

# Simple, Full Featured Mediaportal Codec Guide

Version 0.2 - Goose

*This document is intended to be a simple guide to install the majority of the codecs a user will ever need for mediaportal. This means that all of the common codecs and containers such as divx, xvid, H.264, .avi, .mkv etc. will be playable from within mediaportal (and for that matter any directshow player) It will also allow you to playback less commonly seen codecs and containers such as QuickTime, Realmedia and .ogm. I am not going to advocate a single codec pack for these purposes, although for your setup one may suffice. I am also not averse to users experimenting with codecs to see what best suits them. This document assumes you are running at least 0.2.3.0, though the steps outlined below will almost certainly work on any Mediaportal version.*

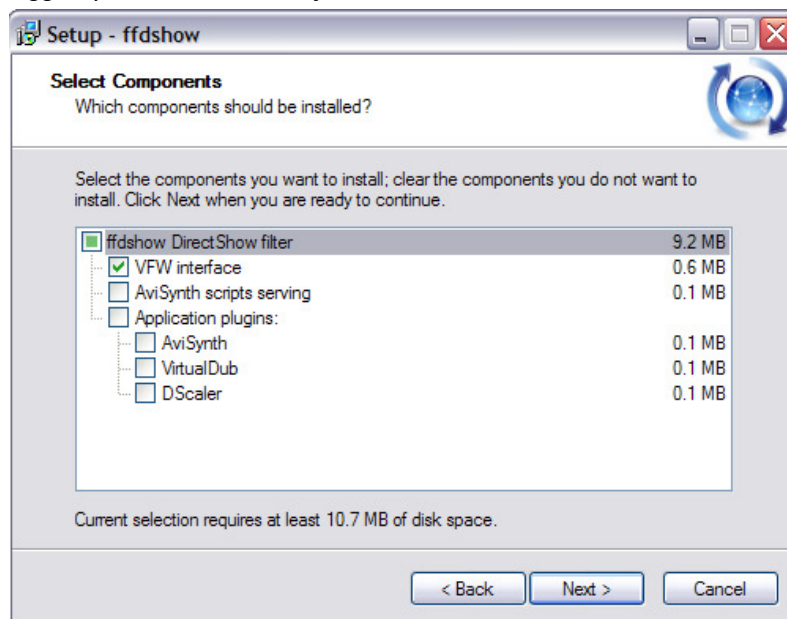
*If you hate ffdshow tryouts stop reading, because a lot of the functionality provided will be from ffdshow. Therefore you will need to download ffdshow, which you can obtain here [http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group\\_id=173941](http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=173941) I recommend that you pick the latest generic build from either xtl or clsid. Some filters in the package benefit from specific instruction sets, so if you have an SSE capable cpu I recommend you download one of those releases. For more information see the ffdshow tryouts page <http://ffdshow-tryout.sourceforge.net>*

## FFDSHOW TRYOUTS Installation

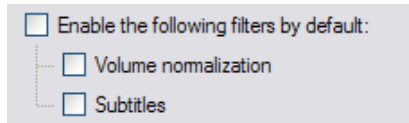
*When installing ffdshow tryouts you need to pick your language.*

*At the next screen click next, and then accept the agreement. Click next again; click next again if you are happy with the default install path. I suggest you leave it.*

*At the next screen you will be presented with a choice of what components to install. I once again suggest you stick with the defaults, as shown below.*



Click next again. You now have the choice over which codecs you want ffmpeg to handle. I like to leave the defaults.



Then click next, *select subtitles only if you have **no** need for external subtitles*, such as .txt, .srt, .ass etc.

If you do require playback of external subtitle files then do not select subtitles as we will have vsfilter to deal with them.

The next two pages are regarding compatibility. I suggest you leave the defaults, which is to use ffmpeg only in the following applications, because mediaportal is in the list.

At speaker setup you should choose the speaker setup that fits your environment. E.g. 2.0 for basic speakers and 5.1 for a surround setup. Then click next.

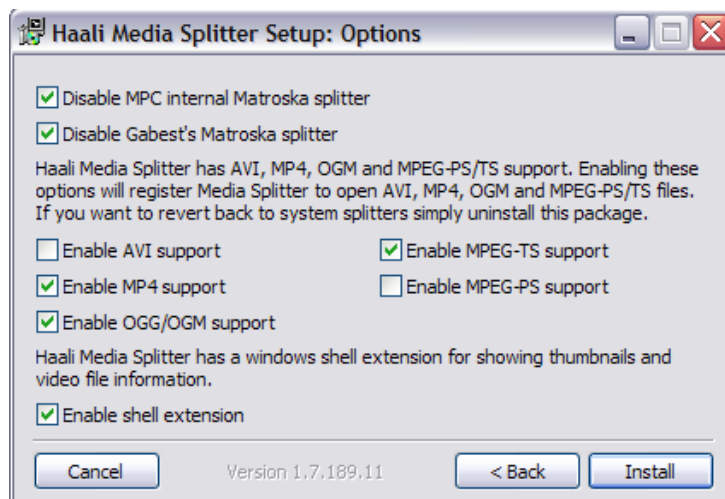
At the next screen simply select install. Then select finish.

