
Podcasting Tips & Tricks

by Brian Mayo

Last Updated: November 6, 2007

This guide is intended for PC users. If you are on a Mac, use [GarageBand](#) for your recording/editing needs. [Audacity](#) works for Linux as well.

Tools (What You Need Beforehand)

- A microphone. (Two for remote recording.) Cheap ones will not produce good sound, especially if you go through Skype. We use and recommend the [Samson Q1U Unidirectional Mic](#). The sticker on it says "Ideal for Podcasting" and that is no lie. They simply work great. You're looking at about \$50-80/each on [eBay](#) if you're lucky.
- [Audacity](#) (STABLE, not BETA). Works for Windows/Linux. THE best freeware audio editor. If you're looking to pay (hah), then definitely check out [Adobe Audition](#) (formerly Cool Edit Pro).
- A host for your podcast. I cover this more in-depth in the "Uploading" section.
- [SmartFTP](#) or another FTP client. This depends on where you are uploading, really.
- Of course, an internet browser as well. We, as smart people, recommend [Firefox](#).

If you plan on recording remotely...



- [Skype](#). Only because there isn't a better alternative.
- [Pamela](#). Records your conversations. We've tried freeware alternatives to record with and they just suck. The demo has a time limit though, so look into getting the full version.

The Thought Process...

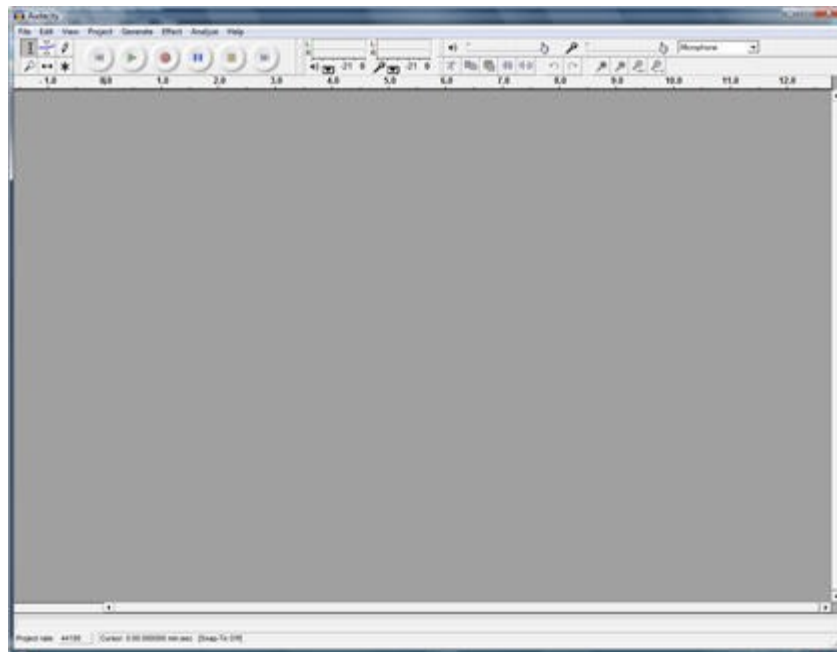
It is imperative that you get all your thoughts together before you record. As much as we'd like to think that stream-of-consciousness rants and raves work 100% of the time, this is not true.

Jotting down your ideas in Notepad or on paper is a great way to organize your thoughts. (Simply put, BRAINSTORM before you record.) If you have multiple hosts, another way to avoid one another talking at once is to assign certain points/thoughts/ideas to a host to introduce or go through. Don't over-do the pre-planning though, as a too-structured podcast will be predictable and certainly less fun.

Recording: The Hardware

As I said before, you'll need your microphone(s). Make sure they are hooked up and that Windows not only detects them, but hears them as well. A great tip is to record a little bit in [Audacity](#) to make sure your mic is working. Play it back to make sure it sounds fine. This may seem like a no-brainer, but if you record an hour-plus episode and it sounds crappy, you won't be in a good mood. Trust me.

