Troubleshooting Microphone Setup for Audio Commenting in MyCompLab and MyLiteratureLab

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Overview of Microphone Setup for Audio Commenting

The My Audio Comment feature works with a built-in microphone, headset, or other speaker/microphone combination that is compatible with a PC or Mac for general use.

If you are new to microphones, you might want to do a bit of research before purchasing one. There is a wealth of information online, and another source of information is your favorite electronics store. Some considerations when buying a microphone are:

- Most microphones can be used for audio commenting. There are microphones that are also well suited for internet voice chat, speech recognition, gaming, and so on. So if you are planning on using the microphone for more than just audio commenting, include that feature in your research.
- Make sure the microphone is compatible with your system (PC or Mac) and operating system.

Built-in Microphones and Feedback

One warning about built-in microphones on laptops: On a laptop, the built-in microphone and speaker are usually close to one another, which often results in feedback. Feedback is caused when sound from the speaker is picked up by the microphone, amplified, and passed out of the speaker again as you are recording. Feedback can cause significantly undesirable noise and distortion.

If you are using a built-in microphone and having problems with feedback, the best solution is to get a headset where the microphone and speaker are farther apart from one another.

Troubleshooting Microphones

The fact that a microphone works with other applications is not a guarantee that the microphone will work the same way with your MyLab. This is because some applications perform their own microphone and speaker tuning but do not propagate those settings to the system settings.

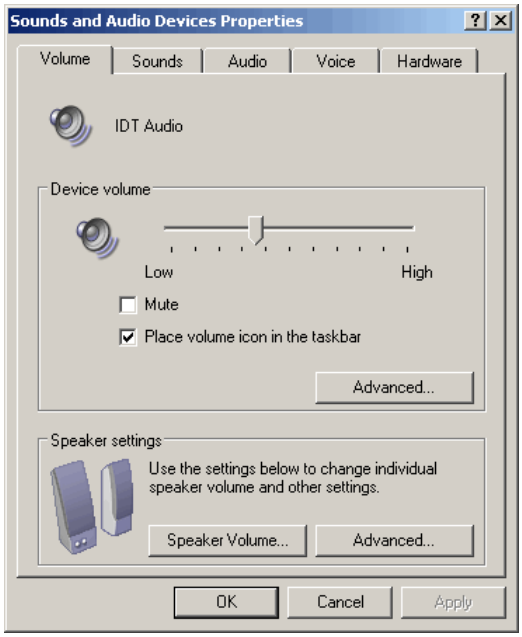
Troubleshooting on a Windows System

Use the following procedure to help diagnose and correct basic microphone setup problems for audio commenting on a Windows® XP. For a Windows Vista® system, see page 5.

To troubleshoot basic microphone problems on a Windows XP system:

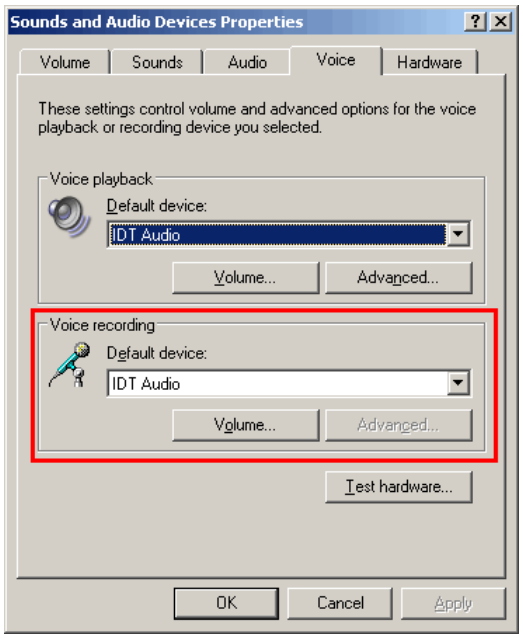
1. Click the **Start** menu button, then choose **Control Panel –Sounds and Audio Devices**.

   The Sounds and Audio Devices Properties dialog box is displayed.



