

AMC Updater

User Guide

Version 0.8.0

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Introduction

AMCUpdater is a utility designed to help you manage your digital movie collection. It supplements the Ant Movie Catalog software by enabling automated import of movies stored on your computer / network. The import can be run manually or on a schedule (through Windows Scheduler) and can perform Internet lookups to grab movie information from popular online movie sites such as IMDB.

This utility was written primarily for people using the Team MediaPortal media interface and the MyFilms plugin for displaying movie data directly from an Ant Movie Catalog database file.

Requirements

- Windows XP or above
- Microsoft .Net Framework v2 or above
- A valid Ant Movie Catalog database stored in XML format (not native .amc format)
- A digital movie collection of some kind!

Installation

A basic setup program is included in the full download. This by default installs the application to c:\Program Files\AMC Updater\ and the Internet lookup scripts for various movie sites are stored in the Scripts subfolder.

Future releases can be simply copied into the application folder - additional full installations are not required.

The application can be installed to any location you choose, however due to Microsoft .Net Framework security, you cannot run the application from a network drive by default.

Running the Application

When you first run the application, you will be warned that no configuration files have been found. The application will then create a default config file in the application directory. This file will contain all the application settings and will be updated each time you close the program, so your current settings are stored between runs.

Configuration Files

On the File menu you can load and save configuration files. This will store all the settings visible on the Interactive, Options and Database Fields tabs. This feature enables you to create multiple configurations, normally used to run the application in batch mode. Each time you exit the application your current settings will be stored as AMCUpdater_DefaultSettings.xml and will be loaded next time to run AMC Updater.

In addition, you can easily create custom config files by setting the options as needed and then choosing File - Save Config File.

The AMCUpdater Interface

The application consists of six main tabbed windows, as shown in Figure 1.

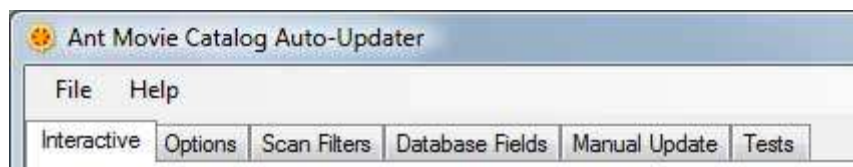


Figure 1 - Application Interface

Interactive Tab

The Interactive tab is used for running the import process manually. Once all parameters have been entered, you can trigger the import by clicking the 'Begin Import' button. Mandatory options are highlighted with red 🚫 symbols.

Alternatively you can run each part of the import in turn using the numbered buttons. This allows you to review the output in the log window and be sure that it is configured correctly.

Options Tab

The Options tab contains the advanced configuration settings for the import. These options are covered in detail in a later section.

Scan Fields Tab

To exclude certain files / folders from scanning, you can enter keywords into the lists here. You can also specify plain text or RegEx expressions to 'clean' filenames before import.

Database Fields Tab

The Ant Movie Catalog database contains various items of data about each entry. When importing movies you can choose whether or not to populate these fields with data. Handy buttons are available to select all options / no options / all media data (data retrieved from the media files themselves, such a runtime and resolution) / no media data / all Internet data / no Internet data.

Note : The database fields tab also affect the Manual Update process. If you run a Manual Update to update Media or Internet data, then ensure the appropriate fields are selected on the Database Fields tab first.

Manual Update Tab

The Manual Updates system allows you to directly query and update the Ant Movie Catalog database file. The interface is designed to be a simple way of creating queries and updating / deleting data from the database based on your query parameters. As with the interactive tab, invalid entries or missing values are clearly highlighted with 🚫 symbols.

Tests Tab

AMCUpdater utilises MediaInfo.dll to retrieve movie information from the files it scans. This includes resolution, runtime, codecs used and so on. If you encounter errors when scanning your collection this tab allows you to scan an individual file and see what the problem is. In general you should not need to use this tab

Configuring AMCUpdater

When run for the first time, various validation errors (🔴 symbols) are shown, indicating that required information is missing. Enter the required fields and review the various options before starting the import process. Each configuration option is explained in detail in the following section.

