Pre-Purchase Frequently Asked Questions.

Q. So this product works with both XP & Vista?

A. Yes, the £33.90 kit works with all varieties of Windows 7, Vista & XP, 32 bit & 64 bit.

Q. How do I know if my PC is fast enough for video capture?

A. If running Windows XP you should have at least a Pentium 4 with a 1.7GHz processor, 512MB of RAM, 80GB Hard drive, and most importantly of all USB2 ports. USB1 is just too slow, and many older PCs with 1.6GHz processors only had USB1 on-board. If this sounds like you, please don't buy the kit – you'll be wasting your time, my time & £5.95 p&p. Also, forget trying to use older Windows 98, ME or 2000 boxes.

If you're running XP you can go to Start → Control Panel → System → General → and you should see Computer: & then something like 2.19GHz, 2.00GB of RAM (This tells you the processor speed and RAM capacity of your PC. If it's less than 1.6GHz & 512MB forget all USB video grabbers, ours included)

Q. My PC is more than 4 years old. How do I know if my PC can burn a DVD video disc?

A. Well if you've already burnt a CD that's no guarantee that your drive supports DVD burning. I've now had two clients who decided our kit was rubbish when they'd successfully captured a video but the Ulead software got stuck at the burning stage. They both swore they'd burned discs before. Can you guess the problem? That's right, I got them to inspect the plastic fascia on the front of the drive, and both said DVD-ROM/CD-RW. If you don't know, that means the drive will play a DVD, and will read & write a CD, but it will NEVER burn a DVD. This isn't the end of world, you can buy an internal IDE DVD writer @ ebuyer.com for £16. It takes 10 minutes to swop the old unit. We don't support external USB DVD writers with the kit BTW, they may work, they may not. If the Ulead software insists you haven't inserted a blank DVD when you have, this is the problem. A few older DVD writers don't support 8.5GB media, only 4.7GB.

Q. Can I connect my camcorder up to your kit?

A. Yes. You should have yellow, red & white phono outputs on the camcorder. Sometime this will come as a plug in adapter. Older camcorders might only have a yellow & black phono output – the yellow will be video & the black will be mono audio, this works just fine too.

Q. I have some old VHS-C compact camcorder tapes, but the camcorder died ages ago – what can be done?

A. We can supply you with a dummy VHS cassette (£19) which you just slot the mini VHS-C tapes into. You can then connect our kit up to the PC and regular VHS player and capture them like that. This only works for VHS-C though. No one made a similar adapter for Hi8, 8mm or MiniDV – sorry, but you'll need an old camcorder.

Q. I already capture video from my Mini-DV using Firewire and I use BlahBlahBlah Corporations editing software. Will your kit clash?

A. Quite possibly. All these other video editing suites tend to come with their own Codec packs. Too many Codecs spoil the broth! If you use Microsoft's bundled Windows Movie Maker I can assure you it will co-exist with our kit. In fact we supply instructions for using it with our kit's hardware for XP & Vista. Your mileage with Adobe Premiere, or any other package will vary... Here's an example of this in action: one customer had another 3rd party video editing suite installed on his PC. When he used my kit to capture video it would play the video back at 2x the normal speed, for no real reason – welcome to Codec hell! (it's also just possible that you recorded the VHS tape on long play and are playing it back years later on regular play).

Q. Do I need to uninstall Apple Quicktime?

A. Apple Quicktime is a pack of Apple's video Codecs that normally come bundled with Apple iTunes. While you may use iTunes every day, it's quite unusual to actual need Quicktime installed on your PC. If Quicktime loads each time your PC starts up it will often be eating up valuable resources (RAM & Processor cycles) for nothing. If you remove Quicktime it won't stop iTunes playing music or talking to your iPod. It may be needed if you download video content from Apple or iTunes though.

I have anecdotal evidence from a customer that removing Quicktime from his Windows XP allowed our kit to work correctly, where it had previously caused a clash

Q. You say there are three ways to capture video with your kit?

A. Yes, you can use solely the supplied Ulead software to capture, edit and burn video to DVD. You can use Microsoft's Movie Maker and some 3rd party open source tools (instructions supplied) or you can use solely open source software (VirtualDub, DVDFlick, & InfraRecorder). All come on our silver CD. No one else gives you OUR silver CD. If you're using Windows 7 you'll capture using Ulead & then burn with Microsoft's built-in DVD Maker application.

