

XBMC User Guide

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Getting to Know XBMC

Introduction

XBMC is an award winning, free and open source media player and entertainment hub.

While XBMC functions very well as a standard media player for your computer, it has been designed to be a perfect companion for your Home Theater PC (HTPC). XBMC supports a range of *remote controls and keyboards*, allowing you to control with your preferred style.

Currently, XBMC can be used to play most popular *audio* and video formats. You can *stream your multimedia* from anywhere in the house or directly from the internet. XBMC can play CDs, DVDs and most archive formats, including ZIP and RAR.

XBMC can also *scan* your media and automatically create a library complete with Boxart, descriptions and Fanart. XBMC also features the ability to create playlists, add slideshows, show weather forecasts and play audio visualizations.

Once installed, XBMC will turn your computer into a full-fledged media jukebox.

Supported Output Formats and Devices

XBMC has support for output to a variety of formats and resolutions as well as a variety of external devices.

- Widescreen (16:9) and normal-TV (4:3) aspect ratio video output support
- HDTV (High-Definition) and Standard Definition output resolutions (480p, 576p, 720p, 1080i, 1080p and higher).
- TV-output: 50hz/60Hz NTSC-M/J (America/Asia) and PAL (Europe/Africa)
- RCA, SCART, RF Coaxial, S-video, Component/RGB, VGA-output #14
- NTSC playback on PAL TV and PAL playback on NTSC TV
- Analog audio-out (stereo/mono) via phono-connection or SCart-adapter
- Digital audio-out (stereo/mono/surround) SPDIF (adapter required)

Supported Controller Peripherals

XBMC supports a multitude of controllers, keyboards and control pads. The following is a comprehensive list of all supported control methods.

- Controllable via Supported Remote Controls
- Controllable via USB Mouse
- Controllable via USB Touchscreen
- Controllable via USB ASCII Keyboard
- Controllable via XBOX IR-DVD remote
- Controllable via XBOX game controller

Audio Playback Features

XBMC has several features available when using the *audio playback* functionality.

- Playback of all supported audio formats.
- SQL database music sorting by Top 100, Albums, Individual Tracks, Artists, Alphabetical and Chronological order.

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- Shift-Key list navigation.
- CDDB album lookup support from freedb.org.
- Thumbnail and Album Information lookup scraping.

NOTE: Scrapers information taken from allmusic.com, last.fm, discogs.com and pitchfork.com.

- Art scraping from htbackdrops.com
- Art support from locally stored backdrops, including support for XML and URL NFO files.
- Displayable, embedded thumbnails.
- Customizable thumbnails and folders
- Audio Autorun and autoplay upon media insertion
- File streaming through HTTP and MMS.
- Streaming through RealMedia from HTTP + RTSP/RDT
- Playback of audio ripped through the XBOX dashboard.
- ID3v1, ID3v2, ID666, APEv2 are all supported tagging formats.
- Playback of SHOUTcast Internet radio.
- Local SHOUTcast recording onto the Xbox harddrive
- Audio Visualizations support
- Option to audio output to mono or stereo for all speakers (for 5.1 surround speakers) see: [Supported Output Formats and Devices](#)
- Bit-Perfect Audio Playback support on Linux/Mac/Windows
- Party Mode and Playlist Editor
- Karaoke features for music files with audio-visualization overlay support for the following:
 - CDG (CDG + MP3, AAC, CDG, WAV, etc.)
 - LRC (LRCv1 and LRCv2)
 - MIDI (.MID/.KAR)
 - Transparent ZIP and RAR files
 - Real-time lyrics timing modification

Features for Viewing Images

XBMC has a number of options to improve your *image viewing* experience.

- Full-Screen image display.
- Shift-Key list navigation
- Slideshow creation with recursion support
- Autogeneration of picture thumbnails.
- Autogeneration of folder thumbnails.
- Picture manipulation support (ISO, IMG, NRG, BIN).
- Kodak Picture compatibility.

Installing XBMC

Installing XBMC for Windows

The installation procedure for XBMC is straightforward and necessary when updating to the latest version of XBMC.

