Rebuilding a Video Server and/or Player (or player/server combo)

WARNING

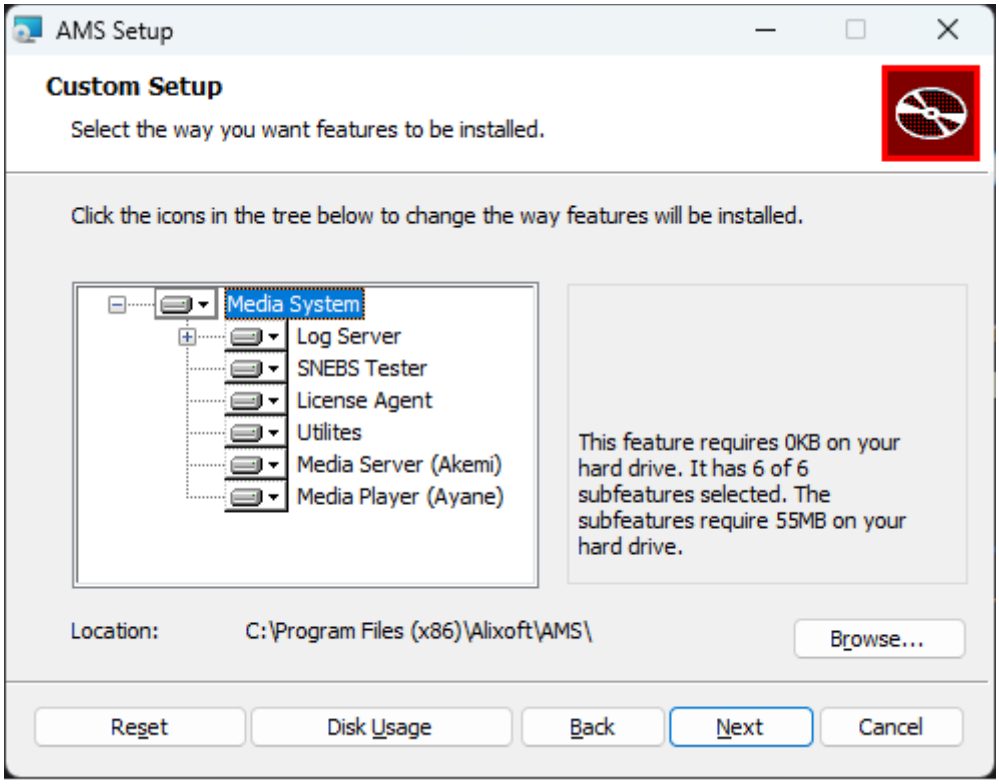
This is a preliminary document and a work in progress… some of the stuff here may be just plane wrong. Please do NOT follow it without question. Instead, read through and ask questions and maybe we can refine it to a useable point. I'll also reach out to others for a bit of help on this if I can get it. Sorry about that!

This is intended to help someone create a new video server, player or combo unit to replace one that is failing (or has failed). This will cover installing and configuring various components. Each step will indicate if it's for building a Player, Server or Combo.

Software

You'll need the AMS.msi installer software.
You'll also need a number of 3rd party software which we'll talk about later.
Both of these things should be available from https://fusionrd.com/movie-server-resources/

The AMS.msi installer can install all components for all three… the issue is what to select during installation. In the installer there's a screen that looks like this:



Install the components as follows depending on what you're building...

Component	Server	Player	Combo
Log Server	install	install	install
SNEBS Tester	install	install	install
License Agent	install	install	install
Utilities	install	install	install
Media Server (Akemi)	install	omit	install
Media Player (Aioni)	omit	install	install

The various components use TCP/UDP and UDP/Multicast to communicate and need to be installed and run as an administrator on the system so they can do things like create network shares and SMB configurations, etc. for data sharing between video system components. Make sure to check the Windows Firewall and verify all of the components have been allowed full network access.

The Log Server, License Agent and Media Server run as system services. You should be able to find them in the system's service control panel after installation. They are installed in C:\Program Files (x86)\Alixoft\.

