



Windows Media Player 10 Technical Beta

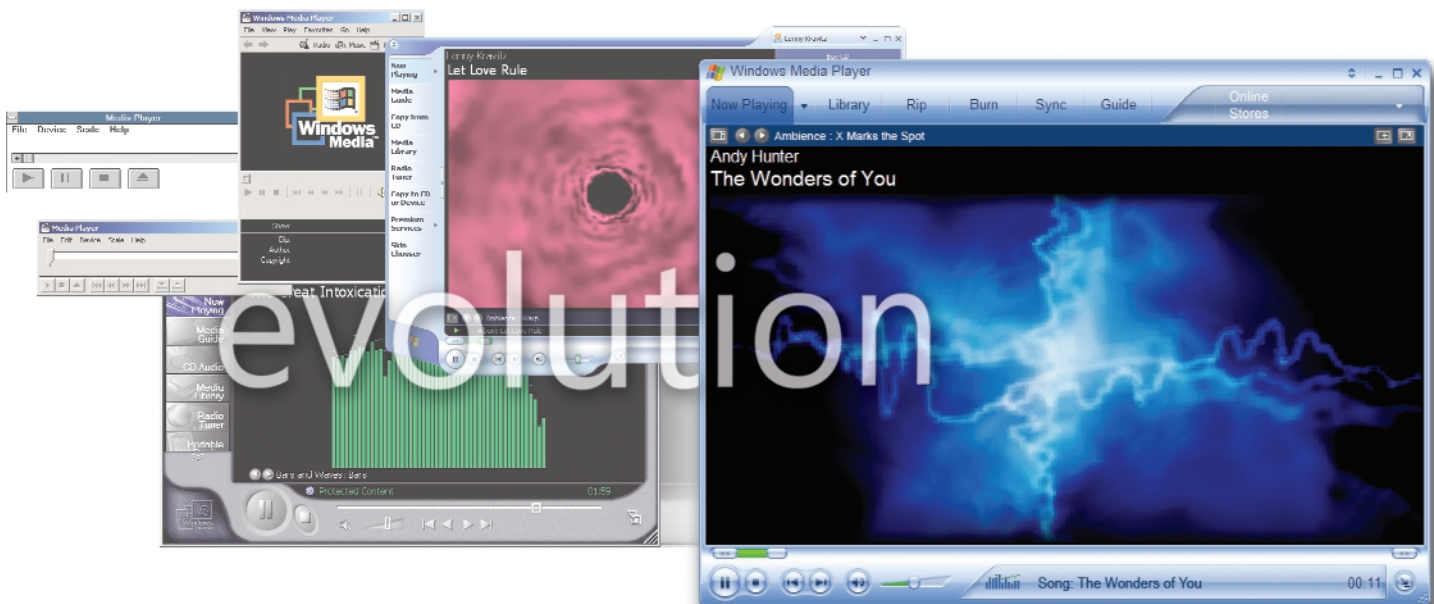
Features Overview

This document provides a high-level overview of new features and functionality to be found in the technical beta release of Windows Media Player 10. This technical beta is designed to provide enthusiasts and early adopters of Windows Media technology with an advance look at some of what's to come in the final Windows Media Player 10 later this year, and to allow the opportunity for testing and providing feedback.

Building on the design accomplishments and award winning features of Windows Media Player 9 Series, Microsoft Corp. is making significant strides in its next-generation, all-in-one media player, Windows Media Player 10. The main goals in the design of Windows Media Player 10 are to provide the best experience for discovering, playing and taking digital media anywhere.

