Authoring Audio for the Web

There a variety of media formats for putting audio on the Internet, and MP3 files is one such option. MP3 is a form of compression (more precisely referred to as **MPEG-1 Audio Layer III**, developed by the **Moving Picture Experts' Group**). Its features and benefits include:

- Encoding process compresses the audio by filtering out all noise that is not detectable to the human ear (using at the high and low frequency ranges)
- Resulting audio files are many times smaller than .wav files, with comparable quality and clarity when compared to RealMedia and Windows Media Audio.
- Standard is not proprietary in nature (i.e., can be played on a wide variety of media players including RealPlayer™, Windows Media Player™, and QuickTime™).

Although not widely known, Windows users can create MP3 files with the **Sound Recorder** accessory on their computers. The benefit of using this utility is that it enables you to record and encode audio without the need of other 3rd-party applications and, since every Windows machine has a version of the **Sound Recorder**, you can create author audio from any machine, from any location. In other words, you could create an audio file in MP3 format while visiting an Internet Café in a city in China and send it as a voice-mail attachment to family, colleagues, and/or students back home.
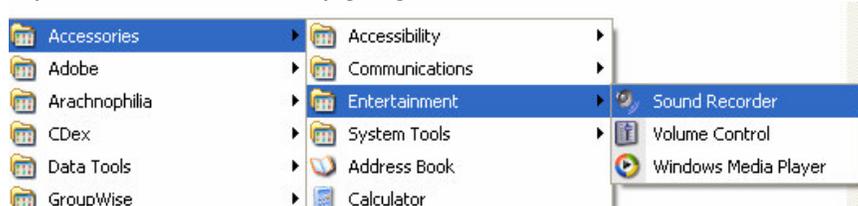
Of course, the Sound Recorder has only a recording limit of 60 seconds (see other options in reference section), and it has limited editing abilities, but it's a quick, easy-to-use, and universal tool that can accomplish a variety of classroom learning tasks.

The screenshots on this handout come from Windows XP, but the instructions here may apply to other versions of Windows.

1. Click on the Start Menu.

2. Open the Sound Record by going to Start / Accessories / Entertainment / Sound Recorder.

3. Click on the Record button. (Be sure you have a microphone plugged into your computer's microphone or line-in jack. The microphone jack is often colored red.)

4. You should be able to see a green sound wave when recording into your microphone. If you don't, check to see that if your microphone has been selected in the Properties of your sound control panel (see section below). Press the stop button and then the play button to check your recording.
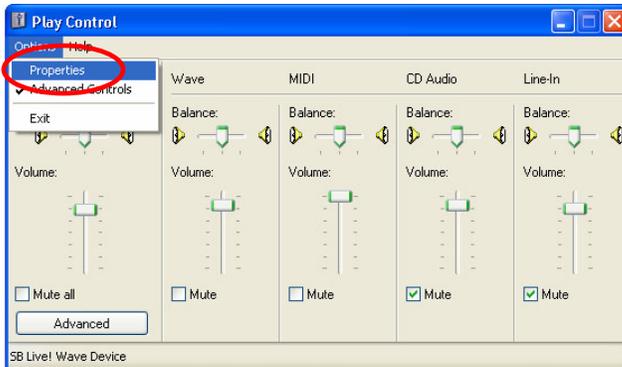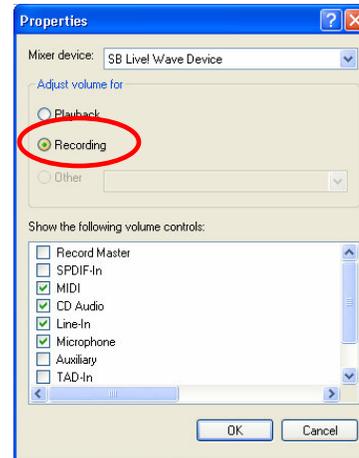
Adjusting Recording Volume
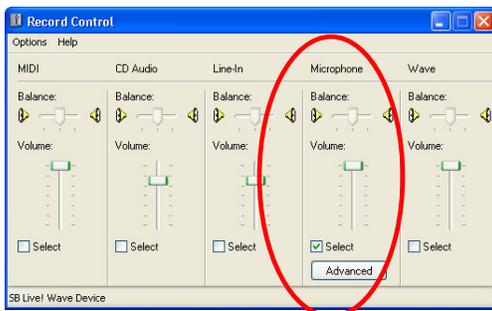
A. Go to the Volume Control Panel
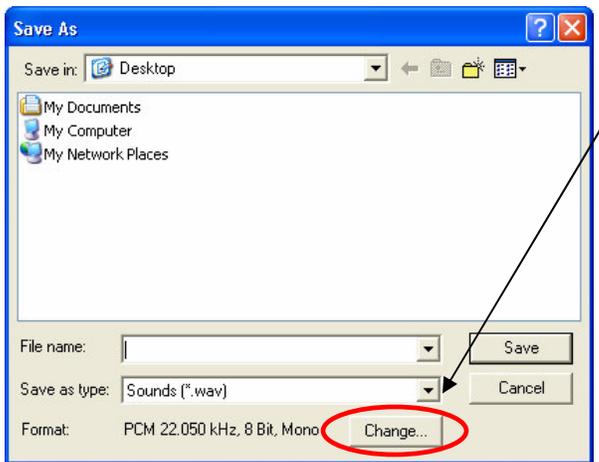
B. Select Properties

