

Introduction to Editing Audio with Audacity

Digital Integration Teaching Initiative (DITI)
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ANTH 4100 - Making Anthropology Public
Spring 2026, Professor Carie Hersh

Agenda

- ❑ Learn about and explore Audacity as an audio editing tool
- ❑ Learn how to:
 - Edit and clip recorded audio
 - Add, move, and delete tracks
 - Add sound effects and/or background music
 - Save and export projects

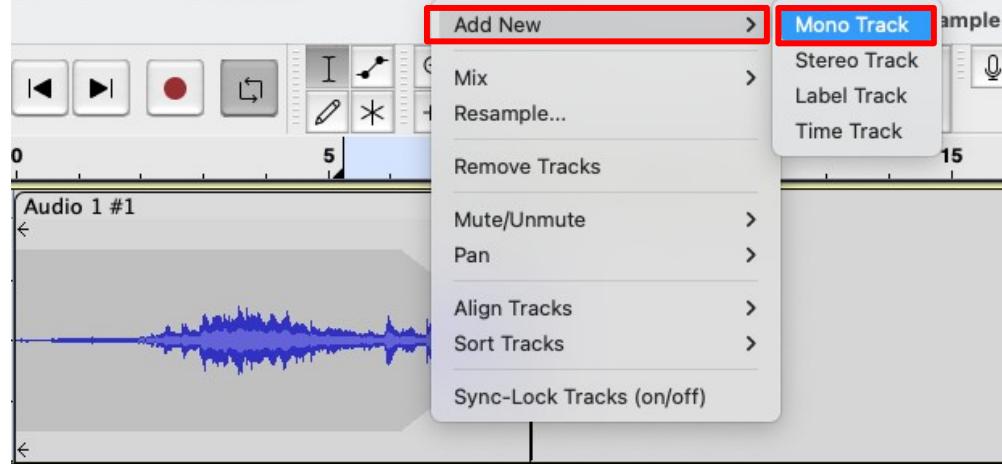
Slides and handouts are available at: bit.ly/sp26-hersh-anth4100-muti

Adding Tracks and Importing Audio

Adding Tracks

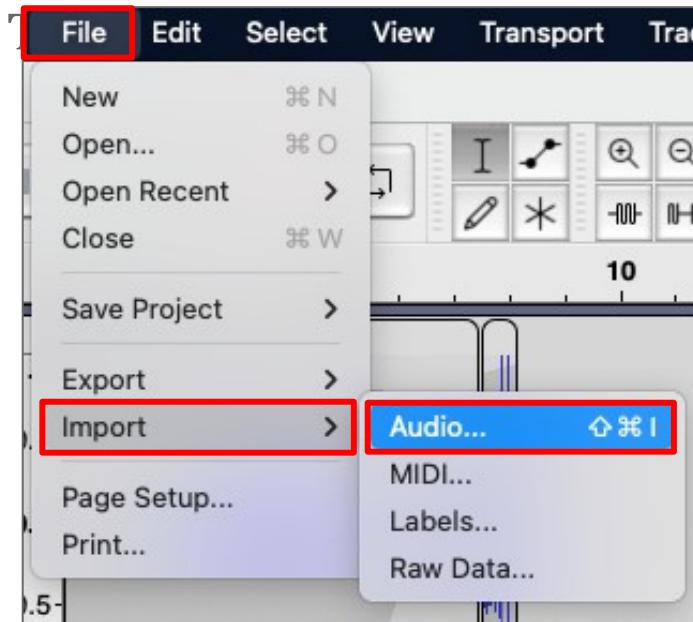
To create additional tracks in Audacity for a **new recording**, hit the record

option is:



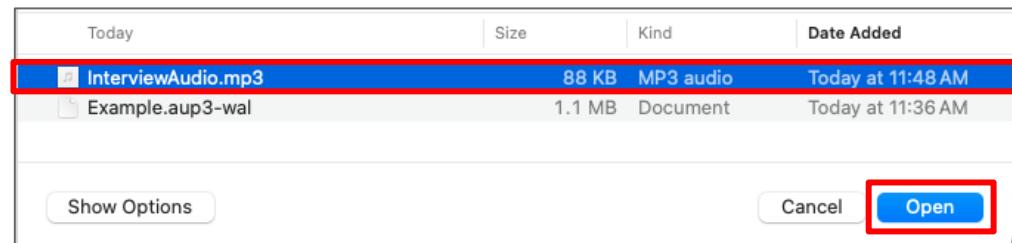
Navigate to the **Tracks** menu option and select **Add New**. This will open a list of options. Select the **Mono Track** option.

