



**FreeTW**  
the Tele-Web-Viewer

# **Media Players & Media Centers**

# Multimedial resources



FILM



MUSICA



FOTO



Web Radio e Web TV



Radio e TV del monopolio

Dear user,

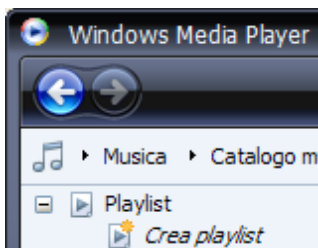
your computer is capable to visualize and play everything.



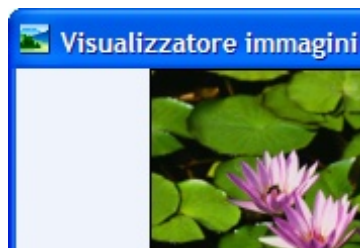
It doesn't matter if coming from Internet or from a USB memory stick, from the LAN or less Network, from an internal or external Hard Disk or from CD.



But there isn't any program able to reproduce all your media.  
You have to use at least four of them.



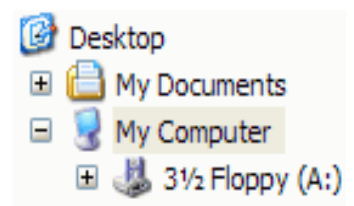
FILM e MUSICA



FOTO



Web Radio e Web TV



MP3 – AVI etc..

They are all different, they don't show the same functions, you can't control them in a uniform way with a remote control, you have to start and then close them, and you should even find the media files.

If you really want to watch your pictures and movies from your lounge, perhaps using a remote control, take a Media Center; there are even some of them freeware.

# The Media Centers

Simply searching with Google you'll find a lot of them, but they are different one each other, what will be right for you ?

*I buy a "Windows Media Center" to be sure !*

*How much does it cost ? Some cash.*

*But may I use it to search the WebTv links on the Web ? No.*

*But is it readable from my lounge... Try to know.*

*Which remote control could I use ?*

*This one only, the cursor can move in only four directions but ...*

*Ok, I buy it... You cannot buy it ! Windows Media Center is an entire operating system, not an application. You have to buy a "Windows Vista Home Premium" or "Windows Vista Ultimate" that contain it.*

*...so I go on Google to find another MediaCenter...*

Here you have a stock of them :

[CenterStage](#) [Dell MediaDirect](#) [Elisa](#) [Entertainer](#) [FreeInternetTv](#) [Freevo](#) [Front Row](#) [GB-PVR](#) [iTheater](#) [J. River Media Center](#) [MediaPortal](#) [Miro](#) [MyCast Orb](#) [MythTV](#) [My Media System](#) [MyCast Orb](#) [Nero MediaHome](#) [OnlineTvPlayer](#) [Pinnacle PCTV MediaCenter](#) [SageTV](#) [Sofa](#) [SuperInternetTV](#) [TVedia](#) [TV-EXE](#) [Wellton Way MultiMedia Center \(MMC\)](#) [Windows Media Center](#)

*I would use it to watch my **pictures**, my **movies** and the **mp3** downloaded with eMule, even the **DVDs** and the **WebTvs** and the streaming movies on RossoAlice (YALP) and FastWeb and I would **surf** the **WEB** to find some links... in conclusion it **should manage all the multimedia tasks**.*

**There isn't !** *How there isn't ???*

First of all none of them has an internal browser, you should use Internet Explorer or Mozilla or Opera... maybe installing a plugin into J River Media Center ( that is the nicest and really well realized ) . Then you go in Internet... you could look inside the blogs to know how to do it...

Otherwise you could do the opposite, installing a plug-in to the Mozilla browser trying to change it in something similar to a media center, but the menu captions will be tiny and not readable sitting into the lounge...

And more, those media centers suited to manage the WebTvs (as "Miro") can't show your pictures, your local media files and the mp3 files downloaded with eMule... and viceversa.

There is only one program that you can use, it is not the most elegant, it is named FreeTW. If you don't trust me, please install all the media centers of this list and try them...



