



YOUR  
FADU GUIDE  
TO  
**VLC**  
**MEDIA PLAYER**

**Siddharth Jha**



# **Your FaduGuide to VLC Media Player**

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The eBook is a collection of amazing things that the player VLC Media Player can do. All the techniques are tried and tested by me on a 32-Bit Windows 7 Ultimate System. But the author takes no responsibility of any kind of damage caused by any of the techniques mentioned in the book.

The eBook is designed to appeal to the average PC user, and I'm sure that most of the readers would be able to appreciate the power of VLC after reading this book.

There is no relation between the author and the team at VideoLan. The author has not been paid in any kind to endorse or publicize anything. This project is a tribute to the application which has been making our lives simpler for years!



## **The Intro**

VLC is an acronym for Video LAN Client. It is a very popularly known free media player that is available for all major platforms like Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, BSD, Solaris, Android, iOS and many more. It all started off as a development educational project by students at the École Centrale Paris (Which is a top level French institution in the field of engineering) which has grown up to become a phenomenon in the world of media players, music, multimedia, internet and humanity!

Video LAN Client was named so because it was developed as a user tool for accessing VideoLAN, which itself was a protocol to create and share over a Local Area Network (LAN). But today, calling it just a client would be considered a joke.

After a complete rewrite in 1998, it became Open Source, thanks to the agreement of the École Centrale Paris, in 2001. The project then started to open up to developers outside of the École. It is now a worldwide project with developers from 20 countries.

Since 2009, the project is completely separated from École Centrale Paris, and is backed up by an autonomous non-profit organization. The current President of the VideoLAN non-profit organization which maintains the project's website is Jean-Baptiste Kempf, who is also one of the project's developers.

VLC today has become a synonym to stability, customizeability and speed, all put together in one neat media player package that plays almost any media file format you throw on it! That's the VLC Magic. But there's more. And the next section of the book is dedicated to that!

## **Why VLC Media Player?**

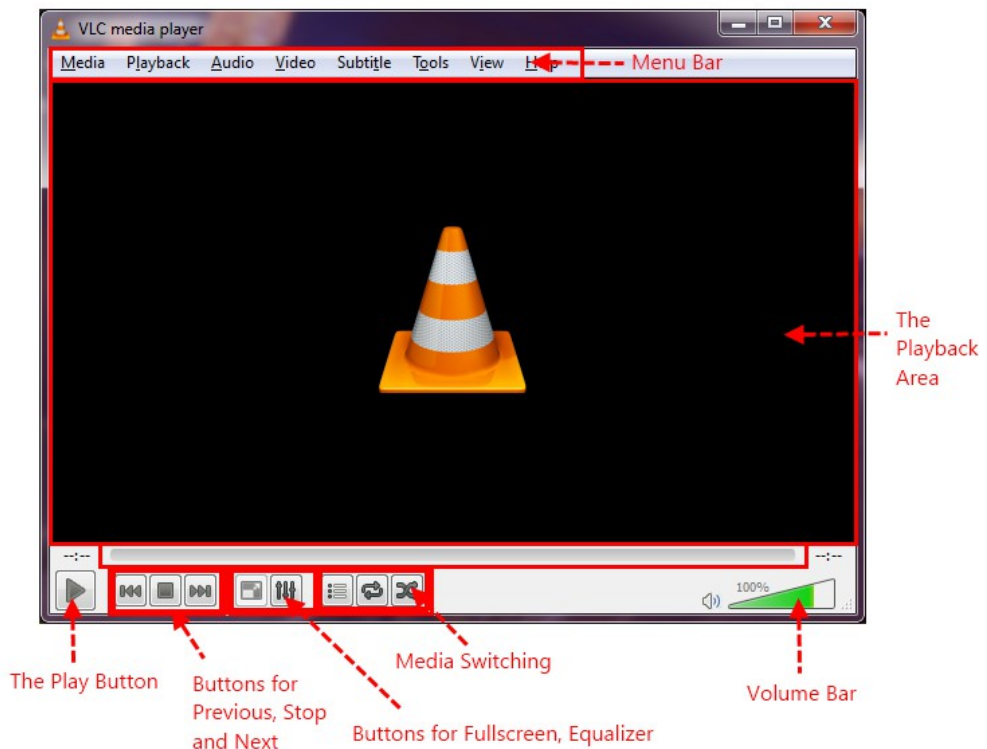
You have a right to ask why? When you have the mighty ol' Windows Media Player that comes pre-loaded on a Windows system, or players like Banshee and Rhythmbox on Linux systems or just QuickTime, then why do you have to download another player that does not look as sleek and suave as any of these players?

The fact is that, out of the box, VLC has many more features than the other players. The size of the install may not be large, but when you go through this eBook and get to find out what all VLC can do out of the box, you'd be biting your nails!

The key features of VLC Media Player that make it irresistible are:

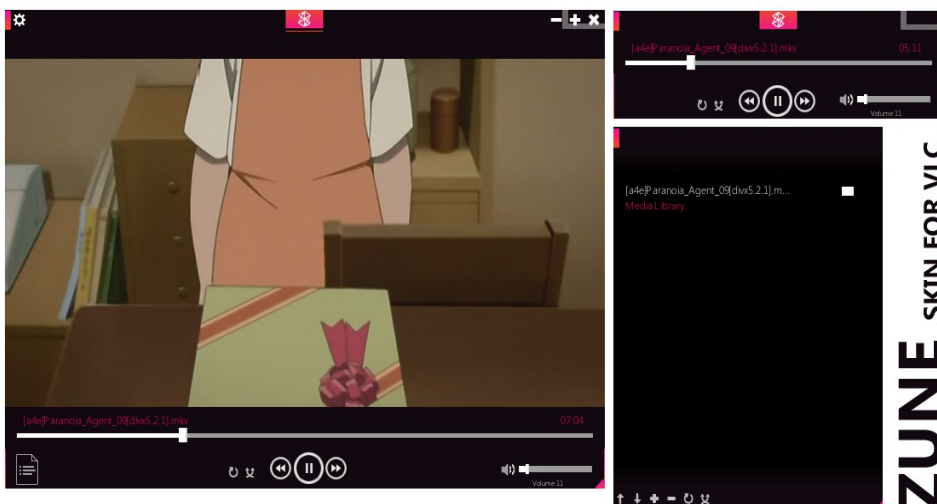
- It'd play anything! MKV, OGG, ASF, MOV, FLAC.... You name it! It also tries to play broken and corrupted files and is quite good at doing so. You can even watch a video as it is being downloaded over a P2P network like BitTorrent!
- It's fast. Yes indeed it is. No appreciable lag between double-clicking on a file and VLC Media Player playing it. It feels responsive and smooth even on old systems.
- It is very easy to customize it. You can find hundreds of addons and themes for VLC, that can make it even more powerful than it really is.
- It is open source, so anyone can customize the player for a version more suitable for his use. For example if a guy is a music aficionado, he may add several addons to the player for making his music listening experience great, while not compromising on the ability to play video. That's the power of VLC and all open source software in general.
- It is regularly updated. The VideoLAN team is very hard working and rolls out new features and updates with every single release (although increasing the size!).
- It's FREE! Best of all, you don't have to shell out a single buck for making the player yours!

## The Interface



As you can appreciate, the interface is clean and non confusing. Any person who has operated any other media player will feel right at home with the buttons. People may find it boring and dull, but they can always customize it the way they want it to be!

For an example, take a look at this customized VLC Media Player (courtesy ReksVeks on DeviantArt). Nice, ain't it?



