

# Advanced Video Blogging



Video technology is so easy and more accessible these days that it should be considered part of your content strategy.

Also the cost of this technology is unbelievable low compared to just a few years ago.

We have talked about using video with the [Quick Blogcast](#) product and you can reference that [article here](#) to get up to speed.

One important component to serving video on the web is encoding. Encoding will transform your Windows video file into a properly compressed format that streams the video while it is being accessed over the web.

This is important for a couple of reasons. First it delivers your video to the user faster because they don't have to wait for the whole video to download before it will play. Secondly it lowers the bandwidth necessary to display the video which translates to dollars to you because you pay for bandwidth.

## The Components

Here are the things you need to post a video on your web site:

1. A video camera or webcam
2. A computer
3. Video editing software
4. Video serving technology
5. Access to your web site.

All of these items are very easy to acquire and learn to use.

## Video Cameras

Webcams cost anywhere between \$60 to \$170 and can be purchased at Best Buy or Amazon. They sit on your computer and can be used for video conferencing and basically what we call "Talking Head" videos. They need to be connected to

your computer for power so they are not very portable. Webcam picture quality is usually low because their intended to be used for web applications.

There are lots of small camcorders on the market and they range from \$200 to \$1200. Some are of the HD (High Definition) technology which are falling into this price range which means your home videos will look great on you HD television.

The important thing to look for with these camcorders is the ability to capture video into the computer. This is accomplished with a special wire that is sometimes referred to as a “Fire Wire” or “IEEE 1394” or “iLink” or “DV” port. While the camcorder records on mini DV (Digital Video) tape, it is the Fire Wire connection that helps in the capture process.

## Your Computer



Most new computers and laptops have a 1394 port. You might want to locate yours first before going to far into this. This is not a USB port. It will look different. Your camcorder will most likely come with a Fire Wire cable but if you have a miss match on the connection it is easy to find Fire Wire accessories online.

## Video Editing Software

The good news is that video editing is now easier than ever and practically free. The video editing software will have a video capture feature. When activated, it will talk to your camcorder through the Fire Wire connection. You will have controls for Play/Record Rewind and Fast-forward.

All you have to do is get your tape in the start position and hit “Record” and the software will generate a digital file.

The Editing software may have an internal video format while you are editing but there is always a way to save to a different format. For PC users a common video format is “WMV” which stands for Windows Media Video

You can download Microsoft’s [Movie Maker 2 from CNET](#). If you have Windows XP with service pack 2 you might already have this and not even know it. I do not have Vista yet (and I am not sure I want to...) but it also contains a version of Movie Maker.

There are other relatively inexpensive editing software that are a bit more powerful than Movie Maker. So you might want to look at the features of these packages which are all under \$100.

- [Power Director 6](#)
- [Movie Edit Pro 12](#)
- [Ulead Video Studio Plus](#)
- [Adobe Premier Elements](#)

To put things into perspective, video editing software used to cost \$1000 for entry level editing just a few years ago.

## Why Do I Need to “Serve” Video

Many customers ask me to put a video on their web site but I do it with a warning. Most web sites are hosted on a file storage type of server which means there are no helper video applications to improve the performance of video on the internet.

It is possible to post your video where your web pages are but videos over 5 minutes will take some time to download causing your users to wait. They may even get denied if more than one person is requesting the file at the same time.

The advantage of having a 3rd party video server is that you can at least be guaranteed that your video gets seen by anyone who requests it. Videos can be encoded on the fly and the streaming capabilities get those videos to play right away. Plus the video will be compatible across all browsers.

Video serving can be expensive and is generally only available to the big boys who have deep pockets. My research on this suggested that the entry level tier was about \$250 a month.

I am still looking for alternatives for the “Ma and Pa” market and thankfully [VMDirect of Hello World](#) is answering this call.

You can get setup at a minimum of \$10 per month and have all kinds great video toys at your command. To me, the best part is the on-the-fly encoding and embed code.

