

Track Snippets

documentation for Windows



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Introduction

You've done the hard work of creating your next audio masterpiece, and you're ready to share it with the world online. Before uploading your work, consider the consequences. Did you know that all audio playing in a browser can be recorded? This means that if you post your complete tracks, you are giving them away for free to anyone with a browser. This is why online retailers like iTunes, Amazon, CD Baby, and others do not allow streaming entire content, and instead give visitors a chance to hear short previews of audio tracks before buying an album or audiobook. Even if this doesn't concern you, what if your tracks are long, and you would like to share shorter excerpts? What if you want to share one of your tracks as an iPhone ringtone? How are these kinds of short previews (snippets) prepared? Normally, each of your source tracks has to be imported into digital audio editing software, clipped to length, fades added as needed, and exported in an appropriate audio format (usually mp3) - a tedious process. This is where Track Snippets comes in.

What is Track Snippets?

Track Snippets lets you create and export preview excerpts (snippets) of your tracks, fast. It imports a wide variety of audio formats, gives you exactly and only the tools you need to prepare your snippets, and exports snippets in .wav, .mp3 (in a wide range of bit rates), and the iPhone ringtone format, .m4r. An unrewarding process that would normally take hours with conventional software can be pleasantly accomplished in a matter of minutes with Track Snippets.

About this Documentation

Using Track Snippets is simple. A quick overview shows you how to get started right away with mouse / trackpad and keyboard shortcuts. Following chapters explain the details you should know about each part of the snippet-making process.

Bug Reporting and Feedback

Please report any problems you experience with Track Snippets directly by using the menu item ***Report a Bug...*** Do you have an idea which would improve the software? Use the menu item ***Request a Feature...*** You may also send feedback and suggestions by email directly to matherpointsoftware@zentral.zone

Kindly do not post complaints about this software in online forums, as there is no way to correspond with you to correct the problem in that case. When you report bugs directly as described above, email correspondence can take place to resolve the issue promptly. Your consideration is much appreciated.

Getting Started

Here is what you need to know to get started using Track Snippets.

Playback

Spacebar : plays back snippet last edited, + Shift : plays back snippet starting at fade-out

Editing Snippets

Click & Drag Snippet : moves snippet, Click & Drag Snippet Right Edge : resizes snippet

Mouse Wheel (+ Shift)* : moves snippet

Mouse Wheel (+ Shift)* + Alt : changes fade-out length

Mouse Wheel (+ Shift)* + Control : changes fade-in length

* *Shift* is only needed for these actions when a vertical scrollbar is present in the list of tracks

Right-click : shows a popup menu to set values for the snippet parameters numerically, reset snippet parameters to default values, preview the sound quality of an mp3 snippet, add or edit User Info, duplicate or remove a track, or export a snippet

Left Arrow Key : nudge snippet left, + Control : larger step

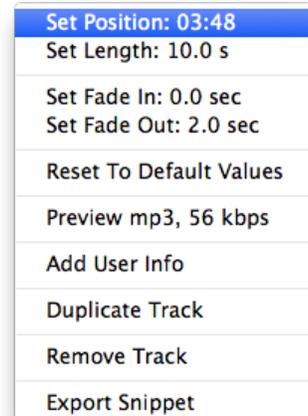
Right Arrow Key : nudge snippet right, + Control : larger step

Left Arrow Key + Alt : shorten snippet, + Control : larger step

Right Arrow Key + Alt : lengthen snippet, + Control : larger step

Up Arrow Key : lengthen fade-out, + Control : larger step, + Shift : apply to fade-in

Down Arrow Key : shorten fade-out, + Control : larger step, + Shift : apply to fade-in



Manual changes to the the snippet (using mouse, trackpad, or keyboard shortcuts) override the Snippet Default settings. For example, after you have manually changed a snippet's length, selecting a new Default snippet length will not affect the length of that snippet, and will affect only the lengths of snippets you have not changed manually. The same applies to fade-in and fade-out lengths. If you want to revert a snippet to the Default values, use the **Right-Click** popup menu option **Reset to Default Values**, described above.