## **Playing a Media File**

### **On Your PC:**

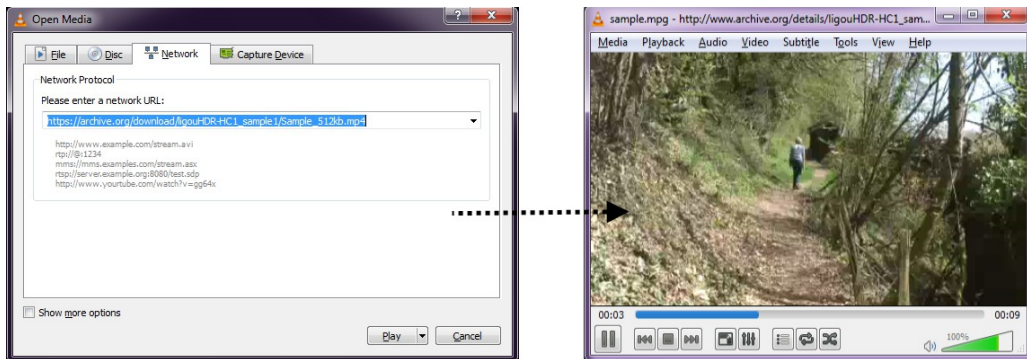
- Go to Media>Open File and browse to the location of the File. Alternatively you can press Ctrl+O to do that.
- If the default player for media files is set as VLC, just double click on the file to play it.
- If not, you can right click on a file and select the application with which you want to open it. Select VLC Media player and you're good to go.

### **From a CD/DVD/Blu-Ray Disk**

- Go to Media>Open Disk and select the drive in which the Disk is inserted. Alternatively, you can also press Ctrl+D to do that.
- In the AutoRun menu that appears after you load a disk in the drive, there should be an entry for playing with VLC Media Player.

### **From the internet**

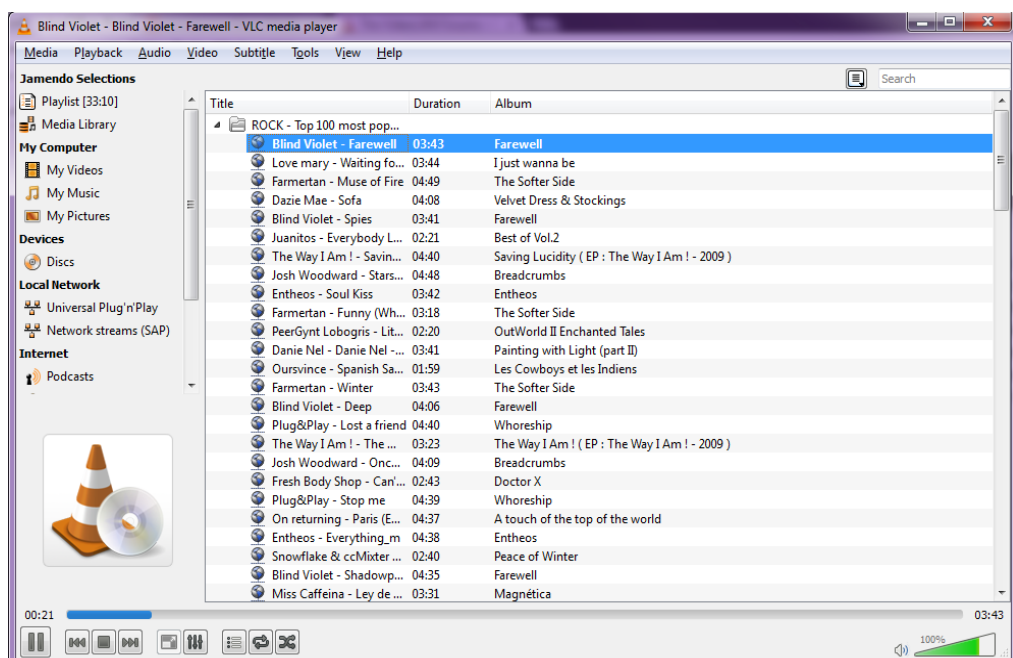
- If you have a direct link to a media file on the internet, then go to Media>Open Network Stream. Alternatively you can also press Ctrl+N to do that. For example:



- But the fact is that most videos on the internet are not files like .mpg or .mp4. Most videos on the web are flash based, and the most popular website for flash videos is undoubtedly YouTube. VLC supports YouTube videos too. Just paste the YouTube link of the video to play it seamlessly. Also worked for DailyMotion. The playback is very nice on a 2Mbps connection, without stutters! Here is an example of a video from YouTube playing seamlessly on a VLC Media Player




- VLC can also play Live RTMP streams (For watching Live TV on your PC). It needs a bit of configuration. I have covered the same in the later sections of the book.
- VLC itself has a nice library/repository of internet radio stations and TV stations that you can play. To access them go to View>Library and in the side bar, you'd see Internet and a large collection of playable channels. Double Click on one of them and enjoy!

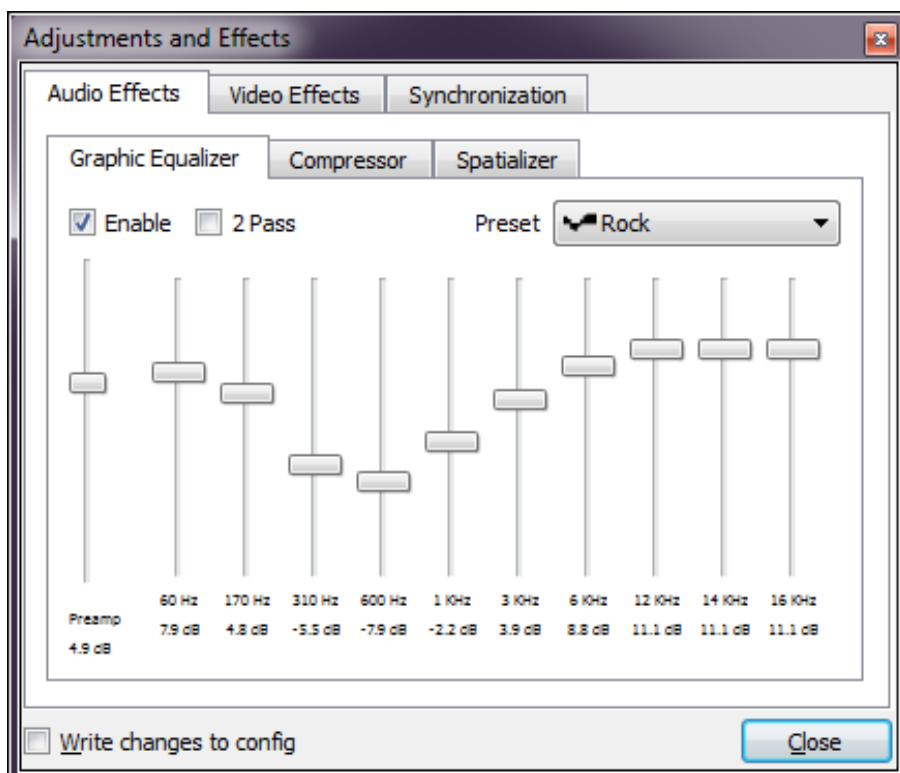




- VLC also has a repository of Jamendo tracks. If you don't know what Jamendo is, it is a service that allows upcoming musicians to share their music for free. So you get to listen to new music for free, and some of the stuff over there is really nice. Many musicians have made it big after Jamendo. The Jamendo radio has its own section in the Internet section of the library, with option to play only the best tracks or the radio categorized according to genre. It is a great artist discovery service, all for free.

## The Equalizer

The player comes with a built in virtual equalizer. Equalization is the process of adjusting the balance between frequency components within an electronic signal. Most modern players have this feature incorporated in them. And VLC is no exception. To start the equalizer you can simply click the  button in the player. If you're like me and don't know much about the stuff like Bass, Treble, you can simply select an equalizer from the presets classified according to Genre. So if you're playing Rock music, simply select Rock as the equalizer preset and get ready for better head banging! Experiment around with the sliders to get a setting that suits your taste of music the best!

