

FORMAT FACT SHEET



VHS

The most common transfer to DVD that we carry out at Apple is a VHS transfer. Having won the format war with Betamax, most households had a VHS recorder, so many home movies were stored on this media.

Later, the format evolved with **SuperVHS**, which was less widely used but had superior picture quality. We can also transfer SVHS tapes.



VHS-C

VHS-C used the same width of tape as VHS, but was in a much smaller chassis. The tapes usually ran for 30, 45 or 60 minutes in standard play. The tape would come straight out a camcorder and would fit into a motorised adapter that was the size of a VHS cassette, and would be then be played in your standard VHS machine for home viewing.



Video8

The next step in home movies arrived with Video8. With domestic cameras getting increasingly smaller, due to technological advances and, not least, the tape size (the tape itself was 8mm wide, hence the name), lots of people snapped up these cameras. Nowadays, most of these cameras have been lost, sold or broken and playing back your precious memories in almost impossible. We probably get almost as many Video8 transfers as VHS!



Hi8

Much like Video8, this cassette used an 8mm tape inside, but had a much better picture resolution making keen amateurs very excited! Hi8 offered 400 horizontal lines of resolution, compared with Video8's 240 lines.

This was pretty much the last analogue format for the domestic market before the advent of digital.



Digital8

This format was released in 1999 and had a modicum of popularity, but eventually lost out to the more popular MiniDV format.

The beauty of this format was that you could record digital video at 720 horizontal lines, on the same tapes you've had for years; Video8 and Hi8! The cameras would also play back these old analogue formats, too! On a 90 minute tape, you could get 60 minutes of Digital8 footage.

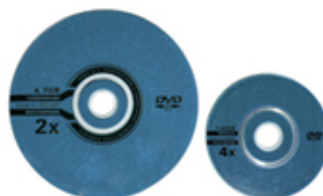
Sadly, as the tape ran through the machine faster, it was a nightmare of the camera's head mechanisms, resulting in lots of cameras packing in after heavy use.



MiniDV

The juggernaut of the home movie industry arrived in the mid-1990s. MiniDV was small enough to allow the cameras of the day to become tiny by comparison to anything previously released. Designed for the consumer market, the results were so impressive, the professional world also adopted this as a format for many years.

What also impressed many people was how durable the cassette was. Short of dirt and snapping the tape, you could reuse old tapes time and again, but even that wasn't necessary as they were generally very cheap.



Mini DVD

As the home DVD market took, DVD camcorders were released. They used an 8cm disc (as opposed to the common 12cm ones), and would record around 30 minutes onto a single-sided, single-layer disc. You could get double-sided and double-layered discs to increase recording time. Sadly, if you marked the discs with a scratch or fingerprint, you may not realise until its too late and the disc wouldn't play.

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Betamax

A casualty of war. As VHS was released by JVC, Betamax was released by Sony, and both battled to be champion of the domestic market.

Performance-wise, Betamax was by far superior, but early tapes had a shorter running time, and video rental chains opted to support the much cheaper, though inferior VHS format.

And the rest is history...



Betacam SP

Sony continued with their "Beta" namesake and produced a broadcast quality analogue format, called Betacam SP, which used VHS-sized tapes in shoulder-mounted cameras, and very large tapes for mastering the finished edit.

The picture quality was unmatched at the time, and was a broadcasting cornerstone for a long time during the analogue years.

Later, Sony developed Betacam SX and Digital Betacam, again, solely for the professional and broadcasting industries.



DVCam

When digital appeared on the scene, it was obvious it was here to stay and had the potential to develop as technology caught up with the developers ideas. DVCam was Sony's variant of DV and MiniDV. The format came in two sizes: "full size" and "mini" and where again intended for the professional markets. Broadcasters liked the image quality and so again, opted to support this standard definition format.

You could use a 60-minute MiniDV tape to record DVCam quality using a DVCam camera, but instead of 60 minutes, you would only have around 40 minutes as the tape runs over the heads much quicker.



HDV

High definition is everywhere nowadays. But back in 2003, one of the only ways you could record HD video images was by using the HDV format. What's good about HDV is that you could use a standard MiniDV cassette and record video that was (arguably) nearly three times the size of standard definition. I say arguably because full HD is 1920x1080 pixels in size and HDV is generally 1440x1080 pixels. It makes up the missing space by stretching the pixels from a square shape to rectangular. This is called "anamorphic". The naked eye probably wouldn't know the difference.

HDV was another format, that, for a time, was used in the broadcast world as standard, mainly by news gathering organisations as the cassette itself was fairly rugged and cheap.



Full HD

Nowadays, most people have access to some kind of full HD recording device, whether it's MP4 using your iPhone or AVCHD using your compact digital camera.

The question then becomes what to do with the footage once its recorded? Uploading it onto YouTube is one thing, but owning the right software to edit and eventually produce a DVD or Blu-ray is where Apple Video can help you!

If you have a format that you are unsure about, and you haven't seen it mentioned here, or if you aren't sure what the format is, just give us a call, email or pop in to our shop and we can advise you. As you can see, there are lots of formats out there. See if we can help to save your precious video memories!