

SoniClear 7

USER GUIDE

for

**MEETING RECORDER 7
GOV RECORDER 7**



About This Manual

This manual covers the features of the following SoniClear digital recording software products:

- Meeting Recorder 7
- Gov Recorder 7

When a particular feature is not available in all of the above versions, a note is included indicating which versions include that feature.

SoniClear makes digital recording as straightforward and efficient as possible. However, it is important to review the instructions provided in this User Guide to reduce the risk of losing audio information. You should not use SoniClear for critical recording work until you have become familiar operation of the software and have tested the software and hardware configuration thoroughly.

SoniClear is a very reliable product that has been carefully tested, and customers have used it for many years. However, because of the complexity of recording using a Windows computer system, there is a slight possibility of the recording system failing. For that reason, it is highly recommended that you use a backup method of recording, in addition to SoniClear, when 100% success in making a recording is critical.

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Table of Contents

Getting Started	6
Overview.....	6
SoniClear Products.....	6
Key Features	6
SoniClear Operation.....	7
SoniClear Installation.....	7
Technical Support	8
Recording with SoniClear.....	9
Initial Main Window Display	9
Create a New Meeting Recording.....	9
Start Recording	11
Stop Recording.....	11
Recording Again	11
File Protection.....	12
Playing Recordings	13
Opening an Existing File	14
VoiceBoost.....	14
Noise Gate.....	15
Volume.....	15
Rumble Filter	15
Mid Filter	15
High Filter.....	16
Speed Controls	16
Archiving the Recording.....	17
Taking Notes While Recording	18
Type New Notes	18
Add Markers as a Note	18
Add Agenda Items as a Note	19
Edit Notes.....	19
Delete Notes.....	19
Using Predefined Markers	20
Predefined Markers in Preferences	20
Editing Markers	21
Save and Load Marker Data	22
Editing Markers in Recording Files.....	22
Editing Markers in Agenda Templates	22
Recording Meetings with an Agenda.....	23
Entering a Meeting Agenda	23
Add Agenda Items	24
Copy Agenda From Template Button.....	24
Add New Item Button.....	24
Create Item From Text File Button.....	24
Edit Agenda Items.....	24
Where Agenda Items Are Stored	24

Agenda Templates	25
Importing an Agenda from Microsoft Word.....	25
Choosing Recording Types.....	27
Meeting	27
Conference	27
Meeting (stereo).....	28
Dictation.....	28
Multi-Channel Recording	29
Managing Files.....	30
Create New Audio Recording File.....	30
Open Existing Audio Recording	30
Open the Last Audio Recording File Used	30
Append Audio File to Currently Open File	30
Close File	31
Restart	31
Delete	31
Rename File	31
File Properties	31
Make Backup	32
Copy File Name to Clipboard.....	32
Convert File to New Format and/or Apply VoiceBoost	32
Auto Archive.....	33
Import from MP3 File.....	33
Export to MP3 Format	34
Export Notes to Text File.....	35
File Editing.....	36
Selecting Edits	37
Selecting Export Type.....	37
Start Export	38
Editing using SoniClear Gov Products	38
Export to CD Image	39
About Archive CD Format.....	39
Producing an Archive Format CD	40
Export to Audio CD Format	41
Export to Data CD Format.....	42
Export to MP3 CD Format.....	43
Manage LAN Archives.....	44
How to Use Manage LAN Archives.....	44
Publishing the Archive to a CDROM	46
Manage Web Archives.....	47
How to Use Manage Web Archives.....	47
Publishing to Website	49
Archive and Export Options	50
Don't Export This Note	50
Cut Audio, Insert "Recording Paused"	50
Start New CD-Image Folder Here	51

Foot Pedal Support.....	52
Virtual Foot Pedal	52
USB Foot Pedal.....	52
Foot Pedal Operation	53
Operation While Playing.....	53
Operation While Recording	53
Annotating PowerPoint Presentations Using the Virtual Foot Pedal.....	53
Toggle 2-Channel Playback	54
Other Program Features	55
Running SoniClear from the Command Line	55
Automatic Silence Detection	55
Online Documentation	55
Online Support	55
Online Sales	55
Licensing Information.....	56

Getting Started

Overview

SoniClear is software-based system for digitally recording all types of meetings.

SoniClear Products

Three versions of SoniClear are available:

- Meeting Recorder for 1-2-channel meeting recording
- Gov Recorder for 1-14 channel meeting recording
- Court Recorder for 1-14 channel court and deposition recording

See the separate Court Recorder User Guide for details about the SoniClear Court Recorder product.

Key Features

- Powerful and Easy to Use
 - Includes all of the features required by clerks and board secretaries.
 - Easy to use as a tape recorder.
- Fast Note Taking
 - Type at any time to enter timestamped notes.
 - 24 predefined Marker notes.
- Hardware Configuration
 - Runs on all modern Windows XP computers.
 - Incorporates the latest professional digital audio equipment for the highest recording quality.
 - Uses industry-standard WAV and MP3 file formats.
- Confidence Monitoring
 - Listen to audio via headphones while recording.
 - Visual indication showing recording status and levels.
 - Low audio level indicator with automatic time of failure notation.
- Advanced Transcription Features
 - Play back dual-channel and multi-channel recordings.
 - Channel selection during playback, with toggle using foot pedal.
 - VoiceBoost audio enhancement for listening to hard to hear dialog.
 - Slow down and speed up playback without changing the pitch of the voice.
 - Optional hardware footpedal works just like transcription machines.

- “Virtual” foot pedal simulated using keystrokes.
- Multichannel Recording*
 - Record up to 14 independent audio channels in WAV or MP3 format.
- File Management
 - Convert recorded files to MP3 format for electronic transmission to transcriptionists and reduced storage overhead.
 - Extract sections of recording to send to judges, lawyers, transcribers, clients, and others.
 - Archive recordings in MP3 format with SoniClear Player included for playback of multi-channel recordings.*

*Note: Multichannel recording, as well as LAN Archive and Web Archive features not included in Meeting Recorder.

SoniClear Operation

SoniClear uses a standard Windows GUI interface. The program looks and works much like a conventional tape recorder. The controls allow the user to operate the recording and playback process. The control buttons can be pressed using the mouse, or by pressing the matching accelerator keys as shown in the Controls pulldown menu.

Additional features are available from buttons displayed on the screen and from pulldown menu selections. These will display popup dialogs prompting the user for the required actions, such as file selection.

For the instructions provided in this Getting Started section you will need a microphone to record your voice. Connect a computer-compatible microphone to the computer microphone input. Use the microphone included with SoniClear, if it is supplied with the version you purchased. Most sound cards also include a low-quality microphone that is compatible with the card. If you do not have a computer-compatible microphone available, you will need to purchase a suitable model. Consult the Support section of the SoniClear website for details about selecting a microphone and other audio hardware information.

SoniClear Installation

SoniClear runs on standard Windows XP laptop or desktop computers. Microphones or sound system audio sources are fed into the computer using the built-in audio connections, or with an external audio interface device. The recorded audio data is stored on the disk drive of the computer that is running the program.

The SoniClear hardware and software setup may have been performed before delivery. If not, the user has the option to configure various options for how the program works. The default values are suitable for simple uses of the program. More advanced uses, such as exporting files or special audio hardware configurations, may require changing the settings. Consult the SoniClear Installation Guide, which covers installation and maintenance of the computer and audio hardware components.

Technical Support

Contact your SoniClear dealer or view the SoniClear Support Page at www.soniclear.com for technical support information.

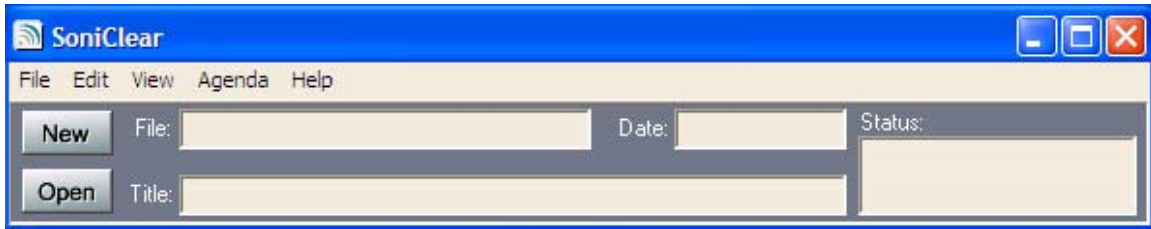
Recording with SoniClear

Before starting SoniClear for recording you will need to exit all other programs. This would include email clients, web browsers, fax receiving programs. This is because SoniClear needs all of the computer's resources while making a recording. If another program running at the same time were to use the CPU or disk drive during recording (for example, checking for email), some of the sound information would be lost. This causes clicking or other distortion in the recording. Word processing and presentation programs (such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint) can be run at the same time as SoniClear without interference, provided that the computer processor is fast enough. You will have to test this empirically on your computer.

You can start SoniClear from the Windows Start button (such as Start/All Programs/SoniClear60/SoniClear Gov Recorder, depending on the product version). You can also start the program from the program icon installed automatically on the Windows desktop.

Initial Main Window Display

When SoniClear starts, it displays the following screen:

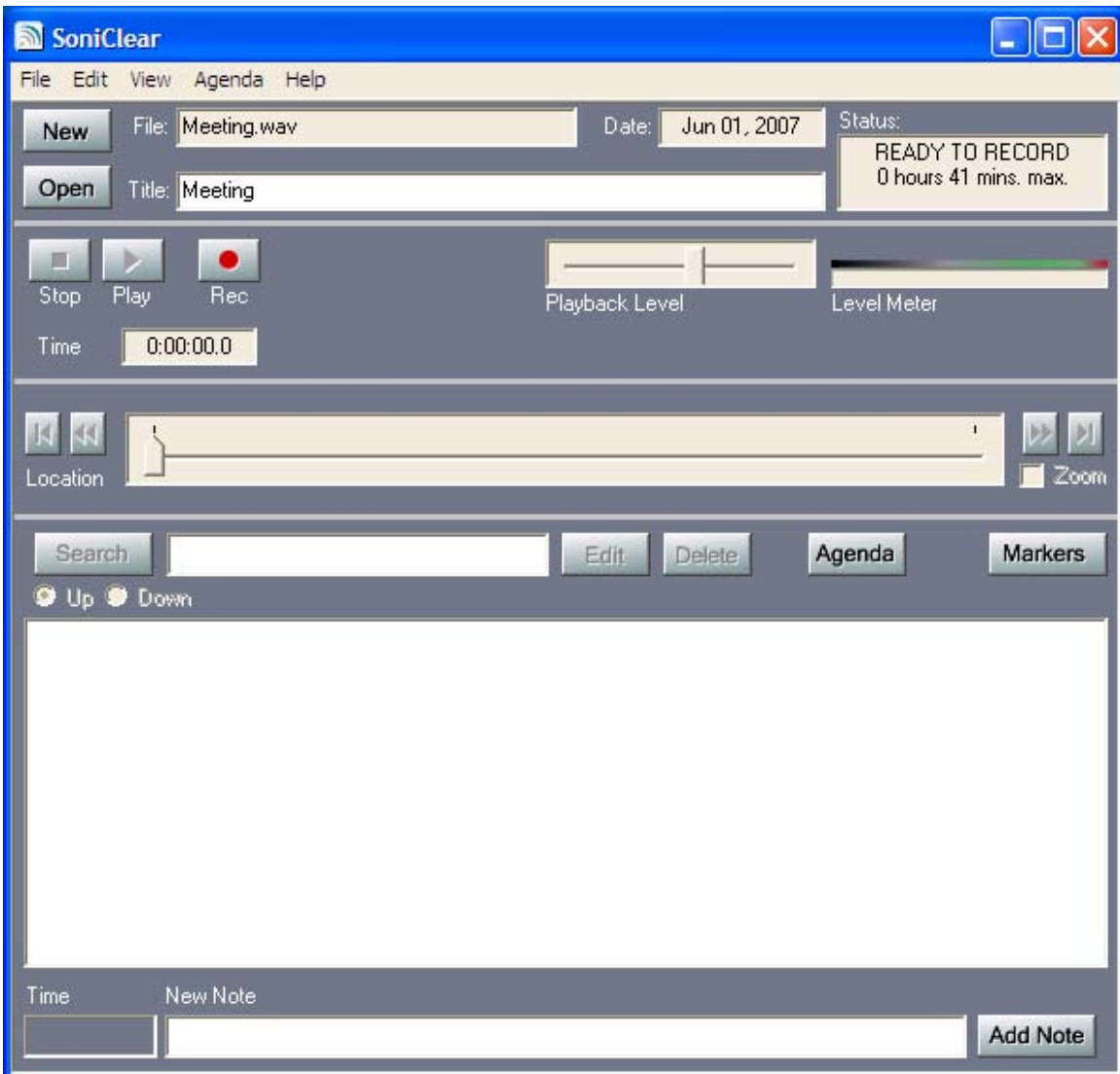


For most applications you can control the program entirely by pressing buttons on the display. Additional features are accessible from the pulldown menus and the various dialogs that are displayed (see Advanced Features for details).

Create a New Meeting Recording

To prepare for a meeting, start by creating a new meeting recording file. Click the New button. You can enter a file name in the blank field. If you do not enter a file name, SoniClear will create a new name for you. You can also rename the file after it has been created using the Rename button. If you close the file or exit SoniClear without making a recording or entering agenda information, the file will automatically be deleted.

After creating a new file the display will change to look something like this:



Start Recording

The new file is now ready for recording. When the meeting begins, click the red Record button. The time counter will start running and an automatic note will be entered in the Notes section titled "Start Recording".

The default input sound source is the microphone of the first sound card in the computer. Other options are possible by editing the Hardware settings in the program Preferences.

After starting recording, adjust the Level slider to achieve the best sound level. The best level is one where the level indicator consistently shows to the middle of the display range. If the meter shows always at the maximum level (too high), or always at the minimum level (too low), an optimal recording will not be made.

If the level meter does not indicate sound is being received when you have the volume control at the maximum value, there is a problem with the microphone connection to the sound card. See the Installation Guide or the SoniClear Support Page (Troubleshooting) at soniclear.com for diagnostic suggestions.

Stop Recording

When you are finished recording a sample meeting, press the Stop button. Then click the Yes button in the confirmation dialog. Meeting recordings require confirmation to stop recording so as to avoid accidentally stopping while taking notes or using other programs. Recording will not stop until the moment you click the Yes button. When you stop recording, an automatic note is entered that says "Stop Recording".

The result of this recording process is a sound file stored on the disk drive of the computer. The digital audio information is stored in the file as the recording is made. There is no need to do any additional "save" operation, as the data is already saved in the file.

Recording Again

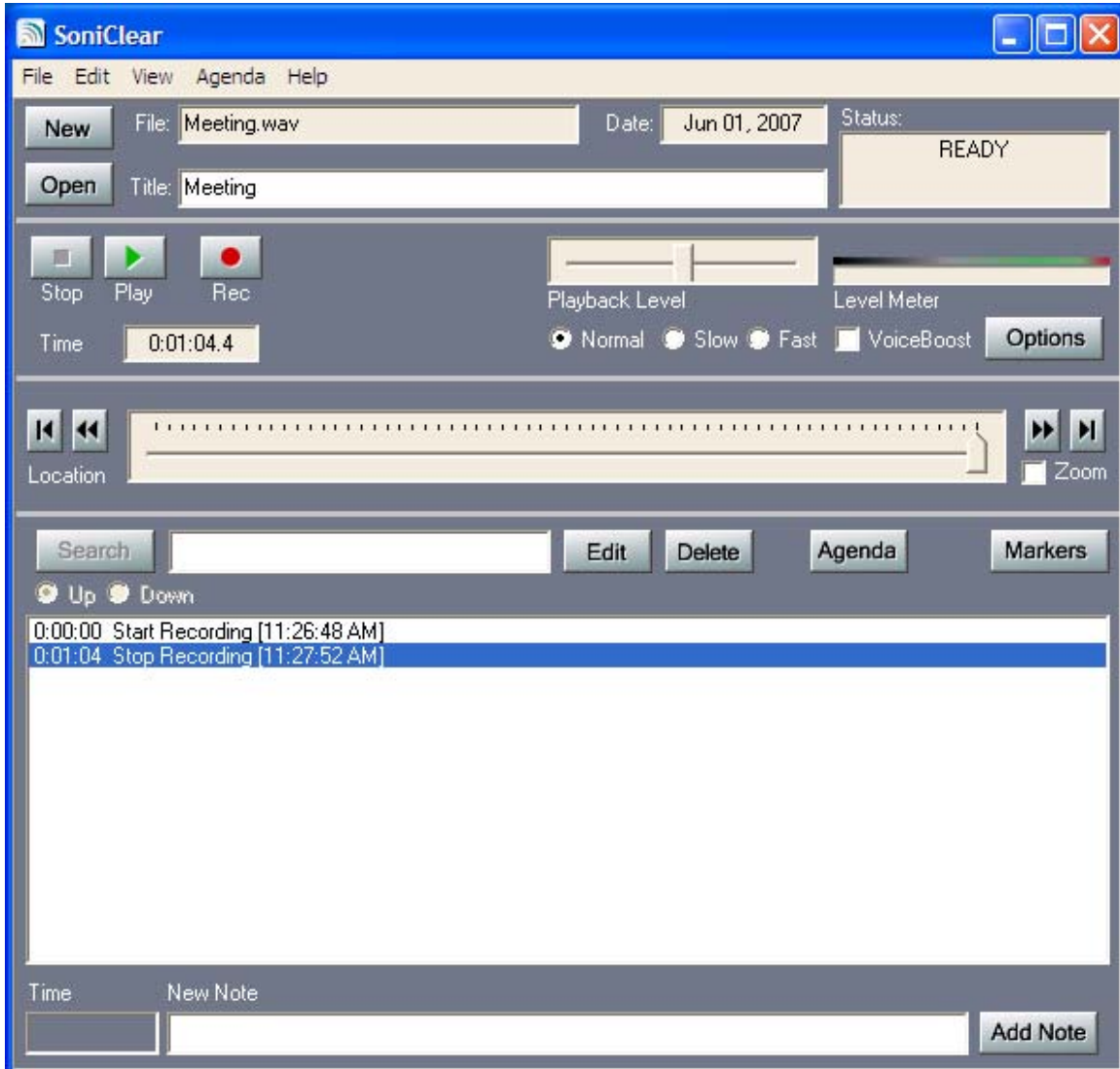
After pressing stop, it is possible to continue recording in the same file. Just press the Record button. The audio will automatically be appended to the end of the file. If you have closed and opened the file, a confirmation dialog will be displayed. Click Yes if you wish to record to the end of the file.

File Protection

There is no way to accidentally overwrite the recording. If you have closed the file, it is marked as "read-only" at the operating system level. When SoniClear opens a read-only recording, it will not allow appending audio to the end of the file without a confirmation. SoniClear allows for renaming read-only files, but will not delete such a file. To delete a meeting recording after it has been closed (and marked read-only), you must use the file management tools in Windows to do so. Make sure that you delete both the WAV file and the BKM file.

Playing Recordings

Now that you have created a sound file, SoniClear can play it back. The playback display looks like this:



Click the Play button to hear your recording. If you do not hear any sound played back, either there is a problem with the playback volume on the sound card, or the program was unable to record from the sound card. For a solution, see the SoniClear Installation Guide, or the SoniClear Support Page at soniclear.com.

SoniClear includes buttons and a slider for moving the playback position. Normally, the position slider represents the entire file. Moving the slider will move to the same relative position in the file as shown on the slider.

The Zoom check box allows for finer control over playback position on long recordings. When Zoom is enabled, the display changes to show 60 seconds of time, with the slider positioned to the middle. Moving to the extreme left or right will move the playback position by 30 seconds and reset the slider to the middle. This makes it easier to move several minutes within a section of the recording. The Rewind to Beginning and Wind to End buttons can also be used to move by 30 seconds when in the Zoom mode. Unchecking the Zoom check box will return to displaying the entire recording timeline.

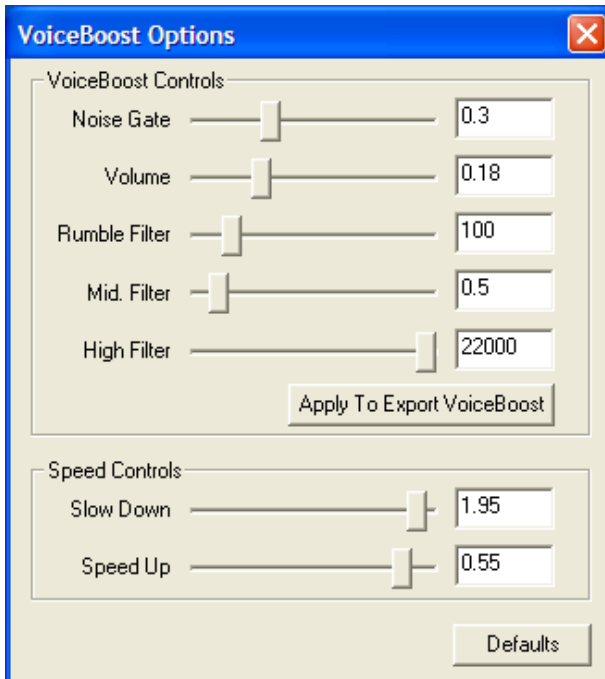
Opening an Existing File

SoniClear can play back sound files in the standard WAV, MP3, AU and AIFF file formats. The proprietary CF3 file format can also be opened in SoniClear. Press the Open button and select the desired file. If a file is already open, it will be closed automatically.

