WESTSIDER RADIO

Studio Manual



Version 1.6
30 July 2026

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Change log

Date	*Version*	*Comments*
12/11/25	*1*	*Draft copy*
20/11/25	*1.1*	*General updates*
1/12/25	*1.2*	*Added Audacity and DJ info*
9/12/25	*1.3*	*Corrected typos and added images for DJ setup*
29/1/26	*1.4*	*Added more troubleshooting info*
21/6/26	*1.5*	*Added info about I/O levels in Audacity, formatting and other edits*
30/7/26	*1.6*	*Added info about the tape deck and updated Mac mini troubleshooting*

Background

Westsider Radio is a volunteer run Internet radio station associated with the Westsider newspaper. Westsider Radio aims to amplify the voices and music of Melbourne's western suburbs. It is hosted through the radio.co website. There is no transmission tower, and it does not broadcast on the AM/FM spectrum. To listen, go to thewestsider.com.au and click on the Westsider Radio button. Shows produced for Westsider Radio will also be made on various podcasting/streaming platforms for on-demand listening.

The studio is located at Kindred Studios, 3 Harris St, Footscray.

The studio can be used to pre-record and edit programs. These can then be uploaded and scheduled to be played online by the station/program manager. Live streamed content can be produced only by prior arrangement.

Who's who

Station Manager – Adam Weatherhead
Program Manager – Mario Pinti
Music Manager – TBA
Technical Manager – TBA
Westsider Editor- Barbara Heggen
Studio Manager – Adam Hutterer

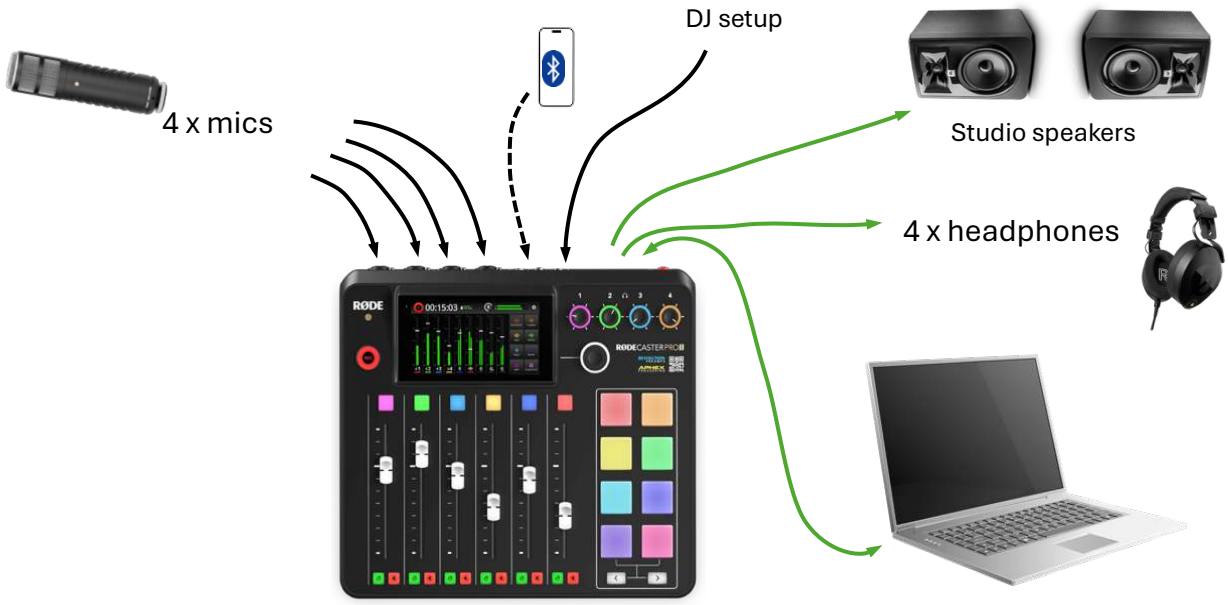
Using the studio

Studio Access

Studio access is granted only on completion of the Westsider Radio training which is managed by the Station Manager. Approved users will be given a door access code. Codes are not to be shared or passed on to others. Doing so risks restrictions on future access and does not absolve you of responsibility for equipment loss or damage.

