

An Introduction to

SoundBox Media Feed Creator

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in curating a SoundBox media feed. Your efforts will benefit many brothers around the world by making it a lot easier for them to prepare the media used for their congregation meetings.

SoundBox Media Service uses XML-based media feeds to automatically locate, download, and label media files for each meeting. As a feed *curator* you are responsible for creating and publishing a feed for a specific language.

SoundBox Media Feed Creator (MFC) has been created to greatly simplify the task of creating media feeds. It does this by automatically extracting the URLs of the images and videos for each meeting and adding them to the feed file. MFC also helps you validate that all content has been added to the feed correctly and allows you to easily make adjustments. Once completed, you will publish the resulting feed so that is publicly available.

MFC is for approved feed curators only. Please do not provide the tool or your license to anyone.

System Requirements

The following requirements must be met for a computer running MFC:

- Windows 7 or higher
- .NET Framework 4
- Internet connection with access to jw.org

Curator Requirements

The following requirements must be met for a feed curator:

- An Internet location to publish your XML feed.
- A working knowledge of XML.
- Fluent in theocratic terminology for your feed language.
- An email address for support requests.
- Be able to spend at least 30 minutes a month updating and verifying the feed.

Interface Overview

The interface has three main areas, the Toolbar at the top, the Meeting pane on the left, and the XML Editor pane on the right as shown in Figure 1.

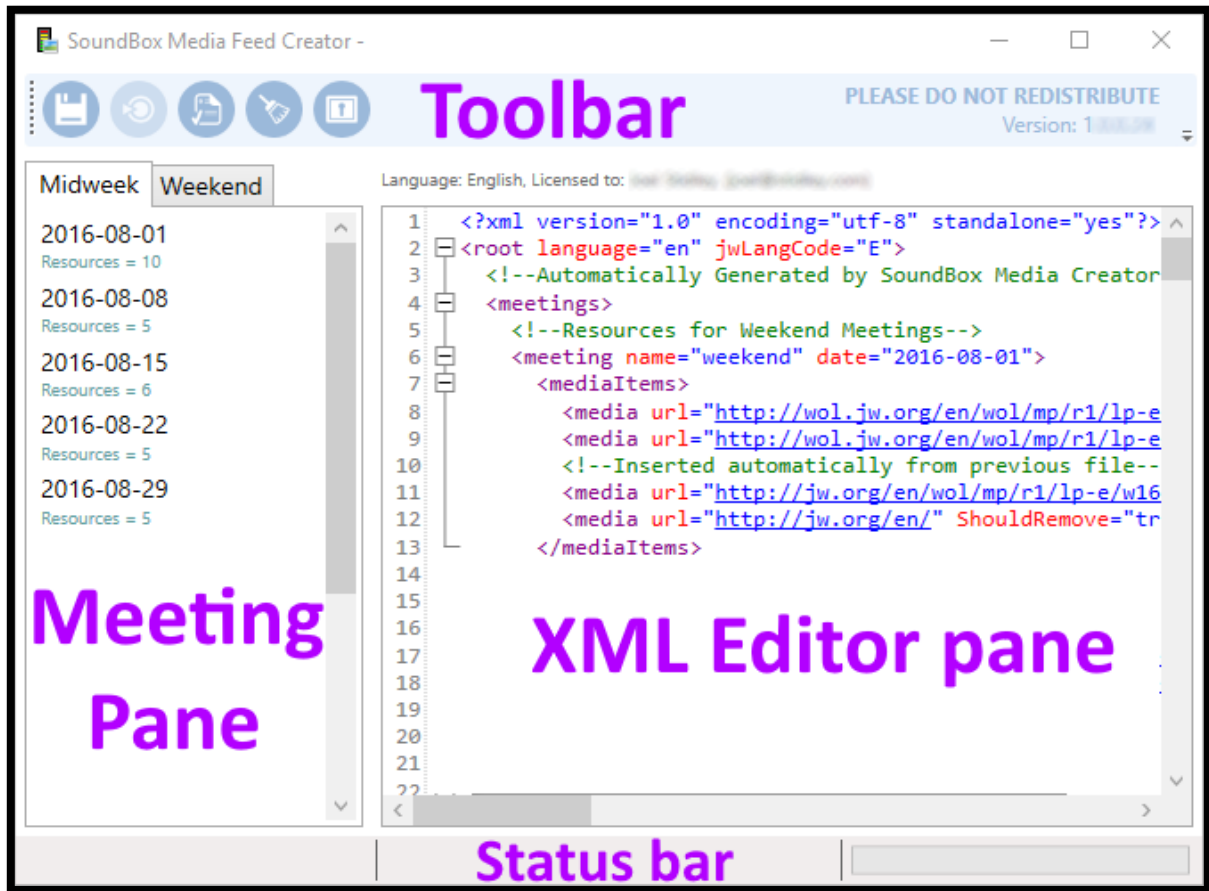


Figure 1: Interface overview

Toolbar

The Toolbar includes the following buttons:

- **Save** – Saves the media feed to the local file specified in order to publish the feed.
- **Open web page** – Opens your default browser to the currently selected meeting schedule page.
- **Verify URLs** – Tests all of the URLs in the XML Editor pane to see if they are valid.
- **Delete Cache** – Removes the local cache for all of the manually inserted links.
- **License** – Opens the license installation menu.

Meeting Pane

The following tasks are available in the Meeting pane:

- Click a meeting date to jump to the relevant part of the feed in the XML Editor pane.
- Click the **Midweek** or **Weekend** tab to toggle between meeting types.
- Right-click a meeting node and then click **Open in browser** to display the meeting homepage in your browser (Figure 2).
- Right-click on a meeting date and click **Paste Media Item** to paste a properly formatted XML media attribute using the URL in your clipboard.

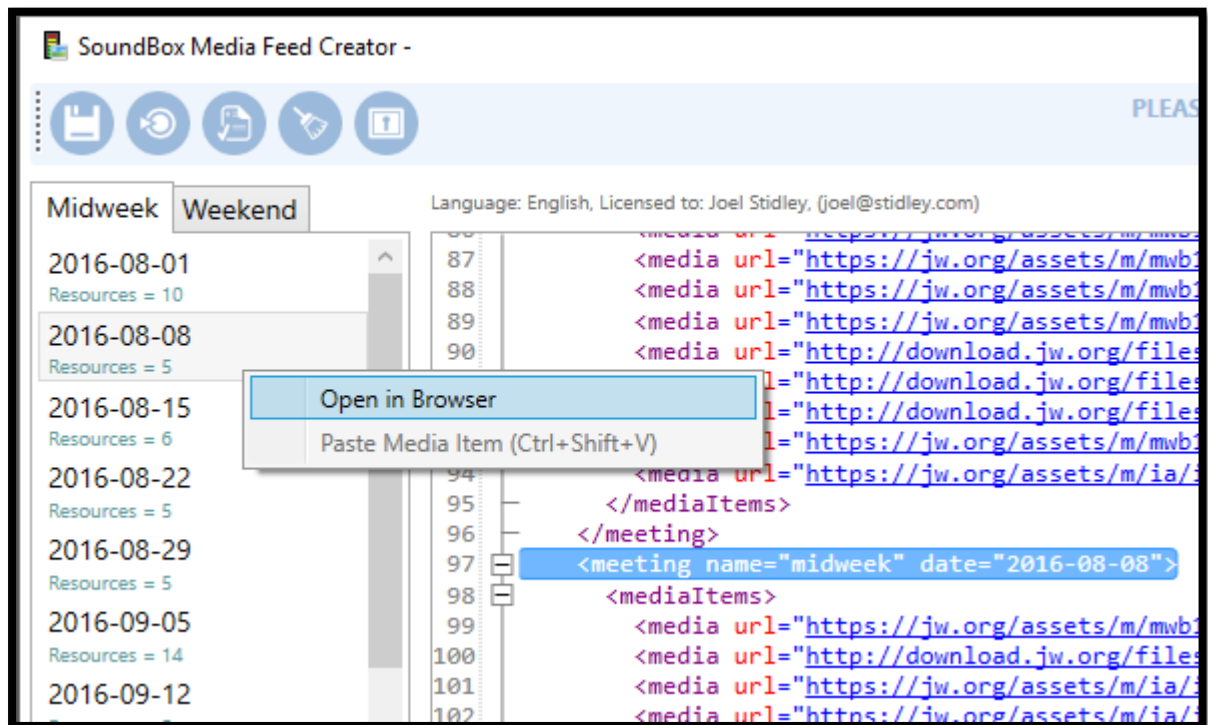


Figure 2: Open in Browser

XML Editor Pane

The following tasks are available in the XML Editor pane:

- Click on a URL while holding the Ctrl key to open the resource in your default browser.
- Modify the XML content including URLs and media titles.

Status bar

The status bar at the bottom of the window shows additional information about the program. For example, it shows the progress of the automatic extraction process described later in this document.

