Encoding Files to 192kbps MP3

Introduction

The last step in preparing your audio files for upload to ACX is encoding them as 192kbps MP3s, <u>our required</u> <u>format</u>. There are many tools available to perform this task, though some are easier to use and produce more reliable results than others. The information provided here explains how to use "fre:ac", one of the best audio converter programs we've tested. fre:ac is free and available for both Mac and PC.

Before You Begin

Before converting to MP3, make sure to back up your work! It is highly recommended to save a "final" version of your audiobook before beginning the encoding process. It is best to archive your completed audiobook's contents as WAV files with the following properties:

- Sampling rate: 44.1kHz
- Bit depth (or bit rate): 16bit
- A length of 120 minutes or less
- Filenames should be named as follows: 01-Intro.wav; 02-Chapter1.wav; 03-Chapter2.wav; etc.

Download fre:ac

The software is easily downloaded via Sourceforge and also through CNET's download.com website.

Prepare Your Files for Conversion

Upon opening fre:ac, you'll see an empty playlist.



Drag your WAV files into the playlist. You will see the files listed in alphanumeric order, which is why the naming convention we referenced above is important.



Converting Files with fre:ac

Before converting, you need to set your MP3 encoding preferences. Click on **options**, and then select *General Settings* from the dropdown menu.

💕 General settings setup	X	
Encoders Playlists Ripper CDDB Plug-ins Info tags		
Encoder	-Options	
LAME MP3 Encoder v3.99.5 Configure encoder	K Encode 'On-The-Fly'	
Utbut directory		
Use input file directory if possible Encode to single file		
Allow overwriting input file		
C:\Users\agrath\Music\ Browse		
Filename pattern	-Unicode	
<artist> - <title></title></artist>	🗙 Use Unicode filenames	
	Cancel OK	

A new window called "General settings setup" will open. At the Encoder drop-down menu, select "LAME MP3 Encoder." Next, click "Configure encoder" to set the encoding options. For best results, set the LAME MP3 encoder configuration to match the settings below:

General settings setup				
Enci	LAME MP3 encoder co	nfiguration	1	
E	Basic Misc Expert Audio Presets Use preset Custom sett	he-Fly' /ave files		
1		Bitrate Set bitrate: 192 kbps	gle file	
[F	ABR CBR (no VBR)	C Set ratio: 1: 11		
		Set quality: 5 worse better	ilenames	
		Cancel OK	ОК	

- User preset: Custom settings
- VBR mode: CBR (no VBR)
- Set bitrate: 192 kbps

Navigate to the 'Misc' tab in order to force the "Stereo mode" to mono^{*}. Ensure that "Force Joint Stereo" is <u>not</u> checked when encoding your audio files to ACX specifications.

ST LAME MP3 encoder configuration				
Basic Misc Expert Audio processing				
Control bits	Stereo mode			
Set Copyright bit	Mono Force Joint Stereo			
🗙 Set Original bit				
Set Private bit	Enable CRC			
Set minimum VBR bitrate:	128 kbps			
Set maximum VBR bitrate: 256 kbps				
	Cancel OK			

*ACX strongly recommends that audio files are submitted in mono format.

fre:ac will remember your settings for your next project, but it is always a good idea to double-check these settings before converting your audio. Once you are sure that the profile matches these specifications, hit "OK".

You will then return to the prior "General settings setup" screen. Click "OK" to return back to your playlist. Please note the "Output dir" option at the bottom of the playlist window. This field shows the directory in which fre:ac will write your new MP3 files. Make sure to change this location to your preferred output directory. Once you're ready to encode, simply click the Play button at the top of the window in order to begin the conversion process.



Confirmation

Once your MP3s have finished encoding, it is recommended you double-check that the resultant files fall in line with ACX's requirements. Ensure that all files are smaller than 170MB and are no longer than two hours in length. Additionally, a brief listening scan of each file is encouraged.