MPV FAQ

MPV Website:
www.osta.org/mpv

Q: What is MPV?
A: MPV is playlist and asset management format for collections of music, photo, and video files in any combination. A playlist is an index or table of contents that specifies the location of files and the order in which to play them. It is an open, multiplatform, free specification developed and managed by the Optical Storage Technology Association (OSTA). A logo is available to communicate compatibility, such as between CD burning software and CD players. More information at www.osta.org/mpv.

Q: What types of consumer electronics (CE) devices might add support for MPV?
A: All CE devices that use digital media content stored on data CDs, data DVDs and flash memory cards. These range from portable music CD players to DVD players and recorders to game consoles.

Q: Which companies are supporting MPV?
A. Companies announcing support for the MPV standard include Eastman Kodak Company, Hewlett-Packard Company, LG Electronics Inc., Olympus Optical Co., Ltd., Royal Philips Electronics, Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd, and Sony Corporation.

Also announcing implementation of the MPV format in future products are companies developing leading software and firmware applications for creating multimedia discs. These applications include ACD Systems ACDSee, Ahead Software's Nero, ArcSoft PhotoBase, HP Memories Disc Creator, Planetweb Digital Photo and Audio Managers, Roxio Easy CD & DVD Creator, Sonic Solutions MyDVD and RecordNow Max.

Additionally, companies supporting the development of the MPV technology include Alera Technologies, ESS Technology, Inc., Imation Corporation, LSI Logic Corporation, MUSICMATCH, Inc., Oak Technology, Inc., Pixel Magic Imaging, Inc., Plasmon, Inc., Rimage Corporation, Ulead Systems, Inc., Verbatim Corporation, and Zoran Corporation.

Q: How does MPV enhance the user experience?
A: MPV supports browsing, playing, and printing multimedia collections.

- Users can navigate large collections of hundreds or thousands of files organized into multiple playlists, such as songs by genre, by artist, and by album.
- Creation and playback of a multimedia slideshows of pictures and video with background music and transition effects.
- Songs can have album art, lyrics, music in both audio-only and video file formats, and multiple encodings of the same music, for example WMA and MP3.
- MPV manages multiple renditions of images, such as high resolution, screen resolution, and thumbnails that enable high-performance playback on low-end systems using low-res images and printing using high-res images.

Q: How does MPV solve problems facing the consumer today?
A: Consumers want to enjoy the same content on their consumer electronics devices that they enjoy on their PCs. Low-cost burners and media for recording CDs and DVDs as well as low-cost memory cards and hard drives are making it easy to share content between PCs and CE devices. But problems abound. Digital cameras, PC applications, retail photo CDs, etc. all organize their contents in diverse ways that makes it hard to share, playback, and exchange collections between products. MPV organizes collections of digital media files into albums and playlists, creating a table of contents that describes the organization of the music, photo and video content on the disc.

Q: What are the key MPV benefits to consumers?
A: There are three main benefits that consumers will notice.

- MPV lets consumers easily playback and exchange collections of their music, photo, and video files between PC applications and consumer electronics (CE) devices from many manufacturers.
- Content on CDs, DVDs, flash memory cards will start playing faster because the the MPV control file can be located quickly and used to present the content to the user without delay.
- MPV offers a consistent playback and content navigation experience on a wide range of CE and PC products.

Q: Where can I get more information about MPV?
A: Information about MPV, press releases, MPV 1.0 specification, access to SDK source code, etc. can all be found at www.osta.org/mpv.

Q: What does MPV stand for?
A: MPV stands for MusicPhotoVideo. Think multimedia.

Q: What file types are supported by MPV?
A: MPV supports music, photo and video content stored in data files. Supported files types include JPEG, MP3, Windows Media Audio (WMA), WAV, ATRAC3, MPEG 1, MPEG 2, MPEG 4, Windows Media Video (WMV), and popular digital camera formats AVI MJPEG and QuickTime MJPEG video. Additional formats are easily supported. MPV can also support document files, including PDF and HTML.

Q: What types of storage media are supported by MPV?
A: MPV is compatible with CDs and DVDs, flash memory cards, removable and fixed hard disks, and the internet. CDs with multiple filesystems, such as ISO9660 and Joliet, are also supported. Multisession CDs are supported.

Q: Does MPV manage music as well as the audio files captured by digital cameras?
A: The MPV specification includes a profile about managing music. MPV also manages the audio files and the coordination of playback with digital photos with audio.

