

PromptBuddy Audio Production Widget User Guide

November 22, 2011

Version 2.0

About PromptBuddy

PromptBuddy is the voiceover artist's new best friend!

It's a simple audio recorder which:

- Allows simple start/stop recording for multiple files
- Automatically renames each file according to the actual script

Record 30 prompts in under 15 minutes
No more trimming or renaming files – they're ready to send to your client!

PromptBuddy has been created by Wells Park Communications, a UK media company with ten years experience in producing corporate audio programmes and podcasts. PromptBuddy is by broadcasters, for broadcasters.

Getting and running with the free trial version of PromptBuddy

You can download the trial version of PromptBuddy (it's fully featured, and unlimited for seven days) from <http://www.wellspark.co.uk/promptbuddy.htm>

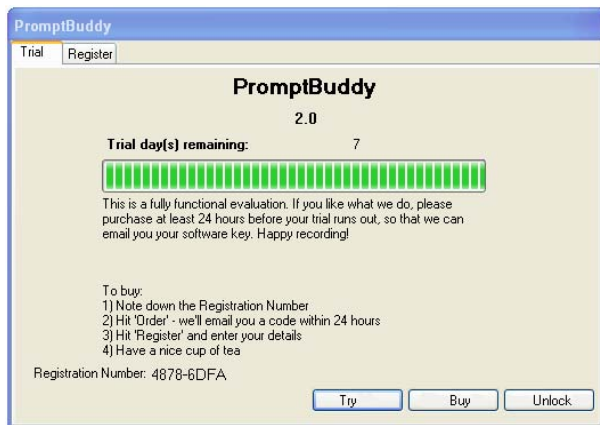
Save it onto your computer wherever you fancy. There's no installation process – simply run it directly with a single click.



promptbuddy 2.0.exe

It's often easiest to put it straight onto your Desktop.

Double-click 'PromptBuddy.exe' to open the program.



You'll see the Trial screen, which will show you how many days free trial you have left.

Hit "Try" to play with PromptBuddy during your trial period.

Hit "Buy" to give us some of your hard earned cash and enjoy PromptBuddy forever.

Hit "Unlock" when you have bought your license, to enter your Unlock Code.

Getting ready to record in PromptBuddy

When you launch PromptBuddy (if you've bought it) or when you hit "Try" (if you're still in your trial period), the first thing you'll see is the main PromptBuddy screen. Don't worry – it's not big!



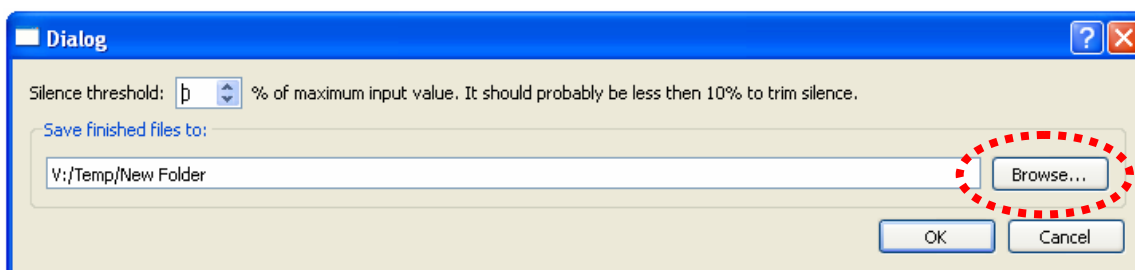
There are two simple things we need to do before we start recording:

- 1) Decide where to put the finished recordings
- 2) And select a script

We are going to select a directory in which to put the finished recordings first.

