



COLUMNISTS

ChessBase Cafe

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Creating Multimedia Content

I'm frequently asked by users of *ChessBase* and *Fritz*, as to how they can create *Chess Media System* content similar to the ChessBase DVDs. Unfortunately, users cannot create such content, because the *Chess Media System* is an in-house proprietary system and is not available to the public. However, it certainly *is* possible to add video, audio, and pictorial content directly to a ChessBase-format game, it just won't be the "sit back and watch the lecture and animated board" type.

The tools to add the content are only available in *ChessBase 8* and *ChessBase 9*, but the end user will be able to access it via *ChessBase*, *Fritz*, or even the free *ChessBase Reader* program. Adding multimedia content to a game is technically very easy (simply a matter of right-clicking on a move, selecting a command, and then choosing a file to attach); however, the act of *producing* it requires some technical knowledge that is outside the scope of this article. If you're not already familiar with how to create electronic video and sound files, then I advise you to stick with the more traditional annotation forms (symbols and text) until you acquire further technical expertise.

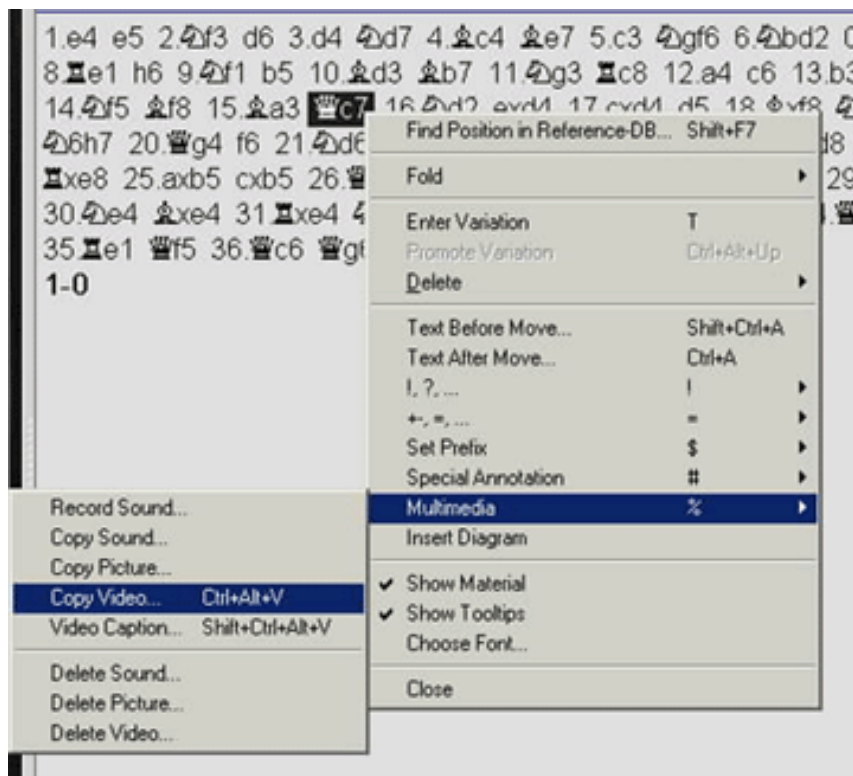
Videos to be added to a ChessBase game *must* be in .avi format; sound files *must* be in .wav format; while images *must* be in .bmp format. Again, if you need to ask what these formats are, you're probably not ready to add multimedia content to your games until you increase your technical proficiency.

I *will* provide one ChessBase-specific technical note: although *ChessBase* allows you to record a .wav file directly within the program (in other words, recording the sound file and attaching it to a move all in one fell swoop), I recommend that you record your .wav files using another audio recording program and then attach the completed .wav file to a game move as a separate step. This will allow you to make multiple "takes" of your commentary, edit them (if your third-party software contains this feature), and then just use the best version you've recorded. By contrast, *ChessBase's* audio recording controls are very basic and, since you're recording directly within the program, you don't have the option for multiple "takes" – any new take will overwrite the existing one.

Once you have created and gathered the various multimedia components that you intend to add to your game (in the requisite formats, of course), you can then add them simply by right-clicking on the move where you would like the content to appear, selecting the correct command, and then clicking on the filename in the File Select dialogue. Let's look at a simple example for each of the three multimedia file types.

Adding a Video Annotation to a Move

In the Notation pane, right-click on the move to which you want to add a video clip. Select "Multimedia" from the popup menu, and then choose "Copy video" from the submenu:



