

Instruction Manual

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MP3 Shortcuts to M3U Playlist v0.99 (d)

Select the Source or Target Directory: i Up F5 Select Source Path Select Target Path

Name	Size	Type	Modified
Audio & Video		Dateiordner	30.07.2023 10:15:59
Office		Dateiordner	07.06.2023 17:59:15
Portables		Dateiordner	19.06.2023 16:36:11
Programme		Dateiordner	22.06.2023 12:23:08
System		Dateiordner	07.06.2023 17:47:08
3dyd64.exe - Ver...	2 KB	Verknüpfung	18.08.2023 11:40:06
Dezemberurlaub ...	1 KB	Internetverknüpfung	28.06.2023 07:46:09

Clear Source Path Insert Source Path cap.

W:\MP3s\MP3-Lieblingslieder\ # ☒

Clear Target Path Insert Target Path whole

W:\MP3s\MP3-Lieblingslieder\ ☐

Select a Command:

35. Open the Settings Sub-directory in the Windows File Explorer Test Execute

Information Output: ☐ Clear Info ☐ Stop Entries ☒ Open Exports Open Help Language E/D

Der Ausführen Button wurde gedrückt.
D:_Portables Thomas\MP3shortcuts2m3uPlaylist v0.99 (d)\Exports\2023-08-22_11.51.21 Suchergebnis [# (Groß- oder Kleir
Die folgende Datei wurde erzeugt und im Exports Unterverzeichnis gespeichert: D:_Portables Thomas\MP3shortcuts2m3uPla
Insgesamt gab es die folgende Anzahl an Suchtreffern: 712
Der 'Language' (Sprache) Knopf wurde gedrückt.
The selected and active language is from now on: English

1. Introduction

The short name of MP3 Shortcuts to M3U Playlist Converter is MP3-to-M3U, where MP3 format is just used as an abbreviation for all music formats. M3U is the best known (to me) format for music playlists. They are pure text files (in Ansi format) with very simple content, such as:

```
D:\MP3s\_Playlists\Alphabeat - Fascination.mp3
D:\MP3s\_Playlists\Amy Winehouse - Back To Black.mp3
D:\MP3s\_Playlists\Avicii - Levels.mp4.mp3
D:\MP3s\_Playlists\Barry Manilow - Can't Smile Without You.mp3
D:\MP3s\_Playlists\Beach Boys - Lady Linda.mp3
```

Each single line contains a file link (fully qualified, i.e., full path plus file name) to a song. Provided the link is correct, most players can play M3U files. M3U files are very small compared to MP3 songs. With one byte (due to Ansi format) per character and an estimated 100 characters per M3U line, an M3U file with 1000 entries is only about 100 kByte in size, i.e., only about 2.5% of a single MP3 file.

My personal favorite player is called **1by1**. The nice thing about it is that it is a directory player. You can just pick 100 songs and copy them to a new directory and you have a playlist. It is my favorite player for two reasons. First, it is small (the EXE is less than 200 kBytes) and second, it has a file browser look and functionality that is indispensable to me. Unfortunately, the ability to play directories is also a curse. That's why my MP3 collection has gone too far by copy/paste. In order to shrink it back to a normal size I have programmed this tool.

One more word about the namesake MP3. MP3-to-M3U completely ignores the file formats during the M3U creation. If there is for example a TXT file in a directory from which a M3U file is created, then this TXT file ends up as a link in the M3U file, but without doing any major damage. The 1by1 player ignores unplayable file links and jumps directly to the next entry.

MP3-to-M3U in the current version offers 37 commands to clean up the MP3 collection in the following categories:

- Create M3U playlists from Windows file links (shortcuts)
- Create M3U playlists from other M3U playlists (because of random order)
- Correction of paths in M3U playlists (when porting to other computers)
- Verification of M3U playlists (finding the linked songs)
- Renaming MP3 files
- Detection of MP3 duplicates
- Duplicate move
- Detection of unused MP3s
- Moving unused MP3s
- Dissolve MP3 directories and replace them with M3U playlists
- Creation of Windows file links (shortcuts) from M3U files

MP3-to-M3U is bilingual, German and English. You can switch the language as often as you like during operation. Then the language of the buttons, headlines, commands, information

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output and tooltips will change. The last used language is reloaded at the next program start, because it is stored in the settings.

