Instantly Boost Sales By adding Audio to your site for Free ! By Satyajeet Hattangadi

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Brought to you by Priya Shah

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I'd like to specially thank my friend, Priya Shah (http://www.ebizwhiz-publishing.com) for her helpful suggestions.

How much time and money have you spent attracting potential customers to your website?

Statistics show that **you have only 30 seconds** to capture a potential client's attention.

Did you know…

- People remember only 10% of what they read

- People remember only 20% of what they hear

- People remember 50% of what they both read and hear!

- It is found that audio increases the web site viewers attention span by 45%

- 79% of web users have audio

- 83% of web users have the Real Audio Plug in, and 96.4 have the Macromedia Plug in

- When used in an E-Commerce application as a help guide, it may increase sales by as much as 33%

- The future of static web pages is audio and video content

Its quite clear that today's web surfers are pretty blasé about standard web technology and need that little extra to get their attention.

About a few years ago the only way to play sound on your site was to

embed a wav or midi file in your web page. The html code that was required to do so was different for Internet explorer and Netscape.

The disadvantage with this method was that the entire sound file had to download before the browser could play it.

Due to this limitation the only sound that you could play was midi files or small wav files that contained a small jingle or background music.

One couldn't think of playing one's own voice!

Enter Streaming Audio

The advent of streaming audio changed the whole equation. In streaming audio the entire sound file does not need to be downloaded to be played. With streaming audio, as soon as a part of the file is downloaded, it starts playing, so to the user there is no delay and the playback is almost **instantaneous**.

The different streaming technologies that are currently available are

Real Audio

Advantages/Disadvantages: Real Audio is audio compression and streaming technology that is frequently used on the Internet. The technology is not in the public domain and as such you must download the plugin player and encoder from www.real.com.

Advantages:

- Almost immediate and real time audio.
- Long audio files are viable.
- Streaming audio so it will play as it downloads.

Disadvantages:

- Many casual surfers cannot play Real Audio (this is improving as Real Audio is supplied with Internet Explorer 5).
- Poor quality audio. High compression results in loss of quality.
- A special server is required for live streaming audio.
- Your server has to be set up for the Real Audio MIME type.
- Streaming audio will not play through some server firewalls.

Encoding Real Audio: To encode real audio, you need to download the real audio encoder from www.real.com. The real audio encoder will convert your wav file to a real audio (.ra) file.

Embed Real Audio Files: Most simply, try to embed your real audio files in a similar manner to wav files. This works on some servers (It depends on the MIME configuration). If this does not work properly visit the Support Pages of www.real.com, which describes how to set up the server MIME configuration.

For better streaming (more immediate play) use a text editor to write a "rpm" file with one line something like this:

http://www.yoursite.com/file.ra

Save the file as "file.rpm" and upload it to your site. On your web page, embed the real audio file like this:

Note: Using "rpm" makes your sound start to play faster.

Microsoft's Windows Media (.wmf file extension)

is audio compression and streaming technology that is frequently used on the internet. The technology is not in the public domain and as such your machine must have the windows media player installed.

Advantages:

- Almost immediate and real time audio.
- Video can also be streamed in the same fashion
- Long audio files are viable.
- Streaming audio so it will play as it downloads.
- Post Windows 98 all Microsoft operating systems have windows media player built in.

Disadvantages:

- Many surfers with older operating systems like Windows 95 cannot play .wmf files.
- Poor quality audio. High compression results in loss of quality.
- Microsoft's streaming server is required for live streaming audio.
- Your server has to be set up for the real audio MIME type.
- Streaming audio will not play through some server firewalls.

Encoding Windows Streaming Media:
To encode windows media, you need to download the windows media encoder from http://www.microsoft.com The windows media encoder will convert your wav file to a windows media (.wmf) file.

Apple Quicktime (.mov files)

This is apples proprietary sound format. It too has all the advantages and disadvantages of Real and Microsoft's technologies.

So what's the problem with all these streaming technologies, Satya? *

*Satya is what my friends call me, its short for Satyajeet ☺

Macromedia to the rescue!

Macromedia, to those who don't know, are the manufacturers of Flash software that is used on the web today to create all those smart animations.

Till version five of Flash, streaming audio was not possible.
Version six has proved to be a godsend to website owners as now you can stream audio very easily with Flash 6.

Well flash isn't free either, but I've provided two free flash buttons, which can stream audio, along with this e-book that you can use on your website.

Various Sound Formats

RIFF format (.wav):
RIFF is a format created by Microsoft and IBM. The format was built into the Windows 3.1 operating system and quickly became a standard. The format ends with the .wav file extension.

WAV files are typically large in file size due to the high quality and the format is used for CDs. An average pop music song is around 50MB in size. WAV files can be made smaller and converted to MP3 format through a process called encoding. This process always yields some kind of quality degradation, depending on how much compression is applied. When MP3 is converted to WAV, the process is called decoding. When MP3 is decoded to WAV, there is no increase in sound quality whatsoever, the file merely increases in size and can be read by common CD players. CD rippers (or CD recorders / extractors) are software programs that record CD audio to WAV format on your hard drive.