Q: Does adding MPV to a CD break compatibility with existing players?
A: MPV is an add-on file that works equally well on CDs, DVDs, or flash memory cards. No change to existing organization and naming of files on a storage media is required, maintaining full compatibility. For example, consumer electronics players that can read data CDs of MP3 orJPEG files but don't understand MPV also still work and just ignore the MPV content on the CD.

Q: Why is MPV being developed?
A: MPV provides a standard for both PCs and CE devices to organize, access, and playback multimedia content on an optical disc or memory card or even on a hard drive or over the internet. MPV enables CE devices to allow the user to easily navigate and enjoy collections of hundreds or even thousands of photos, music tracks, and video clips. MPV also supports the seamless exchange of these collections between devices from many manufacturers and on many types of storage media.

Q: How large is an MPV file?
A: MPV adds very small files and is ideal for firmware applications. Typical file size is less than 50KB; small collections may be 10KB or smaller.

Q: What does the playback device have to do in order to read the MPV control file?
A: The reader device must locate and process the MPV control file. A multiplatform SDK is available as source code suitable for firmware. A device can add a MPV reader in about 50KB of uncompressed object code. The CE device or software application separately determines how to present the information and the digital media content to the consumer.

Q: What is the current status of efforts to develop and deploy MPV?
A: The MPV 1.0 specification has been adopted by OSTA and released to the public. A multiplatform SDK is available as source code. MPV-enabled disc burning software and MPV-enabled CE devices and software players are in development for release in 2003. Prototypes and sample datasets have been demonstrated in public and are available for download.

Q: Is there a license fee or royalty to use MPV?
A: MPV is a specification developed in an open process and available for free from OSTA. Use of the MPV logo on products requires a modest licensing fee; details of the logo licensing program are under development. A SDK for reading and writing MPV content is available as source code and may be used at no cost.

Q: Is MPV limited to Windows platforms?
A: MPV provides multiplatform support and is totally independent of the OS. It is designed to support Windows, Linux, Mac OS, …

Q: Are there competing technologies to MPV?
A: Recently, Microsoft and Matsushita announced HighMAT, a proprietary specification that appears to overlap some MPV capabilities. The HighMAT announcement underscores the importance of the problem that MPV solves with an open, multiplatform, free specification and SDK.

Q: Does MPV create content?
A: MPV organizes and facilitates access to digital media content. It does not create images, thumbnails, etc. Application software or devices that burn discs or transfer files to a memory card create the content and the MPV control file(s).

Q: How does MPV enhance printing of digital photos?
A: MPV promotes sharing and enjoyment of digital photos among consumers and across PC and CE devices in ways that include print-quality high-resolution images. As CE devices increasingly become important viewing platforms for digital photos, many consumers and device makers like DVD manufacturers will add support for local printing. MPV is also part of the Common Picture eXchange Environment (CPXe) initiative sponsored by the International Imaging Industry Association that specifically targets easy printing of digital photos by consumers using online services.

Q: Many DVD players already support JPEG, or Kodak Picture CD or FujiColor CD playback. What does MPV add?
A: These DVD players have photo playback software built into firmware. For the best user experience, the firmware needs to know where the pictures are on the disc. DVD players may support a few types of retail photo CDs, but with MPV support, they can play any MPV-enabled CD from any retailer or burned by consumers using PC software. It is much easier for MPV support to be added to CD creation software and services than for DVD players to add support for each kind of photo CD that can be created.

Q: When you create a collage or collection of photos for home printing, how does MPV help to make it easier to share these collections?
A: Today, when you use a specific application to put more than one photo on a printed page, the application creates a proprietary file. Sharing is difficult unless the receiver has the same application to open the file. MPV provides a standard format for the exchange of collections of photos from one application to another.

Q: What is required to implement MPV on the PC?
A. Software applications that burn CDs or DVDs must create the MPV control file(s). Typically, this will happen automatically within the software application as part of the disc burning process. All of these changes are within the software applications themselves. No OS or hardware changes are needed.

Q: What information is actually stored, and in what form, and where on MPV-enabled media?
A: A MPV album/playlist stores five kinds of information about digital media content: location, identity, metadata, relationships, and presentation control. Location is one or more filename(s) or URLs where the content is located. These are filesystem specific, allowing MPV to represent content located on media with multiple filesystems, such as a CD, which often has two or even three file systems. MPV supports the use of long filenames created by consumers.

Q: How is the MPV metadata displayed to the end-user?
A: MPV data is stored in a file on the MPV-enabled media such as CD, DVD, or memory card. The file can have any name, allowing the user to have named playlists. The names 'album' and 'index' are distinguished and used preferentially. The MPV data is stored in text-based XML format.