

Podcast Primer

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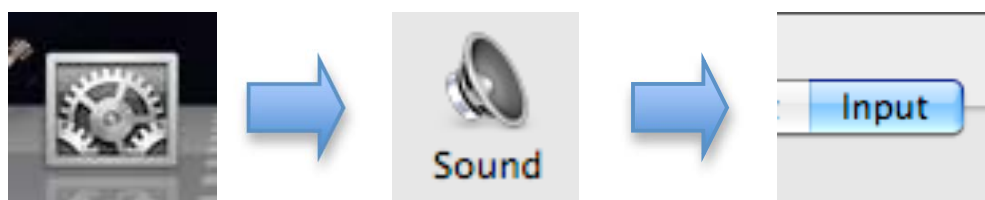
Getting started

Before you get started on your podcast, you need to be prepared both technically and logistically. This means not only having all the equipment set up properly, but having a clear idea of what content you'll have and what direction your podcast will take. For examples of audio packages, you can search iTunes, radio outlets such as NPR.org or other students' work at <http://itunes.ttu.edu>. It is also important to have the computer, soundboard and other audio equipment functioning and communicating with each other before beginning, as otherwise you cannot produce your podcast.

Setting up the computer

To produce a podcast, you're going to be using two pieces of technology: an Apple computer and a MultiMix soundboard. Here are a couple of steps you need take before opening the podcasting software:

1. Turn on the soundboard. It will light up.
2. Check all the settings on the soundboard.
 - a. You'll want sliders 1, 2 and the main mix slider turned up
 - b. Speak into the microphone with the headphones on. You should hear your own voice (make sure the volume is up on the headphone amp.)
3. Make sure the computer recognizes the soundboard
 - a. Open the system preferences panel by clicking the grey box with gears in the dashboard at the bottom of the screen.
 - b. Click on the sound icon, then on the input tab. Look for MultimixFirewire under the device list. If you see it, then the computer can see and work with the soundboard and mics.

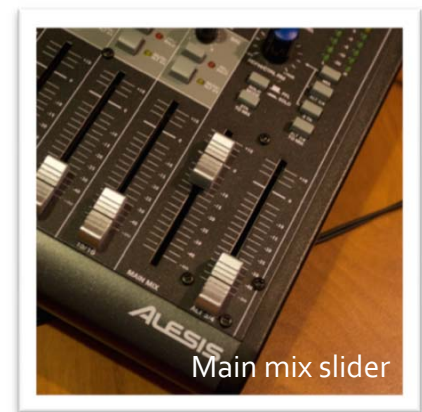
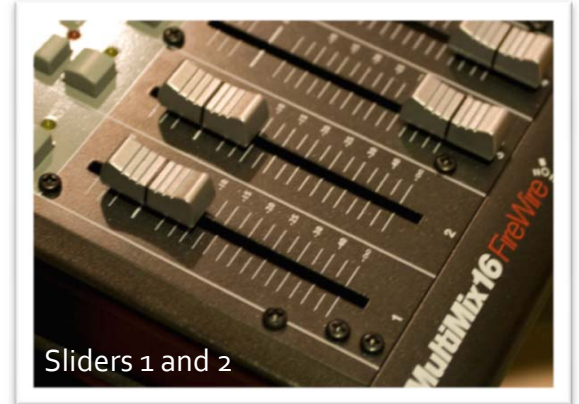


Sometimes you can have problems getting the computer and soundboard to interact. It can be very frustrating, but have patience. Check that all wires look plugged in completely and correctly, restart both the soundboard and computer, then go through the setup process again.

Using the soundboard

Though upon first glance the soundboard may appear daunting to someone who has never worked with audio equipment before, for most podcasts being produced for your class, you'll only need to touch three of the sliders, nothing more.

- Sliders 1, 2 and the main mix slider should all be at zero (pushed fairly high up). Slider 1 controls the input volume for the microphone at the computer screen and slider 2 controls the input volume for the microphone nearest the door.
- The main mix slider controls the direct output volume from the board, meaning that if both it and the first two sliders are turned up, you'll be able to hear yourself through the headphones or amp.
- If you have the main mix turned down but sliders 1 and 2 turned up, the computer will be able to record the sound, but you won't be distracted by your own voice.
- Sliders 1 and 2 are located on the lower left side of the board and the main mix slider is on the lower right.
- If you're not able to hear sound, turning knobs, pushing buttons and making other changes is probably not going to solve your problem. Ask for help if you need it.



This is what the soundboard should look like:



Producing your Podcast

Opening GarageBand

The software we'll be using to make your podcast is GarageBand, the audio software bundled with most Apple computers in their iLife suite of programs. Though it may not offer the same advanced options as more professional pieces of software, it offers an easy step into the world of podcasting for those unfamiliar with audio software and equipment.

1. Open GarageBand by clicking on the guitar on the dashboard at the bottom of your screen.
2. Click "Create New Podcast Episode."
3. It will prompt you to create a save file. Name it according to your digital filing system. For the purposes of Multi-Platform News Delivery, go ahead and name it by the file convention system of lastname_title_episodenummer.
For example: martinez_raidercast_01
 - a. Depending on how many podcasts you produce in a semester, it might be a good idea to keep a folder for each episode, holding not only your GarageBand save file, but also separate files such as scripts, pictures, and other audio clip files brought in from sources other than the studio microphones.
4. You will now be dropped directly into the GarageBand interface.
 - a. In the upper left are your different tracks with a corresponding stacked timeline to the right.
 - b. Below you'll see where the cursor is at in your podcast, shown in minutes and seconds, with a more detailed wavelength view of the currently selected track below that.
 - c. On the right depending on what view you're in, you will either see a panel with access to your iTunes and iPhoto library access or podcast artwork and sound settings.

