GUIDE TO ORGANIZING YOUR MUSIC USING MEDIAMONKEY

By Jack Zhou

Introduction

MediaMonkey is an extremely versatile media organizer and player. It has almost all of the functionality of Winamp or iTunes and offers more advanced tools for music management. This guide will teach you how to take music that is poorly labeled, haphazardly placed in different folders, and mastered at jarringly different volumes and organize it into one well labeled, neatly filed, volume leveled music library. I focus on this process because MediaMonkey makes it very easy to do and efficient for someone who has never used this program before. MediaMonkey's other features, such as playlist creation, are more common among media players and will not be discussed in this user guide. If you are looking for a more general or comprehensive guide, or if something in this guide doesn't make sense, please consult www.mediamonkey.com/support/.

> **Note 1:** this guide is for the free version of MediaMonkey, release number 3.0.3. The gold (paid) version has some additional features not covered in this guide. Some instructions in this guide might not apply to newer versions.

> **Note 2:** Both the words label and tag refer to the information, such as the artist the song is by or the year that the song was released, that is stored in the file itself. These two words will be used interchangeably in this guide

Preparation

Before you begin, make sure you have these:

PC with Microsoft Windows 98™ or higher

Internet connection

Music in a compressed audio format, such as mp3, wma, or m4a, on your computer

Working knowledge of PC's, and media players such as iTunes

Major Steps

1. Downloading and installing MediaMonkey: get MediaMonkey running on your computer.

2. Adding your music to MediaMonkey: scan your music so that MediaMonkey can use it.

3. Auto-tagging from web: use the Internet to properly label your songs.

4. Auto-organizing files: quickly rename songs and file them categorically into the right folders.

5. Volume leveling tracks: even out the differences in volumes between songs.

Guide

1. **Downloading and installing MediaMonkey:**

   These steps will get MediaMonkey installed and running on your computer.

   1.1 Open up your internet browser, and navigate to www.mediamonkey.com/trialpay

   1.2 Click on the download now button under "MediaMonkey Free Version," and save the file to an easily accessible location on your hard drive.

   1.3 Open and run the file once it has completed downloading. The program will ask you to select a language, so select English and click "OK."

   1.4 Follow the instructions to install MediaMonkey:

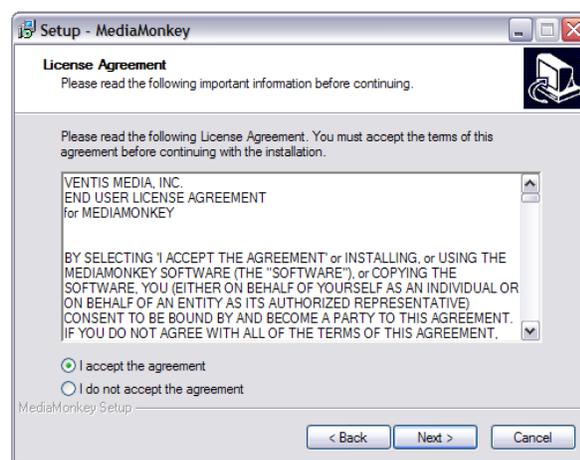**Fig. 1.1** Click next when you see the welcome screen.

Fig. 1.2 Read the license agreement for MediaMonkey, then check "I accept the agreement" and click next.
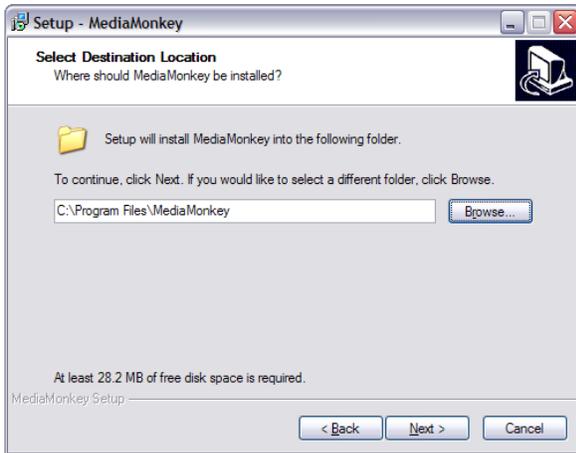
Fig. 1.3 Choose the path you wish to install the program to. Click browse to find the right folder. Click next when ready.
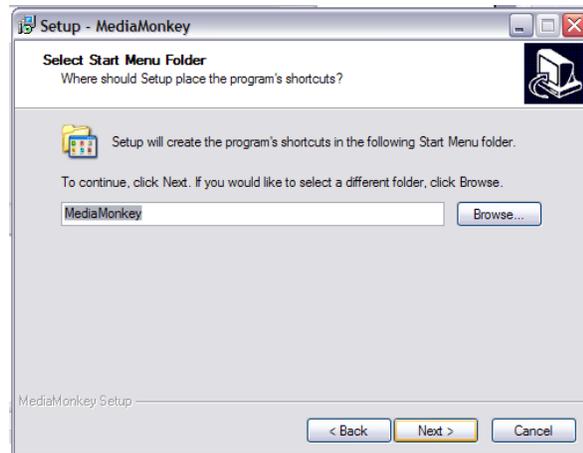

