

Digitizing Vinyl LPs

Recently I have learned how to digitize my old records to my computer. I am able to create mp3s of my original music, store them on my hard drive, and then burn them back out to CD for playback in my vehicle.

Here's what you need to know. First, you must have a sound card, and we all do, that has a "line-in" port. Usually this is the "blue" coloured port. (The green is line-out, or speakers, and the red is for a microphone.)

Next, you must have a turntable that is plugged into an amp or a pre-amp. I naively thought I could just plug my turntable directly into my sound card, but NO, it is not possible to connect without first going through some sort of amplifier. I used the cassette tape "record" RCA jacks from the back of my amp. You can buy a cable that has two RCA jacks on one end and a 3.5mm stereo mini-jack on the other end at your local computer store, like Software Emporium.

In this case I ran a cable with two RCA jacks out of the amp record jacks to the line-in port on my sound card.

Now, for the software. I first used a downloadable program called Polderbits. It worked great, first I would record an entire side of an LP as one file, then with a click of a mouse Polderbits would locate the "white space" between tracks and split the file into several smaller files, one for each song. Then all I had to do was name the tracks and click save.

This was a great solution until the demo period of Polderbits expired.

After some researching, I found what I think is the ultimate software solution. Microsoft makes a "add-on" program called Microsoft Plus. They make one called Microsoft Plus for Windows XP that has screensavers, games and other cute goodies. Microsoft also makes another version called Microsoft Plus Digital Media Edition. This one has many add-ons specifically for Windows Media Player. (If you haven't tried Media Player version 10, please download and try it out, I love it.) So, here I am waiting for my copy of Plus Media Edition to arrive so I can go back to digitizing all of my beloved vinyl LPs.

I have just looked on the software shelves to see that we have a package in stock call Microsoft Plus! Superpack for \$49.95, which includes both Plus! For Windows XP and Plus! Digital Media Edition.

Favorite bookmark of the week: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/plus/plushome.asp>