Operation Manual

EzDJPro / Virtual DJ Pro 3.1

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Minimum System Requirements

Operating System: Windows XP SP2, Windows Server 2003 SP1, Windows Vista, Windows Server 2008, Windows 7 or later. (Server systems may require special configuration: consult your administrator.) (32 or 64-bit versions of Windows are acceptable.) .NET Framework 3.5 (can be automatically downloaded during install.)

Hardware: Intel or AMD x86 or x64 based computer with 1.5 GHz clock speed and 1 GB RAM. Sound card. Monitor with minimum 1024x768 resolution. 1 GB space needed on system drive. You will also need hard drive space for your sound files. Network and USB drives NOT supported. Mouse and keyboard required.

Sound Files: Windows WAV, Windows Media Audio (WMA), and MP3 CBR (Constant Bit Rate) files are supported. It is strongly suggested that WMA and MP3 ID3V2 tags be present with at least artist and title information.

Included Software

The following software is included with this package. In most cases, the only other software you may need is an audio editor.

1. Player: plays sound files, make time and temperature announcements, creates program and error logs.
2. Manager: creates and manages categories of sound files. Creates playlists. Creates artist, selection, and category reports. Backs up and restores configurations.
3. Weather: runs continuously providing temperature information to the player. Powered by The Weather Channel, this application requires a full-time Internet connection.
4. Audio Tag Editor: full-featured tag editor for WMA and MP3 ID3V2 tags. This editor has special features for use with the Player and Manager. Can look up album art on Amazon.com.
5. CD Ripper/Encoder: Rips CD tracks to WAV files suitable for editing which can then be encoded as smaller MP3 files.
6. Podcast Downloader: downloads podcasts with special features for use with Categories.
7. Audacity: Freeware (Open Source) Audio Editor. For trimming rips and editing files. Not Supported.

8. MP3 Gain: Freeware (Open Source) Volume leveling program for MP3 files. Highly recommended. Not Supported.

Welcome

Thank you for purchasing the ultimate low-cost audio automation solution. Regardless if your intended application is Internet Radio, LPFM, background music, store-casting or some other audio application, learning some basic principles will enable you to achieve professional sounding results. We're going to start out with some simple examples to get you started quickly. You can refine your setup later after you actually have something working.

Let's start out by defining some terms:

Categories: related groups of sound files that have similar duration, genre, and/or purpose. All of the sound files that belong to a Category are stored in the same folder and all of the sound files in that folder are part of the Category. Your sound files may not be arranged on your hard drive in exactly the way you want them to be now. Later you can create new folders and copy files to refine your Categories. Examples of Categories might be "slow songs from the 70s," commercials, jingles, podcasts, etc. For now just identify several folders with 25 to 100 files with similar duration and use these for your Categories.

Clock: (also called a format clock) is a sequence of Categories that defines an hour of audio play. In practice, you should select a sequence of Categories that exceeds an hour by 3 to 5 minutes because the time for each Category is approximate. If you have worked in Radio, you are familiar with clocks, otherwise just imagine filling in an analog clock face with Categories. In our example, we will use a clock called a Default Clock that will be used for each hour of the day, every day. There exist Hourly Clocks, but they are an advanced topic. You might use Hourly Clocks to assign a dedicated music category to a certain hour of a day. Below is a graphic that depicts a clock:

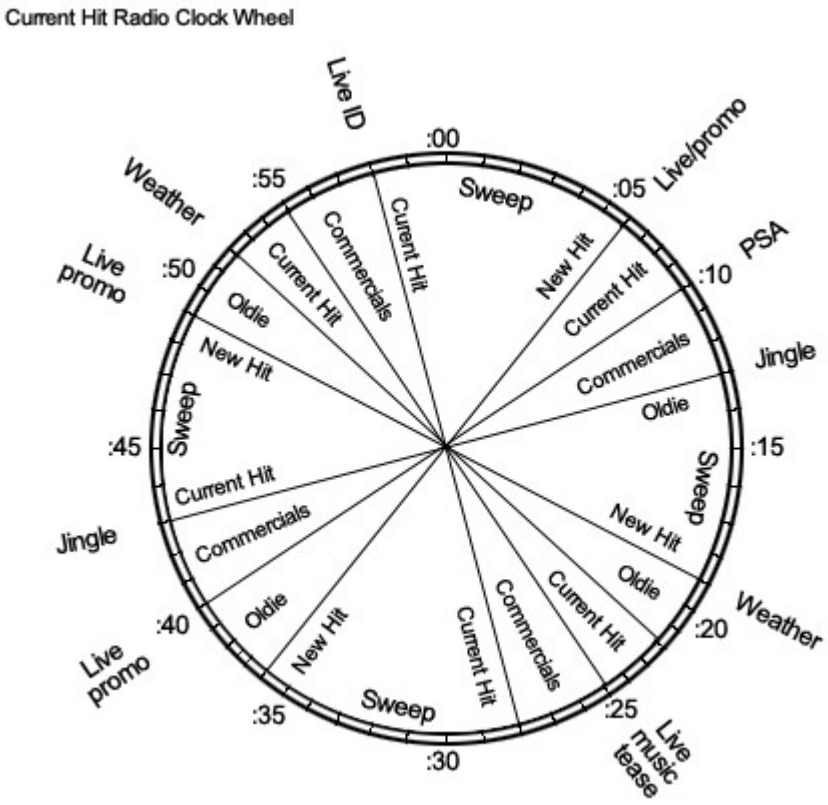


Figure 1 Rotation List

Playlists: the output of Clocks and Categories. After creating playlists for a period of time, you can use the Player. The minimum number of Playlists that can be created is 24 (one day's worth). There is no theoretical upper limit.