## HAALI MEDIA SPLITTER Installation

Now we will install Haali's fantastic splitter. This will allow us to watch videos in several other containers besides .avi such as .mkv, .mp4 and .ogg. Download it from <http://haali.cs.msu.ru/mkv> (The download button is labelled matroska splitter at the top right.) When installing, the first page you will see is the license agreement, click "I agree"

Then click next to accept the default install path. Click next for the start menu path defaults.

The next screen is regarding what file types you would like the splitter to work on. Again the defaults are good. Click install. Then close.



## QT LITE AND REAL ALTERNATIVE Installation

Next are Qt Lite and Real Alternative, for playback of quicktime and realmedia files respectively. Download these at the following urls [http://www.codecguide.com/qt\\_lite.htm](http://www.codecguide.com/qt_lite.htm) and [http://www.codecguide.com/download\\_real.htm](http://www.codecguide.com/download_real.htm)

Run Qt Lite's setup, pick your language and click "ok". Click next. Click next again, if you would like to have the browser plug-in installed as well. It is a good idea to have this as it means you can play

QuickTime in Internet Explorer and Firefox etc. Click next at the next two screens for the default install path. Click install. Click next. Click finish.

Run Real Alternative's setup. Click next twice. Click next again for the default install path. Leave all options selected (default) and click next. Click next again. I wouldn't bother with the system restore point, but it's your choice. Click next. Click install. (If you have any browser open you will be told to close it for successful installation.) Click finish.

## **VSFILTER Installation**

Now we move onto codec installation and configuration for vsfilter.

Vsfilter/Direct Vobsub allows us to read all kinds of subtitles in a manner controllable from within Mediaportal. There are two versions of vsfilter, 2.37/2.38 and 2.33. You should always use 2.37/2.38 unless there is a compatibility problem with it and your HTPC. You can get it here [http://inmatrix.osnn.net/vsfilter.2.37\\_nt.exe](http://inmatrix.osnn.net/vsfilter.2.37_nt.exe)

Download and run the installer.

Simply click "Install" to accept the default location.

You have successfully installed vsfilter.

## **FLV Splitter Installation**

Some users have expressed a desire to watch flash videos from within Mediaportal. If you stuck with the settings I outlined above, all you need is an FLV splitter. You can get one here [http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group\\_id=82303&package\\_id=183318](http://sourceforge.net/project/showfiles.php?group_id=82303&package_id=183318)

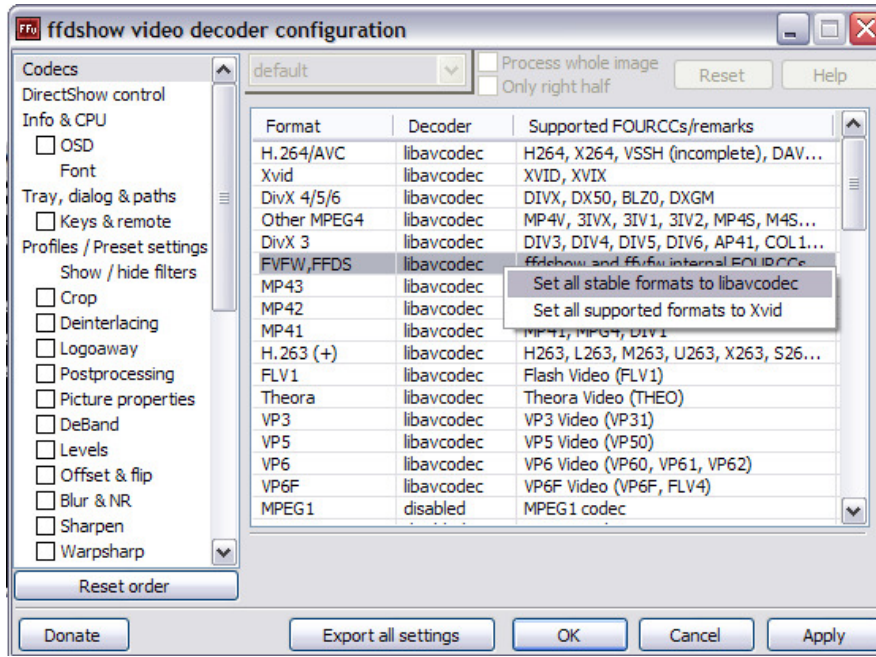
Simply download the latest version, extract and install to the default path.

## FFDSHOW Configuration

Next we will configure *ffdshow* to suit us.

