

(membership includes  
monthly subscription)

# The Digital Viking



## Twin Cities

PC USER GROUP

NEWSLETTER

Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota USA • Vol. 42 No.11 • June 2022

*TC/PC Exists to  
Facilitate and Encourage  
the Cooperative Exchange of  
PC Knowledge and  
Information Across  
All Levels of Experience*

**June 2022**

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**General Meeting**  
**Tuesday, June 14, 2022**  
**7:00 PM**

**TC/PC Annual Meeting  
and  
Election of Officers  
and Board Members**

**Via Zoom Only**

It's time for TC/PC's Annual Meeting where we elect officers/board members and review our finances. This is an opportunity for you to serve as an officer if you are interested. It's a time when members have a chance to give input on the future of TC/PC and to suggest meeting topics and to give feedback on virtual vs. in-person meetings. We need your input. Please come!

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**Note:** All TC/PC Meetings and SIG Groups will be virtual until further notice. Visit [tcpc.com](http://tcpc.com) for info.  
**TC/PC SIG Groups on summer hiatus until Fall.**

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**Tech Topics with Jack Ungerleider via Zoom at 6pm before the General Meeting.**

TC/PC is a  
Member of



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**24-Hour Information • [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com)**  
Application form inside back cover

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# The Digital Viking

The Digital Viking is the official monthly publication of the Twin Cities PC User Group, a 501(c)(3) organization and an all-volunteer organization dedicated to users of IBM-compatible computers. Subscriptions are included in membership. We welcome articles and reviews from members. The Digital Viking is a copyrighted publication and reproduction of any material is expressly prohibited without permission. Exception: other User Groups may use material if unaltered and credited.

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## Advertising

Full page (7½ x 9½)	\$100.00
Two-thirds page (7½ x 6)	80.00
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One-third page (7½ x 3)	50.00
Quarter page (3½ x 4¾)	40.00
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Multiple insertion discounts available.

Contact Sharon Walbran at: SQWalbran@yahoo.com

Deadline for ad placement is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month prior to publication. All rates are per issue and for digital or camera-ready ads. Typesetting and other services are extra and must be requested in advance of submission deadlines.

Payment must accompany order unless other arrangements are made in advance. Place make checks payable to: Twin Cities PC User Group

## TC/PC 2021-2022 Board of Directors

Meets once or twice per year. All members welcome to attend.

Visit [www.tpc.com](http://www.tpc.com) for meeting details.

<b>President</b> —Lee Kaphingst	leekap@comcast.net
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Sharon Walbran	sharon.walbran@gmail.com

## TC/PC Member Benefits

Product previews  
and demonstrations

Special Interest Groups  
Monthly Newsletter

Discounts on products  
and services

Contests and prizes

## Business Member Benefits

All of the above PLUS:

FREE ½ page ad on  
payment of each renewal

20% discount on all ads  
Placed in the *Digital  
Viking* Newsletter

Up to 5 newsletters mailed to  
your site  
(only a nominal cost for each  
additional 5 mailed)

## Newsletter Staff

Editor Sharon Walbran

# Some Notes About Websites: Running HTTPS

Curt Trout, Vice President, Twin Cities PC Users' Group

**Preface:** *Towards the end of APCUG's June 8, 2022 Wednesday Workshop, Judy Tylour asked me to document a couple of my comments related to HTTP and HTTPS. This article is the result of that request. Thank you, Judy*

For reasons that are outside the scope of this discussion, the world of the internet is in the process of moving from the HTTP protocol to the HTTPS protocol. Browsers are beginning to warn users that sites that do not use the HTTPS protocol are "unsecure." It used to be that using HTTPS required difficult and intricate procedures, along with the purchase of security certificates that together could be relatively costly for small websites and the organizations that operate them.

These notes may help people understand what HTTPS is, and more importantly, describe ways to utilize HTTPS on small websites that are hosted on shared hosting facilities.

