Speak up!

Media for inclusion

www.speak-up-eu.com

GUIDELINES #4

Podcast production

Radio is an entertaining and recognised medium for learning foreign languages.

Authors Mouvement Up (FR)

May 2020

www.speak-up-eu.com

Introduction

For the past 5 years, the [Mouvement Up](#) – an actor in solution journalism mobilized for social innovation – has been carrying out Media and Information Literacy (MIL) actions via the Mouvement Up Radio station (formerly known as radio Raje) across France. More than 5,000 young people and professionals were sensitized to fighting off fake news and hate speech online, as well as they were introduced to journalistic and radio practices through workshops and trainings delivered by the Mouvement Up media education center. Our educational approach aims to place MIL at the service of citizenship, emancipation and living together, in a society relying on information and communication.

Radio creation as a foreign language learning tool

Radio is an entertaining and recognised medium for learning foreign languages. Indeed, through experiencing radio, the four basic skills of language learning which are listening, understanding, writing, and speaking, can be developed by individuals, therefore creating a learning "bubble". The radio as a tool can be used as a support for learning at all levels, from beginner to fluent. It can therefore be adapted to the level of the audience/trainees.

With Mouvement Up radio and in collaboration with the Bas-Belleville association, we tested the use of radio in a group of French learners. During the first session, we asked the trainees to interview each other in pairs with one acting as a "journalist" and the other one as an "interviewee". Once the questions and answers were prepared, we recorded the different interviews and we listened to them together. As they listened, the teachers used the recordings as a support material to correct trainees' errors and to review and/or to introduce new vocabulary. In this instance, we were able to notice several benefits in using radio such as the playful component, the immersivity of doing a recording, or the "conversational" component.

During a second session, we asked the trainees to tell us about a cooking recipe while speaking in the microphone, by introducing preparation noises (the recording was made in the large kitchen of the association "Bas-Belleville", which is enough supplied in utensils). The exercise aimed to diversify the vocabulary, to introduce practical expressions from the culinary field (such as "baking", "simmering", etc.), while doing something fun.
During the creation of practical exercises, it is important to keep in mind the level of the trainees as well as the linguistic skills targeted. Listing these skills can help in conducting the workshop: for instance, to introduce oneself, to introduce someone else, or to talk about one's work.[1]

In our project, the target group of learners is a group of migrants. It is essential not to forget their life experiences and their culture of origin. The radio as a tool can then become a unique space for speaking and sharing for people whose lives have

---

[1] https://www.aefe.fr/rechercher-une-ressource-documentaire/les-six-niveaux-de-competences-en-langues-decrits-dans-le. Here, various tools to use radio in L2 :
https://eduscol.education.fr/numerique/dossier/archives/francais-tice/sites/radio-tv-podcasts

been turned upside down. The radio, an intimate medium, is perfect to tell people's stories and for self-expression in a comforting bubble.

Initiation to radio techniques: from recording to broadcasting

The technical creation of a podcast is made following several steps:
1. Recording
2. Editing
3. Mixing
4. Exporting

Recording

Above all, you must choose your recording equipment carefully, a choice that will depend on the type of podcast you wish to broadcast, its target audience and its listening platform.

For our radio workshops, we opted for the *RodeCaster Pro*[2], which is an integrated podcast creation studio. The *RodeCaster Pro* allows you to record on four tracks at the same time. With eight programmable pads, it instantly launches sound effects and jingles to enrich the sound universe of the show. The *RodeCaster Pro* can also be connected to speakers to listen to the recording simultaneously. The sounds are saved on an SD card. The advantage of this type of "mobile" studio is that it combines sound quality and mobility since it is very light and easily transportable. It gives the possibility of recording under the conditions of a live anywhere.

If you want to work with even lighter hardware, you can opt for a *Steinbereg UR22mkII*[3] sound card. The sound card is an audio control interface for extending the computer. Its main function is to generate and manage sound. Since it is a peripheral, it will be necessary to connect it to a computer which will be the recording medium.

