

The Podcast Recording Cheat Sheet



Exploiting
with Teja Kummarikuntla

**Quick and easy
techniques for getting
professional-quality
podcast recordings
every time.**

source: Pat Flynn, Power up Podcasting

Tips for a Perfect Podcast Interview Recording

Recording an interview for a podcast episode is fairly straightforward business, but a reminder is always nice. That's why I'm sharing this quick, nitty-gritty infographic. These tips can make a huge difference between a recording that is clean and easy to edit, and something that sounds muddy or needs a lot of editing.



Tip #1:

LEVEL YOUR MIC IN SYSTEM PREFERENCES

If your mic input is too high, the recording may sound garbled and fuzzy. Luckily, fixing this is super easy!

1. On a Mac, open your System Preferences (fig. 1).
2. Click on “Sound” (fig. 2) and select the “Input” tab (fig. 3, red circle).
3. Select your microphone (fig. 3, purple circle).
4. You’ll notice a slide ruler with a grey equalizer (fig. 3, blue circle). As you speak, the grey blocks will light up, indicating the level of your microphone. Speak at your loudest volume, and adjust the slider. Aim to have your volume peak no higher than 2/3s up the sliding scale. * Note that some microphones only permit volume adjustment on the microphone itself or on the interface it is connected to. In these cases, simply adjust the volume on the hardware itself.



Fig. 1

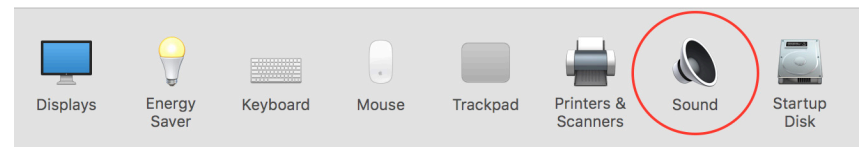


Fig. 2

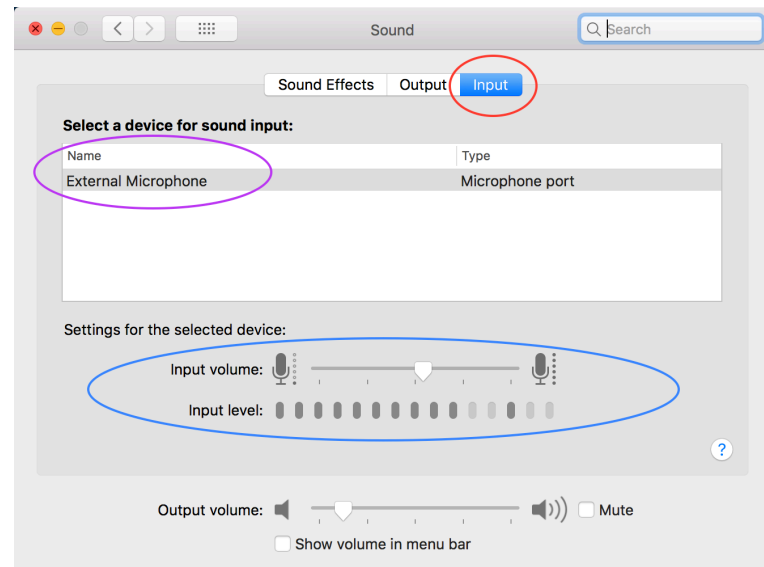


Fig. 3

Tip #2:

SKYPE SETTINGS

(If Recording with Zoom, skip to Tip #3)

There are a few Skype preferences you'll want to set correctly before you start recording.

1. Select "Audio & Video Settings ..." from the drop-down menu under "Skype" (fig. 4).
2. Make sure that the microphone you would like to use is selected under "Microphone" (fig. 5, red circle).
3. On the pop-up menu that appears, be sure to toggle "Automatically adjust microphone settings" OFF (it will be grey as shown in fig. 5, blue circle). This setting can cause wild peaks in volume in the final, recorded audio and is best avoided.

