

Building a DVD using Windows DVD Maker

PLEASE NOTE: The Texas Archive of the Moving Image (TAMI) provides this tutorial as a courtesy to its participants. TAMI regrets that we cannot offer support for DVD creation beyond this simple tutorial. We urge anyone who, after using this tutorial, still has problems to contact family members, friends, or manufacturers (computers or software) for further help.

What you will need:



A copy of Windows DVD Maker installed on your computer. This is free software that comes with some Windows 7 and Windows Vista computers (e.g. Home, Professional, Ultimate, etc). To see if you have Windows DVD Maker installed on your computer, go to the Start Menu and select “All Programs.” You should see the program listed somewhere there. If you don’t have Windows DVD Maker, purchase a new version of Windows at Microsoft.com or obtain a free DVD Maker download by searching online for “free windows DVD Maker download” online.



A DVD drive. The vast majority of modern desktop and laptop computers come with a DVD burning capable drive already installed. If you do not have one, you can either purchase one to install into your computer, or get one that installs externally via a USB cable.

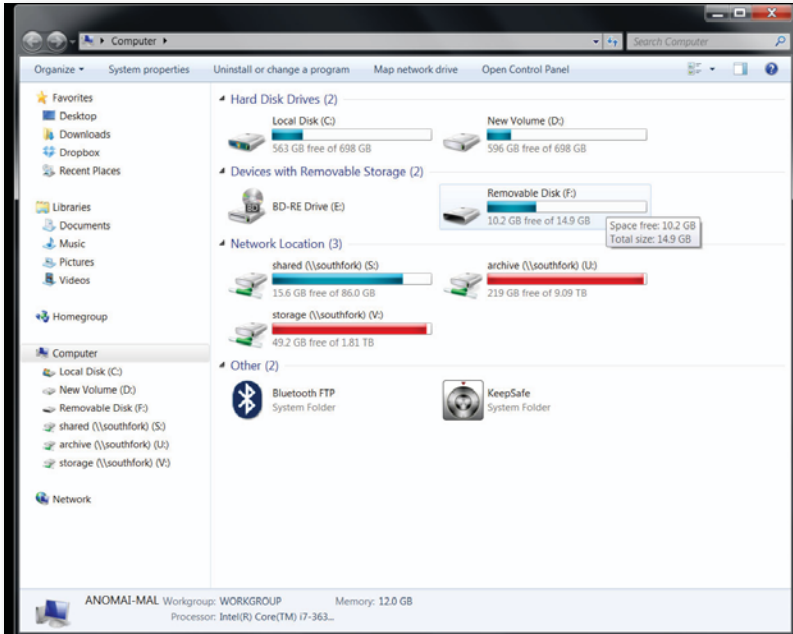


Blank DVDs. How many you will need depends on how much video you have. There are many brands of blank DVDs you can buy and you can read reviews of which are the best. Additionally, there are single and dual layer DVDs. The difference between these is how much video they can hold: The dual layer DVDs hold twice as much video, but they are considerably more expensive. At TAMI we use single layer DVD-R disks and have not had reports of problems with them out of the thousands we have made.

The following steps are to help you build your own DVD with menus using the Windows DVD Maker software.

Step 1: Connect your external hard drive to the computer

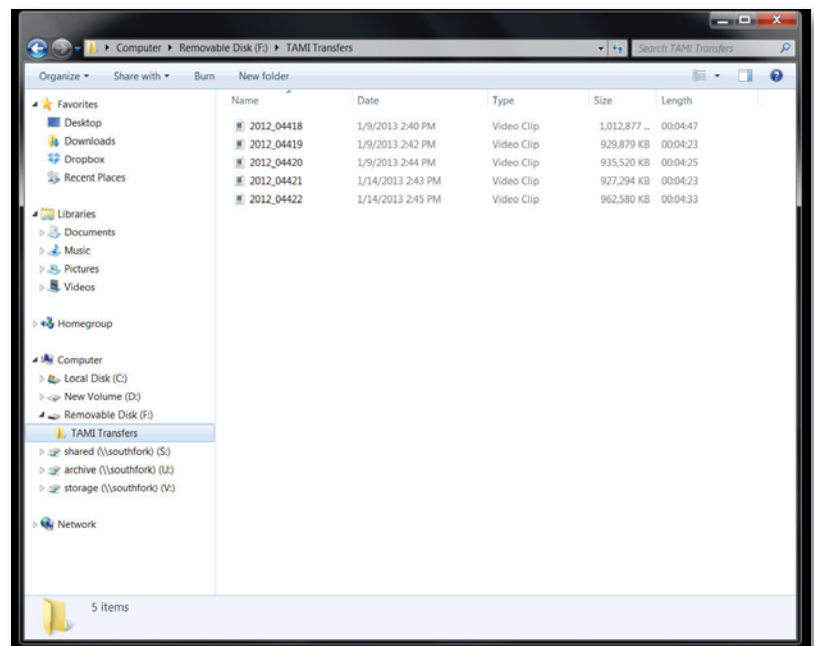
Whether you have an external hard drive or a thumb drive, this process is the same. Verify that the hard drive is connected by selecting the “Computer” or “My Computer” option from the Start Menu. It can take a moment for the drive to be recognized and installed by the computer.



