

General Information

Plex

General Information about the Nasmans Plex-server

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Introduction

Welcome to the Nasmans Plex-server.

This started out as a personal project, but got out of hand pretty quickly. About a year ago, I bought an old NAS because I wanted to improve my backup routine and learn about network attached storage. Because I didn't really trust an old NAS with a fatal CPU-bug, nor the old drives it came with, I decided to set up a Plex-server. Well, fast-forward a year and the amount of media has skyrocketed, my backup-routines are still as bad as ever though. Shocker.

For those who don't know, Plex is a front end for personally hosted media. It pretty much means I have a load of files spinning in a box somewhere, which you can access through Plex. Pretty much a personal Netflix, but without the subscription or the shockingly badly curated content.

This section will give some general information about Plex and some of its best practices.

Players and Platforms

The beautiful thing about Plex is that the developers take pretty much any platform seriously. This means you'll be able to play Plex-content on about every device imaginable. How well it works depends, but there's a pretty good chance a(n official) client is already available.

I'll describe some of the most-used platforms and recommended clients and players here.

Platforms:

This section is about platforms people will probably already have available. They're just recommendations/best practices I discovered through my own experiences. These are not necessarily my most recommended platforms/players, they're just the most practical without any investment.

Microsoft Windows

Probably the first choice for most people after getting into the Plex-server, although not the best choice in my opinion. I think most people try Windows first because they never heard of Plex and don't know about its great availability.

Windows has two options for playing Plex content: the browser and a dedicated app. If you're set on using Windows, I'd always recommend the dedicated app. The app is way better as it supports way more codecs ("filetypes" for video files) and just plain feels better to use. The dedicated app can be found [here](#) or through the [Microsoft Store](#). Make sure you download Plex for Windows, not Plex Media Server (PMS), unless you want to set up your own mediaserver.

Android/iOS

I'm talking about all mobile devices running Android or iOS (yeah, I know Apple makes a difference between iOS and iPadOS, but let's be honest, it's all the same). There is one big limitation to the mobile Plex apps: they're "not free".

Plex has always been, and will always be free for the "big screen" (TV's, mediaplayers, PC etc.). However, for people who do not subscribe to Plex Pass or have a lifetime Plex Pass they do limit the functionality of the mobile app (stop playback of content after one minute). I believe they do this to cover the cost for publishing apps in the Google Play/App Store. There's three ways of solving this: pay a one-time-fee of about €7, subscribe to/buy Plex Pass (€5 monthly/€40 yearly/€120 lifetime) or just use the mobile app to cast content to another (big screen) device. I'd personally recommend just paying the one-time-fee or buying a lifetime Plex Pass. To me it's more than worth it and it makes sure the developers get paid and have reason to continue this great project.

The Android-app is available [here](#) and the iOS-app is available [here](#).

Smart TV

Most people own a TV with some smart capabilities nowadays. Most Smart TV manufacturers use their own OS (e.g. LG with WebOS, Samsung with Tizen etc.) with their own respective app store. I can't very well describe the ins and outs of every platform as I can't reasonably own/test all of them.

I have verified the Plex-app to be available for LG and Samsung TVs. The respective apps work decently, albeit a little slower/less stable than dedicated media players. TVs tend to have fewer resources/fewer development time spent on them as they have fewer users as well. Note that Smart TV apps may stop functioning after about five years (TV age), as they are no longer supported/in development.

If you verified any other Smart TV platform to be working, please leave a comment down below.

Players:

This section is about players (hardware) you might not have available, but which I would recommend if you consider making an investment. Note that these players are not just useful for Plex but for a whole range of types of media consumption.

Chromecast with Google TV/Google Streamer

Probably the most attainable/best value option at the moment, well, the Chromecast with Google TV (CCWGTV) is. These players are actually "three sides of the same coin". Each with their own pros and cons. First, I'll list the options (Name/ Max. Resolution / Year of Release / Avg. Price):

- Chromecast with Google TV (HD) / FHD / 2022 / €30-50
- Chromecast with Google TV (4K) / UHD / 2020 / €60-80
- Google TV Streamer / UHD / 2024 / ~€120

So these are the "currently available" media players made by Google. I put "currently available" in quotes, as Google has started to phase out both versions of the CCWGTV, which makes them a little harder to procure. I'd recommend the CCWGTV (both versions) over the Google TV Streamer (GTVS). The GTVS is pretty much a repackaged version of the CCWGTV with a little more storage and a few more options. In any case, it's not worth the premium they ask for it compared to the CCWGTV. If the CCWGTV is no longer being sold, second hand is a great option, otherwise, look at an NVIDIA SHIELD TV Pro.

