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ENGL2100-506-507-508-F20

Topic

ffmpeg How-To Guide

Description

Write a guide with screenshots that explains how to use the command-line program ffmpeg to convert a video from one format to another. Include a brief explanation of the video formats you have chosen and be sure to list out user requirements.

References

Matroska Media Container Homepage. (n.d.). Retrieved September 13, 2020, from
https://www.matroska.org/index.html
Ffmpeg Documentation. (n.d.). Retrieved September 13, 2020, from
https://ffmpeg.org/ffmpeg.html
Supported Video Formats. (n.d.). Retrieved September 13, 2020, from
http://img.movavi.com/online-help/videoeditor/8/supported_video_formats.htm
Premiere Pro supported file formats. (n.d.). Retrieved September 13, 2020, from
https://helpx.adobe.com/premiere-pro/using/supported-file-formats.html

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How to Convert a Video from MKV to MP4 using ffmpeg

Requirements:
- Windows 10 operating system
- ffmpeg (https://ffmpeg.org/download.html)
- Experience with Command Prompt

Video editing is a popular hobby and there is no shortage of software you can use to edit videos. Most mainstream editing software supports a large range of video formats, but there is one popular format that is not widely supported: Matroska (`.mkv`). Matroska is an open-standards multimedia container format and it is popular because it is free to create and modify `.mkv` files. Because it is a newer format than some popular containers such as `.avi` or `.mp4`, support is still being added to major programs.

Today I will be showing you a quick and convenient way to convert your `.mkv` videos to `.mp4` format so you can open them in your video editor of choice!

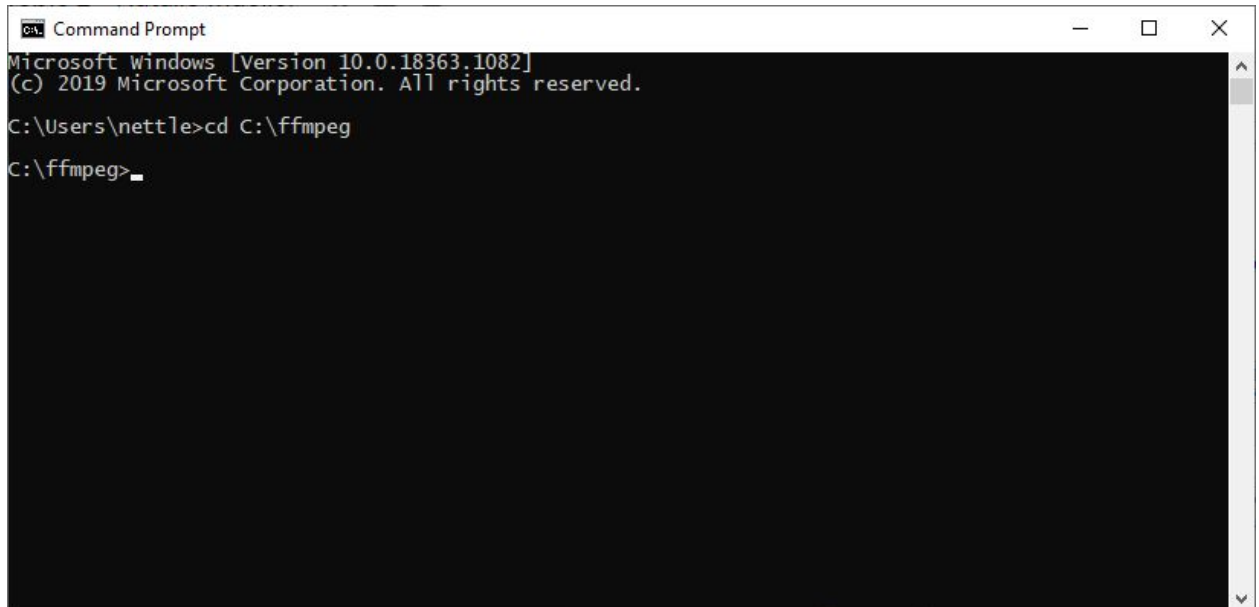1. Go to the ffmpeg Downloads page (https://ffmpeg.org/download.html) and download the latest Windows build