The “Computer” explorer in “My Computer.”

In this first image, I have connected a thumb drive (Removable Drive F) which shows up under the “Devices with Removable Storage” section of the My Computer window.

In the second image to the right, you can see the “TAMI Transfers” folder in the list of devices on the left side of the window, and the list of video files inside that folder on the right side.

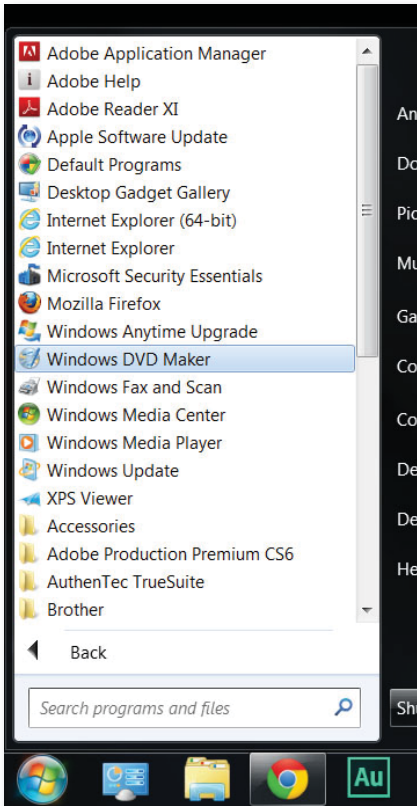


The “TAMI Transfers” folder can be seen under the removable disk in the left hand pane of this window.

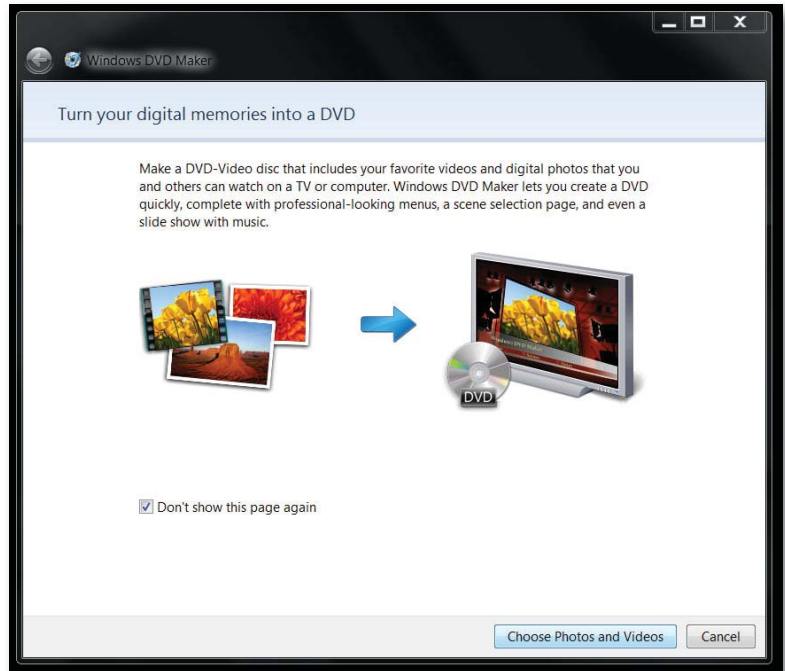
Once you see that the drive has appeared in the list of “Hard Disk Drives” or “Removable Drives” (depending on the type of drive you are using), and you have found the “TAMI Transfers” folder, go to step 2.

