



Recording Your First Podcast

The Fun, Inexpensive and Easy Way to Record Your First Podcast

If by chance you have one of those inexpensive microphones (the kind they usually throw in for free when you buy your computer) lying around the house, you can record a podcast for practically nothing. If you don't have a microphone, you can easily pick one up at a local electronic store for as little as \$10 to \$20. But, as you become a serious podcaster, the quality of your microphone makes all the difference in the quality of your podcast. But for now, as a beginner, let's practice with the lower budget items.

Next, we will need to get a set of headphones. Headphones are important because you can still monitor your voice during recording while having your computer speakers off, which sometimes can cause background noises. A couple of great combination headsets/microphones are the Logitech's Premium USB Headset 350, which you can get for \$40-\$50 at offline electronic stores or at Logitech's website: www.logitech.com or the Plantronics - Audio 550 DSP, which run for about \$48- \$70 and can be found at a variety of different sites online.

Being that this headset/microphone has a USB connection, your sound quality will be so much better than a microphone that plugs directly into the mic jack on your computer.

I recommend, since you are just starting out, to use www.Audacity.Sorceforge.net, an open source, cross platform digital audio editor, that you can download absolutely free to your computer. Audacity is quick to download and offers all the editing features you need to create a great podcast and are simple enough for a beginner to use. Once you download the Lame MP3 encoder, a separate piece of software offered to you at the Audacity site, you will be able to export your recordings in an MP3-format to distribute your podcast.

(Watch the video: <http://www.integrityring.com/learn> showing you how to download Audacity and the Lame MP3 encoder)

With Audacity can record single or multiple tracks, edit and add special effects to your podcast. When you first save your new podcast, save as “project” first and then export as MP3. In the project file, you can go back in and continue to record even after it has been saved. Once it is saved as a MP3, you can still go in and edit, but you cannot do any additional recording on that particular track (though you can add additional tracks to the beginning and end of a MP3, such as a music intro and close)

Wait, Before You Start Recording

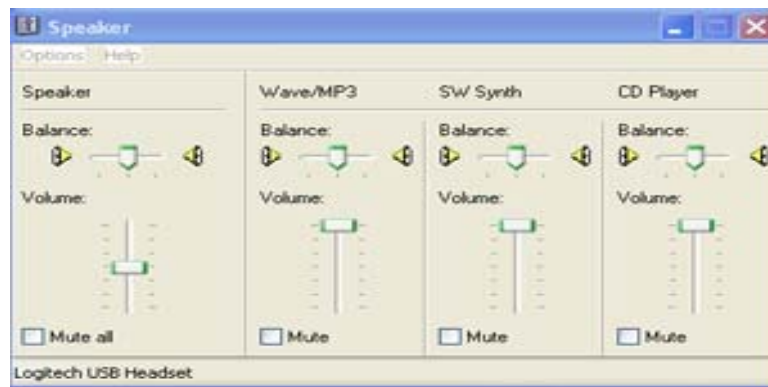


Here's a little checklist for you to make sure that everything is set up properly for your first podcast

First thing to do is set up your station, connect your microphone to your computer, via your telephone (with a telephone logger patch) or directly to your computer depending on if you are recording a telephone interview (you will need the logger patch) or a solo recording, (which we will be focusing on in this lesson).

Next, let's set your volume control on your computer.

Open up your volume controls you can do that by clicking on the Volume icon next to your time – bottom right, or through the start menu-control panel- sound and audio devices-audio devices, and adjust the volume for your recording.



You will most likely see something like this (computer screen vary):

Now open up Audacity:

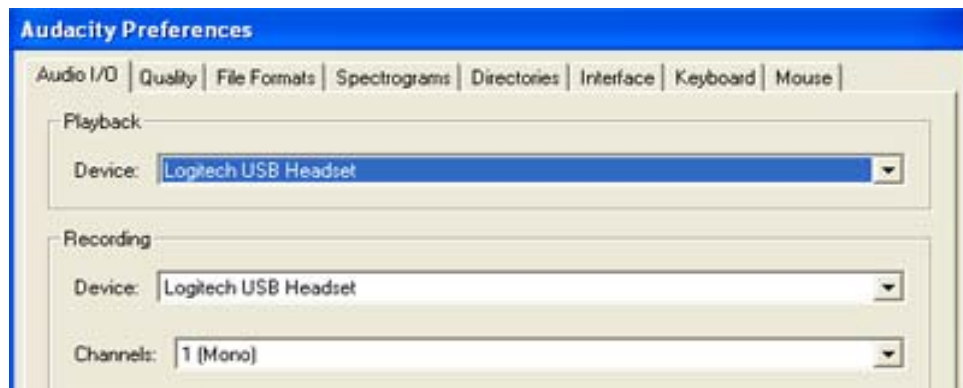


Configure the Preferences:

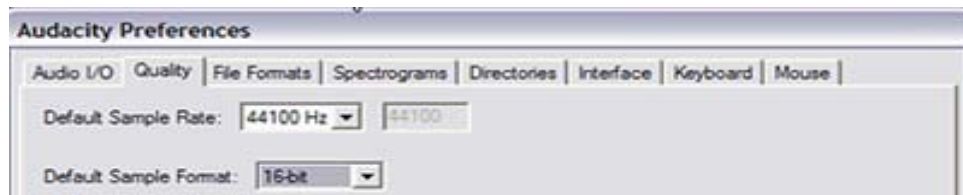
Open the Audacity Preferences window from the File menu,

Scroll down to bottom, click on “Preferences”

On the Audio I/O tab, check to see if your recording device is showing up in both playback and recording (pictured below you will see that I have my Logitech USB Headset for recording in both the playback and recording sections). In the drop-down box under the Recording Device, choose 1 (Mono). Unless you are using two microphones, then you would choose the Stereo option. Choosing the Stereo selection just duplicates the recording track, which makes your file size much larger, but doesn't improve the quality of the sound.

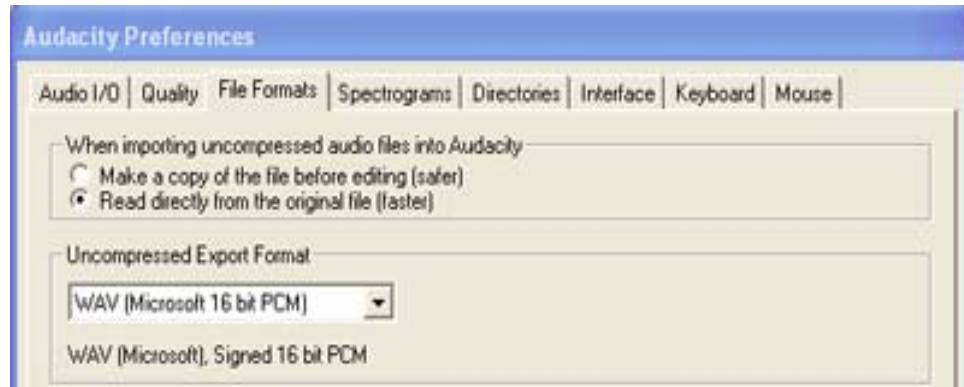


Next, click on the Quality tab, and choose 44,100 Hz as the Default Sample Rate and 16-bit as the Default Sample Format. Recording the original audio at 44,100 Hz and a 16-bit gives a better quality audio when compressed into a MP3.

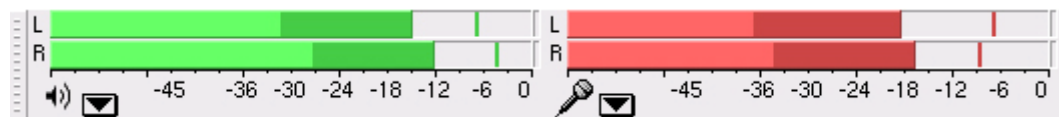


On the File Format tab, you have two choices on importing audio files into Audacity: the 1st makes a copy of the file before editing (this is the safest choice, that way you don't risk damaging the original during editing). The 2nd choice is to bring the original right in for editing (this is faster, but not safer...your call on this one).

The rest of the tabs can stay as they are, and now you are ready to record.



The meter toolbar is used for monitoring the input and output audio level. This is used to make sure that the audio is as loud as possible without clipping (which means that the audio is too loud and will make your recording sound distorted). The output meter, (which the playback) is the one green one on the left. The input meter, (the recording) is the red one on the right. There are two bars one on top of the other on both sides, the second bar is for stereo. The bright part of the bar shows the average audio level, the darker section shows the peak audio level. If your audio goes past the line on the right of your audio level, you are in risk of clipping and you need to turn your audio down. This is to be done internally in your volume control, as shown above. Once you've adjusted the level, you're ready to record.



Finally the moment we have been waiting for, our first recording of a podcast.

To begin recording, push the red button to 'Record' and start talking. After you are finished with your presentation, press the yellow square to 'Stop'. If you ever want to 'Pause' during your recording, you would press the two blue lines. Now we are ready to save the file, a good idea to do right off the bat to eliminate any possibility of accidentally deleting the file during editing. First off, you always want to save your new file as 'Save Project As' (you will find this when you click on 'File' upper left corner). This will save it as a wav file, which is best to do your editing with before you compress your audio into a MP3 format... (*more on 'Editing' next chapter*)



To save file as an MP3, (assuming you have downloaded the Lame encoder), open 'File', upper left hand corner, click on 'Export as MP3'. An ID3 tag box will appear on your screen, you want to fill this out. This tag will embed your name, the name of your show and also your blog or website into the audio which allows your listens to find you. iPods, Creative Zen and many other portable media players display this information to the listener. Click OK...



Let the File compress to a MP3 and you have just created your first podcast!