Using Media Feed Creator

Using MFC involves the following tasks: installing updates, adding a license, creating the feed, customizing the feed, testing the feed, and publishing the feed. This section provides information on each of these tasks.

Installing Updates

When an update is available for MFC, you will be prompted to install the update prior to creating the feed. It is important to install all updates, to ensure that the feed is created correctly.

Adding a License

Before you can start using MFC, you will need to add the license code that you were provided. The first time you start MFC you will see a warning indicating that you do not have a valid license. Click **License** on the toolbar to install the license. Then, paste in the entire license string you received and then click **OK** (Figure 3).

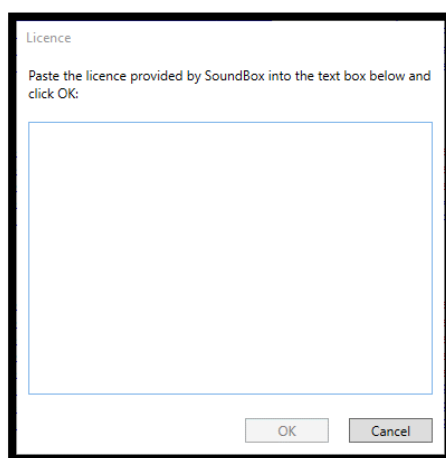


Figure 3: Adding a license

Creating a Feed

When you start MFC, if your license includes multiple languages, you must select the language for the feed you want to create from the **Select the feed language** drop down and then click **OK** (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Language selection window

When MFC starts, it automatically generates a media feed for the next three months. This process requires an Internet connection and a few minutes to complete. The progress is shown in Status bar as shown in Figure 5. During this process, you can safely minimize or even close the application and it will continue in the background. Once completed, click **Save** to export the feed for publishing.

Customizing a Feed

As a curator, you will verify that the feed includes all of the required media and that it is in the correct order. Since audio recordings are not added automatically by MFC, they must be added by the curator.

The following activities are available to customize the media feed:

- Modify the feed by editing the text or by using the **Paste Media Item** command. This makes it easy to navigate to the relevant web page, copy the link and then paste it into the feed.

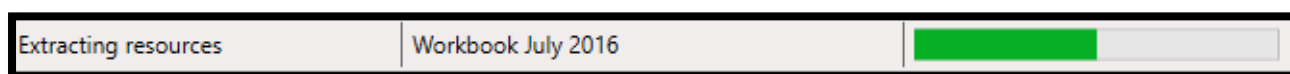


Figure 5: Status bar during automatic feed creation

To improve security, all URLs in the feed must be from jw.org, download.jw.org, or wol.jw.org.

- Click **Verify URLs** to test that the resources are available. This does a simple check by issuing an HTTP HEAD request for each URL and logging the result. Additional verification may be required on your part to ensure that the resources are correct.
- Click **Delete Cache** to remove the cache of items entered manually. These items will no longer be added automatically to the document each time you update it.
- Click **Save** to save the feed to a file that is ready for publishing to your hosting provider.
- MFC remembers resources that were manually inserted into the feed and identifies them with a comment as shown in Figure 6.

```
<meeting name="midweek" date="2016-09-12">
  <mediaItems>
    <media url="https://jw.org/image/univ_cnt_1_xl.jpg" title="M1-010 Israelite worshippers ascend t
    <media url="https://jw.org/image/cnt_2_xl.jpg" title="M1-020 A shepherd" />
    <media url="https://jw.org/image/univ_cnt_3_xl.jpg" title="M1-030 A tree provides shade from the
    <media url="https://jw.org/image/4_xl.jpg" title="M1-040 Soldiers" />
    <media url="https://jw.org/image/E_cnt_1_r720P.mp4" title="M3-010 502015530_E_cnt_1_r720P" />
    <!--Inserted during session 7/25/2016 10:50:14 AM-->
    <media url="https://www.jw.org/en/publications/bible/1/1/books/genesis/2/" />
  </mediaItems>
</meeting>
```

Figure 6: Comment shown media was inserted during a previous session

Find and Replace

The find and replace function is accessed using the **Ctrl+F** keyboard shortcut. In the window (Figure 7) you can search the feed for specific content using a text string, a regular expression, or wildcards.

