

## **Recording Process with *Windows Media Encoder* for the Production of Voice Audio Files**

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## INTRODUCTION

The recording process described in this technical note enables the production of audio files (WMA files) with the use of Microsoft's *Windows Media Encoder* software, which latter can be downloaded for free from Microsoft's website (please see the first paragraph below). The settings describe in this document were chosen specifically for voice recording with the use of **Windows Media Audio Voice 9** codec, which latter provides superb voice quality through excellent voice emphasis and ambient noise reduction, along with small file size.

## PRELIMINARY SETUP

- Download **Windows Media Encoder 9 Series** from Microsoft's Website and install it (click on the following link):  
<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/forpros/encoder/default.msp>  
Preferably, use the 32 bit version, even if you have a 64 bit system.
- If you are running Microsoft's **Windows Media Player 11**, download the following patch and install it (click on the following link): <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/932390>
- Plug a microphone into your laptop or your computer's microphone input jack.

The microphone input jack of a laptop typically looks as shown in **Figure 1**; it usually has a microphone symbol near it.

These input jacks are made for a mini plug (1/8" or 3.5 mm diameter plugs) as shown in **Figure 2**. If your microphone's plug does not match the input jack of your laptop, buy an adapter, or get a microphone with a mini plug (these types of microphones equipped with a mini plug are usually fairly inexpensive and provide excellent voice quality recording).

Adapters, e.g. capable of converting a 1/4" plug to an 1/8" plug (see **Figure 3**), are available from most retail outlets of electronic parts; they are also easy to find on eBay (e.g. key in **mini plug adapter 1/4** in eBay's search engine) and the Internet (e.g. Google - <http://www.google.com/products>).



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**

Once you performed the actions described previously, open the **Recording Control** (see **Figure 6**) in **Sounds and Audio Devices Properties** (see **Figure 5**) from the **Control Panel** (see **Figure 4**).

(Windows **Start** (menu – located at the bottom left hand corner of your computer's screen) > **Settings** > **Control Panel** > **Sounds and Audio Devices** > **Sounds and Audio Devices Properties** (dialog window) > **Audio** (tab) > **Sound recording** > **Volume...** (button) > **Microphone** (select the check box))

Now close all windows that you opened through the **Control Panel**, and close the **Control Panel** too.

