



AutoQ v1.03

© John Romaya (4th December 2016)

User Manual

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Sample Cue file A.1

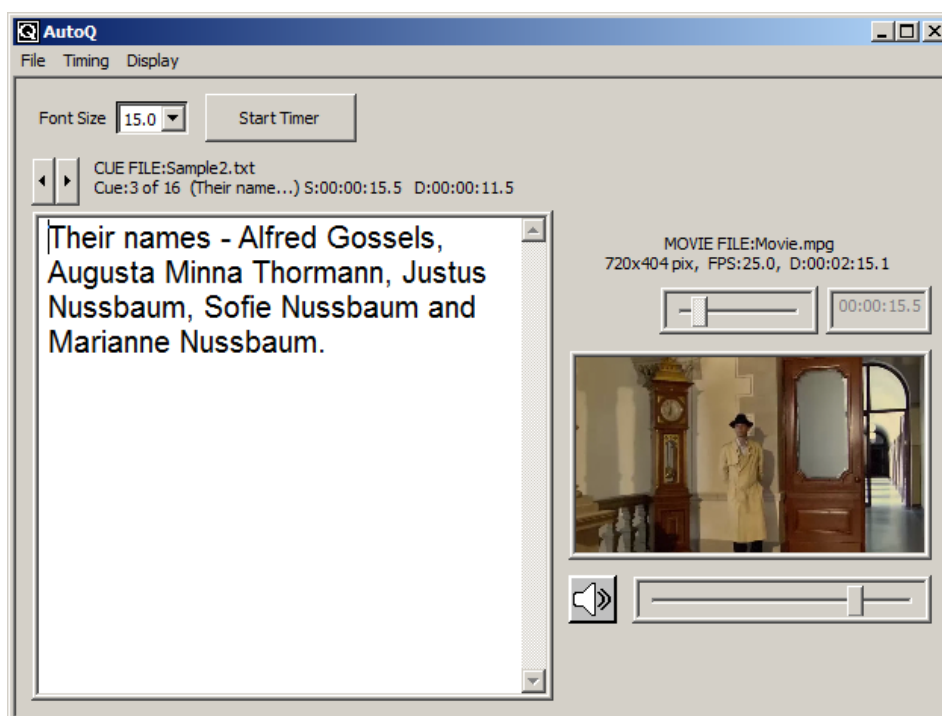
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Overview

The AutoQ program icon looks like this...

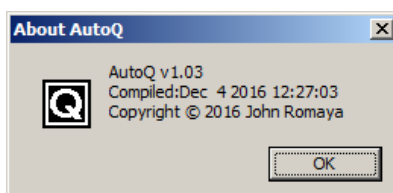


AutoQ is an autocue display program designed for prompting timed readings of text, which can also be synchronized with a movie. The AutoQ window always appears above all other windows on the desktop (it cannot be overlapped by other windows)...



Although AutoQ is designed to be used with a movie and synchronised text cues (as shown above), it can be used with a movie alone, or with text (which may or may contain timing synchronisation information) or with a combination of the two. Text always appears on the left hand side and movies on the right. The three menus at the top ("File", "Timing" and "Display") allow you to perform different operations.

You can resize the window by clicking and dragging the corners or you can minimize/maximize/close the window using the three small square icons in the top right of the titlebar. The titlebar displays "AutoQ". If you right-click on the title bar you bring up the system menu and then you can invoke the "About AutoQ..." dialog, which displays the version number and compilation date of AutoQ which you are using...



Section 1

Cue files

Basic Cue file format

The Cue file contains all the cues which you want to display, separated by a delimiter character, which may be any of the following...

| # ~ ^ % £ \$ * @ [

You must save the file as a plain text file with the file extension “.txt”. AutoQ will not recognise Word document files (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) files.

Here is an excerpt from a typical Cue file...

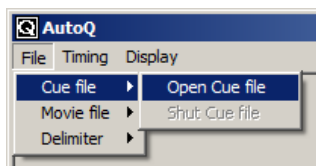
| Osnabrück, 2nd July 1937.

| On this mild Summer's day, a Friday, five people take their leave of Osnabrück.

