

Digital Audio Recording

There are multiple ways to record yourself reading what you have written. Below are only 2 ways. The first instructions (A) are steps for using Audacity on a PC. Audacity is also available for Mac or you might have Garageband for Audio recording on a Mac. You can use google.com to find other instructions. The second (B) are simple, not as good quality and you will have to record the entire piece if you want to make changes rather than “edit” some parts out of the final version.

A. For a somewhat lengthy piece.

What you need to record and edit simple audio files on PC.

There will be other things you can do with Audacity, but the purpose of this tutorial/workshop is to teach the skills so you can record your own stories and export them to mp3 formats to share in podcasts or otherwise over the Internet.

Software

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Audacity is a free cross-platform audio recording and editing program.

Download the software.

If you even have the most basic computer skills you can record digital audio.

The catch is there is an extra step to download something called LAME files.

This piece is needed to export audacity files to **.mp3** format.

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/faq?s=install&item=lame-mp3>

With **Audacity** you will be able to do simple tasks such as cut, copy, or paste audio segments and normalize volume.

Microphone

I use a simple headset with mic made by Logitech.

An example: Logitech® ClearChat Comfort USB™ Headset With Microphone

Storage

Best practice is to make recordings in small chunks because audio files can get very large! Also, shorter segments are easier to manage and edit.

If you have a final product that will be more than 30 mins, you might think of how to break it up into 5-10 min sections. I recommend you keep each file smaller than 10 MB.

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You can store files in My Music/Audio Files on your computer, but an external storage device is recommended to back up files.

You can get external, portable devices to store your audio files.

These are called thumb drive, jump drive, flash drive and range from \$20- 60 depending on memory storage capability. Walmart, Best Buy are some places to look.

If you don't already have a headset microphone and external storage, you can get what you need for as little as \$30.

Attach your **microphone** to the PC and test to see if it works prior to starting to record your final piece.

Open Audacity: Click on the **Audacity** icon  on your desktop to launch the program once you have downloaded the software

Select Input device settings

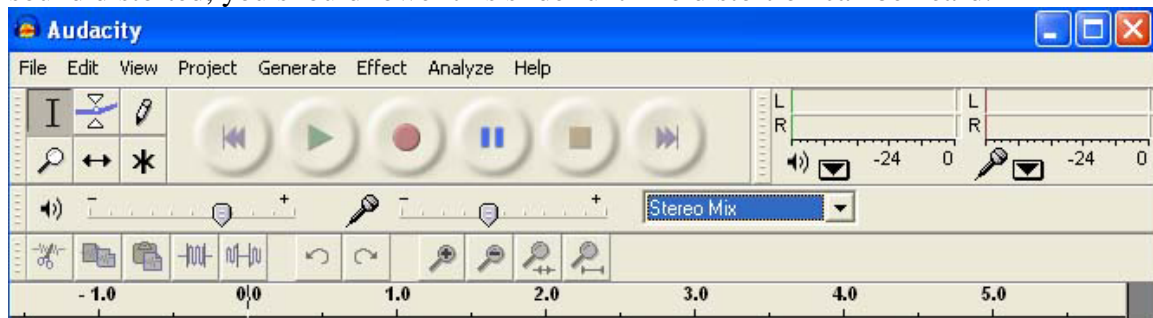
Output Slider

This left hand slider that lets you control the sound level of your headphones or speakers.

Input Slider

This right hand slider that lets you control the sound level of the input selected in the Input Selector (microphone)

Adjust the **Meter Toolbar** to get the preferred sound recording level. Should your input sound distorted, you should lower this slider until no distortion can be heard.

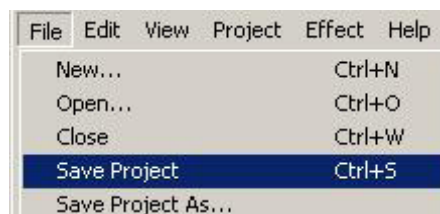


Pick the input source you wish to record from. Select “**Stereo Mix**”

Save project:

When you start Audacity, only the " Save As..." menu option is available.

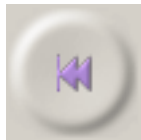
To **edit** your individual tracks again, save your work as a project.



