

Climate Stories Project

Audio editing guidelines

Editing audio interviews is an essential step in creating a listenable and sharable interview. While editing takes a little practice, there are several free applications available that will make it easy to get started, the best known of which is [Audacity](#).

Here are some guidelines to follow as you edit your audio interviews:

Length: The final edited interviews should be no longer than three minutes. Between 2:00 and 2:45 is a good length to aim for.

Narrative: You should listen to the entire interview, taking notes on the timing of sections which would fit well into an edited interview. You can also use markers in Audacity to mark sections as you listen (choose in tracks menu or command B).

The most important guidelines to remember are to make sure to keep the interview focused on a coherent theme and to edit the interview so it has narrative structure (beginning, middle, and end). The primary technique in editing is deciding what is important to keep and what to remove. Here is a rough guideline to interview structure that you can aim for when editing your interview. Of course, the structure your edited interview will depend on the original material you recorded.

- Beginning:
- a) Interviewee introduces themselves and where they live
 - b) Interviewee talks about what in their local environment is special to them (if applicable)
- Middle:
- c) Interviewee makes observations about changes they have observed or are observing due to climate change
 - d) Interviewee discusses the current and future effects of climate change on their organization or work specialty (public health, environment, etc)
- End:
- e) Interviewee talks about possible solutions or adaptations to climate change (in relation to their specialization if applicable)

Editing: Editing is more of an art than a science, but there are some guidelines that will help make the process easier. Remove pauses, “ums and ahs” that detract from the narrative structure. You can overdo this, however. You should balance the goal of shortening the interview with the goal of keeping the interview sounding natural. Make editing cuts at consonants, not vowels. The “peaks” you see in the audio waveform are usually consonants and you should cut right before them. Use crossfading to link together two separate sections of audio. To do this, highlight the end of the first selection and choose *Cross Fade Out* (Effects menu), then highlight the beginning of the second section and choose *Cross Fade In*. Done correctly, this will smooth out the edit so it sounds more natural.