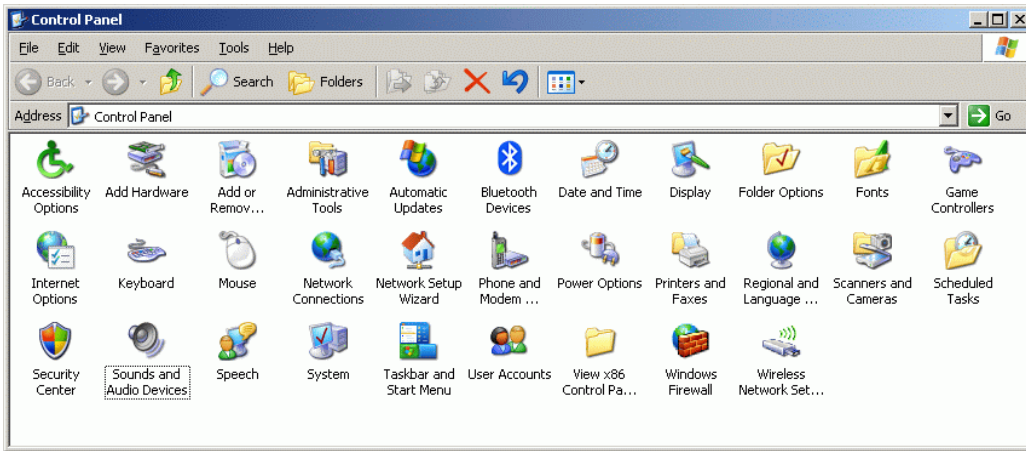


Figure 4

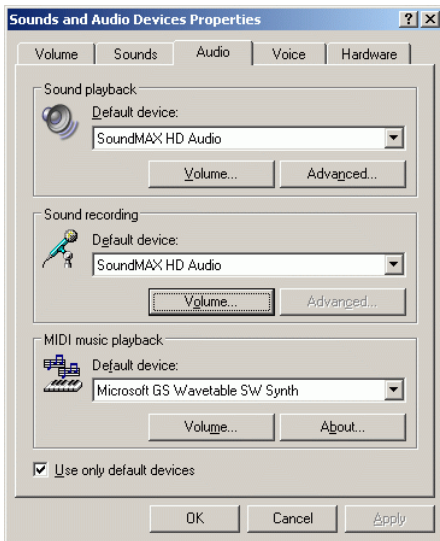


Figure 5

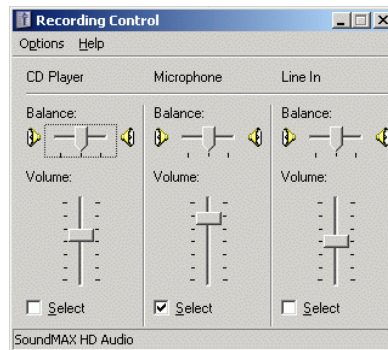
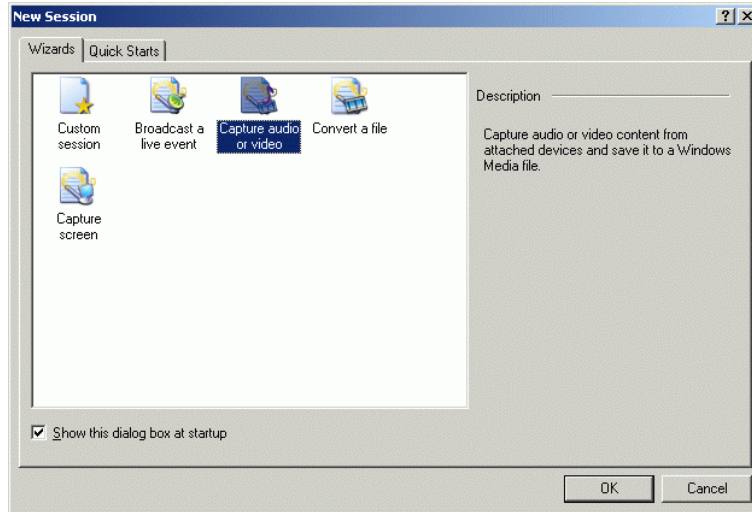


Figure 6

## WINDOWS MEDIA ENCODER SETUP

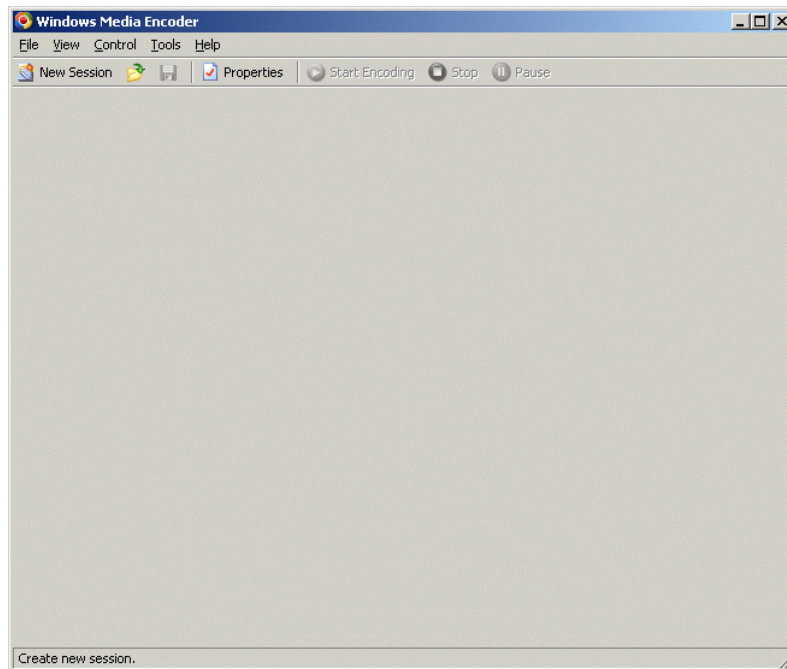
Open **Windows Media Encoder**.

