

# Using MS Media Player 9 and Windows Explorer to Register and Play Your Music Collection

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## Need

The music teacher at the California School for the Blind is blind and uses JAWS to work in Windows. He has a personal and school collection of over 150 music CD's. Each CD is meticulously labeled in Braille and stored in boxes and CD racks. In spite of the care to maintain this collection, CDs invariably get lost or misplaced. Even when a CD is in the correct box, it can take up to 5 minutes to locate the CD, place it in the CD player and find the correct track. The teacher wanted to be able to locate and play CDs for his music appreciation classes within a few seconds.

## Basic Understanding of Audio Files

MP3 – Standard format for music files. It is relatively easy to move music files from one device to another. (Computer to MP3 player)

WMA – Windows Media Audio files – Windows proprietary audio file format. This is the default file format when copying CDs to a computer using Windows Media Player.

CDA – CD Audio file – Format of commercially available music CDs.

Sampling Bit rate – The number of samples taken from a music CD in kilobits per second. This is a way of compressing the size of a music file stored on your computer. The higher the sampling rate, the better quality of playback you should be able to obtain. A single CD will take from 22 to 150 megabytes of hard drive space or more. “CD-quality” is about 55 megabytes for a typical music CD copied at 128 kilobytes per second (kbps). For more information check out the Windows Media help files.

## The Equipment

Gateway 3.0 GHz computer with Windows XP Professional

200 GB Hard Drive

Windows Medial Player 9.0

MP3 Power Encoder from Cyberlink (\$9.95 download) – Found on the Tools menu, Options dialogue box, Copy Music Tab, “Learn more about MP3 formats” link.

Boston Acoustics BA7900 Surround Sound Speakers

Windows Explorer 6.0.

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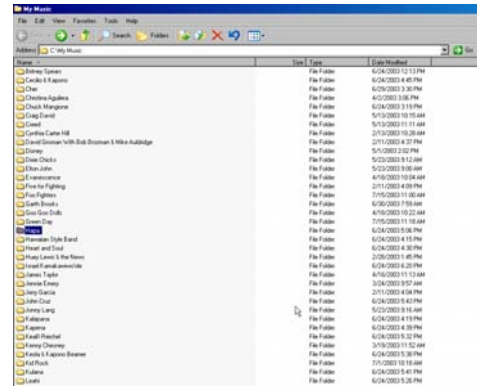
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## Setup

Two different programs are used to access the music files copied onto your computer. The music is played by the Windows Media Player; however it is not fully accessible. For that reason, we use the Windows Explorer file management program to find and select the music we want to hear. Since the music file is linked to Windows Media Player, when we select the music, it automatically starts WMP and plays the selection.



1. **Create a folder on your root directory called, “My Music”.** (C:\my music) or keep the default location (c:\documents and settings\Administrator\My Documents\My Music). As you can see it will be easier to find your music if you simply create the My Music folder on your root directory.
2. **Place a shortcut on your start menu to My Music.** Start Windows Explorer (Windows key, E) and go to the folder you plan to store your music (C:\my music). Right click or use the context sensitive menu key (third key to the right of the space bar). Move down the menu until you find, Send to Desktop”. This puts a shortcut to My Music on the desktop. Click and drag it on top of the Start Button. This puts a shortcut to the My Music folder on the Start Menu. You may need to change the name from “shortcut to My Music” to “My Music”.
3. **Setup Windows Media Player.** (Copy Music Options) Start Windows Media Player. Open the Tools Menu, Options and CTRL-TAB to Copy Music.
  - a. “Change...”, location by selecting the Change button and type in C:\my music in the edit field.
  - b. Tab down to the Format combo box. If you have not downloaded an MP3 converter you will only be able to select from Windows Media Audio and Windows Media Audio (variable bit rate). The latter provides a better quality-sampling rate and provides for surround sound speaker systems. Either WMA file format may not be compatible with other devices such as MP3 players. Check your user manual for compatibility.
  - c. TAB to the next three check boxes for, Copy protected music, Copy CD when inserted and Eject CD when copying is complete. Each should be checked. This will expedite the CD copy process and can be changed after copying all your CDs if you wish.
  - d. TAB to Audio quality slider bar. Select the quality you choose. Left Arrow for Smallest Size and right arrow for Best Quality. With WMA the best quality will copy a CD at 192 kbps and take up about 86 MB per CD. With WMA (variable bit rate) the best quality will copy a CD at 240 to 355 kbps and take up to 155 MB per CD. With MP3 the best quality will copy a CD at 192 kbps and take up about 86 MB of hard drive space. “CD-quality is about 55 MB per CD.
  - e. Press Enter to accept the setup.
4. **Copying a Music CD to Your XP Computer.** Make sure Windows Media Player is not running. Place a CD in your computer CD player. Windows Media Player will

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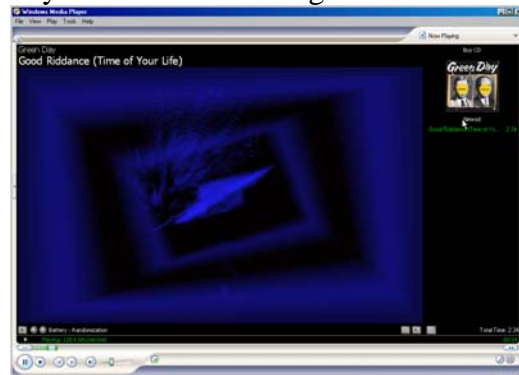
automatically start and should automatically begin to copy the CD to your default directory. If not, go to the View menu, Go To item (Alt-v, g). Press the c-key to go to Copy from CD. Hold down the Alt-key and press c to begin copy. The first time you may be asked if you want to copy protect your music. I take the second choice, Do Not add copy protections, Tab to the “I understand music is protected by law” disclaimer and press the space bar to check the check box. Second screen asks if you want to change your settings. Tab-key twice to “Keep current format” and Enter to finish setup.

Depending on the speed of your hard drive, it should take less than 5 minutes to copy the CD. The music will play independently of the copy speed. If you selected to eject the CD when finished, you should know when it has finished copying your music when the CD is ejected from the CD-drive. Exit Windows Media Player (Alt-f4) before placing a new CD in your CD-ROM. If you do not exit, it will play the CD and not copy it. In Windows 98, you may be required to keep Windows Media Player open to the “Copy from CD”, view in order for the CD to copy automatically.

- Note:** If you are on the Internet, Windows Media Player will automatically search for artist, album and track information and insert that information into your computer if it is available. This way you do not need to hand enter any information for most music CDs. This does not work if you have created a CD with your own mix of songs.

#### 6. **Playing Music from Your Computer.**

Since you created a shortcut to the My Music folder and placed it on your Start Menu, you can find your music by pressing your Window key to open the Start Menu and then pressing the m-key for “My Music”. This opens the My Music folder and displays the Artists Folder list. Find the Artist you want with first letter navigation or down arrow and press Enter.



You are now in the Album Folder list. An artist may have more than one album. Find the album you want and press Enter. You are now in the track view list. Select the track you want or CTRL-A to select all tracks. Press the Enter key to open Windows Media Player and begin playing the selected track or tracks.

- Note:** When your music finishes playing, you can ALT-Tab back to your track view from Windows Media Player and Alt-left arrow (or Backspace) to go back to Album and Artist view.