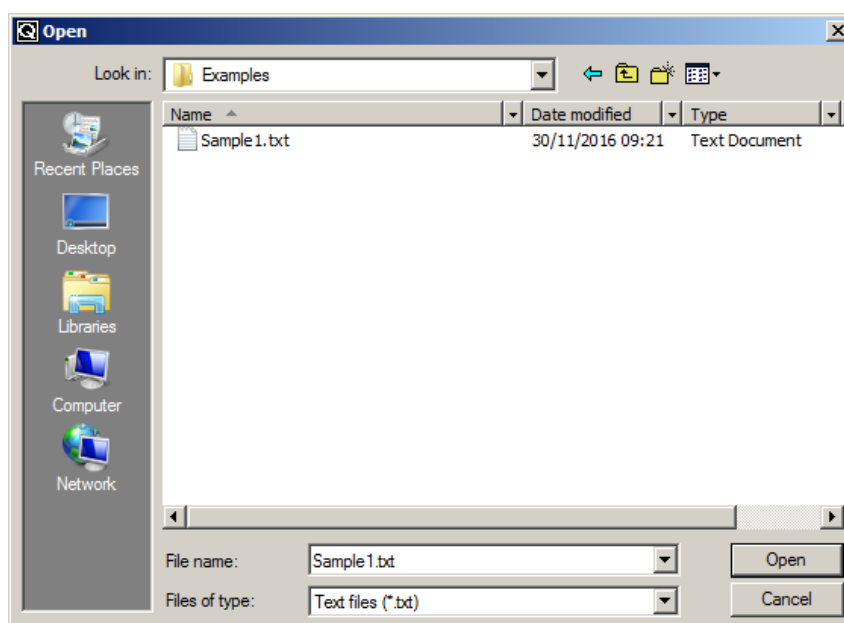
Here we have chosen the “|” character as the delimiter and there are two separate cues; the first is “Osnabrück, 2nd July 1937” and the second is “On this mild Summer's day, a Friday, five people take their leave of Osnabrück.”

Opening a Cue file

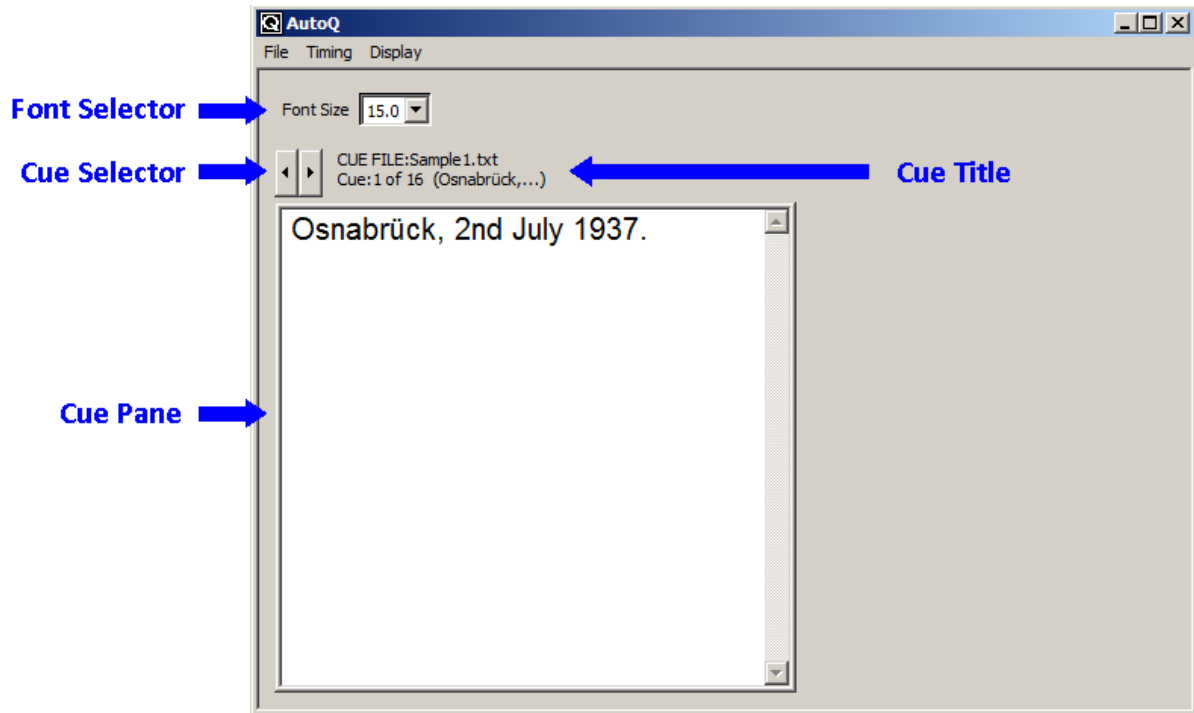
The first step is to load a Cue file containing the text which will be displayed on the AutoQ display. Click on the AutoQ “**File/Cue file**” menu and then click on “**Open Cue file**”...