## What is HTTPS?

*Hypertext transfer protocol secure (HTTPS) is the secure version of HTTP, which is the primary protocol used to send data between a web browser and a website. HTTPS is encrypted in order to increase the security of data transfer...*

(What is HTTPS? <https://www.cloudflare.com/learning/ssl/what-is-https/>)

## What is Shared Hosting?

Shared hosting is one of the least expensive ways to purchase hosting facilities for a website. It usually allows multiple websites to be hosted in a single account and allows multiple accounts to be hosted on a single web server.

## How does HTTPS Work? (A simple explanation, viewed from 10,000 feet)

When a browser (common browsers include: Microsoft's Edge, Apple's Safari, Google's Chrome, Mozilla's Firefox, and many, many more) sends a request to connect with a web server using HTTPS, the browser and the web server exchange credentials designed to verify that the website is what the website proclaims to be. This involves exchange of a certificate from a "Certificate Authority" along with processing associated public and private encryption keys. Once the connection has been determined to be valid, all traffic between the browser and web server is encrypted so that the data is unintelligible to other viewers.

"Certificate Authorities" are validated based upon credentials built into the browsers.

## Conventional SSL Certificates

Traditionally, certificates were issued, purchased from, Certificate Authorities, for all certificate types. There are three general types of certificates:

## 1. Domain Validation SSL Certificates (DV)

- These are the simplest and easiest certificates to obtain. They validate that the purchaser/requestor of the certificate has control over the domain for which the certificate is requested, i.e., the **d**omain has been **v**alidated. Validation requires that the requestor be able to make changes to the domain for which the certificate is requested and that the certificate verifies those changes. Simply put: it prevents me from getting a certificate for your domain, unless you allow it.

## 2. Organization Validation SSL Certificates (OV)

- OV certificates add a level of security (implied trust) to certificates because they require the certification authority to authenticate the legitimacy of an organization beyond what is required for a DV certificate.
- Websites involved in ecommerce should use DV certificates, or higher. The use of OV certificates is outside the scope of this discussion.

## 3. Extended Validation SSL Certificates (EV)

- *Extended Validation (EV) SSL certificates provide the highest level of trust and are the industry standard for business websites.*

(Different Types of SSL Certificates Explained:

<https://sectigo.com/resource-library/different-types-of-ssl-certificates-explained>)

Websites involved in ecommerce should use EV certificates. The use of EV certificates is, again, outside the scope of this discussion.

### **Game Changers: Let's Encrypt and cPanel DV Certificate Facilities**

Regardless of whether we use Let's Encrypt or cPanel to automatically generate and maintain our free DV SSL certificates, we owe a great debt of gratitude to those people and organizations who founded the Let's Encrypt Project:

*The Let's Encrypt project was started in 2012 by two Mozilla employees, Josh Aas and Eric Rescorla, together with Peter Eckersley at the Electronic Frontier Foundation and J. Alex Halderman at the University of Michigan. Internet Security Research Group, the company behind Let's Encrypt, was incorporated in May 2013.*

(Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Let%27s\\_Encrypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Let%27s_Encrypt))

Let's Encrypt revolutionized the generation and automated the process of handling DV SSL certificates in the following ways (among others):

- It created free certificates. It was no longer necessary to purchase certificates from Certificate Authorities. EVERYONE could now afford to use HTTPS on web servers that supported the service.
- It provided automatic certificate generation and management on the hosting computer. Conventional certificate handling is complicated and time consuming when new certificates are needed, typically annually.

While Let's Encrypt worked, and worked very well, it did have at least one drawback. The means used to automate the validation of a domain used a couple of custom directories and files. Websites, depending upon the website's structure, were required to make changes to the `.htaccess` file (an important server configuration file) to prevent the website's code from trying to process the special Let's Encrypt files and allow the web server to serve these special files during validation. The hosting company I, and my clients, use automated this process, which worked well, but made the `.htaccess` file more difficult to understand and modify correctly.

Also, since Let's Encrypt is free, it took away the sales of SSL certificates from the hosting company. I, and my clients, moved from a very good hosting company just because they repeatedly refused to support Let's Encrypt, probably because of the loss of this revenue. We moved to another, also very good, hosting provider that supported and provided Let's Encrypt.

