Container Selection Cheat Sheet

MP4 · fMP4/CMAF · MOV · MKV · WebM · MPEG-TS — pick the right one in 30 seconds

MP4 Universal compatibility default

Best for:	VOD downloads · uploads · single-bitrate files
Fatal flaw:	Cannot stream live · no adaptive bitrate
Codecs:	H.264 + AAC · H.265 + AAC · AV1 + Opus

fMP4 / CMAF Streaming workhorse (2026 default)

Best for:	All HLS + DASH · low-latency live (2–4 s)
Fatal flaw:	Needs a packager and manifest — slightly more ops
Codecs:	H.264 / H.265 / AV1 + AAC / Opus

MOV Editing master / production

Best for:	Final Cut · Avid · DaVinci · colour metadata
Fatal flaw:	Not for delivery — re-encode to MP4 before shipping
Codecs:	ProRes 422 / ProRes 4444 / DNxHR + PCM

MKV Archive / personal library

Best for:	Unlimited tracks · rich subtitles (SSA/SRT/PGS)
Fatal flaw:	No native web playback · not fragmentable for ABR
Codecs:	Any codec — H.265 / AV1 / FLAC common

WebM Royalty-free web delivery

Best for:	Chrome / Firefox / Edge / Safari 14.1+
Fatal flaw:	Patchy hardware decode on older devices
Codecs:	VP9 / AV1 + Opus (no H.264 / AAC)

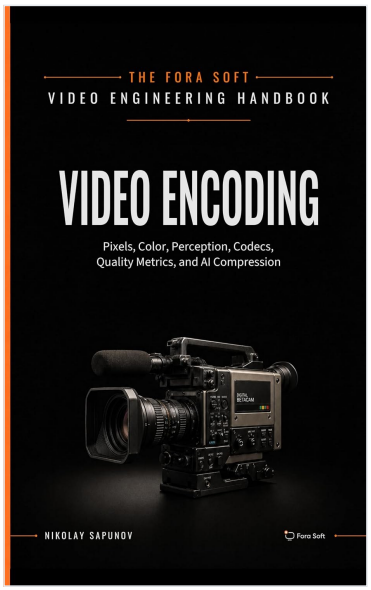
MPEG-TS Broadcast / IPTV / SRT ingest

Best for:	Cable · satellite · contribution feeds · legacy HLS
Fatal flaw:	10–15 % packaging overhead vs fMP4
Codecs:	H.264 / H.265 + AAC / AC-3

The 30-second rule

Editing → MOV. Archival → MKV. Live streaming → fMP4/CMAF.
VOD streaming → fMP4/CMAF. Download/upload → MP4. Broadcast/IPTV → MPEG-TS.
Royalty-free web bonus variant → WebM (VP9 or AV1 inside).

Companion to: 'Containers: MP4, fMP4, MKV, WebM, MOV, MPEG-TS'
www.forasoft.com/learn/video-encoding/articles/containers-mp4-mkv-webm-fmp4



GO DEEPER · VOLUME 1 OF 7

Video Encoding: A Complete Guide to Video Compression

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This sheet picks MP4, fMP4/CMAF, MOV, MKV, WebM or MPEG-TS by job and lists the codecs each carries. Volume 1 covers the encoding side of that choice: how H.264, HEVC and AV1 work, production versus delivery codecs, colour and bit depth, and the quality metrics that check the result.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE

- H.264, HEVC and AV1 codecs
- Production versus delivery codecs
- Colour and bit depth
- Quality metrics such as VMAF

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