

HTTP Live Streaming
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Abstract

This document describes a protocol for transferring unbounded streams of multimedia data. It specifies the data format of the files and the actions to be taken by the server (sender) and the clients (receivers) of the streams. It describes version 7 of this protocol.

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1. Introduction to HTTP Live Streaming

HTTP Live Streaming provides a reliable, cost-effective means of delivering continuous and long-form video over the Internet. It allows a receiver to adapt the bit rate of the media to the current network conditions in order to maintain uninterrupted playback at the best possible quality. It supports interstitial content boundaries. It provides a flexible framework for media encryption. It can efficiently offer multiple renditions of the same content, such as audio translations. It offers compatibility with large-scale HTTP caching infrastructure to support delivery to large audiences.

Since its first draft publication in 2009, HTTP Live Streaming has been implemented and deployed by a wide array of content producers, tools vendors, distributors, and device manufacturers.

The purpose of this document is to facilitate interoperability between HTTP Live Streaming implementations by describing the media

transmission protocol. Using this protocol, a client can receive a continuous stream of media from a server for concurrent presentation.

This document describes version 7 of the protocol.

2. Overview

A multimedia presentation is specified by a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) [[RFC3986](#)] to a Playlist.

A Playlist is either a Media Playlist or a Master Playlist. Both are text files containing URIs and descriptive tags.

A Media Playlist contains a list of Media Segments, which when played sequentially will play the multimedia presentation.

Here is an example of a Media Playlist:

```
#EXTM3U
#EXT-X-TARGETDURATION:10

#EXTINF:9.009,
http://media.example.com/first.ts
#EXTINF:9.009,
http://media.example.com/second.ts
#EXTINF:3.003,
http://media.example.com/third.ts
```

The first line is the format identifier tag #EXTM3U. The line containing #EXT-X-TARGETDURATION says that all Media Segments will be 10 seconds long or less. Then three Media Segments are declared. The first and second are 9.009 seconds long; the third is 3.003 seconds.

To play this Playlist, the client first downloads it and then downloads and plays each Media Segment declared within it. The client reloads the Playlist as described in this document to discover any added segments. Data is usually carried over HTTP [[RFC7230](#)], but in general a URI can specify any protocol that can reliably transfer the specified resource on demand.

A more complex presentation can be described by a Master Playlist. A Master Playlist provides a set of Variant Streams, each of which describes a different version of the same content.

A Variant Stream includes a Media Playlist that specifies media encoded at a particular bit rate, in a particular format, and at a particular resolution for media containing video.

A Variant Stream can also specify a set of Renditions. Renditions are alternate versions of the content, such as audio produced in different languages or video recorded from different camera angles.

Players can switch between the different Variant Streams and Renditions to adapt to network conditions and user preferences.

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC 2119](#) [RFC2119].

3. Media Segments

A Media Playlist contains a series of Media Segments which make up the overall presentation. A Media Segment is specified by a URI and optionally a byte range.

The duration of each Media Segment is indicated in the Media Playlist by its EXTINF tag ([Section 4.3.2.1](#)).

Each segment in a Media Playlist has a unique integer Media Sequence Number. The Media Sequence Number of the first segment in the playlist is either 0, or declared in the Playlist ([Section 4.3.3.2](#)). The Media Sequence Number of every other segment is equal to the Media Sequence Number of the segment that precedes it plus one.

Each Media Segment MUST be formatted as an MPEG-2 Transport Stream [[ISO_13818](#)], an MPEG audio elementary stream [[ISO_11172](#)], or a WebVTT [[WebVTT](#)] file. Transport of other media file formats is not defined.

Some media formats require that a parser be initialized with a common sequence of bytes before a Media Segment can be parsed. This format-specific sequence is called the Media Initialization Section. The Media Initialization Section of an MPEG-2 Transport Stream segment is the Program Association Table (PAT) followed by the Program Map Table (PMT). The Media Initialization Section of a WebVTT segment is the WebVTT header. An audio elementary stream has no Media Initialization Section.

Transport Stream segments MUST contain a single MPEG-2 Program; playback of Multi-Program Transport Streams is not defined. Each Transport Stream segment SHOULD contain a PAT and a PMT at the start of the segment - or have a Media Initialization Section declared in the Media Playlist ([Section 4.3.2.5](#)). Transport Stream packets read before a corresponding PAT/PMT can be discarded.

A Media Segment that contains video SHOULD have at least one key frame and enough information to completely initialize a video decoder.

Each Media Segment MUST be the continuation of the encoded media at the end of the segment with the previous Media Sequence Number, where values in a continuous series such as timestamps and Continuity Counters continue uninterrupted. The only exceptions are the first Media Segment ever to appear in a Media Playlist, and Media Segments which are explicitly signaled as discontinuities ([Section 4.3.2.3](#)). Unmarked media discontinuities can trigger playback errors.

Each Elementary Audio Stream segment MUST signal the timestamp of its first sample with an ID3 PRIV tag [[ID3](#)] at the beginning of the segment. The ID3 PRIV owner identifier MUST be "com.apple.streaming.transportStreamTimestamp". The ID3 payload MUST be a 33-bit MPEG-2 Program Elementary Stream timestamp expressed as a big-endian eight-octet number, with the upper 31 bits set to zero. An Elementary Audio Stream segment without such an ID3 tag can trigger playback errors.

Subtitle segments are formatted as WebVTT [[WebVTT](#)] files. Each subtitle segment MUST contain all subtitle cues that are intended to be displayed during the period indicated by the segment EXTINF duration. The start time offset and end time offset of each cue MUST indicate the total display time for that cue, even if that time range extends beyond the EXTINF duration. A WebVTT segment MAY contain no cues; this indicates that no subtitles are to be displayed during that period.

Each subtitle segment MUST either start with a WebVTT header or have a Media Initialization Section declared in the Media Playlist ([Section 4.3.2.5](#)).

Within each WebVTT header there MUST be an X-TIMESTAMP-MAP metadata header. This header synchronizes the cue timestamps in the WebVTT file with the MPEG-2 (PES) timestamps in other Renditions of the Variant Stream. Its format is:

```
X-TIMESTAMP-MAP=LOCAL:<cue time>,MPEGTS:<MPEG-2 time>  
e.g. X-TIMESTAMP-MAP=LOCAL:00:00:00.000,MPEGTS:900000
```

The cue timestamp in the LOCAL attribute MAY fall outside the range of time covered by the segment.

A subtitle segment not meeting these requirements can be displayed inconsistently, not display at all, or cause other playback errors.

4. Playlists

This section describes the Playlist files used by HTTP Live Streaming. In this section, "MUST" and "MUST NOT" specify the rules for the syntax and structure of legal Playlist files. Playlists that violate these rules are invalid; clients MUST fail to parse them. See [Section 6.3.2](#).

In this section, tags are specified using a BNF-style syntax.

Each Playlist file MUST be identifiable by either the path component of its URI or by HTTP Content-Type. In the first case, the path MUST end with either .m3u8 or .m3u (for compatibility). In the second, the HTTP Content-type MUST be "application/vnd.apple.mpegurl" or "audio/mpegurl" (for compatibility). Clients SHOULD refuse to parse Playlists that are not so identified.

4.1. Definition of a Playlist

Playlist files MUST be encoded in UTF-8 [[RFC3629](#)]. They MUST NOT contain any byte order mark (BOM); Clients SHOULD refuse to parse Playlists which contain a BOM or do not parse as UTF-8. Note that US-ASCII [[US_ASCII](#)] is a proper subset of UTF-8.

Lines in a Playlist file are terminated by either a single line feed character or a carriage return character followed by an line feed character. Each line is a URI, blank, or starts with the character '#'. Blank lines are ignored. White space MUST NOT be present, except for elements in which it is explicitly specified.

Lines that start with the character '#' are either comments or tags. Tags begin with #EXT. They are case-sensitive. All other lines that begin with '#' are comments and SHOULD be ignored.

A URI line identifies a Media Segment or a Playlist file (see [Section 4.3.4.2](#)). Each Media Segment is specified by an URI and the tags that apply to it.

A Playlist is a Media Playlist if all URI lines in the Playlist identify Media Segments. A Playlist is a Master Playlist if all URI lines in the Playlist identify Media Playlists. A Playlist MUST be either a Media Playlist or a Master Playlist; all other Playlists are invalid.

A URI in a Playlist, whether it is a URI line or part of a tag, MAY be relative. Any relative URI is considered to be relative to the URI of the Playlist that contains it.