# FreeTW

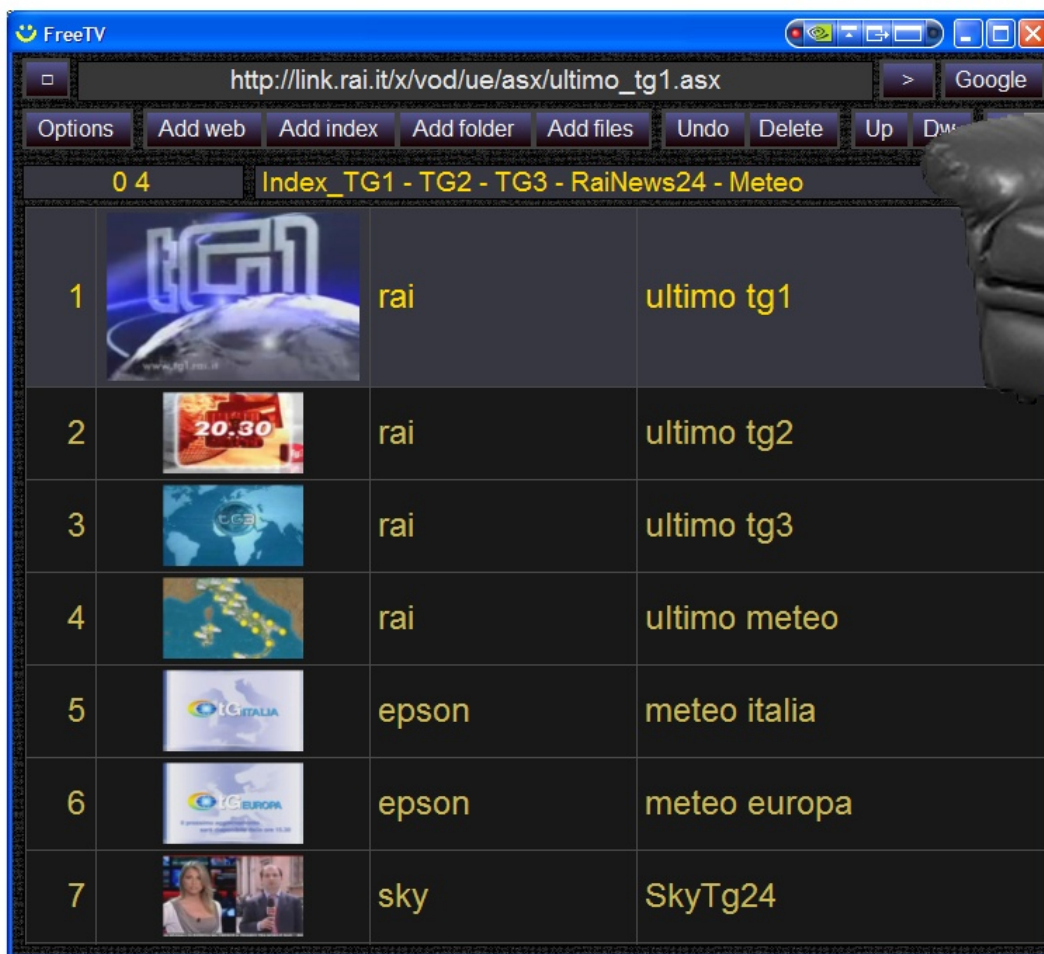
FreeTW only performs four actions: "UP", "DOWN", "OPEN" and "CLOSE" but they are active **on all your media**.

FreeTW does not have the time lapse and does not record, then if you want to fill your hard disk you have to download files using eMule.

FreeTW is not so elegant, it has big and simple captions, **but it is readable from far**.

FreeTW is a simple application but allows you to :

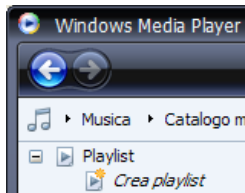
Watch and listen to everything: **WebRadio, WebTvs, Pictures, Movies, MP3, DVD, the TV and the FM radios**, sitting in your lounge, with the remote control, like using a television set.