VoiceBoost

The VoiceBoost feature increases the sound quality of the recording. VoiceBoost is enabled during archive export by default. VoiceBoost can also be applied during playback by clicking the VoiceBoost check box just below the Level Meter.

The default values for VoiceBoost are designed to improve the clarity of speaking voices. You will need to experiment with how the VoiceBoost processing works with your recordings. You can change these default settings by clicking the Options button. This brings up a dialog that allows you to adjust a number of parameters:



Noise Gate

The Noise Gate allows you to reduce the volume of background noise. By positioning the Noise Gate level above the noise volume and below the volume of people speaking, VoiceBoost will increase the volume of speaking and not the noise.

Volume

You can increase or decrease the overall volume of the recording with the Volume slider. This volume control allows you to boost up dramatically people speaking softly in the recording so that they can be heard distinctly. This is different than the volume for the playback device in the main window, which must be set high enough to hear the sound from the speaker or headphones.

Rumble Filter

Low frequency noise can interfere with the ability to hear people speaking. When there is loud air conditioning noise or street traffic, this will often include a large low frequency component. By moving the Rumble Filter setting further to the right, it will cut out more of the low frequencies.

Mid Filter

The Mid Filter slider is designed to boost the loudness of middle frequencies, the frequency range that contains most of the detail of spoken language. By moving the Mid Filter slider further to the right, it will boost these frequencies to make the speaking

louder. Moving the slider further to the right will make the sound quality more natural sounding.

High Filter

The High Filter slider allows you to reduce high frequencies. Background noise in the high frequency range can sometimes interfere with intelligibility of speaking the the mid range frequencies. Moving the slider further to the left will reduce the high frequenciesw.

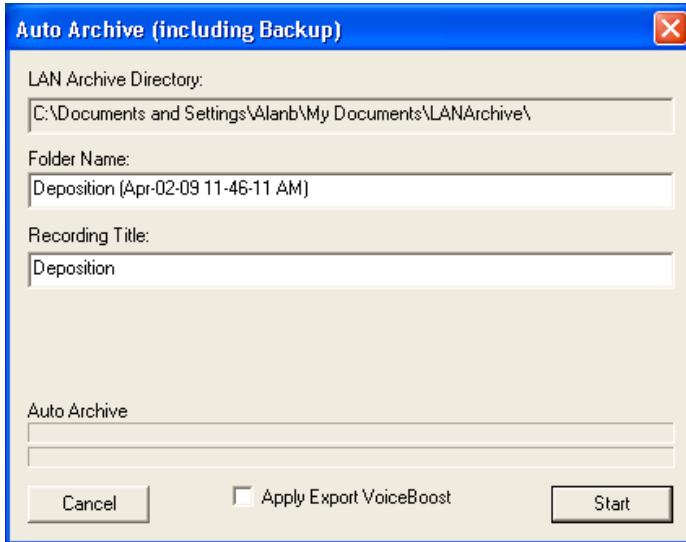
Speed Controls

The VoiceBoost Options dialog also includes controls for setting the rate of slow down or speed up when selecting that option in the main window.

Archiving the Recording

This feature applies to SoniClear Gov Recorder.

After the recording has been completed, it can be transferred to an archive on external disk drive or shared local area network drive. To do this, click on the Archive button (if this feature has been enabled), or select File/Auto Archive from the pulldown menu. This will display the following dialog:



Click the Start button to start the archiving process. The program will automatically backup the original recording files to the backup directory, and then archive the files into the LAN Archive. Once the files have been backed up and archived successfully, the original files are deleted from the recording machine. If any error occurs in the processing, the original files will not be deleted.

If the Apply Export VoiceBoost is checked, the audio added to the LAN Archive will be processed with VoiceBoost for sound enhancement. Otherwise, the audio will be copied directly to the archive without change. Selecting VoiceBoost will take longer to process.

For details about how file backup and LAN Archive processing steps work, see the sections later in this User Guide covering those operations.

Taking Notes While Recording

There are several ways you can enter notes into a recording for use later:

- Type a note in the New Note field
- Click “Add Marker to Notes” in Marker window
- Press a Function Key to add a Marker
- Click “Add Item to Notes” in the Agenda window
- Click “Add Next Agenda Item” foot pedal button

Any of these methods can be used for entering notes during playback as well. In that case, the timestamp entered includes only the relative time in the file, but not the “wall clock” time from the computer system clock.

Type New Notes

While recording, notes can be entered into the file at any time by typing in the New Note field. The timestamp for the note is automatically added from the recording time counter and the computer system clock at the time that the first letter of the note is typed. That way you can take as long as you need typing the note, but the time will be remembered from the point in time when you started typing. Pressing Enter without typing any letters will enter a blank note.

The cursor must be in the New Note field at the bottom of the main window. If the cursor is not in the New Note field, you can move it to that field by either clicking on the field with the mouse, or pressing Ctrl-Enter (control key held down while pressing the Enter key). Then start typing the note.

Notes can be copied using Edit/Note Copy from the pulldown menu, or Ctrl-C from the keyboard. Text from the clipboard can be pasted into a new note using Edit/Note Paste (or Ctrl-V).

Add Markers as a Note

A Marker can be added to the notes by pressing one of the 24 function keys (F1 through F12 and Shift-F1 through Shift-F12). The default action of a Marker is to enter the marker by itself in a note. Markers can also be defined like text macro speed entry keys. In that usage, pressing the Marker function key appends the text into the current New Note field. See the section below, “Using Predefined Markers”.

Add Agenda Items as a Note

By pressing the Add Agenda Item foot pedal key (normally the Control-Semicolon key), the currently highlighted agenda item will be entered as a new note with the timestamp of when the note was entered. The current agenda item is advanced to the next item automatically. This allows you to simply add each agenda item in sequence for meetings that do not alter the event order from that shown in the agenda. You can manually change the order by clicking on the individual agenda items displayed and clicking Add Agenda Item.

Edit Notes

Notes can be edited at any time. Click on the note title shown in the list. Then click the Edit button. This will bring up the Edit Note dialog. You can change the note type (number 1-9), the note title, and the note details. When editing during playback, you can also use the start and stop buttons to check for the correct time position of the note. The timestamp of the note can be moved to a new time by entering a new value in the time field. The time can also be modified by clicking the forward and reverse buttons next to the play button. This moves the time forward or backward by one-second increments.

Delete Notes

You can delete notes at any time. Select the note to be deleted by clicking on it with the mouse. Then click the Delete button.

Using Predefined Markers

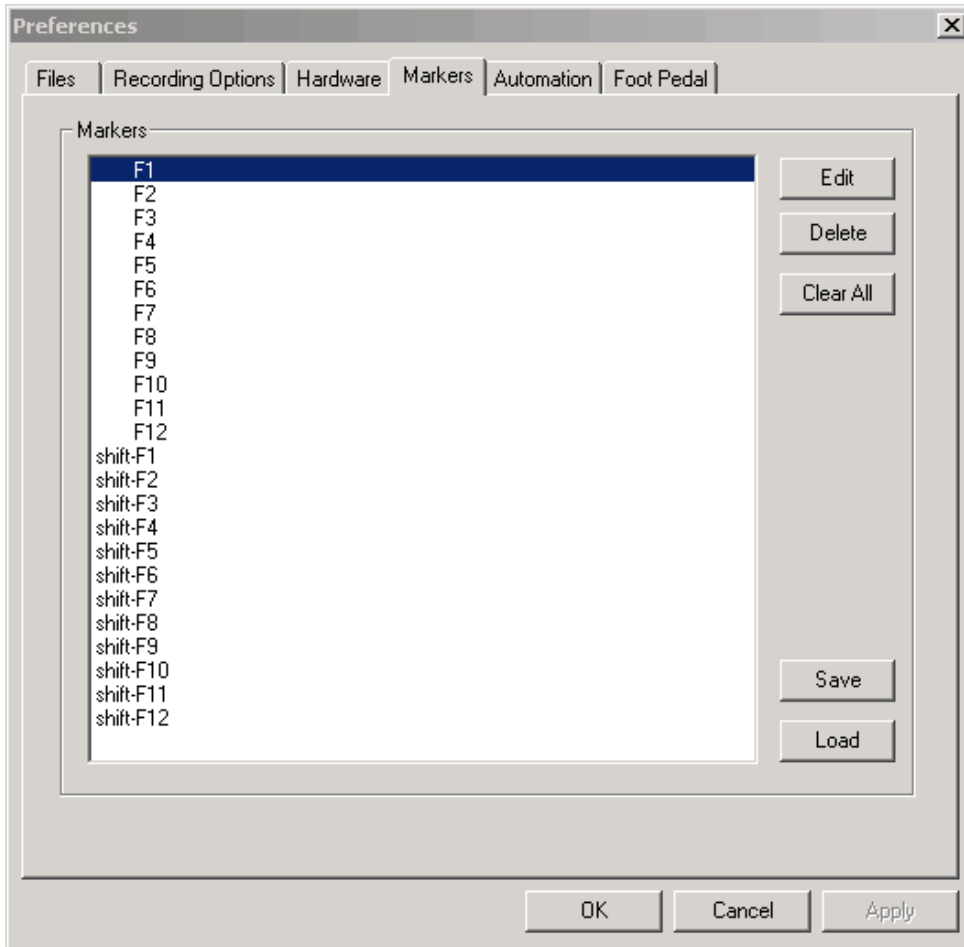
There are 24 predefined Markers that can be used to enter text values into notes. Markers can be specified in three places:

- Program Preferences
- Agenda Template files
- Individual recording files

The Marker is added to the file by pressing one of the 24 function keys (F1 through F12 and Shift-F1 through Shift-F12). This can be while the recording is being made and during playback.

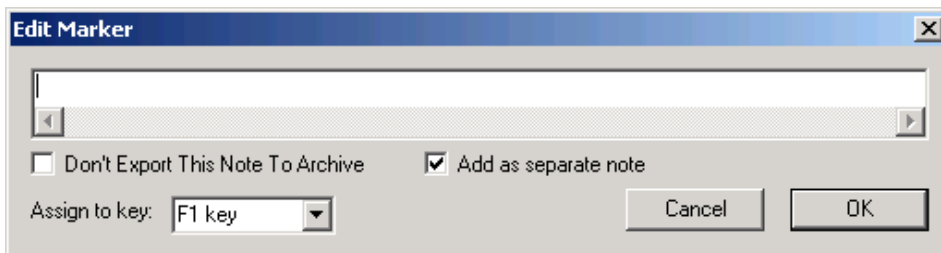
Predefined Markers in Preferences

The program can be set up to have a set of default Markers for all new files. These Marker definitions are stored in the Preference file and are copied into each new file when it is created. To edit the Marker information in the Preferences, select Edit/Preferences from the pulldown menu. Then select the Marker tab. This will display the list of existing markers:



Editing Markers

To add or edit new text for a Marker, select it in the list and click the Edit button. This will bring up the Edit Marker Dialog:



The text of the Marker is entered in the text field. The check boxes affect the behavior of the note when entered.