A file selector dialog appears - open your Cue file (in this case “Sample1.txt”)...



When you have done this, the appearance of AutoQ changes...

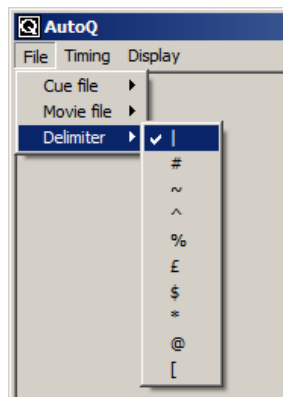


The first cue appears in the **Cue Pane** (in this case “Osnabrück, 2nd July 1937.”) and some information is displayed in the **Cue Title**, which gives the name of the Cue file (in this case “Sample1.txt”). It also says that this is the first of 16 cues in the file and that this cue starts with “Osnabrück,”.

You can run through the cues, either by clicking on the left and right arrows of the **Cue Selector**, or by using the keyboard cursor left/right/up/down buttons.

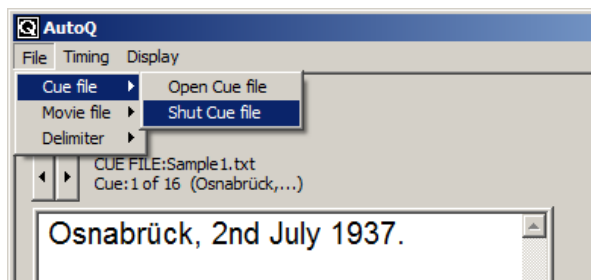
Cue file delimiters

You must ensure that the correct delimiter is selected to match your Cue file. This can be done from the “**File/Delimiter**” menu...



Shutting a Cue file

You can shut a Cue file from the “**File/Cue file/Shut Cue file**” menu item...



Simple AutoQ operation

This then gives the simplest form of AutoQ operation; a simple Cue file containing a number of cues, which can be stepped through using the **Cue Selector** arrows or the keyboard cursor left/right/up/down keys.

Cue file timing information

It is not compulsory or even necessary to include timing information in your Cue file; you can advance cues manually using the **Cue Selector** arrows or the cursor up/down/left/right keys, but including timing information gives you the ability to play through the whole sequence automatically. Each cue in the Cue file may have timing information...

```
|S1:23.4
On this mild Summer's day, a Friday, five people take their leave of
Osnabrück.
```

In this case, the timing information for this cue, **S1:23.4**, indicates that the cue should start after 1 minute 23.4 seconds. There must be no spaces in the timing information. Timing information may be of two types...

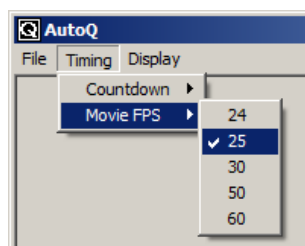
S1:23.4	An 's' indicates the Start time of the cue
D1:23.4	A 'd' indicates the Duration of the cue

AutoQ assumes each cue starts directly after the previous one has finished, so you can specify the whole timing sequence by just specifying either of these values for every cue in your Cue file; AutoQ will calculate the Durations from successive “Start” values and vice-versa, and will assume the whole sequence starts with a Start time of zero (if the initial Start time is not specified).

The time period itself may be specified in various ways...

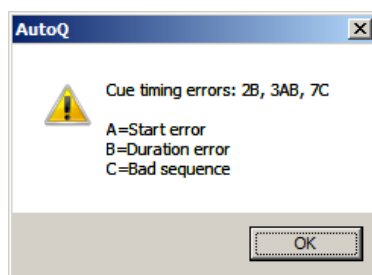
6	6 seconds
4.5	4.5 seconds
13F12	13 seconds and 12 frames
72.4	72.4 seconds (= 1 minute 12.4 seconds)
1:12.4	1 minute 12.4 seconds (= 72.4 seconds)
2:34:4F7	S2 hours, 34 minutes, 4 seconds and 7 frames

Setting timing information by frames may be appropriate if you are using a movie editing program to set the timings. If you use this timing method in your Cue file you should inform AutoQ what the frame rate of the movie is, so that frames can be converted to fractions of a second. You can do this using the AutoQ “**Timing/Movie FPS**” menu...



