

How to Record Audio Files with the Use of a Microphone and Microsoft's Windows Operating Systems

By
Guibord Technical Writing Services, Inc. — www.guibord.com

The process described in this document makes use of Windows VISTA. For other operating systems (e.g., Windows XP, Windows 7, etc.), the names of the icons, dialog windows and their features, and applications will differ, but the fundamentals of the process are the same.

For your VISTA operating system, the devices listed in the dialog windows may differ depending on the equipment (e.g., sound card, microphone, etc.) connected to your computer.

GENERAL SETUP

Be certain that a microphone is connected to the input jack of your PC or laptop before modifying the following settings. Otherwise, if a microphone is plugged in only after you modified the following settings, the microphone may not work (rebooting your PC or laptop may solve the problem).

In the **Control Panel**, double click on **Sound**.

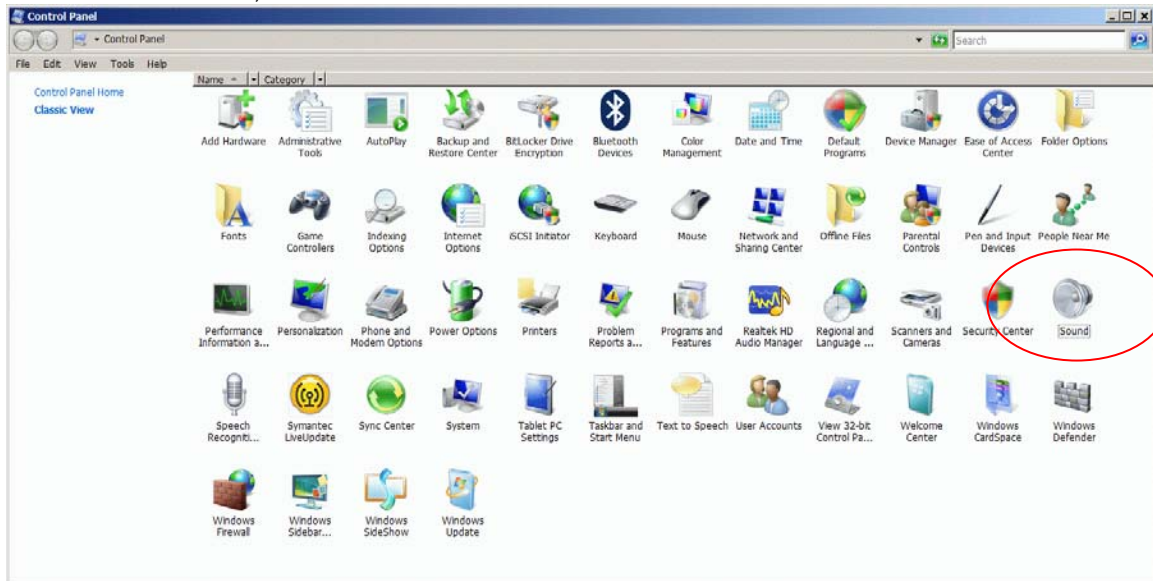


Figure 1

In the **Sound** dialog window, use the settings as described in the following figures.

In the **Playback** tab, be certain that the **Speakers** are checked and stated as **Working**.