Q What kind of blank DVD media should I be buying, for creating DVDs that can be watched in the widest range of players?

A. We recommend the DVD-R standard 4.7GB format. If you use DVD+R you'll find some older domestic players won't read them. Also, if you try to use the Dual Layer 8.5GB discs or the Re-writeable DVD-RW 4.7GB discs you should expect problems in older players. You'll find that the really cheap £20 DVD players that you see in supermarkets will play everything, DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD-RW, DVD+RW in both 4.7GB single layer & 8.5GB dual layer formats.

Q. Should I drape the wires you supply over my WiFi Router & Dect phone while capturing video?

A. Only if you want to give us a troubleshooting headache. WiFi routers are normally transmitting beacon signals 10 time per second, that causes a metronome-like interference pattern. Dect cordless phone base stations transmit a constant RF carrier signal too, even when your not using the phone (unless you have a Siemens Gigaset in Eco+ mode – very sensible of you.) – this can cause interference. Keep our cables and device at least 1 meter away from sources of RF. Also, your mobile when it polls with the mast could have a similar effect on your one hour masterpiece.

Q. I've got some old Hi-8 home-movies that someone converted onto DVD for me some time ago. Can I use your kit to get transfer them back onto the PC & re-edit them?

A. Yes you can. Just connect the Scart socket on the back of the DVD to our leads and use it as you would with a VCR. However, we should point out that as your home-movies are already on DVD you should really be ripping them to the PC and then editing them that way, rather than re-sampling them as if they were an

analogue source.

Also, you can't connect a DVD player and then copy shop-bought movies using this method, as they're protected with Macrovision. If you want to rip DVDs to a PC you need to search on Google for DVDFab Decrypter & DVD Shrink (PC) or Mac the Ripper (Mac). NOTE: Although you're legally allowed to make one fair-use backup of discs you own, you aren't allowed to defeat proper copy protection mechanisms like CSS, as it violates the .http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_Millennium_Copyright_Act

Q. I used the kit to capture a video & have successfully made a DVD. But, when I play the DVD in Windows Media Player on XP I get sound but no video. What's the problem?

A customer had this happen recently. I asked him to try the FREE VLC Media Player which we mention in our instructions. He found that the DVD played fine in VLC & also played fine in the DVD player attached to his TV. We decided the problem lies with Windows Media Player (probably needs a Codec installing). I think some versions of Windows Media Player didn't include DVD playback, so you had to use a separate DVD player application. Commercial DVD player software for XP is available , but VLC costs nothing and works great.

Q. I've already tried similar USB Video capture kits from Roxio, TV Stick & EZ Grabber, and none of them worked on my PC. Will yours?

A. If you connect our kit up to a brand new PC it will almost always work perfectly. However, once you start loading up other video devices and their associated software, Windows XP can become quite confused when you add a new video capture device.

So for instance: I have a Logitech Sphere USB webcam attached to my PC. The first time I tried our Video-2-PC kit, it would crash the PC. I unplugged the webcam from the USB port (as per our supplied instructions) and it behaved better, but still not perfectly.

I noticed that when my PC starts a program called LogiTray.exe starts automatically in background - this is the Logitech's webcam manager application which displays a little webcam icon in the bottom right of the display. By quickly pressing CTRL-ALT-DEL in combination once I can bring up the Windows Task Manager, I then go to Processes, click on LogiTray.exe and End Process. I can then run the Video-2-PC capture process perfectly. It's not only webcams that are video devices. If you have a USB scanner or USB printer/scanner combo device (from Hewlett Packard or similar), Windows will see that as a video device too. That should be unplugged while you initially try our hardware out. If possible, you should try and hunt down any processes the scanner starts in Windows Task Manager, and cancel them too. By doing this you can then prove that the device works with your PC and only then try plugging some of this other hardware back into the PC.

I've had plenty of people buy our kit and have success when they'd failed with the other capture products I've mentioned above, but I think it's got more to do with the instructions & support we supply than the brand-name on the hardware. Most of these devices contain the same chips, after all. All I can say is that I'll be the one replying to your support emails at almost midnight! Really.

With Windows XP you can temporarily turn off all extra startup software by going to → Start → Run → msconfig → Startup tab → Disable All → Ok → Restart. Then do it all in reverse to re-enable them.

Q. What if the manufacturers CD that comes with the USB video grabber is a dud?

A. Amongst the other things on our silver CD, you'll find a folder called 'Easycap_CD_Backup'. We've done this because every once in a while we get a Purple & White CD that won't read in a customers PC.

