

# How to Change the Default Playback & Recording Audio Device



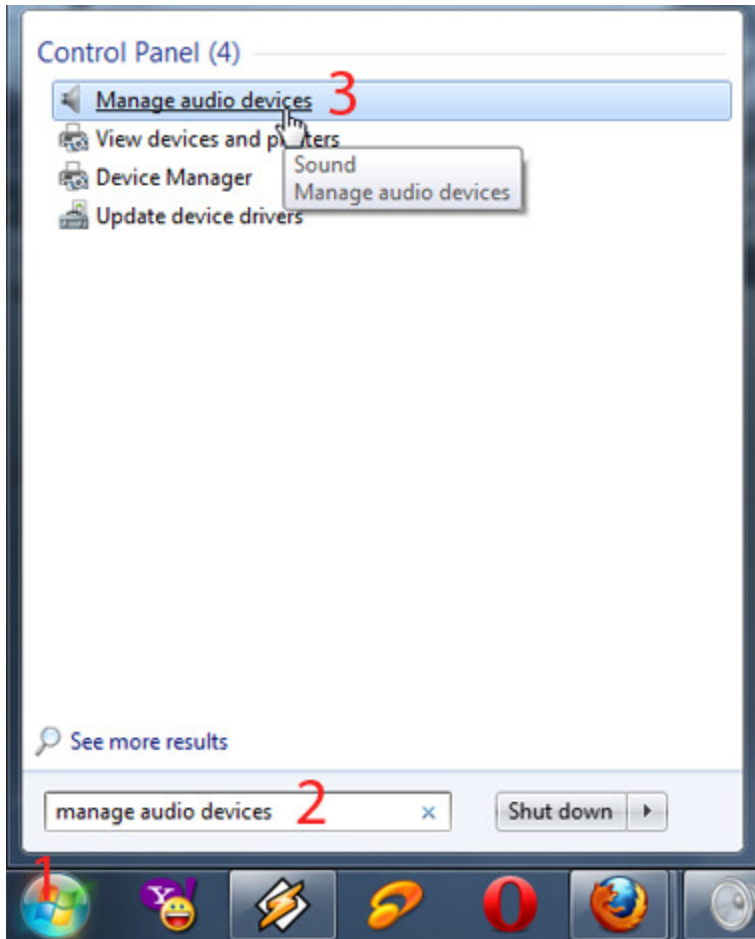
Sound is a very important part of our computing experience. We listen to music, do voice chat, watch movies, play games, record sound, etc. In this article I will talk about two important topics related to sound in Windows 7: how to change the default playback audio & recording devices which are used by your installed applications. I will be sharing some interesting & useful tips about this, including how to troubleshoot certain problems.

## What are Audio Devices?

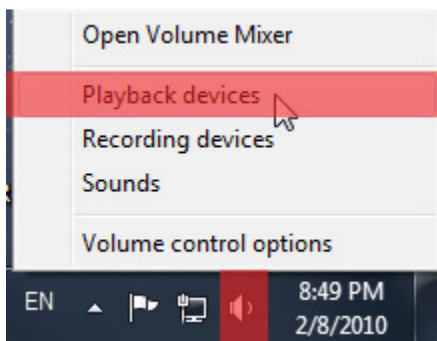
Audio devices in Windows 7 (and not only this version of Windows) are those devices which you can use to play or record audio. This means that every time you listen to your favorite songs or talk on the microphone you are using audio devices. When you listen to music, or any sound that comes from your computer, you use the playback functionality to hear the sounds in the speakers. On the other hand, when talking about the recording functionality, the audio device makes it possible to record any sound you like, be it from your microphone (recording your voice) or from the computer (recording sounds produced by your playback device).