This document outlines new and enhanced features of the player, including:

- **Sleek New Design.** The Windows Media Player 10 technical beta sports a simple user interface that delivers a fresh new look and feel, facilitating fast access to top player tasks. The most important player features are now in a more prominent position in the Media Library, enabling users to accomplish everyday digital media tasks all in one convenient place and to take advantage of the player's full capabilities while browsing the library.
- **Choice of Online Stores.** Available from directly within the player, the new Digital Media Mall offers a wide selection of online music stores and video services deeply integrated into the player. Some of these online stores will soon support next generation Windows Media Digital Rights Management to enable new playback scenarios for subscription-based or on-demand digital music and video.
- **Enhanced Device Support.** The Windows Media Player 10 technical beta supports a wide choice of devices, including a host of current portable music players and new Portable Media Center devices that will be available later this year. A major component to this rich device support is Auto Sync, which enables the seamless, automatic sync of music, video, and even recorded TV and photos to supported portable devices.
- **All-in-one Smart Jukebox.** The Windows Media Player 10 technical beta builds upon and enhances the features from Windows Media Player 9 Series, delivering fast and flexible playback, unmatched audio and video quality, and smart jukebox features.



IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION: This is a technical beta release of Windows Media Player 10. This technical beta is still in the development process; it is not intended for mass consumer adoption and does not have the stability of released Microsoft® software. This means beta users may encounter problems that could possibly result in a loss or destruction of data. This release is not for production use and it is recommended that this software be run in a test environment or that beta users back up existing data, such as their media library files, before installing and running the software.

Highlights of New and Enhanced Features

Sleek New Design

Based on results from usability studies and ongoing user feedback, the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta has been designed to be highly intuitive for users looking to discover, acquire, buy, play and manage digital media, from music to video. A primary design goal of the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta is to provide a sleek and simple user interface (UI) that delivers a fresh new look and feel.

More streamlined and sleeker than ever, the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta offers users an efficient UI, making it quicker, more intuitive, and fun to manage and access music and video. There are improved personalization capabilities allowing users to choose service providers, customize layout settings and much more. Top refinements include:

- **Simplification in the Presentation of Player Tasks.** Sleek new player “chrome;” taskbar navigation has been streamlined and moved to the top of the player; and the simplified naming of common tasks such as Rip, Burn, and Sync.
- **Easy Discoverability of Music and Video Services in the Player.** A new top navigation bar and drop-down menu make it far easier to find the choice of music and video services within the player.
- **Improved Status in the Chrome.** There is now more “communication” in the chrome that informs the user of what is happening from connecting, opening and status—and even includes the metadata information (artist, name of media, bit rate, etc.) while the media is being played.
- **Menus Now “Off” by Default.** In Windows Media Player 9 Series, menus were in Auto Hide mode and the consistent user feedback was that they preferred menus to be off. Users can still access the menus easily by right-clicking the top of the chrome. This helps give the player a more streamlined appearance and removes the clutter.



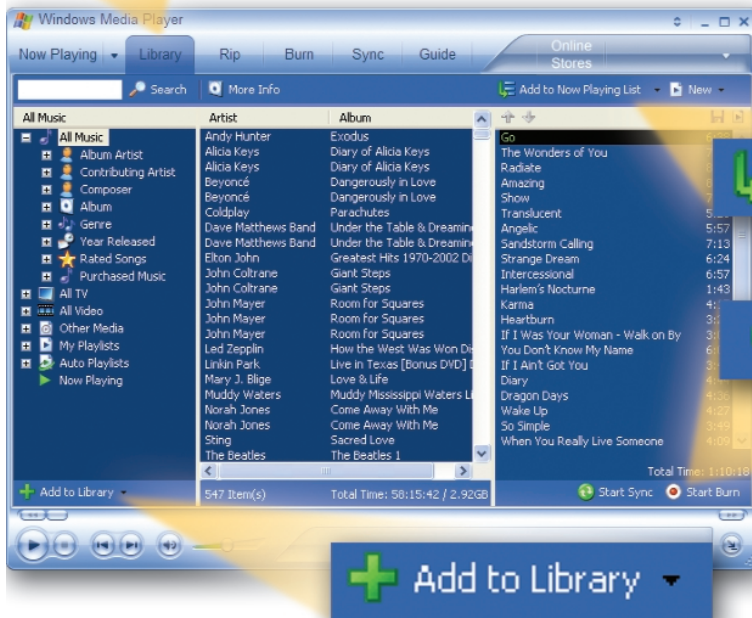
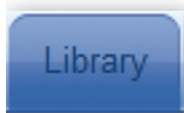
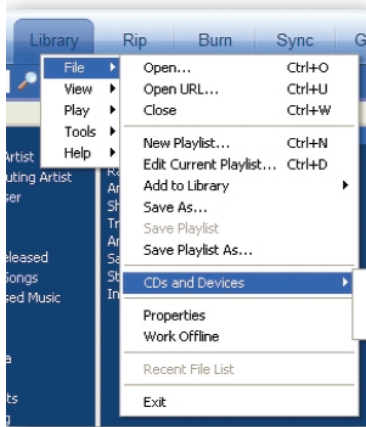
Sleek New Design (Library Enhancements)

