VideoLink Mail

User's Guide

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If you have any comments or suggestions about VideoLink Mail, documentation or online help, please send us e-mail at support@smithmicro.com.

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WELCOME TO VIDEOLINK MAIL

VideoLink Mail allows you to create stunning video mail files (tapes). These files combine audio and video so your e-mail messages have maximum impact! VideoLink Mail files are highly compressed to keep the size small so they can be quickly e-mailed to friends and associates and played on any PC running Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT 4.0 or Windows 2000.

VideoLink Mail provides you with a virtual VCR that allows you to record and save both audio and video from your local camera and microphone. You can then playback recordings at a later time and watch them at your leisure.

The operation of the virtual VCR is similar to that of a standard VCR. Recordings are referred to as 'tapes', and control over the VCR is accomplished with the buttons provided on the display.

VideoLink Mail can save tapes in two formats:

- **Smith Micro Video mail format (SMV)** – this option will save the recording without embedding a player. This method is perfect for saving recordings for your own use, or when saving VideoLink Mail files to send to others who have VideoLink Mail. Files saved in this manner have a .SMV file extension. Saving tapes in this format results in a smaller file size than tapes saved in executable format. Also, these tapes can be reloaded in VideoLink Mail, viewed and even saved in executable format at a later time.

- **Executable format** – this option will incorporate the VideoLink Mail player with the recording. This method is perfect for saving video mail to send to others who do not have VideoLink Mail. Files saved in this manner are executable files and have an .EXE file extension.

Regardless of the method used to save files, they are electronic mail-ready and can be sent using any e-mail application.

This guide explains how to use the program. Further information on the software can be obtained via on-line help in VideoLink Mail.

STARTING VIDEOLINK MAIL

After you have installed VideoLink Mail, it is easy to run and get started. Click the Windows **Start** button and select the *Programs* option. Then select the *VideoLink Mail* option. From the resulting popup menu, select the **VideoLink Mail** icon.

THE VIDEOLINK MAIL INTERFACE

VideoLink Mail provides an easy-to-use interface for accessing all of its powerful features. The interface is divided into various components that will be discussed on the next few pages.

VIEW WINDOW

The view window displays the video from a tape that is playing, or shows the view from the local camera when a tape is not being played.

MENU BUTTON

The Menu button, found on the top left corner of the interface, provides access to four menus. Each of these menus provides a set of commands that

can be used to control VideoLink Mail. Most of the available commands can be accessed from buttons provided on the interface. If a topic in the following text says to select a command from a menu, use the menu button to access the command.

EXPAND/CONTRACT BUTTON

The Expand/Contract button expands the interface by displaying the secondary toolbar, mail signature field and recent file field, or contracts the interface by hiding these items. When the button's arrow points down, clicking the button will expand the interface. When the button's arrow points up, clicking the button will contract the interface.

MAIN TOOLBAR

The main toolbar, found at the bottom of the application, contains buttons that can be clicked to activate VideoLink Mail's standard functions. The tools are, from left to right:

- **Record** – begins recording audio and video.

- **Play** – plays the tape that is currently in memory.

- **Stop** – stops the currently playing tape.

- **Pause/Continue** – pauses the currently playing tape. If the tape is currently paused, when clicked, the tape will resume playing.

- **Mail** – mails the current tape as an e-mail attachment.

SECONDARY TOOLBAR

The secondary toolbar, accessed by clicking the expand arrow, contains buttons that can be clicked to perform further tasks with VideoLink Mail tapes. The tools are, from left to right:

- **New** – creates a new tape. If there is currently a tape in memory, you will be asked if you wish to save the current tape.

- **Open** – accesses the Open Tape dialog box.

- **Import** – accesses a File Open dialog box. From this dialog, you can select an AVI file to import into VideoLink Mail.

- **Save** – saves the current tape to the specified folder.

- **Info** – provides information about the current tape, like file size and upload time.

MAIL SIGNATURE FIELD
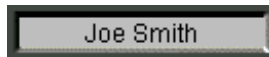
The mail signature field displays your name so that you will be identified as the creator of a tape. This field is only displayed when the interface is expanded. When tapes saved with the embedded player are viewed, the opening screen displays this as the creator of the tape. You can enter your name in the mail signature field by selecting **Mail…** from the **Setup** menu. The Setup menu is accessed from the **Menu** button.

STATUS BAR

The status bar is located at the bottom of the interface. The status bar displays the current status of the VCR.

RECENT FILE FIELD

The recent file field displays the tape currently in use, or shows the last opened or saved file. If a file has been recorded but not yet saved, this field will display "Untitled".

