



Toolbox on the Cheap

Audio setup for Podcasting and Webinars

Podcasting and webinars are a great way to grow a platform. But, audio quality is key. People put up with poor video – but not audio.

A lot of sites talk about spending tons of money (thousands) before you can get started. Buying microphones, booms, mixers, cables, etc. Yuck. Not only does it cost money –but takes time.

However, using that Walmart headset (which many use) is also not the answer. Instead of sounding like a pro, you will sound like a kids playing.

So here is my list of high quality and inexpensive tools – most I still use today.

Setting Up an Audio Studio (Total cost ~ \$150)

Microphone

The microphone is perhaps the most important element. This is my favorite microphone. Great studio sound for low cost. Simple USB.

- [Blue Microphones Yeti USB Microphone - Silver](#)

Recording Software

I use a few tools for this, but the one that is free is where I started and what I often go back to. It is Audacity. Free software for the MAC or PC. Simple to use and has great how-tos on the site.

- [Audacity](#)



Audio Quality Control

Now that you have the microphone and the software, you are ready to go. But getting rid of annoying background noise can take you to a new level

First, you need to find the best noise free environment as possible. Having a barking dog screaming kids in the background every now and then is not the issue (They actually bring reality to your audio.)

The issue is constant noise in the background. Common noise sources are a poor microphone, USB hard drives running on your desk, and fluorescent lights (yes they hum). One other source of noise I discovered is a room with concrete floor and little furniture. My original tests had me sound like I was recording from a tile bathroom.

Eliminate background noises:

- Setup your mic and hit record. Do not say anything, but let it be quiet. Then play is back and amplify it and see if you have a strong background noise. (If you have fluorescent lights try it with the lights on and then off.)
- Work to kill the noises. Common noise sources are lights, USB hard drives on our desk, and printers running in the background.
- Once you have the background noises

Now check your voice:

- Record a few second of you talking. Speak as if you are talking to your best friend in casual conversation. Listen to the audio. How does it sound? Do you hear echo? Do you hear POPPING when you say words that start with "P"?
 - o If you have background echo because you are in a room without much furniture, try to bring in stuffy stuff. Think couch if you can. Think anything to absorb sound. For me I had to do sounds dampening panels – which I also did on the cheap. (If you need to know how – let me know and I will share)
 - o If you have popping, you need a pop filter. One option is to buy one. Here is a version for less than \$10. [Dragonpad pop filter](#). You can also make one from old panty hose stretched over a coat hanger.
- Do you sounds monotone? Does it sound like you are reading? Are you putting yourself to sleep?



- If you have trouble talking to a wall so you sound monotone, get a photo of a good friend and put it in front of you as you talk. Talk to them when you record.
- Pick up the energy. Since they are not seeing your face – you need to animate your voice a bit to bring it alive. But trust me – practice will help.

Now you are ready. With a quick setup you have a great studio that will sound as good as if you spent thousands.

Additions to bring it alive

Intros and Outros

While not critical, many people have music or a voice over at the start and/or end of their podcast or webinar. You can get someone to do this for you on <http://www.fiverr.com>. Or do like many, just do it yourself.

Tagging Your Audio

For podcasting, once you create the audio file, you should have an MP3. But, you need to TAG the MP3 for the file to be good for sharing on a podcast. Tags include title, author, genre, year, and show artwork. You can do this in iTunes, but the tool I like best is ID3 Editor. <http://www.pa-software.com/id3editor/> Cost is \$15.

Other Equipment

Here are some other great tools I use – mostly regarding video. Check them out.

- Webcam – Great for webinars or Skype calls. Also has great audio. [Logitech HD Pro Webcam C920, 1080p Widescreen Video Calling and Recording](#)
- Video Camera – iPhone with a mic. Yes, this is an AWESOME tool for video.
- iPhone Mic – A member of my mastermind group introduced me to this. Awesome. [Rode smartLav+ Lavalier Microphone for iPhone and Smartphones](#)
- iPhone Tripod Mount - [Glif](#)