# The difference between FreeTW and “media players”

FreeTW is not a “Media Center”, nor a “WebTV” nor a “peer to peer TV” but only realizes a channel list that allows to play, using the remote control, the multimedia resources already present .

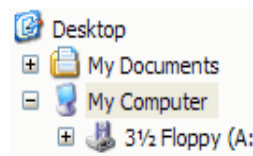
- 1) Windows Media Player ( watch movies and listen to songs )
- 2) Internet Explorer ( browse the web, watching WebTV and do searches )
- 3) Resource Explorer ( access to the local resources and to the LAN )
- 4) Image and Fax Viewer ( look at pictures )



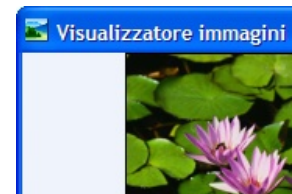
MOVIES and MUSIC



Web Radio and Web TV



MP3 – AVI etc..



PICTURES



FreeTW dispatches different tasks to the applications already present inside the system PC, easing their use and simplifying commands. Unlike the "Media center", FreeTW does not take the full control of the operating system with a worst imitation, instead it enhances the operating system strengths integrating additional functions.

The "Web TV" stays on the “transmitter” side, ( it could deliver advertising, for example ) instead FreeTW stays opposite i.e. on the user side. FreeTW does not deliver anything, it is not a television broadcaster. FreeTW is a “living room television set”. In fact FreeTW puts a big emphasis onto the remote controls while all the other “media players” are not so focused on this issue.

# Experiment with Web / Media / TV / Players / Centers

If you want to experiment, here is a list of the best ones :

## FREEWARE

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[OnlineTvPlayer](#) (freeware) (little captions) (you cannot add channels) The best choice - does not access the web

[GB-PVR](#) (Windows) ( freeware ) - does not access the web

[MediaPortal](#) (Windows) (freeware) (open source) - Ok with DVD and TV but not easy for WEB / plugin for the WEB / Nice keyboard onto the screen

[MyCast Orb](#) (Windows) ( freeware but asks for an account ??? )

[Miro](#) ( freeware and opensource ) – An eMule for the videos – Only its movies are watchable.

[TV-EXE](#) ( freeware ) – the italian channels are nine, of which three are working – It has an integrated browser limited to some destinations.

[Elisa](#) ( freeware and opensource ) – Wonderful !!! Contains a *"class StreamZapInput that implements Streamzap remote control support for win32"* i.e. *"a remote control is your problem"*

## COMMERCIAL

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[Windows Media Center](#) (Windows)

[TVedia](#) (shareware but open front end...)

[Nero MediaHome](#) (Windows) (shareware)

[J. River Media Center](#) (Windows) Superb technical realization. It does not browse the web. A plugin to add a browser is present but I was not able to see it working.

[SageTV](#) (Windows, Linux and Mac)

[SuperInternetTV 7.3](#) Declares 7000 channel of which 110 italians, one worse than the other (Teleliguirasud, LazioTV etc..) and for the most not functioning.

