The Sheer Audacity!

Jerry Franklin

Using the Free Audacity Audio Editing Software to Produce a Podcast

What to Expect:

- Review some terms
- Tour Audacity
- Illustrate Audacity using screenshots, focusing on editing, producing, tips and tricks
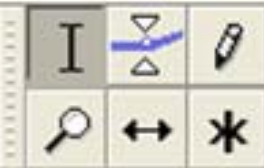
What to Expect:

- **Skip over recording techniques**
- **Link to lots of recording resources at the end**
- **American Idol – NOT**

Podcasting Today

Figures, forecasts vary widely

‣ Current listeners: 2 – 10 million

‣ Most optimistic: 60 million listeners by 2010

‣ Podcasts now outnumber worldwide number of radio stations

But What About Corporate?

Most major brands are doin' it!

‣ Whirlpool ("The American Family" podcast)

‣ Ameriprise ("The New Retirement Mindscape")

‣ American Dental Association

And What About Tech?

Early evidence points to significant adoption

- ‣ 60% of IT professionals preferred podcasts to white papers
- ‣ 25% already incorporate podcasts in buying decisions

Plenty of Tech Examples

Usually conversations with executives, evangelists or other SMEs

- ‣ IBM WebSphere Technical Podcast Series
- ‣ Oracle Podcast Center
- ‣ Microsoft Voice of Support podcasts
- ‣ IT Conversations

A Few Focused on Tech Writing Writing

‣ **Tech Writer Voices**
‣ **IT Author podcast**
‣ **DMN Communications podcast**

But Very Few Pure "Instructional" Examples

- ‣ One Minute Tip
- ‣ One Minute How-To
- ‣ IdiotVox (Computers podcast channel)
- ‣ Exertrack
- ‣ Apple VoiceOver Manual
- ‣ The Pandora Podcast

So – We Should Be Involved

Why let marketing and engineering have all the fun?

Four Terms of End-Ear-Ment

- **Decibel**

- **Waveform**

- **Audio track**

- **Uncompressed vs. compressed files**

  - .wav, .aiff
  - .mp3, Ogg Vorbis

Let's Meet Audacity
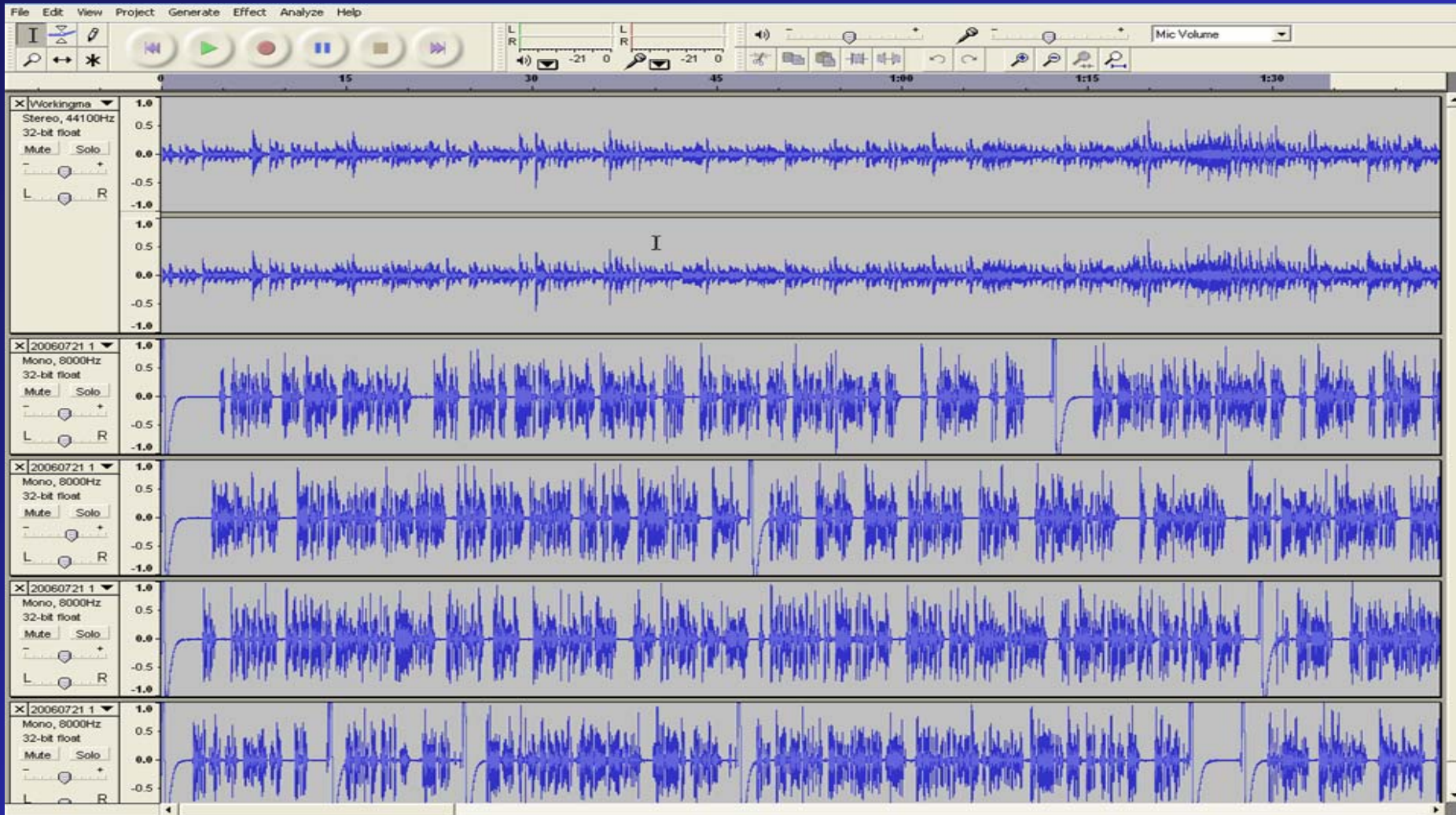
The Audacity Interface

A few selected areas:

- **Control Toolbar**
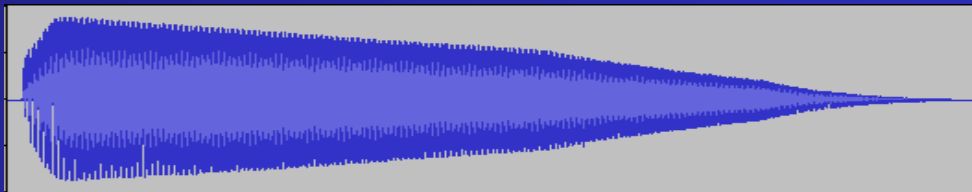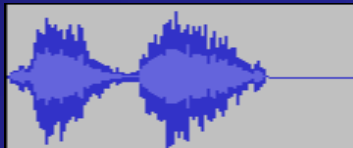
- **Edit Toolbar**

- **Track Control Panel**
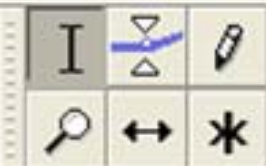
What Does Sound Look Like?

Like a wave
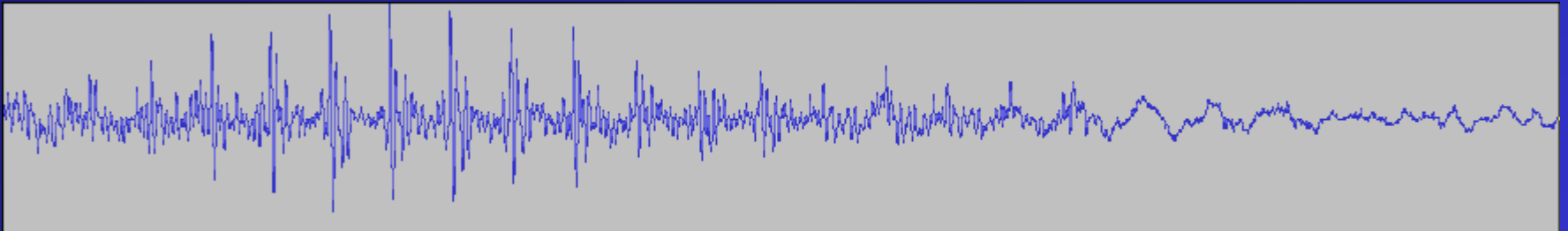
Examples of Waveforms
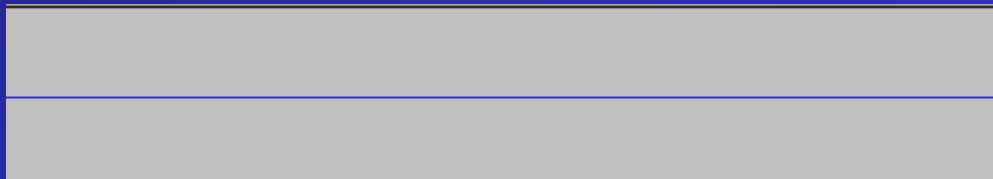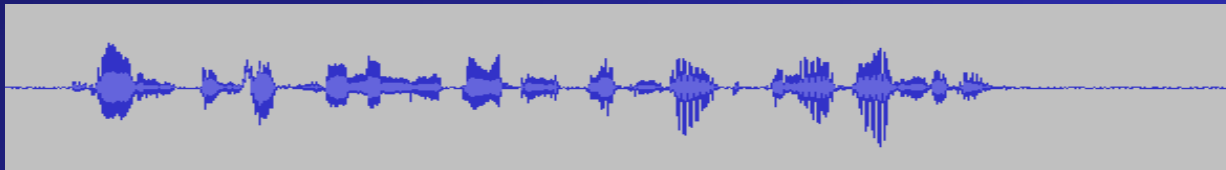
Eight Broad Steps to Editing a Podcast

