

## Ames Free Library Podcasting Studio

Welcome to the Ames Free Library Podcasting Studio! Whether you're here to start production on a podcast, or just try out recording for the first time, everything you need to record audio is here and ready for you to use.

If you're experienced with audio recording equipment and have some of your own, we also invite you to bring it into the studio to better customize your experience.

Before you begin, please be sure you have a flash drive, or other means of transferring files to another device, as we cannot guarantee your files will be preserved on our iMac after your session ends.

If you would like a flash drive, please ask to purchase one at the Queset House Manager's office on the 1st floor of this building.

Good luck & happy recording!

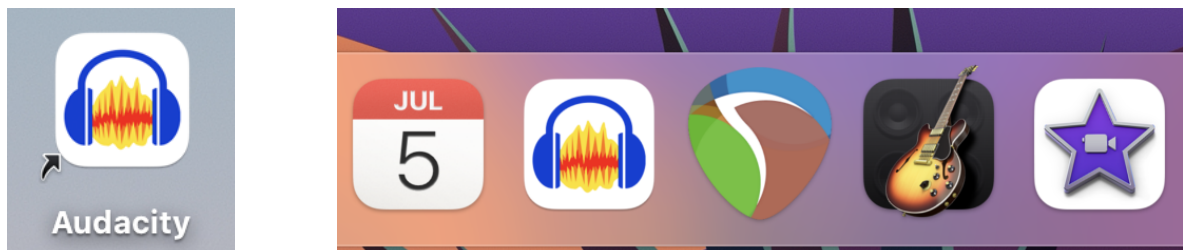


## Getting Started Recording with Audacity

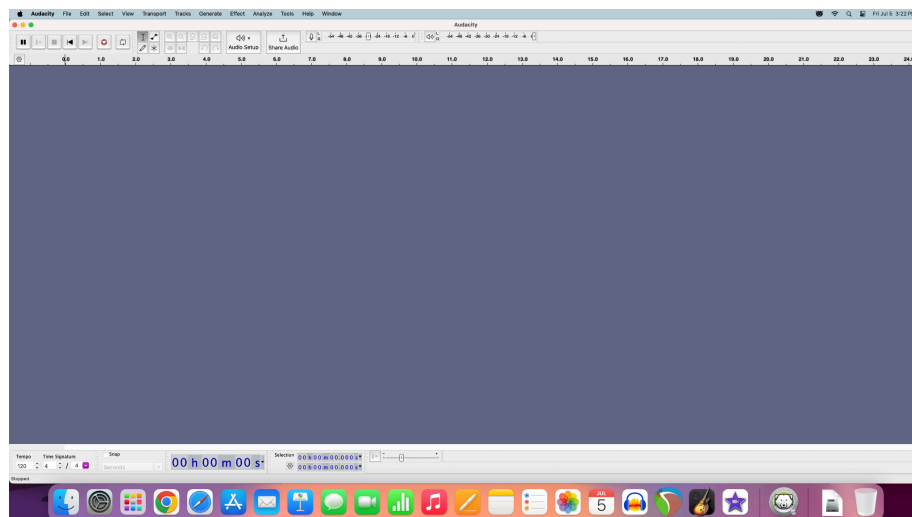
Audacity is a free, open source, digital audio workstation. It can be used to both record and edit audio. Due to its nature of being open source, you could even install Audacity on your home computer and use it to edit audio there!

### To begin:

1. If using our equipment, ensure that Pro FX8 Channel Mixer is turned on, and connected to the USB dock device located at the base of the iMac.
2. Insert your flash drive into the USB dock device, if you plan on using one to transfer your files.
3. Wake up the iMac, or press the power button located on its bottom left corner on the backside if it isn't on.
4. Select the "Podcast Room User" profile when logging in. If another profile is shown by default, click away or press the "ESC" key to show the other profiles.
5. You should now be at the Podcast Room User desktop. Locate and open Audacity on the dock or desktop. It looks like this:

