

[Tech Topic—Wimba Voice Technical Requirements]

Supported Operating Systems, Browsers and Java Versions

To run the Wimba Voice tools, user computers must have at least 128MB or RAM, have access to the Internet (with at least a 56k modem) and have a sound card, and have microphone and speakers or a microphone/speaker headset attached to the computer.

The following chart summarizes the supported operating systems, browsers and Java run time environments for use of Wimba Voice Tools as of November, 2008. For more current information, visit <http://www.wimba.com/technicalsupport/> and access the technical knowledge base > Wimba voice > system requirements section.

Wimba Voice OS, Browser & Java Requirements		
OS	Browser	Java (JRE)
Windows 2000, XP, Vista	IE 6 or higher, Firefox 1.5 or higher Netscape 7 or higher Mozilla 1.4 or higher	1.4, 1.5 (5.0), 1.6 (6.0) or higher
Mac OSX 10.3, 10.4, 10.5	Safari 1.2 or higher Firefox 1.5 or higher	1.4, 1.5 (5.0) or higher

Other browsers may or may not work. The AOL browser and Opera are NOT supported.

The Setup Wizard

In addition to running a supported OS, browser and JRE, users of Wimba Voice Tools must also have a sound card and attached and properly configured microphone and speakers. To be sure a user’s computer can run the Wimba Voice tools, run the setup wizard at:

<http://palomarvoice.wimba.com/palomarvoice/wizard/launcher.jsp?show=wizard.frames>

Instructors should feel free to place an external link to this wizard within their courses so that students can be sure their computers are capable of using the Voice Tools.

The wizard will insure that the user computer has the software and hardware configured to use the voice tools, and if not, determine what the problem might be and suggest remedies.



The wizard tests for:

- A correctly installed version of the **Java virtual machine** (also called the Java run time environment or JRE). If the user does not have Sun Java installed, it can be installed automatically through the wizard.

Details: If the user chooses to test this independently, or wants to install java manually, follow these instructions:

First, use the following test site to check if you do have a working JVM installation:

<http://www.Java.com/en/download/help/testvm.jsp>

If you're unable to see the Java Applet as described on the page above, you can use the instructions below to install the JVM on your computer.

Windows:

1. Visit the website, <http://www.Java.com>, and click on the "Java Software Download" button.
2. Follow the instructions to install the JVM

Macintosh:

Run the software Update for your operating system:

1. Click on the **Apple** button at the top left
2. Go to **System Preferences**
3. Open **Software Update**
4. Click on the **Check Now** button (Wimba Knowledge Base article 2600-661)

- The user has accepted and trusts the Wimba Voice applet certificate. If the user has never used the voice tools before, or not accepted the Voice Tools applet certificate, she will be prompted to trust the signed applet. The correct response to this prompt is "Always" indicating that applets originating from Wimba will always be trusted. Once the user elects to always prompt the Wimba signed applet, she will not be prompted again.

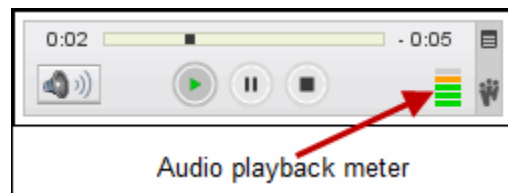
Details: An applet is a small computer program that runs inside a web browser. Because the program is often downloaded over the Internet, your web browser watches over the applet to make sure it doesn't do anything unusual. For an extra measure of security, Wimba Voice applets are digitally signed, meaning that no one can forge Wimba Voice's identity or alter an applet coming from the Wimba Voice server.

Therefore, users must Accept the certificate in order to successfully use the Wimba Voice. When prompted to trust the signed applet, it is recommended that you select to "Always" accept the Wimba certificate. (Wimba Knowledge Base article 2600-636)

- **Connectivity** has been established between the user client computer and the Wimba Voice server.

Details: Wimba Voice files are maintained on a server hosted by Wimba, not Palomar College servers. Therefore connectivity between the Wimba server and clients using the Wimba voice tools must be established. If the connectivity test fails, it is usually because of a personal (or network) firewall blocking the connection, or perhaps anti-virus software running on the client computer. Allowing the Wimba site (*.wimba.com) through the client (or network) firewall should resolve the problem.

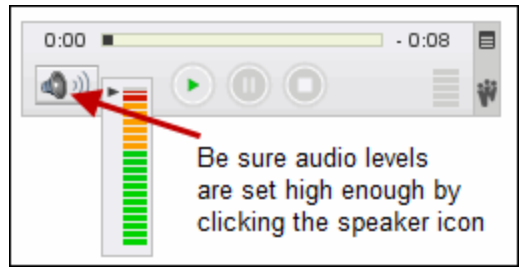
- **Playback.** The playback component of the wizard tests whether the user can hear audio, either through their speakers or headset. A visual representation of the Wimba recorder can be seen, and if audio is being received, the audio meter moves during the test. If the audio meter is moving, but audio cannot be heard, however, then users are helped to set their audio volume properly.



- **Recording.** The record component of the wizard asks the user to record a brief message to be sure the microphone is attached and configured correctly. If not troubleshooting guidelines are provided to assist the user.

Playback and Recording Details. The steps taken to insure that playback and recording is working correctly will vary depending on user computer and OS. The most common are illustrated below. Playback volume must be enabled and set correctly:

- Within the Wimba applet ;



- Within the Operating System;

Windows Vista, click the Start Button > Control Panel > Hardware and Sound > Manage Audio Devices; or simply type the word “Sound” in the Start button search box, and then click on Sound. The Sound dialog box will permit configuration of sound output devices, setting volume levels, and muting/un-muting speakers and microphones.

