

Capturing Streams from Internet Broadcasts

Soundgrabber

Many proud owners of broadband Internet connections enjoy listening to Internet radio streams in the background. Although the enormous range of stations can make it hard to keep track, the real question is how do I go about recording a program that I really like?

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The Shoutcast [1], Live365 [2], and Icecast [3] sites list hundreds of Web radio stations. Web radio stations broadcast a continuous stream of MP3 formatted music. You can use any MP3 player, XMMS [4] for example, for sound output, and the Streamripper [5] command-line tool to capture the stream. Streamtuner [6] provides the GUI needed to coordinate the whole setup.

Although XMMS has a native *Disk Writer* plug-in, which will store a stream locally, the plug-in decodes the incoming stream, converting it to an enormous wave file on the local disk. As you can imagine, extracting your favorite track from the stream can be tricky.

Installation

Most major distributions do not include this update, so check out the packages from [7], [8], and [9]. If you have an RPM-based Linux system, such as Suse,

Red Hat, or Mandrake, ensure that you are *root*, and enter `rpm -Uvh *.rpm` to launch the Streamripper and Streamtuner installs.

These programs require a few additional packages such as the GTK libraries, which are typically pre-installed on most systems; Streamtuner also needs *Curl*.

Streamripper and Streamtuner have not found their way into the stable Debian version, *Woody*, although there are **backports** from future versions, which are not currently in stable. Both packages can be installed by following the typical steps: `dpkg -i *.deb` in the *Debian* directory. Again Streamtuner needs the *libcurl2* package.

To ensure that you have the latest versions, enter the following lines:

```
deb http://www.backports.org/debian
stable streamtuner
deb http://www.backports.org/
debian stable streamripper
```

in your `/etc/apt/sources.list` file and, working as *root*, type `apt-get update`, followed by `apt-get install streamripper streamtuner` to download the packages, after updating your exist-



ing packages.

Streamtuner uses the XMMS MP3 player to play music.

This program is included with all the distributions mentioned so far.

Tune In!

If you have never tried out Web radio before, check out the Shoutcast homepage at [1] for a great selection (see Figure 1). Fans of almost any genre should find something to their liking. Click the *Tune in!* button to the left of a station to pop up a dialog that prompts you to specify the player you want to use. A MP3 stream is not just a simple MP3 file, but a playlist with the *pls* or *m3u* suffix.

In the KDE browser, Konqueror, click on *Open* in the first dialog box. A second window will appear, if you have not previously assigned an application to this



Figure 1: Shoutcast caters to every taste.



Figure 2: XMMS tells you the address for your favorite stream.