C. Select Recording and click OK.

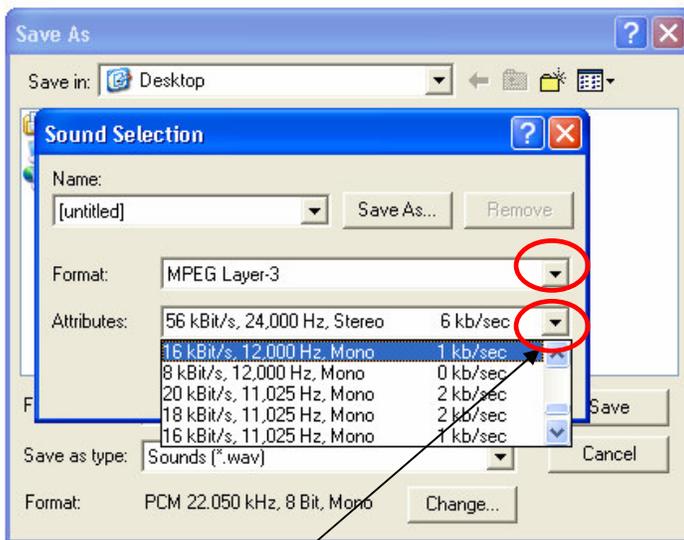D. Be sure the microphone is selected and the volume is at the desired level.

5. Select "Save As…" from the File Menu.

6. The "Save As…" window will open, and you then select where you want to save your files. In this example, I have chosen the save the files on the desktop. Then, click on the Change button.
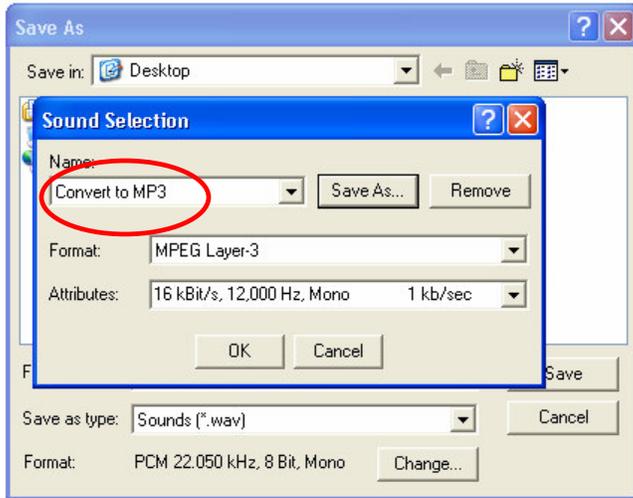

7. The Sound Selection Window will open. First, click on the Format drop down menu, and select **MPEG Layer-3**.
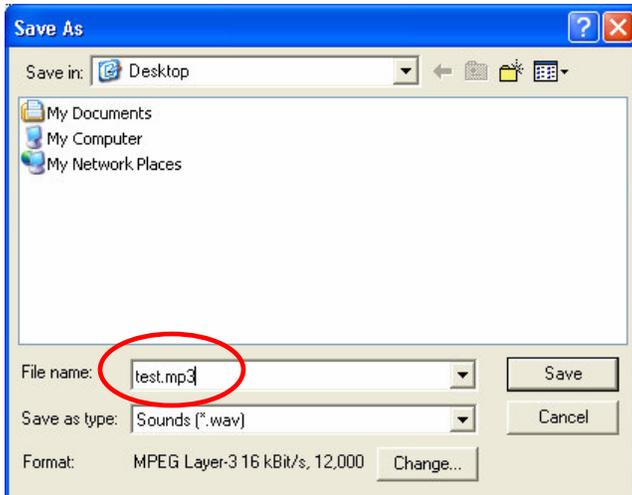

Hint Box: For faster downloads, select an attribute with a lower kBits/second range like 16kBits/s, which would be effective for slower dial-up modems.

8. Next, select the Attributes drop down menu. This selects the quality of the resulting encoding.

9. If you might use this same encoding rate and setting for MP3 files again, type the name of the encoding selection (something like, "Convert to MP3" or any description you like), as shown here in the example. Then, click OK.

10. At this point, name your audio file (in this case, "test.mp3). IMPORTANT: <u>Be sure to add the .mp3 extension to the name</u>. Disregard the fact that the "Save as type" lists it as a .wav file format. Click the save button.

11. You will then see the file conversion window. Your file is saved in the location you selected.