MetaX for Windows

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Updated 8/13/2012

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Introduction

What MetaX Does

MetaX for Windows is a meta-data tagger for MP4 files and their derivatives, as well as QuickTime movie files. The meta-data will be displayed in iTunes, Apple Front Row and the Apple TV. It allows you to search for information on the internet and then write that information into the file.

It can also be used in conjunction with MovieLibrary, which creates a database of all your movies which can be searched and the search results printed with varying levels of detail. When you tag a movie with MetaX, it can automatically keep your MovieLibrary up to date.

If you own an Apple TV, you can use iTunesWatcher to keep your Apple TV synchronized.

About KnowledgeDesign Software

KnowledgeDesign software is dedicated to creating useful software for a variety of needs. Please visit http://www.danhinsley.com/products.html for more information.

Purchase

To fully utilize MetaX you will need to purchase it for \$9.95. Before it is registered, you can read the tags in a file and use all the search options to find the tags from sources on the internet (see Searching and Tagging) but it will not write the tags out to the file.

To get your registration code, go to http://www.danhinsley.com/metax/metax.html and click on the Buy Now button. You will get a username and registration code via email and can use that in Help->Register.

Display

Main Page

There are four main areas:

The Search panes

The Data panes

The Write panes

The Status pane

In addition there are buttons across the top of the form to:

Open files

Copy tags from one set of files to another

Open the archive

Open the presets

Use the framegrabber

Search for posters

Search IMDB

Toggle check marks

Write all files in the write queue

View and modify preferences Help

Search Panes

The search panes consist of three items:

- 1. The search field
- 2. The Go button
- 3. The search results queue

The search field drives searching Amazon.com, tagChimp.com, theTVDB.com, theMovieDB.org, Yahoo posters and IMDB. You can also import XML files from MyMovies or NFO files from MovieJukeBox. This field is automatically filled in when you open a file. If there is a title tag in the file, it is used. If not the filename is used to construct the search entry. Either the filename is used by stripping off the path and the extension, or if the "Create title based on CamelCaseFileName" option is set, the filename is parsed based on capital letters.

If you have the "Autosearch" option selected, the search begins automatically when you open or select a file. If not, clicking the Go button starts the search. Once a search is begun, the Go button turns to Cancel, and the search can be canceled by pressing this button.

As soon as search results are found, they are put into the search queue and can be selected. When an item is selected in the search queue, it's data is placed into the data panes. However, if an item has it's checkbox checked, it will not be overwritten. In this manner you can "mix and match" information from various search results.

Data Panes

The data panes consist of four tabs: Info, Video, Advanced, Sorting and Chapters.

Info tab

Most of the information on this tab is self-explanatory. A few notes:

Cover art - There are four ways to get cover art for the file

- The result of a search (Amazon or tagChimp)
- Yahoo Posters
- From a file on your computer. You can either use the Select File button below the cover art, or drag the file onto the cover art picture.
- You can drag and drop (or copy and paste) from a Website. A button is available to take you
 directly to the GetVideoArt website. Unless you're using IE 7 or later, you'll need to use copy
 and paste as drag and drop is not supported by this website.

Artist - There is a similar field on the Video tab called Cast. By using the "Link Artists <-> Actors" option these two fields will be kept in sync.

Genre - There is a listbox with standard genres. You can select multiple genres by using the control and/or shift keys, and if you do they will be listed separated by commas (e.g. Romantic, Comedy). You can also create your own genres to use by right clicking in the genres box. MetaX will remember this genre and it will appear in the list from then on. If you wish to clear the user created genres, there is an option to do so on the General preferences tab.

Descriptions - the short Description is what is displayed in iTunes, the long description is what is displayed on the Apple TV. I'm not sure which is used by Apple's Front Row. If the short description is greater than 255 characters it will not be displayed in iTunes. The Apple TV appears to only display the first 445 characters of the long description, but it varies depending on what other information is tagged in the file. MetaX will write however much you enter into these fields and will display it. This way you can create longer descriptions for use by other programs (such as MovieLibrary. If either of the two limits (255 or 445) is exceeded, the text in the box will turn blue and you will be notified that you have exceeded the limit. The actual number of characters in continually displayed, so you can see how much you need to trim.

