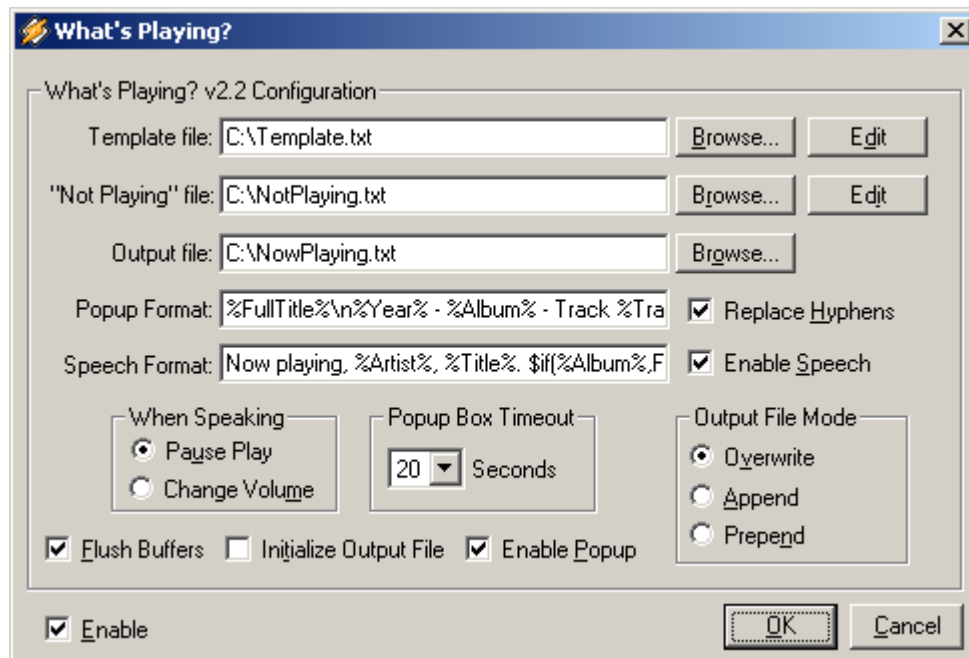# Gen_Whatsplaying

Gen_Whatsplaying is a general purpose Winamp plug-in that is designed to create a file containing information about the currently playing Winamp track based upon a template file. This is most useful in situations where Winamp is running on a server and the player screen is inaccessible. In addition, it provides an optional taskbar popup window containing current track information as well as the option to speak the current track information.

File Output Configuration

Gen_Whatsplaying is configured through the Winamp preferences screen. To access the Gen_Whatsplaying configuration screen, select the "General Purpose" plug-ins category from the "Winamp Preferences" screen, highlight the "What's Playing? V2.2 [gen_whatsplaying.dll]" entry and click on "Configure selected plug-in". The following screen will appear:

The first field, "Template file", contains the name of a file containing text and as well as data tags that are replaced by values. The contents of this file are processed by the plug-in and the result is sent to the output file. This field may be left blank in which case no current track information will be recorded in the output file.

The following data tags are supported in the template file and are case-insensitive:

%FullTitle%   Returns the title of the track playing in the format configured for the player; normally "Artist - Title". In Winamp 5.00 and higher, the format of this tag is controlled through the Winamp "Advanced Title Formatting" option.

%Length%   Returns the length of the current track in either hh:mm:ss or mm:ss format.

%LongLength%   Returns the length of the current track in either "h hours, m minutes, s seconds" or "m minutes, s seconds" format. This tag is used primarily with the "Speech" feature described below.

%FileName%   Returns the file name of the file playing.

%PlaylistEntry%   Returns the active entry number in the current playlist.

%PlayListLength%   Returns the number of entries in the current playlist.

%Bitrate%   Returns the MP3's bitrate (example: 192 or 320).

%Samplerate%   Returns the sample rate in Hertz (example: 44100).

%Mode%   Returns the mode as either "Stereo" or "Mono".

%WinAmpVersion%   Returns the current Winamp version in major.minor format (example: 5.08).

%PluginVersion%   Returns the current version of this plug-in in major.minor format (example: 2.1).

%VBR%   Returns 1 if MP3 bitrate is variable or 0 if not. This tag is only supported in Winamp 2.90 and higher.

%Time%   Returns the current time in the format of the users locale as configured in Control Panel.

%LongDate%   Returns the current long date in the format of the users locale as configured in Control Panel.

%ShortDate%   Returns the current short date in the format of the users locale as configured in Control Panel.

\n   Inserts a line break character. Not normally used in template files as line breaks can be entered directly into the template file but is supported for use with the "Popup Format" described later on.

ID3 information tags (supported in Winamp 2.90 and higher):

%TrackNumber%   Returns the ID3 track number field.