Cue file timing errors

There may be timing errors in your Cue file. If there are, you will see a message like this after you load the Cue file:-

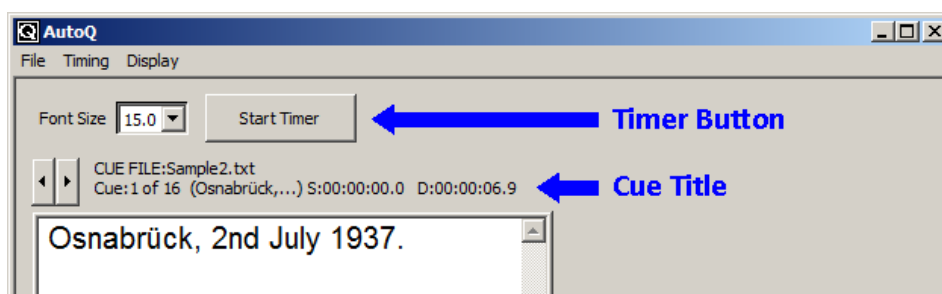


This message states that there is error type “B” in cue number 2, error types “A” and “B” in cue number 3 and error type “C” in cue number 7. The meaning of the errors is as follows:-

- A The Start time is either missing or outside the range of 0 to 864,00 seconds (= 1 day).
- B The Duration is either missing or outside the range of 0 to 864,00 seconds.
- C There is an inconsistency in the sequence of Start times and Durations. For example, if a Cue has a Start time of 0 with Duration 1 second but the next Cue has a start time of 17 seconds.

Playing a timed Cue file

If you load a Cue file which contains timing information the appearance of AutoQ changes...

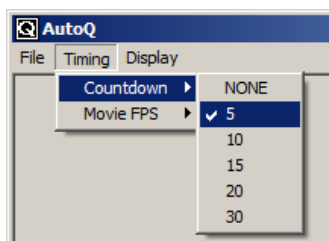


A **Timer Button** appears and the **Cue Title** gives the Start time and Duration of the current cue (in this case S:00:00:00.00 D:00:00:06.9 means Start 0 seconds, Duration 6.9 seconds).

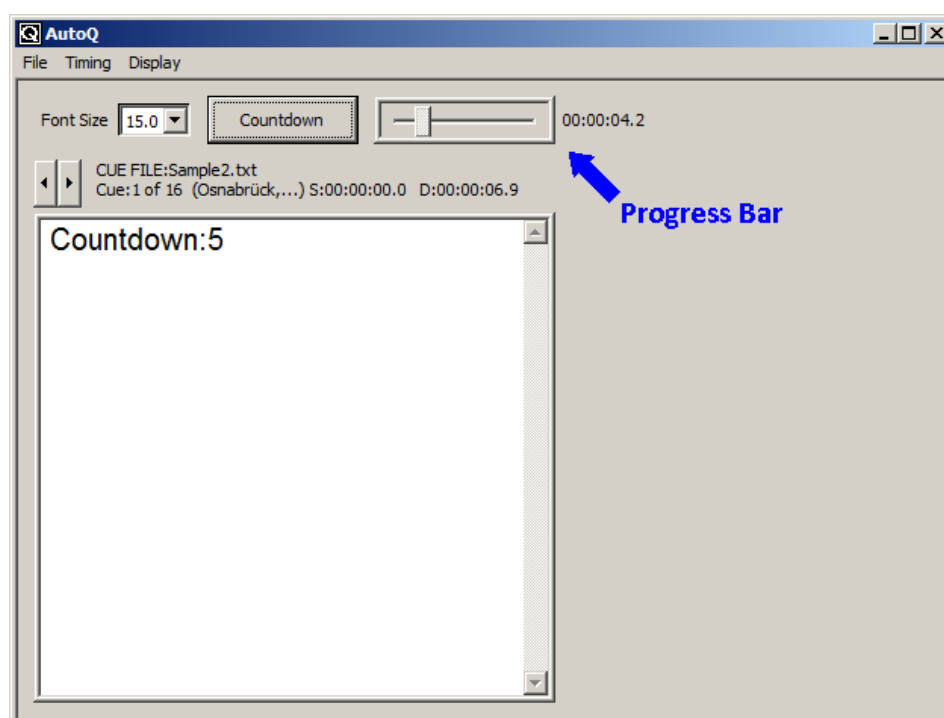
The **Timer Button** will only appear for a cue if the Duration has been correctly defined for that cue, otherwise it will not appear. Clicking on the **Timer Button** initiates a timed playing of the cues, according to the Start times and Durations defined in the Cue file. It may be convenient to display a short countdown before the first cue is displayed (for instance so that recording equipment can be started beforehand). You may choose from the following countdown periods (in seconds)...

