

# From The Editor

David J. Gibson

July/August 2012, Vol. 36, Number 6

# Saxophone JOURNAL



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## COVER PHOTOS

Claude Delangle

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The title of my May/June 2012 *Saxophone Journal* editorial was "And The Winner Is," which was a discussion about using sound files on a website. A brief recap: I explained the various sound files types that included MIDI, RealAudio (.ra), .aiff, .wav, .wma, and .mp3 files (with mp3 files being the "winner"). For our continued discussion .mp3 will simply be referred to as mp3 files.

As I explained in my May/June 2012 editorial the resource rich capability of the mp3 music file format is the primary reason it has jumped to the forefront of being a "winner for many uses" on a website as a digital music file format. There are interesting idiosyncrasies of the mp3 file format that everyone should acquaint themselves with to fully understand it use, and capability, on a given website. There are licensing issues with the use of mp3 files in a given product, including websites but that's for my next editorial in the Sept/Oct 2012 *Saxophone Journal* issue.

The theme of this editorial will focus mainly on the history of the mp3 technology, with some additional information thrown in for good measure.

The Fraunhofer IIS Audio and Multimedia division, based in Erlangen, Germany, has been a leader in compressed audio technology for more than 20 years, and remains a "leading innovator" for cutting-edge multimedia technology. As stated by the company, "Fraunhofer IIS is universally credited with the development of mp3 and co-development of AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) as well as technologies for the media world of tomorrow, including mp3 Surround, and the Fraunhofer Audio Communication Engine." I recommend you visit their website to learn more about this company, at <http://www.iis.fraunhofer.de/en/bf/amm/>.

For purposes of our discussion I'll now redirect your focus to a company in San Diego, California named: Technicolor, 16935 W. Bernardo Drive # 223, San Diego, CA 92127; whose website is <http://mp3licensing.com/>. You can email them directly at: [info@mp3licensing.com](mailto:info@mp3licensing.com). For persons living in the USA, Canada, Mexico (i.e., the "Americas") your focus for mp3 technology and information should be with Technicolor in San Diego.

As stated on Technicolor's website, "mp3 (short for MPEG-1/MPEG-2 Layer 3), is a format for storing digital audio. It uses an advanced type of audio compression, which reduces the file size with little reduction in audio quality. mp3 is used in software applications, digital audio players, home stereo devices and music distribution over the Internet, but is also used for other purposes such as real-time digital audio transmissions over ISDN."

The mp3 format has been an ISO standard since 1993 and as a digital media format it is unique: it is backward and forward compatible with all mp3 players. Meaning every mp3 file created in the past will be playable on current and future digital audio players (and website digital capabilities). The mp3 file format will "never be obsolete."

The central question for musicians wishing to post mp3 digital music files on a website is whether or not a license is needed to include mp3 encoded digital music files on a website. For the correct answer, Technicolor states:

"Yes. A license is needed for commercial (i.e., revenue-generating) use of mp3/mp3PRO in broadcast systems (terrestrial, satellite, cable and/or other distribution channels), streaming applications (via Internet, intranets and/or other networks), other content distribution systems (pay-audio or audio-on-demand applications and the like) or for use of mp3/mp3PRO on physical media (compact discs, digital versatile discs, semiconductor chips, hard drives, memory cards and the like).

However, no license is needed for private, non-commercial activities (e.g., home-entertainment, receiving broadcasts and creating a personal music library), not generating revenue or other consideration of any kind or for entities with associated annual gross revenue less than US\$100 000.00."

In the next issue of *Saxophone Journal* I'll delve into the details of royalties and licensing for using mp3 files on a website. §