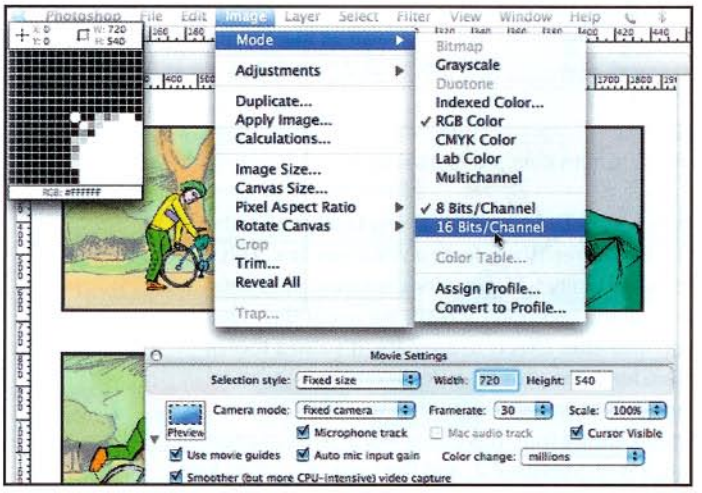


top: Snapz Pro is the author's favorite screen capture utility for Macs.

middle: Cinematize extracts non-copy-protected material from DVDs—a lifesaver when that's the only place your source files can be found.

bottom: BbDEMUX is simple enough to use (not to mention tasty). It demultiplexes MPEG files so video and audio can be handled separately.

1280 x 1024 while we worked. It managed to capture 30 fps for a 3-hour taping session. It took 8 hours to process after capturing, but we ended up with a beautifully clean Animation Codec file that allowed us to scale down for full-screen views and crop for close-up shots for the computer training DVD. This product has fundamentally changed the way training videos and interface shots are captured on a computer: It eliminates the need for a high-end scan converter for most users.

CONVERTER TOOLS

Got this, but need to make it that? These tools will let you convert between digital formats to get you to the file type you need. On a related note, I'll tackle Final Cut Pro–Avid interchange as well, and find another way to help these two apps get along more nicely.

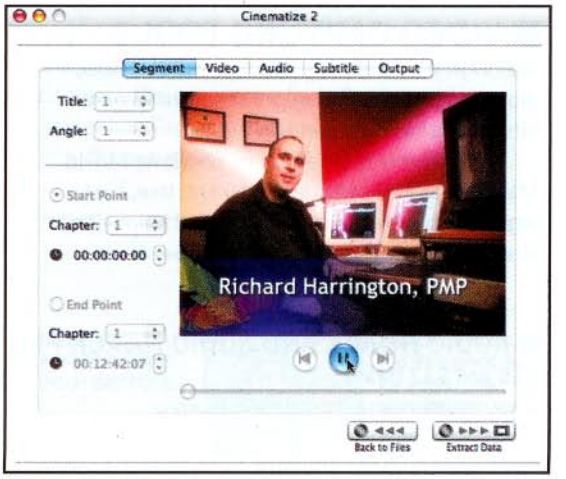
BBDEMUX

Free [Mac]
http://sourceforge.net/projects/macbbdemux

I stumbled across this great piece of freeware when stuck on an editing problem. My clients had some MPEG-1 files they wanted to edit together for their Web site. I was able to import them into my NLE and set the timeline to 320 x 240, but I couldn't get the audio to import. With MPEG-1 files, the audio and video are merged into one track (muxed). This great little app does nothing more then split them apart, but that's all that was needed—and it's free.

CINEMATIZE

$60 [Mac and PC]
www.miraizon.com

We often get DVDs from clients who own video files (we're talking about productions they paid for, not the latest Brad Pitt flick). When we ask for a beta or DVCAM master, they look confused and panicked. It's certainly best to go back to a master tape to rework video, but you may not have the time or means on every job. *DV* covered a lot of these tools in Douglas Dixon's article "Deconstructing DVDs: Re-Editing Your DVDs" (Nov. '04 *DV*), so check that out for more tools and techniques to work with DVD video as a source.

My favorite app is Cinematize, a cross-platform tool designed to extract non-copy-protected material from a DVD. This can also come in handy if the deck just ate your dub master and you have to get a copy out. Although you'll be dealing with a compressed file, it's better than no file at all.