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Submitting Audio to the NCRA

Member stations or grant participants often need to submit completed audio projects to the NCRA. Below outlined what the NCRA expects when submitting audio with regards to quality, format and content.

THIS IS NOT A SUBMISSION FOR SENDING MUSIC TO US OR OUR MEMBERS. If you are interested, please see the [dedicated page here](#).

Steps:

1. Form
2. Format
3. Audio Quality
4. Submission Process

Step 1 – Form:

Each time a program or audio piece is submitted to the NCRA, the form below must be attached in word or pdf format. It is essential for documentation.

NCRA SUBMISSION FORM HERE

Step 2 – Format:

Please submit all audio to the NCRA in the following format

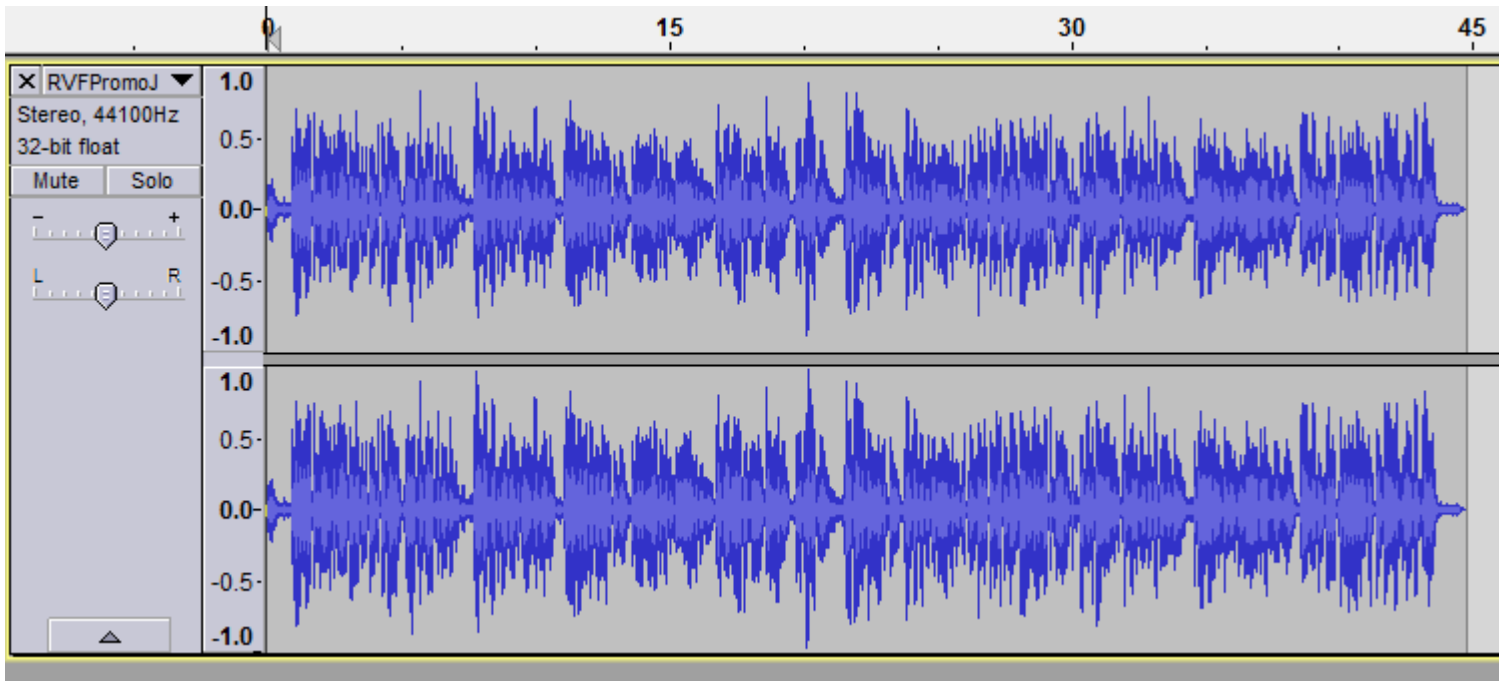
MP3
320 Consistent Bite Rate
44.1 MHZ

Note all musical selections must comply with [CRTC](#) and SOCAN requirements

Step 3 – Audio Quality:

It is extremely important that the completed audio be of broadcast quality. Below are expectations of audio quality, and some examples of what to avoid.

