

TSM543 Media Formats

What is a Format?

In recent decades there has been a proliferation of competing formats and standards each claiming to be 'better' in some respect or other. In this module we will introduce common types of professional audio, video and image formats; explore their technical operating principles and understand why certain formats may be more or less appropriate in a variety of situations. Concepts such as compatibility, extensibility, security and interoperability will be introduced to understand the wider implications of media formats.

Task 1: How many formats?

List all of the audio, video and image formats you can think of. It may be helpful to do this on a PC so that you can rearrange your list and share it with your group.

Task 2: Which of these are container formats?

For the prior list, which of these are container formats? Were you aware of this?

Task 3: Compressing

We're going to be talking very soon about compression. The central issue here is that we need to throw away information, without throwing away stuff we need. How can we do that? Any ideas?

Look at the text below – what could perhaps be done to compress this text? Think about what text is, in terms of binary code.

She sells seashells by the seashore,
The shells she sells are seashells, I'm sure.
So if she sells seashells on the seashore,
Then I'm sure she sells seashore shells.