---

[2] https://en.rode.com/rodecasterpro
[3] https://www.steinberg.net/en/products/audio_interfaces/ur_series/models/ur22mkii.html

Finally, if the program provides for external sound recordings - micro-pavement, sound walks, street interviews, you will need to use a portable Zoom H4 or H1 recorder.[4]

Practical advice for recording:

- Choose a silent place for your recording: a small room or, if you are outdoors, the quietest place and time possible: too loud a noise can cover your voice and thus make the sound inaudible.

- Use your microphone correctly: the trick is to keep three fingers away from the microphone and your mouth; to talk all the time towards the microphone.

- Control the volume and grain throughout the recording.

- Use headphones, for yourself and for your guests: this will allow you to control the recording in all its continuity and to recreate the "intimate" and particular atmosphere of a radio studio.

- If there are errors (technical or voice) do not panic! Stop, breathe, smile ... and start again!

- Finally, try as much as possible to record your program chronologically, without jumping from one part to another: this will make your editing step much easier.

- Remember to warm up your voice, control your breathing and stay as static and calm as possible while recording.
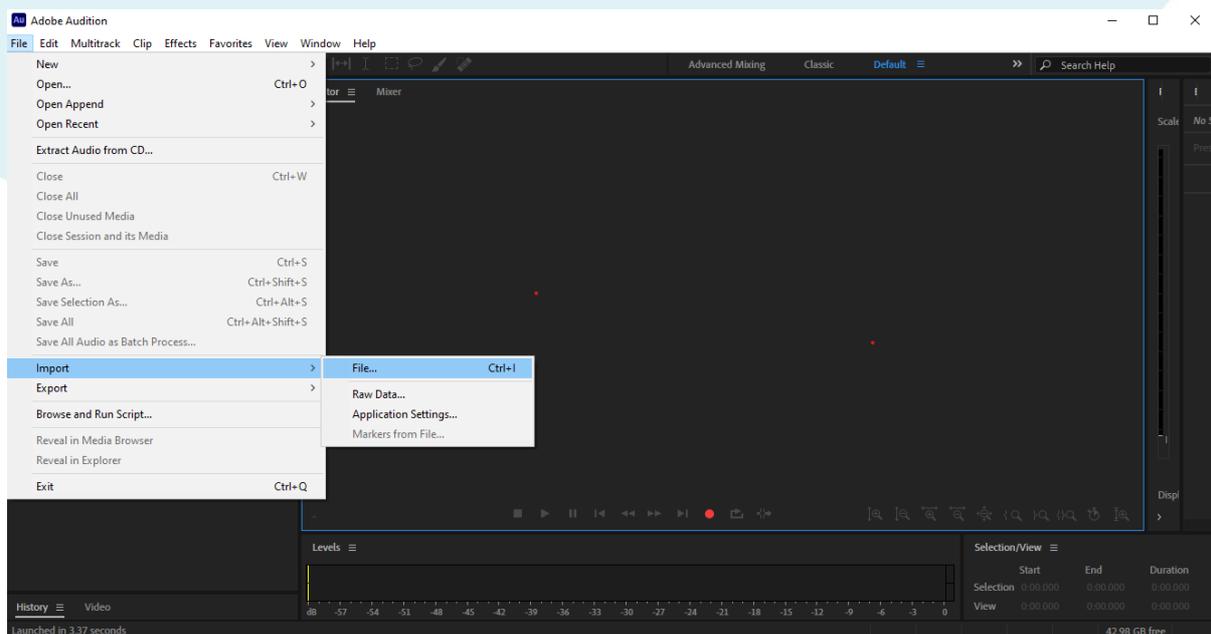
Editing

Audio editing is the process by which you fine-tune your content, create meaning and fluidity between parts, and alleviate audible sound defects. This is a largely subtractive process of reducing your raw recording and reorganizing it for editorial purposes.