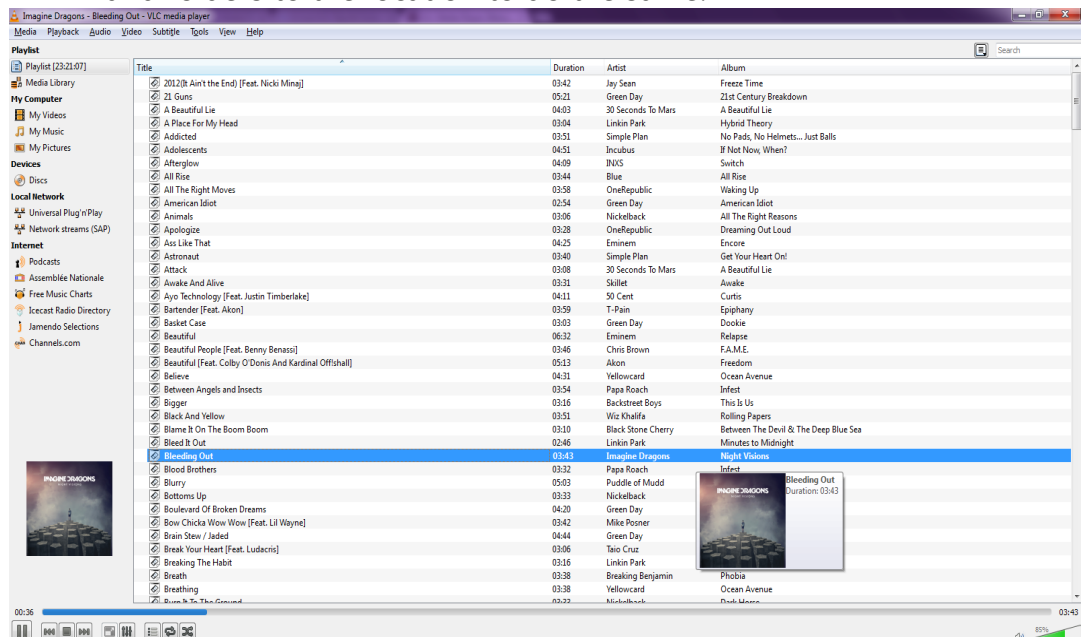


In the same way you can also play around with Compressor and Spatializer the same way (Honestly I don't know what these words mean!).

## Manage Playlists

Playlists are essential for all kinds of music categorization. Almost all players today come with options for playlists, so does VLC Media Player.

- To Create a New Playlist, Go to View>Playlists. Or press Ctrl+L
- Right Click on the Window that opens and select options to add Files or Folders to the playlist you want to create. You can also drag files and folders to the location to do the same.

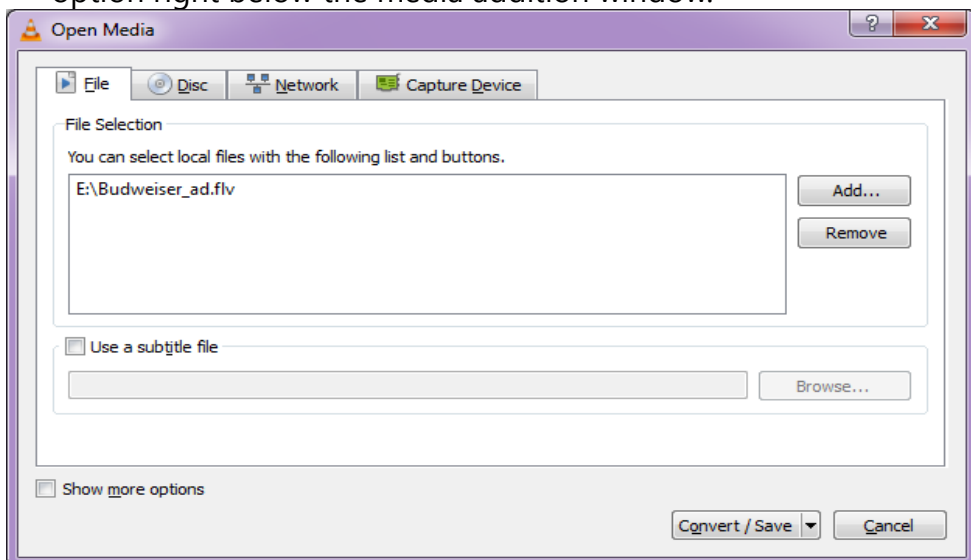



- Now you have to save the playlist. To do this, either go to Media>Save Playlist to File or simply press Ctrl+Y. Select the name of the file and the format. The M3U format is most commonly used for playlists, but you can choose other formats too.
- You can have multiple playlists and these playlists are cross-platform and cross-player too (I hope you understand what I mean to say). You can have separate playlists for Rock Music, Soul Music and Music to listen to while on jogs. It's your world!
- You can also add Videos and Network Stream to the playlist. It can be done by Right clicking in the playlist area and selecting Advanced Open. Now you have to do what you did earlier to play online media files.

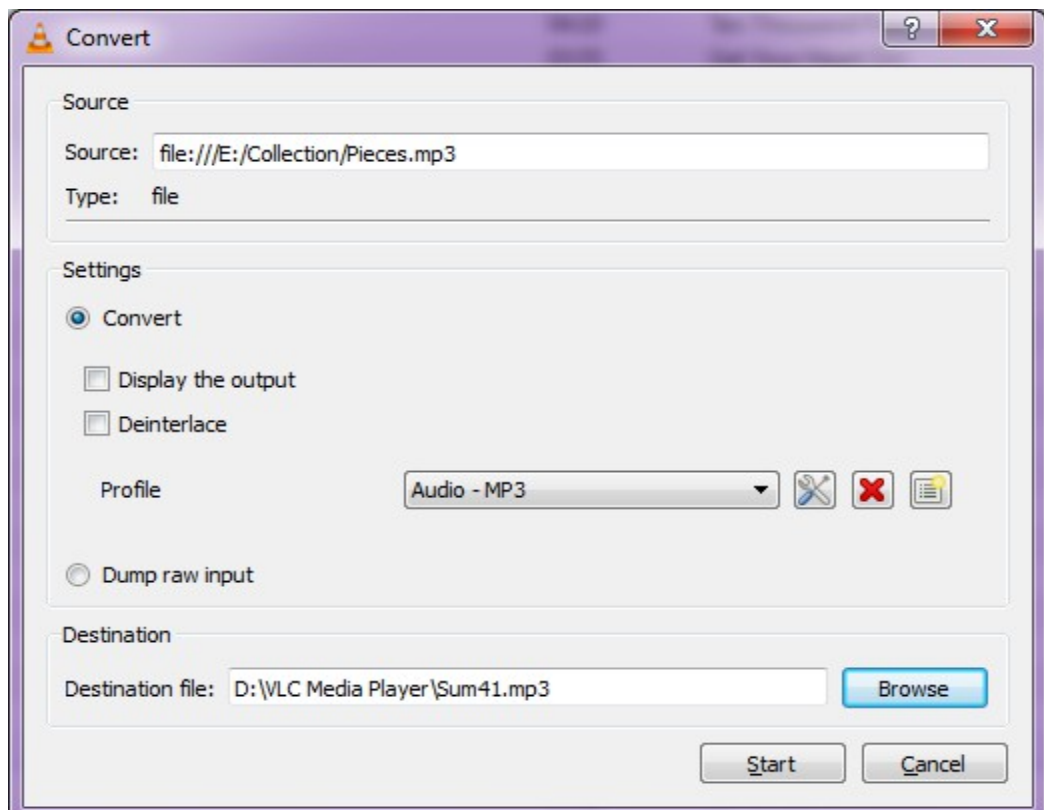
## **Convert Media**

Not many people know this, but VLC can act as a nice converter for media as well. It supports input in all formats of media files that it supports (A plethora of them!) and can output in MP4, OGG, AVI, MP3 etc.

- Go to Media>Convert/Save or alternatively press Ctrl+R
- Add the file you wish to convert by navigating to the folder that contains it. You can choose to add a subtitles file as well, which is the option right below the media addition window.