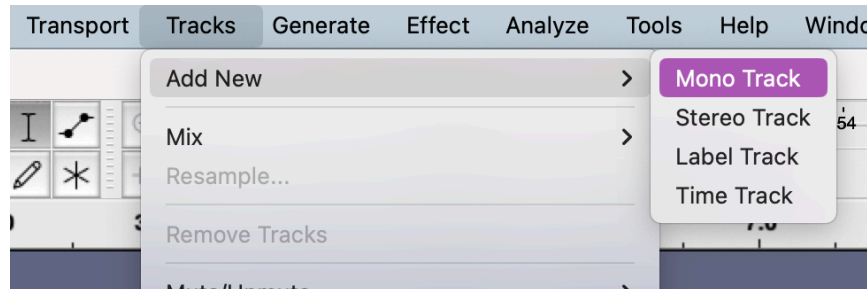


Once opened, Audacity looks like this:

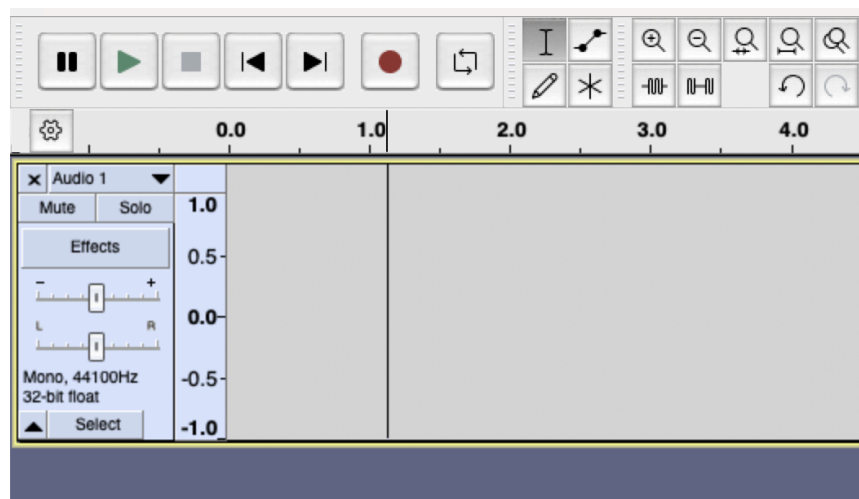


## Using Audacity to Record & Edit

1. The first thing you'll want to do is create a track to record on. Find "Tracks" on the top bar, then "Add New", and create a Mono Track.



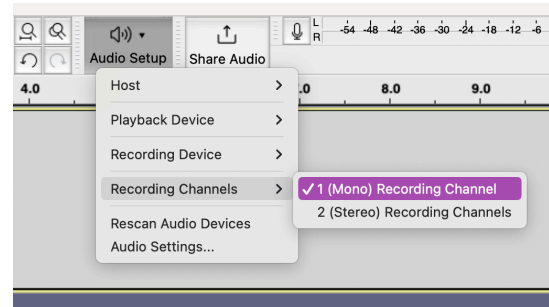
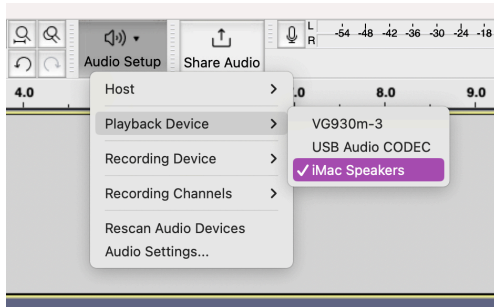
2. Once made, the track looks like the image below. Make sure you have the "I" shaped indicator selected to select audio along the timeline (it should be selected by default).



3. Ensure that you have the correct recording device selected by opening "Audio Setup", then "Recording Device", and selecting the audio capture device you are using. If using our equipment, "USB Audio CODEC" should be selected.



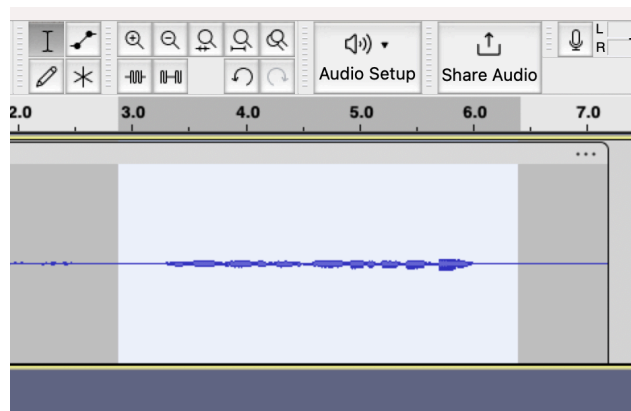
4. Also in these settings, check that under “Playback Device”, “iMac Speakers” is selected, and under “Recording Channels”, “Mono” is selected.



