

Creating a DVD using iDVD on a Mac

PLEASE NOTE: The Texas Archive of the Moving Image (TAMI) provides this tutorial as a courtesy to its participants. TAMI cannot offer support for DVD creation beyond this simple tutorial. We urge anyone who, after using this tutorial, still has problems to contact family members, friends, or manufacturers (computers or software) for further help.

What you will need:



iDVD

A copy of iDVD installed on your computer. This is free software that comes with most Apple computers as a part of the iLife suite. To see if you have this program installed on your computer, look through the “Applications” folder of your computer. You should see the program listed somewhere there. If you cannot find it, you can do a search in that same “Finder” window. Some of the newer Mac computers do not have iDVD installed – contact Apple if you do not have this software.



A DVD drive. The vast majority of modern desktop and laptop computers come with a drive capable of DVD burning already installed. If you do not have one, you can either purchase one to install into your computer, or get one that installs externally via a USB cable. Note that there are some reports of iDVD not recognizing external burners. Be sure to talk to Apple or do thorough research before buying an external DVD burner.



Blank DVDs. How many you will need depends on how much video you have. There are many brands of blank DVDs you can buy and you can read reviews of which are the best. Additionally, there are single and dual layer DVDs. The difference between these is how much video they can hold: The dual layer DVDs hold twice as much video, but they are considerably more expensive. At TAMI we use single layer DVD-R disks and have not had reports of problems with them out of the thousands we have made. You should also be sure to buy blank DVDs that are compatible with your DVD burner. The types of DVDs that are compatible with your burner should be listed in the manual that comes with it, or on the front panel of the drive itself.

The following steps are to help you build your own DVD with menus using iDVD software.

Step 1: Connect your external hard drive to the computer



Once your drive has connected to your computer, it should show up on the desktop. Double click on the drive icon to open it, then navigate to the “TAMI Transfers” folder so that your individual video files are listed in the pane to the right in the Finder.

Move the Finder with your list of files to the side of the screen. You will need to be able to access it in order to place files in your DVD.

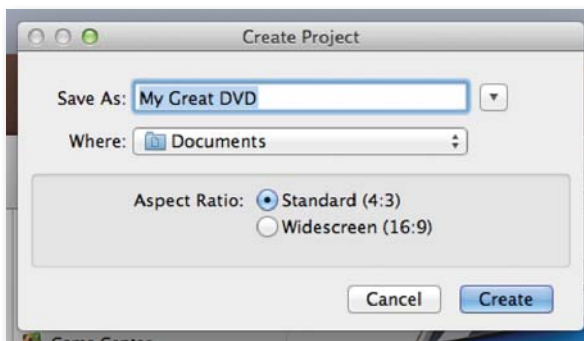
Step 2: Launch iDVD and open a new DVD file

After launching the program (see above for help finding it if you don't know where it is), you will be given a welcome screen. Select “Create a new Project.”

You can name the project whatever you like (e.g. Home Movies Disk 1) and save it in a place that is convenient for you to find.



The iDVD welcome screen



The “Create Project” dialog box

When creating a project, for “Aspect Ratio” select “Standard (4:3).” You can select “Widescreen (16:9)” if you wish, but all video files from TAMI are standard definition (4:3). If you choose 16:9 and play the DVD on a standard definition television, your movies will be letterboxed - they will not fill the screen and will look smaller.

When you are finished naming your DVD project, select “Create.”

Move the iDVD window to a portion of your screen so that you can still see the list of your video files in the Finder.



An example of the screen placement of various windows. This is on a laptop. A larger screen will have more room

In the example here, I have moved the Finder to the top left hand corner of the screen and the iDVD window to the bottom right hand corner of the screen. But you can place them wherever is most convenient for you.

Step 3: Add videos to the DVD

There are a number of ways you can set up your DVD (e.g. with extra menus). This tutorial is meant to be as simple as possible and will not cover advanced features. In this case we will work with the default menu.