It is usually time to produce the pre-recorded sound effects, transitions, music, or jingles that you can include in your episode.

---

[4] https://www.zoom.co.jp/products/field-video-recording/field-recording/h4n-pro

Once your program has been recorded, here come the editing phase. The generalization of digital sound editing generates a large choice of editing software. For our radio workshops, we opted for *Adobe Audition*[5] software which belongs to the Adobe suite. But there is also very good open source software such as *Audacity*[6] or *Reaper.*[7] Regardless of your software, and even before opening your session, you must import the sound files saved on your computer. Make sure you organize your folder well and always know where your folders and files are.

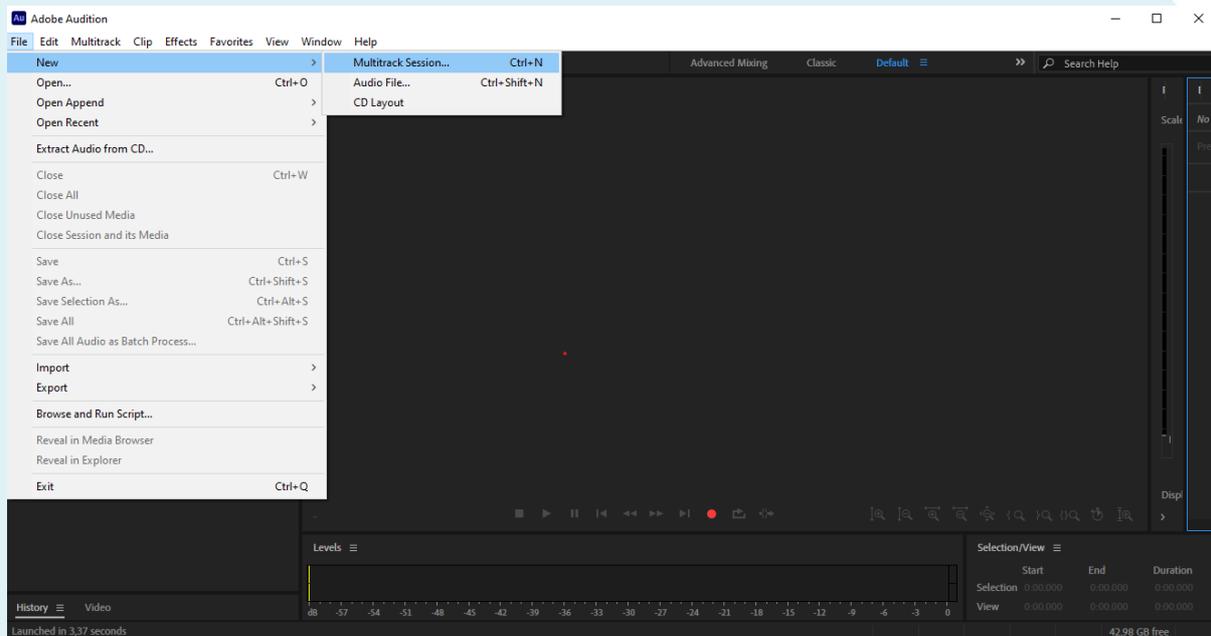Open Audition to import your files there via the FILE - IMPORT - FILE … tabs.

Then, you create a session using the FILE - NEW - MULTRACK SESSION tool

---

[5] https://www.adobe.com/fr/products/audition.html
[6] https://audacity.fr/
[7] https://www.reaper.fm/

Audition offers us a panel. Regarding the location of the file, follow the route offered by Audition by clicking on the New tab. Audition creates an Adobe - Audition folder in "Folder" on your computer as soon as it is installed.