None 5 10 15 20 30

These can be selected using the AutoQ “**Timing/Countdown**” menu item...

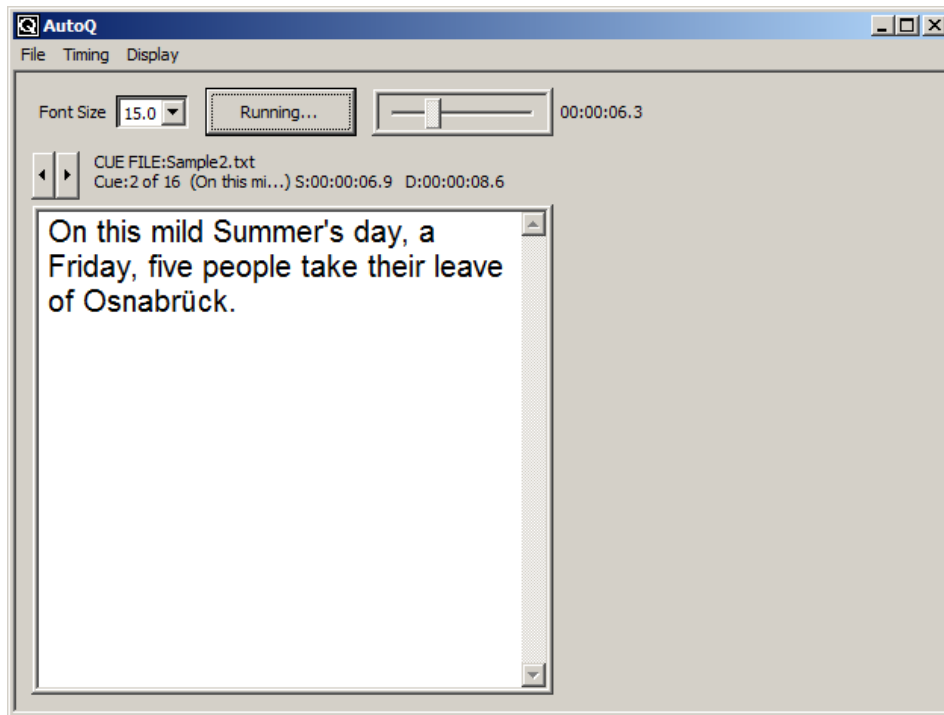


The initial state of the **Timer Button** is labelled “Start Timer”. If you click on the **Timer Button** button and the countdown is set to a value other than “NONE”, a full second countdown is displayed in the **Cue Pane**, the caption in the **Timer Button** changes to “Countdown” and a **Progress Bar** records the progress of the countdown, with the time remaining indicated just to the right of the **Progress Bar** (in this case there is 4.2 seconds remaining of the countdown)...



The countdown counts down to zero and then the cues are displayed in a timed sequence.

The **Timer Button** changes to “Running” and the **Progress Bar** tracks the time for the cue display with the remaining time in seconds to its right (here 6.3 seconds)...



After each cue has been displayed the next one is shown, until the last cue has been displayed, or when a cue is reached for which the Duration has not been defined.

You may also stop either the countdown or the sequential cue display manually by clicking the **Timer Button**, pressing the keyboard "Esc" key, or by advancing to the next cue with the **Cue Selector** arrows or the up/down/left/right cursor arrows on the keyboard.