Windows XP, click Start > Control Panel > Sound, Speech and Audio Devices > Sounds and Audio Devices. The resulting dialog box will allow testing and setting of playback and recording levels.

Mac OS X, click Apple > System Preferences > Sound. Speaker output and Microphone input levels can be set from the resulting dialog box.

- On the physical speakers (or headphones);

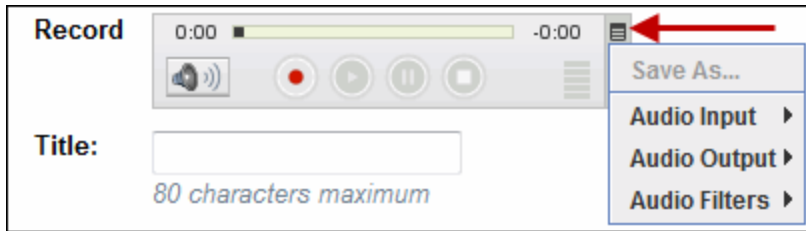
Be sure speakers are attached to your computer, turned on, and volume is turned up.

Microphones and Headsets

Any microphone and speaker or microphone/headset combination you can attach to your computer will work with Wimba Voice Tools. As long as the computer can use the microphone input and speaker/headset output, it will work. Microphone/headset combinations are generally of two types: direct input types, that plug directly into the Mic and Speaker jacks on the computer’s sound card, and USB types, that plug into any USB port.

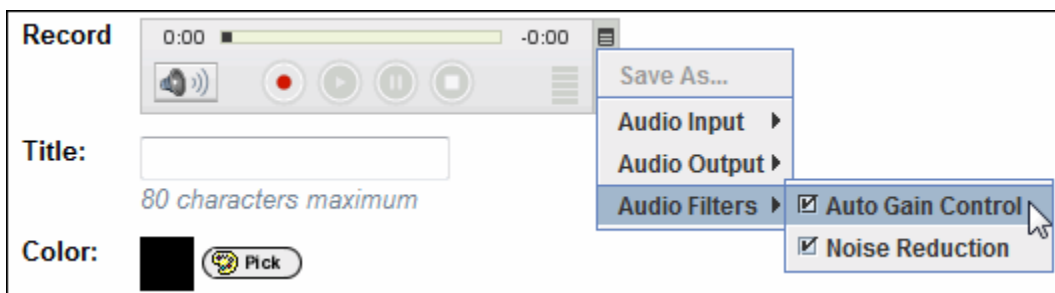
Troubleshooting

In any of the Wimba Voice Tools, if you click the record button, but do not see the volume level meter move, and you are sure your microphone is not muted and that recording levels as set through your computer are at a high enough level, click the menu button within the Wimba Voice Recorder (the small, parallel lines icon in the upper right of the recorder).



Move your mouse over the Audio Input menu item and you will see a sub-menu of all possible audio inputs installed on your computer. Click in the radio button corresponding to the audio input you are using. Then test again to be sure audio input is working correctly. If you are sure you have selected the correct audio input, then the problem is elsewhere, either the microphone itself is muted, or the microphone levels on the computer are set too low.

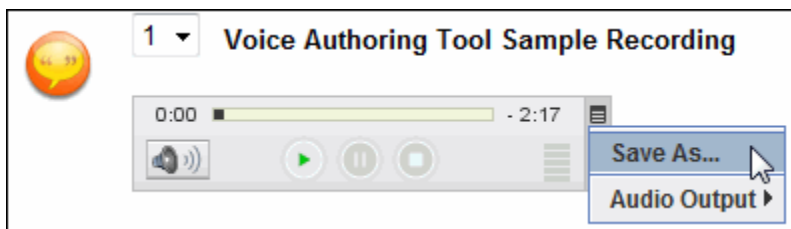
If you notice problems with audio levels in your recording, you might also want to try recording with "Auto Gain Control" turned off. This is controlled from the same Voice Recorder menu button. Click the menu button and hover your mouse over "Audio Filters". When the sub-menu appears, you will see that "Auto Gain Control" is selected. Click in the check box to deselect it and try recording again.



The automatic gain control tends to over-react to recording levels and throttle them down once recording begins. If this produces an unacceptable recording level, turning off Auto Gain Control solves this problem.

Saving a Voice Authoring Recording

Once a voice recording has been placed in a Blackboard course content area, it can be saved locally by clicking the Voice Recorder menu button and selecting Save As...



After selecting Save As... a java Save dialog box will appear. The default Save As file format is WAV. To save in another format, click the drop-down menu in the Files of Type field and select from spx or mp3 format (we recommend mp3). Note, however, that java in use with IE 7 or Firefox 3 behaves oddly in that the Save dialog box will sometimes disappear when the file types field is displayed. This will

undoubtedly be corrected with future versions of java, but it will still work. Select the format you want, then click on your screen anywhere and the Save dialog box will re-appear. Navigate to the location you want to save the file in and click Save.

Technical Support

If you experience difficulty using the Wimba Voice Tools, contact Palomar College Academic Technology for assistance. There are three ways to receive technical support from Academic Technology:

- Submit a technical support request ticket by going to: <http://palomaratrc.helpserve.com>
- Send email to onlineclasses@palomar.edu
- Call (760) 744-1150 ext. 2862 between 7AM and 5PM on Monday through Friday.