Step 2: Launch Windows DVD Maker

Select Windows DVD Maker from the list of programs that appear in your Start Menu. You may need to select “All Programs” to see the full list of programs installed on your computer. Once you find the program, select it to launch.

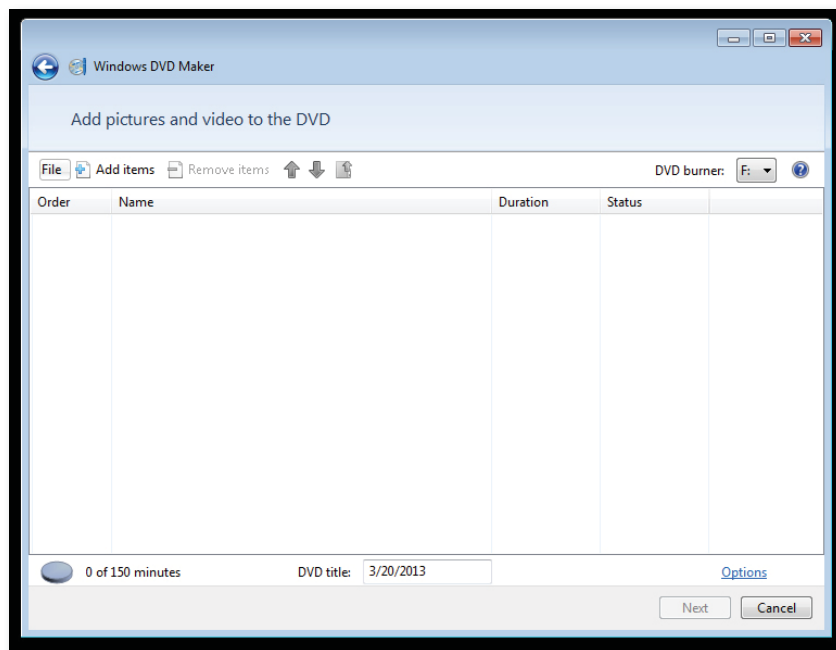


The “Start” menu



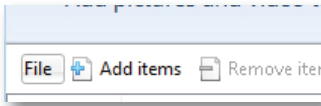
The Windows DVD Maker welcome screen.

After launching the program, you may have to select a button titled “Choose Photos and Videos” to get to the next step. When you see a window similar to the image below, you are ready for the next step.



When you see this screen, you are ready to add video files to the DVD project.

Step 3: Add video files to the DVD



Press the “Add items” button at the top of the screen. When that dialog box opens, navigate to the hard drive and folder that contains your videos by selecting the appropriate drive in the column to the left.

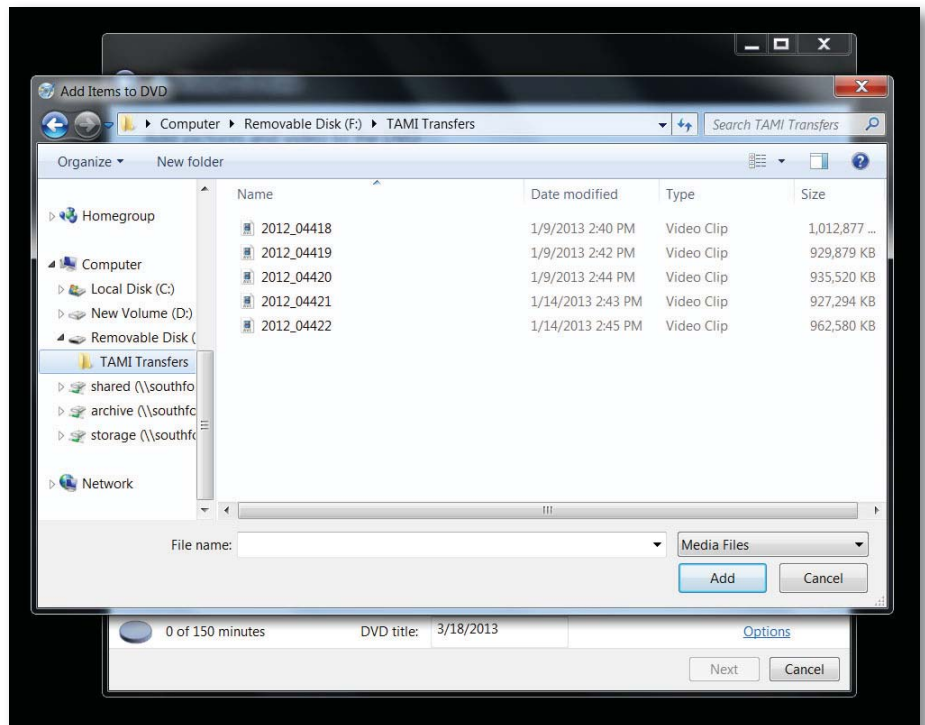
You may need to scroll down a little to see your drive listed. Once you have selected that drive, select the appropriate folder. If you are using the same drive that TAMI returned to you, there should be a folder titled “TAMI Transfers,” which contains your video files.