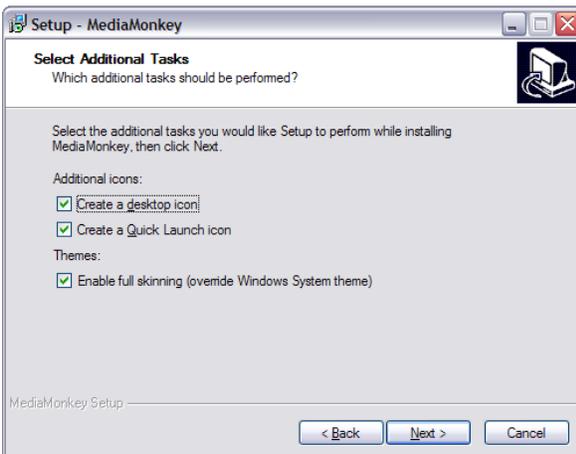**Fig. 1.4** Choose what folder in the start menu you want the icon to be in, then click next.

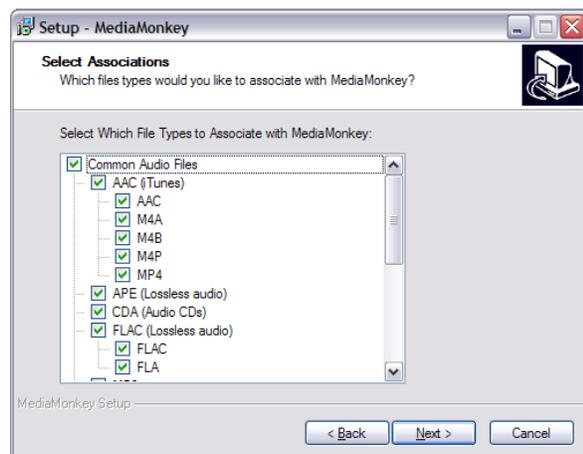**Fig. 1.5** Decide where you want MediaMonkey icons to be created, then click next.

Fig. 1.6 Decide which file types MediaMonkey will be associated with. If you're not sure just keep the default options and click next.
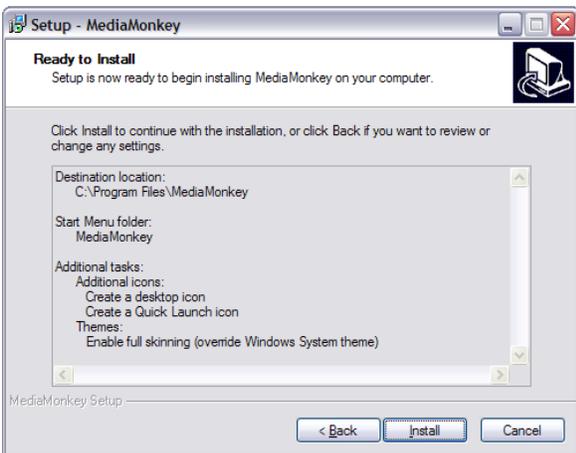

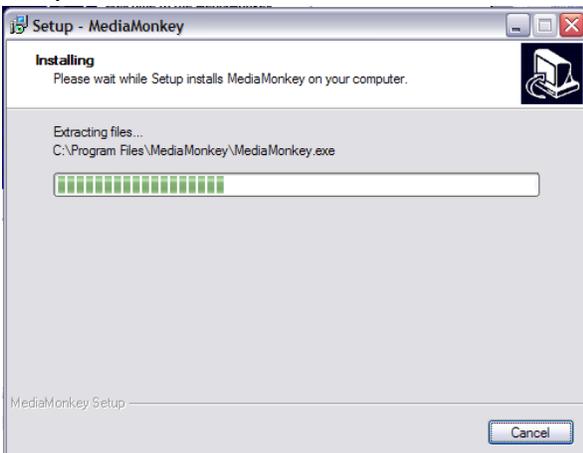**Fig. 1.7** Review your installation preferences, then click install.