2. Click the **Voice** tab.

3. Make sure the correct device is selected for **Voice recording**.



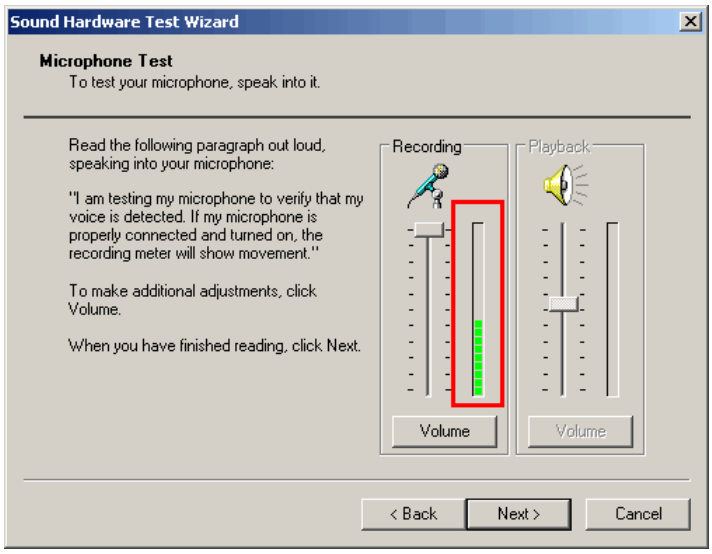
If you have configured multiple sound-input devices, they are listed in the **Default device** drop-down list.

4. If necessary, select another device from the **Default device** drop-down list and then click the **Apply** button.
5. Click the **Test hardware** button to open the Test Wizard.

6. Click the **Next** button.

   The wizard starts the hardware testing of your sound-input device.

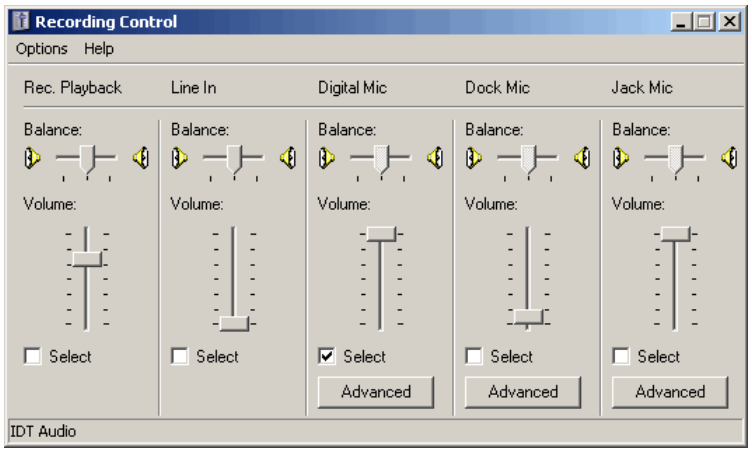
   At the completion of the test, the Microphone Test dialog box is displayed.
7. If you are using an external microphone, make sure it is connected to your system and activated before you proceed to the next step.
8. Speak into the microphone.



If the green bars are barely showing, invisible, or fluctuate only a little, then the microphone may be recording, but at a very low volume. This can cause the MyLab's audio commenting recorder to record a very low volume or spotty comment. (Because the recorder's counter increments only when it detects sound, a low-volume recording can result in a spotty comment.)

9. Click the **Volume** button under **Recording**.

   The Recording Control dialog shows all your system's audio inputs.



10. Determine which input represents your microphone. (For a laptop microphone, Digital Mic is a likely possibility.)
11. Speak into the microphone.

    If the microphone is functioning properly, the volume control in this dialog box moves in concert with the volume control in the Microphone Text dialog box as Windows attempts to auto-tune the microphone volume.

    If the volume is turned off or too low, go on to the next step to adjust it.

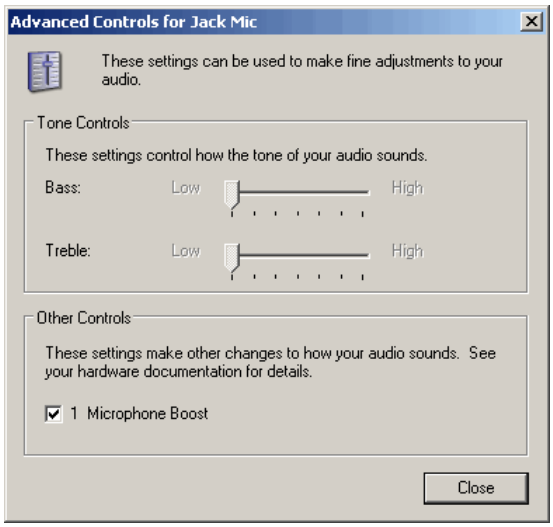
12. Click the microphone's **Advanced** button.