5. Once those settings are squared away, you should be ready to start recording.
- To begin recording, click the red circle.
  - To stop recording or playback, click the black square, or press the spacebar.
  - To playback your recording, click the green arrow, or press the spacebar.
  - Use the black arrows to navigate to the beginning or end of your recording.



6. After your audio has been recorded, you may want to edit out certain areas of the recording. With the selection tool, navigate to the part of the recording you want to edit out, click and drag on the audio track, and then press “Delete” on the keyboard.



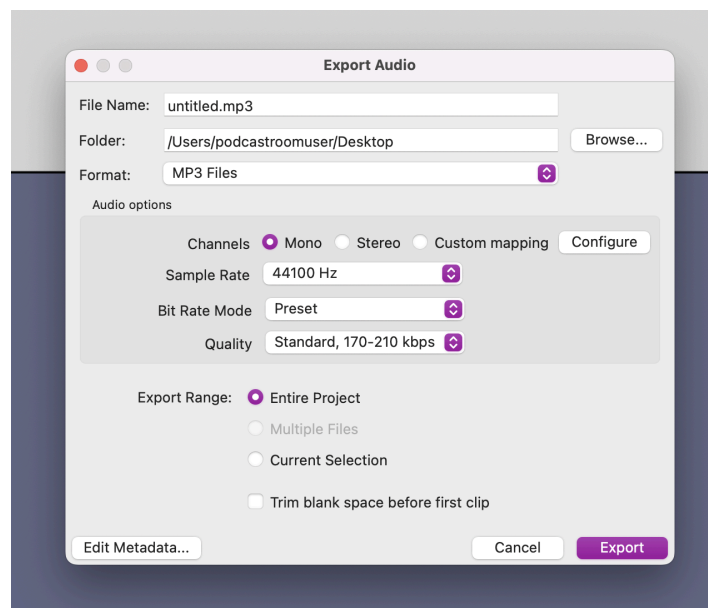
Audacity has many editing tools and mastering effects that can be used to enhance the quality of your recording. If you'd like to learn more about how to do something in audacity, try searching YouTube for video tutorials on how to use its various functions.

## Exporting Audio Files from Audacity

Once your recording is good to go, you'll want to export it as a readable file. The most common type of audio file is MP3, which is a fairly universal audio format.

### To export your audio:

1. Select "File" from the top bar, then "Export Audio".
2. Enter what you'd like to name the audio file.
3. Find the folder you'd like to save the audio file to. If you have a flash drive plugged into the iMac, export your file to that device.
4. Select the audio file format. "MP3" should be selected in most scenarios. The rest of the settings should be kept as they are.
5. For "Export Range", if you only have one track, export the entire project. If you have multiple tracks and want to export them as separate files, use the selection tool to select the areas you'd like to export before opening this window, and then choose "Current Selection".
6. Click on the "Export" button to export the audio file.



## Recording: Tips & Tricks

Here are some handy tips for those who haven't recorded with an XLR microphone before.

### 1. Speak into the front of the microphone.

Our AT2020 microphones are “cardioid” microphones, meaning they only capture sound properly from one side. The front of the microphones are labeled “AT2020” on the base, while the back is labeled “back”.

### 2. Use the over-ear headphones to listen to microphone input.

Listening to what the microphone is picking up in real-time can alert you to any issues or unwanted sounds that are being picked up while you're recording. It can also help you understand how to find your “recording voice”!

### 3. Ensure the microphone “gain” is set at a reasonable level.

Think of gain as the base volume of your recording.

Gain should not be set too low, or too high, as these can both cause issues. The standard gain setting on our devices should be at about the level in the image to the right.



### 4. Maintain a proper distance between the microphone and your mouth.

As a good rule of thumb, outstretch the fingers on your hand so that there's a bit of space between them. A good distance to keep your mouth from the microphone is the same length as the distance between your pinky and your thumb.



### 5. Watch out for “plosives”.

When puffs of air or breath hit a microphone, it makes a rather nasty sort of sound known as a “plosive”. It particularly affects “p” and “b” sounds when we make them.

To help avoid this, try positioning the front of the microphone slightly adjacent to your mouth, instead of directly in front of it. This will make it so your breath goes past the microphone, while other sounds are captured normally.