The duration of a Media Playlist file is the sum of the durations of the Media Segments within it.

The segment bit rate of a Media Segment is the size of the Media Segment divided by its EXTINF duration ([Section 4.3.2.1](#)). Note that this includes container overhead.

The peak bit rate of a Media Playlist is the largest segment bit rate of all segments in the Media Playlist.

The average segment bit rate of a Media Playlist is the sum of the sizes (in bits) of every Media Segment in the Media Playlist, divided by the Media Playlist duration. Note that this includes container overhead, but not HTTP or other overhead imposed by the delivery system.

4.2. Attribute Lists

Certain tags have values which are Attribute Lists. An Attribute List is a comma-separated list of attribute/value pairs with no whitespace.

An attribute/value pair has the following syntax:

AttributeName=AttributeValue

An AttributeName is an unquoted string containing characters from the set [A..Z], [0..9] and '-'.

An AttributeValue is one of the following:

- o decimal-integer: an unquoted string of characters from the set [0..9] expressing an integer in base-10 arithmetic in the range from 0 to $2^{64}-1$.
- o hexadecimal-sequence: an unquoted string of characters from the set [0..9] and [A..F] that is prefixed with 0x or 0X.
- o decimal-floating-point: an unquoted string of characters from the set [0..9] and '.' which expresses a non-negative floating-point number in decimal positional notation.
- o signed-decimal-floating-point: an unquoted string of characters from the set [0..9], '-' and '.' which expresses a signed floating-point number in decimal positional notation.
- o quoted-string: a string of characters within a pair of double-quotes (0x22). All uses of quoted-strings REQUIRE that the

following characters be escaped: line feed (0xA), carriage return (0xD), and double quote (0x22). Escaping rules vary by attribute type; for instance, URI attributes use percent-encoding. Quoted-strings SHOULD be constructed so that byte-wise comparison is sufficient to test two quoted-strings for equality (which implies case-sensitive comparison).

- o enumerated-string: an unquoted character string from a set which is explicitly defined by the Attribute. An enumerated-string will never contain double-quotes ("), commas (,), or whitespace.
- o decimal-resolution: two decimal-integers separated by the "x" character. The first integer is a horizontal pixel dimension (width); the second is a vertical pixel dimension (height).

The type of the AttributeValue for a given AttributeName is specified by the Attribute definition.

A given AttributeName MUST NOT appear more than once in a given Attribute List. Clients SHOULD refuse to play such Playlists.

4.3. Playlist Tags

Playlist tags specify either global parameters of the Playlist, or information about the Media Segments or Media Playlists that appear after them.

4.3.1. Basic Tags

These tags are allowed in both Media Playlists and Master Playlists.

4.3.1.1. EXTM3U

The EXTM3U tag indicates that the file is an Extended M3U [M3U] Playlist file. It MUST be the first line of every Media Playlist and every Master Playlist. Its format is:

```
#EXTM3U
```

4.3.1.2. EXT-X-VERSION

The EXT-X-VERSION tag indicates the compatibility version of the Playlist file, its associated media, and its server.

The EXT-X-VERSION tag applies to the entire Playlist file. Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-VERSION:<n>
```

where n is an integer indicating the protocol compatibility version number.

It MUST appear in all Playlists containing tags or attributes that are not compatible with protocol version 1 to support interoperability with older clients. [Section 7](#) specifies the minimum value of the compatibility version number for any given Playlist file.

A Playlist file MUST NOT contain more than one EXT-X-VERSION tag. If a client encounters a Playlist with multiple EXT-X-VERSION tags, it SHOULD fail to parse it.

[4.3.2.](#) Media Segment Tags

Each Media Segment is specified by a series of Media Segment tags followed by a URI. Some Media Segment tags apply to just the next segment; others apply to all subsequent segments until another instance of the same tag.

A Media Segment tag MUST NOT appear in a Master Playlist. Clients SHOULD fail to parse Playlists that contain both Media Segment Tags and Master Playlist tags ([Section 4.3.4](#)).

[4.3.2.1.](#) EXTINF

The EXTINF tag specifies the duration of a Media Segment. It applies only to the next Media Segment. This tag is REQUIRED for each Media Segment. Its format is:

```
#EXTINF:<duration>,<title>
```

where duration is a decimal-integer or decimal-floating-point number (as described in [Section 4.2](#)) that specifies the duration of the Media Segment in seconds. Durations that are reported as integers SHOULD be rounded to the nearest integer. Durations MUST be integers if the compatibility version number is less than 3 to support older clients. Durations SHOULD be floating-point if the compatibility version number is 3 or greater. The remainder of the line following the comma is an optional human-readable informative title of the Media Segment.

4.3.2.2. EXT-X-BYTERANGE

The EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag indicates that a Media Segment is a sub-range of the resource identified by its URI. It applies only to the next URI line that follows it in the Playlist. Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-BYTERANGE:<n>[@<o>]
```

where n is a decimal-integer indicating the length of the sub-range in bytes. If present, o is a decimal-integer indicating the start of the sub-range, as a byte offset from the beginning of the resource. If o is not present, the sub-range begins at the next byte following the sub-range of the previous Media Segment.

If o is not present, a previous Media Segment **MUST** appear in the Playlist file and **MUST** be a sub-range of the same media resource, or the Media Segment is undefined and parsing the Playlist **MUST** fail.

A Media Segment without an EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag consists of the entire resource identified by its URI.

Use of the EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag **REQUIRES** a compatibility version number of 4 or greater.

4.3.2.3. EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY

The EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag indicates a discontinuity between the Media Segment that follows it and the one that preceded it.

Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY
```

The EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag **MUST** be present if there is a change in any of the following characteristics:

- o file format
- o number, type and identifiers of tracks
- o timestamp sequence

The EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag **SHOULD** be present if there is a change in any of the following characteristics:

- o encoding parameters
- o encoding sequence

See [Section 3](#), [Section 6.2.1](#), and [Section 6.3.3](#) for more information about the EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag.

4.3.2.4. EXT-X-KEY

Media Segments MAY be encrypted. The EXT-X-KEY tag specifies how to decrypt them. It applies to every Media Segment that appears between it and the next EXT-X-KEY tag in the Playlist file with the same KEYFORMAT attribute (or the end of the Playlist file). Two or more EXT-X-KEY tags with different KEYFORMAT attributes MAY apply to the same Media Segment if they ultimately produce the same decryption key. The format is:

```
#EXT-X-KEY:<attribute-list>
```

The following attributes are defined:

METHOD

The value is an enumerated-string that specifies the encryption method. This attribute is REQUIRED.

The methods defined are: NONE, AES-128, and SAMPLE-AES.

An encryption method of NONE means that Media Segments are not encrypted. If the encryption method is NONE, other attributes MUST NOT be present.

An encryption method of AES-128 signals that Media Segments are completely encrypted using the Advanced Encryption Standard [[AES_128](#)] with a 128-bit key, Cipher Block Chaining, and PKCS7 padding [[RFC5652](#)]. CBC is restarted on each segment boundary, using either the IV attribute value or the Media Sequence Number as the IV; see [Section 5.2](#). The URI attribute is REQUIRED for this METHOD.

An encryption method of SAMPLE-AES means that the Media Segments contain media samples, such as audio or video, that are encrypted using the Advanced Encryption Standard [[AES_128](#)]. How these media streams are encrypted and encapsulated in a segment depends on the media encoding and the media format of the segment. The encryption format for H.264 [[H_264](#)], AAC [[ISO_14496](#)] and AC-3 [[AC_3](#)] media streams is described by [[SampleEnc](#)]. The IV attribute MAY be present; see [Section 5.2](#).

URI

The value is a quoted-string containing a URI that specifies how to obtain the key. This attribute is REQUIRED unless the METHOD is NONE.

IV

The value is a hexadecimal-sequence that specifies a 128-bit unsigned integer Initialization Vector to be used with the key. Use of the IV attribute REQUIRES a compatibility version number of 2 or greater. See [Section 5.2](#) for when the IV attribute is used.

KEYFORMAT

The value is a quoted-string that specifies how the key is represented in the resource identified by the URI; see [Section 5](#) for more detail. This attribute is OPTIONAL; its absence indicates an implicit value of "identity". Use of the KEYFORMAT attribute REQUIRES a compatibility version number of 5 or greater.

KEYFORMATVERSIONS

The value is a quoted-string containing one or more positive integers separated by the "/" character (for example, "1/3"). If more than one version of a particular KEYFORMAT is defined, this attribute can be used to indicate which version(s) this instance complies with. This attribute is OPTIONAL; if it is not present, its value is considered to be "1". Use of the KEYFORMATVERSIONS attribute REQUIRES a compatibility version number of 5 or greater.

If the Media Playlist file does not contain an EXT-X-KEY tag then Media Segments are not encrypted.

See [Section 5](#) for the format of the key file, and [Section 5.2](#), [Section 6.2.3](#) and [Section 6.3.6](#) for additional information on Media Segment encryption.

4.3.2.5. EXT-X-MAP

The EXT-X-MAP tag specifies how to obtain the Media Initialization Section ([Section 3](#)) required to parse the applicable Media Segments. It applies to every Media Segment that appears after it in the Playlist until the next EXT-X-MAP tag or until the end of the playlist.

Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-MAP:<attribute-list>
```

The following attributes are defined:

URI

The value is a quoted-string containing a URI that identifies a resource that contains the Media Initialization Section. This attribute is REQUIRED.