2. Open the zip file and locate `ffmpeg.exe` in the `bin` folder. Extract this file to a convenient location (I am using `C:\ffmpeg`)
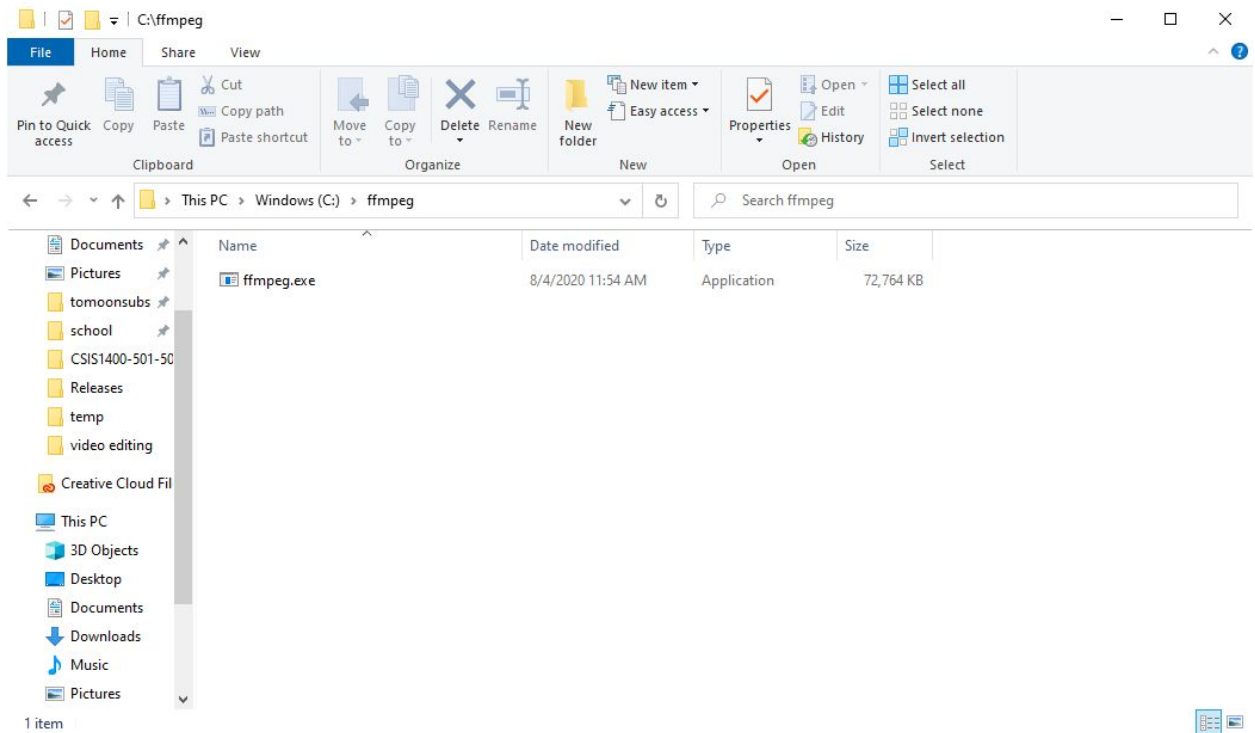
3. Move the `.mkv` file you want to convert to this folder
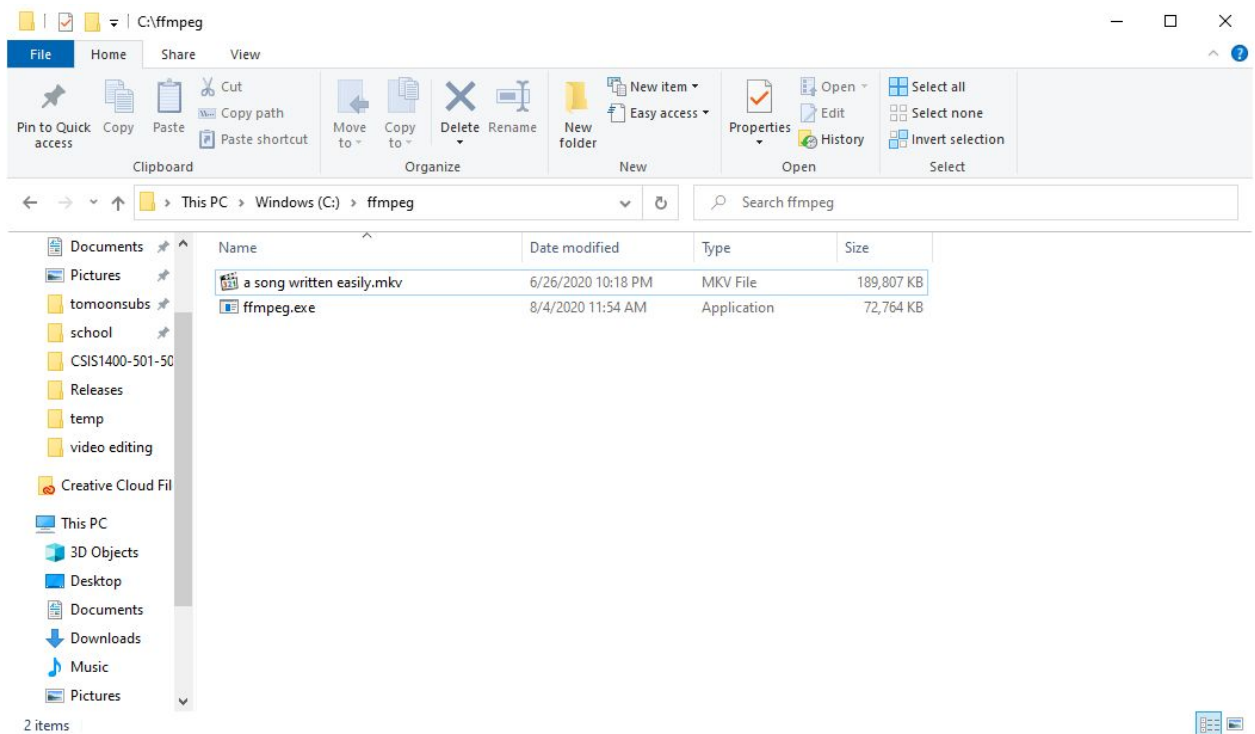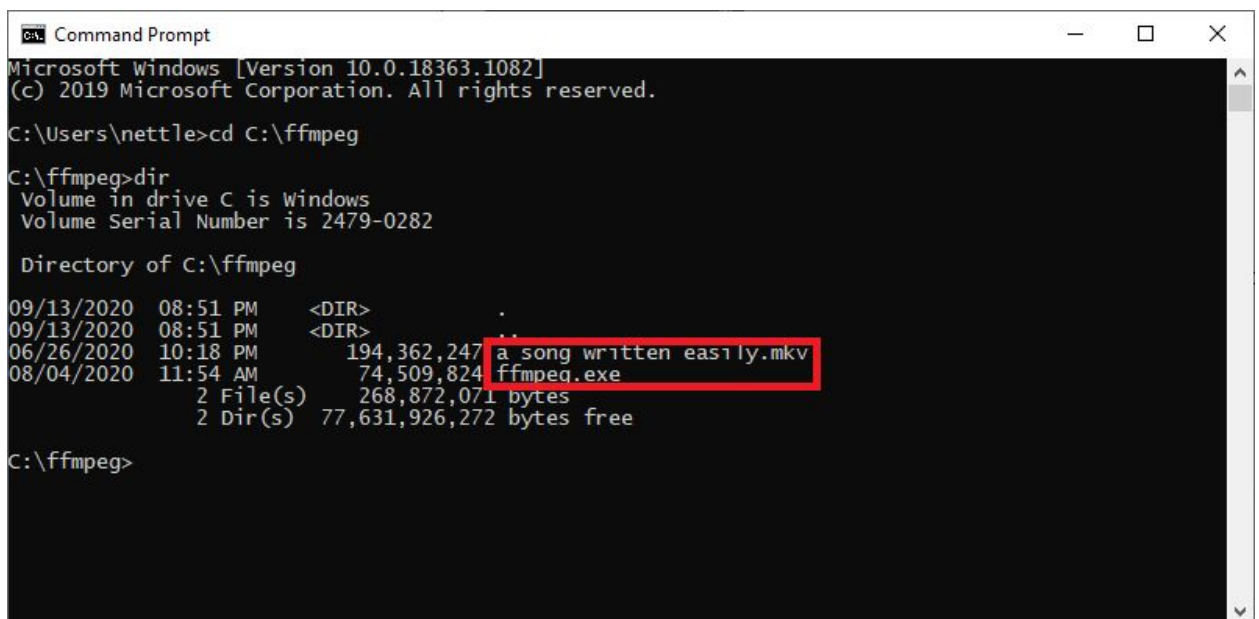
4. Open Command Prompt (Type `cmd` in the Windows search bar) and navigate to your folder using `cd C:\ffmpeg`

```
Command Prompt                                                    —    □    ✕
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18363.1082]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\nettle>cd C:\ffmpeg

C:\ffmpeg>_
```