1. Download the latest version of XBMC from <http://xbmc.org/download/>
2. Unzip the archive.
3. Double Click the **XBMC icon** to start and complete the installation wizard.
4. Click **Start** from the Windows bar.
5. Highlight the program group labelled XBMC Media Center.
6. Click **Add** in the program group to add media to XBMC.

Upgrading to the latest version of XBMC

When upgrading to the latest version of XBMC, you can install the program without losing any of your playlists or library settings.

1. Download the latest version of XBMC from <http://xbmc.org/download/>
2. Unzip the archive.
3. Double Click the **XBMC icon** to start and complete the installation wizard.
4. Click **Start** from the Windows bar
5. Highlight the program group labelled XBMC Media Center.
6. Click **Add** in the program group to add media to XBMC

Uninstalling XBMC for Windows

You can uninstall XBMC without risk to any of your files at any time.

1. Click **Start** from the Windows bar.
2. Click **Control Panel**
3. Click **Add or Remove Programs**.
4. Select XBMC from the list of programs.
5. Click **Remove**
6. Click **OK**

Installing XBMC for Linux

Because of the many versions of Linux, a number of distributions are provided for the following versions of Linux:

[Ubuntu](#), [Arch](#), [Mandriva](#) and [openSUSE](#).

Installing XBMC for Ubuntu

Ubuntu requires that you access the command line in order to install XBMC.

1. In the command line, type: `sudo add-apt-repository ppa:team-xbmc`, enter
2. Type: `sudo apt-get update`, enter

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3. Type: `sudo apt-get install xbmc`, enter
4. Type: `sudo apt-get update`, enter

Installing XBMC for Arch

Arch releases are only available through the community repository and require that you use the Pacman protocol to install.

1. Enable your repository in the folder labelled `/etc/pacman.conf`.
2. Input the pacman command to begin the installation process

Installing XBMC for Mandriva

Note: When Installing for Mandriva, you must have full software sources enabled in Mandriva's settings.

Type: `urpmi xbmc` in the GUI Mandrake tool.

Installing XBMC for openSUSE

1. Add the Pacman repository to your openSUSE system.
2. Click **Repositories**
3. Click **Repositories Manager --> Add**
4. Click **Community Repositories**
5. Run `sudo zypper` in XBMC from the command line.

Backing up your Video Library

When upgrading to the latest version of XBMC, it's always valuable to back up your Video Library.

1. Click **System** on the XBMC homescreen.
2. Click **Video**
3. Click **Export Video Library** on the library tab.
4. Click **Seperate File** to put the necessary information in the folder where the movie is located.

Managing Sources

Setting up XBMC sources

You need to set up XBMC by connecting to media sources.

1. Click **Settings**.
2. Click **Sources**
3. From the menu, select all the available sources you want to connect to XBMC.
4. Click **OK**

The UserData Folder

The User Data folder is where all the settings and customizations you make to XBMC are stored. The UserData folder is made up of smaller subfolders, each of which stores several lists of related databases.

- **Database** - The main folder where all other subfolders are located. Here you can find the databases for Music, Videos, Libraries, and scrape information.
- **MyMusic7.db** - Database file containing *Music* information
- **MyPrograms6.db** - Database file containing Program information.
- **MyVideos34.db** - Database file containing Movie, TV Show and Music Videos information.
- **ViewModes.db** - Database file containing information on all XBMC views (viewmode, sorting etc.).
- **Playlists** - This is where your playlists are stored. There are separate subfolders for mixed, music and video playlists.
- **Mixed** - playlists containing both audio and music videos, will show in both the Music and Video Libraries.
- **Music** - playlists containing audio only, will show in the Music Library.
- **Video** - playlists containing videos only, will show in the Video Library.
- **Thumbnails** - Cached Thumbnails (icons) are stored in this folder.
- **Visualizations** - All of your visualization settings are stored in this folder.
- **Keymaps** - This folder is where your customized keymapping files reside (e.g. MyRemote.xml)
- **Advancedsettings.xml** - This file, which may be created by a user in their UserData folder can contain additional settings, and can contain pre-defined values for the settings available in the GUI (thus removing them from the GUI settings screens.) Useful for advanced users and for installers.
- **Favourites.xml** - This file, which may be created by XBMC or the user in their UserData folder contains items added via the Add to Favourites context menu option.
- **Guisettings.xml** - This is where your settings configured in the GUI are stored (through the User InterfaceSettings).
- **Lircmap.xml** - This file which may be created can contain changes to the default Lircmap (Linux Only).
- **LCD.xml** - The LCD.xml file is used for customizing the output of the LCD Display.
- **PartyMode.xsp** - Defines the Smart Playlist to be used when using Party Mode for music playback.
- **RssFeeds.xml** - RssFeeds.xml is used to configure the RSS feeds displayed in XBMC.
- **Sources.xml** - Defines your Media Sources and locations.

