

# Pack 108, Item 11

Type: Broadcaster-how-to guide

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**BH2 – Saving, organizing, and archiving audio files**

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***How can saving, organizing, and archiving audio files help me serve my listeners better?***

* Broadcasters can post archived radio programs as podcasts on social media and make them available to listeners at any time.
* Archived radio programs can be given to community listener groups or community information centres for rebroadcast.
* When you have a good system for organizing and archiving files, it is easier to safely record, store, and retrieve good quality field recordings that enable listeners to hear the voices of other farmers in their communities on-air.
* Archiving audio programs online allows listeners to listen to any radio program at their convenience. This could include:
	+ re-listening to the details of a show they had not understood the first time;
	+ quickly skipping content that is not interesting or relevant; and
	+ sharing the link or the actual audio file of a program with other interested people.

***How can it help me produce better programs?***

* Archived programs can serve as reference material to let broadcasters know what has been discussed and presented in past programs. This can help broadcasters understand topics, create new programs that build on older programs, and avoid repetition. In addition, broadcasters can use archived materials to get a better understanding of the types of questions listeners have asked, and their concerns around particular issues. A new presenter or journalist could also refer to past episodes to better understand the tone and content of the farmer program.
* Saving and organizing audio files enables broadcasters to easily insert new materials into future radio programs, including, for example, interviews and audio gathered during visits to villages, markets, or other places where farmers gather. Archiving audio files allows you to use them in different contexts. For example, they could be used to research a particular topic or to air stories about a particular topic.

***How do I get started?*** (Learn more about these and other points in the *Details* section below.)

- Choose the types of audio to archive.

- Choose the right place to save your files.

- Create and name well-organized directories.

- Choose the right file format for your audio file.

- Make more than one backup and store them in different locations.

- Use and re-use archived audio files in different ways.

- Share archived audio files on the web in various ways.

***Details***

***Choose the types of audio to save.***

Think about what types of audio files you might want to save and why. This might help you make other organizing decisions along the way. You don’t have to keep everything! And what you do keep can be deleted or moved later.

Here are some suggestions on what you might want to keep:

* Full radio programs, so that you have an archive of your farmer programs.
* High quality material, in which both the broadcaster and the guests gave relevant and detailed information.
* Songs recorded in different communities with high quality sound and themes that are relevant for your program.
* Interviews and panel discussions that contain relevant and detailed information on topics that are relevant to the communities you serve.
* Storytelling interviews that elicit strong emotions and in which guests explained in a compelling way what they are experiencing.

All of these types of audio files can be useful in the future. For example, you can include them as examples of your work when applying for grants, or use them in future programs on the same topic. Naming your audio files ensures that you can easily find them, which increases the chance that you will actually use what you have saved.

***Choose the right place to save your files.***

There are a variety of “places” and ways to save your files, and each has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, you could:

* Save them directly on your computer. This makes the files easily accessible without an internet connection. But there are a few disadvantages to saving everything on a computer. First, it takes up a lot of space on your computer. You may choose to keep only those files you will be working with in the next few months and move older files to another location. The second disadvantage is that, if there are any viruses on the computer, they could corrupt the audio file. Investing in a good antivirus program will save a lot of time and money in the long-term.
* Use external hard drives. External hard drives have more memory space than computers. You could reserve a specific hard drive for audio files from the farmer program and nothing else. You can access audio files on an external hard drive without an Internet connection. But external hard drives are vulnerable to viruses, so any file you transfer to them must be virus-free. Also, if external hard drives are not stored in a dry, dust-free location, they can be damaged.
* Use cloud storage systems like Dropbox or Google Drive. Cloud storage is useful in part because it can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection. Google Drive always includes virus protection. Some of the most popular cloud storage options are free for a certain amount of memory, and charge for additional memory. Because files are held in cloud storage, they are much less vulnerable to damage or hacking. Also, you can easily manage who have access to which files. The disadvantages are that you need to have Internet access and, like anything else online; there is a possibility of being hacked. But because you will be storing audio files that will not usually contain sensitive information, hacking may not be a big problem.