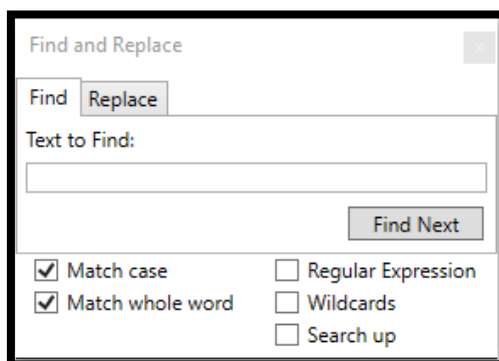


Figure 7: Find and Replace window

The following wildcard characters can be used:

- * – This wildcard character matches any one or more characters. For example, **Je*** matches any text that begins with **Je**, such as **Jehovah**, **Jesus**, or **Jeremiah**.
- ? – This wildcard character matches any single character. For example, **Ab?a** matches text such as **Abba** and **Abda**.

Publishing the feed

Once the feed file has been created and verified, it needs to be made available to SoundBox users by publishing it. This is done by uploading the feed file to an Internet hosting provider where it can be made available for all Internet users. The URL for the feed should remain the same each time it is published so that SoundBox users receive the updates.

Before your feed can be made available to other SoundBox users, the information found in Figure 8 must be provided to the SoundBox team. Create a **Feed Curator Sign Up** request on the SoundBox help desk¹ to submit this information.

There is no required format for naming the URL for publishing. However, for the feed XML file, we recommend naming it *sbmf-<language code>.xml*. For example, the English media feed would be named, *sbmf-en.xml*.

The Update Schedule information is meant for the SoundBox team to verify that the feed is being maintained by verifying the feed is being updated on a set schedule. If a feed is no longer maintained, it will be removed from the catalog.

Given (First) Name:	
Surname (Last):	
E-mail address:	
Support e-mail address (If different):	
Congregation Name:	
City:	
State/Province:	
Country:	
Feed Language:	
Publish URL:	<i>http://yourhost.com/soundbox/sbmf-en.xml</i>
Support/More Information URL:	
Update Schedule:	

Figure 8: Feed curator information table

Maintaining the Feed

When you publish updates you will add new weeks of content. When you add new content, you can remove older content from the feed that is no longer needed. This will reduce the size of the file and make the file easier to maintain.

¹ <https://soundbox.on.spiceworks.com/portal>

Testing the Feed

You will want to test or stage your feed before publishing it to others. To test your feed, you will need to have MFC installed and licensed on the same computer that you will use SoundBox media services. This will enable SoundBox Media services to consume staging feeds. If your feed is not yet active in the feed directory, you must first post an empty feed file for your production feed and then request that your feed be activated. The empty feed file should have the following contents:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8" standalone="yes"?>