Then go through the folder and select from the listed files by double clicking on them. After you double click on a file, it will be added to the list in the DVD Maker software. To add the next files, continue to click “add items” and the file names

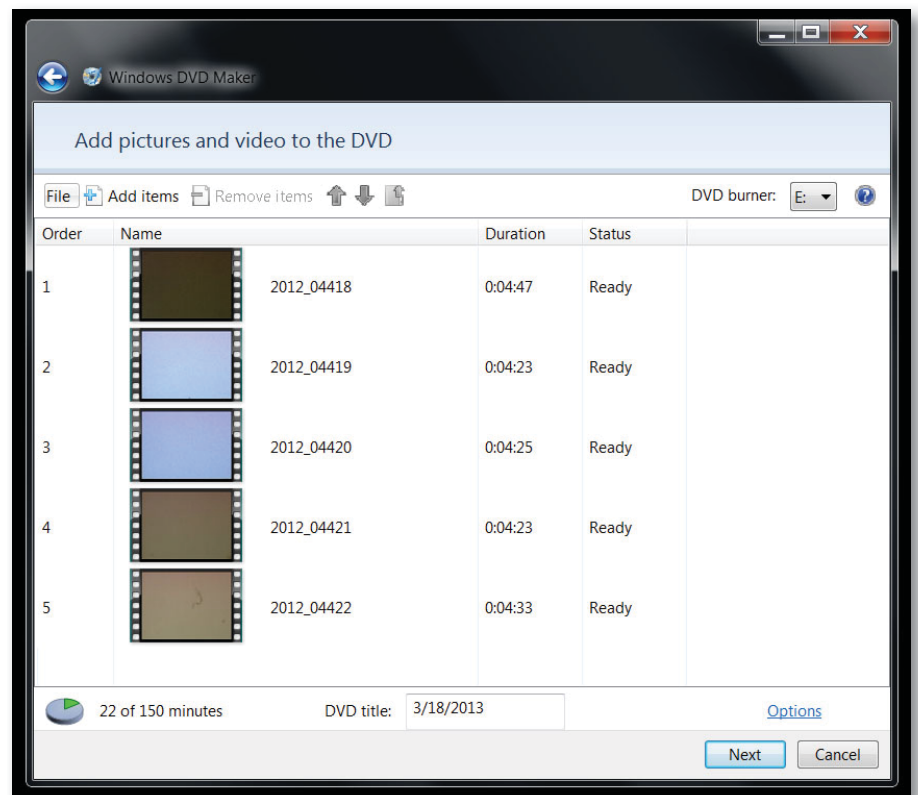
You can change the order of the films you add here by clicking and dragging a title up or down the list.

If you wish to remove an item, just select it, and then click on the “Remove item” button, to the right of the “Add item” button. (The “Remove item” button is not active unless you have a video file selected)

At the bottom of this screen, you can change the title of the DVD. By default, the day’s date is put in this spot, but you can change it to anything that will fit on the screen (e.g. “Home Movies Disk 1”).