BYTERANGE

The value is a quoted-string specifying a byte range into the resource identified by the URI attribute. This range SHOULD contain only the Media Initialization Section. The format of the byte range is described in [Section 4.3.2.2](#). This attribute is OPTIONAL; if it is not present, the byte range is the entire resource indicated by the URI.

An EXT-X-MAP tag SHOULD be supplied for Media Segments in Playlists with the EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY tag when the first Media Segment (i.e., I-frame) in the Playlist (or the first segment following an EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag) does not immediately follow the Media Initialization Section at the beginning of its resource.

Use of the EXT-X-MAP tag in a Media Playlist that does not contain the EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY tag REQUIRES a compatibility version number of 6 or greater; otherwise, a compatibility version number of 5 or greater is REQUIRED.

[4.3.2.6](#). EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME

The EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tag associates the first sample of a Media Segment with an absolute date and/or time. It applies only to the next Media Segment.

The date/time representation is ISO/IEC 8601:2004 [[ISO_8601](#)] and SHOULD indicate a time zone and fractional parts of seconds:

```
#EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME:<YYYY-MM-DDThh:mm:ssZ>
```

For example:

```
#EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME:2010-02-19T14:54:23.031+08:00
```

EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tags SHOULD provide millisecond accuracy.

See [Section 6.2.1](#) and [Section 6.3.3](#) for more information on the EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tag.

4.3.3. Media Playlist Tags

Media Playlist tags describe global parameters of the Media Playlist. There MUST NOT be more than one Media Playlist tag of each type in any Media Playlist.

A Media Playlist Tag MUST NOT appear in a Master Playlist

4.3.3.1. EXT-X-TARGETDURATION

The EXT-X-TARGETDURATION tag specifies the maximum Media Segment duration. The EXTINF duration of each Media Segment in the Playlist file, when rounded to the nearest integer, MUST be less than or equal to the target duration; longer segments can trigger playback stalls or other errors. It applies to the entire Playlist file. Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-TARGETDURATION:<s>
```

where s is a decimal-integer indicating the target duration in seconds. The EXT-X-TARGETDURATION tag is REQUIRED.

4.3.3.2. EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE

The EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE tag indicates the Media Sequence Number of the first Media Segment that appears in a Playlist file. Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE:<number>
```

where number is a decimal-integer.

If the Media Playlist file does not contain an EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE tag then the Media Sequence Number of the first Media Segment in the playlist SHALL be considered to be 0. A client MUST NOT assume that segments with the same Media Sequence Number in different Media Playlists contain matching content - see [Section 6.3.2](#).

A URI for a Media Segment is not required to contain its Media Sequence Number.

See [Section 6.2.1](#) and [Section 6.3.5](#) for more information on setting the EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE tag.

The EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE tag MUST appear before the first Media Segment in the Playlist.

4.3.3.3. EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE

The EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag allows synchronization between different Renditions of the same Variant Stream or different Variant Streams that have EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tags in their Media Playlists.

Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE:<number>
```

where number is a decimal-integer.

If the Media Playlist does not contain an EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag, then the Discontinuity Sequence Number of the first Media Segment in the Playlist SHALL be considered to be 0.

The EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag MUST appear before the first Media Segment in the Playlist.

The EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag MUST appear before any EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag.

See [Section 6.2.1](#) and [Section 6.2.2](#) for more information about setting the value of the EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag.

4.3.3.4. EXT-X-ENDLIST

The EXT-X-ENDLIST tag indicates that no more Media Segments will be added to the Media Playlist file. It MAY occur anywhere in the Media Playlist file. Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-ENDLIST
```

4.3.3.5. EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE

The EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE tag provides mutability information about the Media Playlist file. It applies to the entire Media Playlist file. It is OPTIONAL. Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE:<EVENT|VOD>
```

[Section 6.2.1](#) defines the implications of the EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE tag.

If the EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE value is EVENT, Media Segments can only be added to the end of the Media Playlist. If the EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE value is VOD, the Media Playlist cannot change.

If the EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE tag is omitted from a Media Playlist, the Playlist can be updated according to the rules in [Section 6.2.1](#) with no additional restrictions. For example, a live Playlist ([Section 6.2.2](#)) MAY be updated to remove Media Segments in the order that they appeared.

4.3.3.6. EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY

The EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY tag indicates that each Media Segment in the Playlist describes a single I-frame. I-frames (or Intra frames) are encoded video frames whose encoding does not depend on any other frame.

The EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY tag applies to the entire Playlist. Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY
```

In a Playlist with the EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY tag, the Media Segment duration (EXTINF tag value) is the time between the presentation time of the I-frame in the Media Segment and the presentation time of the next I-frame in the Playlist, or the end of the presentation if it is the last I-frame in the Playlist.

Media resources containing I-frame segments MUST begin with either a Media Initialization Section ([Section 3](#)) or be accompanied by an EXT-X-MAP tag indicating the Media Initialization Section so that clients can load and decode I-frame segments in any order. The byte range of an I-frame segment with an EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag applied to it ([Section 4.3.2.2](#)) MUST NOT include its Media Initialization Section; clients can assume that the Media Initialization Section is defined by EXT-X-MAP tag, or is located from the start of the resource to the offset of the first I-frame segment in that resource.

Use of the EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY REQUIRES a compatibility version number of 4 or greater.

4.3.4. Master Playlist Tags

Master Playlist tags define the Variant Streams, Renditions, and other global parameters of the presentation.

Master Playlist Tags MUST NOT appear in a Media Playlist; clients SHOULD fail to parse any Playlist that contains both a Master Playlist tag and either a Media Playlist tag or a Media Segment tag.

4.3.4.1. EXT-X-MEDIA

The EXT-X-MEDIA tag is used to relate Media Playlists that contain alternative Renditions ([Section 4.3.4.2.1](#)) of the same content. For example, three EXT-X-MEDIA tags can be used to identify audio-only Media Playlists that contain English, French and Spanish Renditions of the same presentation. Or two EXT-X-MEDIA tags can be used to identify video-only Media Playlists that show two different camera angles.

Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-MEDIA:<attribute-list>
```

The following attributes are defined:

TYPE

The value is an enumerated-string; valid strings are AUDIO, VIDEO, SUBTITLES and CLOSED-CAPTIONS. If the value is AUDIO, the Playlist described by the tag MUST contain audio media. If the value is VIDEO, the Playlist MUST contain video media. If the value is SUBTITLES, the Playlist MUST contain subtitle media. If the value is CLOSED-CAPTIONS, the Media Segments for the video Renditions can include closed captions. Specifying a Playlist that does not contain the appropriate media type can lead to client playback errors. This attribute is REQUIRED.

URI

The value is a quoted-string containing a URI that identifies the Playlist file. This attribute is OPTIONAL; see [Section 4.3.4.2.1](#). If the TYPE is CLOSED-CAPTIONS, the URI attribute MUST NOT be present.

GROUP-ID

The value is a quoted-string which specifies the group to which the Rendition belongs. See [Section 4.3.4.1.1](#). This attribute is REQUIRED.

LANGUAGE

The value is a quoted-string containing one of the standard Tags for Identifying Languages [RFC5646], which identifies the primary language used in the Rendition. This attribute is OPTIONAL.

ASSOC-LANGUAGE

The value is a quoted-string containing a language tag [RFC5646] that identifies a language that is associated with the Rendition. An associated language is often used in a different role than the language specified by the LANGUAGE attribute (e.g. written vs. spoken, or as a fallback dialect). This attribute is OPTIONAL.

NAME

The value is a quoted-string containing a human-readable description of the Rendition. If the LANGUAGE attribute is present then this description SHOULD be in that language. This attribute is REQUIRED.

DEFAULT

The value is an enumerated-string; valid strings are YES and NO. If the value is YES, then the client SHOULD play this Rendition of the content in the absence of information from the user indicating a different choice. This attribute is OPTIONAL. Its absence indicates an implicit value of NO.

AUTOSELECT

The value is an enumerated-string; valid strings are YES and NO. This attribute is OPTIONAL. Its absence indicates an implicit value of NO. If the value is YES, then the client MAY choose to play this Rendition in the absence of explicit user preference because it matches the current playback environment, such as chosen system language.

If the AUTOSELECT attribute is present, its value MUST be YES if the value of the DEFAULT attribute is YES.

FORCED

The value is an enumerated-string; valid strings are YES and NO. This attribute is OPTIONAL. Its absence indicates an implicit value of NO. The FORCED attribute MUST NOT be present unless the TYPE is SUBTITLES.

A value of YES indicates that the Rendition contains content which is considered essential to play. When selecting a FORCED Rendition, a client SHOULD choose the one that best matches the current playback environment (e.g. language).

A value of NO indicates that the Rendition contains content which is intended to be played in response to explicit user request.

INSTREAM-ID

The value is a quoted-string that specifies a Rendition within the segments in the Media Playlist. This attribute is REQUIRED if the TYPE attribute is CLOSED-CAPTIONS, in which case it MUST have one of the values: "CC1", "CC2", "CC3", "CC4", or "SERVICE n " where n MUST be an integer between 1 and 63 (e.g. "SERVICE3" or "SERVICE42").

The values "CC1", "CC2", "CC3", and "CC4" identify a Line 21 Data Services channel [CEA608]. The "SERVICE" values identify a Digital Television Closed Captioning [CEA708] service block number.

For all other TYPE values, the INSTREAM-ID MUST NOT be specified.

CHARACTERISTICS

The value is a quoted-string containing one or more Uniform Type Identifiers [UTI] separated by comma (,) characters. This attribute is OPTIONAL. Each UTI indicates an individual characteristic of the Rendition.

A SUBTITLES Rendition MAY include the following characteristics:
"public.accessibility.transcribes-spoken-dialog";
"public.accessibility.describes-music-and-sound"; "public.easy-to-read" (which indicates that the subtitles have been edited for ease of reading).

An AUDIO Rendition MAY include the following characteristics:
"public.accessibility.describes-video".

The CHARACTERISTICS attribute MAY include private UTIs.

4.3.4.1.1. Rendition Groups

A set of EXT-X-MEDIA tags with the same GROUP-ID value and the same TYPE value forms a group of Renditions. Each member of the group MUST be an alternative rendition of the same content; otherwise playback errors can occur.

All EXT-X-MEDIA tags in a Playlist MUST meet the following constraints:

- o All EXT-X-MEDIA tags in the same group MUST have different NAME attributes.
- o A group MUST NOT have more than one member with a DEFAULT attribute of YES.
- o All members of a group whose AUTOSELECT attribute has a value of YES MUST have LANGUAGE [RFC5646] attributes with unique values.

A Playlist MAY contain multiple groups of the same TYPE in order to provide multiple encodings of that media type. If it does so, each group of the same TYPE MUST have the same set of members, and each corresponding member MUST have identical attributes with the exception of the URI attribute.

Each member in a group of Renditions MAY have a different sample format. However, any EXT-X-STREAM-INF (Section 4.3.4.2) tag or EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF (Section 4.3.4.3) tag which references that group MUST have a CODECS attribute that lists every sample format present in any Rendition in the group, or client playback failures can occur.

4.3.4.2. EXT-X-STREAM-INF

The EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag specifies a Variant Stream, which is a set of Renditions which can be combined to play the presentation. The attributes of the tag provide information about the Variant Stream.

The EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag identifies the next URI line in the Playlist as a Rendition of the Variant Stream.

Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:<attribute-list>
<URI>
```

The following attributes are defined:

BANDWIDTH

The value is a decimal-integer of bits per second. It represents the peak segment bit rate of the Variant Stream.

If all the Media Segments in a Variant Stream have already been created, the BANDWIDTH value MUST be the largest sum of peak segment

bit rates that is produced by any playable combination of Renditions. (For a Variant Stream with a single Media Playlist, this is just the peak segment bit rate of that Media Playlist.) An inaccurate value can cause playback stalls or prevent clients from playing the variant.

If the Master Playlist is to be made available before all Media Segments in the presentation have been encoded, the BANDWIDTH value SHOULD be the BANDWIDTH value of a representative period of similar content, encoded using the same settings.

Every EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag MUST include the BANDWIDTH attribute.

AVERAGE-BANDWIDTH

The value is a decimal-integer of bits per second. It represents the average segment bit rate of the Variant Stream.

If all the Media Segments in a Variant Stream have already been created, the AVERAGE-BANDWIDTH value MUST be the largest sum of average segment bit rates that is produced by any playable combination of Renditions. (For a Variant Stream with a single Media Playlist, this is just the average segment bit rate of that Media Playlist.) An inaccurate value can cause playback stalls or prevent clients from playing the variant.

If the Master Playlist is to be made available before all Media Segments in the presentation have been encoded, the AVERAGE-BANDWIDTH value SHOULD be the AVERAGE-BANDWIDTH value of a representative period of similar content, encoded using the same settings.

The AVERAGE-BANDWIDTH attribute is OPTIONAL.

CODECS

The value is a quoted-string containing a comma-separated list of formats, where each format specifies a media sample type that is present in one or more Renditions specified by the Variant Stream. Valid format identifiers are those in the ISO Base Media File Format Name Space defined by The 'Codecs' and 'Profiles' Parameters for "Bucket" Media Types [[RFC6381](#)].

Every EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag SHOULD include a CODECS attribute.

RESOLUTION

The value is a decimal-resolution describing the optimal pixel resolution at which to display all the video in the Variant Stream.

The RESOLUTION attribute is OPTIONAL but is recommended if the Variant Stream includes video.

AUDIO

The value is a quoted-string. It MUST match the value of the GROUP-ID attribute of an EXT-X-MEDIA tag elsewhere in the Master Playlist whose TYPE attribute is AUDIO. It indicates the set of audio Renditions that MAY be used when playing the presentation. See [Section 4.3.4.2.1](#).

The AUDIO attribute is OPTIONAL.

VIDEO

The value is a quoted-string. It MUST match the value of the GROUP-ID attribute of an EXT-X-MEDIA tag elsewhere in the Master Playlist whose TYPE attribute is VIDEO. It indicates the set of video Renditions that MAY be used when playing the presentation. See [Section 4.3.4.2.1](#).

The VIDEO attribute is OPTIONAL.

SUBTITLES

The value is a quoted-string. It MUST match the value of the GROUP-ID attribute of an EXT-X-MEDIA tag elsewhere in the Master Playlist whose TYPE attribute is SUBTITLES. It indicates the set of subtitle Renditions that MAY be used when playing the presentation. See [Section 4.3.4.2.1](#).

The SUBTITLES attribute is OPTIONAL.

CLOSED-CAPTIONS

The value can be either a quoted-string or an enumerated-string with the value NONE. If the value is a quoted-string, it MUST match the value of the GROUP-ID attribute of an EXT-X-MEDIA tag elsewhere in the Playlist whose TYPE attribute is CLOSED-CAPTIONS, and indicates the set of closed-caption Renditions that MAY be used when playing the presentation. See [Section 4.3.4.2.1](#).

If the value is the enumerated-string value NONE, all EXT-X-STREAM-INF tags MUST have this attribute with a value of NONE, indicating that there are no closed captions in any Variant Stream in the Master Playlist. Having closed captions in one Variant Stream but not another can trigger playback inconsistencies.

The CLOSED-CAPTIONS attribute is OPTIONAL.

4.3.4.2.1. Alternative Renditions

When an EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag contains an AUDIO, VIDEO, SUBTITLES, or CLOSED-CAPTIONS attribute, it indicates that alternative Renditions of the content are available for playback of that Variant Stream.