5. Use the `dir` command to verify that ffmpeg and your video are located in the current folder

```
Command Prompt                                                    —    □    ✕
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.18363.1082]
(c) 2019 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\nettle>cd C:\ffmpeg

C:\ffmpeg>dir
 Volume in drive C is Windows
 Volume Serial Number is 2479-0282

 Directory of C:\ffmpeg

09/13/2020  08:51 PM    <DIR>          .
09/13/2020  08:51 PM    <DIR>          ..
06/26/2020  10:18 PM       194,362,247 a song written easily.mkv
08/04/2020  11:54 AM        74,509,824 ffmpeg.exe
               2 File(s)    268,872,071 bytes
               2 Dir(s)  77,631,926,272 bytes free

C:\ffmpeg>
```
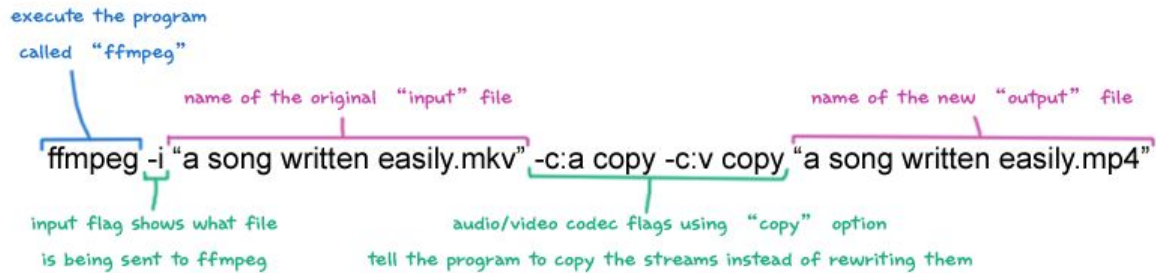
6. We will be using a simple ffmpeg command to convert the video:

```
ffmpeg -i "a song written easily.mkv" -c:a copy -c:v copy "a song
written easily.mp4"
```