MP3-to-M3U does not delete or overwrite songs. When resolving MP3 directories, it checks if a song already exists in the destination directory. If so, then the file is renamed by appending a hash character and a number, immediately before the file extension point. The number is incremented until the file name is unique. Example:

D:\MP3s_Playlists\Alphabeat - Fascination#7.mp3

MP3-to-M3U can identify unused songs and mark them by renaming. For identification, the user must store all M3U files (or copies of them) in a single directory and all songs in another. The associated command will then perform the comparison and mark all unused MP3 using a preceding at sign without any additional digit. Example:

D:\MP3s_Playlists\@Alphabeat - Fascination.mp3

By the way, the M3U playlists are available in three different versions, namely alphabetical (A-Z and Z-A) and mixed. Since you probably don't always want to listen to the same songs, you need mixed playlists if the player can't mix the M3U lists itself (the 1by1 player can).

MP3-toM3U is portable, i.e., it does not make or require any entries in the Windows registry. The directory structure is as follows:

- MP3 toM3U Version.exe
- _Exports\ Exported text files
- _Help\ German and English help file
- _License\ not used in this project
- _Settings\ The saved settings

2. Description of Program's Graphical Interface Controls

The order of the description is from top left to bottom right. The headings are not explained because hopefully they are self-explanatory. Four of the nine headings change depending on the command, namely Source Directory, Target Directory, Search and Replace. If one of these four headings is missing, then no user input is required to execute that command.

There are 18 tooltips in total (for 13 buttons and 5 checkboxes). If you move the mouse over one of the elements, a help text (Microsoft term: tooltip) appears.

Control element	Description
Integrated file browser (Select the Source or Target Directory:)	Selection of applicable directories.
Text input field (Selected Source Directory:)	Display of the selected directory or manual input of a directory path.
Text input field (Selected Target Directory:)	Display of the selected directory or manual input of a directory path.
Text input field (Search:)	Display of the entered search term.
Text input field (Replace:)	Display of the entered replacement term.
Como box (Select a Command:)	Selection of a command to be applied, but it is not actually executed until the Execute button is pressed.
Listbox (Information Output:)	Output of all kinds of information.
Checkboxes:	
cap.	Case distinction when the check mark is set.
whole	Only whole words are searched (supplementing the search term with a space on the right and left) if the check mark is set.
Clear Info	Deletes the contents of the list box. The check mark is automatically reset after a short time.
Stop Entries	Prevents further entries in the list box. This function can sometimes be helpful when you want to look closely at the information in the list box.
Open Exports	Many commands create a text file with information about the command just executed. If the checkmark is set, then these export files are opened automatically immediately after they are created.
Buttons:	
i (upper area on the left)	Output of the information in which ways a directory path can be selected.
Up	Move up one directory level.
F5	Update the display of the integrated file explorer.
Select Source Path	Select directory path for the source directory.
Select Target Path	Select directory path for the destination directory.
Clear Source Path	Delete selected directory path.
Insert Source Path	Paste directory path from Windows clipboard.
Clear Target Path	Delete selected directory path.
Insert Target Path	Paste directory path from Windows clipboard.
Test	Checks whether the required user input is sufficient to execute the selected command and issues a corresponding OK or detailed error

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Control element	Description
	message via message box (modal window that must be confirmed before proceeding).
Execute	The selected command will be executed.
Open Help	Open the help file in the currently active language.
Language E/D	Switching the language, alternating between German and English.

3. Description of the Built-in Commands

The following commands are available to the user:

No.	Command	Description
1.	Create an alphabetically ascending M3U Playlist from MP3 Shortcuts	Example: The user has marked e.g., 30 songs in his MP3 pool. Right mouse button - create shortcut. Mark the shortcuts and move them to the designated M3U directory. Then execute this command.
2.	Create an alphabetically descending M3U Playlist from MP3 Shortcuts	see description command 1
3.	Create a randomly shuffled M3U Playlist from MP3 Shortcuts	see description command 1
4.	Create an alphabetically ascending M3U Playlist from another M3U Playlist	Creates a new M3U list from an existing one.
5.	Create an alphabetically descending M3U Playlist from another M3U Playlist	Creates a new M3U list from an existing one.
6.	Create a randomly shuffled M3U Playlist from another M3U Playlist	Creates a new M3U list from an existing one.
7.	Correct a M3U Playlist with Respect to MP3 inserted/deleted Whitespaces	The user might get the idea to remove excess spaces from his MP3 file names or add missing ones. This command makes the appropriate corrections in M3U files.
8.	Correct a M3U Playlist with Respect to Duplicates (points to Originals afterwards)	Example: The user has resolved an MP3 directory (a playlist per MP3 copies). Since these are copies, when the MP3 files are moved back, it is very likely that a #123 is appended to the files moved back into the MP3 pool. In the corresponding M3U file these appended numberings are of course also included. With the help of this command, you can make your M3U file point back to the originals.
9.	Verify a M3U playlist	Verify an M3U playlist",
Correctable (in M3U playlist) commands for MP3 renaming:		
10.	Apply capital Letters completely for MP3 Names	The command name is self-explanatory.
11.	Apply small Letters completely for MP3 Names	The command name is self-explanatory.