- Now Click on Convert/Save and then in the window that appears, you have to choose one of the presets for the conversion. Select a format for conversion to. You can even convert a video to an audio file. You can even edit the Bitrate, the Sample Rate etc. by pressing the  button next to the format selection dropdown. Lower down the Bitrate for a smaller file size, or you may change the resolution of a video. For example, you may convert a 1080p video to a 720p video, thus reducing its file size and saving you valuable space on your HDD. You can also choose the format and then go through the settings for the codecs that give you the best outputs. When you're happy with the settings, just name the file in the box that is below the format dropdown, and let the conversion begin. I've seen that the conversion speeds are not much slower than dedicated media conversion software



There is no need for another conversion software when you have the gem called VLC!

## **Adjust Video Settings**

VLC allows control over your playback like no other player. Just open your video and you can add a lot of effects to it without any extra addons.

- Open a Video in VLC
- Go to Media>Effects & Filters or Press Ctrl+E. Alternatively, press the equalizer button described earlier. Go to Video Effects Tab
- Now have fun. You can crop, change colours, add hue, adjust gamma, rotate the video, add blur, adjust contrast and much more. Tweak with the settings to get an optimal result with your video. You may choose to have high contrast for making a horror movie scene more grim, or add hue to a nature video to make it more enjoyable.
- Once done, exit the window opened, and the video will play with new settings. To undo the change, simply uncheck the boxes associated with the different video effects. Here I am posting a video snapshot before and after adding effects



Before

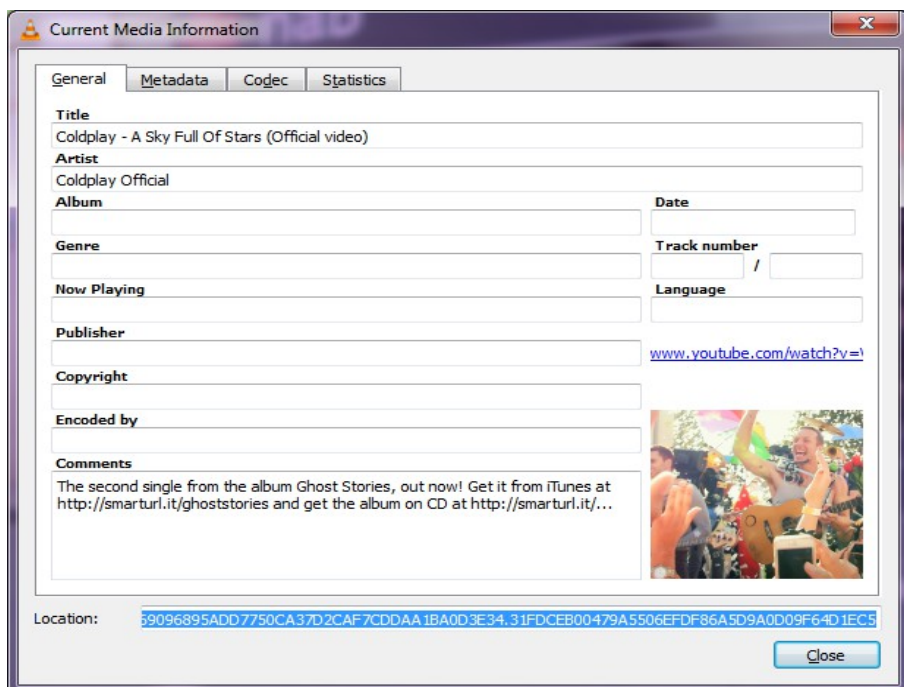


After

## Download YouTube Videos

VLC also acts as a nice way to download YouTube videos. No plugin required!

- You first ought to have the URL of the YouTube video. Copy it to your clipboard
- When in VLC Media Player, press Ctrl+N or go to Media>Open Network Stream. In the Window that opens up, paste the URL of the YouTube video. Hit Enter. You'll observe that the Video starts playing on the player
- Now go to Tools>Media Information or press Ctrl+I. In the lower part of the window that opens, there will be a TextBox called Location.
- Copy the text of the Location TextBox and paste it in your download manager (Like FDM) or simply your browser. You'll see a file gets downloaded which has no extension. Rename the file to a name with the extension .flv . The Video has successfully been downloaded!



Kindly be considerate to the amount and efforts artists put in to make music. Kindly buy a song if you like it. Please don't download copyrighted videos!

## **Fun with Videos**

### **Taking Snapshots**

If you wish to take a screenshot of the video, sans the player, just go to Video>Snapshot. The file is saved in the Pictures library in png format. And yes, its the same image as above!



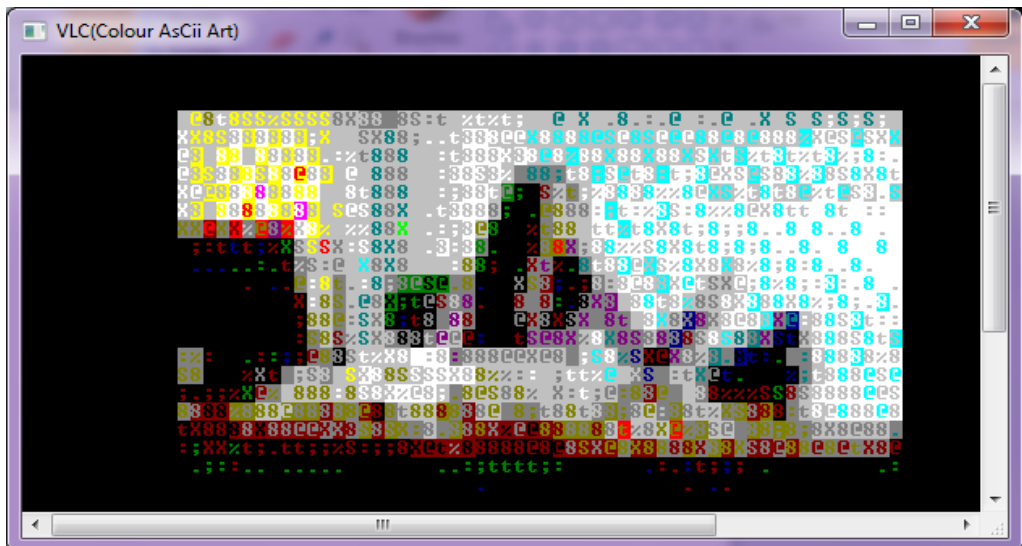
### **Video As Wallpaper**

We have seen wallpapers getting interactive, but how about a video playing as a wallpaper? Seems crazy, doesn't it? But VLC can allow you to have the fun. Just go to Video>Set As Wallpaper. Well the feature is silly and has no use. No icons are visible on the desktop and the wallpaper is removed as soon as the player is stopped. It is just like VLC playing a video in full screen, nothing else.



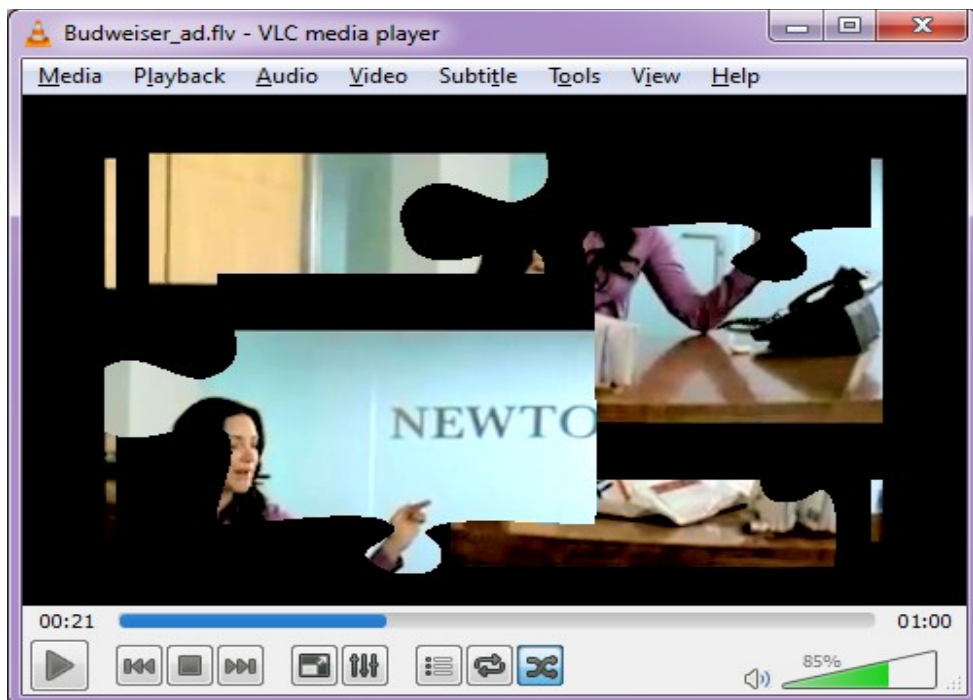
## Videos in ASCII

Have you ever seen an ASCII art video? They were popular in the late 80s in which a video was made using text characters only. You can experience it on VLC too. Just go to Tools>Preferences and select Video tab. In the output section select Colour ASCII Art and now play your videos to see the fun. Of no practical use though!



