

“Why isn’t my Movie Maker project working?” or “A Movie Maker Analogy - With Lego”

Many students are saving or opening Movie Maker files and finding them “empty”. This most commonly happens when they “save” a movie at home then bring it to school.

Why is this happening? Because they ARE empty. That’s why. The files they are saving are just Project files, not the actual videos themselves. They need to either finish the video and export it, or make sure they bring all the parts of the video along with the project. Let me explain with Lego.

Movie Maker uses three concepts that are analogous to a Lego set. The first is the PROJECT. This is like the list of instructions in a Lego set. It’s the file (usually called a .wmlp or a .mswmm file) you see on the screen. It’s where you tell Movie Maker how to “assemble” your movie - the order your video clips are in, where any pictures, titles and transitions appear, and so on. Like the Lego instructions, the project is useless without the parts.



The second is the LIBRARY. This is where all your videos and photos are listed (note - NOT stored) ready to be used in your project. Your project file does NOT contain these videos and photos, only where they are on your computer and how they’re used in your movie. Think of it as the list of parts for your Lego model - useless without the instructions.

The final concept is the MOVIE. This is your DINOSAUR. RAAAAAAWW!!! (Don’t be scared, he’s not real). This is what you get when you’ve assembled all your Lego parts (LIBRARY) using your instructions (PROJECT) - you just need to export it - with the EXPORT or PUBLISH option. If you don’t export it, your dinosaur will forever remain a set of parts and instructions.

Your dinosaur will be a MOVIE file - something like a .wmv file - which can be played without Movie Maker. Raaaaw.

