

Field Recordings Write-Up
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Track: pouring_water_44_1_16_bit.wav

Source: Water being poured in a cup.

Recording date and location: This recording was made on Wednesday, August 31 in my office in East Hall.

What I find interesting about it: I always liked the sound of some liquid being poured in a cup. It can either give you a feeling of warmth (if you think of it as tea) or a refreshing sensation (if you think of it as cold water). In this one I poured room temperature water and I'm curious what people will think when they hear it.

Recording techniques: The audio recorded with a Sony PCM-M10. The recorder was placed on top of the cup as it seemed to be the best place to capture the sound coming from the inside of the cup. The recorder was placed pretty close to the cup as I wanted to capture that sound and as little background noise as possible.

What proved the most successful: I think recording it from close up and from above was the best way to capture the sound of the water falling inside the cup.

Track: bus_44_1_24_bit.wav

Source: The inside of a bus as it drives to the curb and opens its door.

Recording date and location: This recording was made on Wednesday, August 31 in a bus at Ann Arbor.

What I find interesting about it: I wanted to capture sounds that I encounter everyday and not necessarily pay close attention to. Being inside public transportation is something that's very relatable among many people and I think there are many interesting sounds that we don't pay attention to when inside a bus. This is especially true now that we all just put headphones on and listen to music when going somewhere. It really surprised me how pleasing I found the sound of the bus bouncing as it drove around. The low frequencies have an interesting pitch that I think warms the track. I also like that the track finishes with the door opening letting the listener imagine where the person is going.

Recording techniques: The audio recorded with a Sony PCM-M10. The recorder was taken with me and put at waist high right next to the bus driver. The microphone db levels had to be constantly adjusted as the bus parked and the doors opened as there are elements with different intensities in these two "phases" of the track.

What proved the most successful: Staying close to the bus driver was good as it is the region of the bus where the sounds from the vehicle are most loud and where people's voices are the lowest. As I wanted to capture the sound of the bus, this was a good choice. Placing the microphone at waist height was a good choice since it was closer to the ground than people's mouths, emphasizing the bus sound instead of any other sounds in the environment.

Track: stairs_44_1_24_bit.wav

Source: Me running up the stairs.

Recording date and location: This recording was made on Thursday, September 1 in the stairs of East Hall.

What I find interesting about it: I kind of like how the hollowness of the stairs gives a rich sound to the steps. It has some interesting lower and higher frequencies sort of harmonizing with each other.

Recording techniques: The audio recorded with a Sony PCM-M10. The recorder was taken with me as I ran up the stairs and I tried to keep it from touching my clothes to not add any unwanted sounds to it.

What proved the most successful: Overall I think that correctly adjusting the microphones db levels was the hardest part, but once that was done, everything went pretty smoothly.

Track: walking_in_the_office_44_1_24_bit.wav

Source: Me walking from the office door to my desk.

Recording date and location: This recording was made on Thursday, September 1 in my office in East Hall.

What I find interesting about it: With this recording, I wanted to capture a more spatial audio. If you listen closely, you can hear me walking from the right side of the recorder to the left side of it (where my desk is). I think this adds an observer feeling to the recording, as if the listener was looking at me walking from the door to my desk.

Recording techniques: The audio recorded with a Sony PCM-M10. I placed the recorder in the center of the office on top of a desk. I adjusted the db level of the microphone so that the sound of me sitting on the chair and putting my stuff on the table was not too loud.

What proved the most successful: Placing the recorder in the center of the room was a good choice because it gave a nice symmetric feeling of space with me going from one end to the other.

Track: sorry_im_late_44_1_24_bit.wav

Source: A conversation with my advisor.

Recording date and location: This recording was made on Thursday, September 1 in my office in East Hall.

What I find interesting about it: I wanted this recording to capture me having a conversation and I thought that recording me as I was trying to apologize for being late for a meeting would be interesting. I think it's interesting that you don't hear the other side of the conversation so the listener has to imagine what the other person is saying.

Recording techniques: The audio recorded with a Sony PCM-M10. I placed the recorder on my desk as I joined a zoom meeting.

What proved the most successful: Placing the recorder close to me to capture my voice and not other sounds in the office was a good choice.

Track: air_fryer_44_1_24_bit.wav

Source: Air fryer.

Recording date and location: This recording was made on Wednesday, August 31 in my kitchen.

What I find interesting about it: I think the air fryer has a sort of mysterious sound and I think that someone listening to it would imagine that it was something else. Maybe an air conditioner or something. It's also a common part of my day when I'm too busy to make a meal. I just put some frozen dumplings in there and let them cook.

Recording techniques: The audio recorded with a Sony PCM-M10. I placed the recorder slightly above the air fryer since that's where the air comes out from.

What proved the most successful: The recorder placement worked really well as you can hear the buttons being pressed as well as the air fryer starting.

Track: calling_a_partner_44_1_24_bit.wav

Source: Phone and my voice.

Recording date and location: This recording was made on Thursday, September 1 in my living room.

What I find interesting about it: I wanted to include something personal in this project and I thought that calling my partner after a long day at work would be ideal. I always call her when I get home and sometimes we are really tired but no matter what, we are excited to hear each other's voices.

Recording techniques: The audio recorded with a Sony PCM-M10. I placed the recorder in a table in front of me to capture this call somewhat personally. Because I talk really loud, I had to adjust the microphone db level, resulting in a more faint sound from the phone.

What proved the most successful: I think that the db level gives the conversation a little bit of dimensionality, since it seems like the person I'm talking to is far away even though the sound source is right there.

Track: serena_williams_44_1_24_bit.wav

Source: TV (Serena Williams' voice)

Recording date and location: This recording was made on Wednesday, August 31 in my living room.

What I find interesting about it: It was a coincidence that this project aligned with Serena Williams' last tournament. As a tennis fan, capturing the moment of her winning this meaningful match was a pleasure. It was a historic moment not only for tennis fans, but for many other people who admire Serena Williams. I think that this snippet of her post-match interview illustrates her grace and sense of humor. Plus, it was an iconic moment.

Recording techniques: The audio recorded with a Sony PCM-M10. I placed the recorder close to the TV to avoid background noise. Even then, you can still hear background noise because my apartment has some noise and because the interview broadcasted on the television took place in a tennis stadium.

What proved the most successful: Placing the recorder really close to the TV helped overcome some background noise issues.

Final summary: In general, I wanted this project to tell a story and if you listen to the tracks in order, you can get a glimpse of my day. In terms of audio recording, I learned the importance of controlling the db in a microphone. I had never worked with a recorder before and it was a learning experience to experiment with different volumes, sound sources and environments. I learned about how microphone placement can completely change what something sounds like. I also learned about focusing on a sound vs. capturing the overall sound of the environment, in some sense this is analogous to taking a picture with low vs. high aperture. In general, overcoming background noise was challenging especially since a lot of the places I go to on a daily basis are somewhat loud.