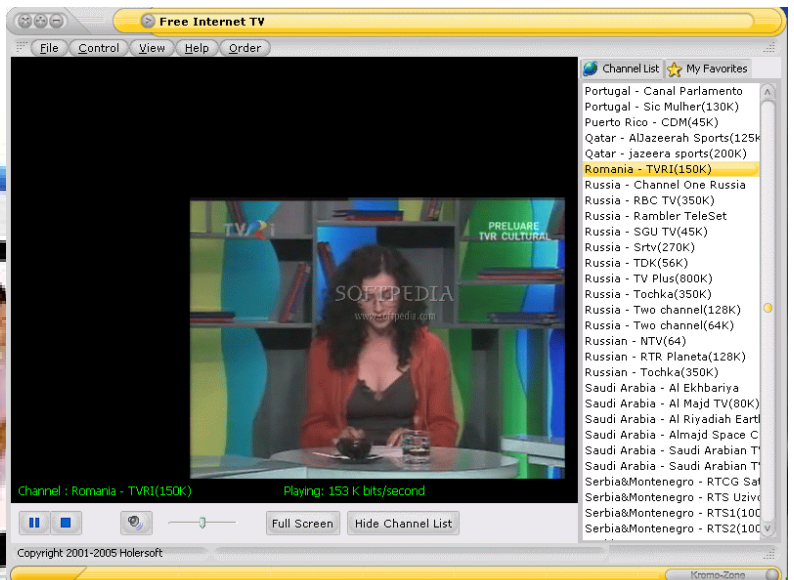
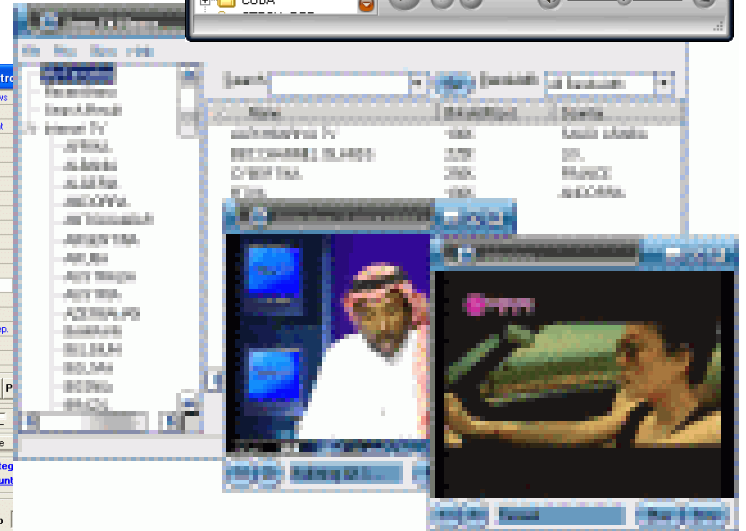
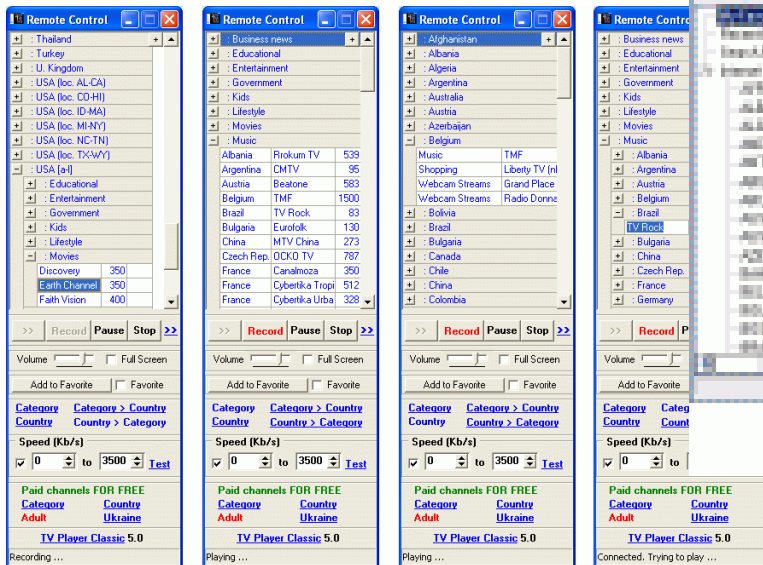
... put a DVD into the tray, watch the movie, extract the DVD, buy a new DVD, look how many WebTVs into the wold... after having tryed some tenth of these softwares, I'm a little bit tired. Who will find a useful one, please let me know. Thanks.

# Some “media players” screenshots with very tiny captions

Almost all of them contain thousands of world channels, of which the Italian channels are usually twenty of which only five are working.

There isn't any browser and it is impossible to add channels because of the **provider**.

