



UltiMOD Player for Windows

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Where Did You Get UltiMOD?

Introduction

Digital audio has beaten a serious path to the PC desktop thanks to the Multimedia capabilities of Microsoft Windows, and its usefulness extends far beyond mere voice-annotated spreadsheets into the realm of CD-quality recording and playback. Although Multimedia is a relatively new phenomenon to the PC, numerous other hardware platforms, including the Commodore Amiga and Apple Macintosh to name a few, have supported similar technology for several years now;

consequently, Windows Multimedia developers should look to the pitfalls and successes of other platforms for valuable cues.

One of the primary limitations of digital audio is storage space: digital recordings require a LOT of room. For example, a two minute 8-bit mono recording sampled at 44.10 kHz occupies a 5.28MB WAV file. Double that figure for a 16-bit recording. "But why," you ask, "worry about storage space when a single, inexpensive CD-ROM can accommodate over six hundred megabytes?" The answer is simple: it takes lots of time and effort for the CPU to read and process so much data, and that translates into reduced overall system performance.

The Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) protocol overcomes space limitations by storing just the sequence of notes for a particular song; however, on the downside, MIDI does not guarantee that songs created on one synthesizer will sound exactly the same on another, nor can it reproduce a human voice. It may surprise you to learn that the Commodore Amiga supports 8-bit digital recordings of five minutes or more that fit on a single floppy disk. This remarkable feat is accomplished using the so-called Module (MOD) file format.

Anatomy of the MOD Format

MOD files fall somewhere between MIDI and WAV formats. MODs, however, contain up to 31 digitized samples--called instruments--in a format similar to WAV Pulse Code Modulation (PCM). Each digital sample represents one note of a particular instrument in one pitch; that is, the digitized "plink" of a piano or the "bang" of a drum. Human voice is also considered an instrument, too. This digitized waveform is a sort of instrument "signature." Modifying the pitch, tempo, and attack of the digitized sample enables you to reproduce any note for a given instrument. MIDI has 16 channels--MODs four; hence, four instruments can be played simultaneously. MOD files contain a table that describes when to play an instrument and upon which channel. All kinds of special effects can be applied to individual notes: arpeggios, portamentos, pitch and volume slides, vibratos, etc.

```
typedef struct tagMODHEADER
{
    char    name[20];
} MODHEADER;
```

```
typedef struct tagINSTRUMENT
{
    char    name[22];
    WORD    sampleLength;
    WORD    volume;
    WORD    repeatOffset;
```

```
    WORD    repeatLength;
} INSTRUMENT;
```

```
typedef struct tagPOSITIONTABLE
{
    BYTE    noOfPositions;
    BYTE    reserved;
    BYTE    position[ MAX_POSITIONS ];
} POSITIONTABLE;
```

```
typedef struct tagNOTE
{
    WORD    word1;
    WORD    word2;
} NOTE;
```

```
typedef struct tagCHANNEL
{
    NOTE    note;
} CHANNEL;
```

```
typedef struct tagPATTERNROW
{
    CHANNEL channel[ MAX_CHANNELS ];
} PATTERNROW;
```

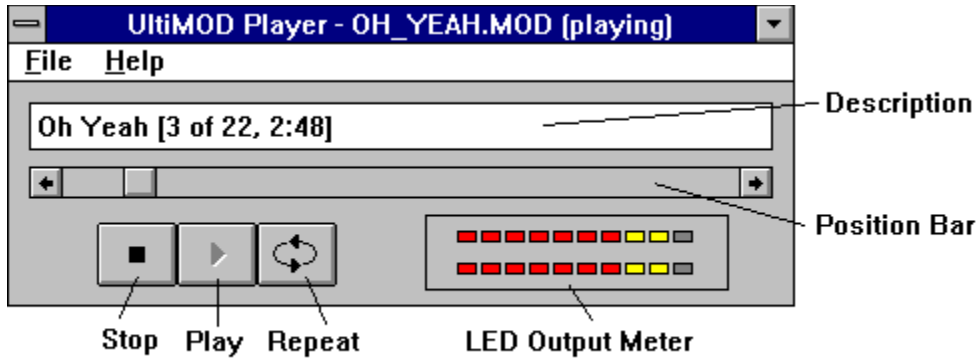
```
typedef struct tagPATTERNTABLE
{
    PATTERNROW row[ MAX_PATTERN_ROWS ];
} PATERNTABLE;
```

// This is the order of these elements in the .MOD file.

```
MODHEADER    modHeader;
INSTRUMENT    instrument[ NO_OF_INSTRUMENTS ];
POSITIONTABLE positionTable;
PATTERNTABLE patternTable;
```

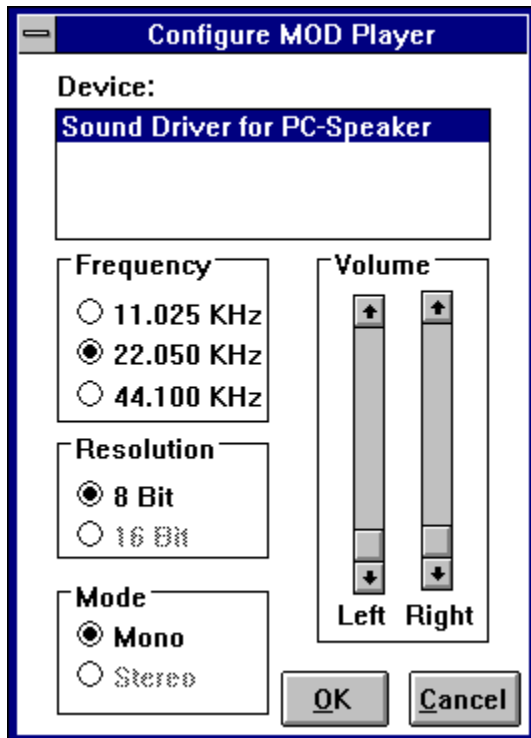
NOTE: NO_OF_INSTRUMENTS defaults to 15, unless the .MOD file contains 'M.K.', 'FLT4', or 'FLT8' at Offset 1080 (decimal)--in which case there are 31 instruments.

Tthe UltiMOD Player



Configuring UltiMOD

UltiMOD should work with all Windows MPC-compatible sound cards, including ADLIB, SoundBlaster, and others supporting 44.1kHz 16-bit stereo audio output. By selecting the &File&Configure option from the UltiMOD Player menu, the following dialog box will appear. You can then modify device, volume, frequency, resolution, and mode settings:



Where Can I Obtain MOD Files, Anyway?

MOD files are surprisingly popular with users of both Amiga and IBM-compatible machines. One of the best places to find MOD files

is in the CompuServe AMIGAARTS Forum (GO AMIGAARTS). They can also be found in dozens of other CIS Forums. Just type GO IBMFF or GO AMIGAFF and search for 'MOD'.