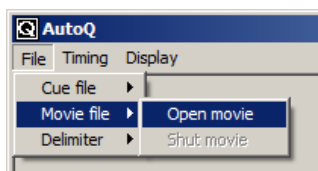
Section 2

Movie files

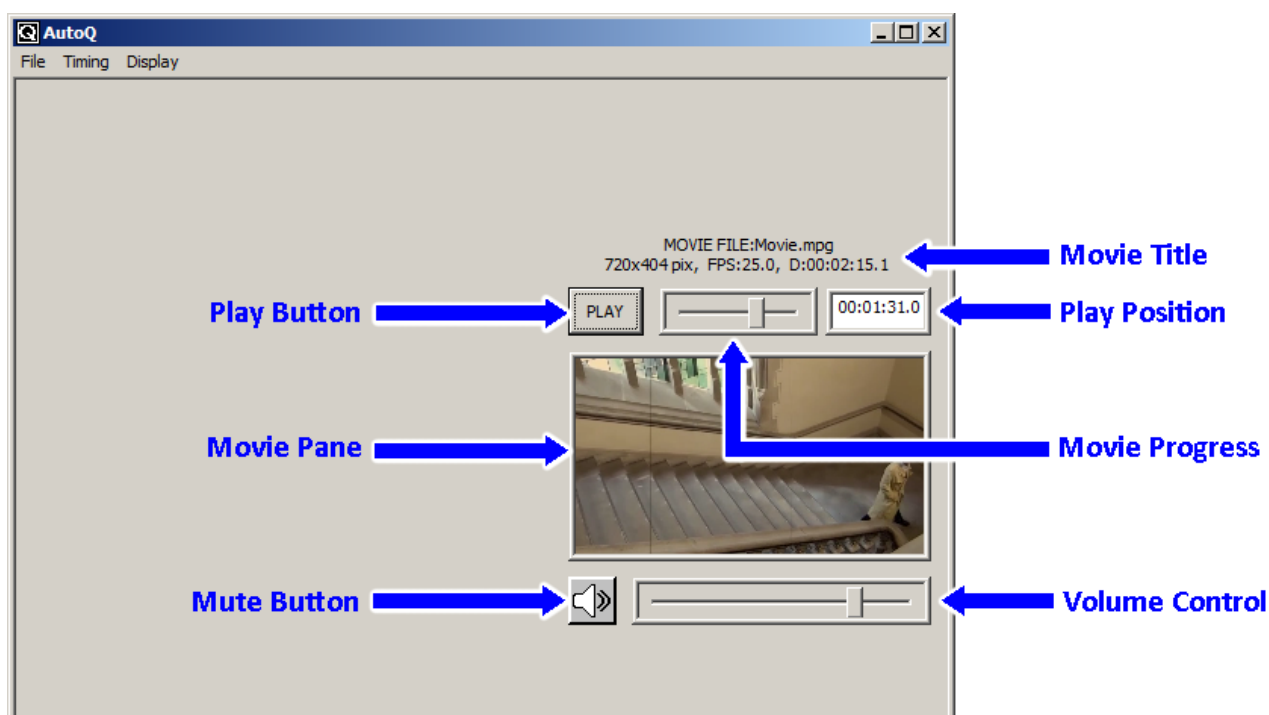
Opening a movie file

AutoQ will play .mp, .avi and .wmv movie files without any other additional preparation, but if you need to play .mp4 files an additional .mp4 decoder is required.

To open a movie, use the “File/Movie/Open movie” menu item...



A file selector dialog appears, as for selecting the Cue file, but this time it allows you to open your movie file. When you have done so, the movie appears in the right of the display...



The movie itself appears in the **Movie Pane** and the **Movie Title** at the very top gives information about the currently loaded movie; the file name (in this case “Movie.mpg”), the dimensions of the movie in pixels (in this case 720x404), the frame rate of the movie (here 25.0 fps, or 25 frames per second) and the duration of the movie (in this case 2 minutes 15.1 seconds).

Play controls appear directly above the **Movie Pane**. The **Play Button** starts or pauses the movie and the **Movie Progress** bar slides across from left to right as the movie plays. The **Play Position** shows the current movie position in HH:MM:SS format (in this case 1 minute, 31 seconds).

Audio controls are located below the **Movie Pane**. There is a **Volume Control**, which allows you to adjust the volume on a sliding scale from the extreme left position (silent) to the extreme right position (maximum volume). There is also a **Mute Button** which can be used to cut the sound completely, independently of the **Volume Control** level.

Playing a movie file

The **Play Button** is displayed if there is no accompanying cue in a text file which has timing information. If you have a text file and the current cue has timing information, movie play and position can only be controlled by the cue controls and in this case the **Play Button** disappears and the **Movie Progress** bar and the **Play Position** are indicators only; they are disabled and greyed out so they cannot be changed by the user. (see Section 3 “Integrated movie and cues”).

The **Volume Control** and **Mute Button** can be used at any time to set the audio level. Clicking the **Mute Button** toggles between two states...



