

1 November 2007

By: Ionut Ilascu, Editor, Software Reviews



MPlayer Portable

[Linux MPlayer Turned Portable for Windows](#)

Linux players are (im)portable on Windows

As every storage device gets physically smaller by the day but increases the storage capacity, making portable software suited for USB keys (either U3 or regular ones) as well as portable hard disks and iPods was just one-step away. Now the most important applications a user needs (web browsers, email clients, anti-viruses, image editors, instant messengers, text editors, audio players, archivers, file managers and even games) are all "to go" and can accompany you on each computer without changing their settings and providing equal quality and stability as if they were installed on a PC. More than this, software launchpads have been created in order to access your portable applications easily. If software "crème de la crème" has been adapted for portable devices, there was no chance for MPlayer (famous mostly on Linux platform) to be forgotten. Although I would rather prefer the non-UI version as I grew accustomed to it, I have to say that MPUI fits very well as it resembles Media Player Classic and most users are very familiar with it. Portable version of the application preserves the general lines of the desktop version but it allows installation on any portable device, starting with the now trivial USB key and ending with the increasingly famous iPod and even on a CD/DVD. This is achievable as the MPlayer will not store any files outside the installation directory, including the various settings you wish to make. So no information will be left behind after closing the application. The interface is simple enough for any user to be able to handle it with no problems. Basically you just have to point MPlayer the file that to be played and it'll do the rest. Generally it does not matter the file format as the program deals nicely with MPEG/VOB, AVI, OGG/OGM, ASF/WMA/WMV, QT/MOV/MP4, RM or MKV. If you plan on running other file formats you will have to install appropriate codecs. It can even play DVD files, but the issue here is that you will not benefit from browsing through the menu and accessing extra features. But at least it'll play the movie and you can easily toggle between multiple audio tracks and subtitles, if available. You have to know though that whenever one of these changes are made the file will start playing from the beginning and during our testing of DVD-Video subtitles were not loaded automatically. The menus available in the top part of the screen shelter options for different modes of viewing the video file, play options as well as several settings for a better experience. There is a lot of flexibility available as MPlayer in its portable version is able to render the file at half size, double size or original size. Needless to say that playing the file in fullscreen mode is supported). More than this, it can stay on top of all other files with absolutely no problems. Play options are not limited to the regular ones (play, pause and stop) but cover moving through the video minute by minute (or 10 minutes at a time) or skip 10 seconds at a time. For each of these commands the application provides a keyboard shortcut for easier access. However, there is a pretty big problem as you cannot drag seek bar to a certain position and expect the video to roll with you. This action is useless and the best way to move forward or backward are rewind and forward options mentioned above. Also, seek bar will not show you the duration of the video or play time. Tools menu provides the user extremely useful options for configuring the player and selecting the desired audio track and subtitles (where available) as well as set the aspect ratio, make deinterlace options (turn it off, simple or adaptive) and access movie clip information. This menu is also the door to accessing MPlayer's Options screen dialog and changing the default language. The list of options is quite short but offers the right alternatives for improving video rendering experience. You can enable post-processing for maximum quality, select between available aspect ratios, set deinterlace, enable index rebuilding or volume control. MPlayer Portable is a good companion for your portable drive

and it can basically play all popular video types. It needs no codecs as it functions very well with all it has built-in. Although the application still needs finishing touches and fixing a few features (DVD menu handling, DVD chapter perusing) it does a great job with playing your video files. **The Good**First off, it is absolutely free and can be carried around on a portable device quite comfortably (installation folder is of about 8MB in size).It leaves no trace on the "host" computer and runs all popular video formats. **The Bad**There are some issues like no support for DVD menu or going through the chapters. Also, the only way to learn about the duration of the video is going in Tools menu and access "Show clip information option". Seek bar does not show play time and you cannot drag the slider in order to bring playing to a different time (the most you can skip is 10 minutes at a time). **The Truth**Despite all the baddies and lack of finishing touches, MPlayer in portable version makes for a very good media player. If you take into account that it still is in RC stage, it can actually be considered a very promising free alternative to most video players on the market.It comes with a very familiar interface, which provides easy handling and effortless access to the application's functions (by the way, check out Help menu for a list with all the supported shortcuts). *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*