Both CCWGTV flavors have their own pros and cons. I'll quickly go through them. The biggest advantages of the HD is that it supports the AV1 and OPUS codecs. These are very modern video/audio codecs, which make a big difference in the storage size of content. Currently, almost no content on the Nasmans server (I think one anime and ~5 movies) is stored using these codecs, so you won't miss much. However, things may change in the future. The CCWGTV 4K has a slightly better processor (on paper) and slightly more RAM (2GB vs 1.5GB), it does not support AV1 and

OPUS though. Just to be clear: if a codec is not supported by the hardware, you WILL NOT be able to play the respective content using that hardware.

Protip: if you got a CCWGTV or GTVS, install a custom launcher. Google crams an endless amount of ads into their own launcher, so in my opinion it's not a great experience. I'd recommend installing Projectivy Launcher.

NVIDIA SHIELD TV Pro

It's old (2019) and it's expensive, but the NVIDIA SHIELDTV Pro (NSTVP) remains the uncontested king of the media players. I don't currently own a SHIELD-device, however the consensus amongst all of the Plex-users worldwide is that this is the best option by far. The hardware supports almost everything (sadly, except AV1), has physical ports to expand storage or use wired networking and is just an allround polished experience. The current price lies around €200-230. Second hand it's around €100-150.

Note that this device was released in 2019. Five years is a LONG time for the lifecycle of a product like this. Now that Google has released their new media player, it's quite possible NVIDIA might release a new device within the foreseeable future to compete with them. It may be worth holding off buying the 2019 SHIELD.

Game Console

Most previous- (8th) and current-generation (9th) video game consoles have a native Plex-app available. Check their respective stores to see whether a client is available.

Performance on consoles is pretty good (Xbox One S and PlayStation 4 have been tested), although codec support (video as well as audio) may vary.

Apple TV

Personally, I never tested Plex on an Apple TV and the way they list their codec support on product pages doesn't make much sense to me. I've heard good stories though. Many people seem to be able to play pretty much any content with a lot of (older) Apple TVs.

Microsoft Windows HTPC

Having a dedicated HTPC (Home Theater PC) may be a good option for you. Most Windows PCs support pretty much any codec, or are powerful enough to decode through software. You may want to download the specific HTPC Plex-client [here](#).

Chromecast V2/V3

The trusty old Chromecasts. You may wonder what version of Chromecast you own. If it looks like a flash drive, it's a V1. It's reached EoL, you can just as well throw it out (can't find any custom firmware/uses). If it's circular with a small HDMI-cable attached and a glossy front with a large

Chrome logo, it's a V2. If it's circular with a small HDMI-cable attached and a matte front with a small G-logo, it's a V3.

Both the V2 and V3 are not ideal for use with Plex. Plex-Cast isn't that great, and the amount of supported codecs is fairly limited. It also isn't very clear whether a codec is unsupported or it is just buffering. Also, Plex's app clients on newer Chromecasts have plain better support.

Due to the codecs used by most media on the Nasmans server, I would not recommend the Chromecast V2/V3

Playback Issues

You might incidentally suffer some playback issues using Plex. This page will contain the most frequent causes and solutions.

Error - Unable to play media

If you're getting this very vaguely worded error while using the mobile app on mobile data, you probably have the quality limitation feature turned on. Plex turns this feature on by default, for some reason. Go to Settings > Quality > Limit mobile data > turn the toggle off. Note that Plex may use a lot data because transcoding is (currently) not allowed on the server.

If you're getting this error in any other situation, your device probably doesn't support the media codec. You can try playing it on a different device. If you click the menu next to the media item, you can click "More info" or "Get Info" to check what the codecs are, and look up whether your devices support them.