Interactive Tab

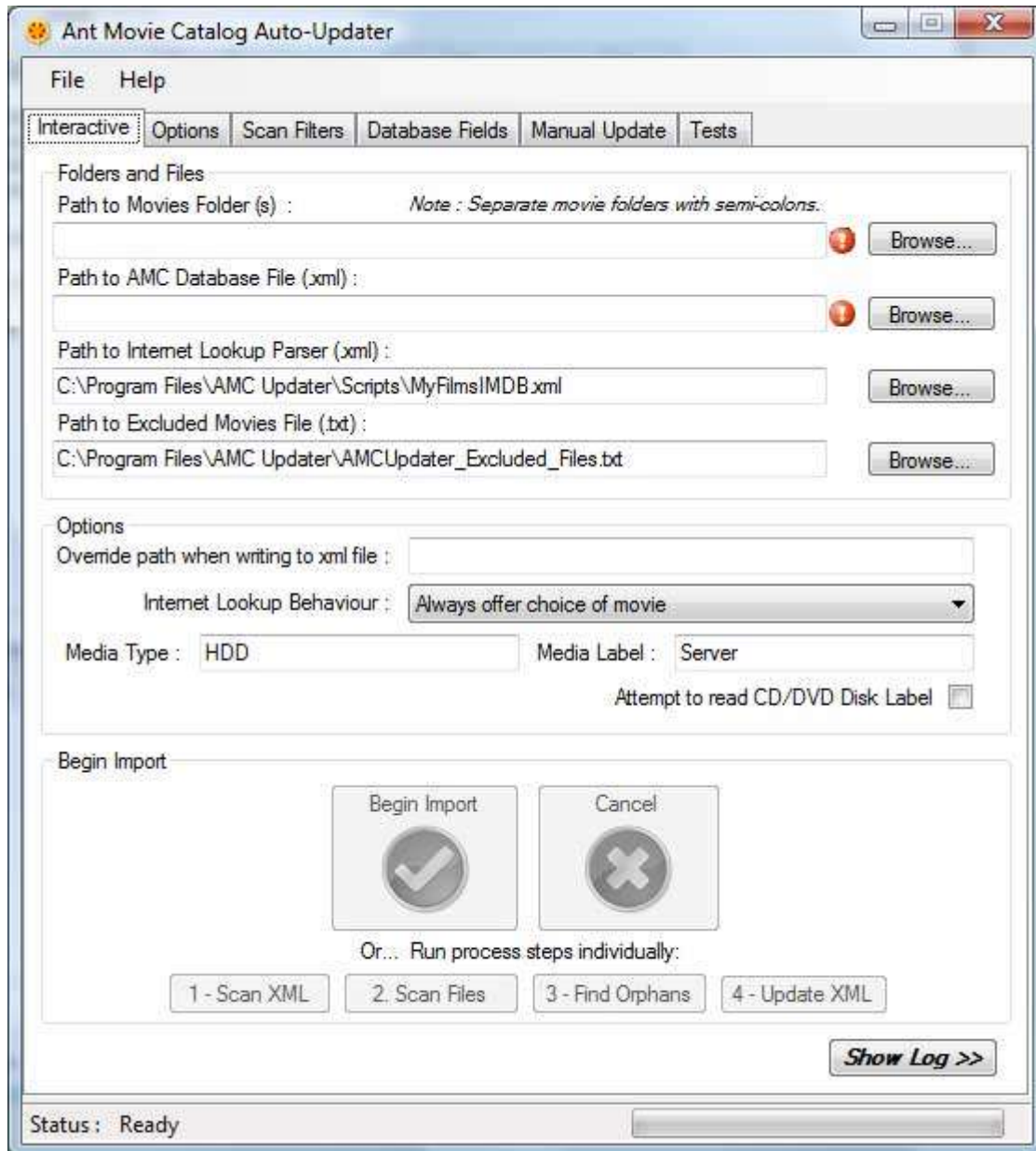


Figure 2 - The Main Application Window

Path to Movies Folder(s)

This is the location of your collection of movie files. This can be a local path (e:\Movies\) or a UNC path (\\computername\foldername\). Multiple folders can be scanned - separate the folders with a semi-colon. If you scan multiple folders then the override path will not function - please see Override Path for details.

Path to AMC Database File

Specify here the location of your Ant Movie Catalog database file. The file must be saved in the XML format.

Path to Internet Lookup Parser

In order to connect to the Internet and download movie information, you need to specify a parser file. By default you'll find these in the application installation folder under Scripts.

Path to Excluded Movies File

When importing movies, and performing Internet lookups, you may find files which have no online entry. This is particularly the case with home movies and the like. If the Internet lookup is unable to find a match for your movie, you will be prompted and may choose to 'Always Ignore' that file. The list of files to be ignored is stored in this plain-text file. By default this is in the application installation directory, and is created when it is first used.

Override Path

The override path is an important concept for people who store their movie collections on a network. In order to optimise the scanning speed you may choose to run AMCUpdater on the computer where your movies are stored. If, however, you access them from a different computer, then the path will be wrong. For instance, your movies are scanned by entering 'D:\Movies\' in the Path to Movie Folders box. Your media PC however will access the files as \\MovieServer\SharedMovies\. In this case, you can scan d:\movies and enter '\\movieserver\sharedmovies\' as the Override path. The scanner will then access the files locally and change the path data stored in the Ant database to reflect the correct path. This system works equally well whether you store your files all in one folder or in a folder tree structure.