The most used assembly tools are found in the upper right, in the tool palette. Here we can find:

- cut (shortcut R),
- move (shortcut V),
- time selection (shortcut T).
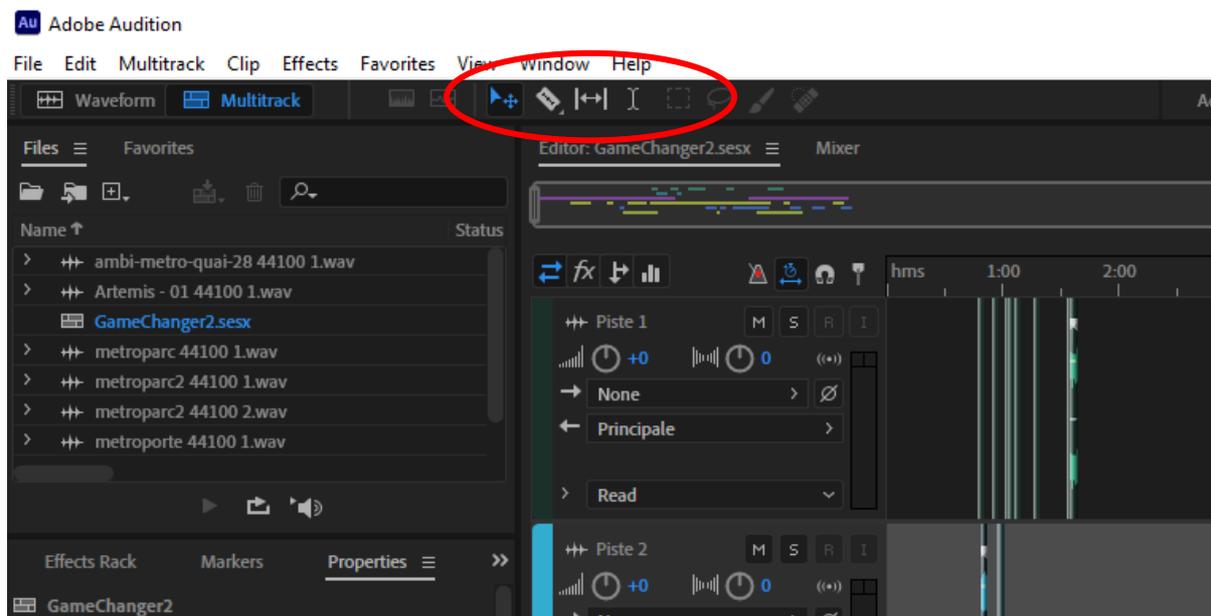
To use them, just position your mouse on the tool palette to see the indication of the name of each tool, its function, and its shortcut.

- The cut tool (R) allows you to cut a clip very precisely by positioning the tab where you want to cut.
- The arrow tool (V) allows you to move a clip in the timeline space or to the other tracks.
- The time selection tool (T) allows you to select a part inside the clip to transform it.

