

DESN 275 Digital Sound

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Most important skills?

- Specific Software? Not so much.
 - Many popular tools: Logic, Ableton, Cubase.
 - The interface/metaphor is common: “mixer”
 - Most DAWs copy each other.
 - Software changes yearly anyway. Specific software skills have a short “half life.”
 - Pro Tools has been a standard for some specific jobs. Good at managing very big projects. But even that is changing.

Importance of sound

- Our favorite music. Themes for life’s activities.
- Our dominant communication medium.
- Quick at making us comfortable or not.
- At least 50% of film and advertising experience.
 - Try turning off the sound and watching...
 - Visual effects often become lame.
- Required for game experience.

Common Software Skills

- Recording
 - Setting up hardware to interact with software, setting levels, microphone choice, use and placement, controlling the recording environment
- Editing
 - Cropping and rearranging sound clips, editing tone, depth, dynamics, and panorama
 - Putting sounds together in a way that is complementary and not masking
- Creating
 - Sound spaces that sound like physical spaces
 - New designed sounds
 - Musical compositions from loops and MIDI sequencer

What about Fidelity?

- The microphone and recording environment is more important than the software.
- A recording should sound like the talent (artist).
 - Often needs to sound better than the talent.
 - Should sound as good as your best competitor
- The sound *and* the message clearly communicate to the listener.
- Perception: Is it “hard to understand”?

Listening

- Be able to listen to sound
 - Not colored by your room
 - Not colored by your speakers
 - Not colored by your headphones
- ...and to understand how someone else’s room, or microphone, or their speaker, or headphones, and the listener’s brain, are changing a sound.

Listening

- Accurate listening skills for evaluation.
 - Be able to describe sound precisely.
 - Compare and contrast.
- Being able to observe what is out there.
 - What should a particular space sound like?
 - What makes a sound sound close?
 - What makes particular sounds “hard to hear”?

Production Skills

- Know what needs to be done to record well.
 - Identify problems, causes, and ways to avoid. (Better than fixing a poor product afterwards.)
- Understand how sound will affect people.
 - What are we communicating that make sound a better choice than a picture or paragraph.
 - Then apply it to the project, whether music, informational products, film, video, or promotional products.

Organizational Skills

- Surprisingly important organizational skills
 - 500 files in a project?
 - 100 projects in your portfolio?
 - Several apps and 10+ audio plugins per project.
- We must
 - Organize folders
 - Insist on logical naming conventions
 - Backup religiously
 - Document what you did: hardware, software, settings.

In This Class

- Hopefully we will have time to listen to a lot of what we do in this class and ask:
 - What am I hearing? Why is it good or how could it be improved?
 - How did s/he do that?
 - How does it affect me?
- I will also ask for specific technical details from you related to levels and frequencies and the occasion of distortion, etc. ...to help you learn the technical language.