**cPanel:** cPanel is both the name of a company and the name of their product. It provides a management facility that allows one web server to operate many (into the thousands) client accounts on a single server and allows those accounts to run multiple websites. It's not an exaggeration to say that cPanel is used by many/most web hosting companies to support their shared hosting accounts.

Within the past few years (I believe, exactly when isn't important) cPanel became a certificate authority and implemented what they call **AutoSSL**. When cPanel is used to manage a website, it doesn't need to do any domain verification; it's running the domain! That allows it to manage SSL certificates automatically without the cumbersome special files required by Let's Encrypt. And, for those who support the websites using cPanel's certificates, it means that there are no modifications to the `.htaccess` files!

So, what do I recommend? If your hosting company supports cPanel's AutoSSL: use it! If your hosting company doesn't support cPanel's AutoSSL, but supports Let's Encrypt: use Let's Encrypt. If your hosting company doesn't support either of these services, then it's time to move to another hosting company. Contact me and I can make a recommendation (and maybe a little commission 😊). Please realize that I won't recommend anything I don't use.

### **Certificate Periods, and Problems**

Every SSL certificate has a valid time period. That is, it contains a date/time upon which the certificate becomes valid and date/time after which the certificate is invalid. The certificate can only be used between these two times.

Traditionally, certificates are issued for one-year. However, it's not uncommon to find certificates issued for other periods, e.g., multiple years, or even unusual beginning and ending dates. This is particularly true for purchased certificates because of the overhead of generating and installing them.

A certificate can be cancelled, or expired, by creating a new certificate with another expiration date.

However, there's a problem actually effecting a certificate expiration/cancellation before the end of the original time period. Browsers may cache certificate validations, i.e., retaining the certificate and its expiration. Once validated, this validation may be used without checking for a possible revocation (it doesn't happen often, but it does happen). So, short certificates, e.g., three months, are better, from a security standpoint, than long certificates, e.g., five years.

Since Let's Encrypt and cPanel have automated the process of generating and installing certificates, and there's no payment requirement, both can routinely issue certificates that are valid for relatively short periods of time; they both use 90 day periods. Here's what they do: Twice a day, every 12 hours, they scan all the certificates on a server looking for those that will expire within 30 days. If they find one, they create and install a new certificate that's good for 90 days from the current date. If you look at this schedule, you might ask: Why do they create a new certificate so early? Why not wait until the end of the 90-day period? It's a fault tolerant mechanism, if a certificate doesn't get renewed after 60 days, it'll get checked again in 12 more hours, or again in another 12 hours. The exact number of checks is irrelevant. The frequency of these checks ensures that a new certificate gets generated and installed long before the old one expires. Rather clever, I think.

### **One more thing:**

#### **Warning:** Tech Talk Ahead

Just because you enable the use of HTTPS on your website, that doesn't necessarily mean that HTTPS will always be used; it's still possible to service requests using HTTP. Therefore, it is advisable to modify the *.htaccess* file, in the *mod\_rewrite* section, to cause HTTP requests to be rewritten the equivalent HTTPS URL (i.e., permanently moved to the HTTPS equivalent, code 301).



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## Nexar Beam Dash Cam

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society

<https://aztcs.apcug.org/>

actuary110 (at) yahoo.com

This product is useful and installs with minimum effort.

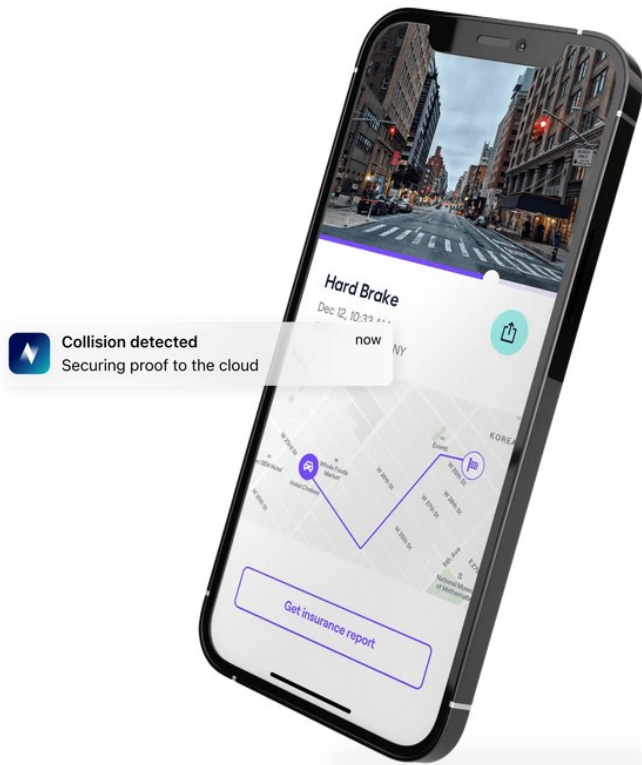
It is a plug-and-play dashcam that installs behind the rear-view mirror.