WAV format is necessary for editing sound files. Technically, MP3 cannot be edited to remove defects or add effects; it must first be converted to WAV format. A WAV editor is needed to alter the WAV file. Some programs like Rip Edit Burn include a WAV editor in the program.

MPEG is the acronym for Moving Picture Experts Group. This group has developed compression systems used for video data. For example, DVD movies, HDTV broadcasts and DSS satellite systems use MPEG compression to fit video and movie data into smaller spaces.

The MPEG compression system includes a subsystem to compress sound, called MPEG audio Layer-3. **We know it by its abbreviation, MP3**.

So what does that mean in English?

The MP3 compression format lets you create CD quality sound with a smaller file size.

> # Yeah, Yeah, I got all that but what's all this got to do with adding sound on my site, Satya?

Well, what all this techie mumbo jumbo means is that MP3 is the best format!

Recording your sound file

Recording your sound file is not as difficult as you might first think.

The only equipment that you need is a microphone and your computer, of course.

I know I could list out a dozen microphones that you could use but the truth is that almost any microphone that comes these days along with multimedia computers will do.

Recording your first sound file

- Open sound Recorder by going to Start/Programs/Accessories/Entertainment for (Windows 98)
- Open sound Recorder by going to Start/Programs/Accessories/Multimedia for (Windows 95)
- Press the "Record button" to start the recorder.
- As you're speaking into the microphone your sound recorder should have a voice pattern.
- After you're done press the "Stop button".
- To hear your recording press the "Play button".
- Next Click "File/Save As from the menu enter your file name and then click the "Change button".
- Another window opens up.
- Here For "Format" click the "Drop down button" and select "MPEG Layer-3".
- For "Attributes" click the "Drop down button" and select 16 kBits/s, 12,000 Hz Mono 2KB/s.
- Click OK.
- Click Save and you see the conversion of the file to a .mp3

    All done !!

Why did we choose "MPEG Layer-3"?

Doh! If you were to make a recording of your voice with the "Windows Sound Recorder" that was 60 seconds long and save it, it would be **1.26 MB** .wav in size.

But you can reduce this to only 117 KB if you made it a .mp3 file instead.

Hey I can't see a "MPEG Layer-3" option in my dropdown list

Well if your machine isn't running Windows XP or Windows 2000, you might not see this option.

Well I have a solution for that too.

There are several free software applications that can convert your file from wav to MP3.

So all you need to do is follow the steps mentioned earlier, only save the file in the default format PCM 22.050 KHZ.

This will save your recording as a huge wav file.

Free Wav to MP3 Convertors/ Recorders

RightClick-MP3:

Plain and simply the easiest way to Encode or Decode an MP3. To use it, you simply RightClick on an .MP3 file and choose to Decode it, or you can RightClick on a .WAV file and choose to Encode it. It's that simple! There's also the option to encode any .WAV file in a directory AND on all methods of encoding, you can optionally choose to have the .WAV's

Click here to visit their site.

Stepvoice Recorder

StepVoice Recorder is a real-time recording software that records directly to MP3 format. It comes with an easy to use interface and allows recording from any sound source, such as microphone, line input, media players, internet streaming audio, etc (using standard Windows mixer controls). It can automatically select the frequency or you can change settings manually.

Click here to visit their site.

Pro Tools

Get Pro Tools FREE and experience the power and flexibility of Pro Tools. Using your computer's built-in sound capability, Pro Tools FREE offers up to 8 tracks of audio and 48 tracks of MIDI, real-time plug-ins, and many of the same editing and mixing features the pros use.

Click here to visit their site.

Not Happy with single-track recording? OK Here are some multi track recording software.

Audacity 1.2.0

Audacity is a free multi-track sound editor for MacOS, Windows, and Linux. It can record directly or import WAV, Ogg Vorbis, MP3, AIFF, and many other formats. Features include built-in effects, VST plugin loading, fast editing, and unlimited undo.

Audacity 1.2.0-pre1 is a public test release of the free Audacity sound editor. The purpose of this release is to allow users to preview and test the new features.

This release adds professional quality audio processing, and major new features such as the ability to speed up, slow down, and alter the pitch of a track. It is the first release that can open project files saved in the older Audacity 1.0 format as well as the new XML format used by Audacity 1.1 and higher. Audacity 1.2.0-pre1 fixes many bugs from the last beta release.

Click here to visit their site.

Quartz AudioMaster Freeware

Quartz AudioMaster Freeware is a powerful though easy-to-use multitrack recorder and MIDI sequencer running under Windows 95/98/NT/2000 and the best way to try the Quartz Audio Family software concept for FREE (fully working - no limitation at all - it's not a trial version).

It is intended for people who want to record, compose, mix, play and share music using a computer and a sound card.

