

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Online Education

Podcasts & MP3 Recordings

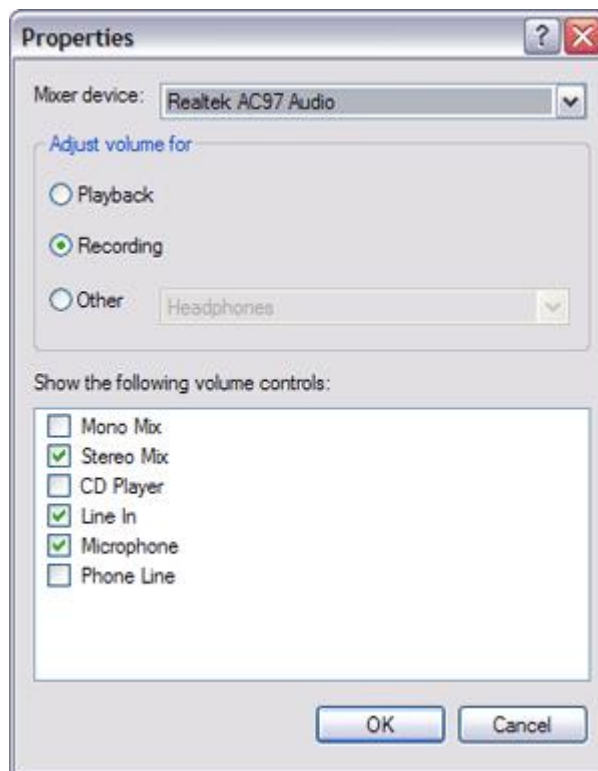
Podcasts and MP3 Recordings

MP3 recordings and podcasts can be useful tools for online learners. Creating a weekly (or monthly) podcasts for students can be a convenient way of learning and studying a subject, and is easily accessible to a large number of students at one time. Before you begin creating podcasts, however, you will need the following audio recording tools:

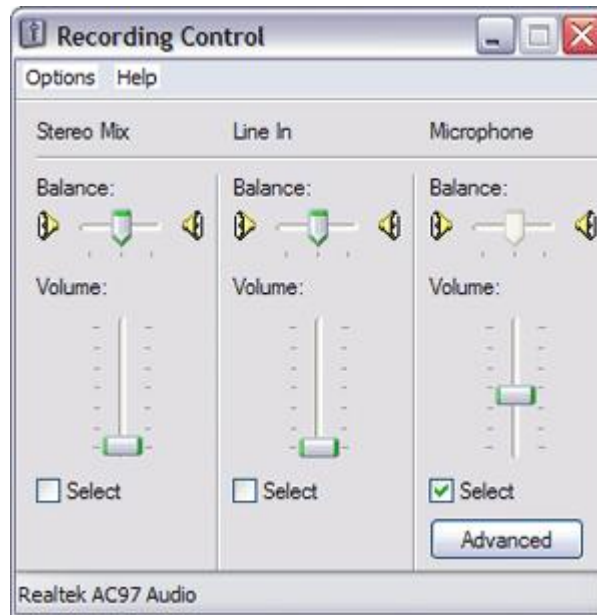
- An application to record your podcast. Audacity is recommended by the University of Pittsburgh. Audacity is compatible with Windows, Mac and Linux systems, and offers a solid complement of editing features. It also outputs recordings in MP3 format for distributing your podcast. To export MP3 files with Audacity, you must have LAME encoder installed on your computer. If you don't have the LAME encoder already, follow the instructions within this manual below for easy installation.
- A microphone. If you already have access to a Creative or Labtec microphone, start with that. If you don't have a microphone at all, there are several cheap solutions available that are compatible with any platform.
- Headphones. Headphones that cover your ears will do the best job of isolating sound in your recording from other audio distractions, but standard ear bud headphones will work just fine.

Before you Record

1. Connect the microphone to the microphone-in connection on your PC.
2. Connect your headphones to the headphone jack.
3. From the Start menu, select Control Panel. Open the Sounds and Audio Devices window. In the Device Volume section of the Sounds and Audio Devices control panel, click the Advanced button.
4. With the Volume Control open, select Properties from the Options menu.



