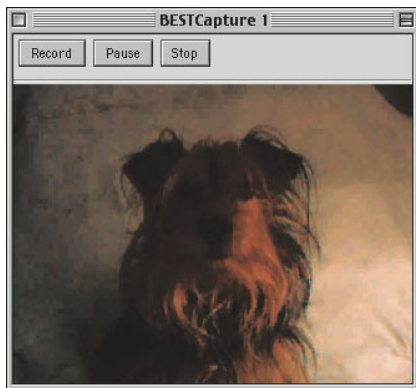


BESTCapture Plugin

Michael Richardson

BEST Software Design's BESTCapture plug-in promises to let your programs easily support video capture.

The plugin worked in REALbasic 5.2, as well as older versions all the way back to REALbasic 3.2.1 (although the example file did not run in older versions due to some syntax that is only in newer versions). One thing I noticed in Mac OS 9 is that this plugin really bogs down the computer when it's operating. It took several seconds just to open menus and do other trivial things, even on an iMac G4 700 MHz.



Mac OS X, of course, did not suffer from this problem, but it is a problem if you still create software for OS 9.


Regardless, there was still a picture in that example window, and it worked with both cameras I tried: the PC Camera feature of a Finepix 3800, and an older QuickCam VC (which only works in OS 9 due to driver issues). The plugin delivered basically the same quality as any other program with video capture.

But now for the important part: how easy is it to implement BESTCapture in a new REALbasic project? You simply drag the BESTCapture icon from the REALbasic Controls palette to an open project window. To have the newly-created control automatically show a preview of the connected camera, just check the "Preview" checkbox. Don't forget to check "EnableVideo" and "EnableSound".

Voilà — you have instant capture from your video source. This alone doesn't do much, however. To do anything useful, you need to start

writing some code—but that's pretty easy. The plugin supports a plethora of options, methods, and functions, and they're all well documented in the included PDF manual. You need to have a little technical knowledge of QuickTime video capture if you want to utilize more advanced functions—but all the basics are pretty easy. For example, capturing the current frame as a picture is as simple as calling the GrabPicture function of the plugin.

However, what if you really want to tweak your settings to get that even-more perfect picture? The plugin supports an impressive array of quality settings such as white level, black level, contrast, depth, saturation, sharpness, and many others.

This plugin has everything you could ever need. The only possible complaint is an inflexible pricing structure. The price is well worth it for most developers, but hobbyists and students might benefit from an academic or freeware-only license. 

IN BRIEF

Product
BESTCapture Plugin

Manufacturer
BEST Software Design

Price
\$59.99

System Requirements
Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X, REALbasic 3.2.1 or better

Contact Info
support@bestsoftwaredesign.com
<http://www.bestsoftwaredesign.com>

Pros
Supports everything you would ever want to do, very compatible.

Cons
Causes lag in OS 9

Rating (1.0-5.0): 4.0



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