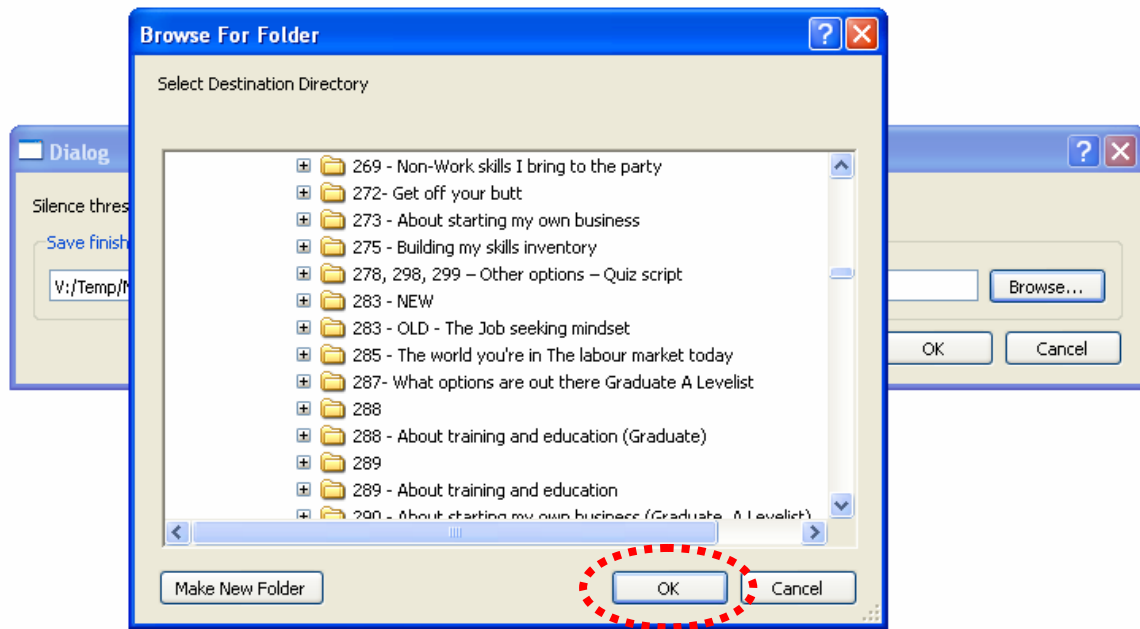
Hit "Settings". The Settings window will open.

Hit the "Browse" button...



and select the folder into which you would like your finished recordings to be saved.

Hit OK to select a folder...



...and then OK again to close the Settings window.

Now it's time to choose a script.

From the main PromptBuddy Audio Production Widget window, hit Browse:

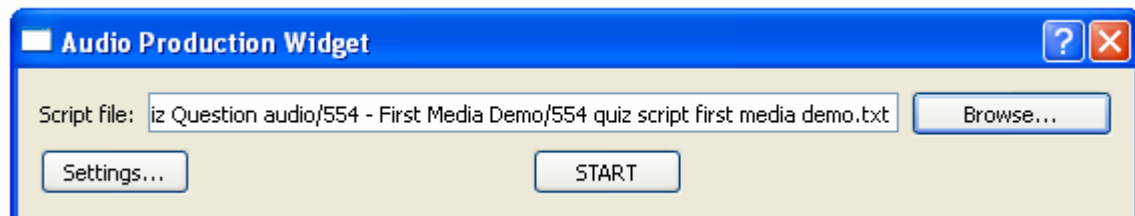


...and select a script file. The default folder is already set to the destination folder you chose.

Your script file must be a text file (ending in the suffix '.txt').

Most word processors (for example Microsoft Word) will allow you to save script files in this text format.

Select the script and hit OK. You'll see your script file in the main window:



You're ready to start recording!

Before you start, note that PromptBuddy takes its audio input from whichever source you have set in your computer's Sound Settings. If necessary, go to Control Panel > Sound to ensure that your

recording input is set to a professional input device (rather than, for example, your laptop's built-in microphone).

Ready? Hit "START". We're so excited, we put it in capitals!

Recording!

You'll see your first prompt on screen.