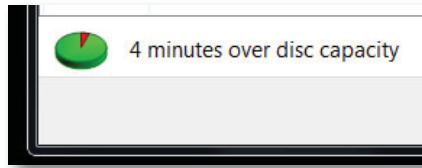
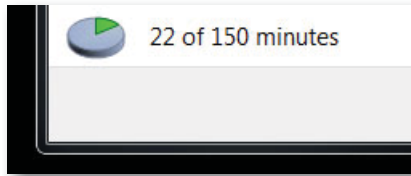


Find your external drive in the left pane of the “Add Items” window.



The files you add will be listed here.

Step 4: Keep an eye on how full your DVD is getting



As you add video files, a small icon towards the bottom left of the screen fills up. Keep an eye on this icon so you don't add more videos than can be burned to one disk. The icon will let you know if you go over, but the program will not stop you from adding videos, so keep an eye out.

Step 5: Changing DVD Options (Optional)

On the bottom right hand side of the DVD Maker program you have the ability to select some options. You can leave these options at their default, or can change them. Below I list some of these options with brief explanations of what they are for:

Choose DVD Playback Settings:

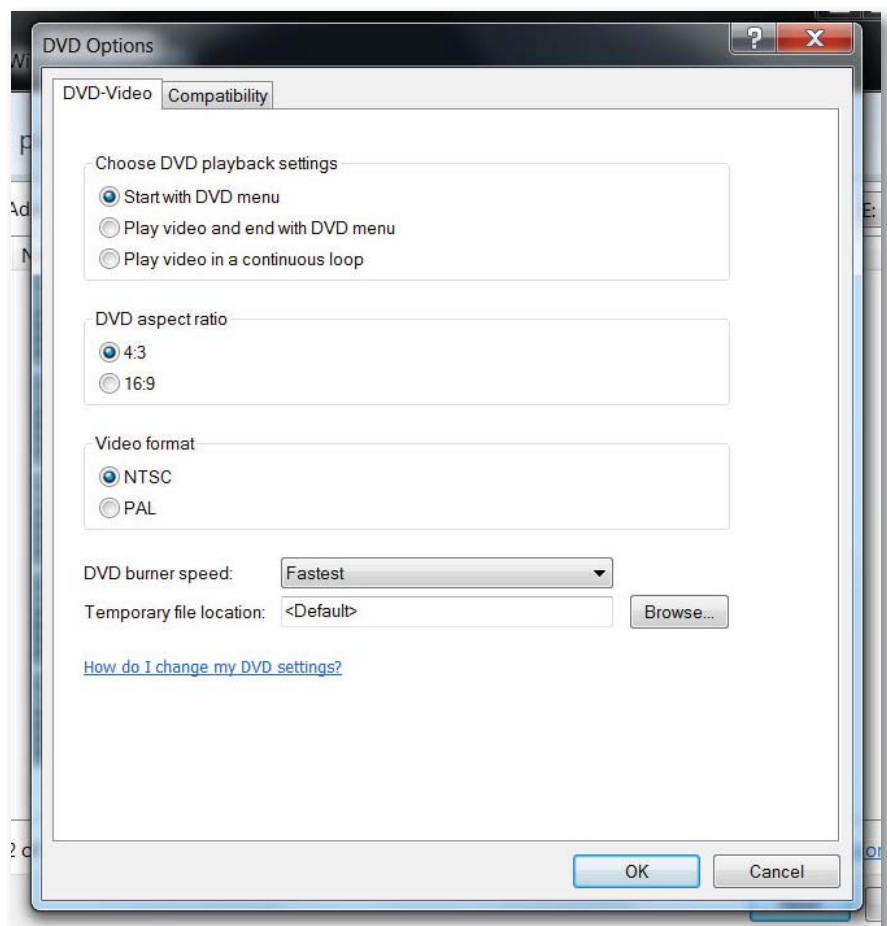
The default is for the DVD to go to the menu when you first start the DVD, but you can change this to your preference if you want the video(s) to play first, or the video(s) to play with no menu.

DVD Aspect Ratio:

Since all of the videos digitized by TAMI are 4:3, there is no need to change this option.

Video Format:

Do not change this setting unless you plan to send your disks to someone in another country that uses the PAL system. If you are sending the disks to another country, you can search online for the name of the country with the words "PAL or NTSC" to find what the correct setting would be.



