



StreamCasting Quick Start Guide – On-Demand Streaming Media Hosting

All of us at StreamCasting.com wish you success with your online streaming venture. We have created this guide to get you up and running with the basic procedures for streaming your content. If you have further questions, please visit our online knowledge base on our website or you can contact us at: support@StreamCasting.com

Step One – Encoding Your Content

If you have already encoded your media files or if we have encoded them for you, then you can move to step two.

Depending on the file formats you intend to stream in, you will need to encode your audio/video content to one or more of these formats: Flash Video (FLV), h.264 (MP4) or Windows Media.

There are many programs available to perform the encoding process:

All formats - Sorenson Squeeze (\$\$\$):

<http://www.sorensonmedia.com/>

Flash Video (FLV) - Flash Video Encoder (Free with Flash CS5 or CS4):

<http://www.adobe.com/products/flash/>

Any Video Converter Ultimate (MP4 formatting) (\$):

<http://www.any-video-converter.com/how-to-enable-mp4-streaming.php>

Windows Media - Windows Expression Encoder (Free):

http://www.microsoft.com/expression/products/encoder4_overview.aspx

There are many settings and variables that can be adjusted when encoding to any of these formats. The best rule of thumb is to use a bitrate that is low enough so that your audience can view the file but just high enough to maintain the quality you need. This is a fine balance and may require some testing when you first start encoding and streaming.

A file that might look great when you play it locally from your hard drive might not yield the same results if it needs to fit through your viewer's cable or DSL connection.

An average streaming video is in the 300-700k range with a frame size of 320x240 or 480x360 at 25 frames per second. If your content has a lot of quick edits or high motion you may need to use a higher bit rate and frame rate. The dimensions mentioned here are for 4:3 formatted video. Widescreen or 16:9 sizes will vary. Most encoder programs allow you to select a 16:9 template or to "maintain aspect ratio" so that when you select the width of the encoder file the height will adjust appropriately.

When thinking about your audience's connection speed, remember that speeds from cable or DSL providers are not guaranteed and on a sustained basis are probably lower than advertised. Even a large corporation using a T-3 line might only have 500k available for each individual user during peak times of the day.

You can do some quick research by going to this page and running the speed test from the closest server to your location:

<http://speedtest.net/>

Subtract 20-25% from the download speed for what you might use as the highest encoding bitrate from that connection at that particular time.

Flash, MP4 and Windows Media allow you to encode multiple bitrate files that will send the correct version based on a test the player performs when the viewer first connects. Please contact us (support@StreamCasting.com) to learn more about how to set this up. The alternative is to offer multiple versions of the encoded files with several links and let the viewer decide.

If you find that encoding is more of a hassle that you had planned, please contact us and we are always available to professionally encode your content for a nominal fee. Be sure to mention you are a streaming hosting client for special rates.

Step Two – Uploading Your Files to the StreamCasting Network

Once you have your encoded content ready to go, take some time to clean up the file names and develop a naming convention, for example:

mmp_video_sample1_low.flv
mmp_video_sample2_med.flv
mmp_video_sample3_high.flv
mmp_video_sample2_mobile.mp4
mmp_video_sample3_300k.wmv
mmp_video_sample3_700k.wmv

It is very important that your file names do not have any spaces or punctuation, other than a dash or an underscore.

Only upload the correct file format to the proper folder. All other support files must be located on your **web server** – not the streaming network. For example:

Windows Media Folder – Only **WMA** and **WMV** files go here.
Your ASX or other files should be on your web server.

Flash Video Folder – Only **FLV** and streaming **MP4** files go here.
If you use a SWF file, it should reside on your **web server** and it should call the FLV from our network.

MP4/h.264 file for http streaming to iOS devices should be placed in a progressive download folder on our network. If you need this type of delivery and you do not already have one, please contact us to have this folder added to your account.

AVI and **MPEG** are not streaming formats and need to be converted before you upload or try to view them online.

You will need an FTP program to send your content to us. Some common programs are:

WinSCP (Free):
<http://winscp.net/eng/download.php>

FileZilla (Free):
<http://filezilla-project.org/>

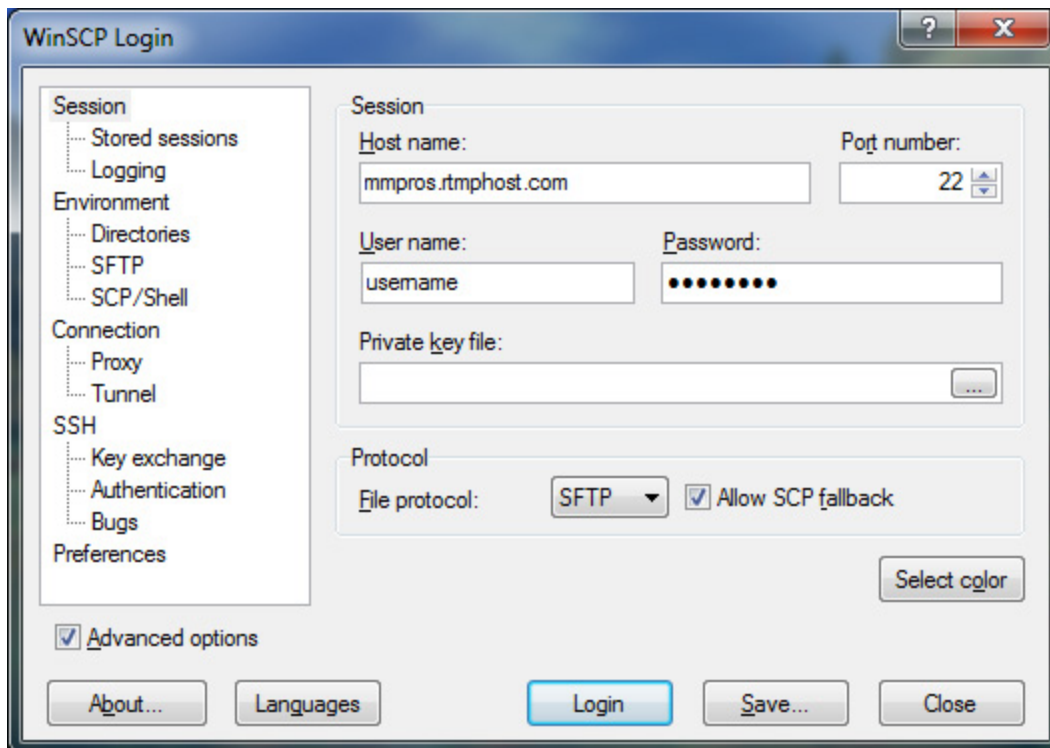
Fetch (Mac users) (\$):
<http://fetchsoftworks.com/>

WS_FTP (\$\$):
http://www.ipswitchft.com/Products/WS_Ftp_Pro/Index.aspx?ps=1

SmartFTP (\$\$):
<http://www.smartftp.com/>

Create a server connection using the FTP information found in your control panel at: <http://StreamCasting.com/mediastats/>

If you are uploading to our “mmpros.rtmphost.com” network, you will need to establish a Secure FTP connection using port 22 in your FTP program. An example of what SFTP settings looks like in WinSCP is shown below:



Your username and password for the control panel were sent to you when you signed up for our service. Contact us if you need this information re-sent.

All FTP programs work pretty much the same way with a display of the files on your local computer on one side and the remote server on the other. Consult each program's documentation for specific details of their use.

Step Three – Create Links to Your Content

Now that you have encoded and uploaded your content, it's time to test the files and then tell the world about it!

In your control panel, you will find linking examples for your streaming files.



For Flash Video, you have a choice of using the direct link to call the video from a Flash Movie (SWF) file or application that you create in Flash CS4/CS5. Most clients choose to simply embed their video into a webpage to have the video play inside your website.

The example code we provide in your streaming media control panel is for a basic looking player with common settings and functionality. We use the JW Player which offers many customizations and powerful plug-in that can enhance your viewers experience. We recommend reviewing the following resource on the JW Player site:

Configuration Options:

www.longtailvideo.com/support/jw-player/jw-player-for-flash-v5/12536/configuration-options

Plug-ins, Modules and Skins:

<http://www.longtailvideo.com/addons/>

We always support the latest release of the JW Player as well as maintaining previous versions. We encourage you to visit your streaming media control panel occasionally to make sure you are embedding the latest code available.



MP4/h.264 files intended to play on mobile device such as Apple iOS products require a different embedded code using a <video> tag which is part of the HTML5 standard. We also provide examples of this type of code in your streaming media control panel. We also have an example of code that will attempt to use Flash first (for desktops) and then fallback to HTML5 for mobile devices. This is an evolving area of streaming and we are here to assist you in any way you need to get your code working for all viewer devices.



For Windows Media, you have a choice of a direct link to the file, which will cause it to play in the viewer's media player designated for that format, or you can embed the file to play inside of a webpage.

The sample links provided for you are specific to your account and all you need to do is change "FILE_NAME_HERE" to the full name of the file, including the file extension. For embedded codes, the file name is sometimes listed in more than one location.

We hope that this has been an informative guide to the basics of streaming media encoding and hosting. Once you have published your first files, the process will become very familiar to you.

We also provide you with real time stats for each format you are using. Links to these statistics are provided in your control panel. Good luck with your on-demand streaming!

Customer Technical Support
StreamCasting.com
support@StreamCasting.com