About Media Sources

Media Sources are virtual links to the content you wish XBMC to use. When you enter any of the Programs, Videos, Music, Pictures or the Filemanager, you will see an entry for "*Add Sources*". When you first start with XBMC you should at least add one source, like a drive or directory on your PC, Mac or Xbox, to get you started. There are several kinds of media sources you need to be aware of when adding to XBMC.

You can add, edit or delete sources anytime you want to, via the *Context Menu* (which you can access e.g. by pressing the letter c on a keyboard).

Note: When you delete a source you only delete the link to that source within XBMC - your files will remain intact.

Adding a Media Source

You need to add Media Sources in order to make the most of XBMC. This is the simplest method of doing so.

1. Enter a Program in XBMC.
2. Click **Add Source**.
3. Click **Browse**.
4. Select the source you wish to add to XBMC
5. Click **OK**

Types of Media Sources

There are two main types of sources, *Local* and *Network*. In addition, there are specialty sources that are only available in certain sections of XBMC, (such as in Music or Videos). In Programs, only local sources (e.g. hard drive and DVD-ROM) are supported (because you can not stream Xbox games or other executable over the network).

Local Sources

Local Sources are divided into two kinds: Basic Sources and XBOX specific sources.

Basic Sources - Basic Sources are ones that lead to physically connected drives and media. External Hard drives and DVDs are examples of Basic Sources.

XBOX Specific -XBOX has the ability to read special encoding formats, iso9660 and UDF. The source route to use this feature is <source> <name>ISO</name>

```
<path>iso9660://</path>
</source> <source>
<name>UDF
</name>
<path>UDF://</path> </source>
```

Generic Network Sources

XBMC supports a wide range of file sharing and source stream protocols. All sections of XBMC support network sources, except for "Programs". The most important of these is the *Windows File Sharing Protocol*. This allows you to sync multiple computers to a single hub, allowing you to share media between them.

About Windows File Sharing

SMB sharing is the most common and best performing sharing solution for XBMC. It supports domains and workgroups as well.

Concept definition: Sharing is syntax based on the following command

```
<source>
<path>smb://domain;username:password@computername_or_ipaddress/sharename/
path</path>
</source>
```

Windows File sharing also has a set of fields that need to be filled out in order for the connection to be authenticated.

domain - If you use a domain controller, enter it in this field

username - The username used to authenticate with the server

password - The password to authenticate with the server

computername/ipaddress - As long as a name server is available on the network computer names **should** work. If any connectivity issues are encountered when using computer names replace it with the direct IP address of the computer.

sharename - Share name on the remote server

path - path relative to the share

About Universal Plug and Play

UPnP ("Universal Plug and Play") media sharing is an extremely easy method of sharing your media on your network as it features automatic-discovery and does not require any configuration.

Concept definition. The UPnP-client in XBMC supports direct links to the server/shares and auto-discovery of servers available on the local network. UPnP require a UPnP-server, UPnP AV Media Servers is where you store and share your media from.

There are UPnP Media Servers available for most operating-systems and many hardware-platforms, UPnP AV Media Servers can be either be categorized as software-based or hardware-based. Software-based Media Servers can be run on PC, mainly on Windows, Linux, BSD, Unix or Mac platform. And, hardware-based Media Servers may run on any NAS (Network Attached Storage) or any specific hardware for delivering media, like for example a PVR (Personal Video Recorder) device.