Importing Audio



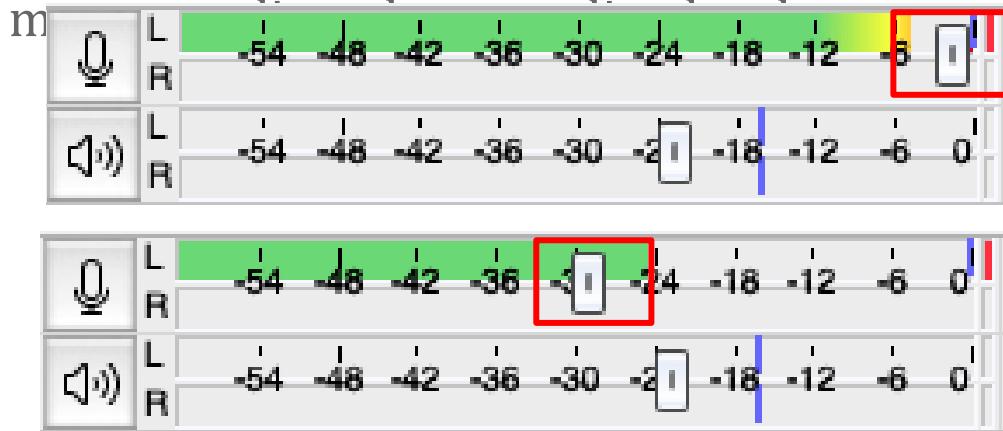
Open Import and select **Audio**.

Select the audio file you would like to import then click **Open**. The imported audio will appear on a new track.



Adjusting Mic Volume

If the recording volume is too loud, you can use the slider in the recording

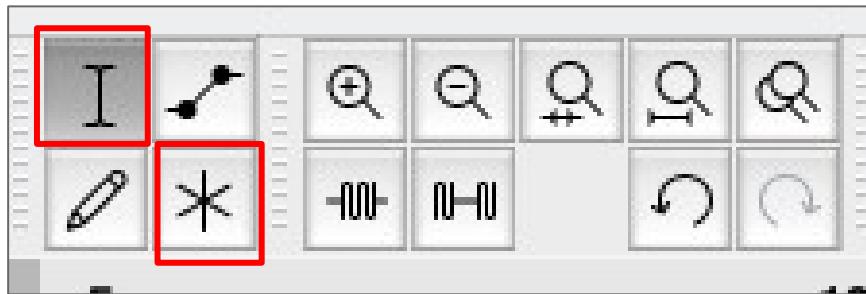
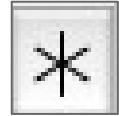
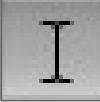


Move the slider to the right for a higher (louder) recording level and to the left for a lower (quieter) recording level.