Go to the *ffdshow* program group in the start menu and select “video decoder configuration”

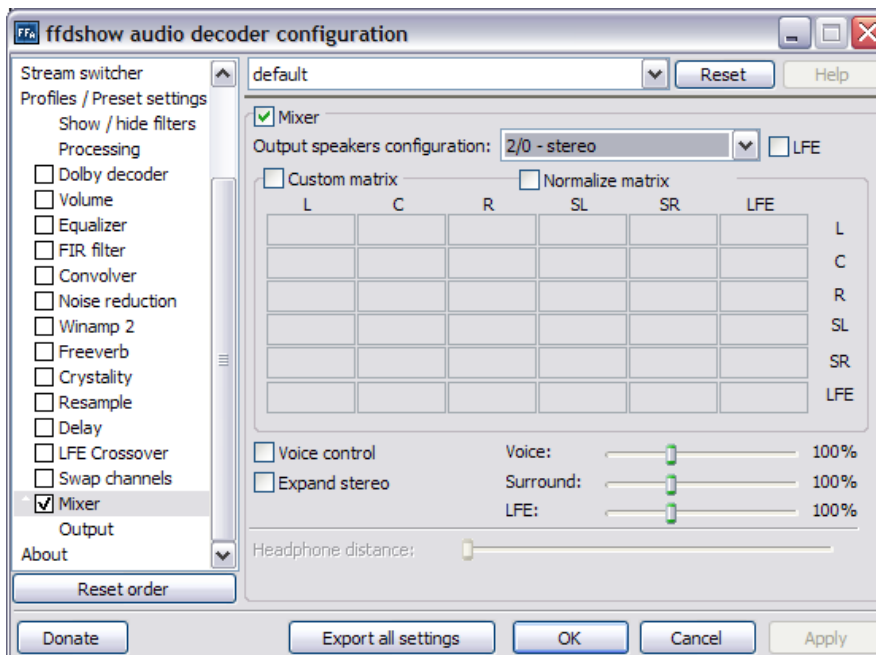
When you see the list of codecs right click on one and select “set all stable formats to libavcodec”



Don't worry about all of the interesting sounding options on the left and just click “OK”

Open the “audio decoder configuration” now. It's located in the same place as video in the start menu.

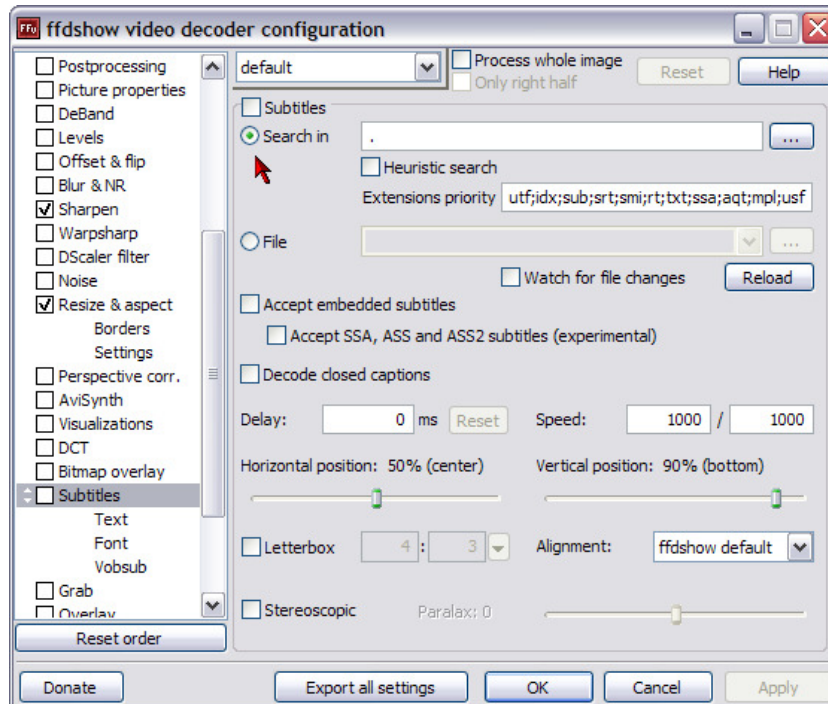
Confirm that mixer is selected in the left pane and that your speaker setup is selected. Click “OK”



