

11.1: Introduction

Sample Wrench is a digital audio editor. It allows you to record and import prerecorded sounds. With it you can view the sound in a flexible manner and edit it in a variety of ways using advanced digital signal processing techniques. It also has a built-in macro/control language that allows you to create custom signal editing functions. Sample Wrench will be used to explore a variety of editing processes and special effects, as well as allow further examination of topics introduced earlier in lecture. Prior to the advent of inexpensive yet powerful desktop computers, the capabilities of a program such as Sample Wrench would've required racks of specialized equipment. In fact, a few decades ago some of the functions available in Sample Wrench were simply not available to audio and recording engineers in any form.

While Sample Wrench is available for use in the on-campus lab, you may wish to download the program for your home use. The demo version will do everything the normal version does except that it will not allow you to record or save sound files. You can, however, open existing sound files, view and edit them, and also listen to them. To download the demo, go to <http://www.dissidents.com> and follow the links to Audio Downloads. Select "Sample Wrench" (**not** Sample Wrench XE). This will program will run under any recent version of Windows, from 95 up. A full installation will need less than 10 Meg of hard drive space. If the sound files are kept small, it will run happily with as little as 64 Meg of RAM.

The first order of business with any reasonably sophisticated tool is to get to know your way around it. This is true whether you're working with a new digital oscilloscope, a distortion analyzer, or yes, a digital audio editor. Sample Wrench is a fairly deep and specialized program and a haphazard "diving in" is not necessarily the best to familiarize yourself with it. There are many aspects of the program that may be new to you, particularly if you are not a musician (particularly a musician familiar with electronic music production).

This tutorial will show you most of what you need to know to get started. The standard install includes a variety of sounds using the .WAV format that you can use for further exploration. You may also wish to load, view, and edit other sounds that you may have. Finally, it will be useful to record a short sentence of your own voice for future lab work.

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