We can move in the timeline through the magnifying glass tools - to enlarge or enlarge our work area (shortcut on the keyboard + and -) which are in a palette at the bottom left of the session.
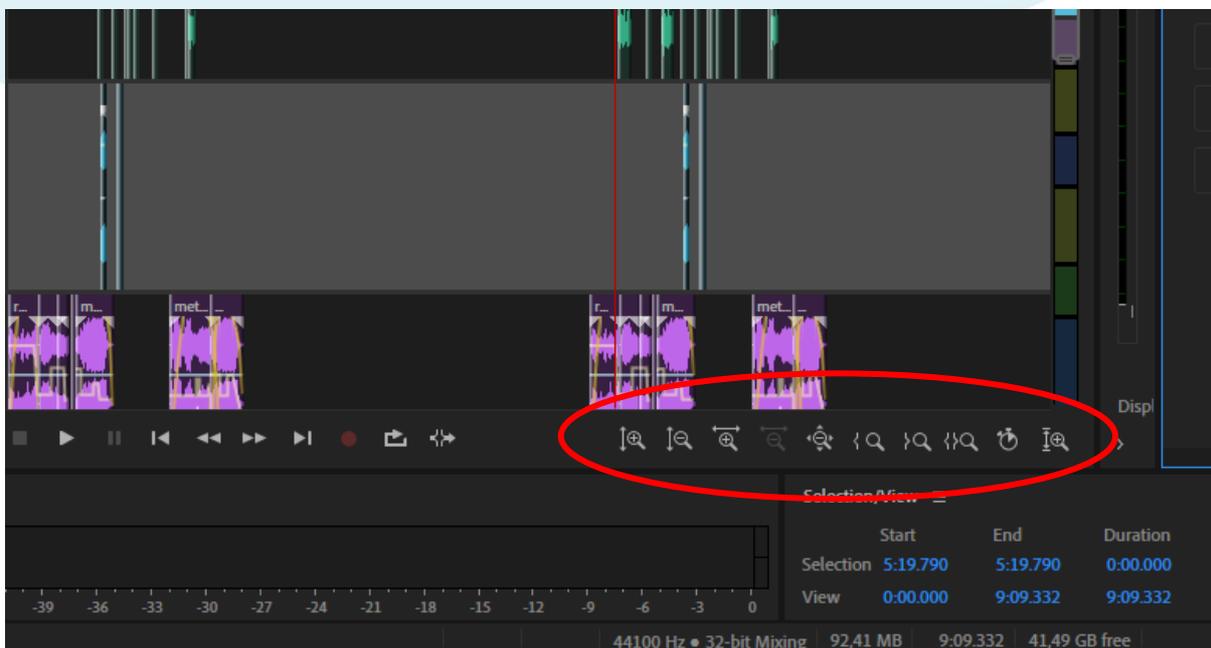

The cross fade (fade in) clip in and out. This effect makes your cut less harsh and creates smoother clip-to-clip transitions.