Setting up GarageBand to work with the soundboard

Though you already checked to see if the computer recognized the soundboard, you need to adjust the settings in GarageBand so that it works with it. Once you go through this step on your account, it will be remembered every time you log in.

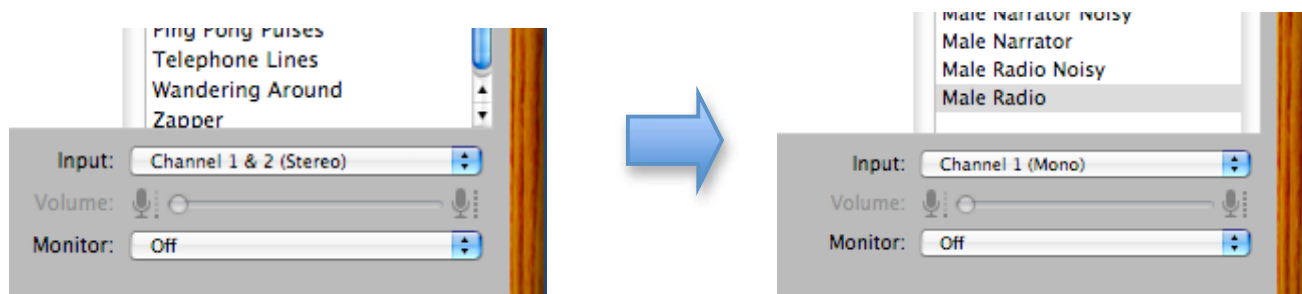
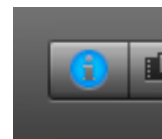
1. With GarageBand open, go to the top left of your screen to the menu bar, pull down the GarageBand menu and go to Preferences.
2. Under the Audio/MIDI tab change the "Audio Output" and "Audio Input" pull-down menus to "MultiMix."

3. The panel should look like this:



The next step is to assign the microphones. This step will have to be completed with each podcast episode you make.

1. In the upper-right corner of the GarageBand window, you'll see a couple of tracks that are dropped in by default. They are named "Male Voice" and "Female Voice." Click on the "Male Voice" track.
2. Just below the timeline in the lower-right there are two buttons, click the letter "i" enclosed in a circle so that it glows blue. This will open the track information panel.
In the lower-right of the track information panel, change the Input pull-down menu from reading "Channel 1&2(Stereo)" to "Channel 1 (Mono)." This assigns microphone 1(nearest computer) to the "Male Voice" track.
3. Do the same for the "Female Voice" track, except instead of choosing "Channel 1(Mono)," choose "Channel 2(Mono)." It should make sense to you by now that this track now corresponds to slider 1 and microphone 1(the one nearest the door.)



4. You may also wonder why one track is designated for different genders. GarageBand has different effects that affect how your voice is recorded. If you are having two males or two females, you can change the settings by changing the “Female Voice” track to “Male Radio” in the track information panel or vice versa.
 - a. Certainly, you can experiment the various other effects available.

Using GarageBand

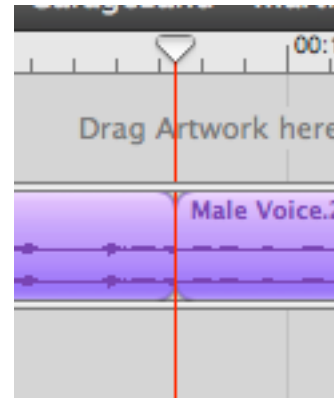
GarageBand uses a drag-and-drop as-simple-as-it-can-get interface for editing and compiling audio clips from various sources. You can use the microphones to record your voice, drag music in from your iTunes or an mp3 file, or drag certain other audio file formats in as ambient noise or soundbytes.

The Podcast Track

If you have the podcast track selected, you’ll notice you have some unique options available unlike other tracks. In the bottom panel where a soundwave is normally displayed for audio tracks, the podcast tracks shows different chapter sections. You can use the podcast track to distinguish different segments on your podcast, provide different artwork or Internet links and also write in descriptions for your podcast on the right panel.

Splitting Tracks and Clips

When editing any clips that you’ve recorded or brought into your timeline from another source, you might need to cut out a certain span of sound or even just delete huge chunks. The best way to do this is by using the split function in GarageBand. By hitting the Command and T keys together or going to the Track Menu and selecting split, whatever clip you have selected will then become two at the point where the cursor is. From that point you can drag the clip you want around easier or just delete sections you don’t want.



Fine-tuning clips

Another editing tool that’s very useful in refining your podcast is the ability to draw in and out on sound clips. When you have a clip selected, float your mouse over the end of the clip. The mouse will become a horizontal arrow next to a line. If you click and drag left and right, you’ll crop or expand the clip.

Exporting and turning in your Podcast

Once you’ve completed your podcast, you’ll want to export it out of GarageBand for your grade and possibly web distribution. Look over and play your podcast one last time, then go to the Share menu, click “Export Song to Disk.” With the compress box checked, select mp3 encoder and high quality. The program will process all your clips and put them together in one file, wherever you saved it.