You'll also see the big blue "Idle" button.

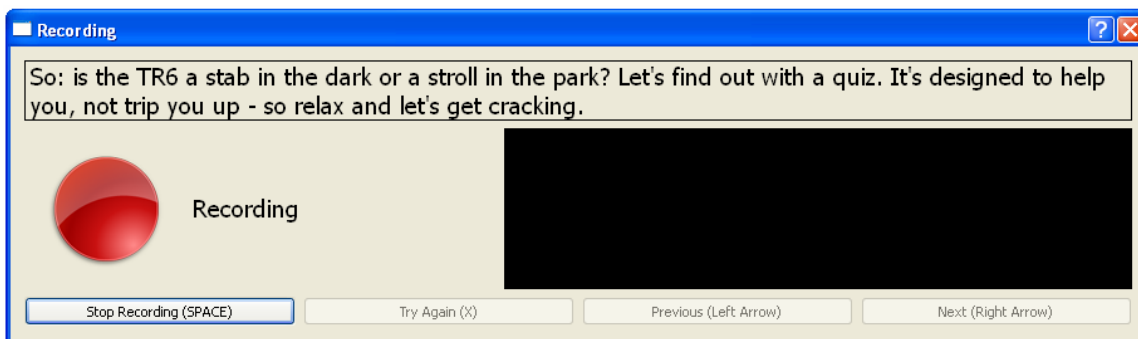
And you'll see the black waveform space – it's empty at the moment.

There are four buttons you can press:

- Start recording (Space bar) – this will start recording your prompt
- Try Again (X key) – greyed out, because you haven't recorded yet
- Previous (Left Arrow) – this will select the previous prompt (this will, of course, not work on your first prompt; but can be used later on to move backwards in your script)
- Next (Right Arrow) – this will select the next prompt if you want to bypass the one displayed

Let's do some recording! Remember, you want to start speaking the moment you hit the Space bar. Get comfortable in front of the microphone and hit the Space bar.

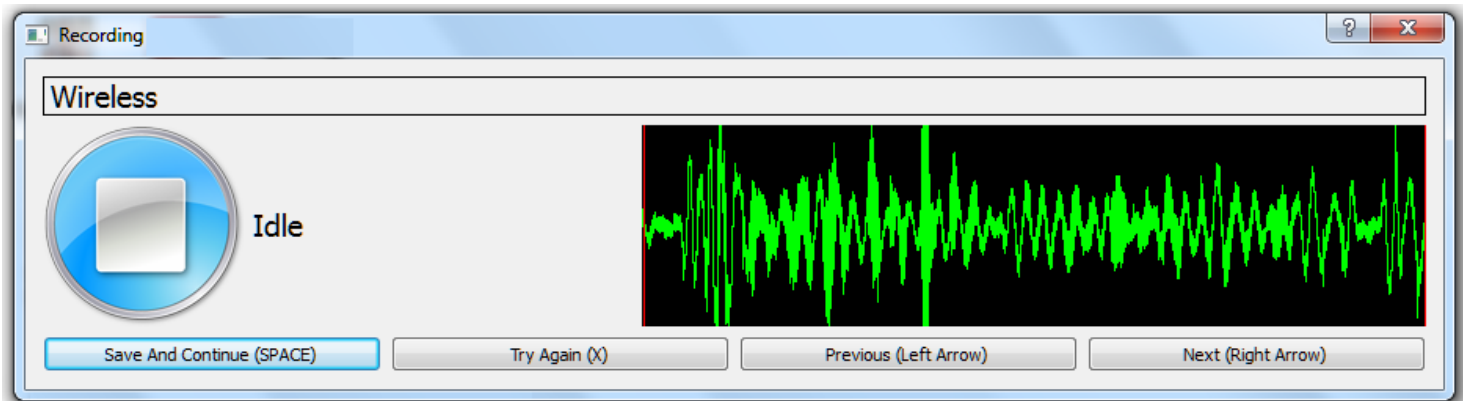
The blue "Idle" icon will change to a red "Recording" icon.



