

Sending Materials for Mission Videos

Note: I'm still in the process of writing this. Wherever you see "\\\", it indicates something that is incomplete or needs to be added.

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Introduction

This guide is to help missionaries who are sending materials for their mission videos. Initially it will cover audio only, but later may be expanded to include photos and video.

Please feel free to contribute ideas to this guide. Email the Multimedia Ministry at multimedia@westover.org.

More Help

The Westover Multimedia Ministry has training tapes available for members. Go to www.westover.org and click "Multimedia" at the left, then click "Educational Library" under "Resources".

Our website also has links to reference material available on the web. Go to www.westover.org and click "Multimedia" at the left, then click "Resources on the Web" under "Resources".

Video

\\\ (Coming soon)

Audio

Unless you're planning to send us a finished video that is ready for showing, you will probably want to send some audio for us to use in assembling your video.

Sending Your Recordings On Tape

Audio Tape

If you have time to mail something to us (so it will arrive at least a week before your program is to be shown), you can record your narration on tape and mail it. If you're not sending a video tape, you can record on a standard Phillips-type audio cassette. Other formats which you are not as likely to have are Mini-Disc and DAT (Digital Audio Tape). We can use those as well. And if you have the ability to record your narration on a computer and send us WAV files on CD, that also works well. But if you are recording on your PC, see *Sending Your Recordings via Email* (page 3) for another option for sending the audio.

Do not use the mini- or micro-cassette format, because the quality is not good. Even at the higher of the two common recording speeds, the stability of the speed is not good.

Video Tape

If you are mailing a video tape with scenes on it that you want in your video, you can record your narration on the video tape. You don't have to have the camera pointed at yourself (though if you do, we could mix the "live" shots of you talking with the shots of the things you're describing). It doesn't really matter what picture gets recorded with the narration—you could even leave the lens cap on.

Record your narration with the camera's built-in microphone about a foot away. Or if you have an external microphone that you can plug into your camera, hold it near your mouth—but beware of letting your breath blow on it (making popping sounds). In either case (using the camera microphone or an external microphone), take care that you don't pick up paper noises if you're reading from a script.

Sending Your Recordings Via Email

Unless you have a very slow Internet connection, it is practical to send your narration as MP3 files. You can record them on your computer, using your own tools or the ones we describe here.

Recording

First, be sure your sound recording program is set for high quality audio. Don't record at 8 bits and 8 KHz: the quality will be very poor. If you're using Windows Sound Recorder, see page 4 for information on setting the audio quality.

If using Windows Sound Recorder, make sure the default recording length is long enough for the speech you want to record. See page 4 for instructions. Note that you may want to record your script in short sections (less than a minute each). Then you can send the short segments in separate emails, and we can string them together when producing your video.

Record your narration segment(s) and save them on your hard disk.

You can re-record all or part of a file if you make a mistake. Just move the slider to the point where you want to start re-recording. It can be in the middle of the file or at the beginning or end. You can play the file back and click the square "stop" button when you get to the part where you want to start re-recording, then click the red "record" button to start recording.

When you are satisfied with each file, save it on disk.

Converting to MP3

If your sound recording program doesn't save files in MP3 format (Windows Sound Recorder doesn't), you'll need to convert your recorded files.

Download the file BLADEENC.EXE from the Westover Multimedia Ministry by keying the following URL into your web browser:

`http://www.onr.com/user/ldedear/wmmm/tools/bladeenc.exe`

Save the file on your Windows desktop, so that it appears as an icon (not a shortcut) on your desktop.

Then, to convert files, open the Windows Explorer or My Computer as a window so you can view files in it but can still see the BLADEENC.EXE icon on the desktop. Click on one or more WAV files, then drag them and drop them on the BLADEENC.EXE icon. The WAV files will not be moved, but after the conversion process is complete, MP3 files will appear in the same folder as the WAV files.

Hints

Check Your Audio

After recording an audio file, play it back to check for noise and distortion.

Photographs

\\ (Coming soon)

Appendix A: Using Windows Sound Recorder

Setting the Recording Quality

On my computer I got the best quality-to-file-size efficiency in Sound Recorder by recording at 32,000 Hz, 16 bit, mono, and converting that WAV file to MP3. The MP3 converter can't handle any sample rate lower than 32,000. 48,000 Hz, 16 bit, mono also worked well. The quality was virtually indistinguishable from 32,000 Hz, so I would advise using the lower sampling rate to conserve on file size.

In Sound Recorder, click "Edit", then "Audio Properties". In the "Customize" dialog box, select "PCM" in the "Format" list, and "32,000 Hz, 16 Bit, Mono" in the "Attributes" list. Then click the "Save As" button and give the setting a name (like "Narration"). Then back on the "Audio Properties" dialog box, make sure your new settings (i.e. "Narration" appears in the "Preferred Quality" list. Run a test before you re-record the whole thing! If for some reason you can't make a good MP3 using 32,000 Hz, modify your narration settings to use 48,000 Hz instead and try it again.

Setting the Maximum Recording Length

Sound Recorder included with Windows 95 and Windows 98 has a default maximum recording time of 60 seconds. You may see a maximum length of some other amount. There doesn't seem to be a way to specify the maximum recording length directly, so here is a workaround.

To increase the time, create a "silence" file that is as long as the recording time you need. Then you can needed by doing the following:

- Make sure your microphone is muted so it will not pick up sound. Use "Mute All" on the recording volume control¹, or turn the microphone volume all the way down. Or if your microphone has a switch on it, turn the switch off.
- Start recording, and let the record reach its maximum length.
- Select Edit, Copy from the Recorder menu.
- Select Edit, Paste Insert to add to the total length of the sound file. Repeat until the file is the desired length, then use Save As to create a "silence template" file.

You can then load and reuse this file each time you want to record a new sound track. Remember to use SAVE AS when saving the actual recording.

Remember to un-mute the microphone before trying to record your narration.

¹ There are many different types of recording control that may be on your computer, depending on which accessories may have been loaded. We can't describe all the options here, but if you're having a problem recording silence, email us and we'll try to help you out.