1. Import your sound files

2. Arrange your sound files

3. Edit/clean each file individually

4. Adjust the timing of your files

Eight Broad Steps to Editing a Podcast

5. Create your musical intro

6. Adjust volume for smooth transitions between files

7. Mix and master your podcast

8. Export your master as an .MP3 file and prepare your ID3 tags

What We'll Do This Afternoon Afternoon

- **Import ten sound files**

- **Work on three sound files, demonstrating all procedures**

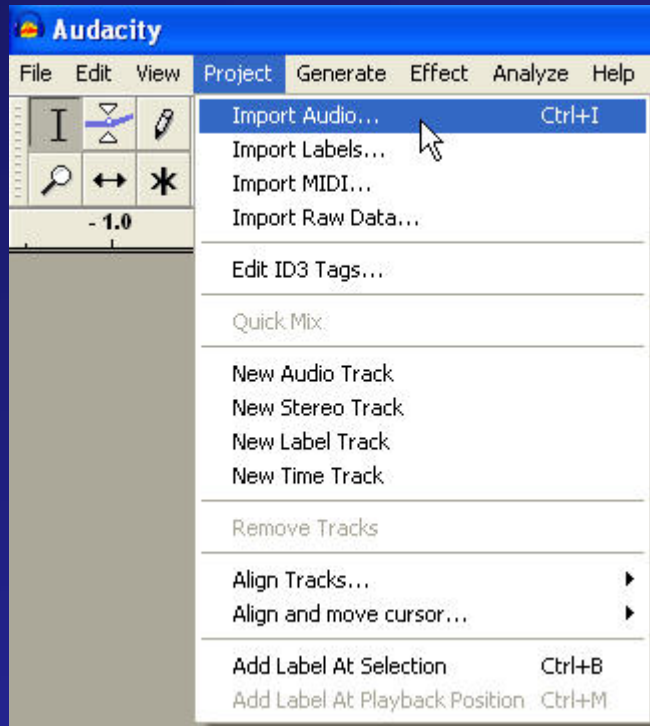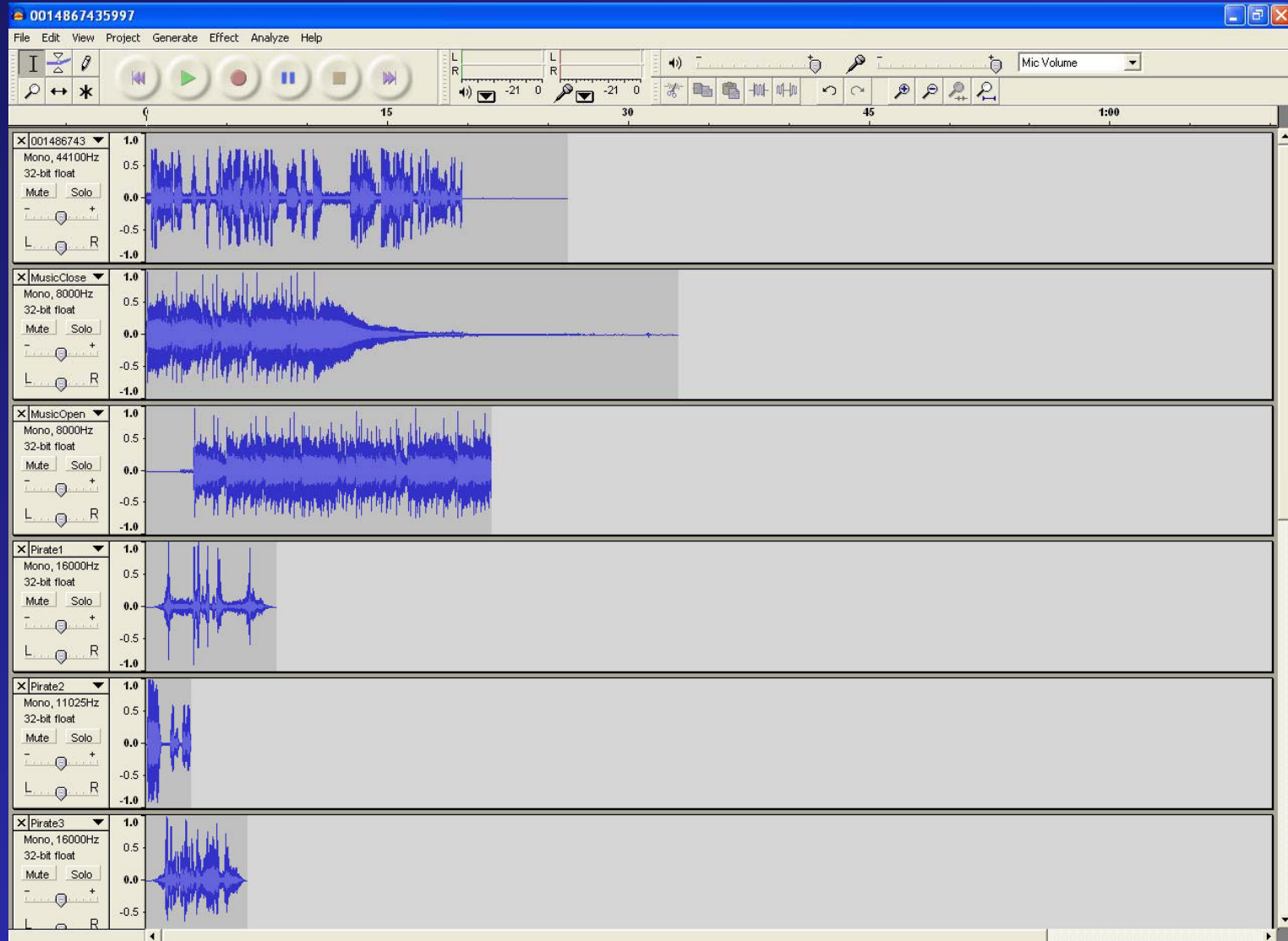- **Finally, will play the finished product in which I used everything I demonstrated**

Step 1: Import Your Sound Files

- **First create a new Audacity Project**

- **Works just like selecting files for a standard program, like Word**

- **Keyboard shortcut to import a file: Control-I**
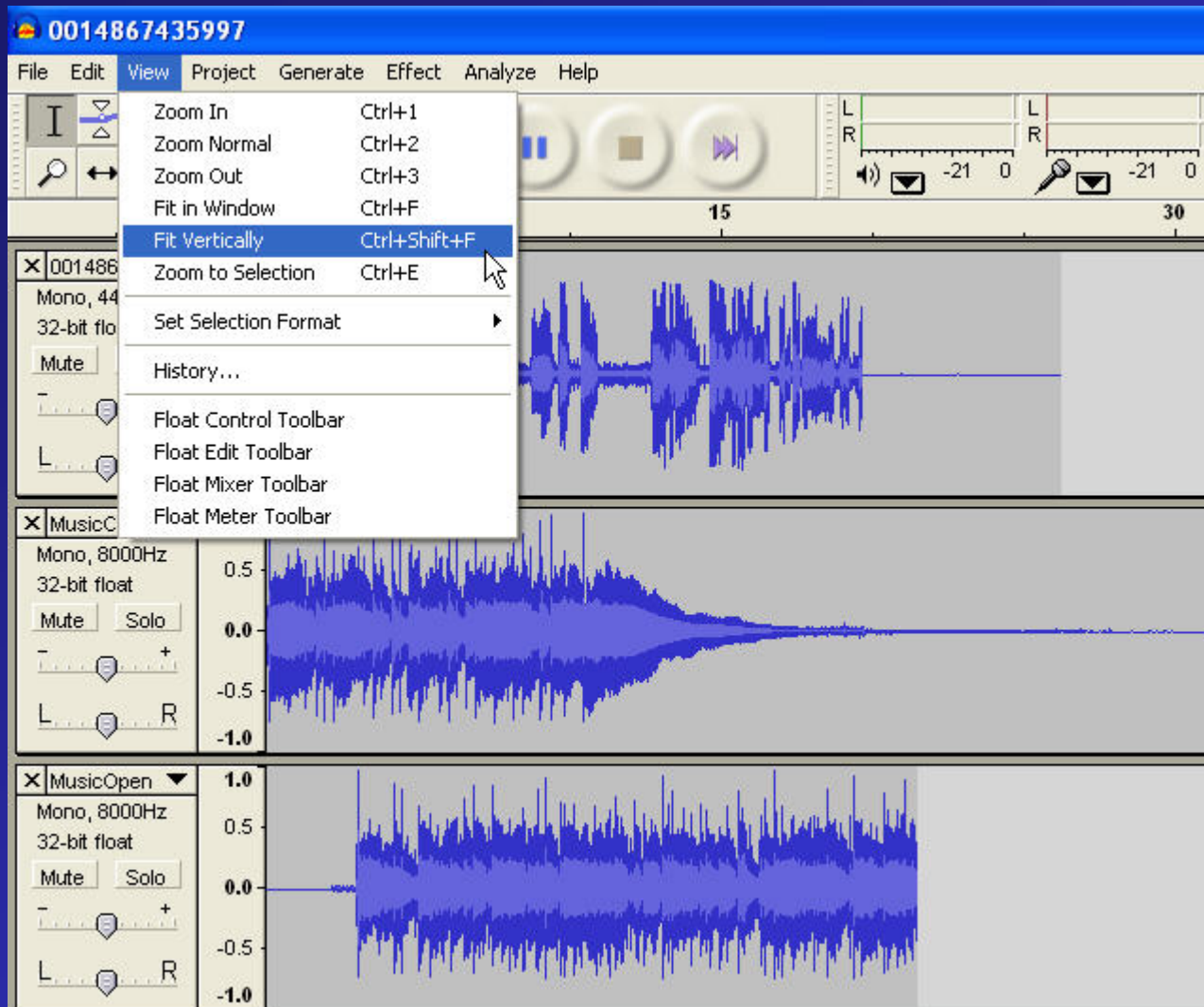
Let's take a look…

Importing Sound Files
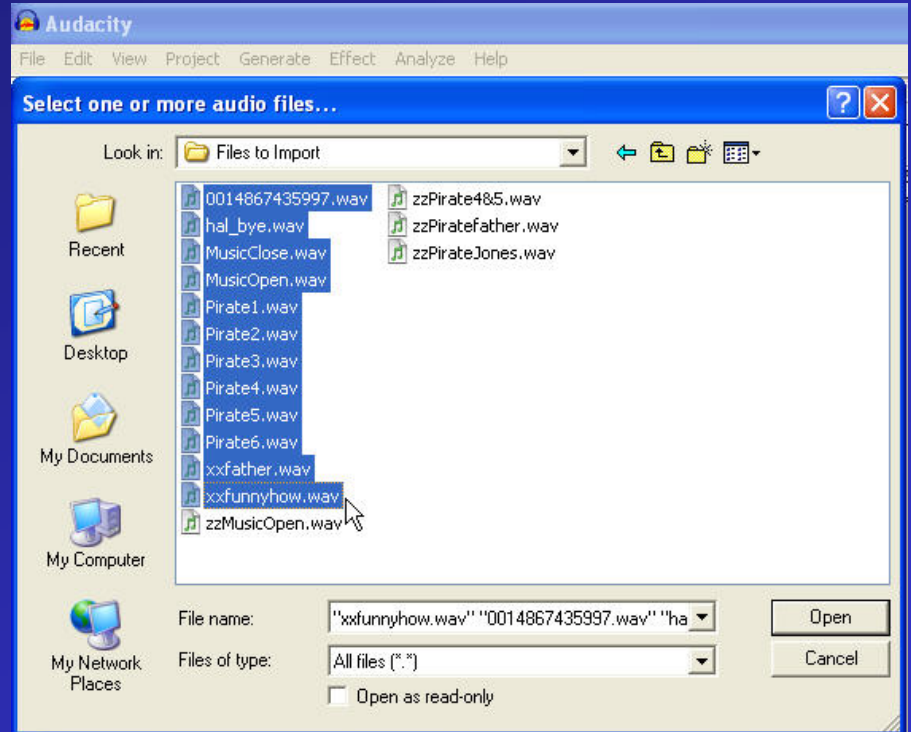
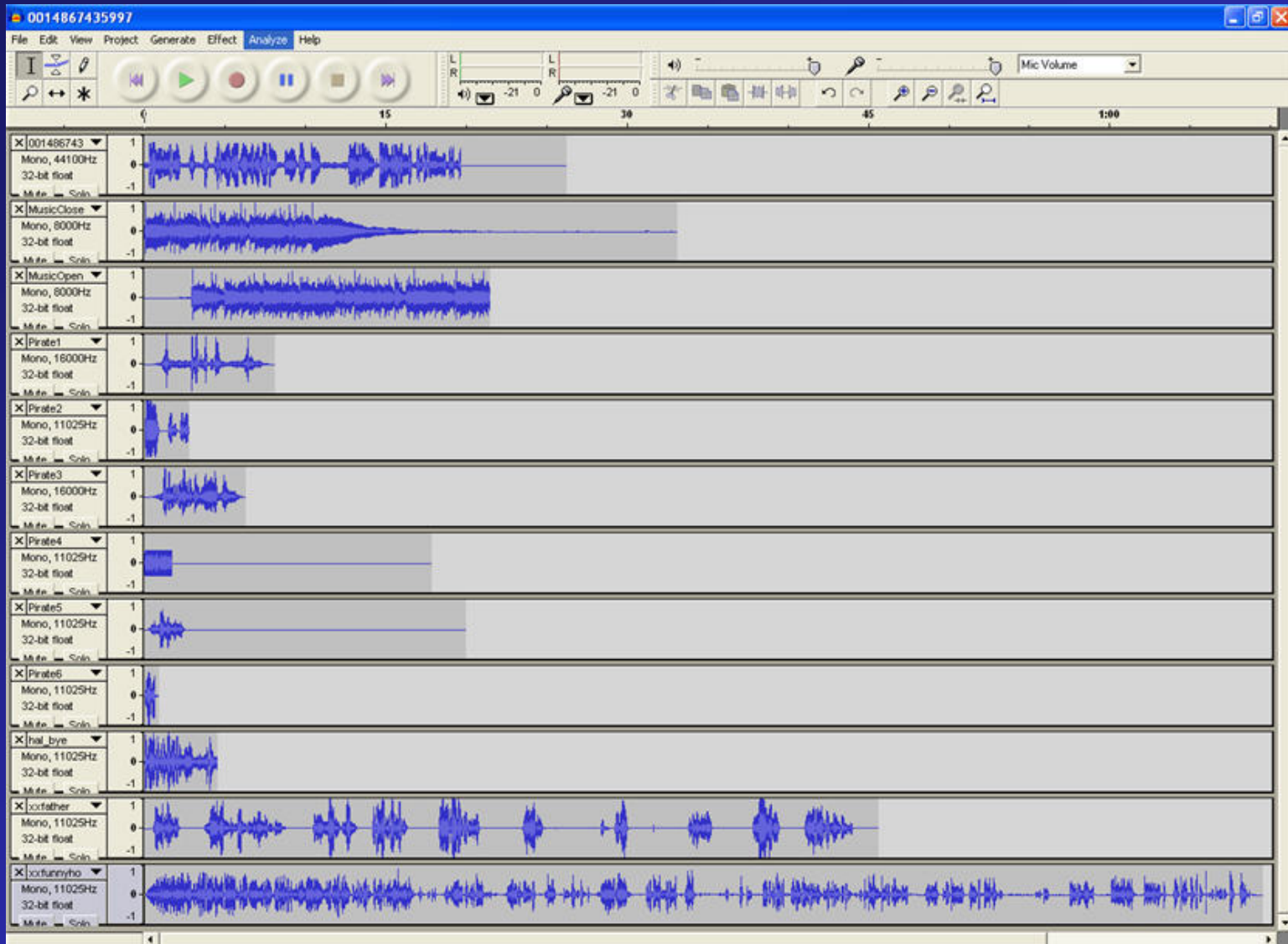# Importing Sound Files