%Title%   Returns the ID3 title field.

%Artist%   Returns the ID3 artist field.

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%Album%   Returns the ID3 album field.

%Year%   Returns the ID3 year field.

%Genre%   Returns the ID3 genre field.

%Comment%   Returns the ID3 comment field.

If a data tag is used that is not supported by the current version of Winamp, the un-translated tag will be displayed in the output file. For example, if the "%Title%" tag is specified in the template file with Winamp 2.81, the string "%Title%" will be displayed in the output file.

The "Not Playing file" field specifies a file containing text that is copied to the output file when Winamp is stopped or shut down. If the "Not Playing" file contains any data tags they will be ignored. This field may be left blank if this feature is not desired.

The "Output file" field specifies the name of the file that Gen_Whatsplaying writes its output to. If left blank, this feature is disabled.

The "Output File Mode" options control how updates are written to the output file. The default "Overwrite" mode causes the output file to be initialized each time an entry is written to the file. This results in only one entry in the output file at any given time. The "Append" mode causes entries to be appended to the bottom of the file resulting in a list of all tracks that have played. The "Prepend" option is similar to the "Append" option except new entries are written to the top of the output file instead of the bottom resulting in a reverse order list of what has played.

The "Flush Buffers" option causes Gen_Whatsplaying to call the Windows function FlushFileBuffers() after writing to the output file. This is useful on systems that buffer file writes resulting in delays before the file changes on disk.

The "Initialize Output File" option causes the contents of the output file to be zeroed when Winamp starts. This is useful when either the "Append" or "Prepend" options are used, and a clean output file is desired each time Winamp is started. Setting the "Append" or "Prepend" option is not required in order to use this option.

Popup Window Configuration

The "Enable Popup" option turns on the Gen_Whatsplaying notification popup. When checked, the "Popup Format", "Replace Hyphens" and "Popup Box Timeout" fields are enabled. This feature displays a popup window like the following, each time the track changes in Winamp:

In addition, the system tray icon will be displayed when this feature is enabled. Double-clicking on this system tray icon will cause the popup window to be displayed. Right double-clicking on the icon will cause a refresh of the track information before the popup window is displayed.

The information displayed in the popup window is configured via the "Popup Format" field. This field uses the same data tags as the template file. Using the line break character "\n", a maximum of four lines of text may be displayed. Lines that are too long are truncated and have an ellipsis appended. In the popup window example above, the popup format was defined as:

   %FullTitle%\n%Year% - %Album% - Track %TrackNumber%\nLength: %Length%

If not specified, the default popup format is:

   %FullTitle%\nLength: %Length%

When Gen_Whatsplaying is used with Winamp 5.00 and higher, Winamp Advanced Title Formatting syntax may be used in "Popup Format" field. In this case, the format:

  %FullTitle%\n[[%Year% -][%Album% -][Track %TrackNumber%]\n]Length: %Length%

will only display two lines of text if the Year, Album and Track fields contain no data. Under versions of Winamp prior to 5.00, the Advanced Title Formatting tags will be passed as-is but the data tags will still be translated.

The "Replace Hyphens" option replaces all occurrences of " – " (space, hyphen, space) with " • " (space, bullet, space). The bullet character has a cleaner look in the popup window than the hyphen character.

The "Popup Box Timeout" fields sets the number of seconds that the popup window is displayed before it disappears. The popup window can be closed early by clicking on the control that is located in the upper right corner of the window or by clicking on the popup window and then pressing Alt+F4.

Speech Configuration

On systems that have the Microsoft Speech API (SAPI) version 5.0 or higher installed, the configuration option "Enable Speech" will be active instead of grayed out. For systems that do not have SAPI installed, the Microsoft Speech SDK 5.1, that contains the Microsoft Speech Engine installation, can be downloaded from:

http://www.microsoft.com/speech/download/sdk51/

Select the Speech SDK 5.1 download from the web page location above. Once installed, the Speech Engine properties can be configured, including the desired voice, through the "Speech" icon in Control Panel.

The "Speech Format" option configures the text that is spoken by the text-to-speech engine. It configured the same way as the "Popup Format" option and uses the same data tags as the template file. When Gen_Whatsplaying is used with Winamp v2.xx and the "Speech Format" field is left blank, the speech format defaults to:
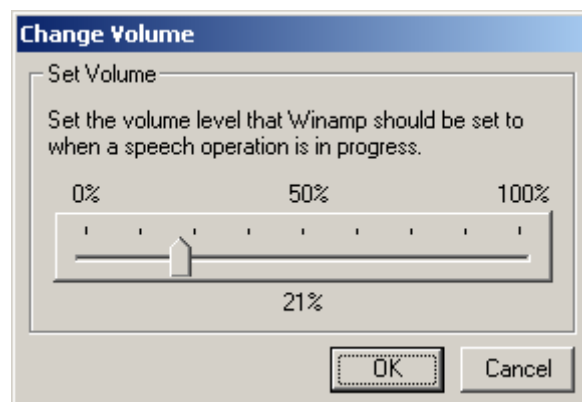
Now playing, %Artist%, %Title%