It records 1080p full HD video, which gives you a vivid 135-degree picture of the view from your windshield. Recording can be up to 4 hours.

A nice feature is the parking mode. Here, you get 24/7 security, and the dashcam can sense any impact and starts recording instantly. In addition, recorded footage can be downloaded to your cell phone for viewing. The included GPS feature even retains the vehicle location.

The companion app allows for live or delayed viewing of footage. In addition, recordings are backed up to the cloud, making them easy to use.



The dashcam comes with a 32GB microSD card, which can be upgraded if desired. In addition, unlimited, free cloud storage means that even if the dashcam is lost or stolen, the recordings can still be viewed and accessed from anywhere.



This is a really nifty device that is useful and maybe the key to proving liability in an accident.

### **Nexar Beam Dash Cam**

<https://shop.getnexar.com/products/nexar-beam-gps-dash-cam>

Priced at \$140

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# Ripping Audio CDs Using MediaMonkey 5

By Tom Burt, Vice President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

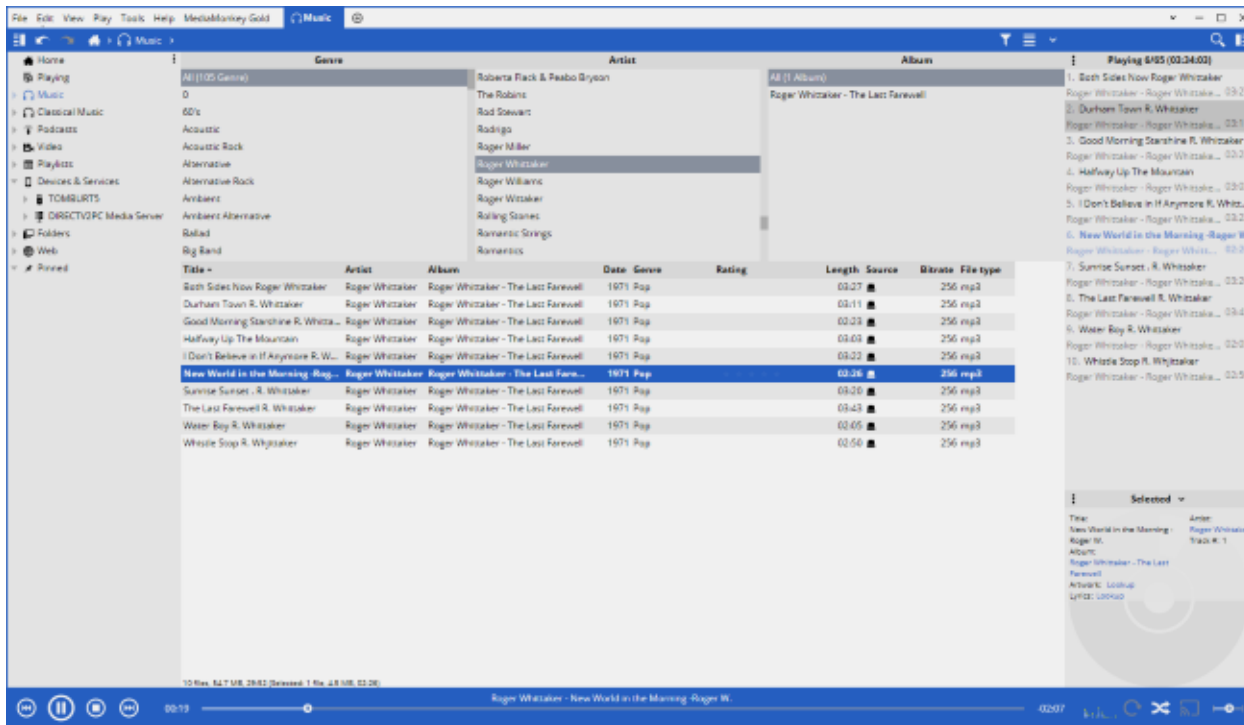
<https://www.scscclb>

tomburt89134 (at) cox.net

I first wrote about the MediaMonkey 4 media player/manager tool in October 2019. At that time, I was interested in MediaMonkey as a replacement for Apple's iTunes media player. I found it to be very capable, plus it had a free version that did everything I was looking for.

Recently the MediaMonkey developers released an upgrade to version 5. Also, for Father's Day, 2021, one of my sons sent me a box set of the Complete Albums Collection of Simon & Garfunkel. I decided to "rip" all 12 CDs to convert them to music files in my music collection. I decided to convert all the CD tracks to the open-source FLAC (Free Lossless Audio Codec) format to achieve maximum sound fidelity. The output FLAC files are fairly large compared to the MP3 format but should sound *identical* to the original CD tracks. iTunes has no support for the FLAC format, so I again turned to MediaMonkey.

First, for those who may have missed my October 2019 column, here's a screenshot of the MediaMonkey 5 main screen.



## MediaMonkey 5 Main Screen

MediaMonkey's main screen (Music View) can be configured to be very similar to that in iTunes. It features a 3-column hierarchical browser (Genre, Artist, Album) that can filter a list of song titles displayed in a table pane below the browser columns. Along the bottom are controls for playing, pausing, skipping, a progress bar with time played and time remaining,