Project Options

Project Type : choose Multi-File Import (various locations, allowing both files and folders) or Single Folder Import (one source location, folder only, enables Create Snippets Subfolder)

Snippet Format : choose wav CD quality, mp3 (choice of bit rate), or iPhone Ringtone format

Add to Snippet Filenames : add selected text as a prefix or suffix to exported file names

Create Snippets Subfolder : create a folder called 'Snippets' inside the source folder (enabled only when Single Folder Import is selected)

Copy Audio Files to .tracksnippets Project File : include the (possibly converted) .wav source files in the .tracksnippets project file

Copying large files into project files is not recommended, as it is slow and uses up disk space. Whenever you copy your source files to a project file, you must have enough disk space to complete the operation. If you do not copy the audio source files, then the project will look for the audio files in the location which existed when the project was created (this is called a linked project). If you change the location of the source files for a linked project after you have created the project, then you will be prompted to locate the source files when you open the project.

Defaults

Snippet Length : choose in increments of 5 seconds (snippets may be of any length)

Fade In For , Fade Out For : choose in increments of 1 second (fades may be of any length)

Files

Import Source Files (button) : choose file or folder from which to load audio source files (valid audio files will be imported)

Source files are never altered. Non-.wav files are internally converted and then imported as .wav files. Source files with greater than 16-bit resolution are imported as 16-bit .wav. All internally converted files are deleted upon quitting the app.

Hide / Show Details (button) : hide or show the various checkbox and popup menu options in the window

Move Snippets (button) : move all snippets to begin at time 0.0 or at random times

Export Snippets (button) : create mp3, ogg, wav, or Ringtone snippet files in the chosen destination

Existing files will never be deleted or replaced without your approval. If you try to export snippets to a location in which files with the same names already exist, Track Snippets will alert you of the situation, and ask if you want to replace the files, skip exporting only the already-existing files, or cancel the export operation.

Import (menu): same functions as **Import Source Files** button

Save (menu) : save a project in .tracksnippets format. This is a bundled single file format which can contain copies of all your source audio files in .wav format, if you choose the Copy Files to .tracksnippets Project File option.

Save As (menu) : save .tracksnippets project with a new name

Open (menu) : open a saved .tracksnippets project (use Import for new projects)

Revert (menu) : discard current changes to a .tracksnippets project file and revert back to the last saved version of the file

Importing Source Tracks



There are a few different ways to import your audio tracks into Track Snippets, and the behavior of the interface depends on which type of project you choose.

About Source Files

Track Snippets will import audio source files in virtually any format except FLAC. (If you need to work with FLAC, you should install the FLAC conversion tool which is available for free online.) If your source files are in .wav format with not-higher-than 16-bit resolution, then they are imported into Track Snippets without any conversion of the audio data. Wav files with higher than 16-bit resolution are internally converted to 16-bit (your source files are never altered). Non-.wav files are also converted to 16-bit stereo .wav internally. Such technical details about the conversion resolution are of no real practical concern. The goal is to provide a consistent standard benchmark of audio quality for all of the imported files, so that the output files are also of uniform quality.

Your source files are never altered. Files may be internally converted for uniform export quality. These converted files are only used internally, and are deleted upon quitting Track Snippets.

Multi-File Import

When you want to import files from various locations, use a Multi-File project (the default setting). In this type of project, you can use the Import button or menu, or you can simply drag and drop audio files into the tracks list. Note that when you export snippets from a Multi-File project, you will be prompted to select a location and provide a name for the export folder.

Single-Folder Import

Choose this project type if you want to work on a set of tracks that all reside in the same folder. This type of project gives you the option of creating a subfolder called *Snippets* within the source folder, which is then used for quickly exporting your snippets without having to choose the destination. Note that once you have selected this project type and imported your tracks, you cannot import files from other locations into the project.

Editing Snippets

Basic editing features of Track Snippets are simple and intuitive. Many shortcut options (summarized in the chapter *Getting Started*) make snippet editing even easier.

Snippet Defaults



When you begin a new project, all snippets default to the same *Snippet Length* value selected at the bottom of the window, given in increments of 5 seconds. This default length is simply a starting point for all of your tracks. Each snippet is adjustable and can be of any length, including fractions of a second. The *Fade In For* and *Fade Out For* settings likewise allow you to choose fade lengths in increments of 1 second. Fades may be of any length, in increments of tenths of a second. These settings are remembered from one session to the next; whatever setting you used in your last project will be the settings your next project will open with.

What Makes a Good Snippet?

Here are a few standard approaches to the creation of track snippets.

