

Using Audacity to create sound files

Audacity is a simple and freely-available tool for recording and editing your own sound files. Your sound recordings can easily be added to Blackboard or Moodle, and used to add voice-over to PowerPoint presentations. There are other options for publishing sound recordings to websites such as Internet Archive etc.

How might audio be useful in your teaching?

- Welcome to the course
- Introduction to a topic
- Detailed explanation / description of an important concept / topic
- Interview
- Voice-over for powerpoint slides

What you need to know about Wav and MP3 formats

The most common used formats for exporting sound files are Wav and MP3 files. In general it is best to save and export your recorded audio track first as a Wav file; this can be thought of as your master file, which can be re-edited if necessary and exported as an MP3 file.

Wav files are better quality but larger in size. This format would be best for burning to a CD or uploading to a hosting server like [Internet Archive](http://www.archive.org/) (if it is really big you may have to convert to MP3 format to upload to Internet Archive).

File size is an important consideration because it determines how long it takes to download. MP3 files are compressed which significantly reduces the size of the file and therefore download time; any reduction in quality is usually not noticeable. MP3 format is best for uploading to Blackboard or Moodle.

To use Audacity

You will need:

- Microphone
- Headset (if you are working in a room with others)
- Audacity including the LAME MP3 encoder installed on your computer. (This is available from the Novell-delivered Application Launcher under the Corporate folder for OP computers; double clicking or opening Audacity will install both of these on your computer. For home computers you need to download Audacity 'Audacity 1.2.6' and the 'LAME MP3 encoder' from the Download pages at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> and at <http://www.guidesandtutorials.com/audacity-lame.html>).

Additional resources:

This short video clip from blip tv.video tells you how to get started with Audacity:
[Audacity: Recording with the Microphone](#) (1:35)

For additional information about using Audacity see
http://wikieducator.org/Using_Audacity

Importing: [importing MP3 files](#)

Exporting: [exporting mp3 file](#)

Sound Tips: [sound tips for audio and video](#)

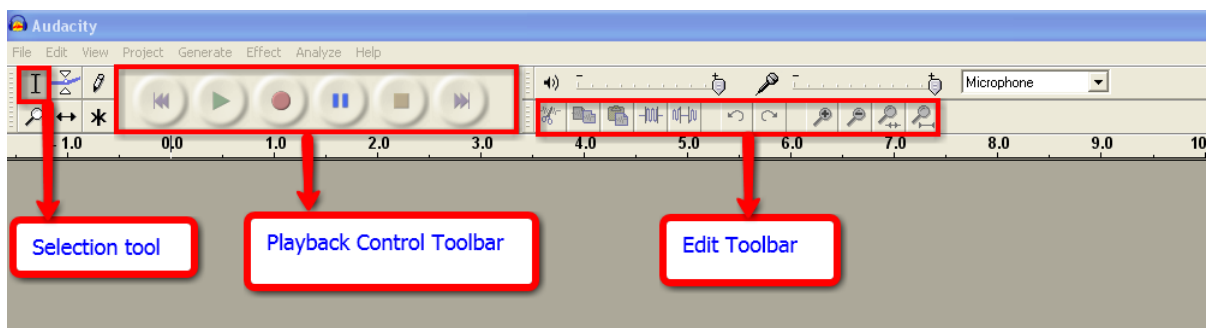
Within Audacity you can access quick reference guides using the *Help* → *Contents* menu.

Steps to creating your own sound files

Step 1: Open Audacity

Identify the features highlighted below.

Adjust the microphone input volume to its highest setting and select Microphone as your input source if it is not automatically selected.



