

## FOREIGN CONVERSION FAQs

### **Are VHS tapes and DVD disks compatible worldwide?**

No. While they may be physically identical, the video is recorded differently to allow compatibility with local TV sets. Different areas of the world use one of three major standards: NTSC, PAL, or SECAM -- or a minor variation of one of those three. All videotapes and disks must conform to the local standard to be playable on local video players and local TV sets.

### **Why are different standards used around the world?**

Different standards are used for historical, political and technical reasons. The NTSC standard was developed in the USA for color television broadcasting. TV sets in the USA were built to conform to the NTSC standard. The PAL standard was later developed in Europe to improve color stability and to accommodate a frame rate compatible with their power frequency (50 Hz vs. 60 Hz in the USA). The SECAM standard was later developed in France. Countries around the world adopted one of these three standards (or a slightly modified version) for use in their countries -- sometimes different from neighboring countries to control what could be viewed. TV sets in their respective countries were built to the broadcast standard adopted by that country. Later VCRs, camcorders, DVD players and other video devices were invented. In order to allow these devices to work with local TV sets, they had to conform to the local TV standard. Thus, the format used in video devices varies depending on the TV standard previously adopted by that country. The standards used in a given country sometimes change as political boundaries, alliances and technology change. As well, availability of foreign satellite programming, DVDs, etc. is causing common usage of standards (particularly NTSC and PAL) in areas that traditionally use other standards.

### **If I buy a "multi-standard" VCR or DVD player can I play foreign videos?**

Usually, no, unless the multi-standard player also converts to your local format or you also have a multi-standard TV monitor. A multi-standard player typically sends video to its output jacks in whatever video standard the media contains. For example, if you put a PAL DVD in a multi-standard DVD player, it will usually send a PAL video signal to your TV set. If you are in the USA, your NTSC TV will not be able to display the PAL signal. You would need to purchase a VCR or DVD player that not only plays multiple standards, but also converts the video signal to that of your TV set. Alternatively, you can purchase both a multi-standard VHS or DVD player as well as a multi-standard TV monitor to play foreign format videos. Unless you view a large quantity of foreign video, it is generally less expensive to have (non-copyrighted) material converted by Access Video and copied to your local format.

### **What is DVD Region Encoding?**

DVD Region Encoding was adopted by the Movie Industry to control marketing of DVD disks. It is unrelated to compatibility standards such as NTSC, PAL, and SECAM. The Movie Industry divided the world into regions and required (as part of an agreement to make commercial movies available on DVD) that DVD players sold in each region of the world would only play DVDs that were officially sold into that region of the world. This allows commercial DVD producers and distributors to release DVDs at different times in different regions and apply different pricing strategies to DVDs in different regions of the world. The region of DVD that a player will play is set at the factory and typically can be changed a limited number of times through a remote control button sequence.

### **Do all DVDs have restrictive Region Encoding?**

No. Region encoding is typically used by commercial movie producers to control marketing of their movies. DVDs produced in small quantities for business use, home movies, etc. are typically set up to play in all regions and will usually display the "All Regions" logo somewhere on the label. DVD's made by Access Video are set to play in all regions.



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**Will Access Video copy or convert a DVD set for one region to another?**

Generally, No. DVDs that are region encoded to a specific region of the world are almost always commercially produced and covered by copyright laws. Copying is generally not allowed under the law. Access Video will only copy or convert such DVDs for owners of the copyrights or for those who have written permission to do so by the owner of the copyrights.

**Why do you convert digital material to analog and back to digital during conversion?**

Because we know of no adequate-quality purely digital converters that can do the job in a reasonable time at a reasonable cost. Most purely digital (software-based) approaches simply drop frames or add frames to make the required frame rate change during the conversion. For example, if converting from 30 Frames Per Second (FPS) NTSC to 25 FPS PAL, most software simply deletes every 6th frame of the video. This results in a visual phenomenon called "jutter" – a combination of jitter and stutter – that makes viewing uncomfortable and looks unnatural. The high-quality analog systems we use incorporate multi-field inter-frame interpolation, which greatly reduces problems with "judder" that plague most digital approaches.

**Why is the menu not transferred when converting DVD to DVD?**

The process we use involves playing the DVD while simultaneously converting the output to the desired world standard and re-recording that signal to a new DVD on a DVD recorder. The interactive menu of the original DVD is only captured as a video image and is not interactive on the new DVD. It is simply part of the video that is re-recorded (if included at the customer's option –see next question). The new DVD will have a new interactive menu created by the DVD recorder on which it is recorded, but that menu will not match the original menu. In order to recreate the original menu, the new DVD would have to be re-authored with a new menu structure that matches the old menu structure. This can be done, but it can take many hours, even days or weeks, of labor to accomplish. Therefore, it is prohibitively expensive for most home video situations.

**Do you include the DVD menu(s) when converting from DVD to VHS?**

This is optional. In most situations, customers want the menu included because it may contain useful information that can be viewed (even if not interactively) on the VHS copy. By default, we transfer the "top" menu, but not sub-menus (like scene selection menus) unless requested. This also applies to DVD-to-DVD transfers in which the menu can be viewed on the converted copy, but is not interactive.