

## *Getting creative with Non-Live Radio*

*Written by Harley Hefford*

There are many ways that you can use non-live radio to enhance and promote your radio show. The four main ways that this can be done are:

- Sweepers/ IDs
- Promos
- Introduction/ Segment Introductions
- Interviews/ Pre-recorded content.

Creating these small pieces of audio is not difficult and can dramatically increase the quality of your radio show. They can be created using **Audacity**, which can be downloaded for free at home ([audacity.sourceforge.net](http://audacity.sourceforge.net)) or **Adobe Audition**, which is available on the SYN computers, among other programs you might own. The beauty of these small non-live bits is that you can edit them as much as you like and get them perfect before you play them.

### **Sweepers and IDs**

**Sweepers or IDs** are short pieces of audio which identify your program, to be played during your radio show. They are very effective when played between two audio tracks, to prevent what can sometimes be a jarring switch (especially if you have a penchant for playing ambient pop songs followed by thrash metal). These can be from 2-30 seconds, but usually last about 20 seconds and commonly contain the name of the show and of the radio station. A simple example might be “You’re listening to Bob and Judy, only on SYN.”

Sweepers are a good place to play around with accents (“Yooo aahh leetzeneeng to ze Bob end Judiii, awnliai on SYiiN!”), one liners (“Not getting enough Bob and Judy in your life? It’s lucky that you’re listening to Bob and Judy, only on SYN”) or short sound effects that you can make relevant (“Did you hear that cow horn? It must mean your listening to Bob and Judy! Only on SYN!”).

### **Promos**

You can create a **promo** for your show, which you are usually able to have

programmed to be played one or several times during the week on SYN and can also be used online. Promos tend to go from between 30-60 seconds. There is lots of potential to be creative here and make good use of sound effects and music. The promo should state the day and time of the radio show and probably give some idea of the content or at least intrigue the listener.

Promos often begin with music, or build some suspense. If you're stuck for content, try to think of three or four things which are part of your show each week that you think listeners might be interested in. For example, the kind of music you play, Bob doing his regular rant about the prices at Supermarkets or opinions about current issues. If you give people some ideas of what they might listen in for, they're much more likely to be hooked, rather than just a gag. It's probably a good idea to think about your target audience also and what they might want to hear.

## Introductions

**Introductions** can be used during the show to add professionalism, add contrast to the alternation of just songs and talking and help to maintain a clear direction for the show. Having a 30 second introduction which might have some kind of theme tune and a booming voice announcing the show title is a great way to open and can link your shows together if you use it every week. If you have regular segments on your show, you can create an introduction for them as well. It tends to sound really good if straight out of a song we hear a quick pre-recorded tune and a voice announce "Movie Review Segment," for instance, so as soon as we hear the presenters talk, we know what's going on and they don't get lost going on a tangent for three minutes.

## Interviews

Recording **Interviews** or other pre-recorded content, like a journalistic piece recorded at a particular relevant event, for example, can also add variety to your show and break up the standard talk/song format. If you're doing a radio show at SYN, booking time in Studio 2 and recording an interview there is easy and you can record straight onto Audition and edit there.

To record out of a radio studio, you'll need to acquire a microphone (most new phones have high quality recording apps on them for free now, such as iTalk) and import your file into an editing program. It might be wise to do some test recording in your location, particularly if you are outside.

Using music and sound effects will almost always add nicely to your non-live radio, with the exception of shorter sweepers which sometimes are just a single spoken sentence and might become busy with music as well. A little bit of music which then fades out as an interview begins and then fades back in for a short time at the close of the interview can be very effective, or a relevant song (a song by the interviewee if they're a musician) played softly underneath the interview. Songs work very well on introductions, where they become theme songs, akin to a news theme. Remember, any music you use in your show must be royalty free. For more information on using music in your show, see the Using Music in Media fact sheet on the SYN website.

Sound effects can also be cleverly used in your radio show, even to punctuate an anecdote or radio play, or perhaps just on hand in case an opportunity for them arises. There are plenty of free sound effects which can be found online ([www.freesound.org](http://www.freesound.org) is fantastic once you register, which is simple and free to do) and there is also a library available with Adobe Audition. There is no copyright issue with using free sound effects from the internet. As for music, if you're using a short section and it's clear that you aren't claiming the song as your own work, then there is no issue. If you are unsure about copyright, remember that you can always create your own music on Garageband, Audition or similar.

Once you have created your non-live radio pieces and they are ready to be played during your SYN show, you can upload them to MMS through your login on the SYN website (contact [info@syn.org.au](mailto:info@syn.org.au) if you are unsure of how to do this). The audio will then be available for play on SYNplayer every time you are presenting your show. There are a range of generic SYN sweepers available already on SYNplayer, while you're still getting around to making your own. Alternatively, once you've made it, you could copy all your regular show media onto a CD.

Have fun with your non-live radio and try to use it frequently during your radio show! Good luck!

#### *About the writer*

*Harley Hefford's SYN career began mid-2008, when he hosted Get Cereal. Since then he has hosted SYN TV music show 1700, produced several SYN Flagship shows, maintained a long running stand-alone show whose name and co-hosts might have varied somewhat and started working for SYN's Education and Training department. Harley has also been creating theatre in the Melbourne arts scene for several years.*