Q. Do Ulead have a website where I can download patches for VideoStudio?

A. It's at http://www.ulead.com/tech/vs/vs_ftp.htm

However, you shouldn't need to, everything on the CD is up to date. I had one customer who decided he'd found updated drivers for the USB device on a non-Ulead website, and actually ended up putting a virus on his PC – clearly if you do this, you're on your own. If you download what look like updated drivers from random websites expect a virus!

If you get to the point where you're looking for software on Ulead's site you're only going to make the problem much harder to troubleshoot for us. Stick to what comes on the CD. The version of VideoStudio that comes bundled with the USB adapter is an OEM bundle version that Ulead don't support personally.

Q. Say I don't like Ulead's VideoStudio software, can I use something else with your kit's hardware?

A. Yes you can. We've put together a guide for using Windows Movie Maker (XP and Vista versions) with our guide. Including using some open-source tools to build & burn a regular DVD. Unlike with some competitors' products, you'll never have to pay for any 3rd party software upgrades with our kit. £33.90 buys you everything you'll need. Our guide to using Windows Movie Maker is at http://www.video-2-pc.co.uk/wmmguide.pdf

Q. These various kits you do, aren't they all just the same hardware with different instructions?

A. - Absolutely not. Although the USB devices look identical they contain different electronics. The XP & Vista 32 bit version contains a Syntek chipset. The 32/64 bit XP, Vista, Windows 7 & Apple Mac version has the newer Empia EM2860 chipset. There's even a version that only works with XP. Be careful what you buy from any other vendor. From January 2010 we'll only supply the NEW Empia device. Take a closer look:

Q. Can your kit record video from one of these newer Freeview PVRs with a hard drive inside?

A. Yes, we've made recordings from a Humax PVR-8000T and they worked fine. We had to go into the PVR's setup menu and make sure the Scart output was set to type RGB and not S-VHS, though. Again, I'd recommend that you buy the Empia chipset version at £33.90 if trying to connect a PVR as it can record at 60hz in colour (PAL60)
(If you buy the cheaper version I'll guarantee that your PVR outputs in PAL60 and you'll only get a black & white image)

Q. I've got some video cassettes from the States in NTSC format. Can your kit convert them?

A. If you also have a video recorder that you bought in the states, then yes easily.

If you have a dual standard PAL/NTSC video player there's a chance that you'll need our 'deluxe version' @ £33.90 which does PAL 50, PAL 60 & NTSC433 formats. If you can plug your dual format VCR into a regular PAL UK TV and see the NTSC tape playing in colour with audio, then our Empia chipset USB grabber will record it for you. Don't expect the £28.95 XP only version to do it though.)

If you try to play an NTSC tape in a regular UK PAL VCR it just won't work, even if you set Ulead VideoStudio to NTSC format! You'll just see multiple stretched copies of the image strobe across the screen. You need a recent UK VHS VCR with NTSC Playback to capture from NTSC tapes using our £33.90 kit.

Q. Can I attach a video games console – A Wii, PS2, Xbox or PS3 – to the kit and record myself playing, so I can show my friends on YouTube.

A. Yes, you need the £33.90 version though - www.video-2-pc.co.uk

Q. So what's the difference between PAL 50 & PAL 60 & NTSC433 exactly?

A. Read all about it here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PAL#Multisystem_PAL_support_and_.22PAL_60.22

Q. I read on a forum that the audio function of the USB video grabber doesn't work with Windows 7 64 bit versions. Is that true?

A. It might seem that way to some! We know it's an issue and provide very specific instructions on how to install with Windows 7 – if you follow our instructions both the audio & video work perfectly with Windows 7 64 bit. We also show you how to alter the audio driver, in case you forgot to read our instructions first time around! The message is: don't worry, and don't believe half the stuff you read on forums. We've sold thousands of these devices, and it took just two customers to encounter the problem with Windows 7 64 bit audio for us to amend our instructions, and all within 48 hours...There's lots of good information on forums, but there are also lots of posts left by people who don't really know what they're doing – sadly, you need to be an expert to tell the difference.

Q. So, how long does the whole recording-authoring-burning process take on my PC?

A. On a modern PC with a 1 hour VHS tape – it takes 1 hour to capture the video to hard disc (and you can't use the PC for anything else while this is happening), it then takes between 1 & 3 hours (processor speed dependent) to render/author the video files ready for burning, and it then takes 15 minutes to burn the DVD.