Recording: The Software

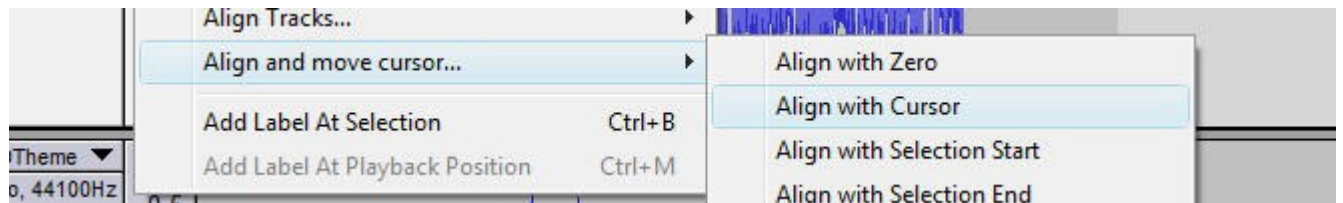
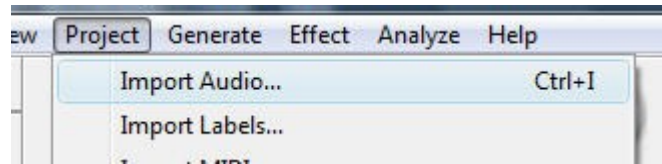


Once you get your thoughts down and your mic all situated, time to fire up Audacity. The default settings should work fine. Simply hit the Record button and ramble on.

We here at the KAMPC record the whole episode at once and edit later, however if you want to split up recording into bits, that is fine. It's important you have time to record, because picking up where you left off after a day or more may get confusing and result in a sub-par podcast. If you screw up or something goes wrong, you always have the option to stop recording or edit it later. Don't freak out. And remember, **ALWAYS SAVE OFTEN**.

Editing

Audacity's interface is fairly straightforward.



Import new clips and use Project -> Align Tracks to put the tracks in the right place.

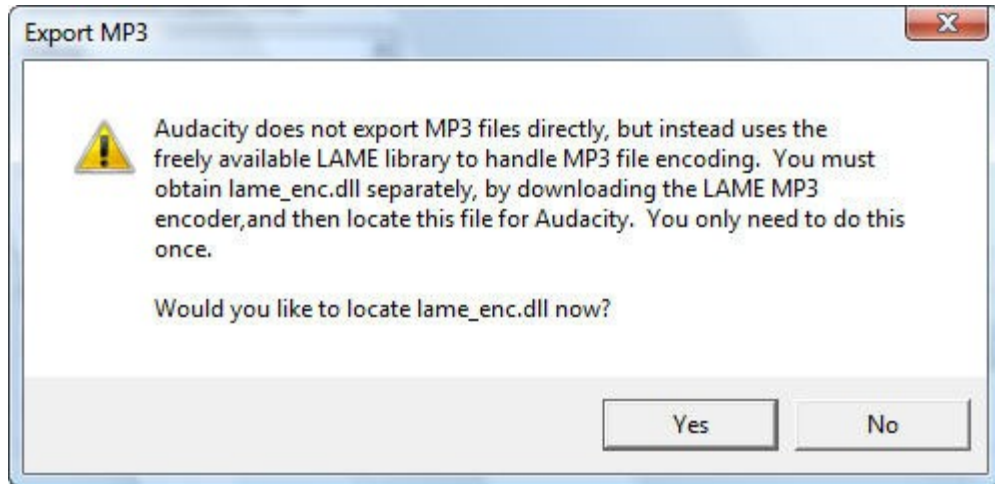


Zoom in, zoom out, etc.

