

When one wishes to emphasize the connection, one may use the term *differential compression* to refer to data differencing.

Uses [edit]

Audio [edit]

See also: *Audio codec* and *Audio coding format*

Audio data compression, as distinguished from **dynamic range compression**, has the potential to reduce the transmission **bandwidth** and storage requirements of audio data. **Audio compression algorithms** are implemented in **software** as audio **codecs**. Lossy audio compression algorithms provide higher compression at the cost of fidelity and are used in numerous audio applications. These algorithms almost all rely on **psychoacoustics** to eliminate less audible or meaningful sounds, thereby reducing the space required to store or transmit them.^[2]

In both lossy and lossless compression, **information redundancy** is reduced, using methods such as **coding**, **pattern recognition**, and **linear prediction** to reduce the amount of information used to represent the uncompressed data.

The acceptable trade-off between loss of audio quality and transmission or storage size depends upon the application. For example, one 640MB **compact disc** (CD) holds approximately one hour of uncompressed **high fidelity** music, less than 2 hours of music compressed losslessly, or 7 hours of music compressed in the **MP3** format at a medium **bit rate**. A digital sound recorder can typically store around 200 hours of clearly intelligible speech in 640MB.^[14]

Lossless audio compression produces a representation of digital data that decompress to an exact digital duplicate of the original audio stream, unlike playback from lossy compression techniques such as **Vorbis** and **MP3**. Compression ratios are around 50–60% of original size,^[15] which is similar to those for generic lossless data compression. Lossless compression is unable to attain high compression ratios due to the complexity of **waveforms** and the rapid changes in sound forms. Codecs like **FLAC**, **Shorten** and **TTA** use **linear prediction** to estimate the spectrum of the signal. Many of these algorithms use **convolution** with the filter [−1 1] to slightly **whiten** or **flatten** the spectrum, thereby allowing traditional lossless compression to work more efficiently. The process is reversed upon decompression.

When audio files are to be processed, either by further compression or for **editing**, it is desirable to work from an unchanged original (uncompressed or losslessly compressed). Processing of a lossily compressed file for some purpose usually produces a final result inferior to the creation of the same compressed file from an uncompressed original. In addition to sound editing or mixing, lossless audio compression is often used for archival storage, or as master copies.

A number of lossless audio compression formats exist. **Shorten** was an early lossless format. Newer ones include **Free Lossless Audio Codec** (FLAC), Apple's **Apple Lossless** (ALAC), **MPEG-4 ALS**, Microsoft's **Windows Media Audio 9 Lossless** (WMA Lossless), **Monkey's Audio**, **TTA**, and **WavPack**. See *list of lossless codecs* for a complete listing.

Some **audio formats** feature a combination of a lossy format and a lossless correction; this allows stripping the correction to easily obtain a lossy file. Such formats include **MPEG-4 SLS** (Scalable to Lossless), **WavPack**, and **OptimFROG DualStream**.

Other formats are associated with a distinct system, such as:

- **Direct Stream Transfer**, used in **Super Audio CD**
- **Meridian Lossless Packing**, used in **DVD-Audio**, **Dolby TrueHD**, **Blu-ray** and **HD DVD**

Lossy audio compression [edit]

Lossy audio compression is used in a wide range of applications. In addition to the direct applications (mp3 players or computers), digitally compressed audio streams are used in most video DVDs, digital television, streaming media on the **internet**, satellite and cable radio, and increasingly in terrestrial radio broadcasts. Lossy compression typically achieves far greater compression than lossless compression (data of 5 percent to 20 percent of the original stream, rather than 50 percent to 60 percent), by discarding less-critical data.^[16]

The innovation of lossy audio compression was to use **psychoacoustics** to recognize that not all data in an audio stream can be perceived by the human **auditory system**. Most lossy compression reduces perceptual redundancy by first identifying perceptually irrelevant sounds, that is, sounds that are very hard to hear. Typical examples include high frequencies or sounds that occur at the same time as louder sounds. Those sounds are coded with decreased accuracy or not at all.

Due to the nature of lossy algorithms, **audio quality** suffers when a file is decompressed and recompressed (**digital generation loss**). This makes lossy compression unsuitable for storing the intermediate results in professional audio engineering applications, such as sound editing and multitrack recording. However, they are very popular with end users (particularly **MP3**) as a megabyte can store about a minute's worth of music at adequate quality.

