

What is a Codec?

Whenever you listen to MP3's, watch YouTube videos, or look at JPEGs on a webpage, you're using a Codec.

The word 'codec' is short for **CO**mpression **DE**Compression. When you rip MP3's from a CD, you compress the files into MP3 format. Then when you listen to the MP3 on your iPod, the MP3 is decompressed into a linear audio file so you can hear it.

Here's a list of common codecs:

Audio Codecs

- MP3, RealAudio, OggVorbis, WMA, and AAC.

Video Codecs

- Flash (FLV), MPEG, Sorenson.

Image Codecs

- JPEG, GIF.

Codecs are really useful because they make it possible to store your music and videos in fairly small files on your hard drive. Of course, sometimes quality is lost because of the compression.

Codecs are a kind of software. So they keep getting better as computers get more powerful.