LL2MP3

version 1.9.9.16

GENERAL REMARKS

LL2MP3 converts three lossless audio file formats - WAV, FLAC, APE - into the MP3 format. If there are any ID3 tags (Title, Artist, Album, etc.) these are transferred to the MP3 file.
The conversion is effectuated by several external applications - codecs - and these have to be present on the local hard drives. The codecs are:

- **Mac.exe** - converts APE to WAV.
- **Flac.exe** - converts FLAC to WAV;
- **Metaflac.exe** - extracts tags from FLAC (same location as Flac.exe is required);
- **Lame.exe** - converts a WAV to MP3;

LL2MP3 is a so-called frontend. Its purpose is to simplify the setting up and the use of the codecs. The codecs operate with many and rather complicated options. LL2MP3 takes care of this in an easy way. At http://LL2MP3.com you will find links to sites where you can download these codecs. See also **USER INTERFACE.**

OPERATION

Setting up LL2MP3 is done using its 'context menu' (Fig. 1).

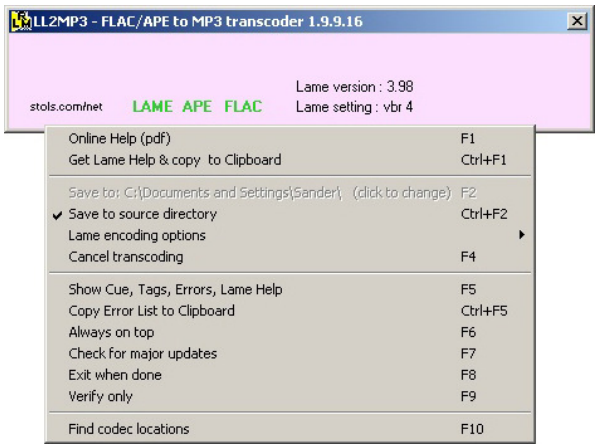

Fig. 1

The menu items are explained below. The conversion process starts immediately after you have dragged and dropped any mix of lossless files and of directories containing these files from the Windows Explorer to the LL2MP3 window. Be sure to have all the settings as you want them before you do this, since several menu items are disabled while the conversion process is going on. During conversion, you can however drop more files on the window.

Most settings are saved between sessions, meaning that next time you use LL2MP3 you have very little setting up to do.

Several copies of the program may run at the same time. This speeds up the work if you have a multi-core processor.

WORKFLOW

DECODING to WAV

FLAC and APE files are decoded to WAV files in the first step. These WAV files are encoded to MP3 files in a second step. The decoding step also extracts the ID3 tags to be added to the MP3 files. Intermediate WAV files are removed after completion of the second step.

ENCODING TO MP3

Clicking on 'Lame encoding options' in the context menu opens a submenu where you can select one of ten Lame encoding options. They determine the quality and the size of the MP3 files to different degrees. Five options are pre-defined (right half of the menu), five options can be defined by the user (click on 'custom settings', or press F3 from the main window, see: **USER INTERFACE**).

You can select the destination directory where the MP3 files should be stored. If any directories, containing lossless files to be converted, were used as input for LL2MP3, a similar directory structure is set up in the destination directory to hold the corresponding MP3 files.

If the destination directory is read-only (e.g. a ROM drive), the Default User Directory is chosen instead to write to.

VERIFYING LOSSLESS FILES

It is possible to only verify the integrity of FLAC and APE files (F9, see: **USER INTERFACE**). If any file fails to decode properly, one or more message lines are added to the Error List (**Fig. 4**).

USER INTERFACE

There are three colored labels (LAME, APE, FLAC) shown in the main window. The meaning of the colors is as follows:

- **LAME**: the codec is present and WAV can be converted to MP3;
- **LAME**: the location is unknown or the codec is absent;
- **APE**: the codec is present and APE can be converted to WAV;
- **APE**: the location is unknown or the codec is absent.
- **FLAC**: both Flac.exe and Metaflac.exe are present and FLAC can be converted to WAV while the ID3 tags can be extracted;
- **FLAC**: only Flac.exe was found. FLAC can still be converted to WAV but the ID3 tags cannot be extracted;
- **FLAC**: both codecs weren't found or are absent.