This server is not powerful enough to convert video/Not enough CPU for conversion of this item

This error occurs because of the hardware the Nasmans server is being run on. For me to be able to afford it, it has to be a simple, cost-effective setup. This means software- or hardware-transcoding currently is not an option. You can solve this problem by switching the media back to the highest/original quality in the player. Incidentally this may not work, you can solve this by opening the menu and selecting "Play from start" or toggling "Mark as watched". Click [here](#) for more information about this problem.

The audio to my video is in the wrong language

All content on the Nasmans server contains the original audio track. If you're hearing a wrong language, you should probably update your preferences [here](#)! Alternatively, you can open the playback options in the player and select a different audio track.

The subtitles in <language> to <media> are missing/out of sync/incomplete

Well, tough luck. I have an automated system running to grab all the available subtitles for all the content automatically. I'm not checking this system regularly, nor am I updating the subtitles manually. If it fails to find anything, you're on your own, sorry. It's impossible for me to manually keep up with this. Plex contains a feature for on-demand subtitle search, you may try this, click [here](#) for more information. If this doesn't work, subtitles just aren't available for this content.

For a quick reference guide you may refer to [Plxplainers](#).

Client Configuration

This page contains some information about (recommended) configuration of Plex-clients. Some of this information might be vital for the content to be played back correctly.

Account Configuration

The first thing you should do after creating your Plex-account is checking your account settings.

Click [here](#) to go to the settings page. Please turn on two-factor authentication and if you logged in using a service, set a password to make sure you don't lose your account. Set every option under the header "Settings" according to your preferences and save your changes.

Privacy Configuration

It's always a good idea to check your privacy settings, so you don't spread any sensitive information. Click [here](#) to go to the settings page.

Client Configuration

Here I'll give a short explanation and some recommendations about a basic client setup. I've used the Android app for the most comprehensive overview. I'll go through the settings section by section

Account

Configure according to preferences, just be aware of your privacy. Most important function on this page: "Sync Your Watch State and Ratings". My advice: turn on as soon as you can. This makes sure your progress/ratings carryover between clients/sessions.

Plex Home

No necessary modifications.

Manage Library Access

No necessary modifications. Only useful for server owners

Experience

You may turn "Sign in automatically" on, but this only really matters if you have multiple users configured in the client. You can set a friendly name for the client, to verify your trusted devices. I'd recommend leaving the "Watched Indicators" on Movies & TV Shows. Theme Music determines whether Plex plays theme music while scrolling through a shows menu. I recommend turning on

"Remember Selected Tab". Plex has the nasty habit of opening the recommended page when selecting a library. I recommend switching to the library page. Toggling on this feature makes sure it opens the library page by default.

Notifications

I'd just recommend leaving the "Watch Together" notifications on. This is a great feature, allowing you to watch content synchronized with a friend. Notification permissions are required on mobile to show the player controls in the notification area while casting or playing music.

Downloads

Configure according to preference. Leave quality settings on Original.

Player Experience

Configure according to preference. I recommend leaving "Cinema Extras" set to "Play Pre-roll Only". I may use pre-rolls to communicate scheduled downtime or maintenance.

Quality

Turn off "Automatically adjust quality", this WILL NOT work, transcoding is not allowed. Turn "Limit mobile data" off. Set "Remote streaming quality" to maximum/original. Turn off "Use low quality on mobile".

Sharing

Configure according to preference

Streaming Services

You may choose to connect any of your other streaming services. This does not affect any of the functionality of the Nasmans server.

Advanced

Configure according to preference. Contains some useful features for subtitles or for using external players.

Privacy

You can disable sharing crash reports and verify other privacy options.

Help & Support

Links to various help sources

Most of these configuration options are universal between different clients. They may however be in a different section. Click [here](#) for some more information on the web settings. Someone made complete guides on configuring different clients [here](#). I have not checked them all, settings listed as required above have hierarchy than these guides.

For a quick reference guide you may refer to [Plxplainers](#).

Account Configuration

This page contains some information about (recommended) configuration of Plex-accounts. Some of this information might be vital for the content to be played back correctly

Account Configuration

The first thing you should do after creating your Plex-account is checking your account settings.

