Review: Yoostar is a movie-studio-in-a-box

August 28 2009, By DERRIK J. LANG , AP Entertainment Writer

In this product image released by Yoostar, the new Yoostar system, is shown. It is a do-it-yourself film studio, that allows people to digitally insert themselves into famous movie scenes from the comfort of their own living rooms. (AP Photo/Yoostar)

(AP) -- If you've ever wanted to battle "The Terminator," talk smack as "The Godfather" or get in the shower with a "Psycho," now you can - without having to move to Hollywood.

The new Yoostar system, a sort of do-it-yourself film studio, allows wannabe A-listers to digitally insert themselves into famous movie scenes from the comfort of their own living rooms.

Setting up the system is a snap. Just add computer.

Yoostar comes with a camera, remote control, green screen and

software. The 2-megapixel mounted camera, which looks more like "WALL-E" than a traditional webcam, effectively captures crisp and clear moving images. The audio from the built-in microphone, however, often turns out muffled and distorted and doesn't always sync up with the sound from the clips.

The green screen is actually a 6-by-6-foot swath of neon fabric that stretches over a retractable frame and can easily be stored or transported in a nylon carrying case that comes with the system. The effect works best if used in a well-lit room with no shadows, but it seems hit or miss. Some scenes turn out seamless; others are a hot pixilated mess.

It's reminiscent of last year's "You're in the Movies," a lame Xbox 360 game that utilized the Xbox Live Vision camera to transport gamers into fake kitschy B-movies. Luckily, there's no meaningless game element with Yoostar, and the film scenes themselves are from a library of recognizable films from studios like MGM, Paramount, Universal and Warner Bros.

Movie lovers will be tickled with the wide variety of curated clips, ranging from older flicks including "Double Indemnity," "Spartacus" and "Casablanca" to contemporary classics such as "Animal House," "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" and "Forrest Gump" to less legendary fare like "Norbit," "Employee of the Month" and a few of the "Saw" films.

Once users have mastered their best Sylvester Stallone impersonation - yes, "Rocky" is in there, too - they can upload their performances to Yoostar's online portal, which features most social networking features one might expect. However, copyright restrictions mean Yoostar performances are limited in the places they can be posted. That means no YouTube.

At a hefty $169.95, Yoostar probably isn't worth the price - unless you

really, really want to be in the movies.

The easy-to-use Yoostar software only comes with 14 scenes, which last between one to three minutes apiece. Yoostar promises that about 200 clips will be available for download at launch, costing between $1.99 to $3.99 each. They expect to have over 500 clips online by the end of the year, and the site is already taking requests. "Top Gun," anyone?

On the Net:

www.yoostar.com

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