Fig. 1.8 MediaMonkey is installing on your computer.

1.5 When the installation is finished, select "Launch MediaMonkey" and click "Finish."

> **Note:** in the future, you can open MediaMonkey by opening the start menu, clicking on "All Programs," then the "MediaMonkey" folder, then clicking on "MediaMonkey." Alternatively, you could double click the MediaMonkey icon on your desktop.

2. Adding your music:

This step tells MediaMonkey which music files you want it to keep in its database. MediaMonkey can only organize songs that are in its database, so make sure you scan all your music. If this is your first time using MediaMonkey, you must complete this step before you move on to the other sections of this user guide.

2.1 If you are running MediaMonkey for the first time, a window called "Add/Rescan Folders" will automatically pop up. If this is not the first time, open this window by going to the file menu and clicking "Add/Rescan Tracks to the Library," as shown in figure 2.1, or by simply pressing the Insert key on your keyboard. This window is where you will be adding the majority of your music to the MediaMonkey library.

2.2 Using the file tree, navigate to the folder where your music is kept. Check the boxes next to all the folders which contain the music you wish to add, as shown in figure 2.2. Then click "OK." The program will begin to scan all the information from the music in the folders you have selected.

> **Note:** Depending on how many music files you are adding, this could take up to several minutes.
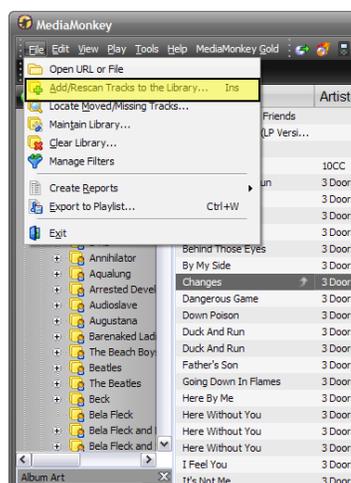

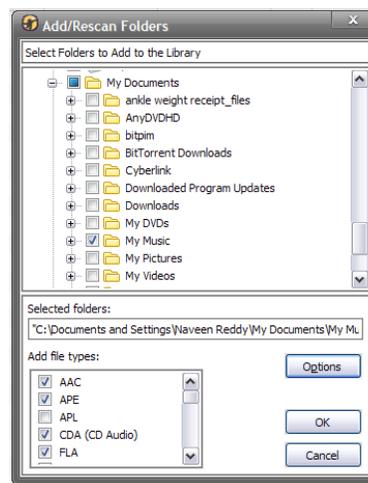**Fig. 2.1** The Add/Rescan Tracks button in the file menu.

Fig. 2.2 The Add/Rescan Tracks dialog box.

2.3 After MediaMonkey finishes adding your music, it will ask if you want to import settings from other music players you have installed. If you have music information or playlists stored on another media player, select it and click "OK." If not, just click cancel.

2.4 Finally you will see the main screen for MediaMonkey.   Click the icon named Artist & Album Artist on the left side of the screen. All the music you added should show up in the center screen, organized alphabetically by artist and then by title, as shown in figure 2.3.
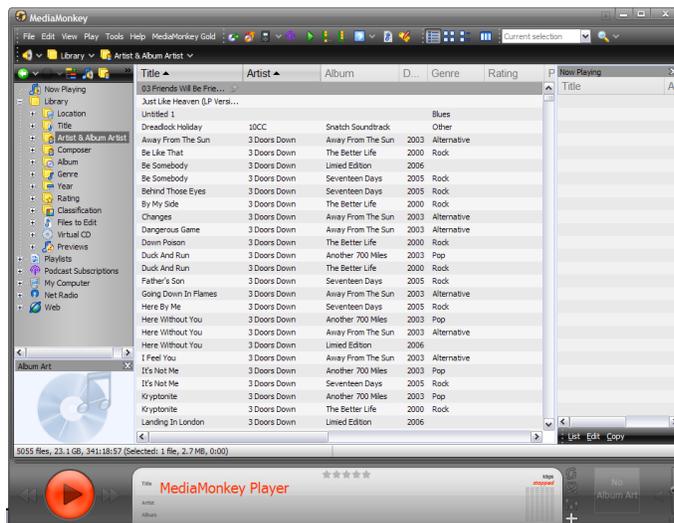
Fig. 2.3 MediaMonkey's main window. All of the scanned songs are now available in the library.