The default menu in this example is called “Revolution.” The default title on this menu is “Revolution Main.” To change this name, click on the title and a border will appear around it. Click on it again and the text will be highlighted and some font options will appear underneath it. Type in whatever title you wish (e.g. Home Movies Disk 1). When you are finished, click on an area outside the title.

You can move this text to another part of the screen by clicking on it and dragging it.



Edit the DVD title by typing in the text box



Add a video file by dragging and dropping it into the "Add Movie Here" button on the DVD screen

To add a video to the menu, select the “+” in the bottom right corner of the iDVD program window and select “Add Movie.” A new menu button will appear on the DVD screen that says “add movie here.”

Move your cursor to the TAMI Transfers folder and over the video file you wish to add to the DVD. Click and hold on the file, drag it to the “add movie here” button in the iDVD window, then drop the file over the “add movie here” text. When the video file has been successfully added to the menu button, the name of the button will change to be the same as the video file.

You can customize the text of the menu button in the same manner that you changed the name of the title of the disk.

Continue adding files, but you will want to periodically check how much room you have on the disk. How to do this is explained in the next step.

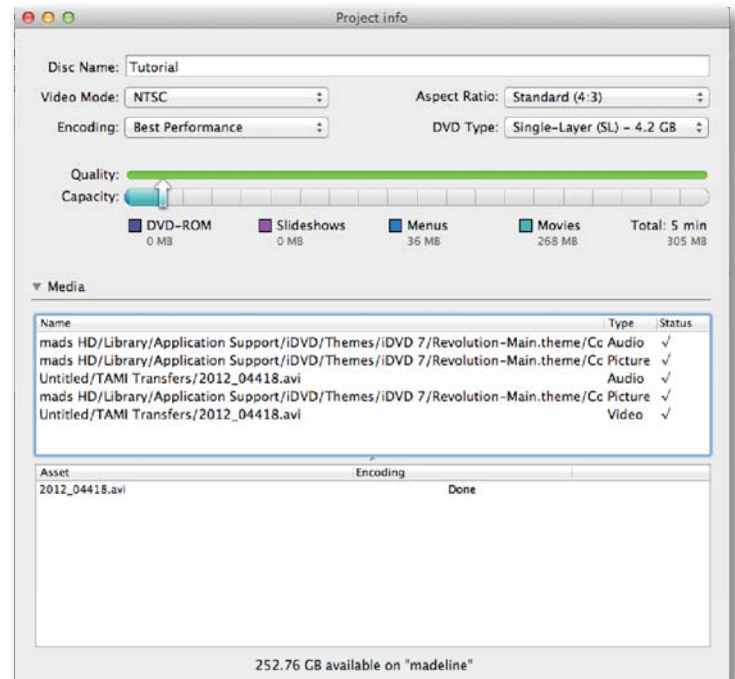
Step 4: Keep an eye on how full your DVD is getting

To check on how full the disk is getting, select “Project” and then “Project Info...”

The Project Info window will open and give you details about your project. For right now we are interested in the Quality and Capacity indicators. Keep an eye on the arrow as it moves up the indicator. As it moves higher up the indicator, it is getting full. At some point as you add videos to the DVD, you might get a notice telling you that the disk is full, or the “Total” time counter in the Project Info window will turn red. It is at this point you will need to remove videos until the “Total” time counter turns black again.



The Total Time indicator is red here, indicating the disk is over capacity



The Project Info window. Notice the Time indicator is black, meaning there is still room on the disk.