    Note: If the Advanced button is not displayed, do the following:

    a. Check the microphone's **Select** check box.

b. Choose the **Options – Advanced Controls** menu command.

13. Check the **Microphone Boost** check box.



If Microphone Boost was not already selected, selecting it should make the microphone more sensitive. Try speaking into the microphone again to see if the (green) bar in the Recording Control dialog box has a better range of movement.

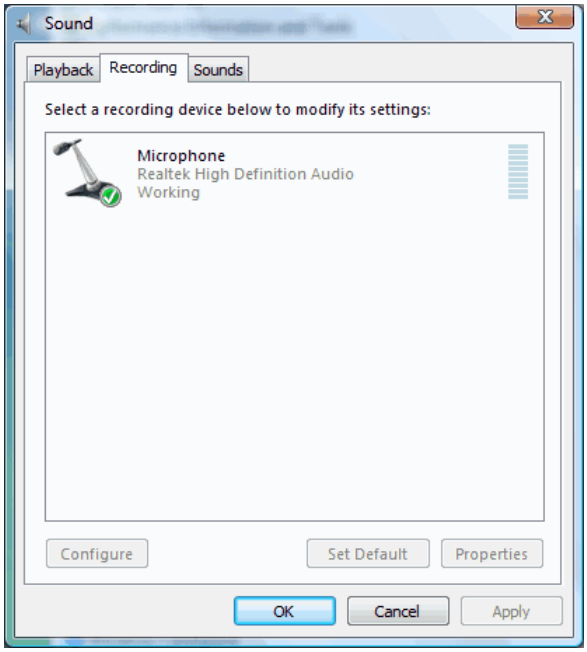
If you still have a problem, try selecting a different microphone control in the Sound and Audio Devices dialog or the Recording Control dialog box. For additional guidelines, see page 10.

To troubleshoot basic microphone problems on a Windows Vista system:

Before you begin, if you are working on a desktop system, make sure that the microphone is plugged in to the correct port. If that is not the problem, try the following steps to make sure the microphone is enabled and that the volume is high enough.

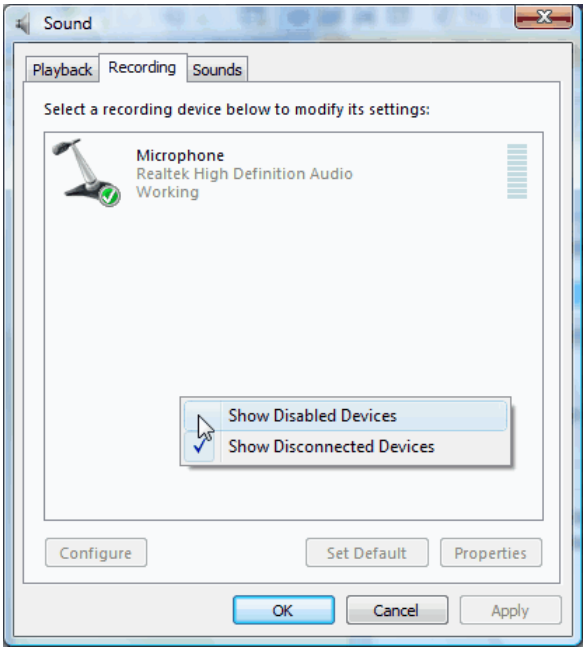
1. Click the **Start** menu button and click **Control Panel**.
2. Double-click **Sound** in the **Control Panel** (Classic View).

   The Sound dialog box is displayed.
3. Click the **Recording** tab.