Here is an example of almost perfect audio: (Visually). You can download a copy of this clip [here](#) and load it into your audio editor if you wish to listen.



Reasons: No clipping, light compression, sound levels are relatively flat but still have range of dynamics for the voice, background music not overpowering, minimal/no background noise/hiss, smooth and clean transitions, good spacing, not rushed.

Bad/Inconsistent Levels (Example #1)



Reason – Levels are not uniform, when listening there will be sharp distinction between segments and will cause people to turn up or down their radio.

Solution – For Example #1, the best way to fix this is during a mix-down with multi-track editing, to make sure that all channels are essentially the same levels. If using a single wave for editing, the quiet part can be turned up

and/or add compression to match the remaining parts. This would result in a solution that looks like this:



Another example below here shows a lot of inconsistent levels. (Example #2)



This was solved by using compression and normalization to increase the levels to be consistent.



We can see the example below also has issues as some sections are too quiet, others too loud. For sections like this, it is easiest to use the amplify/gain function in an editor to boost the quiet parts (Example #3)



Bar Compression Issue

In the case below, we can see that there has been excessive compression used when mixing the files together in a multi-track format before applying compression.



Solution – When using multi-track, you should do your best to make sure a) that the levels are being recorded with headroom and no clipping and b) that you should only apply compression after you have mixed any multi-track files into one.

Too Quiet

If files are too quiet, you will be unable to hear them on the radio. (Example #1)



Solution – Use Amplify, normalize and compression when required. A good rule of thumb is that all files should look (on average) to peak between -0.3db and -0.9db . Some can be louder (but not over 0db) and others can be quieter, but in general you should be able to tell by looking at it if it will be too quiet or not.

No Compression

Compression is like squeezing clothing into a box, sometimes you waste space and are not utilizing all of the room you have, other times you put too much in, things get damaged or crushed. With an example below, there would be often louder peaks that are outside the audio recording range (i.e. sticking out of the box) and other times where

there is room.

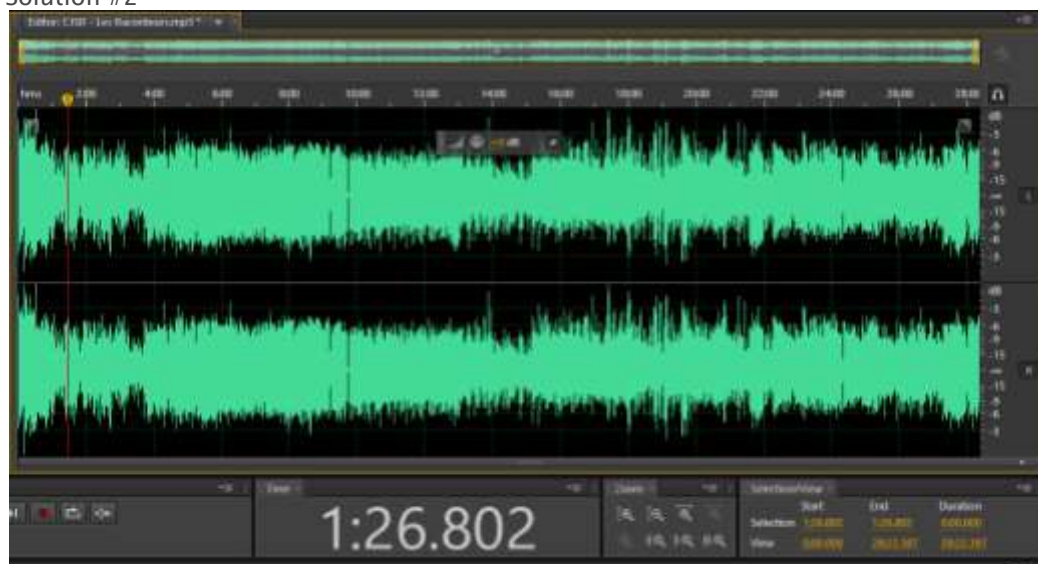


Solution:

Adding some light compression will assist in making things more uniform, BUT not making it sound like everything is squished in and crushed. (Example #2)



Solution #2



Spikes

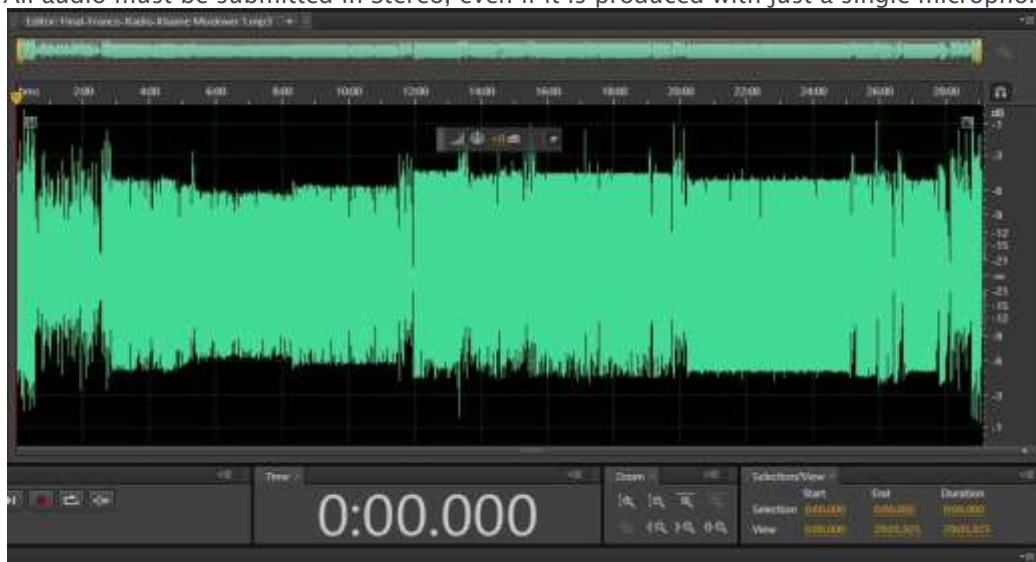
Sometimes spikes happen when recording at the source and there is nothing you cannot do about it. This comes down to microphone technique (lesson for another day). However, when a spike does occur like the example below, it either needs to be a) removed (i.e. you edit out that portion so it still makes sense, or b) the levels brought down or attempted to be fixed so that there is not a loud audio burst when someone is trying to listen carefully which is

shocking and unpleasant.



Formats:

All audio must be submitted in Stereo, even if it is produced with just a single microphone in Mono.



Be careful that if you split mono files into stereo, you could get what is called "phasing", see [here](#) for an example in youtube.

Other Issues:

Background Noise

You also need to be aware of background noise, such that if you are out on the street and talking with people, or in a windy location, often the background noise is too much so that you cannot hear what is being said. Solution: Re-record or find other audio sources.

Background Music

Background Music can be used to enhance programming, but it should not distract from the content. Keep the following in mind when using it. a) do not use music with vocals, it will clash and make it hard to hear the person speaking, b) make sure it is at a good level so that it does not overpower and get lost (Typically you want your voice recording to peak just below the 0db, and audio (uncompressed around -15-20db, more if you plan to compress after you have mixed the files together after) and c) make sure you have good quality music, that fits the programming you are making, i.e. not hit music, and is not a long loop of a single song.

Step 4 – Submission Process:

Because files are often large there are multiple ways to submit, preference from the office is the order listed below for submitting.

Checklist: Make sure you are including the following

- a) NCRA Submission Form
- b) Audio Files (As per the format and quality outlined above)
- c) Any additional info as needed for the grant

E-Mail: Please review the specific instructions outlined on the grant when submitting (ie which e-mail address or location), and if nothing is specified, e-mail barry@ncra.ca with the subject line "NCRA Audio Submission ___ Grant – Station Call Letters"

- 1) Attach to via Email (For files under 20 megabytes)
- 2) Upload all files (including form) to www.wetransfer.com (submit to the specified e-mail address)
- 3) Provide a direct download link via a personal FTP (submit to the specified e-mail address)
- 4) Use dropbox, google drive or other cloud (submit to the specified e-mail address)