On the other hand, if you enter multiple folders to scan then you cannot use the Override Path; or if you do then you will get unpredictable results. Logically, it is unlikely that two separate folders will be accessed using the same UNC path, so the application will warn you if you attempt to scan multiple folders and apply an override path.

Internet Lookup Behaviour

AMCUpdater will attempt to look up your movies online if you have selected to import any Internet-only database fields. Sometimes the search will find a perfect match to your movie title - and sometimes that match will be incorrect. With so many similarly-named movies out there, this is perhaps not surprising. The default action here is 'Always offer choice of movie' and this will prompt you to select the best match for each file it scans. If you select 'Try to find the best match automatically', and only one result is found online, then that will be used and you will not be prompted.

Media Type

The media type field in Ant Movie Catalog is generally used to record the type of storage used for the movie. This might be 'DVD' or 'Hard Disk' or whatever. Because this field cannot be determined by the program, enter whatever value you like here.

Media Label

To assist with locating offline media, it is common to use the Media Label field to record the name of the disk or similar. You can enter this manually, or attempt to read it from a CD or DVD label, as discussed in the next section.

Attempt to read CD/DVD Disk Label

If you are using AMCUdater to scan CDs or DVDs then the program can attempt to read the label of the disk. If this operation fails, then the text entered in the 'Media Label' field (if any) will be used instead. This option is best suited to scanning archive disks containing multiple files, where disks are identified as 'Backup DVD 21' or something meaningful. Using this option on video DVDs or similar will generally not produce useful results.

