Free Front Row Alternative: MediaCentral
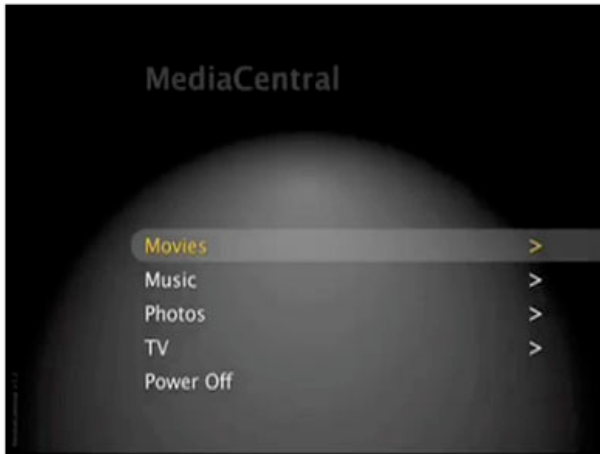
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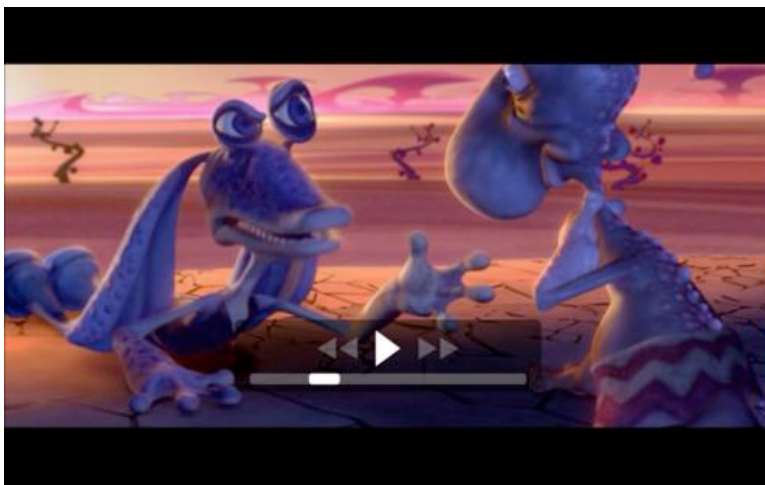
Digital LifeStyle, **Macintosh**, **Reviews**   digg this

by Stephen Antonucci

If you have an older Mac that did not ship with Apple's new Front Row and the Apple Remote you are not "out-of-luck" as there are ways to get Front Row running on an older Mac. But it may take some work and did get harder recently as Apple's lawyers sent a notice to some websites telling them to remove the Front Row Enabler they were allowing people to freely download. Sure you can still find it with instructions via BitTorrent, but here is an exciting **FREE** alternative to Front Row that has real promise from e.quinux software called **MediaCentral**.

MediaCentral supports numerous audio, video and multimedia formats, MediaCentral, like Front Row works with a remote and turns your Mac into a full featured home theatre. MediaCentral has a few features that Front Row lacks at this time. Both applications are showing that they need to mature a bit more to be "bullet-proof" but for a version 1.2 free application certainly is a nice alternative to older Mac owners lacking Front Row. Who knows when or even if, Apple will release Front Row for older Macs. They have certainly not shown any indication of doing so, making it prime-time for developers to create some magic of their own. Clearly, there is a demand for turning Macs into home theatres and until Apple comes to the party for older Macs, there are bound to be alternatives.
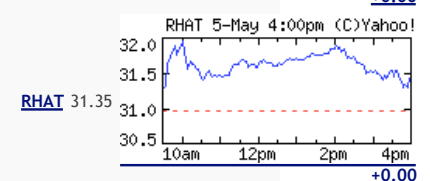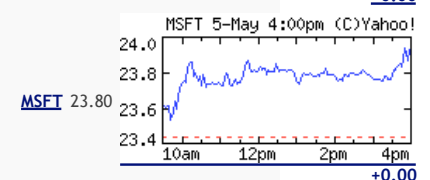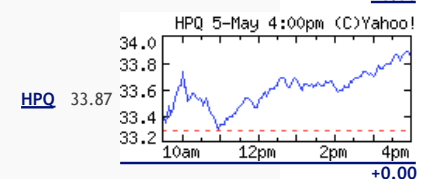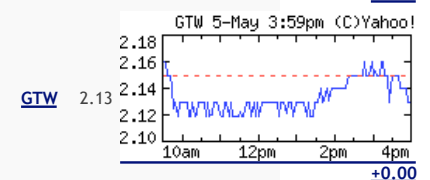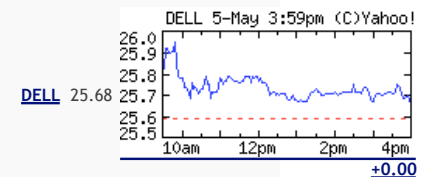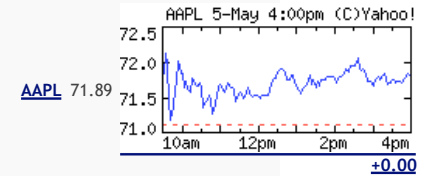
Cool features of MediaCentral:

- Play Movies and DVDs
- Play Movie trailers
- Play Music iTunes, including shared libraries

Antonucci, Stephen. "Free Front Row Alternative: MediaCentral." ReelSmart.com 03 April 2006. 08 May 2006 <http://www.reelsmart.com/2006/04/03/free-front-row-alternative-mediacentral/>.