Component	EXE Name	Service Name	TCP Ports	Config Port
Log Server	LogServer_WinSvc	Log Server (Alixoft)		
License Agent	IWS_LicenseAgent_WinSvc	AMS IWS License Agent	5110-5111	5111
Video Server	Akemi_Server_WinSvc	AMS Media Server	5150-5151	5151

Both the License Agent and Video Server are configured through a web brpwser opened to their configuration port. On first start-up the Video Server will scan all the drives it knows about and build a video database from the XML metadata files it finds. This can take a long time, so if the server is not responsive immediately , please give it some time.

License Agent Configuration

Open a browser on the machine to http://127.0.0.1:5111/

You will see a page for the License Agent with the following “tabs” :
Home | About | SNEBS | License | Settings | Power.

The SNEBS tab will let you see which components the License Agent is able to find through UDP multicast on UDP port 5350. This is helpful to make sure other players are visible. If you are having connectivity issues, verify this from each piece of equipment.

The License tab will lwt you see your software serial number and hardware serial number (if assigned) as well as re-aquiring the license form the internet. Licensing is based on MAC addresses on the machine, so if swapping the motherboard, the license will need to be re-assigned. See note at end of document.

The Settings tab has sub-options: Basic | Time | Serial # | IWS | Ports

Basic lets you set the “friendly name” which appears in some places. You don’t need it, especially if you only have one device, but if you have multiple players, it can be helpful to name them based on location.

Time lets you set the system clock. Make sure your system clock is accurate.

Serial Number lets you attach the hardware serial number to the machine. If you’re replacing a machine, use the original serial number here… and ideally put that on a sticker on the new machine. It’s the only way to talk about licenses if the machine is inoperable.

IWS is where the license comes from. The default will be fine. Please don’t change this.

Ports are the ports the service is using. Also do NOT change these.

Finally the Power tab lets you power on/off and reboot the machine and other devices on the SNEBS network this device knows about. This depends on things working properly, so it can fail if the machine is in a messed up state. You may need to use an actual power button.

Video Server Configuration

Open a browser on the machine to http://127.0.0.1:5111/

You will see a page for the Video Server with “tabs” for Home and Config. Clicking Config expands it to the following:
Home | About | SNEBS | General | Removable | Monitor | Storage | IWS | Password | Restart | Upgrade.

The About and SNEBS tabs are the same as the License Agent, so let’s skip them.

The General tab indicates the port the server uses. Do NOT change them. The write strategy indicates how the server decides where to put a video if importing based on available space across multiple storage locations. The default is fine, unless you have a reason to change it.

Note: Many “tabs” here will have an “Authorization” field which you must provide a password for to make the setting change. The default password is “fusion1” (no quotes). It can be changed, but I do NOT recommend it. If you forget the password, there’s no recovery.

The Removable tab deals with plugging in external USB drives with video content on them. I don;t think anyone ever did this, so let’s skip over it.

The Monitor tab controls how the server scans it’s known storage locations. I recommend leaving the defaults.

The Storage tab is the most important one to configure as it tells the server where to look for video files. Remember, the files need to be in the correct format (properly imported into the system using one of the Import Utilities). You can’t just stick MP4 files somewhere and have them available, but you can import them using an import utility and then they’ll be put in a storage location.

Choose “Add” to add a new storage location. The drop-down lets you choose a local drive, or SMB share. When using a local drive, pick the drive and give a fill path… for example: “C:\” and “FusionMedia”. When using SMB you need the server and share. Assume the share name is going to be controlled by the server. For example: “SMB” and “\\10.1.14.100\FusionMedia” is going try connecting through SMB to a NAS located at 10.1.14.100 on the network and try to access a share named “FusionMedia”. NAS devices can be case sensitive, even though SMB should not be. Also be aware the account you give will need complete read/write access to the device.

The IWS tab is similar to the License Agent version, except it specifies where the server will try to identify videos. I cloned the service to my house before everything went away, and the defaults should continue to work. I’m hoping to keep these things running indefinitely (at least 5 years)

The Password tab is where you could change the administrative password if you wanted to. Please don’t. There’s really no good reason to unless you live with a malicious hacker that hates you. If that’s the case… maybe rethink some things?