Step 2: File Management Protocol

- **Fit all sound files vertically (keyboard shortcut: Control-Shift-F)**

- **Arrange sound files in order of use, from top to bottom**
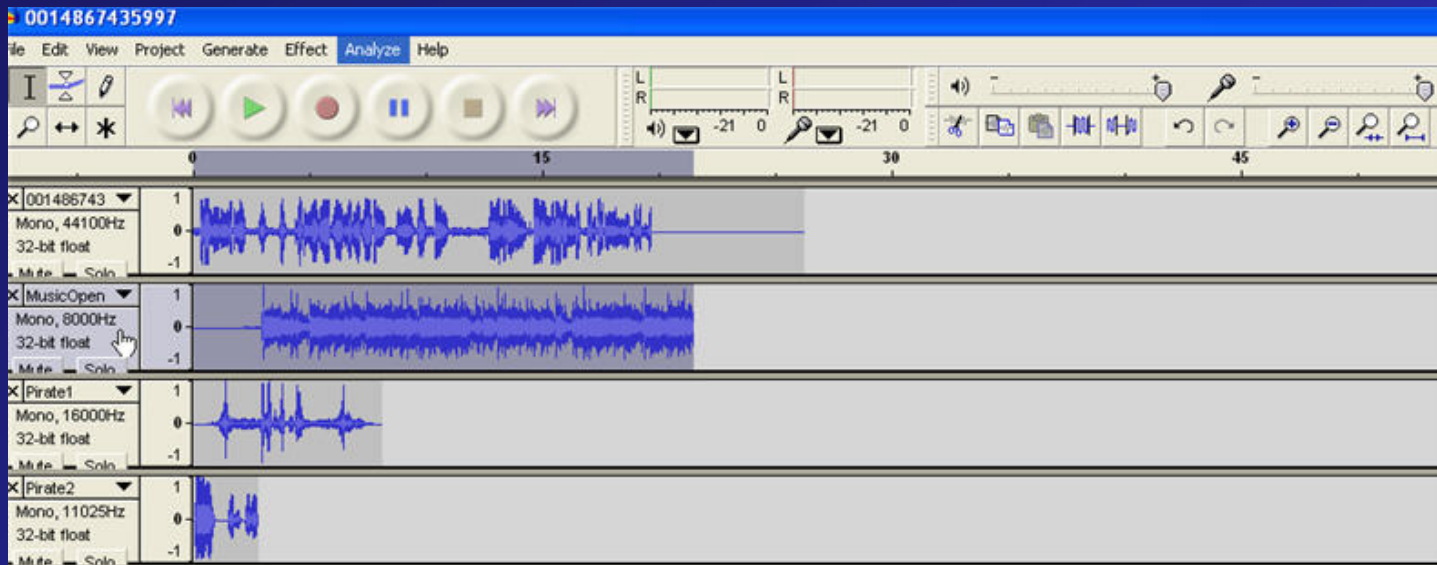
- **Rename files**