Let's Create Some Categories

On your desktop, double-click the Manager icon. You might have to do this twice if it's not been opened before. Navigate so that you see this screen:

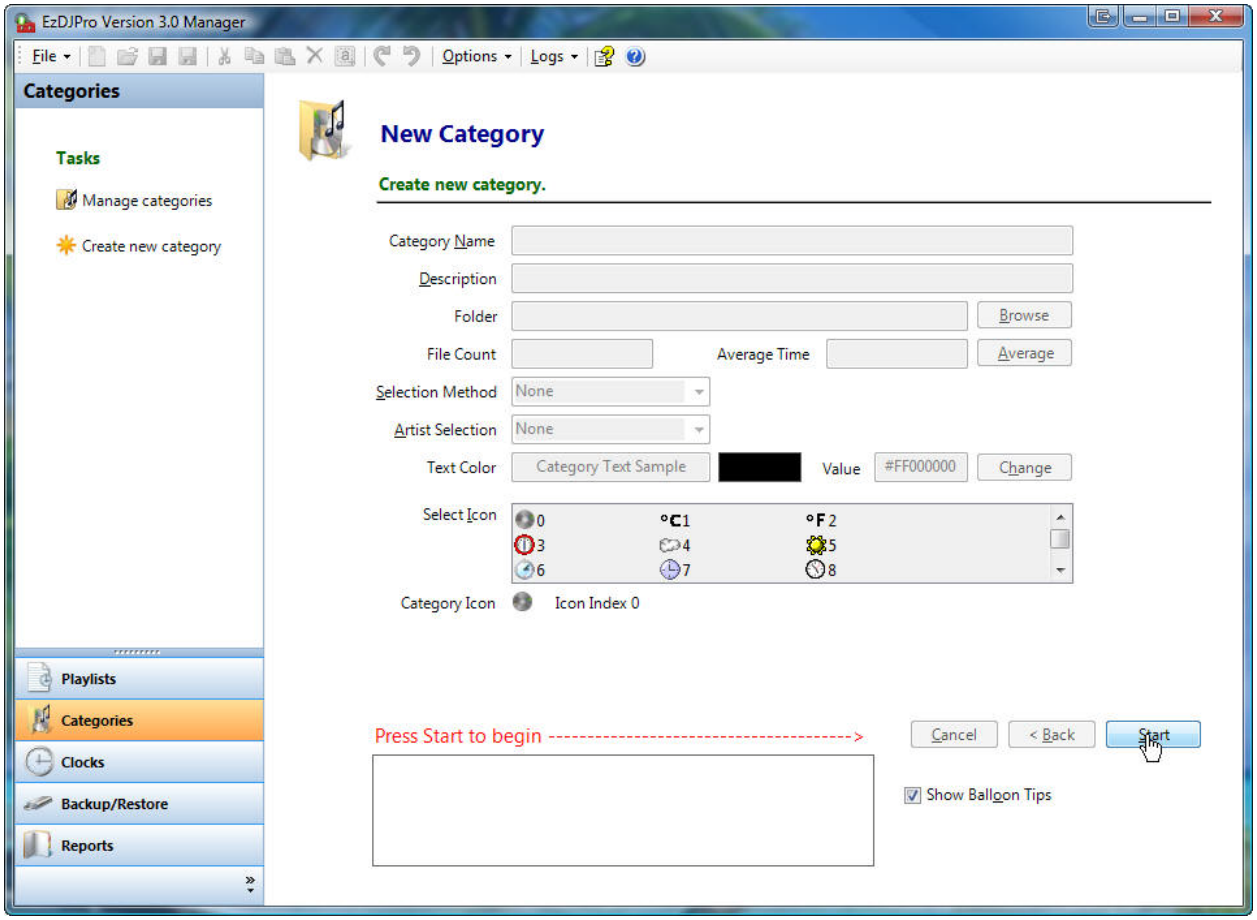


Figure 2 Categories

Click the start button and follow the instructions on the balloon tips to create 5 or 6 categories of similar sound files. Accept all the defaults and don't worry about the contents of the categories right now. It's more important that the durations be similar.

When you are done, select "Clocks."

Let's Create a Default Clock

Navigate so that you see this screen:

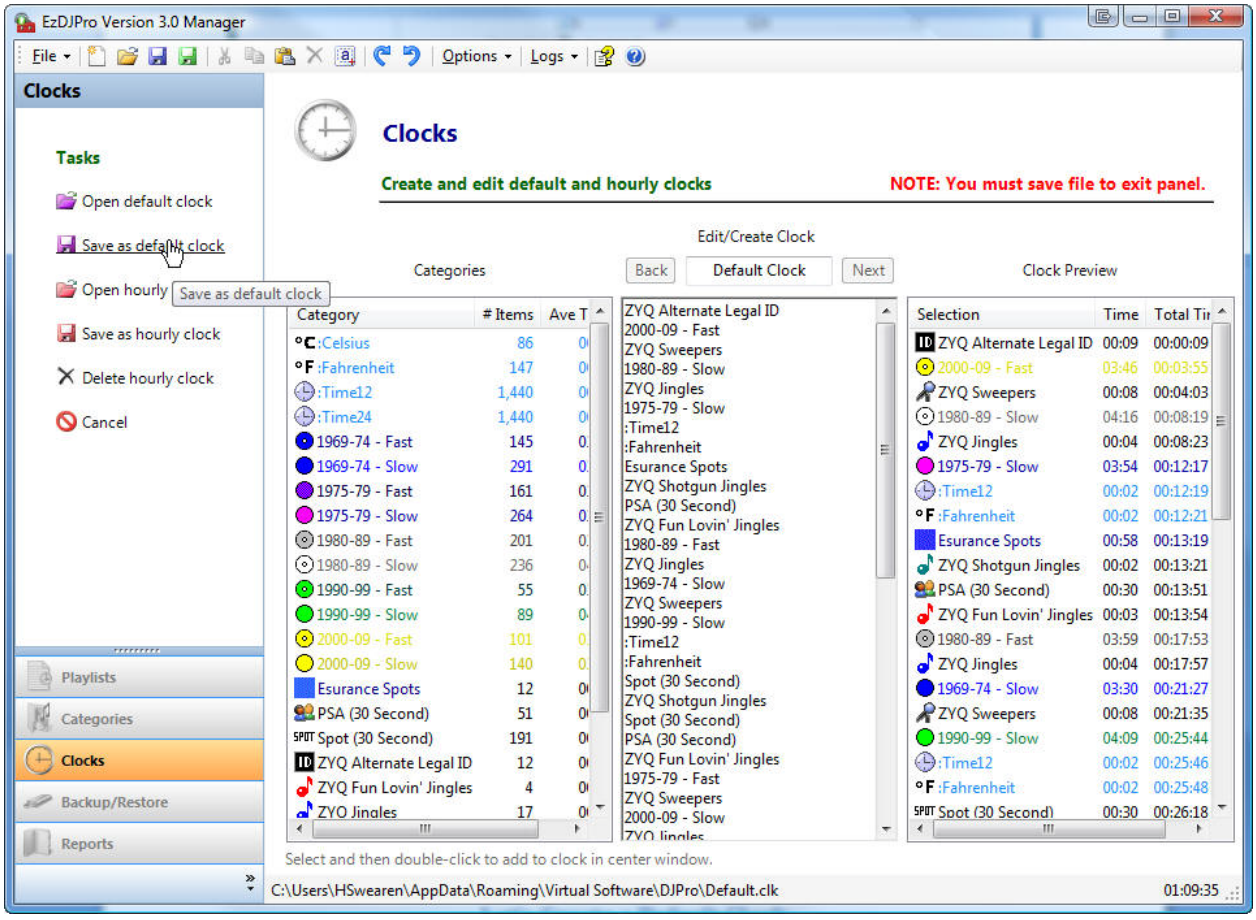


Figure 3 Default Clock

On this screen you will see the Categories you just created plus four special categories. The special categories are for announcing time and temperature. The center and right parts of the screen should be blank since you haven't added any Categories to your clock.