Menus and Commands

The Home Screen

The Home Screen is the default starting position when XBMC loads. From here you access all other sections of XBMC, starting from the top:

Programs

Videos

Music

Pictures

Weather

Settings, Scripts, Filemanager

Power settings

Accessing the Context Menu

Throughout XBMC you can often bring up a context menu that will offer the user a selection of functions you can perform on the currently selected item or in the context of your current screen. The Context Menu can be accessed easily at any time.

Right Click the item you wish to modify.

Options common to all subsections

Certain options are available to all sections of the *Home Screen*.

View - Allows you to change the right side display of the XBMC screen. You can change it to display Thumbnails of the currently playing media and playlists.

Sort - Controls the sorting of the items in the right pane.

Name - Sorts content alphabetically by filename, folders and archives are sorted first

File - Sorts content alphabetically by file / foldername, folders and files are treated alike.

Music

About the Music Library

The Music Library, one of the XBMC databases, is a key feature of XBMC. It allows the organization of your music collection by information stored in your music file ID tag, like title, artist, album, genre and popularity.

The library organizes your music into many categories, allowing you to find a specific song using one of many possible criteria.

- **View** - You can toggle between the different display options, amongst others; List, Icons and Big Icons.
- **Sort By** - You can choose what criteria to sort your music by. Note the arrow to the right which controls whether the items are sorted in ascending or descending order.
- **Library Mode** - This control allows you to switch between Library Mode and File View. (used to be called Switch View)
- **Search** - You can search for a string anywhere in the XBMC music database, see more below.
- **Filter** - Allows you to filter the library to only show albums, artists or songs that include the specified string in the name.
- **Party Mode** - Allows you to set a shuffle play based on customizable parameters.

About the Music Library Context Menu

When playing music, certain new actions become available from the *context menu*.

- **Queue Item** - Adds the item to the Now Playing playlist.
- **Play** - Plays the selected file.
- **Add to Favourites** - Adds the item to your Favourites menu.
- **Album/Song information** - Shows the relevant information from allmusic.com.
- **Query Information For all albums** - Queries information from allmusic.com for all albums in the path.
- **Update Library** - Checks if files in the Library have been changed, added or removed, modifies the database accordingly and runs a cleaning routine. Adds missing media to the database.
- **Go to Root** - Takes you to the Music Library root.
- **Now Playing** - Takes you to Now Playing screen that shows what is currently playing and what the next queued files are.
- **Settings** - Opens the Music Settings menu.

Scanning Music

Scanning music is the most basic of actions when preparing a music source for XBMC.

1. Click **Music**
2. Uncheck the box labeled **Library Mode**.
3. Click **Browse**.
4. Locate the music you want to add to XBMC.
5. Access the Context Menu
6. Click **Scan item to database**.
7. Check the box labeled **Library Mode**

Configuring itunes to share

Before adding itunes as a source to XBMC, iTunes must be configured properly to be able to connect.

1. Launch iTunes.

2. Click **Scan Music**
3. Click **Preferences --> Sharing**
4. Check the box labeled **Share my Music**
5. Check the box labeled **Share Entire Library**
6. Input a name for your library for XMBC to recognize it as

Add iTunes share via XML

You can add or change the iTunes source in Sources.xml like all Media Sources, your iTunes source needs to contain two pieces of information: The name tag and the save path tag in the form of an IP address.

1. Access the IP address of your computer through the command line.
2. Change the tag "name" to the name you want for your iTunes library.
3. Change the IP address to the address of the PC where the shares are located.

Searching Your Library

The search functionality of the music library can be useful when you have a huge number of files added. The search button is available on the left side of the 'Music' window, and is also available in the root listing of your music library. The search is performed in realtime and the results are displayed dynamically as you progress. Previous searches are saved, so if you return to the search node later on, it will have the results of your previous search

1. Click **Music**
2. Click *Search*
3. Enter your search terms into the search field.
4. Click **OK** when you have found the song you wanted

Activating Party Mode

Party Mode is a variant of shuffle where you can set the shuffle parameters from a special party mode file type.

1. Build a smart playlist.
2. Save the playlist as partymode.xsp in the User Data folder
3. When playing the playlist, select **Party Mode** from the side bar to enter Party Mode

Pictures

Sources for Pictures

Sources are an important aspect of Pictures. Setting sources allows you to easily access your picture collection.

