Agenda

- **Review of recording: matters arising**
- **Brass tacks considerations**
- **Workshopping scripting / recording / editing**

Recording hazards

- Reverb (sound bouncing around):
  - Easy to add, hard to subtract
  - More reverb suggests large spaces or distances; control through room/space textures and size of spaces and distance from microphone

- Gain (mic sensitivity / input volume)
  - Easy to boost, hard to recover overdriven recording (distorted)
  - Check levels prior to recording, err on the side of quiet (lower gain)

- Breathing and other unintended noises
  - Possible to mitigate during recording and/or editing
  - Parcel script into breath size chunks / lean back in between or when taking a breath
  - Record a separate track of room/space ambience to cover any de-amplification during editing, or copy "dead air passages" and paste in a separate covering track

Recording guidelines

- Choose consistent locations, circumstances, and technologies (microphones, apps) to match each narrative focus (e.g., baseline narration, interviews, field recordings, sound bites, etc.).

- If home, pick a smaller space with soft surfaces (beds, curtains, carpets, etc.) to mitigate reverb for baseline narration.

- Have remote interviewees record under optimal circumstances (e.g., phone recorder works better than Teams)

- Practice your delivery, review, and develop the proper tone – this goes for narration AND interviews (workshop both), imagine the audience you are addressing.

Parameters for scripting

- What is the premise?
- What about you? Who are you and why are you doing this? Where are you in all this?
- What are your podcast inspirations for content, format, editing, sound, etc.?
- Who is the audience? What is the tone?
- What is the format (solo / interview / roundtable / mix)?
- How long will the project be?
- How are you going to record? Edit?

What are the storytelling implications of a medium?

vs

Audio scripting and sculpting (editing) implications: *Create*, don't re-create an experience

Scripting elements	Examples
Planning for sounds	Real and imagined settings, mood music and ***evocative tonal effects*** to accompany the script
Make it personal	• Relate topics to your own experience to reinforce both yours and the listener's investment in the story • Add cues for tone and pacing if you tend toward a breathless or monotonous read out loud style • ***Expect to practice: record, review, rerecord, repeat***
Concision and selective (paced) eloquence	• Solo: Short, clear sentences • Interviews: Questions that build upon one another (leading down a clear path); planned (and spontaneous) probes • ***Be ruthless***: Clear up excessive vocal distractions (um, erm, ah) / rambling / less engaging passages
Sequencing, pacing, and transitions	***Show AND tell***: Explicit control of flow • Pause and set the stage; explicitly wrap up a section and introduce the next ("So…up to this point we've learned about the background of X, X's motivations and X's expectations, and next we'll explore how X's experience of Y has been shaped by these…") • Interviews: the **"NPR" approach**: Short speaker quote + clear, quick introduction of speaker + longer speaker quote • Music or sound effects that fade in / out and/or match shifts in narrative tone
Eliciting soundbites	Interview: follow up open ended questions and general answers by asking for ***specific examples - from the interviewee - and sharing common experiences;*** **re-stage** portions where the effect could be improved

Podcast structure

- For the introduction (60 seconds to 3 minutes), some options and considerations:
  - Cold open: Situational teaser of what is to come (e.g., snippet of conversation, narrated reflection or recollection, media report or sonic artefact, sample from "our story, already in progress")
  - Host / Narrator setting the scene or establishing the podcast and episode premise
  - Will there be theme music? How will it be used? Will it be layered with a voice over? Typically, this is brief (5-10 seconds)
  - Will you spell out the episode, or keep it "mysterious"? If the latter, consider providing an ultimate destination or objective up front, however vague or suggestive

In the thick of it: the episode proper

- Carve up the structure and timing provisionally:
  - Narration
    - Consider the classic storyline structure:
      - Subject (person, place, thing, event)
      - Situation (challenge, mystery, opportunity, etc.)
      - Subject's response (action)
      - Conclusion (resolution of the journey, cliffhanger for another episode)
    - How will you inject interview material (if applicable)?
  - Interview(s) and roundtable
    - How will you introduce the conversation and participants?
    - How many questions? Follow up prompts?
    - How will you implicate yourself to build rapport with interviewee(s) and audience?
    - Don't hesitate to ask a guest to restate an answer

Interviews: release form

- Make the understanding explicit, if not strictly legal:
    - https://www.jotform.com/form-templates/podcast-guest-release-form
    - https://castos.com/podcast-release-form-guest/

The End.

- Consider summarizing the episode

- Will you suggest further resources?

- Will there be end music – the opening theme, something else, overtop of narration or stand alone?

- Will there be credits? Licensing terms of music/loops/sounds used?

