

AUDACITY 101: Dr. Smith's Basic Instructions

DO NOT RELY ON THIS HANDOUT ALONE!!!! Watch a few tutorials on YouTube to familiarize yourself with the program before you begin to edit!

Getting Started:

- It is ALWAYS a good idea to RESTART your computer before you begin editing.
- The Audacity Icon = Headphones (blue w/ orange and yellow in between).



If you don't see it, in the Finder window, go to Go > Applications. Double-click on the folder and drag icon to "Dock".

- Your project folder should already be on your desktop. Make sure it is labeled with your project name (ex: FA1 - Smith) and that you have renamed all your field material in the "Raw" sub-folder (ex: nats-typing, Intv-Johnson, Reporter tracks)
- Wear headphones to edit in the Computer Labs!!!

Click once on Audacity in the "Dock" to open it.

Note: When the program opens, you have access to Help Tutorials, Wikis, websites, etc. Use these when/if you have problems/questions!!! Download the manual so it's available offline!!

Once the audacity project opens, go File > "Save Project As" > Name your project (Ex: "FA1 – Smith"). Be SURE to save the project IN your project folder (not inside the Raw folder and not on the hard drive of the computer). Keep everything in the same file!

When this happens, the program automatically creates two data files, (1) is the primary digital editing file (.aup), and the other (2) is a data "folder" where all your digital details/editing marks/etc. will be maintained. Never kill either.

Once your project is created, it's time to bring in your raw material for editing. Select File > Import > Audio. From the "Raw Folder," bring in the audio you want to START your project with. EX: If you want to start with nats, bring nats file in first.

Note: When you bring in a raw audio file, a "Warning" window will come open and ask you if you want to make a copy of the files" before editing (safe option). Say yes!!! You may also select "Don't Warn me Again" if you want.

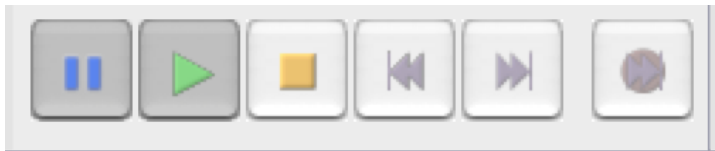
EACH track shows up as two channels of audio – left/right. You can adjust the size of the lines by dragging them (like in XL Spreadsheets). Changing the size of the lines does not affect the actual audio in any way, only the way your tracks look on the screen.

For your first project, bring in the natural sound first, then bring in your reporter track/s. MUTE the reporter tracks (look on the left side of the screen) so you're only working with one type of sound at a time.

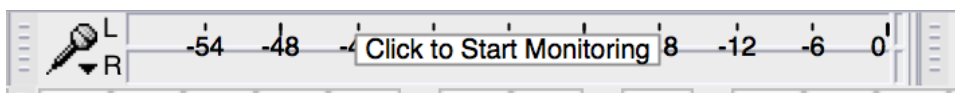
Once all audio files are in, hit File > Save Project (not save as).

BEFORE WE BEGIN EDITING... LET'S LOOK AT YOUR TOOLBARS:

- **FUNCTION TOOLBAR (top/left):** Allows you to listen & shuttle around in your audio file:



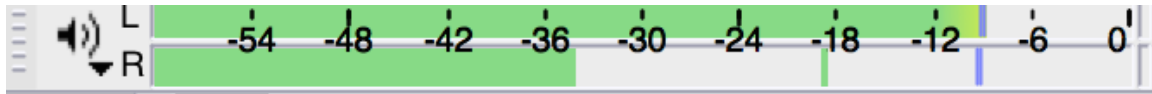
- Play/Pause: You can begin listening by hitting the green button (spacebar doesn't work well with this program!).
 - Once you've started a track playing, use the blue pause button to start and stop, start and stop. The PLAY button will take you back to the beginning of the track. So will the spacebar.
 - The yellow "stop" button is your friend. If you can't make something work... hit stop, then try again. Audacity can be a glitchy program to learn at first and this button really helps.
 - Purple/Double Arrows: Jump to beginning, end of timeline/project
 - Red: Records directly into the computer. This is often very bad audio compared to your field gear. I strongly recommend against using it!
- **AUDIO LEVELS (The version with the microphone on the left) shows you audio levels when/if you're tracking directly into the program.**



- I don't recommend this. Your field gear is MUCH better. However, to use, click on into the middle of the window to begin monitoring levels.

- You'll see your record levels if you talk.
- BEFORE you record, mute any other tracks in your project, otherwise you'll hear them in the background/get reverb.
- Hit the RED/REC button and a new track will open recording your voice.
- Again, however, I recommend against this.

- AUDIO LEVELS (the one with the audio icon on the left): Shows you your audio levels for the left/right channels of audio you've imported into the project.



- EDIT TOOLBAR: Has a number of functions useful for editing your project.