If any of these codecs is missing or their location on the hard drives is unknown, you can press F10 to try and find them (see below). At the very first start of the program all three labels will be red: use F10!

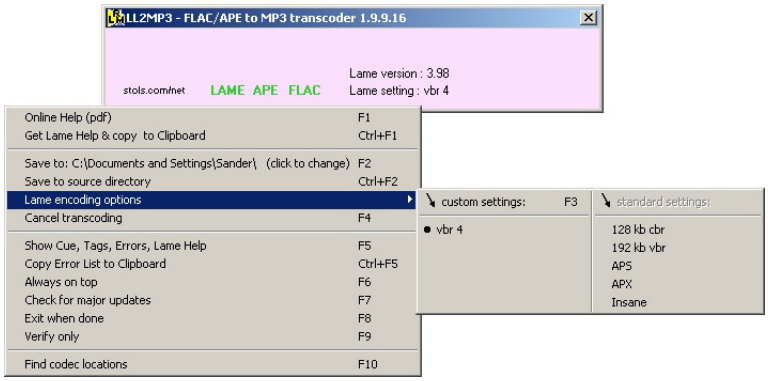

Fig. 2

The context menu with 12 items shows what settings there are and which function keys have been assigned to them.

- Online Help (pdf) (**F1**) – gets this HELP as a pdf from the author's web site.
- Get Lame Help & copy to Clipboard (**Ctrl+F1**) – the full Lame Help text taken from the current Lame version is copied to the clipboard. If you want to add custom Lame options, this text can help to build correct strings.
- Save to: [*directory*] (click to change) (**F2**) - select the MP3 destination directory, as mentioned above.
- Save to source directory (**Ctrl+F2**) – When checked, saves all MP3 files to their source directories. Save to: (F2) is disabled; it is enabled again by unchecking Save to source directory.
- Lame encoding options - shows a menu with five custom Lame Options (left half of table) and five pre-defined Options (right half) (**Fig. 2**). Click one to select it.
    - Clicking on custom settings at the top left (**F3**) shows a new window in which you can define up to five custom Lame encoding strings and assign a name to them(**Fig. 3**).

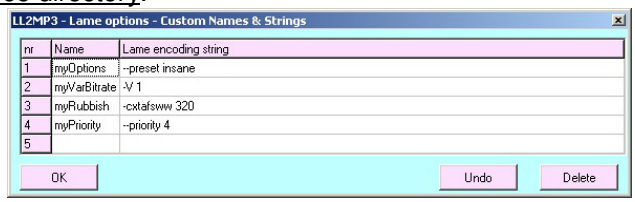

Fig. 3

- Stop transcoding (**F4**) - The conversion process stops the moment this function key is pressed. All intermediate data are deleted and LL2MP3 is ready for a fresh start.
- Show Cue, Tags, Errors, Lame Help (**F5**) - Shows or hides four tabbed lists (**Fig. 4**).
    - **Cue List** shows all files to be converted;
    - **Tag List** shows the ID3 tags extracted from the file being converted;
    - **Error List** shows any errors found and the files in which they occurred;
    - **Lame Help** shows a complete Help text from the current Lame version. This text file is copied to the clipboard with Ctrl+F1.

