

# AUDACITY QUICK START GUIDE

## What is it and where can I find it?

Audacity is simple audio recording and editing software that is available for both Microsoft Windows and Mac OS X. It is installed on computers in Ciruti classrooms and the LRC, the Library Information Commons and MEWS (the remodeled Dwight Corridor). If you'd like to install this free software on your own computer, please visit <http://webdev.mtholyoke.edu/lits/18273.shtml> for instructions and links to download the installation files.

## What will I need?

For best voice-recording results, use a USB headset with microphone. A headset with microphone will help block out background noise and do a better job of capturing just your voice. Headsets can be borrowed from the Library Circulation Desk or the LRC. If you're interested in buying your own combination headset with microphone, here are some specs to look out for:


- A microphone frequency response range of 100Hz to 8kHz (8,000Hz) or better
- A unidirectional microphone
- Stereo headset

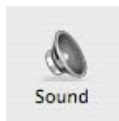
## Setting up

1. Plug your USB headset into one of the computer's USB ports and make sure that the computer detects the new device:

- In Windows
  - You should, after a moment, see a message bubble in the lower right hand corner of the screen saying that new hardware has been detected and, finally, "Found New Hardware. Your new hardware is installed and ready to use."

- In OSX

- Click on the apple icon  in the upper left-hand corner of the computer screen and select "System Preferences" from the menu that appears.
- In the System Preferences window, in the "Hardware" section, click on the "Sound" icon



- In the Sound window that opens, click on the "Output tab." In the "Choose a device for sound output" list you should see the headset that you just plugged in. Select the headset by clicking on it
- Click on the "Input" tab – once again, you should see your headset in the "Choose a device for sound input" list. Select it.
- Close the Sound window.

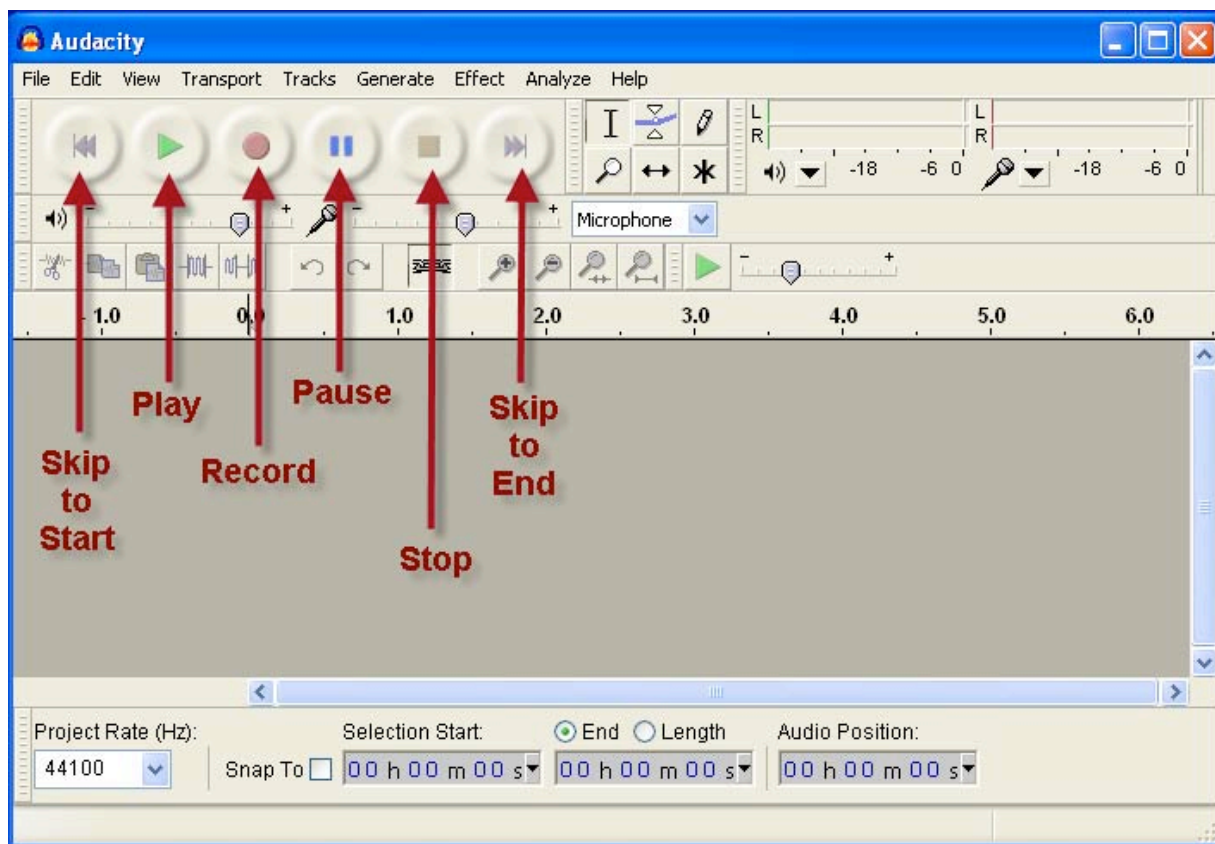
2. Change Audacity's preferences so the software will use the headset as its input and output device.

