# Guides: Soulseek Guide for the Dummies

So here you are
trying to use soulseek, but you're completely lost. Well, let me start
off with explaining what soulseek is all about.

Soulseek (commonly abreviated with simply "slsk") was created to
be a unique alternative to Kazaa and other simple programs for people
who aren't into mainstream music and want a better way to find material
by artists you don't commonly find on peer to peer programs. So
basically, if you want to download a bunch of mainstream music, don't
use this program. It's not for you.

If you have experience with programs like IRC or if you've used
Napster back in the day, this should be pretty easy for you to get the
hang of. Slsk is unique in many ways though. It's all based on the
user. You download from other users and you gain respect by other users
by respecting them through many ways. I'll try to guide you through
this as we go on. It helps if you're already pretty knowledgable with
computers or are good at learning new programs. If you're not, don't
worry; this guide is written for idiots like you.

**Part One - setting up**

In this guide, I'm using soulseek version
156. If you don't have this version, you can get it from the Soulseek home page. The version doesn't
really matter, but it's a good
idea to always use the newest version.
Before you even start the program, you need to do a few things.
Open up "My Computer" and open "Local Disk" which is your C: drive.
When this opens, you'll see a bunch of folders like "Documents and
Settings" and "Program Files". What I want you to do is create a new
folder (right click › new › new folder). Name it "slsk". Open
that folder and create two new folders in that. One will be called
"incoming" and the other one will be called "music". If you're using
slsk for other things (like audiobooks, video files, etc) you can use
that instead of "music". Or you can simply call it "media" which covers
all bases. It really doesn't matter though. For now we'll assume you're
downloading music.

Anyway, you may be asking what each folder is for. Your incoming
folder is where all of the files you download, or "incoming files",
will go. Your music folder is where you move the files to when they're
completed downloading. You see, with soulseek, you usually download
complete albums instead of single songs. Albums are seperated by
folders. Each album will have its own folder, and so on. Of course, you

can download single files, but you usually download complete albums because... well, why not? But anyway, we'll go back to this later.

Now that we have your folders set up, we can move on.

Assuming you have slsk installed, open it up. The first thing you encounter is a box asking for a username and password. If you didn't know, everything on slsk is case sensetive and two users can't have the same username. So put whatever you want for a user name. I put my own name, all in lowercase letters. So my soulseek username (for the time being - this isn't my actual username I always use) is "nick beauregard" without the quotes.
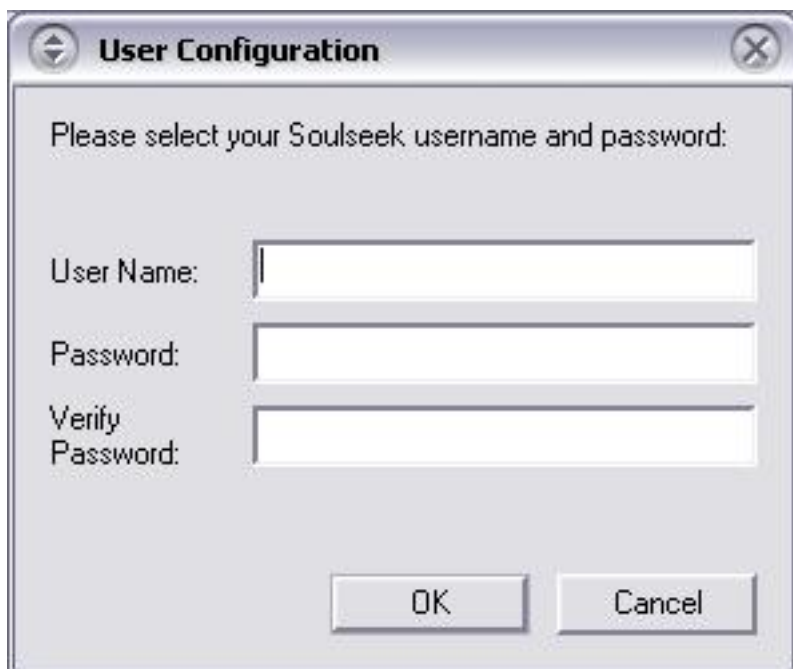


Now that we are done with that, let's set up our sharing folders. Click on the button, at the top, called File Sharing.