Ok I just said “embed code” and you are wondering what the heck that is all about. Embedded video plays inside your web page as oppose to launching your computer’s default video player in a new window. This is important to me because I can then control how my video is displayed.

At my Hello World account I can upload a video, then select the type of encoding I want and then in a few minutes I can retrieve the embed code like you see here:

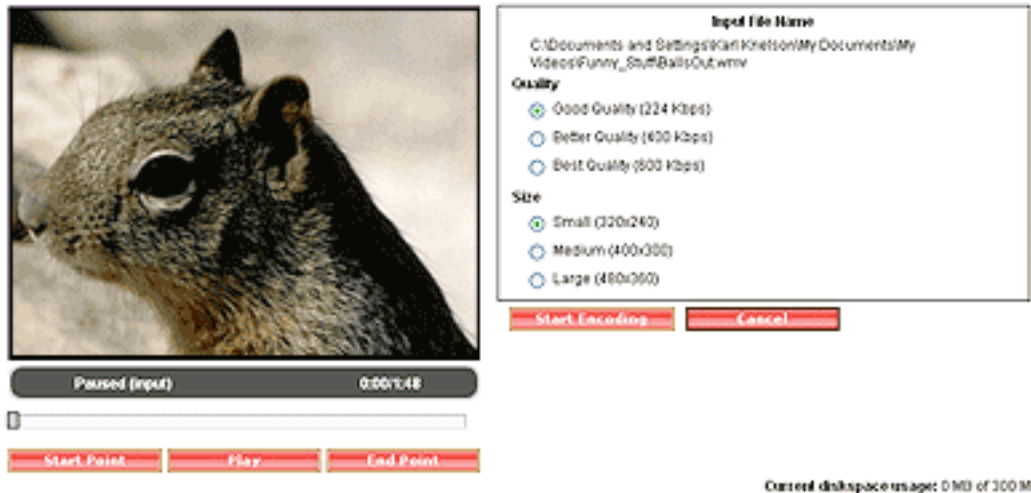
Step 3: Copy the code below and paste it in your web-page editor:

```
<iframe width='320' height='240'  
frameborder='0' marginheight='0'  
marginwidth='0' noresize  
scrolling=no  
src='http://ravenas.razorstream.com  
:80/eve-service/player.jspx?  
enc=9NppZDUSyS8NFvp36%2FZEMw%3D%  
3D&h=240&w=320'></iframe>
```

All I have to do is cut and paste this code into my web page and then update the page by posting it to my web server.

## Quick Blogcasting

I wanted to mention [Quick Blogcasting](#) as an alternative because it is a blog which means it is a web site with an administrative control panel that you can access through your browser. So not only can you update the site yourself you also have video capabilities built in.



You can do a quick record with your webcam or you could also upload and encode a video that you created with your video editing software. Think of it, Your Own custom video commercials.

## Access to Your Web Site

If you are familiar with FTP and HTML this is a cinch but if not, you can have your web person do it for you. It only takes a few minutes. Find out more about [FTP here](#). Just email them the embed code.

If you are editing your own web site with web authoring software or a hosted CMS (Content Management System) all you need to do is cut and paste the embed code in the page. You may need to use a view toggle to switch from the user friendly display to the icky code view in order to paste. Most WYSIWYG editors can do this.

All right,... WYSIWIG (pronounced “Wizzy Wig”) stands for What You See Is What You Get.

## **Conclusion**

Just like with the advent of digital cameras, everyone is a “Photographer” but perhaps not good ones.

When rolling your own videos remember to be critical of your own work. Make sure you are not showing a video or photo that makes you look bad.

You may also consider hiring a local videographer to make a nice company video for you. They can easily orchestrate the elements that will help you look good like models, music and graphics. [Ask us](#) we know lots of them.

Posted on February 2nd, 2008 by Karl Knelson