In software design, providing power and ease of use together is a challenge. Since the launch of Windows Media Player 9 Series, consumer feedback has consistently told Microsoft that users “live in the Windows Media Player Media Library.” With this feedback in mind, Microsoft has updated the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta to make more of its powerful capabilities readily available while users are in the library view, to provide fast access to top player tasks. This enables most users to accomplish their everyday tasks from one central location, the Media Library. Power users will still be able to find additional features and tasks from Windows Media Player 9 Series in the View, Play and Tools options in the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta.

This means users can easily rip and burn CDs and sync tracks to portable devices while searching and navigating the Media Library. Music, videos, and now photos¹ and recorded television can all be accessed from the Media Library. Smart Jukebox functionality in the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta automatically organizes and updates all downloads and CD-ripped music. New capabilities include:

- **Always-on Playlist View.** Users can now always see the Now Playing list of files in the Media Library view (in the far-right pane). This makes it much easier for users to control what they are listening to by using features such as Add to Now Playing List in the media library. Users can drag and drop tracks, albums, and playlists to the Now Playing list whenever they want. This control also allows users to easily create and view lists for burning CDs and synchronizing content to a portable device.

- **Search.** Search functionality is now permanently in the Media Library toolbar. Search has been designed in the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta to help users search a wider set of information about the files in the library. This allows the user to quickly find files even in huge libraries and seamlessly add them to the list on the right side of the player window for playing, burning or syncing.
- **Display of Device Contents.** When a portable device is connected to a Windows XP PC, the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta adds a section or node to the Media Library which shows the files the player has transferred to the portable device.
- **Management of Purchased Content.** Each of the integrated services available in the player can add a section in the Media Library that contains all the content from that specific service. Each main media type (music, video, etc.) has its own Purchased section distinguishing media from services integrated within the player so users can easily track and locate video and music from these service providers. There are some additional features in this area still under development and planned for the final release of Windows Media Player 10.
- **Addition of Recorded Television.** In the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta recorded television from a Windows XP Media Center Edition-based PC (or another source) can be added to the player library, complete with sorting based on series, genre, actor or recording time. This enables users to easily add recorded television to a portable device such as forthcoming Portable Media Center-based devices.



¹Photos support in the library is enabled only when a user connects a photo-capable device. Users can optionally enable this feature by selecting Tools->Options->Player->Enable Picture Support for Devices

Choice of Online Stores

The Windows Media Player 10 technical beta enables service providers to deliver deeper integration and customization of their service offerings from within the new drop-down menu in the top upper-right-hand of the player. The result for consumers is the industry's first **Digital Media Mall** (an early version is included in the release of this technical beta) which provides users with a selection of leading online music stores and video services directly from within the player. The integrated access of these services directly in the player removes the need for users to navigate through multiple Web pages and makes services easy to use from within the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta.

Service providers, including Napster, MusicNow and CinemaNow, enjoy their own dedicated area of the player with the capability for deeper integration and customization. Improved integration for service providers includes:

- An integrated presence within the player Media Library, where users can find all their content from that service.
- Multiple buttons (such as Video, Radio or Music) available for customization by service providers.
- Customization of info-center, music shop, and album and movie information sections, to provide users with an even nicer experience.
- Ability to enable an integrated Now Playing experience that can provide contextual information about what the user is listening to.
- Online or link redistribution, which allows a service provider to redistribute the player with its service set as the default.