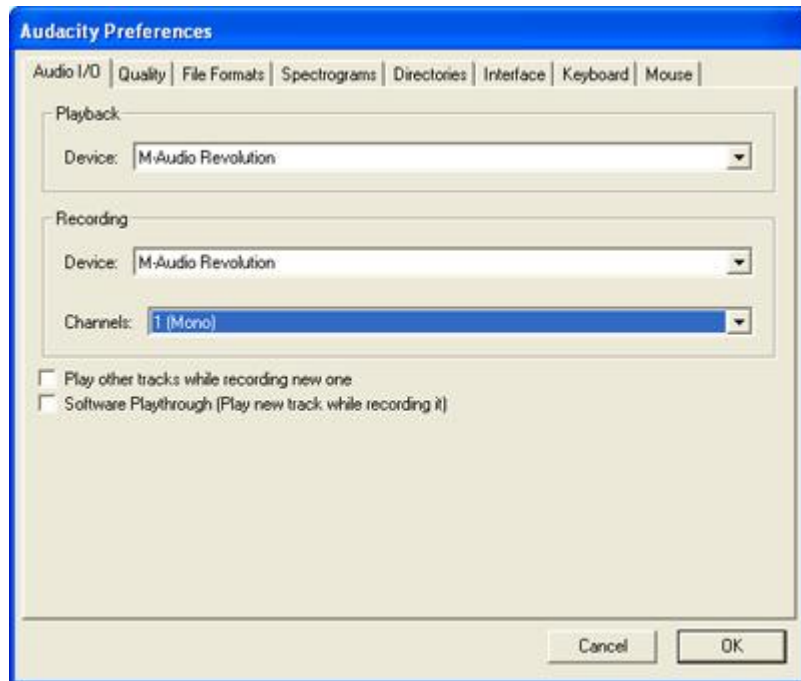
5. Make sure the Select box under the Microphone column is checked and the volume is above zero or you won't be recording anything.



6. If you didn't already install Audacity, make sure you do it now. Make sure the LAME encoder is also installed.

Preparing to Record

1. Open Audacity and then navigate to the File menu and select Preferences.
2. On the Audio I/O tab, verify your sound card is selected as the device for both playback and recording. In the channels dropdown box under Recording choose 1 (Mono).



From the Quality tab choose 44,100 Hz as the Default Sample Rate and 16-bit as the Default Sample Format.

3. The File Formats tab controls the output formats for your audio. To avoid accidentally overwriting your audio files, select Make a copy of the file before editing under the When importing uncompressed audio files into Audacity option.
4. While still in the File Formats tab, select WAV (Microsoft 16 bit PCM) as the Uncompressed Export Format. Follow the instructions on MP3 Export Setup to configure MP3 output.
5. Close the preferences by clicking OK.

6. From the main program window verify Microphone is selected as the recording input option on the Audacity Mixer Toolbar.
7. Click the microphone icon on the Audacity Meter Toolbar to turn on monitoring.
8. Talk into the microphone and make adjustments to the volume until you get a level that moves close to the top of the right edge without turning a solid red color. Once the level is adjusted, you're ready to record.
9. Push the record button and start talking.
10. When you finish recording press the stop button and save the file as a WAV.
11. To save the file as an MP3, open the preferences again, and select the MP3 bit rate on the File Formats page (generally somewhere between 32 and 64 is fine). If you didn't setup the LAME encoder already, follow these instructions to configure it now.
 - a. Go to the [LAME download page](#).
 - b. Click any link from the list of identical "lame-3.96.1" links.
 - c. When you finish downloading LAME, unzip it and save the file lame_enc.dll anywhere on your computer.

- d. The first time you use the "Export as MP3" command, Audacity will ask you where lame_enc.dll is saved.

Posting a Recording

1. Place your podcast or MP3 recording in a file on your computer.
2. Right click on that selection and choose the option, Send To then Compressed (zipped) Folder.
3. Open your browser window and navigate to the Courseweb site.
4. Find your course and select the folder to which you will add the file (for example, Course Documents).
5. Click the Add Item button.
6. Enter the name that will be associated with the podcast.
7. In the file window, browse to the zipped file that you previously created.
8. Enter the name of the file.
9. IMPORTANT: Set the Special Action option to Unpackaged This File.
10. Click the Submit button.