

Introduction to Audacity



NOTE: This document illustrates Audacity 1.3.14 on the Windows operating system. Audacity periodically updates their program to newer versions.

Audacity is an open source sound editing program. It is readily available to the public for download at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>. The program is free and written by a group of volunteers. Audacity is created and distributed as using the Open Source model. Complete licensing information is available on the Audacity Web site.

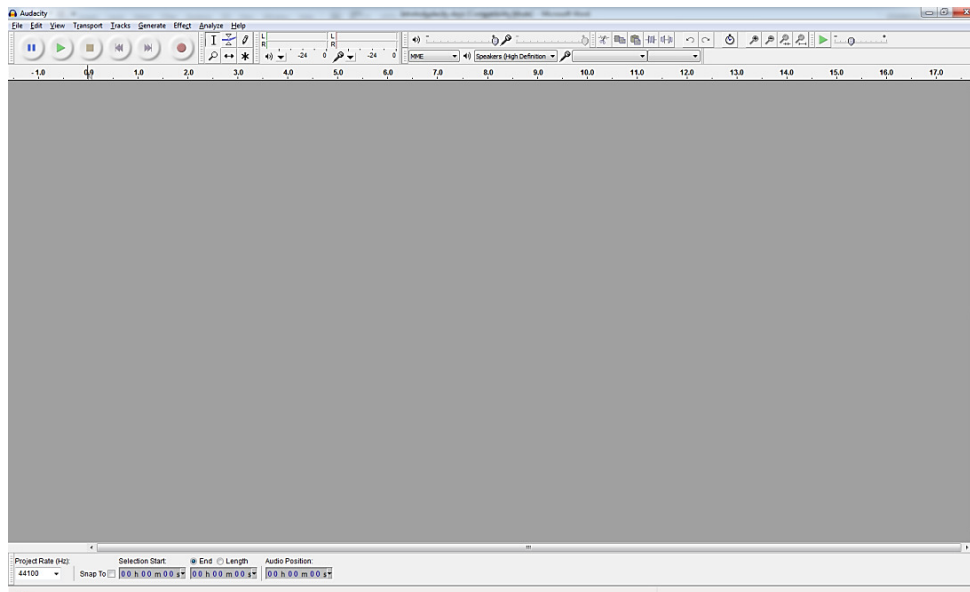
Audacity is versatile program that can be used to edit sound files and convert them to various formats. It has many of the features that are required to complete the typical project. This document is designed to introduce new users to the basic features of the program.

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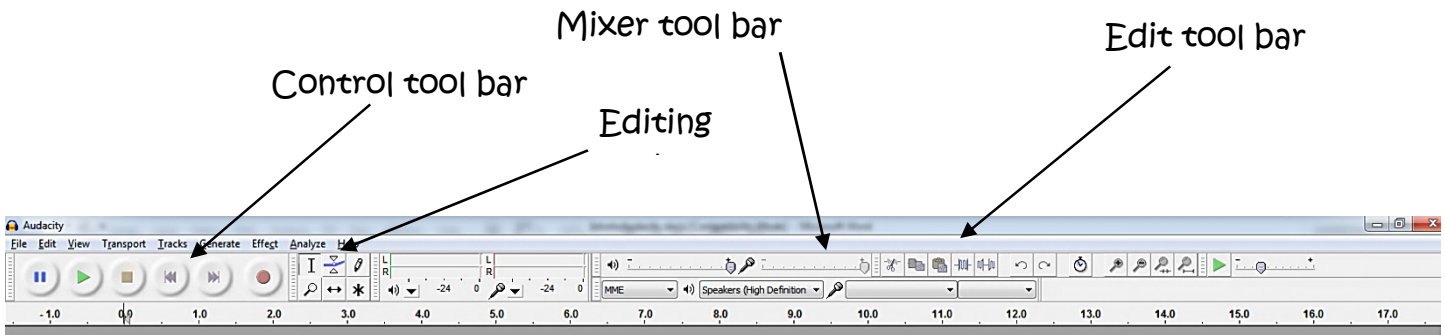
The Audacity Work Space

When you first start Audacity the work space will resemble the illustration below.