A box will open up. This is where you select the
folders you want to share with other users and the folder where your
downloads go to. The first thing we'll do is click "select save
folder". A box comes up and we will select our incoming folder. Now,
select "add shared folder". Find your "slsk" folder and hit okay. Now,
after you click okay, a box will come up asking for the **access leve**l
for this folder. Right now we'll stick with "Folder is accessable to
all". I'll go into details about this and what access levels are all
about later on. For now, it doesn't matter. Finally, we need to decide
who we'll accept uploads from. Now, this is a bit tricky. What this
whole portion of the program does is allow other users to upload to
you, rather than you downloading from them. So, say you have a friend
who uses slsk and he has a new album he wants you to hear but you're
asleep when he wants you to download it. Well, with this feature he can
upload it to you without you doing anything. But of course, you don't
want to just accept uploads from anyone... that can be dangerous. So
we're given a few options: *no one, people in your userlist, people in your uploads permit list, and
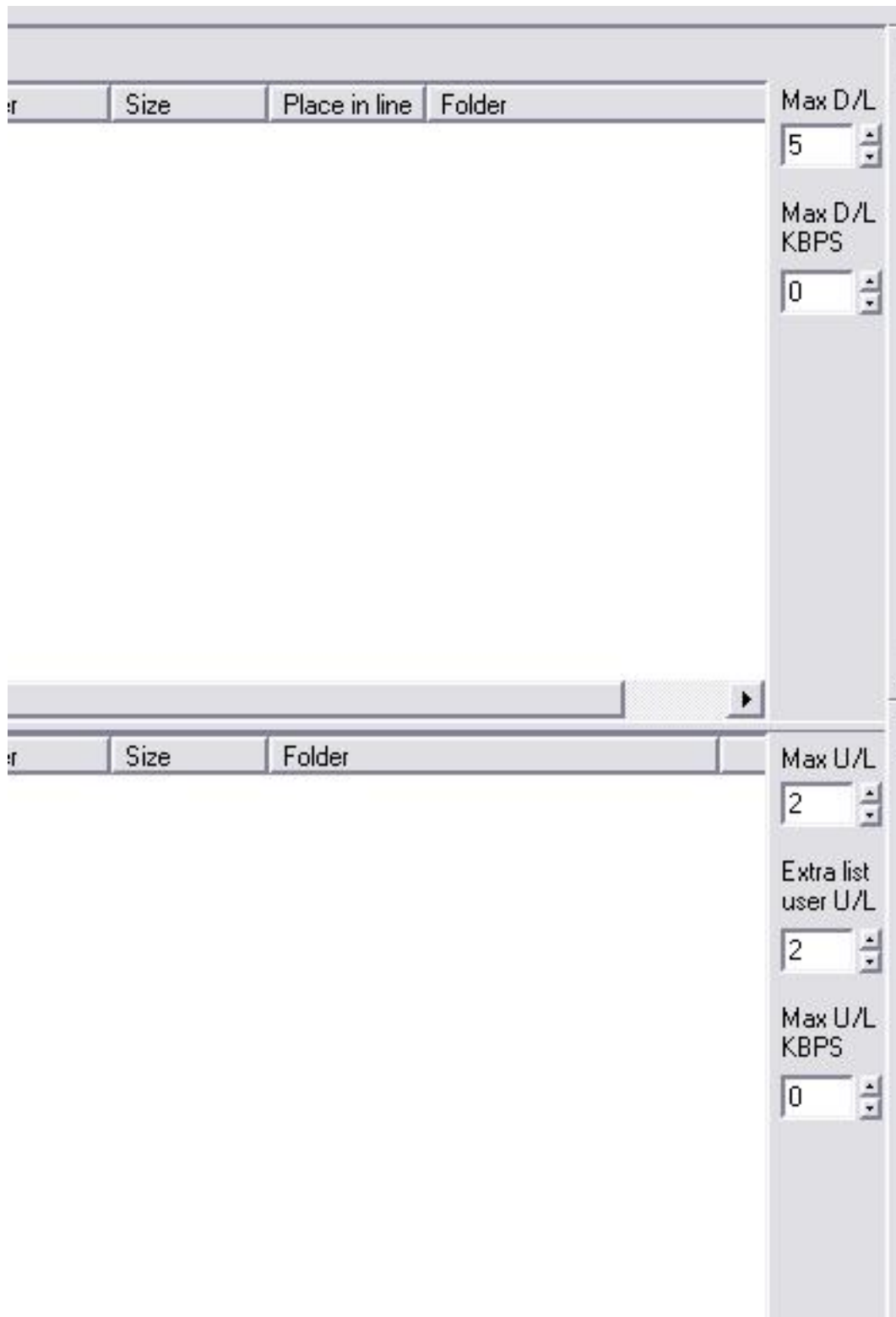everyone*.
Right now, let's just select no one because this isn't a part of the
program that we want to deal with right now. So your file sharing
settings box should look like this right now:
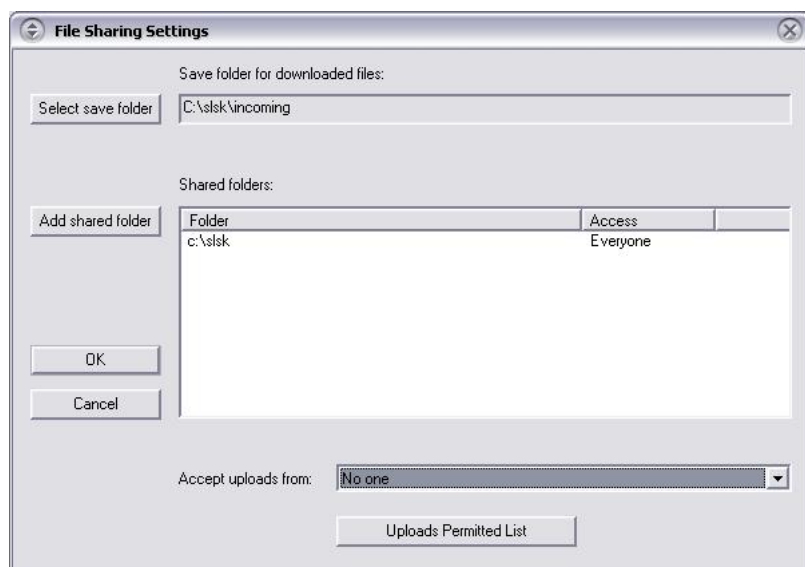