## How to Change the Default Playback Device

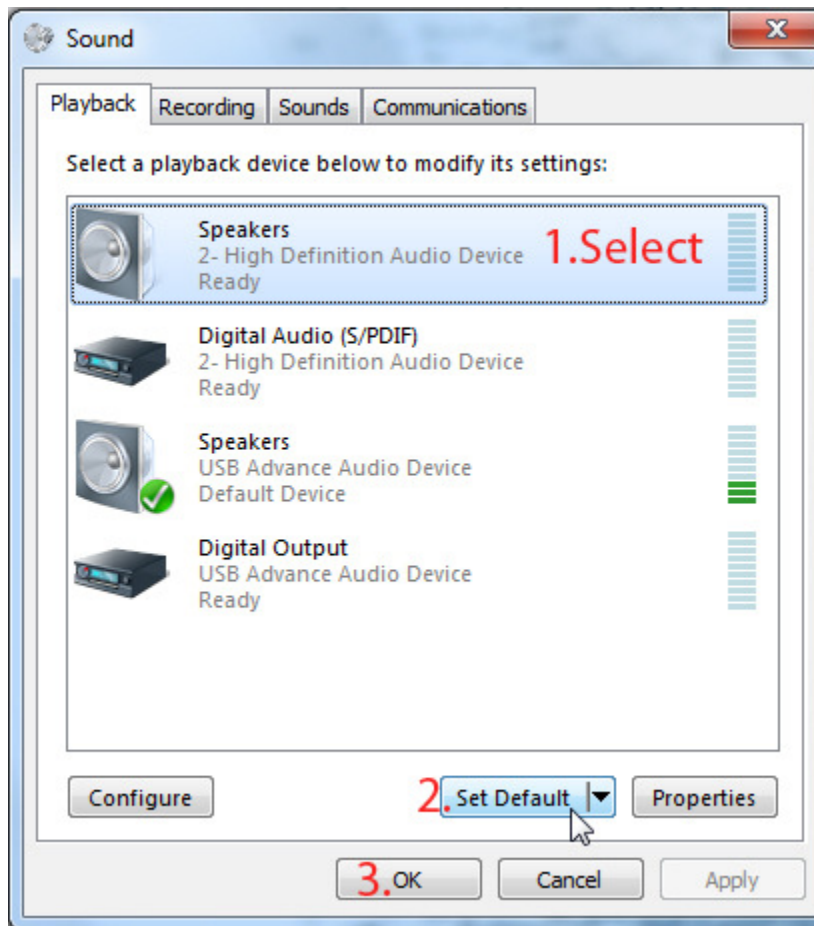
Click on the *Start* button and, in the search box, type '*Change sound card settings*' or '*Manage audio devices*' without the quotes. In the results, click on the link with the same name.



An alternative is to right click on the sound icon in the [Notification Area](#) and select '*Playback devices*'.



A new window, called *Sound*, will open. In this window you will usually see the sound devices for playback, which are currently present in Windows 7. Select the device you want to set as default and click on the *Set Default* button. When you are done click on *OK* to save the current configuration.