- **Give 'em a listen!**

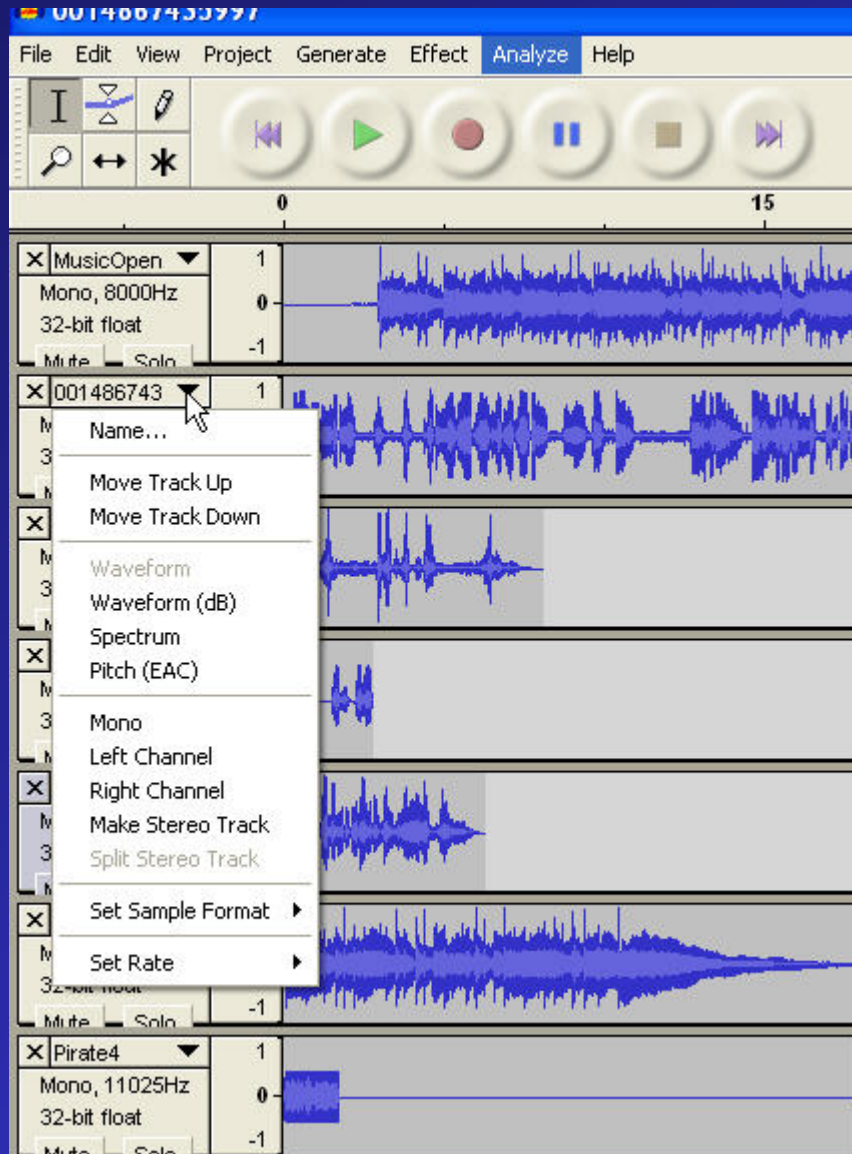 *Let's see it in action…*

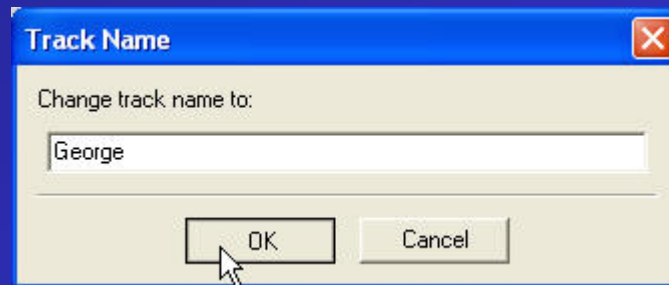# File Management – Viewing All Files

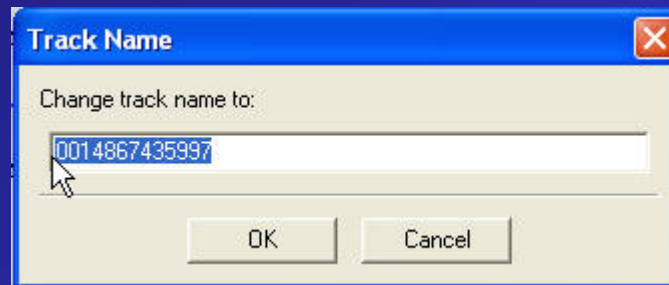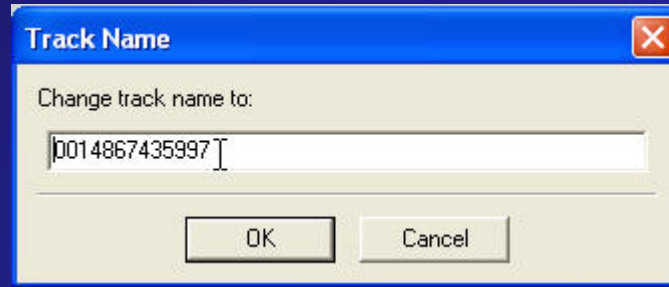# File Management – Viewing All Files
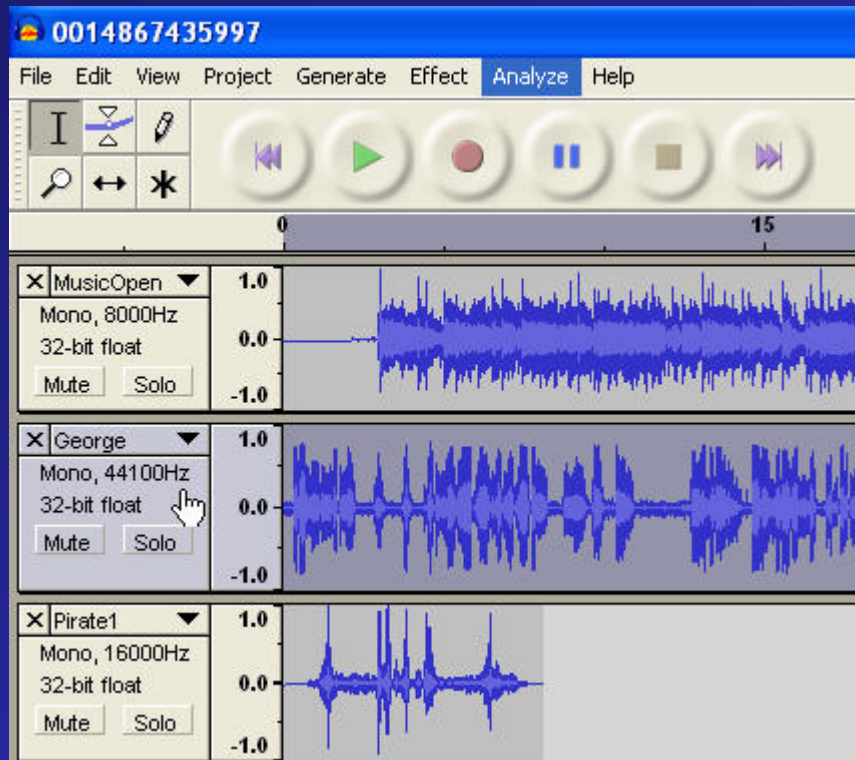
File Management – Moving Files
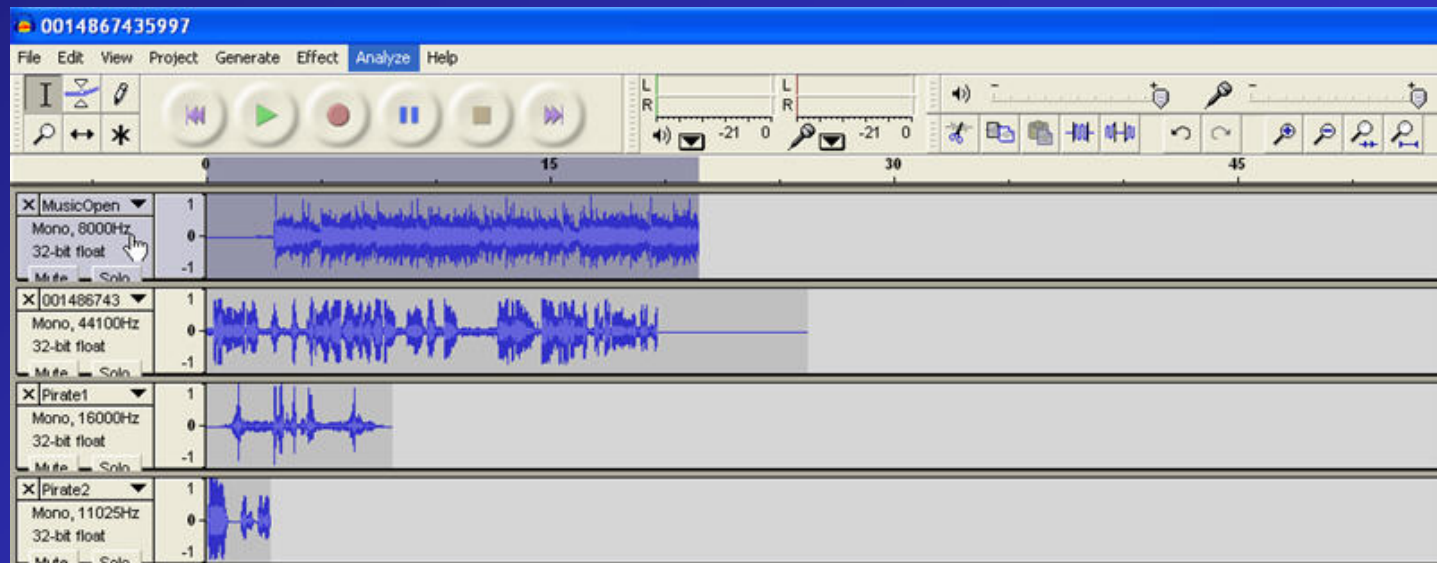
File Management – Renaming a File

File Management – Renaming a File

File Management - Renaming a File

✅ TIP: Remember this:

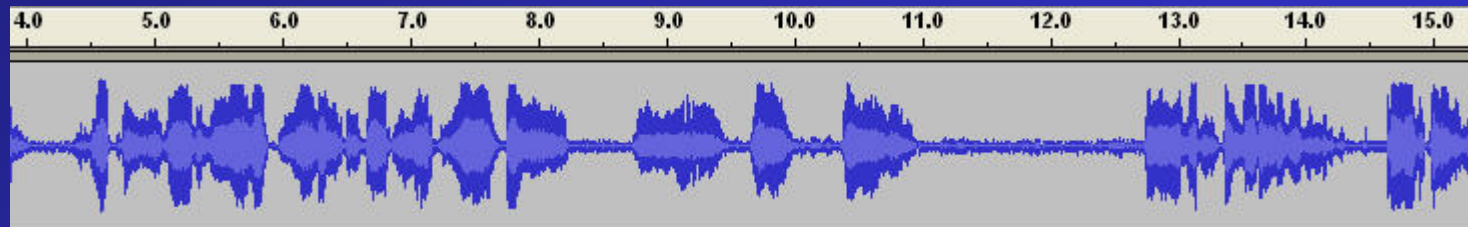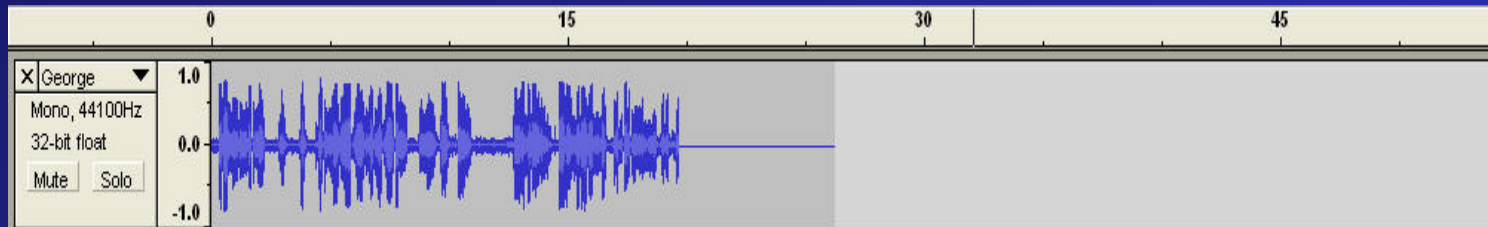**The Mute and Solo buttons
are your friends!**

Step 3: Edit an Individual File
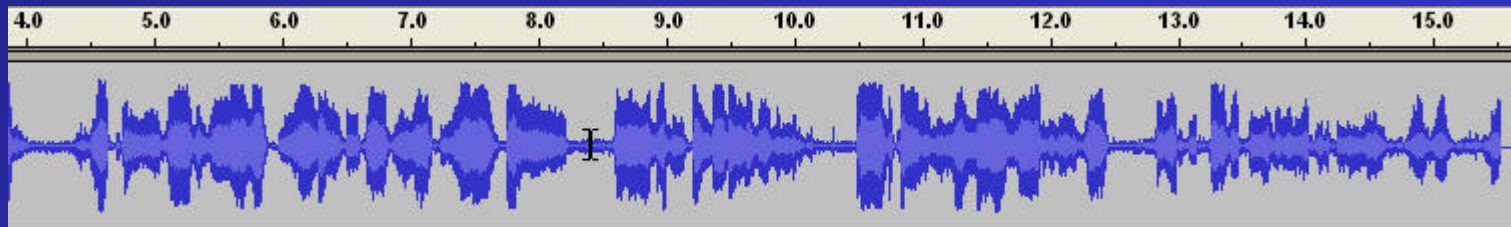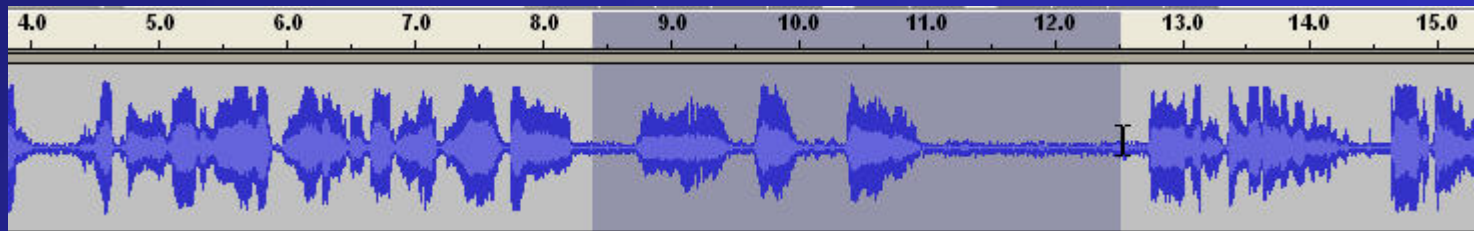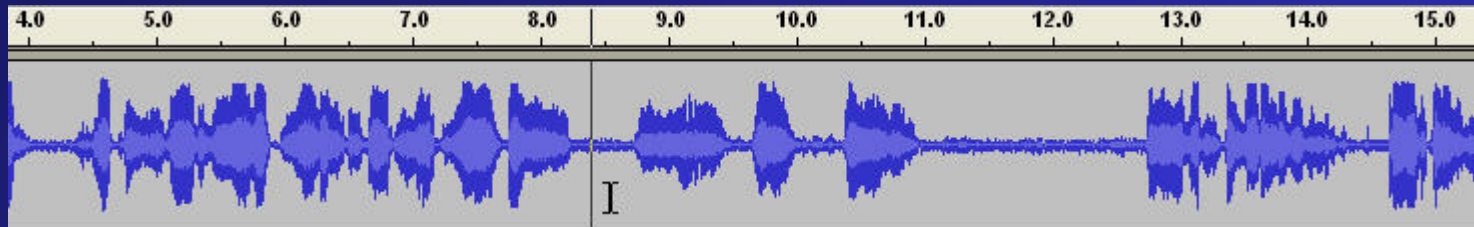
Cut out artifacts and unwanted passages

- Use the Selection Tool to locate, isolate, select passages
- Zoom in and out
- Use the Cut function
- Use the Undo button

Let's take a look…

Editing an Individual File

Editing an Individual File

TIP: Remember This

The Undo button is your best friend!
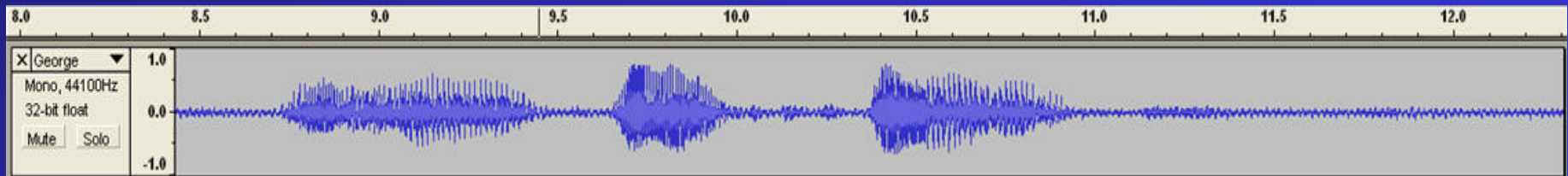
Keyboard Shortcut: Control Z