- 1. Beginnings** : all snippets can begin at the start of each track and continue for the same amount of time, say 20 seconds, fading out for the last 2 seconds. Track Snippets defaults to this approach as the fastest and easiest method. Import your tracks, click the **Export** button, and you are finished.
- 2. Random** : a slightly more interesting approach is for all snippets to be the same length, each beginning somewhere after the beginning of the track, fading in and fading out for some length, such as 2 seconds. To do this, you can check **Fade In For** and select a length, then click the **Move Snippets** button and select **Move To Random**.
- 3. Customized** : the best results are likely to be found when snippets are individually tailored to each track, to feature distinctive or attractive passages. Track Snippets lets you do this quickly and easily with mouse / trackpad control and keyboard shortcuts.

Mouse & Trackpad Control

The Mouse or Trackpad can be used in the following ways to edit snippets. (*NOTE: This information is also found in abbreviated form in the opening chapter **Getting Started**.*)

Moving and resizing the snippet directly with the mouse or trackpad works as expected.
Click & Drag Snippet : moves snippet, **Click & Drag Snippet Right Edge** : resizes snippet



The following features implementing the mouse wheel / 2-finger trackpad swipe are perhaps a little less obvious. With these motions and key combinations you can quickly move the snippet or change the lengths of the snippet fade-in and fade-out parameters.

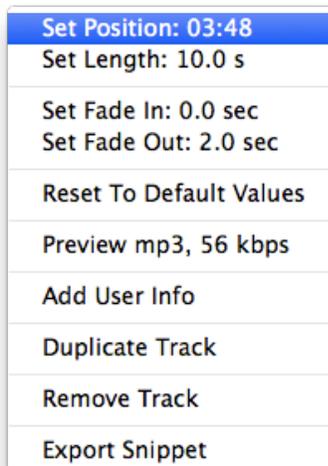
Mouse Wheel (+ Shift)* : moves snippet

Mouse Wheel (+ Shift)* + Alt : changes fade-out length

Mouse Wheel (+ Shift)* + Control : changes fade-in length

** Shift is only needed for these actions when a vertical scrollbar is present in the list of tracks*

If you need to enter values specifically in numbers, you can do so by selecting menu options. **Right-click** : shows the following popup menu.



Set Position, **Set Length**, **Set Fade In**, and **Set Fade Out** all open a modal window allowing you to set values for these snippet parameters numerically.

Reset To Default Values overrides the current values of the snippet with the default values selected at the bottom of the window.

If you have selected mp3 as the Export Format, **Preview mp3** appears in this menu allowing you to preview the sound quality of the snippet without having to export the .mp3 file.

Add User Info (or, if User Info exists for a given track **Edit User Info**) opens a modal window allowing you to type in a note to yourself for a given track. This text is displayed at the bottom of the track display.

Choose **Duplicate Track** if you want to create more than one snippet for any given track.

Remove Track may come in handy for projects where some tracks of a group of files within a folder aren't needed, or if you have decided not to use a duplicated track.

Select **Export Snippet** to export only the snippet from the given track without exporting any other snippets in the project.

Keyboard Shortcuts

Working with the keyboard can sometimes be faster than working with the mouse or trackpad. (NOTE: This information is also found in abbreviated form in the opening chapter **Getting Started**.)

To play back the snippet, you can click in the area where the name of the track is shown, or simply use the spacebar. Hearing the snippet only from the fade-out point can sometimes be useful, so holding down the shift key and then the spacebar allows you to do this.

Spacebar : plays snippet last edited, + **Shift** : plays back snippet starting at fade-out

The left and right arrow keys move the snippet right or left in screen pixel increments, and in larger steps when the Control key is held.

Left Arrow Key : nudge snippet left, + **Control** : larger step
Right Arrow Key : nudge snippet right, + **Control** : larger step

When the Alt key is also held with left and right arrows, the snippet is not moved but rather changed in length, by larger steps when the Control key is held.

Left Arrow Key + Alt : shorten snippet, + **Control** : larger step
Right Arrow Key + Alt : lengthen snippet, + **Control** : larger step

The up and down arrow keys change the length of fade-out, or when the Shift key is held, fade-in. Again the Control key provides a larger step of change.

Up Arrow Key : lengthen fade-out, + **Control** : larger step, + **Shift** : apply to fade-in
Down Arrow Key : shorten fade-out, + **Control** : larger step, + **Shift** : apply to fade-in

Exporting Snippets

The export options of which you should be aware are as follows.

Create Snippets Subfolder

Snippets are always exported to a folder, so that your snippet files will be together in one place, and so that there will not be conflicts with existing files having the same names. Automatic creation of a folder called *Snippets* inside the source folder is available for Single-Folder projects. This eliminates the need to choose a location and name for the snippets export folder. Note that if you export more than once using this option, you will be asked whether to replace the existing files or not.

