



## MAKING AND EDITING mp3 RECORDINGS

There are many ways to record, save, edit, and transmit voice files. I recommend this one to the beginner, as it is free, except for your investment in a microphone or headset/microphone (if you don't already have one), and it produces good results.

### ON YOUR PC (See page 3 for MAC instructions)

1. BUY a Logitech 350 Premium USB Headset or equivalent device – a good combination headset/microphone. (If you choose to purchase a microphone without a headset, make sure your computer has speakers that are capable of playing back mp3 files.) The microphone/headset will plug and play from any USB port on your computer without additional software. Search online for this product and expect to pay around \$50. Best Buy and other such stores will have a range of similar devices.
2. Install **Audacity**, an open-source editing suite. It's easy to download, install, and operate, and it's free. It offers just about any processing function you would ever want, and allows you to edit and save your recordings in the format of your choice, including the popular mp3 *as long as you also download the "LAME" encoder*. (See below.)
3. Go to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download> and follow the download instructions for the operating system of your computer (select for Windows).

4. Then go to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/faq?s=install&item=lame-mp3> to download the LAME mp3 encoder. Again, select for Windows. Make sure to follow all the appropriate instructions. Pay special attention to STEP FIVE in those instructions, which walks you through the “export as mp3” step. If you do not follow this step, your audio files will save as Audacity files, not mp3 files.
5. Plug in your Logitech (or equivalent) microphone/headset into any USB port.
6. Double click on the **Audacity** icon to launch it.
7. Go to Audacity’s **Edit/Preferences** to select preferences.
  - Under **Quality**, I suggest you select 44,100 as your “default sample rate,” and “32-bit float” as the default sample format; under “Real Time Sample Rate Converter,” select “High Quality Sinc Interpolation.” Leave other settings alone. Click OK.
  - Under File Formats, under “Uncompressed Export Format” choose “WAV Microsoft 32-bit float.” And under “MP3 Export Set-up,” choose “320.”
8. To make a recording, select “New” from the Audacity “File” menu, put on your headset (or simply turn on your microphone), click the red circle record button, and talk.
9. Click the square “stop” button and then press the green triangle “play” button. You should be able to hear your voice back in your headset.
10. Spend a while playing with the various editing and processing functions. (Highlight parts of your recording and use the functions under Effect and Edit; *normalize* is a good one that optimizes the playback level.) You won’t hurt anything. Use the Help menu to learn how to do anything not immediately intuitive.
11. Go to **File/Export as mp3**. If you followed step five in the “LAME” download, you will now be able to export your audio file as an mp3 to any location on your computer. Select the location you want to save the mp3 file to. Name the file again if you are requested to do so. If you followed the instructions, your first self-produced mp3 file will now be in the place you saved it, ready for you to e-mail it to the destination of your choice.

## ON YOUR MAC

(See page 1 for PC instructions)

1. BUY a Logitech 350 Premium USB Headset or equivalent device – a good combination headset/microphone. (If you choose to purchase a microphone without a headset, make sure your computer has speakers that are capable of playing back mp3 files.) The microphone/headset will plug and play from any USB port on your computer without additional software. Search online for this product and expect to pay around \$50. Best Buy and other such stores will have a range of similar devices.
2. Install **Audacity**, an open-source editing suite. It's easy to download, install, operate, and it's free. It offers just about any processing function you would ever want, and allows you to edit and save your recordings in the format of your choice, including the popular mp3 *as long as you also download the "LAME" encoder*. (See below).
3. Go to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download> and follow the download instructions for the operating system of your computer (Mac usually)
4. Then go to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/faq?s=install&item=lame-mp3> to download the LAME mp3 encoder. Again, select for Mac. Install it on your desktop, unzip the zipped file you have downloaded, and drag the "lame\_enc.dll" icon to your desktop. Leave it there. Make sure to follow all the appropriate instructions. Pay special attention to the "export as mp3" step. If you do not follow this step, your audio files will save as Audacity files, not mp3 files.
5. Plug in your Logitech (or equivalent) microphone/headset into any USB port.
6. Double click on the **Audacity** icon to launch it.
7. Go to Audacity's **File/Preferences** to select preferences.
  - a. Select the "Devices" tab on the left, and then in the "Playback" and "Recording" sections on the right, select **Logitech** (or equivalent) as your recording and playback device, and **2 (stereo)** under "Channels." Leave two other boxes unchecked.
  - b. Select the "Quality" tab on the left, and then select 44,100 as your "default sample rate," and "32-bit float" as the default sample format; under "Real Time Sample Rate Converter," select "High Quality Sinc Interpolation." Leave other settings alone. Click OK.
8. In Finder, open "System Preferences" and open the Sound Preference Pane. Under the Input tab, select **Logitech** (or your equivalent), and then do the same under the Output tab. Close the Sound Preference Pane to save these settings.

9. To make a recording, select “New” from the Audacity “File” menu, put on your headset (or simply turn on your microphone), click the red circle record button, and talk.
10. Click the square “stop” button and then press the green triangle “play” button. You should be able to hear your voice back in your headset.
11. Spend a while playing with the various editing and processing functions. (Highlight parts of your recording and use the functions under Effect and Edit; *normalize* is a good one that optimizes the playback level.) You won’t hurt anything. Use the Help menu to learn how to do anything not immediately intuitive.
12. Go to **File/Export...** [*The first time you do this a dialogue box will ask you where you put your LAME program. Browse to the file you downloaded earlier on the desktop, and hit OK.*] You will be prompted to give the file metadata, such as “Artist Name,” etc. You can skip this step by hitting OK. Name the file and select mp3 as your file type. Click the “Options” button beside the MP3 Files drop down, and choose “320 kbps” from the Quality dropdown menu. Select “Desktop” as the save destination. Click “save.” If you have followed instructions correctly, your first, self-produced mp3 file will now be sitting on your desktop, ready for you to e-mail to the destination of your choice.

Instructions by Paul Meier, with help from Eric Armstrong. E-mail him at [paul@paulmeier.com](mailto:paul@paulmeier.com) with suggestions for improvements to these instructions.

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