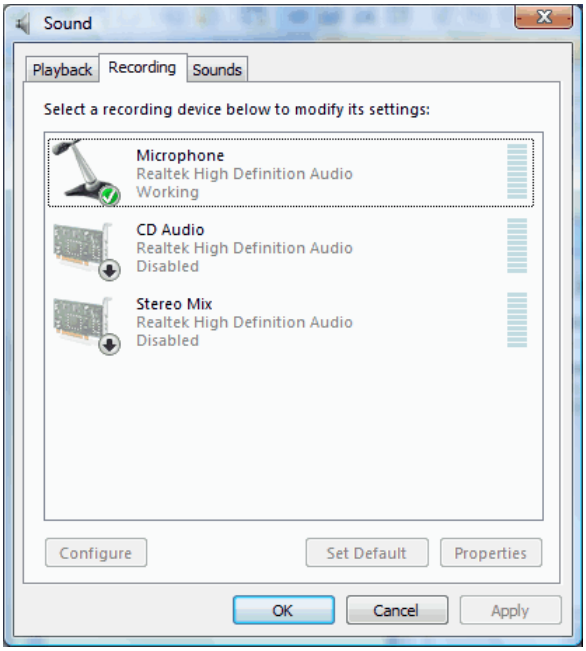


4. If the displayed microphone is not the one you are using for audio commenting, do the following:

    a. Right-click in the empty/blank area of the tab and choose **Show Disabled Devices**.

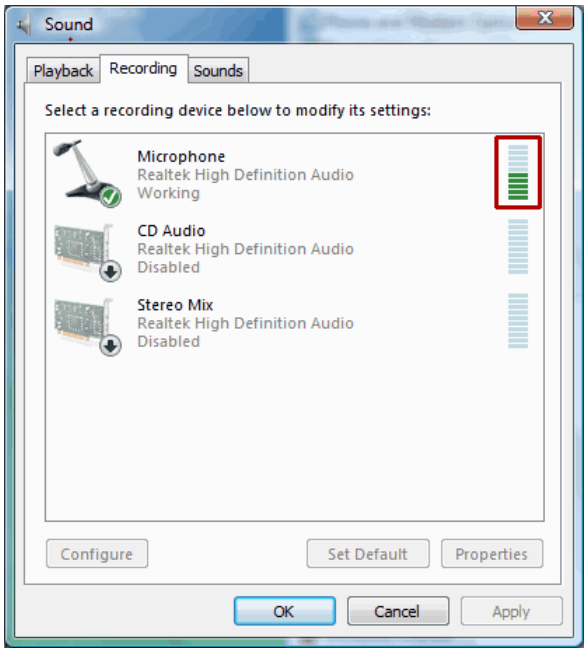


The Recording tab now displays the full list of recording devices configured for your system.



b. Right-click the sound-input device that you are using for audio commenting and make sure that **Enabled** is selected.

5. Speak into the microphone and you should see the sound detection (green) moving up and down.



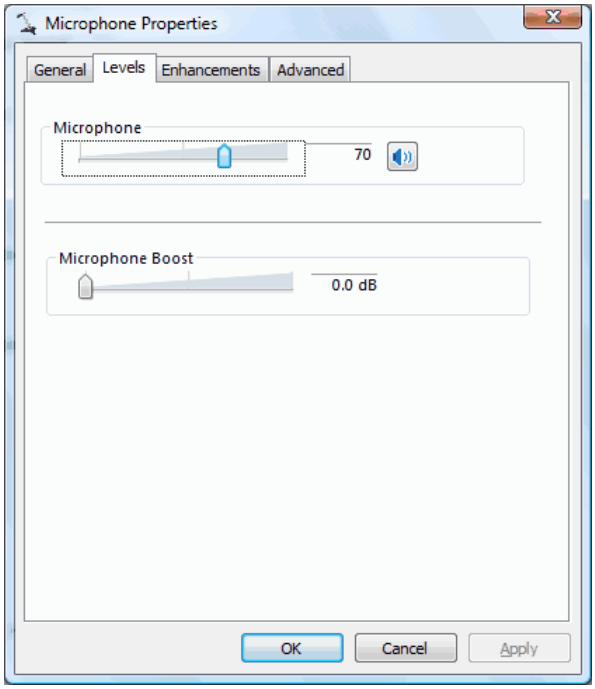
If the green bars are barely showing, invisible, or fluctuate only a little, then the microphone may be recording, but at a very low volume. This can cause the MyLab's audio commenting recorder to record a very low or spotty comment. (Because the recorder's counter increments only when it detects sound, the end result can be a spotty comment.)