When defining alternative Renditions, the following constraints MUST be met to prevent client playback errors:

- o All playable combinations of Renditions associated with an EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag MUST have an aggregate bandwidth less than or equal to the BANDWIDTH attribute of the EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag.
- o If an EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag contains a RESOLUTION attribute and a VIDEO attribute, then every alternative video Rendition MUST have an optimal display resolution matching the value of the RESOLUTION attribute.
- o Every alternative Rendition associated with an EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag MUST meet the constraints for a Variant Stream described in [Section 6.2.4](#).

The URI attribute of the EXT-X-MEDIA tag is REQUIRED if the media type is SUBTITLES, but OPTIONAL if the media type is VIDEO or AUDIO. If the media type is VIDEO or AUDIO, a missing URI attribute indicates that the media data for this Rendition is included in the Media playlist of any EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag referencing this MEDIA tag. If the media type is AUDIO and the URI attribute is missing, clients MAY assume that the audio data for this Rendition is present in every video Rendition specified by the EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag.

The URI attribute of the EXT-X-MEDIA tag MUST NOT be included if the media type is CLOSED-CAPTIONS.

4.3.4.3. EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF

The EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF tag identifies a Media Playlist file containing the I-frames of a multimedia presentation. It stands alone, in that it does not apply to a particular URI in the Master Playlist. Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF:<attribute-list>
```

All attributes defined for the EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag ([Section 4.3.4.2](#)) are also defined for the EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF tag, except for the

AUDIO, SUBTITLES and CLOSED-CAPTIONS attributes. In addition, the following attribute is defined:

URI

The value is a quoted-string containing a URI that identifies the I-frame Playlist file.

Every EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF tag MUST include a BANDWIDTH attribute and a URI attribute.

The provisions in [Section 4.3.4.2.1](#) also apply to EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF tags with a VIDEO attribute.

A Master Playlist that specifies alternative VIDEO Renditions and I-frame Playlists SHOULD include an alternative I-frame VIDEO Rendition for each regular VIDEO Rendition, with the same NAME and LANGUAGE attributes.

4.3.4.4. EXT-X-SESSION-DATA

The EXT-X-SESSION-DATA tag allows arbitrary session data to be carried in a Master Playlist.

Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-SESSION-DATA:<attribute list>
```

The following attributes are defined:

DATA-ID

The value of DATA-ID is a quoted-string which identifies that data value. The DATA-ID SHOULD conform to a reverse DNS naming convention, such as "com.example.movie.title". This attribute is REQUIRED.

VALUE

VALUE is a quoted-string. It contains the data identified by DATA-ID. If the LANGUAGE is specified, VALUE SHOULD contain a human-readable string written in the specified language.

URI

The value is a quoted-string containing a URI. The resource identified by the URI MUST be formatted as JSON [[RFC7159](#)]; otherwise, clients may fail to interpret the resource.

LANGUAGE

The value is a quoted-string containing a language tag [RFC5646] that identifies the language of the VALUE. This attribute is OPTIONAL.

Each EXT-X-SESSION-DATA tag MUST contain either a VALUE or URI attribute, but not both.

A Playlist MAY contain multiple EXT-X-SESSION-DATA tags with the same DATA-ID attribute. A Playlist MUST NOT contain more than one EXT-X-SESSION-DATA tag with the same DATA-ID attribute and the same LANGUAGE attribute.

4.3.5. Media or Master Playlist Tags

The tags in this section can appear in either Master Playlists or Media Playlists. If one of these tags appears in a Master Playlist, it SHOULD NOT appear in any Media Playlist referenced by that Master Playlist. A tag that appears in both MUST have the same value; otherwise, clients SHOULD ignore the value in the Media Playlist(s).

These tags MUST NOT appear more than once in a Playlist.

4.3.5.1. EXT-X-INDEPENDENT-SEGMENTS

The EXT-X-INDEPENDENT-SEGMENTS tag indicates that all media samples in a Media Segment can be decoded without information from other segments. It applies to every Media Segment in the Playlist.

Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-INDEPENDENT-SEGMENTS
```

If the EXT-X-INDEPENDENT-SEGMENTS tag appears in a Master Playlist, it applies to every Media Segment in every Media Playlist in the Master Playlist.

4.3.5.2. EXT-X-START

The EXT-X-START tag indicates a preferred point at which to start playing a Playlist. By default, clients SHOULD start playback at this point when beginning a playback session. This tag is OPTIONAL.

Its format is:

