

VIDEO FILE FORMATS

Most video files have at least two types of file formats. First there is the container and then the codec which is used inside the container.

The container describes the whole structure of the file, and specifies which codecs are being used. The following is a list of some of the more common types of container formats:

Flash video format (.flv)

The Flash video format has become increasingly popular because of the cross-platform availability of Flash video players, Flash video is playable within Flash movies files, which are supported by practically every browser on every platform. Flash video is compact, using compression from On2, and supports both progressive and streaming downloads.

AVI format (.avi)

The AVI format stands for audio video interleave, was developed by Microsoft. It stores data that can be encoded in a number of different codec's and can contain both audio and video data. The AVI format usually uses less compression than some similar formats and is a very popular format amongst internet users.

AVI files most commonly contain M-JPEG, or DivX codec's, but can also contain almost any format.

The AVI format is supported by almost all computers using Windows, and can be played on various players. Some of the most common players that support the AVI format are:

- Apple QuickTime Player (Windows and Mac)
- Microsoft Windows Media Player (Windows and Mac)
- VideoLAN VLC media player (Windows and Mac)
- Nullsoft Winamp

Quicktime format (.mov)

The QuickTime format was developed by Apple and is a very common one. It is often used on the internet, and for saving movie and video files. The format contains one or more tracks storing video, audio, text or effects. It is compatible with both Mac and Windows platforms, and can be played on an Apple Quicktime player.

MP4 format (.mp4)

This format is mostly used to store audio and visual streams online, most commonly those defined by MPEG. It Expands MPEG-1 to support video/audio 'objects', 3D content, low bit rate encoding and support for Digital Rights Management.

The MPEG-4 video format uses separate compression for audio and video tracks; video is compressed with MPEG-4 video encoding; audio is compressed using AAC compression, the same type of audio compression used in .AAC files.

The mp4 can most commonly be played on the Apple QuickTime Player or other movie players. Devices that play p4 are also known as mp4 players.

Mpg format (.mpg)

Common video format standardized by the Moving Picture Experts Group (MPEG); typically incorporates MPEG-1 or MPEG-2 audio and video compression; often used for creating downloadable movies. It can be played using Apple QuickTime Player or Microsoft Windows Media Player.

Windows Media Video format (.wmv)

WMV format, short for Windows Media Video was developed by Microsoft. It was originally designed for internet streaming applications, and can now cater to more specialized content. Windows Media is a common format on the Internet, but Windows Media movies cannot be played on non-Windows computer without an extra (free) component installed. Some later Windows Media movies cannot play at all on non-Windows computers because no player is available. Videos stored in the Windows Media format have the extension .wmv.

3GP file extension (.3gp)

The 3gp format is both an audio and video format that was designed as a multimedia format for transmitting audio and video files between 3G cell phones and the internet. It is most commonly used to capture video from your cell phone and place it online.

This format supports both Mac and windows applications and can be commonly played in the following:

- Apple
- Quicktime
- Player
- RealNetworks
- Realplayer
- VideoLAN
- VLC media
- Player Mplayer
- MIKSOFT Mobile 3GP converter (Windows)

Advances Streaming Format (.asf)

ASF is a subset of the wmv format and was developed by Microsoft. It is intended for streaming and is used to support playback from digital media and HTTP servers, and to support storage devices such as hard disks. It can be compressed using a variety of video codecs. The most common files types that are contained within an ASF file are Windows Media Audio, and Windows Media video.

Real Media format (.rm)

RealMedia is a format which was created my RealNetworks. It contains both audio and video data and typically used for streaming media files over the internet. RealMedia can play on a wide variety of media players for both Mac and Windows platforms. The realplayer is the most compatible.

Flash Movie format (.swf)

The Flash movie format was developed by Macromedia. This format can include text, graphics and animation. In order to play in web browsers, they must have the Flash plug-in installed. The Flash plug-in comes pre-installed in the latest version of many popular web browsers.

The RealVideo format

The RealVideo format was developed for the internet by Real Media. The format is used for streaming of video at low bandwidths. This sometimes causes the quality of the videos to be reduced.