The RODECaster

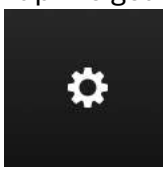
The heart of the studio is the RODECaster mixing desk and touchscreen. The 4 microphones (mics), a Bluetooth input and the DJ mixer each correspond to the faders from left to right on the RODECaster. The turntables and CDJs connect into the DJ mixer and then to the RODECaster. The output of the RODECaster goes into the studio laptop via USB 1. Recordings are made with an app called Audacity. Recordings can be edited or just exported and saved as a file. The RODECaster can also record to a micro-SD card which goes into the slot on the back. Scan the QR code on the front panel for the online manual and how-to videos.



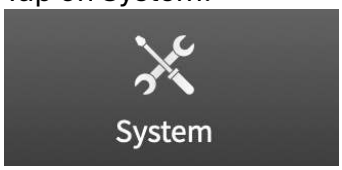
Bluetooth

If you need to play music from a device such as your phone or laptop or to record a phone conversation, the easiest (and only) way to do this is to connect it to the RODECaster via Bluetooth.

Tap the gear cog on the top right corner of the RODECaster screen.



Tap on System.



Tap on Bluetooth.



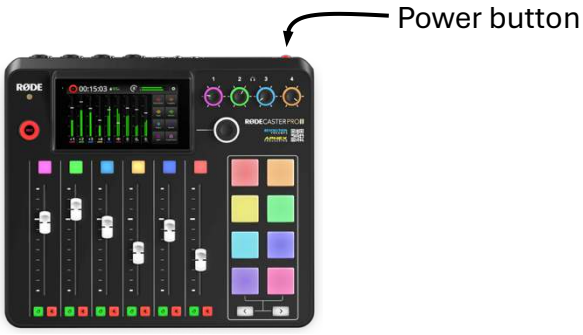
On your device, go to Bluetooth settings, scroll to the bottom and you should be able to select the RODECaster.

On the RODECaster, tap on the Home icon in the top right-hand corner of the screen to return to the mixer screen and turn the Bluetooth fader up. You should see the signal metering and hear the audio through headphones.

When recording a phone conversation, make sure your phone is using the RODECaster as a Bluetooth device and is not on speakerphone.

Power

Turn the RODECaster on and off using the red button on the top right corner of the unit.



Turn the DJ gear on/off by using the power switches on each piece of equipment. The CDJ power buttons are on the rear top right of the units, the turntables have a raised on/off knob next to the platter, and the DJ mixer's power switch is on the top right of the unit.

The wall-mounted speakers will turn on automatically when they detect an audio signal and will power off after 20 minutes of no audio. You do not need to turn them on or off manually.

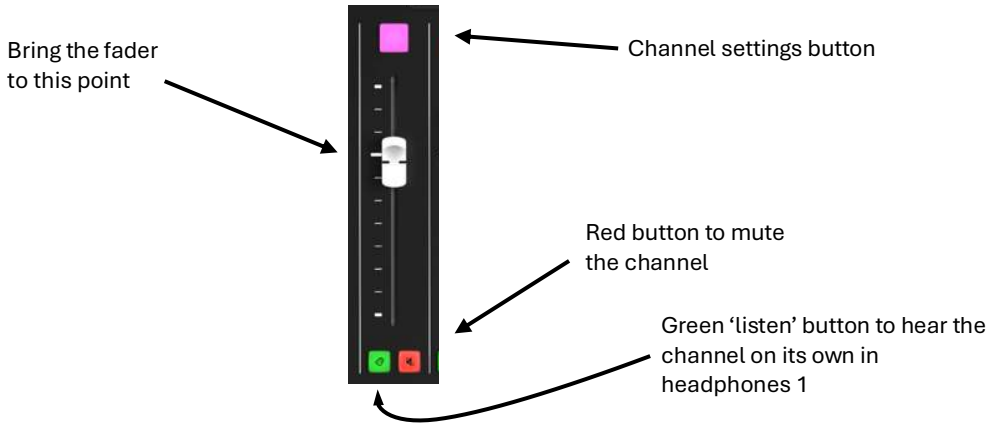
The Mac mini (the little silver box on the corner of the desk) stays on all the time. Its job is to pass audio from the DJ mixer to the USB-C input on the RODECaster. In the case of a power outage, it is set to restart automatically and to pass audio again. Note that it will take 3-4 minutes to restart, so be patient.

