

# **Digital Recording 101**

## **Handouts**

**Region 11  
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## TECHNOPHOBIA QUIZ

Instructions: Place a check mark next to the items that you use with comfort.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Answering Machine                | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Security System                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby monitor                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackberry/iPhone/etc.           | <input type="checkbox"/> iPod (or other mp3 player)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calculator                       | <input type="checkbox"/> LCD projector                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camcorder                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Microwave oven                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cassette tapes/recorders         | <input type="checkbox"/> Music CDs                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital alarm clock              | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital thermometer              | <input type="checkbox"/> Online shopping (e.g. iTunes, Amazon)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Pager                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Color TV                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Computer                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cordless phone                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Photocopy machine                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cruise control                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Programmable coffee maker              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital camera                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Programmable thermostat                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital voice recorder           | <input type="checkbox"/> Remote control                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DVD player                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Touch-tone phone                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail                           | <input type="checkbox"/> TiVo (or other Digital Video Recorder) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fax machine                      | <input type="checkbox"/> VCR                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flash Drive                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Walkie-talkies                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GPS (or other navigation system) | <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube                                |

Note: These are all inventions that have been introduced in my lifetime (yes, I'm old!)

# Digital Recording

## Things to consider when purchasing a digital recorder:

### Recording Time

There are digital voice recorders that boast of over 250 hours of recording time. These claims always have to be taken with a grain of salt. Since you will want your recordings to be of the highest possible quality (unlike business users, who might need them just for recording spoken voices), fewer hours of recording time will be available. Be sure to check how long you can record in high quality mode, or look for a recorder with the largest hard drive you can afford.

### Ease of Operation

Take a look at the device and see if it appears to be easy to operate. Especially for first-time users, it will be important that the device does not intimidate you.

### Connectivity to your computer

If you plan to share your files with your chorus mates (e.g. send your qualifying recordings to your evaluator) you must get a recorder that has PC connectivity. Many of the inexpensive digital recorders don't have this feature, so be sure to check for this. If you don't get this feature, anything you record will only be "listenable" through the recorder - you will not be able to save the recording on your computer or e-mail the recording to your evaluator.

My preference is for a digital voice recorder that plugs directly into the computer's USB port, but some digital voice recorders use docking stations and USB cables. My opinion - If the USB connection is built in, there is less chance of its being misplaced.

### Microphone jack

Most digital recorders have built-in microphones, but some also allow the attachment of an external mic (to clip onto your lapel, for example.) If this is something you think you might want, then be sure to look for that feature.

### Need it for other uses?

Some digital voice recorders are actually mp3 players with built-in voice recorders. If you want your device to also serve as an mp3 player, look for one that does both - but make sure you get one with a lot of memory because some of your memory will be used by the songs you load onto the device.

### A general rule of thumb:

My advice is that, just as with a computer, you buy the one with the most memory you can afford.

# But I Don't Want to Change!

## Symptoms of technophobia:

- ✓ Fear of computers and related technologies
- ✓ Unwillingness to change from one system to another
- ✓ Highly critical of any technology implementations
- ✓ Passive resistance to new technology
- ✓ Unwillingness to be trained in new technologies
- ✓ Making excuses for not getting trained
- ✓ Relentlessly arguing the lack of need for new technology
- ✓ Pleading, “The old way is the best way!”
- ✓ Attempting to convince others that “I have made it this far without technology. Why now?”

Do you have any of these symptoms?

## **Some suggestions for your first digital recorder (not comprehensive by any means)**

### **Olympus WS series**

- Easy to use, but buttons are quite small
- Uses AAA batteries
- Has built-in USB plug
- Has external mic jack in addition to built-in mic
- Can be used as an mp3 player
- Five folders
- Pretty darned decent sound quality
- Files are created in WMA format
- Very affordable - good value

### **Olympus DS series**

- Very easy to use - buttons are relatively large
- Uses AAA batteries
- USB connection is via auxiliary cable
- Has external mic jack in addition to built-in mic
- Cannot be used as an mp3 player
- Five folders
- Excellent sound quality
- Files are created in WMA format
- Much more costly than WS series, because recording quality is higher

### **Philips**

- Not as easy to use as Olympus, but not too difficult
- Uses AAA batteries
- Has built-in USB plug
- One folder for recordings
- No external mic jack
- Decent recording quality
- Very inexpensive, but recording quality is not fabulous

### **Sandisk (Sansa)**

- Easy to use with Mac, difficult with PC
- Battery is rechargeable
- USB connection is via auxiliary cable
- One folder for recordings
- No external mic jack
- Can be used as an mp3 player
- Has an FM tuner and can record FM radio
- Good sound quality
- Files are created in WAV format
- Inexpensive, but recording quality and ease of use suffer

## Some Awesome Free Downloads

Audio editing: **Audacity**

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>

This free program allows you to edit your audio recordings. In one case, I was actually able to “doctor” a baritone learning tape when the bari and tenor switched notes.