***Create and name well-organized directories.***

Giving your audio file a good name helps you easily identify and locate audio files that might be scattered around various directories. A poor name can make it almost impossible to find an audio file. You can avoid losing an audio file in a forest of mp3s by effectively naming it.

When you archive audio files, you should label the files with a date and a descriptive title—for example, *Time with Farmers\_land Preparaton2017.10.24.mp3.* This kind of title tells you the name of the program, the topic of discussion, and the date of broadcast. You should also create folders and sub-folders, starting with broad categories for folders, then becoming more specific for sub-folders and sub-sub-folders. For example, you might name a folder:

AUDIO > RADIO SHOWS > FARMERS PROGRAM>

And you might name a sub-folder:

AUDIO > RADIO SHOWS > FARMERS PROGRAM > REARING CHICKENS>

These kinds of file names helps you identify specific audio files.

***Choose the right file format for your audio file.***

Choosing the right type of file format depends on a few factors, including the quality of the audio files you need, and the storage space available on the drive where you want to save it.

You are most likely recording in one of two formats: WAV files or MP3 files. WAV files produce high quality sound but occupy a lot of space. WAV is preferred by most technicians who do studio recording and by DJs. Because WAV files contain more sound data, the audio is sharper and richer, and, for example, it is easier to differentiate various kinds of sounds.

MP3 files occupy less storage space but the audio is not as high quality as WAV files. But MP3 files are ideal for podcasting, any form of sharing from the Internet or “cloud,” and for radio broadcasts. They are not recommended for music.

***Make more than one backup and store them in different locations.***

Saving audio files on your computer is the first step, but you should also think about saving the same files somewhere else. This is called *backing up* your files.

There are a few ways to do this. You can back up files on an external hard drive or on cloud storage like Dropbox or Google Drive. But external hard drives can break or be infected by viruses. This means that you need at least two copies to ensure that your audio is saved. Store backup copies of your files on two or three different drives, and ensure they are in a safe place, away from water and dust. Save copies of these files in separate geographical locations if possible. If disaster strikes one location, your audio recordings in the other place should be safe. Remember that hard drives can degrade over time, so broadcasters should copy program files to newer drives every five years.

***Use and re-use archived audio files in different ways.***

Archiving audio files allows you to use them in different contexts, even after they have been aired. For example, if you are running a radio series on the benefits of vaccinating chickens, you might air an interview with a farmer who has lost most of her chickens and is feeling desperate. Later, you can interview the same farmer and record her story now that she has vaccinated her chickens. When you air the interviews, you could set the scene by beginning with a particularly emotional section of the first interview. This would emphasize and dramatize the contrast between previous and current situation. You could also include old clips of interviews on a particular topic in a new program on the same topic in order to review the key opinions or lessons learned.

***Share archived audio files on the web in various ways.***

Creating a podcast is a great way to use your archived radio programs to reach even more people. The following guide offers some starting points for podcasting, including places on the web that can “host” your podcast: <https://radio.co/learn/how-to-start-a-podcast-for-your-radio-station>

WhatsApp: If your station has a WhatsApp group for a specific radio show, you could attach an mp3 file of your radio program and send it to the group. This makes it easier for them to share with interested friends and family.

***Where else can I learn about how to save, organize, and archive audio files?***

Beck, Chelsea, 2016. *Find Files Faster: How to Organize Files and Folders*. https://zapier.com/blog/organize-files-folders/

*How to use Google Drive*: https://support.google.com/drive/answer/2424384?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en

Virtue, Mark, 2010. *Zen and the Art of File and Folder Organization*. https://www.howtogeek.com/howto/15677/zen-and-the-art-of-file-and-folder-organization/

***Definitions***

*Cloud storage:* Cloud storage is a way of storing digital data in “logical pools.” The physical storage includes multiple servers (and often multiple locations), and the physical environment is typically owned and managed by a hosting company. Cloud storage providers are responsible for keeping the data available and accessible, and for the physical environment. People and organizations buy or lease storage capacity from the providers so they can store user, organization, or application data.

*Drop Box:* Dropbox is a file-hosting service operated by the American company Dropbox, Inc., that offers cloud storage, file synchronization, personal cloud, and client software.

*Google Drive:* Google Drive is a file storage and synchronization service developed by Google.

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