Macintosh: PlainTalk Audio Port Microphone Support (8/95)

Article Created: 24 June 1994
Article Reviewed/Updated: 30 August 1995

TOPIC ---

Can I plug in a standard line level 3.5mm connector microphone into my Macintosh
AV or Power Macintosh? I noticed that the PlainTalk microphone connector is
slightly longer and have not been able to find a comparable third party
microphone.

DISCUSSION --

Standard 3.5mm connector microphones which have a line level output will work on
any Macintosh computer which utilizes the PlainTalk type microphone. The
PlainTalk microphone requires +5Vdc power to function, thus the extra length on
the connector. The original round Omni-Directional Apple Microphone will not
work with PlainTalk equipped computers however.

The microphone port on all Macintosh Computers that use the PlainTalk microphone
(such as the Macintosh AV computers, Power Macintosh computers, Macintosh Quadra
605, Macintosh 630 family, and Macintosh LC 575) is a standard stereo 3.5mm
stereo plug. The Plaintalk microphone has an extra 1/4 inch on the tip to get +5
volt power from the logic board. It is also a mono plug, so the rubber rings on
it do not match a stereo plug. The microphone plug has 2 separators. The one
near the end is used to isolate the power at the tip. This can be confusing to
those who think that our port is longer and has non-standard spacing for the
left and right channels.

To connect an RCA equipped line level device such as a VCR or home audio
equipment to your Macintosh, a standard RCA to 3.5mm stereo adapter cable can be
used. An example of this is a 6 foot stereo mini to RCA cable available from
most electronic suppliers.

The PlainTalk sound input mini-jack is a standard 3.5 mm in diameter. Using
microphones (that supply a line level signal) or adapters with 1/8 inch plugs
may work, but they are not recommended. The 1/8 inch plugs have a diameter
.014inches smaller than the 3.5 mm plugs. When a 1/8-in. plug is used, it is
prone to cutting out and having excessive noise on the audio line.

Be aware that non-Apple microphones must supply the line level voltage in order
to work properly when connected to the PlainTalk audio port.

Article Change History:
30 Aug 1995 - Changed microphone port measurement to 3.5mm.
16 Feb 1995 - Noted that old Apple microphone will not work with PlainTalk.
28 Jun 1994 - Added more detail to explanation. Changed title to include
              date.

Support Information Services
Copyright 1994-95, Apple Computer, Inc

Keywords: <None>

===

This information is from the Apple Technical Information Library.

19960215 11:05:19.00
Tech Info Library Article Number: 15699