Options Tab

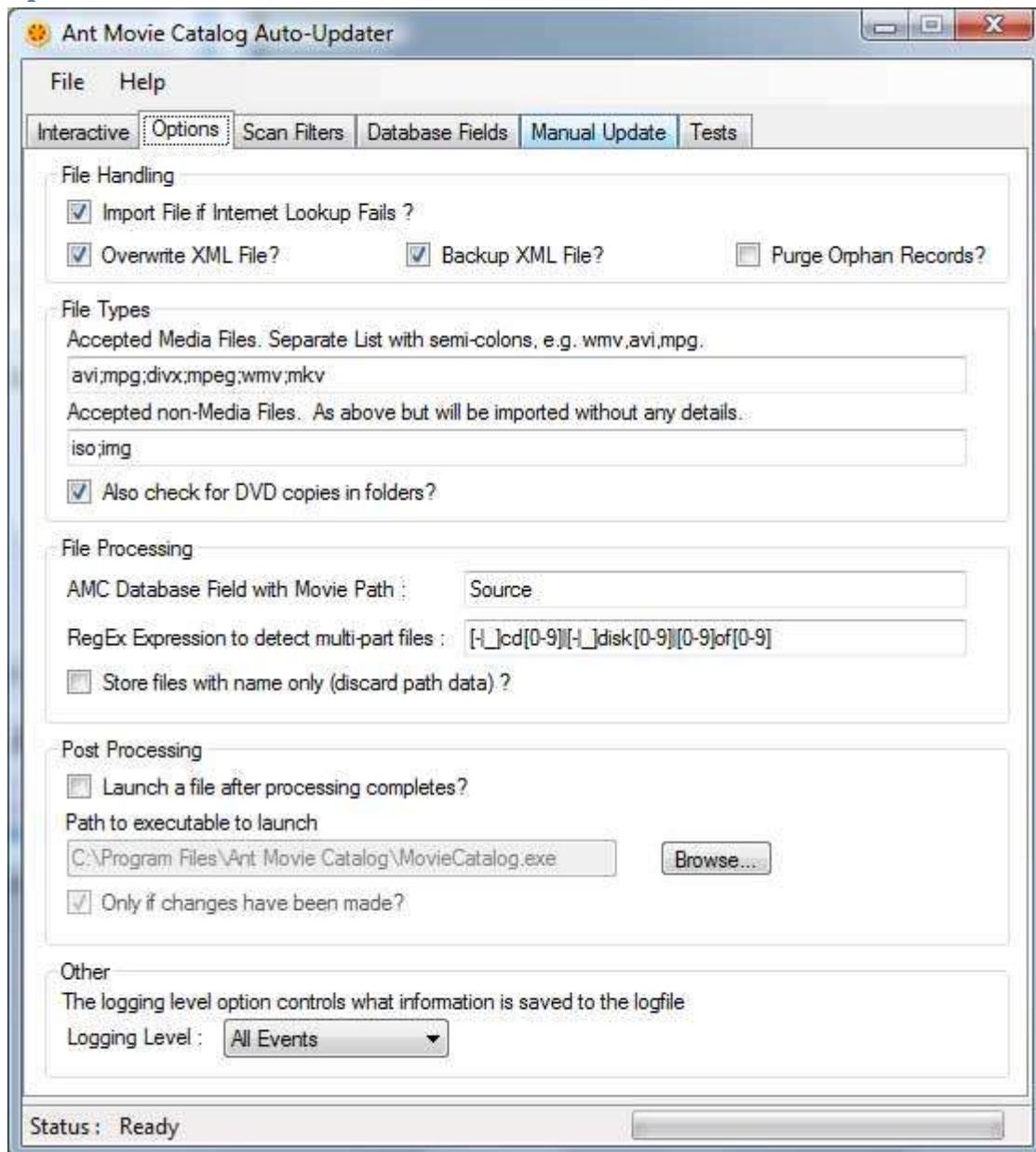


Figure 3 - Options

Import file if Internet lookup fails?

As the name implies, if the file cannot be found through an online lookup, then the basic data will still be stored in the Ant database.

Overwrite XML File?

AMCUpdater uses an in-memory representation of your Ant database file when running. When the import process is complete, you can choose to save the changes back to the original file. This is the default option. If you un-tick this box, then the new Ant database file will be saved to the same folder as the original file, but with the name modified to include '-NEW.xml' at the end.

Backup XML file?

As you would expect, this option is on by default. When the AMCUdater application saves your changes it will first take a copy of your original database file and save it with a unique filename including the date and time it was modified.

Purge Orphan Records?

By default, AMCUdater adds new movies to your database when they are added to your collection. This option allows AMCUdater to remove any database entries which reference non-existent files. The logic used for this is quite complex, so accommodate the various ways people use Ant Media Catalog. For example, many people store DivX movies on their hard disk (such as \\server\share\moviename.avi), older movies backed up to disk (such as D:\movie.avi) and their DVD / BlueRay movies (such as d:\VIDEO_TS\VIDEO_TS.IFO). To allow for this, AMCUdater will only remove database entries if they match the following conditions:

- Database entry references a file that is not located at the given path
- The path in the database matches the path you are scanning

To clarify, if you scan \\server1\movies and your database refers to a movie stored at \\server2\DVDs\ then the entry will not be considered to be an orphan and will not be removed. If however you have a database entry referring to [\\server1\movies\moviename.avi](#), and you are scanning [\\server1\movies\](#) (or using that as an **Override Path**) then the entry will be removed if the file is not found.

Accepted Media Files

File extensions are used to identify files for import. This list of file extensions defines the file types which are to be imported and scanned for media related data. Entries should be separated with semi-colons.

Accepted Non-Media Files

As for the Accepted Media Files, however these file types are considered non-media files and hence will not be scanned for media data. This is normally suitable for ISO, BIN, IMG and other disk image formats.

Also check for DVD copies in folders?

If you enable this option then the program will check for DVD images stored in the movies path. The program identifies these by searching for VIDEO_TS.IFO and then attempting to find the movie name from the folder structure.

AMC Database field with movie path

The flexibility of Ant Movie Catalog means you can store the actual file location in various fields. By default this option is set to 'Source' however if you use an alternate field to record the file location then please enter the field name here.

RegEx Expression to detect multi-part files

If you store movie files which have been split into multiple parts - common with very large movies and similar - then this Regular Expression will allow AMCUdater to recognise the split files and handle them appropriately. The default expression will detect the following file naming conventions:

- FileName CD1, FileName CD2 etc.
- FileName Disk 1, FileName Disk 2 etc.
- FileName 1of3, FileName 2of3 etc.

If you use another method of naming your multi-part files then alter the regular expression to match before running the import.

Multi-part files will be stored in the Ant database as a single entry, with a semi-colon delimited list of the files.

Store names with name only (discard path data)?

When using the AMCUdater in conjunction with MediaPortal and the MyFilms plugin, you have the option to store only filenames and not the full path to your movie files. The MyFilms plugin is capable of searching pre-defined locations for a matching filename.

If you use MyFilms in this way, and wish to store just the individual filenames in your Ant database, then select this option before starting the import.

Launch a file after processing completes?

For convenience, you may wish to run a program after running an import. This works equally well from the Interactive mode as from Batch mode. This is commonly used to launch Ant Movie Catalog or MediaPortal once processing is complete and your database is up to date.

Path to Executable to launch

If you wish to launch a file after processing, enter the path here. This defaults to the default installation folder for Ant Movie Catalog.

Only if changes have been made?

Select this option to ensure that your program is only launched if AMCUdater has made changes.

