Preparing Audio Files

Audio files can make your yearbook much more appealing.

Ways to Use Audio in Memories Builder:
- Background Music
- Page Narration
- Hot Spot Link

This guide will explain how to prepare your files and the different ways of using them in your yearbook.

Software

In order to prepare your audio for use, you will need audio editing software. There are many programs available, ranging in price and features from the free Audacity to Cakewalk SONAR (a full suite of digital audio editing tools and effects).

Free Audio Software:
Audacity (recorder/editor)   audacity.sourceforge.net
CDex (utility for transferring music from a CD)   www.cdex.n3.net

For other recommendations, call Technical Support at 877-463-6924.

Optimizing Audio

Audio editing programs allow you to change a number of settings that will affect the sound quality and size of your audio files (the higher the sound quality, the larger the file size). Audio files can be very large. It's best to make your files as small as possible, without compromising too much sound quality, to save space and speed up your project.

MP3 Format

This popular format is extremely useful for reducing file size while maintaining acceptable standards of quality. We recommend this format for full-length songs. If your sound-editing program doesn't have an mp3 encoder, save your files on your hard drive as WAV or AIFF files, and then download CDex (see above) to convert the files to mp3 format. Once they're in mp3 format, you can bring them into the project. We recommend the following settings for mp3 files:

- 160 kbps Bit Rate (128 kbps is fine for speech)
- Stereo Channel Setting

WAV and AIFF Formats

WAV is the standard Windows audio file format, and AIFF is the standard for Mac computers. We recommend these formats for loops. After recording speech or music, it's

always a good idea to save a copy of the file in WAV format or AIFF format, depending on your platform.

For speech, we recommend the following settings:
- 22,050 Hz Sample Rate (also called Sampling Frequency)
- 16 Bit Resolution
- Mono Channel Setting

For music, we recommend the following settings:
- 22,050 Hz Sample Rate (also called Sampling Frequency)
- 16 Bit Resolution
- Stereo Channel Setting

We also recommend that you *normalize* your audio files. This will set them to more even volume levels (so that one file is not much louder or softer than another). Most audio editing programs have a normalize function. CDex provides an option for normalizing files when you are recording from a CD or converting files from one format to another. If the normalize function has settings, choose 100% or 0.0dB.

Using Audio in Your Project

After you have prepared your audio files, you are ready to bring them into the project. There are three ways that you can use audio files. Consult the following descriptions to help you decide how to best use your audio:
- *Background Audio* – Plays continuously as viewers browse the project.
- *Page Narration* – When a viewer navigates to a page with Page Narration, Memories Builder interrupts the background music to play the narration file. Afterwards the background music will resume.
- *Audio File Hot Spot* – Makes an area of the canvas active (a Hot Spot). When viewers click on the Hot Spot, Memories Builder interrupts the background music to play the audio file. After the audio file is finished playing, background music resumes.

How you add the audio file into your Memories Builder project will depend on how you decide to use the file in your project. Consult the instructions below:

Background Audio
1. Background audio is assigned by section. Locate the section to which you'd like to add background audio in the *Contents* window and double click on it.
2. In the *Section Properties* dialog, click on the **Memories Builder Music Library** icon or the open folder icon next to the *Background Audio* field.
3. Browse for your audio file in the *File Preview* dialog and double click on it.
4. The file will now be assigned as background audio. Click on **OK** in the *Section Properties* dialog.

Page Narration
1. Page narration is assigned by page. Locate the page to which you'd like to add page narration in the *Contents* window, and double click on it.
2. Click on the open folder icon next to the *Page Narration* field.
3. Browse for your audio file in the *File Preview* dialog and double click on it.
4. You may also record your own page narration if you have a microphone for your computer. Click on the **Record** button. Wait for the prompt to begin recording and the time counter that shows the length of the recording and then speak into the microphone. When you have finished, click **Stop**. Go into preview (click on the eye icon on the toolbar) and check the page narration. If necessary, record again.
5. The file will now be assigned as page narration. Click on **OK** in the *Page Properties* dialog.

Audio File Hot Spot
1. Click on the **Hot Spot** icon on the *Main Toolbar*.
2. In the *Link Hotspot To* dialog, click on the **Audio** radio button.
3. Click on the open folder icon next to the *Audio* field.
4. Browse for your audio file in the *File Preview* dialog and double click on it.
5. The file will now be assigned as a Hot Spot. (You may preview it with the **Play** button or remove it with the **Clear** button.) Click on **OK**.
6. Select an area for the Hot Spot by clicking and holding the mouse button down on the canvas, and then dragging to open up a Hot Spot area. When you release the mouse button, Memories Builder creates the Hot Spot.
7. The Hot Spot will appear as a red rectangle outline on the canvas.

For your convenience, Memories Builder provides a few royalty-free audio selections that you can use. Look for the **Memories Builder Music Library** icon.