



# Audio Portfolios

## Online Speaking Practice

Dennie Hoopingarner  
Michigan State University

<http://www.audioportfolios.com>

October 2006

## Audio Portfolios: Online speaking practice



### Introduction and background:

Audio Portfolios is a program developed at the Language Learning Center at Michigan State University. The purpose of the program was to replace audiocassette-based recording with a web-based computer program. Pedagogically, the program was not designed to break any new ground; rather, the intention is to make assigning speaking work to language classes more practical to manage. The program makes use of new streaming technology to make recording audio from within a web page easy and transparent to the users. In this way, audio homework assignments are easier to manage.

The program is web-based, meaning that instructors and students can access the software from anywhere, and their work is saved on a central server. Both students and instructors access the program using a web browser. A computer with a broadband connection, and a web browser with the Flash plugin are all that are needed to access the program. The program can detect the user's speakers and microphone to capture and play back sound. In addition, if the user's computer has a web cam, the program can detect it as well, and capture video of the student speaking as well.

The program was designed to facilitate speaking assignments in language classes. There are many ways to get effective use out of the program. Some examples are given in the spring 2005 issue of CLEAR's newsletter, which is available in PDF form from this website: <http://clear.msu.edu/newsletter/spring05/index.pdf>.

## Users Guides

### Students:

Getting started.....	4
Logging in.....	4
Creating recordings.....	5
Modifying recordings.....	6
Locking your recordings.....	7
Viewing your recordings.....	7
Sharing recordings with your instructor.....	8
Sharing recordings with others.....	8
Deleting recordings.....	9
Modify account information.....	9

### Instructors:

Getting started.....	10
Logging in.....	10
Creating classes.....	12
Adding students to classes.....	12
Modifying student account information.....	13
Deleting student accounts and classes.....	13
Viewing student recordings.....	14

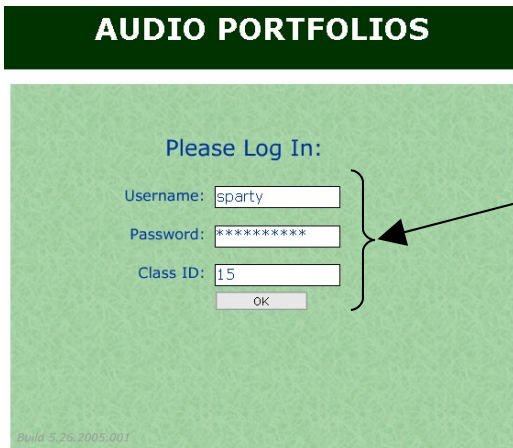
## Students: Getting started

Audio Portfolios is a tool to record and share your recordings. You will use the program to record assignments and, depending on the assignments that your instructor gives you, submit them to your instructor, or use the recordings for self-monitoring or archival purposes.

**Technical requirements:** In order to use the program, your computer needs a fast connection to the Internet, a web browser with at least version 7 of the Flash plugin, and a microphone and speakers. The program works on any computer operating system or browser that meets these requirements.