```
#EXT-X-START:<attribute list>
```

The following attributes are defined:

TIME-OFFSET

The value of TIME-OFFSET is a signed-decimal-floating-point number of seconds. A positive number indicates a time offset from the beginning of the Playlist. A negative number indicates a negative time offset from the end of the last Media Segment in the Playlist. This attribute is REQUIRED.

The absolute value of TIME-OFFSET SHOULD NOT be larger than the Playlist duration. If the absolute value of TIME-OFFSET exceeds the duration of the Playlist, it indicates either the end of the Playlist (if positive) or the beginning of the Playlist (if negative).

If the Playlist does not contain the EXT-X-ENDLIST tag, the TIME-OFFSET SHOULD NOT be within three target durations of the end of the Playlist file.

PRECISE

The value is an enumerated-string; valid strings are YES and NO. If the value is YES, clients SHOULD start playback at the Media Segment containing the TIME-OFFSET, but SHOULD NOT render media samples in that segment whose presentation times are prior to the TIME-OFFSET. If the value is NO, clients SHOULD attempt to render every media sample in that segment. This attribute is OPTIONAL. If it is missing, its value should be treated as NO.

5. Key files

5.1. Structure of Key files

An EXT-X-KEY tag with a URI attribute identifies a Key file. A Key file contains a cipher key that can decrypt Media Segments in the Playlist.

[AES_128] encryption uses 16-octet keys. If the KEYFORMAT of an EXT-X-KEY tag is "identity", the Key file is a single packed array of 16 octets in binary format.

5.2. IV for [AES_128]

[AES_128] REQUIRES the same 16-octet Initialization Vector (IV) to be supplied when encrypting and decrypting. Varying this IV increases the strength of the cipher.

An IV attribute on an EXT-X-KEY tag with a KEYFORMAT of "identity" specifies an Initialization Vector that can be used when decrypting

Media Segments encrypted with that Key file. It is formatted as a 128-bit unsigned integer.

An EXT-X-KEY tag with a KEYFORMAT of "identity" that does not have an IV attribute indicates that the Media Sequence Number is to be used as the IV when decrypting a Media Segment, by putting its big-endian binary representation into a 16-octet (128-bit) buffer and padding (on the left) with zeros.

6. Client/Server Responsibilities

6.1. Introduction

This section describes how the server generates the Playlist and Media Segments and how the client should download them for playback.

6.2. Server Responsibilities

6.2.1. General Server Responsibilities

The production of the source media is outside the scope of this document, which simply presumes a source of continuous encoded media containing the presentation.

The server **MUST** divide the source media into individual Media Segments whose duration is less than or equal to a constant target duration. Segments that are longer than the planned target duration can trigger playback stalls and other errors.

The server **SHOULD** attempt to divide the source media at points that support effective decode of individual Media Segments, e.g. on packet and key frame boundaries.

The server **MUST** create a URI for every Media Segment that enables its clients to obtain the segment data. If a server supports partial loading of resources (e.g. via HTTP Range requests), it **MAY** specify segments as sub-ranges of larger resources using the EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag.

Any Media Segment that is specified in a Playlist loaded by a client **MUST** be completely available at that time, or playback errors can occur.

HTTP servers **SHOULD** transfer text files - such as Playlists and WebVTT segments - using the "gzip" Content-Encoding if the client indicates that it is prepared to accept it.

The server must create a Media Playlist file ([Section 4](#)) that contains a URI for each Media Segment that the server wishes to make available, in the order in which they are to be played.

The value of the EXT-X-VERSION tag ([Section 4.3.1.2](#)) SHOULD NOT be greater than what is required for the tags and attributes in the Playlist - see [Section 7](#).

Changes to the Playlist file MUST be made atomically from the point of view of the clients, or playback errors MAY occur.

The server MUST NOT change the Media Playlist file, except to:

- Append lines to it ([Section 6.2.1](#)).

- Remove Media Segment URIs from the Playlist in the order that they appear, along with any tags that apply only to those segments ([Section 6.2.2](#)).

- Increment the value of the EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE or EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tags ([Section 6.2.2](#)).

- Add an EXT-X-ENDLIST tag to the Playlist ([Section 6.2.1](#)).

Furthermore, the Playlist file MAY contain an EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE tag with a value of either EVENT or VOD. If the tag is present and has a value of EVENT, the server MUST NOT change or delete any part of the Playlist file (although it MAY append lines to it). If the tag is present and has a value of VOD, the Playlist file MUST NOT change.

The value of the EXT-X-TARGETDURATION tag in the Media Playlist MUST NOT change. A typical target duration is 10 seconds.

Unexpected Playlist changes MAY trigger playback errors or inconsistent client behavior.

Each Media Segment in a Media Playlist has an integer Discontinuity Sequence Number. The Discontinuity Sequence Number can be used in addition to the timestamps within the media to synchronize Media Segments across different Renditions.

A segment's Discontinuity Sequence Number is the value of the EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag (or zero if none) plus the number of EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tags in the Playlist preceding the URI line of the segment.

The server MAY associate an absolute date and time with a Media Segment by applying an EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tag to it. This

defines an informative mapping of the (wall-clock) date and time specified by the tag to the first media timestamp in the segment, which may be used as a basis for seeking, for display, or for other purposes. If a server provides this mapping, it SHOULD apply an EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tag to every segment that has an EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag applied to it.

If the Media Playlist contains the final Media Segment of the presentation then the Playlist file MUST contain the EXT-X-ENDLIST tag; this allows clients to minimize unproductive Playlist reloads.

If a Media Playlist does not contain the EXT-X-ENDLIST tag, the server MUST make a new version of the Playlist file available that contains at least one new Media Segment. It MUST be made available relative to the time that the previous version of the Playlist file was made available: no earlier than one-half the target duration after that time, and no later than 1.5 times the target duration after that time. This allows clients to utilize the network efficiently.

If the server wishes to remove an entire presentation, it SHOULD provide a clear indication to clients that the Playlist file is no longer available (e.g. with an HTTP 404 or 410 response). It MUST ensure that all Media Segments in the Playlist file remain available to clients for at least the duration of the Playlist file at the time of removal to prevent interruption of in-progress playback.

6.2.2. Live Playlists

The server MAY limit the availability of Media Segments by removing Media Segments from the Playlist file ([Section 6.2.1](#)). If Media Segments are to be removed, the Playlist file MUST contain an EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE tag. Its value MUST be incremented by 1 for every Media Segment that is removed from the Playlist file; it MUST NOT decrease or wrap. Clients can malfunction if each Media Segment does not have a consistent, unique Media Sequence Number.

Media Segments MUST be removed from the Playlist file in the order that they appear in the Playlist; otherwise, client playback can malfunction.

The server MUST NOT remove a Media Segment from a Playlist file without an EXT-X-ENDLIST tag if that would produce a Playlist whose duration is less than three times the target duration. Doing so can trigger playback stalls.

When the server removes a Media Segment URI from the Playlist, the corresponding Media Segment MUST remain available to clients for a

period of time equal to the duration of the segment plus the duration of the longest Playlist file distributed by the server containing that segment. Removing a Media Segment earlier than that can interrupt in-progress playback.

If the server wishes to remove segments from a Media Playlist containing an EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag, the playlist MUST contain an EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag. Without the EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag, it can be impossible for a client to locate corresponding segments between Renditions.

If the server removes an EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag from the Media Playlist, it MUST increment the value of the EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag so that the Discontinuity Sequence Numbers of the segments still in the playlist remain unchanged. The value of the EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY-SEQUENCE tag MUST NOT decrease or wrap. Clients can malfunction if each Media Segment does not have a consistent Discontinuity Sequence Number.

If a server plans to remove a Media Segment after it is delivered to clients over HTTP, it SHOULD ensure that the HTTP response contains an Expires header that reflects the planned time-to-live.

A Live Playlist MUST NOT contain the EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE tag, as no value of that tag allows Media Segments to be removed.

6.2.3. Encrypting Media Segments

Media Segments MAY be encrypted. Every encrypted Media Segment MUST have an EXT-X-KEY tag ([Section 4.3.2.4](#)) applied to it with a URI that the client can use to obtain a Key file ([Section 5](#)) containing the decryption key. A Media Segment MAY have multiple EXT-X-KEY tags, each with a different KEYFORMAT attribute value.

The server MAY set the HTTP Expires header in the key response to indicate that the key can be cached.

If an encrypted Media Segment is followed by one or more unencrypted Media Segments in the Playlist, the unencrypted Media Segments MUST have an EXT-X-KEY tag whose METHOD is NONE applied to them. Otherwise, the client will misinterpret those segments as encrypted.

If the encryption METHOD is AES-128 and the Playlist does not contain the EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY tag, AES encryption as described in [Section 4.3.2.4](#) SHALL be applied to individual Media Segments.

If the encryption METHOD is AES-128 and the Playlist contains an EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY tag, the entire resource MUST be encrypted using

AES-128 CBC with PKCS7 padding [[RFC5652](#)]. Encryption MAY be restarted on 16-byte block boundaries, unless the first block contains an I-frame. The IV used for encryption MUST be either the Media Sequence Number of the Media Segment or the value of the IV attribute of the EXT-X-KEY tag, as described in [Section 5.2](#). These constraints allow a client to load and decrypt individual I-frames specified as sub-ranges of regular encrypted Media Segments, and their Media Initialization Sections.

If the encryption METHOD is SAMPLE-AES, media samples MAY be encrypted prior to encapsulation in a Media Segment. The encryption format for H.264, AAC and AC-3 media streams is described by [[SampleEnc](#)].

The server MUST NOT remove an EXT-X-KEY tag from the Playlist file if it applies to any Media Segment in the Playlist file, or clients who subsequently load that Playlist will be unable to decrypt those Media Segments.

6.2.4. Providing Variant Streams

A server MAY offer multiple Media Playlist files to provide different encodings of the same presentation. If it does so it SHOULD provide a Master Playlist file that lists each Variant Stream to allow clients to switch between encodings dynamically.

Master Playlists describe regular Variant Streams with EXT-X-STREAM-INF tags and I-frame Variant Streams with EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF tags.

If an EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag or EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF tag contains the CODECS attribute, the attribute value MUST include every media format [[RFC6381](#)] present in any Media Segment in any of the Renditions specified by the Variant Stream.

The server MUST meet the following constraints when producing Variant Streams in order to allow clients to switch between them seamlessly:

- Each Variant Stream MUST present the same content.

- Matching content in Variant Streams MUST have matching timestamps. This allows clients to synchronize the media.

- Matching content in Variant Streams MUST have matching Discontinuity Sequence Numbers - see [Section 4.3.3.3](#).

- Each Media Playlist in each Variant Stream MUST have the same target duration. The only exception is that SUBTITLES Renditions

with an EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE of VOD MAY have longer target durations.

Content that appears in a Media Playlist of one Variant Stream but not in another MUST appear either at the beginning or at the end of the Media Playlist file and MUST NOT be longer than the target duration.

If any Media Playlist in a Master Playlist contains an EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tag, then all Media Playlists in that Master Playlist MUST contain EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tags with consistent mappings of date and time to media timestamps.

In addition, for broadest compatibility, Variant Streams SHOULD contain the same encoded audio bitstream. This allows clients to switch between Variant Streams without audible glitching.

The rules for Variant Streams also apply to alternative Renditions - see [Section 4.3.4.2.1](#).

6.3. Client Responsibilities

6.3.1. General Client Responsibilities

How the client obtains the URI to the Playlist file is outside the scope of this document; it is presumed to have done so.

The client obtains the Playlist file from the URI. If the Playlist file so obtained is a Master Playlist, the client can select a Variant Stream to load from the Master Playlist.

Clients MUST ensure that loaded Playlists comply with [Section 4](#) and that the EXT-X-VERSION tag, if present, specifies a protocol version supported by the client; if either check fails, the client MUST NOT attempt to use the Playlist, or unintended behavior could occur.

To support forward compatibility, when parsing Playlists, Clients MUST:

- o ignore any unrecognized tags.
- o ignore any Attribute/value pair with an unrecognized AttributeName.
- o ignore any tag containing an attribute/value pair of type enumerated-string whose AttributeName is recognized but whose AttributeValue is not recognized, unless the definition of the attribute says otherwise.

This document does not specify the treatment of Variant Streams by clients.

6.3.2. Loading the Media Playlist file

Every time a Media Playlist is loaded or reloaded from a Playlist URI, the client **MUST** determine the next Media Segment to load, as described in [Section 6.3.5](#), if it intends to play the presentation normally (i.e., in playlist order at the nominal playback rate).

If the Media Playlist contains the EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE tag, the client **SHOULD** assume that each Media Segment in it will become unavailable at the time that the Playlist file was loaded plus the duration of the Playlist file.

A client **MAY** use the segment Media Sequence Number to track the location of a Media Segment within a Playlist when the Playlist is reloaded.

A client **MUST NOT** assume that segments with the same Media Sequence Number in different Variant Streams or Renditions have the same position in the presentation; Playlists **MAY** have independent Media Sequence Numbers. Instead, a client **MUST** use the relative position of each segment on the Playlist timeline and its Discontinuity Sequence Number to locate corresponding segments.

A client **MUST** load the Media Playlist file of every Rendition selected for playback in order to locate the media specific to that Rendition. But it **SHOULD NOT** load the Playlist file of any other Rendition to prevent unnecessary load on the server.

For some Variant Streams, it is possible to select Renditions such that the Media Playlist to which the EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag is applied contains none of the media selected for playback. In that case, the client **SHOULD NOT** load that Media Playlist file.

6.3.3. Playing the Media Playlist file

The client **SHALL** choose which Media Segment to play first from the Media Playlist when playback starts. If the EXT-X-ENDLIST tag is not present and the client intends to play the media normally, the client **SHOULD NOT** choose a segment which starts less than three target durations from the end of the Playlist file. Doing so can trigger playback stalls.

Normal playback can be achieved by playing the Media Segments in the order that they appear in the Playlist. The client **MAY** present the

available media in any way it wishes, including normal playback, random access, and trick modes.

The encoding parameters for samples in a Media Segment and across multiple Media Segments in a Media Playlist SHOULD remain consistent. However, clients SHOULD deal with encoding changes as they are encountered, for example by scaling video content to accommodate a resolution change. If the Variant Stream includes a RESOLUTION attribute, clients SHOULD display all video within a rectangle with the same proportions as that resolution.

Clients SHOULD be prepared to handle multiple tracks of a particular type (e.g. audio or video). A client with no other preference SHOULD choose the track with the lowest numerical track identifier that it can play.

Clients SHOULD ignore private streams inside Transport Streams that they do not recognize to support cross-device addressability.

The client MUST be prepared to reset its parser(s) and decoder(s) before playing a Media Segment that has an EXT-X-DISCONTINUITY tag applied to it, otherwise playback errors can occur.

The client SHOULD attempt to load Media Segments in advance of when they will be required for uninterrupted playback to compensate for temporary variations in latency and throughput.

The client MAY use the value of the EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tag to display the program origination time to the user. If the value includes time zone information, the client SHALL take it into account; if it does not the client MAY assume the time to be local.

The client MUST NOT depend upon the correctness or the consistency of the value of the EXT-X-PROGRAM-DATE-TIME tag; its value is informative.

6.3.4. Reloading the Media Playlist file

The client MUST periodically reload a Media Playlist file to learn what media is currently available, unless it contains an EXT-X-PLAYLIST-TYPE tag with a value of VOD, or a value of EVENT and the EXT-X-ENDLIST tag is also present.

However the client MUST NOT attempt to reload the Playlist file more frequently than specified by this section, in order to limit the collective load on the server.

When a client loads a Playlist file for the first time or reloads a Playlist file and finds that it has changed since the last time it was loaded, the client **MUST** wait for at least the target duration before attempting to reload the Playlist file again, measured from the last time the client began loading the Playlist file.

If the client reloads a Playlist file and finds that it has not changed then it **MUST** wait for a period of one-half the target duration before retrying.

After reloading a Media Playlist, the client **SHOULD** verify that each Media Segment in it has the same URI (and byte range, if specified) as the Media Segment with the same Media Sequence Number in the previous Media Playlist. It **SHOULD** halt playback if it does not, as this normally indicates a server error.

In order to reduce server load, the client **SHOULD NOT** reload the Playlist files of Variant Streams or alternate Renditions that are not currently being played. If it decides to switch playback to a different Variant Stream, it **SHOULD** stop reloading the Playlist of the old Variant Stream and begin loading the Playlist of the new Variant Stream. It can use the **EXTINF** durations and the constraints in [Section 6.2.4](#) to determine the approximate location of corresponding media. Once media from the new Variant Stream has been loaded, the timestamps in the Media Segments can be used to synchronize the old and new timelines precisely.

A client **MUST NOT** attempt to use the Media Sequence Number to synchronize between streams - see [Section 6.3.2](#).

[6.3.5](#). Determining the next segment to load

The client **MUST** examine the Media Playlist file every time it is loaded or reloaded to determine the next Media Segment to load, as the set of available media **MAY** have changed.

The first segment to load is generally the segment that the client has chosen to play first - see [Section 6.3.3](#).

In order to play the presentation normally, the next Media Segment to load is the one with the lowest Media Sequence Number that is greater than the Media Sequence Number of the last Media Segment loaded.

[6.3.6](#). Decrypting encrypted Media Segments

If a Media Playlist file contains an **EXT-X-KEY** tag that specifies a Key file URI, the client can obtain that Key file and use the key

inside it to decrypt all Media Segments to which that EXT-X-KEY tag applies.

A client MUST ignore any EXT-X-KEY tag with an unsupported or unrecognized KEYFORMAT attribute, to allow for cross-device addressability. If the Playlist contains a Media Segment to which only EXT-X-KEY tags with unrecognized or unsupported KEYFORMAT attributes are applied, playback SHOULD fail.

A client MUST NOT attempt to decrypt any segments whose EXT-X-KEY tag has a METHOD attribute that it does not recognize.

If the encryption METHOD is AES-128, AES-128 CBC decryption SHALL be applied to individual Media Segments, whose encryption format is described in [Section 4.3.2.4](#).

If the encryption METHOD is AES-128 and the Media Segment is part of an I-frame playlist ([Section 4.3.3.6](#)) and it has an EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag applied to it, special care needs to be taken in loading and decrypting the segment, because the resource identified by the URI is encrypted in 16-byte blocks from the start of the resource (offset 0). The decrypted I-frame can be recovered by first widening its byte range, as specified by the EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag, so that it starts and ends on 16-byte boundaries. Next, the byte range is widened further to include the previous 16-byte block. That byte range is then loaded and decrypted with AES-128 CBC using an arbitrary IV. The decrypted I-frame can then be read out from the range specified by the EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag and the remainder discarded.

If the encryption METHOD is SAMPLE-AES, AES-128 decryption SHALL be applied to encrypted media samples within the Media Segment. The format for encrypted H.264, AAC and AC-3 media streams is described by [\[SampleEnc\]](#).

An EXT-X-KEY tag with a METHOD of NONE indicates that the Media Segments it applies to are not encrypted.

7. Protocol version compatibility

Protocol compatibility is specified by the EXT-X-VERSION tag. A Playlist that contains tags or attributes that are not compatible with protocol version 1 MUST include an EXT-X-VERSION tag. The value of the EXT-X-VERSION tag MUST be a protocol version that defines all tags and attributes in the Playlist; otherwise, client behavior is not defined.

A client MUST NOT attempt playback if it does not support the protocol version specified by the EXT-X-VERSION tag, or unintended behavior could occur.

A Media Playlist REQUIRES protocol version 2 or higher if it contains:

- o The IV attribute of the EXT-X-KEY tag.

A Media Playlist REQUIRES protocol version 3 or higher if it contains:

- o Floating-point EXTINF duration values.

A Media Playlist REQUIRES protocol version 4 or higher if it contains:

- o The EXT-X-BYTERANGE tag.
- o The EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY tag.

A Media Playlist REQUIRES protocol version 5 or higher if it contains:

- o The KEYFORMAT and KEYFORMATVERSIONS attributes of the EXT-X-KEY tag.
- o The EXT-X-MAP tag.

A Media Playlist REQUIRES protocol version 6 or higher if it contains:

- o The EXT-X-MAP tag in a Media playlist that does not contain EXT-X-I-FRAMES-ONLY.

A Media Playlist REQUIRES protocol version 7 or higher if it contains:

- o "SERVICE" values for the INSTREAM-ID attribute for the EXT-X-MEDIA tag.

The EXT-X-MEDIA tag and the AUDIO, VIDEO and SUBTITLES attributes of the EXT-X-STREAM-INF tag are backward compatible to protocol version 1, but playback on older clients may not be desirable. A server MAY consider indicating protocol version 4 in the Master Playlist but is not required to do so.

The PROGRAM-ID attribute of the EXT-X-STREAM-INF and the EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF tags was removed in protocol version 6.

The EXT-X-ALLOW-CACHE tag was removed in protocol version 7.

8. Playlist Examples

8.1. Simple Media Playlist

