



Sony Pictures Digital Networks

a sony pictures entertainment company



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Mid-range video contention

PREMIERE ELEMENTS WITH PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 3.0, VEGAS MOVIE STUDIO +DVD

It's hard to think of a software market that has more competing titles in it than consumer video editing. Now the list has become even longer with a new version of Vegas Movie Studio from Sony, and an entirely new contender from Adobe in Premiere Elements.

Similarly priced, these products come with radically different auxiliary software: with Vegas Movie Studio +DVD you get Vegas Movie Studio 4.0 and DVD Architect Studio 2.0, while Premiere Elements 1.0 comes with Photoshop Elements 3.0 (Premiere Elements is available on its own for \$179, while Vegas Movie Studio is not).

What sets both of these products apart from typical consumer non-linear editors (NLEs) is they've not made as many sacrifices in order to appeal to the casual user. They use very similar interfaces to their larger, more expensive

IN BRIEF:

Adobe Premiere Elements & Photoshop Elements 3.0

[Beta version, not rated]

Rather difficult for novice users, but worth the effort if you want the most powerful consumer editor currently available.

Price: \$269 (\$179 without Photoshop Elements)

Vendor: Adobe Australia
Phone: 1300 550 205
URL: www.adobe.com.au

Sony Pictures Digital Networks Vegas Movie Studio +DVD

Easy to learn but still a powerful editor, Vegas Movie Studio +DVD is ideal for simpler video compositions and comes with better DVD authoring support.

★★★★★

Price: \$249

Distributor: New Magic
Phone: (02) 9528 4555
URL: www.newmagic.com.au



Support for up to 99 video tracks makes complex compositions possible in Premiere Elements.

stablemates (Vegas 5.0 and Premiere Pro 1.5) and provide professional quality filters, effects and tools. However, unlike Premiere Elements, which retains the tabbed, fully customisable interface of Premiere Pro, Vegas Movie Studio can only be resized, rather than rearranged — making Premiere Elements better suited to those with multi-monitor setups.

Inevitably, the more comprehensive features of both products make for a steeper learning curve. Premiere Elements, in particular, relies too much on tool variations via key combinations to be truly intuitive — much like its bigger brother. Vegas Movie Studio, on the other hand, is far more approachable, especially with its effective “Show Me How” walkthroughs.

Both products come with a surprisingly wide range of filters, transitions and effects, but again it's Vegas Movie Studio that's more accessible, with animated icons and clearer naming conventions. As far as control and fine tuning are concerned, both provide keyframes and envelope editing, and also have tools that have previously been reserved for the top end — like chroma keying and mattes. Where they differ most is how they avoid stepping on the toes of their high-end counterparts. Obviously, certain features have been stripped: Premiere Elements' titler and export functions are more basic, and it only has a single pane



Movie Studio 4.0's “Show Me How” walkthroughs make it much easier to use.

preview monitor. Vegas Movie Studio has discarded video envelopes, timeline scrubbing, advanced colour correction, and many of the advanced audio tools. On top of this, Sony has chosen the conventional path of restricting the number of timeline tracks, giving you just two video, one title and three audio tracks to play with. Adobe, on the other hand, has taken the unprecedented step of creating a consumer NLE with support for 99 video and 99 audio tracks, which allows you to create more complex and professional-looking compositions. To balance things out, Premiere Elements lacks timeline tools like Slide, Roll and Slip, as well as sequences and layered .PSD import (though you can still import Photoshop files as merged layers). Put simply, Vegas Movie Studio places more restrictions on what you can do: Premiere Elements restricts the ways you can do it.

Both products are equally worthy, but the capabilities offered by the accompanying software and the ways that the editors function make them suited to different users. For those who want simplicity and more effective DVD authoring, Vegas Movie Studio +DVD is best. Intermediate editors who want to build compositions that are more advanced will find Premiere and Photoshop Elements a compelling and cost-effective purchase. ■

— Laurence Grayson