect one more time on a still photograph. But what else can you do with your stills and stay within budget? Aaaah ... CubeMovie.

"CubeMovie is an easy-to-use and affordable shareware that can create lots of jaw-dropping movies. It is specially designed to integrate into your iMovie project.

Choose 6 pictures and apply them to the faces of a Cube. Rotate the cube, zoom it in and out, and record the moves. Then export the result as a QuickTime movie."

OK. Let's see if I can wake-up my viewers.

The Good

"Drag this icon ... yadda, yadda, yadda." The controls in the CM pane are laid out very interestingly. Where your pictures will be displayed are laid out on a 'blow up' diagram, which is very helpful. You can pick your international format (NTSC or PAL) for your output. You can then pick your DV format (DV, DVCPRO or DVCPRO50). Plus you have audio settings that you can pick from. (I'm not sure what these are for as I haven't found any explanations as how or why audio would be involved.)

CM comes bundled with two other pieces of shareware – the Crop Tool and the Headline Tool, either of which can be used separately or combined with CubeMovie. The Crop Tool is primarily used to square your chosen photo to meet CM's requirements. The Headline Tool gives you several ways to place pictures within your fonts to give them interesting textures.

(NOTE: As I am using a Trial version, the Headline Tool is not operational, so I can't comment on it's performance. My Bad: I was sent a serial code but I lost it. My apologies to BJ.)

The Bad

Not much in the way of Help here. If you click the CubeMovie's Help button, you're presented with a drawer that takes you through the process sep-by-step. And as thorough and precise as it is, if something should go wrong, you're on your own.

The Ugly

You can't call up the other tools windows once you have closed them. I had to quit the CubeMovie and relaunch it to reopen those tools. Needless to say, this brings your workflow and creativity to a grinding halt.

The Close

There are several sites that are dedicated to helping you make your iMovie experience more flexible. And no doubt you can find this feature in some packages. But here you can buy the one function separately. And I have to say that it renders a very smooth looking movie.

Unfortunately, even at this low price, I wouldn't recommend this to either a neophyte or someone who lacks patience. But if you don't fit under either of these categories, download the trial.

And use the 'Ken Burns Effect' a little less. Please?

Rating: 7 out of 10

Pull Quote: "Tabbed browsing is starting to look old-fashioned already."