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By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews



[DVD Video Playing for Free](#)

Play your DVDs the AVS way

DVD playing softwares are all over the place. One better than the other. Most of them have price tags, but once in a while, you bump into an application that does exactly what you want and, on top of everything, it is free. I guess you all know my opinion when it comes to DVD playing softwares. You all know which one is the best and I hope you agree with me when I say that [WinDVD](#) is top of the top, capo di tutti capi. Of course, competition is very tough and when you stumble over a freeware that has the same basic features [WindDVD](#) has to offer, then you have to give it enough credit. I have found a DVD playing software that comes fully featured, offers answers to your basic DVD watching needs, and it comes free of charge. AVS DVD Player is part of a larger project and, as most of you must have thought, the free release is actually a preview to the quality of the company's products and a way to promote more useful merchandise. Anyway, we have to draw the benefits out of this marketing/sale strategy and enjoy the free products we are offered. With the installation of AVS DVD Player, the developer also included AVS DVDtoGo (which in its turn, is part of the AVS Video Tools suite together with AVS Video Converter, AVS Capture Wizard and AVS Video ReMaker), a software designed to create backups for your DVDs. The entire suite the software is included in comes with a price of \$29.95 (\$20 discount was applied to the initial price). But let's get back to our business and proceed to testing AVS DVD Player. The interface is not too unusual and it is composed of the video window and the controls bar. The basic playback controls (play, fast forward, rewind, stop and pause) are placed in the middle of the bar. The playback controls are flanked by the title and chapter controls. The volume control is placed in the left side of the menu bar and in the right side, there is the Open Source button that allows you to choose the folder or drive the software will play the DVD from. I just love it when developers think about users' needs and include the option DVD from Folder, as many of us are making backups of the DVDs, and I never play a DVD from the disc and never use a regular DVD playing device because I have seen the effects on the discs after five or six uses. Next to the Source button, there is the DVD Menu button that when pressed, will open a context menu for you to choose the DVD menu you want to go to (Root, Title, Chapter, Audio, Subtitles or Angle). Above these options, there is the Take Snapshot option which allows the user to record instances of the movie. In order to see where the images are stored (and to change the location) go to Preferences menu (the last option in the row or in the context menu at right clicking inside the video window). DVD videos are not the only files you can play with AVS DVD Player and regular video can also be viewed (WMV, ASF, AVI, MPEG, 3GP, 3G2, 3GPP, MP4) and you can also listen to music as the software supports the most popular audio formats available (OGG, MP3, MPC, AAC, WMA, WAV, M4A). The visualizations you can choose from are variable enough to suit you. The user can add to the playlist as many files as s/he wishes and the playing order has two options: either shuffle the items or play in the order they are in the playlist. The items can be moved up and down either one by one or in a bunch (with Ctrl/Shift+Select). For optimum audition, in Speaker Environment you can set the dimensions of the room in feet or meters (length and width), the audio system you have and your position in the room (drag yourself inside the software's virtual room). **The Good** The software is easy to use and if you have problems with the playback controls bar, I recommend using a different skin (the button before minimize option or in Preferences menu). The fact that it is free adds to its value and the resources used are not worrying at all. **The Bad** I had some troubles with playing DVDs from folder. I have two DVD back ups on my hard disc. At the beginning, they both worked fine, but after a while, the software took an awful long time to load it and I could

not play it. Only the DVD menu appeared and that was it. With the second DVD, I had absolutely no trouble at all. On inserting the disc and playing it on my drive, there was absolutely no problem. **The Truth** The software is a good alternative to the other similar commercial softwares on the Internet. Besides that little baddie I have mentioned, there was nothing wrong with it. Of course, the number of options is limited and it is not as extensive as in [WinDVD](#), but the application does the job. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*