Sound is audible

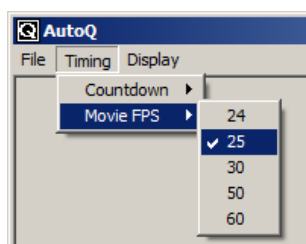


Sound is muted

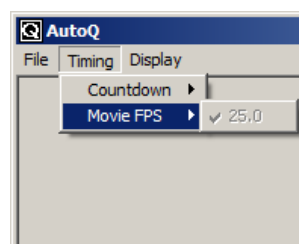
Clicking the **Play Button** also toggles between two states; “PLAY” and “PAUSE” and this is used to control movie playback. While the movie is playing, the **Movie Progress** bar and the **Play Position** serve as indicators only; they indicate the current play position but they are disabled and cannot be changed by the user. When the movie is paused however, you can use either of these controls to jump to a desired play position; you can either drag the **Movie Progress** bar across to the desired position or click to jump to the place you want. For a more accurate control, type a time value into the **Play Position** and then hit the return key. You can specify the time as HH:MM:SS or a time in seconds.

Movie frame rate

If a movie has been loaded, AutoQ knows the correct frame rate for the movie, and the AutoQ “**Timing/Movie FPS**” value is fixed at this value and cannot be changed by the user...



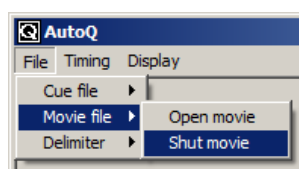
No movie loaded – multiple FPS values can be selected.



Movie loaded – FPS is fixed at the movie frame rate.

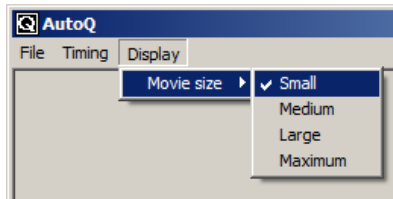
Shutting a Cue file

You can shut a Cue file from the “**File/Cue file/Shut Cue file**” menu item...



Movie pane size

You can select from a range of sizes for the **Movie Pane** from the “Display/Movie size” menu item...



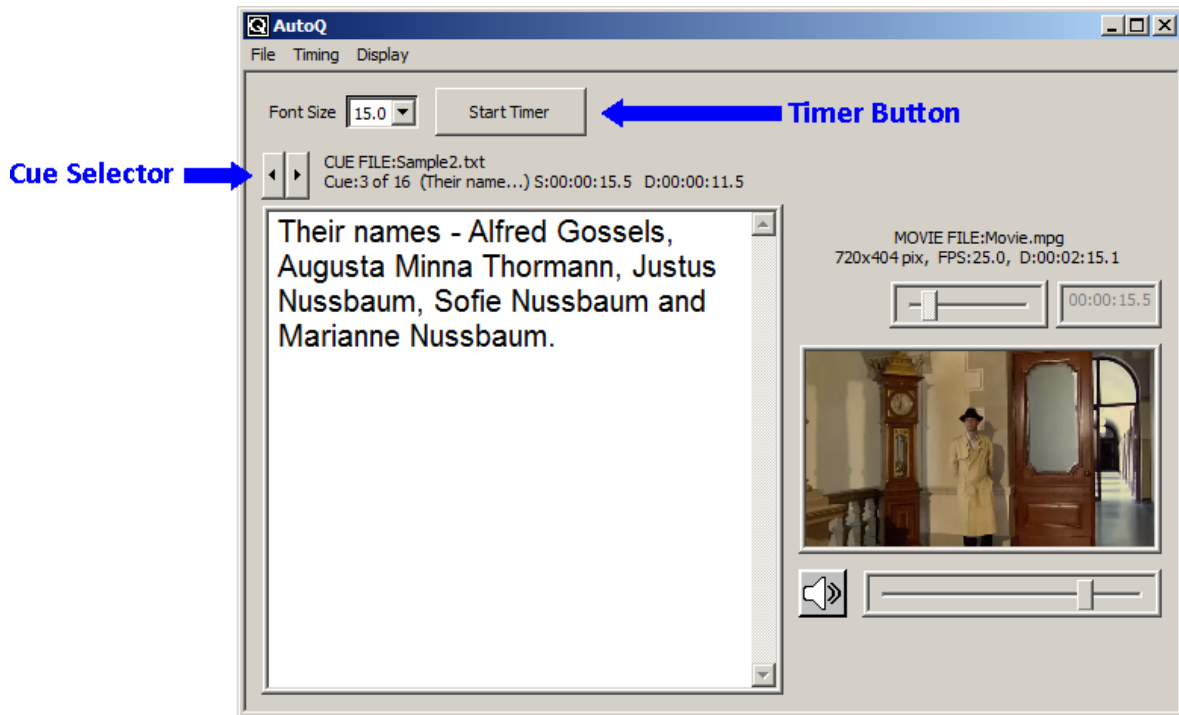
Choose the size which you find most convenient.