Double-click the categories on the left and they will appear in both the middle and right parts of the screen. The right part keeps track of the total time of the clock (which is also shown at the lower right corner). The center works just like a text editor. You can cut and paste. Make sure there are no blank lines. You can add the built-in time and temperature categories, too. Keep adding categories until the total time is about 1:06:00. Then click "Save as Default Clock."

Let's Create Some Playlists

Navigate to this screen:

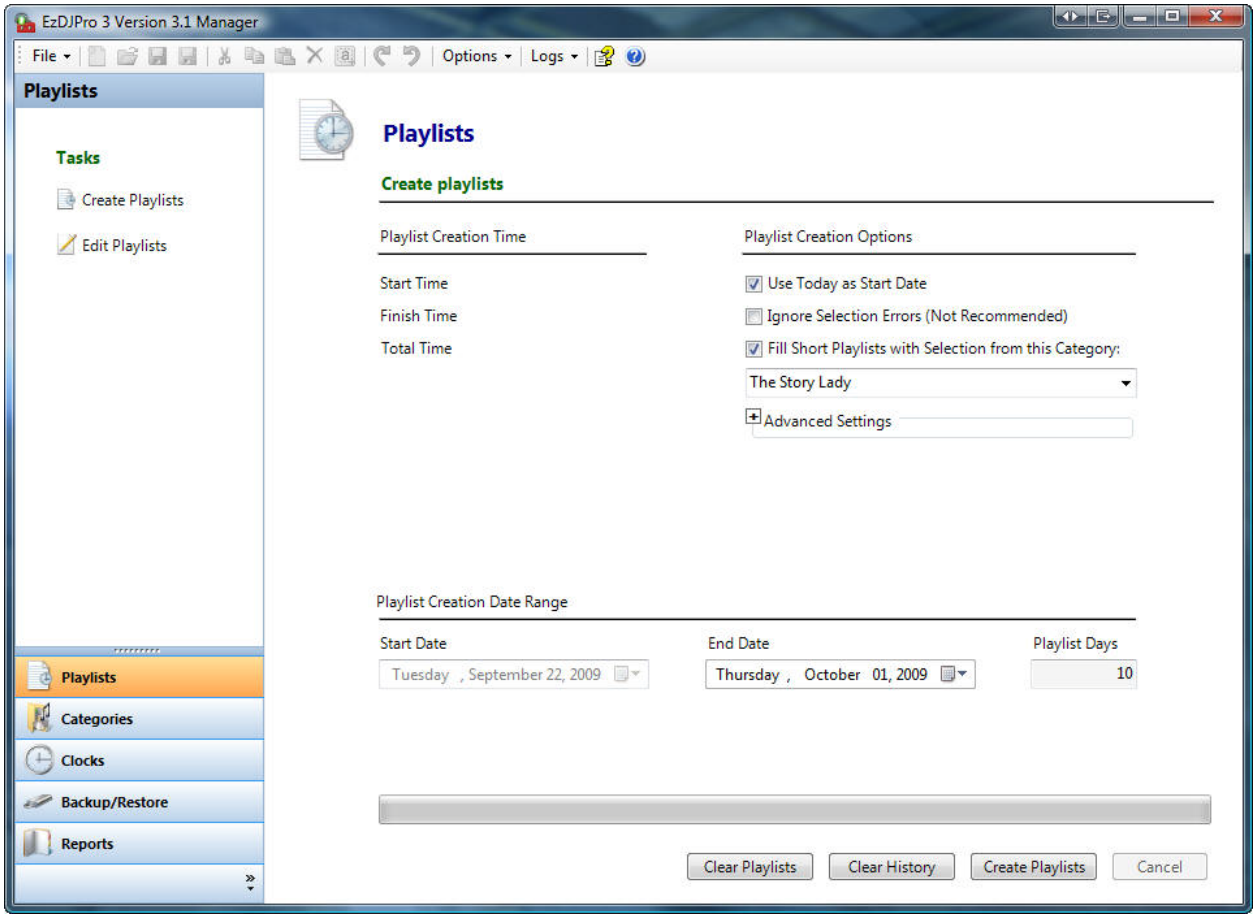


Figure 4 Playlists

Make sure your screen looks just like this one. Don't change any dates for now. Just click "Create Playlists" and wait for the progress bar to move all the way to the right. If you get an error such as "Playlist is less than one hour," press "Clear Playlists" and "Clear History". Then go back to "Clocks" and add a couple of additional categories to your default clock. Don't forget to save the clock and then try creating playlist again.

Hopefully, you have been successful so far. If not, please contact us at the email address or phone number shown in the about dialog. We're pretty sure we can get you started quickly.

Let's Setup the Weather

If you have a full-time Internet connection on the computer running the application, it's possible to announce the temperature. Double-click the Weather icon on your desktop and enter your ZIP code or city (outside US and Canada) and press "Search." If there's a monitoring station nearby, you will get a response.

