

FRH RADIO's Five Step Guide to "Meta-tagging for Radio"

When an audio file is produced, information about the recording is stored in the file as **meta-tags**. This automatically includes some technical information such as file length, codec, bit rate etc. but additional information can then be added to provide other information such as the track title, album title, artist/songwriter's names, record company and promoter names etc. Sometimes this meta-data is added by your recording studio, your promoter or your record label, sometimes not, so it is always worth checking that the meta-tagging has been entered correctly before issuing copies of your file. Once a wrongly tagged file has been issued you can never get it back to correct mistakes!

This is particularly important if you are intending to distribute copies of your file to radio stations, as there are licensing requirements which, if not met, means the station will not be able to accept your file for air-play.

We have therefore created this guide to help you ensure your music file is "radio ready" before submission, but remember, **failure to follow these requirements will mean your submission WILL be automatically rejected by FRH Radio, no matter how good the song may be.**

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STEP 1: Ensure your file has a clean, clear file title/name

The file title/name is the name given to the music file itself, much like the name given to a word document. It is the name that helps you to locate the file on your computer, and allows music organisations, such as promoters, streaming sites and radio stations to locate it in an extensive music library. **It is important that the file name should ONLY contain the track title and artist name!** Do NOT include any other details as this may prevent your music file from being easily identified, and may mean you lose airplay.

Good Example:

Driving Myself Crazy – John Doe or **John Doe – Driving Myself Crazy**

Unacceptable Examples:

- **John Doe – Driving Myself Crazy MASTER**
- **Driving Myself Crazy– Faux Pa Recording Studio**
- **Driving Myself Crazy by John Doe – ISRC NO546712**
- **Driving Myself Crazy – John Doe – MP3**
- **John Doe – Driving Myself Crazy (Radio Release)**

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STEP 2: Ensure your file contains the minimum required meta-tags

If you intend to submit your music file to radio, there is a licensing requirement that the following meta-tags are the **MINIMUM WHICH MUST BE INCLUDED** in the file:-

1. **Track Title** - This should be the full name of the song (matching the title in the filename). Nothing more / Nothing less.
2. **Artist Name** - This should be YOUR name as the recording artist, either as an individual or a band/group. If your song features an accompanying singer or instrumentalist, you can add their name also by adding (example) "**Feat. Jane Doe**"
3. **Album Title** - All music files MUST provide this even if the song is not from an album. If your track is a single release, an entry is still required in this box and in this case you should simply repeat the **Track Title**.

IMPORTANT - No other information should be recorded in any of these boxes.

This information will be displayed on digital radio players. The listening public do not want to see miscellaneous information displayed; they simply want to know what the song is called and who the artist is. Radio stations (including FRH Radio) which broadcast in the USA, also have to follow the DMCA separation rules, which state how many times a track, an artist and an album can be played within a 3-hour time window. If you put other information into these boxes, this confuses the separation rules, and prevents a station from airing your work.

These are the 3 basic tags which are essential for radio airplay.

Without these tags, in the correct location and form,

your music cannot be considered for air-play.

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STEP 3: Adding other meta-tags

There are numerous other tag boxes which can be completed (or new ones added), to provide more information about your recording, but none of these are essential for radio airplay.

HOWEVER, we do recommend that you consider adding the following tags as a minimum:-

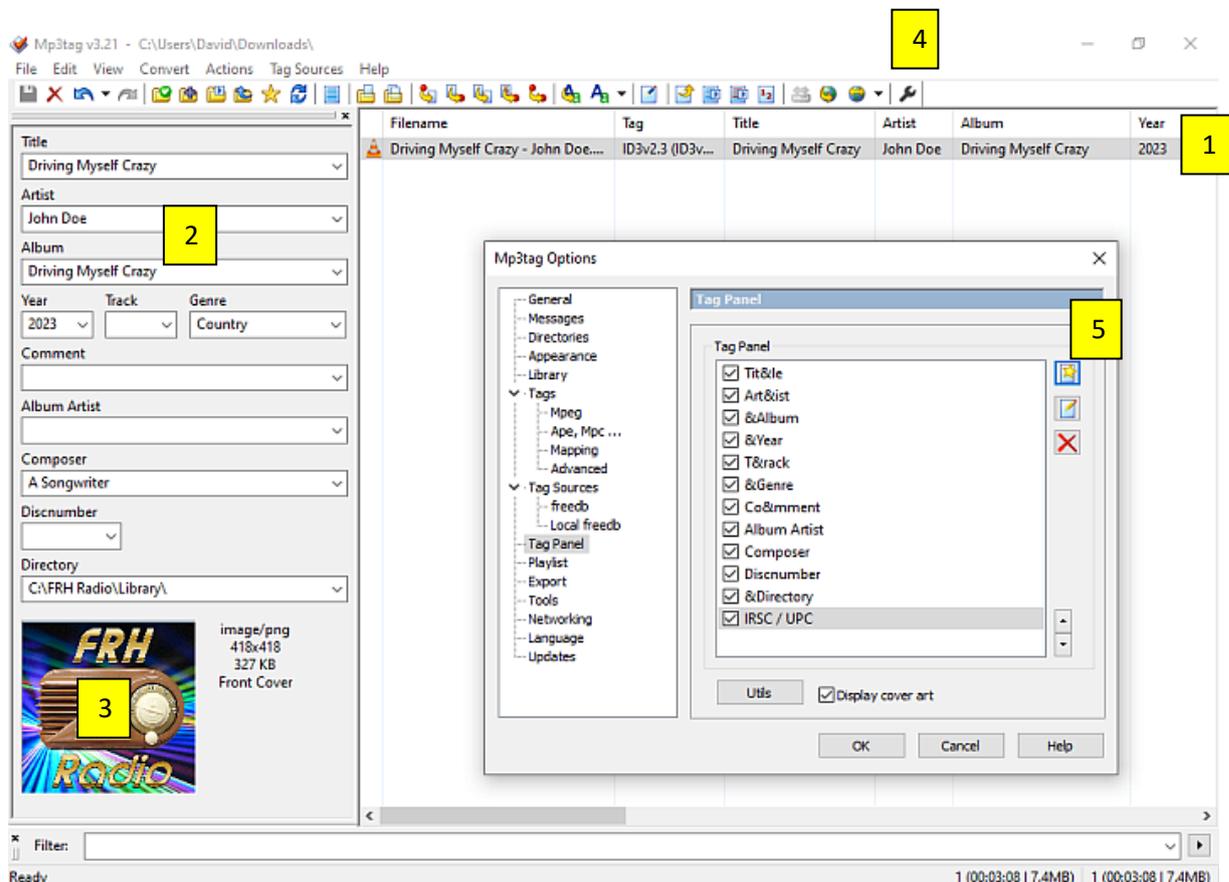
- 1. International Standard Recording Code ('ISRC') and/or Universal Product Code (UPC).** These codes enable sound recordings to be uniquely and permanently identified. It is this code which is used to identify you (and the songwriter and publisher) for air-play royalty payments. **Without an ISRC or UPC code attached to your file, your track may not be identified and therefore royalty payments may not be made.** These codes are available through various sources, but will be provided free of charge when your track is released via a digital distributor such as Distrokid / CDBaby etc.
- 2. Image or Artwork.** You should consider adding your image or song/album artwork as a meta-tag. This image will then display on most radio players when your track is aired. It is not mandatory, but will help listeners remember you and your song.
- 3. Composer/Songwriter.** It makes sense to add songwriter credits in the meta-tags, especially if you are the composer, but if you are performing someone else's composition, why would you not want to give them credit?