Audio format converter: **Switch**

<http://www.nch.com.au/switch/>

(Be careful not to download Switch Plus - it is not free)

This free program enables you to convert WMA files, WAV files, etc. to a different format, such as mp3. It will NOT convert m4p (protected) files to mp3, but you can do that by simply burning a disc. The files on the disc will be mp3 files.

PDF creating: **CutePDF**

<http://www.cutepdf.com/Products/CutePDF/writer.asp>

If your computer does not have a program to make PDF's, this is a nice little program. You will need to download both the program and a converter (both available on site listed above) and CutePDF will show up as a printer option. If you want your document to be a PDF (so others can read but not change it) just choose this printer option. The best part is that the files are readable on both PCs and Macs.

Converting PDFs to Word documents: **Free PDF to Word doc converter**

<http://www.hellopdf.com/download.php>

This program will convert a PDF to a Word document, which you can then edit as you see fit. Very cool!

Be aware that this program is only for PCs (not Macs) and you will occasionally be required to answer a “simple” (not really so simple) math problem in order to continue to use it for free. So brush off your math skills, and have fun!

Word of Warning: These programs were discovered by me and I did research before downloading them. I have downloaded and tested all four of these programs. But be warned that there is always a chance of getting a virus when you download programs from unknown or untested sources. So beware of downloading just any old thing.

# Olympus Digital Recorder Comparison

1-27-11

| Model   | mp3 player? | Memory      | USB cable or built in? | Mic jack? | PC link?  | Price (list) | Price (Amazon) 1-27-11 | Format of output    |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| WS-710M   | yes         | 8 GB + card | both                   | yes       | yes       | 149.99       | 107.99                 | WAV, MP3, WMA       |
| WS-700M   | yes         | 4 GB + card | both                   | yes       | yes       | 99.99        | 79.99                  | WAV, MP3, WMA       |
| DM-4  | yes         | 8 GB + card | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 299.99       | n/a at Amazon          | WAV, MP3, WMA       |
| DM-2  | yes         | 4 GB + card | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 249.99       | 193.72                 | WAV, MP3, WMA       |
| WS-520M   | yes         | 8 GB        | built in               | yes       | yes       | 169.99       | 88.88                  | WAV, MP3, WMA       |
| DM-520  | yes         | 4 GB + card | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 199.99       | 144.99                 | WAV, MP3, WMA       |
| DM-420  | yes         | 2 GB + card | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 149.99       | 105.9                  | MP3 and WMA         |
| WS-510M   | yes         | 4 GB        | both                   | yes       | yes       | 149.99       | 64.99                  | WMA (MP3 poss.)     |
| WS-500  | yes         | 2 GB        | both                   | yes       | yes       | 99.99        | 44.95 (pink)           | WMA (MP3 poss.)     |
|   |             |             |                        |           |           |              |                        |                     |
| WS-600S   | no          | 2 GB        | built in               | yes       | yes       | 79.99        | 64.99                  | MP3 and WMA         |
| VN-8100PC   | no          | 2 GB        | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 59.99        | 49.99                  | MP3 and WMA         |
| VN-8000PC   | no          | 1 GB        | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 49.99        | n/a at Amazon          | WMA                 |
| VN-7600PC   | no          | 2 GB        | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 59.99        | 39.95                  | MP3 and WMA         |
| VN-6200PC   | no          | 1 GB        | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 59.99        | 34.45                  | WMA                 |
| WS-400S   | no          | 1 GB        | built in               | yes       | yes       | 79.99        | 53.99                  | WMA                 |
| DS-2400   | no          | expandable  | SD card                | yes       | yes       | 299.99       | 217.79                 | DS2 - for dictation |
| VN-5200PC   | no          | 512 MB      | cable                  | yes       | yes       | 59.99        | 43.95                  | WMA                 |
|   |             |             |                        |           |           |              |                        |                     |
| <b>DON'T BUY THESE RECORDERS. YOU ARE UNABLE TO TRANSFER THE RECORDINGS TO YOUR COMPUTER.</b> |             |             |                        |           |           |              |                        |                     |
| DP-10   | no          | 1 GB        | neither                | no        | <b>NO</b> | 34.99        |                        | WMA                 |
| VN-7000   | no          | 2 GB        | neither                | yes       | <b>NO</b> | 39.99        |                        | CELP                |
| VN-6000   | no          | 1 GB        | neither                | yes       | <b>NO</b> | 39.99        |                        | CELP                |
| VN-5000   | no          | 512 MB      | neither                | yes       | <b>NO</b> | 39.99        |                        | CELP                |