

MUSIC COPIED FROM A CD

by Judi Ball

WMA, WAV, MPEG 3 FORMATS:

This analog-to-digitized music action is referred to as “ripping.” And as great as XP is with all of its music, movie, etc. mini programs, Media Player does not cover this sufficiently. Media Player (and other small applications) will rip the music from a CD, but the files will be in the WMA format (as in .wma). This format will not play on CD players (such as a car’s player or your grandson’s boombox) except a computer’s CD drive, nor can this format be edited in all music editing programs. The “ripped” music file must be converted to a *wave* file (.wav) or an MPEG 3 file (.mp3), whether it be a Windows based wave or MPEG 3 format, or some other choice as listed in music editing open/save dialog boxes.

NOTE: The Nero Wave Editor program will play and edit the WMA files, then convert/save as an MPEG 3. An all-in-one package for about \$99. What plug-ins are needed on top of that will depend on what the editor needs, but an editing plug-in will cost extra. A plug-in is an added feature, such as editing out pops and clicks from an LP recording, and most likely one or two or more plug-ins will be needed to do the most common editing.

Why edit if a file comes from a pure sounding CD? There are most likely many reasons beyond mine, but personally, I like to mix music and end up with a variety CD of only those songs I want to hear. When music comes from several different CDs, the volume levels will be different. You will find yourself reaching for the volume control on your playing unit with every song, either to turn it up or down. I edit the volume on my new variety line up, so all the songs are fairly close to the same loudness before I burn the final CD. I also edit out applause, if possible, and lead-in and lead-out time on a song.

The WMA format exists because it was created to compete with MPEG 3 as a compressed music file. Both formats are compressed formats, but not all programs have caught up with it, or perhaps not impressed enough to use it.

How important is the compressed MPEG3 format? Well, an 80-minute/700 MB, (which are the CDs we use—including the music CDs), doesn’t matter the speed of the CD, will hold on the average of about 25 two to three minute songs in .wav format. The same CD will hold about 250 MP3 files of the same type songs. That’s a lot of compression! Why do we even mess with .wav files? Because the MP3 players are just now becoming popular enough to find in stores, and still pretty pricey. But it won’t be long! And in the meantime, well, the following is still the answer for most of us.

Cool Edit is another application for editing and converting. However, it does not recognize the WMA files. Since I edit and convert from Wave to MPEG 3 I use Cool Edit and use another program to convert from WMA first.

NOTE: Cool Edit Pro is now *Adobe Audition*. This buy-out took place in 2003, and the upgrade from Cool Edit Pro to Adobe’s program is \$69. Full program is \$299. I checked online and Adobe does not claim that the WMA is a recognized format of their new program. The old Cool Edit works fine for what I want, therefore, I have no intentions to change. But for the new music editor, I recommend looking into all of the music ripping/editing/burning programs on the market before buying.

CDA Format

.cda is 4 byte file for Windows that represents an audio track. You do not “play” this format, it is an explanation of the data knowledge of the file. I.E., the name of the CD album, the song title, and artist. Even date and company of the music CD. When you put a professional music CD in your computer, and are online at the time, and select a particular file, information about the song will come back to you from the originators, RCA, Columbia, etc.

How To COPY MUSIC FROM A RECORD OR CASSETTE

RCA JACKS

You will need the player to have RCA output jacks and cables to connect to the back of your computer. The cables are easy, the phonograph/turntable and all other players of the 1940s through 1980s are not. In many cases your older unit might very well have the output jacks, but just as many may not. The best bet is to hit up friends or relatives with the favor to borrow theirs, or hit the yard sales, or a used item store, or a pawn shop and buy such a unit, remembering that they will most likely not cost an arm and a leg under these used conditions.



Needles for the phonos. The only place I know of in Redding to buy a needle anymore is *Clydes* near Cypress and Churn Creek (4 Corners). The needles are rare, and not all are available. They had to order one for our phonograph, and then the cartridge wasn't right. It was also expensive. Around \$40 a needle/cartridge or more. Much more in some cases. I remember one quote was \$72 about three years ago. You can go online and buy needles. LPs and 45s as well from a few different companies that collect music items of our past era. And the prices can be fair, but the shipping isn't always so cheap, so don't forget to add that to the cost.

Tip: Go to a search engine and ask for phonograph needles, it will lead to many such places.

The units must have an amplifier if you are to hear the music as it is being recorded into your computer. (Very important, because you will know if there is a needle-skip, or other problems with an LP, and whether you will need to edit the song.) So, an amplifier is another item you will have to add, if you don't have one, however, even new they are fairly inexpensive. A friend bought a small amplifier from a Best Buy/Circuit City type store recently. The amplifier is fairly small in physical size, which makes no difference and fits better beside most computer setups.