


Nullsoft

By Contributors to Wikimedia projects

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Nullsoft

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| Company type | Private |
| Industry | Computer software |
| Founded | 1997 |
| Defunct | 2014 |
| Successor | Radionomy . |
| Headquarters | Sedona, Arizona |
| Key people | Justin Frankel Tom Pepper |
| Products | Winamp , SHOUTcast , and others |
| Owner | Radionomy Group |

Nullsoft, Inc. was an American software house founded in [Sedona, Arizona](#) in 1997 by programmer [Justin Frankel](#). Its products included the [Winamp media player](#) and the [SHOUTcast MP3 streaming media](#) server.

In 1997, [Justin Frankel](#), a programmer from [Sedona, Arizona](#), founded Nullsoft, Inc in his home town. The company's name is a [parody](#) of [Microsoft](#).^[1] *Mike the Llama* is the company's [mascot](#).^[a] The company launched the media player [Winamp](#) that year, developed by Frankel and Dmitry Boldyrev. It was the second [real-time](#) MP3 player for Windows, following [WinPlay3](#).^[2]

Nullsoft, along with [Spinner.com](#), was sold to [America Online](#) (AOL) on June 1, 1999, for around \$400 million. It became an AOL [subsidiary](#), subsequently becoming a division of AOL Music. Its headquarters were moved to [San Francisco, California](#).^{[3][4]}

According to [Bonnie Burton](#), then editor of the website Winamp.com, 2001 was a period of heightened tension between the Nullsoft staff and upper management, because of Frankel's uncompromising views about file-sharing. He had developed [Gnutella](#) in 2000 and released it using company infrastructure.^{[5][6]} Ars Technica also noted that AOL failed to effectively monetize or find a larger audience for Winamp.^[7] Nullsoft's San Francisco offices were closed in December 2003, with a near-concurrent departure of Frankel and the original Winamp development team.^{[1][3]} In 2013, some AOL Music sites were shut down and others sold to [Townsquare Media](#).^{[8][9][10]}

In November 2013, an unofficial report surfaced that [Microsoft](#) was in talks with AOL to acquire Nullsoft.^[11] On January 14, 2014, it was officially announced that Belgian online radio aggregator [Radionomy](#) had bought Winamp and Shoutcast, formerly owned by Nullsoft. No financial details were publicly announced.^{[12][13]}

Winamp is a media player released by Nullsoft in April 1997. By 1999, it was downloaded by 15 million people.^[1] The company released several new versions of the Winamp player and grew its monthly unique subscriber base to 60 million users by late 2004.^[3] Winamp was discontinued by Nullsoft around 2013.^[14] New versions of Winamp, which started releasing in 2023, are by a different developer named Llama Group.^[15]

SHOUTcast (currently Shoutcast) is an [MP3 streaming media](#) server.

Nullsoft Scriptable Install System

[\[edit\]](#)

In later years, their open source installer system, the Nullsoft Scriptable Install System (NSIS) became an alternative to commercial products like [InstallShield](#), [InnoSetup](#), InstallSimple, InstallAware and Advanced Installer.^[16] In January 2006, NSIS was named *Project of the Month* by [SourceForge](#).^[17]

Nullsoft's developments after acquisition included the Nullsoft Streaming Video (NSV) format, which was intended to stream media that used any [audio](#) or [video codec](#). In 2002, the press reported a technology called [Ultravox](#) being developed by Nullsoft.^[18] The company also created the [peer-to-peer](#) networks [Gnutella](#) and [WASTE](#).^[1] Although AOL tried to limit the distribution of Gnutella and WASTE, the Ultravox technology was reportedly used for some AOL radio services in 2003.^[19] A service called Nullsoft Television was announced in 2003 using NSV.^[20]

- ¹ ↑ this is frequently referred to in promotional material (especially for Winamp) citing [llamas](#). Frankel introduced the llama in Winamp's startup sound clip, inspired by the lyrics of [Wesley Willis](#): "Winamp, it really whips the llama's ass!"^[1]
- ¹ ^ [Jump up to: *a b c d e*](#) Kushner, David (January 13, 2004). *"The World's Most Dangerous Geek"*. *Rolling Stone*. Archived from [the original](#) on March 21, 2007. Retrieved June 7, 2013.
- ² ↑ ["Tales in Tech History: Winamp"](#). August 25, 2017.

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- [Winamp](#)