

The Noatun Handbook

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Features	1
2	Using Noatun	2
2.1	Title Format	2
3	Using Noatun Plugins	3
3.1	Milk Chocolate	3
3.2	Young Hickory	3
3.3	HTML Playlist Export	3
3.4	K-Jöfol Skins	4
3.5	The Split Playlist	4
3.6	Winamp Skins	4
3.7	Metatag	5
3.8	Keyz	5
3.9	Infrared Control	5
4	Questions, Answers, and Tips	6
5	Credits and Licenses	7
A	Installation	8
A.1	How to obtain Noatun	8
A.2	Requirements	8
A.3	Compilation and Installation	8
B	Glossary	10

Abstract

Noatun is a fully-featured plugin-based media player for KDE.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Noatun is a fully-featured plugin-based media player for KDE.

1.1 Features

Noatun is an elaborate front-end to aRts — the Analog Real-Time Synthesizer. To add additional playobjects, go to <http://noatun.kde.org/plugins.phtml>, or <http://mpeglib.sf.net>. By default aRts supports MP3 and MPEG-1. Vorbis is also supported if the Vorbis libraries were available during the compilation of KDE.

Chapter 2

Using Noatun

Noatun, by default, starts with the Excellent user interface plugin. This plugin was chosen as it bears the most similarity to other KDE applications.

Noatun is unique in that no two installations are the same, and there is no standard interface, although there is a default one. You're free to mix-and-match your selection of plugins, and customize Noatun until it is your ideal media player!

2.1 Title Format

The Noatun Preferences Window has an odd Title Format text box. You can enter a format string to customize how titles appear.

- Any text appears normally, unless it is within a `$()`.
- The text within `$()` will read the Noatun property for the given item, and replace the text with it.
- If, within the `$()` are quotes, the text within the quotes will be displayed normally, but only if the property of the name exists.
- The quotes may be either at the beginning of the `$()`, at the end of it, or at both the end or the beginning

For example, `$(bitrate)` is replaced by the bitrate of the file, as loaded by the Metatag plugin. However, if you insert quotes into that field, the text within the quotes will be displayed: `$(bitrate"kbps")` for example will display the bitrate of the file, followed by the characters "kbps". Neither will be displayed if the property 'bitrate' does not exist.

Chapter 3

Using Noatun Plugins

You can select different plugins by going to the Settings menu, and selecting Configure Noatun.... Move to the Plugins page by selecting the appropriate list item. Then you can enable enable plugins by selecting the checkbox near their name. Noatun requires at least one User-Interface plugin, and requires exactly one Playlist plugin.

3.1 Milk Chocolate

Milk Chocolate is a small, simple User Interface. The buttons behave mostly like a CD-player, and the eject button opens the playlist. The sheet with a cross button removes the current playlist item, but does not delete the file from disk, and the arrow button sets the looping mode. A menu is available by right mouse button clicking anywhere in the window.

3.2 Young Hickory

Young hickory is a plugin for the KDE System Tray, the area near the clock, by default.

right mouse button clicking on the icon will show a small menu, and left mouse button clicking will toggle the visibility of your Noatun user-interface windows. Note that playlists, for example, are not considered user-interfaces.

3.3 HTML Playlist Export

This plugin will place your playlist in a nice HTML table. Its preferences page will allow you to set colors, background image, and enable the Hover mode, for changing colors when the cursor is over a link.

After setting options, the Actions menu's Export Playlist... will open a file dialog for you to select where to save the output.

3.4 K-Jöfol Skins

The Noatun K-Jöfol skin loader is a reimplementaion of a Windows® program under the same name.

Noatun's implementation has a few limitations, unfortunately. For instance the skins must be uncompressed on disk in order to load them.

To install a skin (in the Windows® ZIP format) you can use the skin-installer that can be found in the preferences-dialog of Noatun.

Because some skins are not packaged correctly and the skin-installer can not guess everything you can still follow these commands if installation of a certain skin failed:

```
% cd $KDEHOME/share/apps/noatun
% mkdir kjskins (if needed)
% cd kjskins
% mkdir new_skin ; cd new_skin
% unzip /path/to/new_skin.zip
```

You can also make your own skins with the tutorial at <http://www.angelfire.com/mo/nequiem/tutorial.html>.

3.5 The Split Playlist

The Split Playlist had a simple, classic-style design. Double clicking on an entry will play it (as will selecting it and pressing **Enter**). You can drag files and URLs in as well.

As of KDE 3.0, the Split Playlist (SPL) stores its data in an XML format, but will automatically import the m3u list if the XML file does not exist. This means that you can write to the m3u file, and delete the XML file, to automatically generate playlists.

The name Split Playlist is a bit of a misnomer, as the list is not actually split. It results from the original design (back in the early Noatun days) actually having it split.