✅ TIPS: Some Editing Shortcuts

- **Spacebar – Plays your selection**

- **L – Loops your selection**

- **Zoom to selection**

- **To cut and paste, use the same keyboard shortcuts as Microsoft Office**

Let's take a look…

Editing Shortcuts

A Brief Public Service Announcement

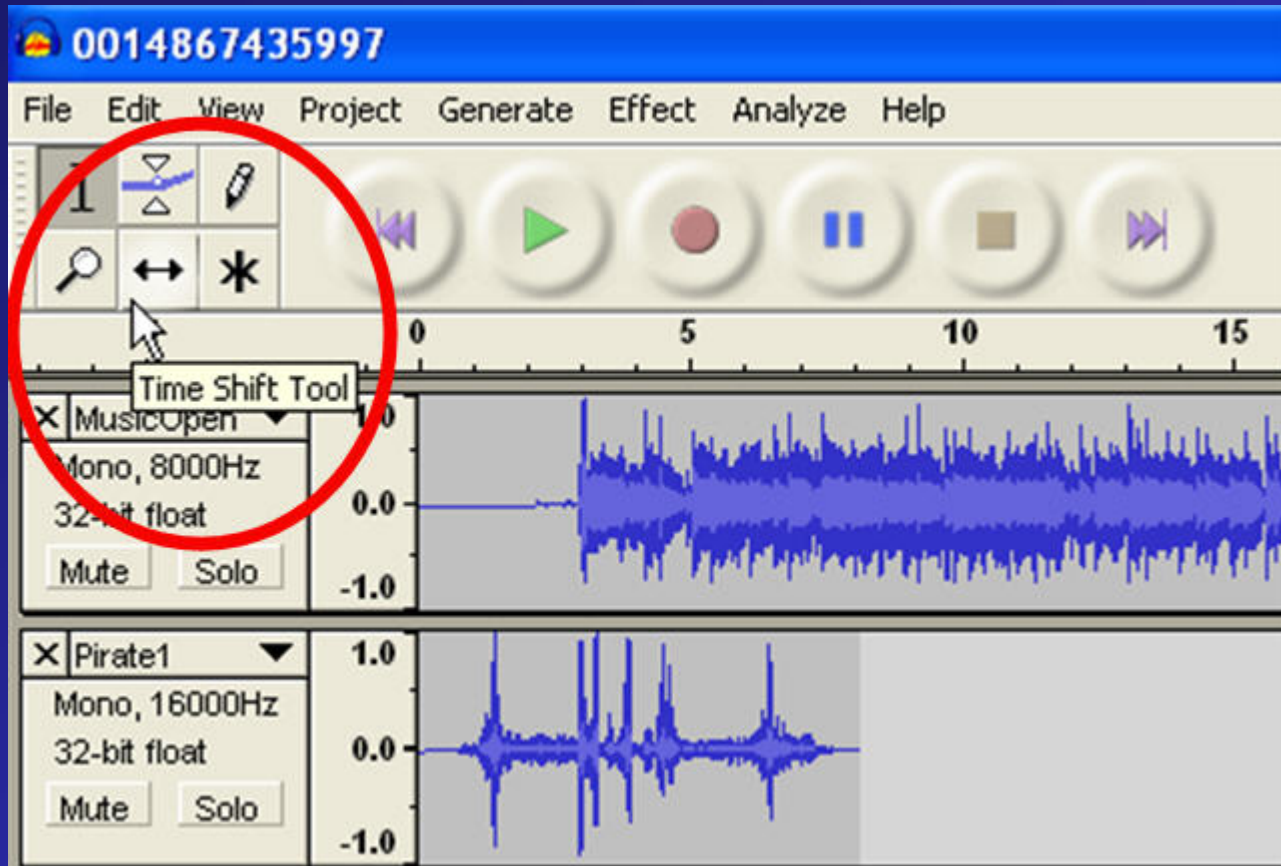- **Have you saved your file lately?**

- **Best practice**
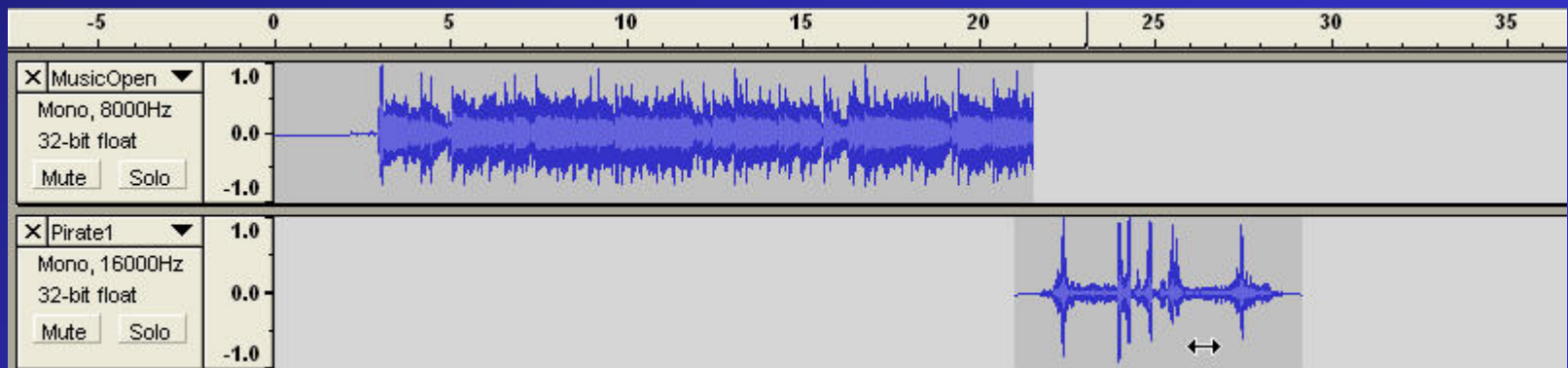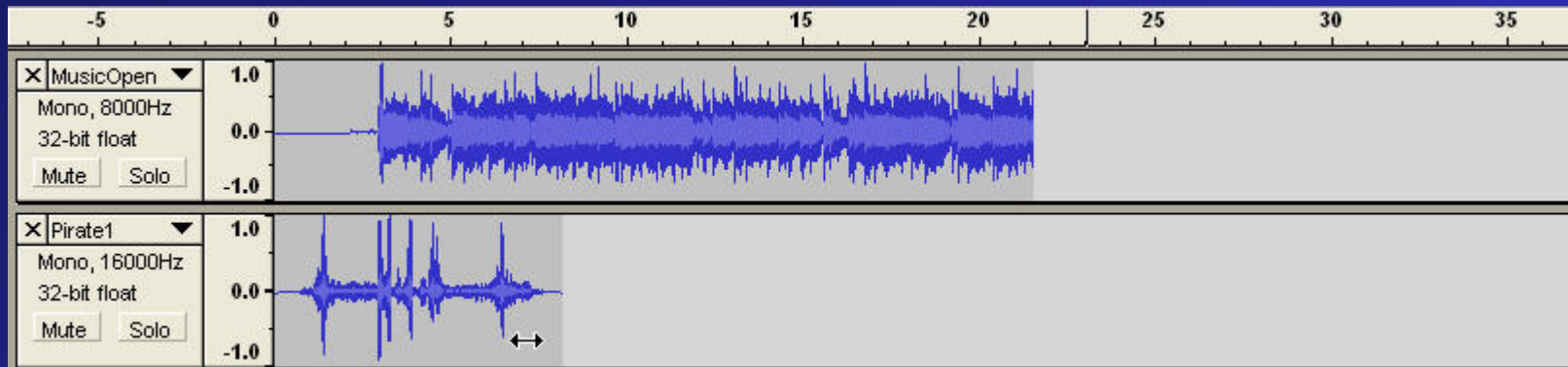
Step 4: Adjust the Timing

The Time Shift tool

- Adjusts your waveforms horizontally along the timeline
- Aims to create a smooth transition between sound files

Let's take a look…

Adjusting File Timing

Adjusting File Timing

Step 5: The Musical Intro

- **Insert silence at the beginning**

- **Fade music out**

    - Use the Skip to Start button
    - Use the Generate Silence function
    - Use the Fade Out function (use Fade In function for musical close)
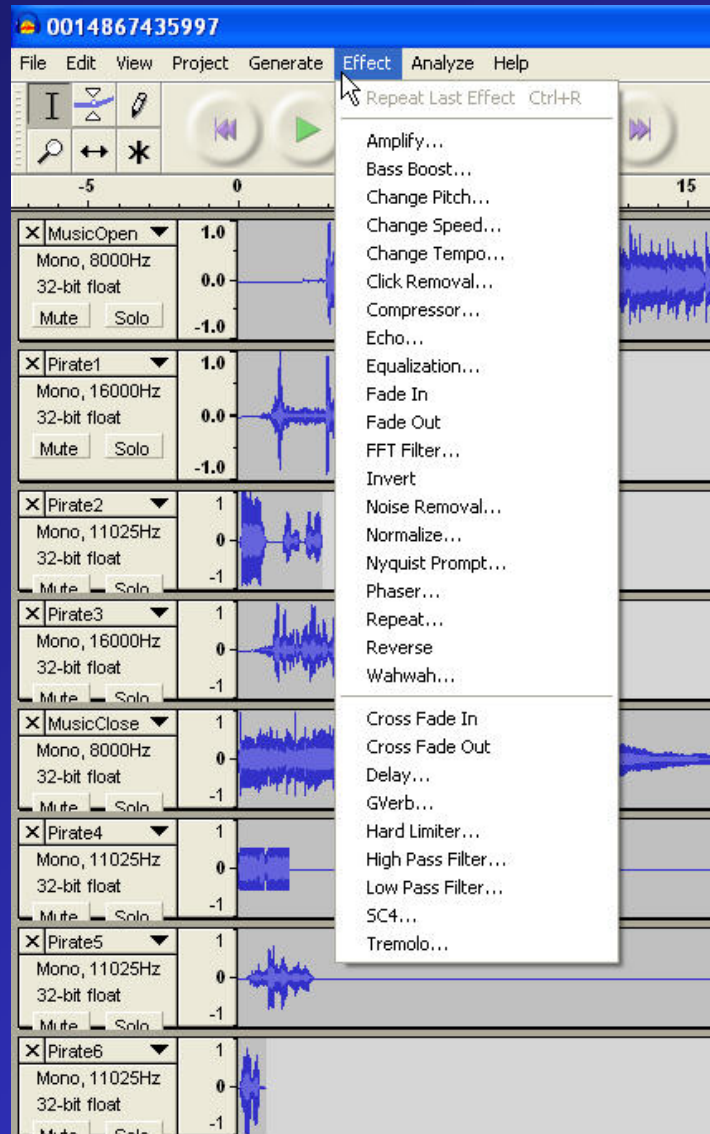
    But before we see it in action...
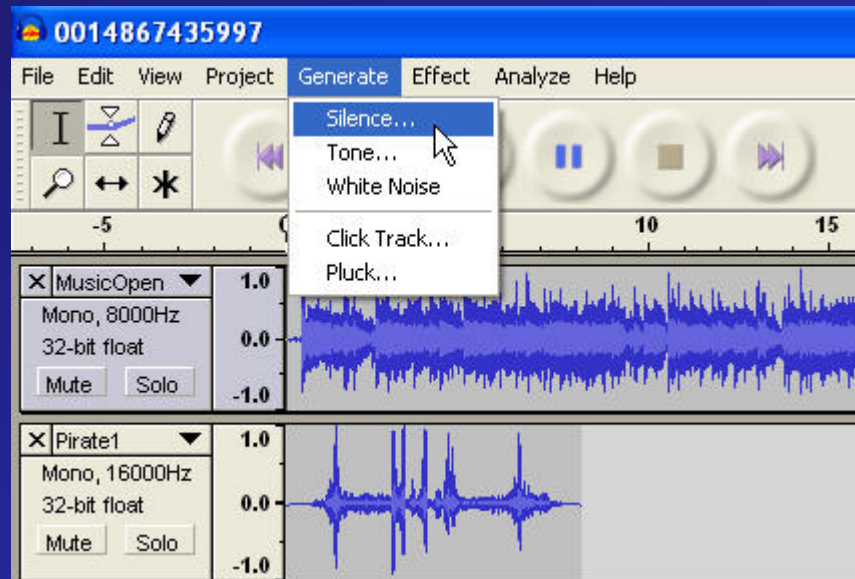
Introducing The Effects Menu