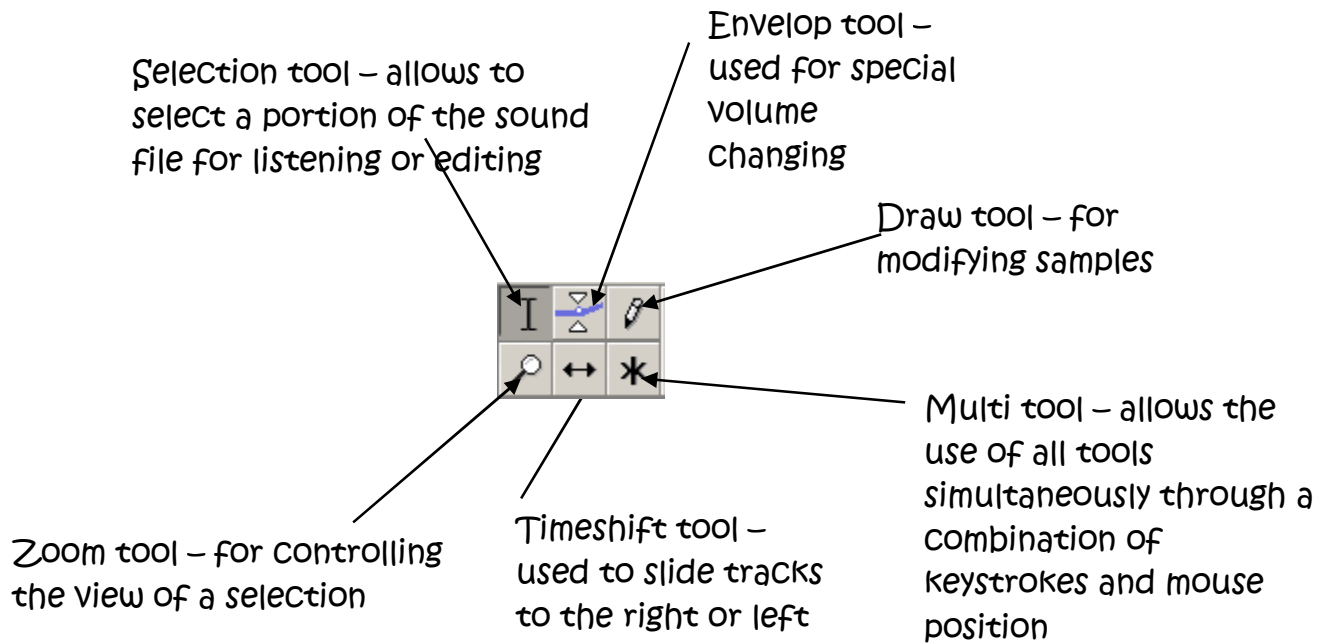
NOTE: The image below is from a Windows 7 equipped computer. The view on your computer may be different.