Audacity & Editing Audio

Toolbar: Selection and Multitool

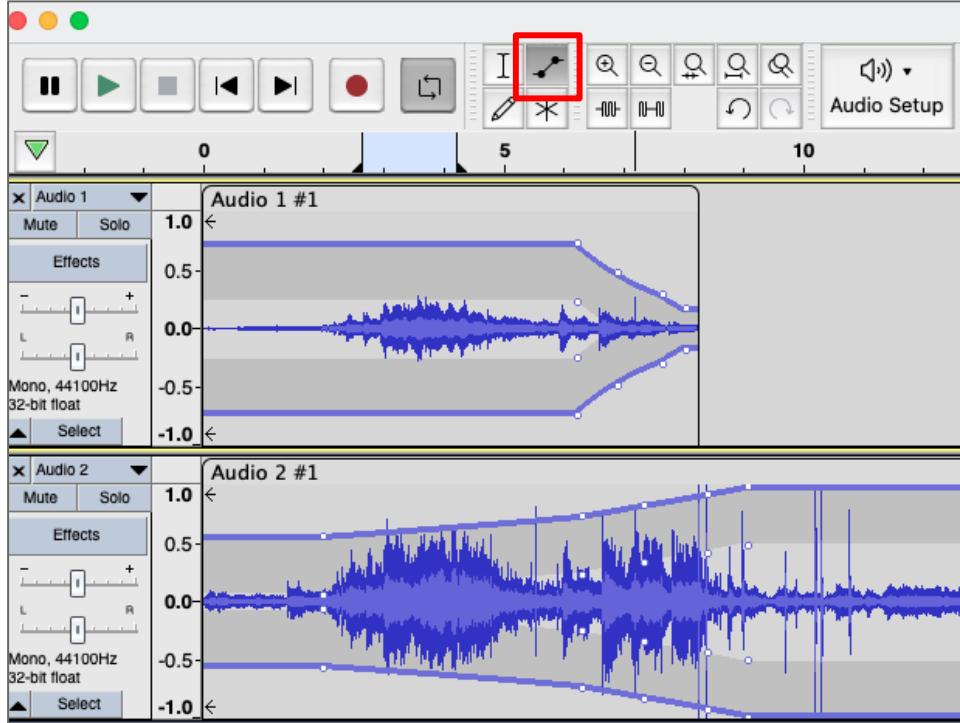
- ?] The **selection tool** will be active automatically when you open Audacity.
- ?] The **multitool** allows you to use all the functions of the other tools without switching to them.
 - The selection tool function is the default.
 - Hover over the waveform borders to use the envelope tool function.
 - Use your trackpad to zoom.
 - Zoom in and left click to use the draw tool function.



*Feel free to ask questions at any point
during the presentation!*

Toolbar: Envelope

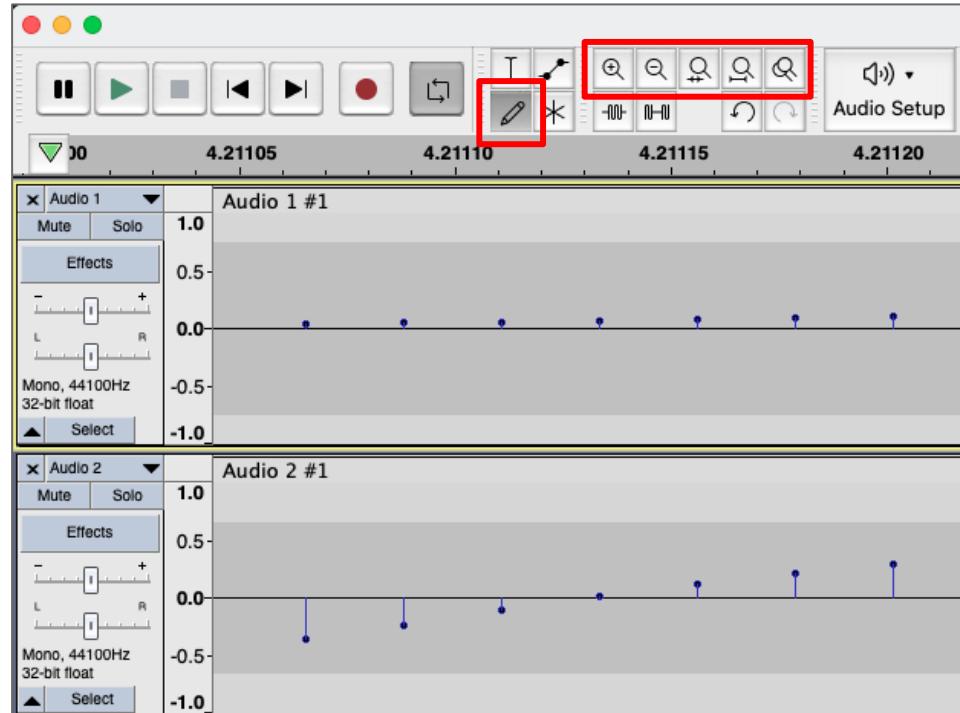
- The envelope tool allows you to smooth changes in volume by using control points at the top and bottom of the waveform.
 - Clicking on the blue border will create control points, which you can then move around to adjust the waveform envelope.