Now speak the script.

And hit the Space bar to stop recording.

You'll see that the blue "Idle" icon is back, but now you have a waveform in the waveform window.



- If you're happy with your performance, hit the Space bar again to Save the file and continue.
- If you're not happy with it, perhaps because:
 - You made a mistake (words, tone etc.)
 - You left too long a gap at the start or finish
 - The waveform peaked...no problem. Get yourself comfortable, maybe practice, and hit the X key to try again. As soon as you hit the X key, the recorder will start again.
- If you want to give up on this prompt, without recording it, and move to the next one, hit the right arrow (Next).

When you're done, you will be shown the next prompt, and so on.

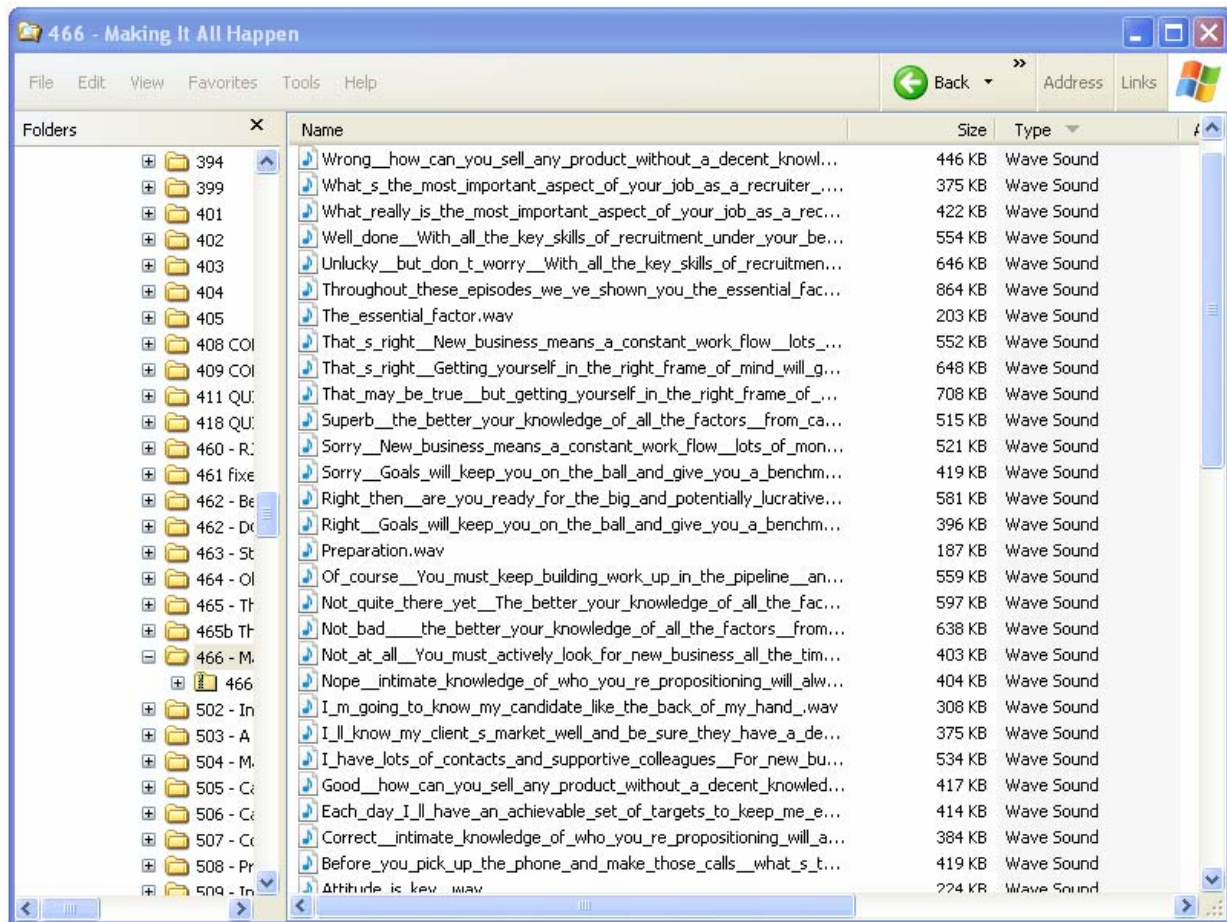
It may take a couple of test runs for you to get familiar with the process, but **you will soon find that, clicking on the Space bar alone, you can breeze through fifty prompts in well under 15 minutes!**

