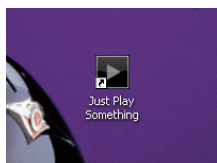


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By: Florin Tibu, Editor, Software Reviews



Just Play Something

Random is the keyword. Shuffle was already taken.

Now, there are players and players... some of them are true multimedia centers and allow you play almost any digital content, be that MP3 or HD DVD, others are specialized in the very precise setting up of various playlists based on genre or length (much like setting up an automated radio broadcast) while some also allow CD/DVD-ripping and burning and the like. Jukeboxes, total multimedia players and all sorts of high-end software – all for one purpose: to give you absolute control over your media. Well, some are like I've told you above, indeed. But today I'm not going to tell you about them. Today's piece of code spells “freedom, randomness and novelty”. Yep, it is all about NOT having control on what's actually playing. In a world dominated by more and more ordered things or at least by the possibility to do things exactly the way one wants, here pops in a piece of code sworn to “mess” things up: the Just Play Something. **What's up?** Funny name, this Just Play Something! I am trying to find some idea to start with when describing the GUI of this unconventional player. Since all it does is play a random track from your PC, it could very well be just a DLL (which it actually is) with no face, triggered by some pre-defined key-combo. Well, lucky us, the producer decided to make a really cute thing out of the basic idea so it has received a proper GUI. Even more, the fact that instead of throwing in some lousy picture or some poor-design button the developers have worked carefully and came up with a very neat frontend made me really like this little program even more! Namely, the Just Play Something GUI is a square area with a Play button in the middle. The whole software may be small and simple but this was by no means a reason for making a crappy GUI: the small square is roughly 1 sq cm and has a variable transparence on mouse hover. As well, on mouse hover the smaller Repeat button fades into view just to disappear the instant the cursor moves. The right-click opens the menu of the application allowing the user to access either the Options menu or the Theme one. Theme is a bit too much for what's actually happening: the small square changes the tint between black, grey, green, orange and blue. And yes, that's all! The rest of the settings and menus are looking simply XP and therefore are very readable and intuitive. **What's in?** As I have already told you, the Just Play Something simply plays something (sorry about the repetition but I just couldn't contain myself). This small application does two things: first of all it scans a user-defined location on the PC for a number of audio file formats and then creates an index of them. Don't think it works as a catalog because it does not, so you won't be able to either see or use this index! The moment the indexing process has ended, the application displays a message and the number of the indexed files; click Close and you're ready to go. Working with Just Play Something is more than simple as the single thing one has to do is click the Play button on the small square and things move by themselves. The application will play random tracks from the index it has created previously. Heard a track you like more and want it again: no problem, just press the smaller repeat button and there you go! Advancing is made by further clicking on the Play... it really can't get any simpler than this! Ah, one more thing: you can trigger the playback by setting your own custom key combination so the music will play instantly, without any mouse movement. Things that have to be mended in the future versions and what can become rather annoying now would be the fact that the Just Play Something does not sport a system tray icon which could come in really handy as the small GUI disappears when you press Win+D to quickly access your desktop; and this sucks. The system tray icon could really solve this problem and make a great combination with the custom combo. **The Good** really like this software because it is small, good and based on a very nice idea. No fuss, just random music in simplicity beyond thought. **The Bad** Fix the

disappearing problem and everything will be cool; add the tray icon and it will be perfect.
The Truth \$3,95 is simply too much of a good price for this small soft gadget. Try it and I am most confident you'll want to buy it at least for fun! *Screenshots below:*