Tools4U - Audacity
Digital Education Revolution NSW

Using Audacity to create an audio file for podcasting

Background

A podcast is a form of audio broadcasting over the internet. It might be anything from episodes in a radio program, to a tutorial series, to audio blogging.

The 'cast' part of podcast refers to the fact that users can subscribe (via an RSS feed) to receive recordings automatically when they become available.

Software such as Internet Explorer 8 and iTunes can be used to subscribe to podcasts.

Record your podcast

Before you begin recording, thoroughly plan what you will say. To make your recording you will need Audacity, a microphone (for example, a laptop's built-in microphone) and a quiet space for recording. Headphones are also a good idea.

1. Open Audacity and become familiar with the Audacity window. The main tools — the *Play*, *Record*, *Pause* and *Stop* buttons—are straightforward. Use *Help* to learn about other tools.

2. When you are ready, press *Record* (red circle) to start recording your audio track.
3. Click *Stop* (yellow square) when you are finished. An audio track appears.
4. Click *Play* (green arrow) to listen to your recording.
5. If you want to start again, click the track close box (X) and repeat steps 2 and 3).
6. Name the track and adjust the volume and balance if desired (see graphic at right).

7. To edit the track (for example, to delete content or insert silence), select the area to modify (click and drag the mouse across the waveform) and choose a command on the Edit menu.

8. Save your file as you work by going to ***File* menu > *Save Project***. This saves your project as an Audacity file (.aup) which will allow you to further edit the file. The conversion to an MP3 file comes later.

Add music or other sounds

Music or other sounds may enhance your podcast. For example, you might begin and end your podcast with music, have music playing softly in the background or add some sound effects.

It is easy to import an audio file into Audacity. You can import several audio file formats including MP3, WAV and AIF.

1. Select **Project menu > Import Audio…**.
2. Find the file you want to use and click *Open*.
   The imported audio appears in a new track window below existing tracks.
3. You may need to modify one or more tracks. For example:
   - copy and paste, delete or trim audio, or insert silence (commands on the ***Edit* menu**)
   - adjust the volume of the audio track (**Track controls** to left of waveform display)
   - change the volume level of a track over time (**Envelope tool**)
   - fade music in or out (***Effect* menu > *Fade In*** or ***Effect* menu > *Fade Out***)
   - move a track left or right (**Timeshift tool**)
   - loop audio to extend it (***Effect* menu >*Repeat*…**).

Go to the Help menu to read more about using these and other tools and commands.

Export your file ready for podcasting

1. When the track is complete, save the project again (***File* menu > *Save Project***), and then select:
   File* menu > *Export As MP3.
2. The ***Edit the ID3 tags…*** window may open, allowing you to add information or metadata about the audio file. Some of this data may display in audio players when the file is playing.

   You can also edit the tags by going to ***Project* menu > *Edit ID3 Tags…***.

Broadcast your podcast file

You are now ready to podcast your MP3 file. You could do this by uploading it to a class wiki or blog, or another website you have access to.

To be a true podcast, the audio file should be made available via an RSS feed so that subscribers automatically receive, or are alerted to, your new podcast. A typical RSS feed includes the title, description, link to the audio file and date posted of each available podcast. Creating your own RSS feed page can be a complicated process. You can use RSS feed generators to create an RSS page to add to a website.

If you cannot upload your podcast recording to the web, share it with your class via email, USB drive or simply listen to each other's recordings.