Studio Laptop

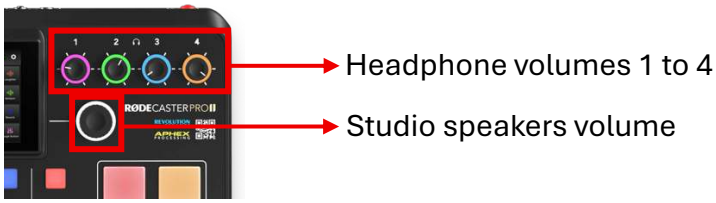
There is no password to login to The Westsider account. When you are finished recording, copy your files to a USB stick or follow the upload instructions you were given in your training session, delete them from the laptop hard drive and just shut the lid. The laptop hard drive will be wiped clean from time to time so your files may not be there next time you are in. Playing back files from the laptop should automatically come through the RODECaster and to all headphones and speakers (if there are no mics turned up).

Making a show

Once you have planned your show and are ready to record, all you need to do is to bring up the fader for the sound sources you are using and begin recording.



The studio speakers will automatically mute when any of the mics are turned up. This is to avoid feedback caused by the sound from the speakers going into the mic and then out the speakers again etc. The best way to monitor what is being recorded is by using the headphones.

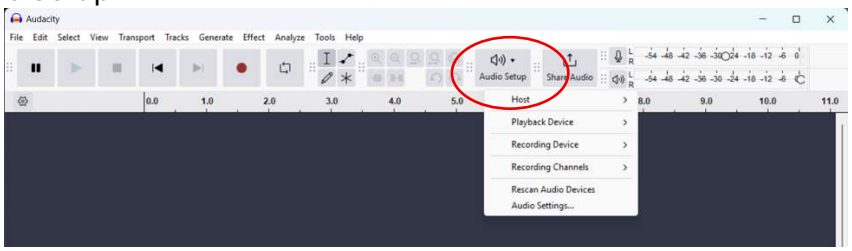


- To record on the laptop, open Audacity (there's a shortcut link on the computer desktop) and go to the next section for details
- To record on the RODECaster to a micro-SD card, insert the card (which will need to be formatted by following the on screen instructions) and press the record button on the top left of the RODECaster.

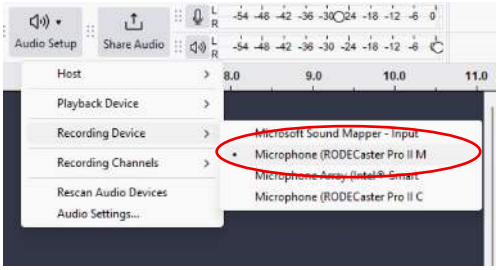
Recording with Audacity

There is a shortcut to a default Audacity session on the laptop's desktop. Please do not save over this file. The input level should match the level on the RODECaster. Check that Audacity is going to record the output of the RODECaster before you start recording.