Tools of the trade

# Audio recording and editing correlates

Property of sound	Recording control	Editing control (Audacity)	Effect (when intentional)
Volume	Gain (microphone)	**Volume /Amplification / Fade in and out**	Focus
Dynamic range	Practice and intention	**Compression / Normalization**	Texture
Frequency	Practice and intention / autotune filter	**Pitch correction**	Emotion
Tone	Practice and intention	**Equalization (EQ)**	Balance and Depth
Reverberation	Distance from microphone, size of space, textures and angles of surfaces	**Reverb**	Focus and Depth
Direction	Stereo / omnidirectional recording (microphone)	**Panning**	Focus, Balance, and Depth

Editing / sound design approaches

- Be ruthless with brain-fog, ho-hums, and overruns
- Reduce room sound / hum, if any
- Consider using sounds / effects to animate and distinguish passages from one another
- Use panning to guide focus
  - Position solo voice down the middle of the mix (where it is by default), while panning music and effects to varying degrees to the left and right
  - Pan interviewer slightly to the left and interviewee slightly to the right
- Sound balance:
  - Use primary narration as a consistent volume baseline throughout
  - Boost and dip music volumes with a gentle touch...

Sound design resources

- freesound.org | soundtrap.com | upbeat.io | GarageBand |Ableton (Audio Studio)

- Make and record your own music and sound effects

- Copyright considerations and attribution
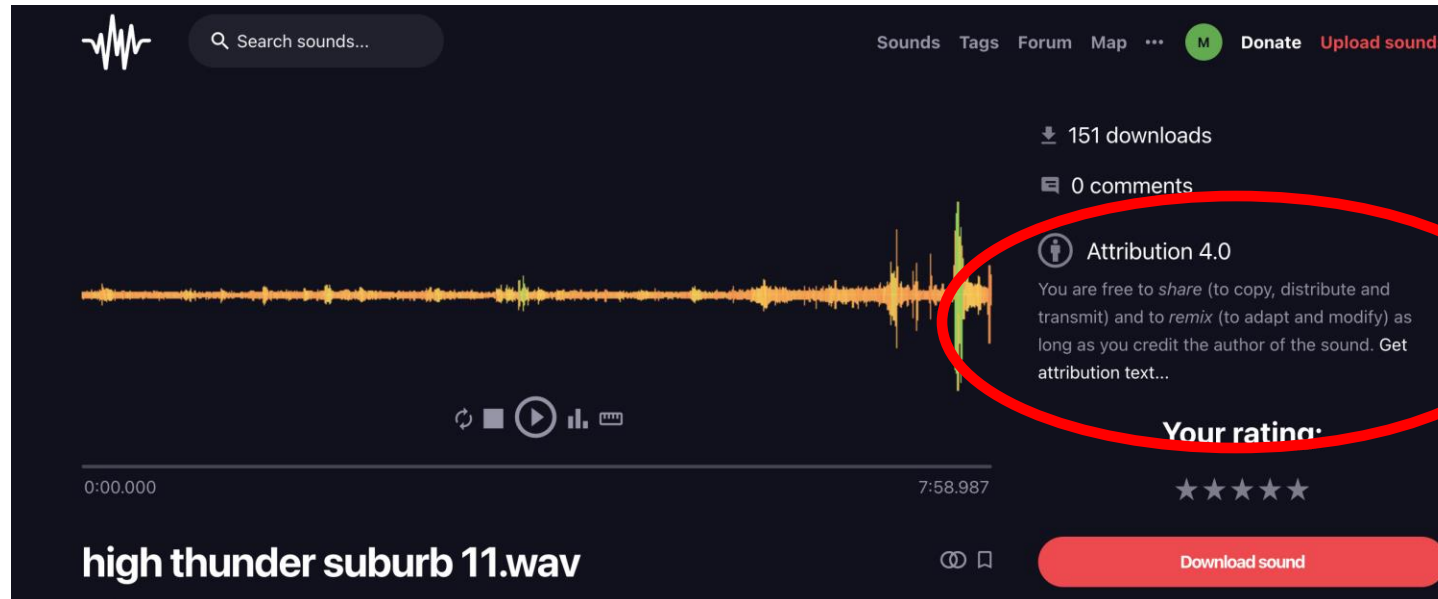
Workshopping your podcast

- You can book audio studio or borrow microphones for laptops and phones
- Recording on an iPhone but editing in Audacity? Install the FFmpeg plugin:
https://support.audacityteam.org/basics/installing-ffmpeg
- Add music or sound effects that enhance and distinguish the passages from one another
- Editing functions:
  - Volume and Compression (narration and music/effects)
  - Fades
  - Panning
  - Voice effects / EQ
  - Export