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## Panorama Menu

Panorama menu is an idea I always wanted to implement on DVD. It is a series of still menus and transitions between them. The still menu has left and right buttons. Pressing either one will rotate the view to that direction revealing a new point of interest.

The key word is to "rotate". Not just plain slide from one picture to another which you can do with a simple menu transitions or in any NLE, but really feeling of rotation of camera. That would be cool.

The applications are many. We can make a virtual tour of house for example. User can interactively move from room to room and look around. Or we can make really cool looking menu.

**The text below refers to DVD-lab PRO.**

## VR Panorama

The VR panoramas are quite popular on web pages. The simple ones are created easily with a normal digital camera. Most of the cameras have a panorama mode that let's you to capture series images surrounding you. Then a 'stitching' application is used to create one single wrap-around image. This application often comes with the camera equipped with panorama mode. Canon, Olympus, Pentax all have panorama mode. (Sony digital cameras don't)

Here I captured series of images:



Then a stitching application is used to put all together to create panoramatic image.



Then a panorama viewer applet is usually used to bring the panorama to a web page. You can scroll the panorama and it has a feel of "being there".

**We will now create something similar on DVD!**

First step is to create the stitched panorama file as described above. Use your digital camera and then stitching software supplied with the camera or any of the numerous panorama stitching programs from internet). I will not go into details of this.

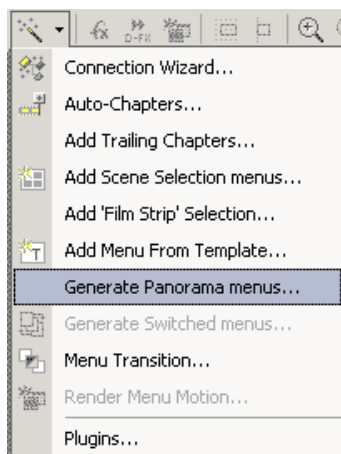
**Note:** Panoramas are spherical and cylindrical. We will work on cylindrical panoramas - these are the ones you can create with your digital camera and allows moving in horizontal direction. The spherical panoramas enables you to also look all the way down or up - but they are not easy to make - you need an expensive fish eye lens, that is often more expensive than the camera itself.

**Note2:** Most of the normal cameras don't have lens too wide and panorama images love wide shots (see my panorama above). A wide convertor lens (0.7x or 0.5x) can dramatically improve the feel.

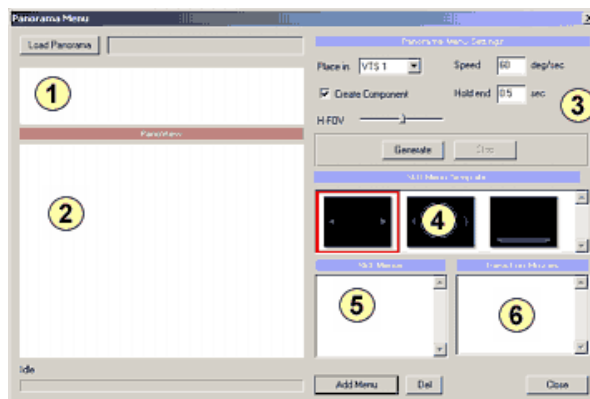
My panorama was created with now ancient Canon S10, but I had a wide angle lens attached to it. I used also ancient PhotoVista software (it allows to enter manually the lens parameters) to stitch the image together. It went very well.

### Generate Panorama menus

Once we have our stitched panorama file we can continue in DVD-lab PRO:



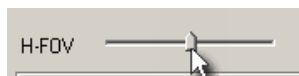
This will open my own magic panorama menu maker:



- 1 - Preview of loaded panorama image
- 2 - Panorama View
- 3 - Settings
- 4 - Menu template
- 5 - Menu list
- 6 - Transition List

First we will load the stitched panorama image using Load panorama button. The image will appear in preview and also below in the Panorama View. This view is very similar to the web page panorama views, you can click inside and then drag mouse to rotate the panorama.

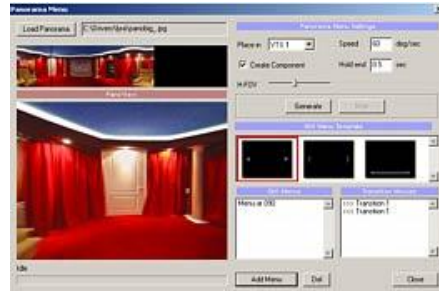
If the image was stitched correctly the view in the Panorama view should look fine. Sometimes, however, it may look bit squashed or stretched to sides. This can happen if your stitching software didn't wrap the images correctly - for example if you set that the lens was 20mm when in fact it was a 35 mm lens etc... but this can be adjusted with the H-FOV slider. The default way is in the middle.



