

WSJT-X AUDIO FILE SAVE PROBLEM AND FIX

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Introduction

Long story short, even though WSJT-X's default menu "**Save**" setting is "**None**" (no audio *.wav format file recordings should be saved), this is not so. While doing some Windows 10 housekeeping, I noticed that a huge chunk of the hard drive had been used up, which turned out to be a staggering 82,000+ *.wav audio files saved in WSJT-X's default **save** directory. This was the accumulated result of several years of 24/7 WSPR beacon monitoring, and was also causing the program to crash frequently with a cryptic audio file write or access issue message, which also had me puzzled since it shouldn't be writing any audio files in the first place! And it's even more problematic when using FT8 because of rapid fire 15 second audio tracks being constantly written to the hard drive (I'm not a Linux user but I assume the same problem exists).

Because later versions of the Windows operating system allows for virtually an unlimited number of data files to be written per directory and sub-directory, even multi-terabyte (TB) hard drives will fill up and just stop working—eventually. So, if I had been using a TB hard drive a missing 100 GB would probably go unnoticed, but it was really obvious on my relatively small one. It seems that the program "choice" to save audio files inside the operating system's local or local roaming invisible directory and sub-directories is the root cause of the problem (pun intended). I'm not into social media et al, and have no idea if this issue is well known and documented on the various Amateur Radio digital groups, but here's how I solved this problem of mine for Windows versions of WSJT-X.

Step 1

Run WSJT-X and select **File > Open log directory**. From the Windows file browser window open the "**save**" folder (double mouse-click on it). You should see a lot of audio files therein even though the "**Save**" menu option is "**None**". If you've been regularly using **File > Delete all *.wav and .c2 files in SaveDir**, then you probably won't have as many, but most WSJT-X users probably don't do any regular housekeeping (I obviously didn't). Unless you have some specific reason to keep them, say for later signal data analysis, you really don't want thousands of small audio files to gradually "eat up" your hard drive.

If this isn't the case for you, simply delete all the files using WSJT-X. However, if there are a lot of them it will take a long time (deleting 82,000+ files took about an hour). If you remember to do this on a daily basis you don't need to make any further program changes, and I wish that this was an option within WSJT-X to do this automatically for you. We shouldn't have to think and/or work harder than the computer programs we use, eh? So read on if you want to semi-fix this issue

Step 2

We need to tell WSJT-X to use a visible/top level accessible “save” subdirectory; this could be inside the root WSJT-X directory (C:\WSJT-X\save), or in the documents directory (C:\User\Documents\WSJT-X\save). You can do this using WSJT-X's **File > Settings > Audio** and click the select button next to the “**Save Directory**”. Select a new location (already created or you can create a new folder) using the file explorer window.

Step 3

But even after doing this, I found that the “**Save**” options flag still wasn't getting the “idea”, and so I had to cycle the “**Save**” options to “**Save decoded**” and back to “**None**”. The WSJT-X program also had to be elevated to Administrator privilege (see <https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ff431742.aspx>). If you watch the contents of the new redefined “save” directory, you should see an audio file being written and then deleted. I still can't figure out why the program does this unless it requires this file to decode signals. These changes worked on all my Windows 10 64-bit computers but the 32-bit versions just refused to “cooperate” and kept writing hundreds of FT8 audio files, so a daily execution of **File > Delete all *.wav and .c2 files in SaveDir**.

Conclusion

Obviously, this is something that the WSJT-X programmers need to address. I don't like any files being written when they shouldn't be, and I certainly don't like the use of hidden directories and sub-directories for storing data since both Windows and Linux seem to do things programmers didn't intend or anticipate. Well, hope this helps someone “out there”—73