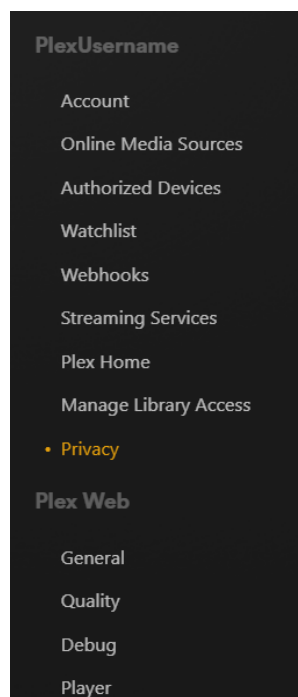
Click [here](#) to go to the settings page. Please turn on two-factor authentication and if you logged in using a service, set a password to make sure you don't lose your account. Check the setting **Account Visibility & Activity Sharing** and consider which data you want to make public.

Privacy Configuration

It's always a good idea to check your privacy settings, so you don't spread any sensitive information. Click [here](#) to go to the settings page. Set according to your liking.

Preferences

I have listed the two most important pages and their most important settings to check above, however, Plex offers a whole lot more in terms of personalization. If you look in the top left of the sidebar, you'll see a set of configuration pages linked there.



It is recommended you at least check these pages. In this paragraph I'll explain some of the functionalities.

Account

This is probably the most important of all settings pages. Almost every setting that directly impacts your viewing/interaction experience is on this page. The **Language** setting determines the language the webpage and apps are displayed in. The **Audio & Subtitle Settings** allow you to set a default concerning subtitles: turned on or off, language and type. It's important to know *SDH* means "*Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing*", and *Forced Subtitles* are subtitles that only show when the content contains pieces of foreign languages. **Watched Indicators for Personal Media** is a setting that determines whether Plex will remember what movies/episodes you have yet watched. The **Sync my Watch State and Ratings** is important in my opinion, it remembers what/how much of a piece of content you have watched exactly, and allows you to pick up where you left off on any device/app. **Linked Accounts** is a setting that allows you to link other accounts, to make signing into Plex easier. I think the rest of the settings are pretty self-explanatory/unnecessary.

Online Media Sources

These settings are related to Plex's own content (**Live TV, Movies & Shows**) and the searchability of media. Note that settings related to Managed Accounts are probably not that useful to you, as long as you're not a server owner. I personally turn off all of Plex's own media, as they're supported by ads, and the torrential amount of ads in daily life were kind of the point for me of moving to Plex. I personally leave **Discover Source** enabled, as it let's me search for content that is not (yet) available on the server. If you are subscribed to any other streaming service, you can leave **Display Availabilities from other Streaming Services on Detail Pages** enabled, this allows you to link to other apps if the content is available on one of your streaming services but on on Plex. **Display Activity from my Friends on Detail Pages** is just a bit of fun. It's Plex's attempt of making itself into kind of a social platform. You can see what others (your friends) have watched/watchlisted and see what is popular within your community.

Authorized Devices

This is a page where you can see all the devices that have ever logged in using your account. You probably don't need this page, unless you suspect someone else is using your account. You can remove the access from the (unknown) device by just deleting it from this page. Don't forget to change your password too, as your account is still compromised.

Watchlist

Has the possibility to create RSS Feeds from your/your friends' watchlists. Only available when using Plex Pass. Don't really know what the use of this feature is.

Webhooks

Functionality for automation. Integrate Plex into your smarthome... if you wish? They sketch the example of dimming the lights when starting a movie. Probably only useful for insane people, like ThatBeardGuy. (Come to think of it, this might solve your Harmony-problem, mate!)

Streaming Services

As touched upon above, this page allows you to link all the other streaming services you may be subscribed to. Kind of makes Plex into a central hub for all your streaming needs.

Plex Home

I'll leave this explanation to the Plex-Gods. Click [here](#).

Manage Library Access

Not sure if this is a default tab for everyone. May only be available if you configured a **PMS**-instance. Gives server-owners the ability to allow people to access their servers.

Plex Web

The next settings are all listed underneath the **Plex Web** header. This means these settings are directly related to your experience when using the Plex web-app (<https://app.plex.tv>). These settings are nearly identical to client configuration. For this information, please refer to the [Client Configuration](#) page.

For a quick reference guide you may refer to [Plxplainers](#).