Section 3

Integrated movie and cues

Synchronised movie and cues

This is the most sophisticated mode of AutoQ operation; a Cue file containing timing information is synchronised with a movie...



Once the Cue file has been set up with the correct timings you use the **Cue Selector** to step through each cue and the **Movie Pane** will display the still from the movie at the Start point of the cue. And if you press the **Timer Button**, the movie will play from that point and the text cues will appear in the designated sequence.

Appendix

Sample text file

Copy and paste the section below into a plain text file with a ".txt" file extension...

|S0

Osnabrück, 2nd July 1937.

|S6F23

On this mild Summer's day, a Friday, five people take their leave of Osnabrück.

|S15F13

Their names - Alfred Gossels, Augusta Minna Thormann, Justus Nussbaum, Sofie Nussbaum and Marianne Nussbaum.

|S27F0

Their destination: Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands.

|S32F6

Four of these people have to leave Osnabrück because they're Jews and no longer feel safe in their city.

|S40F09

The fifth person, Protestant Augusta Minna Thormann, is leaving her home town for the sake of her friend Alfred Gossels.

|S51F20

Relationships between Jews and Arians have been forbidden by law since 1935.

|S59F13

Alfred Gossels and Justus Nussbaum run a scrap car recycling business in their city of birth.

|S1:07F19

Two of their employees, Wilhelm Hellmeister and Friedrich Niehüser, are helping with the emigration.

|S1:16F17

Justus Nussbaum is the first to emigrate to Amsterdam, together with his wife Sofie and their two year old daughter Marianne.

|S1:26F03

A few days later Alfred will be brought to safety in Holland in a car driven by Wilhelm and Friedrich.

|S1:32F20

Perhaps Minna also sits in the car. In any case for all concerned it's a flight that's been well-planned and two long years in preparation.

|S1:42

No commentary

|S1:59F02

This documentary hopes to ensure that their flight will not be allowed to fade into obscurity.

|S2:08

No commentary

|S2:14F21

End of trailer

Diagnostics (technical notes)

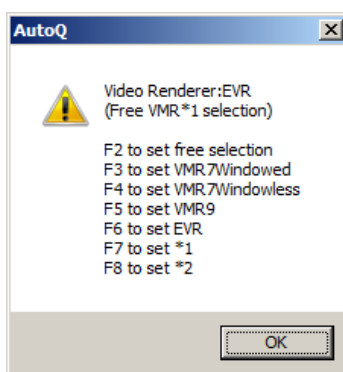
AutoQ uses Windows' DirectShow framework to play movies. A number of video renderers are available and DirectShow tries to load a video using the following types in turn...

- 1) EVR
- 2) VMR 9
- 3) VMR 7 (Windowless)
- 4) VMR 7 (Windowed)

The two versions of the VMR renderer appear to have a bug whereby they will only load properly the second time they are loaded, so AutoQ allows either single (*1) or double (*2) loading of the first movie.

It has been noted that there are performance issues with some of these renderers and so diagnostic tools are available to view the currently loaded renderer or to force a particular renderer to be used the next time a movie is loaded. This may be useful if a particular movie file is causing problems with AutoQ; in that case a different renderer may be able to display the movie. For example, it has been noted that the VMR 9 renderer may not display .avi movie files properly.

To reveal which renderer is currently loaded, press F1 + Ctl + Shift...



The example shows that the EVR renderer has been loaded for the current movie. The current loading policy is shown below in parentheses "Free VMR*1 selection". This means that when the next movie is loaded, it will be single-loaded and all four renderers will be tried (i.e. EVR, VMR 9 and both VMR 7 renderers).

For diagnostic purposes, you can specify a different loading policy for the next movie by holding down the Ctl and Shift keys and then pressing the following function keys...

- F2 – allows a free renderer selection; EVR, VMR 9 and both VMR 7 renderers
- F3 – VMR 7 Windowed mode will be used
- F4 – VMR 7 Windowless mode will be used
- F5 – VMR 9 will be used
- F6 – EVR will be used
- F7 – sets *1 (single-loading of the next file)
- F8 – sets *2 (double loading of the next file)