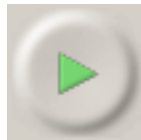
If you **Save Project As...**, **only Audacity** can open the files as they are saved in **.aup** format.

Select a location for your project. A project file (.aup) and associated folder will be saved to the selected location.

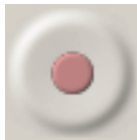
Chose **Export** when you have finished editing and recording in order to create the **.mp3** file format that can be played in an external program to Audacity like Windows Media



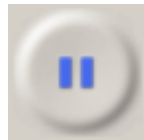
Skip to Start



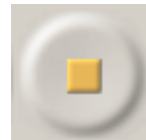
Play



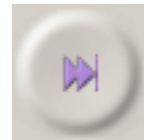
Record



Pause



Stop




Skip to End

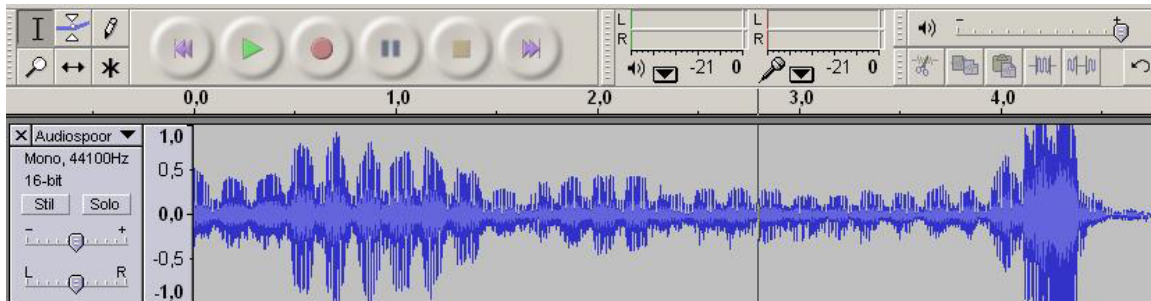
Player or iTunes.

Control Panel: The audio recording and playback controls are much like you find on an analog audio recorder.

Red Record button begins recording.

Blue Pause button pauses the recording. Press it again to continue.

Yellow Stop button ceases the recording and the **cursor** will return to its previous position, before the recording was started. 

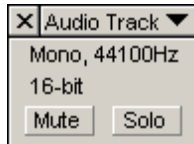


Record: Click on the **Record** button to begin recording. A window with your active audio track will appear as you record.

- Press the **Stop** button when finished recording.
- Press the **Pause** button to temporarily stop recording; click **Pause** again to resume recording.

Once you have pressed **Stop**, the new recording will start on a new track in a new window which begins at 00:00. When you export the windows as .mp3, the program merges each window into one.

Audio track window:



Click the **X** in the upper left hand corner to delete the track.

Play your recording:

- Press the **Play** button to begin playback. Press **Stop** to finish.
- Start playback from the beginning of your recording by clicking on **Skip To Start**, then **Play**.
- **Place the cursor** at any place of your recording by clicking on the audio track, to start playback from that point.

Tip: Short cut is to use the **space bar** to start and stop **Play**.

Save as an MP3 file:

- On the menu, click **File** and then **Export As MP3**.

Tips

1. If you don't see the option to **Export As MP3** the **LAME encoder** was not properly installed.
2. Save your MP3 file onto your USB Thumb Drive for a back up copy or copy to it from your desktop
3. Optionally, you may enter MP3 "Tag" information to display to the listener when the audio file is played.

Select Tracks or parts of a track by using the **Selection Tool** 

You can click and drag to select parts of the track to edit.

For example if part of the track needs to be amplified or normalized, select it with the cursor then go to the Menu to select **Effect> Amplify**

These are basic instructions to get started.

More help is online @

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

B. For a short piece

A simpler way to record your writing is to use the **Listener Phone Line for the SCN Podcast**. In this case, the podcast coordinator or administrator will retrieve your files for the podcast. You create the files like you were recording a greeting for your answering machine or cell phone.

All you need to do is call in and record on a phone number...no other person involved.

You call (641) 715-3900

Extension:19212#

Password: 4226#

Playback and Record

Delete or record as you like.

However the recording must be made in “single takes”.

If you use audacity you can learn the skill of editing and cut “uhs” and other vocal irregularities rather than reread the entire piece.