Using Windows Live Movie Maker
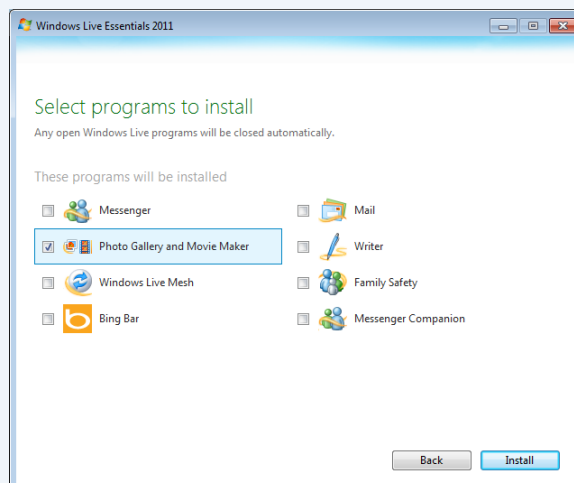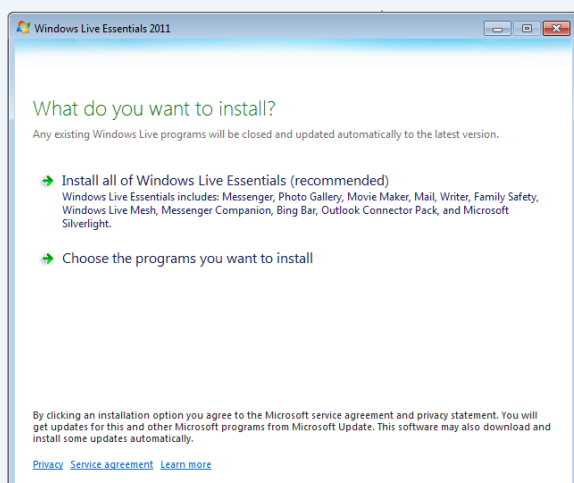
Videos can be useful in teaching in a variety of situations, eg filming an experiment, filming the operation of specific equipment, role-play situations, interviewing students, filming visiting speakers, and many others. Videos can be stored on a video server and there are a number of these publicly available eg Vimeo, YouTube and TeacherTube.   UHI does have a Video Streaming Service where videos can be stored so that they are retained within the UHI network. The Video Streaming Server has a lot of storage available for videos and each video uploaded is given a URL which can then be inserted into Blackboard modules or emailed to students.

Downloading and Installing

Windows Movie Maker™ is available on most PCs and the screenshots in this note are taken from the Windows Live version which runs on Windows 7.   If you do not have Movie Maker installed, it can be downloaded from this link http://explore.live.com/windows-live-movie-maker (Windows 7) or from the foot of this page http://download.cnet.com/Windows-Movie-Maker-Windows-XP/3000-13631_4-10187903.html (Windows XP).   The two versions are fairly similar.
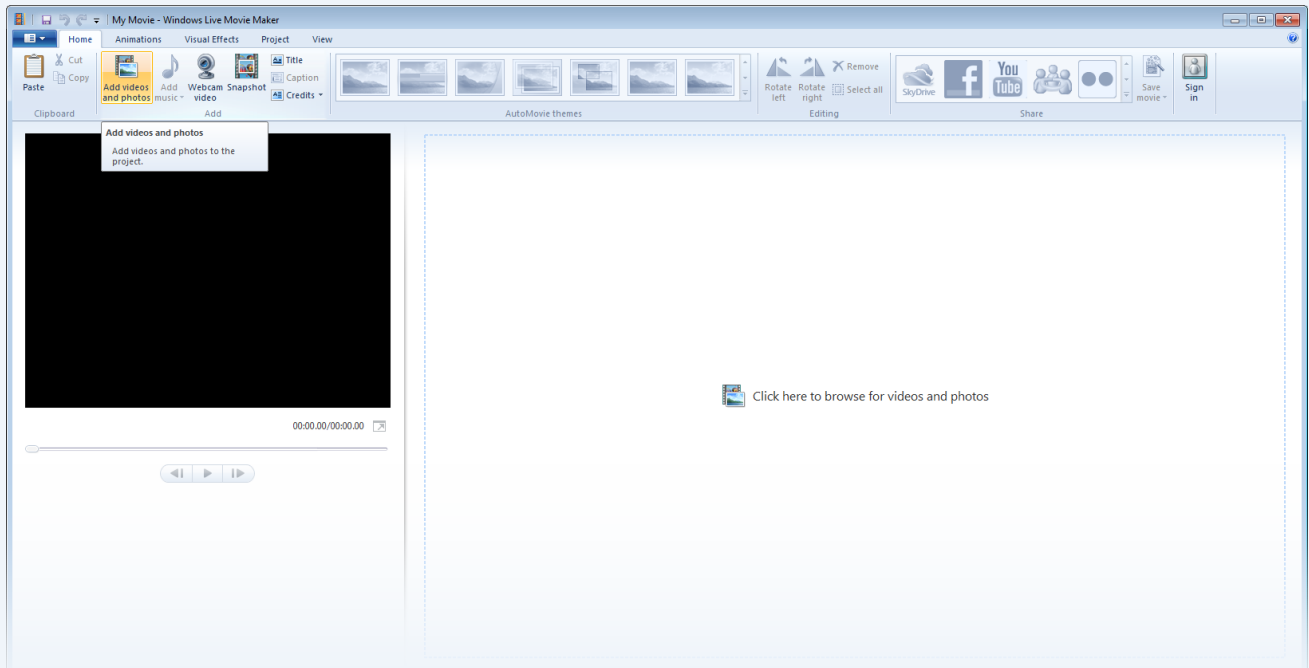
When you click on the link to download the software, you have the option to save the file onto your disc and run it from there or you can click the 'Run' button and run it directly.   When you get to this screen shown on the left below, you may wish to choose to select those programs which are installed. The screen shown on the right below would then enable you to untick all of Windows Live elements except Photo Gallery and Movie Maker. For example, there would be little need to install Messenger since we use Microsoft Lync within UHI for instant messaging.