The check box “Don’t Export This Note To Archive” will set the note checkbox value of the same name when the Marker is entered. This is convenient for entering routine notes into a recording that should not appear in the archived copies of the file.

The “Add as separate note” check box changes how the note text is added. When this box is checked (the default value) the action of a Marker is to first enter any text that may be in the New Note field (equivalent to pressing the Enter key), and then to enter a separate new note containing just the text that is defined for that note. This is useful when you want to have a Marker that is always entered as a separate note.

The alternative behavior is to have this box uncheck. In that case, the Marker behaves more like a text macro speed key. The text value of the Marker is appended to the end of the New Note field and the cursor is left in that location to allow for typing of additional information. In addition, the state of the “Don’t Export” check box will be copied to the current note.

The “Assign to key:” field allows you to specify to which function key to assign the Marker information.

After entering the desired marker data, click OK to store the new values in the program preference file.

Save and Load Marker Data

The Save button will save the Marker data from this dialog in a new text file. The default directory is the SoniClear program directory. The Load button will restore data values previously save. The Save and Load feature is separate from the automatic save that occurs to retain the information in the program preference file.

Editing Markers in Recording Files

When a new file is created, the predefined Markers stored in the Preferences will be copied into the new file. These values can be edited and saved in that file. To do that, create a new file or open an existing file. Then click the Markers button in the main window and click the Edit Markers button in the Marker popup window. This will display the Edit Current Markers dialog, which works in the same way as the dialog for entering predefined markers in the Preferences (see above).

Editing Markers in Agenda Templates

Every Agenda Template includes a set of predefined Markers that are copied into a recording file along with the agenda information. To edit this Marker information, select the Edit Markers button in the Edit Agenda Template dialog. This will display the Markers dialog, which allows editing the Marker information just like the Markers in the Preferences and the Markers in the recording file.

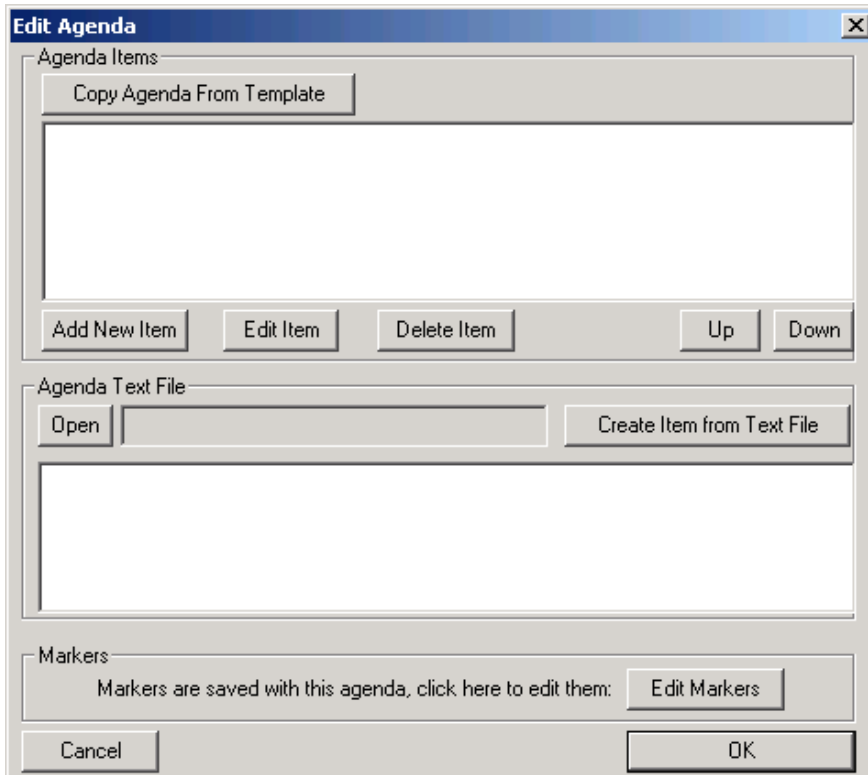
Recording Meetings with an Agenda

SoniClear has a number of features specifically to make it easy and productive to record meetings that have a formal agenda. These include:

- Prepare meeting agenda in advance to simply entry of meeting notes.
- Import meeting agenda items from text files.
- Create Agenda Templates for standardized meeting agendas.
- Take notes during meeting from agenda items or predefined notes with a single keypress.
- Edit notes during recording or playback
- Export notes to text files for import into word processing documents and web pages.

Entering a Meeting Agenda

After creating the file, click the Agenda button to display the Agenda popup window. Then click the Edit Agenda button. This will display the Edit Agenda dialog for adding and editing agenda items:



Add Agenda Items

There are three ways to add new agenda items:

- Copy Agenda From Template button to copy an entire agenda
- Add New Item button for adding individual items
- Create Item From Text File button to copy items from a text file

Copy Agenda From Template Button

Complete agendas that have been saved into a SoniClear Agenda Template can be copied into this file by clicking the Copy Agenda From Template button. This will also copy the Marker data from the stored agenda template.

Add New Item Button

You can add new agenda items to the list using the Add New Item button. Type the text of the item using the popup dialog. You can also use the Windows clipboard to paste text from other sources, such as a Word document.

Create Item From Text File Button

For more complex agendas, it is useful to import the agenda items using an existing word processing file. This is accomplished by opening a text file with the agenda items. Then select an item in the list and click the Create Item from Text File button to add it to the SoniClear list of agenda items.

When selecting an agenda item, you can select more than one line. Use the standard Windows control to do that, hold down the shift key and click to select a range of lines. The first line becomes the agenda item title and all additional lines are copied into the detail field of the agenda item. See the section below: “Importing an Agenda from Microsoft Word”,

Edit Agenda Items

To edit the title or detail information of an agenda item, select the item in the Agenda Items list and click Use the Edit Item. The Delete Item button will remove an item from the list. The order of items can be changed by clicking the Up and Down buttons, which will move the selected item higher or lower in the list.

Where Agenda Items Are Stored

When entering agenda items while a recording file is open, the information is automatically associated with the recording. Once the agenda items have been entered, click OK and the items will appear in the Agenda section of the main SoniClear window.

The agenda items are saved to disk in a file with the same name as the current recording file, with the extension of BKM. Note: If you are copying meeting recording files to other computers, you must also copy the BKM file that matches the audio file.

When creating agenda items in an Agenda Template, the information is stored in a separate .AGD file, which can then be copied at a later time into a recording file.

Agenda Templates

You may want to enter agenda items in advance of the meeting. This is most easily accomplished by creating an Agenda Template and then copying the agenda into a new recording just before the meeting begins.

To do this, use the Create Agenda Template option from the Agenda pulldown menu item. The process for entering the agenda items is the same as for entering items into a recording (as described above).

Importing an Agenda from Microsoft Word

To import an agenda from an existing Word document into a SoniClear agenda template, follow these steps:

1. Open the existing Word document.
2. Save the file as a text file by selecting File/SaveAs from the pulldown menu and specifying the file type option of “Text Only” or “Plain Text”. Note: the exact terminology and dialog sequence for saving the file in text format will vary depending on which version of Word is being used.
3. Close the file in Word (this is important, otherwise SoniClear will not be able to open this file).
4. Start SoniClear and select “Create New Template” from the Agenda pulldown menu. This will display the Edit Agenda Template dialog.
5. Click the Open button and select the text file that you saved in Step 2.
6. Click on the first agenda item to add, shown in the Agenda Text File list.
7. Click the Create Item from Text File button. This will move the text file item from the text file list to the Agenda Items list. If you select multiple lines, all will be added, with the first line being the title and subsequent lines being detail information.

8. The list box selection will automatically move to the next item on the list in the text file. You can continue to add agenda items by clicking the Create Item from Text File button until you have added all of the items for the meeting.
9. Optionally you can click the Edit Markers button to create a set of markers specifically for this meeting.
10. Click the OK button to save the agenda template in a new file. Enter a file name and verify the folder for storing the file. The default file location is the same as the folder that is used for saving SoniClear recordings.
11. Click Save. This will save the agenda information in a file of the “.AGD”.

You can import this Agenda Template information into a new recording by selecting “Copy Agenda From Template” from the Agenda pulldown menu and then selecting this agenda file from the file selection dialog.

Choosing Recording Types

SoniClear allows the user to select from several Recording Types when creating a new file. When clicking the New button (or selecting File/New from the pulldown menu) the new file dialog is displayed with a field for the new file name and a field indicating the current Recording Type.

The Recording Type can be changed by modifying the settings in Edit/Preferences/Recording Options. Each Recording Type is designed to optimize various recording options, VoiceBoost settings (sound enhancement), and output file type for recording in different situations. Following are descriptions of the Recording Types, also referred to as “recording mode” in this User Guide. See the detailed description for how to edit Preferences in the SoniClear Installation Guide.

Meeting

The Meeting recording mode creates standard WAV files in 22K/16bit/Mono format. This is a very high quality recording for suitable for voice. Files take 158 Megabytes per hour. Maximum recording time in a single file is 12 hours. VoiceBoost is performed at archive export time to enhance clarity and intelligibility for archived recordings that will be played without the use of SoniClear.

Along with the WAV file, a companion file is created that contains the agenda items and notes that have been entered for the recording. This so-called “notes” file is always named the same as the WAV file, with the extension changed to “BKM”.

Meeting recording mode is the most commonly used option and is recommended for recording meetings when one channel is suitable. An alternative to Meeting Mode would be the Conference Mode. The WAV file format is somewhat higher sound quality than the MP3 format used for Conference Mode (.CF3) files. Also important is that Meeting mode has a higher degree of reliability, handling system crashes gracefully. If the computer ever fails while recording a meeting using the Meeting mode, the program will not lose any audio or notes. Under the same rare circumstance, recording in Conference mode will lose the notes and may also lose a few seconds of audio just prior to the recording ending abnormally.

Conference

The Conference mode creates proprietary CF3 format files. The CF3 file contains standard MP3 audio data at the beginning of the file, followed by the recording-specific

data (such as agenda, notes, recording mode, etc). MP3 format used is 48kbps mono. This results in near-WAV quality recordings that are suitable for voice recording. Recording from the sound card occurs at 22K samples per second, with conversion to MP3 occurring on-the-fly. Files take 22 Megabytes per hour for storage on the disk drive while recording. There is no intermediate storage of the audio data in WAV files that would take large amounts of disk space. VoiceBoost is also performed at playback or export time. This enhances clarity and intelligibility. Maximum recording time in a single file is 24 hours.