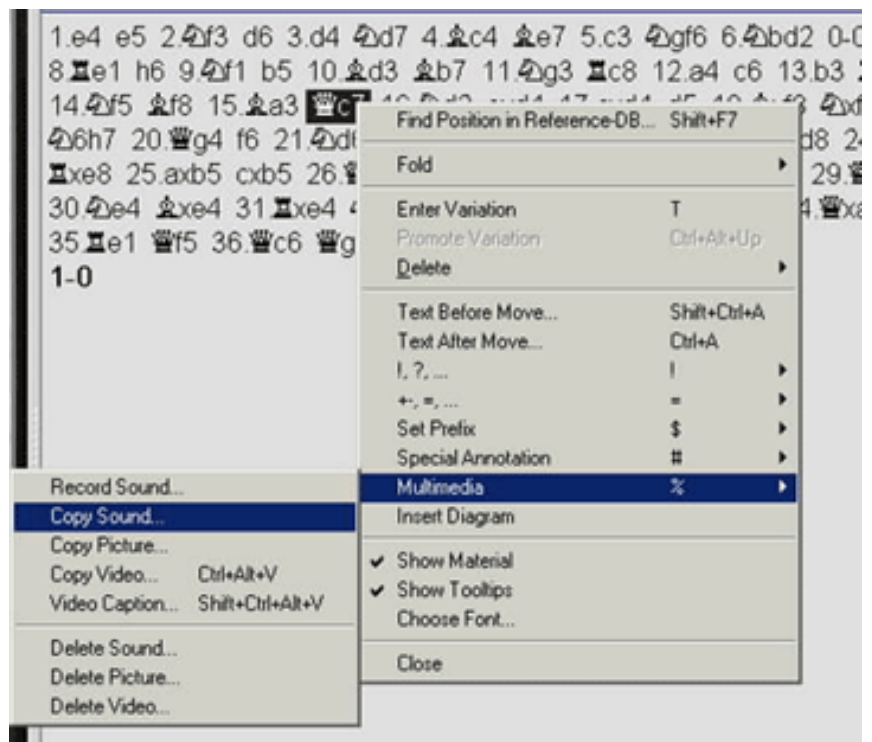
You'll see the standard *Windows* File Select dialogue appear. Use it to navigate to the folder where you've stored the video clip that corresponds to that move, select the .avi file, and then click "OK."

You can also add a text caption to your video clip. Simply right-click on the same move to which you just added an .avi clip, select "Multimedia," and then "Video caption." A box quite similar to the normal *ChessBase* annotation window will appear, and you can just type a brief caption into this box.

After you've added all of your video clips to the game, it's *very important* that you go to the File menu in the game window and select "Replace game" – otherwise these video additions will be lost when you exit from that game (the video clips will still exist on your hard drive – but they won't appear in the game).

Adding an Audio Annotation to a Move

In the Notation pane, right-click on the move to which you'd like to add an audio clip. Select "Multimedia" from the popup menu, and then choose "Copy sound" from the submenu:

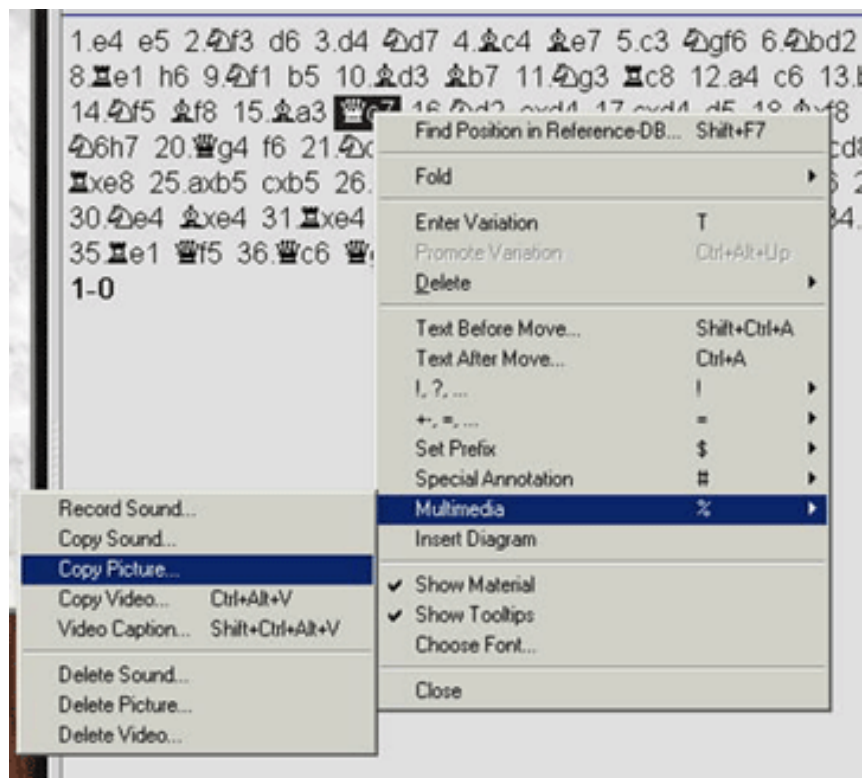


You'll see the standard *Windows* File Select dialogue appear. Use it to navigate to the folder where you've stored the audio clip that corresponds to that move, select that .wav file, and then click "OK."

Again, don't forget to use "Replace game" to save your work after you've added all of your audio clips to the game.

Adding an Image to a Move

In the Notation pane, right-click on the move to which you'd like to add a picture or photo. Select "Multimedia" from the popup menu, and then choose "Copy picture" from the submenu:



You'll see the standard *Windows* File Select dialogue appear. Use it to navigate to the folder where you've stored the graphic in question, select that .bmp file, and then click "OK." And, as in the above examples, remember to use "Replace game" to save your work.

The end result won't be the same as a ChessBase-produced *Chess Media System* game, but rather an inverted version of said multimedia content. Instead of a running video commentary with moves made automatically on the board at appropriate places, you'll be creating an annotated game that the end user can play through at his own pace, complete with multimedia content that appears automatically at the appropriate spots. As the user steps through the game and reaches a move annotated with a multimedia element, a separate window will appear as an inset on the screen. This window will contain either an image (for .bmp files), volume controls (for an audio clip in .wav format), or a screen displaying the video content, complete with VCR-style controls (in the event of an .avi file).

Until next month, have fun!

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All the ChessBase software described by Steve in this column, as well as many more ChessBase programs, are available in the [ChessCafe Online Catalog](#).

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