

## Chapter 3



# Importing Media Fil

Get media files from other sources to enhance your project and make it really sparkle



Yes you can...

- Find video and audio files on your PC
- Import these files into Microsoft Windows Movie Maker 2
- Understand which file formats are supported by Windows Movie Maker 2

Project time...



45 mins

More Info



[www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/moviemaker/videos/default.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/moviemaker/videos/default.asp)

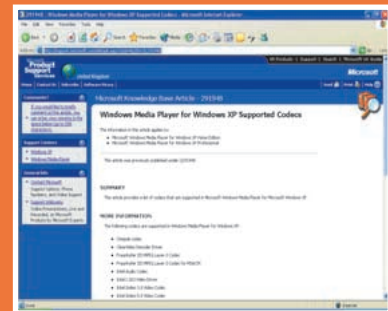
While it's certainly true that you won't get far in video making if you don't have a camera, you can use other video files to practise on. You may also find stock footage, library film or other people's video useful to supplement your movie. Short shots of still images or brief video clips can be invaluable to use as establishing shots. This technique is widely used in films and television to give the audience the idea of a location despite the filming taking place in a studio hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

## Taking Stock

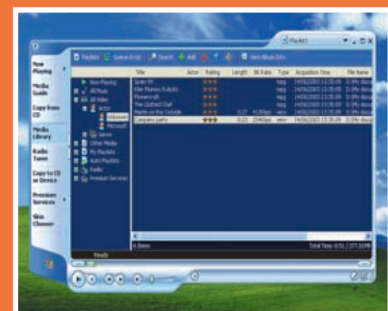
In documentaries, stock footage is used effectively to illustrate what might otherwise be a visually dull piece of narration. This technique is used extensively in historical programmes, when the subject can't be filmed – access to time machines being limited these days. Used sparingly, other people's footage can make a big difference to your movie, providing you have permission to use it.



Page 33 Use Windows Media Encoder 9 Series to make incompatible files play



Page 35 Learn which codecs are supported by Windows Movie Maker 2



Page 36 Manage your media files using Windows Media Player 9 Series



# Video File Sources

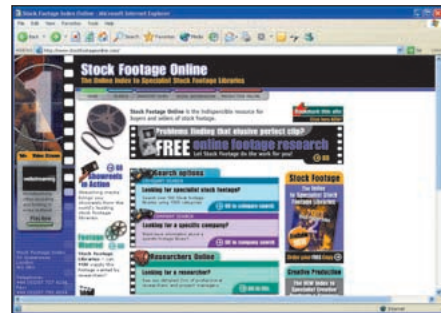
## Looking for video files to use? Here are some places to start looking



*You may encounter material that's protected by copyright while searching for video files. Don't copy anything unless you have explicit permission. If in any doubt consult a copyright lawyer. We can't offer legal advice. The tips and explanations in this book cannot be construed as legal advice.*

You may be restricted by what video you can edit if you don't have a camera or if you just don't have the resources to visit a particular location or recreate a scene. In these cases you might want to consider using video that already exists. Windows Movie Maker 2 is quite happy to import files recorded in a wide variety of formats.

You may well already have video files stored on your hard drive. Use the Search tool on the Start Menu to trawl through for all the video files you have saved. You may be







**Stock Footage Online offers a huge database of registered clips and the companies selling them.**

pleasantly surprised. Consider the list of options below, which offers cheap and not-so-cheap ways to get hold of some moving images.



www.stockfootageonline.com

*Looking for particular pictures that you can't get by other means? Visit Stock Footage Online. You can search for footage by category or by company. Then just call the company involved and ask for their rates.*

-  **Video CDs** offer a wealth of video files for you to import. You could get a friend to transfer some video for you and burn it to CD. This is a good way to overcome the lack of a suitable adapter. You'll find some sample footage on your cover CD.
-  **Import existing** video files on your hard drive that weren't captured by Windows Movie Maker 2. You may have imported these earlier with some other third party software.
-  **Download video** files from the internet. Many sites offer video clips for download. You'll have to obtain permission to use them from the copyright holder of the video. Send an email to the webmaster to find out who to contact.
-  **Stock footage** is available via the web or on disc. The video will cost you and you'll have limited permission, based on how many times you use it. It may seem expensive, but it's far cheaper than getting clearance on existing film.

# Video File Formats

## Windows Movie Maker 2 handles a wide range of video files. Here's our guide...

There are lots of ways to record digital video. The file type depends on how the data is arranged. Each type was developed for a particular application, though many programs, Windows Movie Maker 2 included, support several types. These are commonly known by their extensions (the three letters after the dot in the filename) or by the file type name.

