

With WeVideo, you can edit video in the cloud, then share it

December 22 2011, By Mike Swift

The Internet has long been a great place to express yourself in words. But two of the biggest trends on the Web, cloud computing and social networks, are also making it a great place to express yourself with images - to create visual art alone or in collaboration with others, and then to share what you create with as many people as you dare.

That is the vision of WeVideo, a new online [video](#) editing startup, based in Sunnyvale, Calif., that says it is the first company to offer a video editing platform in the cloud as powerful as many desktop editing tools. WeVideo, which has versions ranging from free to \$60 a month depending on the amount of video you want to edit and share, allows people to edit within their Web browser - to splice video clips, add audio and weave in [visual effects](#) to create the kind of polished video that previously required sophisticated and pricey software like Apple's Final Cut Pro.

Sharing and watching online video has become a mainstream activity. About seven out of 10 online Americans use video-sharing sites like [YouTube](#) and Vimeo, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, while YouTube says it receives 48 hours of video uploads each minute. But while hundreds of millions of people now carry smartphones equipped with video cameras, relatively few have the tools to edit raw footage into something polished and creative.

WeVideo, which developed the first versions of its product in Norway as an educational tool for European schoolchildren and has tried to retain

that simplicity and intuitive use in its online video software, hopes to change all that.

"Our ultimate goal is to become the most widely used video editing platform in the world," said Jostein Svendsen, CEO of WeVideo. "It's a big goal for a small startup, but we think we can achieve it."

By using the "cloud" - where the heavy computing work of video editing is distributed across vast server farms owned by Amazon, rather than on an individual computer - WeVideo also allows people in different places to collaborate on a video. And once your video is complete, you can post it almost instantly on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, without a lengthy upload.

WeVideo, which has attracted more than 100,000 users since its Sept. 13 launch and hopes to hit 1 million by the end of its first year, is hardly the only startup trying to use the cloud let people make and share art. Another is Mixel, an iPad app launched Nov. 10 that allows users to create their own digital collages, or to "remix" the creations of others.

"I realized that if somebody could create a social art-making experience, you could turn tens of millions of people into artists who didn't think of themselves as artists," said Khoi Vinh, the former director of design for The New York Times' website, who is co-founder and CEO of Mixel.

Mixel is social on two levels: You can share what you create on Facebook, Tumblr or other social networks, and you also can share the process of creating images. Each component of each collage is part of a shared online database that can be used by other Mixel users. Users also can remix the collages of others by adding their own images, drawing from their photos on Facebook or other sources, to create a "thread" of collages that evolve as they move through each user's iPad.

"The tool is really, really simple - almost primitive - so people would just focus on getting collages done, not on being super perfectionists," Vinh said. "But even as primitive as they are, we've noticed that people have found new ways of making collages that are shockingly good."

Simplicity, collaboration and sharing are also key to what WeVideo is trying to do.

WeVideo isn't quite a finished product yet. Svendsen and his engineers are working on mobile apps that will soon allow users to upload video directly from an iPhone or Android phone to its website, rather than downloading to a PC before uploading it. Until those apps are available, probably in the spring, the process of getting raw video from your phone to WeVideo's cloud can be somewhat difficult.

But once your raw footage is uploaded to the cloud, WeVideo is fun and highly addictive. WeVideo offers more features than Apple's iMovie or Microsoft's Moviemaker, Svendsen said, but slightly fewer than Final Cut Pro, which costs \$299.99 on iTunes. Not limited to either a PC or a Mac, the service runs in any browser, including Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox and Safari. There is also an integration with YouTube, at www.youtube.com/create, allowing you to work right in the Web's top video site.

While I have limited experience with Final Cut Pro, I am a long way from expert at editing video. But using WeVideo's free service, I was able to take the video I shot on my phone on a recent trip to Yosemite National Park and edit it into a three-minute movie, complete with sound track, titles and transitions from one scene to another, in about 2 { hours. (I actually could have done it more quickly, but I was having so much fun I didn't want to stop. Just don't tell my editor that.) I only had to click the "Help" button twice.

As in Apple's video editing software, WeVideo's editing tool lets you drag raw video clips you have stored into a timeline, cut them to the length you want, and drag in audio tracks, transitions and graphics like titles and end credits.

Svendsen said the cloud's power to simplify and allow collaboration will transform and "democratize" the process of video creation, letting anyone become a broadcaster.

"We are trying to find the right balance," he said, "between powerful and simple."

WEVIDEO

-What it is: A full-feature video editing tool that runs in your [Web browser](#).

-Cost: Four introductory subscription models: free, \$4.99 a month, \$29.99 month or \$59.99 a month, depending on image quality and the amount of video you want to store and export to destinations like Facebook and YouTube.

-Where: wevideo.com, where you can create an account or sign in with a Facebook, Google or Yahoo account.

MIXEL:

-What it is: An iPad app that allows you to create and share image collages, either by "remixing" other people's collages, or by creating your

OWN.

-Cost: Free

-Where: App can be downloaded at Apple's App Store. More information at mixel.cc/. You need a Facebook account to use the service. Mixel imposes that requirement because it wants people to use their real names on the service, to maintain a family friendly environment.

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