- Zoom in/out on entire timeline - for precision
- Copy/Paste/etc. (just like in Word)
- Undo/Redo (are your friends)

- SELECTION TOOLBAR: Little gray box with six tools in it. This is EXTREMELY useful for editing!!! If you can't find it, go to View > Toolbars and make sure "Selection toolbar" has a check next to it:



- I = Selection Tool: Helps you select/highlight portions you want to cut/keep.
- Envelope Tool: Looks like a SandTimer cut in half. Helps you adjust Audio levels
 - Clicks/little dots – drag up and down to lower/raise audio
 - Can do the ENTIRE track by clicking on the blue line
 - Can raise and lower natural sound or eliminate confusing noises within a track (drag up and down, in and out)
- Left/Right arrow = Time Shift. Allows you to drag your sound around in the timeline.
- Zoom Tool: Lets you click on the timeline in a particular place and zoom in right there. Very useful for editing

GENERAL FLOW OF THE EDIT:

- Import track. Play your audio.
- Zoom into the portion you want to edit so you can “see” your audio.
- Pick the place where you want the audio to start. With the selection tool, click with your mouse **IN THE WAVEFORM** (not above it), hold the mouse down, drag and highlight everything that you don’t want, then hit “delete” on your computer.
- Hit STOP/yellow.
- File/Save.
- Go to the next edit. Highlight/delete. Stop > File/Save.
- Import next track. Play > Select > Edit. DRAG & DROP to assemble.

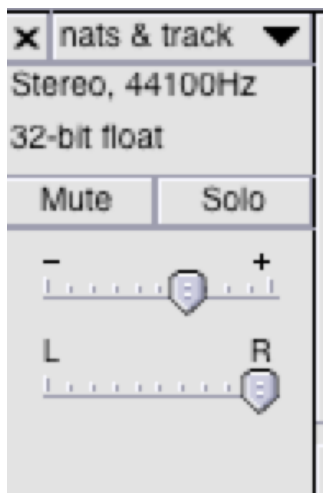
ALTERNATIVELY: You can import all tracks at once, and MUTE the ones you don’t want to listen to or SOLO the one you do. On/off... mix/blend... listen... look.

WORKING WITH & ADJUSTING AUDIO – QUALITY CONTROL STANDARDS:

PROPER AUDIO LEVELS:

- Natural sound full should be at -12
- Natural sound “under” reporter track and/or interviews should be down near -30 or -36 or it will interfere)
- Primary Audio (reporter track AND interviews) should be at -12 (“fully saturated” audio)

TO THE LEFT OF EACH TRACK:



- Use Volume up or down to raise or lower the entire track (be sure to look at your levels above).
- To hear only that track, “solo” it. Alternatively, just leave it alone and “mute” the other channels.
- You will also see the “name” of the first file you used in the track as well as the size of the media you’re working with. Should be stereo 44100Hz/32-bit float.
- Natural sound track should be panned to the right
- PRIMARY sound (track/bites/etc.) should be panned left.
- This way, your story will export in stereo sound.

TWEAKING / PERFECTING:

- Use the Envelope tool to raise or lower sound in certain parts of the track / tweak levels. When you use the dots, usually, you use three or four, drag them up/down, left right.
- Use your ears and eyes to achieve a balance.
- FRONT PAD: Let the natural sound last about a second before anything you expect/want to hear. Same if you start with your voice. Give us a second of front pad.
- FADE IN/OUT: USING THE "I" tool, highlight the first second of your section you want then go to Effects > Fade in/out. BEST FOR THE END!!!!

IF YOU WANT TO BRING IN A NEW PIECE OF NATURAL SOUND FROM A DIFFERENT RECORDING... OR BRING IN A DIFFERENT PIECE OF PRIMARY AUDIO (interview / reporter track / out que / etc.) FROM A DIFFERENT RECORDING:

- Import the new audio file. Edit / fine-tune the piece you want.
- Copy/paste it into the track where you want it, then drag and drop it using the arrow tools to where you want it to go
- Delete the empty/extra track that's now empty (X at top/left corner of track)
- YOU SHOULD ONLY BE WORKING WITH TWO TRACKS OF AUDIO FOR PROJECTS THIS SEMESTER.

REMEMBER:

- The yellow "stop" button is your friend. Use it after every edit!
- **SAVE OFTEN!!!**
- **If all of the sudden you cannot do something or the program seems frozen, go to Audacity > Quit > Save changes. Then re-open the project and begin again.**

WHEN FINISHED, IT'S TIME TO EXPORT IN A FORMAT WE CAN LISTEN TO:

- File > Export
- Direct it into the project folder on the desktop!
- You can export in many formats. For this class, use the following file type:

File type: WAV (Microsoft) signed 16-bit PCM

It's a broad, less compressed, higher quality file. If you want a different version for your own i-pod, go for .mp3 (takes up less space)

- If you want, when the "Metadata" box pops up, you can put your last name in the Artist's name category & project name in track title, or date of project, etc.
- Export will automatically convert the entire project onto 2-channels.
- Once it's done, be sure you LISTEN to the exported project file to make sure it sounds right!!! Primary should be left, nats should be right.

FINAL PROJECT FOLDER SHOULD BE LABELED WITH THE PROJECT NAME AND YOUR LAST NAME. INSIDE, IT SHOULD CONTAIN:

- Project Data folder
- Project.aup (your audacity edit program)
- Project.wav (edited/exported finished project)
- RAW materials file with field recordings inside/labeled separately
- Word Doc of your script (including the RUNS TIME OF YOUR .WAV!!!!!!))

