



VLC Media Player

Editors' Note: VLC is an open source product developed by VideoLAN Project licensed under GNU GPL v2. The VLC Media Player source code is also available for download from Download.com.

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Editors' Review - April 17, 2014

VLC Media Player is an open-source application that gives you the ability to play media from your computer or a disk, or to stream it from the Web. Have your favorite videos playing in a snap through this app's intuitive interface.

Pros

Wiki help: For just about any process you want to carry out with this software, you'll find a detailed Wiki with step-by-step instructions. All of these documents have been created and edited by other users, so they're surprisingly detailed and complete.

Intuitive controls: For all basic functions, this medial player is accessible to users of all skill and experience levels. The controls are intuitive, and playback works smoothly regardless of the source of the media being displayed.

Cons

Advanced knowledge: This app can do a lot more than just play media, but to access any of those more advanced features, you need to have some technical knowledge. Although there are thorough instructions on how to do just about anything, only users with some experience using this technology will be able to follow them accurately.

Inconsistent interface: This app is available for various systems, and its interface looks a little different on each one. That means that Wikis containing instructions for completing various processes aren't necessarily describing the same interface you're seeing. If you know what you're doing, though, you can still accomplish what you set out to do, and then add your experience to the document to help make it more complete for future users.

Bottom Line

As with any open-source software, there are benefits and drawbacks to using VLC Media Player. But if you just want to be able to stream and play video on your computer without hassle, this program is a good choice. Likewise, users with some technical know-how can have fun exploring the more advanced capabilities of this free program.

Publisher's Description - from VideoLAN Project:

VLC (initially VideoLAN Client) is a highly portable multimedia player for various audio and video formats, including MPEG-1, MPEG-2, MPEG-4, DivX, MP3, and OGG, as well as for DVDs, VCDs, and various streaming protocols. It also can be used as a server for unicast or multicast streams in IPv4 or IPv6 on a high-bandwidth network.