

converting video files on PC

We have Handbrake on PCs, but the current version has some limitations when used on the PC platform: 1) Its performance is not stable; it crashes quite a lot; 2) it cannot convert files to .wmv; 3) although it can convert a file to .avi, we have to be very careful with the codecs; otherwise, it won't play unless extra codecs are installed, and the output file is often huge; 4) it has difficulty converting .flv (format used by YouTube and other on-line video) to formats other than .avi.

WinFF is able to conquer all these problems, and it works with .vob (for DVDs) as well. The process is fast, and it allows batch processing. WinFF (http://winff.org/html/index_html), like Handbrake on PC, cannot handle copyright protected DVD, though.

With that said, **if we want to convert the whole video file to another format (esp. .avi or .wmv) when working on PC**, the workflow is as follows:

Preparation (for on-line video)

- Download the online video (.flv) from YouTube (or other websites) with the Firefox add-on, DownloadHelp (<http://www.downloadhelper.net/>).

Processing

- Use WinFF (http://winff.org/html/index_html) to convert the files. If the output files are .avi or .wmv, they can be edited in Windows Movie Maker, or used for PPT on PC.

If we only want a small portion of an on-line video or a DVD when working on PC, the workflow is as follows.

Preparation (for on-line video)

- Download the online video (.flv) from YouTube (or other websites) with the Firefox add-on, DownloadHelp (<http://www.downloadhelper.net/>).

Processing

- Use MPEG Streamclip (<http://www.squared5.com/>) to extract the portion we want.
- If MPEG Streamclip refuses to cooperate (like asking for extra codecs), either find out and download the codecs or just use WinFF (http://winff.org/html/index_html) to convert the whole file first, and then trim down the file in Windows Movie Maker or other software.

The instructions above apply to both support people and end-users (instructors, TAs, and students). End-users can do the processing themselves if they prefer to. And everything is free =)

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