On audition we can create this transition quite easily: just position the browser arrow on the small grey square at the top of the clip so that a yellow curve appears to stretch according to the desired fade.
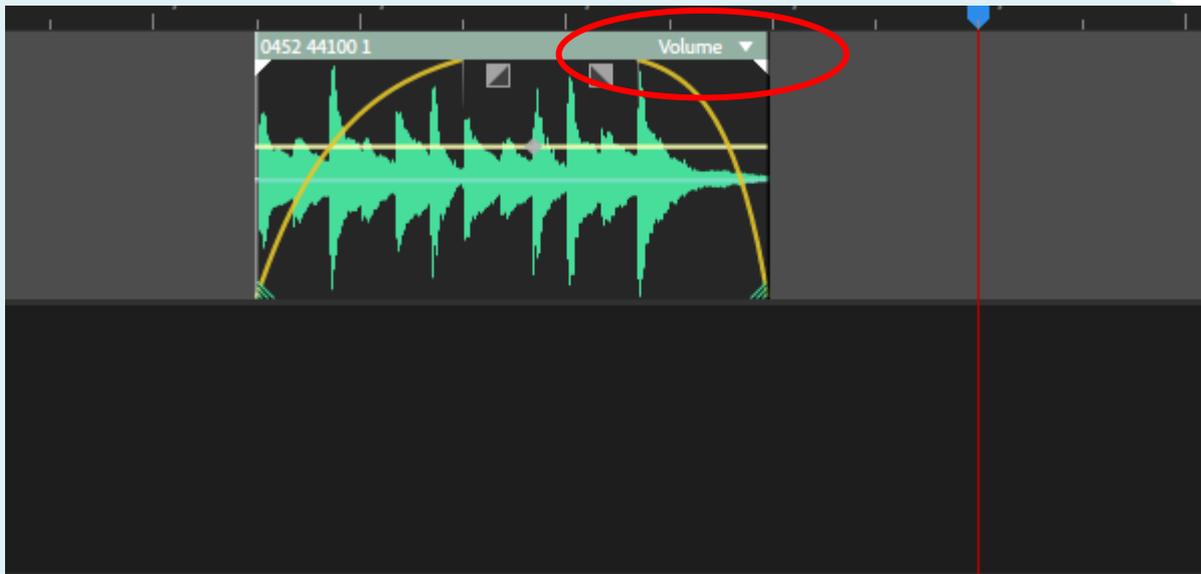
The main sound effects are found in the EFFECT tab which offers a wide choice to improve and / or enrich your sound editing:
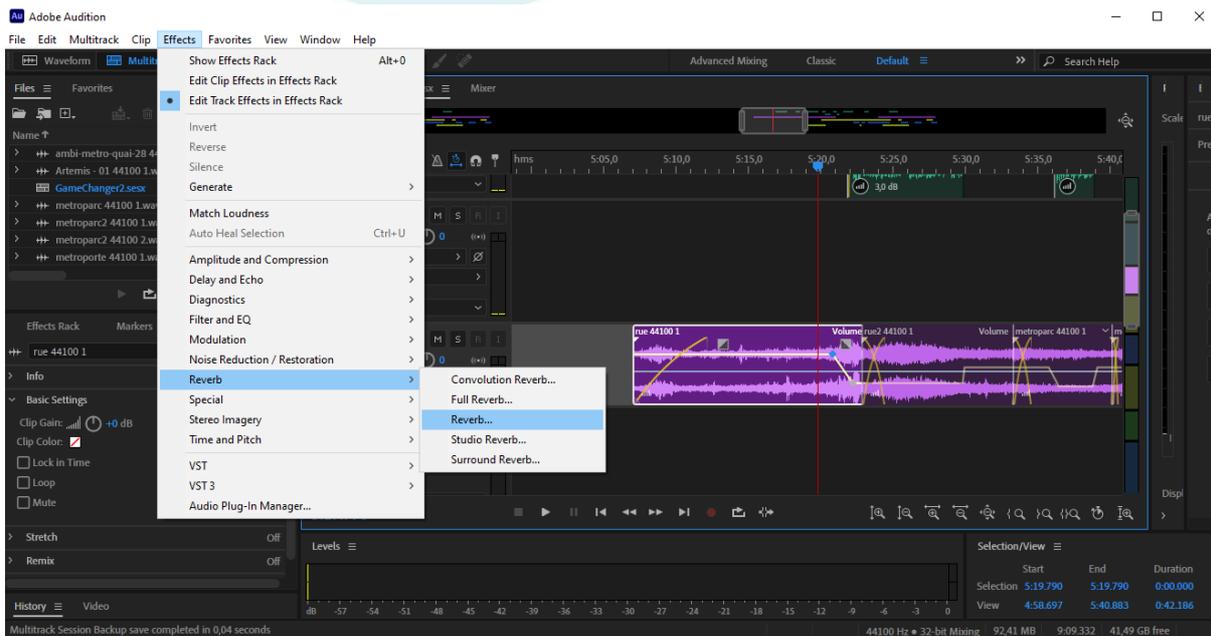

Mixing

Mixing involves balancing the levels between tracks, making tone adjustments, using noise reduction to minimize or eliminate background noise, and finally bouncing your episode on a single stereo track for mastering / distribution.

Now is the time to use EQ, Compression and other processing tools to tame frequencies or to be creative with various sound effects, if necessary.

Rendering and exporting

We are at the end of production of our program. The final step is finalization. It simply consists in exporting our session as a standalone sound file.