To adjust the volume level, go on to the next step. Or, to test the volume, skip to the last step in this procedure.

6. Click the **Properties** button.

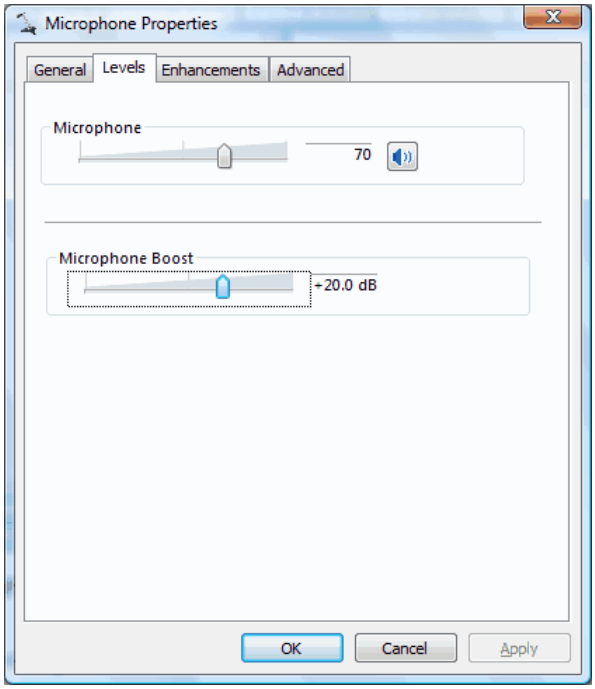
   The Microphone Properties dialog box is displayed.

7. Click the **Levels** tab.



8. Drag the **Microphone** slider to the right. (Depending on your version of Vista, this may be referred to as the **Front Mic** slider.)

9. Drag the **Microphone Boost** slider to the right.



10. Keep both the Sound dialog box, on the Recording tab, and the Microphone Properties dialog box open, and speak into the microphone again.

    As you speak, the green bars on the Recording tab show the difference in the recording volume. You can continue adjusting the Level sliders until you reach the desired recording level.

11. (Optional) Click the **Enhancements** tab (if available) to select options to reduce the outside or room sounds often picked up by microphones. Then click the **Apply** button.

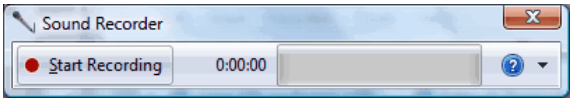
12. (Optional) Do the following to create a recording to test the volume settings.

    a. Click the **Start** menu button.

    b. Type *sound* in the **Start Search** text box.

    c. Click **Sound** under **Programs**.

       The Sound Recorder is displayed.

    d. Click **Start Recording** and speak into the microphone.

    e. Click **Stop Recording** to end the recording.

    f. Save the recording.

    g. Click the **Start** menu button.

    h. Select the recording from the **Recent Items** list.

Still have a problem? Try selecting a different microphone on the Recording tab in the Sound dialog box. Also check to see if you need to update your sound card drivers. This can be the case when you are using a microphone that is plugged in to your system.

For additional guidelines, see page 10.

Additional Guidelines

- **Check your cable connections.** Make sure the microphone is properly connected to your system. For example, on some systems microphones have to be connected to the sound card. If your system has two microphone jacks, make sure the one you are using is not muted.
- **USB connections.** For a headset with a USB connection, check that the USB port that you are connected to is operating.
- **Macs.** For a built-in microphone, in the system preferences, check that the sound input setting is **Internal / microphone / built-in** and that the input is set to maximum. For further information or details on an external microphone or headset, refer to the Apple Support website (http://www.apple.com/support/) and the microphone manufacturer's website.
- **Volume is off or set too low**. Check the volume settings for your system's speakers. You may need to enable or adjust the volume settings. Also make sure that external speakers are turned on, and you may need to turn up their volume.
- **Refer to the website of the operating system or microphone manufacturer.** These websites typically have information on connecting microphones to systems and troubleshooting guidelines.