

## So you want to do some recording?

Here are some basic pointers on recording, for anyone wanting to record their own material.

### Recording formats - some options to consider

#### **Mini Disc**

Technology has really come of age in recent years and one of the best formats for capturing live material is the Mini Disc, invented by Sony some years ago. The mini disc nearly died a death in early years because it wasn't marketed in such a way that



people began to appreciate its flexibility, so sales only really grew in Japan! I still have one of the original units, built like a tank and still works perfectly to this day. With the advent of MP3 players and iPods, mini disc has battled to maintain its market share, but is still an excellent recording medium.

The advantage with mini disc is that it is a digital format and as such doesn't have the inherent problems of tape hiss associated with tape recording analogue mechanisms. For many years whenever I bought a new set of NLP or hypnosis tapes, the first thing I had to do was to take them into the studio and start "the clean up operation!" This meant removing all the annoying background noise and hiss, so I could actually hear what was on the recording! I prefer the Sony models (<http://www.sony.uk>) which are all pretty good, as long as you use a decent quality microphone...

#### **Recording on a PC**



My studio recording is done on computers. One of the absolute joys of using this medium is that you can see you work in visual waveforms, as well as hearing it. This means that you have two ways to check the quality of your work. If you are going to use a PC, I recommend using an audio biased sound card, suitable for these specific needs. As I mentioned in my previous article, I recommend Midiman sound cards (<http://www.midiman.co.uk>), which have served me well over many years with my own work and when recording other people.

If you want a really straight ahead easy programme for recording NLP or hypnosis work, look no further than Adobe Audition (<http://www.adobe.com>) This used to be called Cool Edit Pro, until Adobe bought out Syntrillium, the previous manufacturer. Audition is very easy to use and you can multi track up to 120 tracks if you want to go seriously crazy! As I mention later in this article, subscribe to Sound on Sound magazine and save yourself times and money by following their excellent advice!

## **Microphones**

I am constantly amazed by people who fail to realise that an investment in a quality microphone, will make a massive difference to the final recording. Sony produce a range of mics and my advice is to grab one for about £100 as this will make a huge difference to the final recording. There are a variety of clip mics and stand alone mics, but I favour the stand alone type as in some instances the clip mic if not properly setup, will overload and ruin the vocal recording.





### **God bless the Chinese**

In studio settings for voice work, I suggest using valve microphones. Historically these would be pretty costly, with a basic mic costing around £1000. Today with manufacturing overseas, the Chinese have started to produce some excellent units which are in my opinion as good as the older mics, but for a fraction of the price! I use SE mics (<http://www.tbkmics.com>) for all current work and these work out at about £300+ for each unit. Of course if you are recording onto a PC, its also best to have a preamplifier, which sits between the mic and your PC, allowing you to adjust input levels. There are a number of quality units that will do a good job and I recommend TL Audio (<http://www.tludio.co.uk>) and Focusrite (<http://www.focusrite.com>)

### **Monitors**

If you are working in a PC recording environment, I strongly suggest using TFT monitors. These have great viewing definition, don't fry you with radiation and most importantly look very cool! I use a number of 19 inch monitors which allow me to work easily with more complicated recordings where I can be using up to 25 tracks at any one time! If you want to use more than one monitor for your PC, check that your graphics card will handle dual options. However be warned, once you use multiple monitors, you will never return to a single monitor setup!

### **Stereo and multi channel recording**

With the advent of DVDs, many people are getting used to multi channel recording. In recent years I have begun to produce work in DTS multi channel format. This becomes particularly exciting with the option to have many more separate channels of sound than just the normal two stereo options. I am convinced that this will become more of the format for the future as people use their multi sound systems to hear music as well as movie soundtracks. I use Steinberg's Nuendo (<http://www.steinberg.net/>) as a software package which will do pretty much anything you could possibly want, but is more complex to use than Audition! If you are going to go this route, you will need a monitoring setup that allows you to listen back with a 6 speaker setup. If like me space is a consideration, I recommend using KEF KHT series of



speakers which are excellent! (<http://www.kef.com>) You will also need a software package that allows you to record in surround sound and a DTS decoder as suggested in the previous article. My guess however is that many reading this will be happy to settle for a decent voice recording and well produced music, which fortunately is pretty easy to achieve these days!

### **SOS magazine**

Sound on Sound magazine  
(<http://www.soundonsound.com>)



The World's Best Music Recording Magazine

is a **must buy** for anyone seriously thinking about producing their own material. This magazine appears monthly and is easy to read with essential practical tips on recording and equipment.

*Nick Kemp June 2004*