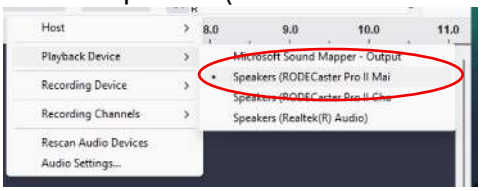
Click on Audio Setup



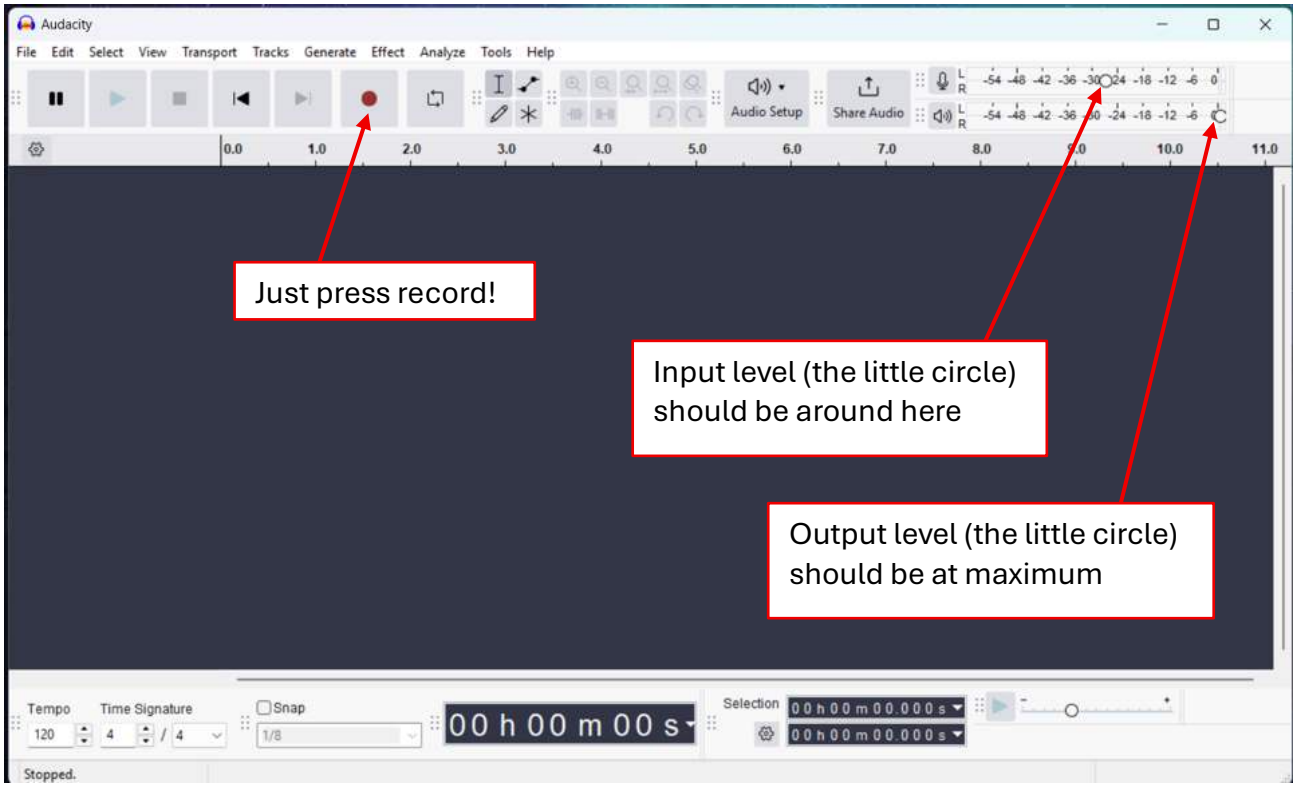
Recording Device should be set to 'Microphone (RODECaster Pro II M'.



Playback Device should be set to 'Speaker (RODECaster Pro II Mai'.

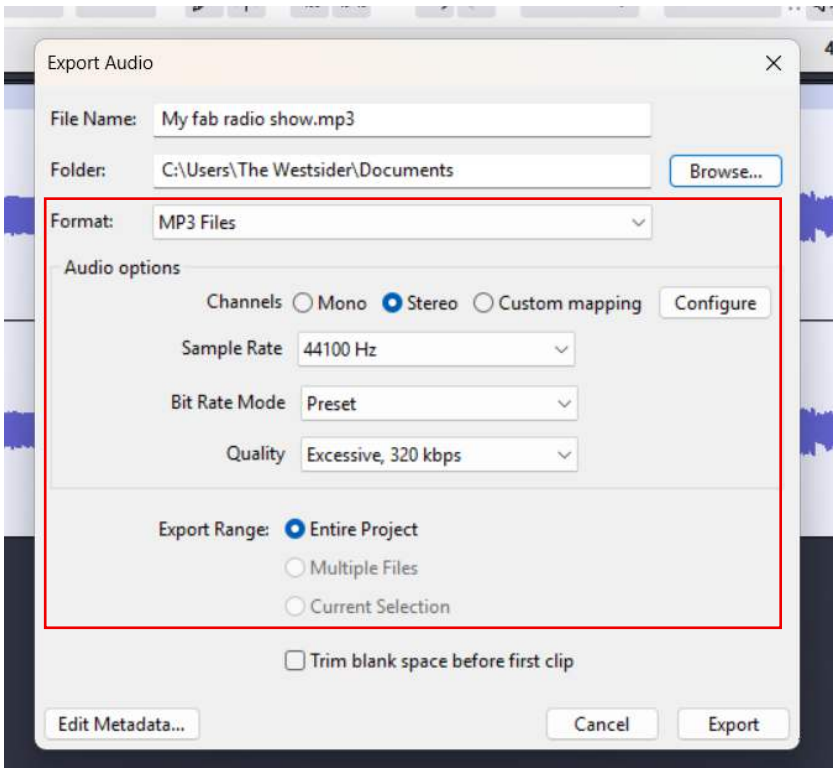


When you are ready to record your show, just press the record button.