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Toolbar: Zoom and Draw

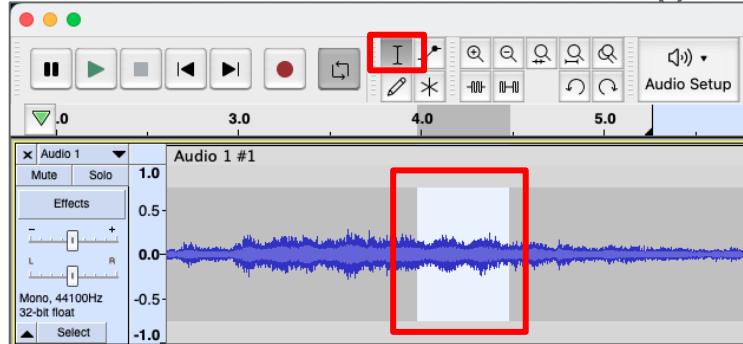
- ? The **zoom tools** let you zoom in and out of the waveform in order to make adjustments.
- ? The **draw tool** allows you to manually redraw the waveform to change the volume or correct background noise.
- ? You can only use the draw tool if you've zoomed into the waveform.



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Removing Parts of Tracks

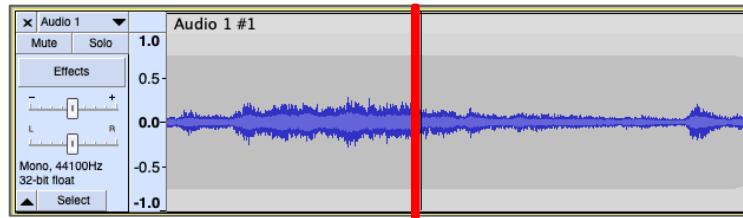
Once you have recorded audio in Audacity, you can easily edit it. Here is how to remove sections using the **selection tool**:



Click and drag with your cursor to select the portion you wish to remove.

Then, hit backspace or delete on your keyboard.

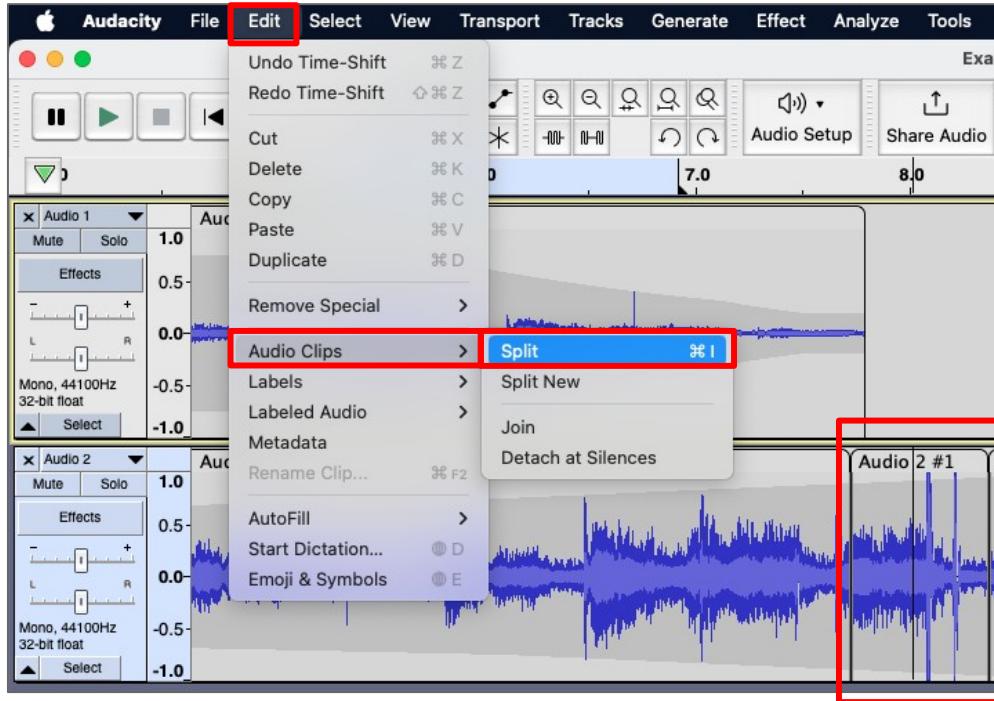
Tip: you can zoom in and out with the **zoom tools** to better see what you're trying to delete.