How the DVD-lab panorama works is that we choose few places of interests in the panorama that will be generated as still menus. Then the generator will create a transition movies

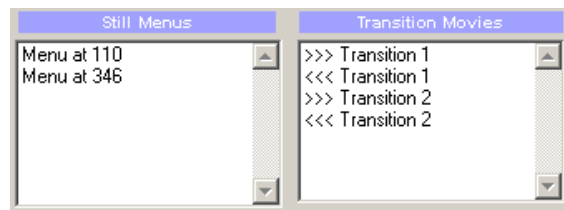
between these still menus in both direction. At the end all will be combined and linked, ready to use.

In my panorama I choose this door to be first still menu. Let's say later I want to link this door to another panorama that shows the room inside.



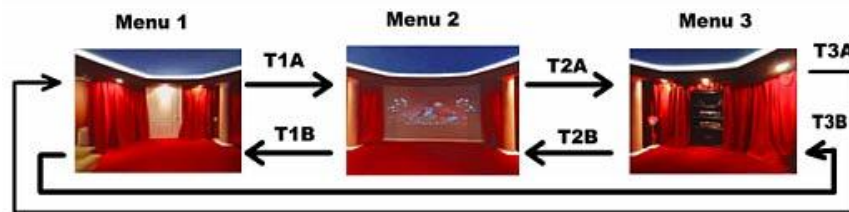
I rotate the view to my point of interest and then click Add Still button. Few things will happened. First the Still Menu entry will be added and then two new transition movies will be added to the right list.

As we scroll to another place and add another Still menu, yet another entries will appear.

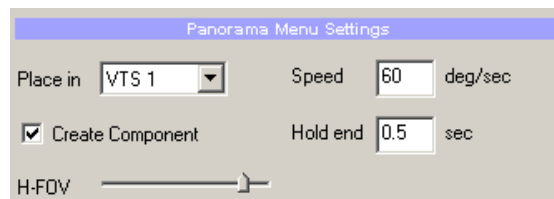


For each still menu we need two transition files to cover both directions.

For 3 menus we will have the scenario below. We have to be able to transit from each menu to the menu in left or right so we have to build that many transitions.



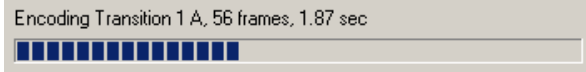
Before we let generate all the menus and transitions, lets have a look at the settings.



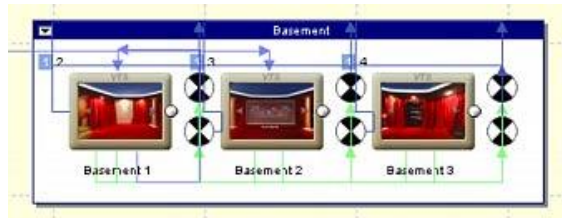
An interesting part is speed. It is measured in degrees per second. Full panorama is 360 degrees. A value between 60 (slower) or 120 (faster) works best.

The Hold end of 0.5 second will create the transition that will hold last frame for 0.5 sec. This will assure that when player go from transition to still menu it will not create "jump" but make it smooth. A value of 0.5 sec is a very good one.

OK, we can press Generate button. It will ask us for a name (as \*.m2v file). After that it will take few minutes because the transition movies will need to be generated into MPEG-2 mini-movies.



Once that is done a new menus and transition menus will be created and also correctly linked together. A big time saver.



The still menus have also left and right buttons on them. This was added from the Menu template box. Also you may not see it clearly on the image below, but a central dummy button is also added. This is the default "first" but invisible button. As soon as user press left or right button on remote the left or right button will be activated (they have auto-activate property set) and the transition movement (rotation of camera) is played.



Works great in my case!

**Note:** The invisible central dummy button can be also later used to link various panoramas together. For example here if user press enter it may "go" to the room behind the door or go to any normal menu.

**Tip:** You don't have to limit yourself to a virtual tours. In fact you can use it instead a normal menus. Be creative.

**Example:**

I took this panorama image and typed directly some text on it in Real-DRAW (or Photoshop etc.), then save it and used it in Panorama generator.

Pressing Enter will Play the  
Movie



Pressing Enter will go to settings menu, which may be a close-up of the apparatus with settings for audio or subtitles.



Pressing Enter will go to special features menu (another room?)



This is just one of the many ideas how to use this.

