Network Recorder Codec on Windows 7

Essential Codec Missing

Network Recorder requires Fraunhofer IIS MPEG Layer-3 codec. Due to some licensing issues, Vista onwards (including W7) does not allow encryption using the codec.

Fortunately, a Windows XP version of the codec can be used.

Network Recorder Symptoms

Network Recorder simply won't start. On earlier versions, it will display an error message stating either "Error in file converion". On newer versions, "MPEG CODEC not found" or "ACM stream open failed: The requested operation cannot be performed." will appear.

Installing the Codec

Acquire a copy of l3codeca.acm from a Windows XP installation.

Rename the file to l3codecb.acm (or whatever you want) and place it in C:\windows\system32\ directory. The rename is required due to the fact that there should already be l3codeca.acm present, and the file is protected. For a 64-bit PC also add it to C:\windows\SysWOW64.

Open regedit

Navigate to [HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Drivers32]

You should be able to find a string value named "msacm.l3acm".

Change it from C:\WINDOWS\system32\l3codeca.acm to C:\WINDOWS\system32\l3codecb.acm

Navigate to [HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\drivers.desc]

Create a new string value with the name "C:\WINDOWS\system32\l3codecb.acm"

Set its value to "Fraunhofer IIS MPEG Layer-3 Codec". Note: This is possibly just a label, and may not be necessary.

64 bit Extra Step

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Wow6432Node\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Drivers32

Change the "msacm.l3acm" entry from "C:\Windows\SysWOW64\l3codeca.acm" to "C:\Windows\SysWOW64\l3codecb.acm"

[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Drivers32]

"msacm.l3acm"="C:\WINDOWS\system32\l3codecb.acm"

[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Wow6432Node\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\Drivers32]

"msacm.l3acm"="C:\Windows\SysWOW64\l3codecb.acm"

This information was found in the blog http://www.virtualdub.org/blog/pivot/entry.php?id=16.

Other Notes

There are several different versions of the codec.

l3codecx.acm: Cannot encode at all.

l3codeca.acm (Advanced): Encodes up to 56Kbps.

l3codecp.acm (Professional, older version): Encodes up to 128Kbps.

l3codecp.acm (Professional, newer version): Encodes up to 320Kbps.

l3codecp.acm (so-called "Radium" version): Encodes up to 320Kbps

The professional version will not work with network recorder.

File sizes of l3codeca.acm

Windows XP w/ Encoder = 284 kB

Windows 7 w/o Encoder = 62.5 kB