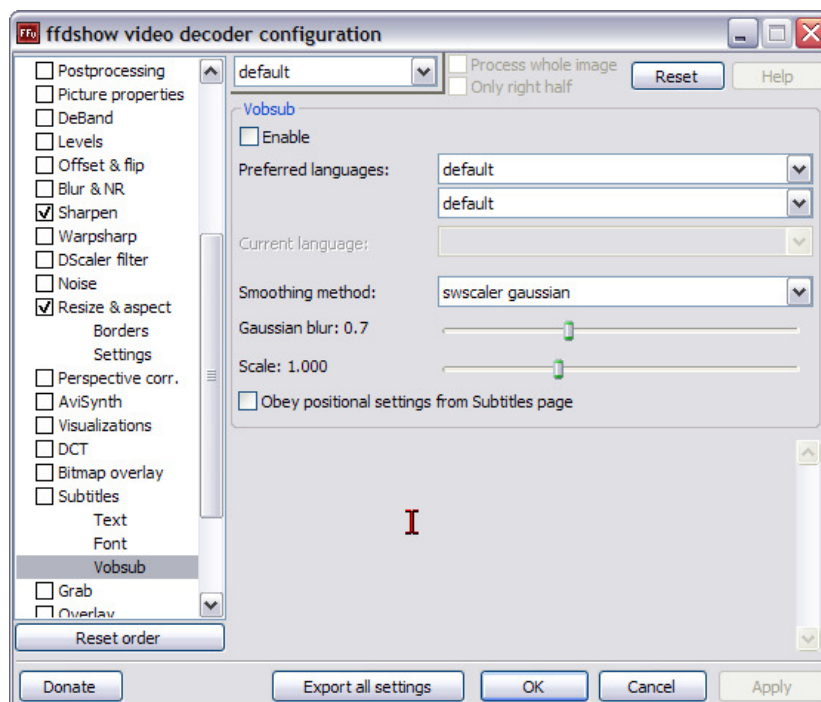
There is currently an issue regarding subtitle handling in the ogg media container .ogg. The issue presents itself as Mediaportal saying the subtitles are enabled but not actually displaying them.

The following workaround was kindly suggested by Peterk2007. Thanks!

In ffdshow video configuration, select subtitles and remove ticks from the following boxes in the right hand pane: Subtitles, Accept embedded subtitles, Accept SSA, ASS ...



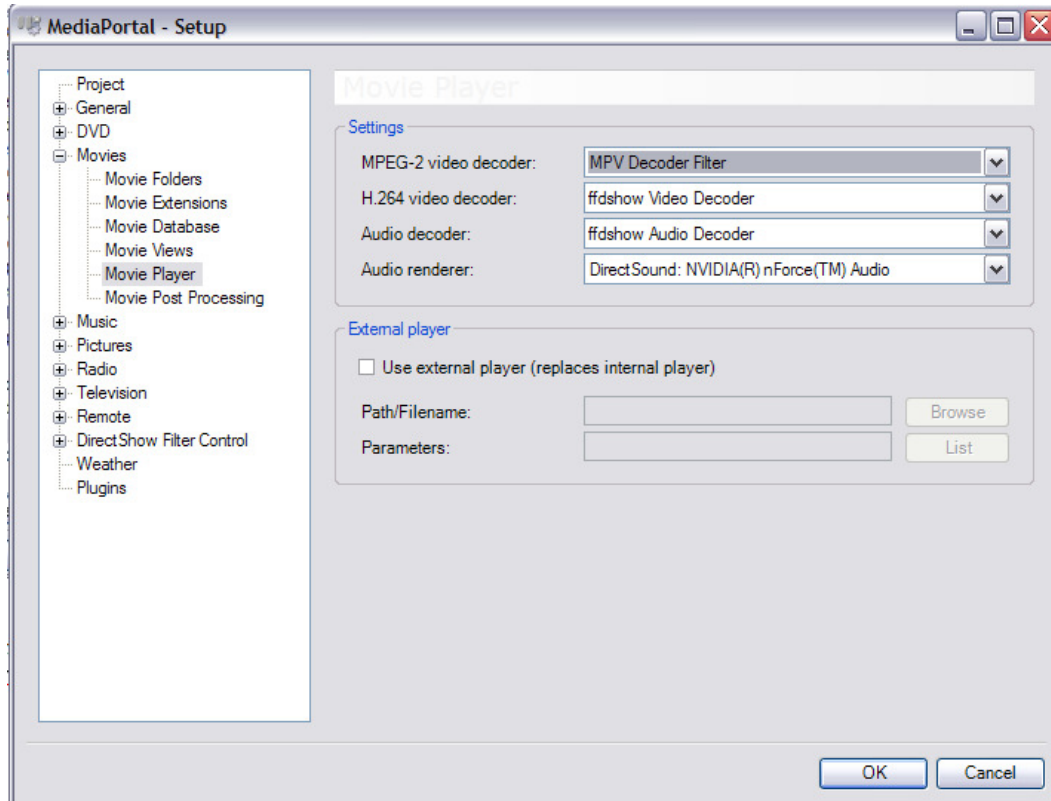
Then select the vobsub menu underneath subtitles in the left pane and remove the tick from the Enable box.