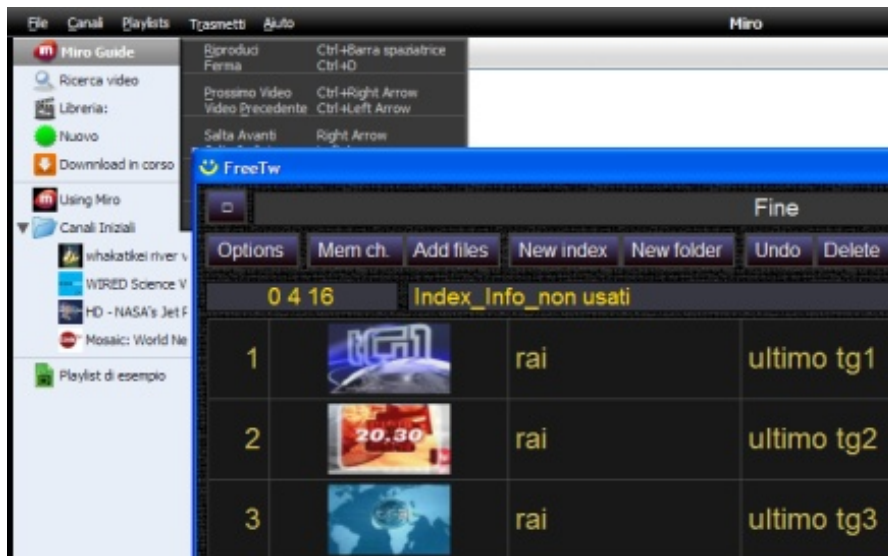
What you can see in these images is more or less what you could see



# The caption dimension

Someone could think that the caption dimensions are not so important and usually the opinion is that there is always some way to enlarge them.

Well, this way to enlarge the captions does not exist. Some users, to attempt to read from their lounge, set the screen resolution to 640x480 but this damages the movie quality, the pictures are terrible and the main functions of the computer become unusable. Whoever would try to modify the "Screen properties" and the "Windows themes" would see that all the not useful captions are enlarged while those we are interested to, continue to be tiny.



Here you can see "Miro" and "FreeTW" overlaid.

The visibility is the same as looking at a 30 inches monitor from a distance of three meters.

And here all the "Miro" window, you could read something but with some difficulties...



## Using dark colours

FreeTW on this white page seems a bit dark but when FreeTW is pleasant while the white pages are disturbed.

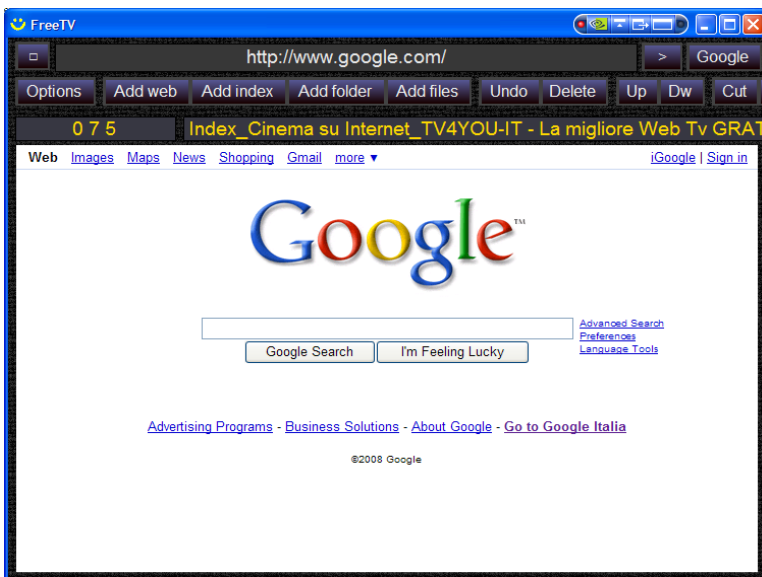
The captions of FreeTW are big and are easily readable. The characters, can be recognized for their shape.



## Facilitating the channels management

The indexes of FreeTW allow reaching every program using a few buttons, like composing a telephone number. For example to watch at TG1 it is enough to hit the keys "0", "4" e "1" of the remote control. If you want to select Radio 105 – Latino you have to simply hit "0 9 2 7"

Using FreeTW it is possible to reproduce every kind of media, both on the web than the local resources. The pictures could be shown in sequence, with background music, with a border and with transitions between them. The MP3 files memorized into your hard-disk are reached and played very easily.



All the media (movies / music / pictures) could be directly played in their location (for instance directly inside an USB memory stick or inside an external hard disk)

It is also possible to browse the web to search for new channels or watching some contents only playable in Internet like, for example, the "YouTube" videos.