Volume Controls

The speaker volume control is located to the left of the view window. The microphone volume control is located to the right of the view window. Each of these controls can be adjusted by moving the slider bar up to increase the volume or down to decrease the volume. Hold down the left mouse button on the slider bar to move the bar. After the bar is placed at the desired location, release the mouse button.

Working with Tapes

Recording Tapes

VideoLink Mail allows you to record and save video mail files (tapes), which you can send to friends and associates. Files are recorded locally from your PC using a video camera and microphone. To record a tape:

1. Start VideoLink Mail. The main interface appears.

2. Record a tape.

3. Click the **Save** button or select Save As from the File menu. The Save Tape dialog box appears.

3. Enter a name for the tape in the File name field.

4. Select the desired tape format in the Save as type drop-down list.

5. Click **OK** to save the tape.

PLAYING TAPES

While VideoLink Mail tapes that have been saved with the embedded player can be played by anyone with a PC running Windows 95, Windows 98 Windows NT 4.0 or Windows 2000, tapes that have been saved in the SMV format can only be played from within VideoLink Mail. It is recommended that tapes that are created for personal use be saved in Smith Micro video mail format, as these tapes will take up less hard drive space. To play tapes:

1. Click the **Open** button or select **Open** from the **File** menu. The Open Tape dialog box appears.

2. Select the desired tape and click **Open**.

    The selected tape will begin playing in the video window.

Note: to play a tape that is already in memory, click the Play button or select Play from the VCR menu.

MAILING TAPES

VideoLink Mail records audio and video in formats that can easily be sent via electronic mail (e-mail). Special digital compression techniques are used to keep the size of the tapes as small as possible. The audio is compressed almost 20 times smaller than its original size. The video is compressed over 200 times smaller than its original size. The following two sections describe how to send these tapes in e-mail messages.

MAILING TAPES AUTOMATICALLY THROUGH E-MAIL

If you are using a MAPI compliant e-mail program, VideoLink Mail can automatically open the application and create a new message with the current tape attached to the message. The tape will automatically be converted to executable format when attached to an e-mail in this manner. All you need to do is address the message to the desired recipient(s) and click Send. Here's how to automatically send tapes through your e-mail program:

1. Record or open the desired tape.

2. Click the **Mail** button or select **Send Mail…** from the **File** menu. The Choose Profile dialog box appears.

3. Select the desired Exchange profile from the drop-down list and click **OK**. This dialog will only appear if you are using Microsoft Outlook.

4. A New Message dialog box appears. The Subject field will read "VideoLink Mail Message", and the current tape will be attached as an EXE file to the message.

5. Address the message to the desired recipients. If you are unsure how to perform this step, consult your e-mail program's documentation.

6. Click Send to send the message via your e-mail program.

Note: You must have e-mail program installed and properly configured to automatically send E-mail messages in this manner. If you are having trouble mailing tapes, see Mailing Tapes Manually for further information.

MAILING TAPES MANUALLY

If you are not using a MAPI compliant email program, you can still easily attach tapes to your e-mail messages.   Sending tapes through e-mail requires that your on-line service or Internet Service Provider (ISP) allows file attachments. All you need to do is create an e-mail message to the desired recipient(s), attach the video mail file and send the e-mail. The specific steps necessary to access your E-mail account will vary, but the following guidelines should apply for most services.

1. Record or open the desired tape.

    *   If the intended recipient(s) has VideoLink Mail, save the tape as a Smith Micro video mail file.

    *   If the intended recipient(s) does not have VideoLink Mail, save the tape as an executable file.

2. Open your E-mail program. (For example, you may use America Online, Eudora, Netscape, Web based e-mail or a host of others).

3. Select the option that allows you to create a new E-mail message.

4. Select the option that allows you to attach files to your message, and attach the desired video mail file.

5. Address the message to the desired recipients. If you are unsure how to perform this step, consult your E-mail program's documentation.

6. Send the message.

Note: Some E-mail applications, such as Juno, do not support attachments. If your E-mail service does not support attachments, you will be unable to send video files via E-mail.

IMPORTING AVI FILES

VideoLink Mail allows you to import Windows video files that have been saved in the Audio Video Interleave (AVI) format. These video files can be clips from feature films, or videos created using your microphone, camera and video capture card. Smith Micro Video (SMV) files are highly compressed, and will result in a smaller file size than the original AVI file. This makes it quicker and easier to send the video file via e-mail.

1. Click the **Import** button or select Import from the File menu. The Import File dialog box appears.

2. Select the desired file and click **Open**.

3. The selected file will be opened and converted into VideoLink Mail format.

4. You can now save the file in either of the VideoLink Mail formats.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the topics described in this guide is available in the VideoLink Mail on-line help. The following sections of this guide describe the available configuration options.