Adjust pitch, volume, and tempo, add reverb or echo, filter frequencies, remove background noise, even play in reverse
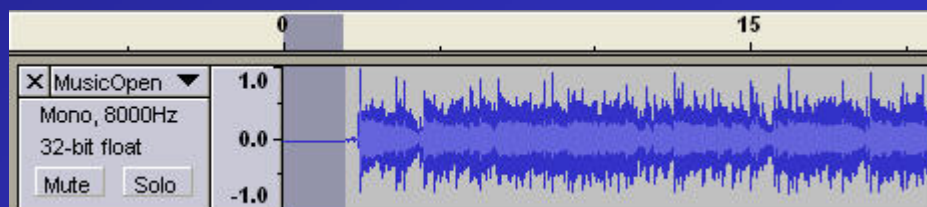
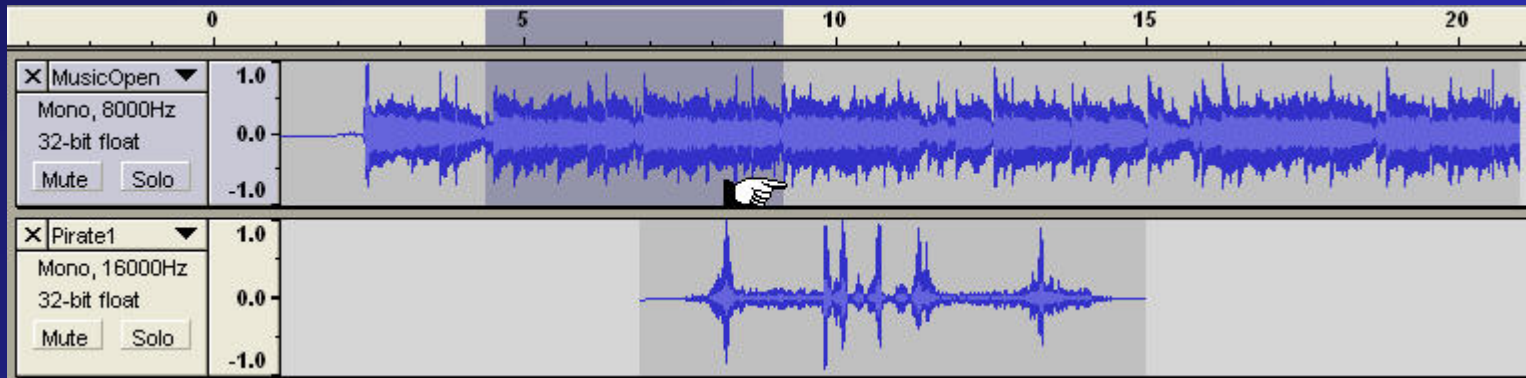*Let's take a look…*

The Effects Menu
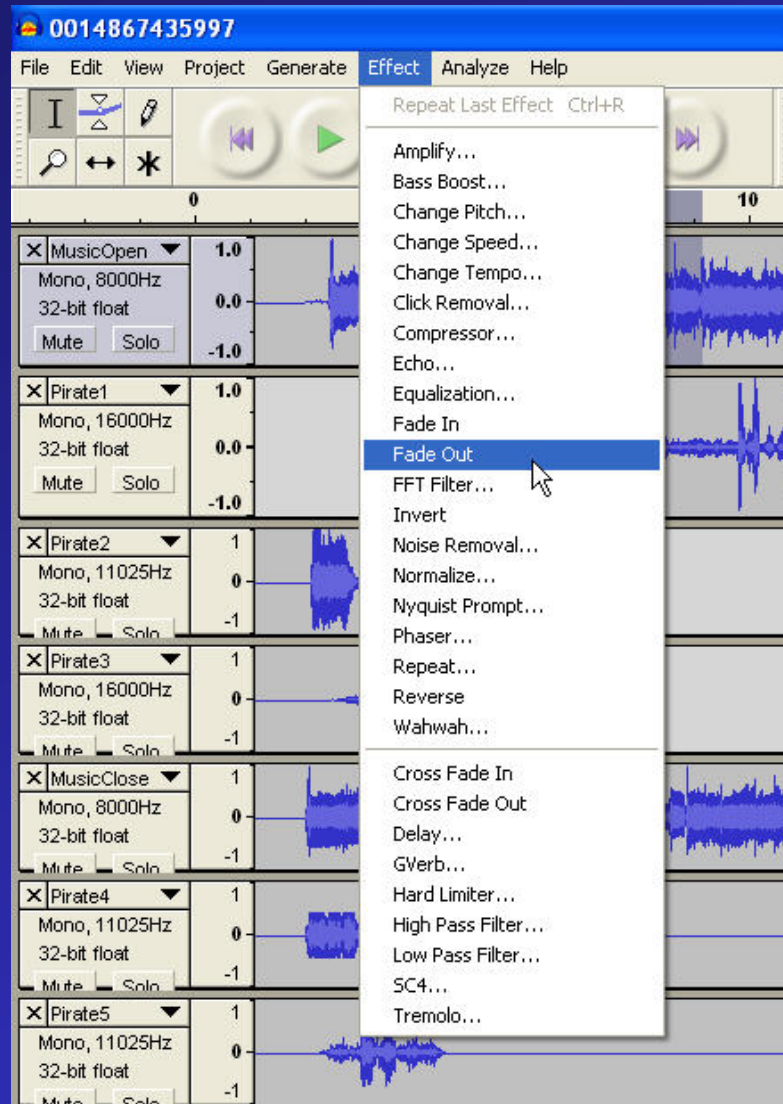
The Musical Intro – Generating Silence
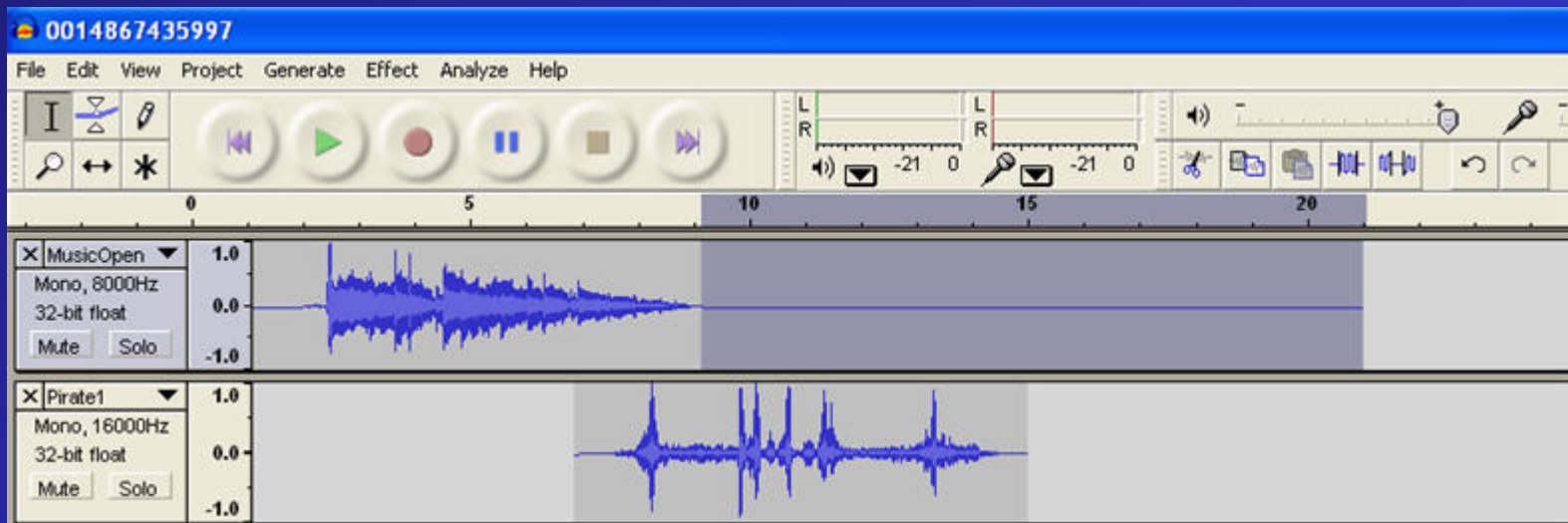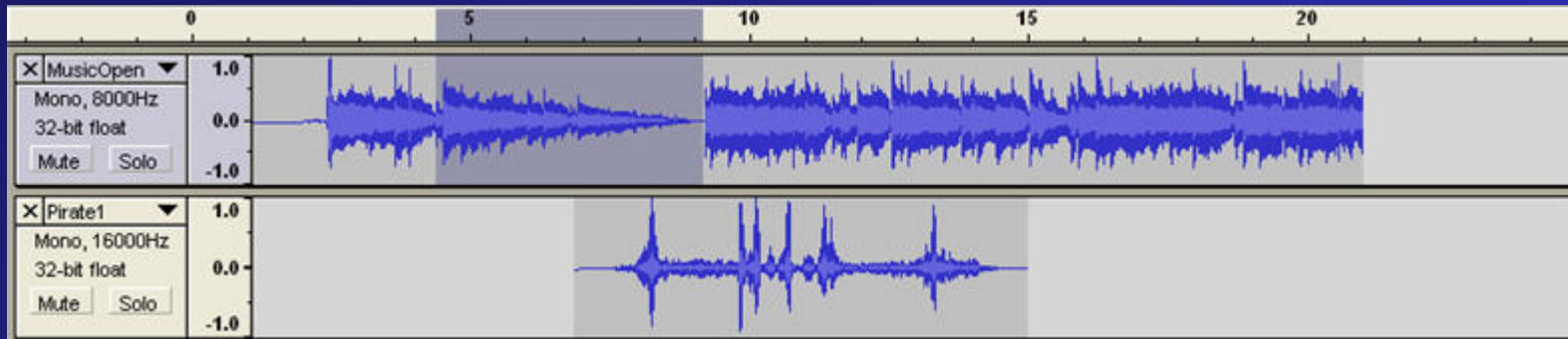
The Musical Intro – Generating Silence