Existing files will never be deleted or replaced without your approval. If you try to export snippets to a location in which files with the same names already exist, Track Snippets will alert you of the situation, and ask if you want to replace the files, skip exporting only the already-existing files, or cancel the export operation.

Snippet Formats

Export

Snippets intended for online listening should be of acceptable audio quality, and small file size. Mp3 has become the default format for internet streaming because it provides a good balance between these two criteria. The .ogg vorbis format is also provided as an open-source alternative to .mp3. Normally, snippets do not need to be in wav CD quality, and .wav is not recommended for online streaming, but Track Snippets does provide this option. The iPhone Ringtone format is a special version of the .mp4 (.m4a) format using the extension .m4r. It is only used for iPhones and is not intended for online listening.

Choosing an .mp3 Bit Rate

The *Snippet Format* popup provides many options for mp3 exporting, giving values in *kbps*, which means *kilobits per second*. Higher numbers correspond to higher audio quality, and larger files. Because small file size is desirable for online streaming, you should select the lowest bit rate giving an acceptable level of quality. For example, if you are preparing snippets of spoken word for an audiobook, the lowest setting of 32 kbps will probably be sufficient; however, this low bit rate is very unlikely to sound good enough for music.

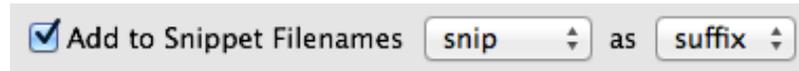
Previewing an .mp3 for Quality Before Exporting

It is useful to be able to hear the quality of a given mp3 bit rate before exporting your tracks. To do this, simply Right-Click on a track and select the *Preview .mp3* option. The file will be prepared and played back without having to export.

Choosing an ogg vorbis output quality level

The ogg vorbis format is similar to .mp3 in that it is a lossy codec, but it is open-source. The balance between file size and audio quality is determined in the vorbis format according to a scale between 1 and 10, where 1 is the lowest quality audio and smallest file, and 10 is the highest quality audio and largest file. Low values will work for spoken word, while middle values should be sufficient for most music.

Add to Snippet Filenames



A prefix or suffix can be added to your exported file names so that snippet files will not be

confused with the source files. By default, Track Snippets adds the suffix *-snip* to each file name, and you can select from a few different options, and whether to place the added text before or after the file names. If you would like the file names to be the same as the source tracks, simply uncheck this option.

Project Files

Track Snippets lets you save your projects in a native .tracksnippets format, so that you can come back to a project later to make changes or export track snippets from your source files again if you need to. There are two types of project files: those that contain the source tracks (called “complete” files), and those that contain only references to the source tracks (called “linked” files).

Complete Project Files

Copy Audio Source Files to .tracksnippets Project File

You will want to use this option in situations where you need file

portability. If you are working only on one computer, and you aren't changing the locations of your audio source files, then there is really no need to use this option. Using a complete project file can take some time to open, because the project file can be quite large, depending on the size of your source files. Note that the files included in a complete project are those that Track Snippets actually shows you in the editing window. In other words, if any files have been internally converted to .wav from some other format when you initially create the project, the converted files are stored in the complete project, not copies of the original files. Your original files are never saved in a project; only copies and converted copies. To save your project as a complete file, check the *Copy Audio Files to .tracksnippets Project File*.

Linked Project Files

Copy Audio Source Files to .tracksnippets Project File

A linked project file is always very small, and is the better option for

most situations. The project file does not contain any audio files. Instead, it only contains the path information for the source files. To save your project as a linked file, uncheck the *Copy Audio Files to .tracksnippets Project File*.

iPhone Ringtones

iPhone Ringtones are limited to 30 seconds maximum length. Track Snippets will alert you if your snippets are too long, and will give you an option to automatically shorten the snippets to the required length, while maintaining your Fades settings.

After exporting your Ringtones, follow these steps to transfer them to your iPhone.

1. Drop exported .m4r Ringtone files into the Tones section of your iTunes library.
2. If you are using WiFi sync, you can simply drag the Ringtones to your iPhone icon in iTunes. For manual syncing, use the 'Sync Tones' option in iTunes when you sync, and the Ringtones will appear on your iPhone in Settings > Sounds > Ringtones.

Credits

Track Snippets was designed and programmed by Aaron Andrew Hunt, using [Xojo](#) and [MBS Plugins](#) on a [Mac](#). This documentation was written by Aaron Andrew Hunt, using Apple [Pages](#). Special thanks to Darren Scorza for feedback and suggestions during development.

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