

Setting Up a Pro-Tools Session



Swansea
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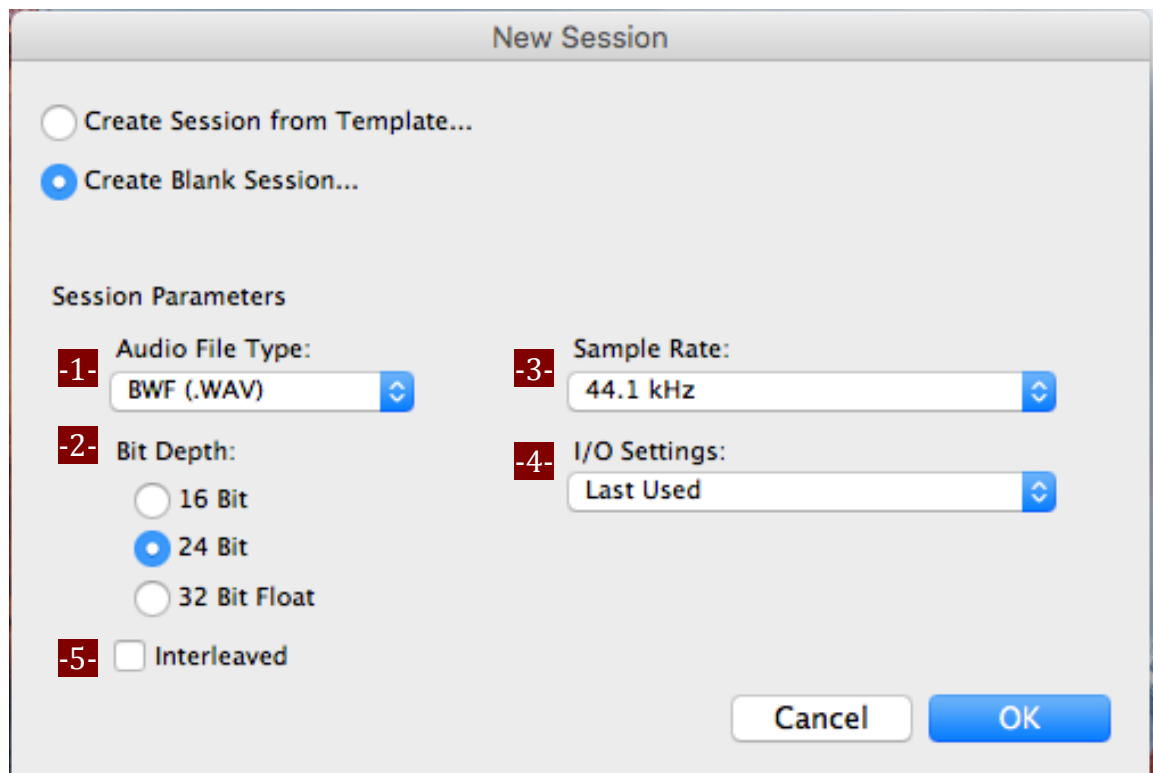
MMusTech Level 4
The Studio Engineer
Handout #2



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Opening A Session



- 1- Here we choose our audio format that we want to record to. Options will include WAV and AIFF (depending on the system, a few others may be available). Use WAV.
- 2- This options lets us chose the Bit Depth (also known as Bit Rate) of the audio files. In others lessons we will have covered the pros and cons of different Bit Depths. Use 24 Bit.
- 3- Here we choose our sample rate. Once again, in other lectures, we will have covered the differences between different sample rates. If you are recording for audio use 44.1kHz or one of its multiples. If recording for film or DVD then use 48kHz or one of its multiples.
- 4- This option is where we can choose I/O (Inputs and Outputs) settings. This is useful when working on a laptop that may find itself plugged into different equipment on a regular basis. In regards to Studio 1 at the BBC, it is *normally* advisable to go with Last Used.
- 5- Interleaved decides whether we are going to record stereo tracks as stereo files or as 2 mono files. I'd advise to not interleave the files until you actually need to record them interleaved for a particular reason. Leave box unchecked.

Controls / Options Overview

Left Section



Snap Select



This box lets us choose the type of snapping we would like when selecting areas. **Slip** is for free selection, essentially not having snap on (the most common option). **Grid** snaps to the currently selected grid (this can be bars, min/secs, frames, etc.).

You will find yourself switching between Slip and Grid quite often, but consider slip to be the normal setting.

Zoom Control



This box gives us control over the zoom functions within Pro-Tools. The arrows either side move the view of the screen to the left or right along the timeline.