The .CF3 file format is associated with SoniClear during installation. This allows for double clicking or opening a .CF3 file directly from Windows and other programs. For example, the .CF3 Conference files can be linked to from within ACT!, Goldmine, and any other software program that can reference an external file. Selecting File/Copy Filename to Clipboard from the menu makes it easy to enter the file name of the recording into the other software. With the relatively small file size of the CF3 file format and the incorporation of notes into a single file, it easy to share the recorded files with other SoniClear users.

The Conference mode does not produce recordings that are quite as clear as the Meeting Recording Type, and if the computer crashes while recording, the entered notes and a few seconds of audio will be lost.

Meeting (stereo)

The Meeting Stereo recording mode is similar to regular (mono) Meeting mode. However, it produces 22K/16bit/Stereo WAV files. File size is 316 Megabytes per hour. Maximum recording time in a single file is 6 hours. VoiceBoost processing during export is suitable when the audio signal being recorded is true stereo (two microphones in the same recording space).

This recording mode is a good choice to use for recording meetings with a stereo microphone, or where a stereo audio feed is provided by the sound system. Having a stereo signal to listen to can help with identifying which person is speaking (based on where the person speaking is located in the stereo sound field), and also can help in some situations with hearing over background noise.

Dictation

The Dictation recording mode produces a WAV file in 22K/16Bit/Mono format. VoiceBoost processing must be added using the File/Convert function.

Maximum recording time in a single file is 12 hours.

Dictation mode is suitable for recording dictation and voice tracks for multimedia presentations. The Dictation mode also has features for recording in separate "takes", including an Undo feature.

The standard WAV files created in Dictation mode are compatible with Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition software. Dictation files can be recorded on the computer in SoniClear and fed into Dragon at a later time for conversion to text.

Multi-Channel Recording

This feature applies to SoniClear Gov Recorder.

Gov Recorder includes the ability to record in multiple independent channels, from a minimum of 2 channels up to a maximum of 14 channels. This allows for recording of microphones into independent audio channels. You select the number of channels in the Edit/Preferences/Recording Options dialog.

Multi-channel recordings can be in either WAV or MP3 format. The advantage of WAV format is that the sound quality is slightly better. The advantage of MP3 format is that it uses considerably less disk space.

When playing back a multi-channel recording, you have the option of selecting the stereo mix, the Left channel only of the stereo mix, the right channel of that mix, or any one of the separately recorded audio channels (1-12). This allows you to hear more clearly the speaking from the microphone closest to the source.

See the SoniClear Installation Guide for details on how to configure multichannel recording options.

Managing Files

SoniClear includes a number of advanced features for managing files that can be accessed from the File pulldown menu selections.

Create New Audio Recording File

The File/New menu selection includes the same features that are available from the New button. Enter the new file name for the recording and select the Recording Type.

Open Existing Audio Recording

The File/Open menu selection allows you to open sound files supported by SoniClear. This function performs the same as the Open button. The default type of files shown are the BKM note files. Selecting one of these files will automatically open the corresponding WAV or MP3 file. You can change the type of audio files being shown by selecting a different set from the “Files of type:” combo selection box.

Open the Last Audio Recording File Used

The File/Open Last File menu selection opens the last file that was opened using SoniClear. It also positions the playback pointer to where it was when the file was last open. This is useful for continuing transcription of a file after taking a break.

Append Audio File to Currently Open File

You can append an existing WAV, MP3, AU, or AIFF file to the end of the currently open file. It will not insert into the middle of a file. This feature is useful for composing recordings from a group of sound files, or adding sounds to a recording you are working on. File/Append automatically adjusts the sample rate to match the currently open file. This feature can be useful for converting files between different sample rates. Rate conversion is also performed by the File/Convert feature (see below).

The Append function does not append notes from other files, only the audio information.

Close File

You can close the currently open file with this option. This may be necessary if the file is going to be opened in another application before exiting SoniClear.

Restart

The File/Restart menu selection erases the audio data already recorded in the currently open file and allows the recording to be started from scratch. The note data is also erased, but the Agenda and Marker information is retained. The Restart feature is disabled once the file has been closed and then opened again, to protect against accidentally overwriting the audio file.

Delete

The File/Delete menu selection erases the audio file and associated BKM note file. Confirmation is required. Once the file has been deleted, it cannot be restored. Deleted files are not saved in the Recycle Bin.

Rename File

The File/Rename menu selection renames the current file to a new name. If the file is being saved to a new folder or drive, the file is copied with the new file name and the original file is deleted. There must be enough disk space for both copies of the file while the rename operation is being performed. The File/Rename menu selection is the same as the Rename button.

File Properties

The File/Properties menu selection displays the operating system file information and recording format information for the currently open file.

Make Backup

The File/Make Backup menu selection makes a backup copy of the currently open file. A new copy of the file is made, while leaving the open file as it is. After specifying the output file and folder, click Begin Backup. The files stored in the backup folder can be burned to CD or DVD for archival purposes using the CD burning software supplied with your computer.

Copy File Name to Clipboard

The name of the SoniClear file is automatically copied to the clipboard when the file is created. This makes it simple to start SoniClear, record a new file, and then move to another program to paste the file name into a database or document. The name can also be copied to the clipboard by opening the file and selecting File/Copy Filename to Clipboard from the pulldown menu. This will put the file name on the clipboard for pasting into another application.

Convert File to New Format and/or Apply VoiceBoost

The File/Convert feature makes it possible to convert the currently open recording into other file formats, and to apply VoiceBoost. The option to mix or split stereo or 2-channel recordings is also provided in the SoniClear ClearScribe version.

You can convert to one of the supported file formats, WAV, AU, or AIFF. Converting allows you to select a new sample rate (with automatic rate conversion), splitting stereo/2-channel recordings into separate files for left and right channel, mixing stereo recordings to mono, and the option of performing VoiceBoost DSP processing on the samples stored in the new file. The convert feature is useful for audio development in desktop video production, webcasting, and software development. The splitting feature of Convert also is helpful for extracting the stenomask channel of a 2-Channel recording for import into a voice recognition program.

Select File/Convert from the pulldown menu. The current file format is shown along with controls for selecting the output bitrate and file type. Select the required parameters and click OK. Specify the number of channels in the output file. To split a stereo or 2-channel recording into separate files, select either the Left or Right channel for output.

Enter the new file name and click OK.

In the Process Dialog, check the VoiceBoost check box if you want to perform the automatic VoiceBoost processing. Be sure to select the type of filtering required.

Generally this will be related to the output format. For example, converting to 8kHz/8bit/mono AU files will require the "Low Bitrate" VoiceBoost setting. In some cases, however, the output format from SoniClear will be higher than the ultimate bitrate that the sound will be delivered at. For example, if the file will be incorporated into a low bitrate video presentation, the sound will be encoded by the video editor at a low bitrate. In this case, select "Low Bitrate" for the VoiceBoost processing. The Close/Far radio buttons control the behavior of the "noise gate". For recordings made with the microphone close to the speaker, use the Close setting, otherwise, select Far.

After VoiceBoost settings are completed, click Begin Conversion to process to the output file.

Note: if you select AU format, the only valid settings for the parameters is 8K, 8 bit, Mono. Any other setting will generate a file that will not play back correctly.

Auto Archive

This feature applies to SoniClear Gov Recorder.

The File/Auto Archive menu selection performs three processing steps automatically. It makes a backup copy of the currently open file, just the same as File/Make Backup. After the backup step is completed, it archives the recording in the LAN Archive. If both backup and archiving steps complete without error, the original recording file is deleted from the recording machine. Selecting File/Auto Archive is the same as clicking the Archive button displayed in the main window.

For optimal Auto Archive performance the default recording type should be set to Conference or MP3 (multichannel). Also, the Export Voice Boost option should be disabled. This will result in the original recording file being copied directly to the LAN Archive directory, with no additional audio processing. If the recording type is WAV (Meeting recording mode) or the Voice Boost option is checked, the archiving process will include a file conversion and/or Voice Boost enhancement step, which will take longer to complete. See the SoniClear Installation Guide for information on how to modify the default recording type and the Export Voice Boost option.

Import from MP3 File

You can import files into Court Recorder that are stored in the standard MP3 file format. The import process creates a new BKM file of the same name. No modification to the MP3 file occurs.

Import using the File/Import from MP3 pulldown menu item. The software will give you a dialog to select the file name. Enter the file name or leave the default choice, and then click Save. The Process Dialog will provide the option of performing VoiceBoost processing on the file being converted. Click the Begin Conversion button to start the import process.

Export to MP3 Format

You can export directly from the open sound file to the standard MP3 file format. Start exporting using the File/Export to MP3 pulldown menu item.

You will be prompted to select the desired MP3 file name and directory. Then, in the Export to MP3 dialog, select the desired "codec" in the Output Format selection and choose Mono, Stereo, Left or Right channel (for splitting a stereo or 2-channel recording). If the original file is stereo or 2-Channel, the Mono option will mix the left and right channels together. For multi-channel recordings it will create MP3 files that correspond to the WAV stereo mix file.

After entering the conversion information and parameters, click "Encode" to start the export process. Conversion will take a few seconds to a few minutes, depending on the file size and the speed of the computer. You can cancel conversion by pressing the Stop button.

The default output formats settings are optimal for most spoken word recordings. However, for music or other special needs, the Advanced button will display the full set of options for encoding to MP3. In the Advanced dialog there are options for the following features:

"Allow Downmix": this allows the MP3 encoder to resample the bitrates for optimal sound quality. Generally this option will be checked.

"Allow Intensity": this option is not recommended for voice recordings as it introduces an unpleasant distortion in the speakers voice. For music recordings, this option may allow for encoding at lower bitrates while keeping an acceptable level of listenability.

"Mono" and "Stereo" radio buttons: This selects whether the output MP3 file will be mono or stereo.

"CBR" and encoder selection: This stands for "Constant Bit Rate" encoding. This is the preferred method for encoding recordings that will need to be accessed randomly based on time. For example, if the recording is a 2 hour meeting, using the CBR option will make it possible to select the specific time to play back in the MP3 player.

"VBR" and encoder selection: This stands for "Variable Bit Rate" encoding. While the encoder is processing the sound, it varies the number of bits used to encode a given part of the file to give the best sound quality, while not wasting bits on unimportant sound (such as background silence). The advantage of this method is that it allows for the encoded file to be smaller at a given overall bit rate. The disadvantage of VBR encoding is that the MP3 player will not be able to compute the exact location of information in the file. VBR is generally employed where the user will listen to the track from the beginning, since they cannot randomly positioning to an exact location in the track.