When Gen_Whatsplaying is used with Winamp 5.00 and higher, and the "Speech Format" field is left blank, the speech format defaults to:

Now playing, %Artist%, %Title%. $if(%Album%,From the %Year% album %Album%,)

In addition to the tags listed earlier, the "Speech Format" field supports an additional tag, "%Year2%", that outputs the year as two sets of two digits for years before 2000. The result is that a year such as 1996 is output as "19 96". This is mainly for supporting the AT&T Natural Voices text to speech engine. Without a split inserted into the year number, the AT&T Natural Voices software will pronounce a year, such as 1996, as nineteen hundred ninety six. The "%Year2%" tag provides a workaround for this problem.

The "When Playing" options control what happens to Winamp playback while the text-to-speech engine is operating. When "Pause Play" is selected, playback is paused while the text-to-speech engine is operating. Playback resumes when the speech operation completes.

When "Change Volume" is selected, the following dialog will popup that will allow you to set the desired volume level that will be used when a speech operation is in progress:

At the completion of the speech operation, the volume is restored to its original setting. This option is useful only if the Winamp output plug-in, such as DirectSound, supports changing the Winamp playback volume independently of the system volume. When used with the Wave Output plug-in, the system volume will be reduced causing the volume of the text-to-speech engine to be reduced as well. In this case, the "Pause Play" option should be selected instead or a different output plug-in should be selected.

Polling Interval Configuration

When Gen_Whatsplaying in run under Winamp version 2.xx, it periodically polls Winamp to detect track changes. The default polling interval is five seconds. To set a different polling interval, you must manually edit the Gen_Whatsplaying configuration file Gen_Whatsplaying.ini that is located in the Winamp plugins directory. Under the "[WhatsPlaying]" section, insert the line "PollingInterval=nn", where nn is the desired polling interval in seconds. If the value is set to less than two seconds or more than thirty seconds, the setting will be ignored and the plug-in will default to five seconds. Restart Winamp and the new value will be in effect.

Under Winamp 5.00 and higher, polling is not necessary because Gen_Whatsplaying receives IPC_PLAYING_FILE notification messages from Winamp when the track changes.

Application Notification

If an application running on the same system as Winamp and Gen_Whatsplaying needs to know when the output file has been updated, it can register via RegisterWindowMessage() the name "WhatsPlayingOutputFileUpdated" and monitor for these messages. Each time Gen_Whatsplaying updates the output file, it broadcasts this message to all windows using SendNotifyMessage().

Examples

The following sample templates show how to configure the plug-in for various reports:

1) Sample template to report all supported fields:

Now playing %FullTitle%:

Length: %Length% (%LongLength%)
File: %FileName%
Playlist Entry: %PlaylistEntry%/%PlaylistLength%
Track: %TrackNumber%
Title: %Title%
Artist: %Artist%
Album: %Album%
Year: %Year%
Genre: %Genre%
Bitrate: %Bitrate%
VBR: %VBR%
Sample Rate: %Samplerate%
Mode: %Mode%
Comment: %Comment%

Last updated at %Time% on %LongDate% (%ShortDate%)

Winamp: %WinampVersion%

Plugin: %PluginVersion%

2) Sample template to generate report of current title and track length for use as a server-side-include document:

   <FONT STYLE="font-size: 14pt">%FullTitle%</FONT>
   <FONT STYLE="font-size: 10pt">[%Length%]</FONT>

3) Sample template to generate a brief report showing the short date and time as well as the title and track length. When used with either the "append" or "prepend" options, this template will generate a list of every track played including the date and time:

   [%ShortDate% %Time%] %FullTitle% (%Length%)

This plug-in has been tested successfully with Winamp 2.81, 2.91 and 5.01 through 5.1 on Windows 98SE, Windows ME, Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows 2003, and Windows XP.

The functionality of this application is similar to the gen_NowPlaying.dll application that used to be available from http://drpizza.arsware.org/nowplaying/. The major differences are; Gen_WhatsPlaying.dll supports many more information tags, provides append and prepend options, provides a Speech API interface, and also provides a System Tray popup window to signal when a track change occurs.

The speech functionality is similar to that provided by the Tellmewhatsplaying plug-in. The major difference between Gen_Whatsplaying and Tellmewhatsplaying is Gen_Whatsplaying's allowing the user to configure what information is spoken.

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The source code for this plug-in is available for download at http://www.schaffrath.net/gen_whatsplaying_source.zip.