A track will be created automatically, and the audio waveform should appear. Avoid starting and stopping the recording. You will be able to trim the start and end or edit out mistakes afterwards. Once you have finished recording, play the file back to make sure it sounds as expected. You should hear playback through the RODECaster headphones or the studio speakers (if the mic channels are all turned down). If all ok, export the audio and save it to a USB or upload it to the station Google Drive for review and scheduling.

Go to File > Export audio and make sure the Audio options are set as below:

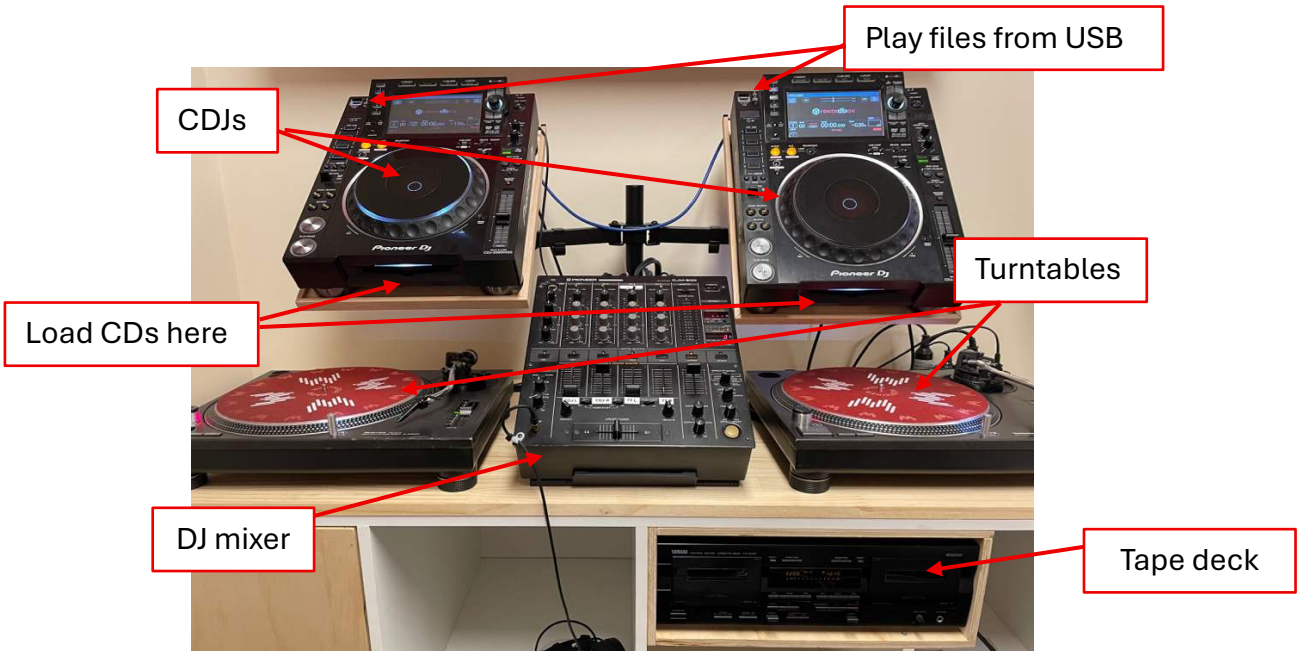


Submitting a finished show file

Some shows may need to be edited to be a set length. Check with the Program Manager before recording your show. Finished show files will be too big to email. They will need to be either delivered by USB stick or upload method explained in your training to the Program Manager who will then upload to our radio.co account to play at a scheduled time.