HARDWARE SETUP

The Hardware Setup dialog allows you to specify which audio and video device that VideoLink Mail will use when recording tapes. You can also access your video device's setup options. It is recommended that you do not modify these setting unless you have compelling reasons to change them.

To access the Hardware Setup dialog box:

1. Select the **Hardware** option in the **Setup** menu. The Hardware Setup dialog appears:
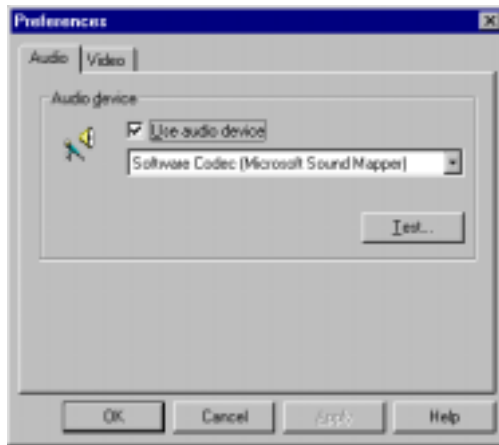
2. Select the desired audio device from the drop-down list.

3. Select the video input device from the drop-down list in the Video tab.

4. Click **OK** to save your changes, or **Cancel** to discard your changes.

AUDIO TAB

The following text describes the options available in the Audio tab of the Hardware Setup dialog box.

- **Audio device** – Select the desired compression mode from the provided drop-down list. Note: If No audio is selected, the Play and the Record options will be disabled.

- **Test** – Tests the selected audio device. You should be able to hear what you speak into your microphone through your speakers. Warning: If your microphone is close to your speakers, this test may result in feedback.

VIDEO TAB

The following text describes the options available in the Video tab of the Hardware Setup dialog box.
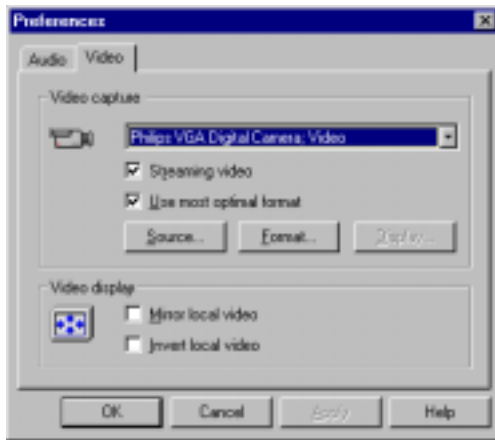
- **Video Capture** – Select the desired video input device from the provided drop-down list.

- **Streaming video** – Optimally, VideoLink Mail will set up a camera/capture card to provide "streaming video". In practice, however, some devices haven't implemented streaming video very well. If your video looks slow or choppy, try un-checking this box.

- **Use most optional format** – Optimally, VideoLink Mail will set up the camera/capture card to provide a format that will most easily be converted into the required internal format. In practice, however, some devices might produce slow or odd-looking video if this "optimal" format is chosen. If this box is unchecked, VideoLink Mail will allow the camera/capture card to produce the format it wants to.

- **Video Manufacturer's Setup Dialogs** – Click these three buttons to access the hardware specific setup dialogs for your device. Most video hardware devices offer three setup dialogs, **Source**, **Format** and **Display**. Consult your video hardware documentation for information on the contents of these dialogs. Note: All options may not be available for all video hardware devices.

- **Mirror video** – when selected, the image displayed in the view window appears as it would if you were in front of a mirror.

- **Invert video** – when selected, the image displayed in the view window is inverted 180 degrees.

VCR FINE TUNING

The Fine Tuning dialog box allows you to optimize the video settings to your personal preferences. To specify the desired video settings:

1. Select **Fine Tune Video** under the **Setup** menu. The Fine Tuning dialog box appears:
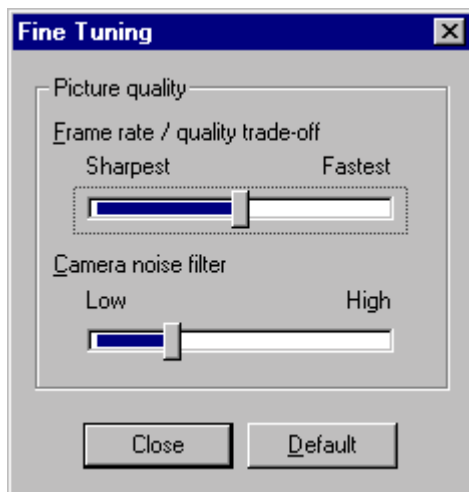
5. Adjust the slider bars in the provided fields.

4. Click **Close** to save your changes. Press **Default** to return all fields to their default value.

The following text describes each of the options available in the Fine Tune dialog box.