## Puzzle Game

If you've already noticed this feature, you are a curious, inquisitive fellow. If you've not, try it by going to Video Effects after pressing Ctrl+E. Then go to Geometry tab and select puzzle game. Select no of rows and column and exit. Now your video has turned into a jigsaw puzzle that you can assemble to make a video! And the best part, the video keeps playing as you solve the puzzle! Great fun!



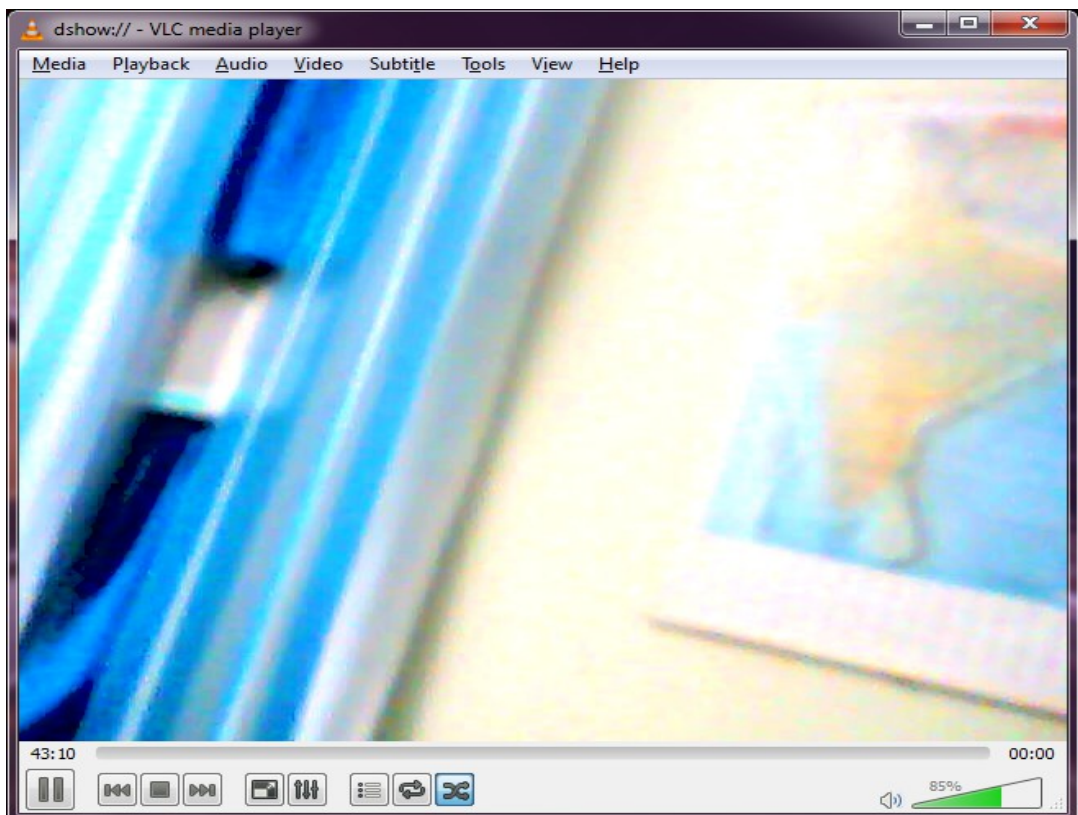
### **Add a Logo or text to your Video**

You can do it in the overlay section in the Video Effects window. You can also add a text to the video. Bad part is that you can't edit the font!



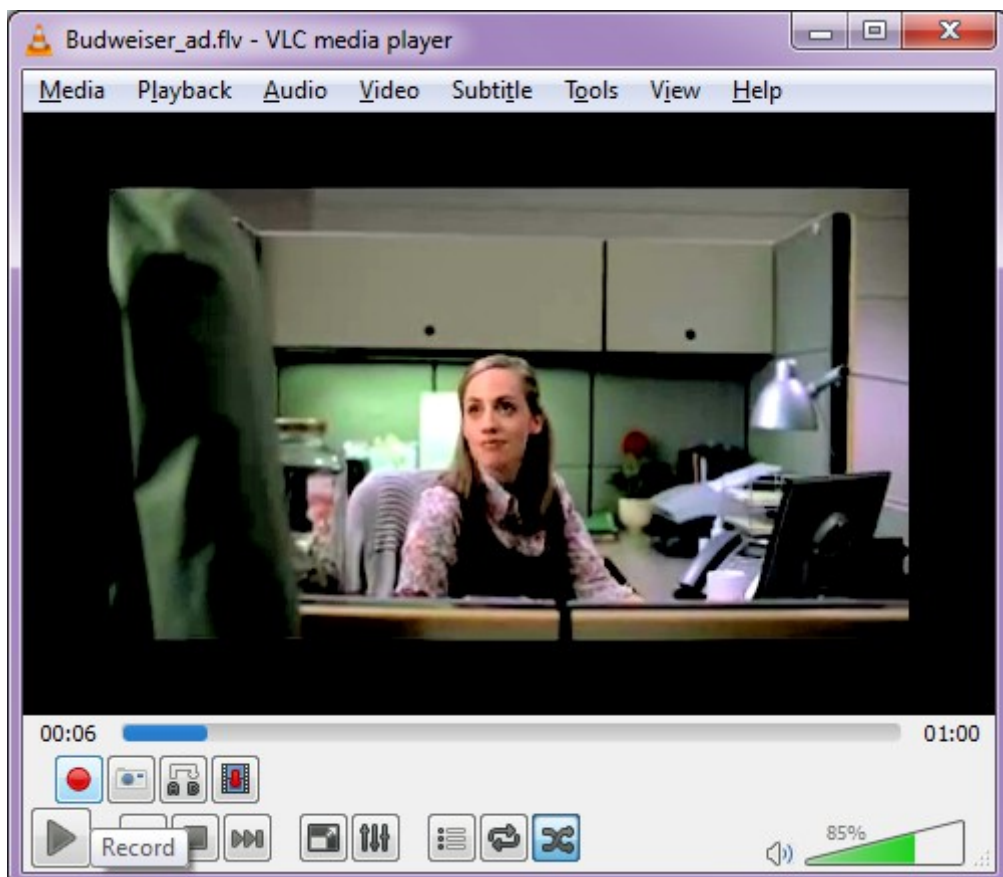
## **Play a Video Stream from a WebCam**

With VLC you can play a video live stream from a WebCam. To do this go to Media>Open Capture device. Connect your WebCam before doing this. Now select your device from the dropdown for both Video & Audio input. You should have the video up and running in a few seconds. In my case, I found a bit of a lag. That may be due to the fact that I still own a 10 yr old WebCam, but it may be perfect for you. Drop in a comment if it works for you! You can record the video from the software itself! In the next section, you will know how!



## **Record Videos, Radio, Podcasts etc.**

For doing this, you simply go to View>Advanced Controls. Now you'd see a big red button along with a few new buttons. Now whatever you are playing, you can record it. When you have to start recording, press the red button once, and when you're done, press it again. Just like the snapshots stuff, it is saved in the Videos Library.