<root language="XX" jwLangCode="X">

    <meetings>

    </meetings>

</root>
```

Once your feed is active you are able to save a staging feed file by completing the following steps:

1. Save the feed for staging.
 - a. In Media Feed Creator, click **Save**
 - b. In the **Save SoundBox Feed** window click the **Save as Type** drop down and click **Staging files (*.staging.xml)** to save your feed as a staging file as shown in Figure 9.

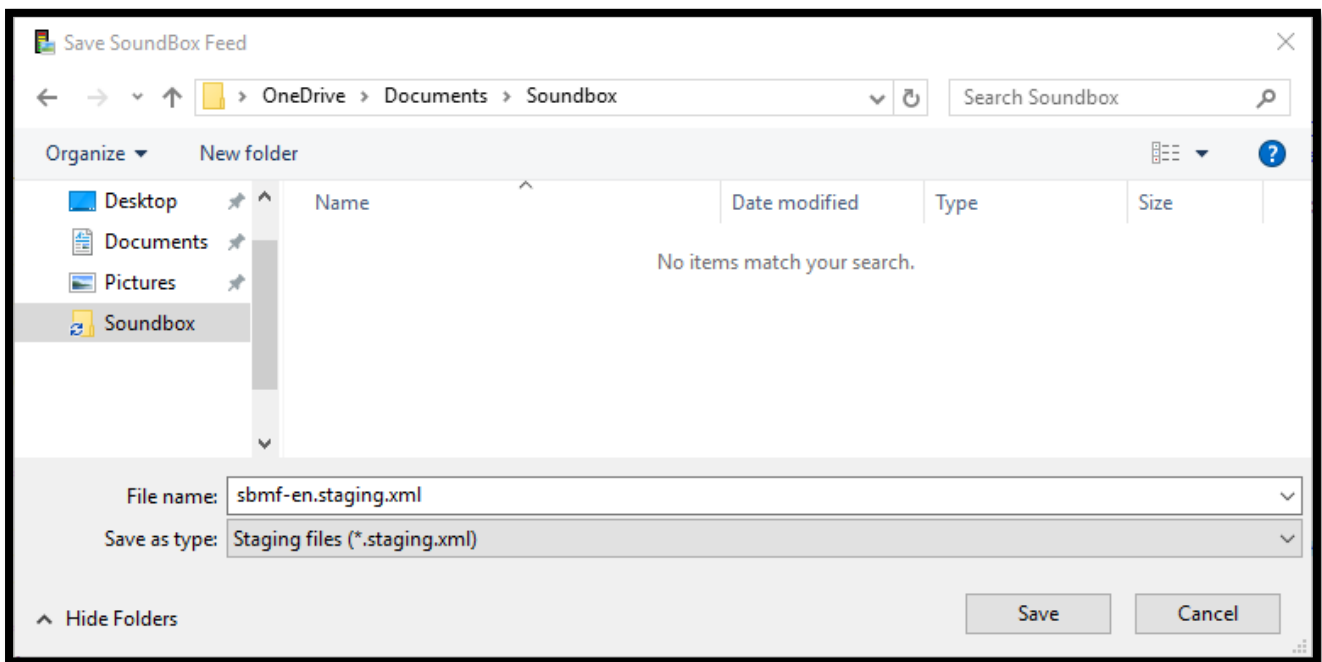


Figure 9: Saving the feed staging

2. Upload your staging feed to your host. Be sure to copy the feed file to the same path as your production feed, with the new name. For example, if the production feed URL is: <https://sb.host.com/sbmf-en.xml> your staging feed URL would be <https://sb.host.com/sbmf-en.staging.xml>

3. Enable staging feeds within SoundBox Media Service.
 - a. Start the **SoundBox Media Service Manager** utility.
 - b. Uncheck the **Enable media service** checkbox to stop the SoundBox Media Service.
 - c. Check the **Use staging feeds** checkbox.
 - d. Check the **Enable media service** checkbox to start the SoundBox Media Service.
4. Verify staging feed.
 - a. Start SoundBox.
 - b. Click Options
 - c. Click Media Subscriptions
 - d. Check to see if the staging feed is available.
 - e. When feed has synchronized then verify that all media has downloaded.
5. Disable staging feeds within SoundBox Media Service.
 - a. Start the **SoundBox Media Service Manager** utility.
 - b. Uncheck the **Enable media service** checkbox to stop the SoundBox Media Service.
 - c. Uncheck the **Use staging feeds** checkbox.
 - d. Check the **Enable media service** checkbox to start the SoundBox Media Service.

XML Reference

The following information is provided so that curators can understand the contents of the feed and be able to properly modify it. All of the XML elements and attributes are *case sensitive*, so be careful when modifying the feed using XML Editor.

All feed elements and attributes are case sensitive

Setting the Media Order in SoundBox

You define the order in which media is displayed within the SoundBox interface with a listing number prefix. The prefix is placed at the beginning of the media **title** attribute. To understand the information included in a prefix, note the following example: "PQ-XYZ Title of the file"

Each portion of the prefix is explained below:

- **P** – A character denoting the meeting. M is used for the midweek meeting, and W is used for the weekend meeting.
- **Q** – A number denoting the meeting section number. For the midweek meeting this is 1 for "Treasures from God's Word", 2 for "Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry" and 3 for "Living as Christians". For the weekend meeting, 2 for *The Watchtower*² study. When adding media items manually, the listing number prefix must be added to control the order.
- **XYZ** – Three numbers that set the order of the media to be displayed. The first two numbers are used by MFC to automatically set the order of extracted media. The last number is used to place additional media in order. The first media file would be 010, the second media file would be 020, and the third media file would be 030. Media that should be played between the first and second file would be numbered: 011, 012, 013, 014, 015, 016, 017, 018, and 019.
- **Title** – After the prefix, a space and the title or name of the file is included.

For example, Figure 10 shows the prefixes for two pictures: W2-010 and the W2-020. Using the information above, you see that the media is for weekend meeting (**W**) and *The Watchtower* study (**2**). Then the order of the media is set by the last three numbers of **010** and **020**.

```
<media url="http://jw.org/en/w16/383" title="W2-010 An older couple reads book together" />
<media url="http://jw.org/en/w16/385" title="W2-020 A couple study the Bible together" />
```

Figure 20: Images placed in order for *The Watchtower* discussion

Setting the language

The second element in the feed is the Root element. This defines the language, both for SoundBox and for use on jw.org as shown in Figure 11.