Logging Level

AMCUdater will, by default, store a detailed log of all processing output. This log is located in the application installation directory. Log information is also shown 'live' in the AMCUdater log window. If you want to control the log file output, then change this drop-down list to select the amount of detail you would like logged. The three options are as follows:

- All Events - The default. Information about every file processed will be logged.
- Major Events. Individual file information will not be logged, however major program options and events will be logged.
- Errors Only. As the name implies, the log will only show significant events such as errors.

Please Note : the log window will always show all events; this option only controls which data is logged to file.

Scan Filters Tab

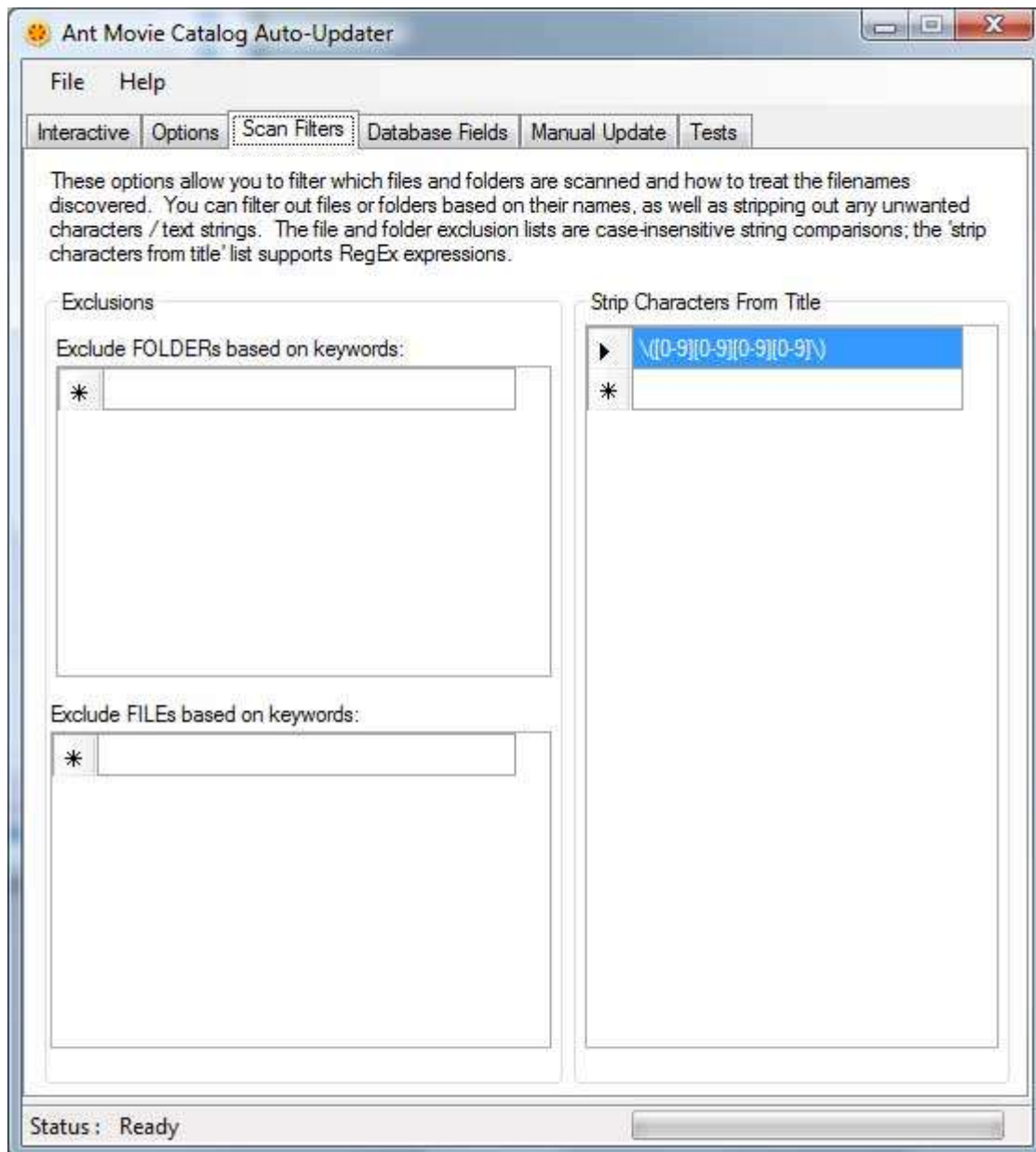


Figure 4 - Scan Filters

The system uses a case-insensitive text comparison to determine which files or folders to ignore. You can also use RegEx expressions to clean up your filenames when they are imported. This will not modify the original file on your drive; it will however ensure that the movie title is more accurately read from the file name. One default entry is included as an example - `\([0-9][0-9][0-9][0-9]\)` – which will remove any year value in brackets. For example, “Batman (1989).avi” will be imported as “Batman” with this RegEx value.