The **New Session** dialog window should pop up (see **Figure 7**).  
Click on **Cancel**.



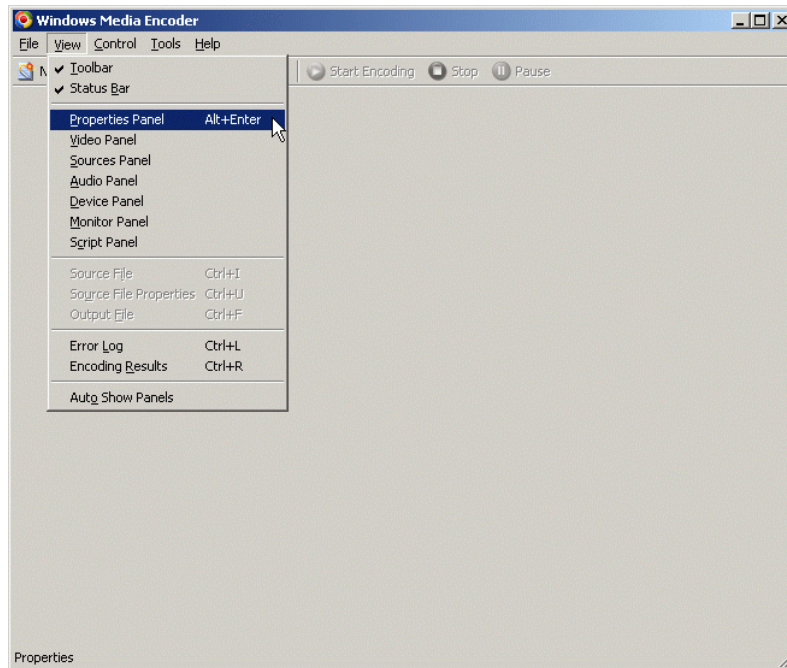
**Figure 7**

You should now be able to see the main dialog window of **Windows Media Encoder** (see **Figure 8**).



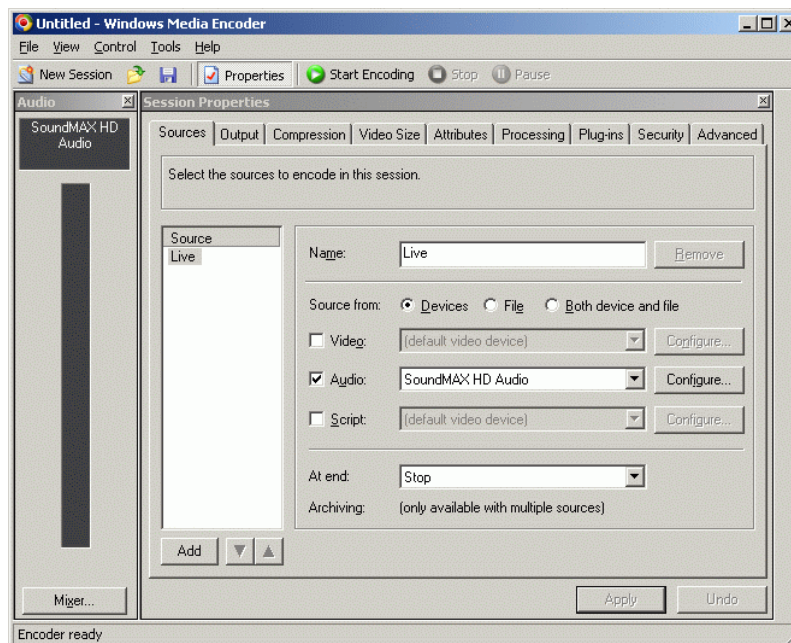
**Figure 8**

Use the **View** menu to display the **Properties Panel** and **Audio Panel** (see **Figure 9**).