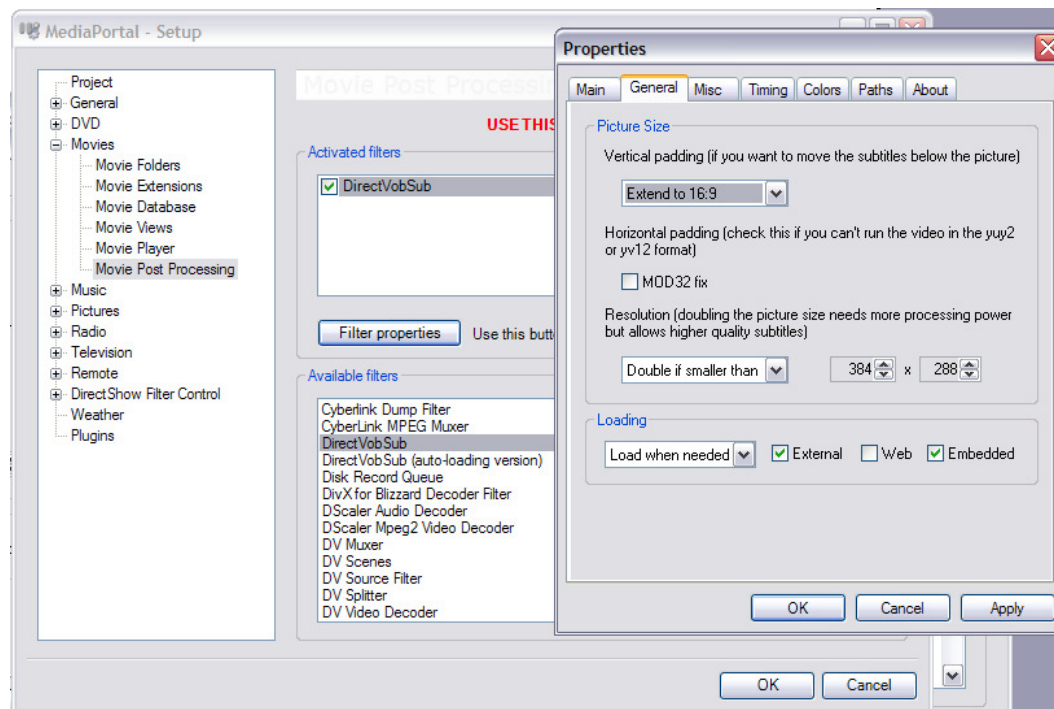
## Mediaportal Configuration

Now we move to mediaportal itself. Find mediaportal on the start menu and select "mediaportal configuration"

Select "movies" and then "movie player" make sure "MPV Decoder Filter" is selected for Mpeg-2 and "ffdshow" is selected for H.264 video and audio. The audio renderer will be different for because you will have a different soundcard.



Next select “movie post processing”. Double-click “directvobsub” (not auto loading) from the “available filters” list. It will be added to the top list. Select the checkbox and click “filter properties”. Click the “general” tab and select external and embedded. Check that “load when needed” is selected. Click “OK” Click “OK” on the “Mediaportal” window as well.



## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations, you should now be able to play the vast majority of movie types and containers from within Mediaportal with both internal and external subtitles.

## HINTS, TIPS and TRICKS

**Hint:** If you have a Microsoft media centre remote you can quickly change subtitles by pressing the “yellow” button. To switch audio press the “green button”. If your movie has chapters you can skip with the skip buttons just like on a DVD. These features are usually only present in .mkv and .mp4 files not .avi.

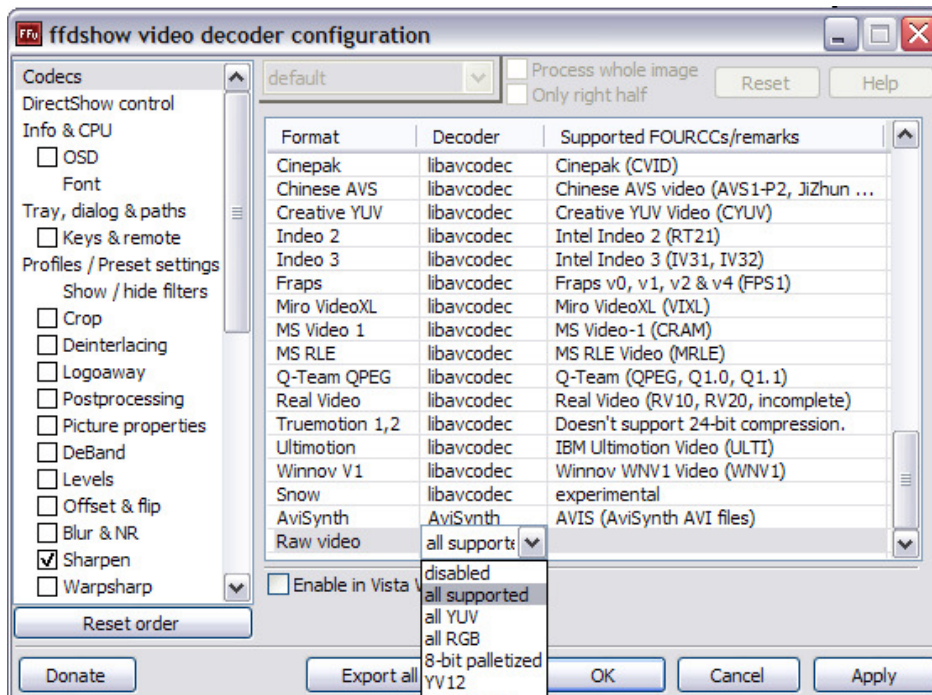
**Tips and Tricks:** ffdshow does not only have a very full featured codec list, it also has the ability to somewhat improve image and audio quality.

