

Laptop Essentials

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR HUNTER CENTRAL COAST TEACHERS

Visit our Laptop Support COW

The Laptop Support COW is part of the Hunter Central Coast Regional COW's (Collaborative Online Workspaces).

Access

Access the COW's via the link on the HCC Regional Intranet: https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/regional/hunter_ccoast/

Login with your DET portal username with the suffix @det

e.g. Jennifer.Wise@det

Have you seen our Blog?

Access our blog at:

<http://share.dernsw.posterous.com>

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Creating a Simple Podcast in Audacity

Podcasting is the process of recording audio or video to share with others. In the commercial world, podcasts are shared via the internet and can be streamed online or downloaded to a computer or MP3 player.

In the educational setting, podcasts can be a valuable tool to enhance student learning. Podcasts allow students to capture their learning experiences and share their learning with a wide audience. Podcasts make learning portable and provide opportunities for authentic and meaningful assessment.

Audacity is a piece of software which allows users to record and edit audio, insert existing sound files, and export to MP3 or WAV files. This issue of Laptop Essentials will focus on the use of Audacity to create a simple audio podcast.

Ideas for Podcasting

There are many ways that Podcasting can be used for learning. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:




- Report on fieldwork or the outcome of an experiment
- Record a classroom performance or speech
- Create a radio style advertisement
- Conduct an interview on a controversial topic

Planning for your Podcast

Before making a podcast, create a plan for the recording. This may involve writing a script, selecting backing music or creating sound effects. Audacity will allow you to put these elements together to make an engaging audio recording.



All DER laptops have a built-in microphone input. Test the microphone before you begin your podcast. The microphone settings can be found in the Sound option of the windows Control Panel.

Creating your first Voice Recording in Audacity

1. Open Audacity from  > All Programs >  Audacity
2. Press the red 'Record'  button to begin the recording.
3. Speak clearly so that your voice can be picked up by the microphone. A new audio track will appear in the project window. A blue waveform display indicates the level of audio that is being recorded.



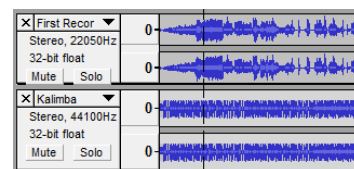
Above: The blue waveform of an audio track

4. To 'pause' the recording presses the pause button . This will allow you to add further audio to the one track.
5. When finished, press the stop button . This will finalise the track.

* Make sure that you save your project via the **File** menu.


Adding Music to your Podcast

Backing music can be added to your podcast by importing it into your project. Music can be imported as a WAV, MP3 or AIFF file. You will need to have a copy of this file ready on your computer before you can import it. To import a music audio file, click on the **Project** menu and select the **Import audio** option. Browse to find the file on your computer and click **Open**. A new track will be added to the project below the voice track that you recorded (see below).




Above: Two audio tracks in a project

Trimming an Audio Track

Trimming is useful when you have parts of a track that you need to discard. To 'trim' a section of track, highlight the section of track that you need to trim and click on the cut button .

Adjusting the Volume of your Audio Tracks

So that your voice recording and backing music work well together, you will need to adjust the volume of your tracks. On each track is a Gain Control . Move the gain control slider for the backing music to the left to lower the volume. This will allow the voice recording to be heard clearly over the backing music.

Fading In and Out

Fading allows you to gradually increase or decrease the volume of an audio track. This is particularly useful where the backing music of a track needs to be faded out as the voice recording begins. To apply a fade in or fade out to a track, first select the part of the track that needs to be faded. In the **Effect** menu choose **Fade In** (or **Fade Out**). The changes will be applied to the audio track and will be visible in the waveform.

Publishing your Project

Publishing the project will bring all of the tracks together into a single audio file (rendering). To publish your podcast, select the **File** menu followed by **'Export As MP3'** (or **.WAV**). Choose a location to save your podcast and click **Save**.

Further help

'UCreate an Audio Podcast' -> click [HERE](#)

'Tools 4U: Audacity' -> click [HERE](#)

'UCreate a Video Podcast' -> click [HERE](#)

Next Issue: Creating an image slideshow in Adobe Captivate