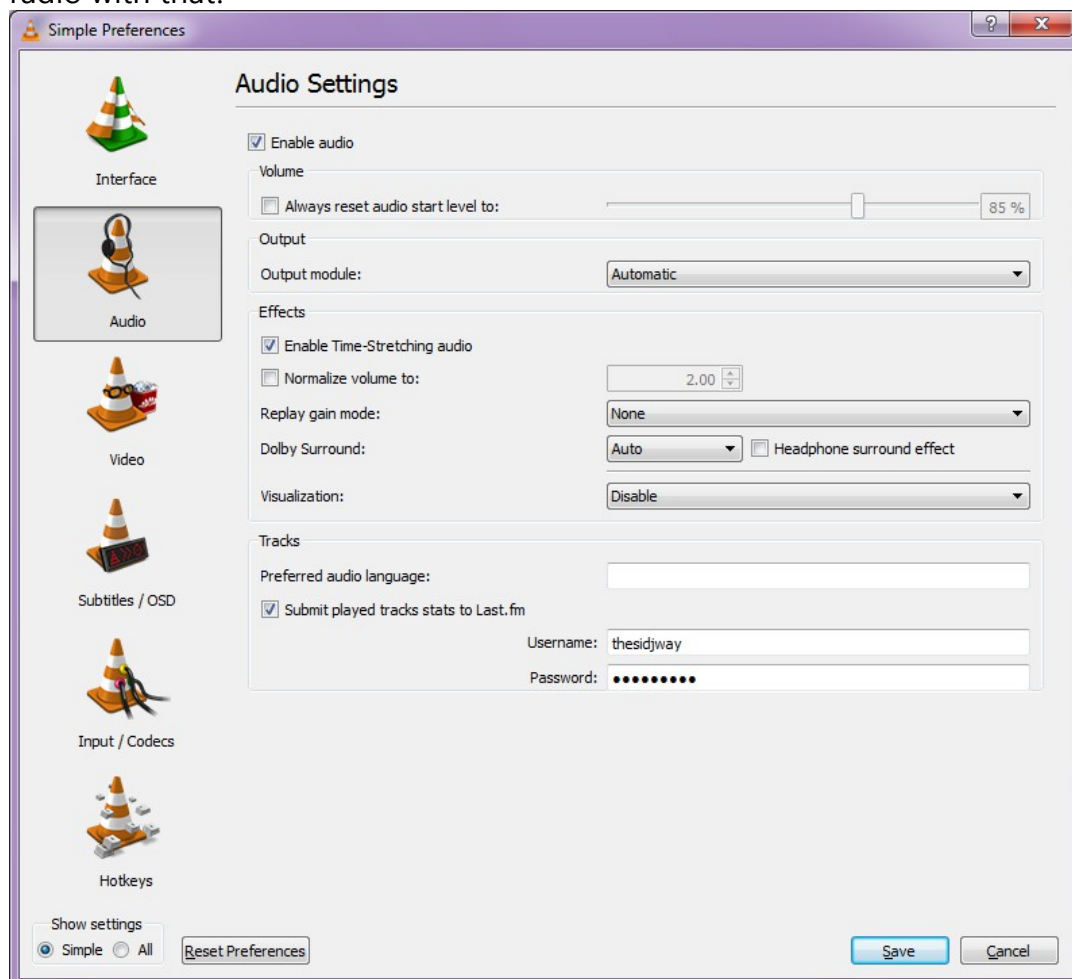
Please note that recording radio is not recommended. You are causing monetary harm to a singer if you're recording his/her song. If you like a song, just buy it! Feel free to record podcasts! Now you can also record the output from your WebCam!

## **Scrobble to Last.FM**

Many people use Last.FM as a very nice music discovery service that gives users personalized radio according to the tastes of the user. But for recognizing the tastes of the users, it should know what type of music do they listen. So scrobbling refers to sending data about played tracks to Last.FM.

To do so, for other media players, you have to download a plugin or install it via the Last.FM PC software. No such worries in VLC as VLC has Last.FM support built in!

Just Go to Tools>Preferences>Audio and tick Submit played tracks stats to Last.FM checkbox. Enter your username and password and done! Whatever tracks you play are scrobbled to Last.FM and you can enjoy personalized radio with that!



Me on Last.FM---> [www.last.fm/user/thesidjway](http://www.last.fm/user/thesidjway)

## **Make VLC Look the way you want to be!**

### **Change Button Placement**

You can change the default button placement in VLC by going to Tools>Customize Interface...

You can change the position of the toolbar, or change the order of buttons on it, or add new buttons too!

### **Change the Skin**

Go to Tools>Preferences>Interface and select 'Use custom skin" from there. Now you have to download the theme files for VLC. They are available in the .vlt format. A lot of skins are available on the official website

<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/skins.php>. The skins are available for single download or they also have a 37MB archive that has all the skins. Now you have to place the themes in the skins directory of your player. For example if you have VLC installed at 'D:\VLC Media Player', then you should copy all themes to 'D:\VLC Media Player\skins'.

Now when you restart VLC, you will notice a new interface which is the default skinned interface of VLC. Now to change the theme, right click in the main window, go to Interface>Select Skin>Your Theme. If you've done everything right, VLC would now be looking entirely different. Here's a screenshot of one of my favourite themes.





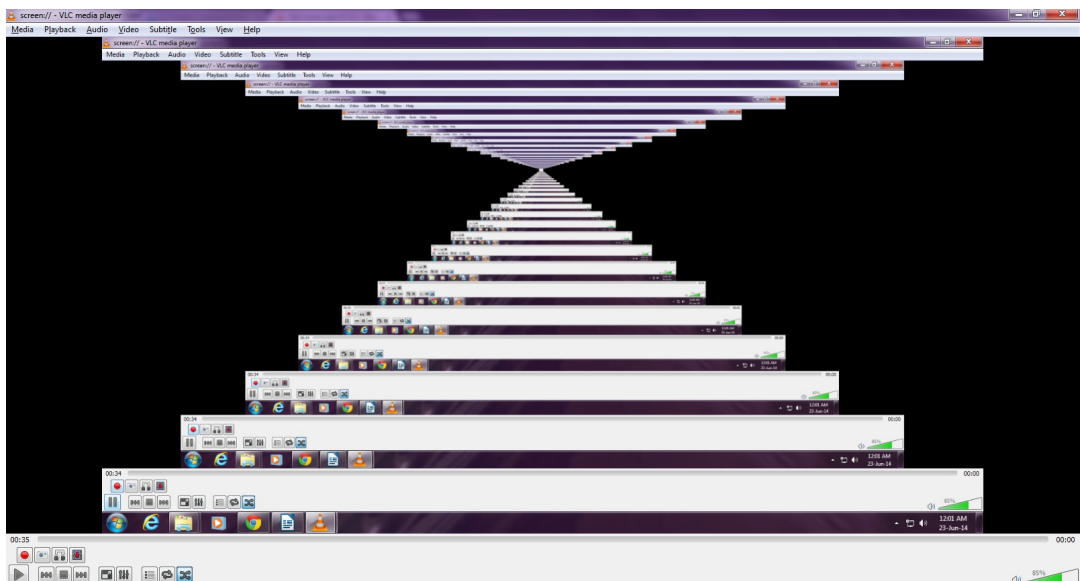
## **More Techniques**

### **Play from archives**

VLC Player can play compressed video files also. Video will play as a normal video and you can also use the seek bar as well. Sometimes the .rar file is broken into several parts but with VLC player its not a problem. What you have to do is that just load the first part (e.g. .part001.rar ) and it will automatically take the rest of the parts and play the whole file.