# The reproduction quality of FreeTW

The "design" of FreeTW is simple and minimalist, there are few commands and the buttons don't present artistic icons or translucent effects but using FreeTW you can watch and listen with a superior quality than with other applications ( moreover the streams reproduction is faster to start )

## Windows Media Player

To reproduce videos and music, FreeTW uses the complete "Windows Media Player" with equalizer, audio filters SRS and WOW, control of the pixel-ratio to obtain right proportions of the frame, the animated visualizations when playing music, etc... instead of the WMP control that you can find inside the web pages that is missing a lot of functions.

Before the choice of using "Windows Media Player" inside FreeTW, we attempted to integrate other players. Between them the WMP control from Microsoft, other players like f.i. Bsplayer and WinAmp and finally VideoLan VLC (Video Lan Client)

VLC was working decently but it needed the double of time to start the reproduction of a stream, often crashed with not recoverable errors sometimes terminating FreeTW too (please note that VLC is a prerelease version). Moreover it could not reproduce a lot of ".ASX" videos and sometimes it shew problems with the "mms:/" too.

A long time was spent trying to integrate VLC because it is free-software and open-source but at last I reverted back to "Windows Media Player 11" that works smoothly inside FreeTW.

## Slide show

With FreeTW you can enjoy your pictures with thirty dissolvence and transition types, with background music and with frames/borders. It is also possible, using the remote control, pausing the show to comment the pictures with your spectators or to go away for a while. Or you can select the "manual mode" to advance the pictures one at a time using the remote control.

To enlarge or shrink the images, FreeTW uses the "bicubical resample" method that maintains the best possible quality.

## Web sites

FreeTW can show the websites with continuous zoom and scroll. The other browsers cannot do that. If you want more, you also could use a comfortable magnification lens that automatically disappears when you no more need it. The pop-up windows are 100% captured and destroyed. Eventual viruses will find an environment so different from classic browsers that don't know how to behave and so they die.

## Channel quantity

FreeTW actually indexes more than 300 channels, all in italian language and all working well, while the other "media-players" promise to bring you 500 world TV channels but in fact they manage twenty italian channels of which only five are working.

Using FreeTW, finding and indexing new channels is straightforward because there are special search functions. Thanks to these features it was possible to find a so big bulk of italian channels.

Who would try to find other italian channels could start with the "on demand" channels by RAI-Tv (that at the moment are indexed only as a web site) adding another three hundred channels dedicating only a few hours to this task.

# Using Internet and Windows with the remote control



Some operations usually accomplished using the keyboard could become very difficult, uncomfortable or even impossible to do when you are managing your computer with a remote control

## 1) Difficulties and slowness to move the pointer

Generally the remote controls move the pointer with four buttons, the best remotes having a round big joggle button and the progressive acceleration allowing acceptable speed and pointing precision, however worse than using a classic mouse. ( for informations about the remote commands, please read the document "Remote\_control\_instructions" )

For these reasons, a good application should limit at most the use of pointings of the cursor, preferring the selection of its functions by means of buttons.

## 2) Difficulties to read the little captions

Computer monitors are usually 17 or 19 inches wide and you watch them at a distance of about one meter. To obtain the same visibility being at three or four meters from them, that is common between a television set and a lounge, you should use a 50 to 70 inches monitor ( costing from 5000 to 20000 Euro )

The price of monitors rapidly increases when you choose a more than 24 inches model, so usually you could have a monitor that hardly allows reading captions less than 12 .. 16 points-per-inch high.

A comfortable application should avoid to use the base Windows controls: listviews, menus, comboboxes, checkboxes that show tiny captions and are boring to be used with the remote control.

## 2) Difficulties to write text

Without a keyboard you could write slowly and hardly, in the dark using the remote control keys, that usually have less quality than a mobile phone keyboard.

A usable application should limit the needs to write text and allow to postpone the editing operations at a later time, when you could use a real computer keyboard.

Because some WebTVs ask you login and password it is very useful to have a way to memorize a vocabulary of these strings to use them with a few keys of the remote control. FreeTW can do that.