

Specifying What Video Codecs to use for Walkthroughs

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The information in this article applies to:



QUESTION

I receive an error message when I attempt to create a walkthrough. It was mentioned that I should try using a different codec. What are codecs, and how do I obtain different ones for the purposes of recording walkthroughs?

ANSWER

A codec is a program that allows you to both record and play digital videos. The name “codec” is short for “coder-decoder”, which basically means that when a video is recorded, the codec will compress the individual images that make up the video into a single file. Then, when the video is played, the codec decompresses the file and shows the individual images as a video stream.

It is not unusual to have multiple codecs installed on a given computer, and in Chief Architect you can specify which codec you want to use when recording a walkthrough. Please note that in order for a codec to appear as an option in Chief Architect, it must support encoding.

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Finding additional video codecs

Finding additional video codecs can be difficult, unless you know the publisher of the codec. Information about a codec can be found on the site of the video codec owner/publisher.

Many codecs are published and copyrighted by software developers who develop video editing software. This means that these copyrighted codecs are only available for people who have purchased their software as the codec is installed along side the software. However, there are also many free codecs, referred to as open source

or patent free codecs.

One codec that works well with Chief Architect is Xvid. Information about Xvid, including download instructions, can be found on Xvid's website <https://www.xvid.com/> (<https://www.xvid.com/>)

It is always best to research any codec you wish to install to find who published it and how to obtain it. Many sites may offer a download for a codec that contains additional unwanted or malicious software. Only download a codec from sources that are verified or approved by the codec's developer or publisher.

Best practices when sharing a video

Playback

When sharing a video file you will need to make sure that the recipient can play the video. This generally requires that their system have the same video codec installed that was used to encode/compress the video file. To ensure this, include a copy of the codec for your recipient to install.

If you encounter trouble playing a walkthrough back in a particular media player, then you may want to try opening the walkthrough file using an alternate player. Most users report good results with using the [VLC media player](http://www.videolan.org/vlc/index.html#download) (<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/index.html#download>), which is available for both Windows and Mac operating systems.

Sending/Receiving

There are a number of ways that you can share a video that you have created with others.

File sharing services such as [Dropbox](https://www.dropbox.com/) (<https://www.dropbox.com/>), [Microsoft OneDrive](https://onedrive.live.com/about/en-us/) (<https://onedrive.live.com/about/en-us/>), or [Google Drive](https://www.google.com/drive/) (<https://www.google.com/drive/>), can be a good way to provide a fast and effective way of delivering a file.


You can also upload videos to services like [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/) (<https://www.youtube.com/>) or [Vimeo](http://vimeo.com/) (<http://vimeo.com/>), which allows the recipient to watch them in their web browser.


It's a good idea to become familiar with whatever service you choose to use before trying to share your files with clients.

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To change the video codec in Chief Architect X11, Home Designer 2020, and newer program versions

1. Once a walkthrough path is created, select it, and click on the **Record Walkthrough Along Path**  edit button.

If you're creating a walkthrough from within a 3D view, navigate to **3D > Walkthroughs > Record Walkthrough** .

2. In the **Walkthrough Options** dialog that appears, next to the Video Codec section, specify your desired codec using the drop-down menu.

To change the video codec in Chief Architect X10, Home Designer 2019, and prior program versions

1. From the menu, select **Edit > Preferences**  if you're on a Windows computer or **Chief Architect > Preferences**  if you're on a Mac.
2. In the **Preferences** dialog that opens, select the **RENDER** panel.
3. In the Codec Options section, the Codec for Walkthrough Recordings drop-down menu will list any available codecs found on the system. Select the desired codec from the list and press **OK**.

Missing codecs

If the software is unable to find the specified codec one of the following messages may appear:


- Unable to find codec "%1%" for walkthrough recording.
- Unable to find preferred codec. Please choose another codec in Preferences > Render.
- Unable to find preferred codec. Revert to default codec.

If any of these errors display, then it may be necessary to choose a different codec.

MORE INFORMATION

If you receive a warning message in Microsoft Windows of: "Cannot play back the file. The format is not supported." in Windows Media Player, please see [this Microsoft article \(https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/842180/cannot-play-back-the-file-the-format-is-not-supported-error-80040265-e\)](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/842180/cannot-play-back-the-file-the-format-is-not-supported-error-80040265-e), which addresses how to resolve the error.

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