Above the Quality and Capacity indicators there are a number of options. The following two options should be set as indicated here:

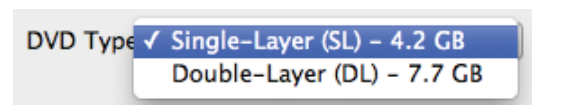
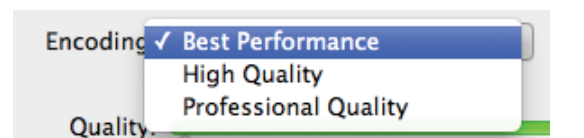
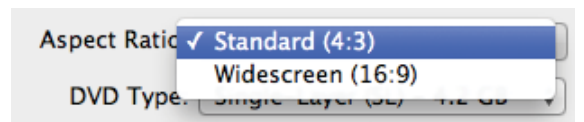
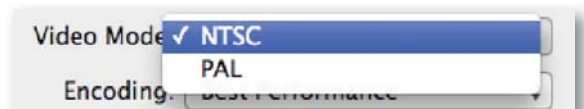
Video Mode must be set to NTSC. The only time this should be changed is if you are sending DVDs to someone in another country.

Aspect Ratio should be set to 4:3 unless you want to author in 16:9. Refer to Step 2 for more info about how these two aspect ratios would look different on your TV.

The next two options can depend on your choices.

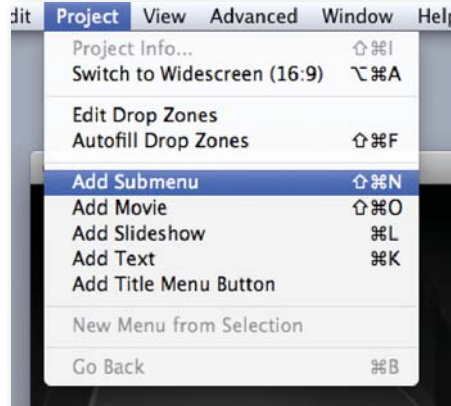
For **Encoding**, the default is for **best performance**, but you can select either of the other two options, keeping in mind that they will take up more disk space (meaning you will be able to fit less on a DVD) and more time to create the DVD.

DVD Type should match whatever type of blank DVD you will be writing to. The options are Single-Layer and Double-Layer. See the description of blank DVDs above for more info on these two types of disks.



Step 5: Adding a second menu page

iDVD limits the number of menu buttons per page to 10. If you can fit more than 10 videos on a disk, then you will need to create a second (or more) menu page.



Adding a submenu

To create another menu page, go to “Project” then select “Add Submenu.” A new button will appear titled “My Submenu.” You can change the name of this button to your liking.

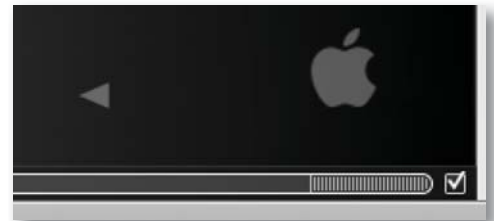


The submenu button

If you double click on the submenu button, it will take you to the new menu page, which looks similar to the main menu page. This menu page can be set up exactly

the same as the main menu page. Refer to the instructions above to add videos to this new page.

You can get back to the main menu page by selecting the small triangle on the bottom of the submenu page.



Select the small triangle to go back to the main menu page

Step 6: The “Drop Zone” (optional)



The “Drop Zone” on the Revolution theme main menu page

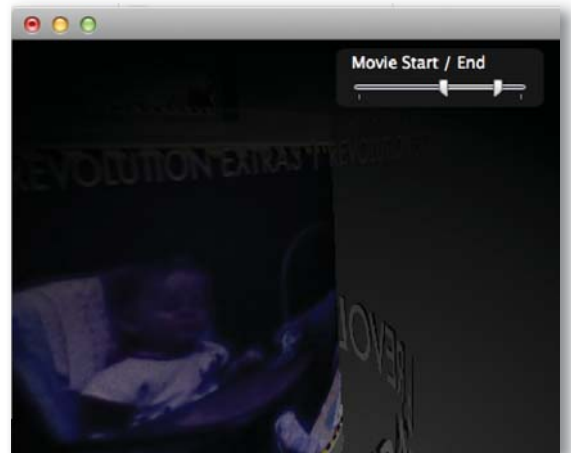
Most of the iDVD menus have what is called a “Drop Zone.” This is a space for you to place content that shows in the space reserved for the Drop Zone. It is an image or video that plays/appears while the DVD is on the menu. It is optional for you to place content in this spot, but you will receive a warning when you try to burn the DVD if there is no content in this space.