Q. How much video can I fit on a DVD?

A. If you use the Ulead VideoStudio software you should expect to get a maximum of 1hour 20 minutes on a 4.7GB DVD-R, or a maximum of 2 hours 30 minutes on a blank dual-layer 8.5GB DVD. I know that a 4.7GB can in theory hold up to two hours, but the compressor used in the Ulead software won't reliably put more than 1hour 20 minutes on a 4.7GB disc.

To put all this in perspective, a pack of 10 dual-layer 8.5GB 8X blank DVDs currently cost £2.99 inc VAT at ebuyer.com (order code125847). If you absolutely must put 1 hour 40 minutes on a 4.7gb DVD you can capture using Ulead and then drag the resulting MPEG file into the DVDFlick authoring package & then burn it using InfraRecorder (both free open-source software found on our silver CD)

Q. In a previous Q&A you mentioned other video devices causing clashes. I've got a laptop with a built-in Webcam, is that a problem?

A. No, normally it can be turned off with a keyboard shortcut. Look on your keyboard for a golf-ball-style logo. You normally hold down Fn+Key to de/activate it. If you can choose your webcam as a capture device in Ulead VideoStudio it's not been turned off yet. You can also go into the laptop's BIOS setup program before Windows starts to load and maybe turn off the Webcam in there.

Also, one customer with a Laptop running Vista simply went into Windows Control Panel & Disabled the webcam device in there – simple but effective. Here's how to do that in Vista → Control Panel → Hardware & Sound → Device Manager → Imaging Devices → Integrated Webcam → Right Mouse Click & Select Disable → Click Yes → Device should now be disabled.

Not all video devices clash, but it makes life easier to unplug/turn them all off ,before starting to install the kit. That means unplugging USB Webcams, USB Scanners, Cameras(USB), Printer/Scanner combos(USB), USB Telescopes, etc, etc.

Q. Can I use your kit with virtualization software?

A. If you didn't already know, virtualization software lets your Mac run Windows inside Mac OSX (it's not like Bootcamp), or your new Windows 7 PC run XP , or your Linux box run Windows. Products of this type are: Parallels for Mac; Microsoft Virtual PC; Sun VirtualBox for Linux & Windows (free & open-source, easily the best!http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtualbox); Vmware Player etc... **None of them work with our kit!**

So, please don't buy a cheaper Windows version thinking it will run on the Mac and save you £5, because you'll be wasting at least £5.95 in postage. I've tried to use our kit with Crunchbang Linux (Ubuntu) running Windows through Sun VirtualBox – while it runs Windows just fine, our kit doesn't work.
This is such a niche question that 99% of customers can ignore it. It might apply to you if you bought our Video-2-PC kit for XP & Vista and now want to run Windows 7 – you need to buy a new USB adapter from us, sorry. You can't run the old one under XP, running inside Virtual PC on Windows 7. The Syntek 1150/1160 chipset USB video grabbers don't work with Windows 7 – you need the new Empia version & we don't offer trade-ins, sorry again.

Q. Can I use a VCR/TV combo unit to capture videos to my PC?

A. Probably not. Often the Scart socket on the back of these units is only an input port, for connect a DVD player to the TV. You can test this by connecting the VCR/TV combo to a 2nd TV before ordering our kit.

Q. Will your kit capture in HD?
A. No. Real HD video signals only travel along HDMI video cables. This kit doesn't take HDMI inputs.
Q. Will the kit capture video in 16:9 widescreen format?

A. Sort of. The kit is designed to capture old 4:3 format video from VHS & Camcorder tapes. If you capture from a 16:9 source, say a hard drive PVR, you will get black bands at the top and bottom of the image.

Q. Can I connect your kit to the Yellow, Red & White connections on the front of my VCR?

A. No you can't. Those sockets are video inputs only, we need an output! Connect our kit to the Scart socket on the back of your VCR (If you have a choice test with the one marked TV first).

Q. How do I select between the Composite (yellow) video signal lead & the S-Video (black) signal lead on the USB video grabber?

A. Good question! Our instructions show you clearly how to select this at the PC end, but often they'll be a setting in the VCR's menu system where you choose the Scart output to be RGB, CVBS or SVHS/S-Video. If using the Composite yellow lead you choose either CVBS or RGB. If using the black S-Video lead you'd choose S-Video/SVHS. If you have this setting wrong you'll often only get a black & white image. (Our kit only comes with the yellow composite lead.) This setting is important because the Scart socket on the back of the VCR is capable of talking to adapters wired in different ways, if you've selected the wrong thing in the VCR's menu you might think our kit isn't working. We'd always recommend attaching a different video device (camcorder, DVD player, freeview box, etc – anything with a Scart output) to confirm that the problem isn't with the VCR.