3.6 Winamp Skins

If you're actually using the Winamp™ skin, it should seem familiar to you. Clicking on the timer will toggle it between count-down and count-up mode.

Selecting the Scope region under it will enable and disable the scope. You can also double click on the titlebar to toggle Windowshade mode. Right clicking (or clicking on the top-left icon will show the standard Noatun toolbar.

You can install new skins by, in `$KDEHOME/share/apps/noatun/skins/winamp`, creating a folder for them, and then unzipping the skin in there. Winamp™ skin files with the extension `.wsz` can be treated as normal zip files. You may have to rename them first, however, to be able to unzip them.

3.7 Metatag

Metatag is a plugin that loads information about a file through the use of KFile, the same mechanism that provides Konqueror with those tooltips when you hover a mouse over files. Aside from loading the information, it supports editing it via the Actions' menu subitem Tag Editing. It supports editing of ID3 tags, as well as OggVorbis tags. It also reads the bitrate from files.

3.8 Keyz

Carsten Pfeiffer decided to break with the long lived Noatun tradition of naming a plugin in the most inaccurate way possible, as proven by both Milk-Chocolate, Young Hickory, and countless others. What's the value in just converting an S to a Z? Sounds like something American-English speakers would do!

However, just because the name is unoriginal doesn't mean this is any less of a plugin. Indeed, this one lets you assign keystrokes to some Noatun actions. The real beauty is that these keystrokes work from anywhere, not just from Noatun. So this may finally make those 'Multimedia Keyboards' worthwhile.

3.9 Infrared Control

If you have a remote control for your computer (such as those found on television cards with Brooktree® tuners), and your infrared remote control is supported by [LIRC](#), this should work. Like Keyz, the name is unexciting, but the plugin allows you to assign actions to button presses.

To assign an action to a keypress, load the plugin, go to the Infrared Control page in the Noatun configuration window. Select the keypress in the list, and then choose the action to perform with the combo box below. If, in an action like Volume control, you want the action to be performed repeatedly, check the box and select the interval between actions.

If you have a TV card, a convenient trick is to assign the Mute button to Pause, thereby allowing you to mute your TV display application while unpausing Noatun, and vice-versa, particularly useful in the case of commercials.

Chapter 4

Questions, Answers, and Tips

Frequently-asked questions

1. *The music skips a lot when moving windows.*

You can have aRts buffer more as follows:

- Start KControl
- Move to the Sound group
- Move to the Sound Server section
- Increase the response time—384ms is usually sufficient for most computers.

You may also consider running the soundserver with real-time priority if setting the response time doesn't help. Be aware that this can cause your system to lock-up.

2. *I can't remove a playlist or user-interface from the plugins list.*

Since Noatun requires at least one user-interface loaded, and exactly one playlist, you have to add a new user-interface plugin before removing the old one. Adding a new playlist will automatically remove the old one.

3. *Where can I get more plugins?*

Third-party developers can submit their own plugins to the [Noatun web-site](#), where they can be downloaded by you, the users.

4. *How do I write a Noatun plugin?*

Documentation, an API reference, and example source code is available at the [Noatun web-site](#). Also, in the spirit of Open Source software the source code to Noatun and all default plugins is available.

Chapter 5

Credits and Licenses

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Appendix A

Installation

A.1 How to obtain Noatun

Noatun is part of the KDE project <http://www.kde.org/> .

Noatun can be found in the kdemultimedia package on <ftp://ftp.kde.org/pub/kde/> , the main FTP site of the KDE project.

A.2 Requirements

Noatun requires at least a Pentium 200 with Linux[®], a PowerPC with Linux[®] 2.4.1 or later, or several other platforms. Support for more platforms will be available in later versions.

For a platform to be supported easily, it must have pthread support, and the OSS sound output system, however ALSA is supported under Linux[®].

A.3 Compilation and Installation

In order to compile and install Noatun on your system, type the following in the base directory of the Noatun distribution:

```
% ./configure
% make
% make install
```

Since Noatun uses **autoconf** and **automake** you should have no trouble compiling it. Should you run into problems please report them to the KDE mailing lists.

The Noatun Handbook

Should you run into any problems, please report them to the author at charles@kde.org.

If you have this documentation, you've probably already compiled Noatun

Appendix B

Glossary

Milk Chocolate Milk Chocolate is a simple, minimalist user interface plugin

aRts aRts is the Analog Real-time Synthesizer. A powerful media framework used by Noatun

K-Jöfol This plugin loads skins originally used under a Windows® media player under the same name.

Keyz Keyz allows you to assign keystrokes to actions in Noatun

Young Hickory Young Hickory is a system tray plugin.

Noatun Kaiman is a plugin that loads skins from the media player GQMPEG. Kaiman is also Noatun's predecessor, and was distributed with KDE for KDE 2.0. When Noatun was introduced in KDE 2.1, Kaiman's skin loader became a Noatun plugin.