When the entire script is finished, the main PromptBuddy screen will show without any more prompts.

Now for the magic.

Open the folder where you chose to put your finished files...

All your recordings (saved in .wav format) have been automatically named according to their contents.

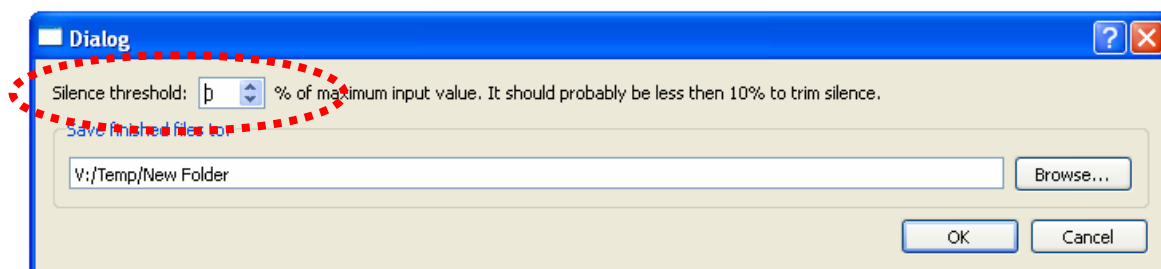


They're completely ready to send to a client, or convert to another format in your favourite batch-conversion program.

Extra Functions

PromptBuddy also includes a basic threshold trimmer, useful for close mic work when there is some background noise.

To use it, hit 'Settings'. You will see an option to select a Silence Threshold – usually somewhere around 2% to 4% works best. When set above 0%, PromptBuddy will automatically trim the start and end of each voice file until the gain threshold reaches the chosen level.



Troubleshooting and Error Messages

PromptBuddy has been thoroughly tested on Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7. It shouldn't cause you much trouble at all. The following, however, should answer any problems you may have.

Will PromptBuddy work on any computer?

Your license is valid on one PC only. If you change PCs, no problem - email us at support@wellspark.co.uk and we'll transfer your license over. Easy.

What else do I need?

PromptBuddy runs on even quite basic PCs. Hook up a microphone and an ADC (analogue to digital converter, which takes your mic signal and converts it into digital stuff). That's it: you're in business.

I don't get a waveform!

This is usually because your computer is configured to take input from a source different to your desired input. Open Control Panel and select Sound to ensure that the selected 'Recording Device' is your microphone input.

I get horrible sound quality, and I have a perfectly good microphone!

This caught us out a few times. Again, it is usually because your computer is configured to take input from a built-in (low-quality) microphone instead of a nice professional mic. Open Control Panel and select Sound to ensure that the selected 'Recording Device' is your professional microphone input.

I get an error message saying "No room on device!"

This covers a multitude of sins:

- Your hard drive is full
- A network drive is not properly connected
- Your sound input is badly configured, leading to files which are 0 bytes long

Need more help? Got a problem we don't know about? Email us at support@wellspark.co.uk

Enjoying PromptBuddy?

Yes? Tell us! We'd love to hear your good news.

No? Definitely tell us – we'll do our best to put it right.