The Musical Intro – Fading Out

The Musical Intro – Fading Out

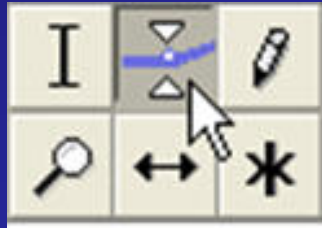# The Musical Intro – Fading Out

Step 6: Adjust Volume

Adjusting volume: The Envelope Tool
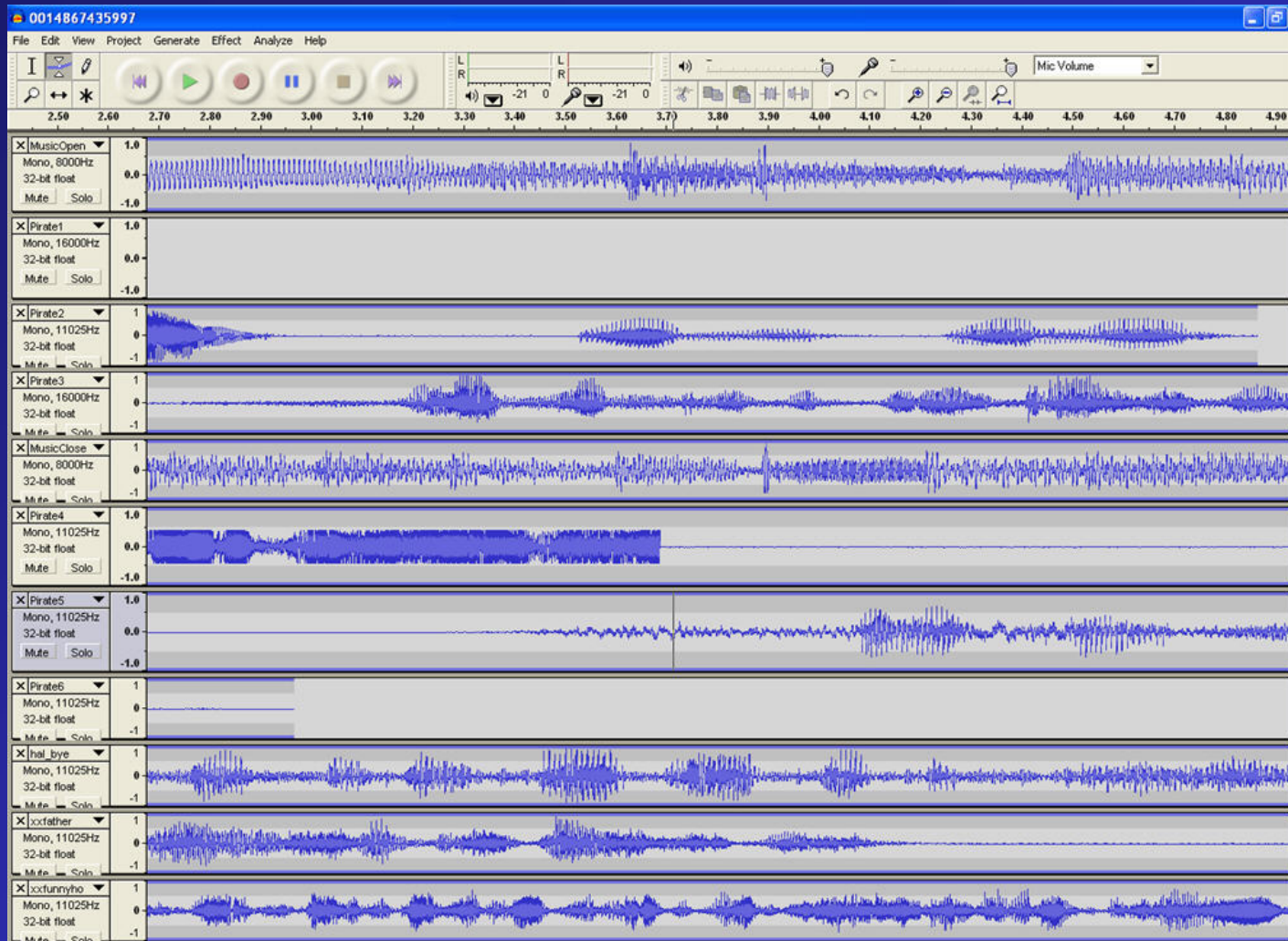
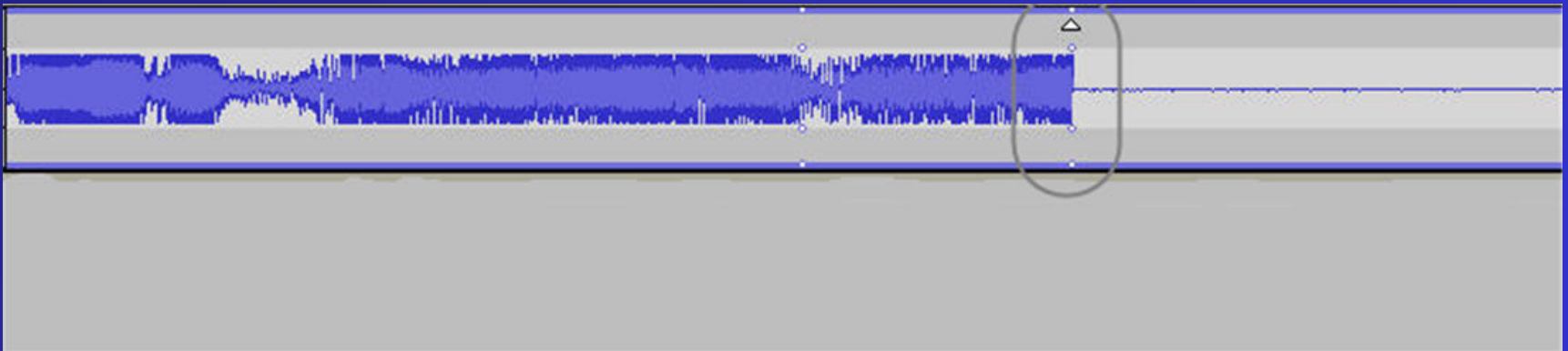- **Enables very precise modification of volume levels**

Let's take a look…

Adjusting Volume Using the Envelope Tool

Adjusting Volume Using the Envelope Tool

Adjusting Volume Using the Envelope Tool
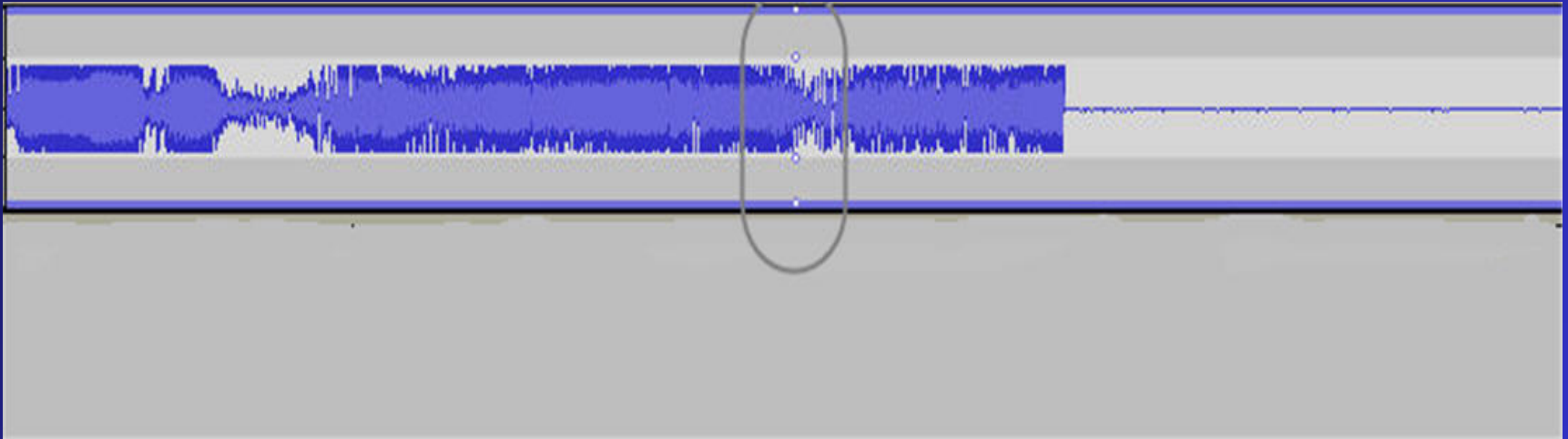
Adjusting Volume Using the Envelope Tool
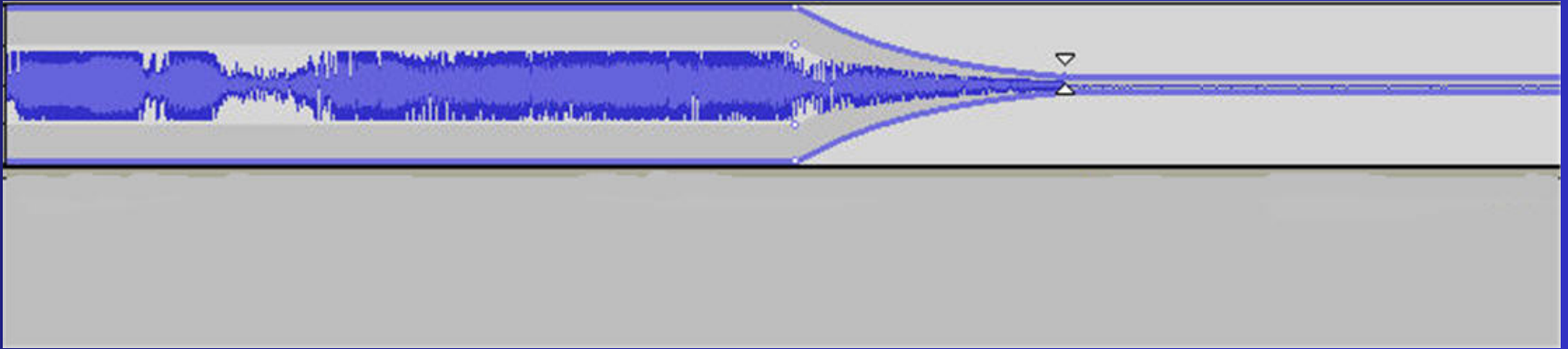
✔TIP: Remember This

**Use your ear. Your ear is
the ultimate umpire!**

Okay – You're Done – Kind of

- **Play your podcast**

- **Listen to your podcast – really listen**

- **Take notes on everything that still needs fixing**

- **Fix 'em**

- **Rinse and Repeat – and repeat, and repeat, until you're satisfied!**

Step 7: Master Your Podcast

Mastering is…

- Making your audio levels consistent
- Eliminating sudden spikes, plummets
- Raising the overall volume of the podcast
- Mixing your multiple sound files into one combined sound file

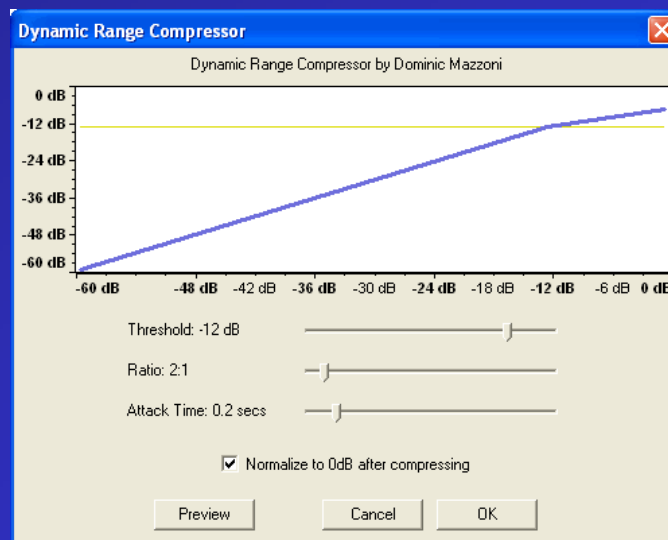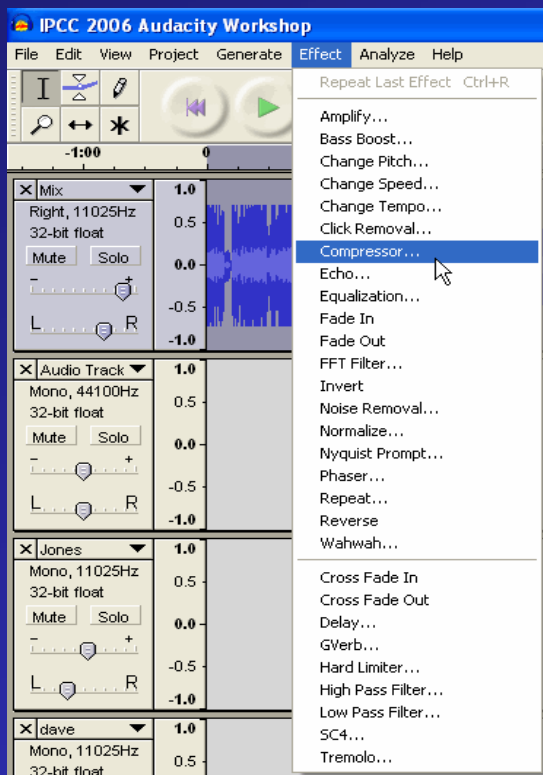# Compressing and Normalizing Your Podcast