3. **Auto-tag from web:**

This function uses the internet to look up missing tag information, including album covers, for a particular song. For example, if you have a song but don't know what album it is from, this function will look that up based on the title, artist, and any other information stored in the song's tag.

3.1 Select a song that has incomplete information.

3.2 Right click on the song, and select auto-tag from web. Alternatively, you could select the song and then click "tools" in the top toolbar, then click "auto-tag from web." These are the blue highlighted options in figures 3.1 and 3.2.
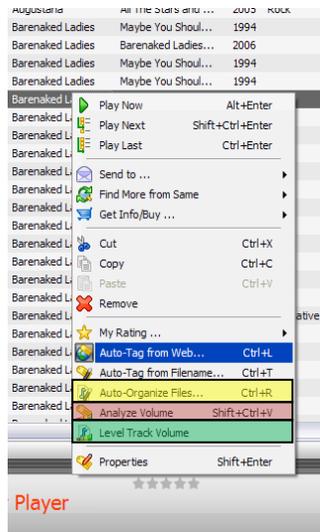
Fig. 3.1 The menu that appears when you right click on a song.
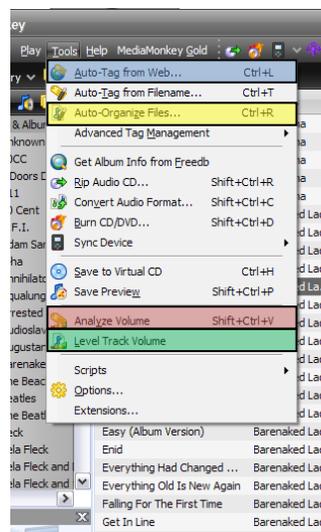
Fig. 3.2 The Tools menu. It is very similar to the right click menu in figure 3.

3.3 A window will pop up with the song's information downloaded from the internet, as shown in figure 3.3. If you think the information is correct, navigate to the window at the bottom and select the check box next to the song you want to update. If the information is incorrect, click the dropdown box at the top for a list of albums by that artist. Pick the correct album and the correct release date. Also, you could click the options button to the right of that and select a different search engine. Click "Auto-Tag," and all the information embedded in the tag should update to match the online search result.

Fig. 3.3 Auto-tag from Web window with the song information displayed. The song that is highlighted in yellow will be updated with the new information.

3.4 A window will pop up asking where to save the album cover image. Select "save to tag" and click OK. Close the window when the tag is done updating. Your song will now have all the tag information that was available online. If you want to update more songs, just repeat the process.

> **Note:** The search engine is not perfect, so if you are looking up an obscure song or band, it might give you incorrect information.

4. **Auto-organize files:**

This function renames your songs, and places them into different folders that are organized by category. This is useful if you have songs with long, unwieldy filenames, or songs located in various misnamed folders. The greatest benefit of this feature is that it can automatically organize as many or as few files as you want, giving you the power to neatly organize your entire library in one click.

4.1 Select the songs you want to auto-organize. Hold the Ctrl key when you are clicking to select multiple songs.

4.2 Right click the selection or go to the tools menu and select auto-organize files. These are shown as the yellow highlighted options in figures 3.1 and 3.2.

Fig. 4.1 Auto-Organize window. The songs that will be moved are highlighted in yellow. The songs with duplicate filenames are highlighted in red.

4.3 A window will appear with a list of all the files that you have selected. Click the configure button at the top right. Here are the options you can manipulate.
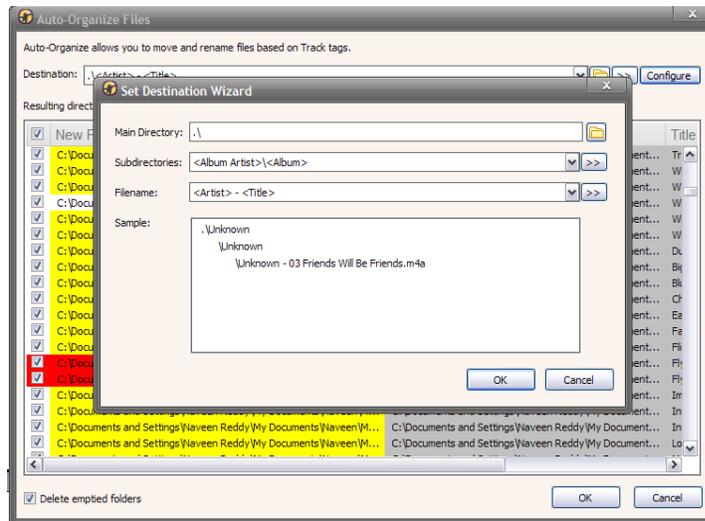