Database Fields Tab

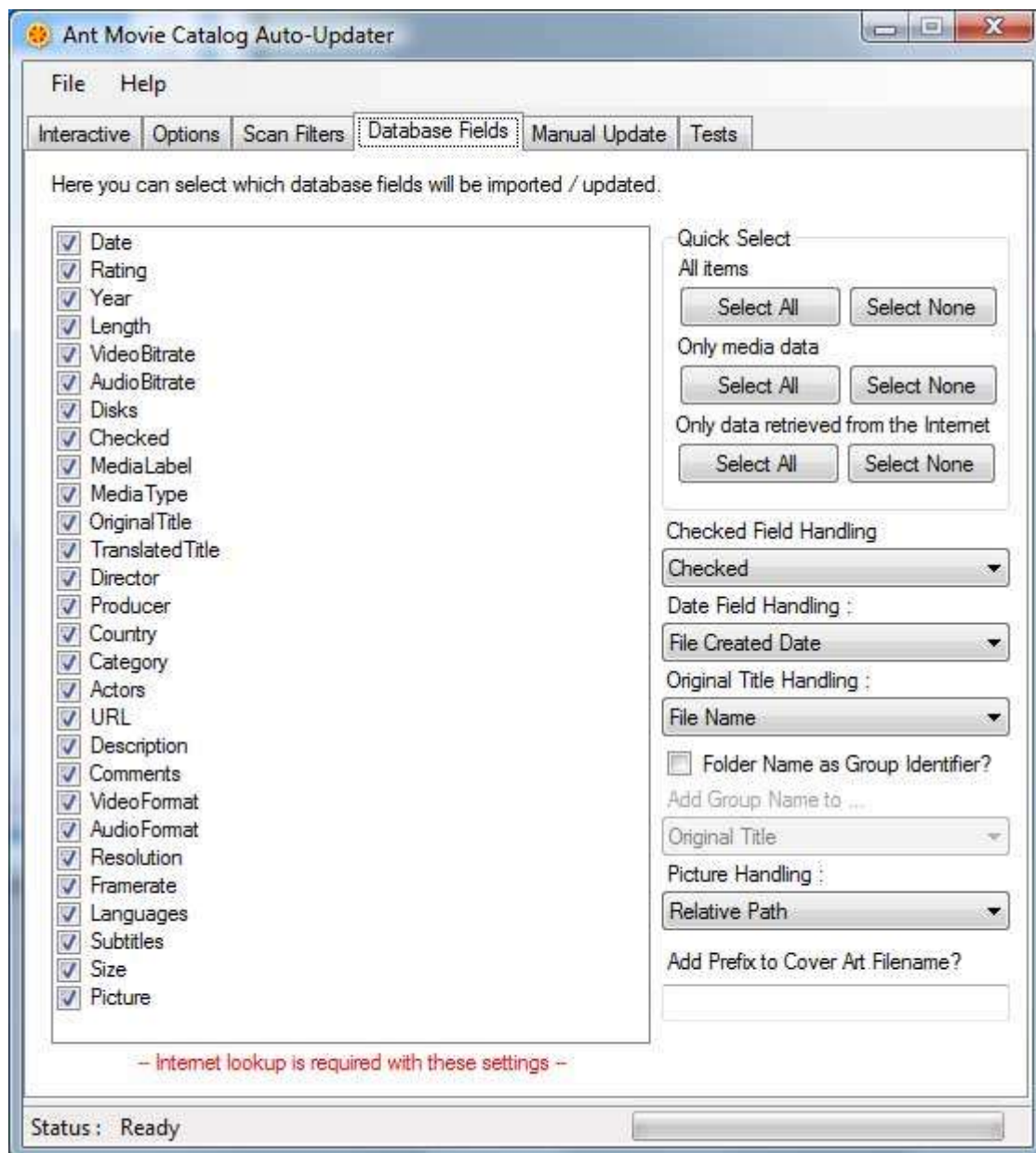


Figure 5 - Database Fields

As previously noted, this tab allows you to select which fields in your Ant Movie Catalog database are imported or updated. If you deselect a field from this list then AMCUpdater will not modify that value, either for Import or Manual Update processes. Several Ant database fields require some special handling:

Checked Field Handling

The Ant database has a 'checked' option, which is an on/off flag to highlight or mark certain entries. This is entirely optional so if you select the 'Checked' box in the list of fields, you can use this drop-down list to select whether to mark the imported / updated entries as 'Checked'.

Date Handling

At present there is no easy way to look up an accurate date for any film, so this is often used to record the date a film was added to the collection. You can choose either the date the file was created, the date the file was last modified, or the date when the update process is run.

