The introduction to the audio unit was a welcome relief from the scary depths of digital design and version control. I had gotten a hand on those and was happy to see that we would be using Audacity for Unit 3, a program that I had used once before in Writing for the Public. However, I underestimated how much I had forgotten about the program, and how many assets of the program I had not used before. Looking back to my sophomore year in Writing for the Public, I wonder how terrible my audio project had been in that class because I think the extent of the modification I did to my sounds was amplify, fade in, fade out, and noise removal effects.

With that said, I began to sweep off the dust in Audacity and go after some of that aspirational criteria. My goal for the project was to turn one of the blog posts I had written also during my sophomore year into a miniature podcast, like the weekly ones with talk show hosts and big influencers that are so popular in today’s culture. I chose the blog, “Cheat Meals” because I am kind of obsessed with this whole healthy lifestyle thing recently and I thought it would work well with the spoken word.

In alignment with the traditional conventions of the genre, I started my project with some striking music and a brief introduction of who I was and what I was doing. I then transitioned into the meat of my writing. I had initially set the background noise as a coffee shop, which failed miserably. Someone in class had suggested a kitchen or restaurant might work better, and I turned that idea into using sounds of cooking. I think this fits well because the entire time all I am talking about is food. I think the cracking of the egg serves as a good starter to the conversation, and there are times when the sounds, such as cutting, peeling, boiling, and sizzling, duck in and out based on the pauses in my speaking and the emphasis I am trying to create with my words. I chose to end the project in the same way that I started, with a repetition of the start of the tuba music that the class seemed to like so much.

I see this piece targeting the health and wellness community, which might as well be everyone at this point. I think the music I chose for the introduction and conclusion provides contrast to previously held perceptions about this type of work. To the eye, my piece may have seemed as though it was trying to be inspirational and supportive, but in its audio version my personality was able to come out. This is the personality of someone who does not have it all under control either, and is still learning how to balance their own eating habits. In essence, the written version may make me sound lofty, but the audio version reveals that I have just the same weaknesses as everyone else. I believe that the major areas I have to improve on in terms of content are the pieces duration as well as eliminating choppiness. To make this work really reputable, I would have liked to include a longer more detailed dialogue, and I think the fact that I was limited by time made it seem like I was cut off in some places.

I had mentioned earlier that I was familiar with the amplify, fade in, fade out, and noise removal effects. In addition to the these, I also learned and attempted to use the following effects, although some were complete failures. I used envelope to fade in and out of my spoken tracks as well as music and sound effects rather than using fade in and fade out. This allowed me to control the pace of the fading as well as adjust volume in the middle of the track at any points I needed. There were times when I was recording my voice that I did not realize I had been clicking on things on my laptop, so I used click removal if they were in the middle of the track, rather than at the beginning or the end where I could simply cut them out. As I was recording my voice, I was in a room that I perceived was rather quiet, but there was some humming from a nearby air conditioner. To filter this out I used noise reduction by taking a noise sample from the start of my track where I was not speaking, and remove those same noises from when I was speaking.

By far the most challenging part of the project was making my voice sound the way I wanted it to. There were times when it cracked, times when I would lose my place and have an unwanted pause, and a bit of vibrations as I was speaking. A tried a few different effects to normalize my voice. I played around a bit in reverberation, adjusting the room size above and below 0 to attempt to make it sound more like I was in a recording studio rather than a hollow room. I had some luck with changing the tone high %, which adjusted certain frequencies in my voice, but only in some places did it produce the desired effects. I had read that equalization may help with cracks in the voice, and applied this to both the body and introduction of my spoken tracks. Finally, I successfully eliminated some of the larger pauses where I lost my place by using truncate silence.

I have to say that I am still not completely satisfied with how my voice sounds in the recording, and with more time I would have liked to experiment with modifying the sound effects I had inputted to make them seem purer as well. That is, in my perfect project, it would sound like I am speaking this blog while cooking, or having someone cook for me.

The following is all of the resources and audio downloads I used in the project as well as my permissions to use and adapt them for my purposes.

“Effect Menu.” *Effect Menu - Audacity Development Manual*, manual.audacityteam.org/man/effect\_menu.html.

Sound Name: Coup 1E42

<https://freesound.org/people/Setuniman/sounds/276266/>

Created by: Sentuniman

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Sound Name: Cutting with a kitchen knive

<https://freesound.org/people/edhutschek/sounds/214359/>

Created by: edhutschek

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Sound Name: CuttingOnion.wav

<https://freesound.org/people/Dr.%20Macak/sounds/201032/>

Created by: Dr. Macak

Permission: Creative Commons 0 License-no copyright, available to modify, distribute, and perform the work even for commercial purposes

Sound Name: burger flip.flac

<https://freesound.org/people/Corsica_S/sounds/24251/>

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Sound Name: egg crack sizzle cook

<https://freesound.org/people/spanrucker/sounds/272225/>

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Sound Name: [Eau-bouillante1.wav](https://freesound.org/people/rombart/sounds/197798/)

<https://freesound.org/people/rombart/sounds/197798/>

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