- Shows album cover artwork while playing songs
- View Photos from your iPhoto Library with slideshows
- Watch TV (using Elgato EyeTV) and Web TV

Supported Video formats include (but are not limited to):
Quicktime Movies
DV Movies
AVIs with DivX, Xvid, MP3 and AC3 codecs
MPEG-1,2,4 Program and Transport Streams
Unfortunately MediaCentral is NOT compatible with Protected videos from iTunes that use Fairplay.
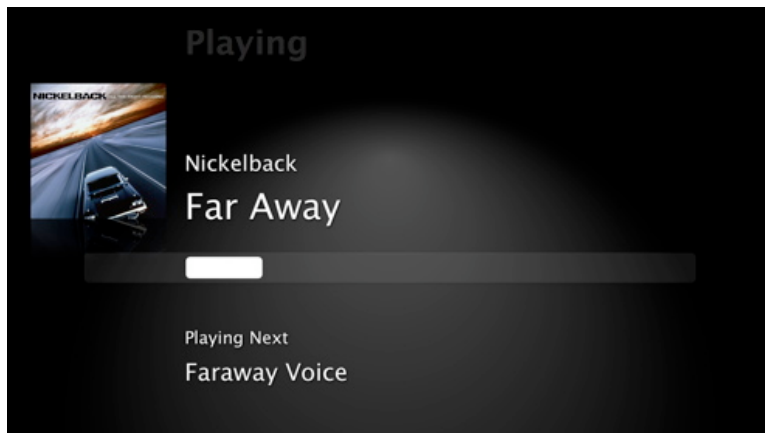
DVDs
If a DVD is inserted into the DVD drive a submenu item of the "DVD" main menu will appear. Hit it and there you go. Additionally MediaCentral is able to find any VIDEO_TS folder on your hard drive and will update the menu with the filename of the folder that is parent to the VIDEO_TS folder.

Web TV
The MediaCentral Web TV engine is compatible with QuickTime, Real, and Windows Media Player Webstreams. MediaCentral also supports the Elgato EyeTV products.
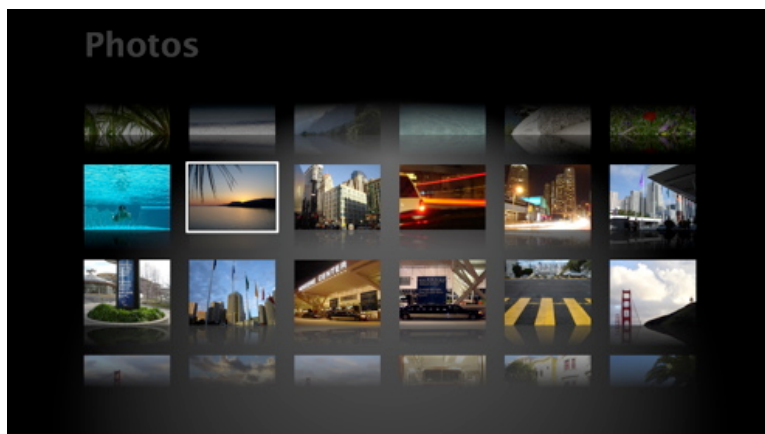
Movie trailers on demand
You now have instant access to the most current movie trailers. Most trailers allow you to select your preferred resolution. Sit back and enjoy these films in HD (up to 1080i). Don't worry about selection, MediaCentral has access to over 100 different trailers.

Audio
Access all your audio content in iTune's from MediaCentral.
MediaCentral supports all iTune's audio formats as well as any locally shared iTune's Playlists and Libraries. If you have an iPod, connect it to you Mac and it will appear in the Music menu.

The latest version of MediaCentral is Universal and is fully compatible with the brand new Intel Macs. I plan on putting it on my older Mac mini (PPC) version and getting it working with one of the available **compatible** remotes.

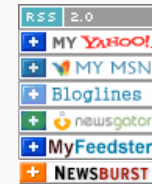I have tested MediaCentral on a few of my Macs and found the experience to be a lot like Front Row. MediaCentral even does some stuff that Front Row doesn't. The application is a

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(3)
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DigiProductions
- A Digital Media Company
LosingTom.org
- A documentary film

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LINK ReelSmart

bit buggy and not perfect but shows great potential as an alternative to Front Row. Since it is a free download and installs in a "snap" you have nothing to lose in trying it. My guess is as it matures it will not always be free.

[Download](#) the latest and greatest version of MediaCentral and "Be entertained".

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