

Task: to collate some film clips for a film round for the school quiz.

The scenario being to take 30 second clips from each of ten films and ask a question about each clip. How might you obtain , sequence, and present these

Try the Internet first ...

I thought the most straightforward approach would be a web-based solution so, visiting Youtube, finding some clips that approximated to what I needed, and observing that you can get code to embed in a page, I thought a blog –based approach would work. The result was <http://schoolsquiz.blogspot.com/>

The following flaws were identified with this approach:

- The school didn't have a fixed internet connection where the quiz was due to take place, and wireless access would have proved too unreliable
- The quality of the clips wasn't always that great, particularly when enlarged to fill a hall.
- The clips often contained the answer, eg. the film or actor's name, and couldn't be edited (not downloadable; don't know how one might capture a videostream for editing). Clips are downloadable from <http://www.bittorrent.com/> but it doesn't have the content of Youtube.
- Finally, using web-based content was regarded as potentially too unreliable. Although I could have taken DR measures to cover some eventualities (e.g. two Blogger sites), this finally killed the approach

Now try without the PC ...

Just to see copy protection in action, I connected my DVD player to my DVD recorder. Lo and behold, on trying to record from the input to which the DVD was connected, the screen message "Cannot copy from source" appeared.

I assembled a series of clips onto Video tape via the VCR instead, so that we could at least have a run-through to agree the suitability of the clips.

Back to the PC ...

Having done the equivalent for music (see ...) I assumed assembling video clips would be much the same. Wrong! Much harder!

For a start, some video decryption software is required to extract the video files. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DVD_Decrypter regarding the legality of this. This typically takes 50 minutes per film on the PC setup I have, and the whole film has to be extracted before you can edit out what you want.

I then used Nero v7 Recode (see <http://www.nero.com> for a free trial 30-day download) to import each film, select, and record (burn) each extract required. This was fine in that the picture preview worked well, BUT no sound was presented, so a better editor is required if you wish to be more precise with your extract. Creating a Nero Vision project, I assembled the clips into a single DVD video.

Presentation tips:

When you create such a DVD you are not copying the whole DVD so you do not get the options menu to select language/ soundtrack type, subtitles on/off etc. It therefore seemed best to assemble these as a project with a title for each. However, producing such a menu doesn't guarantee that the player will stop after each title. In fact the opposite seems to be the case – one title plays after another all the way through. Come the day of the quiz, we had to manually pause then play each separate title, sometimes sadly displaying the first frame of the subsequent clip before we stopped.

TOP TIP: turn off all of the options not required when recording your clips. And test the recorded disk in the precise player (with the precise DVD playing program, if using a PC) to see exactly how the disk plays before you present it. AND with the connection to the projector in place if that's how you're presenting.