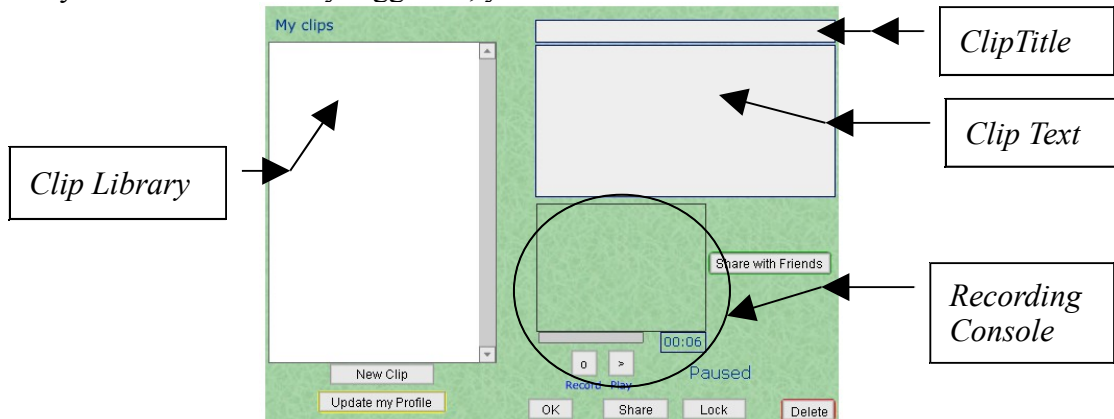
## Logging in

The URL for Audio Portfolios is <http://www.audioportfolios.com>. To log into the program, type the username and password, plus the class ID code that your instructor gave you. Click the OK button. If you get an error, verify that you're typing the correct information in the correct place. If you still get an error, contact your instructor for help.



Get your account login information from your instructor.

When you have successfully logged in, you will see an interface that looks like this:





## Creating recordings

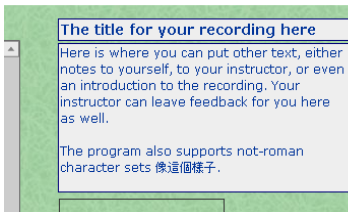
To create a recording, first make sure that your microphone is plugged in, and your speakers are on.

Click the “New Clip” button. You may see a popup window that looks like this. This window is asking permission to capture audio (and video, if your computer has a camera connected to it). Click on the green “Allow” button.

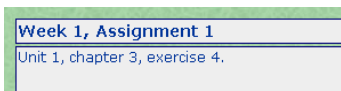


Notice that you now have an item in the Clip Library, named “Title.” This is the record holder for your new recording.

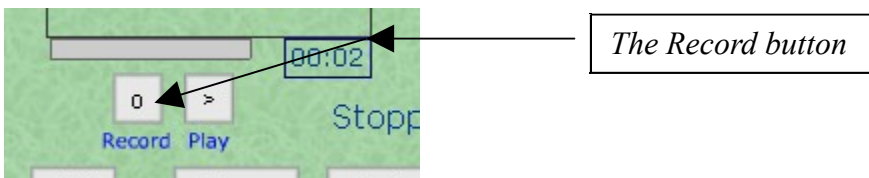
You can change the title by editing the text in the Clip Title textbox. In addition to the Clip Title, you can add comments or notes in the Clip Text text field below the title.



It's best to make your title descriptive and simple.

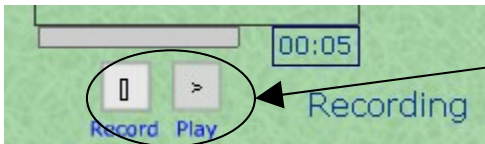


You start recording by clicking the Record button in the Recording Console:



When you click the Record button, you will see a “Recording” message, and the icon of the record button will change from “o” to “[].” Click the record button again to stop recording.

*When recording, the Play button is disabled, and the Record button changes to a Stop button.*



You can play back your recording by clicking the Play button. When you click the Play button, the icon will change from “>” to “||” and you will see a “Playing” message.



*When playing, the Record button is disabled, and the Play button changes to a Pause button.*

Remember to click the OK button to save your changes.

## Modifying recordings

You can modify the title and text of a recording. Just click on the title in the Clip Library, make the changes in the text boxes on the right side of the interface, and click the OK button.

You can record over your recordings, but you can not append to them, or delete part of the recording. Re-recording will replace the previous recording with the new recording. It is also not possible to undo an accidental erasing of a recording. This is why it's a good idea to “lock” your recordings.

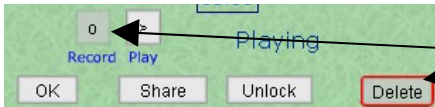
## Locking your recordings

Locking your recordings prevents them from being accidentally deleted or recorded over. To lock a recording, click on the title in the Clip Library, then click the Lock button.



*The Lock function prevents your recordings from being erased by accident.*

After a clip has been locked, the Record and Delete buttons are disabled when that clip is selected.