On Audition, the action of exporting is quite simple: You have to click on FILE - EXPORT - MULTI-TRACK MIXING - FULL SESSION or SELECTED CLIPS. With the Full session choice, you export the entire session while with Selected Clip, you only export the clips that you have selected on our timeline.
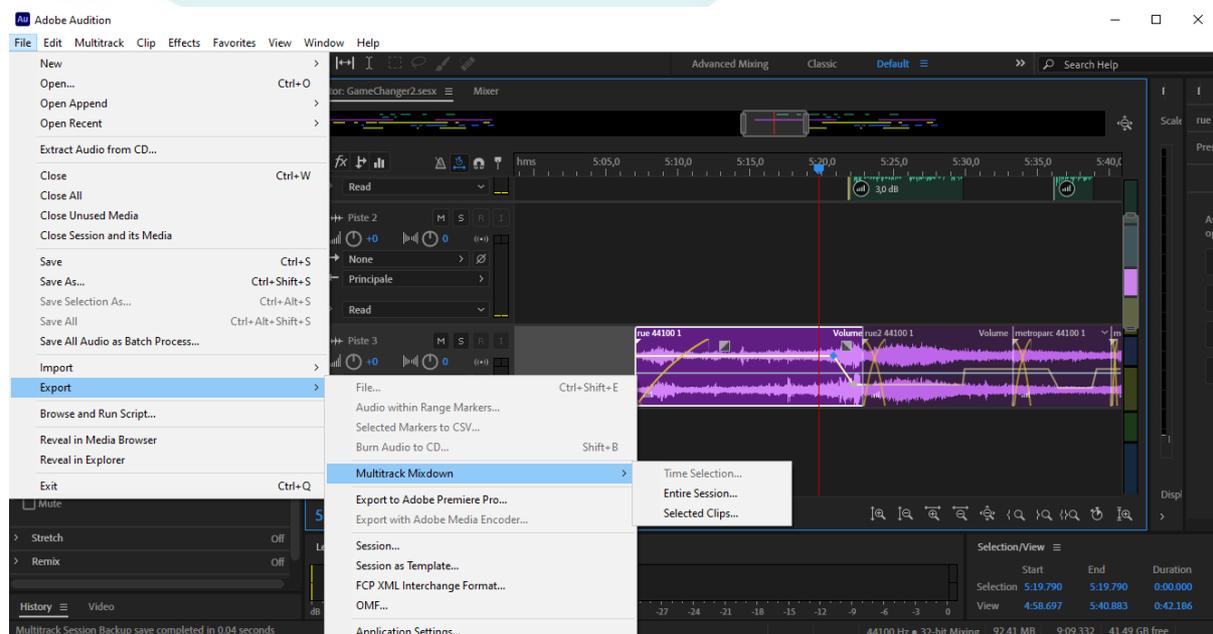
Finally, the choice of export format: when you click on export, Audition offers a large panel to choose the export format.
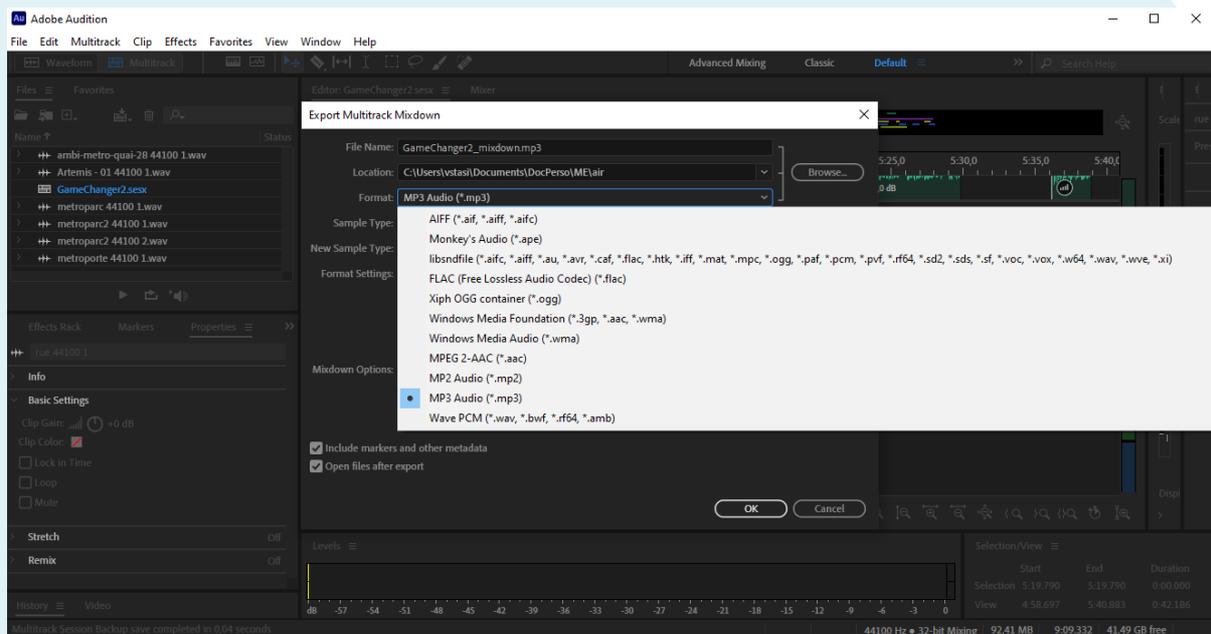
The three most used formats - therefore the most interesting - are MP3, AIFF and PCM or .wav (acronym for Waveform Audio File Format) The choice of format varies depending on the end use of your file: indeed, AIFF formats - native Mac / Apple format - and .wav format are high quality formats, therefore quite heavy. These are the benchmarks for the music and video production industry; MP3 on the contrary is a format with loss of data - therefore with data compression: the result is a qualitatively less fine file, but less heavy. The .mp3 are therefore preferable in case your broadcast will be posted on a website or on a host such as Soundcloud or Mixcloud.

