

Introduction

This guide is about generally available digital recorders. These include MP3 and minidisk recorders. The audio recorders are those that can be used in a lecture and seminar or for making private notes.

Considerations

- Always ask permission to record a lecture, seminar or meeting.
- It can help to use a microphone to avoid motor sounds as well as the speech. It is preferable to have a microphone less than 30cm away from the speaker but this is not always possible. In a seminar, it may help to have an omni-directional microphone.
- Written language tends to be more ordered and less prone to error compared to spoken language - some time may need to be spent in corrections and re-ordering for easy reading later.
- Recordings for speech recognition tend to improve if the microphone and recorder are used with the training scripts.
- Free programs like Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>) can be used for editing recordings.
- Most digital recorders allow for speedy download via a USB connection. It is also possible to transcribe speech from a recorder in real time with silent replay, by connecting the recorder's earphone output to the microphone input on the computer.
- Transcribing recordings takes time - one hour of recorded speech may take up to four hours of typing text. Be selective! It might be useful and also save time to look at the handout at the same time as transcribing the audio to remind oneself what the main structure/most important points of the lecture/seminar were.

Additional Resources

- **Microphone Tips for live recordings**

http://www.sounddevices.com/tech/mic_tips.htm

This page describes how the placement of a microphone can make all the difference to the quality of the recording. Although the web page is designed to help those undertaking professional recordings it can also be useful for those who wish to record lectures. The site is presenting Condenser and Dynamic Microphones.

- **Mini Disk Recorders in lectures and tutorials**

<http://www.anu.edu.au/disabilities/atproject/mini/index.php>

This is a very practical page about the use of mini disks in lecture and discussion situations from the Australian National University by Trevor Wilks.

- **Minidisk to MP3 recordings on a computer**

<http://www.minidisc.org/charman/mdtomp3.html>

This is an easy to follow set of instructions about how to record from a minidisk recorder to a PC. The system could be used to transfer voice files into speech recognition systems.

- **How to transfer a tape to a CD using Audacity**

<http://nsftools.com/misc/TapeToCD.htm>

- **Recording tips when interviewing people**

<http://www.livingarchive.org.uk/docs/trainingC2.html>

Although this page is about taping interviews and a little out of date, the tips are useful for those recording lectures with digital recorders.

- **Recording of Lectures by Disabled Students - policy and procedures. (PDF)**

<http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/tlao/MAP2/recording-lectures-guidance.pdf>

Compliance with Part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act – Recording of Lectures by Disabled Students - guidance for lecturers from NATHFE, SKILL and the DRC.

- **Digital Recorder (Olympus DS40) with Dragon**

<http://www.dyslexic.com/dragon9-and-digital-recorder>

A personal perspective on using the Olympus DS40 digital voice recorder with Dragon NaturallySpeaking (Preferred Version 9).