With this deeper integration of services and broad availability of choices coming in the final release of Windows Media Player 10, users will experience the freedom to shop where they want, from the widest choices in stores with the broadest range in content. And they can manage and play back their purchased content the same way they enjoy the rest of the content in their Media Library, because of the seamless integration in the player.

All the services accessible from within the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta support Windows Media technology, including Windows Media DRM, ensuring the seamless transfer of content between the player library and compatible portable or networked devices.

In addition, a number of services in the **Digital Media Mall** will soon use the advanced capabilities of Microsoft's next generation Windows Media DRM to enable users to play a la carte subscription and promotional digital media content on PCs, portable audio devices, Portable Media Center devices, and networked devices connected to an IP network.

Delivering a seamless media experience for consumers includes helping ensure interoperability between all manner of devices and the PC. Microsoft's next generation Windows Media DRM enables easier license management, direct content acquisition for devices, easier transfer to devices, and extension of playback of secure content to networked devices.

Additional features and benefits include:

- **Playback of Subscription and Promotional Content on Devices.** With Microsoft's next generation Windows Media DRM, content providers and device manufacturers now can enable users to acquire, transfer and play subscription and promotional content through a wide variety of supported portable devices and home network devices.
- **License Refresh for Devices.** A new scenario enabled by Microsoft's next generation Windows Media DRM is the ability for users to potentially download thousands of subscription-based files on a portable device. By the nature of subscription, these files will "time out" on the device if a new license is not periodically delivered. It would be burdensome to have to reload all files to the device just to renew the license. Microsoft's next generation Windows Media DRM allows for content providers to refresh just the licenses for content on a portable device, making for a quick and seamless subscription experience on the device.
- **New and Flexible Device Scenarios.** Because content providers now can offer various content acquisition models across many types of devices, there are many new scenarios that content providers can deliver. For example, users may be able to listen to a specific song with unlimited playback on their Windows XP-based PC and for 30 days on a portable music device. This will increase the ability for users to listen to more songs or watch more videos across the range of their devices.



Enhanced Device Support

The Windows Media Player 10 technical beta enables users to take what they want, wherever they want on a host of portable music players and new Portable Media Center devices available later this year. The player supports transfer to over 60 portable devices that work with online music services (a full list of devices is on the web at <http://www.microsoft.com/cooldevices/>).

To provide a highly seamless device experience, the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta introduces a new feature called Auto Sync. Auto Sync was developed to give users the ability to quickly and easily take the content they want wherever they want. With the support of Microsoft's new Multimedia Transport Protocol (MTP)² technology, connecting devices and transferring digital content has become seamless and fast. Once a device supporting MTP is connected to a Windows XP-based PC with the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta, the player automatically recognizes and enables the immediate and seamless transfer of digital content to that device, all without the need to download drivers or confusing third-party multimedia applications. A significant user hurdle has been removed.

²Developed by Microsoft, **MTP is a protocol extension** based on an industry-standard Picture Transfer Protocol (fully backward-compatible) and is a free specification available for device vendors. MTP is built into the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta. Its key benefits include:

- A no-software, no-driver, plug-and-play installation and configuration for portable media players — the same experience customers have come to expect from devices such as digital cameras.
- A robust protocol that allows users to remove the device from Windows XP-based PCs at any time without fear of any corruption of the device or the sync experience.

Other features of Auto Sync include:

- Auto Sync can be set up to automatically start downloading specific content to a device every time it is connected to a Windows XP-based PC, all while users engage in other player tasks. Intelligent enough to follow customizable user preferences, Auto Sync only downloads content that meets certain parameters, such as songs most listened to, television programming acquired within a certain time frame, or recently downloaded photos.
- Auto Sync understands how to sort content on each device, ensuring that only specified content is loaded and nothing is accidentally erased. If a device does not have enough storage for the whole library, depending on the device, Auto Sync will default to transferring “Auto Playlists”—such as four- and five-star-rated content, new music and photos taken within the last month, etc. Users will be able to establish this in the Set Up Sync section of the player.
- In addition, the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta provides the player’s first video and image support for device synchronization so digital movies, television content and photos can be seamlessly transferred to devices that support these content types. Auto Sync has also been optimized for new subscription model capabilities, empowered by Microsoft’s latest Windows Media DRM, enabling devices supporting this technology to store vast libraries of subscription or promotional digital media (music and video).