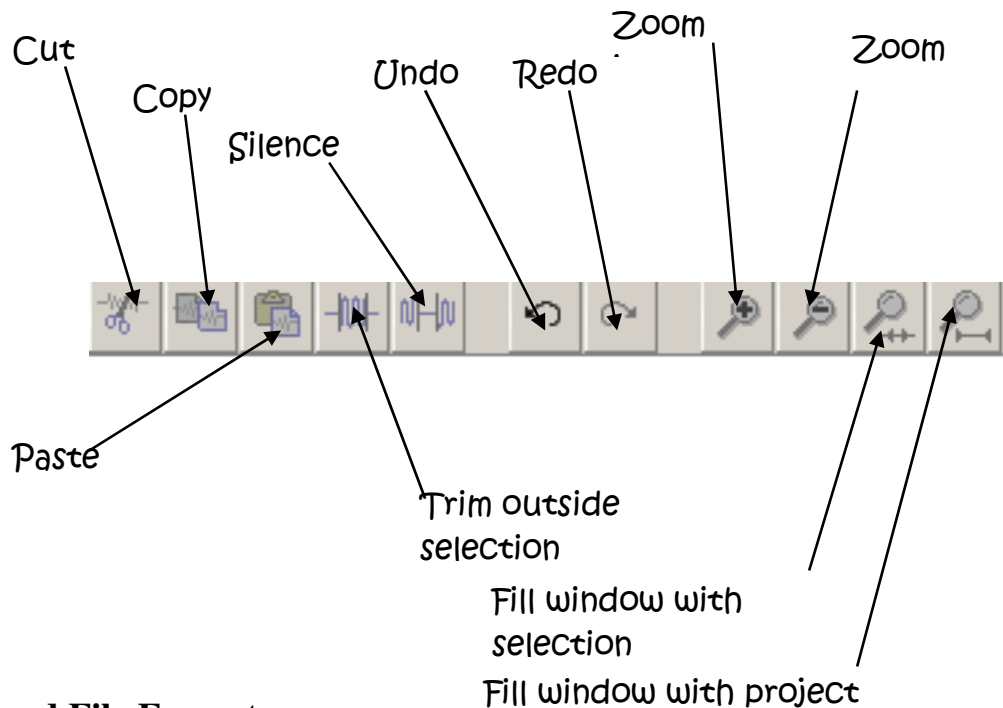
The primary components of the program are shown in the following illustration.



The purposes of the editing buttons are illustrated on the below.



The Editing tool bar has a wide range to additional tools with the purposes noted below.



Sound File Formats

Audacity will open and edit files in many formats; following are popular formats:

Audacity Project (AUP) – This is the format in which Audacity projects are saved. Projects will have to be exported into another format for replaying by other programs.

WAV – This is the standard uncompressed sound file format.

AIFF – This is the default Macintosh format for files that are not compressed.

MP3, WMA, AC3 – These are common file formats that are especially popular for music. They can be compressed with relatively little loss of audio quality. It is especially useful for situations where file size is important. To work with MP3 files, download the LAME MP3. To use audio from video and many other audio files such as WMA (Windows Media Audio and AC3 (iPod audio tracks) download FFmpeg import/export library Find both of these here: <http://lame1.buanzo.com.ar/> (accessed 03/12)

SUN Au/NeXT – This is the default sound format used on Sun and NeXT computers.

Ogg Vorbis – This is format similar to MP3, but is a free alternative.

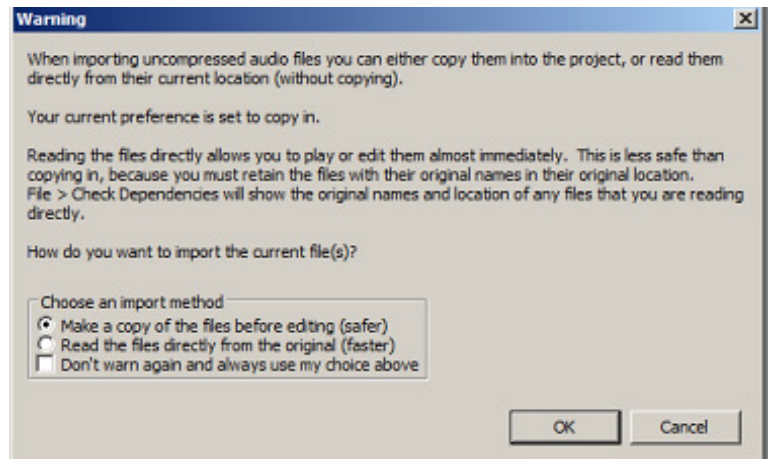
Preparing to Edit a Sound File

The first step is to open a sound file with Audacity.

