

## Encoding with RealNetworks® RealProducer® 10 Basic

RealNetworks® RealProducer® 10 Basic (henceforth referred to as RealProducer®) is the free downloadable version of RealProducer®. There is a fully featured version available from RealNetworks® for a charge. The basic version provides all the necessary functions to enable quick production of video files suitable for viewing over the Internet in the RealNetworks® video format (files have the extension .rm).

The installation package for RealProducer® is available via download at:  
<http://www.realnetworks.com/products/producer/basic.html>

The package is available for the Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® Mac® and Linux® platforms.

### CREATING A VIDEO FILE FROM A LIVE VIDEO SOURCE

Any type of video source can be used, either live or pre-recorded. Ensure the device is connected to the computer. This may be as simple as connecting a webcam to a USB port or as complex as connecting a VCR to a breakout box attached to a dedicated encoding card using an S-VHS cable. Once the device is connected, run the RealProducer® program.

1. The RealProducer® program essentially consists of two windows (Figure 1).

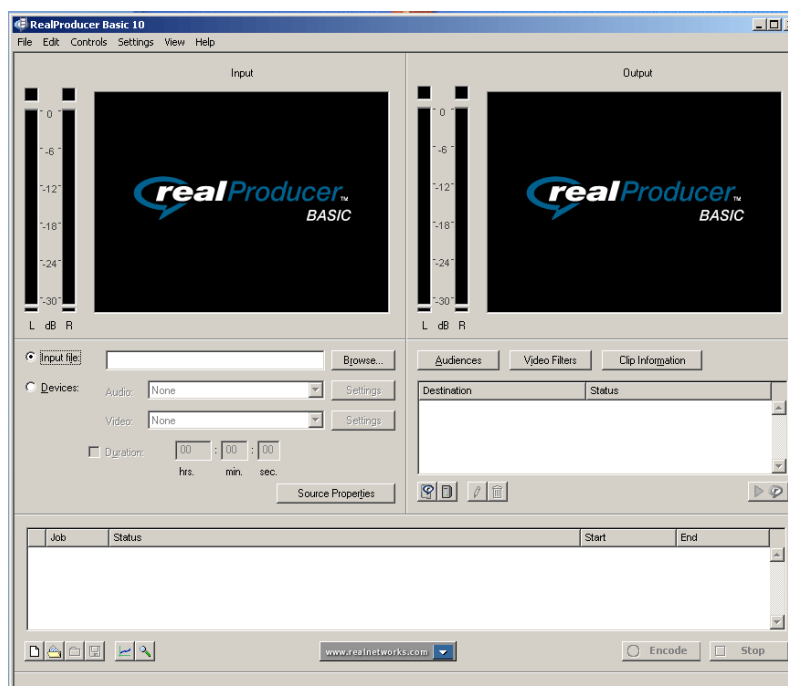


Figure 1 RealProducer® screenshot

The left window represents the video source (the input), such as a webcam or VCR. Upon starting the program, make sure that the source can be seen before proceeding further.

2. If nothing can be seen in the left window, click on the radio button labelled **Devices**. If audio is required as well as video then select the audio device from the **Audio** dropdown menu. Next select the video source from the **Video** dropdown menu. Once the source is selected, the video source should appear in the left window (there may be a slight delay) with the audio signal represented by the meter to the left of the window. If nothing appears then ensure that the device is working correctly. Also,

make sure that the video tape is playing some content – otherwise the screen is likely to be blank anyway.

3. Set the video file audience. This requires a decision as to what type of file is being created. Will the file be viewed over the Internet? If so, using what connection speed, and at what size? Be clear about the target audience(s) of the video.

To configure the target audience, click on the **Audiences** button. This presents a choice of a large number of different audiences for the file, from users on a 28k modem all the way up to 5000kbit/s broadcast signal quality. The decision will be affected by the quality of the video source. 'Rubbish in, Rubbish out' is the rule of thumb in this instance. If the video source is low quality, it cannot be improved by using a higher setting such as 5000kbit/s. Conversely, if the source is very high quality then selecting a low setting such as '28k modem' will reduce the quality of the video for the end user. This is the trade-off that must be made between making the files accessible over low speed connections and ensuring that they are still watchable when the user finally views the content.

Selecting more than one audience will create a RealNetworks® SureStream™ file. In effect this means that if there is a problem with a viewer's Internet connection, and the end result is that the connection becomes slower, then the SureStream file will revert to playing at the speed most suited to the viewer's connection speed.

Once the audience(s) have been selected, ensure they have appeared in the right hand pane of the 'Audiences' window and exit using the little **x** in the top right hand corner.

