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Player Feature Comparison

See the feature-by-feature comparison below to learn how Windows Media Player 9 Series stacks up against the competition in six major usage scenarios:

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Windows Media Platform

What is Windows Media?

Codecs

- Format Server
- Digital Rights Management Licensing & Logos
- SDK
- Encoder
- Producer
- Authoring Utilities

Digital Media Playback

	Windows Media Player 9 Series	iTunes 4 (Mac & Windows)	MusicMatch 8.1 Basic	RealOne Player 2.0	QuickTime 6.4
Enhanced media information for WMA and MP3 content	✓		✓	✓	
Queue-It-Up	✓		✓	✓	
Quick Access Panel provides fast access to media	✓				
Docked mini-player in taskbar	✓				
Access media library within mini-player	✓				
Watch videos in mini-player	✓				
Full-screen audio controls	✓				
Automatically resizes to the best size for video playback	✓			✓	✓
Instant-on/always-on streaming capabilities	✓			Instant-on only	✓
One-click automatic streaming of multiple languages and video resolutions	✓			No video or language MBR	No MBR
Variable Speed Playback	✓				

For Professionals

- Audio/Video Production & Broadcasting
- Streaming Delivery
- Consumer Electronics
- Media & Entertainment
- Enterprise

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Player Feature Comparison

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/press/compfeatures.aspx>

Overview

Audio Crossfading	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Auto Volume Leveling	✓	✓	✓		
Quiet Mode (dynamic range compression)	✓				
Text captioning in full-screen mode	✓				
Supports Windows XP fast user switching	✓			✓	✓

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Music Services

	Windows Media Player 9 Series	iTunes 4 (Mac & Windows)	MusicMatch 8.1 Basic	RealOne Player 2.0	QuickTime 6.4
Premium Services—access multiple third-party services within player	✓	Apple music store only	MusicMatch only	RealOne services only	
Music services built on digital media platform	BuyMusic.com, MusicNow, MusicMatch, Napster, OD2, Others	Apple music store only	N/A	RealOne services only	N/A
Create playlists with songs from multiple music services	✓		✓	✓ (via WMA)	
Burn CDs with playlists of songs from multiple music services	✓		✓	✓ (via WMA)	
Transfer playlists of songs from multiple music services to devices	✓		✓		
Number of devices that work with music services	>40 (via WMA)	iPod only	>40 (via WMA)	0	N/A

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Media Library Creation and Organization

Player Feature Comparison

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/prcss/compfeatures.aspx>

	Windows Media Player 9 Series	iTunes 4 (Mac & Windows)	MusicMatch 8.1 Basic	RealOne Player 2.0	QuickTime 6.4
Integrated music library to manage music—from CDs or multiple music services	✓		✓		
Intelligent media management—automatically knows when media files are moved	✓	✓	<i>Periodic Rescan</i>	<i>Periodic Rescan</i>	
Easily scan network drives for music	✓	<i>Must drag and drop</i>	<i>Must drag and drop</i>	<i>Must drag and drop</i>	
Auto Ratings and Personal Ratings	✓	✓ <i>(not auto ratings)</i>			
Dynamic playlists automatically include new music	✓	✓	<i>Must recreate playlists to refresh</i>	<i>Must manually add</i>	
AutoComplete remembers and autofills text such as artist names or addresses	✓	✓			
Copy CDs to a PC with CD quality at half the bit rate of MP3 and play back in 400+ devices and players	✓		<i>Must add WMA plug-in</i>	<i>Must add WMA plug-in</i>	
Copy CDs using lossless compression (WMA Lossless)	✓				
Transfer media to Pocket PCs and Smartphones	✓				
Per-user media libraries	✓	✓		✓	
Media library includes custom views of more than 35 types of media information	✓				
Automatically look up missing tag information in MP3 and WMA files	✓		✓		
Playlist Editor	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Advanced Tag Editor—view and edit more than 35 fields	✓				
Synchronized lyrics support	✓				
Edit both ID3 (MP3) and WMA file tags	✓	<i>ID3 only</i>	✓	✓	

Pluggable MP3 encoder model	✓				
Burn MP3 music files to CD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Audio Video Quality and Flexibility

	Windows Media Player 9 Series	iTunes 4 (Mac & Windows)	MusicMatch 8.1 Basic	RealOne Player 2.0	QuickTime 6.4
WMA 9 support	✓		<i>Must add WMA plug-in to encode in WMA 9</i>	<i>Premium feature—requires Windows Media Player</i>	
WMA Pro support (24-bit / 96 kHz)	✓			<i>Premium feature—requires Windows Media Player</i>	
5.1 channel digital discrete surround sound playback	✓ (WMA 9 Pro)			<i>Premium feature—requires Windows Media Player</i>	✓
Lossless compression	✓ (WMA 9 Lossless)				
20-bit HDCD playback	✓				
Plays low bit-rate codec optimized for both voice and music	✓ (WMA 9 Voice)	Voice only		Voice only	
Play back high-definition 720p video	✓ (WMV 9)			<i>Premium feature—requires Windows Media Player</i>	
Play back high-definition 1080i / 1080p video	✓ (WMV 9)			<i>Premium feature—requires Windows Media Player</i>	
Play back high-definition 1080i / 1080p video	✓ (WMV 9)			<i>Premium feature—requires Windows Media Player</i>	
Video Smoothing for smoother low bitrate video playback	✓			<i>Limited*</i>	

Screen capture playback	✓	✓
	(WMV 9 screen)	

*Basic "motion vector" technology provides smoothing, but gives poor results for many content types, e.g., scrolling text.

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Easy Discovery and Download

	Windows Media Player 9 Series	iTunes 4 (Mac & Windows)	MusicMatch 8.1 Basic	RealOne Player 2.0	QuickTime 6.4
Built in Media Guide	✓		✓	✓	✓
Radio tuner—access to thousands of stations worldwide	✓	✓	<i>Fee only</i>	✓	
Full-speed CD burning and transfer	✓	✓	<i>Plus feature only</i>	✓	
Burn music and video content on a single CD-R	✓		✓	✓	
Audio CD burning with volume leveling	✓	✓	✓		
Device transfer with transcoding of high-bit-rate PC content to lower rates	✓				

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Customization and Extensibility

	Windows Media Player 9 Series	iTunes 4 (Mac & Windows)	MusicMatch 8.1 Basic	RealOne Player 2.0	QuickTime 6.4
Privacy and security controls—one place to go for a robust set of security and privacy settings	✓				
Color chooser—customize the color of the player	✓				

Player Feature Comparison

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/press/corpfeatures.aspx>

Skins with customizable functions and HTML hosting	✓				
Content providers can customize the Now Playing window to deliver their own user experience	✓				
Number of built-in visualizations	Dozens	1	1	5	N/A
Robust plug-in architecture	✓			✓	✓
More than 100 plug-ins available (WMPPlugins.com)	✓				
Embedded player control with fast streaming	✓			Fast start only	✓
Number of supported languages	26	16	9	5	16

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