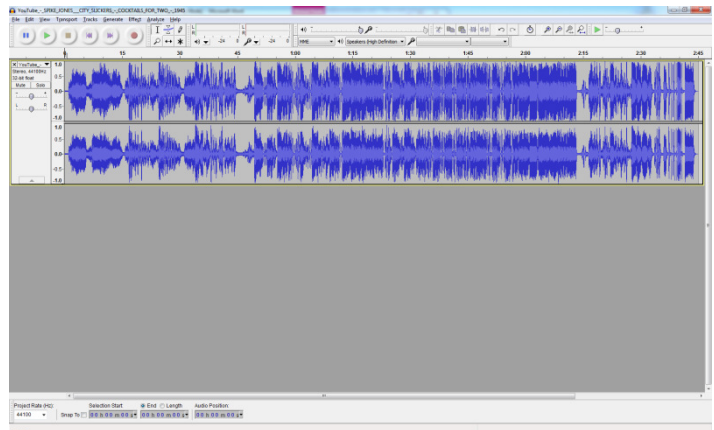
Click File on the Menu bar. A drop down list will appear.

Select Import > Audio on the drop down list. A control panel will open.

Navigate to the sound file you wish to edit. **Select** the sound file. **Click** Open. Make a decision on importing. Making a copy of the file before editing will ensure that the original is untouched and that the file imported into Audacity will always be associated with the project, should for example, you save the project to the hard drive but the original audio file is on a USB drive.




The sound file will appear in your workspace, which will now resemble the illustration on the right.



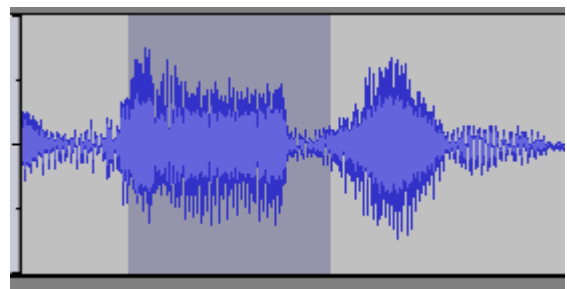
Now you are ready to edit the file.

Basic Selecting and Editing a Segment of a Sound File

Click the button for the Selection tool .

Place the Selection tool at the starting point for your edit.

Left click and **drag** the Selection tool to highlight the segment of the sound file you wish to edit.



You can now edit apply any of several editing techniques to this segment.

To delete the segment so that it is permanently removed

Click Edit on the Menu bar. A drop down menu will appear.

Click Delete

or

Press the Delete key on your keyboard.

To delete the segment so that it is permanently removed and not shift the following audio.

Click Edit on the Menu bar. A drop down menu will appear.

Click Split Delete

The remaining audio clips are now separate clips that can be moved independently.

To cut a segment so that the segment is removed from the file but is retained in the computer's clipboard-

Click Edit on the Menu bar. The drop down menu will appear.

Click Cut.

or

Press the Control and X keys on the keyboard.

To copy a segment so that it is not removed from the file, but is placed in the computer's clipboard-

Click Edit on the Menu bar.

Click Copy on the drop down menu

or

Press the Control and C keys on the keyboard.

To paste a segment-

Select a segment of your sound file.

Cut or **Copy** the segment so that it is in the computer's clipboard.

Place Editing tool in the point in the sound file where you want the segment to be pasted

Click Edit on the Menu bar.

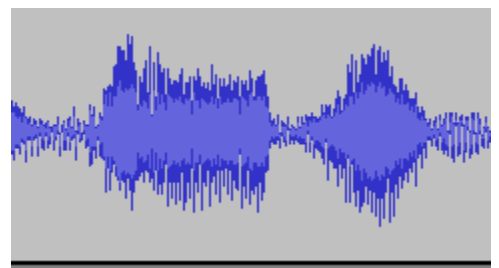
Click Paste.

or

Press the Control and V keys on the keyboard.

