

Hello, here are instructions for Apple Mac users. (lots of pictures so it's not going to take long).

The first thing to do is connect the microphone. The microphone described here is the RODE NT-USB mini. For the Audio Technica AT2020 and other USB mics, same principles apply. At the back of the mic there are sockets for the USB cable (supplied) and your headphones.



It's best not to use ear buds. Closed cup type headphones are better. Ear buds can sometimes have a tinny high frequency spill - you hear it when somebody on the bus has their volume up loud. It will pick up on these microphones so please don't use earbuds.

You should plug your headphones into the microphone. Don't use the headphone socket on your computer.

When you've connected the USB lead to your laptop, you should see both of the little white lights illuminated (RODE mic only). The volume knob is also a "push" switch. If you press it, one light will go off and you won't hear yourself through the headphones (that is probably not a good setting to be using for this type of work). Keep both lights on.



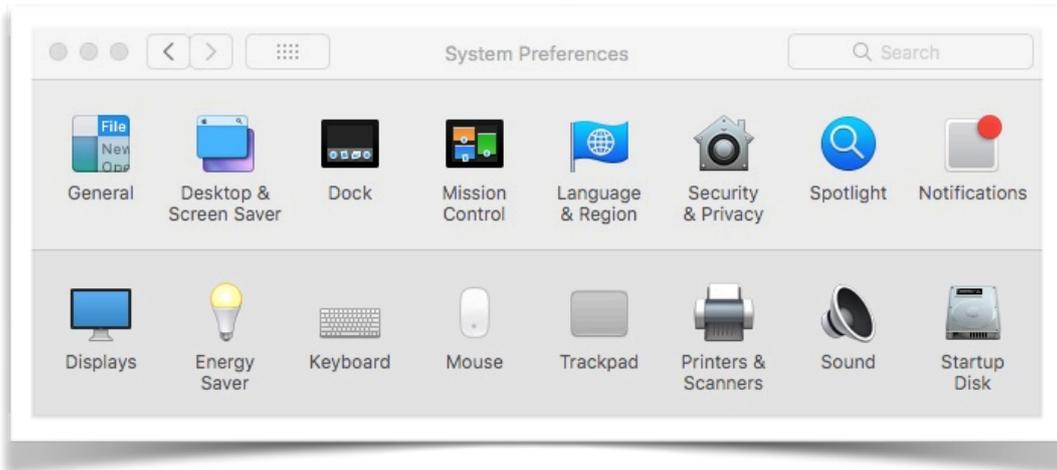
The microphone capsule needs to be level with your mouth. Assuming you'll be sitting at a desk, I suggest using a pile of sturdy books to achieve this. Do not use anything hollow like a cardboard box or an upturned bin. These will resonate and create a nasty echoey tone.



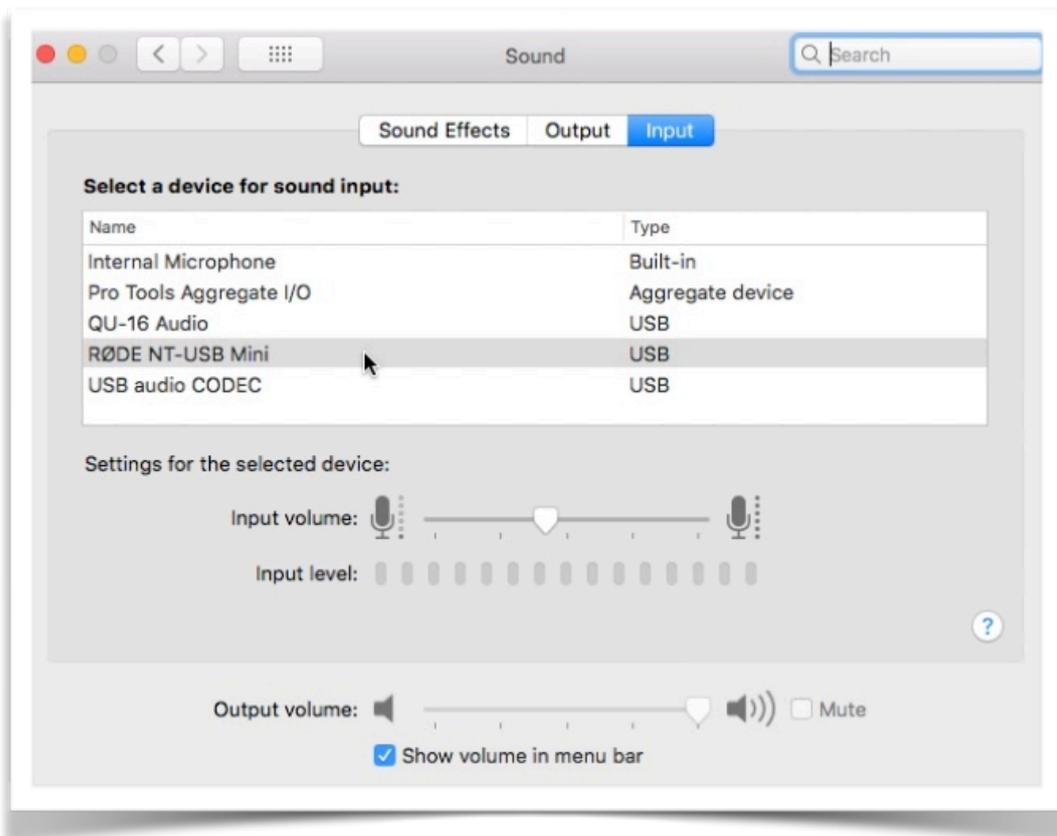
These are "side address" microphones. Talk into the side, not the top.