Here are the video file types that Windows Movie Maker 2 supports: Advanced Streaming Format (ASF) is a Microsoft format that can use third

party codecs (video compression methods); Audio Video Interleaf (AVI) files are widely supported by software and digital video players; Windows Media Video (WMV) files are Microsoft-made and provide impressive compression with excellent playback. MPEG (Moving Pictures Experts Group), MPG and M1V are video movie files that can be encoded in a number of ways. Some of these codecs can't import into Windows Movie Maker (see below). Many popular still image files are supported as well.

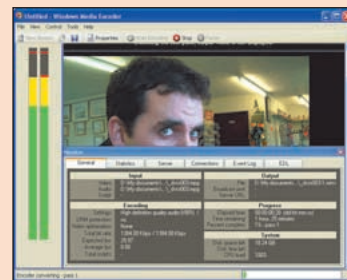


The following still picture files can be imported into Windows Movie Maker 2: Bitmap (BMP), Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPG, JPEG, JPE, JFIF) and Graphic Interchange Format (GIF). Convert pictures saved in other formats using your graphics program.

## Codec Conundrum

If a supported file type won't import, blame it on the codec

You may find that a supported file type that plays OK in Windows Media Player won't import correctly into Windows Movie Maker 2. This is because the codec (the mathematical formula for recording the video in the file) is not one that's included with Microsoft Windows XP. To solve this problem, you need to convert the relevant media file into a format that Windows Movie Maker can play. You can do this with Windows Media Encoder 9 Series, which is available to download for free from the web address given below.



Windows Media Encoder 9 Series will sort out any errant file that won't play.

[www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia](http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia)

# Audio File Sources

## Just like video, you can import audio files to supplement your production



*It's tempting to try to make up a killer soundtrack from your favourite music. You'll need permission from the copyright holders to do that, which almost certainly will be expensive and difficult to obtain. Lower your sights and use tracks you own.*

There's no shortage of sound files to be found. You can rip them from a CD, convert analogue music from record and tape players into audio files, record your own effects or download them. However, working out what you may legally use is far harder than turning up the files in the first place. We can't offer legal advice because we aren't lawyers, but a reasonable rule of thumb is to only use sounds that you created yourself or that you have written permission from the copyright holder to use in your films.



Visit AKM music at [www.akmmusic.co.uk](http://www.akmmusic.co.uk) for music to use in your videos.

Even that isn't hard and fast, however, so if you have any worries at all about the issue of copyright, ask a legal practitioner.



*Don't take any of our suggestions as legal advice. Contact your copyright lawyer for up-to-date legal guidance. Alternatively, avoid the issue completely by only using images and sound that you own.*

- **Use audio** files from your Media Library. Import them into Windows Movie Maker 2 to use as sound effects or background music. Remember, you'll need permission to use tracks or sounds that you don't own.
- **Use Windows** Media Player 9 Series to copy CD tracks to your hard drive and then import them into Windows Movie Maker 2. The same caution about ownership of the content applies.
- **Record sound** effects using Sound Recorder. You can launch it by choosing Start > All Programs > Accessories > Entertainment > Sound Recorder. Import the files into Windows Movie Maker 2.
- **Download sound** files from the web by all means, but get permission before using them.
- **Buy a CD** of royalty-free music. This comes with permission to reuse the tracks. You'll find a number of sounds on your cover CD.

# Audio File Formats

## What audio file types does Windows Movie Maker 2 support?

Many common audio file types can be imported into Windows Movie Maker 2. These include waveform audio (WAV) files. This is uncompressed data, so the files are big, but you might use this to record your own sound effects using Sound Recorder. The SND extension covers a range of files, including Macintosh files. The audio basic, AU files are mainly used in UNIX-based computers, but Windows Movie Maker 2 can import them. Audio Interchange (AIF, AIFC, or AIFF) files will easily transfer into

your project, as will the two most popular audio file formats of the moment. MPEG, layer 3, (or MP3) has a compression method based on removing inaudible frequencies. Its critics claim that audible frequencies vanish too, but it did make transferring music over the internet possible. Windows Media Audio (WMA) is Microsoft's compressed sound format. Compared to MP3 it provides clearer sound, around twice the amount of compression (though you can reduce this to lossless), and digital rights management.