Using the Zoom Tool

Sometimes the default view of the sound file wave form is not detailed enough for making accurate edits. The illustration on the right is an example of a crowded wave form.

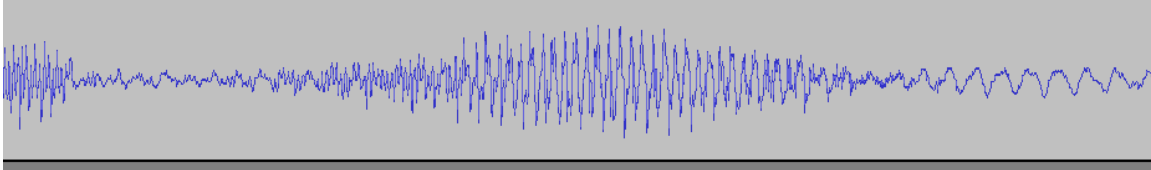


Zooming in on the view will provide more detail and make selecting a sound file segment much easier.

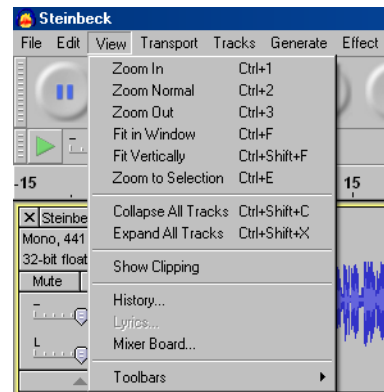
Click the Zoom tool .

Place the Zoom tool over the wave form.

Left click until the wave form is enlarged enough to make editing easier. An example is shown below.



You can also change the zoom value by clicking on View on the Menu bar and then selecting Zoom In, Zoom Out, or Zoom Normal as required. Other options are available as indicated in the illustration on the right.



Advanced Editing Options

A number of editing options are available that are more advanced than simple cut and paste. The ones available when you click Effect on the menu bar are illustrated on the right.

Each of these effects requires you to use the same general steps.

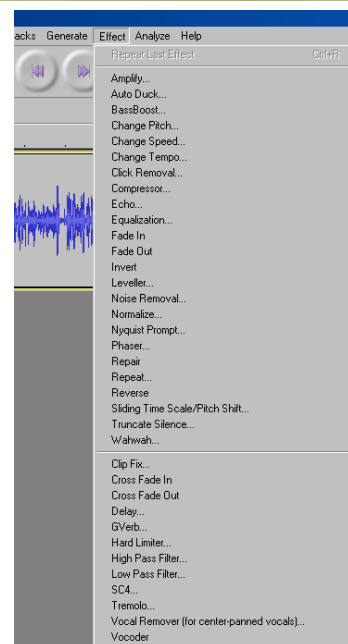
Select the segment of the file you wish to edit.

Click Effect on the Menu bar.

Select the Effect you wish to apply.

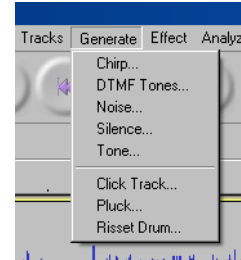
Make any adjustments that might be required if a control panel appears.

Click OK to apply the effect.



You will probably wish to experiment and test the effects several times to make sure they produce the type of edit you want them to.

Other useful edits can be accomplished by trying the options that appear on the list when you click Generate on the Menu bar. That list is shown on the right.



One especially handy editing feature is the ability to insert silence. This is often used when preparing transcriptions where names must be deleted.

Select the segment that must be turned silent.

Click Generate on the Menu bar.

Select Silence or click the Insert Silence button  on the Editing bar.

Audacity is an easy program to learn. Because it is so easy, experimenting will usually yield many positive results. The new user is encouraged to try the many features. Most features can be applied once a segment has been selected as described above.