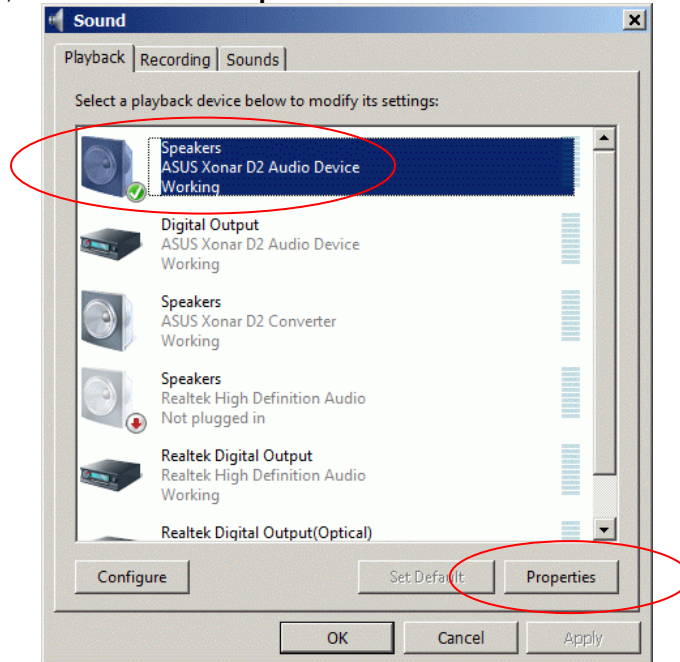


Figure 2

In the **Playback** tab, with the **Speakers** selected, click on **Properties**.

In the **Speakers Properties** dialog window, **General** tab, verify that **Device usage** is set to **Use this device (enable)**.

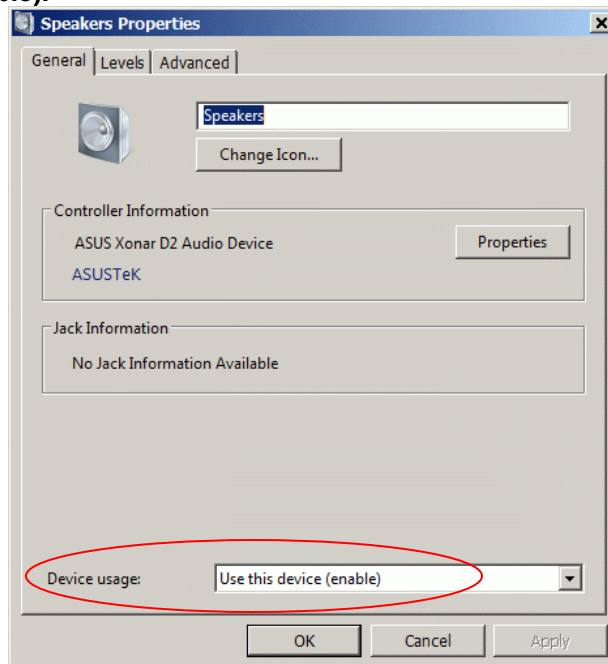


Figure 3

In the **Speakers Properties** dialog window, **Levels** tab, verify that the **Volume Control** is set to its maximum; also, **verify that the speakers are not muted.**

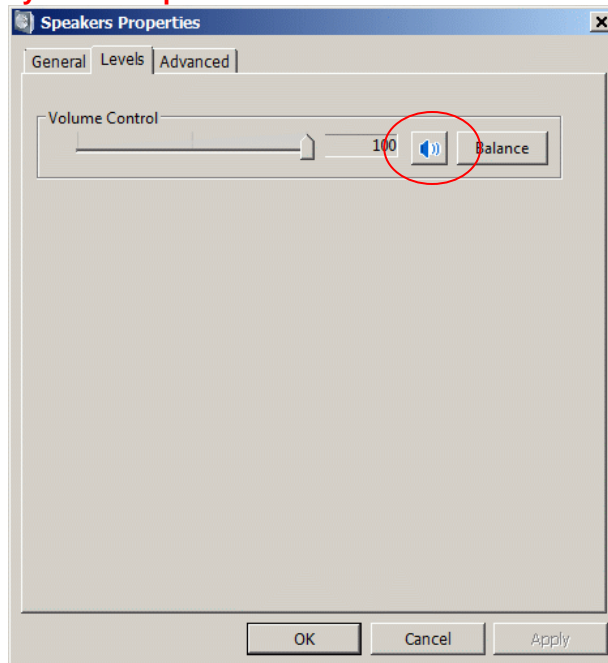


Figure 4

In the **Speakers Properties** dialog window, **Advanced** tab, verify that the **Exclusive Mode** settings are checked as indicated in Figure 5, then with the **Test** button, test the speakers (you should hear test signals generated by Windows).