In addition, the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta takes full advantage of the next-generation Windows Media Digital Rights Management technology that makes purchasing, managing and enjoying secured content easy and compelling on a wide range of devices. This next-generation DRM technology will enable new possibilities for users, including new delivery and playback scenarios for subscription-based or on-demand digital music and video. These scenarios span Windows XP-based PCs and devices, including portable audio devices, Portable Media Centers, and networked devices connected within the home, including those that connect over a wireless network.

Resources:

For a complete online music stores and services listing, see:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/press/vip/music.aspx>.

For a complete device listing, see: <http://www.microsoft.com/cooldevices>.



All-In-One Smart Jukebox

Windows Media Player 10 technical beta builds on the features from the award winning Windows Media Player 9 Series, including:

Fast and Flexible Playback

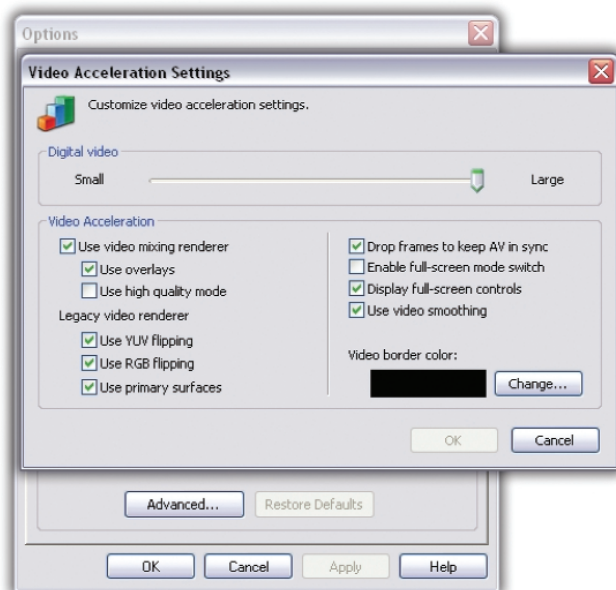
- **Mini-Player**—The Mini-Player mode docks the player into your taskbar for instant access while saving space and now includes support for seek.
- **Full Screen Mode**—Go big with full screen support for video and music playback with controls that move away when you're not using them.
- **Instant-on/Always-on Streaming**—Say goodbye to buffering with Fast Streaming. Windows Media Player enables a channel surfing experience for broadband users when connected to a server running Windows Media Services 9 Series.
- **Mix your Music DJ-style with Cross-fading and Auto Volume Leveling**—For seamless playback, cross-fading mixes the end of one song into the beginning of another with no "dead air." Auto Volume Leveling equalizes volume across tracks for uninterrupted playback.
- **Variable Speed Playback and Media Link**—Control the speed of audio or video without changing the pitch and tone perfect for quickly getting through a long video, or for aiding comprehension. Use Media Link to e-mail links to your own highlights from streamed news, presentations, home movies, and more.
- **Fast and Flexible Playback**—All-in-one ease of use and fast performance gets you playing your music and video fast, from startup and playback, to management of large media libraries and CD burning. Flexible new features combine for easy control of your playback experience for more types of media than other players: streaming or downloaded music, Internet radio, audio CDs, HDCDs, DVDs, CompactFlash, SmartMedia, MMC, SD Media, and more.
- **Now Playing Info Center View**—Access a wide range of information on the music you play—available album art, music videos, downloads, biographies, discographies, reviews, news, related artists, and much more. You even get DVD cover art, chapter information, reviews, and much more when you play DVDs.