Video Tab

There are several fields in the video tab that are required to have values. You must set a Video Kind (Movie, Music Video, Short Film, TV Show). If you select TV Show you must have a season number and an Episode #, both numeric.

The Toggle button only toggles fields on the Info, Video and Chapters tabs.

Advanced Tab

I must admit I don't really know what these fields are used for. They were in the MetaX for the Mac program, so I have them as well.

Sorting Tab

These fields affect the way that the file is sorted in iTunes (not sure about Apple TV or Front Row). The columns on the left show the values currently set for the sortable fields, the columns on the right can be used to modify the fields that will be used to sort.

Chapters Tab

If you want to share your tagging information with tagChimp you will need to have chapter information with real titles (not Chapter 1, ...). It will not accept an entry without them.

Usually you will have chapters in the file created by your encoding tool (e.g. Handbrake), but the chapter titles will be non-descript (e.g. Chapter 1). Amazon.com does not carry chapter titles, but tagChimp usually does and can have durations as well. The tagChimp durations will override those in the file if there is a different number of chapters. If there are the same number of chapters, the file durations will be kept and only the titles will be copied over from tagChimp.

You can also manually edit the chapter info. You can click on a title or duration and enter it manually. You can also split a chapter (you will be given a slider to set where the split occurs), merge two chapters, delete a chapter or reset the chapters back to what was in the file.

Another way to get chapter information is by dragging and dropping or cutting and pasting text information that is in the format of a chapter per line, with each line having a chapter number followed by a "." followed by the chapter title, optionally followed by the duration in square brackets ([0:3:52]). There are three ways to get chapter information from the internet:

The Barnes and Noble website is a good source for this information, so there is a B&N button on the chapters tab that will bring up the Barnes and Noble website in your browser searching for the movie title listed in the search box. You can then select the chapter information and drag and drop it into the chapters tab. If the number of chapters differs from those in the file, you will be asked if you want to override the file information. If you override the number of chapters, it will also use the duration information. If there is the same number of chapters in the text as in the file, it will only use the chapters and keep the durations present in the file. If you wish to override the durations as well, hold down the shift key when doing the drag and drop.

If you hold down the shift key when you click the B&N button, it will automatically get the chapter information. First it will display a list of the available entries, and when you click on one it will find the chapter information and enter it.

There is also a ChapDB button that searches the ChapterDB.org website. As with B&N, it will give you a list of entries to choose from.

Finally you can provide the chapter information in an XML file. If you click on the XML button, it will look in the same directory as the movie file for a file with the same name as the movie file (but without the extension) plus chapters.xml. So if the movie file is test1.m4v, it looks for test1.chapters.xml in the same directory. The format of this file is:

```
<Chapters>
<Chapter Number="1" Hours="00" Minutes="04" Seconds="12">
<Title><![CDATA[Main Titles]]></Title>
</Chapter>
.
. more chapter entries
.
</Chapters>
```

If you just click the button, it will replace the current chapters with the information from the XML file (warning you if the number of chapters is different). If you hold down the shift key while clicking the button, it will append the chapters from the XML file at the end of the current set of chapters.

Write Panes

The Write panes consists of the Write queue, the clear and cancel buttons and the progress bar.

When an item is opened it is added to the Write queue with an unmodified status (no icon). After a change has been made to the data (but not if just a search result is used) the status is

changed to modified

when MetaX is writing the file the icon is changed to and when



the write is complete the icon is changed to



As each file is being written the progress is indicated by a progress bar at the bottom of this area.

When a file is selected in the write queue, it's information is displayed in the data panes and any modification to these areas are saved in the file. If multiple files are selected, only those fields which are the same in all files is displayed, and any modifications affect all selected files.

If you right click on an item in the queue, you are given an option to delete the item from the queue, rename it or change it's status to queued or done. You can also rename an item by just double clicking on it and modifying the name in place.

Finally there are two buttons, clear and cancel. Clear will remove all items from the write queue, prompting you if some have been modified but not written. Cancel will cancel a write in progress.

