JPlayer How To

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Introduction.

JPlayer is a Java app to play audio files that have been produced by Scott Studios TLC program for playing in SS32. If you have library of these audio files and you copy them to a pc with an ordinary sound card, you can use this app to provide backup audio at the transmitter if the STL fails or the studio automation stops working. Or, you might want to have your own semi-professional player for a home jukebox. JPlayer honors all embedded metadata providing two song overlap and descriptive display of text and timing.

Your pc must have Java version 8 or newer installed for JPlayer to work. All audio should be in one parent folder, with sub folders for the categories that contain the audio files. All audio files should be named SPxxxx.WAV files as produced by TLC in these sub folders. You need to use uppercase extension .WAV if using this app in Pi or Linux. ToC

Please read this completely before starting to use JPlayer.

Set up.

Because it's Java, there is no 'installation' into Windows. Simply download the JPlayer.zip file to a new folder named JPlayer. Extract the zip file to this folder.

Similarly, there's no installation into Linux. On my Raspberry Pi I have a folder made in the home directory called 'JPlayer. Download the JPlayer.zip file to that folder and double click on that file and the XArchiver app starts. Click on the Action Menu and select Extract. A pop-up allows you to set the folder it extracts to. Select the JPlayer folder. Leave the rest of the Extract options as they are and click on Extract at the bottom of the app. If your Pi (Linux) pc doesn't have a file association for java files, you'll need to set it up before you double click on the JPlayer.jar file. See my post at the raspberrypi.org: Create executable of java program for instructions how to associate jar file with the April 2019 version of the rPi or email me for details at philofjava@gmail.com.

The JPlayer folder will contain three sub folders (Schedule, lib and fonts) and six other files (music-icon-18071.png, READEME.TXT, jPlayer.jar, JPlayer.sid, default.mv.db and JPlayerHowTo.pdf). The Schedule folder contains 1 file (default.skd), the fonts folder has 1 font not supplied with Java and the lib folder that has 7 files. ToC

First Use.

Use the file manager to go to the JPlayer folder. Double click on the jPlayer.jar file to start. A pop-up will ask you to find the configuration file or start a new station. From new station you will get a series of pop-ups to find the Audio and Schedule folders, and have you set normal starting parameters. Once the JPlayer.cfg config file has been written, please close the app and relaunch it.

The un-zipped file contains demo versions of the default.skd file in the Schedules folder plus a default database (default.mv.db) and another file (ScottPlayer.sid) in the root folder. Do not try to play the default.skd. The default.skd file can be looked at with a text editor. The schedule is all audio. No special commands like AXWAIT that might be in your version of the default.skd, so if your file has those events, they need to be deleted before you use it in JPlayer. Replace my default.skd with yours or a dated .skd file like used in SS32. Do not delete the other two files. The default database file is used when you make a search database and the ScottPlayer.sid contains a sample of the messages that can be sent with metadata when streaming with the BUTT encoder (not included). The Player compact window is the default screen when the app launches. ToC

Descriptions.

The Menu bar at the top of all screens has the following:

File menu has five items to choose from. ToC

  Change/Reset Station presents a series of pop-ups to find the Audio and Schedule folders, and have you set normal starting parameters. This is the same as launching the app without a JPlayer.cfg file in the JPlayer folder. ToC

  Create TOC gets the metadata from each song file in your library. You select where the audio folder is, and it makes a text file called SPOTDTA.asc in the JPlayer folder. ToC

  Create Search Database has you name the database then makes it. It will be in the JPlayer folder named *DatabaseName*.mv.db along with a file *DatabaseName*.trace.db. ToC

  Import SPOTDTA.asc populates the database you just made with the SPOTDTA.asc file. You'll be asked to locate it. ToC

  Exit closes the app, saving the size and position of the app on your screen for the next time you launch it. ToC

Search/Insert menu has two items.

By Title presents a list box of all songs ordered by title. You'll be asked to locate the database you created (*DatabaseName.*mv.db). You may have more than one database/station. Once selected, you will not be asked again until you restart JPlayer. Click on any title in the list to highlight it and click on the Insert button. Do this as many times as you like. When you have selected all the songs you want, click on the Done button to have those songs play in the order you picked them, starting with the next song to play. The window frame returns to the last size and position. You can see what you inserted by clicking on Window>Player>Show Info in the menu bar. The Cat and Cart of the songs will appear in the lower info text box. You can search for a title by entering one or more characters of the name in the Search by Title box and clicking the Search button. To return to the entire list, clear the Search by Title box and click the Search button.