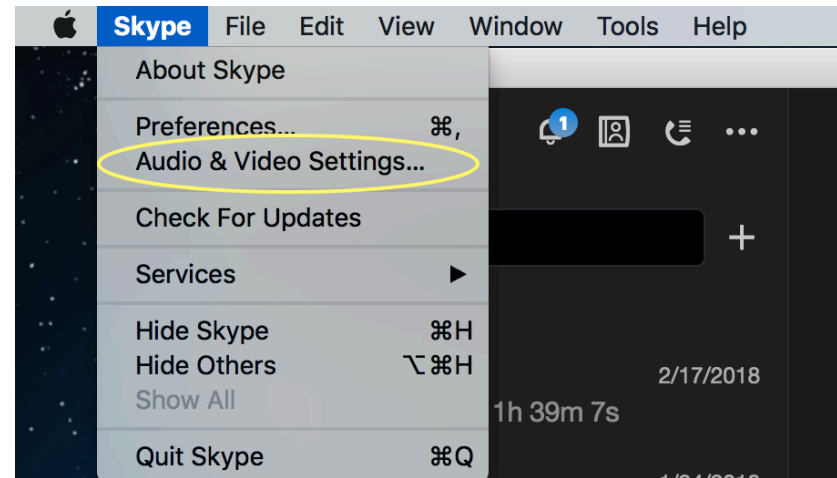


Fig. 4

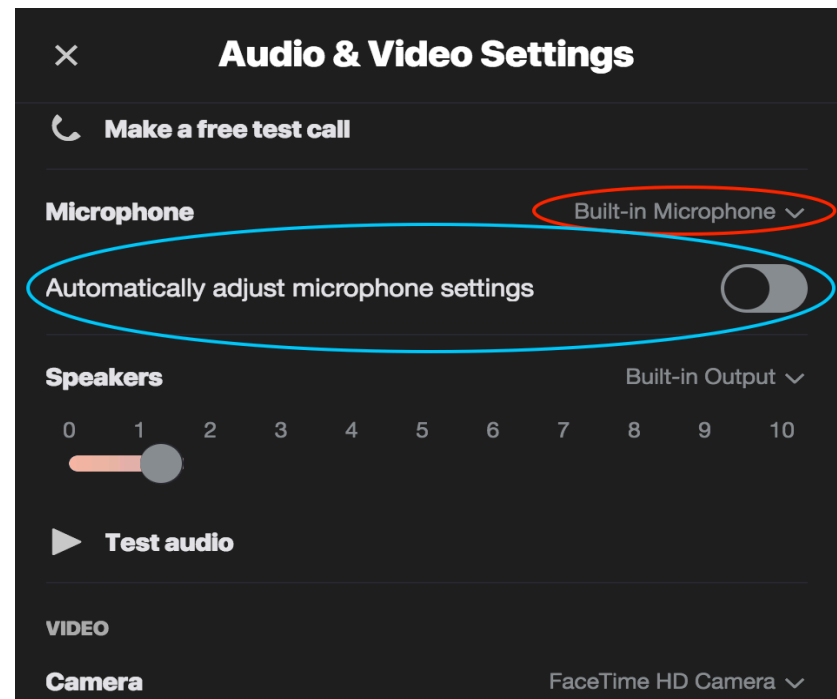


Fig. 5

Tip #3:

ZOOM SETTINGS

1. Open the Zoom desktop application and open the app's System Preferences (Fig. 6).
2. Select the "Audio" tab (Fig. 7, blue circle).
3. Under "Microphone" (Fig. 7, green circle) select the microphone you would like to use from the dropdown menu.
4. Uncheck the checkbox next to "Automatically adjust microphone settings." This setting can result in uneven volume and/or clipping in the final recording.
5. Adjust the slider next to "Input Volume," speaking in the upper and lower range of your natural vocal volume. The range next to "Input Level" will light up green as you speak. Aim to have your volume peak no higher than 2/3s up the sliding scale.
6. * BONUS: Zoom has a special feature here that I like using. Next to the dropdown list for mic input is a button called "Test Mic." Push this button and start speaking to record; the button will read

"Recording." Press again to stop recording and Zoom will play back your audio one time. This feature lets you quickly evaluate your setup on the fly so that you can be confident your mic sounds good.