So let's look at our downloading and uploading settings now. Click
on your Transfers window if you're not there. You see there are two big
areas. The top area is for your downloads, and the bottom is for your
uploads. And on the right side is a column of settings for your
downloads and uploads. Your **Max D/L**
is the maximum amount of files you can download at a time. Remember,

you can't download more than one file from a user at a time. So this means, 5 files from 5 different users at a time. The files that aren't being downloaded will be in a queue until the file ahead of it is done downloading. Your **Max D/L KBPS** is the maximum kilobytes per second you can download at. Setting it at zero means that it's unlimited. This is good because it lets you take full advantage of your connection's speed while downloading.

Your **Max U/L** is automatically set at 2. This means two users can be downloading a file from you at a time. If you have a slow connection (such as 56k), set this at one. If your connection is average (normal cable/DSL) keep it at 2, and if you're on a very high speed connection (uncapped cable, T1, etc.) set it at 3 or 4. Your **Extra list user U/L** is a bit complicated. You see, you can add users to your "list" similar to a buddy list. These users are automatically ahead in your queue when uploading your files. So, if you set slots for them, they get priority because these slots are not public. Anyway, let's make the **Extra list user U/L** set at 2. So you can have two users uploading from you publically, and two users from your list downloading at the same time. If you're on a slow connection, set it at zero. This means no one on your list gets priority. If you're wondering what this whole "user list" thing is all about, I'll explain later. Anyway, your settings should look like this (or a bit different if you made changes I noted):

| r | Size | Place in line | Folder | | Max D/L |
|---|------|---------------|--------|---|---------|

5

Max D/L
KBPS

0

▶

| r | Size | Folder | | Max U/L |
|---|------|--------|---|---------|

2

Extra list
user U/L

2

Max U/L
KBPS

0

Now we have the basics of setting up slsk finished. You can take a look
at the general options by going to Options › General Options and
taking a look at those. The options there are either self-explanatory
or unimportant for the most part. You really shouldn't need my help on
those.

**Part Two - downloading an album**

So now that we have the basics set up, let's have some fun. We're
going to download an album and I'll show you what's happening as it
downloads as well as what to do after it downloads. You may not realize
it, but searching for files is very complex at first. Hopefully I'll
guide you well.

