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Webcam Funny Effects

Snap some fun into Photobucket

Webcams are fun, no matter their use: you can use it as a mirror, for surveillance purposes, spying, looking around the corner, see who's behind the door, video chatting with someone miles away, record movies, take pictures, etc. Oh, and for having fun. Combine it with the right application and you can have huge laughs on your account or your friends'. Snap is an absolutely free application designed to de-frown you with its abilities of distorting your face as captured by the webcam and adding stickers to the image. Though it is free to use, Snap imposes a limit to your share of fun: you cannot take more than ten pictures per day. If you want this limitation removed (in my case it turned really addictive) the \$18.99 fee has to be paid. Paying the cost will also remove the developer's logo from the video window. Actually what Snap does is add all sort of comic effects over the image. To make your experience more fun and share your zing with your friends you can use the numerous stickers available. Snap comes in very handy when you want to play a prank on someone as it is also able to take pictures of the final result. The looks of the application are great and no matter your computer skills I am sure that it will seem a walk in the park toying around with its features. There are five distinct components of the interface, as follows: the upper part is reserved for the sticky characters and forms you can adorn your face with, but not before applying one of the left hand side effects on the video. In the middle there is the video as captured by the webcam and the South part of the screen is dedicated to the different options available. The right hand side is where you can store your pictures. The list of filters is not too extensive, but there are some great effects there. In my case, out of the total of 14 effects available, only three of them were simply not appealing to me. The listing includes cool cartoon effect, night vision, horizontal mirroring, sepia tone, black and white, color craze (too bad you cannot change the color, but still doing a good job) or flat styled. The one thing that bugged me the most with regard to effects was the impossibility of adjusting or customizing them. Once you apply a video filter there is no way to modify it. I guess this qualifies as ease of use. If you want to stretch the fun to new levels, you can use the stickers available in the upper part of the screen. There are seven categories, each of them including at least five options. There are seven types of speech bubbles to assist you in conveying a message. All you have to do to insert them is a "strenuous" drag and drop effort. All the stickers can be adjusted in terms of size and position so you don't have to worry about them falling in the wrong position. Adding text to speech bubbles is easy. Suffice to double click on the text inside the bubble and type in your own. Resizing the forms is also just a matter of dragging by the black dots available. Some of the users may be into monkey business so Snap makes it easy for you to place yourself in an adequate environment filled with monkey faces or to put on a monkey costume. In the same Space Monkey sticker category you will also find the ruthless three-eyed octopus, ready to suck on your brains. All the stickers are just as easy to use and with a keen eye you can put on party caps or dress up like a combat koala bear. The downfall of the stickers is that you cannot rotate them and this may limit a bit your laughing spree. The coolest thing is that you can take snapshots of you with all the effects applied and all sticked up. Hovering your mouse on the name of the picture in the left hand image strip will give you the exact location of the item on your computer. Don't worry, you can change it from the Options menu. Having a Photobucket account sure comes in handy in this case as you can publish those pizzazz infused pictures on the website so that everyone can have a laugh at you. The button is right at the bottom of the screen (the one that says Publish). Simply login to your Photobucket account directly from Snap's Options menu and press Publish. The image is automatically uploaded on the website with no hassle at all. Options menu does not contain complicated settings and it allows you to change the photo directory for saving your images, enable sharing with Snap community and provide the Photobucket login details. Also, you can toggle between the two themes available at the moment (go with "silver" for a brighter interface and use "wood" to darken it). **The Good** The application is hyper easy to use and offers quite some laughs. You have the possibility of immortalizing your wacky behavior and even share it with the Photobucket community (there is some interesting Snap art there). You can use it for free if you come to terms with the 10 pictures per day limitation. **The Bad** The application uses a considerable amount of resources. You won't have a problem

with RAM as it takes only 41MB, but it is constantly oscillating between 20% and 40 % of CPU usage, which is not OK if your computer is also doing something else. Of course, a dual core will not have any problem with this, but the CPU challenged computers should have a tough time keeping all the processes running smoothly. Paid version only removes the Snap logo from the pictures and adds two more stickers. For that money, some users would expect liberty to download more stickers and effects. **The Truth** So Snap offers an effects list, sticky options, allows you to take a picture (the images are displayed in a strip, just like in a photobooth) and is a lot of fun. However, it wouldn't be such a bad idea to add some more effects (vertical mirror would fit right in) and make the stickers more flexible (being able to rotate them would be nice). All in all, the application did great, although there is still work to be done, in order to make it really special. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*