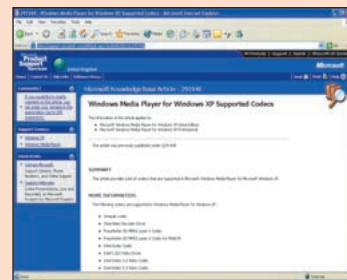


*Compressed media files can be 'lossless' or 'lossy'. Lossless compression involves reducing the file size without removing data. Lossy compression is where data is removed in such a way that the lost data is unlikely to be noticed. Most popular picture, sound and video files utilise lossy compression and the loss is unnoticeable.*

## What Codecs?

Windows Movie Maker 2 supports numerous audio codecs

As with video files, it's not just the file type that determines whether or not you can play certain tracks; the codec used to compress the data is equally important. Different codecs are designed to produce a range of attributes. Some aim for maximum compression at the expense of sound quality, while others preserve sound frequencies by opting for larger file sizes. Windows Movie Maker 2 supports all popular sound codecs, plus a large number of lesser known ones.



For a list of supported codecs, see article 291948 in Microsoft support.

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;EN-US;291948>

# Managing Media Files

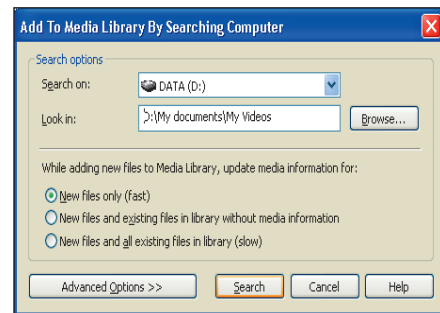
## Windows Media 9 Series can handle both source files and finished movies



To update your Media Library, search your computer for media files. You can do this by choosing **Tools > Search for Media Files** and then selecting a disk or folder to scan. Select 'New files only' and click **Search**.

Windows Movie Maker 2 is a powerful video editing program, but for playback and management of multimedia files, Windows Media 9 Series is the program to use. This has its own Focus Guide which you should turn to for detailed information. However, we'll take a brief look at its media management features, because these relate to Windows Movie Maker 2.

Windows Media Player 9 Series manages the Media Library, which lists all your media files. If you haven't run it before, or you've



**Add your latest videos to the Media Library by searching your computer.**

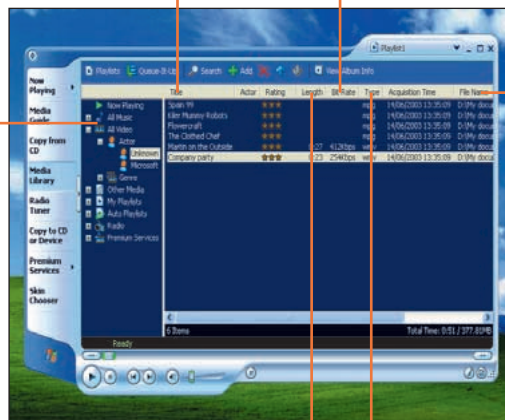
added files to your computer without using Media Library, you'll need to get it to scan your computer for media files.

## Organise Your Media Files

**Make sure you save your video with a useful filename because Media Library uses it as the title.**

**You can list videos by genre or actor, although you may need to add this information to the library entries.**

**The Length column gives precise timings – very useful for planning video showings.**



**The Bit Rate gives you an indication of the quality of the video. The higher the number the better the quality.**

**File Name shows the location and filename of the video. This is essential information if you want to import the file.**

**The Type indicates the file format that the video was saved in. Acquisition time shows when the file was added to the library.**

# Downloading Video

## Plenty of websites offer video clips, but you'll need permission to use them

Most online video is provided as streaming files; you watch the video as the file transfers to your PC. This is an effective way to protect content because you can't easily save the video or manipulate it. However some sites offer complete video files for download. If the file is one of the types supported by Windows Movie Maker 2, you can download and import it, if you have permission.

File sharing and peer-to-peer applications are very tempting to use because they offer searchable

databases of currently online computers, enabling you to track down video files easily. However, most of these networks provide opportunities for people to trade illegal material. Copyright violation is rife, but so is trading illegal pornography and other unpleasant material. You can't rely on someone else naming a file correctly and innocent sounding files may contain nasty content. Stick to using the web for your video search. File sharing is at best of dodgy morality; at worst it's downright illegal.



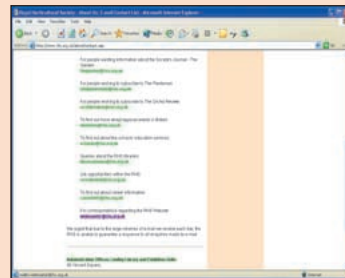
*For an even more comprehensive guide to the wonders of Windows XP, including Windows Movie Maker 2, why not try our sister title, Windows XP: The Official Magazine. It's available every month, providing you with the latest tips, tutorials and expert advice. It's priced £5.99 with two CDs or £6.49 for a DVD and CD.*

www.windowsexpmagazine.co.uk

## Get Permission

In some cases, all you need do is send an email

When looking for web video, you're best off searching for sites that cover the subject matter of your movie. You may find some that not only cover the subject but also have video material. If the site is a personal one, kept going as a hobby and not for profit, getting permission to use the footage may simply be a matter of sending a polite email. Corporate sites usually have a webmaster you can ask to point you in the direction of the copyright holder of the relevant clip. In these cases you're unlikely to gain permission to use video without money changing hands, but nothing ventured, nothing gained...