4. Add clip information using the **Clip Information** button. This is information regarding copyright and ownership, and a description.
5. Choose a destination. Click on the **Add File Destination** icon under the **Audiences** button. Give the file a name and choose where the file should be saved once encoded.
6. Encode the file. Once the destination has been set, the **Encode** button at the bottom of RealProducer® becomes enabled. Click the button to start the encoding process based on the settings.

#### **Tips for encoding a live video source**

- If recording from videotape, make sure the encoder is started well before pressing 'play' on the VCR. This gives the encoder time to begin the encoding process; otherwise the beginning of the encoded file may not start smoothly.
- Ensure that different audience, audio and video settings are tested sufficiently on the encoder before using it for a live video event. Remember to write down the settings that work best. The RealProducer® 10 Basic version does not allow system configuration settings to be saved, so everything will have to be set up again every time a video is encoded.

#### **CREATING A VIDEO FILE FROM A PREVIOUSLY ENCODED FILE**

Creating a RealMedia format video file using a previously encoded video file is essentially the same process as that for using a live video source. Files can be used that were previously encoded using all the popular video formats including Microsoft® Windows Media® Video (.wmv) and Apple® QuickTime® (.mov). The major difference is that in the first step a file source is selected instead of a video source.

1. Click on the radio button labelled **Input File**. Choose the file location. The first frame of the selected video will appear in the left window of RealProducer®.
2. Follow steps 3-6 above.

### EDITING THE FILE AFTER ENCODING WITH THE REALMEDIA EDITOR

RealProducer® also allows the RealMedia file to be edited once it has been encoded. The start and end points of the file can be edited, which is useful if recording went beyond a certain point on the video file and it needs to be shortened. It is also handy for selecting a specific image sequence in the encoded file.

To edit a file:

1. Click **File>Edit RealMedia File**. This opens the RealMedia Editor.
2. On the RealMedia Editor window click **File>Open RealMedia File**. Choose the file to be edited and click **Open**.
3. The first frame of the video file will appear.
4. Below the video window is the timeline (see figure 2). The grey bar with black handles at either end represents the 'in' and 'out' points of the video. By moving the left handle forwards and the right handle backwards, the beginning and end points of the video can be cut out. The buttons to the left of the timeline with '+' and '-' signs respectively increase or decrease the granularity of the time divisions of the timeline, making it easier to find the exact point at which to cut the video file.

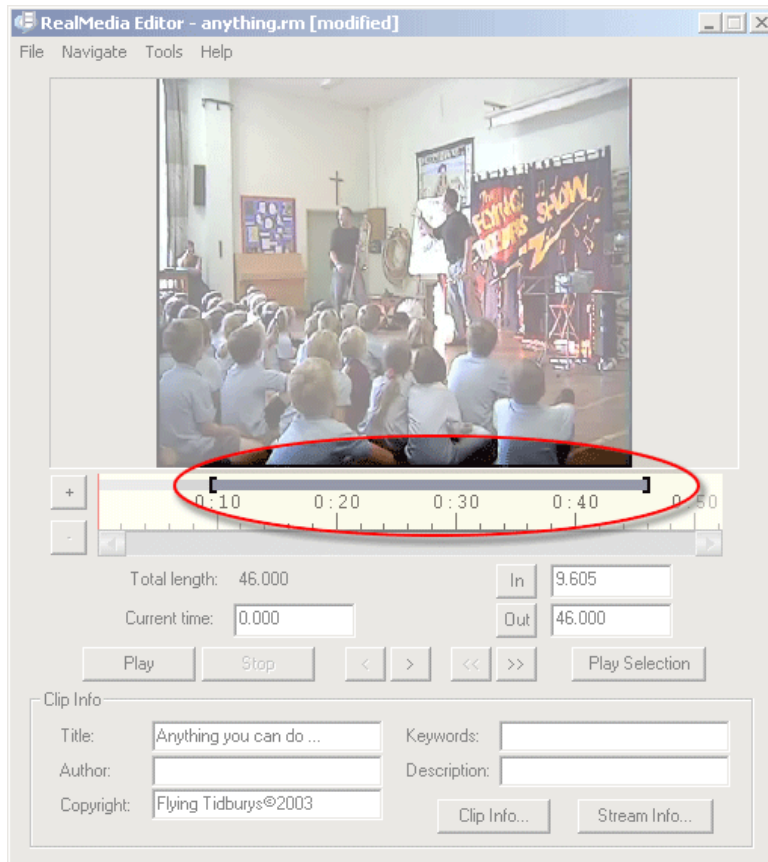


Figure 2 RealMedia Editor screenshot showing 'in' and 'out' points

5. The in and out points can also be set manually using the 'In' and 'Out' boxes below the timeline.

6. Click on **Play Selection** to preview the edit and make any appropriate changes.
7. Go to **File>Save RealMedia File**.

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