Status Pane

There is a status pane at the lower right side of the form. This is where messages that do not require user interaction will be displayed. If the "Reply Yes to All Confirmations" option is checked, this is where messages that yes was automatically replied to will be displayed. There is also a file, metax.log, kept in the My Documents/MetaX directory that has all messages from the last execution. It is recreated every time MetaX is started, so you will need to examine this file before the next time you run MetaX.

Searching and Tagging

Opening Files

There are five ways to open a file in MetaX:

- 1. Drag a file into the write queue.
- 2. Drag it onto the icon used for starting MetaX (Windows 7 note: If you pin MetaX to the taskbar and you just drag a file to the icon, it will add it to the jump list. If you want to open it, hold down the shift key when dropping).
- 3. Use the standard file open menu.
- 4. Open a folder of files (including sub-folders)
- 5. Drop a validation file created by MovieLibrary onto the write queue.

There are three types of files that MetaX supports: Movies, TV Shows and Music Videos. the TVDB.com and tagChimp will do a better job of searching if they knows what type the file is. So there is a preference in MetaX to set a default file type if there isn't a file type tag in the file. The default is to prompt the user, but this can be set to any of the three file types and any file that is opened that does

not have a tag for type will be set to that type. If you open multiple files at once, you can set them all to a particular type by checking the box to use this type for all selected files.

If you hold down the shift key when you click on the file open toolbar option, you will be asked to specify a directory, and then MetaX will open all movie files (extension .mp4, .m4v or .mov) in that directory and any subdirectory. If you wish to cancel out before all files are open, merely shift click the file open toolbar item again.

Entering Information

There are multiple ways to enter information about a file. You can enter information directly on the form. When you enter information this way, the check box for that items is checked and it will be written out when the write option is chosen. Also, any field that is checked will not have it's information overwritten by information from a search, an archive or preset entry.

One of the things you can set via the form is the cover art file. Under the cover art, there is an open option that will let you select an image file to use for the cover art. You can also enter information from a search result. This information can either be from Amazon, tagChimp, theTVDB.com (if it's a TV Show), theMovieDB, an XML file from MyMovies, an NFO file from MovieJukeBox, from an archive entry or from a preset. You can also search for cover art by using the Get Video Art button (which takes you to the VideoArt website).

You can drag and drop information into either of the description fields, as well as the chapters tab. For chapters there are buttons to search the Barnes and Noble website for chapter information. The chapter information must have a number followed by a period followed by the chapter name optionally followed by the duration in square brackets. For example:

- 1. Chapter 1 [0:42]
- 2. Chapter 2 [0:11]

If it has this information, you can hold down the shift key when clicking the B&N button and it will bring up a list of the B&N entries. You can then select one and it will enter the information into the chapters automatically.

Searching for Information

MetaX doesn't require you to type in all the information for a file. You can search the internet in a variety of ways. The easiest is to use information that is returned from Amazon, tagChimp, theTVDB, theMovieDB, or an XML or NFO file. But you can also find movie posters from VideoArt and a variety of information from IMDB.

Copy Tags

MetaX will allow you copy tags from one set of files to another set. This can be handy if you've tagged some files, but then re-rip them at a higher quality.

To do this, place the tagged files in one directory, then the untagged files (named the same as the tagged files) in a different directory. Then click the copy icon.

This will bring up a dialog box asking for the source and destination directories. After you enter these directories, use the scan button to show which files will be updated and the copy button to actually copy the tags.

theMovieDB

theMovieDB provides detailed information about movies. When you check the "Get Data From theMovieDB" checkbox on Preferences->Data, searches will search this database and provide search

results. These results will be preceded with



While this product uses the TMDb API, it is not endorsed or certified by TMDb.

theTVDB

theTVDB provides detailed information about TV Shows. When you check the "Get Data From theTVDB" checkbox on Preferences->Data, searches will search this database and provide search results. These results will be preceded with . To select one of these entries, you must have entered the season and episode number, or the episode name, you wish to tag.

Please go to the TVDB.com and contribute information and artwork about TV Shows.