Click the Search Files button. The album we'll be searching for is called *"Some Album"* by the band
*"Some Band"*.
It doesn't matter if you've heard of them or not, or if you like their
music or not. We're searching for this album right now as an example.
In the search bar, type in "Some Album Some Band" and click search.
You're probably going to get a lot of results very quickly. So after a
minute or so, hit "stop search" and we'll work with the results we get.
Another reason we stopped the search is because slsk takes up a lot of
memory and when you get a lot of results for something as popular as
this album, you may get a runtime error and slsk will crash. So when
you think you have enough results, you should stop the search. Anyway,
here's what I got for results:

Obviously, your results will be much different. But what you learn from my results should be fine with
whatever yours are.

My results gave me a variety of people to download from. There are
a few interesting things to be noted. The first is the difference
between the results in black, and the results in gray. The files in
gray mean the user who supplied the results has a queue. If the files
are black, there's no queue. So basically, you're going to have to wait
in line a while for your downloads to start if you're going to download
from someone with a queue. You can see the length of the queue by
looking under the "In Queue" tab. If the queue is over 200 or so,
you'll be waiting a long time, especially if the user has a slow upload
speed. If the user has a queue of about 10, 20, etc your downloads
should start rather quickly. If you haven't figured it out, the queue
is the amount of files a user has waiting to be uploaded. Simple as
that.

So let's sort our search results based on the speed of the user. You do this by clicking on the "D/L
Speed" tab.

Lucky me! The first few users who have the complete album have no
queue. This isn't always the case, so be aware of that. But for now,
I'm going to download from the user who's on top. Now, I'm a lazy guy.
I don't want to have to click on each file to download the whole album.
So I'm going to right-click on one of the files, and select **Download Containing Folder**.
This allows me to download the entire folder with all the tracks of the
album. This is good for so many reasons and it makes things so much
easier when it comes to sorting out your incoming folder.

Okay, so let's close the search window, because we don't need that anymore, and open up our
transfers window.

Two of our tracks have already finished downloading. The third is
downloading at a nice speed. This is the end of this part of the guide.
When the album finished downloading, come back and read on.

**Part Three - keeping things organized**

Alright, the album has finished
downloading. This is where things take a creative turn on your part.
Organizing your files. Everyone on slsk has their own way of keeping
things organized. And to gain respect from other users, you better keep
your files organized and neat. So I'll help you out a bit and you can
decide what to do later on when you grasp the idea of organized files.

Go to your incoming folder. You'll see a folder called Some Album or Some Band - Some Album
or something similar. This is the "containing folder" that we
downloaded. Soulseek automatically created a folder identical to the
one the user you downloaded from has and downloaded the tracks to that
folder. So if you open the folder, you'll see all the tracks in there
for you.

What we want to do is take that album out of your incoming folder, and put it into your music folder in an organized way. So follow these steps:

**1.** drag the "Some Album" folder to your desktop

**2.** if it's not already named this, give it the name "Some Band - Some Album" without quotes

**3.** open up your *music* folder

**4.** drag "Some Band - Some Album" to it your music folder

**5.** pat yourself on the back

What we did was the basic steps of organization. Here's where that creativity I was talking about comes in. If you're into a lot of genres of music, you may want to sort the music you download by genre so you, and others, can easily navigate your files. So let's do that. Even if you don't like these genres I'm going to use, just follow me so you can understand. Open up your *music* folder and drag your Massive Attack album to the desktop for a while. Create the folders I have below inside of your *music* folder.
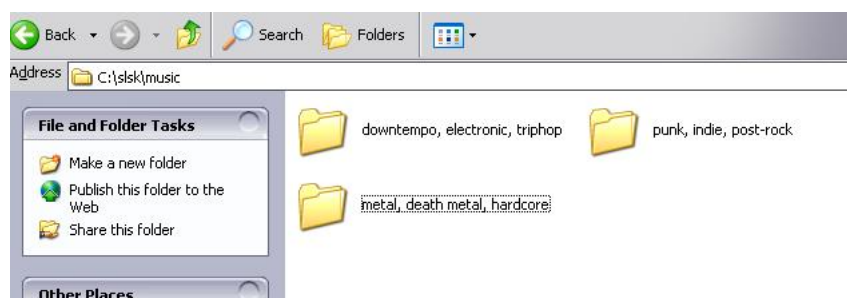


What you now have is 3 folders for three basic genres of music. One for electronic music, one for rock music, one for hard rock music. I'm pretty vague with genres because I hate overusing them. But it's up to you how you organize your files. Anyway, drop your album into your electronic folder or whatever is the proper folder for that band.

