

## **ID3 Tags And The Tune Library**

A new feature of DC7 that you should not overlook is the Tune Library. If you haven't already, you should experiment with the Library. It's easy to use and quite a good organizational tool.

One feature that you may not have thought much about is the support for ID3 tags in the Tune Library. If you don't know what an ID3 tag is, then let's have a little lesson on them.

Wave files were defined a LONG time ago. In their simplest form, a wave file is just a voltage reading taken many times per second. Each of these voltage readings is converted to a binary number and then are stored, one after the other, in a file. Thus, our wave file contains little except audio information - there are no song names, artist names or album names in a wave file. That was fine when we could read the artist and song names right on the CD we were playing, but what about now when we have hundreds or thousands of songs loaded on our hard drives or MP3 players?

The answer is called ID3 tags. These are extra spaces of non audio information in a compressed file which can contain all sorts of info. Alas, only compressed formats such as MP3 contain this information - the wave format was defined so long ago that it's really too late to change it.

So there are two ways around the problem of storing information about our music - one is to store information about wave files in a separate file. This is what the Tune Library does. When you see the title of White Christmas and the Artist as Aaron Neville and the Album as Soulful Christmas, none of this info is stored in the wave files. It can't be. Instead it is stored in the tune library and just "linked" to the song itself. If you use DC7 to rip your CDs, it'll look up this info from the Internet and add it for you. Or, you can add it yourself, by just right clicking on a song and choosing Properties in the Tune Library. Note that there is no way to automate filling in this info when the source is a vinyl record - you just have to type it in yourself.

But MP3 and other compressed formats sometimes already have this information included in the file itself. If that's so, DC7 will read it and fill in the blanks in the database for you. If there is no information in the ID3 part of an MP3 file, you could add it to the DC7 database yourself, but it's better to add it to the file and let DC7 read it that way. Why, you ask? Because if you add the artist/album information to the file itself, then it'll show up when you play the file on your MP3 player. This way if you have thousands of songs, it'll be easier to find the ones you want.

So, how to add ID3 info to an existing MP3 file? You can do it yourself by just right clicking and choosing properties in windows, OR you can download any of hundreds of little programs called ID3 editors. Some of these make it easy to add the info on songs, add cover art and much more.

To summarize:

- The Tune Library in DC7 has it's own database of song/artist/album information.
- If you rip CDs, this info will be looked up and added automatically from the net
- If you add wave files you recorded from vinyl, you'll have to type in the info
- If you add MP3 files and they have ID3 info already there it will be added to the database
- If you have MP3 files without ID3 info, it is recommended that you add it directly to the MP3 as ID3 data using an ID3 editor. DC7 and you MP3 player will then be able to read this data automatically.