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Splitting Tracks

To split a track in Audacity, follow these steps to make shorter clips:



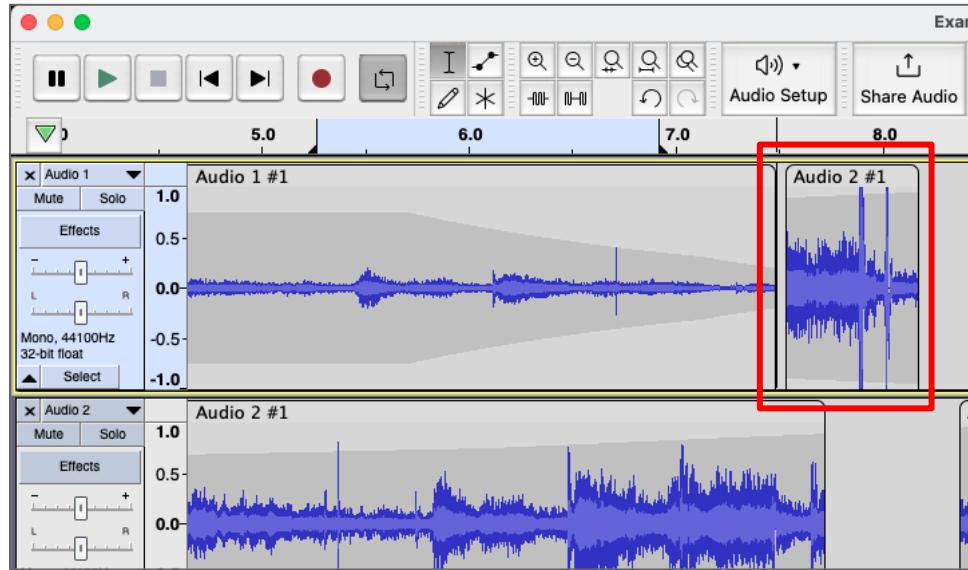
With the **selection tool**, place your cursor over the section where you want to split your track.

Navigate to the **Edit** menu, click under **Clip Boundaries** and select **Split**.

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Moving Tracks

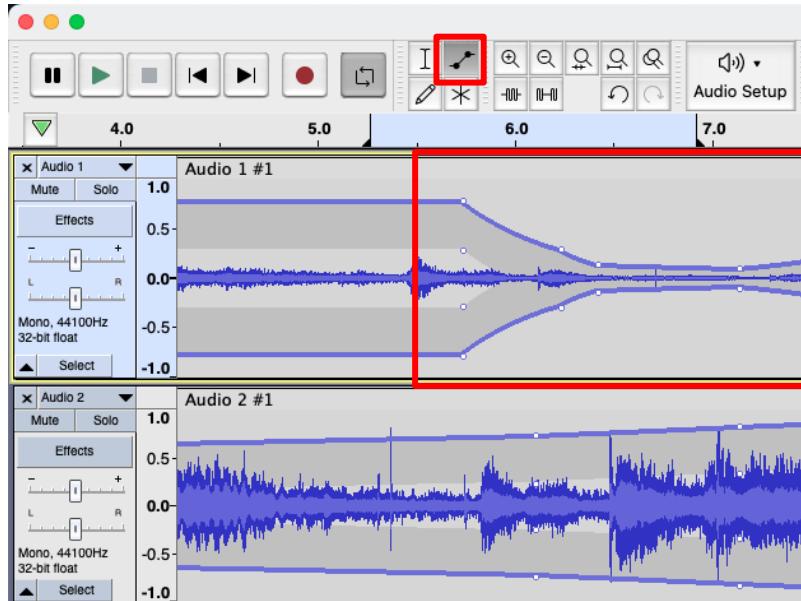
To move entire tracks or audio around in Audacity, you can click and drag them by hovering your mouse over the top of the clip.



Once you have selected the clip, click whatever clip or track you want to move and drag it into position.

Fading In/Out

To fade music in and out on Audacity, use the **envelope tool**. Two yellow bars will show up on each track.



Click to add **control points** (little white dots) on the track you want to fade in.

Drag and move the nodes to up and down and side to side to change the volume and how gradual the volume fade is.

Add and adjust nodes at the end of the track to fade the music back in.

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Your Turn!

- ❑ Open your Audacity recording or download a track to experiment with:
 - [BBC Sound Effects](#) and click on ‘Browse All’
 - [incompetech.com](#) and click on ‘Royalty Free Music’
- ❑ Edit the track and try to:
 - **Remove** some of your track
 - Choose a part to **fade in** or **fade out**
 - **Split the track** into multiple clips
 - **Add an outro sound effect or music** to your project

Saving, Exporting, and Sharing

Saving

Audacity does not auto-save! Save your recording, early and often!