*A locked clip can not be recorded over or deleted.*

Unlock a clip by clicking the Unlock button.



*Unlock a locked clip.*

## Viewing your recordings

You can listen to your recordings by clicking on the title in the Clip Library, then clicking the Play button.

While a clip is playing back, you can skip around in the recording by clicking in the progress bar in the recording console. The clip will begin playing at the point where you clicked the mouse.

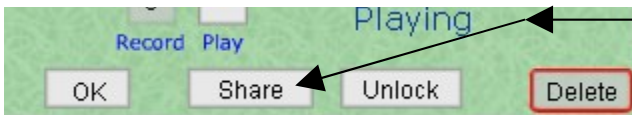


*Clicking here will start playing about 1/3 of the way through the clip.*

## Sharing recordings with your instructor

Your instructor can not automatically see all of your recordings. In order to make your recordings available to your instructor, you must share them. Sharing a recordings will allow your instructor to see your clip, and to leave you feedback.

To share a clip, select it in the Clip Library, then click the Share button.

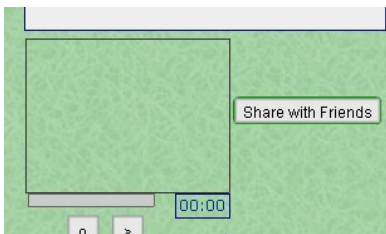


*The share button makes your recording available to your instructor.*

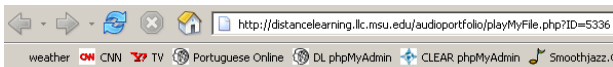
When you share your recording, only your instructor will be able to see it. If you want to share your recording with other people, use the Share with Friends function.

## Sharing recordings with others

Sharing your recordings with others will allow anyone with the appropriate URL to view your recording. To share a clip, select the clip in the Clip Library, then click the Share with Friends button to the right of the Recording Console.

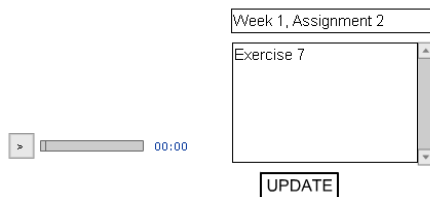


A new browser window will open with the clip in a special playback console.



*The clip's URL*

A file from my [Audio Portfolio](#)



The URL in the browser address window is the unique URL of this clip. Copy it and email it to the people with whom you want to share the recording.

## Deleting recordings

As the owner of your recordings, you have the ability to delete your recordings. Note that deleting clips is irreversible; there is no undo, so take care when deleting clips!

To delete a clip, click its title in the Clip Library, then click the Delete button.



Note that you can not delete a locked clip; you must first unlock it, then you can delete it.

## Modifying account information

You can change your username and password for your Audio Portfolios account. When you are logged in, click the Update my Profile button in the lower left-hand corner of the interface.



You will be taken to a screen that looks like this:

A screenshot of the 'Update your profile' form. The title 'Update your profile' is at the top. Below it are three input fields: 'Username' with the value 'sparty' and a note 'At least 8 characters', 'Password' with the value '\*\*\*\*\*' and a note 'At least 8 characters', and 'Email Address' with an empty field. At the bottom are 'Cancel' and 'OK' buttons.

Make the changes that you want, then click the OK button, or click the Cancel button to abort and return to the main screen.

## Instructors: Getting started

After your Audio Portfolios account is established, you will have to log in, create classes, create student accounts for each of your students, then give your students their login information. Your students will then have to log in using their accounts and class ID code, record files, and share them with you before you will be able to monitor their work. It is a good idea to create a student account for yourself so that you can familiarize yourself with the student-side functionality.

