

Audio Recording Tips

Best practices for recording podcasting audio

Get Ready!

- Know your questions before the interview.
- Type, print them and bring them with you to the interview.
- Re-read your questions prior to the beginning of the interview.



You want your interviews to feel like a conversation, so keep your questions close, but allow the natural flow of dialog be your guide. Reading questions during the interview is a distraction and a barrier to dialogue.

Be Engaged!

A recorded conversation that drags with slow moving questions and answers quickly seems boring to the listener. Keep up the pace and energy.

Use non-verbal probes: nod, smile, tilt your head, raise your eyebrows, etc. All these are great ways to enlist more information without interrupting the conversation. When you need to ask a question wait until the interviewee has finished talking, count to five and then ask the question.

Keys to Success

1

SLATE TAPE

Record the following: date, location, name of the person you're interviewing, and the subject matter.

2

THROWAWAY Q

Ask a general question so you can check both input & output audio levels.
"What did you have for lunch?"

3

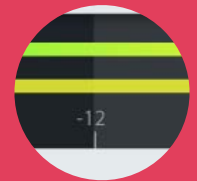
MOMENT OF SILENCE

Before the interview starts, take 3-5 second pause. This silence can be used later for filtering ambient noise.



Gear Check!

Recorder,
Microphone,
Headphones,
Notebook and pen.



Level Check!

All Green, a little
Yellow, and no Red.
Target level is
-15 or -12 dBFS



Bad Vibes!

Turn cell phones off
or set to airplane
mode.

Location, Location, Location

This is the key factor that determines audio recording quality. It's important to ask for what you want - the best recording situation! You'll need to tell people what will work for you and what produces a good audio interview.

"I want to make sure you sound good. Can we..."

Ask to hold the interview in a quiet location. In essence, try and hold the interview in a place where you or the interviewee can control background noise and interruptions. One of the best places to hold an interview is across the respondent's kitchen table. Office's and classrooms are also good locations.

LISTEN

Sound bounces around a room in waves, and it will reflect off of anything that is hard.



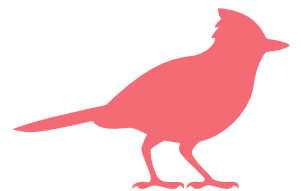
Listen for unwanted background noise (fluorescent lights, air conditioning, wind noise, traffic, hums, hisses, airplanes, buzzing) during your recording.

Microphone Distance

The mic should be held about 3 inches from the person's mouth. However, the distance can depend on how much the person projects. Try not to position the mic directly in front of the mouth where you will capture the air. Instead, hold it slightly to the side or under the mouth to avoid sibilance and p-popping.

Ambient Sounds

This is probably the most commonly forgotten audio element, but it's absolutely necessary. It can be used to repair edits and having enough ambient noise can help you build a scene. It's suggested you record 90 seconds of ambience for every scene and interview you record. To ensure the sound of the ambience matches the interview perfectly, keep your microphone in the same place it was in during the interview and do not adjust levels on the recorder.



A MOMENT OF SILENCE

Of course, there's no such thing as a perfect recording situation in the field. If there's a noise you can not control, sit so your mic is facing away from the sound. Pause the interview but keep recording - just remain silent if loud intrusive noises present themselves, such as a passing ambulance.

Take a moment to regain your composure, leave an audio cue in the recording *"Ok, let's take that last part out...starting again now"*, pause for 2 seconds to allow for enough editing space, and start again.