All of the following settings require opening ffdshow video and audio configuration windows respectively.

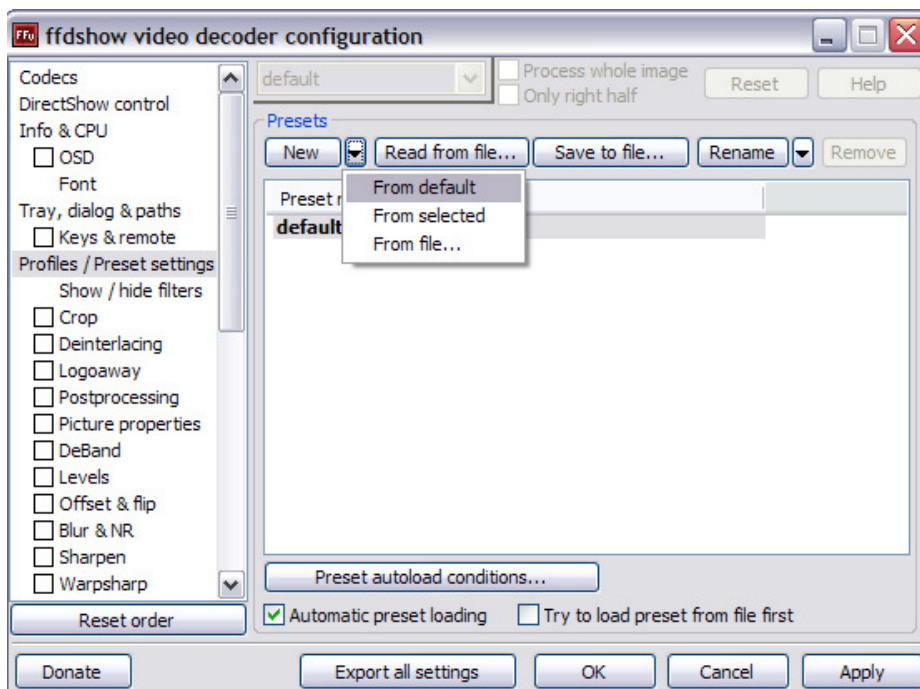
1. If your HTPC has the power, use xsharpen. Basically it will remove a lot of the blockiness that seems inherent in those 350MB Xvids we all love ☺. Tick the “sharpen” checkbox. Then in the right pane at the top click “process whole image” Make sure xsharpen is selected from the list of possible effects.
2. If you want; experiment with the postprocessing checkbox, you may find it cleans up the image somewhat as well. If you want to see what your changes did, just select “only right

half” This will allow you to see the difference very easily by only using post processing on the right half of the image.

3. In the codec list change Raw to all supported. This allows ffdshow quality enhancements even when you don't use ffdshow to decode the stream.



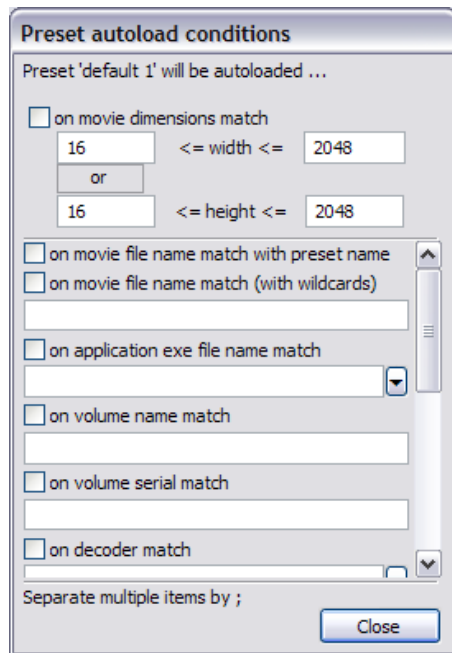
4. You may fall in love with all these quality settings but don't have the horsepower for them on some videos. Fear not; this is where profiles become your best friend. E.g. you discover that your HTPC doesn't have enough grunt for the enhancements you chose on H.264 content. To allow the enhancements on all video types except H.264 you need to create a H.264 only profile. Go to "profiles/preset settings" select new "from default" Rename profile to H.264 then select "automatic preset loading" Click "Preset autoload conditions"



