

CANOPUS IMAGINATE 2.0

by Paul Brett

If you can't afford a Camcorder and the editing suite to go with it, here's a great piece of software that will enable you to produce a professional looking promo to upload onto the net, using just still photographs. It's conceived by Canopus and it's called Imagine.

Apart from user compilations, it also has a series of pre-recorded frames that you can just insert your own photos and text into, run a music track underneath and it will automatically make you a mini movie. It will then convert the master file into an up loadable format for just about any situation. It's very easy to use and some of the effects are just superb. I have used photographic sequences from this program to insert a mini section into my DVD's. Sometimes, using stills can have a better impact than using live shots. If you mix the two together, it can provide an interesting mix within say a half hour production. This system also works very well with a narrative underlay. You can also make up your own scenes using the Storyboard.

Basically, the overview says it's a still - image, animation software that brings new dimensions to productions by transforming still images and photographs into movies.

That's just about as accurate a description as you can get. The Scene Wizard and Storyboard mode can help create compositions in minutes with an intuitive interface that features realtime preview and detailed key framing options for fine-tuning any animated sequence. Imagine 2.0 projects can include music, combine with other Imagine projects and be exported to video formats that are ready for video editing or Video /CDDVD authoring. From the manufacturer's description, here's what this little maestro can do with some pics of the interface.



Imagine 2.0's main timeline interface

Features

Pan, zoom, rotate and skew high-resolution stills in 3D.

Save projects as video clips for easy integration with video editing software.

High-quality image scaling retains sharp, precise photo details.

Plug-in support for Canopus EDIUS, Canopus Edit, Canopus Let's EDIT and Adobe® Premiere® (6.x or Pro)

New Features in Imagine 2

Smart wizards and ready-to-use templates for

simplified project configuration.

Multiple image support and easy set up of montages using the Imagine Storyboard.

Audio import support to add narration or music to any project.

Keyframable Blur filter for realistic camera effects.

Anchor and Spline controls ensure precise camera positioning for intricate motion sequences

Create with Ease – The Imagine 2.0 Wizard Imagine 2.0 can boost production workflow with the scene wizard feature. Creating sweeping cinematic effects for still images is now as easy as answering a set of simple questions regarding camera movements. Upon completion of the wizard, editors can further adjust any camera settings to create a specific effect.



Easy project creation with Imagine 2.0's wizard

Scene Templates and the Storyboard Feature

With the storyboard feature; editors can import multiple images into a new project to easily create montages, slideshows and presentations. Images placed into the storyboard can be connected with simple, adjustable dissolves for a clean, professional look. Simply drag-and-drop one of Imagine 2.0's preset motion sequence templates onto each imported image for even faster project creation. Each image can have further individually customized camera movements, effects and lengths if desired. Imagine 2.0 features over 190 templates to choose from with the ability to save any new custom templates created by the user.

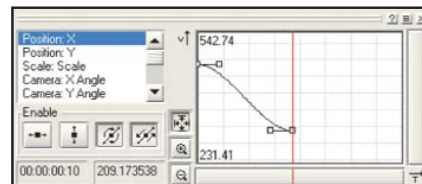


Drag-and-drop multiple images to create a storyboard



Choose from over 190 camera motion templates

Professional Camera Tools and Keyframing With its intuitive interface, editors can easily adjust the camera's size, rotation and 2D/3D positioning within the main interface window, or use specific measurements within the Configuration Window. Imagine 2.0's high-quality scaling functions produce incredibly detailed images when zooming in on high-resolution stills, retaining information normally lost with other image pan/zoom software.

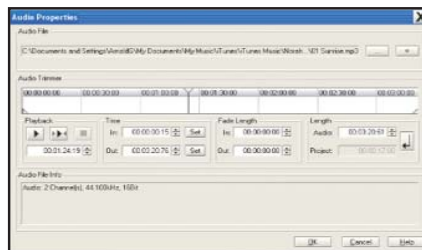


Make precise adjustments to spline paths

Imagine 2.0's timeline interface allows each aspect of a sequence to be individually keyframed for precise camera movement and timing. The Spline Editor window allows editors to carefully control ease in/ease out properties of each camera movement.

Audio File Support

Import music soundtracks or add narration to a completed sequence for that extra touch. Imagine 2.0's Audio Trimmer has controls to set In/Out points, add fades and adjust the project length to match the length of an audio clip. Imagine 2.0 supports all popular audio files, including WAV and MP3.



Import any sound file to accompany projects

Export Options and NLE Plug-in Support

Completed Imagine 2.0 projects can be exported to a number of different video formats for video editing, emailing and Web streaming. Imagine 2.0 can make use of additional video codecs that may be installed on the same system, such as DivX® or Canopus DV.

Imagine 2.0 plugs into EDIUS and Adobe Premiere allowing editors to create and import Imagine projects directly from the editing software. When a project is imported into either of these applications, alpha channels of any images within the project are preserved, giving the editor the ability to create professional-looking title sequences and compositions.

You can pick Imagine 2.0 up for around the £130 mark, which is cheap for what it does and is a great way of promoting your projects, whether music, art, photographs, hotels, restaurants, or whatever you choose to create from your stills. All Imagine needs is your imagination.