**Figure 9**

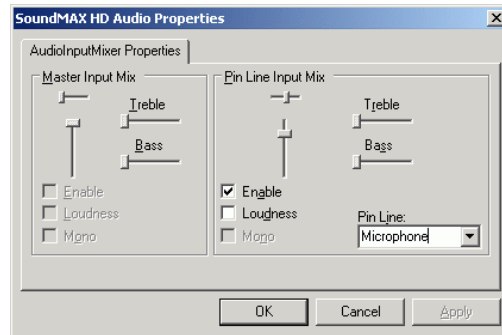
At minimum, your window should now look like **Figure 10**.



**Figure 10**

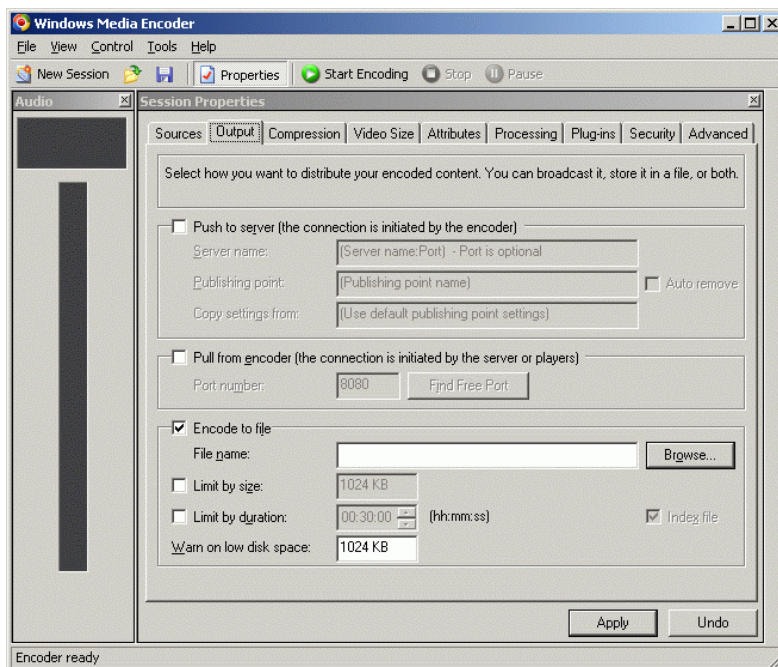
In the **Sources** tab, select only the **Audio** check box and then click on **Configure**.

An ...**Audio Properties** dialog window should pop up (see **Figure 11**). Select **Microphone** in the **Pin Line** drop down menu box, and select the **Enable** check box only. Click on the **OK** button.



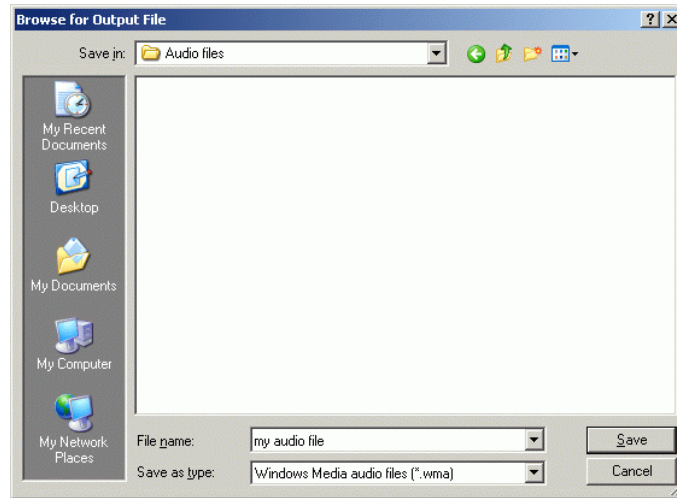
**Figure 11**

In the **Output** tab, select only the **Encode to file** check box and then click on the **Browse** button (see **Figure 12**).



**Figure 12**

Once you clicked on the **Browse** button, use the **Browse for Output File** dialog window that will pop up (see **Figure 13**) to determine the place where you will save the output audio file (the audio file that you will record), along with the audio file type (e.g. wma), and the audio file name (e.g. you could name it, say as an example, *My\_first\_audio\_file*).