and some buttons for special features like shuffle and enabling the equalizer. The left-hand pane allows choosing between major views, including Playlists. The right-hand pane displays a list of the songs queued up for playing. At the lower right is a small pane with detailed information about the current song that's playing.

Along the top are a menu bar and a toolbar that together provide a rich set of functions for setting options, importing tracks into the song library, building playlists, ripping CDs, burning discs, converting file formats, and syncing to external devices.

### **Importing Existing Music Files**

When first launched, MediaMonkey offered to import your music files into its music library. You can specify which folder(s) it should scan. MediaMonkey reads each music file in the designated tree of folders and extracts the ID1 and ID2 tag information into fields in its library database. It imported my 6000 file (22 GB) collection in about five minutes. Each record in the library database points back to the actual path\filename of the music file.

You can use the File menu to add additional music files to the library. You can also have MediaMonkey rescan previously indexed folders to update the music index. If you used another program like iTunes to update tag information, this might come into play.

### **Playlists**

A playlist is a named ordered list of music files, typically a subset of your entire collection. Examples might be "My top 100" or "Favorite Instrumentals" or "Christmas Music" or "Party Mix." In MediaMonkey, you can start a new playlist by right-clicking on the Playlists item in the left-hand (View) pane and then clicking New Playlist. A small dialog will open asking for the name of the new playlist. Type in a name and then click OK. Your new playlist will appear in the listing under the Playlists item.

To add tracks to a playlist, go to the Music view, leaving the Playlists item open to make the individual playlists visible. Select one or more music files, and then drag the selection onto the name of your new playlist. Repeat for all the music files you want added to the playlist.

Under the Playlists, view item, click to select your new playlist, and all the song files it contains will be shown in the file list pane. To play a music file, double-click it. You can also turn on the shuffle mode to randomly play the tracks in your playlist. To change the play order, select any track in the main list pane and drag it up or down in the list.

You can right-click on a playlist and choose "Send to," which offers various options, including "Burn to CD/DVD" and "Copy to Folder." Both will copy the music files in the playlist to the specified target. For example, "Copy to Folder" can be used to copy a playlist to a flash drive for playing in your car's entertainment center or taking to a party.

