Creating Slideshows with XP or Vista
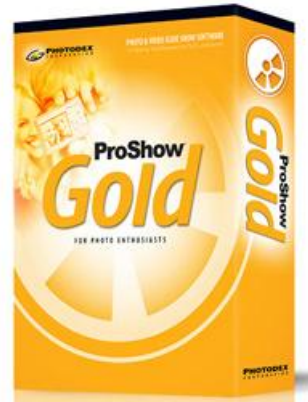
 Stump the PC Club is a free tech-advice column written by members of the North Orange County Computer Club, which has been in existence since 1976. Visit the club's site at noccc.org. And don't forget to stop by the Gadgetress' home for the PC Club, at ocregister.com/link/pcclub, to find out how to ask a question and read past answers.

QUESTION: I recently bought a unit which enables me to transfer my slides to my PC. I have Windows Vista. In burning the transferred slides to a DVD, what time lapse do you use between slides for future viewing on TV? If you know of a book or literature that will help me to create discs somewhat professionally, I would sure like to get at them. I hope you can help me out.

PC CLUB: Slideshows have two main time components: the duration of the slide and the transition between slides. A typical slideshow includes slide durations of 5 to 7 seconds with a 3-second transition between them. If a slide includes captions, allow sufficient time for your audience to read them. There are several free, or at least inexpensive,

alternatives for creating DVDs for playback on a TV.

My all-time favorite for creating DVD slideshows for playback on TV is Photodex's ProShow Gold which can do almost anything. It's $69.95 at www.photodex.com and also is available as a trial version. If you order the boxed version, it includes a manual to get you started. There are free tutorials for the program at www.proshowenthusiasts.com and several books available from $20 to $25. You can search the Amazon.com site for "Proshow" to review these.

Also, there is a free program for creating slideshows called Photostage available at www.nchsoftware.com/slideshow. It has many features including the creation of DVDs but it lacks many other features offered by ProShow. I would try this first before graduating to ProShow. Both of these programs allow you to incorporate videos and music with your stills.

Although Windows XP and Vista have built-in tools for creating slideshows, the tools are not as straightforward as the programs mentioned above. Windows Vista users can use the built-in Windows Photo Gallery, which integrates with Windows Movie Maker and Windows DVD Maker. Windows XP, on the other hand, has no native support for burning DVDs, you must purchase third-party software to do this.

Here are the instructions for creating slide shows in Windows Vista:

1. Open Photo Gallery and add photos and select the ones for your show
2. Select "Make a Movie," which utilizes Movie Maker
3. Add music or videos if desired by clicking "File," then "Import Media"
4. Select "Publish Movie" and select "DVD"
5. Click "Next" which opens Windows DVD Maker
6. Add additional projects as desired
7. Select "Menu style" and click "Burn"

Here are the instructions for creating slide shows in Windows XP:

1. Use Photo Story to make a video out of stills with Pan and Zoom effect
2. Use Movie Maker to import the movie made in step 1 and add your videos to it if desired
3. Add music if desired
4. Burn the movie to a DVD, this requires separate DVD-burning software such as Sonic DVD for Photo Story 3, available from Sonic for $9.95 at bit.ly/q6P7H.

Please be cautioned that if you spend a lot of time learning the Windows tools it might be for naught since the next version of Windows (Version 7) will most likely exclude them.

~Ed Schwartz, NOCCC member. View his blog at www.edwardns.com/blog.