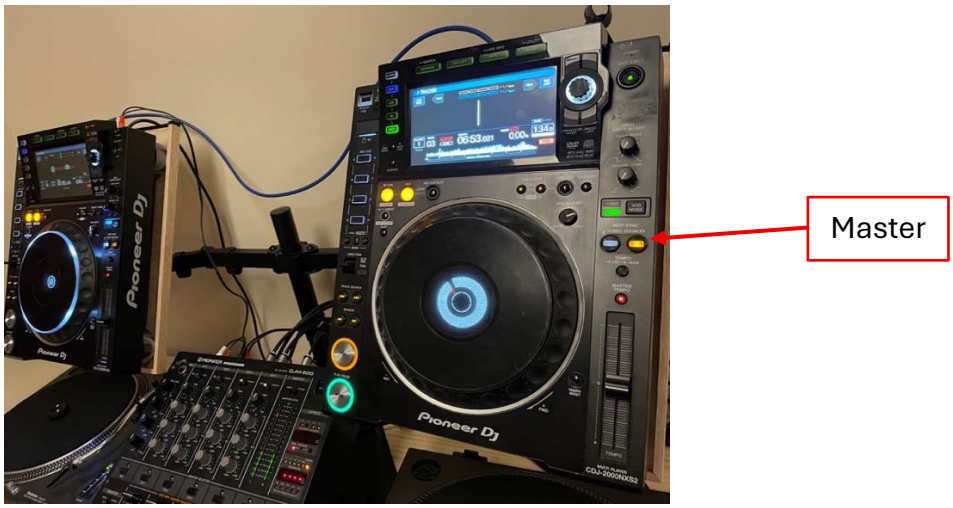
The DJ equipment

There are two CDJs, two turntables, tape deck and a DJ mixer. The audio signal from the DJ setup goes through a Mac mini computer to convert it from analogue to digital and into the USB-C 2 input of the RODECaster. As a result, there is a short but noticeable latency (delay) between the sound you will hear through the DJ headphones and the studio speakers. This is normal. If the audio is not getting to the RODECaster DJ channel, check the troubleshooting section of this manual.



CDJs

The CDJs can play CDs or audio files from a USB stick or SD card. The two CDJs are linked together via an ethernet cable. Make sure only one CDJ is set to master if you want to be able to match tempos between the two.



Audio files on one USB or SD card can be played from either CDJs. Refer to the Pioneer CDJ-2000NXS2 manual here.

Turntables

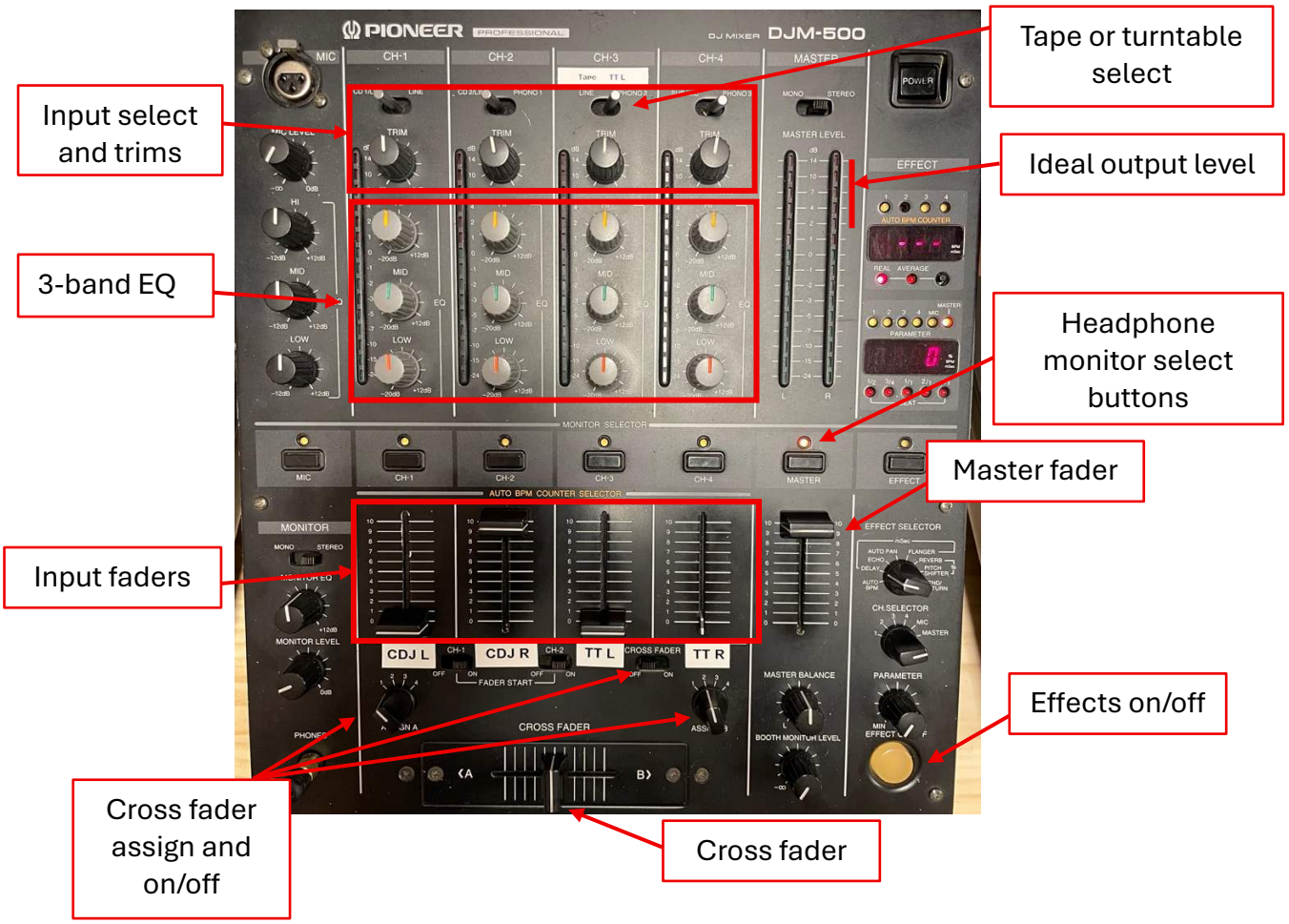
The turntables are industry standard Technics SL-1200MK2. Please be careful with the stylus (needles) as they are very delicate