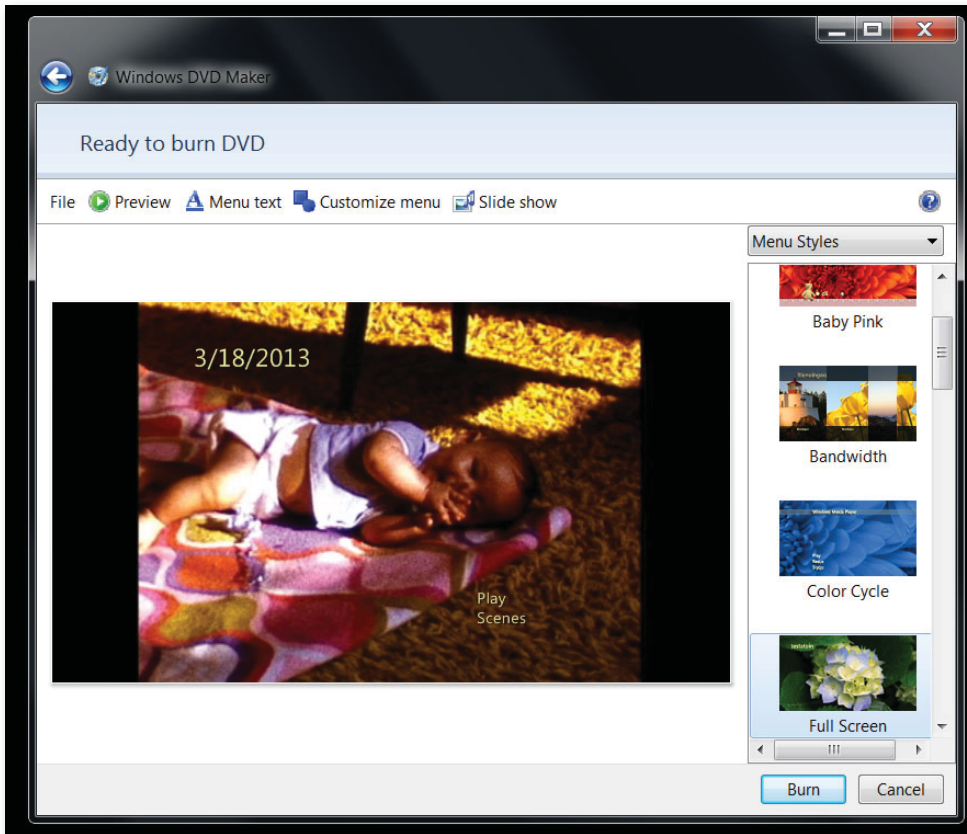
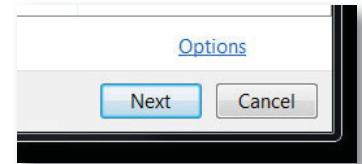
The Options menu.

DVD Burner Speed:

Most DVDs will burn just fine at the "Fastest" setting, but selecting a lower speed improves the accuracy of the burning process and reduces the risk of an error being written to the disk.

Step 6: Press the “Next” button

After you finish adding all your films or changing any options, select the “Next” button. On the next screen you will be presented with a lot of options to customize your DVD if you wish. In step 7, I briefly go through some of these steps if you wish to customize the menu.



This screen presents menu customization options.

Otherwise, if you would like to burn the disk with the default settings and titles, you can select the “Burn” button on the bottom right of the screen.



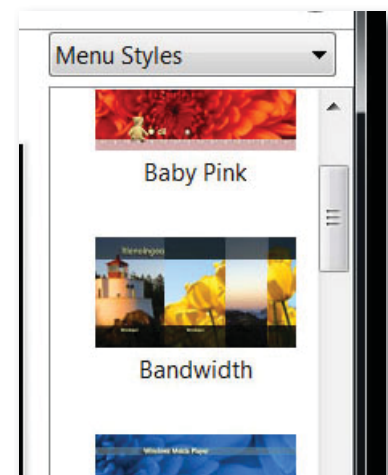
If at any time you need to return to a previous page, you can press the “Back” button, located at in the top right corner of the program window.

Step 7: Customize your DVD (Optional)


There are a number of options for you to customize your DVD.

Menu Style

On the right side of the screen are different menu options for you to choose from. Select one by one down the list until you find one you like, and click.

