

DVD To Cowon S9 Conversion Guide

by JMK.

If you like to watch your movies in the car, bus or in the train, your Cowon S9 can be a good alternative to lugging around a portable DVD player or laptop computer. Getting a show from a DVD onto it can be a little awkward in some cases, so I'm going to take a look at using *HandBrake* and *MP4 Cam 2 AVI* for Microsoft Windows. You will probably need Windows XP or later. (You can get HandBrake for Mac OS X and Linux as well.)

The S9 is a bit particular about MP4 files, and I wasn't able to get any I produced with HandBrake to work with it. However by using MP4 Cam 2 AVI, you can retain your converted video without any recompression. Basically, it provides you with a container change.

If you have another way to do this, then that's great, but this guide is how I've been doing it, for those of you who have been having troubles or are completely clueless as to how to get a movie / show from a DVD onto your S9.

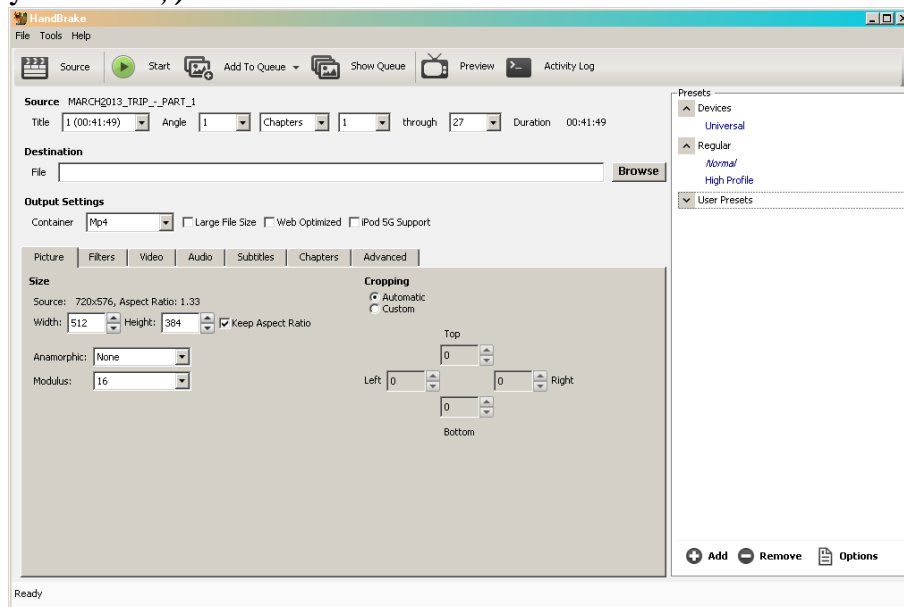
First of all, you'll need to get HandBrake and MP4 Cam 2 AVI:

- <http://handbrake.fr/>
- <http://www.videohelp.com/tools/MP4Cam2AVI> or:
- <http://www.softpedia.com/get/Multimedia/Video/Encoders-Converter-DIVX-Related/MP4Cam2AVI.shtml>

If you're dealing with encrypted DVDs you will need to get the "libdvdcss.dll" file. You can get it here:

- <http://download.videolan.org/pub/libdvdcss/1.2.12/win64/libdvdcss-2.dll> or for 32 bit Windows:
- <http://download.videolan.org/pub/libdvdcss/1.2.12/win32/libdvdcss-2.dll> and you will need to place it in your HandBrake installation directory and rename it to *libdvdcss.dll*

All of these programs are freeware, so you don't need to worry about trial time limits or forking out your cash. ;-)



Firstly, insert your DVD and then run HandBrake. It may take a moment or 2 to kick in. Click on the Source button and choose your DVD drive from the list. (You can also load from other drives.) HandBrake will then scan the files and pick the longest title found. If you have VLC, you can play a DVD from a specific title to make sure you have the correct one chosen before you start.

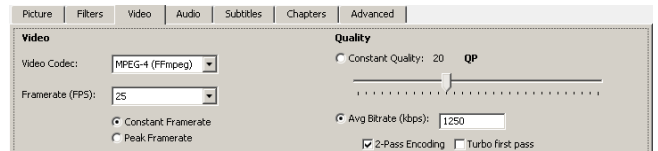
If there are black areas in the video, HandBrake will crop them automatically. You can

turn this off if you wish or manually adjust it. Set your output video size. Here you can see I'm using 512 × 384 pixels. You may wish to make it 364 × 272 pixels if you want it exactly at the height of the S9's display. For 16:9 aspect ratio videos, simply make it 480 × 272 pixels, which is the S9's resolution when held sideways. I usually like to make it a bit higher, so around 512 × 288 pixels. The vertical number maybe less if you're cropping to a different aspect ratio.

In the filters tab, you can select whether you want to de-interlace as well. Most theatre movies are non-interlaced, where as TV shows tend to be interlaced.

Next, choose the video tab, and set it up like in the next picture (on page 2). You may wish to

change the frame rate to your country's normal setting. As I'm using PAL, I have it on 25 F.P.S. 2 pass encoding should give a better quality result, but it obviously takes twice as long. I'm not overly certain on how high you can crank the bit rate when it comes to the S9, but anywhere around the 1300 kbps range is usually adequate.



In the Chapters tab, you can have it create chapter markers, but I don't bother with those. Don't forget to specify your output file location as well! I often end up almost forgetting this bit.

Next, go to the audio tab. MP4 Cam 2 AVI seems to work well with the AAC (faac) codec, so I use that.

When you're ready to go, click on the start button, and sit back while it does its thing. Or go onto doing something else. A 1½ hour movie can take around 22 minutes for me with 2 pass encoding. And if you are using that, HandBrake will show you the processing percentage *twice*. When you see it get to 100% the 1st time, don't assume it's done and then close it. When it has completed fully, close HandBrake and then open MP4 Cam 2 AVI. Choose your directory at the top left, where you saved the MP4 file and then choose it from the selection box on the bottom left.

I usually have it do the audio into MP3, because I don't think the S9 will work with AAC. (Normal quality is 128 kbps.) This is all you have to do really. Just make sure the AVI size limit is cranked up larger than your video file and hit the *Start* button. For a 90-ish minute video, it will take about 2 minutes. When it's done, you can rename the AVI file and copy it to your S9's Video directory. If you've done this before, you will know that it takes some time to copy. My S9 seems to transfer at USB 1 speeds. That's about it really! Remember that copying commercial DVDs and redistributing movies without permission is usually illegal in most countries, so please don't abuse my guide for these purposes. This is only intended for personal use.