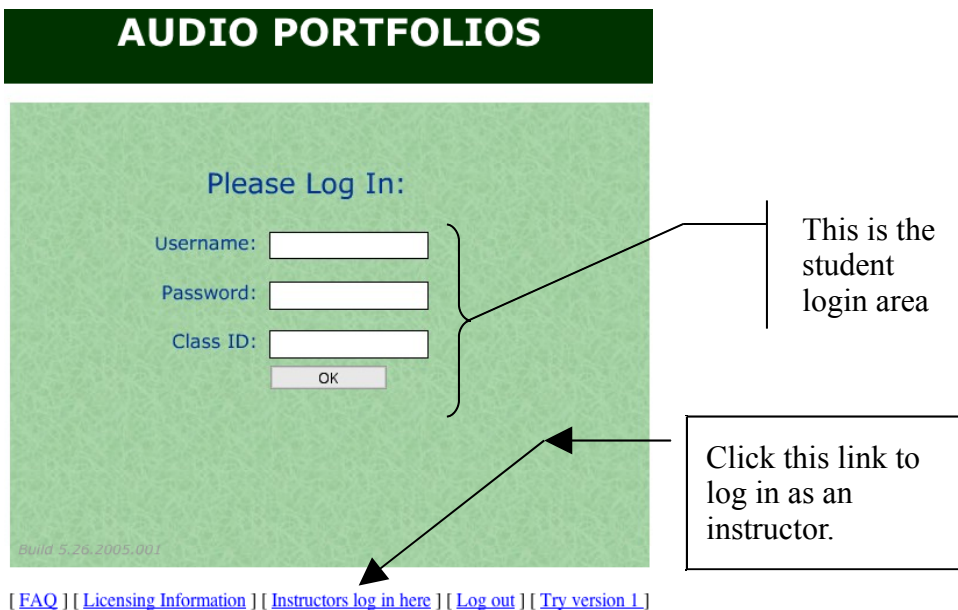
To begin to use the program, you will have to complete all of these steps:

1. Log in to the program
2. Create a class
3. Add students to the class
4. Give the students their login information and class ID code
5. Give your students assignments

The following sections detail the procedures for completing these steps.

## Logging In

The URL for Audio Portfolios is <http://distancelearning.llc.msu.edu/audioportfolio>. Note though that what shows up by default is the student interface. You will not be able to log in to your instructor account from this page. Instead, you must click on the “Instructors log in here” link at the bottom of the page.



The screenshot shows the Audio Portfolios login interface. At the top, a dark green banner contains the text "AUDIO PORTFOLIOS" in white. Below this, the page has a light green background with the heading "Please Log In:" in blue. There are three input fields: "Username:", "Password:", and "Class ID:", each followed by a white text box. Below these fields is a grey "OK" button. A bracket on the right side of the input fields points to a text box that says "This is the student login area". At the bottom of the page, there is a link "Instructors log in here" which is highlighted with a black box. An arrow points from this box to the link, with a text box that says "Click this link to log in as an instructor." Below the input fields, the text "Build 5.26.2005.001" is visible. At the very bottom, there is a navigation bar with links: "[ [FAQ](#) ] [ [Licensing Information](#) ] [ [Instructors log in here](#) ] [ [Log out](#) ] [ [Try version 1](#) ]".

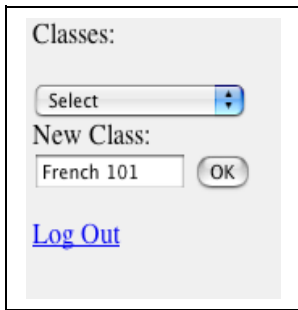
In the login page, type your username and password, then click the “OK” button.

The screen of the instructor-side interface is organized as shown below:

<b>Audio Portfolios</b>	
<p><b>Classes Area:</b></p> <p>Select a class to work with, Create a new class, Log out of the program</p>	<p><b>View Recordings Area:</b></p> <p>View a student’s shared recording here</p>
<p><b>Class Details Area:</b></p> <p>Select a student to access recordings, Choose to edit the class</p>	<p><b>Student Details Area:</b></p> <p>See a student’s recordings, Add/delete/modify student accounts, Delete a class</p>

When you first log in to the program, the only area that is not blank is the Classes Area. You will see nothing but the list of classes, as shown here:

## Creating a class



Classes:

Select

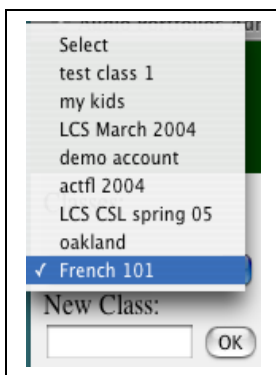
New Class:

French 101 OK

[Log Out](#)

To add a class, type a name for the class in the “New Class” box, then click the “OK” button. The class will automatically be added to the drop-down list of classes.