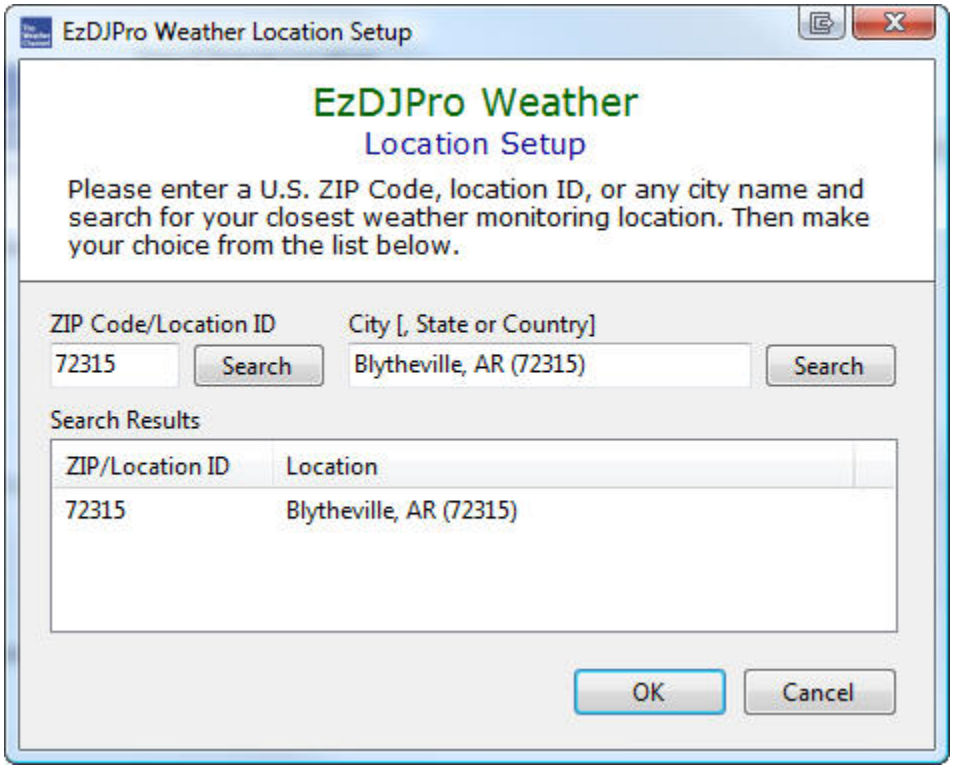


Figure 5 Weather Setup

Click OK and that's all that is necessary to provide Fahrenheit temperature. Celsius temperature requires a couple of additional steps and will be covered later. The application resides in the Notification Area (System Tray) and displays temperature from 0 to 99 degrees. Double-clicking the icon displays a 2-day forecast plus current conditions.

Let's Try the Player

If you have followed the steps so far, the player should just work. There are a lot of settings in the player, but most are for advanced features that we will cover later.

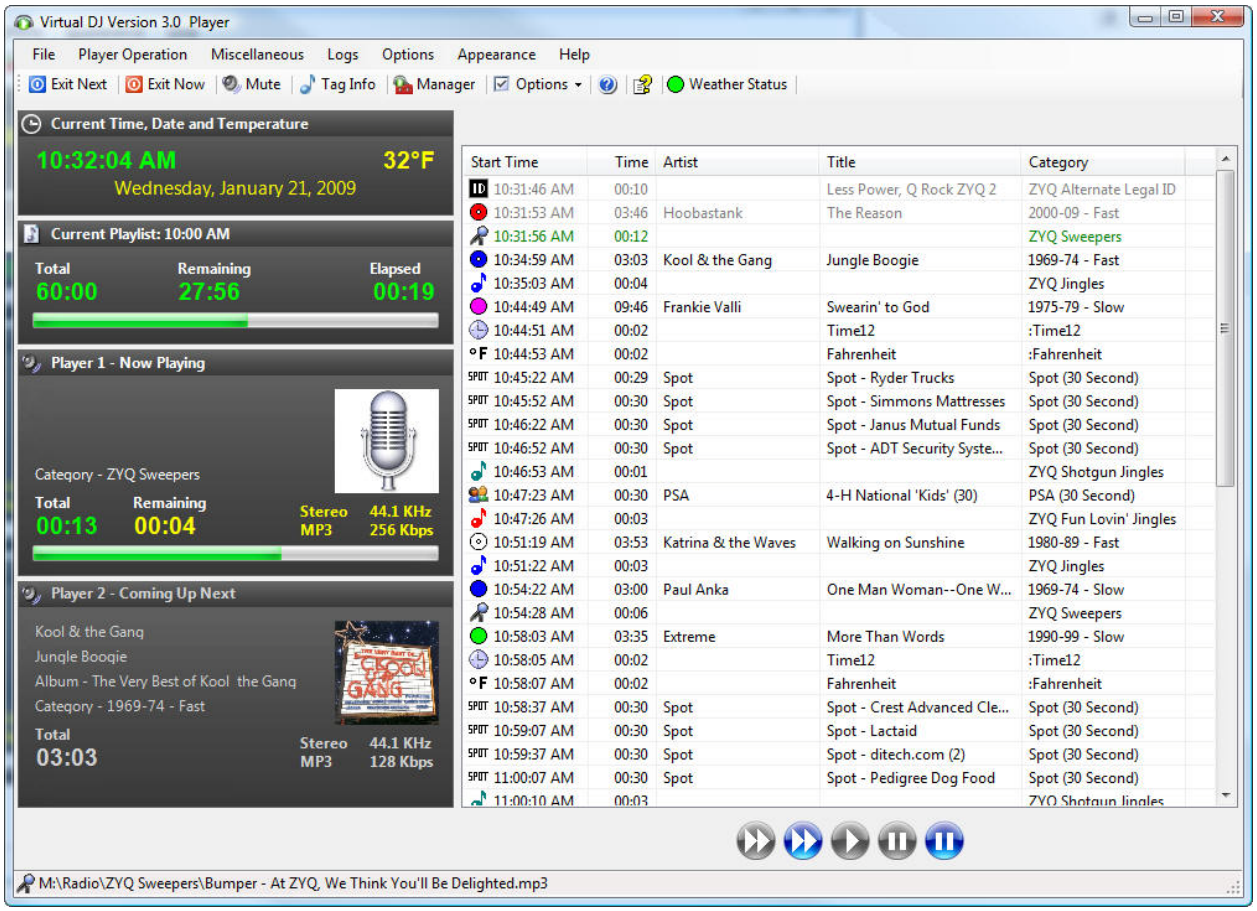


Figure 6 Player

Configuring the Temperature for Metric Units (Celsius)

Setting up Celsius temperature announcements requires that both the Weather and Player applications be changed. Let's start with the Weather application in the Notification Area (System Tray). Right-click the icon and choose Setup. You will see this screen:

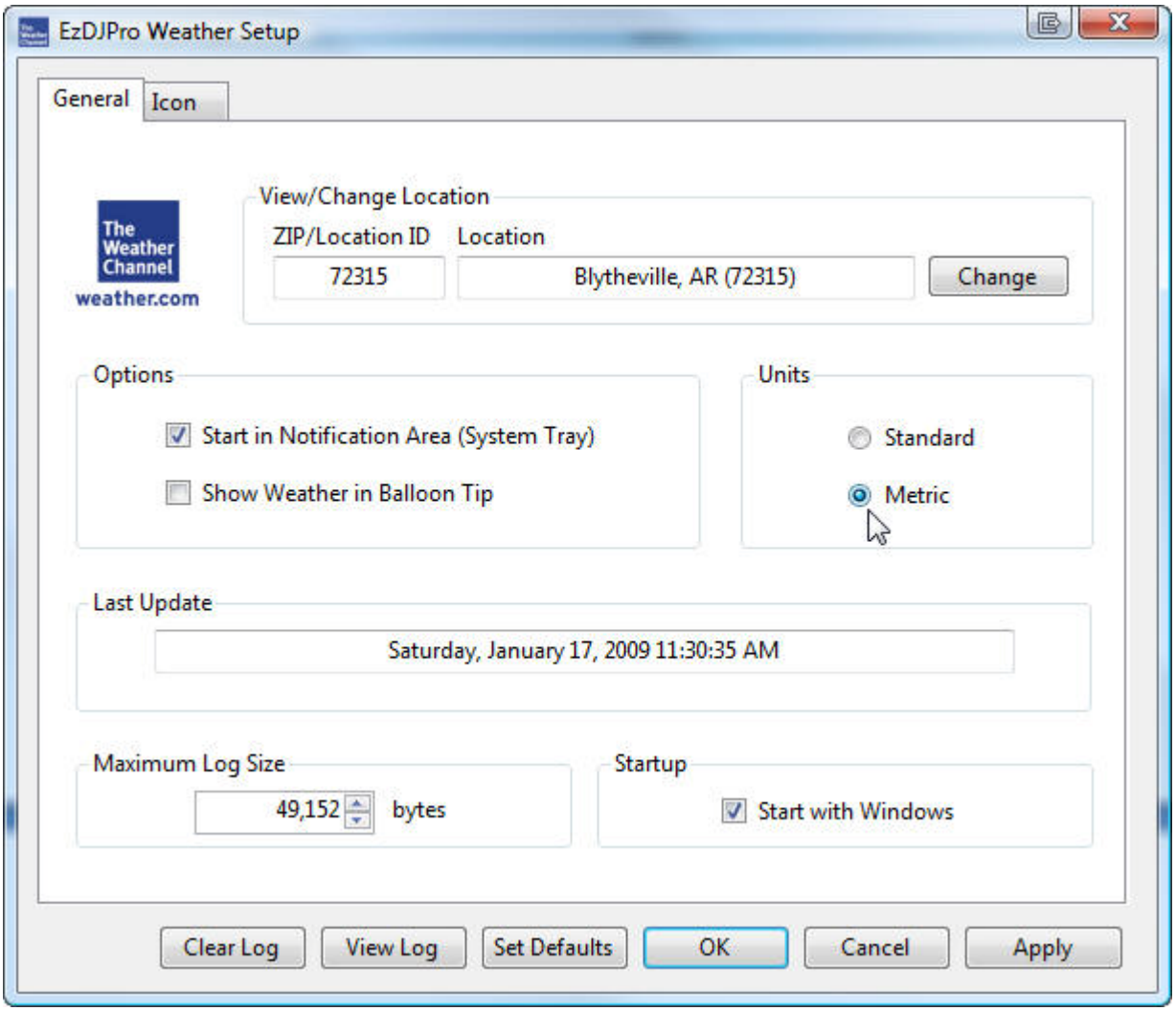


Figure 7 Temperature Units Setup

As shown, choose "Metric." Click "OK." Within a few minutes, the icon will begin displaying Celsius temperature instead of Fahrenheit. Note that temperatures above 0 are displayed in normal typeface; negative temperatures below 0 are displayed in *Italic* type.

Now you need to make a change in the Player. Open the Player and display the “General Options screen. As shown in the following graphic, change the temperature scale to Celsius:

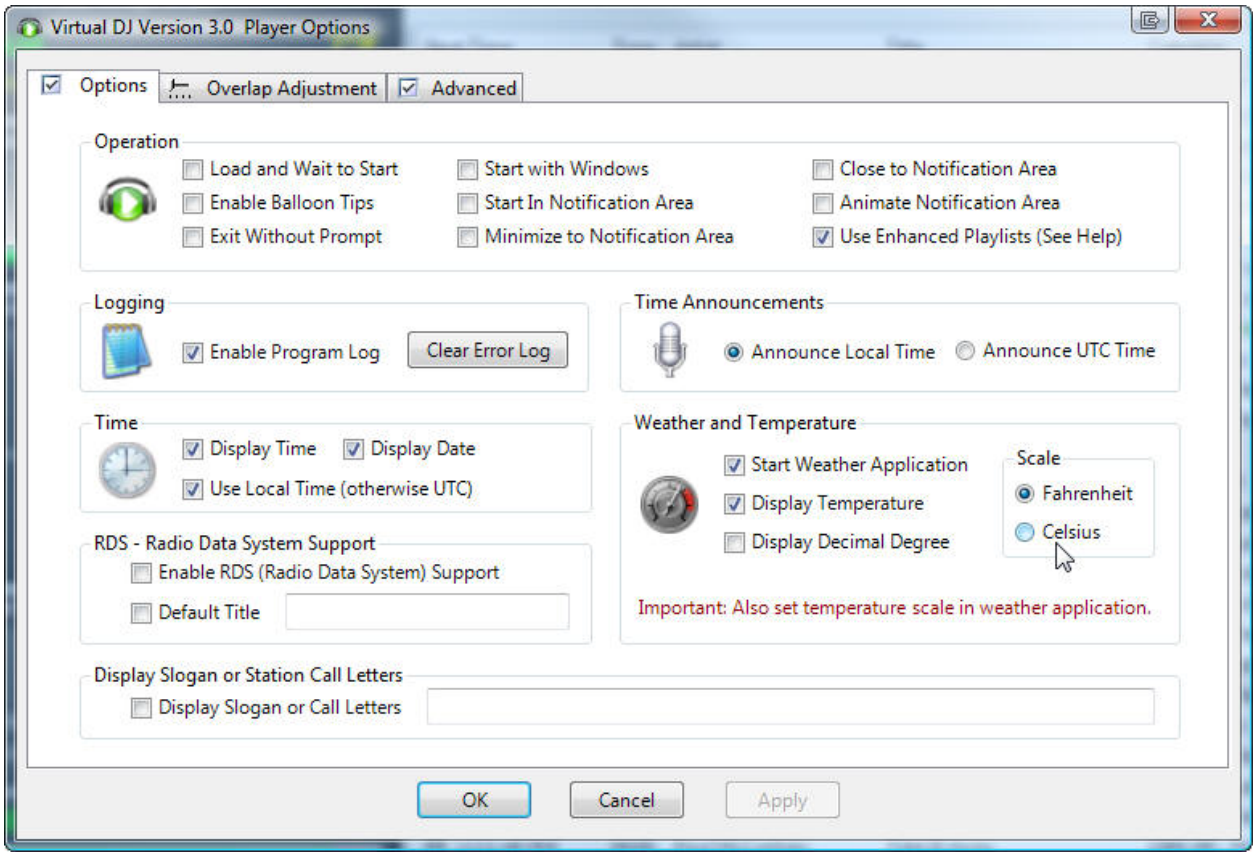


Figure 8 Player Options

Setting Player Options

Most Player options are simple and easy to understand. Most don't need to be changed. Here we will concentrate on RDS (Radio Data System) support and sound overlap adjustment. If you don't need to use RDS, you can just skip the RDS information. However, if you need to use it you need to understand the format of the information provided so that the hardware or software you use for RDS can be properly configured.

