

A Guide to Recording Your Program at Home

The following guide has been adapted from information developed by the CMTO for community radio stations and tailed to CMS requirements.

Under the COVID19 pandemic, some presenters may wish to prepare their programs at home.

There are several methods of pre-recording your program from home depending on what equipment you have available.

Equipment you will need:

A computer or laptop with a good amount of space to store audio.

An external hard drive (backup and extra space to keep files off your computer).

Portable recording device; or a headset with a microphone; or a mobile phone voice recorder; or a USB microphone connected directly to a PC, ipad or Mac.

Sound editing software:

There are several free or low cost packaged available for Windows and Mac, and also iPad, iPhone or Android:

See <https://www.audacityteam.org>

Audacity is a free, industry level piece of recording software that simply allows you to record or upload audio into it, cut it up and export it as different audio formats. It's an excellent one to use if you are just getting into audio recording and editing because of its super user friendly interface.

Also <https://www.nch.com.au/mixpad/index.html> (Free trial then \$49.99 - multitrack editor like Adobe Audition)

Or simpler: <https://www.nch.com.au/wavepad/index.html> (Free trial then \$24.99 – basic editing only).

Garageband is an Apple exclusive program that can also be used

Many people in community radio have discovered the new USB microphone – the Rode NT USB mini <https://www.storedj.com.au/rode-nt-usb-mini-compact-studio-quality-usb-microphone> which can plug into a USB connection on a PC or Mac. To use this you need some editing software and a set of headphones that plug into the microphone for high quality monitoring of your voiceovers. Make sure you record in a room that has plenty of absorbent furniture and not too many reflective walls. If you experience too much reverberation, use the mic a little closer (we recommend a handspan away from the mic) and pile some pillows around where you are recording – particularly at your sides).

You will need to source your music from legitimate sources and rip the tracks to mp3 if you are planning to use CDs. Software such as CDex or WMP is typically used for Windows PCs.

Music files can be mp3 (128 kbps minimum, preferably higher rate) to mix in with your recorded voice inserts.

All programs should end a couple of minutes short, and on a voice announcement as automated music will kick in immediately the file finishes. This could be, for example “You are listening to CMS - please stay tuned.”.

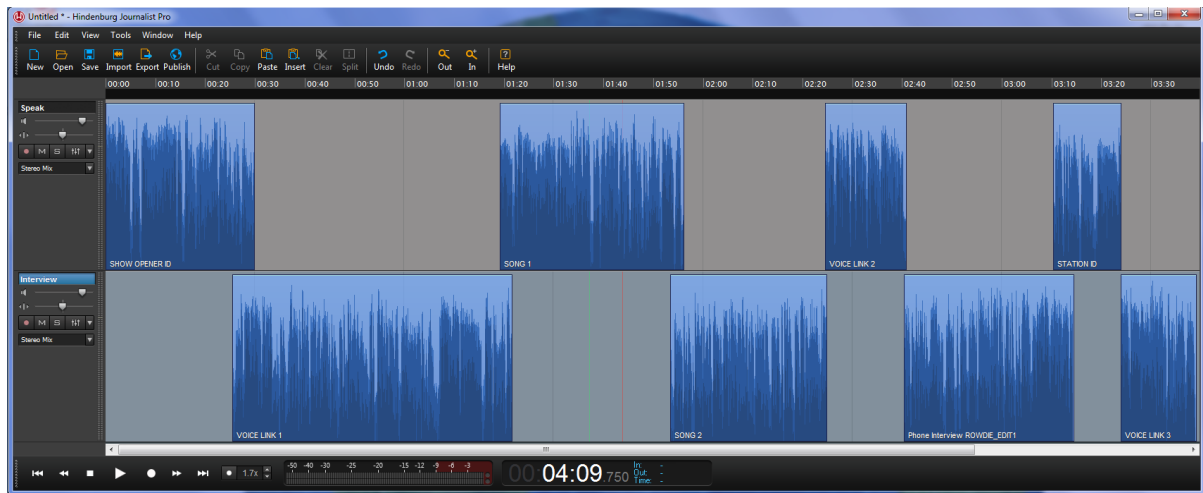
The Drop-In Method:

This method will require you to have your program content ready to go before you record it, just as you would if it was live in the studio.

1. Create a runsheet including your scripted mic-breaks, music and any other audio you will be using such as a pre-recorded interviews, or station I.D’s. This will be your guide when you are ready to put it together.
2. Using your computer, portable recorder, mobile phone or headset, record your script one mic-break at a time. For example- record your program introduction and label it *Voice_link_1.wav*
3. Export the recorded voice links onto your computer or external hard drive and make a folder titled *Raw Audio* (raw meaning unedited) you will listen back to each voice link and edit any unwanted audio and clean it up ready to drop into the sound editing software.
4. When you have recorded all the voice links and edited them you can now begin to put your program together using your audio editing software.
5. Open a new project in your sound editing software and follow your runsheet as a guide to dropping your audio into the tracks of your audio editing software. You can use one to two tracks on your software to add the files in.

For example- using two tracks of your software interface.

Track 1	Show Opener
Track 2	<i>Voice Link 1</i>
Track 1	Song1
Track 2	Song 2
Track 1	<i>Voice link 2</i>
Track 2	Pre-recorded interview
Track 1	Station ID
Track 2	<i>Voice Link 3</i>



Mix down your program

Once you have dropped in all the audio files, it's a good idea to listen back to each transition, ensuring there is no overlapping audio and that your links flow smoothly through the program. Also pay particular attention to relative levels of each segment to ensure consistency across the entire program. Normalise your files to 60% or -5dB. When you are happy with your program mix it down to one file saving it as a copy that is .wav and a copy that is .mp3.

Sending your program to the station

The station will take care of putting your program to air via the automation system. You can use an online file share platform to send your program file by uploading it ready to download.

CMS uses Dropbox and will share a folder with you on request. This will also link with those staff who will be responsible for scheduling any pre-recorded content.

Do not upload wav files – only mp3! To facilitate putting programs to air in a timely manner, you should name the file such as:

GREEK20200323.mp3 (Greek Program, to air 23 March 2020).

Note particularly the reverse date nomenclature, which facilitates ordering the files.

Next steps

- Contact the station staff to arrange for your program to be produced at home.
- The staff will contact you with details of where to upload your program.

- Programs will need to be of a suitably high technical standard before they can be broadcast. This is not difficult to achieve if the above guidelines and techniques are followed. Even voice recordings on an iphone can produce acceptable results these days.
 - To ensure best quality, we recommend using an external USB microphone with a computer.
- If you need any further advice, please contact tech@cmsradio.org.au.

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