

Exploring iDVD

At one time the acronym *DVD* stood for *Digital Versatile Disc* and in keeping with that original meaning, iDVD is certainly versatile. Making a DVD with iDVD can be a complex creative undertaking requiring a lot of time, thought, planning, and ingenuity—or it can be as simple as making a couple of menu choices, sticking a recordable DVD into your Mac's optical disc drive, and clicking a button.

The work you'll do in this lesson falls somewhere between a complex creative undertaking and the super-simple click-and-burn solution. Before you begin, though, it will help if you take just a few minutes and get to know some basic iDVD concepts, along with some of the names and functions of the tools that iDVD offers.

Although the purpose of using iDVD is to make a shiny DVD that you can play in your DVD player or on your Mac, what you are actually making as you work is an iDVD *project*. Each iDVD project is stored in its own *project file*, which you can store anywhere on your Mac. iDVD remembers the last project you worked on, and opens that project's project file when you launch iDVD.

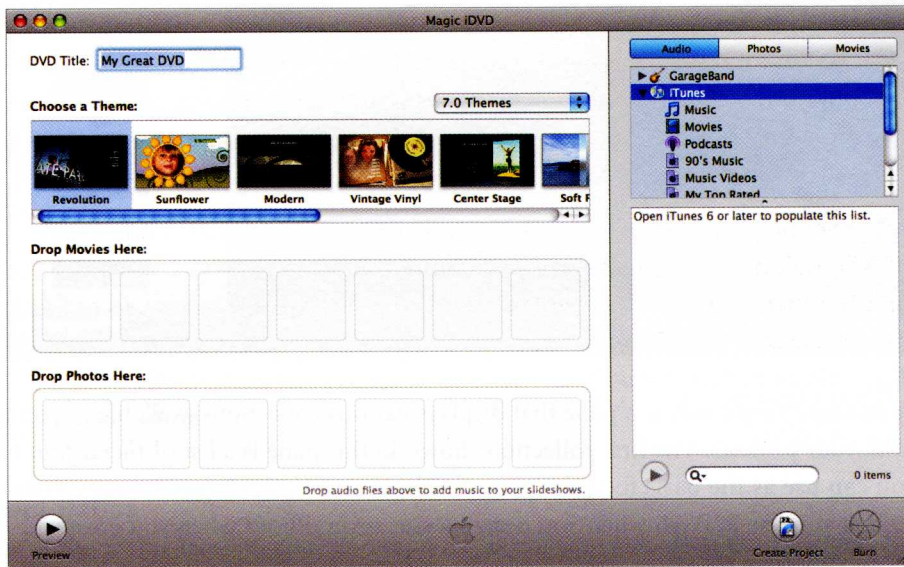
If iDVD can't find the last project you worked on, it shows you this window when it launches, and it also displays this window when you close the project that you're currently working on:



The functions of the first two buttons in the main pane of this window are obvious. Here are brief descriptions of what the other two buttons do.

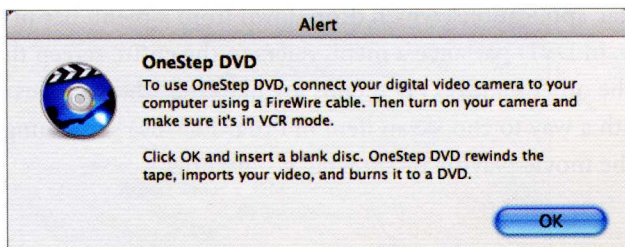
Magic DVD

This button offers a quick way to create a DVD containing multiple movies and photo slideshows. You simply drag movies and sets of photos into the main iDVD screen, choose a design theme for the DVD, and click a button—at which point iDVD creates a complete project, ready for you to use to burn a DVD or to further customize. Magic DVD is a great way to get a running start when assembling a DVD project.



OneStep DVD

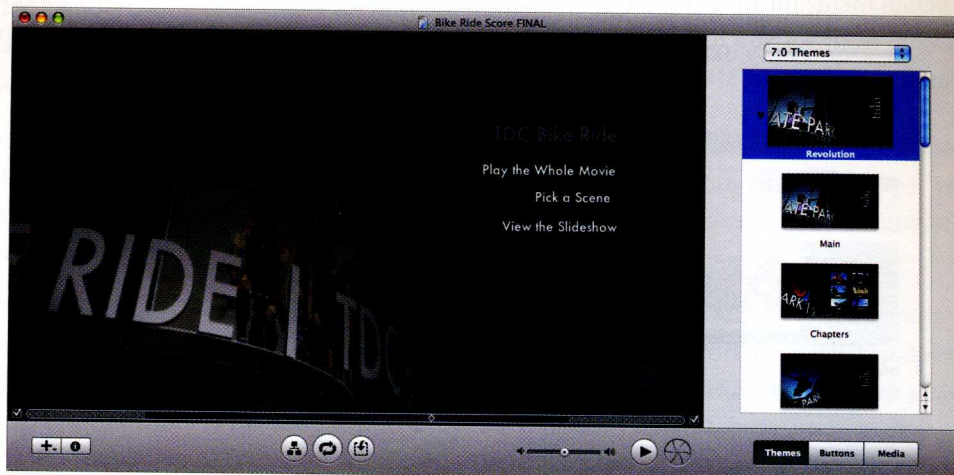
This is an even simpler way to use iDVD. Connect your video camera to your Mac, click this button, and iDVD takes the video from your camera and prepares a DVD from it.