The Restart tab lets you restart the server and the Upgrade tab probably won’t work anymore. You probably have the latest software anyway, and there almost certainly won’t be any more versions unless something goes seriously wrong. If that happens, I’ll put something out through the discord server.

Player Configuration

The player is configured through the TV user interface. The ~ key should bring it up.
Go to the Setup option to configure the player.

License will let you see the license information and possibly refresh it. It's effectively the same as using the License Agent.

Network lets you configure the network connections, but I'll assume you are doing this through the Windows desktop mechanism and not here. In face, if you're replacing a player you don't need a lot of the stuff here as it was needed because people couldn't get to the windows desktop.

Machine is a whole new set of stuff so we'll come back to that.

Disc lets you configure how an internal (or external) optical drive is accessed. Since the end of AnyDVD we can't really do it on the machine easily. Decrypting the disc requires DVDFab's Passkey to do the decryption, and that doesn't work great with other stuff (it's pretty slow). I don't think you can use it through the GUI. I don;t remember if we put out a fix for that after AnyDVD went down or not. Best bet is to the the Import utility on a PC (could be the same one) from the Windows desktop and imort discs that way.

Video lets you adjust underscan for when the player is running full screen and configure filters for playback of different video types. Please install all the 3rd Party stuff before you try this. See the section for that first.

The Machine menu lets you do machine related things. Some (like Time) are easier to do from Windows. Things you should look for: Video / Interface Overscan and Audio.

OK… that's about all I can think of for now related to the player. Let me know if questions come up and I'll update the document as I can.

A Note about navigation. You can navigate with keyboard keys (cursor, enter, esc) or mouse clicks. Click off something to "go back".

A Note about "grayed out" stuff… sometimes things are greyed out because they aren't available, but some times that's because we didn't want people messing with them. You can enter 411 or 911 on any given screen to see if something becomes enabled after. If so, they are things we didn't want people messing with, but you may have to.

Third Party Software

When you installed the AMS.msi, there was a notice about third party software requirements. Most of that is now obsolite. For example, AnyDVD is gone. Arcsoft TMT is gone. CCCP is obsolite and so forth. Here's the translation though.

1) You are going to need Virtual Clone Drive for the player to mount an ISO (or UDF) image from the server for playback. Thankfully this is still available. I'm including the latest one I know works in the 3rd party download at https://fusionrd.com/movie-server-resources/ Look for "AMS 3rd Party"

Install that. You don't need to configure anything and the defaults should work just fine.

2) You're gonna need a codec pack. Apparently K-Lite is the latest and greatest. I also included that in the "AMS 3rd Party" download. Install it. There's a ton of stuff in there but it's likely the defaults will work just fine. I think you should install this last if you're installing other codecs as it promises to fix bad stuff on install.

3) You may need other stuff… I don't know. Other people did this in the company and I don't know exactly what they were doing. So instead I'll tell you where pitfalls may arise. If you discover anything as you go, please let me know so I can update this document.

Note: I added some other stuff to the "AMS 3rd Party" under a folder called "May be needed - Try without first". This includes an old copy of DirectX (the last one I know included a working DVD Navigator filter) as well as the old Dscaler and VSFilter. I don't think you'll need them anymore. Hopefully the newer K-Lite has equivalents of them.

Once you install all the 3rd Party stuff, you can test playback for different file formats using the Player engine. I think that does DVD (with menus), Blu-ray (no menus) and MKV/MP4 files. You can find it at "C:\Program Files (x86)\Alixoft\AMS\Media Player\Engine\Ayane_VideoPlayer_Forms.exe". You need to right-click to do anything with it. You will also have to manually mount ISO/UDF images using Virtual Clone Drive (VCD). This is only for testing and if everything went well with the install, you shouldn't need to do it.

Licensing Notes

I didn’t have time before the company shut down to change the software so no licensing server was required. This means replacing hardware will require me altering the license database I cloned to my house before Fusion went kaput and you re-acquiring the license. Once it’s retrieved, you shouldn’t need to do anything more, unless you heed to change the hardware again. I’ll need MAC address information and the original software or hardware serial number to find your entry in the database. The database doesn’t have customer information in it, so I can’t find you by a name.