Concept definition: XBMC allows you to link to both *Local and Network* sources when sourcing pictures.

Picture Controls

When viewing a picture, there are a number of options available to control the image. These range from simple rotation to accessing picture information.

- **-/Select/R key** - This allows you to rotate the image.
- **Black Button/ O key** - Toggles picture information on the image being displayed
- **Trigger buttons/left and right keys** - Switches image to previous/next in the slideshow

Zooming in/out on images

You can zoom up to x10 with XBMC. This feature is particularly useful when viewing images on a large display.

1. When viewing an image, press the **back button** on the XBOX controller to enter zoom mode.
2. Press the **back button** until you reach the desired zoom level
3. Tilt the control stick to scroll to the part of the image you want to focus on

Disabling Transition effects in Slideshows

The SlideShow function will start a sequential slideshow of all the pictures in the current folder with some nice transition effects

1. Click **Settings --> Pictures**
2. Click **Slideshow**
3. Uncheck the box labeled **Transition Effects**

Videos

Managing Videos

To access Videos, select it from the *Home screen*. Some of the key features of Videos are:

- Support for a countless number of formats and codecs. You can find a full list in Supported video codecs
- A full-featured Video Library that makes it easy to organize, find and watch your favorite videos
 - Integrated support for getting information on your video content from external sites, via scrapers
 - Fully integrated support for Internet Movie lookups
 - Fully integrated support for getting info on TV shows from sites like TheTVDB.com
 - Support for Music Videos
 - Support for Fanart
- Built in ability to stream media from the internet or locations on your network gives you access to your entire collection
- Full support of Playlists
- Support for Subtitles
- DVD video playback, including the ability to play imaged DVDs (iso) over a network
- A fully customizable view

On Screen Display

The majority of the video functions can be controlled through the OSD (On Screen Display).

The OSD has 4 buttons:

- OSD Audio and Subtitle Settings - Allows you to change the language and subtitles
- OSD Video Settings - Allows you to change picture settings and image adjustments
- Stop - Stops the movie.
- Video Bookmarks - For storing and retrieving location *bookmarks* in your video files

Creating a video bookmark

You can create video bookmarks in a video at any time.

1. Skip to the point in your film where you want to set up a bookmark.
2. Access the Context menu.
3. Click **Create Bookmark**

User Profiles

About User Profiles

XBMC supports multiple user profiles, much the same as setting up individual users on your home computer. These individual profiles allow you to customize the environment for multiple users, allowing for such functionality as:

- Customized view settings such as skins for each user
- The ability to lock folders, such as network shares on a per-user basis
- Separate Media Libraries for each user
- Unique RSS feeds for each user
- Unique keymapping for each user
- Unique network settings
- The ability to add scripts both globally or on a per-profile basis

About the Profile Options Menu

Profiles have a wide number of customization options in XBMC. The Profile Options menu is where all of those features are configured and customized.

- **Profile name** -Change the name of your profile
- **Profile Picture** -Allows you to associate a picture with your profile
- **Profile Directory** -Allows you to choose the folder in which your individual settings are stored
- **Lock Preferences** -Allows you to lock many of your preferences. This is detailed below.
- **Media Information** - Allows you to have separate information saved for your media, i.e. IMDb, AllMusic, etc.
 - **Seperate** - have separate media info with full control
 - **Shares with Default** -Shares media info with the default user with full control
 - **Shares with Default (Read Only)** - Shares media info with the default user, and is locked by the master code
 - **Separate (Read Only)** -Profile has separate media info, but you can only change it by enabling master mode.
- **Media Sources**
 - **Separate** -Profiles have separate media sources with full control
 - **Shares with Default** -Shares media sources with the default user with full control
 - **Shares with Default (Read Only)** - Shares media sources with the default user, and is locked by the master code
 - **Separate (locked)** -Profiles have separate media sources, but you can only change them by enabling master mode.

Adding a Profile

You can add as many profiles as you want. These profiles will have their own personal settings for when they sign in to XBMC.

1. Click **Add Profile**
2. Enter a name for the profile
3. Browse for a file directory
4. Click **New Folder**
5. Name the folder the same as your user profile name from step 2
6. Click **OK**