execute the program called "ffmpeg"

name of the original "input" file

name of the new "output" file

ffmpeg -i "a song written easily.mkv" -c:a copy -c:v copy "a song written easily.mp4"

input flag shows what file is being sent to ffmpeg

audio/video codec flags using "copy" option tell the program to copy the streams instead of rewriting them

7. After executing the command, you should see a wall of scrolling text appear in the command-line window. This means the conversion worked! If you run into an error, double-check the command and make sure nothing was typed incorrectly

8. Now you have a shiny, new `.mp4` video!
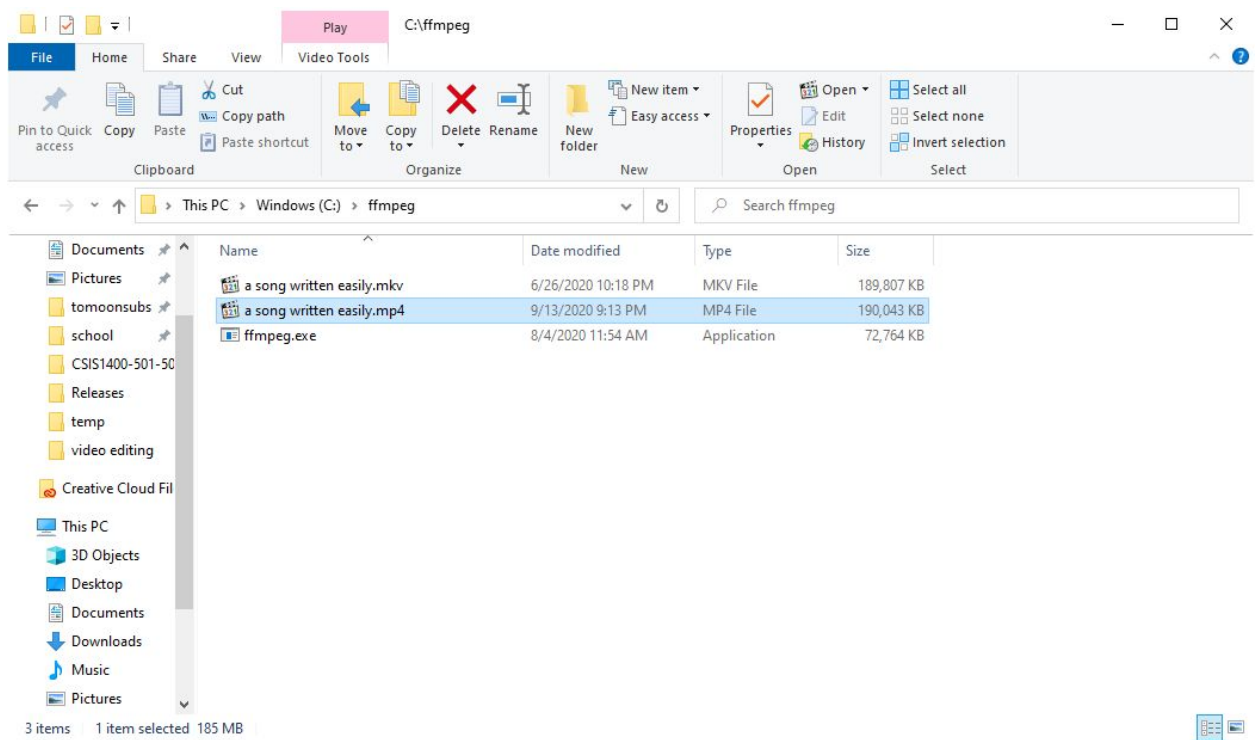
This is only one of many ways to convert a video from `.mkv` to `.mp4`, but an explanation of all the different settings and options is outside of the scope of this tutorial.

Thank you for reading!