You can check to make sure that the class has been added by clicking the drop-down list to see a list of all of the classes that you have created.



Select

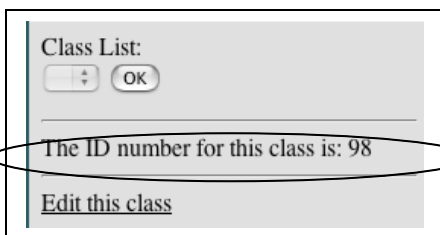
- test class 1
- my kids
- LCS March 2004
- demo account
- actfl 2004
- LCS CSL spring 05
- oakland
- ✓ French 101

New Class:

OK

## Adding students to a class

After you have created a class, you can add students. Choose the class from the drop-down list. The following information will show up in the Class Details area.



Class List:

OK

The ID number for this class is: 98

[Edit this class](#)

This is the class ID number.

Since this is a new class, the “Class List” drop-down list will be null. Note that the class ID number is given to you here. This code is a unique code number for this class. Your students will need this code in order to log in.

To add students to the class, click on the “Edit this class” link. In the Student Details area you will see a form like this:

	Full Name	Username	Password	Email Address	Active?
NEW:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> OK
<a href="#">Delete this class</a>					

Fill in the blanks and click the OK button to add a student. The “Active” value is optional, and is here for future use. You can disregard it.

As you add students, the class list will be displayed in a table.

	Full Name	Username	Password	Email Address	Active?
<a href="#">EDIT</a>	Frank Kappa	frankk	fk001	frank@msu.edu	0
<a href="#">EDIT</a>	Alan Bean	alanb	ab001	alan@msu.edu	0
<a href="#">EDIT</a>	Mary Jones	maryj	mj001	mj@msu.edu	0
NEW:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> OK



### Modifying student account information

You can edit a student’s account information by clicking the “EDIT” link in the leftmost column. Make changes as needed, then click the “OK” button to save the changes.

Full Name	Username	Password	Email Address	Active?
<input type="text" value="Alan Bean"/>	<input type="text" value="alanb"/>	<input type="text" value="ab001"/>	<input type="text" value="alan@msu.edu"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> OK

It may be necessary to do this if a student needs to reset a password or make changes to an email address.



### Deleting classes

The “Delete this class” will delete all student accounts and that class from the database. This is irreversible, so take care in using this function!

## Viewing student recordings


After students have recorded and shared files, the files will be available for you to play.

Select the student's name from the drop-down list, and click the "OK" button. In the Student Details area of the screen, you will see a list of that student's shared recordings.

Published recordings for Andy Tran:

[VIEW] ball (3/18/2004 3:30 pm)  
[VIEW] untitled (3/18/2004 3:30 pm)  
[VIEW] homework (3/12/2005 7:22 pm)  
[VIEW] homework (3/12/2005 7:32 pm)

Click on the "View" link to access the recording. It will show up above, in the View Recordings section of the screen.



> 00:18

UPDATE

If the students recorded video, it will display, otherwise, just a scrubber bar will show the progress of the audio track as it plays.

You can jump around in the recording by clicking inside the scrubber bar. The playhead will jump to the spot in the recording where you clicked the mouse.

You can leave written feedback for students by typing in the text window and clicking the "Update" button. They will be able to see your feedback the next time they view their recording.

If a student has not shared any recordings, this message will show up:

Published recordings for Alan Bean:

This student hasn't shared any recordings.