It features 4 stereo audio tracks, 16 MIDI tracks, effect plug-ins, per-track EQ, Aux buses, Video sync, Score, GM/GS/XG and "Piano roll" editors and all the functionalities required to easily share musical projects across the internet up to its multitrack compressed file format.

Click here to visit their site.

DDClip Free

DDClip is the professional non-linear non-destructive multitrack real-time audio and video editor for Windows95/98/NT. Outstanding feature of the editor is the speed of the playback, especially for its audio part - DDClip is able to mix sound tracks in real time. DDClip is especially effective for video clips scoring, creating audio commercials and synchronizing voice with music.

You can create, save, restore and playback a project of many tracks. Track can have unlimited number of clips. Clip contains a reference to a continuous fragment (or whole content) of audio or/and video data from source file. DDClip is non-destructive editor, it does not change source multimedia files. Master volume and balance can be set for whole project, each track and each clip. Moreover, clip may have its own volume and balance profile. Each track has solo/mute toggles. DDClip has intuitive user interface. Operations and features are easily accessible on toolbar, menus and context-sensitive local menus. Application supports multilevel undo/redo.

DDClip Free is Freeware application. It has one video and 4 audio tracks, supports most popular audio formats and has 10 undo/redo levels.

Click here to visit their site.

Choosing a Voice

Most people are shy in recording in their own voice. But what most people don't realize is that a message in your own voice comes across as a strong affirmation of your credibility.

Yes I know you might say my "voice sounds funny" or "I sound like a toad", but if you follow some simple steps you can make your message sound very positive.

- Write down what you are going to say before you start recording.
- Keep your voice lively and keep changing your pitch during the course of the recording
- Avoid speaking in a monotone. You don't want the listener to fall asleep do you?
- Avoid pauses in your recording. Saying "Umm" and "Ah" make the voice seem unprofessional.
- Make your passion for your business seep into your recording
- Avoid the standard "Welcome to my website, please buy my product" kind of recording. Say something refreshingly new.
- Listen to audio recordings from professional voice over artists and try to mimic their style.

Can I get a professional voice over?

Well yes you can, but they don't come cheap.

Some of the relatively inexpensive ones are:

Amazing Talking Websites

They have a basic package for $197, I know that's not cheap but listen to the quality of their recording and decide if they are what you need.

Click here to see a sample of their recordings.

World Voices

Another professional voice over company is World voices that have artists from all over the world. So you can get a voice of any nationality and accent to dub for you.

Click here to visit their site.

Can I get a free professionally recorded message?

Yes you can. But it'll only be a generic message. But hey! Its free right ☺

Voice on Site

They offer free generic messages in .wav format that you can download and convert into MP3's.

Click here to sample their free Wavs.

Amazing Talking Websites

They have just one message.

Click here to sample their free recording.

"But, I'm not tech savvy enough to do all this"

Well there is a paid service called **Instant Audio** that you can use

This is a real well thought out piece of software. The creator Rick Raddatz, has cleverly hooked the package up to an 800 toll free number which you can advertise to help gather testimonials about your own product or service.

If you don't have your own microphone for your PC then you can actually use the 'free' 800 number to record your own voice and add that to your website. So the phone line option effectively acts as your microphone too.

The Site charges $29.95 per month for this service. All you need to do is call up the number that they provide and record your voice. They then will provide you with a piece of code that you copy paste into you web page and that's it.

The sound file is stored on their server, and you don have to bother about it.

The funny part is that the 800 number, which we traditionally treat as a toll free number isn't exactly free. That's because you'll be charged 14.9c per minute to use the equipment that is recording your voice at the other end of the toll free 800 number!

Click here to visit their site.

Another similar clone of this is Armand Morin's Audio Generator, who has outsourced his software from Instant audio.

OK so I have recorded my sound file, but how the heck do I get it on my site??

Read on to find out!

Using the Free Flash buttons provided with this E-book

Along with this e-book, you will find a folder called sample. This contains a sample HTML file, an mp3 file and a ".swf" file.

The .swf (satya.swf) file is the flash button and the html file is the sample file that holds the button.

The sample sound is called "sample.mp3".

Simply copy paste the source code from the html file into your webpage at the point where you want the button to be displayed.

Change the code where it says, "thefile=sample.mp3|0" to point to your mp3 file name.

For example, if you record a sound file called myfile.mp3, simply change the part of the code that says "thefile=sample.mp3|0" to "thefile=myfile.mp3|0"

That's it, nothing more to change...

Make sure that the MP3, swf and your html page are in the same directory or use a relative path to point to the file.

Congratulations! You've added audio to your site for FREE.

Feel free to pass this e-book around to anybody who you think will benefit from it.

About Novasoft Inc

Novasoft, is a software solutions company that primarily deals in software outsourcing and off-shoring, recently having diversified into online privacy and Internet marketing products.

Well that's about it from me. I hope you enjoyed reading this e-book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

If you ever feel like getting in touch with me feel free to drop me an email at info@novasoft-inc.com

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