Sound overlap adjustment is probably something you will want to tinker with—although the preset settings will work in most situations. Almost all radio stations and many background music systems overlap the audio of the ending sound file with the beginning to the next sound file. This gives a finished or professional sound. However, most short sound files should have very little overlap. While longer sound files should have an overlap of several seconds if they fade out or very little if they end abruptly. In radio, songs that end abruptly are said to end "cold." We will use that term here.

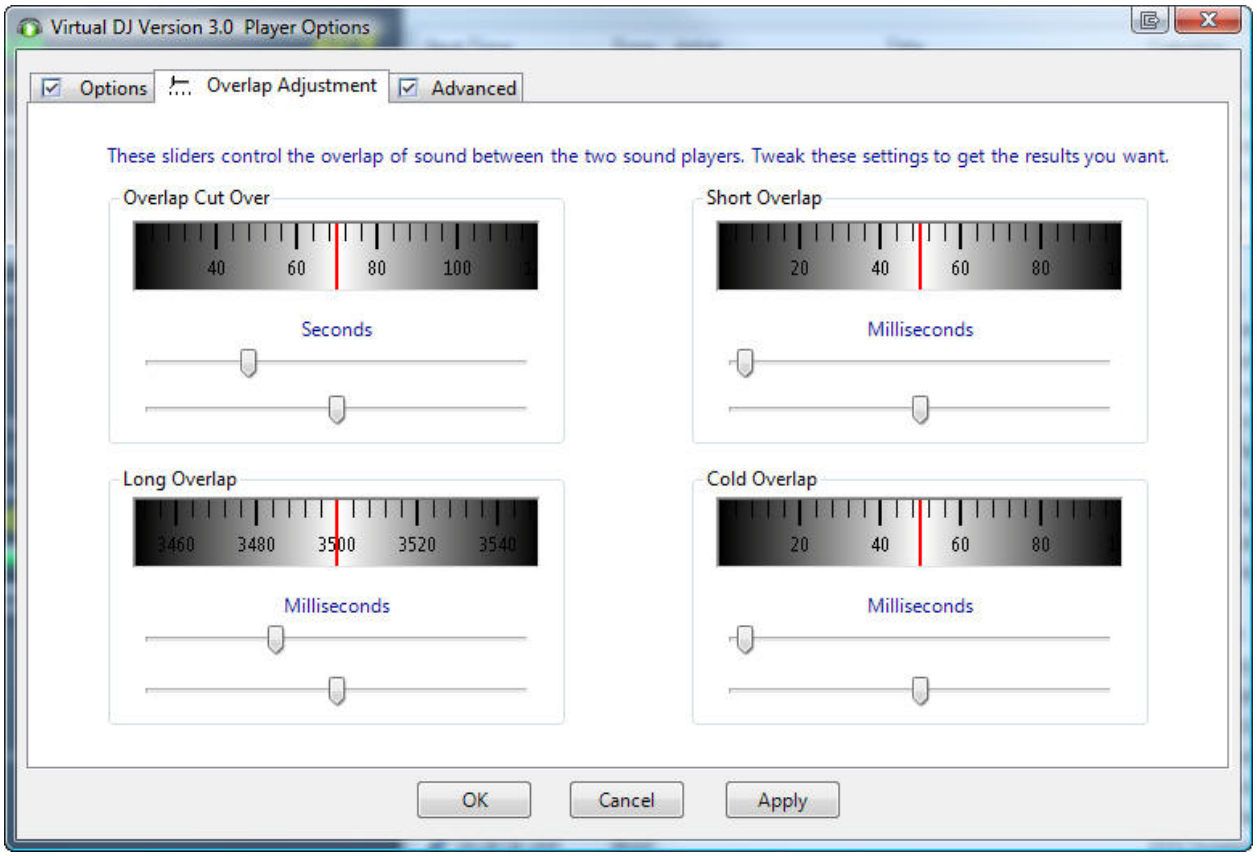


Figure 9 Player Options - Overlap Adjustment

The screen above shows the overlap adjustments. Overlap Cut Over divides short from long sound files.

Advanced Category Configuration

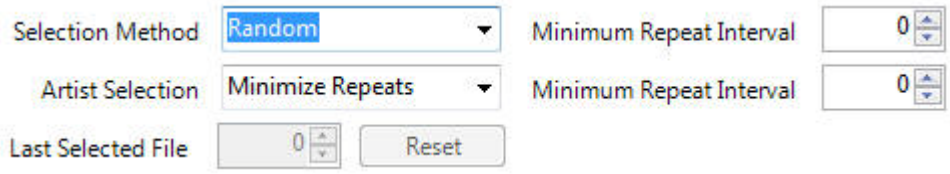


Figure 10 Advanced Categories Settings

In the graphic above (from the "Manage Categories" screen ,you see that there are different methods for selecting selections and artists. We will explain the choices below.

Selection Method (For the file – or title):

1. None (reserved – not used at present)
2. Sequential – files are played in sequence. Good for small number of files or for files that make no sense out of sequence. Must be used when Category contains only 1 or 2 files.
3. Random – files are played at random. Repeats are possible. You can set the desired minimum hours to repeat a file or use "0" for best effort.
4. No Repeats – files are played at random with no repeats until all files have been played. Best for the most variety of songs.
5. Special – Must be used time and temperature categories and not for any other categories.

Artist Selection (You must have ID3 or WMA tags to use other than "None"):

1. None – Used for files that don't have an artist: jingles, spots, liners, etc. or don't have tags.
2. Minimize Repeats – You can set the desired number of hours for an artist to repeat or leave the setting at "0" for best effort.

Our recommendations:

Categories with at least 50 files: No Repeats

Categories with less than 50 files: Random with Minimum Repeat Interval left at "0"

All other categories with less than 20 files total: Sequential, otherwise Random with Minimum Repeat Interval left at "0."

Note: all setups are different. Your mileage may vary and some experimentation may be necessary to eliminate errors during Playlist creation and to achieve the sound you want.

