Troubleshooting WindowsMedia

Q: Does the player come up when you click on the link to a media file?
A: If you don't see the WindowsMedia player opening up, the player is not installed or not properly configured, and it may need to be re-installed.

But before you do that, perhaps your Internet browser is not configured to recognize WindowsMedia. This could be the case if you recently updated your browser. In this case, you could open the player manually (eg- from the System Start menu), select 'File, Open URL', and type (or cut & paste) the media file URL into the dialog box shown.

If your browser is Netscape v4.x, you may simply need to update the WindowsMedia plugin. You can download the small (300 kb) plugin at this location.

- http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/download/plugin.asp

If you need to reinstall, and have the WindowsMedia player setup program on a disc, you can run it. Otherwise, download it from this location.

- http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/download/default.asp

Kindly note that installation of the WindowsMedia player will update your browser(s), but will require that you close your browser, and that you *restart* your Windows system.

Q: Does the player start 'buffering' or pre-loading the media file?
A: Usually you will see the player open, display status messages to indicate it's pre-loading the media file, and you will see the title and/or copyright information. If your player *fails* to start buffering or pre-loading, it could indicate that the server is down, or there are problems with your Internet connection. [Technical note: This can happen in an organizational network if the system administrator has blocked access to streaming video, but it should not be a problem with links to media files that begin with 'http'.]

One thing to check is whether you can view streaming media files at other sites, such as this short music clip (suitable for dialup access), at Microsoft's own site:

- http://support.microsoft.com/support/mediaplayer/wmptest/samples/locke_20.asf

Or this video ad for MSNBC (suitable for dialup access), also at Microsoft's site:

- http://support.microsoft.com/support/mediaplayer/wmptest/samples/msnbc_28.wmv

If you are not able to view these files, you should re-install the WindowsMedia player. If you are able to view these clips, but not our files, perhaps there is a problem with our servers or your player needs to be updated (see below for more info). If you can see but not hear the files, please see the notes below on checking your audio system.

Q: Does the player have problems finding the specified file?

A: If you can see video at other sites, but not ours, there is either a problem with your ISP, or with our servers. You can test access to another of our servers, by trying to view this sample MPG file (which shows juggling dice):

- http://www.openasia.net/upload/demos/random.mpg

If you find that you cannot access *either* the MPEG, or the WindowsMedia files, there is likely to be a connection problem. If you can access the sample MPEG but not our WindowsMedia files, the problem appears to be with one or more of our media servers. You could try again in a few minutes. In any case, please email our system administrator (ie- sysadmin@openasia.net').

Q: Does the player request you to download a "missing plug-in"?

A: Our WindowsMedia files use the latest streaming technology (ie- v8.0 codecs) and it is common that you will be asked to download a missing plugin, or to upgrade to the latest codecs. This process is free, easy, secure, and takes just a minute or two. You will not even need to restart your player.

If you have problems updating your player, you may need to reinstall, as described above.

Q: Can you hear the audio clearly?

A: You should have no problem hearing the audio even if the video does not play well. If you cannot hear audio at all, the problem is on your own machine. Try the following.

- Open Control Panel, Sounds, and play a system sound file. If it does not play, either the speakers are not plugged in, the audio channel for "WAVE" is muted, or the volume is set too low.
- Open Sound Control or your audio mixer, and check that the channel for "WAVE" audio is enabled. Adjust the level until you can hear the system sound file.

If you hear system sounds, but not the WindowsMedia files, try the following.

- Check that the WindowsMedia player is not muted. Select 'Play, Volume, Mute' to toggle from disabled (muted) to enabled.

If the audio you hear is too soft, too loud or distorted, try the following.

- Use the slider in the WindowsMedia player to adjust the volume level. Alternatively, select 'Play, Volume, Down/Up' to adjust the volume to a more comfortable level.

If your speakers are not amplified enough to hear either system sounds or WindowsMedia files, try plugging headphones into the headphone jack of your computer. The headphone jack may be located on the sound board, sometimes at the back of the machine.

Q: Can you see the video clearly?

A: So far, so good? Internet video is often less than satisfactory, and choppy or pixelated video often is the result of a poor connection, or perhaps a slow computer.

If you cannot see any video, but you hear the audio, then the player needs to be upgraded to include the latest media codecs. This might happen if your player was unable to use the 'autoupdate' feature, or if you did not give it permission to connect to the Microsoft website.

At this point, you can either reinstall the player, as described above, or simply install the codecs. An installer for the codecs is small (800 kb), easily downloaded, and may be obtained from this location. You will not be required to restart the Windows system.

- http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/format/codecdownload.asp

If the colors are wrong, the problem is with your video drivers. Try opening 'Control Panel, Display, Settings' and select 'High Color', '16 bit color' or 'Thousands of Colors'. This change will normally be tested for 15 seconds, to see that you accept the change, and if not, the monitor will revert to the old settings. This change should fix color rendering problems.

If these options to modify the display settings are not available, the video display driver needs to be updated. This can be done by selecting the 'advanced' button and following instructions to change or update the graphics adapter, but you'll probably need *both* the monitor manufacturer's disc and the Windows system installation disk to complete the change. If necessary, seek the assistance of your system administrator.

If the video is choppy, blurred or pixelated, either your connection is at fault or our servers are overloaded with traffic. This could be due to high traffic in your local network or over an international connection to our servers. The best approach to resolving these problems are:

- Try accessing the files optimized for lower bandwidth (eg- dialup).
- Come back at another time, when traffic is less.
- Download the MPEG files instead.

Q: Did the video just stop midway?
A: This is likely to be caused by network congestion. But sometimes the WindowsMedia player encounters an error that it can only recover from by starting over. Try closing the player, and opening it again to view the video.

Q: Still stuck?
A: Please send your queries to our system administrator (sysadmin@openasia.net). Kindly provide the version of your operating system, and the version of your WindowsMedia player (you can get this by selecting 'Help, About WindowsMedia Player').