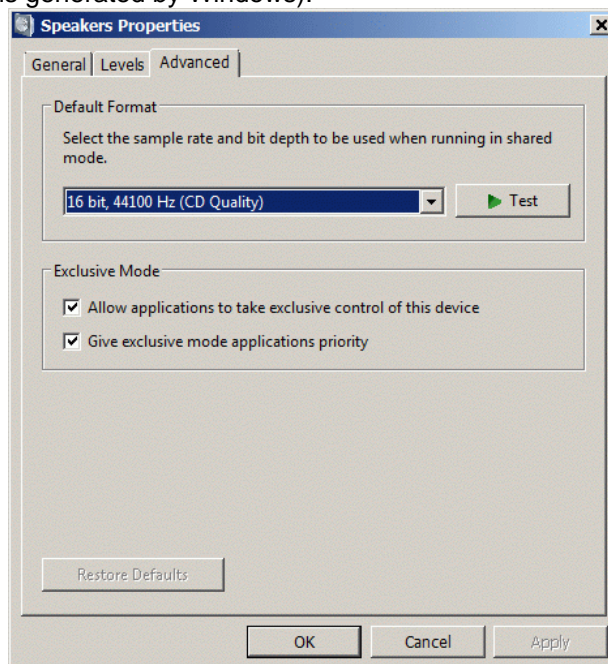


Figure 5

In the **Recording** tab, be certain that the **Microphone** is checked and stated as **Working** (A microphone must be connected to the input jack of your PC or laptop for the microphone to be recognized by Windows as **Working**).

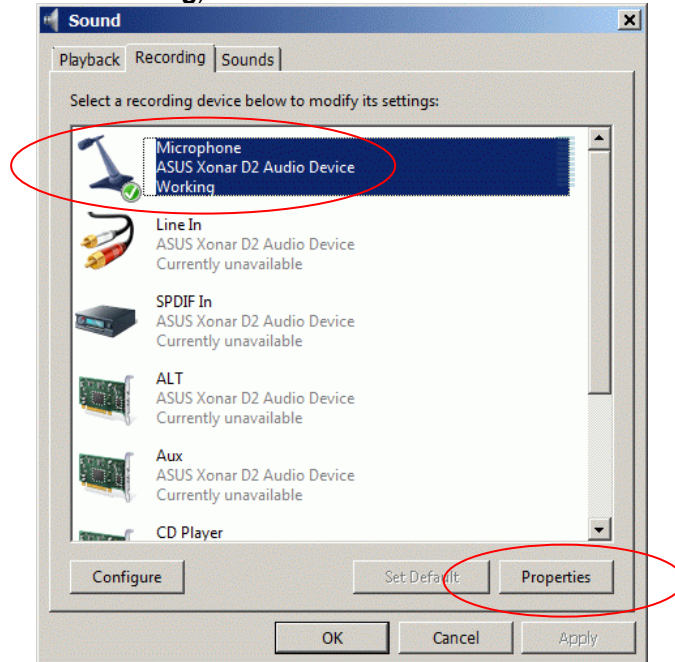


Figure 6

In the **Recording** tab, with the **Microphone** selected, click on **Properties**.

In the **Microphone Properties** dialog window, **General** tab, verify that **Device usage** is set to **Use this device (enable)**.

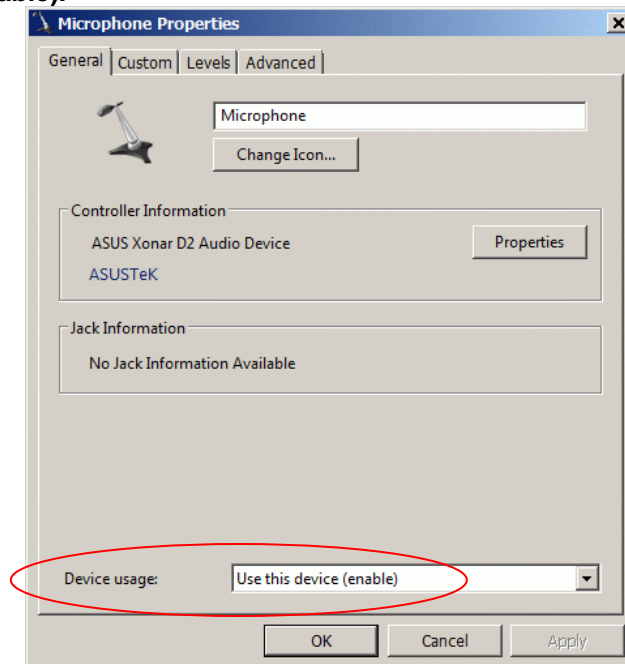


Figure 7

In the **Microphone Properties** dialog window, **Custom** tab, verify that **Microphone Boost** is checked. If later on you find that the microphone is too sensitive, uncheck **Microphone Boost**. If **Monitoring** is also checked, any sound picked up by the microphone will be simultaneously played back through the speakers, which will likely cause audio feedback.