### **Editing Music File Information**

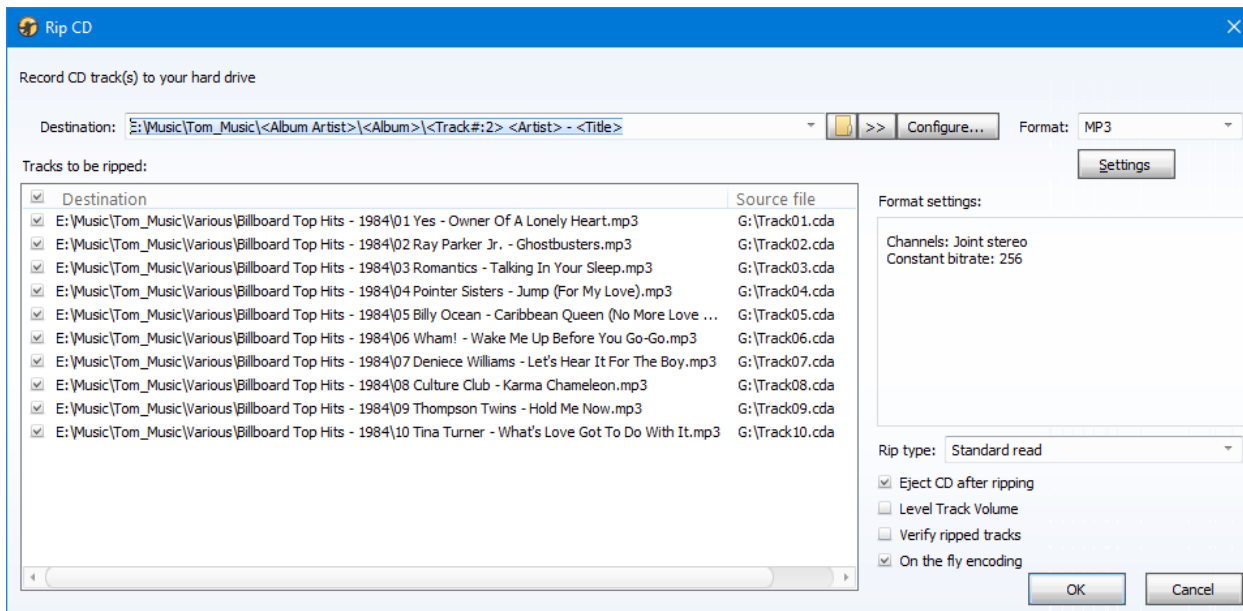
To modify the tag information for a music file, right-click it in the file list pane and select Properties. An editor dialog will display with fields that you can edit. Change the field values to suit and click OK to save the results.

You can also select multiple files, right-click the selection and choose Properties. In this mode, you can edit properties common to the selected set.

## **Ripping Audio CDs**

A common way to add to your digital music collection is to convert audio CDs you own or borrow to individual digital music files on your PC's hard drive. This process is known as **ripping**. MediaMonkey makes ripping very easy. First, insert an audio CD into your PC's CD/DVD drive with MediaMonkey running. Then, in MediaMonkey, click your CD/DVD drive in the left-hand (view) pane and click the Rip Audio CD button in the toolbar. A CD Ripping dialog (see below) will appear, listing the tracks with the song titles, the folder to which the ripped music files will be written, and the file name layout.

The track information displayed is looked up in the Internet FreeDB database, a comprehensive listing of every commercial audio CD produced by the music industry. Take a few moments to configure the various settings. Click the Configure button to set the destination folder into which the ripped music files will be copied and the format for the file names. I like the folder hierarchy to be Album Artist > Album Name. I like the output file name to be Artist – Song name. The file extension depends on the output format you choose, such as MP3, FLAC, or OGG.