Tape deck

Either side of the tape deck can be used for playback. Tape to tape recording can be done for making copies, or the tape playback can be recorded on the computer. The tape deck is connected to channel 3 input of the DJ mixer. There is a switch at the top pf channel 3 to select either Tape or Turntable Left (TT L).

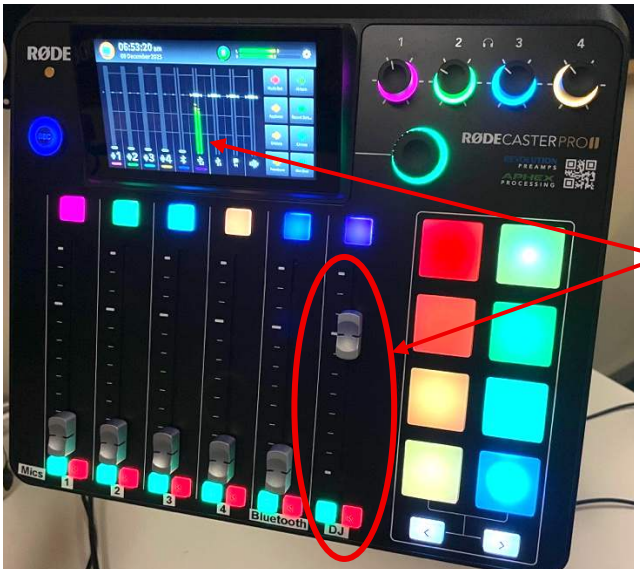
DJ Mixer

The Pioneer DJM-500 mixer inputs are labelled from left to right: CDJ L, CDJ R, and TT L, TT R for the turntables. Note that TT L can also be used for the tape deck. These input faders route signal to the DJ mixer master fader. It's normal to set them to 10 (maximum) when playing audio. Try to keep the master level tickling into the red at around +4 to 7dB. The input select and trims should be as in the image below.



The cross fader can be switched in/out and assigned to any combination of input channels. In addition to the 3-band EQ on all channels, there is also an effects section

that can be switched on/off. Audio from the master fader is converted to a digital stream by the Mac mini and sent into the DJ channel on the RODECaster.



Troubleshooting. Help! I'm stuck!

I can't hear anything

Is it turned on? (It's worth asking.)
If you can't hear any audio from a channel and the fader is up, check if it is muted (the red speaker button at the bottom). Also check if the RODECaster speaker knob is turned down or muted (the little speaker icon at the top of the screen will be red if they are muted). Push and hold the speaker volume knob to mute/unmute the studio speakers.

Speaker volume is shown in green.
Red **X** means the speakers are muted. Orange means the speakers are muted because a mic channel is up.