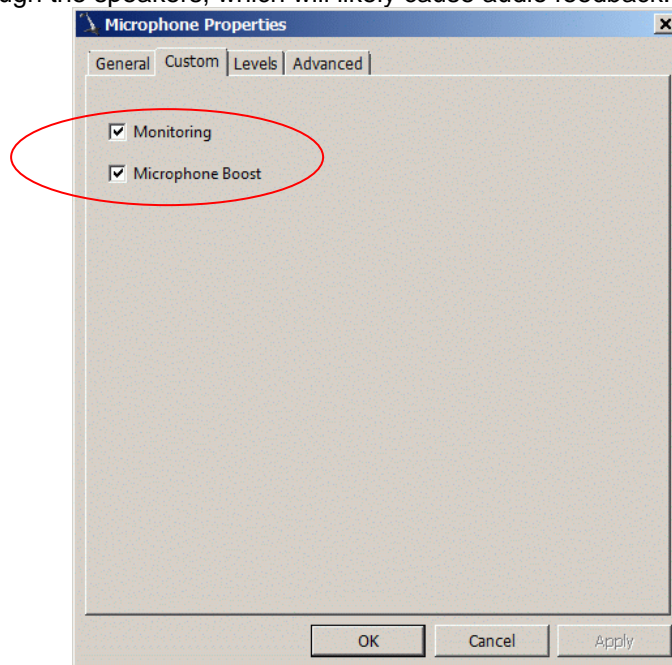


Figure 8

In the **Microphone Properties** dialog window, **Levels** tab, verify that the **Microphone** level is set to its maximum; also, **verify that the microphone is not muted**.

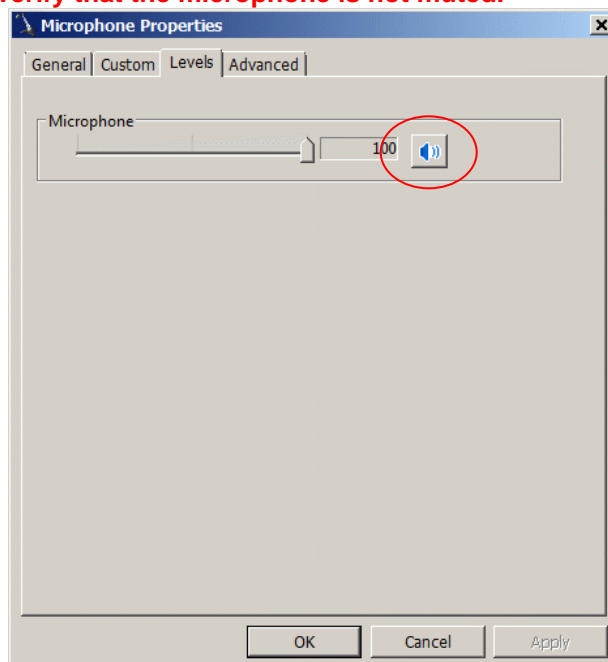


Figure 9

In the **Microphone Properties** dialog window, **Advanced** tab, verify that the **Exclusive Mode** settings are checked as indicated in Figure 10. For voice recordings, use only the **2 channel, 16 bit, 44100 Hz (CD Quality)** setting.