Configuring RDS Support

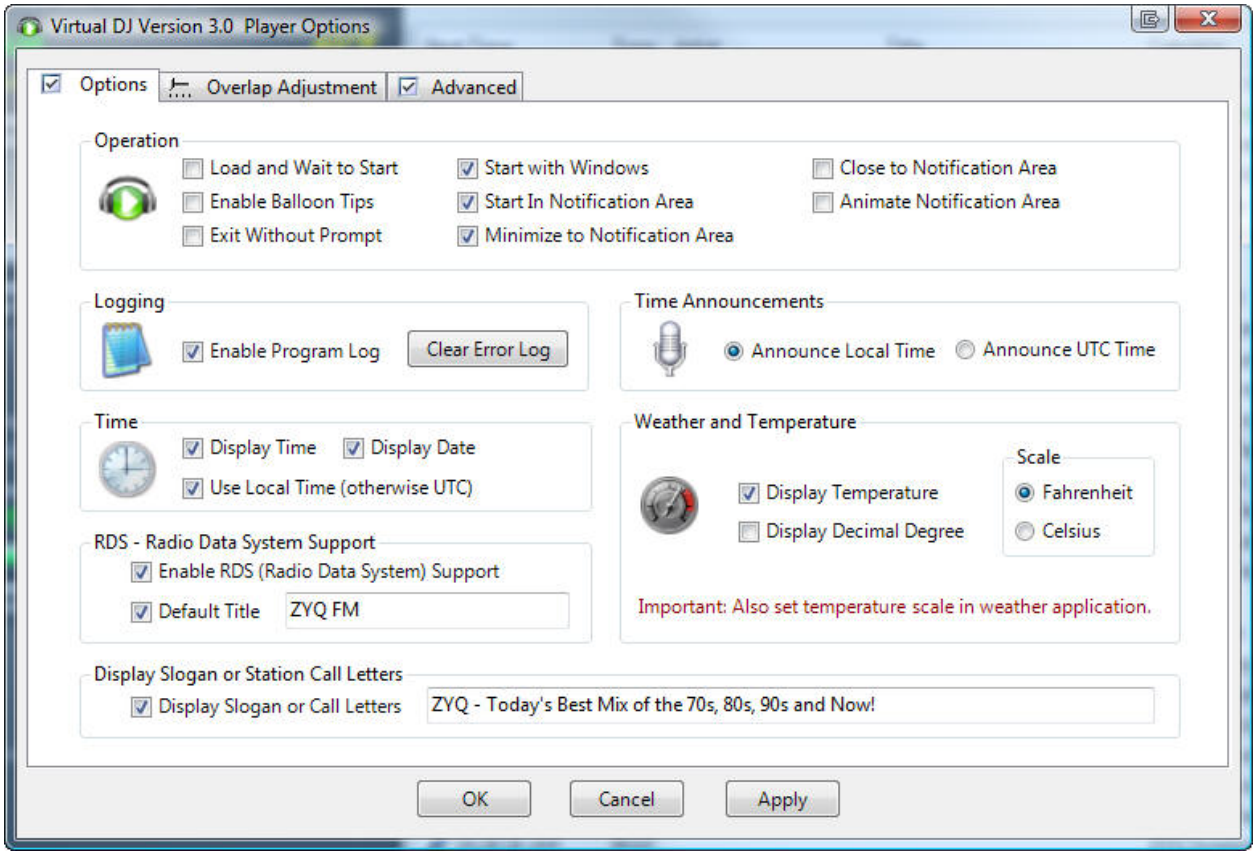


Figure 11 RDS Support

Notice in the screen above that RDS support has been enabled and that a default title has been given for sound files that have no title (ID3V2 or WMA tag). You can use a slogan, the station call letters, or the DJ's name.

A small CSV (Comma Separated Values) file is created each time play of an audio file starts. This file can be read by RDS equipment or other software to obtain information about the current playing selection. In addition, if the audio file contains album art, an additional file called "AlbumArt.jpg" is saved alongside the RDS.txt file.

The location of this file is under the current user's profile and will vary with version of Windows and of course the user name. It may be simpler to simply search, with access to hidden and system files turned on, for "RDS.txt."

From the command prompt (run cmd.exe), enter the following line:

cd "%AppData%\Virtual Software\DJ Pro\RDS"

The RDS.txt file and AlbumArt.jpg file will be located in the current folder.

This is an example of RDS.txt file contents:

"Pink”,” Get The Party Started","","Missundaztood","1","3:09","Thu2100","28:17","34","4","C:\Users\HSwearen\AppData\Roaming\Virtual Software\DJPro\RDS\AlbumArt.jpg","9:31:43 PM"

Summary of Data to be written to RDS (Radio Data System) file:

1. Artist
2. TItle
3. Album Artist - Note MP3 files have no offical field for Album Artist as do WMA files, "Orchestra" is used if present.
4. Album Name
5. Track
6. Duration
7. Playlist Name
8. Approximate Time Left in Playlist
9. Approximate Number of Songs Left in Playlist
10. Song Position Within This Playlist (includes ALL audio files)
11. Path to Album Art, If Available
12. Time Selection Started

Album Art, if present in the tag, is stored alongside the RDS.txt file. It’s always called “AlbumArt.jpg.” If there is no Album Art, there is no “AlbumArt.jpg” file and the field in the RDS.txt file is “”. The size of the image is the same as what is stored in the mp3/wma tag.

When the Player is closed, both the RDS.txt and AlbumArt.jpg files are erased. In the unlikely event of a program or system crash, there is a possibility that these files could be left on the system. However, they will be overwritten as soon as the Player starts again.

Note: you can add album art to songs by using the Amazon lookup feature of the Audio Tag Editor.

Interactive Features

While primarily intended as a fully automated audio solution, this product includes several features that allow you to either transition to live programming or to modify the loaded playlist.

Exit Next: This button will completely close the player at the end of the next selection.

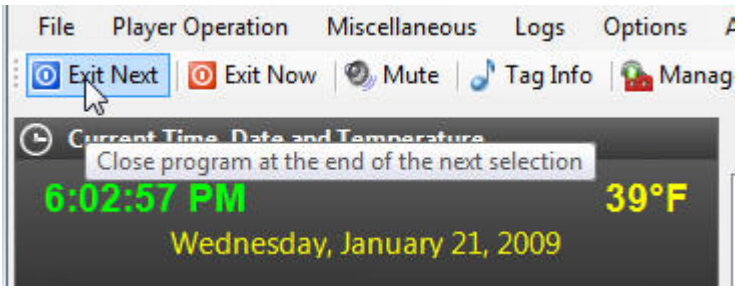


Figure 12 Exit Next

Transport Buttons: Located below the playlist listing. They perform the following functions (in order): fade out and skip the current selection, skip the next selection, resume from pause, pause, pause at the end of the current selection.



Figure 13 Transport Buttons

Playlist Context Menu: Allows you to move, delete, and add selections that have not been played or cued for play.

