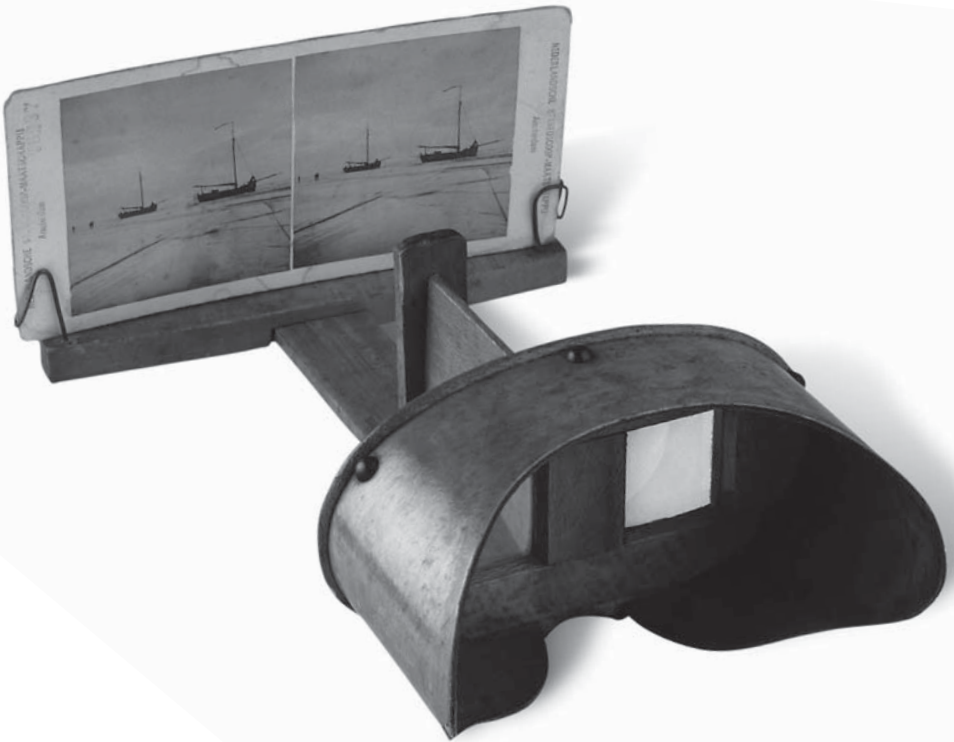


LINUX MULTIMEDIA HACKS™

*Tips & Tools for Taming Images,
Audio, and Video*



O'REILLY®

Kyle Rankin



HACK

#91

Watch Videos Within Firefox

Use `mplayerplug-in` to view video embedded into web pages.

If you chat with a group of geeks for any extended period of time, the conversation inevitably steers into talks of the “good old days” of computing, when geeks were geeks and you edited your files with a magnet and a magnifying glass. Let me be the first to break rank and say that the good old days of watching embedded web video under Linux were anything but. In the case of QuickTime video (such as movie trailers), once Linux was able to play them, you still couldn’t watch them in a browser: instead you had to put on your detective hat and often dig around in the web page source for the URL you needed to download the video. That of course was only if you could find the right URL.

MPlayer’s support of streaming URLs from the command line improved things a bit, but considering the steps Windows users had to take to watch video streams on the Web, it was still pretty troublesome. A breakthrough came with the creation of the `mplayerplug-in`—a plug-in for Mozilla-based browsers (Konqueror is not currently supported) that embedded MPlayer into web pages offering streaming video. Now every video that MPlayer can play outside of the browser you can play embedded inside the browser so the experience is more or less the same as browsing under Windows.

Since `mplayerplug-in` uses MPlayer for all the video playback, you will need MPlayer version 0.92 or higher installed on your system. ([Hack #48] explains how to install and use MPlayer.)

The downloads page for `mplayerplug-in` at <http://mplayerplug-in.sourceforge.net> offers links to precompiled packages for a number of Linux distributions, so installation is simple: download the package that matches your distribution and install it using your distribution’s package manager. If you use a Debian-based distribution, the package is called `mozilla-mplayer` and is a part of the Debian “unstable contrib” repository. Add the following line to your `/etc/apt/sources.list`, run **apt-get update**, and then install the package:

```
deb ftp://ftp.nerim.net/debian-marillat/ unstable main
```

If there isn’t a package for your particular distribution, just download the source code from the project page and follow the installation instructions at <http://mplayerplug-in.sourceforge.net/install.php> to compile and install the software.

After the software is installed, open Firefox or another Mozilla-based browser and browse to your favorite movie-trailer site. When you open a page that has embedded video, `mplayerplug-in` should display in the video’s space. By default `mplayerplug-in` caches 25% of the video before it plays, and it shows the current cache status as it is downloading. When the cache

limit of 25% is reached the video begins. You can control playback with the buttons along the bottom of the interface. There is also a button to the far right of the controls that will toggle full-screen mode for the video.

mplayerplug-in chooses sane defaults, but it also provides a number of options for you to tweak. Configuration tweaks that affect all users can be done in */etc/mplayerplug-in.conf*. Or you can put a configuration that just affects your user in *~/mplayer/mplayerplug-in.conf*. This file contains all *mplayerplug-in* options, set to their defaults and commented out. This way you can see your options and their normal behaviors. The *mplayerplug-in* documentation at <http://mplayerplug-in.sourceforge.net/config.php> describes the purposes of all the options, but a few bear mentioning here. Table 5-1 lists a number of interesting *mplayerplug-in* options and their functions.

Table 5-1. *mplayerplug-in* options

Option	Function
<code>vo=[xv,x11...etc.]</code>	Override the default MPlayer video output settings.
<code>ao=[arts,esd,oss...etc.]</code>	Override the default MPlayer audio output settings.
<code>qtspeed=[low medium high]</code>	Set the QT speed, low for dialup, medium for DSL, and high for higher-speed connections.
<code>noembed=[0 1]</code>	If set to 1, will force video to be displayed in its own window instead of embedded in the browser.
<code>keep-download=[0 1]</code>	If set to 1, videos you view will be automatically saved to the directory specified in <i>dload-dir</i> .
<code>dload-dir=/path/to/directory</code>	Where to store movies that <i>mplayerplug-in</i> downloads.