Sometime back, I created a stop-motion animation film with the soft toys of my 2-year old son playing the lead roles. This 19 second movie was done using just a digital still camera (not video camcorder) and Windows Movie Maker, a free video editing software.

If the term "Stop Motion" is new for you, Wikipedia defines it as an **animation technique which makes static objects appear to move.** The object is moved by very small amounts between individual frames, producing the effect of motion when the film is played back.

To **create a stop motion animation**, you need a webcam or a basic digital camera (preferably mounted on a tripod for stability) and any video editing software (like Windows Movie Maker, Adobe Premiere Pro, Apple iMovie, etc)

**Step 1:** Fix your camera in front of the subjects (Mickey Mouse & Co. in my case). You can also your webcam mounted on the computer screen and capture still photographs using the keyboard.

**Step 2:** Visualize the movements and action of the characters in the movie (like what path they would follow, whether they would jump, etc). You may want to write this down as a rough movie script.

**Step 3:** Once your initial setting is in place, click the first picture. Now move the object(s) by a very small distance (few centimeters) and shoot the next picture. Make sure you don't change the position of your camera.

Repeat the step until all your characters reach the final frame.

Here's are some sample photographs shot for the movie embedded above - **Notice how the elephant, dog and Mickey have moved in each of the frames while the bear is sitting still.**

**Step 4:** Open Windows Movie Maker and goto Tools, Options and click the Advanced tab. Change the "Picture Duration" to 0.125 seconds and Transition Duration to 0.25 seconds (both are minimum values).

Now import all your digital photographs into Movie Maker and drag-n-drop them onto the Video Timeline. That's it. Export the video in AVI or WMV format and upload it to YouTube for sharing with your friends.
Bonus Tip: If you like your characters to jump in the stop-motion animation video, attach them to a thin wire and lift the wire a few centimeters in each frame. If the wire is of the same color as the background, it won't be visible in the final movie.

If you have professional video editing software like Adobe Premiere Pro or Apple Final Cut Pro, you can further reduce the time duration between still photographs to create smooth animation video without flickers or jerks.