Try and save after each major edit/input of a recording, just to be safe.

Save in multiple places. Always have backup.

File > Save Project > Save Project As> “Name of your podcast”

And once your project is saved...

File > Save Project > Save Project > [saves the updates to your file]

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About File Formats

- ? **Lossless Audio File Formats:** better than or equal to CD-quality
 - **WAV:** uncompressed file, meaning huge file size. The best for editing raw audio files in Audacity.
 - **AIFF:** Apple's alternative to WAV. Uncompressed, not widely used
- ? ***MP3/MP4:** compressed audio file, ensures small file size. Best for exporting and distributing from Audacity.
- ? **Ogg Vorbis:** Open-source alternative to MP3. Used in Spotify streaming.

**Note: The DITI typically recommends you save files as mp3 (sometimes mp4, if you use a PC).*

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Exporting and Sharing

Finished with your recording? Make sure you **export your project as an MP3** before you send or share it! This will ensure that other people are able to listen to it; anyone who does not have Audacity downloaded will not be able to open your project file otherwise. This also allows you to upload your audio to a video editing tool.

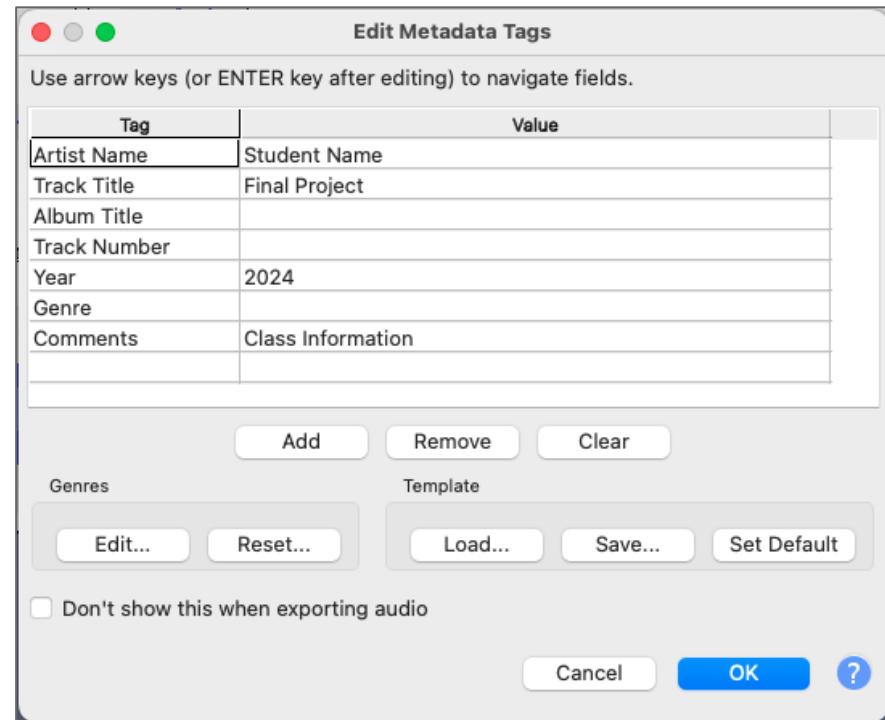
File > Export > Export as MP3

Select “best quality”

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Exporting: Metadata Tagging

When you export your file, Audacity will prompt you to add metadata tags to identify it.



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For Further Exploration

DITI Handout on Audacity

DITI Handout on Troubleshooting Audio Editing

DITI Handout on Copyright and Fair Use

DITI Handout on Accessibility

Northeastern Library Recording Studios

Northeastern Library Digital Media Toolkit

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Thank you!

—Developed by Sara Morrell, Carlos Arriaga Serrano, and Halima Haruna

- ❑ For more information on the DITI, please see: <https://bit.ly/diti-about>
- ❑ Schedule an appointment with us! <https://bit.ly/diti-meeting>
- ❑ If you have any questions, contact us at: nulab.info@gmail.com
- ❑ We'd love your feedback! Please fill out a short survey here: <https://bit.ly/diti-feedback>