XML files

You can also import information contained in XML files. Two file formats are supported:

- MyMovies MetaX expects the XML file to be located in the same directory as the movie file
 itself, and to be called mymovies.xml. You can supply an alternate location for these files on the
 Preferences->Data tab. If the xml file is not in either of these locations, MetaX will allow you to
 locate the file. It also looks for a image file in that same directory called either <filename>.jpg,
 folder.jpg or mymovies-front.jpg to use for cover art.
- 2. NFO files These are created by MovieJukeBox and are expected to be in the same directory as the movie file and called <filename>.nfo. If it is not there, MetaX will let you supply the location. It also expects a jpg file with a name like MyMovies in the same directory to use as cover art.

To import one of these files, right click on an entry in the write queue and you will see options to import either and XML or NFO file.

tagChimp

tagChimp (www.tagChimp.com) is a good source of information, if the show is in their database. Besides having more complete information on such items as genre, director, producer and screenwriter, it will also have chapter information. When you select a tagChimp search result, if the number of chapters it has matches the number of chapters reported in the file, the chapter titles from tagChimp will be merged with the chapter duration from the file.

tagChimp gets its information from user submitted data. To share data with tagChimp, you need to go to their website and sign up for a tagChimp ID. Once you've done this, you'll be able to upload the information from a file to the tagChimp database. Currently, tagChimp does not allow a user to update and existing record, you can only upload a new one. But if the file is not currently in tagChimp, you can be the creator! However, to share data with tagChimp you must fill out the following fields:

For all files: kinds, title, releasedate, rating, cast, shortDescription, longDescription and coverArt,

plus for movies: directors and chapters (titles cannot be "Chapter 1, ...)

And for TV Shows: showName, season, episode, episodeID and network

tagChimp is user supported, so please consider donating to keep the Chimp in bananas.

Amazon

You can also get information from Amazon.com. However, amazon doesn't carry genre or type (movie, tv show, ...) information, so you'll need to supply that yourself.

One of the MetaX options is to get amazon information from a variety of country amazon websites. Under preferences you can select which country you would like to use for your amazon searches. In addition to setting which Amazon site to go to, it also sets which country's ratings to use. You can select multiple countries to have all their ratings listed. If you select multiple countries that each has their own Amazon site, you'll be asked which one to use for Amazon.

If you wish to just change the country for the current search, there is a country list next to the Search button which allows this.

Internet Movie Database (IMDB)

If you don't find the information you want in one of the search items, you can go to the Internet Movie Database (IMDB). Here you can find more information about the movie or TV Show. If you find a description you like, you can highlight it and drag it into either of the two description fields.

Workflow for TV Episodes

With the addition of the TVDB as an information source, tagging TV Episodes has become much easier. The suggested workflow is:

- 1. Open all the episodes you want to tag
- 2. Select all the episodes for a particular season and enter the season number on the Video tab
- 3. Select each episode and enter the episode number on the Video tab (you could also just enter the episode name instead of season number / episode number)
- 4. Highlight all the episodes (they can be from different seasons)
- 5. Enter the show name in the search box

6. Select the TVDB entry

Voila! All the episodes are tagged with the correct cover art, episode descriptions and all other information.

Note: If you create the movie files with a name like Show Name S1E1 (or S01E01), then MetaX will automatically fill in the season and episode numbers. Then all you need to do is Step 1. (which will have all the episodes highlighted), then Steps 5 & 6. What could be easier?

Writing tags to Files

After you have the information filled in for all the movies in your write queue, you can use the write menu option to write the information into the file. Only fields with their check boxes checked will be written into the file. If a check box is checked, but that field is blank, the corresponding tag will be deleted from the file if it exists.

Update iTunes

The version 9 of iTunes has a feature which will automatically keep iTunes up to date with added files. In the Media Folder, there is a directory called "Automatically Add to iTunes". If you put a file in this folder, iTunes will move it to either the Movies subdirectory of the Media Folder or the TV Shows\<show name> subdirectory, and then add it to iTunes.

By using the Preferences->File->Place tagged files in ... and delete Original feature of Preferences, you can tag a file and have it automatically added to iTunes. To also keep your Apple TV in sync, you can also use the iTunesWatcher program.

By using these two features, you can have a "one-click" experience with your tagged files, iTunes and Apple TV. Rip the movie to a directory and then when you tag it, MetaX will move it to the "Automatically Add to iTunes" folder, iTunes will move it to the correct place in your media folder and iTunesWatcher will see it and automatically sync your Apple TV!