Coding methods [edit]

To determine what information in an audio signal is perceptually irrelevant, most lossy compression algorithms use transforms such as the **modified discrete cosine transform** (MDCT) to convert **time domain** sampled waveforms into a transform domain. Once transformed, typically into the **frequency domain**, component frequencies can be allocated bits according to how audible they are. Audibility of spectral components calculated using the **absolute threshold of hearing** and the principles of **simultaneous masking**—the phenomenon wherein a signal is masked by another signal separated by frequency—and, in some cases, **temporal masking**—where a signal is masked by another signal separated by time. **Equal-loudness contours** may also be used to weight the perceptual importance of components. Models of the human ear-brain combination incorporating such effects are often called **psychoacoustic models**.^[17]

Other types of lossy compressors, such as the **linear predictive coding** (LPC) used with speech, are source-based coders. These coders use a model of the sound's generator (such as the human vocal tract with LPC) to whiten the audio signal (i.e., flatten its spectrum) before **quantization**. LPC may be thought of as a basic perceptual coding technique: reconstruction of an audio signal using a linear predictor shapes the coder's quantization noise into the spectrum of the target signal, partially masking it.^[16]

Lossy formats are often used for the distribution of streaming audio or interactive applications (such as the coding of speech for digital transmission in cell phone networks). In such applications, the data must be decompressed as the data flows, rather than after the entire data stream has been transmitted. Not all audio codecs can be used for streaming applications, and for such applications a codec designed to stream data effectively will usually be chosen.^[18]

Latency results from the methods used to encode and decode the data. Some codecs will analyze a longer segment of the data to optimize efficiency, and then code it in a manner that requires a larger segment of data at one time to decode. (Often codecs create segments called a "frame" to create discrete data segments for encoding and decoding.) The inherent **latency** of the coding algorithm can be critical; for example, when there is a two-way transmission of data, such as with a telephone conversation, significant delays may seriously degrade the perceived quality.

In contrast to the speed of compression, which is proportional to the number of operations required by the algorithm, here latency refers to the number of samples that must be analysed before a block of audio is processed. In the minimum case, latency is zero samples (e.g., if the coder/decoder simply reduces the number of bits used to quantize the signal). Time domain algorithms such as LPC also often have low latencies, hence their popularity in speech coding for telephony. In algorithms such as MP3, however, a large number of samples have to be analyzed to implement a psychoacoustic model in the frequency domain, and latency is on the order of 23 ms (46 ms for two-way communication)).

Speech encoding [edit]

Speech encoding is an important category of audio data compression. The perceptual models used to estimate what a human ear can hear are generally somewhat different from those used for music. The range of frequencies needed to convey the sounds of a human voice are normally far narrower than that needed for music, and the sound is normally less complex. As a result, speech can be encoded at high quality using a relatively low bit rate.

If the data to be compressed is analog (such as a voltage that varies with time), quantization is employed to digitize it into numbers (normally integers). This is referred to as analog-to-digital (A/D) conversion. If the integers generated by quantization are 8 bits each, then the entire range of the analog signal is divided into 256 intervals and all the signal values within an interval are quantized to the same number. If 16-bit integers are generated, then the range of the analog signal is divided into 65,536 intervals.

This relation illustrates the compromise between high resolution (a large number of analog intervals) and high compression (small integers generated). This application of quantization is used by several speech compression methods. This is accomplished, in general, by some combination of two approaches:

- Only encoding sounds that could be made by a single human voice.
- Throwing away more of the data in the signal—keeping just enough to reconstruct an "intelligible" voice rather than the full frequency range of human **hearing**.

Perhaps the earliest algorithms used in speech encoding (and audio data compression in general) were the **A-law algorithm** and the **μ-law algorithm**.

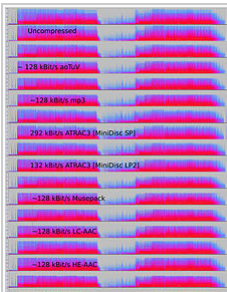
History [edit]

A literature compendium for a large variety of audio coding systems was published in the IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications (JSAC), February 1988. While there were some papers from before that time, this collection documented an entire variety of finished, working audio coders, nearly all of them using perceptual (i.e. masking) techniques and some kind of frequency analysis and back-end noiseless coding.^[18] Several of these papers remarked on the difficulty of obtaining good, clean digital audio for research purposes. Most, if not all, of the authors in the JSAC edition were also active in the MPEG-1 Audio committee.