Export Notes to Text File

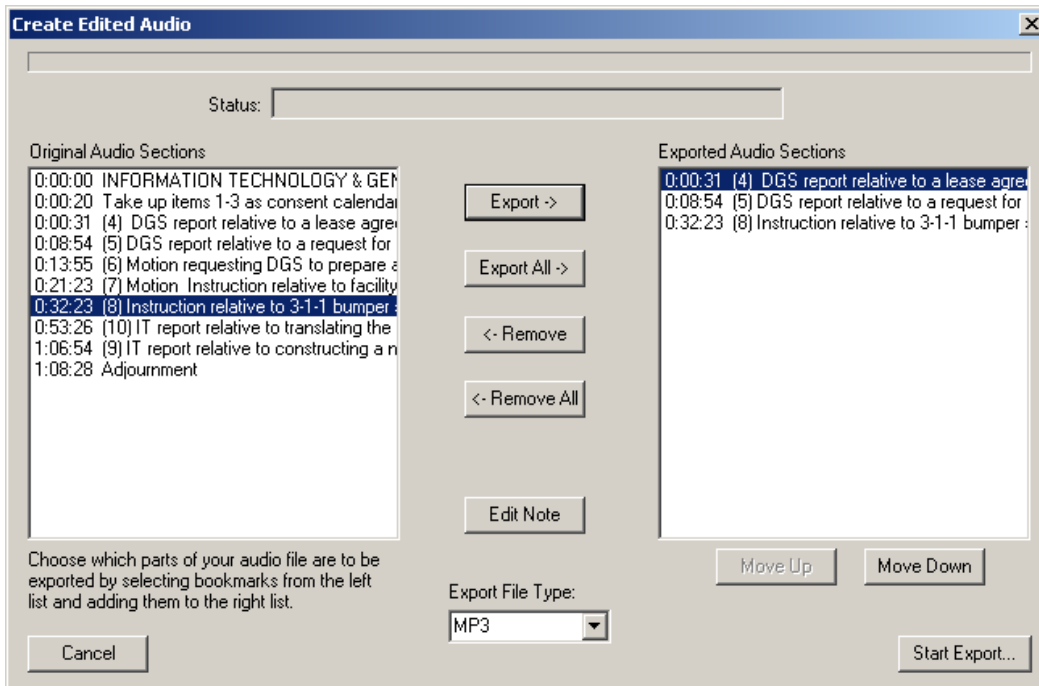
The File/Export Notes menu selection writes the notes entered for the currently open Meeting recording into a new text file. The exported notes can be opened in a word processing program in text format, or inserted into an existing word processing document (for example, in Microsoft Word use the Insert/File option).

File Editing

SoniClear includes the ability to easily edit audio files. By entering notes into the file for the sections to be extracted, the user can simply specify which sections should be included in a new, edited version of the file (the “Edited Copy” of the file that is exported from the original file). The edited file can be exported into MP3, CF3 (Conference) or WAV (Meeting) formats.

SoniClear file editing makes it easy to copy selected sections of a meeting to a new file. The edited file can then be sent by email, copied to disk or posted to a web server for people who need the information for review.

To edit a file, start SoniClear and open an existing file (or record a new file). Then select File/Create Edited Copy. Following is a screen shot of a recording from a government meeting showing the Create Edited Audio dialog:



Selecting Edits

The left selection list, Original Audio Sections, shows all of the notes entered for the recording. The right selection list, Exported Audio Sections, shows the sections of the file to be written to the edited audio file.

The user can pick sections to export by highlighting one or more items in the Original Audio Sections list and clicking the Export button. The user can also copy all of the items to export them by clicking the Export All button.

Items that have already been moved to the Export Audio Sections list can also be selectively removed. Click the item to remove and click the Remove button. The export items list can be cleared by clicking the Remove All button.

When a note has the Cut Audio check box selected, the text of the note will be displayed in brackets (“[]”). These items cannot be copied to the export sections list. This makes it easy to copy all of the items to the export list without sections that are marked for removal (such as off-the-record discussions) from being accidentally put in the output list. A note can be edited by selecting it in the Original Audio Sections list and clicking the Edit Note button.

Selecting Export Type

The Export File Type selection box allows the user to pick the type of file being created with the edited sections. The default type is MP3, which uses the 48kbps mono or 64kbps stereo encoding rate, depending on whether it is a mono or stereo original file.

The CF3 option outputs a SoniClear standard Conference file. The resulting file will include the notes, which can be used for subsequent playback and processing.

The WAV option creates a SoniClear standard meeting file that consists of a 22kbps/16bit WAV file (in mono or stereo, depending on the original file format). The notes in the Exported Audio Sections list are exported into a matching BKM file. Like exporting CF3 files, the WAV and BKM file pair can then be opened and used for playback and processing like an originally recorded SoniClear file.

Start Export

Clicking the Start Export button will initiate the export process. Depending on the size of the original recording, this process may awhile to complete. The progress of the exporting is shown in a progress bar at the top of the screen, along with a status message showing the current export step. Exporting can be cancelled at any time while editing the lists, or during processing, by clicking the Cancel button.

Editing using SoniClear Gov Products

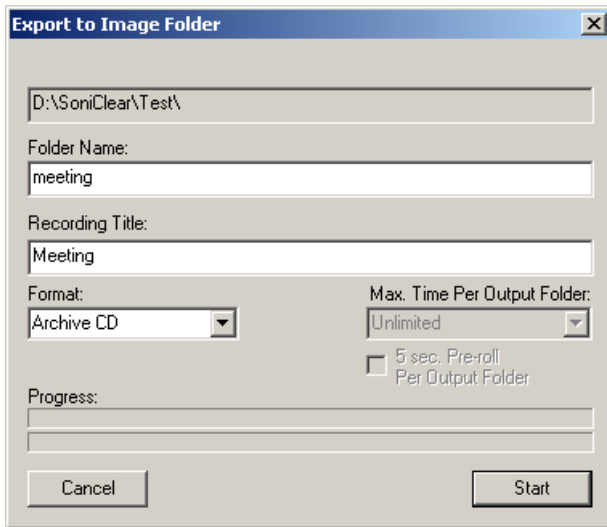
This feature applies to SoniClear Gov Recorder.

When using any of the SoniClear Gov Recorder, the actions taken by the program are slightly different than for Meeting Recorder. When a Start Recording note is encountered after a Stop Note, the program will add to the output file an audio recording and a note indicating “Recording Paused”. If only portions of the original recording are added to the output file, an audio recording and a note indicating “Recording Excerpted” will be added. This ensures that audio recording from SoniClear Gov programs cannot be edited without an audible indication of there having been an edit

Export to CD Image

The purpose of Export to CD Image is to make it easy to create an archive copy of the recording on CDROM that is compatible with computers and CD players. Three different formats are supported for exporting: Archive Format (using MP3 audio files), and Audio CD format (sometimes called "music" format or "Red Book" format), and CD format (the audio format used to make the recording).

Selecting Export to Image Folder will display the export dialog:



When exporting to Audio CD format, you can select the maximum length of the recording on each disk image. When exporting to Audio CD or Data CD format, the option to "Pre-roll" the beginning of the next segment is enabled. The Pre-roll feature creates a 5 second overlap between disks so that words will not be lost when they cross a media boundary.

About Archive CD Format

The Export to CD Image feature generates a set of files that can be burned to a CDROM using the software included with the CD-RW drive on your computer. The default action is to export in "Archive (MP3)" format. The resulting disk can be played in any computer and also in audio CD players that support playback of MP3 files. Archive format uses 48Kbps Mono MP3 format for very high quality audio in relatively small files. Because an MP3 format CD can hold up to 30 hours of audio on a single disk, exporting to Archive format will produce a single disk image, regardless of the length of the original recording (which will be 24 hours or less). Archive format recordings will never be split across multiple disks.

When the disk produced by this process is inserted into a Windows computer, it will automatically play the recording in a SoniClear Player standalone player program. The recording notes are included in the user display, allowing for direct access to different sections of the recording. Some advantages of using the Archive export format:

1. Meetings up to the full 12 hour SoniClear file time recording limit can be written to a CDROM as a single recording. In fact, up to 30 hours of audio can be stored on a CDROM using this feature, stored as separate directories on the disk.
2. By providing a SoniClear Player program on the disk, the user does not need a separately installed media player (such as Windows Media). When playing back the CDROM on a Windows computer, it automatically launches the SoniClear Player program to play back the file.
3. The SoniClear Player interface also shows the notes that are entered into the recording. This allows the user to navigate to specific locations in the meeting, skipping material that is not of interest. This approach to "attending" a meeting is extremely efficient. Hours of a meeting that are not of interest can be bypassed for information that is needed.

Producing an Archive Format CD

Once the meeting has been recorded and you have edited the notes to your satisfaction, you are ready to export the meeting recording into a separate directory that will contain all of the files needed for burning onto the archive format CDROM.

Start the export process by having open the file to be exported. Then select option "File/Export to CD Image" from the pulldown menu. The files will be written into a folder using the name of the file as the folder name, or any other folder name you enter in the export dialog. In this dialog you can also specify the Recording Title, although this does not appear in the exported files.

Be sure the Format option is set to the default setting, "Archive CD". Then click the Start button.

After exporting has completed, you will have a directory with all of the files needed to create the CDROM disk. The exported files are stored in a single folder (directory) of the same name as the original recording file. The location of that folder is specified in the Files tab of the Edit Preferences dialog (Edit/Preferences from the pulldown menu). The default location is in MyDocuments.

Use the CD writing software included with your computer to burn the disk. Select the Data option in the CD writing software (not music format) and select all of the files in the export folder to be written to disk. When the data format CD is written correctly, all of the files in the export subdirectory will be written to the "root" directory of the CD and you will be able to see these files by viewing the CD in the Windows file explorer.

Export to Audio CD Format

The second format option is to export in "Audio CD" format. This exports files that can be written using the "music" format option of the CD burning software. The resulting disks are compatible with conventional audio CD players of the type usually found in cars and home stereo equipment.

The export process generates a set of file folders, named "Disk1", "Disk2", "Disk3", etc. Each folder will contain one or more WAV files, "Track001.wav", "Track002.wav", "Track003.wav", etc. The length of each track is controlled by the location of notes in the meeting recording and the maximum amount of time allowed for each disk. The software automatically determines where to split the recording to ensure that each section of a meeting has its own track, and that disks do not exceed the maximum length. When the software identifies a section that can not be recorded on a disk without going over the maximum length, the section is arbitrarily split at the point that will store the maximum time on the disk.