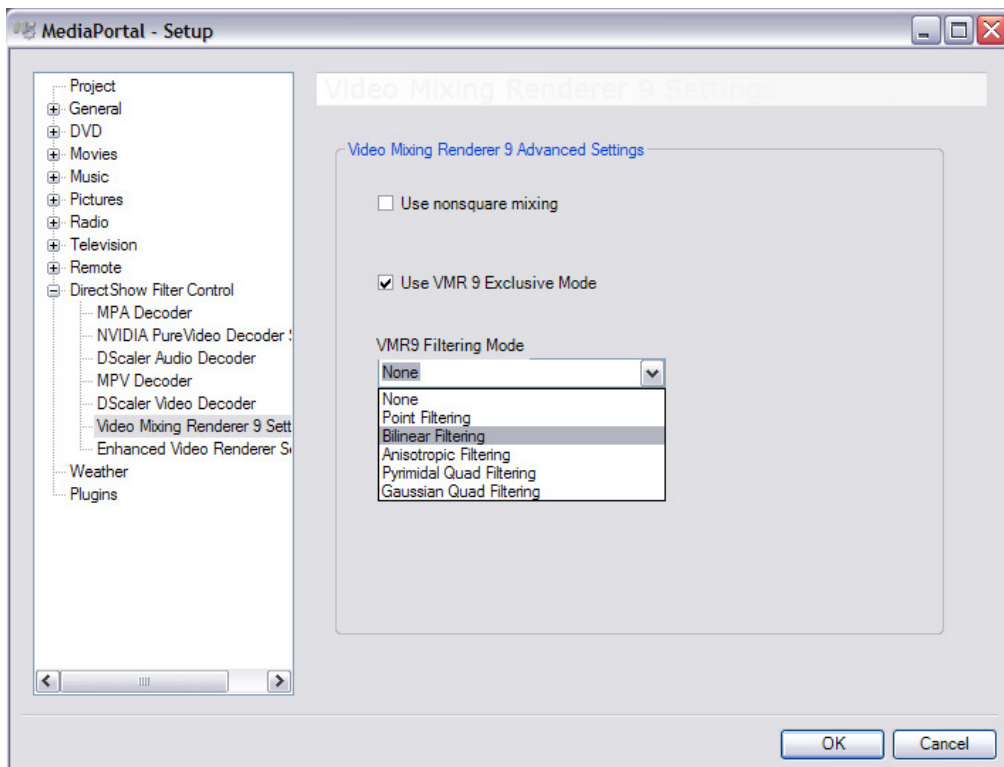
Deselect “on movie file name match with preset name” and select “on FOURCC match” Click the dropdown box and select “H264” and “X264” Click “Close” Now in the main window disable the performance limiting enhancements and click apply.

You can have as many profiles as you like. E.g. One for xvid and one for divx, or perhaps you like to use certain enhancements only if the video size is below 1280 x 720 (HDTV)

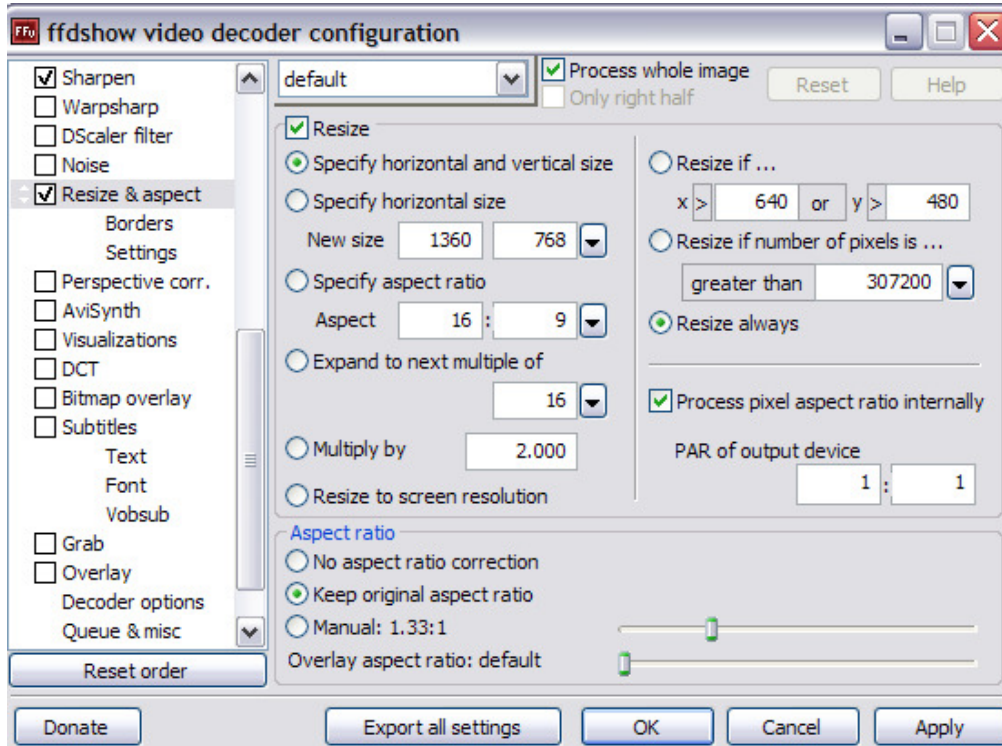
You can tailor the options to suit whatever attributes you need. Don’t hesitate to experiment.