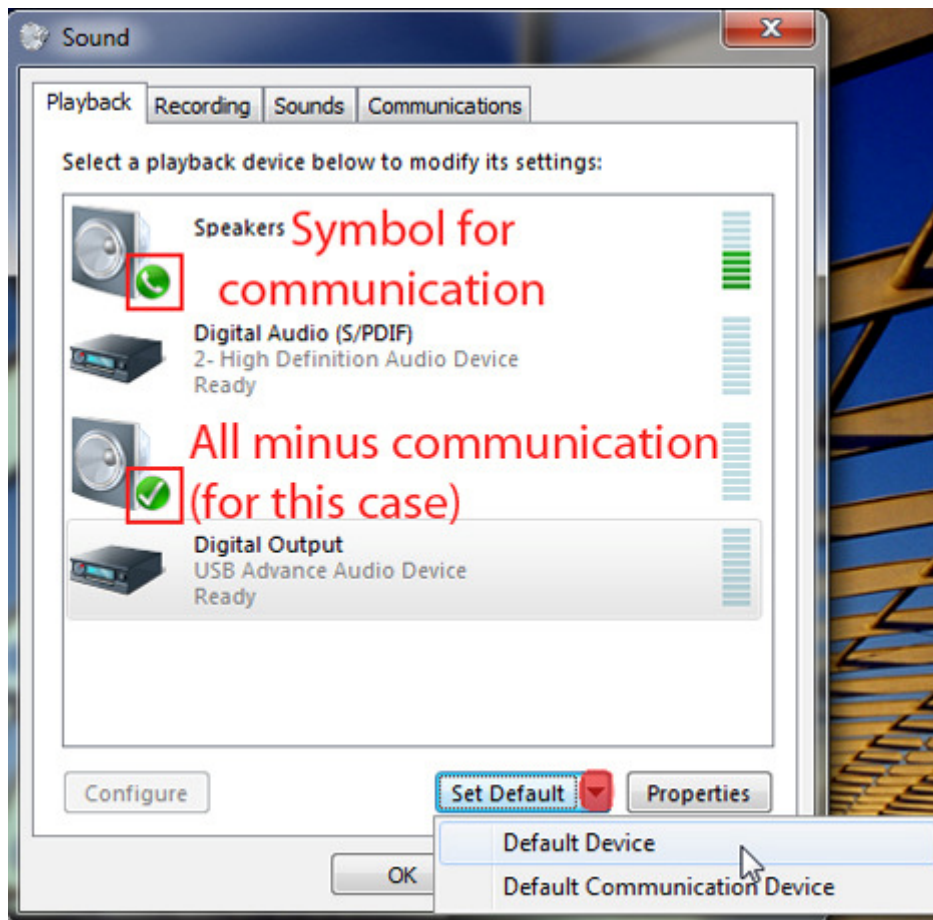
**NOTE:** The default selected device will be used by all of your programs unless stated otherwise.

The *Set Default* has two options: *Default Communication Device* which handles all communications such as calls or video conferences done on IM or VOIP and *Default Device* which handles all the output done without the communication part (if the *Default Communication Device* is set).

A good example is that you can make calls or video conferences be heard on headphones and use the speakers for the rest of your daily computer activity.

To select which device should be the default for communication and which device should do the rest of the work, click on the small arrow located on the *Set Default* button. If clicked, the arrow will show you the two options. Select the device for communication, then click on *Set Default -> Default Communication Device*. Select the device for all other types of playback and click on *Set Default -> Default Device*

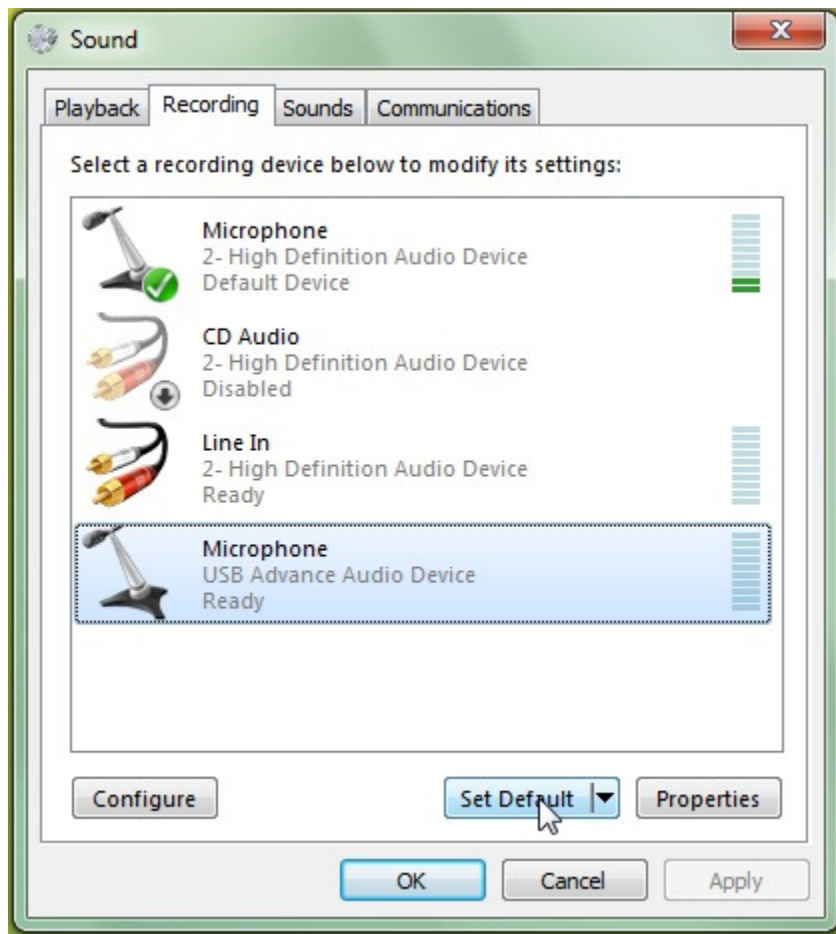
If you want the *Default Communication Device* and the *Default Device* to be set on the same sound device just click on the *Set Default* button instead.



