



## **Recording the Spoken Word**

There are many important considerations when recording the spoken word. In this article we explore what is required to achieve high quality recordings of your own voice.

### **The most important thing of all..**

In order to achieve a sound which is natural and listenable the most important factor is consistency. The volume, pitch, tempo and tonal quality of the speaking voice should remain as consistent as possible throughout the recording. This is especially true if the recordings are done in more than one session over a period of time. The key factors which can create consistency in a recording are:

### **Microphones**

It is impossible to stress how important the microphone is in achieving high quality recordings. A recording studio will usually have a wide choice of microphones but it is also possible to record at home in a quiet space using a good quality condenser mic which can be bought or hired for a reasonable price. A clip-on mic can produce very good results because it is worn by the speaker at a constant distance from the mouth meaning a more consistent tone and level in the recording, and less problems with pops and sibilance (see below).

### **Placement**

Good microphone placement can avoid unwanted sounds such as poor room acoustics, sounds of breathing, lips and script which can be very difficult to remove later on. Use headphones to experiment with the distance between mic and mouth to find the an even sound quality. The best results are usually found between 15 to 25cm. Try to make sure that there are no unwanted echoes or reflections from the room as this will affect the clarity of the recording. Once you have found the right distance try to keep it the same each time you record. The letter P along with T and B can cause pops in the recording known as plosives. The letter S and Sh sounds can cause sibilance which is distortion caused by the hissing breath when pronouncing these sounds. Pops and sibilance can be prevented by arranging the mic slightly to one side or above the mouth or by using a pop shield - a thin membrane placed between the mouth and the mic.

### **Starting to Record**

Try to find a comfortable consistent sitting position which enables you to read the script without changing the mic distance or direction of the mouth as these will affect the tonal quality of the recording. Before you start It's a good idea to read for 5 minutes or so to allow your voice to warm up. If you make a mistake or cough or hear some unwanted background noise, just go back to the start of the sentence or paragraph and read it again - the mistakes can be edited out at a later stage. Try to avoid putting your scripts on a table - a music stand is a much better option - and the sounds of turning the pages can also be edited out during mixing.

### **That's it..**

Recording with the spoken word doesn't need a studio or expensive gear to achieve really good results. You need a quiet space, a decent microphone and time to experiment..

**info@silenciomusic.co.uk**  
**www.silenciomusic.co.uk**