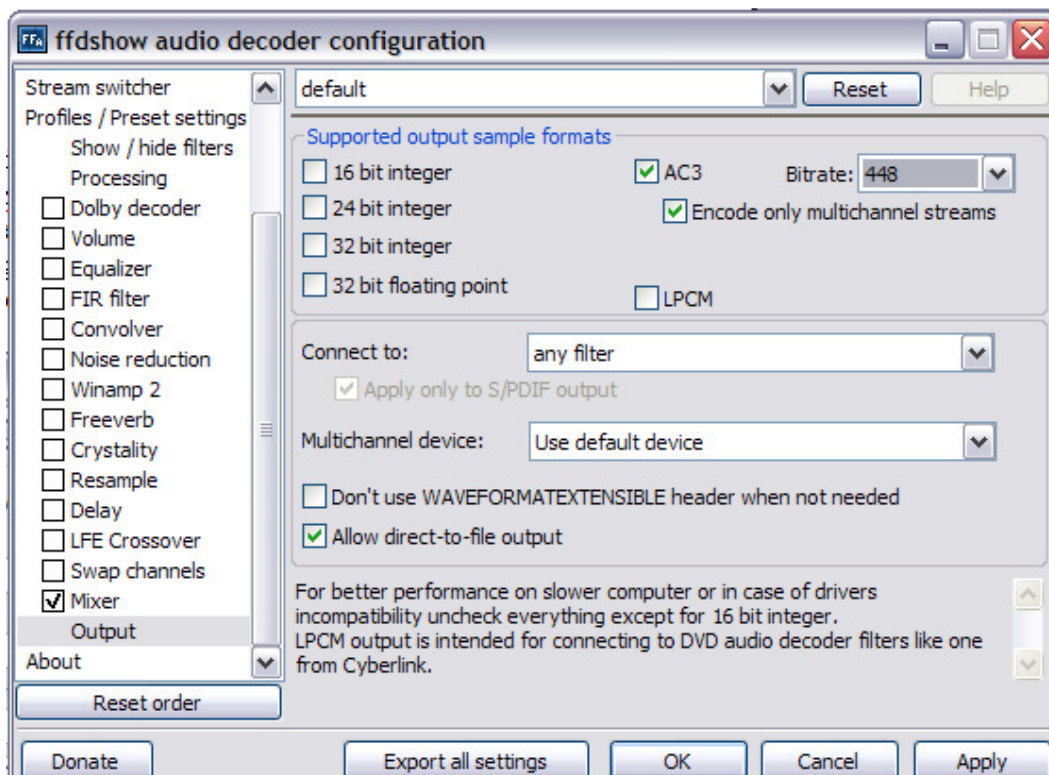
- Resizing video to your screens native resolution is quite resource intensive but can significantly improve video quality. There are two ways to do this, GPU and CPU, my preference is GPU. To allow the graphics card to scale the video for you, you need to open up “Mediaportal configuration” and navigate to “directshow filter control” and “video mixing renderer 9 settings” Then select a filtering mode your GPU can handle. This may require trial and error.



If you take the CPU route then you need to fire up “ffds show video decoder configuration” again. Then select the tickbox next to “Resize and Aspect” Make sure “specify horizontal and vertical size” is selected. Type your screen’s resolution into the boxes underneath, e.g. 1360 and 768 respectively. Make sure “resize always”, “Process pixel ratio internally” and “keep original aspect ratio” are selected.



6. Encoding to ac3 will allow ffdshow to output ac3 audio. This can be quite handy for those of us with multichannel receivers. You can see how to do this in the following screenshot.



7. *When all of your settings are done. Open either "ffdshow video decoder configuration" or "ffdshow audio decoder configuration" and click "export all settings" This allows you to backup your settings to .reg files in case of reinstall or whatever.*
8. *There are many other options in ffdshow, so I advise you to experiment.*

*Happy watching guys,*

*Goose*