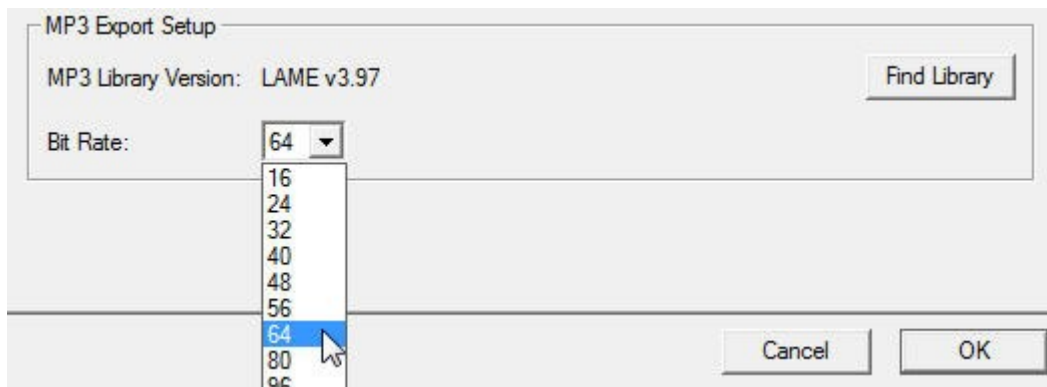
I'll probably expand on this section in the future.

Exporting

When you're done editing your podcast and it's ready to be exported, you first have to configure your export settings.

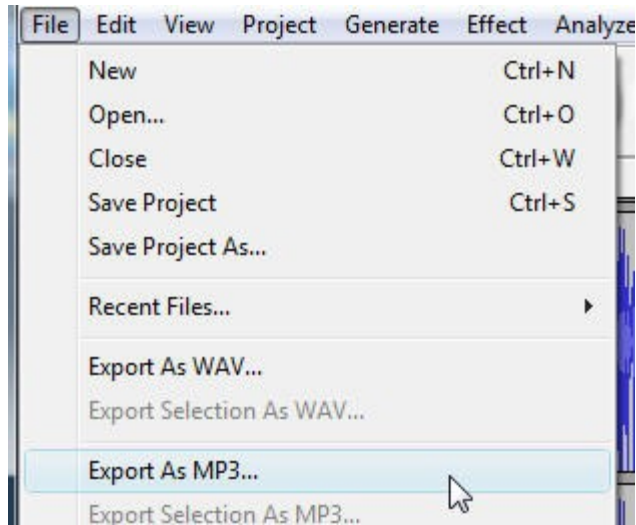


You're going to want to export to MP3, basically, but Audacity will complain about lame_enc.dll. This means you have to download the LAME encoder. You can find it [here](#). Extract lame_enc.dll from that ZIP in your Audacity folder, and point Audacity to it when it asks for the DLL (click Find Library).



Now you have to figure out your bitrate. Obviously, the lower the bitrate, the lower quality the file, the less MB you use. We here at the KAMPC use 64kbps which suits us just fine. If your using a more music-laden show, then 96kbps should be sufficient. Some major podcasts even use 32kbps which is perfect for just voice. Experiment, and decide which is good for the quality and your bandwidth.

128kbps and more is simply overkill. Please, don't do this.



Once the settings are taken care of, just go to File -> Export as MP3 and save it.

Uploading

Here comes the somewhat tricky part... where to upload? There is no true definitive answer for this one, you're just going to have to decide how serious you want to take your podcast.



- The KAMPC is hosted by SLANTD.com, my website. SLANTD.com is in turn hosted by a hosting company which I pay for. The blog/podcast is built using the [WordPress](#) publishing platform, along with the [PodPress](#) Wordpress plugin. Since both those sites contain more than enough info on how to install/use their services, I won't go into detail unless asked.
- If you're looking a simple free site with little-to-no frills, [MyPodcast.com](#) fits the bill. I've never really used it all that much, but it seems to be fine for the small start-up podcast looking to get started.

- Worried about using too much bandwidth and want a separate host for just your MP3? Check out Ourmedia.org, powered by the almighty Internet Archive. Sign-up is sort of complicated but worth it. I'm pretty sure they have some other functionality as well, but I'm not too sure on what. Give it a whirl.
- Stumped? SIMPLY GOOGLE IT. Most of the time you'll find something that just might work.

Video Podcasting

Video podcasting is a different creature that the KAMPC hasn't tackled (yet). Check out "Sites of Interest" below for some articles on video podcasting.

Sites and Tools of Interest



- Check out the [Ultimate Podcasting Guide](#). Full of pointers and external links. Sections on audio and video podcasting as well.
- [Tubes](#): Zach and I use this to send the episodes to one another. Comes quite in handy.

Questions? Comments?

Simply post in this thread, and I'll tackle it. Or add to the guide.