- In Windows
  - Open Audacity (click on Start > Programs > Audacity)

- In the Audacity menu bar, click on Edit > Preferences.
- In the “Audacity Preferences” menu that opens, the “Audio I/O” tab should be selected by default. In the “Playback” section, use the “Device” drop-down menu to select the headset you just installed. In the “Recording” section, use the “Device” drop-down menu to again select the headset. Click on “OK” to save the changes and exit Preferences.
- In OSX
  - Open Audacity (in Finder menu bar, click on Go > Applications > Audacity)
  - In the Audacity menu bar, click on Audacity > Preferences
  - On the left side of the Audacity Preferences window that opens, select the “Audio I/O” item. On the right side of the window in the “Playback” section, use the “Device” drop-down menu to select the headset you just installed. In the “Recording” section, use the “Device” drop-down menu to again select the headset. Also in the Recording section, use the “Channels” drop-down menu to select “1 (Mono)”. Click on “OK” to save the changes and exit Preferences.

## Recording a track

The Audacity interface is very simple with the buttons you'll use most resembling those on a VCR or DVD Recorder:




- The Record button will start recording
- The Stop button will stop recording
- The Play button will playback the track you've recorded
- The Pause button can be used to pause while you're recording or to pause during playback of material already recorded
- The Skip to Start and Skip to End buttons do exactly what they say – use these to skip to the start or end of a track you've recorded

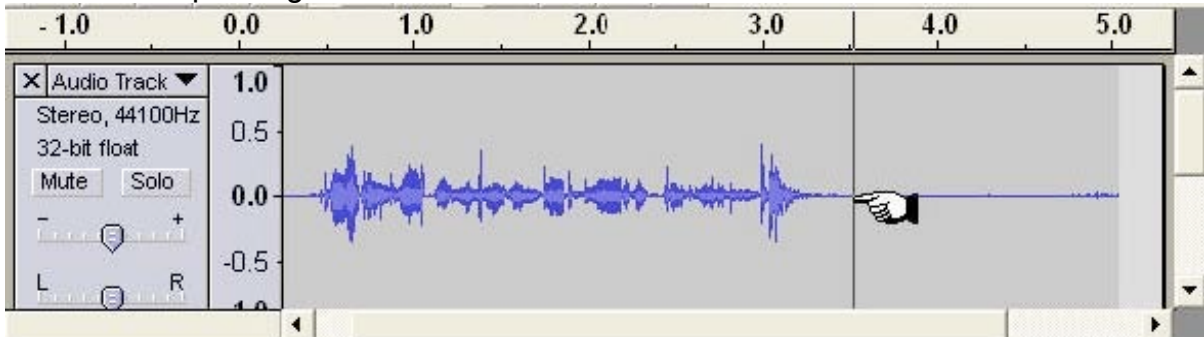
## Basic editing tips

To discard a track you don't want to keep:

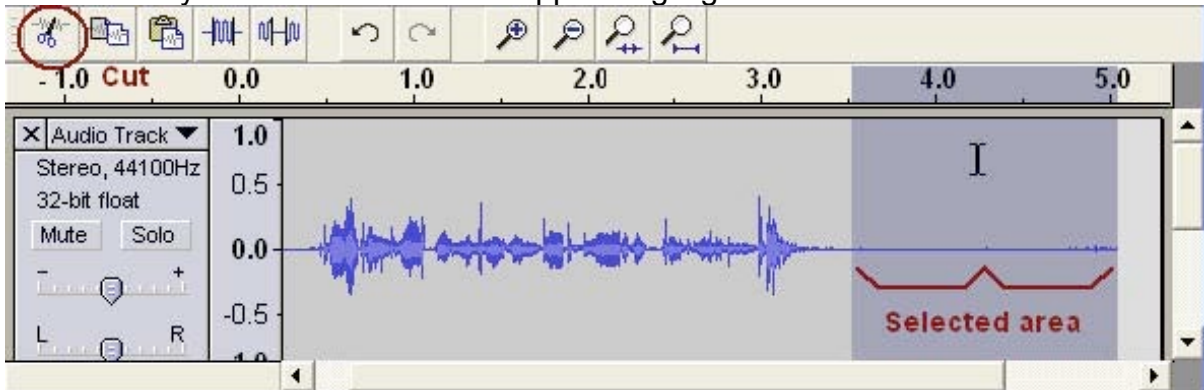
- In the Audacity menu bar, click on Edit > Undo Record

To cut out “dead air” at the beginning or end of a track:

- In the Audacity tool bar, click on the Selection Tool 
- Then click on the place in the track where you wish to begin to select a section for cutting. You'll notice that the selection tool inserts a vertical line and the cursor changes to look like a pointing hand:



- In Windows, hold down the left mouse button, in OS X, hold down the mouse button, and drag the hand to the end of the section you want to cut then release the mouse button. The section you wish to remove will appear highlighted:



- Use the Cut button (circled above) or, in the menu bar, click on Edit > Cut to delete the selected area.
- If you want to undo a cut, in the Menu bar, click on Edit > Undo Cut.

## Exporting a track to mp3 file

Audacity has more than one export option, but mp3 sound files are the most commonly used and are playable on most computers. To export an Audacity track as an mp3 file:

- In the menu bar, click on File > Export
  - In Windows, an “Export File” window will open. Use the “Save in” drop-down menu to choose a location to save the file, use the “File name” box to name the file, use the “Save as type” drop-down menu to select “MP3 Files,” then click on “Save.”
  - In OS X, an untitled window will open. Use the “Save As” box to name the file, choose a location to save the file, use the “Format” drop-down menu to select “MP3 files,” then click on “Save.”