



## Quick definitions

**Sound card:**

Installed hardware that enables your computer to play and record sounds.

**Multimedia:**

Any presentation that involves two or more media, such as text, graphics, or sound.

## Sounds & Multimedia

All computers are equipped with basic sounds: beeps, dings and random startup sounds. However, in order to hear more sophisticated sounds (music and speeches), you'll need a sound card and either speakers or headphones. Fortunately, all Macs and most PC's and laptops come with a sound card already installed.

To see if you have a sound card installed on your machine, click Start→ Settings→ Control Panel and look for an icon called "Multimedia" or "Sounds". Double-click on the icon to view your sound card information. While you are here: to place a speaker icon in the bottom right hand tray, check the "Show Volume Control on Taskbar" box. To adjust the volume, double-click on the speaker icon and slide the Balance bar either up (louder) or down (quieter). Some laptops also have an external volume control knob.

To test the sound & volume on your computer, Start→ Settings→ Control Panel→ Sounds. Choose one of your computer's built-in sounds (i.e. Default Beep) and click the play arrow next to the name. If you can't hear the sound, or if the sound is too low, adjust the volume accordingly.

## CD-ROMs

If you have a CD-ROM drive on your computer, you can listen to regular audio CD's even if you don't have a sound card. Simply place the CD in the CD-ROM drive and plug the headphones in the jack near the CD tray. The CD should start playing automatically (if not, open "My Computer" and double-click the CD-ROM Drive). Adjust the volume by turning the little knob near the side of the CD tray.

If you have a sound card installed or are using a laptop, insert the audio CD and plug the headphones or speakers into the back of the computer (or side of the laptop), instead of near the CD-ROM drive. Laptops come with built-in speakers, which you can also use.

**INTERESTING NOTE:**

If you have a relatively new computer or laptop (Windows 98 or higher) with a CD-ROM drive, you can also play movies in VCD (Video CD) format on your computer. You do not need a DVD-ROM drive to do so. These movies are saved on regular-sized CD-ROMs, are split into two disks, and are quite cheap (\$4-10). VCD movies can also be played in most standard DVD players.

In order to view VCD movies on your computer, you will need a VCD Player (CyberLink Trial Version: <http://www.gocyberlink.com/english/index.jsp>) and a VCD-format movie: <http://www.zoommovie.com> & <http://www.coolvcd.com>



### WINDOWS XP USERS:

Microsoft Narrator is a free built-in text-to-speech recognition program. While running, it will read the contents of your computer (and websites).

To start using Microsoft Narrator, click Start→ Programs→ Accessories→ Accessibility→ Narrator.

To force Narrator to read the contents of the computer screen, hold down <CTRL><SHIFT> <SPACEBAR>

For more information, visit: <http://www.microsoft.com/enable/training/windowsxp/usingnarrator.htm>

## CONTACT US

The System Department of the New York Society Library selects, upgrades, and maintains computer resources for the Library staff and patrons. If you have a question or problem with any Library-related computer resource, please contact us.

## Multimedia Programs:

Most websites that use Multimedia will include a link to these pages or a prompt for a download of these free programs:

### **QuickTime**

(format: MOV)

<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/>

QuickTime was one of the first multimedia programs, initially designed for the Mac. Nowadays, both Mac & PC users can use QuickTime; many CD-ROMs take advantage of the video-like quality. To view a QuickTime file (the trailer to Pirates of the Caribbean), visit: <http://www.apple.com/trailers/disney/piratesofthecaribbean.html>

### **Real Media**

(format: RM& RA):

<http://www.real.com>

Another multimedia program, somewhat in decline since they started actively persuading people to buy their software program. You can still get a free copy of RealOne, but they make it difficult. Used primarily for Streaming Audio and Streaming Video (sends either sound or video as a continuous stream from another website). To listen to Real Audio speeches, visit the History Channels' webpage at: <http://www.historychannel.com/speeches/>

### **Windows Media Player**

(formats: AVI, ASF, MP3, WMV):

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads>

Microsoft's free media player lets you play videos and music on your machine. Of special interest here are MP3s, which are compressed music files (12:1 compression from the initial source). Because of their small size and good quality, MP3's are easily downloaded and traded online. To download free (and legal) MP3's, visit: <http://www.audiobooksforfree.com>, <http://www.mp3.com> and <http://www.classical.com/downloads>

### **Winamp Media Player**

(formats: AVI, ASF, MP3, WMV):

<http://www.winamp.com/download/>

An alternate form of Windows Media Player (different program with different look)

## Links:

### **Psychic Flash Movie:**

<http://www.cyberglass.co.uk/FlashEx/mindreader.html>

A mathematical mind-bender puzzle. Fun to figure out. You will need to install Macromedia Flash in order to view this page.

### **Tomb Town:**

<http://www.tombtown.com>

Virtual world with famous biographical tombstones. Morbidly interactive. You will need to download TombTown's Viscage browser plug-in to maneuver around the gravesites.