Step 2: Recording

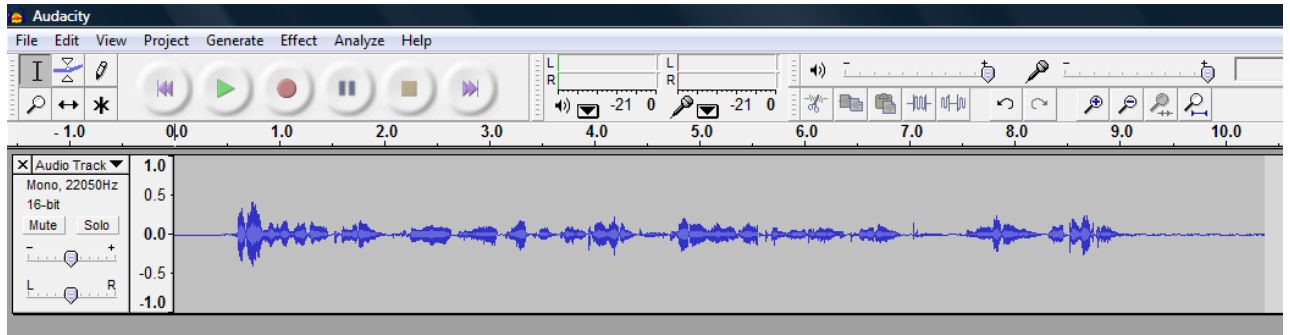
Check your microphone is plugged in and ready to go. Click on the red Record button on the Playback Control toolbar.

This will automatically open a new track in the Track window and **begin recording**. As you talk into the microphone a waveform will appear in the new track.

Click on the blue Pause button on the Playback Control toolbar to **pause the recording**. Click the Pause button again to continue recording.

Click on the yellow Stop button on the Playback Control Toolbar to **stop the recording**.

You can listen to your recording by rewinding back to the start using the double back arrows, then clicking the green Play button on the Playback Control Toolbar.



Step 3: Editing

If you run your cursor slowly along the Edit toolbar it will identify each of the editing functions.

To select parts of your audio recording for editing click on the selection tool, then click and drag it across the area of audio you wish to edit.

To adjust the volume, drag the Gain button in the left of the Track window and slide it along; then click the Play button. It will playback at the adjusted volume although the size of the waveform appears unchanged.

Step 4: Exporting as a Wav file

Once you have recorded an audio track, save and export it as a Wav file by selecting *File* → *Export as WAV* option.

Once the audio file has been successfully exported as a .wav file, you can exit Audacity without saving changes, or if you wish to record a new audio track, delete the audio track by clicking the X of the Track window and start recording again.

Additional information

Importing (opening) a Wav or MP3 file with Audacity

There are two ways to do this:

1. Right click on the sound file and select *Open With* → *Audacity* (browse and select Audacity if it not listed on the drop-down menu). The audio recording will appear in the track window.
2. Open Audacity. From the menu bar select *Project* → *Import Audio*. Locate the sound file and Open. The audio recording will appear in the track window.

Exporting a Wav file as an MP3 file

Open a Wav file. Export it as an MP3 file by selecting *File* → *Export as MP3* option. Ignore the 'Edit the ID3 tags ...' box that pops up and click OK. You will now have an .mp3 file as well as the .wav file. Check the difference in file size.

Voice-over for Powerpoints

Record separate sound files for each of the Powerpoint slides you will add voice-over to. As you record each audio track it's easier to save and export it first-time as an MP3 file (rather than making a wav file and converting it later to MP3). Select *File* → *Export as MP3*, ignore the Edit format box that pops up and click OK. It is very important that you save all the sound files AND the Powerpoint to the same folder BEFORE you start attaching the sound files to your slides. Use a filename associated with the slide you will attach it to.

Select the Powerpoint slide to attach your audio to. Choose *Insert* → *Sound from file*. Locate sound file, select it and click OK. Select the option to make the sound play **automatically**. A speaker will appear on your slide indicating that the sound file has been attached. Save your presentation. Select *Slide Show* to view the presentation with its audio recording.

The best way to present your finished Powerpoint Presentation on Blackboard or Moodle is as a Flash file (.swf). Presentations can be quickly and easily converted into a Flash file using [iSpring](#). Once you have downloaded iSpring to your computer, reopen your Powerpoint Presentation; the iSpring menu bar should be located in the upper left corner. Click **Publish** from the iSpring menu bar. This will produce a Flash file which can be uploaded to Blackboard or Moodle.

If you need extra help, please get in contact with EDC.