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No.	Command	Description
12.	First Letter capital in each Word of MP3 Name	The command name is self-explanatory.
13.	First Letter capital on the left Side of the Separator	You have to specify a separator between the artist and the title. I use the hyphen in my MP3 collection.
14.	All Letters capital on the left Side of the Separator	The command name is self-explanatory.
15.	All Letters small on the left Side of the Separator	The command name is self-explanatory.
16.	First Letter capital on the right Side of the Separator	The command name is self-explanatory.
17.	All Letters capital on the right Side of the Separator	The command name is self-explanatory.
18.	All Letters small on the right Side of the Separator	The command name is self-explanatory.
19.	Delete/supplement all excessive/missing Whitespaces out of/in MP3 Names	For example, if several spaces have been used between two words in MP3 Names, then all but one space will be removed. Additions can logically only be made around the separator.
20.	Verify Duplicate Names (does each Original exist?)	The command checks if there is an original for each duplicate (e.g., Alphabeat - Fascination#7.mp3). As long as the user has not done any manual renaming, this should always be the case.
Non-correctable (in M3U playlist) commands for MP3 renaming:		
21.	Find and replace Partitions in MP3 Names	The command name is self-explanatory.
22.	Mark File Names of unused MP3s (@) by Comparison with M3U Playlists	Attention, this command should be used as the very last one when cleaning up your MP3 collection. After you have replaced all the MP3 files with M3U files, you have to copy all the M3U files into a directory of your choice. All (for the comparison) relevant MP3 files must also be in a single directory. Under these conditions, the command can determine which MP3s are unused, i.e., never heard.
23.	Delete Markings (@) out of File Names of unused MP3s	The command to undo the command above.
Commands to copy or move MP3 files:",		
24.	Empty out a MP3 Directory by Shifting MP3s and create a M3U Playlist	The main command when cleaning up his MP3 collection.
25.	Create a MP3 Export out of a M3U Playlist	The command is intended for when someone has praised a particular playlist. With this command you can then create a "hard copy" (MP3 files) of the list.
26.	Shift marked MP3 Duplicates into the in das Doublet Directory	An important command to clean up your MP3 collection. Before moving one should execute the command 20 to be completely safe. If you forget to execute the command number 20 before, it is not a big deal, because there is a correction command (Create missing originals).

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No.	Command	Description
27.	Shift MP3 Files marked as unused into the forwarded Directory	This command should be used only at the very end of the cleanup process. There is no counter command for this, however it can be done quickly and unproblematically by hand.
28.	Create, if missing, a MP3 Original out of the Doublet Directory	The command name is self-explanatory.
29.	Create, if missing, a MP3 Original out of the unused MP3s	The command name is self-explanatory.
30.	Find MP3 Name Partitions and move the affected MP3 Files	The command is intended for when, for example, you want to have the titles of a particular artist separately.
Porting-related commands to correct file paths in M3U files:		
31.	Correct Song Paths in M3U Files	Let's assume that the MP3 collection on the living room PC has been corrected. All MP3s have been transferred to a single MP3 pool and all necessary M3U files have been created. Now I want to transfer this collection (MP3s and M3Us) to the basement PC. However, this basement PC does not have a D:\ hard drive, only C:\. This means that the M3U files can't run on the basement PC, because all MP3 links in it go to nowhere. With the help of this command all M3Us can be corrected accordingly. Attention, all M3Us must be in the same directory. Alternatively, you have to execute the command for each M3U list separately, which clearly costs more time.
32.	Create Sub-dirs from M3U Names and move the M3Us into the new Directories	The command creates subdirectories for each M3U list in a directory. Example: I have passed a directory with an M3U list named Thomas.m3u. This command creates a subdirectory Thomas (below the M3U path) and moves the M3U list into the new subdirectory. The passed M3U directory may contain any number of M3U files.
Other, unsorted commands:		
33.	Intensive Search capital/small/complete Words with File Generation and Storage	The command can be interesting to get an overview of your MP3 collection. For example, you enter Barry White and click on execute. A text file with the hits will be created in the exports directory. If you plan to do more or even many searches, then the checkbox "Open Exports" should preferably not be set. Example: I perform 30 intensive searches. After that I open the exports subdirectory with the immediately following command 34. Then I mark all 30 new files and open them with my favorite text editor (I recommend Notepad++). After that I look at all files in peace.
34.	Open the Exports Sub-directory in the Windows File Explorer	The command name is self-explanatory.
35.	Open the Settings Sub-directory in the Windows File Explorer	The command name is self-explanatory.
36.	Open the Settings File in the Standard Text Editor	The command name is self-explanatory.
37.	Create MP3 Shortcuts out of a M3U File within the M3U Directory	This is the counter command to commands 1, 2 and 3. It can make sense to have the corresponding file links

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No.	Command	Description
		generated for an M3U list, because it does not consume any significant memory and you can immediately see which songs the M3U list contains after opening a directory.