Your creativity comes in when you decide how you want to sort
things. Some people do it alphabetically, some by genres, some in other
ways too. It's all up to you. People like seeing other users who keep
things well organized. And even though it can be a hassle organizing
things all the time, it pays off well in the soulseek community.

There are plenty of programs out there to help you sort it out! Consider using the utilities at
http://www.musicbrainz.org

**Part Four - browsing**

So you want to take a look at other
users' files, see how they organize, see what they're sharing, etc?
Well, the great thing about slsk is you can **browse** the files of other users. It's great... especially
when the user you're browsing has organized files.

To browse a user, right click on their name and select "Browse Files".
Below is someone's files who I'm browsing. As you can see, they sort
all of their music by genre. Again, I've protected the privacy of the
user and all the other things that need blacking out. Anyway, here's an
example of organized files.

By clicking the little + sign, you get
the subfolders, which means, any folders that are in the folder you're
in. So, let's see what happened when I see what's in this user's
"triphop" folder:

As you can see, this user has very nicely organized his files.

Browsing users makes it easy to find an album you're looking for.
It's a good alternative to searching when you're just looking around
for various albums.

**Part Five - list only?**

One of the controversial features of
soulseek is the ability to be "list only" which means only users who
are in your userlist can download your files. If you don't know where
or what your user list is, I'll show you mine below. This is the
userlist for my primary username, not the one I created earlier.

| user | files | K/s... |
|------|-------|--------|
| ...uf | 5,602 | 8.0 |
| | 4,607 | 29.5 |
| ...al | 11,297 | 0.8 |
| | 22,671 | 0.6 |
| | 6,459 | 1.4 |
| | | 8.5 |
| | 3,937 | 71.9 |

## userlist

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 16,097 | |
| | 11,018 | 28.8 |
| | 11,445 | 17.5 |
| | 14,840 | 13.7 |
| | 1,864 | 17.7 |
| | 13,561 | |

| Rooms | Users | |
|-------|-------|---|
| Underground Hip... | 665 | |
| Psytrance | 468 | |
| PUNK/HARDCO... | 464 | |
| HOUSE MUSIC L... | 424 | |
| Spain | 351 | |
| indie | 344 | |
| japanese music | 328 | |
| drum'n'bass | 327 | |
| progressive house | 310 | |
| FRENCH HIP HOP | 307 | |
| !ReGGaeGaLaXy | 274 | |
| +BlackMetal+ | 250 | |
| Hardcore NL | 243 | |
| !!RIDDIM!! | 235 | |
| hip hop espanol | 234 | |
| TECHNO, Mixes ... | 210 | |
| electro | 208 | |
| Jazz (Full CDs) | 202 | |
| Portugal | 188 | |
| #polska | 174 | |

I scratched out the users for privacy and tried to make it obvious **where**
the userlist is. Anyway, you can add someone to your list by

right-clicking on their name (anywhere... in a chat, search, room, etc.) and selecting "add to list".

Here's how the whole idea of adding people to your list works. When you're at the point where you have a few thousand mp3's and a lot of people download from you, you realize it's hard to keep up with everyone and it's only an inconvenience for them that they're waiting in your queue for such a long time. So you decide to go list only so that only people you want to be downloading from you can. Usually it's people who you know and are friendly with, people who have an impressive collection to share, or whoever else. This makes it more convenient for you because you don't have to deal with a lot of people downloading from you and it's convenient for them because there's not a long wait in line. It is, however *inconvenient* for newer users who are looking for music and everyone who has it is list only. This is where people have differences of opinions. Is list only mean and selfish or is it okay and only for the good?

My opinion is that there's no reason for you to be list only unless it's necessary. If your connection is slow and a lot of users try to download from you, then you should go list only. If your connection is fast, you only have a few hundred files, etc. you have no reason to. Simple as that.

