

# California Computer Care

News,  
Views,  
Tips and  
Cool Techniques  
for CCC Members

March 2007  
Vol. X, No. 3

We  
speak  
Geek,  
so you  
don't  
have to.

## Record Your Own

I've just completed a project. I've finally digitized all of my old music tape cassettes into MP3 files that I can play on my Mac, listen to on my iPod and burn to CD. The old cassettes were deteriorating badly (many were beyond saving), so now, in digital form, the music is good "forever."

I did the same for my vinyl records back in 2001. You can read about that adventure in the August, 2001 CCC News:

<http://www.calcompcare.com/news4.html>

Maybe you, too, have tape cassettes or records that are sitting unused because with each play they degrade until they become unplayable. Digital files and CDs don't do that. So, if you would like to preserve your old music, this is how I did it.

**Here's what you need:** A Mac (of course!), with a CD-R, Combo or SuperDrive, a cable (more about this later) and software. Fortunately, you already have the Mac, all Macs less than five years old have at least a CD-R, and the software is free or inexpensive.

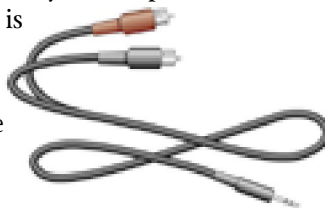
**Software.** I used three applications: *iTunes*, *QuickTime Pro* and *WireTap Pro*. You already have *iTunes* in your *Applications* folder. You also have *QuickTime*, though you probably do not have the Pro version. *QuickTime Pro* is available from Apple, get it here:

<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/mac.html> click the *Upgrade Now* button. *QuickTime Pro* is \$29.99. If you don't want to edit your recordings, you can skip *QuickTime Pro*.

*WireTap Pro* is for recording sounds in the digital form that computers and iPods require. *WireTap Pro* is \$19.00 from Ambrosia Software at: <http://www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/wiretap>

There is a free alternative that isn't as easy to use, but, hey! it's free. *SoundRecorder* does the job for basic recording. Find it at: <http://www.monkeybreadsoftware.de>

**The cable.** To complete your setup for recording, a special cable is needed to connect your cassette player or turntable to your Mac. This cable is available from any good electronic supply store such as

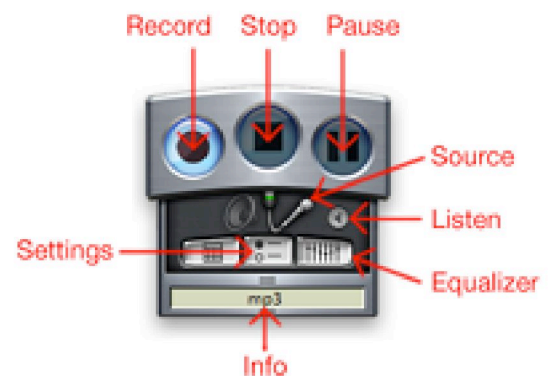


Radio Shack for about \$6.00. Use the cable to connect from the output of your receiver or amplifier to the microphone port on your Mac.

A few Macs do not have microphone ports. For these Macs, you'll need a *Griffin iMic*, \$39.99: <http://www.griffintechology.com/products/imic>

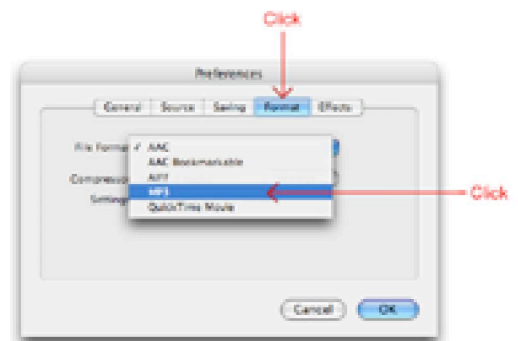
**Now for the fun part.** Connect your Mac to your cassette player or turntable using the cable mentioned above. Next, launch *WireTap Pro* or *SoundRecorder*. The following instructions will be for *WireTap Pro* (you will find that *SoundRecorder* is similar).

