APPENDIX B: MULTI-TRACK RECORDING AND MIXDOWNS

If you use more than one microphone channel to make your recording, the Zoom H6 will create separate audio files for each channel. Each file is called a **track**. This process is known as **multi-track recording**. In order to listen to all the tracks at the same time, you will need to create a **mixdown**. A mixdown combines each of the tracks into one file.

An example of this can be found in popular music. When you listen to a song on the radio, you hear a *mixdown* of all the instruments that were recorded played back at the same time. However, you could visit the studio and ask to listen to only the bass *track*. A multi-track recording allows you to adjust the **mix**, or the volume and effects on each track of your recording.

This appendix will help you decide when and how to mixdown your files. It will also help you develop a preservation plan for tracks and mixdowns.

CHOOSING A MIXDOWN OPTION

You can either create a mixdown on your Zoom H6 recorder or using Audacity. If the initial tracks are saved in one location, you can make a mixdown at anytime. Creating a mixdown on your Zoom recorder is more convenient, but poses some serious risks.

Mixdown Options			
Zoom H6		**Audacity**	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
● More convenient; ● Quick and easy; ● Simple workflow.	● Risk of distortion; ● Risk of losing clarity.	● More control over mix; ● Improved clarity.	● Less convenient; ● More time consuming; ● More complex workflow.

To create a mixdown using Audacity, upload your files to your computer as described in <u>Step 7: Back up Your Recording</u>. You will then need to <u>import</u> your files and <u>mix them</u> before <u>exporting</u> a new mixdown file.

HOW TO CREATE A MIXDOWN USING THE ZOOM H6

To create a mixdown using the Zoom recorder, follow the steps below:

1. Press the **menu button** on the right side of your Zoom H6;
2. Use the **menu switch** to scroll four steps down to "Project Menu". Press the **menu switch** to select;
3. Use the **menu switch** to scroll down to "Mixdown" and select;
4. Press the **menu switch** to choose "Select Format";
5. Double check that your format is set to WAV96kHz/24bit. If not, select this option and press the **menu button** to return one step;
6. Scroll down to "Execute" and select this option. Your screen will display a "Now Processing" dialog box. This may take several minutes or more with a longer recording. The dialog box will disappear when the mixdown is created.

Written by: Nick Ubels, Professional Experience Student
Indigitization Program, 2019

You can find the mixdown file in the same folder as your individual tracks. It will be named after the folder where it is located with a three-digit number added to the end. For example, "ZOOM001_ST001.Wav".

PRESERVATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR MULTITRACK RECORDINGS

It is important to consider whether you want to save a master of your individual tracks, or only your mixdown.

Advantages of saving Preservation Masters of your individual tracks include:

- If you are making language recordings, individual tracks allow you to isolate the speech of a speaker more easily;
- If you are recording music or other performances, you can isolate a part. Future users may also be able to remix or reuse this recording in their creative work;
- **It is not possible to create individual tracks from a mixdown**. By keeping master copies of your individual tracks, you are keeping your options open;
- You can always make a new mixdown using your individual track masters if there are any problems with your first mixdown (e.g. clipping, distortion).

Disadvantages of saving Preservation Masters of your individual tracks include:

- You will need more storage space. Each individual track will take up the same storage space as your mixdown. This means that you will need to multiply your required storage space by each individual track, including the mixdown. Storing a recording with five microphones will require **six times** the space of only a mixdown;
- Individual tracks could become separated from each other if not stored and moved carefully.

Ultimately, the decision of whether to save individual track masters comes down to your context and community. If you are recording language or performance and have the resources to store individual tracks, doing so will allow for more use options in the future. But storing individual track masters requires a significant increase in storage space that may be beyond the budget of your project.