Alternatively you can select 'No Date' - this is effectively the same as un-ticking the Date checkbox in the list.

Original Title Handling

Most people store their movies in a logical structure, which contains the name of the movie in either the individual file names or in the parent folder name. This drop-down lets you select how the application attempted to read the movie title. The options are File Name, Folder Name, or either one followed by an Internet lookup.

The files imported will be processed in the following manner:

1. The file / folder name is read as the movie title.
2. If using the file name, any file extension found will be stripped.
3. The title may then be cleaned up by string replacements defined on the Scan Filters tab. If your files often have a '.' between each word in the file / folder name, for example, this can turn 'The.Matrix.Revolutions.avi' into "The Matrix Revolutions".
4. Finally, if you selected an Internet Lookup option, then the application will attempt an online lookup

Group Identifiers

The MyFilms plugin for Team MediaPortal supports group identifiers. This is normally a \ character and allows multiple entries to be grouped together. For example, a trilogy of films such as the Bourne trilogy will be displayed as a single entry in MyFilms, and clicking it will show you the three individual movies.

AMCUpdater has no way to determine when files should be grouped unless you use a folder-based storage system. If you store multiple movies in folders together (e.g. 'Movies\Bourne Trilogy\...' then this option will store each entry as 'Foldername \ Filename'. The MyFilms interface then displays the group appropriately.

If you select to use the folder name as a group identifier, you can also select which value in the Ant database will store this – Original Title, Translated Title, or both.

Picture Handling

By default, AMCUpdater will store cover images in the same folder as the Ant XML File. The path to these images will be stored simply as 'filename.ext'. If you wish to store the full path to the image (e.g. c:\Ant\filename.jpg) then select 'Full Path' from this drop-down.

Additionally, you can choose to rename the downloaded images by adding a prefix. This is to maintain compatibility with Ant Movie Catalog which has a similar function. An image with the name 'Batman.jpg' can therefore be saved as 'Movie Database_Batman.jpg' (or whatever) if needed to match your existing collection. If you include a \ character in the prefix, the images will be stored in a subfolder e.g. 'foldername\prefix' will add a prefix of 'prefix' and store the files in the Foldername folder. Note : Only one subfolder allowed; not sub-sub-folders!

Manual Updates

AMCUpdater includes a function for manually searching / updating your Ant Movie Catalog database.