The world's first commercial **broadcast automation** audio compression system was developed by Oscar Bonello, an engineering professor at the **University of Buenos Aires**.^[19] In 1983, using the psychoacoustic principle of the masking of critical bands first published in 1967,^[20] he started developing a practical application based on the recently developed **IBM PC** computer, and the broadcast automation system was launched in 1987 under the name **Audicom**. Twenty years later, almost all the radio stations in the world were using similar technology manufactured by a number of companies.

Video [edit]

See also: *Video coding format* and *Video codec*



Comparison of acoustic spectrograms of a song in an uncompressed format and lossy formats. That the lossy spectrograms are different from the uncompressed one indicates that they are, in fact, lossy, but nothing can be assumed about the effect of the changes on perceived quality.



Solidyne 922: The world's first commercial audio bit compression card for PC, 1990

Video compression uses modern coding techniques to reduce redundancy in video data. Most [video compression algorithms](#) and [codecs](#) combine spatial [image compression](#) and temporal [motion compensation](#). Video compression is a practical implementation of source coding in information theory. In practice, most video codecs also use audio compression techniques in parallel to compress the separate, but combined data streams as one package.^[21]

The majority of video compression algorithms use [lossy compression](#). [Uncompressed video](#) requires a very high [data rate](#). Although [lossless video compression](#) codecs perform an average compression factor of over 3, a typical [MPEG-4](#) lossy compression video has a compression factor between 20 and 200.^[22] As in all lossy compression, there is a [trade-off](#) between [video quality](#), cost of processing the compression and decompression, and system requirements. Highly compressed video may present visible or distracting [artifacts](#).

Some video compression schemes typically operate on square-shaped groups of neighboring [pixels](#), often called [macroblocks](#). These pixel groups or blocks of pixels are compared from one frame to the next, and the [video compression codec](#) sends only the [differences](#) within those blocks. In areas of video with more motion, the compression must encode more data to keep up with the larger number of pixels that are changing. Commonly during explosions, flames, flocks of animals, and in some panning shots, the high-frequency detail leads to quality decreases or to increases in the [variable bitrate](#).

Encoding theory [\[edit\]](#)

Video data may be represented as a series of still image frames. The sequence of frames contains spatial and temporal [redundancy](#) that video compression algorithms attempt to eliminate or code in a smaller size. Similarities can be encoded by only storing differences between frames, or by using perceptual features of human vision. For example, small differences in color are more difficult to perceive than are changes in brightness. Compression algorithms can average a color across these similar areas to reduce space, in a manner similar to those used in [JPEG](#) image compression.^[23] Some of these methods are inherently lossy while others may preserve all relevant information from the original, [uncompressed video](#).

One of the most powerful techniques for compressing video is interframe compression. Interframe compression uses one or more earlier or later frames in a sequence to compress the current frame, while intraframe compression uses only the current frame, effectively being [image compression](#).^[24]

The most powerful used method works by comparing each frame in the video with the previous one. If the frame contains areas where nothing has moved, the system simply issues a short command that copies that part of the previous frame, bit-for-bit, into the next one. If sections of the frame move in a simple manner, the compressor emits a (slightly longer) command that tells the decompressor to shift, rotate, lighten, or darken the copy. This longer command still remains much shorter than intraframe compression. Interframe compression works well for programs that will simply be played back by the viewer, but can cause problems if the video sequence needs to be edited.^[25]

Because interframe compression copies data from one frame to another, if the original frame is simply cut out (or lost in transmission), the following frames cannot be reconstructed properly. Some [video formats](#), such as [DV](#), compress each frame independently using intraframe compression. Making 'cuts' in intraframe-compressed video is almost as easy as editing uncompressed video: one finds the beginning and ending of each frame, and simply copies bit-for-bit each frame that one wants to keep, and discards the frames one doesn't want. Another difference between intraframe and interframe compression is that, with intraframe systems, each frame uses a similar amount of data. In most interframe systems, certain frames (such as "[I frames](#)" in [MPEG-2](#)) aren't allowed to copy data from other frames, so they require much more data than other frames nearby.^[16]

It is possible to build a computer-based video editor that spots problems caused when I frames are edited out while other frames need them. This has allowed newer formats like [HDV](#) to be used for editing. However, this process demands a lot more computing power than editing intraframe compressed video with the same picture quality.

