

Ensure Music Players Display the Correct Details for Your Audio Tracks

This article shows you how to:

- ✓ Embed textual ‘tags’ in your audio files
- ✓ Quickly specify artist and album names
- ✓ Add track titles and numbers to each music file

As well as playing music on your PC, you quite likely copy your albums to your mobile phone or MP3 player, and perhaps play them in the car via a memory card or a DVD. All these music players should tell you what you’re listening do, but do you ever find you’re listening to ‘Track01’ on ‘Unknown Album’ by ‘Unknown Artist’?

If you do, it’s because your music files don’t contain any information about the tracks. These details are known as ‘tags’, and adding tags to your music is an easy job. Just follow the steps in this article to make those anonymous music files recognisable.



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A Brief Introduction to Tags

Textual
information
stored in
music files

The word ‘tags’ relates to additional text-based information that’s embedded into a music file. You can include tags in MP3 and WMA audio files, and most music players – on your PC and especially on other devices – rely on those tags to display information about the file they’re playing.

Editing tags is easy in Windows, as I’ll explain. The one catch is that if you edit the tags of the music files on your PC, you’ll have to re-copy those files to your other devices afterwards. However, if you have tracks on a flash drive or memory card, you can edit the files on that device directly.

Step 1: Get the Album’s Filenames Right

Are the
filenames
anonymous
too?

The missing tags are quite likely the result of having copied (or ‘ripped’) the music from an audio CD, and that quite likely means that the filenames are anonymous too: they’re named Track01, Track02, and so on. So first, let’s set about renaming them.

Give them
recognisable
names

The best naming scheme is to use the track number (as two digits) followed by a space and the name, missing out any characters that can’t be included in a filename (`\ / : * ? " | < >`). Here’s the quickest way to rename the tracks of an album:



1. Make your way to the drive and folder containing the album’s tracks.
2. Select the first track (‘Track01’) and press the **F2** key to rename it.
3. Type the new name, using the scheme above, but when you’ve finished, don’t press **Enter**. (You could

do that, then select the second track and press **(F2)** and so on, but this is quicker!) Instead, press **(Tab)**.

4. That selects the second track and puts it into renaming mode, letting you type the new name for that and press **(Tab)** again to move to the third track.

01 Alfie's Theme	08/10/2019 10:33	MP3 File	14,201 KB
02 This Is Love	08/10/2019 10:33	MP3 File	11,246 KB
03 Mr Papa	08/10/2019 10:33	MP3 File	10,974 KB
Track04	08/10/2019 10:33	MP3 File	12,496 KB
Track05	08/10/2019 10:33	MP3 File	11,473 KB
Track06	08/10/2019 10:33	MP3 File	17,820 KB

5. When you've finished typing the name of the last track, press **(Enter)** to confirm that one and you've finished.

Step 2: Quickly Enter the Artist Name and Album Title

Getting the filenames right is chiefly to help you tell the difference between one track and another: some music players may fall back on the filename to display the track title if the file contains no tags, but not all.

It's the remaining steps that truly get your tracks looking as they should when you play them – the tags.

We'll do this in two steps. First we can enter the details that are the same for every track on the album, such as the artist name and the album title, and that's a quick job. Here's how it's done:

1. Begin by selecting all the tracks belonging to this album. If the music tracks are the only files in the folder, you can do that by pressing **(Ctrl) + (A)** (for

Enter tags
relating to the
whole album



Open the
Properties dialog

We'll fill in
these fields

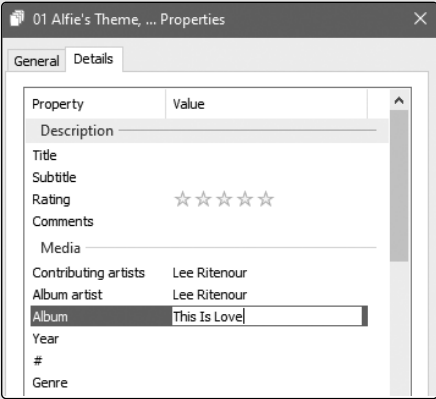
Contributing
artist

Album artist

- Select All). If not, you should be able to click your first ('01') track, then hold **(Shift)** as you click the last to select everything in between.
2. Now we open the Properties dialog for these files. Either press **(Alt)** + **(Enter)** or right-click one of your selected files and choose **Properties**.
 3. In the dialog that appears, switch to the **Details** tab, pictured opposite. There are several fields we're going to fill in here, all of which appear in the 'Media' section:
 - **Contributing artists**: the name of this particular track's artist. In most cases, every track on the album is by the same artist, so we can fill this in now.
 - **Album artist**: the name of the artist to whom the album is credited (which is often the same as above, but may be 'Various Artists' on a compilation album).
 - **Album**: the album title.
 - **Year**: you might like to enter the year the album was released.
 - **Genre**: this is optional, but you can type the album's genre, such as 'Jazz', 'Pop', 'Classical' and so on.
 4. Is every track on this album by the same artist? If not, skip ahead to step 5. Otherwise, move the mouse a little way to the right of the words **Contributing artist** and click. A text box will appear containing the words 'Specify contributing artist'. Type the artist's name.
 5. Click to the right of the words **Album artist** and type the name of the artist credited for the whole album. (In fact, after filling in one of these fields, you can

speed things along a little by pressing the **(Tab)** key to jump from the current field to the next.)

6. Alongside **Year** you can optionally type the year this album was released. Skip the **#** field, which is where the track numbers will go later, and beside **Genre** you can type the album's genre.
7. After filling in the last field you need, click the **OK** button at the bottom of the dialog. That's got all the general information entered about this album's tracks.



Optionally include Year and Genre

Step 3: Specify the Track Names and Numbers

The final step is slightly more longwinded: now we need to add the tags relating to each individual track – its title and track number. Here's what to do:

Individual details for each track

1. Click a blank white space in the folder window to deselect all those tracks.



Track title

Contributing
artist, if
necessary

Track number

2.

Select the first track and either press **(Alt) + (Enter)** or right-click it and choose **Properties**.
3.

Once again, switch to the **Details** tab.
4.

Click to the right of the word **Title** and type the title of this first track. This time you can include characters that aren't allowed in filenames.
5.

If the tracks on this album are by a variety of different artists, you left the **Contributing artists** field blank earlier. Now click beside it and type the artist of this first track.
6.

Lastly, click beside the **#** and type the track number ('1' in this case).
7.

Click **OK** and you've completed the details for this track. Go back to step 2 and do the same for the second (and subsequent) tracks.