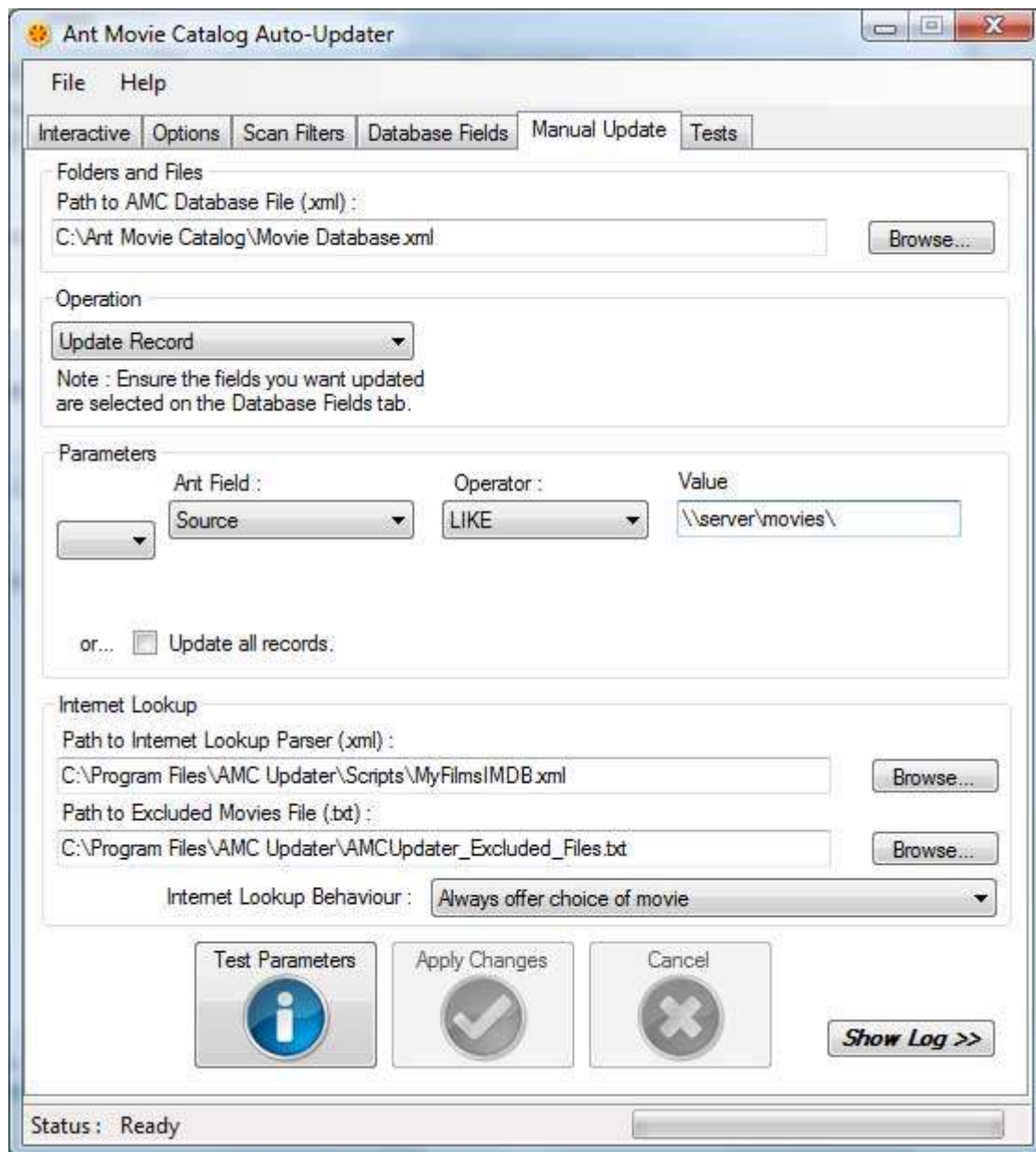


Figure 6 - Manual Update

To use the manual updater, first select your Ant XML file by clicking 'Browse'. Then select your operation type, as follows:

- Update Value (Insert / Update a single field in the database)
- Delete Value (Delete an individual field from the database)
- Update Record (Scan selected file(s) for media / Internet data)
- Delete Record (Delete a whole entry from the database)

If you select 'Update Value' you will also need to enter the database field you want to update, and the value you wish to set.

If you select 'Delete Value' you will need to specify which database field to delete.

To select which database records should be affected, change the values in the Parameters sections. You can selectively filter records based on any Ant field, with a choice of possible operations:

- = (Database field must match your given value)
- != (Database field must be different from your given value)
- LIKE (Performs a case-insensitive comparison, so entering 'bob' will match records with a value of 'SpongeBob')
- EXISTS (Selected field must contain a value in the database)
- NOT EXISTS (Selected field must be empty or not stored)

For a more complicated search, you can select AND or OR from the drop-down list and add a second set of parameters.

Alternatively, click the 'Update all records' checkbox to apply your change to all records in the database.

Once you have set the parameters as needed, click 'Test Parameters'. The log window will then show you a list of database entries which match your parameters. Check this list before proceeding to ensure it is what you expected. If you are happy with the output, click 'Apply Changes' and the database will be updated with your chosen changes.

If you select 'Update Record' then additional options will be displayed, allowing you to select your Internet Parser file and a location for the Excluded Movies file.

Important Note:

The Manual Updater uses the options on the Database Fields tab to control which fields it is allowed to update. If you use the 'Update Record' then ensure the appropriate items on the Database Fields tab are selected. This does not apply to 'Update Value', 'Delete Value' or 'Delete Record'.

Tests

If you experience any issues with the data imported by AMCUdater, the Tests tab can help you determine where the problem is. If, for example, some media files are imported without certain data, such as the resolution, you can use the Tests tab to check whether the program is able to understand your movie file. Simply select your file and click 'Analyse'. Relevant media data from the file will be displayed on the form. If a field you need is not shown, please report a bug in the forums. Alternatively, try downloading the latest version of MedialInfo.dll

Ant Movie Catalog Auto-Updater

File Help

Interactive Options Scan Filters Database Fields Manual Update Tests

This page allows you to test that the MedialInfo dll is able to read your movie file correctly. Relevant information from the file will be displayed below if possible.

Select sample movie file :

Browse Analyse

Video

Codec :

Bitrate : Resolution : FrameRate :

Audio

Codec :

Bitrate : Streams :

Streams :

Languages :

Subtitles

Codec List :

Languages :

File

Size : Length :

Status : Ready

Figure 7 - Testing the MedialInfo dll

Links and References

AMC Updater

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/amcupdater/>

Ant Movie Catalog

<http://www.antp.be/software/moviecatalog>

Media Portal

<http://www.team-mediaportal.com>

MyFilms Plugin for Media Portal

<http://forum.team-mediaportal.com/my-films-164/>

MediaInfo

<http://mediainfo.sourceforge.net/en>

Credits

AMCUpdater has been developed by OrionHall, Zebons and Titof.