Here a remark to the heading of the commands 10 to 20 (In M3U lists correctable commands for MP3 renaming). For the commands 10 to 18 nothing has to be corrected in the M3U lists, because Windows does not distinguish between upper and lower case for directory and file names. The use of command 19 requires the counter command 7 to correct the M3U list. Command 20 does not change anything and therefore does not require any correction either.

And here a note about the heading of the commands 21 to 23 (In M3U lists **not** correctable commands for MP3 renaming). It means that there are no commands to adjust the M3U files accordingly. For the commands 22 and 23 this should not be a problem, because after all it is about unused files, which should not exist in M3U files. And for command 21 it is clear that there can be no correction command for it, because MP3-to-M3U does not have psychic abilities.

The re-sorting of commands is relatively time-consuming. Therefore, new, future commands are simply appended at the end to the category "Other, unsorted commands".

Here is a screenshot that shows that the command 37 has its justification, because you can see immediately which songs the M3U list contains at the top:



4. Recommended Use of MP3-to-M3U

I programmed MP3-toM3U to clean up my own "record collection". Although the app doesn't delete or overwrite files, hasty clicks can do the opposite (lots of new, extra MP3 copies instead of fewer). In order to clean up my MP3 collection I created the following directory structure **below** my MP3 directory (just as an example), directories in bold:

Directory	Subdirectory/ Files	Subdirectory/ Files
_Playlists	Barry White	Alphabetical (A-Z)
		Mixed 1
	
		Mixed 9
Duplicates	Barry Manilow ... #7.mp3	
	...	
	Delegation ... #2.mp3	
MP3 pool	Cock Robinmp3	
	...	
	Ten Sharpmp3	
Unused	@Kungsmp3	Trash (@...mp3)
	...	
	@Simple Mindsmp3	

I created the Trash folder below the unused MP3s for songs that I will definitely not listen to myself, but maybe a visitor will sometime in the distant future. It is so to speak once again a separation of the songs into unheard and completely unpopular.

Below the playlist directory, depending on the number of expected subdirectories, it might be appropriate to create another subdirectory level (e.g., **_MorePlaylists**). Please consider the names of the directories very carefully, because a subsequent name change will result in the corresponding changes in the M3U files. And that can be time-consuming.

Here now my personal order:

- 1) Create the above subdirectories and rename the logically existing MP3 pool or move if they are directly in the MP3 directory. However, there is also nothing against leaving the MP3s directly in the MP3 directory.
- 2) Dissolve all MP3 subdirectories and replace them with M3U files.
- 3) Check if an original exists for all MP3 files and add if not.
- 4) Correction of M3U files, which should now point to the original.
- 5) Moving the duplicate to the duplicate directory. After a few years you can think about deleting them.
- 6) Identify the unused MP3s and move them to the Unused directory. From this I have created another playlist, because there are also nice things.

Please be careful when deleting M3U files. Even if the associated MP3 files (for whatever reason) they still contain the information for a possible future "rebuild". This information should not be underestimated.

Remark:

Unfortunately, my cleanup with MP3-to-M3U was less productive than I had hoped. I found 750 duplicates, but together they were only about 3 GB in size. Nevertheless, my collection is now much tidier. There was only one problem in my code, but that is corrected as of version 0.99d.

5. Contents of the Settings File

MP3-to-M3U saves the following settings for reuse:

Language = German
Start position = 480.511
MP3 Pool = D:\MP3s\
Duplicate Pool = D:\MP3s\Dubletten\
Unused Pool = D:\MP3s\Unused\
Exclude Extensions = .m3u, .jpg, .docx, .xism, .txt

The first two entries are self-explanatory. The third, fourth and fifth entries are to save the user typing work. Command-dependent MP3-to-M3U tries to determine these entries and to apply them subsequently, i.e., to apply them immediately after a command selection.

The sixth entry is only used for command 25 (MP3 directory resolution). The file types referenced there are not moved and do not end up in the subsequently created M3U file. It makes sense that M3U files should not end up in other M3U files that have yet to be created. Some of my MP3 directories actually contained JPG files (I don't remember why). I added the other three file extensions to explain the purpose because of their familiarity. There were no such file types in my MP3 archive.