By Artist presents a list box of all songs ordered by artist. It works the same as the By Title search.

Window has two items.

Player has three items.

Reset window makes the window frame compact and centers it on your screen.

Show Info enlarges the window to show additional info and centers it on your screen.

Hide Info reverses the Show Info screen size and position.

Stream Msg has one item.

Stream Msgs show the screen of stream msgs so you can edit them. I included a sample of the messages I use for streaming. You can enter/edit up to three messages check if any should be use and set the interval for changing the message streamed out. There is a place to add a station slogan separate of any message and an Update button to apply the changes. After updating the window frame returns to its last size and position.

Operation.

Simple operation starts with the Play button. Today's schedule or the default schedule will start playing nearest the current time. When the schedule runs out, the next available schedule will load and keep playing. If there's no available or default schedule JPlayer will quit. If there is a soft sync on a song (like my SimpleSkd app provides), the schedule will jump to that song if running late. The Next button will advance to the next song in the schedule. The Stop button does an immediate stop of the current song playing.

The Auto/Man button toggles for continuous play or waiting for the Play button before continuing. The Play Hook radio button allows for a quick play of the end of the song for the amount of time you entered when originally setting up the app. The countdown bar changes color near the end of the song, flashing Cyan at 30 seconds and Yellow at 20 seconds, then changing to red for the last 10 seconds. When a song is at the EOM, the Next button will go Orange and be unavailable until the song has ended, because there will already be two songs playing a third cannot start. ToC

The Menu Bar has options for File, Search/Insert and Window.

The File Menu has options to Change/Reset Station, Create TOC, Create Search Database, Import SPOTDTA.asc and Exit. Change/Reset Station stops the audio and presents pop-ups like you had when doing the original set up. Create TOC asks you to find the Audio folder, then reads the metadata for each song and makes the SPOTDTA.asc file of the entire library. Create Search Database asks for a name you want for the database, then copies the default database to one with *yourname*.mv.db in the root folder. Import SPOTDTA.asc will populate the database you created with all the Title and Artist info from your library. Exit shuts down the app, saving the size and location of the window and the text for the stream messages used with BUTT.

The Search/Insert Menu makes a list of songs ordered by titles or artist names. When you first try after launching the app, you'll be asked to select the database. You can make multiple databases, so you'll need to choose which one you want. This is the database that will be used until you relaunch the app. A list will appear and you can click on a song, click on the Insert button at the bottom for each song you want to insert, the click on Done to insert them. A search box is available at the top of the list where you can enter one or more characters of the title or artist, click Search or press Enter on the keyboard and the list will change showing a filtered list of selections that match what you entered. Inserting one of those songs is the same as before. To get back to the full list before clicking Done, just delete all the characters in the box and click Search or hit Enter.

The Window Menu has two sub menus for Player and Stream Msg. The Player Menu has options for Reset Window, Show Info and Hide Info. Reset Window make the app appear at the original smaller size at the center of your display. Show Info enlarges the window to give you more detail on which schedule is being used, and a list of songs inserted and the currently scheduled song playing. Hide Info will put the app window back to where it was before you

used Show Info. If all else fails, use Reset Window. Stream Msg has the option to show and edit StreamMsgs that are added to the Title and Artist metadata text the gets output to a file called BUTT.txt in the root folder. Clicking Update will re-write the ScottPlayer.sid file and return to the player window you had previously. BUTT can use the text in BUTT.txt to add to the mp3 stream BUTT creates. This is used if you are streaming the player output on the web (like I do). Icecast2 is a good stream server to use with BUTT. If you're not streaming, this can be ignored. ToC

That's it. Pretty simple to use for playing the TLC audio files with overlap and metadata displayed. If you need to create schedules for this player, my SimpleSkd app lets you create a database, assign attributes like Bin, Tempo and Power for each song, set some rules for selection like Bin sequence and song and artist minimum replay times. It just make audio schedules, no automation features like AXWAIT or satellite cues. Handy for home juke box use.

Thanks for trying JPlayer. You can email me at philofjava@gmail.com with comments and such. I'll help when I can.