**Most big websites have a webmaster address that you can write to.**

# Importing Video Files

## Now you've located the file you want, how do you get it into Windows Movie Maker 2?



*The original or source file isn't moved or copied; the clips imported refer back to the source file. Don't delete the file that you imported because doing so would make the clips fail to work.*

To import a video file into Windows Movie Maker 2, the file must be either on your computer or in a location that is easily accessible by your PC, such as on a local network. The import action doesn't move or copy the original file; it just provides Windows Movie Maker 2 with the details of the file's location so it can refer back to it.

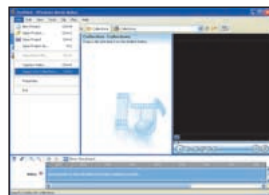
You can import multiple files at a time by highlighting them in the Import File dialogue. To highlight more than one item at a time, hold

down the [Ctrl] key as you click each file you want to import.

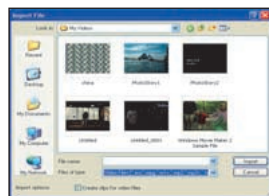
Just like video capture, whenever you import a file you are given the option to create clips. Depending on the format of the file you are importing, the clips are created in slightly different ways. Windows Media files with the extensions WMV or ASF contain markers which coincide with significant events. Digital Video AVI files contain time stamp info; clips are taken from this. For other file types, clips are created at shot changes.



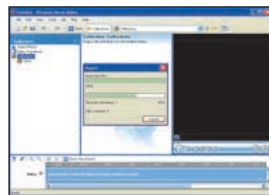
*Video files that have been protected using digital rights management cannot be imported into Windows Movie Maker. This is by design to prevent copyright abuse.*



**1** Launch Windows Movie Maker 2 from the Start menu. To import an existing video file, choose File > Import into Collections. Alternatively, press [Ctrl]+[I] on the keyboard. This brings up the Import File dialogue, which displays files in My Documents by default.



**2** Browse to the file you want to import. It may lie in the My Videos folder. You should see thumbnail still images to help you find the file you want. Select the file and check 'Create clips for video files' before clicking Import.



**3** Windows Movie Maker 2 imports the file and chops it up into clips to make handling the video less cumbersome. Once the import is complete, you'll see several clips in the Contents pane. These are ready for you to manipulate.

# Importing Other Files

## Try importing still pictures, sound files or collections from Windows Movie Maker 1

Any audio file of a supported type can be imported into a Windows Movie Maker 2 collection. The process is similar to that of importing video files, only the Import File dialogue doesn't create clips of sound files. Choose File > Import into Collections to open the Import File dialogue. Change the Files of Type drop-down list to display Audio and Music Files. Browse to the sound file you want to import and click Import.

You can import still pictures using the same process, but by changing

the Files of Type setting to Picture Files. Setting this to Windows Movie Maker 1.x Collection Files enables you to import collections from the earlier version of Windows Movie Maker, sparing you the problem of importing all the components of a collection that you previously toiled over. You'll find the collections file in C:\Documents and Settings\{Your name}\Application Data\Microsoft\Movie Maker, where C is your hard drive. The file is named Windows Movie Maker.col. Only do this if you used Windows Movie Maker 1.

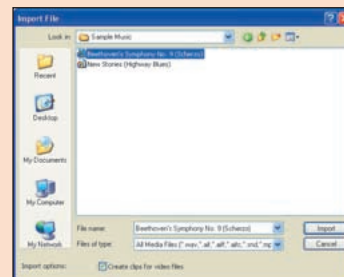


*Do you know someone who likes to produce their own music? Try asking them for permission to use their tunes or, even better, write some music specially for your movie.*

## The Sound of Music

Choose your music to complement the action on screen

Incidental music should influence our reaction to the pictures and events on screen without intruding. Good incidental music heightens the experience of a movie, while bad incidental music jars. Listen out for musical styles as you watch a film or television programme. Australian soaps are particularly good for this because they use a limited range of themes that are repeated several times in an episode. Try to imagine the effect if, for example, the humorous theme were used with a sad scene. It makes you chuckle, but illustrates the importance of an appropriate choice.



**You can import music files, providing you have permission, of course.**