*WireTap Pro's* window opens. Note that it displays controls like you would find on a tape recorder or VCR.



Click the little microphone icon labelled as *Source* above (you could also choose *Microphone* from the *File* menu).

Next, click the *Settings* button. The *Preferences* window opens. Click the *Format* tab and choose MP3 from the *File Format* menu.



Click the *OK* button.

Now, click the *Listen* button and start your cassette or record playing. You should be able to hear the music through your Mac's speakers. If

you don't, adjust your Mac's sound volume until the music is loud enough to comfortably hear.

After doing this check, stop the music from playing and rewind the tape to the beginning. Click *WireTap Pro's Record* button and start the tape playing again. You are now digitally recording!

If you are feeling adventurous, you could play with the equalizer. Click the *Equalizer* button and choose one of the pre-set equalizer settings or fiddle around with the sliders to adjust the tone of the music to your preference.

You can also play with other settings like record level and compression by clicking on the *Settings* button and investigating the many options in the *Preferences* window.

When the music is done playing, click on *WireTap Pro's Stop* button. A window will open giving you the opportunity to name the recording and specify where it will be saved (I suggest the Desktop). If something went wrong during recording, you can click the *Cancel* button and the recorded information will be instantly discarded.

After naming the recording and selecting a location to save, click the *Save* button and a new icon will appear in the place specified by you. This icon is your recording. Play your recording by double-clicking on it. *iTunes* will pop up and play the tune for you. *iTunes* will also add the recording to its Library unless you have previously told it not to do so. More about this later.

**Editing.** You can edit your recordings to fine tune them. To do so, you will need *QuickTime Pro* or other sound file editing software. Find the saved recording and click it once to select it. Now, from the *File* menu, choose *Open With* and *QuickTime Player* from the sub-menu. *QuickTime Player* opens and shows its control window. Click the *Play* button and your music begins to play. (Note the tab tracking left to right as the music plays. That tab is called the *Playhead*.) As an editing example, let's remove the unnecessary blank space at the start of your recording.



Selection Markers Play/Pause

Here's how:

- 1) Click the *Play/Pause* button.
- 2) As soon as the music starts, click the *Play/Pause* button, again.
- 3) Click below the *Playhead* and the *Selection Markers* will appear.
- 4) Drag the right *Selection Marker* to the left until you hear no more music.
- 5) Drag the left *Selection Marker* all the way to the left.
- 6) Hit *Delete* on your keyboard and the extra space is gone. You can use the same trick to eliminate a song or to do any other edit that you want.

If you played the recording before you edited it, the un-edited version is in your *iTunes* Library. So, before you play the edited version, be sure to remove the un-edited version from *iTunes*.

Now play your edited digital recording and it becomes part of the *iTunes* Library, all set to sync to your *iPod* or burn to a CD.

**There. Done at last.** Now, those fragile, hard to play cassette tapes and records are converted to nice, clean, durable digital files or CDs that will last almost forever (just don't sit on 'em!).

### March Tip —

It's spring cleaning time! Spif up the old Mac with these:

- 1) Clean screens and cases with Klear-Screen wipes (the only safe cleaner): <http://www.klearscreen.com/iKlear.aspx>
- 2) Turn your mouse over and clean off the built-up dirt. If your mouse has a rolling ball inside, remove the ball and clean with a soft cloth. Clean the rollers inside by scraping off the dirt with a toothpick or orange stick. No Q-Tips!
- 3) Flip the keyboard over and brush the cookie crumbs out from between the keys. A couple of sharp taps to the back will dislodge paperclips and ???
- 4) Vacuum the dust from the breathing holes of desktop Macs. Don't stick the vacuum inside!

California Computer Care

P.O. Box 9445

Santa Rosa, CA 95405

(800) 540-8989

help@calcompcare.com

Like an  
auto club  
for your  
computer.