Review: OggEnc

Ogg/Vorbis encoder

by Timo "Blazko" Boewing, mail@neveprise.de

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What LAME is to the MP3 creator is oggenc to the Ogg/Vorbis user: it converts uncompressed audio files, e.g. PCM wave files, to Ogg/Vorbis compressed audio files.

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1.1 about Ogg/Vorbis

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Normally, people use the MP3 format on their computers and portables. The benefits are obvious: The MPEG Layer-3 compression allows filesizes of approx. one tenth of uncompressed raw audio data, strongly depending on desired quality and number of sound channels. This enables users to have all of their CDs quickly at hand on their computers with quite good sound quality.
> This gave MP3 very huge success, not at least due to the reason that these small file sizes allowed music exchange (most of it illegal) over the internet, even when using a standard modem. <p>

But there is a problem: MP3 is a development of the MPEG group, one of its most prominent member and main developer is the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft. But MPEG is not open. If you are just listening to MP3, there is no problem, but if you want to create / convert your own MP3 files or want to develop a MP3-writing library or application, you have to pay license fees to the MPEG group -- it is patented.

Ogg/Vorbis however, is an open standard whose development started around 1993, more or less for fun; but it evolved to a full alternative with same quality and feature cisiderings. Here a small feature list of Ogg/Vorbis:
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>

specification / feature	value
sample rates	44.1 to 48 kHz @ 16 bits and up
support f. variable bitrates	yes
bitrates	16 to 128 kbps / channel
sample rates	44.1 to 48 kHz @ 16 bits and up
max. channels	255
streaming support	yes
license	BSD (libs), GPL (all othe)r; royalty-free, patent-free

1.2 about OggEnc

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OggEnc is a Ogg/Vorbis encoder that reads uncompressed audio files and converts them to .ogg files ready for use in your favourite audio player.
> Although the underlying vorbis library is considered beta (release candidate 3 at the time of this writing) it is very usable, the quality is really perfect. <p>

2.0 review

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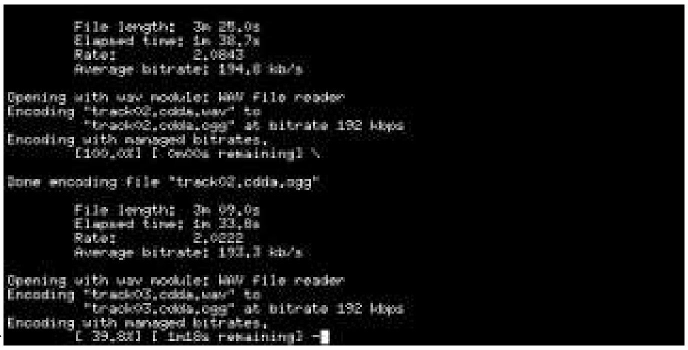
OggEnc comes as a console application with a nice set of parameters. But the internal help (oggenc --help) is well structured and parameters well documented. The amount of params meet realistic purpose, there is no overhead of unimportant settings.

(click image to enlarge)

>oggenc_l.png" target="_blank">



Pic 2.0a: OggEnc in action

Thus, the following simple command line is enough for converting all PCM wave files in a directory to Ogg files, using a variable bitrate around 192 kbps @ 16 bit:

```
oggenc --bitrate 192 *.wav
```

When started, OggEnc prints out information on current status and file properties, including:

- elapsed and remaining conversion time plus percentage done
- final adio stream runtime length (m, s)
- average bitrate
- current i/o filenames

Left to say that OggEnc is a tiny and very useful tool. It shows no instabilities and is easy to use, performance can be compaired to MP3 converters. The output quality is excellent. To avoid jitter on high frequncies (e.g. a drum's hi-hat) i recommend using a variable bitrate around 192 kbps, but less will also do good quality.

[IMAGE]

Pic 2.0b: Oggs play out-of-the-box in nowaday players

When having created .ogg files, you may ask if your audio player can use this format. If youhave quite recent software, most of the players will come with Ogg support by using appropriate plugins and libvorbis.
> Examples of players with OggVorbis support:

- XMMS, see picture 2.0b (Open Sound System and other targets, e.d. esd)
- Noatun (standard KDE media player, aRTs)
- WinAmp (Win32 platform)

If your player does not support Ogg/Vorbis, please have a look at the developer's website, they will surely have plugins for the player. If not, try to search on the www for third party plugins.

3.0 rating

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OggEnc

Category:	software, audio
Function:	wave to .ogg converter / Ogg encoder
Version:	0.9 (encoder), RC3 (libvorbis)
By	Xiph
License:	GPL (app) / BSD (libs)
Platforms:	• GNU platforms, e.g. GNU/Linux • BSD platforms • Solaris • Windows 32
Features:	• dest. file formats: wave, raw PCM (headerless waves), aiff, aiff-c • creates oggs w/ fixed or variable bitrates
Pro:	• intelligent variable bitrate setting • good performance • easy handling • due to standard, first quality sound files • files can be euipped with meta information (kinda ID3 tags), e.g. interprete, date of performance etc.
Contra:	• any?
Rating:	10 / 10
Comment:	nice and simple to use converter