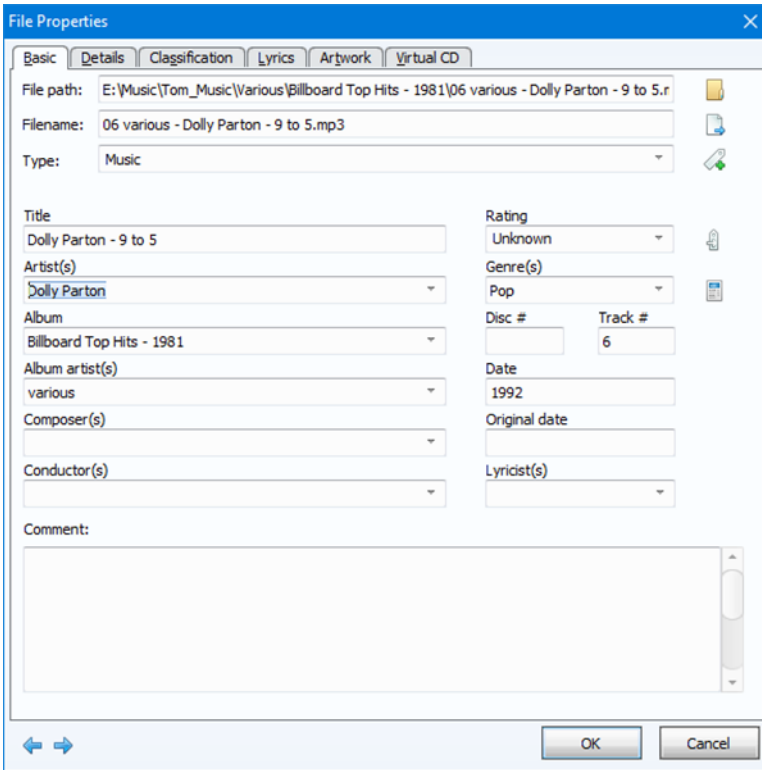


## **MediaMonkey Rip Audio CD Dialog**

Also, click the Settings button to choose the sampling bit rate and other values for the selected format. Usually, I choose MP3 format, Constant Bit Rate, 256 kilobits. This is the same as what most commercial digital music is now encoded to. However, I chose the FLAC format for my Simon & Garfunkel project and left other Settings values at their defaults. Once set, your settings will be remembered for future CD rips.

Finally, click the OK button, and MediaMonkey will read each audio track from the CD

and convert it to a music file in the selected format, stored in the specified folder with the specified file name. For each ripped file, the music library database will have a record added pointing to the song file, with all the tag information (Artist, Album, Genre, Title, Year, Play Time, etc.) Typically, it takes 2 to 3 minutes to rip an entire audio CD.



### **Results**

The FLAC files ripped by MediaMonkey sounded extremely good when played by MediaMonkey and by Windows 10's built-in Groove music player. As an experiment, I had also ripped one album to MP3 format using the maximum sample rate of 320 Kbits/sec; I wanted to compare the sound quality and file sizes between FLAC and MP3-320.

As an example, from Simon & Garfunkel's "Concert in Central Park" album, for the track "Late in the Evening" (time 4:07), I got the following file sizes (including a prior rip to MP3 at 256 Kbits sampling):

**FLAC: 25.9 Mbytes    MP3-320: 9.7 Mbytes    MP3-256: 7.8 Mbytes**

In MediaMonkey, the FLAC file sounded sharper and brighter than the MP3-320, but the difference was relatively small. I also tried playing the MP3-320 track in iTunes, but it didn't sound clear. So, it appears MediaMonkey's music player is better at reproducing sound than iTunes.

That's all I have space for. However, MediaMonkey seems to be a great alternative to iTunes, and it's free. Give it a try!



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# Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

w Work phone h Home phone c Cell phone  
\* Meets at an alternate location

Most SIGs will meet at Edina Executive Plaza, Conference Room #102, 5200 Willson Road, Edina, MN

Confirm with a SIG group if they meet elsewhere.  
For more info contact the SIG Leader(s) listed here.

Get SIG announcements!  
Link from [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com)

## Board of Directors\*

All members are welcome! Check [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com) for location.

Selected Saturday mornings

## Linux on Saturday

This is for the Linux newbie and those trying to come over from Microsoft to a different operating system.

