

# Tech File: Pinnacle Systems

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Jeff Hastings, general manager for Pinnacle Systems, spoke with Tech File about his company and the current digital-video-editing industry.

As a 20-year provider of creating-editing-sharing digital video solutions and earning some nine Emmy Awards, Pinnacle has kept consumer products under its name while its broadcast and consumer video business moved under Avid following its buyout last year. Since the acquisition, Pinnacle has concentrated more on the consumer market, developing products that help people get the most from all their personal media, said Hastings, noting that the merger made sense placing the companies in an unrivalled space.

"We started out in video editing software and hardware, and still consider that one of our primary focuses, but the consumer electronics industry is changing so much that we cannot ignore the other opportunities," Hastings said. "For instance, growing consumer media consumption is undeniable. TV solutions for PCs and digital homes, digital media adaptors, or transcoding solutions for media use on portable devices like a Sony PSP or Apple's iPod. All of those issues are part of what Pinnacle concentrates on now."

Q. Why do you think portable and Internet video is suddenly so hot?

A. It seems to stem from a few main things. First, the cost of video playback devices has dropped to a mass market price level. Second, the availability of video content -- both personal content and professionally created movies and TV -- has gone up dramatically in recent months and

continues to rise. Third, the simplification of media formats and transferring between formats is a great deal easier now. It doesn't take a lot of effort to make exactly what you want available whenever and wherever you want it.

Q. Two of your products, Pinnacle Mobile Media Converter and Pinnacle Mobile Media Organizer, focus on converting video for portable devices like iPods and portable media centers. What do you think about this market's future potential?

A. We believe the portable video market will follow a path similar to what the portable music market has taken. The portable music example is clear: Sony's estimation of 29 million PlayStation Portable units to be sold by the end of 2006 and more than 6 million Apple video iPods sold to date.

But that is only a starting point to the millions of other mobile devices that will make a difference in our market, like video-enabled cell phones. Mobile devices and video media use are emerging rapidly and Pinnacle Systems plans to be strong in that space.

Q. What can you tell us about consumer editing products like Dazzle and Studio?

A. We have a dual brand strategy with Dazzle and Studio. Both are built off the same technology base but address the entire range of customers' needs. To be more specific, Dazzle is our entry-level solution for video capture, which still is a very strong market that we lead. We just renewed the entire line and we now offer solutions that range from simple capture to DVD authoring, as well as light editing and transfer to mobile devices. Most of us have old media with our favorite home movies and photos that we don't want to lose and shouldn't have to lose just because of outdated formats. With a product like Dazzle you don't

have to be limited by older formats.

Also, we understand that not all customers have the latest, best, fastest hardware equipment available on the market. Two of our Dazzle products actually include hardware compression components so customers working from lower performance laptops or PCs can still get the most out of Dazzle and accomplish what they have set out to do.

Studio is our flagship product line that has been in the marketplace for a number of years and has evolved to reflect consumers' demands. When we launched Studio 10 in the fall of 2005 we did have trouble right off the bat with stability, but have been putting an enormous amount of effort behind improving that quality and exceeding customers' expectations. Even with the lower-than-expected quality issues, customers still rated us the easiest-to-use application on the market.

We recently introduced Studio 10.5 and Studio Titanium Edition. With this addition we are demonstrating our commitment to constantly improve the Studio line and make it the best in the business, bar none. The family of products is a complete solution with both software and hardware video editing options.

Q. What consumer feedback have you received? What features are customers looking in this level of product?

A. They certainly appreciate the flexibility and ease-of-use that are fundamental components of all of our products. They are looking for more simplicity and the ability to easily integrate all of the media they have. Some of the features customers cite most frequently are:

- Dazzle's hardware compression and resulting benefits
- One-click transferring ability to PSPs or iPods

-- HD editing capability

Given that most camcorders will be HD-ready soon, we are well ahead of the curve by offering HD editing as a standard option.

Q. Where do you think video editing software is going in the next few years?

A. There will be more opportunity to share beyond traditional devices, like DVDs. Web sharing will be key, no doubt. Also, full digital editing as well as 100 percent capture on digital devices appear to be closer to reality. With that in mind, HD will continue to be a large component of our business. But it is not just HD.

Today we are looking at an explosion of devices that can capture content. But that is only part of the future's story. The destination of that content is an important consideration as well.

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