The Audio CD option allows you to select the length of the recording on CD. This allows you to customize the length for different types of recording media. Standard audio compact disks have a maximum play time of 70 minutes, however, special disks can be purchased for up to 80 minutes. This option can also be used to export audio files of the proper length for unattended copying to audio cassette tape. The default maximum time per disk is 60 minutes, to allow production of CDs that can easily be copied to cassette tape. When creating audio cassettes, the audio can be played from a CD, or played from the disk image stored on the computer drive. However, if you are not burning audio compact disks, you should use the Native format option for creating files for writing to tape, since that uses less disk space (see Export to Data CD Format).

In addition to maximum time to store on each disk, you can control the split point for each disk by adding a note at the location you want to split disks and checking the "Start new CD-Image Folder Here" option in the note Export option section. This allows you to start a CD at any arbitrary location, regardless of space used on the disk.

When a note to start a new disk is not found before the maximum disk time specified, the system will automatically split the recording to a new disk. You have the option of this split occurring with or without "Pre-roll". When Pre-roll is selected in the Export dialog screen, five seconds of the previous disk is included in the next disk. This allows for words that may be chopped off in the middle to be repeated in whole on the next disk. If this option is not selected, there will be no overlap between the audio on the disks.

Because of the complexity of converting audio files from the original recorded format (22K, mono) to the larger size (44K, stereo), exporting to Audio CD format is slow. The export time is shown when you start the process. You can cancel exporting at any time by clicking the Cancel button.

The files created by Audio CD export are extremely large. For example, a four hour meeting will take approximately 632 Megabytes for the original recording WAV file (158 Megabytes per hour of recording time). This will be exported into a set of files for burning onto four CDs, and will take approximately 2.5 Gigabytes of disk space (620 megabytes per 60 minutes of recording time). Be sure to have adequate disk space before starting the export process. If the program runs out of disk space before completing, the export process will have to be repeated, starting from the beginning.

When burning the exported files to the CD, the CD writing software must have the "Music CD" option selected, not Data. Otherwise the generated disk will not play in a normal audio CD player. When selecting the tracks to burn on the disk, it is **extremely important** that you sort the order of the track files into alphabetical order. Otherwise the meeting will have the tracks written in a jumbled order. For some reason, most CD burning software will place the first selected track at the end of the list by default. Clicking on the file Name column header will cause the list to be properly sorted. Once the disk has been burned, there is no way to tell if the files were written in the correct order, so you must always check this detail before burning the disk.

The CDs that you put into a computer can have a paper label applied to the surface. However, on Audio CDs, a label can cause the disk to become jammed when playing on a conventional audio CD player, especially those that load through a slot. Do not use a paper label unless you know that the disk will be used on a machine that will not jam. You can write onto the disk directly using a permanent marker. However, this method of marking should not be used for archive copies, as it is likely that the chemicals in such a marker will reduce the storage life of the disk (the chemicals in a permanent marker will eventually seep into the disk, damaging the information stored on the metal surface inside the disk). For best appearance and storage life, use special printer designed for printing directly onto the disk.

Export to Data CD Format

The third format option is to export a Data CD image. This exports files in "native" format (the format of the recording) for writing to disk using the "data" format option of the CD burning software. The resulting disks can be played on any computer, but are not compatible with audio CD players.

This feature is desirable for creating data disks with up to approximately four hours of recording on each disk, when the recording is created in regular Meeting mode (22K/16bit/mono). One example application would be to distribute long meeting recordings to staff and clients for playback on a computer.

The options and directions are similar to exporting in Audio CD format. The maximum time written to disk option is disabled. The image files add up to 700 Megabytes per disk. When recordings exceed that they are automatically split. You must burn the files using

DATA format (not "music" or Red Book). Just like Audio CD format, you can control the split point using the Export option in a recording note. In addition, the Pre-roll option will overlap 5 seconds from the preceding disk, when enabled.

Export to MP3 CD Format

The third format option is to export an MP3 CD image. This exports files in MP3 format for writing to disk using the "data" format option of the CD burning software. The resulting disk can be played on audio CD players that have the ability to play MP3 files (most modern portable CD players). The MP3 files generated will be one MP3 file for each section of the recording (split at the location of each note in the file):

- note0001.mp3
- note0002.mp3
- note0003.mp3
- (etc)

Manage LAN Archives

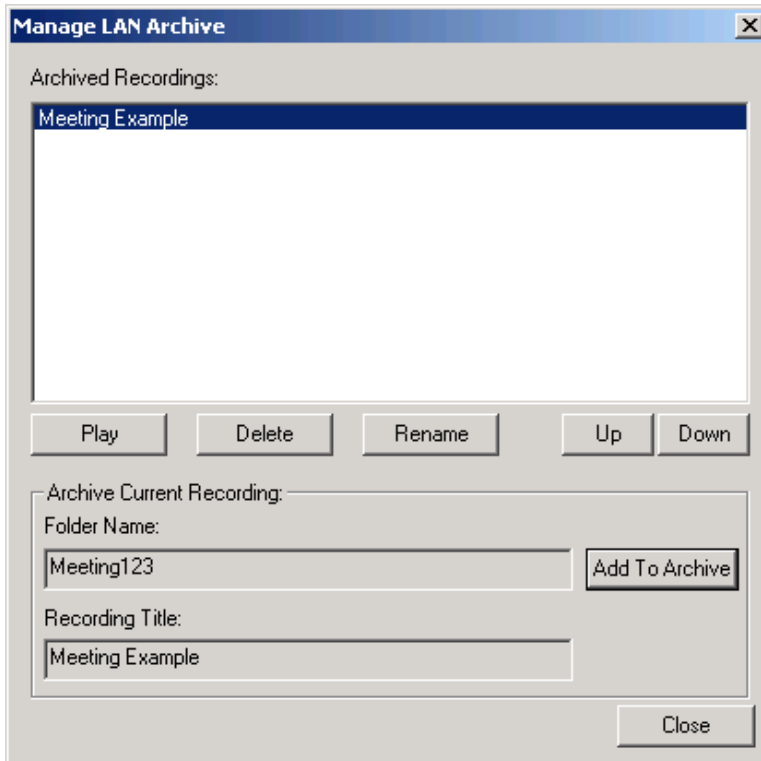
This feature applies to SoniClear Gov Recorder.

SoniClear allows you to add recordings to an archive maintained on the local computer disk drive or a LAN drive. The recording archive can be played back on any Windows computer from the drive where it is stored, (local or LAN drive). Alternatively, the LAN Archive files may be copied to CDROM for playback.

Recordings stored in the LAN Archive are played back using the SoniClear Player program (SoniClearPlayer.exe). This is a standalone Windows program for playing SoniClear .AF3 archive files. The SoniClear Player program does not require installation on the computer where it is being run. It will automatically configure itself to play back through the default sound card. The user can also configure the SoniClear Player to use different sound card hardware by adjusting the Hardware preferences settings (Edit/Preferences/Hardware from the pulldown menu).

How to Use Manage LAN Archives

Record your meeting with the notes that you want the user to see in the final archive. Open the file to be exported. Then select option "File/Manage LAN Archives" from the pulldown menu. This will display the Manage Archives dialog:



Archived Recordings

This is the list of recordings currently stored in your archive.

Play

You can play a recording by clicking on the Play button. This will launch the Player5.exe program to play this single recording for review.

Delete

Deletes the currently highlighted recording in the list. You will receive a delete confirmation dialog before the delete action occurs.

Rename

Renames the title displayed in the list of recordings shown on this dialog and shown to the user viewing the archive.

Up/Down

Moves the currently highlighted entry up and down in the list of recordings.

Archive Current Recording

This section of the dialog shows the file name and title of the recording that is currently open in SoniClear. If a file is open, you have the option of adding this recording to the archive by clicking the Add To Archive button. If you want to add a file to the archive that is not shown as currently open, close the Manage Archive dialog, and use the Open button to open the file to be added to the archive. Then reopen the Manage LAN Archive dialog, and click on Add To Archive.

After clicking the Add To Archive button, the Add Recording To Archive dialog is displayed. It shows the archive directory, the folder name for storing the recording (which defaults to the name of the file that is currently open), and the Recording Title. You can change the folder name and the recording title in this dialog. To add the recording, click the Start button, or click Cancel to stop the archive process. If the Folder Name specified is the same as an existing recording in the archive, the user will be prompted for a confirmation dialog to overwrite the previous recording. No backup is made, so overwriting will remove the previously added files.

Publishing the Archive to a CDROM

In addition to making the LAN Archive recordings available over a LAN, the files can be published on CDROM for playback on Windows computers. Up to 30 hours of audio archive recordings will fit on a single 700MB CDROM disk.

To publish the LAN Archive to a CDROM, burn the image of the contents of the archive base directory (and all of the subdirectories under it) to the root directory of the CDROM. On Windows computers, with the AutoPlay feature activated, playback will start automatically when the disk is inserted. If AutoPlay is disabled, the user can start playback of the recording by manually starting the SoniClearPlayer.exe program, or selecting the index.html file (for the Browser format option).

Manage Web Archives

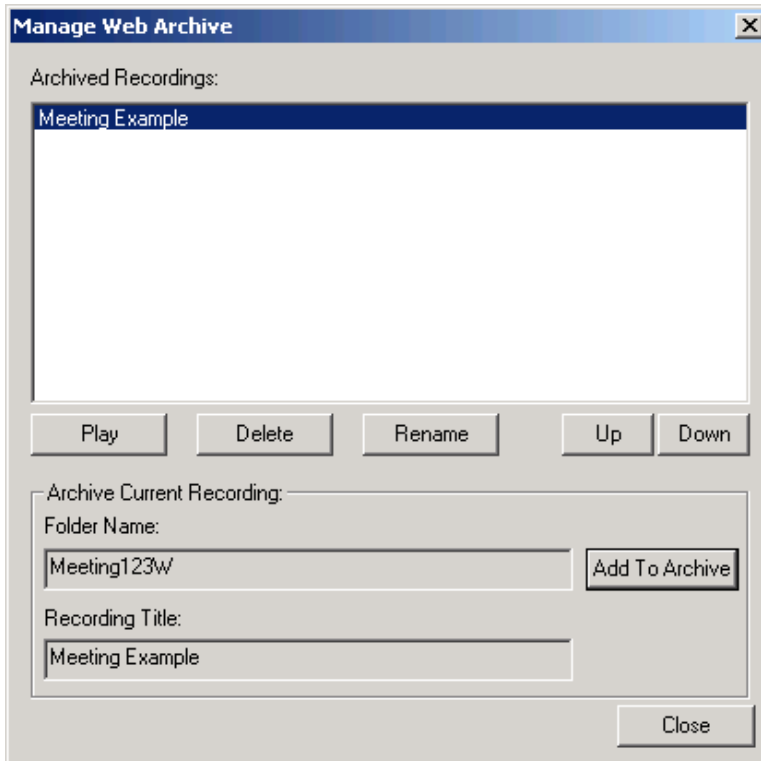
This feature applies to SoniClear Gov Recorder.