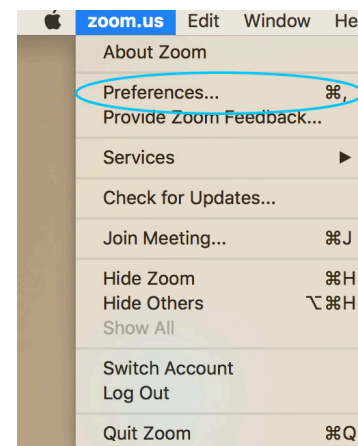


Fig. 6

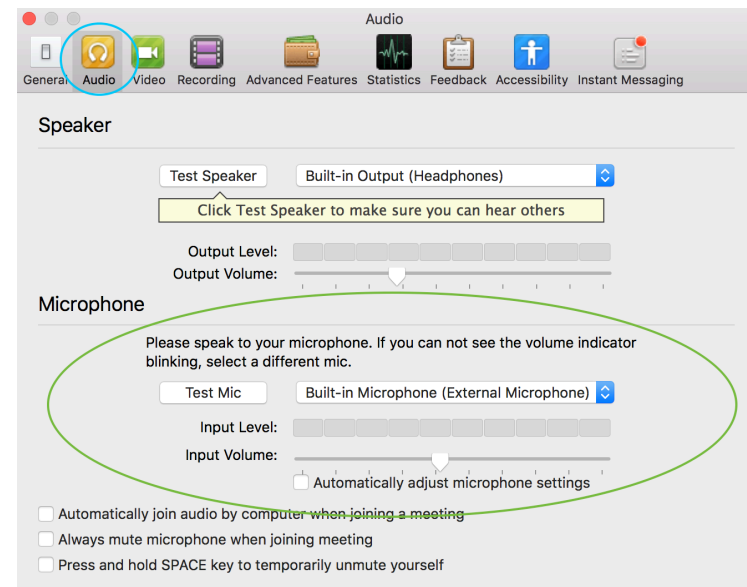


Fig. 7

Tip #4:

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

1. Choose a spot to record that is quiet. Even the noise of a box fan or a dryer running in the background can be distracting on a recording.
2. Close all applications on your computer except Skype (and your call recorder, if you're running one). All those applications pull bandwidth, which can result in glitching in the final recording (or worse, an interrupted call). If possible, make sure no other devices are running on your WiFi network during the recording.



Tip #5:

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Recording a podcast interview is as much about what you hear as what you don't hear. You don't want to be unpleasantly surprised when you listen to a final recording. Here are a few common offenders that tend to sneak their way into your mic, and how to avoid them:

1. Head movement. You're likely speaking about something you're passionate about, and if you're like me you can get pretty animated. But moving your head around while recording can cause unwanted changes in volume. Just remember, mic's can be very sensitive (aww), so try to speak into it from the same angle throughout the recording.
2. Shuffling papers. It's a great idea to have notes for a recording session, but it's also wise to have them laid out flat before you press that red button. Shuffling papers sound a lot like static on a final recording . . . not a good sound.
3. Bumps. Anytime you bump your mic stand, or even the table it's on, you'll hear it. Remember that a microphone's job is to capture sound vibrations; that

includes vibrations traveling through the mic stand that it's attached to. Make sure there are no loose cords, and try not to bump your mic when recording.

4. Fidget spinners. Okay, that's never actually happened to me, but I've heard plenty of "fidgety" sounds on final recordings. Pens clicking . . . knuckles cracking. These are sounds that will stick out to your listener, in a bad way. Get comfortable so you don't have to fidget. Remember, like a good friend, the mic is always listening!