```
<root language="en" jwLangCode="E">
```

Figure 11: The language attributes

² Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York Inc.

Removing Previously Downloaded Media

At times, corrections are needed to be published because of incorrect or out of date items. SoundBox Media Services can be instructed to remove incorrect items by adding the `shouldRemove="true"` attribute as shown in Figure 12. To replace these item, you must first remove the incorrect item and then create a new corrected item.

```
<media url="http://jw.org/en/1.jpg" shouldRemove="true" title="W2-010 An older couple reads together" />
```

Figure 12 Using `shouldRemove` attribute

Adding a Website

A `media` element is identified as a website by adding the `isWebsite="true"` attribute as shown in Figure 13. A website media item creates a shortcut file instead of downloading content.

```
<media url="https://www.jw.org/en/publications" isWebsite="true" title="M3-010 JW.org Publications" />
```

Figure 13: Using the `isWebsite` attribute

Adding a Slideshow

To define a slideshow, add a `slideshow` element within a `meeting` element. Then create a `mediaItem` element with `media` elements for each of the slides as shown in Figure 14.

```
<meeting name="weekend" date="2016-07-25">
  <slideshow title="Warwick Update">
    <mediaItems>
      <media url="https://jw.org/images/1.jpg" title="M3-010 Warwick 1" />
      <media url="https://jw.org/images/2.jpg" title="M3-020 Warwick 2" />
      <media url="https://jw.org/images/3.jpg" title="M3-030 Warwick 3" />
      <media url="https://jw.org/images/4.jpg" title="M3-040 Warwick 4" />
    </mediaItems>
  </slideshow>
</meeting>
```

Figure 14: The `slideshow` element

Adding a Meeting

The `meeting` element groups together media for a meeting. Each `meeting` element requires both the `name` and `date` attribute. The `name` attribute will have a value of `weekend` or `midweek`. The date attribute is formatted as Year-Month-Day (YYYY-MM-DD), regardless of your computer's regional settings. The date for the midweek meeting is usually the Monday of the week to match the date in the meeting workbook. The date for the weekend meeting is the Sunday of the week, which is the last date specified for *The Watchtower* lesson.

Multiple `meeting` elements can be created for a single meeting to separate media types or editing sessions. For example, you can add a second `meeting` element for media that wasn't automatically inserted into the feed by MFC to help keep the feed more organized for editing.

Errors

When you save a feed, MFC checks for XML syntax errors. If there are errors, a warning message similar to the one shown in Figure 15 is displayed. You must correct all syntax errors before the feed can be saved.

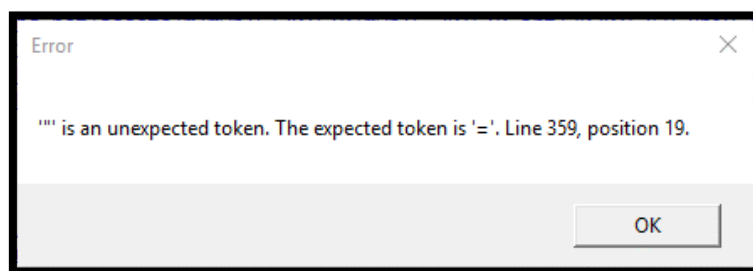


Figure 15: Example XML error message

Other MFC errors are logged in C:\ProgramData\SoundBox\Logs\MediaFeedCreator.txt. Open this file in a text editor to review any issues. If you are still not able to determine a fix for your problem, please see the Getting Help section of this document. The Media Service logs are located in C:\ProgramData\SoundBox\Logs\ . These logs would indicate why a feed is not being downloaded and how the status of a feed is determined.

Getting Help

If you need assistance with MFC or creating a feed, be sure you are using the latest version. If you are unable to find a solution to your problem, please contact the [SoundBox help desk](mailto:support@soundbox.on.spiceworks.com)³. This is an email based support system so make sure that our replies don't end up in your spam folder! Please limit your request to a single topic. If you have several questions, create a ticket for each. Please indicate SoundBox and MFC version numbers (see main window caption) and try to be as specific as possible in your description of the problem.

Document Version

Date	Notes
29 July 2016	Initial Release
5 August 2016	Add information about staging and naming the feed
7 August 2016	Added contents page and information about updates.
15 August 2016	Updated staging information

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³ <https://soundbox.on.spiceworks.com/portal>

if any, take place directly between the vendors and the prospective users. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this manual is accurate. The authors are not responsible for printing or clerical errors.