



EXPECT TO PAY
£25

▲ **Fool your family and friends into thinking you spent hundreds of pounds on a slideshow with MediaShow 4**

■ **PUBLISHER:** CyberLink ■ **WEB SITE:** www.cyberlink.com
■ **SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:** Microsoft Windows XP/Vista, 512MB RAM, 1GB free hard disk space, dual-core processor, 800 x 600 display

CyberLink MediaShow 4

If you thought you'd seen all that slideshows can offer, then think again, says **Christian Hall**

For years, PC users have craved something as intuitive as Apple's *iLife* suite and as powerful as *Adobe Photoshop Elements* to share, display and edit photos and videos. There's no shortage of excellent applications, but a one-stop shop has never really made the grade. However, *MediaShow 4* gets very close.

Essentially, *MediaShow 4* does the job of other good video and photo editors, but adds a certain quality to projects with a superb selection of photo and video slideshow effects. It's the sort of thing that you'd expect to see in professional packages. If that wedding DVD with the dodgy intro is looking a bit amateurish, then *MediaShow* is your ticket to making it look like the video cost hundreds of pounds to make.

MediaShow can be seen as a media enhancer. Burning mixed-content DVDs in a few clicks is as easy as it sounds, while sharing photos and videos online by uploading directly to YouTube or Flickr, or mailing them, is simple.

Media flow

MediaShow 4 is one of the most comprehensive digital media organisers we've used, and the

3D flip interface adds as much usability as it does graphical wizardry. The grey interface that's become common in the latest photo-editing packages helps images and videos to stand out, while keeping menu items easy on the eye. The autosizing scrollbar for images and videos also provides an instant way of resizing for your workspace.

Searching for media is also speedy and the tagging feature is a must-have for organising large collections. Mixing your media by creating a video and photo DVD is a smooth transition and the one-click sharing of your results is a breeze. The clever way that *MediaShow* can sync your media to the pace of your music takes the hassle out of trying to get a tune pinned down with the way you've constructed a slideshow. Overall, this is a powerful app with a professional feel and comes highly recommended. **PCA**

PCAnswers VERDICT	
Ease of use	●●●●○
Features	●●●●○
Performance	●●●●○
Value for money	●●●●○

Beautiful results, effortless control **86%**

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▲ **PowerDVD 8 enables you to edit your DVDs on the fly, but this feature is likely to leave most users unmoved**

■ **PUBLISHER:** CyberLink ■ **WEB SITE:** www.cyberlink.com
■ **SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:** Microsoft Windows XP/Vista, 256MB RAM (512MB RAM Vista), AGP or PCI-E video supporting DirectX 9.0, 1,024 x 768 or 1,280 x 1,024 display

CyberLink PowerDVD 8

DVD playback with real-time editing? **Christian Hall** senses that movie watching has gone too far

DVD playback on your PC is pretty cut and dried.

All new machines come with DVD software, whether it's Windows' own or, more often than not, from CyberLink itself. So why would anyone spend money on a tool that costs more than most DVD players?

The answer lies in how old your PC's software is. Windows XP MCE and Vista users should revel in the excellent set of tools in *Media Center*, and even *Windows Media Player* is now a sturdy tool. Yet there's no denying that *PowerDVD 8* gives you a new approach to watching DVDs on your PC and how you interact with them, offering you controls that go way beyond what's on your remote.

Director's cut

Anyone familiar with previous CyberLink products will be able to jump straight in, while fledgling users will have no difficulty getting used to the GUI. A new feature to version 8 is the oddly named 'Moovie Live', which is an attempt to build a community of DVD fans by organising your own DVD collection. If you have the time then there's plenty to get from this.

The other major new element of *PowerDVD 8* is *Movie Remix*,

which enables you to edit a movie and add new sounds, comments or effects. It's a clever program but the longevity of its features is debatable. If DVD editing is your thing then you'd want to look at more professional products.

CyberLink's CLEV2 technology remains, which sorts out colour and contrast issues, and the DVD playback quality is excellent. The configurations tab is generally the same as previous versions and this is an essential part of how to configure *PowerDVD* for optimum performance. If you have a 5.1 system then be sure to change the audio output settings – as you would with *Windows Media Center* – and use the colour profiling to fine-tune your monitor.

CyberLink PowerDVD 8 is an enhanced version of the excellent package that it's always been. However, the editing extras will have limited appeal as far as most users are concerned. **PCA**

PCAnswers VERDICT	
Ease of use	●●●●○
Features	●●●●○
Performance	●●●●○
Value for money	●●●●○

Good playback, but too many gimmicks **70%**

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