SoniClear allows you to add recordings to a Web Archive. The Web Archive files are maintained on a local computer disk drive or a LAN drive. The Web Archive files can be uploaded ("mirrored") to any web server for public access to the recordings using a web browser. The Web Archive can also be accessed from a shared LAN drive (without the need for a web server), or copied to CDROM.

The Flash MX-based Web Archive playback program is compatible with Windows, Mac, and Unix computers. Any web browser that has the Flash MX plugin installed can be used for playback. The Web Archive startup web page checks to ensure that the Flash MX plugin is installed. If it is not, the user will be prompted to install the plugin from the Macromedia website, a process that takes just a few minutes.

How to Use Manage Web Archives

Record your meeting with the notes that you want to have the user see in the final archive. Start the archive process by having open the file to be exported. Then select option "File/Manage Web Archives" from the pulldown menu. This will display the Manage Archives dialog:



Archived Recordings

This is the list of recordings currently stored in your archive.

Play

You can play a recording by clicking on the Play button. This will launch the index.html web page from the directory containing that recording in the default web browser on your computer.

Delete

Deletes the currently highlighted recording in the list. You will receive a delete confirmation dialog before the delete action occurs.

Rename

Renames the title displayed in the list of recordings shown on this dialog and shown to the user viewing the archive.

Up/Down

Moves the currently highlighted entry up and down in the list of recordings.

Archive Current Recording

This section of the dialog shows the file name and title of the recording that is currently open in SoniClear. If a file is open, you have the option of adding this recording to the archive by clicking the Add To Archive button. If you want to add a file to the archive that is not shown as currently open, close the Manage Archive dialog, and use the Open

button to open the file to be added to the archive. Then reopen the Manage Archive dialog, and click on Add To Archive.

After clicking the Add To Archive button, the Add Recording To Archive dialog is displayed. It shows the archive directory, the folder name for storing the recording (which defaults to the name of the file that is currently open), and the Recording Title. You can change the folder name and the recording title in this dialog. To add the recording, click the Start button, or click Cancel to stop the archive process. If the Folder Name specified is the same as an existing recording in the archive, the user will be prompted for a confirmation dialog to overwrite the previous recording. No backup is made, so overwriting will remove the previously added files.

Publishing to Website

After the webcast recording files have been created using Manage Web Archive, the files must be transferred to the web server. For information about how to publish the recordings to a website, see the discussion about webcasting in the SoniClear Installation Guide.

Archive and Export Options

In the Edit Note dialog, two check boxes are available to control how the audio recording and notes are handled in the Manage Archive and Export to Image Folder features. These allow you to control which notes are displayed, and to remove any section of the recording that should remain off the record (audio that was recorded in error, such as before the beginning of a meeting, at breaks, or after the end of the meeting).

The original recording and notes are not affected in any way by the settings of these options. Only the files generated by Manage Archive and Export to CD Image Folder are altered.

Don't Export This Note

By checking this option, the text entered in this note will not appear in the exported files. This allows you to enter notes for internal use (such as places that require detailed transcription for meeting minutes), without those notes appearing in the version of the file shared with others on CDROM or in the recording archive.

Cut Audio, Insert "Recording Paused"

By checking this option, the user can cause the audio that occurs at this time to be suppressed from the exported file.

How this is treated at export depends on the location of the note in the file. If the note is the very first note, or the very last note, the audio is simply removed. If the Don't Export This Note is also checked, there will be no indication of audio having been removed. If the note is at any other location in the file, there will be a visual and audio indication of the recording having been altered. The message "Recording Paused" is inserted into the notes at that time location. In place of the audio of that section, a prerecorded message is inserted that says "Recording Paused".

The audio output will be resumed at the time of the next note that does not have the "Cut Audio" option checked.

The prerecorded audio that announces the recording has been paused is contained in the RecordingPaused.mp3 and RecordingPaused.wav files, in the ArchiveAudio source directories (under the program directory). You can use SoniClear to record a new version of this announcement. Create a new file named RecordingPaused, selecting "CD" as the format. Record a short message to be played when the Recording Paused option is

checked. Export the recording to an MP3 file named RecordingPaused.mp3. Copy the RecordingPaused.wav and RecordingPaused.mp3 files to the ArchiveAudio directories (under the program directory).

Start New CD-Image Folder Here

This option applies to Export to CD Image when using Audio CD format or Native format. By checking this option, the user can cause the audio that occurs at this time to be moved to the start of a new disk when doing Export to CD Image (for Audio CD and Native file formats). This allows the location for splitting files between disks to be controlled exactly. This is useful, for example, when a separate CD is being created for each speaker, or for each section of a meeting.

Foot Pedal Support

SoniClear provides the same hands-free functionality of a transcription machine, allowing the user to start and stop playback without having to take hands off the keyboard. This feature can be controlled through a keyboard shortcut, or using an optional hardware foot pedal.

Virtual Foot Pedal

SoniClear provides a simulation of the USB foot pedal using special key combinations. This eliminates the need for the optional hardware USB foot pedal in many situations. The special Virtual Foot Pedal keys will allow the user to perform the same type of action as a USB foot pedal, regardless of what program is running in the foreground. For example, SoniClear can be running in the background, while typing a transcript in the foreground on a word processor. Default key values are Control-8 for left foot pedal, Control-; (semicolon) for center pedal, and Control-9 for left foot pedal. These can be changed in the Preferences dialog. In addition to operating during playback, the Virtual Foot Pedal keys will work while recording, just like the USB foot pedal.

USB Foot Pedal

No additional software is needed to use the USB Foot Pedal. Support for the hardware is built into all versions of SoniClear that support the foot pedal feature. To enable the Foot Pedal feature, perform the following steps

1. Install a SoniClear USB Foot Pedal (purchased separately from Trio Systems). When first plugged in, Windows will display messages indicating that the Foot Pedal is being installed (referred to as a USB HID device).
2. Start SoniClear.
3. Select Edit/Preferences from the pulldown menu, and click on the Foot Pedal tab.
4. Click the "Test X-Keys Foot Pedal" button to verify operation of the device. The popup message "X-keys foot pedal is operating correctly." should be displayed. If not, recheck proper installation of the USB pedal.
5. Options are available for how the foot pedal works during playback, simulating a transcription machine.
6. Additional options provide for using the foot pedal during recording to insert notes while recording. There are three choices for recording actions. "Do Nothing" disables any action by that pedal during recording. "Add Note" automatically adds a blank note when the foot pedal is pressed. This is the same

- action as pressing the Spacebar key on the keyboard. "Edit Note" adds a note and pops up the Edit Note dialog box to allow for editing.
7. Default settings are provided for the operation of the Foot Pedal. You can change these settings at any time and they will be saved in the Preference file.

Foot Pedal Operation

Operation While Playing

With SoniClear running, start, stop, wind, and rewind playback of any file that is currently open will be controlled by the Foot Pedal, as well as the regular program controls. The pedal will continue to control SoniClear operation, even when you are using another program, such as a word processor, for transcribing dialog.

Default action of the foot pedal:

- Left Foot Pedal rewinds audio 10 seconds when pressed.
- Center Foot Pedal plays audio when pressed, then rewinds 5 seconds when lifted.
- Right Foot Pedal fast forwards audio 10 seconds when pressed.

These default values can be modified by editing the Program Preferences (Edit/Preferences, Foot Pedal tab).

IMPORTANT: you must plug in the USB Foot Pedal before starting SoniClear. It may take a few seconds for the USB device to register with the operating system. If for some reason the USB Foot Pedal does not appear to be working after it has been plugged in, go to the Edit/Preferences dialog. In the Foot Pedal tab, click the Test X-keys Foot Pedal button to make sure it is working correctly.

Operation While Recording

The default action for the center pedal is to perform the Add Agenda Item action when pressed during recording. The default action for the left pedal is to perform Edit Note. This adds a note and pops up the edit dialog. The default action for the right pedal is to perform Add Note (blank note). These foot pedal actions are useful for situations where the recording needs to be annotated with a minimum of user involvement with the computer, such as during a lecture or presentation, or while taking notes in a word processor at the same time as recording. The default foot pedal actions can be modified in the Program Preferences dialog.

Annotating PowerPoint Presentations Using the Virtual Foot Pedal

A situation where the user might want to change these defaults would be for recording a PowerPoint presentation. The center pedal key can be set to the Enter key. Then record in SoniClear in the background while showing the PowerPoint presentation in the foreground. Each time the Enter key is pressed to change the PowerPoint slide a note will be added to the SoniClear recording notes. When the recording is completed, it can be exported to a CD image using the MP3 CD file format option. This splits each section of the recording into a separate MP3 file. In this case, each slide will be represented by a single MP3 file. These can be imported into a PowerPoint presentation for creating a self-running presentation with audio.

Toggle 2-Channel Playback

The left and right foot pedal switch can be used to control the toggling of playback between left and right channels using the USB or Virtual Foot Pedal. This action is specified in the Edit/Preferences/Foot Pedal dialog tab. Check the Enable box and select the Left/Right Toggle option, instead of Rewind Audio option.

Other Program Features

Running SoniClear from the Command Line

SoniClear can be run from a command line statement. This is useful for integrating SoniClear with other programs that need to control the management of files and workflow. See the SoniClear Installation Guide for instructions on how to use this feature.

Automatic Silence Detection

SoniClear can be configured by default to automatically detect silence that occurs during a recording. When this happens, a note is entered with a timestamp at the point in time where the silence was detected and where audio resumes. The note also has the Cut Audio export option checked. When using Create Edited Copy, Export to Image Folder, Manage LAN Archives, or Manage Web Archives, the sections that are marked as silent will be removed from the file or archive being created.

This feature can be turned on or off, as well as setting the threshold and time delay parameters. For details, see the section Editing Program Preferences, Automatic Notation Preference Tab in this manual.

Online Documentation

SoniClear documentation is available from within the program by selecting Help/SoniClear Help from the pulldown menu. This will launch the default browser and display a help page with links to the manuals, as well as web support.

Online Support

You can access support information and determine if your program is up to date using the Help/Online Support pulldown menu selection. This will launch the default browser and display the support page on the SoniClear website for the version of the software that you are using.

Online Sales

You can access sales information to learn about how to purchase additional SoniClear products using the Help/Online sales pulldown menu selection.

Licensing Information

The terms of the SoniClear software license are controlled by the “click through” license accepted by the user at time of installation. A copy of the license agreement is installed in the software program directory in the file "license.txt". Any other licensing information provided to the customer is for review purposes only. For example, a sample of the SoniClear license agreement appears on the SoniClear Legal Page at soniclear.com. In the event of discrepancies between the license accepted by the user and terms published or otherwise provided to the customer for review, the specific terms specified in license.txt license file shall prevail.

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