Indicative Workshop Agenda

DAY 1 – Discovering the radio universe By starting the workshop with a dedicated space for discussion, the educators will make the trainees talk about their own media practices, and in particular their relationship(s) to the radio.	
Morning	
20 min	Participants and Project introduction
20 min	Collective discussion around media : Words cloud exercice
50 min	Collective creation of a radio worldmap based on the trainees listening habits
BREAK	
45 min	Icebreaker: crossed interviews of the trainees
45 min	Quizz on radio and journalism universe
Afternoon	
45 min	Getting started with the rafio equipment
45 min	Voice, diction and articulation
BREAK	
30 min	Active listening of podcasts
1h	How to create a podcast: common thread development and choice of topics covered

DAY 2 – Step by step creation of a podcast The second part of the workshop, which already started at the end of the first day, consists in putting the trainees in the role of radio content creator.	
Morning	
30 min	Icebreaker : trailer creation
1h	Initiation to sound editing
BREAK	
1h30	Tools and methods of radio writing as well as of the journalistic approach to researching information
Afternoon	
3h	Show script writing

DAY 3 – Podcast Recording During this last day, trainees are put in the shoes of a radio host or technician and record their podcast under live conditions.	
Morning	
15 min	Relaxation activities
1h15	Show script writing
BREAK	
1h30	Text appropriation exercise and radio animation technique
Afternoon	
2h30	Podcast recording
30 min	Feedback and review of the action

Going further & resources

Teaching english radio: British Council – a series of audio programmes to help you develop your skills as a teacher:
https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-development/teachingenglish-radio

Learning English inspirations: BBC – a series by BBC to inspire news tools for teachers
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/teachingenglish/radio/innovations.shtml

ESL Partyland: Exemples of teaching by films and videos
http://eslpartytown.com/teachers/nov/film.html

School Radio: resources to teach English by radio
https://www.schoolradio.com/resources

English for migrants: radio program to learn English for migrants
https://www.planetaudio.org.nz/english-for-migrants

Madrid young learners podcast: an example of a teacher-produced podcast with foreign students.
http://mylcpodcasts.blogspot.com/

Radio MBSSE: English radio program by Sierra Leone Ministry of Education
https://mbsse.gov.sl/radio/

Teaching Podcast: podcast for students with a large educational section
https://player.fm/featured/teaching

The Internet TESL journal: Articles, Research Papers, Lessons Plans, Classroom Handouts, Teaching Ideas & Links
http://iteslj.org/

UE Using English: different types of games and lesson plans for students at different levels.
https://www.usingenglish.com/teachers/lesson-plans/level-beginner.html