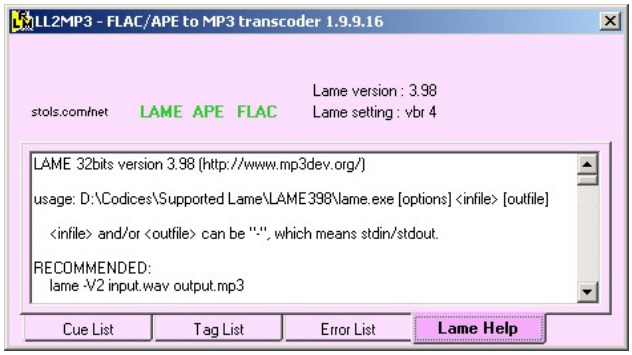

Fig. 4

- Copy Error List to Clipboard (**Ctrl+F5**) - If any errors were found, the Error List data is copied to the Clipboard.
- Always on top (**F6**) - When checked, the LL2MP3 window appears 'Always on top'.
- Check for major updates (**F7**) - When checked, the first time you run LL2MP3 any day you are notified if there is a major update of LL2MP3 available. During the checking process the message 'Checking for latest version' is shown. Go to http://LL2MP3.com to get the latest version.
- Exit when done (**F8**) - When checked, LL2MP3 closes after the conversion of all the files in the queue is finished.

- Verify only (**F9**) - When checked, no conversion to MP3 takes place: used to only verify the integrity of FLAC and APE files.
- Find codec locations (**F10**) - A window pops up where you have three options to find a missing codec (Fig. 5).
    - press ··· to browse to the codec location on the local hard drive;
    - press to let LL2MP3 find the locations of all copies of the codec on the local hard drives. The number of copies found is shown. The text box shows the last file found. You can stop the search any moment.
      In the case of Flac the program searches for both flac.exe and metaflac.exe. If metaflac.exe is found in the same directory as flac.exe, the text box shows them both as shown in Fig 5. You should select a line like this to enable LL2MP3 to use both codecs since they have to be located in the same directory. If no codec is found you are advised to try the button to the right.
      By pressing the drop down button at right of the text box you can then scroll through the list of files found so far (Fig 6). Select the one you want and click OK.

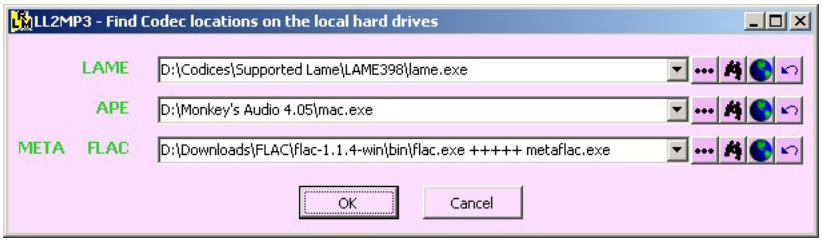

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

    - press to get the codec from the internet. Save the file found in a directory of your choice.
    - Pressing the fourth small button restores the the original codec location. The Reset All button resets all three original locations. The OK button saves the locations as displayed and closes the window.

Besides the LAME, FLAC, and APE labels, the LL2MP3 window shows the name and destination of the file currently being converted. There is a progress bar the color of which shows what step is being executed:

- ■■■■■ - FLAC conversion to WAV
- ■■■■■ - APE conversion to WAV
- ■■■■■ - WAV conversion to MP3

During the decoding phase the codec currently in use and its version is also shown. During the encoding step, the Lame version is displayed, together with the Lame encoding option you selected.

LOSSLESS FORMATS

- WAV - With only the Lame codec present, you still can convert WAV files to MP3. In this case the original WAV files are not deleted. If the Lame codec is absent but Flac or Ape codecs are present, you can still verify Flac and Ape files.
- FLAC - With the Flac and Metaflac codecs present you can convert FLAC to MP3 and transfer any ID3 tags. If Metaflac is missing, you can still convert FLAC but the tags will be lost. Intermediate WAV files are deleted after conversion to MP3.
- APE - With the Ape codec present, you can convert APE to MP3. Intermediate WAV files again are removed.

TESTED CODEC VERSIONS

- Lame versions 3.93, 3.96.1, 3.97, 3.98, 3.98.2. Alpha and Beta versions are not supported.
- Ape versions 3.99, 4.01, 4.05.
- Flac versions 1.1.0 up to and including 1.2.1.
- Metaflac versions 1.1.1 up to and including 1.2.1.

May work with later codec versions.
Not tested for earlier versions.
Runs in Windows XP Home, XP Pro, and Vista Home Premium.