Language

Amazon, theMovieDB and theTVDB support returning information in languages other than English. Amazon has a limited number of country sites, which can be selected on the Preferences->General tab or on a search by search basis using the drop-down next to the Search button. But the MovieDB and theTVDB have much more extensive foreign language capabilities. To select the language returned by these sources, go to Preferences->Data and use the Language button to select your desired language.

Archive and Presets

Archive

Every time you write tags into a file, an archive entry is created (if this option is selected in preferences). Then if you need to retag the file at some point in the future you can just select this entry and all the fields will be filled back in just as they were when you first tagged the file.

From the archive form you can right click and delete entries or import/export entries.

Presets

Presets are designed to work with a TV series. With a TV series you have a number of files (episodes) that share some information (cover art, cast, genre, ...) but not others (Title, Episode ID, Episode Number, ...). With a preset you fill in the information that will be shared by all episodes, making sure that the fields' check boxes are checked. You then create a preset from the preset menu. Then you can select all the episodes from that show, apply the preset and then edit just the fields that are different for each episode.

Preferences

General

Check for updates

When MetaX starts up, it can check to see if there is a more current version available. If so, it will give you the option to install it. If there are significant changes that you need to be aware of (such as a format change in the database used for archive and preset entries) you will be notified of this before you do the install. During the install, the install program will save the current binaries to a backup directory in case there are any problems with the new release.

You can use this option to only check for new updates every so many days if you don't want to check every time to run the program. Regardless of the value, it will never check more than once on a given day.

Moo when done

When all the entries in the write queue are done, the program will make a mooing sound (don't ask me, I'm just following Rodney's lead).

Disable automatic archiving

Normally when you write tags to a file, an archive entry is created so that you will be able to retag the file in the future. If you don't wish these entries created, you can disable this feature.

Reply Yes to all confirmations

If you wish to tag a list of files in an unattended mode, this option will cause MetaX to act as if yes was replied to an message that would have been displayed to the user. The information is still displayed in the status field and written out to the log file (metax.log).

Shutdown After Write

If you want to have the computer shut down after the last file is tagged, you can set that here. If this option is set when you first click the write button, you will be asked to confirm that you want the computer to shutdown after the writes (I just want to be sure before I go around shutting down your computer).

Show movie ratings from

This determines the ratings that will be listed in the ratings listbox. You can select more than one and the ratings from both countries will be available. This option also selects which Amazon country specific website (if there is one) is used.

Clear user created genres

If you enter a genre that is not one of the standard ones that MetaX knows about, MetaX will use it and remember it, so it will show up in the list the next time. If you wish to clear all user created genres, you can do it here.

Character separator for Actors, etc.

If you don't want entries in actors, directors, genres etc to be separated by a comma, you can specify a different character here. This is useful for the XBox.

Ellipsize Descriptions

If either the Long or Short Description is too long, it will be truncated to an acceptable length and an ellipse (...) added.

Don't Write Track/Disk Data

If you use the "Automatically Add To iTunes" feature (see Updating iTunes) iTunes will rename a file if there is track data to start with the track number. If you don't want this to happen (sometimes a search result will supply a track number and you won't see this), check this box and neither track nor disk information will be written to the file even if supplied.

File

Default file type

Files are of the type (Kind on the Video tab) of Movie, Music Video, TV Show or Short Film. tagChimp allows searching based on the kind of file (except for Short Film). In order to facilitate this, MetaX will assign a kind if one doesn't exist in the file based on the user's preference. You can select one of Movies, TV Show or Music Video, or have MetaX prompt you for the file type when you open the file.

Saving a copy of the original file

To tag a movie file, MetaX needs to completely rewrite the file. On rare occasions, if MetaX crashes in the part of the program that is doing this, the movie file can be corrupted and no longer playable. To protect against this, MetaX can save a copy of the original file before it's tagged. So there are three possibilities:

- 1. Don't save a copy, neither "Save originals in recycle bin" or "Save originals in Deleted Directory" are checked.
- 2. Save a copy in the recycle bin. If you choose this option and your recycle bin is not active, you will be notified of this. If you later write a file to a different disk whose recycle bin is not active

- you'll be warned of this when you start the write. Note: If you have "Reply Yes to all Confirmations" checked, the only notice you'll get is a note in the status area.
- 3. Save a copy in Deleted Directory. A directory called Deleted will be created in the directory where the movie file resides. A copy will be saved there before the movie is tagged

Place tagged files in ...

