

**WHAT IS IT?**

Sony's flagship audio editing package

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**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 1 New event-based editing system
- 2 Updated CD authoring features
- 3 Excellent package of extra features



# Sony Sound Forge Pro 10 | £380

Fed up trying to edit audio in your DAW? Why not try out the old master. **Greg Scarth** takes a look at the latest version of Sony's long-standing audio editor

**B**ack when Sony purchased the rights to Sonic Foundry's Sound Forge in 2003, the software was already a

popular stereo audio editor mainly suitable for mastering tasks and hardcore manual editing of sound files. Since then, it's been developed into a slick and highly capable multi-channel package that has maintained its position at the top of the audio editing market. Version 10 introduces a series of new features that aim to build on Sound Forge's excellent reputation.

**Forging ahead**

Without going into too much detail about all the features which have been

carried over from previous versions of Sound Forge, the program is still packed full of powerful editing tools and there are a couple of new arrivals which will be of particular interest to musicians. These new features include a resonant filter plug-in, Zplane élastique plug-in and an updated version of the iZotope-powered mastering effects plug-in. élastique is a very high-quality time-stretching and pitch-shifting tool which can operate in real-time, allowing you to tweak time and pitch independently while maintaining high sound quality.

To help you achieve the best results there are also a series of different models which can tailor the stretching

process to different sources and produce noticeably different results. Sound Forge's existing time stretch function is still there too so you have a choice of tool.

The largest single change to the way Sound Forge works is the introduction of a new event-based editing system. Audio files are split into a series of events, each of which can be edited individually. It's a tricky process to explain without the software in front of you but it breaks down a long file into more manageable chunks, improving the workflow significantly.

In fact, the whole Sound Forge workflow has been updated and tidied up with the addition of features like customisable window layouts, floating window docks, tabbed browsing and custom selection grid lines. There's also a new global media cache option in the preferences, which allows you to reserve a chunk of RAM for recently used media in order to smooth recording and playback.

They're all minor details but it does add up to a good improvement. Whether it's worth upgrading will depend on how you find the current workflow but newcomers will find Sound Forge easy to get to grips with.

**Masters of the universe**

The iZotope-powered mastering effects bundle will look vaguely familiar to

## Why Do I Need An Audio Editing Program?

If you've got a DAW with audio editing functions, you may well ask why you'd need audio editing software. After all, your DAW can already cut, paste, fade and process files so why would you want something else? If that's your opinion, you

should probably try playing with an audio editor for an hour or two and see if it changes your mind. DAWs are great at sequencing, multi-track recording, hosting virtual instruments and mixing but you'll soon realise that their audio editing

functions leave a lot to be desired. If you're regularly editing samples, working with field recordings or mastering, you'll reap the benefits of using more specialised software with a more efficient workflow and a variety of more advanced features.

anyone who's used Ozone, and although it's not as complete as iZotope's flagship mastering bundle, it's still a very good package of tools for polishing mixes. Under the Process menu you'll also notice that this update introduces iZotope-powered 64-bit SRC sample rate conversion and MBIT+ bit depth conversion (dither). iZotope certainly have the pedigree when it comes to these plug-ins but Sony have also retained their own versions of these tools in case you prefer the original.

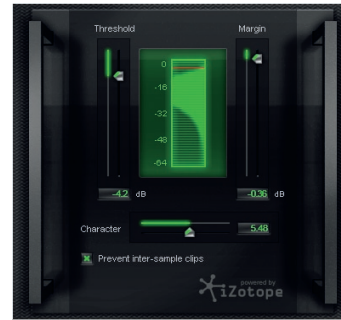
Elsewhere, there aren't too many major surprise upgrades. There are also a couple of new file formats to play

the right direction, the instrument formats are slightly outdated now.

### Burns unit

Sound Forge's CD-authoring capabilities have received a major overhaul for version 10. Most notably, disc-at-once burning has been integrated into Sound Forge. The most obvious use for this in a music production context is when burning a continuous mix of tracks to CD.