Maximizes "listenability"

• Raises overall volume level of your podcast

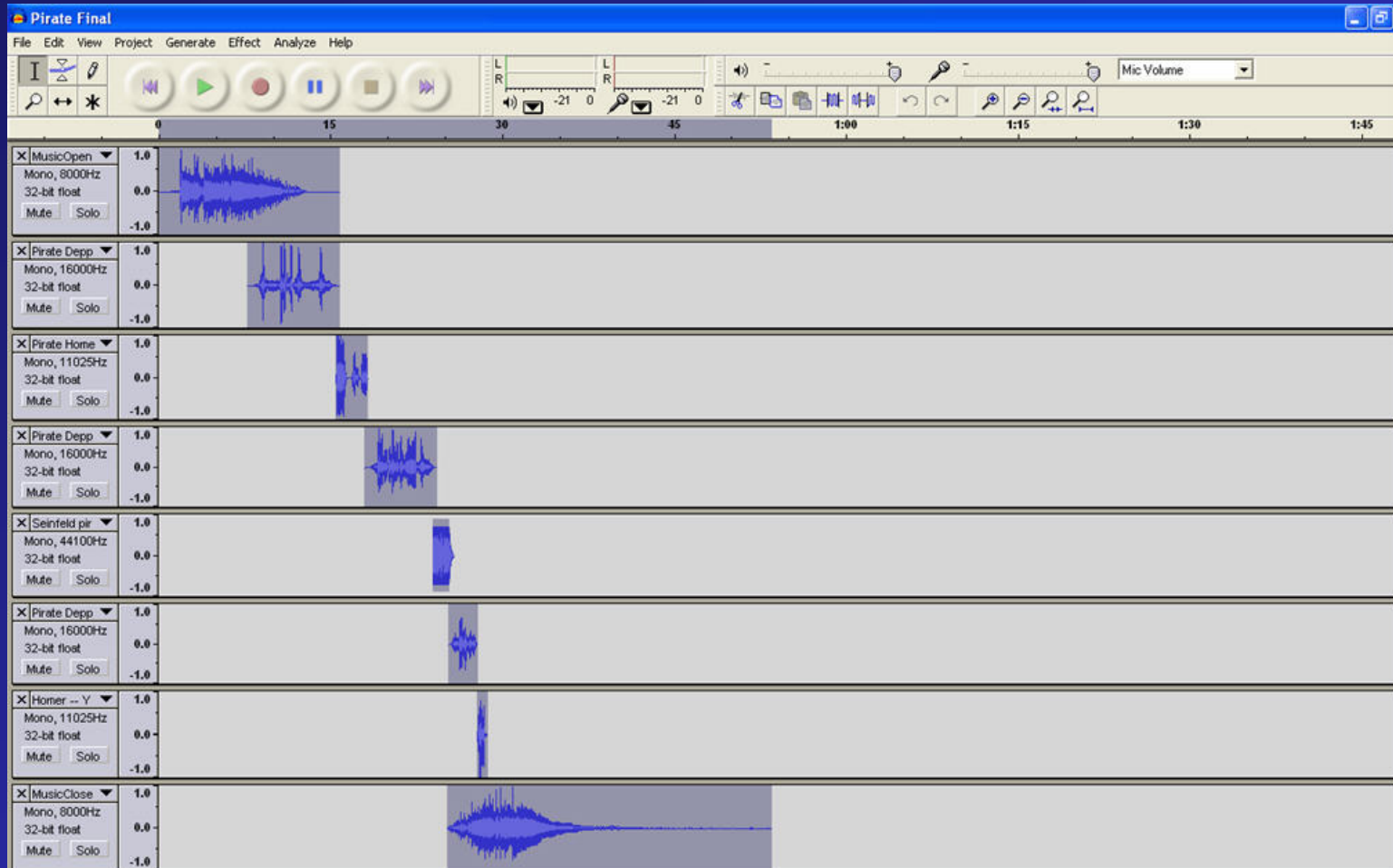*Let's take a look...*

Compressing and Normalizing Your Podcast

Using the Hard Limiter

Not a new action hero

- Places a "hard limit" on your maximum audio volume
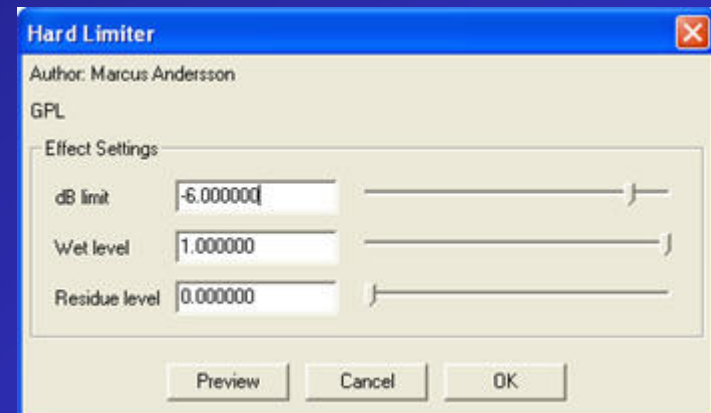
Let's take a look…

The Hard Limiter

The Hard Limiter

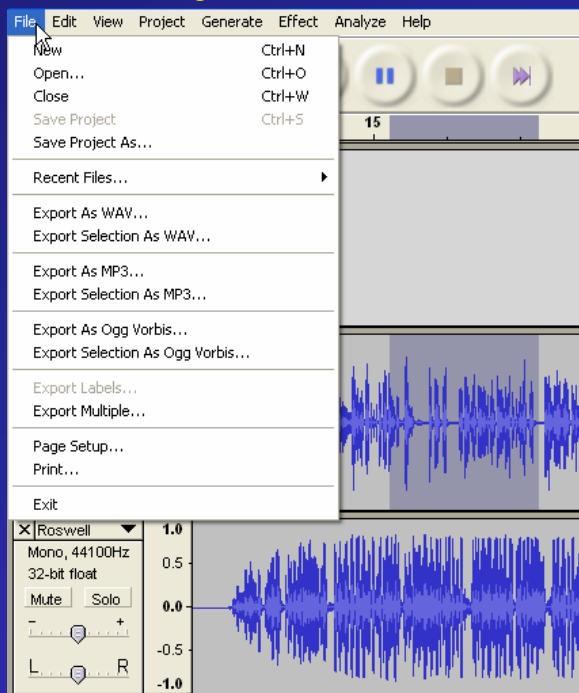# ✅ TIP: Mastering Shortcut

The Levelator

- http://www.gigavox.com/levelator

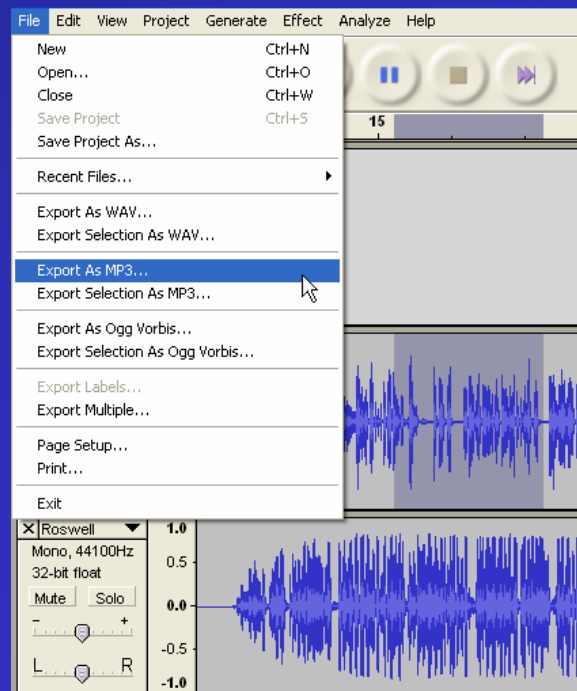# Step 8: Export Your Podcast as as an MP3 File

As easy as 1...

2...

ID3!
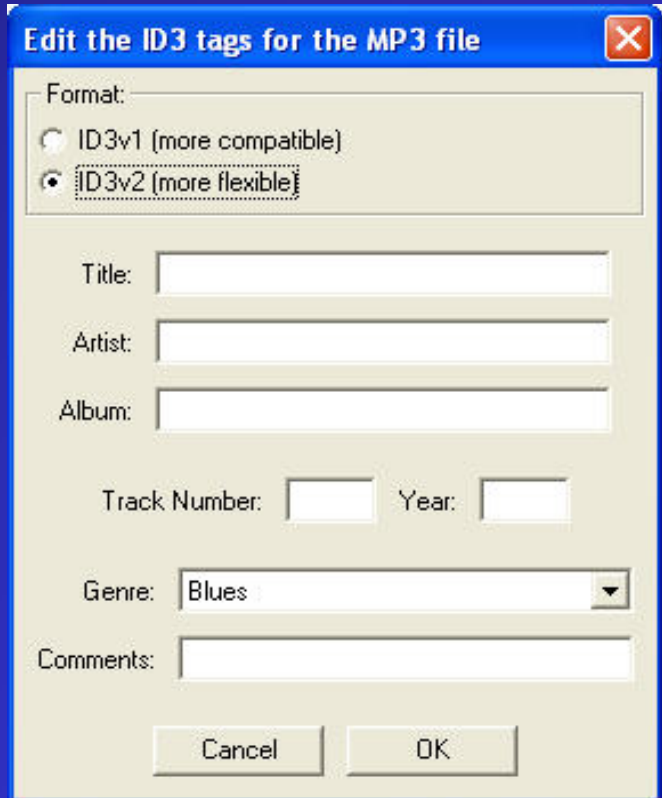
REALLY BIG Tip:

ID3 tags are big.

Huge.

Critical.

Because that's how we find you. And if we can't find you… we can't hear you.

Congratulations – You're a Podcast Producer!

- **Now, post it… party down…**

- **…and start all over again.**

- **Which is why you should know about a few more…**

✅ TIPS and TRICKS

Top keyboard shortcuts:

- Control-A to select all your audio files at once
- Control-mouse wheel to zoom
- Shift-arrow buttons to expand selection

✔ TIPS and TRICKS

Cool additional functions:

- Project menu – New Label Track – to transcribe, notate, or flag part of an audio track using text

- Effects menu – Noise Removal – removes or decreases background

- Float the toolbars to reduce mouse movement

Er – one tiny little detail…

Where to download Audacity:

- http://audacity.sourceforge.net
  - NOT www.audacity.com
- Latest stable version is 1.2.6
- Don't forget the LAME MP3 Encoder (click the Download tab and then click Windows)

What's Next With Audacity?

- **Customizable user interface**
- **More effects**
- **Repair of corrupted waveforms**
- **Greater stability**

Thank You Very Much!

Jerry is available for:

- Additional questions
- Weddings and bar mitzvahs
- audacityguy@gmail.com
- www.audacityguy.com
- www.dogworks.libsyn.com