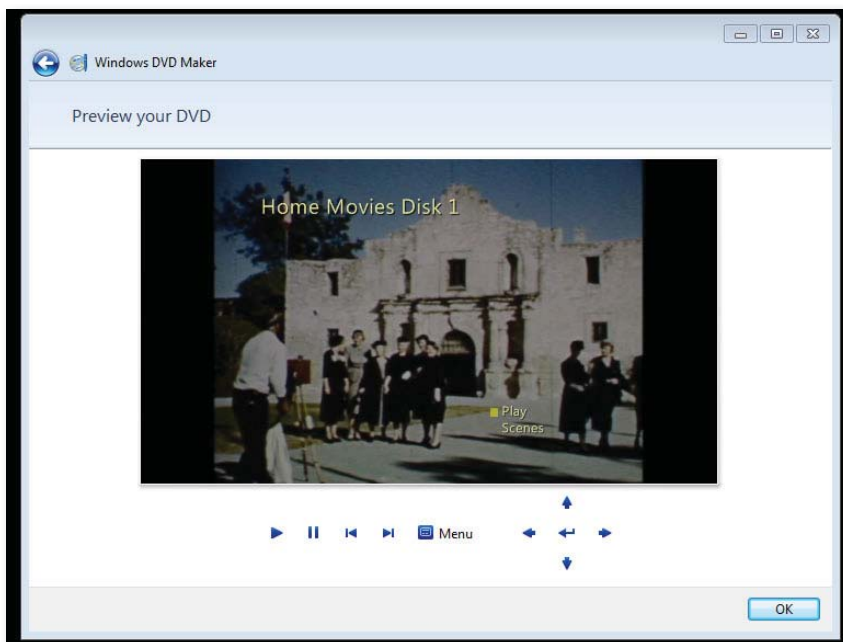


Menu Style options.

 **Preview** You can preview your selection any time by selecting the “Preview” command towards the top left of the screen.


The preview is a fully functioning DVD simulation, and you can select menus and videos to see how they will look. You can either use your mouse to navigate the DVD preview or use the remote commands at the bottom of the preview window.

If you select the “Play” button, all the videos on the disk will play in the order they were imported. To see a list of the videos you imported, press the “Scenes” button



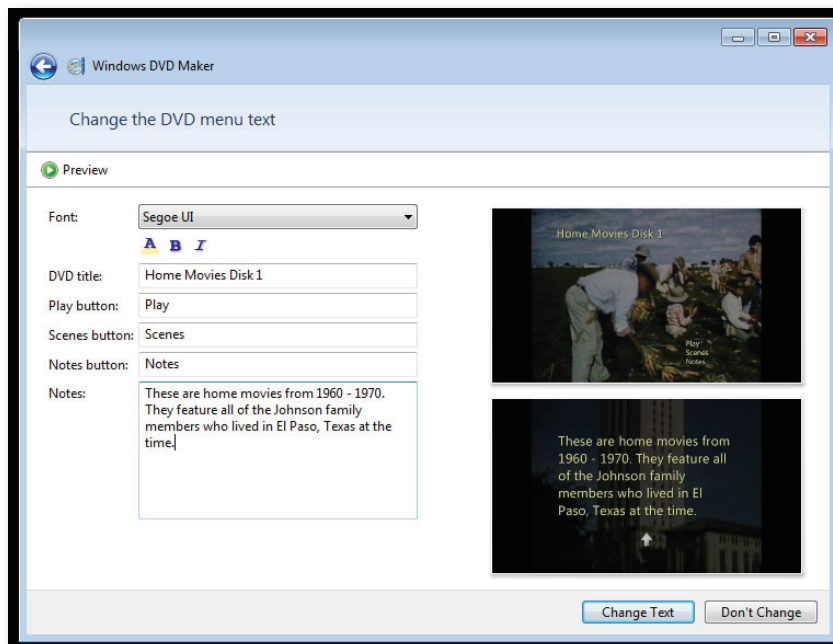
The DVD Preview window. Navigate as you would the DVD on your television

When you are done previewing, select the “OK” button. You will have the option to preview at any stage of the customization process.

 **Menu text** Selecting “Menu Text” allows you to add a customized title and labels for buttons.


By default, the DVD Title is the date you are making the DVD. Keep in mind there are a limited number of digits you can input for your title for it all to fit on the screen. As you type in the title, the preview window to the right will show you how it looks on screen. You can also change the font of the text if you like.