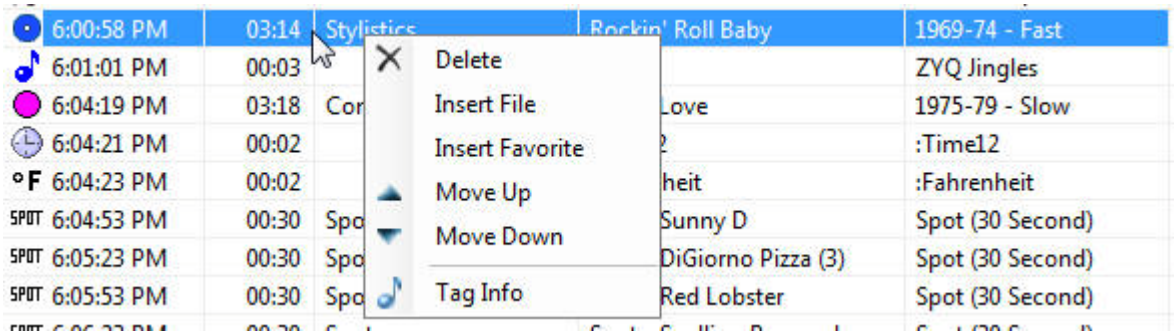


Figure 14 Playlist Context Menu

Favorites Menu: Used with the playlist context menu to provide easy access to frequently used folders. These folders are remembered from session to session.

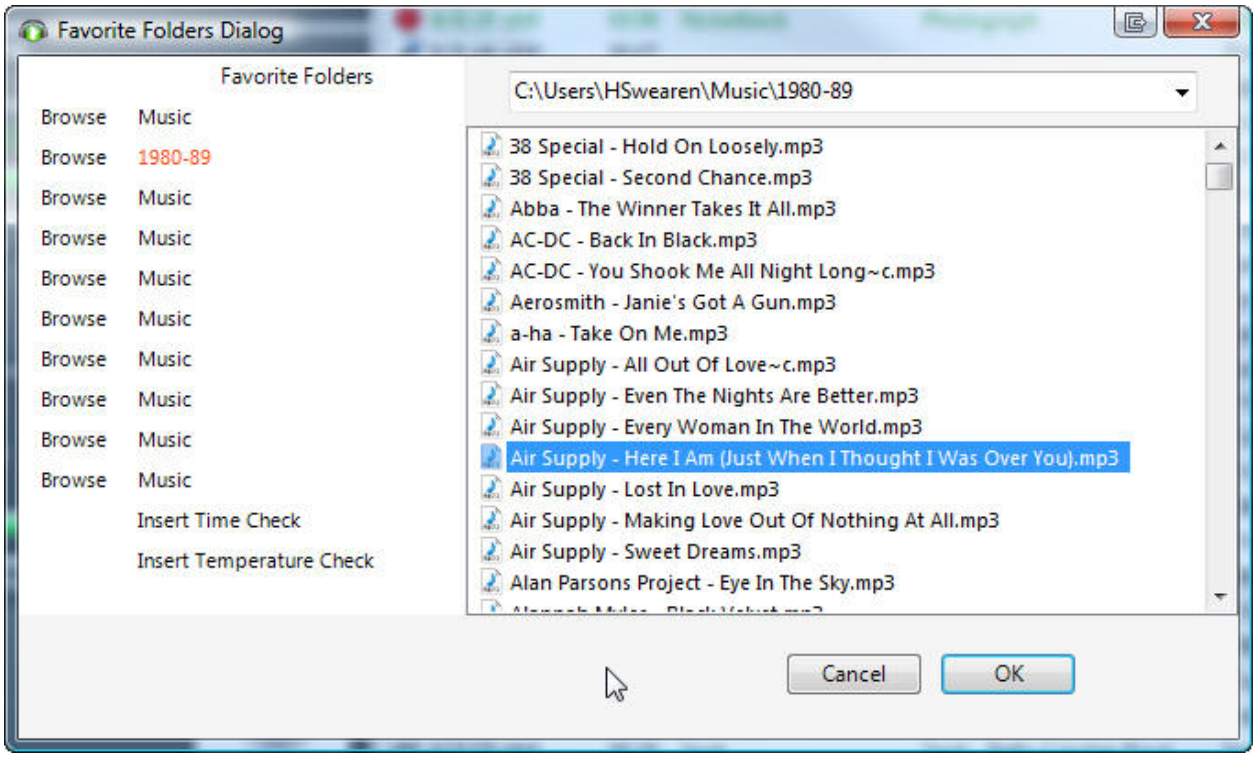


Figure 15 Favorites Menu

Miscellaneous Tips

1. What is Audacity? It is a free, open source audio editor. We didn't write it nor do we support it. But we thought you might find it useful.

2. Why can't I edit songs in Audacity in the Tag Editor? Audacity is asking what language you want to use. Open it once from the start menu and it will work just fine.

3. What is MP3 Gain? It is a free, open source program that levels out the volume of all of your sound files. We highly recommend it. Again we didn't write or support it, but you will find it useful.

4. How do I display album art in the Player? The images come from pictures embedded in the ID3 or WMA tags. Commercial downloads already have these images. If you rip you own files, you will need to look up the album on Amazon using the Tag Editor to add them. There's no automated way, unfortunately.

5. That's too much trouble. What else can I do? You can use Category images. Create a JPEG image named "CoverArt.jpg" and put it in the same folder as your sound files. You can create different images for all of your Categories. If you later add pictures to your sound files, they will be shown instead of the "CoverArt.jpg" file. Your JPEG images should be from 256x256 to 600x600 with a size of about 100 KB.

6. Why do I get a warning message when I average time and there is a note in the error log about VBR MP3 files? VBR (Variable Bit Rate) MP3 files have inaccurate duration times and will not work well with this software. You should use and editor and resave these files as CBR (Constant Bit Rate). Always save at a higher bit rate, if possible, to prevent quality loss.

7. Why do I get a warning message about the size of pictures in certain MP3 files? These picture files will prevent playback, and in some cases lock up the Player. Even though these file may play fine in other media players, they will not work with this application. You can fix these files easily using the Tag Editor. Either remove the picture completely or save the picture to your hard drive and use a picture editor to reduce the size to about 100KB or less. Then delete the picture using Tag Editor and add the smaller version.

8. Audacity needs "lame_enc.dll" to export MP3 files. Where can I find this file? This file is included with the setup of this product. It is in the program folder with the other program files. Usually this is "C:\Program Files\Virtual Software\DJPro". You may need to modify this path if you have a 64-bit version of Windows or have a system drive other than "C:".

9. How do I handle songs that end "cold" and shouldn't be overlapped at the end? Add "~c" to the filename just before the extension using the Tag Editor.