Creating podcasts with Audacity

1. Audacity can be downloaded for free from: http://audacity.sourceforge.net. In addition to the audacity installer, you will want to download the “LAME MP3 Encoder” in order to be able to export your project as an MP3.

2. There are two versions of Audacity – a stable version (1.2.6) and a beta version (1.3.2). This tutorial is based on version 1.3.2 which is similar to 1.2.6.

3. When you launch Audacity, it will present you with some controls toward the top of the screen and grey working area (figure 1).

4. Before you begin recording, it is important that you make sure that your microphone is selected and working properly. This is especially important if you are using a laptop with a built-in microphone and also a higher quality external microphone. One way to verify what audio source is selected is to go to the “Edit” dropdown menu and select the “Preferences” option.

5. From the “Audacity Preferences” window (figure 2) you can choose the selected recording device by looking at the “Device” dropdown menu under the “Recording” section.
6. To begin recording, you will need to click the “Record” button (figure 3). This will be right next to the buttons that are used to control the playback features during the editing.

7. After clicking “Record”, an “Audio Track” window will appear (figure 4). If you are speaking and your microphone is working properly, you should notice a bunch of squiggly lines. Vertical lines represent the changes in your voice and a flat line indicates silence.

8. Before you begin your actual recording, I can not stress enough the importance of recording a 20 second test file that you can playback to make sure that the audio sounds good.

9. As you record, it is important to keep an eye on your “Input Level Meter” to make sure that your audio levels are not peaking too high (figure 5). If these levels are too high (all the way to the right) your audio will sound distorted.
10. While you are recording, you have the option of either pausing or stopping your recording (figure 6). If you pause your recording, you will need to click the pause button again to continue recording. Some users like to use the pause button as a means of gaining composure or thinking about what they would like to say next.

11. If you click the “Stop” button during your recording, you can always go back and record additional material. However, when you click the record button after hitting the stop button the new audio segments will be added to a new “Audio Track”.

   **Note:** If you make a mistake partway through the recording, some people like to use the stop button so that they can edit out the mistake and then continue recording.

12. If you plan on using either the Pause or Stop buttons, make sure that you leave at least a 2 second pause before or after speaking. This will provide you with dead air that will ensure seamless editing and help ensure that portions of your audio are not cut off.

13. Once you have recorded your segment, it is very likely that you will want to do some editing. It is possible to make a number of changes such as cutting out mistakes, removing pauses, adding white noise or raising audio levels.
14. In order to edit an “Audio Track”, you will need to determine the portions that you want to remove. To do so, you need to listen to the audio that you recorded. If you want to listen to a specific portion of your presentation, you can specify where you want Audacity to start playing by making sure that the “Selection Tool” is selected (figure 7) and then clicking the desired area.

**Note:** if you are listening to an “Audio Track” and click the “Pause” button, you can not use the “Selection Tool” to listen to a different part of the “Audio Track” until you click on the “Stop” button.

![Audacity](image)

**Figure 7:** Selection Tool.

15. If you need to remove the beginning or ending portions of a presentation, the easiest way to do so is to use the “Trim Outside Selection” tool (figure 8). Using the “Selection Tool”, highlight the portion of your presentation that you want to keep. Once the appropriate portion is highlighted, click the “Trim Outside Selection” button. This will remove any audio outside of your selection.

**Note:** if you are trying to listen to a portion of your “Audio Track” and it will not play, it is very likely that the “Selection Tool” is not highlighted.

![Audacity](image)

**Figure 8:** Trim Outside Selection button.

16. Another option for editing audio is to select the portion that you would like to remove and click the “Cut” button (figure 9). This will remove the entire selected portion.
17. To delete an entire “Audio Track”, click the “X” button for the appropriate “Audio Track” as seen in figure 10.

18. If you used the “Stop” button during recording and are working with multiple audio tracks (figure 11), it is very likely that you will need to rearrange the position of the audio segments so that they play in order, are not playing on top of each other and do not have dead sound from any edit that were made.
19. To change the start time of an “Audio Track”, you need to make sure that you have the “Time Shift Tool” selected (figure 12). With the “Time Shift Tool” activated, adjust the position of an “Audio Track’ by dragging it left or right. It is also possible to move the audio to another audio track by dragging it either up or down.

![Time Shift Tool](image12.png)

Figure 12: Time Shift Tool.

20. As you are working on your presentation you will want to make sure that you regularly save the file. To save a file, go to the “File” drop-down menu and select “Save Project”. By default, Audacity saves the file as an “.AUP” file. This is an Audacity project file that retains the separate “Audio Track” information and will allow you to edit the file at a later date.

21. When you are done editing the file and want to export it to MP3, select the “Export as MP3 option from the “File” drop-down menu. In order to have Audacity export as an MP3, it will ask you to locate the “Lame MP3 Encoder” that you should also have downloaded.

22. Once the MP3 is created, you will want to add additional “Track Information” using iTunes. This will increase the likelihood that your users’ audio players will display the proper metadata.

23. To edit “Track Information”, open the file in iTunes. Locate the file in your iTunes “Library”, right click on the file and select the “Get Info” option (figure 13).

![Get Info option](image13.png)

Figure 13: Get Info option.
24. From the “Get Info” screen, click the “Info” tab (figure 14) and fill out as much information as possible and click the “OK” button.

Figure 14: Info Tab.