It is important to realize that the Drop Zone does not function as a regular video button. It is merely there for show, to make the menu page look dynamic. When you make the DVD, you will not be able to select the Drop Zone and play the video you have put there. So whatever you choose should be something that has already been added to the DVD as a video file.

Placing content in the Drop Zone is optional. If you do not place content here, you can still burn and play the DVD, but the Drop Zone area will be grey. You will get a warning when you select “Burn DVD,” but if you want to go ahead, you can by selecting “Continue Burning.”

If you wish to add content to the Drop Zone, here is how:

Select the image or video you wish to place in the Drop Zone, and drag it over to the Drop Zone area. If you place a video in the Drop Zone, you will be given the option to select which portion of the video plays by using the sliders that appear at the top of the menu page when you select the Drop Zone. Move the sliders for the beginning and the end of the video to bracket the portion of the video you would like to play on the menu page.



After placing content into the Drop Zone, sliders will appear above it that allow you to edit the length of the video that plays

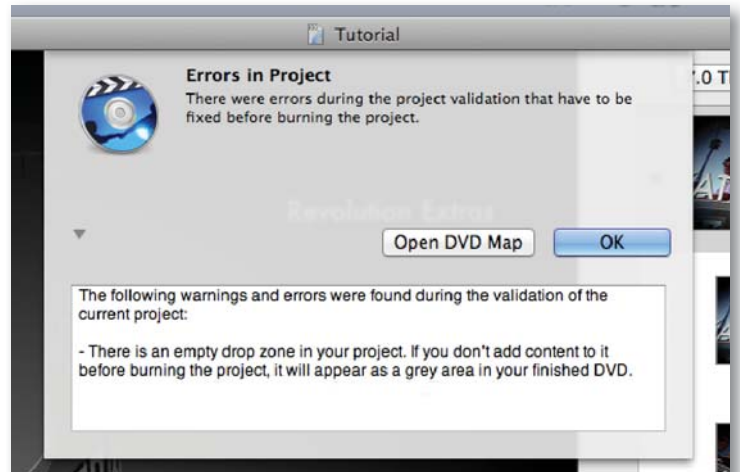
Step 7: Burning the DVD



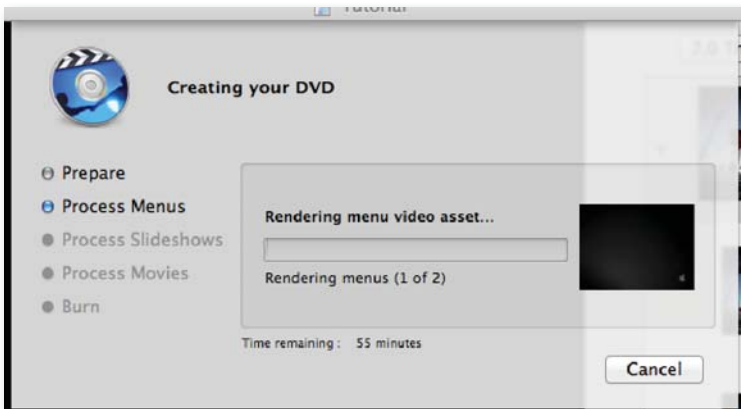
The burn button before and after selection

When you have finished adding video files, insert a blank DVD into the DVD drive. Then select the “burn” button, located immediately to the right of the “Play” button at the bottom of the program window.

If you get a “Warnings in Project” error after selecting to burn the DVD, click on the small arrow to the right side of the “Cancel” button to see what the error is. Then select cancel and fix the error. If the error is related to the Drop Zone, see step 6 above.



An example an error warning



The progress of the creation of your DVD will be show in this window

When the DVD creation process begins, this window will appear to show you the progress. When the DVD is finished burning, it should eject from your DVD drive (if it does not, you can eject it from the desktop).