

Handout 3: Recording Sound with the Smart phone

Virtual Recorder and FreeMP3Droid

Recording sound with the mobile? Depending on the microphone that's integrated into the smartphone, the recordings may sound good or not so good – but in any case, better than telephone quality. Provided that one uses a special app for high-quality audio recording. Extensive background and links can be found on the topic *Radio via Smartphone* at

http://mediensyndikat.de/20_10.html

There are a number of decent **recording apps**, including *Smart Voice Recorder* and *Easy Voice Recorder*. Here, we will discuss the free Android app *Virtual Recorder*. It stores the recordings as PCM files without using data reduction technology.



Recording is started and stopped with buttons that are self-explanatory. With the yellow arrowhead, one can also listen to previous takes. The recording levels are modulated automatically when the limiter is activated. (via context menu, *Enable Limiter* should be green). The fader outlined in red controls the recording level: if the fader is too far to the right, the activated limiter automatically adjusts the setting to a suitable level.

The PCM files are normally stored on the SD memory card in a folder called *Virtual Recorder*. As raw data (mono, sampling frequency 22050 Hz) they can, for example, be transferred to Audacity on the computer or converted into mp3 format directly on the smartphone.

For **converting PCM files into mp3**, the Android app Free MP3Droid can be recommended. After selecting the PCM file via the grey button in the heading of the app, one sets the sampling frequency and the bit rate to the audio quality the mp3 should have, and then the file can be converted from PCM into mp3 format.

Factors relevant to the **quality of the recording** are the distance (at least 20 cm) between sound source and microphone (the side of the smartphone near the mouth when telephoning), the use of a foam-rubber wind shield, and a steady hand while recording. Tip: start the recording and then turn off the touchscreen to avoid entering commands by mistake, and hold the smartphone with the wind shield on the microphone side toward your interview partner upside down (standing on its head) as if it were a cable-free microphone.