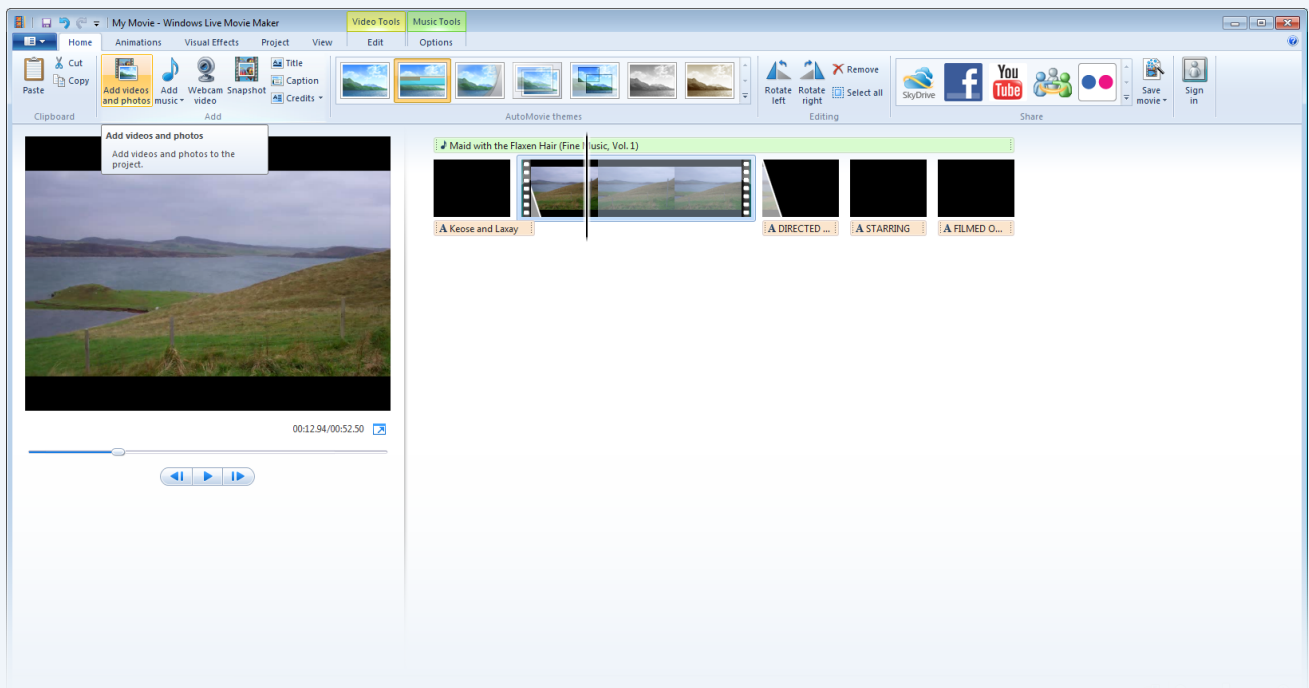Continue with the rest of the installation as usual.

Main Screen

When you run the program, the main screen looks like the image below.

The first button you would most likely want to use is highlighted in the image and it allows you to browse to your camera or disc and import video clips. (One significant point is that Movie Maker is now able to handle MP4 video which is the format most used with small hand-held video cameras).