Windows Media Player 10 technical beta

Unmatched Audio and Video Quality

- **Stunning Audio and Video Quality**—Experience the highest quality audio and stunning video quality at any connection speed with Windows Media Audio and Video 9 Series. Take advantage of Variable Bit Rate (VBR) audio and new compression that delivers MP3 quality at half the size so you can carry more music on your PC, CD-R, or on a host of devices. Windows Media Video 9 delivers the best quality video at the smallest download sizes or streaming speeds when compared to other formats.
- **True Multichannel Audio**—Bring the high-end audio experience to your PC and the Web. WMA 9 Pro supports 24-bit, 96khz audio with support for 5.1+ channel audio as low as 128 Kbps.
- **Lossless Audio**—Copy your CDs to your PC at archive-quality levels with WMA 9 Lossless' mathematically lossless compression technology.
- **High-resolution, 20-bit HDCD® Playback**—Previously only available on high-end and professional CD and DVD players, Microsoft's patented HDCD audio enhancement technology delivers full 20-bit playback with HDCD-encoded compact discs.
- **Video Smoothing Technology for Narrowband Content**—Since most low-bit-rate content is created with only about half of the motion of the original, video smoothing works by inserting (interpolating) this motion for smoother playback.



New audio and video support and capabilities unique to Windows Media Player 10 technical beta include:

- **NEW! Aspect ratio capabilities** that allow Windows Media Player 10 technical beta to be optimized for display on any monitor, both in normal mode and full screen.
- **NEW! Color space and black levels**, which allow the user to match the matte color of the player in full screen to the black levels of a video.
- **NEW! Audio video synchronization capabilities** provide users with greater control of the playback experience. Users can choose to prioritize audio and video synchronization or prioritize the viewing of every frame, gaining maximum flexibility when playing HD content in a home theater environment.

The First All-In-One Smart Jukebox

- **Smart Organization features keep it organized**—The Windows Media Player 10 technical beta utilizes Auto Folder Monitoring and Auto Find features to automatically organize media files, even if they are stored or moved to multiple folders, drives, or PCs.
- **Auto Playlists and Ratings**—Personal ratings and Auto Playlists are a great way to get the music and videos you want, when you want it. Over 20 Auto Playlists ship with Windows Media Player for everything from your favorite weekday music to one CD's worth ready to burn for the road, and you can build your own.
- **Auto Info**—Auto Info can automatically fix or add album details (tags) to your MP3 and WMA files such as artist or album name, year, composer, or track number.
- **Advanced Tag Editor**—View and edit over 35 different types of media information including mood, comments, artist photos, synchronized lyrics, and much more.
- **Auto Volume Leveling**—Automatic volume leveling equalizes the volume of tracks across your playlist for professional-sounding CDs.



Stay Tuned for the Final Release of Windows Media Player 10

This document outlined new and enhanced features and functionality already included in the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta. From the sleek new design, enhanced device support and a choice of online stores in the Digital Media Mall, the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta shows the foundation Microsoft is building for the best end-to-end consumer experience to discover, play and take high-quality digital media on the go. The final release of Windows Media Player 10 is scheduled for later this year.

Additional Resources

More information on the Windows Media Player 10 technical beta is available from the following resources:

Player customization and extensibility.

Check out these software development kits (SDKs) to learn about the new features that enable improved customization and extensibility of the Windows Media Player experience.

- Windows Media Player 10 Software Development Kit (beta version)
- Windows Media Format 9.5 Software Development Kit

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/mp10/developerresources.aspx>

Digital Rights Management and consumer electronics.

More information about the new technologies that permit portable and networked devices to play content protected by using the Windows Media Rights Manager SDK can be found by downloading the white papers "Introducing DRM for Portable and Networked Devices" and "Using DRM for Portable and Networked Devices" from the Technical Articles page.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/knowledgecenter/technicalarticles.aspx#digitalrightsmanagement>

More information about protecting content and the new Windows Media DRM Platform can be found on the Windows Media DRM page at

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/drm/default.aspx>.

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