If you decide to go list only, you can set your music to only be shared with listed user by clicking File Sharing, right-clicking on your shared folders, selecting set folder access, and selecting *folder is accessible only users in my list.*

**Part Six - using the rooms**

Rooms are tricky. If you're a user of IRC, you'll understand. You see, most people **idle** rooms. This means they stay in the room when they're gone from their computer. So when you get 40 or 50 people who idle a room, it makes other people think "Hey, I bet that room has a lot of good users" so they'll join the room and thus the room gains popularity.

The one thing you do not want to do in a room is to go in and say

something stupid like "who has music for me to download?" or message
every user who has over 5,000 mp3's and ask to be added to their list.
Especially don't do this when you only have a few albums to share.
That's annoying and stupid. To get respect in a room, you need to
respect other users. The rooms on slsk aren't for people to come in
asking for music, they're for people to come in and discuss the music
and have a fun time chatting. Slsk is more than just a p2p program,
it's a community. You find yourself meeting new friends in rooms and
chatting about all sorts of things other than music. Gaining someone's
respect and friendship is a better way for them to add you to their
list so you can download from them.

Anyway, when you start up slsk, the only rooms that are visible to
you (on the lower right hand corner) are the rooms that have at least
20 users in them. If you want to see rooms with under 20 people, right
click anywhere on the rooms list and select "refresh room list". Give
it a minute and it will show you all the rooms on slsk. About 85% of
the rooms only have one user in them. This is because any user can
create a room (by right clicking and selecting *create room*). Users will create rooms and stay in them
hoping someone else will join, and then more and more people, and so on.

Here's a few tips for rooms:

**a.** stay away from rooms with over 150 people in them. Usually,
they're way too crowded and it's impossible to have a conversation.
Only go into them if you're looking for music or files to download.

**b.** to join a room every time you start slsk, right click in the room and select "toggle room autojoin"

**c.** the ticker is a small bar
across the top of the room where users can type messages that scroll
across every minute or so. You can set a message to scroll in the
ticker by right clicking in the room and selecting "set personal
ticker". The rest is self-explanatory

**d.** since slsk is popular all over the world, some rooms may be
filled with non-english speaking people. So be aware that not everyone
will speak english in every room.

**e.** Shift-click and ctrl-click work in soulseek. So selecting
multiple files at once is easy. This is helpful if you accidentaly
queue up a big folder or need to delete something from a queue.

**Part Seven - user info and things I like**

Every user has the ability to create a "user info" where they can write whatever they want and supply a picture of themselves. Many users take advantage of their info to write "rules" for users who download from them. These rules usually include how many albums you're allowed to download from them at a time and other things. Some users don't use this at all. It's completely optional and not always necessary. You can look at someone's userinfo by right-clicking their name, and selecting "Get user info".

The "Things I Like" window is pretty fun sometimes. It works side-by-side with your user info. When you look at someone's info, you also see columns of "things I like" and "things I dislike". This is self-explanatory I guess. So you should get the idea.

You can edit what you like and dislike by clicking on the "Things I Like" tab and adding things in. You can also get "Global Rankings" which shows you the most liked and disliked things on slsk, as well as global recommendations and similar users.

Mess around and have fun with this, it's nothing important for the most part.

**Part Eight - general stuff**

Tips

- someone being a moron to you
  through the messenger? Ignore them by right-clicking their name and
  adding them to your ignore list.

- want to search all the users in one room? Right-click anywhere in the room and select "Search For Files in Room"

- want to search all the users in your user-list? Right-click any user on your list and select " Search For Files in User-list"

- someone downloading too much from you
  and hogging your queue? Ban them by right-clicking their name and
  adding them to your ban list

- read the user info's of people you
  intend on downloading from before downloading anything. Often there
  will be "rules" that you should take note of

- before downloading a folder, browse
  the user and make sure the folder you're downloading isn't something
  similar to a kazaa folder where everything is in the same folder. You
  don't want to end up queueing thousands of files when you intended to
  download a single album.
- I'll add more tips the next time I update this guide*

Always remember that slsk is not just a way to download music. It's a
large community of people and it takes respect and well behaved users
to keep it running so nicely. Don't be a jerk, don't be an asshole, and
respect other users the way they respect you. This isn't Kazaa and if
you want to leech music all day, go back to Kazaa.

*Unique solution ID: #1037*
*Author: Arsenic*
*Last update: 2005-10-11 07:34*