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STEP 4: So How Do I Meta-Tag My Music File?

There are a number of free meta-tagging programmes available on the web. Here at FRH Radio we use **Mp3tag** to check the meta-tags on all music submissions received. The programme is reasonably easy to use and can be freely downloaded from <https://www.mp3tag.de/en/download.html>.

The following image is a screenshot of **Mp3tag** when opened from the mp3 music file (in this case "Driving Me Crazy"). Below that are basic instructions for meta-tagging your file in line with the guidance outlined above.



1 The track you have opened will show at the top of the main panel. There will be no other information in the main panel (unless you have imported several tracks) nor in the Information Panel on the left. (**note** - the Mp3tag Options box showing above will not be visible at this stage). Scroll along the track line to see any meta-tags which may already be attached to the track. Now click the track, this will allow you to enter your information in the Information Panel on the left.

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If the **Title**, **Artist** or **Album** boxes are empty, or incorrectly entered, add or edit them following the instructions given in **STEP 2** of this guide. You can also add other information in the Information Panel including the songwriter(s) name in the 'Composer' box. Click the "Save" icon.

3

If you want to add an image for airplay display, right click in the image box, select 'Add cover' and source your preferred image from your computer. Click the "Save" icon.

NOTE If you want to add your ISRC and/or your UPC code (strongly recommended) please be aware that there is no specific meta-tag box for this information. For this reason these codes are often added to the 'Comment' box in the Information Panel. However, we would advise against this and would recommend that you create new meta-tag boxes to hold these codes as this data will generally be hidden on simple view in most meta-tagging software and will reduce the chance of the codes being accidentally removed or corrupted by 3rd parties.

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To create a new meta-tag box, click on the **spanner** in the icons at the top of the page. This will open the 'Mp3tag Options' dialogue box as shown in the image above.

5

In the 'Tag Panel' click the top button of 3 on the right hand side and this will open a dialogue box. Insert **IRSC** in both 'Field' and Name'. Click 'OK' on both boxes to save and close. Repeat this for a **UPC** code. You can then add your code(s) via the Information Panel. Click the "Save" icon.

Congratulations. You have now meta-tagged your music file (or checked that it has been tagged correctly) and you can issue copies in the knowledge that your information is securely attached to the file and it is ready for radio airplay.

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STEP 5: A Few Final Thoughts

- FRH Radio does not, and will never, charge to air an artist's work. To request payment to play songs on a radio station is illegal. Be very wary if you are asked for money to play your track.
- Due to the costs involved in running FRH Radio, we do not offer free advertising to promoters, recording studios, record labels, or any other music institutions with whom you may have an agreement. For this reason, any image meta-tagged to your music file should relate only to you or the song and be free of any logos associated with any of the above. You may add 3rd Party details in your meta-tagging, but **NOT IN THE META TAG BOXES REFERRED TO IN STEPS 2 & 3 ABOVE**. Remember, the information you add to your meta-tags will last long after your relationship with the 3rd party may have ended.
- This is not strictly a meta-tagging issue, but please bear in mind that if you want us to play your music on the station, it must be of studio quality, falling within the wide Country Music genre and we cannot accept links to social media pages. **Our preferred broadcast file format is mp3, but other formats will be considered.**

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We hope this guide will prove useful to you and look forward to receiving your correctly tagged song submissions in the near future.