Your computer should recognise the microphone but we need to check that it has been selected as the default audio device.

Open the Apple menu in the top left corner of the screen. 



Choose System Preferences then click on the "Sound" icon.



You must select your microphone as both Input AND Output device. The input volume slider should be about half way up, as shown.

The recording is done via a website called "Cleanfeed". It's a bit like the "Zoom" but there's no video. All the capacity of your internet connection is used for the best possible audio quality.

Cleanfeed only works on some browsers - Google "Chrome" is what we recommend.

https://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/chrome/

"Opera" web browser is similar and will also work. You can download Opera from here:

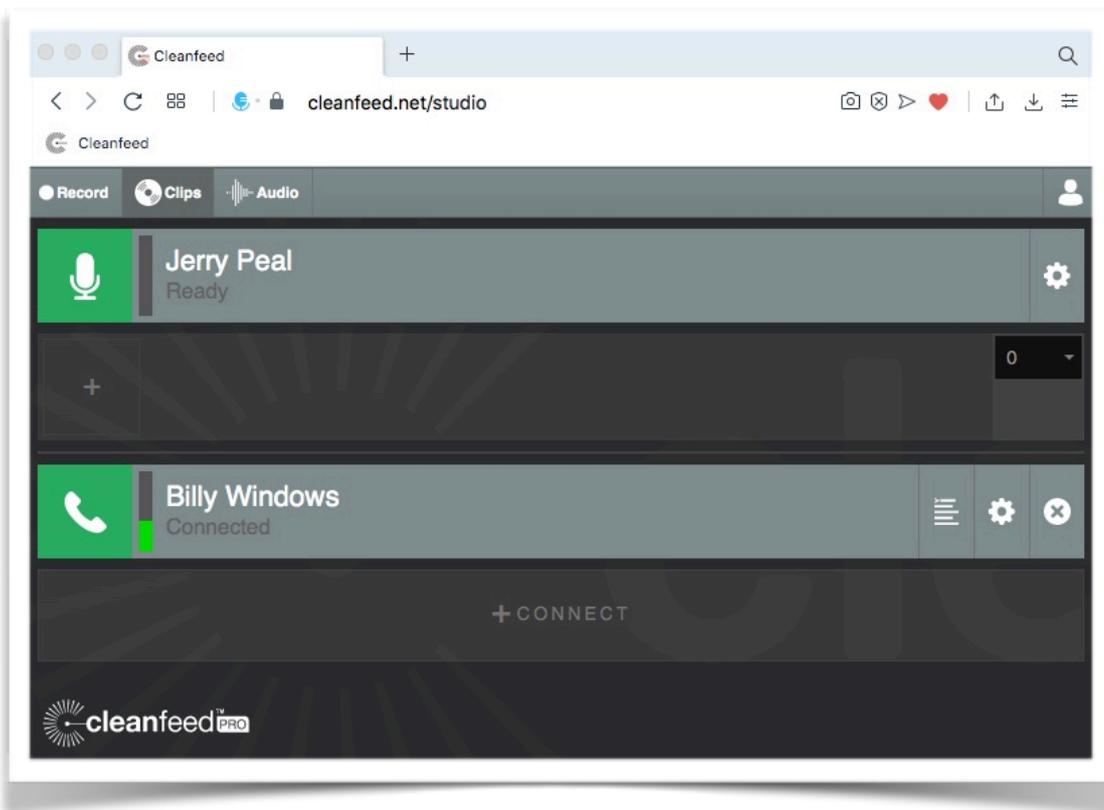
<https://www.opera.com/download>

If Chrome is your default browser, remember to close all other tabs whilst recording as we don't want emails and pop-ups interrupting the session.

On the day of the session, shortly before we start, you will receive an email from me, inviting you to join the Cleanfeed session.

Click the link and it may open the Cleanfeed page in Safari. In that case, copy the link and paste it into Chrome or Opera. Close all other applications. Only the Cleanfeed page should be running.

The Cleanfeed session should look like this.