Second Saturday @ 9 AM-Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Jack Ungerleider 612/418-3494 c  
[jack@jacku.com](mailto:jack@jacku.com)

## Tech Topics

Technical presentation/discussion on various technical topics from the following areas:

- Web/Internet
- Mobile Devices and Apps
- Playing with Programming
- DIY (3D Printing, R-Pi, other hobby electronics, etc.)

Second Tuesday @ 6:00-7:00 PM

Every month

Right before the general meeting.

Jack Ungerleider 612/418-3494 c  
[jack@jacku.com](mailto:jack@jacku.com)

## Microsoft Access

All levels. Presentations by expert developers within the group and by MS reps.

Third Saturday 9:00 AM—Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmeier 952/934-8492  
[skuhlmeier@hotmail.com](mailto:skuhlmeier@hotmail.com)

## Microsoft Office

Addresses the use, integration, and nuances of the Microsoft Office applications.

Combined with Systems on Saturday

Third Saturday of the Month

9:00 AM—Noon

Note: No Meetings June-August

Steve Kuhlmeier 952/934-8492  
[skuhlmeier@hotmail.com](mailto:skuhlmeier@hotmail.com)

Directions to Accord, 1515 Energy Park Drive for General Meetings:  
From I-94 in St. Paul, take the Snelling Avenue exit, then go north on Snelling Avenue about one mile to Energy Park Drive. Take Energy Park Drive and take the first left into the driveway to 1515 Energy Park Drive.  
From I-694 or Hwy 36 in St. Paul, take the Snelling Avenue exit, then go south on Snelling Avenue past Como Avenue to Energy Park Drive. Take Energy Park Drive and take the first left into the driveway to 1515 Energy Park Drive.

Directions to Edina Executive Plaza for Systems on Saturday, Access, Word and Picture Perfect SIGs: Take Highway 100 to the 50th Street/Vernon exit. [If you have come from the north, cross back over Highway 100 to the east side.] Take the first right and go past Perkins [The golf course will be on your left.] and continue on the east frontage road (Willson Road) to the next building—5200. There is ample parking in the building's lot. Conference Room #102 is on 1st floor.

Help yourself by helping others!

Join the team & share your knowledge with others.

Contact TC/PC at [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com)

Meetings start at 7:00 PM (9:00 AM on Saturday) unless otherwise noted. \*Virtual Meetings during Covid pandemic.

**June**

**July**

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 7pm General Mtg Annual Mtg Election of Officers/Board  6pm Tech Topics	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 7pm General Mtg TBA  6pm Tech Topics	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

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## You have just read an issue of The Digital Viking.

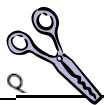
*Would you like to receive this delivered directly to your email or business each month?*

As a member of TC/PC, the Twin Cities Personal Computer Group, one of the benefits is reading this monthly publication at [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com).

As a member of TC/PC, you may attend any or all of the monthly Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings and be eligible for software drawings. The small membership fee also includes access to real-live people with answers via our helplines, discounts, and various other perks.

Does membership in this group sound like a good way to increase your computer knowledge?

It's easy to do! Simply fill in the form below and mail it to the address shown.  
(If you use the form in this issue, you will receive an extra month for joining now.)



6/22

### Here's the info for my TC/PC Membership:

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Company name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home  Business  Change address:  Perm.  Temp. 'til \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

Online address(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about TC/PC? \_\_\_\_\_

I DO NOT want any of my information disclosed.

I DO NOT want to receive any mailings

### I'm signing up for:

Individual/Family Membership (\$18)

Business Membership (\$100)

If an existing member your # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Make checks payable to:

**Twin Cities PC User Group**

**341 County Rd C2 W**

**Roseville, MN 55113**

<http://www.tcpc.com>

Check # \_\_\_\_\_  Bill me

New member  Renewal  Prior member

I'm interested in:

Training classes  Volunteering

Special Interest Groups: New User, Access, etc.

List here:

**Administrative Use Only** Rec'd \_\_\_\_\_ Chk# \_\_\_\_\_

**June 14, 2022  
7:00 pm  
General Meeting**

**Annual Meeting  
And  
Election of Officers  
and Board Members**

**Via Zoom Only**



341 County Rd C2 W  
Roseville, MN 55113

***FIRST CLASS MAIL***