Of the two boxes on the top row, the left one controls the waveform zoom and the right one controls the track zoom. Clicking the top half or bottom half will zoom in or out respectively. Play around with these to get an idea of how they work.

The bottom row of numbers stores a preset zoom level. 1 will be all the way out and 5 will be all the way in; the others are levels in between.

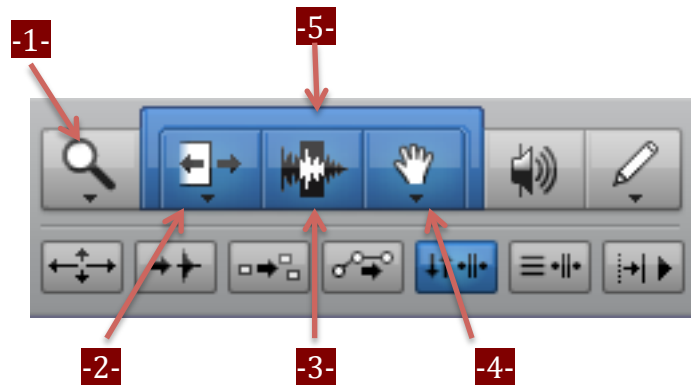
Instead of using these zoom controls I tend to use the shortcuts of:

CMD+[= Zoom Out

CMD+] = Zoom In

Central Section

The central section consists of two rows. The top row contains a selection of cursor options and the bottom row contains a number of display and view options. The bottom row will be covered in a later session.



-1- Zoom Tool

This tool turns the cursor into a magnifying glass that, when clicked, will zoom in. Holding ALT while clicking will zoom out.

-2- Trim Tool

This tool allows you to trim the ends of a clip to remove unwanted sections of audio (or restore previously trimmed audio).

-3- Selection Tool

This tool turns the pointer into an area select tool. Fairly straightforward here.

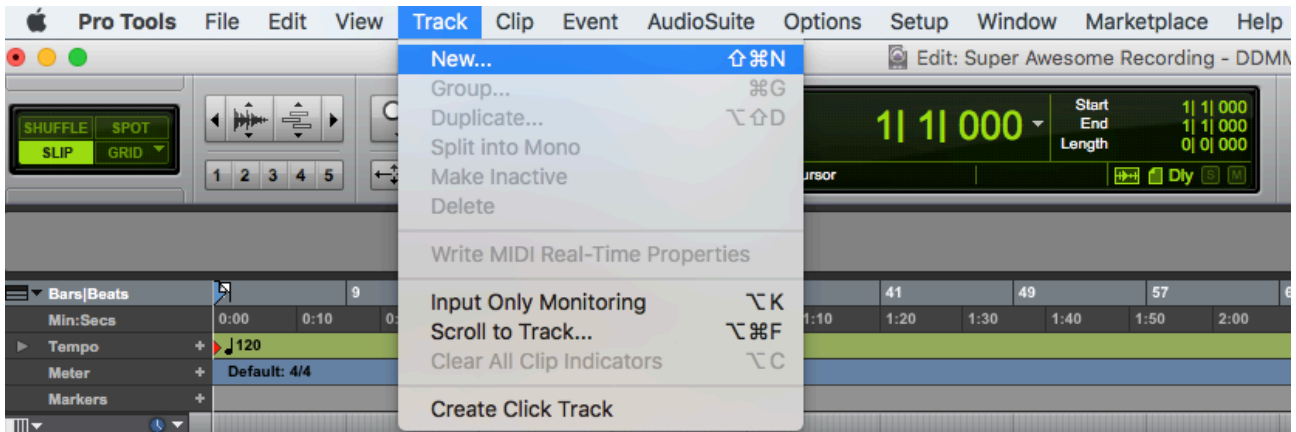
-4- Hand Tool

This tool turns the pointer into a hand that selects audio clips. This is the tool you need to use if you want to drag audio files around the edit window.

-5- Smart Tool

This is the tool you will have selected for the most part. This tool changes the function of the pointer depending on where the cursor is in relation to the audio clip. Spend some time with this tool to get used to the areas where it changes and what it changes to when it is there.