Simply load your audio file in Sound Forge, insert track markers, burn in disc-at-once mode and enjoy the benefits of a CD which plays continuously without gaps between



iZotope's impressive Ozone mastering solution is included in a cutdown version

want them. This includes standard stuff like CD text and automatic file conversion but a variety of more esoteric functions like hidden tracks and overburn support are also capably handled, either in Sound Forge itself or in the bundled CD Architect.

CD authoring is also one of the topics covered by a new series of interactive tutorials. These will no doubt come as a bonus to any new users or anyone wanting to brush up on the basics.

### Sound as a pound

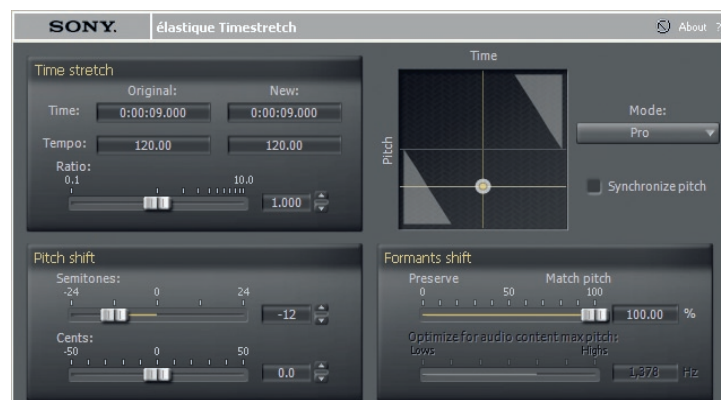
Audio editing has never been a strong point for most DAWs, so investing in a good audio editing package could be a sensible choice if you spend much time chopping and trimming samples or just want to take complete control

of your stereo mastering. Throw in Sound Forge's CD authoring capabilities and the various extra bundled features and you have a very enticing package. This latest update has undoubtedly improved what was already a very impressive product and the fact that Sound Forge is cheaper than most of its competitors means it's a seriously good buy. **FM**

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with: Sound Forge is now able to edit SF2 (SoundFont), GIG (GigaStudio) and DLS (Roland) format files, which opens up options for editing sample-based instruments, and broadcast wave format (BWF) support has also been improved, which ties in nicely with the improved metadata functions. While support for these formats is a step in

tracks but can still be skipped through. It's not exactly a groundbreaking feature but it certainly adds value to the existing authoring features of the package. As well as performing all the basic burning functions perfectly well, the Sound Forge package also includes a bunch of extra features to ensure that you can create discs just the way you



Sony's new élastique timestretching algorithm comes bundled with Sound Forge 10

## SPECS

**Minimum requirements**  
**PC:** Windows Vista SP2 or XP SP2, 1GHz processor, 512MB RAM, 300MB hard drive space

## ALTERNATIVES



### Adobe Audition 3

**£450**

Picking up where Cool Edit Pro left off, Audition is Adobe's range-topping Windows audio editing package. Mac users should check out Adobe's other audio editor, Soundbooth.

[adobe.com](http://adobe.com)



### Audacity

**£Free**

Available for Windows, Mac and even Linux, Audacity is one of the best freeware programs we've ever seen. A complete audio editor packed with good features, it's well worth a look.

[audacity.sourceforge.net](http://audacity.sourceforge.net)

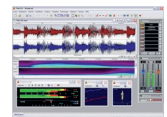


### Bias Peak Pro 6

**£430**

For Apple users, Peak is a seriously powerful Mac-only stereo audio editor. Also available as the cheaper LE version or fully-loaded XT package.

[bias-inc.com](http://bias-inc.com)



### Steinberg WaveLab 6

**£499**

WaveLab is another old favourite for Windows users, combining powerful multi-channel audio editing with great support for external effects hardware and MIDI controllers.

[steinberg.net](http://steinberg.net)

FutureMusic

VERDICT

BUILD

VALUE

EASE OF USE

VERSATILITY

RESULTS

The latest updates make Sound Forge an even more impressive audio editing package.