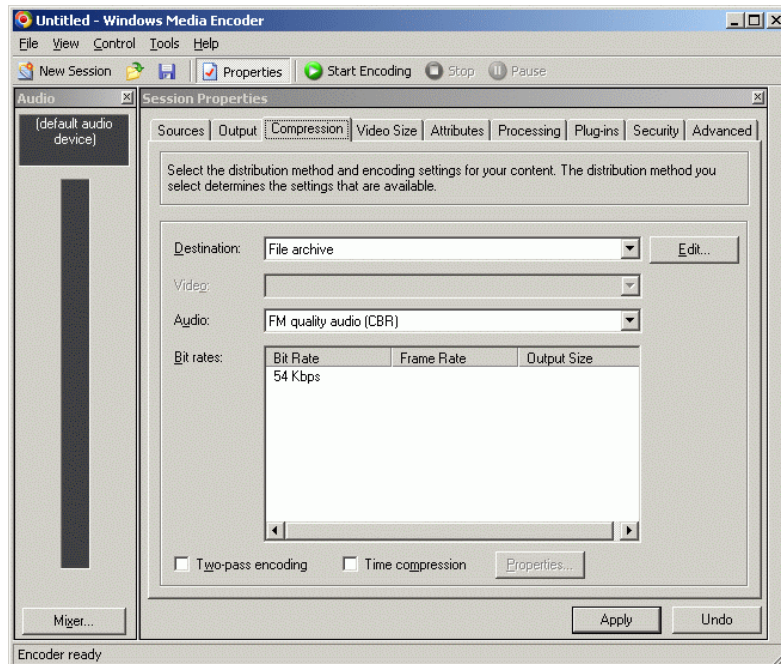
**Figure 13**

Once you saved the output file (now only an empty file on your hard disk), click on the **Compression** tab (see **Figure 14**).

In the **Destination** drop down menu, select **File archive**.

In the **Audio** drop down menu, select **FM quality audio (CBR)**.

Now click on the **Edit** button.



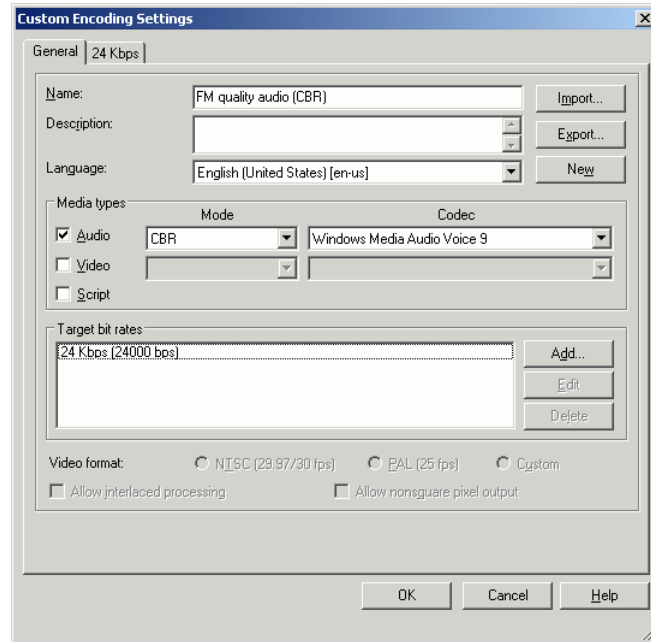
**Figure 14**

The **Custom Encoding Settings** window should pop up (see **Figure 15**).

In the **Codec** drop down menu, select **Windows Media Audio Voice 9**.

Click on the **OK** button.

**NOTE:** The **Windows Media Audio Voice 9** codec provides superb voice quality through excellent voice emphasis and ambient noise reduction, along with small file size.



**Figure 15**

Ignore the following tabs: **Video Size**, **Attributes**, **Processing**, **Plug-ins**, **Security** and **Advanced**.

You are now ready to record your first audio session.

## RECORDING OF AUDIO FILES

Press on the **Start Encoding** button.

As you speak in the microphone, you should be able to see the audio signal's level change in the **Audio Panel** (akin to a VU meter).

Once you are through with the recording, press on the **Stop** button.

To play the audio file you just recorded, double click on it.

Upon exiting **Windows Media Encoder**, you will be asked to save the current session, simply save it under an appropriate file name, say as an example, *My\_first\_audio\_session*.