

In Brief: 'MP4' software offered for Windows Player

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A public beta test has been launched for software that will allow the playing of low-bandwidth MPEG-4 audio on Microsoft Windows Media Player.

Orban and Coding Technologies said late Monday the free software would allow Media Player users to sample what the companies termed a breakthrough in digital audio applications for Internet, broadcast and mobile.

MPEG-4 is a step up from MPEG-3, better known as MP3, in that it provides CD-quality sound with a footprint far smaller than MP3 technology. The compact bit rates eliminate the annoyance of rebuffering that often interrupts streaming audio files.

"Content rebuffering is the static of digital radio," said Shawn Hopwood, senior director of Coding Technologies. "We are delighted to work with Orban to bring the high-quality audio and the continuous streaming experience ... to such a large Windows Media listening community."

The software is known as AAC/aacPlus Player Plugin and can be downloaded without charge from orban.com.

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