You can also change the names of buttons on the main menu screen. Just type a new name for the button in the corresponding text box.



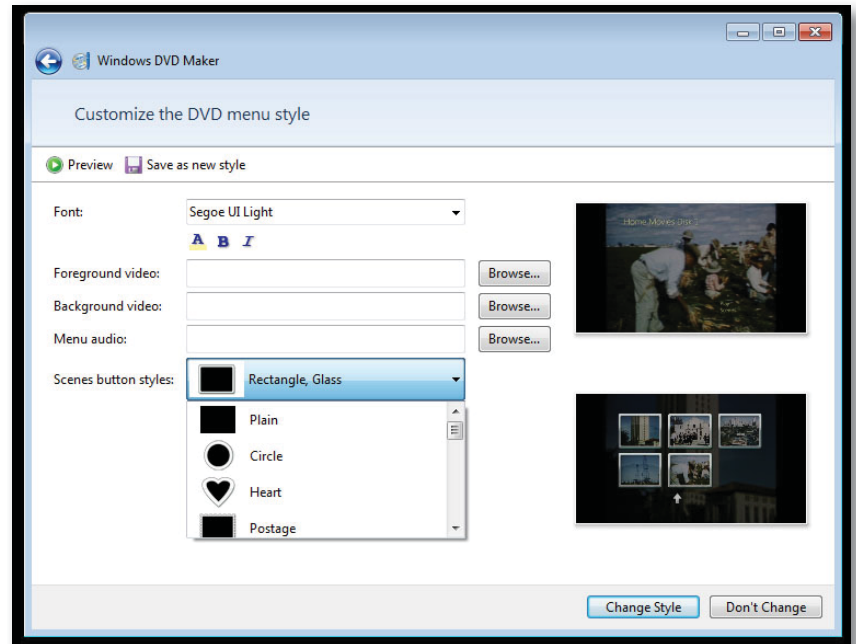
The DVD menu customization window. Change font styles, text, and add notes.

By default, the “Notes” page is turned off. The “Notes” button will appear on the main menu and the “Notes” page will become active if you enter text in the notes field on this screen. You can see how the notes page looks in the example to the right.

 **Customize menu** Selecting “Customize Menu” allows you to change various aspects of the appearance of the menus, depending on which menu style you choose.

For example, options here include the ability to change foreground and background video. By default, Windows DVD Maker automatically uses clips from the videos you added to your DVD. But on this screen, you can change what plays in the background with different video if you wish.

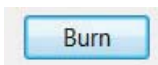
Also on this page you can change the look of the scene buttons. The scene buttons can be found on the “Scenes” page and are previewed in this window in the lower right image. You can change the look of the buttons by selecting a new one in the “Scene button style” drop down box.



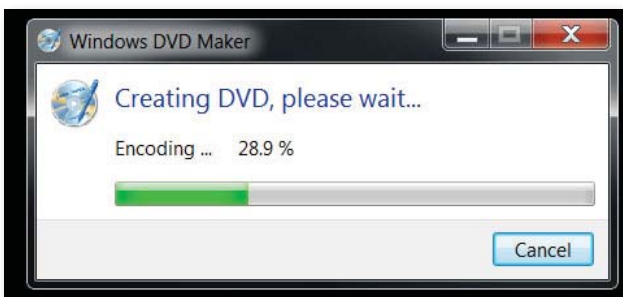
The DVD menu style customization window. Change foreground and background video and video button shapes.

Step 8: Burn your DVD

Insert a blank DVD into the DVD drive on your computer.



Once you are finished customizing your DVD, select the “Burn” button located towards the bottom right of the screen. The main program window will close and a new window will open and display the progress of the DVD burning process.



This DVD creation progress window will appear at the bottom of the screen,

Keep in mind that the length of time it will take for the computer to burn your DVD depends on the type of hardware in your computer.

Also note, there are two processes. The first process is called “encoding,” this is converting your videos to the DVD format. The second process is called “burning,” and this is writing your files to the disk. When the burning process is done, the tray on your DVD drive should automatically open.

When the DVD has finished burning, the program will return to the DVD building menu. You can either exit the program here, or begin building a new DVD.