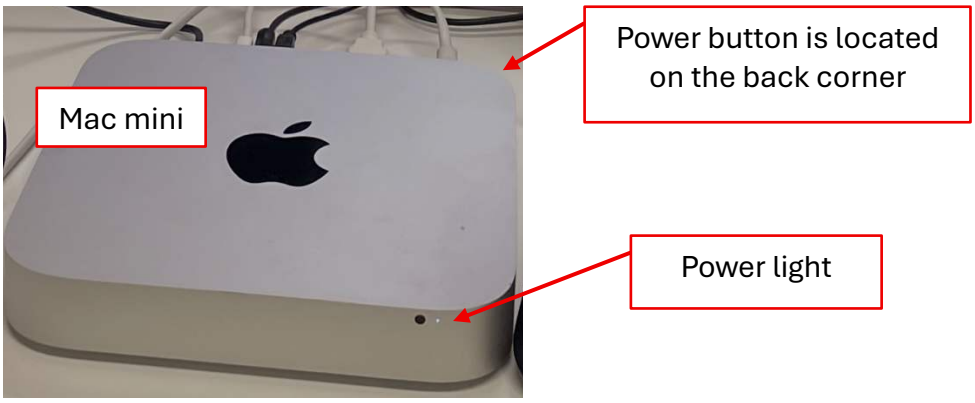


Remember if a mic channel fader is up, the speakers will automatically mute to avoid feedback. Use the headphones to monitor audio. The volume controls for headphones 1 to 4 are across the top of the RODECaster.

I can't hear the DJ setup through the RODECaster or speakers

Turn up the DJ fader on the RODECaster and turn the mic faders down to unmute the speakers. If there is audio showing on the DJ mixer master level and the DJ fader is up on the RODECaster but there is still no sound, try restarting the Mac mini computer. The Mac mini is the silver box on the back corner of the table, to the right of the DJ setup. There is a power button on the back right corner. Hold it down for 10 seconds until the

power light on the front is off. Wait 30 seconds and then press the power button once. Wait 3-4 minutes for it to restart and automatically load the audio pass-through app. Audio should then appear on the DJ channel of the RODECaster again.



Mic 1 is not coming through Headphones 1

Check to see if any other channels have the green 'listen' button on. Make sure you check the virtual fader channels on the RODECaster screen. Tap on the virtual fader and a little menu will pop up with the  button. Make sure it is turned off.

Read the manual…

The RODECaster online manual and videos are really useful. Scan the QR code on the front panel of the RODECaster. If you are still really stuck, contact the Studio Manager for assistance.

Creating content

How long is your show?

Radio shows tend to be in blocks of 60, 30 or 15 minutes. Make sure you know what the length of your show is going to be before you start to record it. Bear in mind that editing a show can take a lot more time than the length of the show itself.

Mic technique

The mics are directional, that is, they work best at the front (end-on), and not at the side or back. Talk normally into the front of the mic at a distance of a few centimetres. Move the mic stand to where you are comfortable. There is a tilt/rotate adjustment where the mic attaches to the stand. Don't overtighten – it is designed to allow for some movement without becoming loose. Encourage your guests to speak directly into and close to their mic. Make sure their headphones are not so loud that they pull away from the mic.

Maintaining interest

Avoid audible distractions, for example, long gaps of silence, background noise, and don't make comments about technical issues. Keep the flow of your show moving. Remind the listener at regular intervals who you are and what they are listening to.

Live streaming

Live streaming must be pre-arranged with the station/program manager as it requires access to our radio.co account and an interruption to the schedule.

Note that it takes several seconds to transition from the scheduled programming to a live stream.

Glossary

CDJ	Compact Disc player used by DJs
Compressor	A processor that automatically reduces loud audio signals and increases the quieter sounds
Cue	To locate the start of a music track
dB	Decibel – a measure of loudness or audio level. Every 10dB is a doubling of volume.
Ducking	Fading music down while someone is talking
EQ	Equalisation – boosting or cutting certain frequencies
Feedback	Unwanted audio produced when sound from a mic is coming out of the speakers and going back into the mic again causing a feedback loop.
Headset	Headphones that also have a mic mounted on them.
Indent	Same as station ID
Mic	Microphone. A transducer that converts acoustic sound waves into an electric signal.
Outside Broadcast (OB)	A live show produced from outside the studio
Popper stopper	A foam 'sock' for the microphone to prevent plosives (pops or deep thumps) caused when bursts of air hit the microphone by talking. They are also used when outdoors to prevent the low rumble sound of wind passing over the microphone.
Station ID	A short audio segment that tells the listeners what radio station they are listening to
XLR connector	An industry standard 3 pin connector used for audio cables such as mic leads