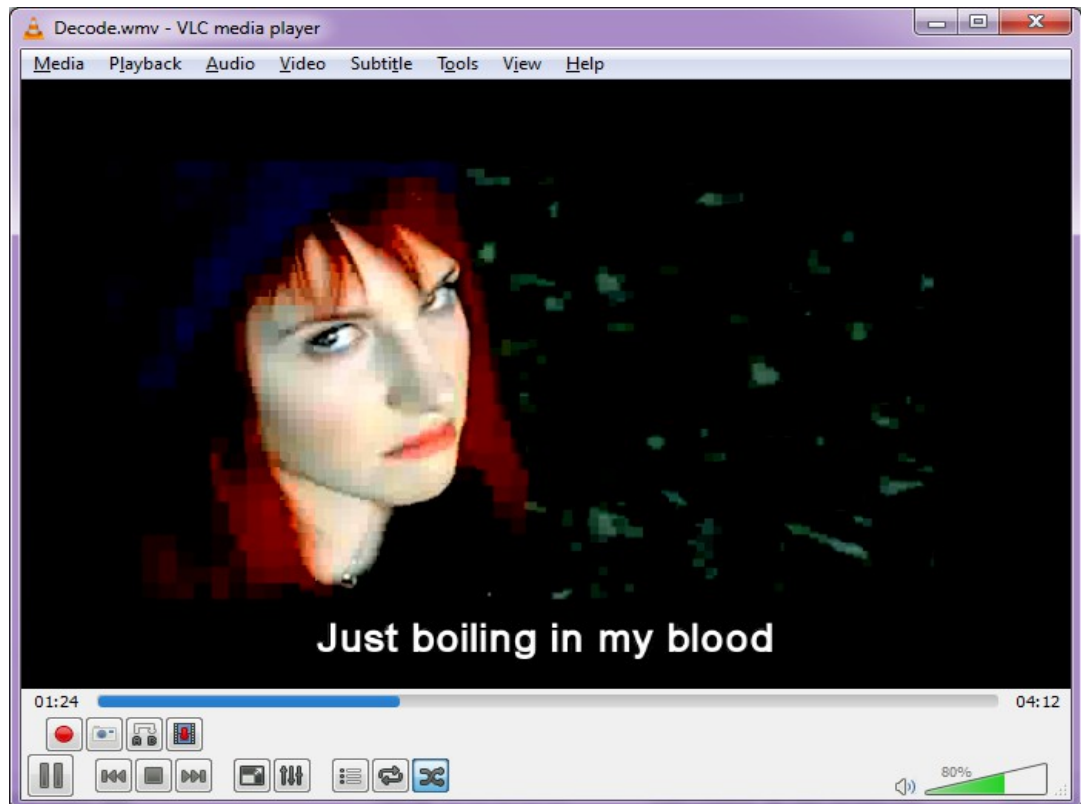
### **Record Your Desktop**

In VLC, go to Media>Open Capture device. Now in Capture mode select Desktop. Initially you'd see a very peculiar display of infinite screens of VLC. Now what VLC is doing is playing what you see on your desktop, and now you can understand why you see infinite screens. Now to record your desktop, select Advanced Controls as described earlier. Now you should press the big red button. Now record your desktop the way you do it with dedicated software. After you're finished, just press the red button again. You'd have to edit the video slightly to cut out the start and the end, to hide the VLC.



## **Subtitles in VLC**

VLC supports subtitles natively. You just have to navigate to the subtitles files. Subtitles are available for almost all music videos and movies out there. To navigate to the subtitles file, go to Subtitle>Add Subtitle File.. The most common format used is .srt.



Sometimes there is a delay in the timing of the video and the subtitles file. That can easily be corrected. The keys for this are 'h' and 'g' respectively. So you can watch a movie without knowing the forthcoming dialogues in advance or wondering 'what the hell did the chap say?!'



## **Keyboard Shortcuts**

Become a keyboard VLC warrior with these keyboard shortcuts that'll make the player easier to use!

**F:** Full Screen

**Space:** Play/Pause

**T:** Show Position/Time

**S:** Stop

**Ctrl+Q:** Quit

**+/-:** Faster/Slower

**N/P:** Next/Previous

**Ctrl+up:** Volume Up

**Ctrl+down:** Volume Down

**Ctrl+E:** To Adjust Audio/Video Effects

**Ctrl+ H:** To Hide/Unhide Controls

**M:** Mute

**Z:** Zoom In

**Shift+Z:** Zoom Out

**Ctrl+Right/Left:** To Skip a minute in the Audio/Video

**T:** Check remaining Time in Video

**Ctrl+O:** Open Single File

**A:** Change Aspect ratio

**Shift+S:** Capture Snapshot

**Shift+R:** Record Video

## Watching Live TV on your PC

With people getting access to high speed broadband and 3G, Internet TV has become a possibility. Live TV is available online on many servers, but they are usually crappy and show up a lot of advertisements in the surroundings of the play area. But with VLC, you can watch Live TV on your own desktop, just like you'd on a HDTV in your couchroom.

This is possible with the help of a software known as RtmpGUI. It defines itself as a GUI version of rtmpdump, a toolkit for RTMP streams. All forms of RTMP are supported, including rtmp://, rtmpt://, rtmpe://, rtmpte://, and rtmps://.

rtmpGUI has an extensive list of thousands of channels from almost all countries in hundreds of languages! Everything from HBO to Discovery to Fox Sports is covered. And all these can be streamed free from your system. I don't know about the legality of the streaming but it just works!

For configuring RtmpGUI, you first have to download the portable application. It's under a Megabyte, so won't take much time. During installation it will load the channels list, which may take a few minutes. There are thousands of channels from almost every country and in hundreds of languages. The program should automatically find your VLC location and add it as the default media player. If it doesn't then click "File" and then "Options" and either enter the path manually or click "Locate" to browse for it.



Now simply double click on the required channel to play it in VLC. You'd find out that only about half the channels actually work well, some work with no audio, some with no video, some with a lot of lag. So try out the channels well and you'd probably get to watch quality TV on your PC for free!



[Download Link for RtmpGUI](#)

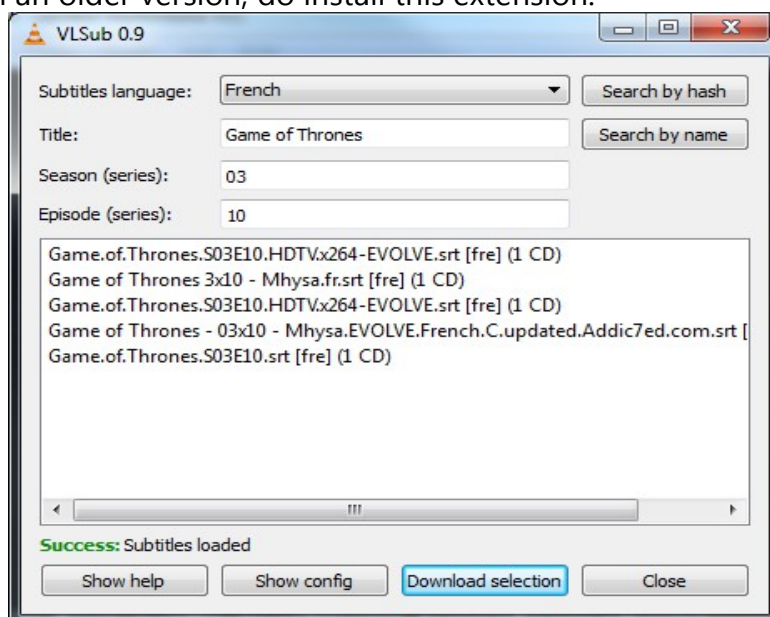
## **Extensions for VLC**

VLC Media Player is capable of doing much out of the box. But there are certain extensions that when incorporated in VLC make it even a better player to use!

Here is a list of a few of them that all VLC users should install.