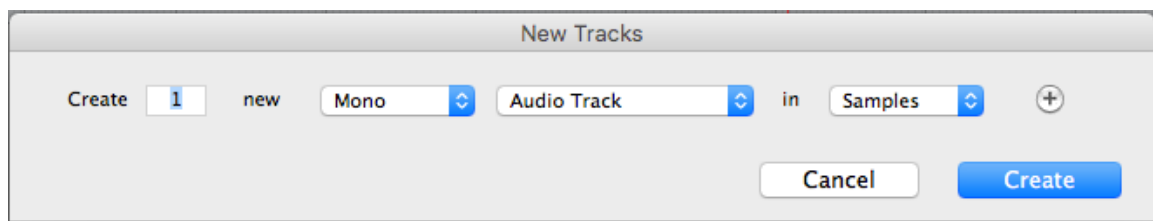
Creating a New Track



To create a new track you can either go through the menus by clicking *Track* on the menu bar and then clicking *New*. An easier way is to use the shortcut:

CMD+shift+N

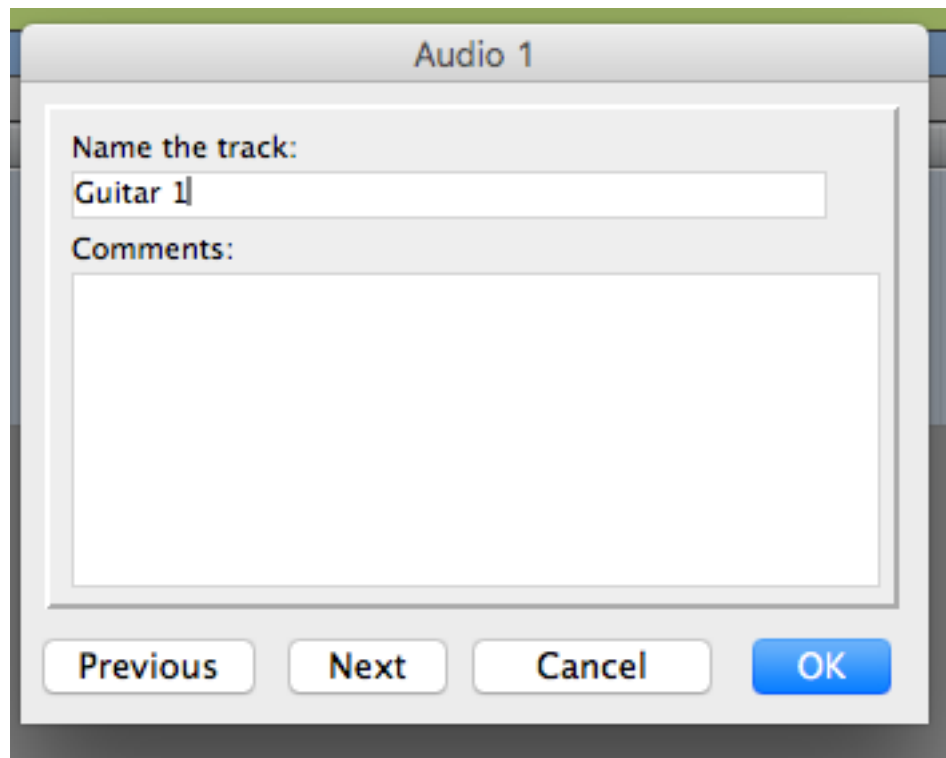
You will then be presented with the following box:



The settings shown above are what you will need to create a new mono audio track; which is what you will usually be creating for the first few sessions. We will go over the other track types available when as and when we need to use them.



With your new audio track created you should name it. ProTools normally names the tracks for you as "*Audio #*" where # is the number successive to the previous one created. It is good practice to name the tracks as you create them as the filenames of new recordings are named after their track. To rename a track simply double click its name in the white box.



Once you double click the track name you are presented with the box above. It's all quite self-explanatory; previous/next will move to the next track in the list (quite handy if you've just created 24 new audio tracks).

You can put anything you wish into the comments section. My personal preference is to type in details of the recording setup for this channel, in-case I ever need to go back to it then I can refresh my memory on how I recorded the audio onto it.

Click OK to commit to renaming the track.



The Channel Strip I/O



Input Select

Clicking this box will give you a list of available inputs. In Studio 1 this list related to the outputs of the MOTU interface, which in-turn relates to the routing buttons on the desk (these are set to correspond to the channel number, so channel 1 on the desk will be input 1 here).

Output Select

Similar to the input select box, this will give you a list of available outputs. These will be sent back to the desk and will appear on the long faders (the white ones).

*Bus Routing

In these 2 options you will encounter inputs and outputs labeled as Busses (e.g. Bus 1-2, Bus 27-28 etc.). These are very useful functions that we will cover in later sessions. Ignore them for now.

That's about it for what we need to know about ProTools in order to set up a recording session.

If you want to learn ProTools in your own time, feel free. There are plenty of good tutorials on pro-tools, and even an app called "Learn Pro Tools in 12 weeks" which is actually a really good way of learning the software.