

Solving the Error 50 Problem When Importing a File

Back when the Mackie HDR/MDR series hard disk recorders were new, importing files into a project from an external source almost always worked without a hitch. One exception was that attempting to import a WAV file created in Cakewalk failed, reporting Error 50. This was apparently due to some data in the file header area that Cakewalk used and the Mackie software didn't understand. The common solution was to open the file using another audio editing program that didn't put anything special in the header, save it, and then import the "cleaned" file. Audacity was the usual recommendation since it was free and produced a file that the HDR could accept, and files were almost always 16-bit, one of Audacity's default file export formats.

A lot has changed in the 15 years since the HDR software was last updated to accommodate broadcast wave files. Now just about everyone uses 24-bit files, and Sound Forge, my stereo editor of choice, produces files that are compatible with the HDR, so I assumed everybody's editor did, too.

I recently received a note from a user who had some 24-bit files that were recorded from a digital mixer that gave him the Error 50 when he tried to import them into an HDR project, and he asked if there was a solution. I suggested the Audacity suggestion, but this prompted me to check it out myself and see if it still worked.

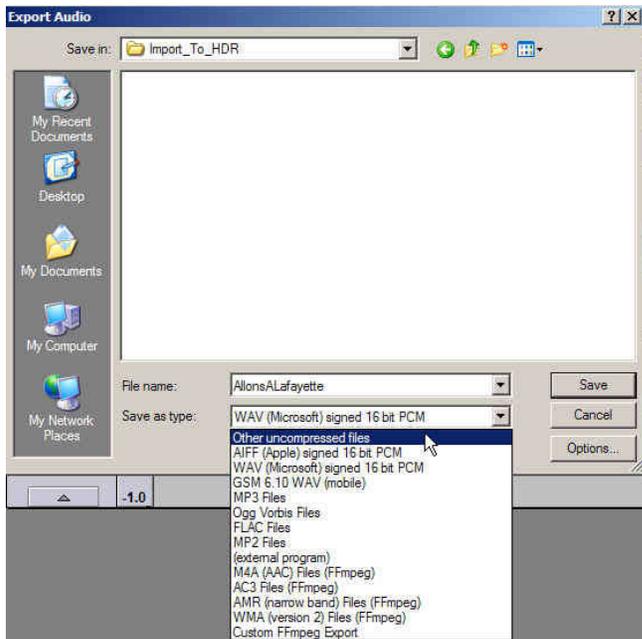
I recorded a 24-bit mono and a 24-bit stereo file using a TASCAM handheld recorder because it was handy, and when I tried importing those files into an HDR project, darn if I didn't get the Error 50. So, following my own suggestion, I opened them in the current version of Audacity, but when I went to export the file (in Audacity, you must "export" in order to get a complete WAV file), I was offered the options of exporting either a 16-bit or 32-bit (that's a file format, not really 32 bits of audio resolution) WAV or AIF file; 24-bit wasn't on the menu. So as not to lose 8 bit of resolution, I chose the 32-bit WAV file option, attempted to import it into an HDR project, and again got the Error 50 message.

Next, I tried importing the files into ProTools (I have PT 10) as clips, then exporting them from the clip list. Same problem. Finally, as a sanity check, I tried "converting" the TASCAM recorder's files using Sound Forge, and those imported without any complaints.

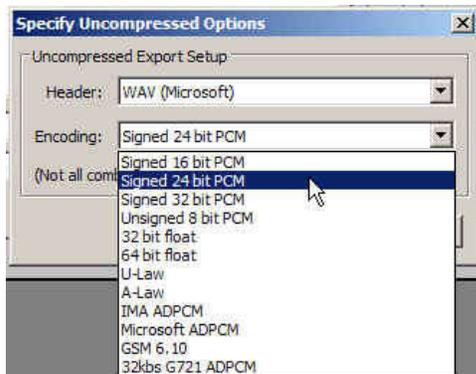
I took a closer look at Audacity's File Export options, and instead of taking one of the default choices for file format, I selected "Other" in the Export dialog box, and from there selected the 24-bit WAV format. Using that setting to export the

files, the HDR imported them without error. I also exported them as 24-bit AIF files, and that worked as well.

So, if you encounter problems when importing a file into an HDR project, Audacity is still a viable program to use as a “format converter,” but you need to take the extra step of specifying an “other” file type to export. Here are screenshots of the Audacity Export Audio dialog that will get you there:



Step 1 - Select type as "Other uncompressed files"



Step 2 - Select "Signed 24-bit PCM"

The format you select here will stick as the exported format until you change it, so that when you go back to the Export Audio dialog box and click SAVE, the exported files will be 24-bit PCM. If you click the OPTIONS button, you can choose another format.

Some reminders, in case you've never imported a file, or it's been too long and you've forgotten how:

- You can't import a file directly from your computer. You first need to copy it from the computer to a folder on one of the HDR's drives, either internal or external. Be sure you remember where you've put it! Putting it in a folder under the Project folder named Imported will save a little disk space and make it easy to find.
- Importing a file only places its name on the Regions list. You then have to place it on the track where you want it. On the HDR, you can do this simply by opening the Regions List panel at the right side of the screen, locating the file name, and dragging it into the project. On the MDR, it's a little more complicated since you have to work with the LCD menu. Start with the TRACK/EDIT menu, switch to Page 2, select Import Audio, and work your way through the files until you find what you're looking for. You select the track where you want it to go by using the track-arming button.
- When you import a stereo files, it appears on the Regions list as two files, Filename-L and Filename-R, representing the left and right channels. Since the HDR doesn't support stereo tracks, you need to drag both the left and right files into separate tracks in the project.

I hope this gets you out of a jam.

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