

Conversion and Editing Tools:

This guide will walk you through how to use iTunes and Audacity to create an MP3 file for podcasting Flathead County Library story times. iTunes and Audacity have been chosen for conversion and editing tools simply because of their free availability.

iTunes:

If you are using a digital voice recorder, such as an Olympus or anything that produces an output file other than an MP3, you will need to convert the file. MP3 files are the preferred format for podcasts because of their universality and smaller file size. Also, WMA files need to be converted to MP3 format before they can be edited in Audacity. Converting files in iTunes is fairly straightforward.

1. In iTunes, click on the File Menu, then click Import (or Ctrl+Shift+O). iTunes will automatically prompt you to convert the file.
2. If you are not automatically prompted, highlight the file. Then click on the Advanced menu and select Convert Selection to MP3.
3. After the file is converted, simply find the file on your hard drive. The default is usually an iTunes folder in the My Music folder in My Documents. If you would like to change the default location, first select Preferences from the Edit menu. “iTunes Music folder location” setting is under the Advanced tab.

Audacity:

If you have more than one recording you would like to put together into one file, or you would like to add background music, this can easily be done using Audacity, a freely downloadable music file editing software program. Audacity can also be used to record the podcast, if a computer and microphone are available.

To combine multiple files:

1. You can drag and drop audio files into Audacity, or select Import from the File menu. Every time you import a new file into Audacity it creates a new “track” just underneath the original. Left alone, the tracks will play together all at once, like a guitar, drums and bass should.

2. If you have a beginning, middle, and end that you need to put into chronological order, you'll need to move the tracks around. This can be done by moving sections to the top track and deleting the empty track. Click on the Time Shift Tool, which is in the tool bar just right of the fast-forward button and features a horizontal line with arrows pointing in either direction. This button allows you to click and drag sections to anywhere on the screen.
3. Once your sections are in chronological order on the top track, delete the extra empty tracks. If you are adding music, leave a little space between sections.

To add music:

Please make sure to use only music you have permission to use or you don't need permission for. The following website offers links to music that legally be used in podcasts: <http://creativecommons.org/legalmusicforvideos>. Unfortunately, not many of these websites have children's music, so you can also just try searching the internet. I found three nicely sung acoustic children's songs for anyone to use here:

<http://www.victorjohnson.com/free-music-downloads.html>

1. Drag in or import the file you would like to use for music.
2. Leave it as an extra track.
3. Use the Cut Tool (button with scissors) to cut the song up and use the Time Shift Tool to move it into the spaces you left between the top track sections.
4. To fade the song in and out, first select the section to fade with Selection Tool (button with a Capital I cursor). Then select Fade In or Fade Out from the Effects menu.

Simply saving the project saves it as an AUP file. To save the file as an MP3 you will need to use the Export command from the File menu. When you Export it also allows you to name the artist, song, and album. Please pick a "song title" that identifies the podcast by date and an "artist" that identifies the reader. The "album" should be Flathead County Library.