

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Sound Recording with Audacity

Audacity® is free, open source, cross-platform audio software for multi-track recording and editing. For more info visit:
<https://www.audacityteam.org/>

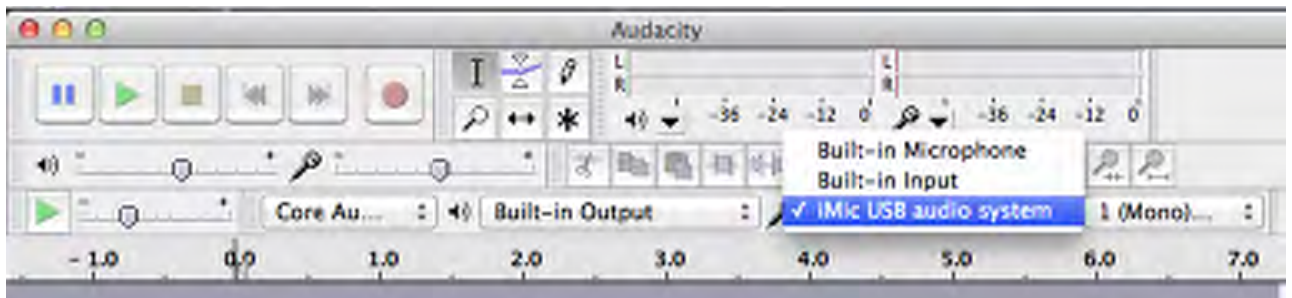


Step 1:

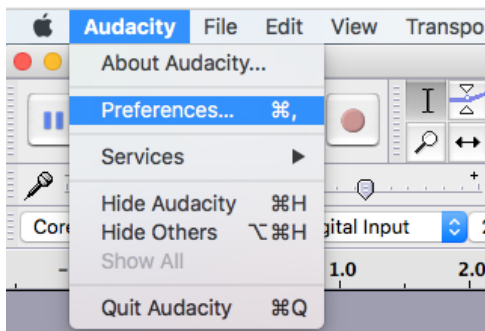
Turn on the laptop, log in under the Foley account, using the password “illusion”. The white ‘iMic’ USB cable should already be plugged into the laptop; this will connect the microphone to the computer. Audacity is located in the “applications” folder as well as located in the dock.

Step 2:

With Audacity open, make sure that the Input Device (the pull down menu next to the microphone icon) is ‘iMic USB audio system’.



If you do not see ‘iMic USB’ as an option, make sure that it is connected via the USB port on the laptop, and then in the laptops System Preferences check Sound>Input, and select ‘iMac USB’. You can leave the Output setting at ‘Built-in Output’, so that you can listen to your audio through the headphones connected to the headphone jack of the laptop.



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Step 3:

Choose 1 (Mono) to balance the audio on both left and right channels. Using the stereo setting while re- cording with a mono microphone will result in your audio only being on the right or left track.

If you would like to monitor your audio before you begin recording, you can so via the top menu Audacity>Preferences. Select Software Play through, and then click OK. Selecting Hardware Play through as well will result in recording an echo, as the monitoing sound will be slightly recorded as well as the source sound through the microphone.



To activate the monitoring, click on the microphone icon or select Start Monitoring from the pull down menu. This will allow you to see your sound levels (red) in the meter. A good recording level would be around the -24 to 12 db range.



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
Step 4:

Press the red record button to record, and the yellow stop button to stop the recording. You can then listen back to your recording with the green play button and navigate through the track with the timeline marker. If you are monitoring your audio while recording, make sure the sound is not coming out of the speakers, but rather through the headphones, so that you are not recording both the original sound and the playback.



Note:

Multiple takes will result in multiple individual tracks- this is okay, when you export the audio file it will be collapsed into two tracks.

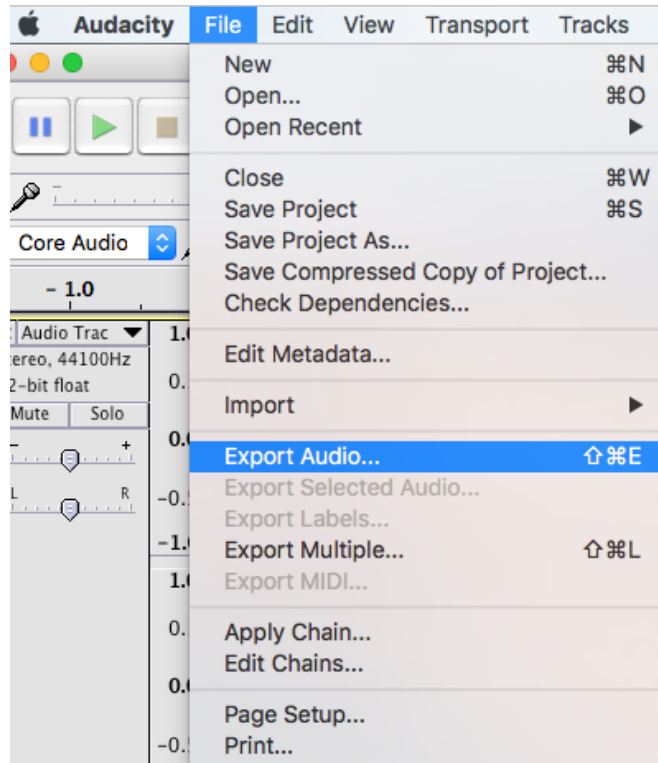
Usually you will be using the selection tool  to navigate your way around the tracks you created. You do have the option of using the time shift tool ; this will allow you to 'move' your tracks around and stack them up, if you would like them to play over each other. You may want to leave all your tracks staggered so they play one after the other, so that you can cut and arrange them later against your movie in your Non-Linear Editor (such as Final Cut Pro) timeline. Know that stacking up your audio tracks may lead to an increased 'room tone' level in the quieter moments of your recording, as they will all be playing at the same time. Once you have finished recording your sound, you are now ready to create an audio file that you can work with.

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Step 5:

You can save an audio file from your Audacity project by selecting File>Export. A new window will open, allowing you to name the file, select where you will save the file (ideally a folder you have created for yourself in the Sound FX folder on the hard drive), and to choose the file format you will save the file as. A good option would be to save it as an AIFF file, a format that works well within most editing programs such as Final Cut Pro.



You will get a warning that your tracks will be mixed down that is fine and you can click OK.

After saving the file, you will have an opportunity to add any metadata you would like to include for that file (this info will be visible to you via the 'get info' option of the file later).

Ending your session:

When you quit Audacity you will be asked if you want to save your project. If you think you will need to return and add new recordings to these original tracks, choose "Yes", name the project and save that as well to your folder. Remember, doing this saves only the project, and does not export usable sound files for editing. If you have no need to save the project, simply select No. Once you have finished, you can copy the files in your folder to an external hard drive of your own, or move your folder to the Archive via the local network (plug the Ethernet cable into any even numbered Ethernet port in Studio 106), and access your files that way from the Animation Lab.

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