Imported video clips and images appear on the right hand of the screen. The preview window is on the left. You may prefer to extend the preview column when editing so that detail in the video clip can be seen. This is done by hovering over the grey vertical line indicated in the image below and, when the resize cursor ⟷ appears, click and drag the line. At this point, it's worth clicking on the 'Project' menu and checking whether the aspect ratio is right – most cameras would use Widescreen rather than Standard.

AutoMovie Themes

AutoMovie Themes will automatically insert a title page at the beginning and a credits page at the end as well as transitions between clips.

If you are working with several clips, you can drag and drop their thumbnails into the correct order in the timeline panel on the right.

Editing Video

To edit video, make sure it is selected in the right hand pane and play the preview. If you wish to remove a section of video, for example, play the clip and find the start of the section. Click on 'Trim tool' in the 'Edit' ribbon, followed by 'Set start point'. Continue playing the video until you reach the end point and click on 'Set end point'. Finally, use 'Save trim' to make the cut.
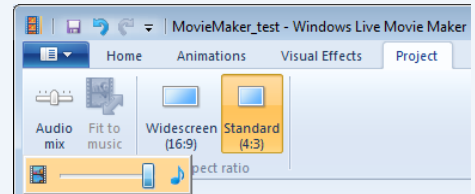
It's also possible to use 'Split' which is also on the 'Edit' ribbon. Play the video and use 'Split' at the appropriate point. If you continue to play and split, the clip is divided into chunks which can then be removed or repositioned.

You may notice that the menus disappear if you are using the 'Edit' ribbon. Click anywhere on the screen to get it back.
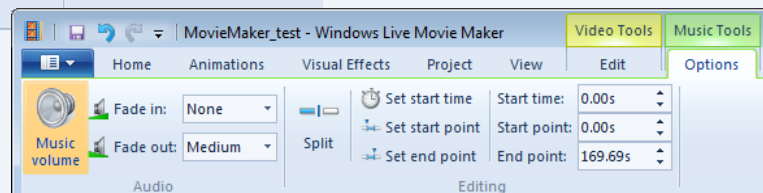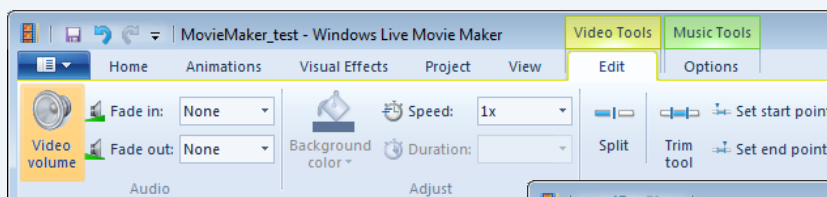
Editing Audio

If your clips have audio that you wish to replace with your narration/music, select the clip and choose the 'Edit' menu. 'Video volume' is on the left – when you click that, a slide appears which you can move to the left to mute the audio on that particular clip. It is possible to add a separate audio file to the project by using the 'Add music' button on the 'Home' ribbon.

If you wish to mix the audio from the video clips with imported audio, it is possible to adjust the level by going to the 'Project' ribbon and selecting 'Audio Mix'.
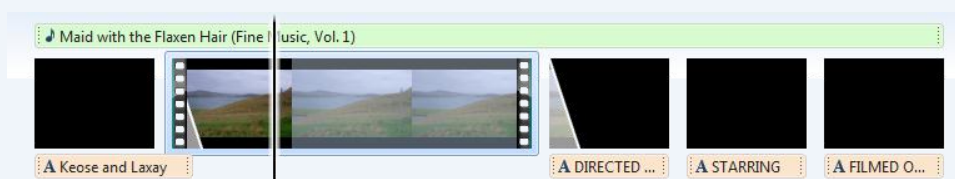

By using the 'Video Tools' and 'Music Tools' buttons, you have quite a lot of control over fading in/out the two channels. If your video audio consists of wind noise, for example, it is also possible to reduce the audio volume of the video to zero by selecting the 'Video Tools' ribbon.

Titles and Credits

To edit the text which appears on Titles and Credits, just click the peach-coloured textboxes underneath.

You can publish your video direct to Facebook, YouTube, etc but you may prefer to save the movie on your disc first. In that case, you would select 'Save Movie' from the 'File' menu.

Uploading to the Video Streamer

To upload your video to the UHI Video Streaming Service (also known as the Helix Media Library), open a browser and enter http://stream.uhi.ac.uk and log in using your usual UHI userID.   You will see the 'Upload' command on the menu bar and this starts a wizard which you can follow through to upload your finished video. Further details are available in the PDF 'Uploading to the Video Streamer'.

When the video has been encoded, you will receive an email with a link to the video and the embed codes necessary for inserting the video on a web page. The PDF 'Uploading to the Video Streamer' also explains how to link the video to a Blackboard module and a Mahara page.