Fig. 4.2 Configuration window.

a.   Main directory: choose one overarching folder that all your music will be kept in. A ".\" means that the song's original folder will be the main directory.

b.   Subdirectory: specify the folders that will separate different types of music from each other. If you click the drop down box, there are some popular options that can be used to organize your music. For example, if you picked "Album Artist then Album," <Album Artist>\<Album> shows up in the box. This means that all songs from the same artist will be placed in a folder with the artist's name. Then they will be further subdivided in to folders corresponding with each song's album. If you are unsatisfied with the options in the drop down menu, click on the button next to it with the two horizontal arrows. A list of other categories is displayed, such as <Year>, <Genre>, and etc, which you can add and delete to the subdirectories box.

c.   Filename: This allows you to automatically change the filename of the song. The pull down menu works in the same way as the menu for the subdirectories box. Once again, you can further customize the default options by clicking on the double arrow box and selecting your own tags to add.

4.4 When you are done, make sure to look at the information in the sample box for an example of the location and file name of a particular song in your library. When you are satisfied, click "OK."

4.5 The list of songs you have selected to auto-organize is visible again. The program will move or rename the songs highlighted in yellow. The songs that are highlighted in red have conflicting filenames, which is a reliable way to tell if you have duplicate songs.

> **Note:** Auto-organizing permanently changes the song's location and filename. If there is important information about the song that is stored in the original filename, record that first before using auto-organize.

Put a check next to the songs that you want to move, and then click "OK." The files should reorganize and rename themselves to your specifications.

5. Volume leveling tracks:

MediaMonkey has a very useful feature that automatically makes the average volume of all selected songs the same. If you have songs from different sources that are mastered at different volume levels, this feature is helpful at eliminating harsh changes in volumes between songs.

5.1 Select the tracks that you want to volume level.

5.2 Right click the files or click the tools menu, and select "Analyze Volume," as shown by the red highlighting in figures 3.1 and 3.2.
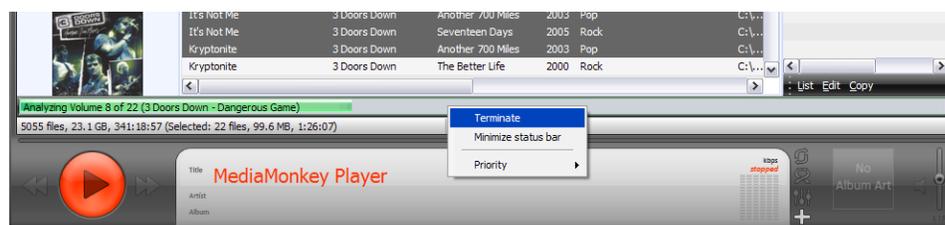

Fig. 5.1 The green progress bar when analyzing the volume. Right clicking on the bar allows you to cancel the process.

5.3 The program will begin analyzing every song and storing the volume information.

> **Note:** This process can take very long depending on the number of songs selected and the speed of your computer. You can terminate it by right clicking on the progress bar and selecting terminate as shown in figure 5.1.

5.4 Once this is finished, all the selected songs will have volume information. This means that the MediaMonkey will adjust its volume accordingly to make sure the volumes of songs are almost equal. However, other media players and devices such as iPods will not be able to read this information, and thus their songs' volumes will not be leveled even if they were in MediaMonkey.

5.5 To make the volume leveling carry to all other programs, you must permanently modify the song. To do this, the select the songs you want to level, and right click on them or click tools and select "Level Track Volume" as highlighted in green in figures 3.1 and 3.2.

> **Caution:** doing this will change the song permanently. Although you can always adjust volume of the song by changing the volume settings and releveling the song, the original volume data will be lost forever.

A warning will appear saying that this will permanently change the song. Click "OK." For songs that already have volume information, this process will be very quick. Any songs without this information will be volume analyzed first, then volume leveled. Your songs should now have the same average volume.

Summary:

This is the extent of my guide to organizing and volume leveling your music using MediaMonkey. Now that your music is properly tagged, organized, renamed, and volume leveled, enjoy listening to it and playing with some of MediaMonkey's playback features. MediaMonkey has many other powerful features, such as taking music from a CD and putting on your computer, converting files from one type to another, and burning CDs of your playlists. These and other features can be found on www.mediamonkey.com/support/.