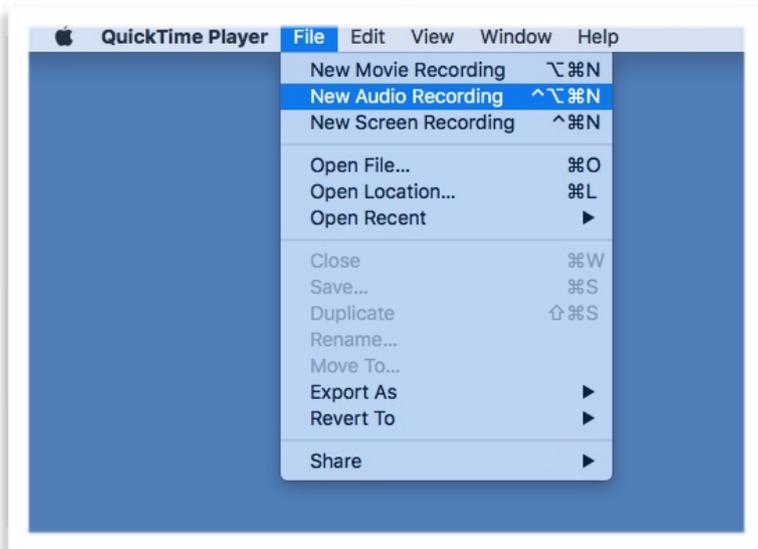
There's a little settings "cogwheel" icon to the right of your name bar. This opens a small drop down menu. Underneath your name, you should select your microphone.

If you want to mute yourself so others can't hear you, press the microphone icon beside your name, the green light will go off. Press again to rejoin,

Sometimes, Cleanfeed recordings can drop out or distort due to internet traffic beyond our control so we need to make a clean recording of your microphone on your computer.

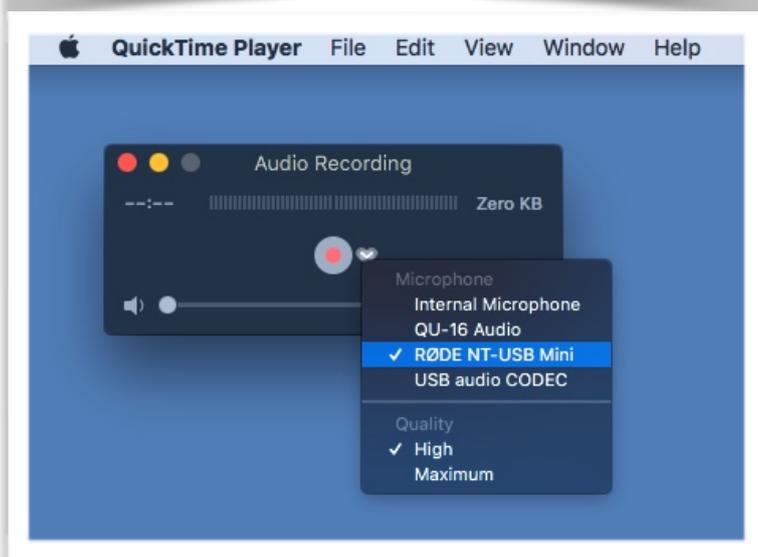
I'll refer to it as a "local" recording.

To make a clean "local" recording on your computer, we will use the app "Quick Time Player". You can find it in the Applications folder.



From the "File" menu choose "New Audio Recording".

Next to the red record button there's drop down menu for selecting which microphone you wish to use. For the "Quality" setting, choose Maximum. (in my screen shot below, it's set wrong - use Maximum, not High)



The volume slider at the bottom should remain off (fully left).

Press record and leave it going for the whole session.

When you press stop, the first thing to do is save it!

In the "File" menu choose "Save..."

Please give it a unique name (not "Untitled") and save it in a place where you can find it because the next thing you'll do is send it to me via WeTransfer or a similar file transfer utility.

Finally, where to sit for the best sound? - A few tips.

Main things to consider:

- *Background noise - avoid rooms near a road.
- *Use an Ethernet cable to connect to your router - If that's not possible, make sure you have a strong WiFi signal.
- *Neutral, dead, non-echoey acoustic.

A bedroom is probably best because it's likely to have a carpet and curtains, the sort of surfaces that absorb sound. Avoid kitchens, places with hard floors and large rooms. Don't sit under the stairs - low ceilings are bad.

Ideally, a small bedroom. You will need to be on wifi, or if you can, have a wired connection to the internet. A home office is ok if you can draw the curtains and deaden the acoustic. You could try putting up a 6 foot step ladder behind your chair and hang a duvet over it to create a "soft wall" behind you.



In the photo above, I've draped a duvet over one door of the wardrobe. The hanging clothes are also good at absorbing unwanted reflections. The most important area to keep acoustically dead is BEHIND you. You should:

*Sit close to, and have your back to the acoustically absorbent surfaces.

*Do not have the laptop too close to the microphone. It is a hard surface (not good) plus the cooling fans might kick in (noisy).

*This follows on from the above. Don't read your scripts from the laptop screen. The computer is ONLY for connection to Cleanfeed.

*Use paper scripts, or better if you can, read from an iPad (in flight mode).

*You may have heard of people "doing it under a duvet". That quite often sounds too enclosed and it will get very hot, very quickly and we can hear the thing moving around. Take 5 minutes to create absorbent surfaces behind and around you and you'll have a more comfortable session.

That's all folks.

Jerry Peal

Any questions, I'm on 07956 118 258.

I'm on Whats App too.

Email jerry.peal@mac.com