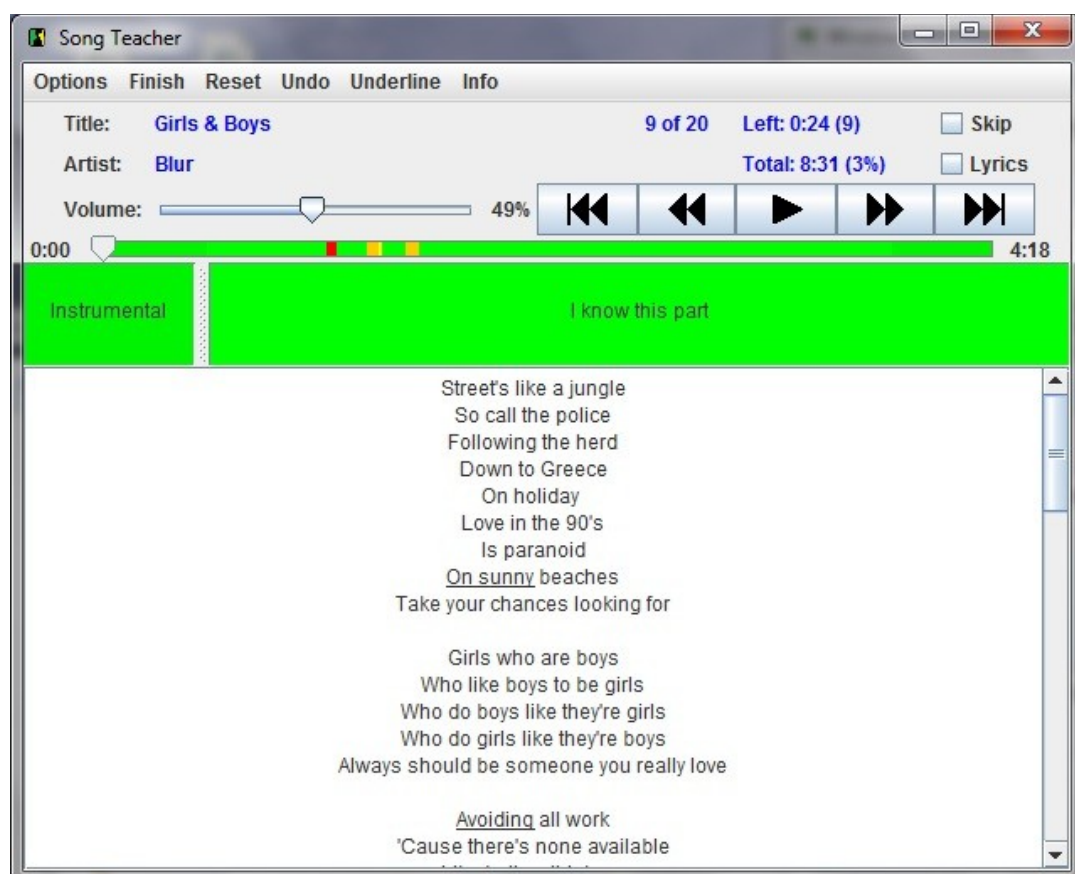
### **VLSub**

It searches and downloads subtitles from opensubtitles.org using the hash of the video currently playing or its title. Very useful extension to carry out subtitling tasks. I was not able to test this one out on my latest VLC 2.1.3 as according to its page, it has stopped working above VLC 2.0.8 on Windows. If you own an older version, do install this extension.



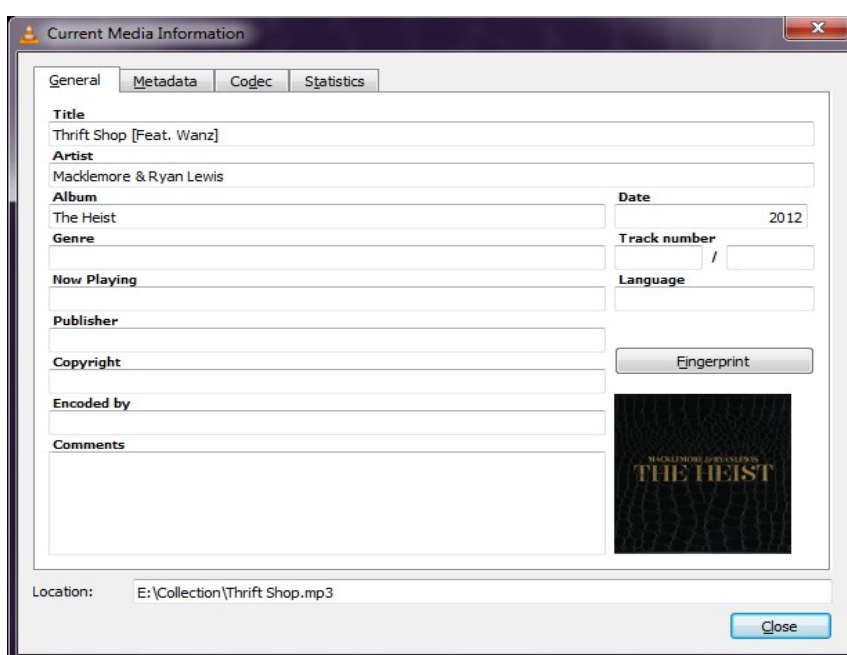
### **Song Teacher**

This extension helps you to learn the lyrics of your favorite songs. There are a few glitches but this mostly depends on the source file, not the extension. You won't get any error with properly tagged files. The most important thing is that you can actually sing along with the music, and VLC will show you the right lines with green and mark the ones where you made mistakes with red. This color coding is really helpful in learning song lyrics.



## Tag your Files

Many file formats support tagging of the audio/video. I personally am a mp3 tag freak. All the songs in my collection are tagged. If you don't know what tagging is, it is adding metadata to the file that makes it easier to find out in any kind of media player, on phones, tablets or on PCs. I also like all my songs with their album art on. You can do all this in VLC Media Player. Just when a song/video is playing, press Ctrl+I. Now you can edit the Title, Artist, Album and also apply the album art from an image file. VLC also allows for downloading album art automatically.



You can also add Lyrics to the song in the comments section. This way your media library looks well organized and easier to navigate. You can also do this to a video. Contrary to popular belief, just renaming a file doesn't make it easier to find in a media player. Do it and enjoy better music categorization!

## **Resume Videos from last position**

By default, VLC doesn't resume the video from the point at which it was last stopped. If you want this feature, there are 2 ways out. One with an extension and one without.

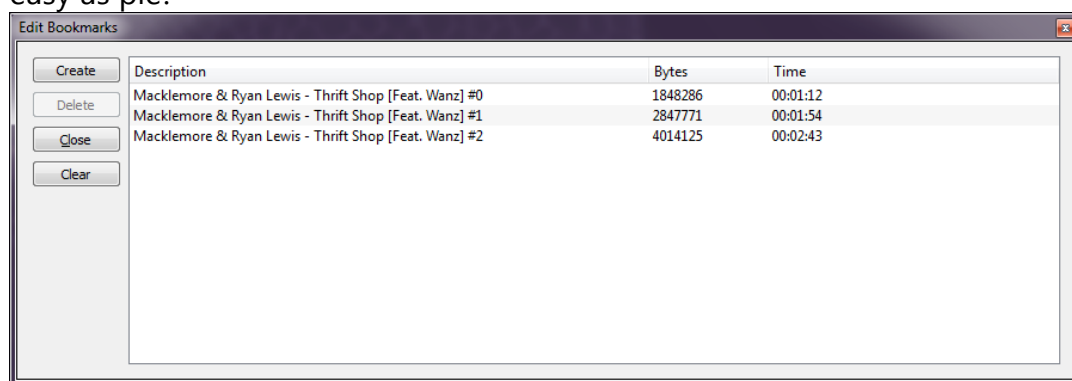
### **With Extension**

The extension called Remember Position does exactly the same task as you require. VLC extensions have the format .lua and to install an extension, just copy the file in the /lua/extensions directory. If you have VLC installed at D:\VLC Media Player, copy files to D:\VLC Media Player\lua\extensions and then restart VLC. To enable an extension, go to View>Extension Name.

[Download It!](#)

### **Without Extension**

The same functionality can be achieved using Bookmarks. When the song/video is playing, just press Ctrl+B to create a bookmark at that position. The same way, you can bookmark where you left the video. As easy as pie!



Please Note that once you change the path of the video being played, the Bookmarks will automatically be deleted, so take care!

## **That's All Folks!**

In this initial edition of the book, I've not covered streaming using VLC as I did not have the required apparatus. If there is any kind of demand to cover it up, I'd definitely do it in the forthcoming editions

Thanks!

Siddharth Jha

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