```
#EXTM3U
#EXT-X-TARGETDURATION:10
#EXTINF:9.009,
http://media.example.com/first.ts
#EXTINF:9.009,
http://media.example.com/second.ts
#EXTINF:3.003,
http://media.example.com/third.ts
#EXT-X-ENDLIST
```

8.2. Live Media Playlist, using HTTPS

```
#EXTM3U
#EXT-X-VERSION:3
#EXT-X-TARGETDURATION:8
#EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE:2680

#EXTINF:7.975,
https://priv.example.com/fileSequence2680.ts
#EXTINF:7.941,
https://priv.example.com/fileSequence2681.ts
#EXTINF:7.975,
https://priv.example.com/fileSequence2682.ts
```

8.3. Playlist with encrypted Media Segments

```
#EXTM3U
#EXT-X-VERSION:3
#EXT-X-MEDIA-SEQUENCE:7794
#EXT-X-TARGETDURATION:15

#EXT-X-KEY:METHOD=AES-128,URI="https://priv.example.com/key.php?r=52"

#EXTINF:2.833,
http://media.example.com/fileSequence52-A.ts
#EXTINF:15.0,
http://media.example.com/fileSequence52-B.ts
#EXTINF:13.333,
http://media.example.com/fileSequence52-C.ts

#EXT-X-KEY:METHOD=AES-128,URI="https://priv.example.com/key.php?r=53"

#EXTINF:15.0,
http://media.example.com/fileSequence53-A.ts
```

8.4. Master Playlist

```
#EXTM3U
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=1280000,AVERAGE-BANDWIDTH=1000000
http://example.com/low.m3u8
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=2560000,AVERAGE-BANDWIDTH=2000000
http://example.com/mid.m3u8
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=7680000,AVERAGE-BANDWIDTH=6000000
http://example.com/hi.m3u8
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=65000,CODECS="mp4a.40.5"
http://example.com/audio-only.m3u8
```

8.5. Master Playlist with I-Frames

```
#EXTM3U
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=1280000
low/audio-video.m3u8
#EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=86000,URI="low/iframe.m3u8"
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=2560000
mid/audio-video.m3u8
#EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=150000,URI="mid/iframe.m3u8"
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=7680000
hi/audio-video.m3u8
#EXT-X-I-FRAME-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=550000,URI="hi/iframe.m3u8"
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=65000,CODECS="mp4a.40.5"
audio-only.m3u8
```


8.6. Master Playlist with Alternative audio

In this example, the CODECS attributes have been condensed for space. A '\ ' is used to indicate that the tag continues on the following line with whitespace removed:

```
#EXTM3U
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=AUDIO,GROUP-ID="aac",NAME="English", \
    DEFAULT=YES,AUTOSELECT=YES,LANGUAGE="en", \
    URI="main/english-audio.m3u8"
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=AUDIO,GROUP-ID="aac",NAME="Deutsch", \
    DEFAULT=NO,AUTOSELECT=YES,LANGUAGE="de", \
    URI="main/german-audio.m3u8"
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=AUDIO,GROUP-ID="aac",NAME="Commentary", \
    DEFAULT=NO,AUTOSELECT=NO,LANGUAGE="en", \
    URI="commentary/audio-only.m3u8"
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=1280000,CODECS="...",AUDIO="aac"
low/video-only.m3u8
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=2560000,CODECS="...",AUDIO="aac"
mid/video-only.m3u8
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=7680000,CODECS="...",AUDIO="aac"
hi/video-only.m3u8
#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=65000,CODECS="mp4a.40.5",AUDIO="aac"
main/english-audio.m3u8
```

8.7. Master Playlist with Alternative video

In this example, the CODECS attributes have been condensed for space. A '\ ' is used to indicate that the tag continues on the following line with whitespace removed:

```
#EXTM3U
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="low",NAME="Main", \
    DEFAULT=YES,URI="low/main/audio-video.m3u8"
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="low",NAME="Centerfield", \
    DEFAULT=NO,URI="low/centerfield/audio-video.m3u8"
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="low",NAME="Dugout", \
    DEFAULT=NO,URI="low/dugout/audio-video.m3u8"

#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=1280000,CODECS="...",VIDEO="low"
low/main/audio-video.m3u8

#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="mid",NAME="Main", \
    DEFAULT=YES,URI="mid/main/audio-video.m3u8"
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="mid",NAME="Centerfield", \
    DEFAULT=NO,URI="mid/centerfield/audio-video.m3u8"
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="mid",NAME="Dugout", \
    DEFAULT=NO,URI="mid/dugout/audio-video.m3u8"

#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=2560000,CODECS="...",VIDEO="mid"
mid/main/audio-video.m3u8

#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="hi",NAME="Main", \
    DEFAULT=YES,URI="hi/main/audio-video.m3u8"
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="hi",NAME="Centerfield", \
    DEFAULT=NO,URI="hi/centerfield/audio-video.m3u8"
#EXT-X-MEDIA:TYPE=VIDEO,GROUP-ID="hi",NAME="Dugout", \
    DEFAULT=NO,URI="hi/dugout/audio-video.m3u8"

#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=7680000,CODECS="...",VIDEO="hi"
hi/main/audio-video.m3u8

#EXT-X-STREAM-INF:BANDWIDTH=65000,CODECS="mp4a.40.5"
main/audio-only.m3u8
```

8.8. Session Data in a Master Playlist

In this example, only the EXT-X-SESSION-DATA is shown:

```
#EXT-X-SESSION-DATA:DATA-ID="com.example.lyrics",URI="lyrics.json"

#EXT-X-SESSION-DATA:DATA-ID="com.example.title",LANGUAGE="en", \
    VALUE="This is an example"
#EXT-X-SESSION-DATA:DATA-ID="com.example.title",LANGUAGE="sp", \
    VALUE="Este es un ejemplo"
```

9. Contributors

Significant contributions to the design of this protocol were made by Jim Batson, David Biderman, Bill May, Roger Pantos, Alan Tseng, and Eryk Vershen.

10. IANA Considerations

This memo requests that the following MIME type [[RFC2046](#)] be registered with the IANA:

Type name: "application"

Subtype name: "vnd.apple.mpegurl"

Required parameters: (none)

Optional parameters: (none)

Encoding considerations: encoded as text. See [Section 4](#) for more information.

Security considerations: See [Section 11](#).

Compression: this media type does not employ compression.

Interoperability considerations: There are no byte-ordering issues, since files are 7- or 8-bit text. Applications could encounter unrecognized tags, which SHOULD be ignored.

Published specification: see [Section 4](#).

Applications that use this media type: Multimedia applications such as the iPhone media player in iOS 3.0 and later and QuickTime Player in Mac OS X version 10.6 and later.

Additional information: files begin with the magic number #EXTM3U. Filenames normally end with .m3u8 or .m3u (see [Section 4](#)). No Macintosh file type codes have been registered.

Person & email address to contact for further information: David Singer, singer AT apple.com.

Intended usage: LIMITED USE

Restrictions on usage: (none)

Author: Roger Pantos

Change Controller: David Singer

11. Security Considerations

Since the protocol generally uses HTTP to transfer data, most of the same security considerations apply. See [section 15](#) of HTTP [\[RFC7230\]](#).

Media file parsers are typically subject to "fuzzing" attacks. Implementors SHOULD pay particular attention to code that will parse data received from a server and ensure that all possible inputs are handled correctly.

Playlist files contain URIs, which clients will use to make network requests of arbitrary entities. Clients SHOULD range-check responses to prevent buffer overflows. See also the Security Considerations section of Uniform Resource Identifier (URI): Generic Syntax [\[RFC3986\]](#).

Clients SHOULD limit each playback session to a reasonable number of concurrent downloads (e.g. 4) to avoid contributing to denial-of-service attacks.

HTTP requests often include session state ("cookies"), which may contain private user data. Implementations MUST follow cookie restriction and expiry rules specified by HTTP State Management Mechanism [\[RFC6265\]](#) to protect themselves from attack. See also the Security Considerations section of that document, and Use of HTTP State Management [\[RFC2964\]](#).

Encryption keys are specified by URI. The delivery of these keys SHOULD be secured by a mechanism such as HTTP Over TLS [\[RFC2818\]](#) (formerly SSL) in conjunction with a secure realm or a session token.

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