Today, nearly all commonly used video compression methods (e.g., those in standards approved by the [ITU-T](#) or [ISO](#)) apply a [discrete cosine transform](#) (DCT) for spatial redundancy reduction. The DCT that is widely used in this regard was introduced by [N. Ahmed](#), [T. Natarajan](#) and [K. R. Rao](#) in 1974.^[26] Other methods, such as [fractal compression](#), [matching pursuit](#) and the use of a [discrete wavelet transform](#) (DWT) have been the subject of some research, but are typically not used in practical products (except for the use of [wavelet coding](#) as still-image coders without motion compensation). Interest in fractal compression seems to be waning, due to recent theoretical analysis showing a comparative lack of effectiveness of such methods.^[24]

Timeline [\[edit\]](#)

The following table is a partial history of international video compression standards.

History of Video Compression Standards			
Year	Standard	Publisher	Popular Implementations
1984	H.120	ITU-T	
1988	H.261	ITU-T	Videoconferencing, Videotelephony
1993	MPEG-1 Part 2	ISO, IEC	Video-CD
1995	H.262/MPEG-2 Part 2	ISO, IEC, ITU-T	DVD Video, Blu-ray, Digital Video Broadcasting, SVCD
1996	H.263	ITU-T	Videoconferencing, Videotelephony, Video on Mobile Phones (3GP)
1999	MPEG-4 Part 2	ISO, IEC	Video on Internet (DivX, Xvid ...)
2003	H.264/MPEG-4 AVC	Sony, Panasonic, Samsung, ISO, IEC, ITU-T	Blu-ray, HD DVD, Digital Video Broadcasting, iPod Video, Apple TV, videoconferencing
2009	VC-2 (Dirac)	SMPTE	Video on Internet, HDTV broadcast, UHDTV
2013	H.265	ISO, IEC, ITU-T	

Genetics [\[edit\]](#)

See also: *[Compression of Genomic Re-Sequencing Data](#)*

[Genetics compression algorithms](#) are the latest generation of lossless algorithms that compress data (typically sequences of nucleotides) using both conventional compression algorithms and genetic algorithms adapted to the specific datatype. In 2012, a team of scientists from Johns Hopkins University published a genetic compression algorithm that does not use a reference genome for compression. HAPZIPPER was tailored for [HapMap](#) data and achieves over 20-fold compression (95% reduction in file size), providing 2- to 4-fold better compression and in much faster time than the leading general-purpose compression utilities. For this, Chanda, Elhaik, and Bader introduced MAF based encoding (MAFE), which reduces the heterogeneity of the dataset by sorting SNPs by their minor allele frequency, thus homogenizing the dataset.^[27] Other algorithms in 2009 and 2013 (DNAZip and GenomeZip) have compression ratios of up to 1200-fold—allowing 6 billion basepair diploid human genomes to be stored in 2.5 megabytes (relative to a reference genome or averaged over many genomes).^{[28][29]}

Outlook and currently unused potential [\[edit\]](#)

























It is estimated that the total amount of data that is stored on the world's storage devices could be further compressed with existing compression algorithms by a remaining average factor of 4.5:1. It is estimated that the combined technological capacity of the world to store information provides 1,300 [exabytes](#) of hardware digits in 2007, but when the corresponding content is optimally compressed, this only represents 295 exabytes of [Shannon information](#).^[30]

See also [\[edit\]](#)



This "[see also](#)" section **may contain an excessive number of suggestions**. Please ensure that only the most relevant suggestions are given and that they are not [red links](#), and consider integrating suggestions into the article itself. *(November 2011)*

- [Auditory masking](#)
- [Calgary corpus](#)
- [Canterbury corpus](#)
- [Context mixing](#)
- [Compression artifact](#)
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- [Kolmogorov complexity](#)
- [Magic compression algorithm](#)
- [Minimum description length](#)
- [Modulo-N code](#)
- [Range encoding](#)
- [Sub-band coding](#)

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- Video compression 4:2:2 10-bit and its benefits [↗](#)
- Why does 10-bit save bandwidth (even when content is 8-bit)? [↗](#)
- Which compression technology should be used [↗](#)
- Wiley - Introduction to Compression Theory [↗](#)
- EBU subjective listening tests on low-bitrate audio codecs [↗](#)
- Audio Archiving Guide: Music Formats [↗](#) (Guide for helping a user pick out the right codec)
- MPEG 1&2 video compression intro (pdf format) [↗](#) at the [Wayback Machine](#) (archived September 28, 2007)
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