














Codec History Cheat Sheet

Every major video codec from H.120 (1984) to AV2 (2025) on one page.



Fora Soft Learn

May 2026 edition

v1.0

Codec	Year	Body	Headline savings	Where it lives in 2026
 H.120	1984	ITU-T	first digital	historical
 H.261	1988	ITU-T VCEG	first hybrid	replaced by MPEG-1/-2
 MPEG-1	1993	ISO MPEG	VHS @ 1.5 Mbps	replaced
 MPEG-2/H.262	1995	joint	DVD/digital TV	legacy broadcast
 H.263	1995	ITU-T VCEG	low-bitrate conf	replaced (Flash)
 MPEG-4 Part 2	1999	ISO MPEG	DivX, Xvid era	replaced
 H.264 / AVC	2003	joint JVT	-50% vs MPEG-2	dominant baseline
 VP8	2010	Google	first royalty-free	replaced by VP9
 H.265 / HEVC	2013	joint JCT-VC	-50% vs H.264	Apple + broadcast
 VP9	2013	Google	HEVC-class	YouTube legacy
 AV1	2018	AOMedia	-30% vs HEVC	modern web baseline
 H.266 / VVC	2020	joint JVET	-40-50% vs HEVC	broadcast only
 AV2	2025	AOMedia	-38% vs AV1	rolling out 2026

Governance camps

 ITU-T VCEG	telecoms-funded UN body
 ISO/IEC MPEG	consumer-electronics-funded standards body
 Joint VCEG + MPEG	single global codec, e.g. H.264, HEVC, VVC
 Alliance for Open Media	industry consortium, royalty-free (AV1, AV2)

Codec strategy shortcut for 2026

- Keep H.264 on every product. Hardware coverage is unbeatable; do not migrate away.
- Add HEVC where Apple devices dominate the viewer mix. Browsers still avoid it.
- Add AV1 wherever encoding cost amortises over millions of views. Web baseline now.
- Start AV2 trials in 2026 if you are Meta-, Netflix-, or YouTube-scale. Otherwise wait.
- VVC is broadcast-only. Skip it for web streaming.

Matched-quality bitrate for one hour of 1080p

MPEG-2 12 Mbps 5.4 GB / hr	H.264 6 Mbps 2.7 GB / hr	HEVC 3 Mbps 1.4 GB / hr	AV1 2.1 Mbps 0.95 GB / hr	VVC 1.8 Mbps 0.8 GB / hr	AV2 1.3 Mbps 0.6 GB / hr
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