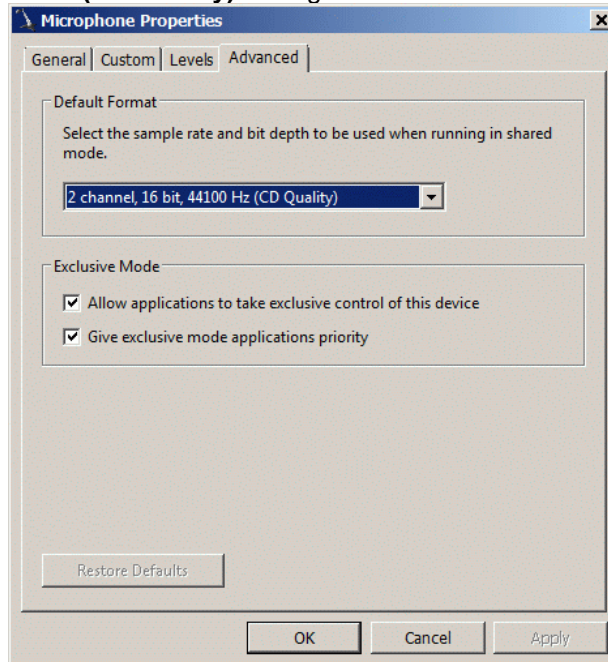


Figure 10

The settings available in the **Sounds** tab of the **Sound** dialog window do not affect the recording nor the playback of audio files.

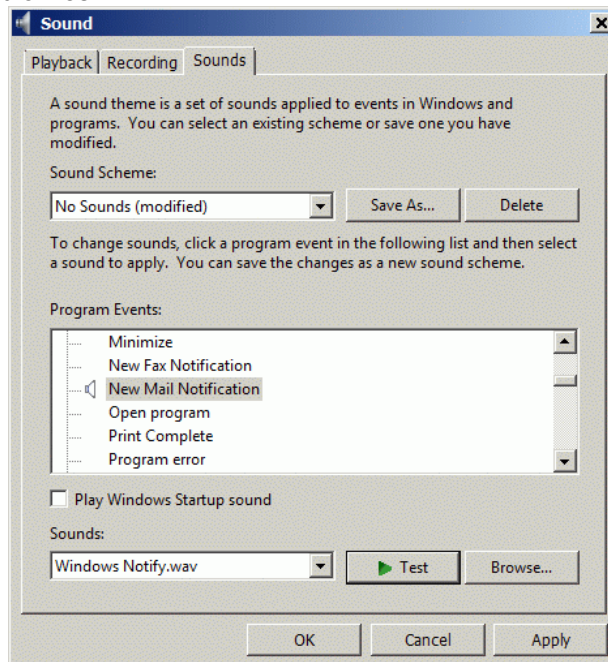


Figure 11

RECORDING OF AUDIO FILES

Once the microphone works properly, find the shortcut for Windows' **Sound Recorder** and click on it (**Windows > Start > Programs > Accessories > Sound Recorder**). Use Windows' Help to locate it if necessary.

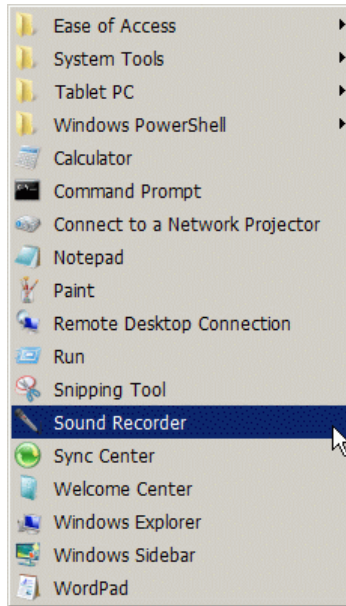


Figure 12

The Windows' **Sound Recorder** application will display on screen.

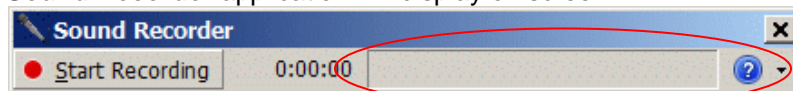


Figure 13

Windows' Sound Recorder contains the visual equivalent of a VU-Meter

Speak in the microphone to test that the Sound Recorder works properly. If it does, the VU Meter should indicate sound variations as you speak in the microphone.

To record an audio file, press on the **Start Recording** button

Once you are through recording the audio file, press on the **Stop Recording** button and then save the file in an appropriate location.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

A "Y" adapter for 3.5 mm plugs and jacks can be used to mix two microphones instead of using an expensive and cumbersome microphone mixer.