Although you won't use either of these techniques in this lesson, the iDVD project that you'll create starts with a process just about as easy as the one that Magic DVD offers.

Exploring the iDVD Main Window

Nearly all the work you do when creating an iDVD project happens in the iDVD main window.



On the window's right side is a pane that displays various collections available to you as you build your projects. The first collection shown in this pane is a list of *theme families* that you can use as the basis for your project. These are similar in many ways to the themes that you use in iWeb when you design a site, or in iPhoto when you create a book, card, or calendar.

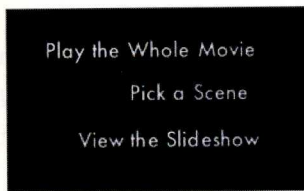
DVD Menus

On the window's left is the main area where you build your project. This area normally presents a DVD *menu*.

Unlike the menus you use in Mac applications, which drop down from a menu bar or pop up from a button on the screen, in DVD parlance a menu refers to the entire screen that the viewer of a DVD sees. On the other hand, DVD menus *are* like your Mac's menus in that they provide the viewer with a way to choose an item in order to cause something to happen: for example, starting the movie playing or showing a slideshow.

Menu Buttons

The items that DVD users interact with on a DVD menu are called *buttons*, even though they may not look like buttons.



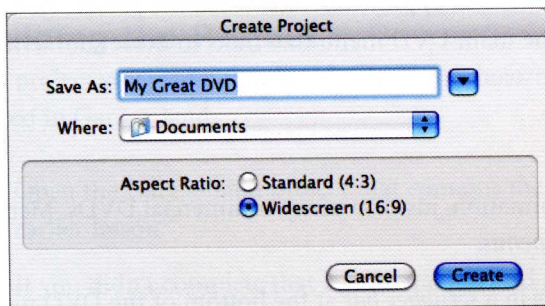
Although they look like text labels, these are DVD menu buttons

A DVD viewer typically uses the DVD player's remote control to move among the buttons on the DVD menu and to pick one—usually by clicking a real, physical button on the player's remote control. (If you use your Mac's DVD Player application to view a DVD on your Mac, you can navigate among the buttons on the DVD's menu with the simulated DVD remote control that DVD Player provides.)

The appearance of a DVD menu's buttons is set initially by the theme family that you choose when you create a DVD project. You can change a button's appearance with the Buttons pane, which you access by clicking Buttons below the pane on the right of the iDVD window. The Buttons pane contains a collection of button styles you can apply to DVD menu buttons.

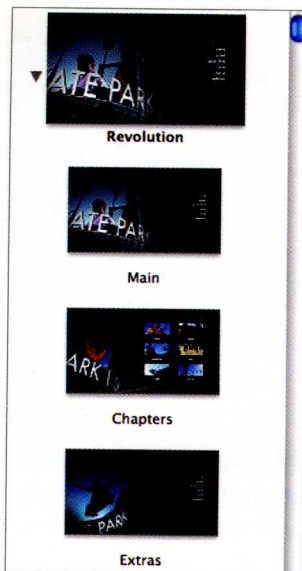
Aspect Ratios

Many of the theme families you can use in iDVD come in two sizes: the 4:3 aspect ratio used by standard television sets, and the 16:9 widescreen aspect ratio used by modern HDTVs. You choose the aspect ratio for your project when you create it from scratch, though you can change it at any time. iDVD can also choose the appropriate aspect ratio for your project when you create it by sending a movie to iDVD from GarageBand, as you'll see later.



DVD Submenus

In addition to coming in two aspect ratios, many iDVD theme families offer three menu themes: one for the main menu, one for *chapters submenu*, and one for *extras submenu*.



Chapters submenus are used when a movie on the DVD is marked with chapter markers, as you did with GarageBand in an earlier lesson. Viewers use a chapters submenu to view the individual scenes in a movie.

Extras submenus are used when a DVD contains additional material, such as the behind-the-scenes production videos that many commercial DVDs offer in addition to the main feature.

Both extras submenu and chapters submenu appear onscreen when the person viewing the DVD chooses a menu button on the main DVD menu that links to those submenus. You establish those links when you construct your iDVD project.

Motion Menus

A number of iDVD themes provide animation, just like many commercial DVDs. Menus with animation are known as *motion menus*.

On a motion menu, a *playhead* appears in a *scrubber bar* at the bottom of the DVD menu in the iDVD window (it doesn't appear, of course, on the final DVD that you make).