Q. Can I buy your kit and then use my own adapters & cables?

A. Please don't do this! All phono to Scart adapters look quite similar, but they are either wired In OR Out, or they have a switch that selects the mode for you. The Scart to phono adapter we supply is wired for 'signal out' (because it carries video signals out of the VCR) with no switch on it. If you use a similar looking adapter wired for video-in, you'll never make the kit work, because your VHS signals won't be getting output from the VCR! We like to keep things simple, so please only use what we supply, at least at first.

Q. Why would the video I capture seem to be at double speed with fast talking audio?
A. You recorded the VHS tape on a long play VCR and are now using a regular VCR to playback, perhaps.

Q. Your kit captures Video & Audio? A. It does. Both are captured via the USB2 port.

Q. Why would I get 'juddery' video when using your kit?

A. There are several possible reasons: 1) Your Anti-Virus software is trying to scan the hard drive while you're trying to record video. 2) You have an automatic disk defragmenter, like Diskeeper running. 3) You're trying to capture video to an external USB hard drive. 4) Your PC is too slow or you have too many applications running in the background. 5)You're using a laptop running from the battery -connect it to the mains adapter. Capturing video is very processor intensive, and the USB port & hard drive can't really cope with trying to do two things at once. Any of the above can also explain wandering audio/video sync too.

Q. Can I use your kit with a cheap Atom-processor based Netbook like the Asus EEE or Acer One?

A. Basically, yes you can. Any Netbook with a 1.6GHz processor & a real hard drive (rather than a low-capacity SSD) should work fine. However, you will need to put the contents of our CD onto a USB stick to install everything. You'll also need an external monitor attached to the Netbook, as Ulead Video Studio complains if it detects that it's running on a screen resolution lower than 1024x768 – most 10" Netbook displays are just 1024x600. Of course most Netbooks don't have a DVD burner either...

Q. So, if I buy a kit from you, and it doesn't work, I can return it within 14 days for a full refund?

A. Yes. (Offer excludes all postage costs)

Q. So how long have you been trading?

A. TR Computers have been trading since 1989. For years we advertised in Micromart magazine. Since the internet took off we've concentrated on Google Adwords & eBay. You can check our ebay feedback via our shop spystore-uk - you'll see we're very trustworthy. Prices in the eBay shop are the same as the website.

Q. I bought an older version of the kit for my XP or Vista box, and now I've upgraded to Windows 7 it won't work. Can I swop it or get a refund six months on?

A. No way, sorry. From January 2010 we'll only be supplying the newer version of the hardware, which works fine with all versions of Windows 7, Vista & XP. It gives you future proof hardware for £5 more than the old standard kit.

Think of it this way: if your PC blows up tomorrow and you go to PC World for a new one they'll all have Windows 7 pre-loaded. The plus version gives better colour reproduction, better sound, higher resolution.

Q. How can I pay for the kit?

A. You can use Visa, Mastercard, Maestro, Paypal Express or Google Checkout via our shopping cart, or you can just call us with your card details direct on 01565 640739 if you prefer. Orders placed before 1pm (Monday to Friday) are shipped the same day.

Q. Can I pay by cheque? Can I collect?

A. No, sorry.

Q. Tell me again which kits are available from video-2-pc.co.uk & video-2-mac.co.uk ?

A. Video-2-PC for Windows XP ONLY @ £28.95 + P&P.
Video-2-PC for Windows XP, Vista & the NEW Windows 7, 32 & 64 bit all versions £33.90 + P&P.
Video-2-Mac.co.uk for Apple Mac OSX with fully licensed VideoGlide £ 33.95 + P&P.

These frequently asked question pages are intended to enlighten you pre-purchase. You get several more pages of simple-to-follow instructions with the kit, plus a page of the most commonly encountered problems and their solutions. If you find an undocumented problem we'll try and solve it over the phone while you're sat at the PC.

All the USB adapters we supply are individually tested by ourselves before shipping.

If this document helped you troubleshoot another manufacturers video grabber, please let them know.
Don't call us for support if you bought a video kit elsewhere, we ask all customers for their sales number.