If you would like to have the tagged file go to a different directory, you can specify that here. You can either use an absolute path (c:\Tagged) or a relative path (tagged) which will be created in the directory where the original file exists.

and delete Original

This deletes the original file after tagging. If this is used, the file is tagged, and then moved to the tagged directory. This is useful for using the automatic feature of iTunes (see Updating iTunes).

Create title BasedOnCamelCaseFileName

If there is no title tag in the movie, MetaX will attempt to create a title (and search item) based on the filename. The default is to just use the filename minus the extension. This option will break the title up based on capital letters, so ThisIsATest would become This Is A Test.

File Tagging

If you want the filename to be changed based on information in the tags, you can use this option. There is a separate format string for Movies versus TV Shows. You can embed %n values in the string to include information from the tags. The specifiers are:

- 1 Title
- 2 Year
- 3 TV Series Name
- 4 TV Season #
- 5 TV Episode #
- 6 TV Episode Title

So, for example, a string of "%3 S%4E%5 - %6" used with an episode of Burn Notice might result in "Burn Notice S1E3 - Nothing Left To Lose.m4v"

Only specifiers 1 & 2 can be used for movies, while all 6 can be used for TV Shows.

If you enter a new filename in the write queue, this overrides the file tagging option.

Title Tagging

The same as file tagging, except it changes the title based on your format string and the value of tags.

Season/Ep Regex

MetaX will extract the showname, season # and episode # from the filename. This fields allows you to set a regular expression to extract this information. There are two capture groups in the expression, the first is the season number and the second is the episode number. Anything in front of the first capture

group is the showname (if there isn't a space directly before the first capture group, it skips back to prior to the last space, so that SxxExx will get rid of the S).

The default expression is $[Ss](\d\d?)[Ee](\d\d?)$ to handle SxxExx. You could use $(\d)(\d\d?)$ to handle 104 (where the season number is always a single digit) or $(\d\d?)[Xx](\d\d?)$ to handle 1x4.

Enable Network Streaming

This optimizes the file after writing (this takes quite a bit longer than just writing the tags). This allows the file to be streamed over the internet instead of being downloaded and then played.

Data

Strip () info from files

Some titles have parenthetical information in the title, e.g. Spiderman 3 (Blu-Ray). If you would like to have this information removed from the title, use this option.

Link Artists <-> Actors

There is a field on the Info tab called Artist, and another on the Video tab called Cast. If you check this option these two fields will be kept in sync.

Link Episode <-> Track

If you check this option the episode number in the TV Tags section will be kept in sync with the track number on the advanced tab.

Automatically search for tag data

If this option is checked, when a file is selected in the write queue, a search will automatically start based on the title tag, if there is one, or on the filename (minus the extension).

Send data to iTunes after writing

After the write of a file is complete, the information will be updated in iTunes. Checking this option will cause iTunes to startup when MetaX does. However, if you change the title of the movie/TV show, this will not work and it will warn you that you'll need to delete/re-add the item manually.

Keep MovieLibrary Synced

If you use the MovieLibrary product, this will automatically update it's database when you tag a file. You can select the set of flags to use for the movie when it is added to the database.

Get data from tagChimp

When MetaX searches for data, it will not only search Amazon, but also tagChimp (www.tagChimp.com). You do not need to be registered at tagChimp to get data from there.

Share data with tagChimp

tagChimp relies on user submitted information to build it's database of movies. If you like to share information with tagChimp when you tag a movie, you'll need to register at www.tagChimp.com and get a tagChimp ID, which you supply when you use this option.

Get data from the Movie DB

Searches will return data from the Movie DB. org.

Get data from TVDB

Searches will return data from the TVDB.com.

Directory for MyMovies XML files

If your XML files aren't in the same directory as the movie files, you can specify an alternate location here.

Directory for log file

If you don't want your log file to go to <My Documents>\MetaX, you can specify an alternate location here.

Language Button

This selects the language used by the Movie DB and the TVDB.