- **Frame rate/quality trade-off** – This slider control allows you to select the trade-off between speed and picture quality, which will be used by VideoLink Mail. As the slider is moved towards a sharper picture, the more data must be recorded, which will result in a larger file size for the tape.

- **Camera noise filter** – This setting controls the sensitivity level of the camera being used by VideoLink Mail. Sometimes cameras can generate "visual noise" in a picture. This can be demonstrated by pointing your camera at a perfectly blank, white wall and studying the image it produces. Typically, you will see "boiling" or some kind of movement or motion in the picture, even if there is no real motion. This visual noise

translates into data being recorded that relates only to the visual noise, and therefore cuts down on your picture speed.

By decreasing the sensitivity, you can cut down on the effects of this visual noise. All cameras produce some level of noise, so the filter is usually not all the way on the "low" end. If the setting is too far towards "high" sensitivity, you will see the image "smear" as things move across the screen -- almost as if part of the image moves and part of the image stays still. In this case the sensitivity is set so high that it is actually ignoring real motion, rather than just camera noise.

You will need to find a point where the image seems to be cleanest and produces the best frame rate. For most cameras, this is about ¼ to 1/3 of the way towards low sensitivity.

RECORDING RATE

VideoLink allows you to limit the amount of information stored when recording a tape and specify how often key frames are recorded.

To specify your recording rate preferences:

1. Select **Record Rate** under the **Setup** menu. The Record Rate dialog box shown below appears:
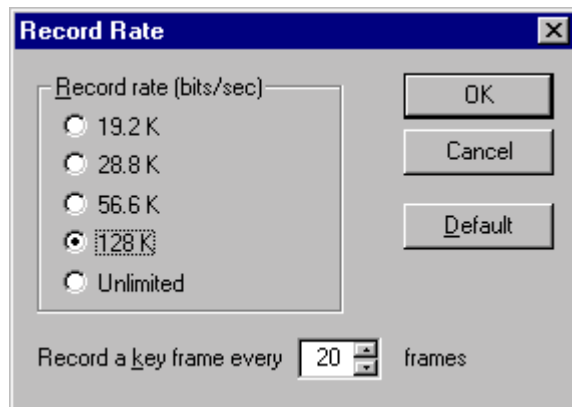
2. Adjust the desired values in the provided fields.

3. Click **OK** to save your changes, or **Cancel** to discard your changes. Press **Default** to return all fields to their default value.

The following text describes each of the options available in the Recording Rate dialog box.

- **Record rate** − These options allow you to limit the amount of information stored when recording a tape. Lowering the recording rate will reduce the size of the video mail file. Note that this will also reduce the frame rate of the recording, and make the video "choppier". That is because fewer frames will be recorded. Available options are:

  - 19.2 K – Maximum recording rate will be 19,200 bits per second
  - 28.8 K – Maximum recording rate will be 28,800 bits per second
  - 56.6 K – Maximum recording rate will be 56,600 bits per second
  - 128 K – Maximum recording rate will be 128,000 bits per second
  - Unlimited – the recording rate is not restrained by file size

- **Record a key frame every n frames** − This option will specify how often VideoLink Mail will record a key frame. A key frame is a frame with a "marker". You can specify how often key frames are recorded from the Recording Rate dialog box, accessed from the Record Rate option from the Setup menu. Increasing the number of key frames in the tape increases the size of the tape. If size is a primary concern, reduce the number of key frames by increasing the number of normal frames between key frames.

MAIL SETUP

The Mail Setup dialog box allows you to specify your mail signature and whether you wish to keep a local copy of mailed tapes. The mail signature field identifies who created a tape. When a tape is saved in executable player format, a brief opening screen appears. The opening screen displays the displays the name supplied in this field as the creator of the tape.

To access the Mail Setup dialog box:

1. Select the **Mail** option under the **Setup** menu. The Mail Setup dialog box appears:
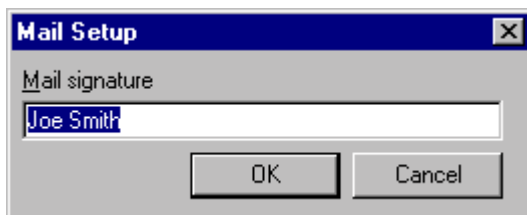
4. Make the desired changes in the provided fields.

5. Click **OK** to save your name.

CONTACTING TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Please contact Smith Micro Software Technical Support via our Web site at:

Web site: http://www.smithmicro.com/techsupport

Here you will have access to our **Online Knowledge Base**. Try it for an immediate answer. This will also give you the opportunity to submit a **Personal Assistance request** if an answer cannot be found in our knowledge base.

You may also e-mail your question to:

E-**mail:** videolinkmail@smithmicro.com

Or fax your questions to:

Fax number: 949-362-2399