

Designing Web Audio, by Josh Beggs & Dylan Thede
Reviewed by Sandra D. Dobbs

Rating: 4

After trying to avoid it for too long, I accepted a request for audio on a website. I thought I'd take a shot at it though I know nothing about creating audio files. My biggest question was what is the standard that would play today on all computers? Going online resulted in too much old information, so I broke down and bought a book.

Designing Web Audio is great for someone who knows nothing about audio/video. The copyright date is 2001 and I thought their information would be current enough to suit the average web user who is probably using 2001 technology. Though my main interest was audio, the information about video just increased my knowledge. It was helpful getting background information about what audio/video really is and how it is created. My conclusion from the book was that MIDI was the format that would play anywhere. I tried Anvil Studio for the conversion. This is a pretty slick product but it wasn't easy and the quality was lost. My version of Windows Media player created a playlist with an .asx extension that was not backward compatible to lower versions of Media Player. Real Audio seemed to be the best alternative if you have a streaming media server. But even without, I found computers that did not have the proper file extensions. And I didn't want visitors to have to download anything in order to hear this. So Flash was not a choice as well.

My conclusion about audio on the web is that download times are still too long as there are still many people out there with dial-up access. Player inconsistencies create unreliable results. But Designing Web Audio gave me the information I needed to try things and I am still playing with this audio idea. I now have a better understanding of what audio is all about and I may even try some video. And having done that, explain to my client why audio is a bad idea.

Sandra D. Dobbs
8/2003

This article is solely the responsibility of the author and does not necessarily express the views of the Philadelphia Area Computer Society, its board of directors, or anyone else.