## How to Change the Default Recording Device

As previously said, the recording option is used when recording your voice or the sound coming from your playback device.

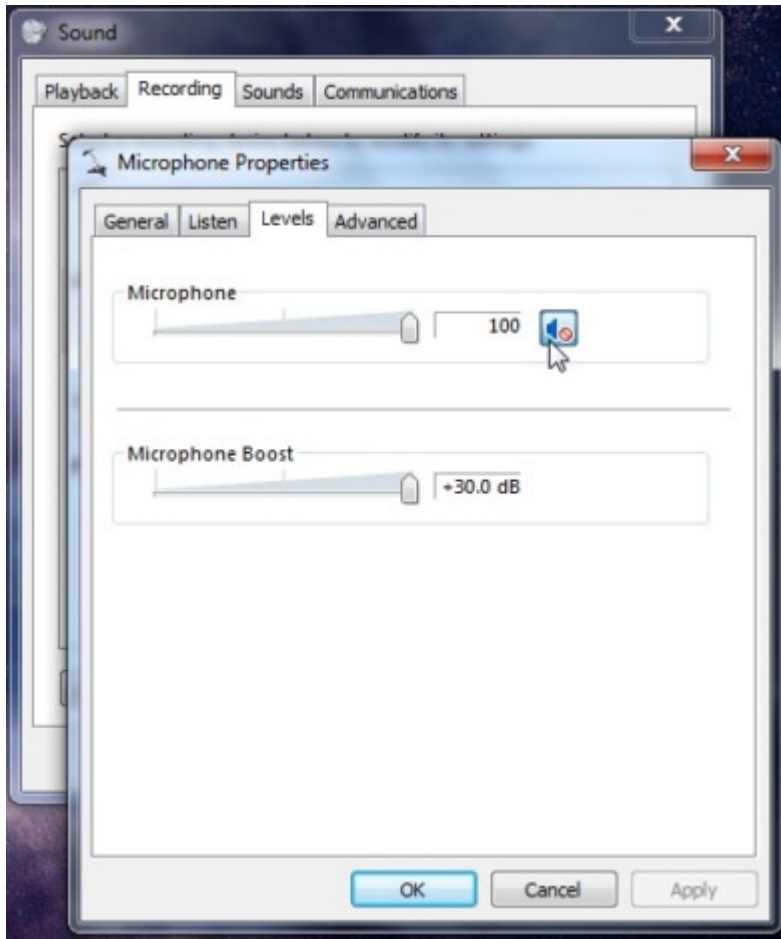
To set a device as default for recording, go to the *Recording* tab in the *Sound* window. In the *Recording* tab, click on the desired default recording device (ex. a certain microphone) and click on the *Set Default* button.



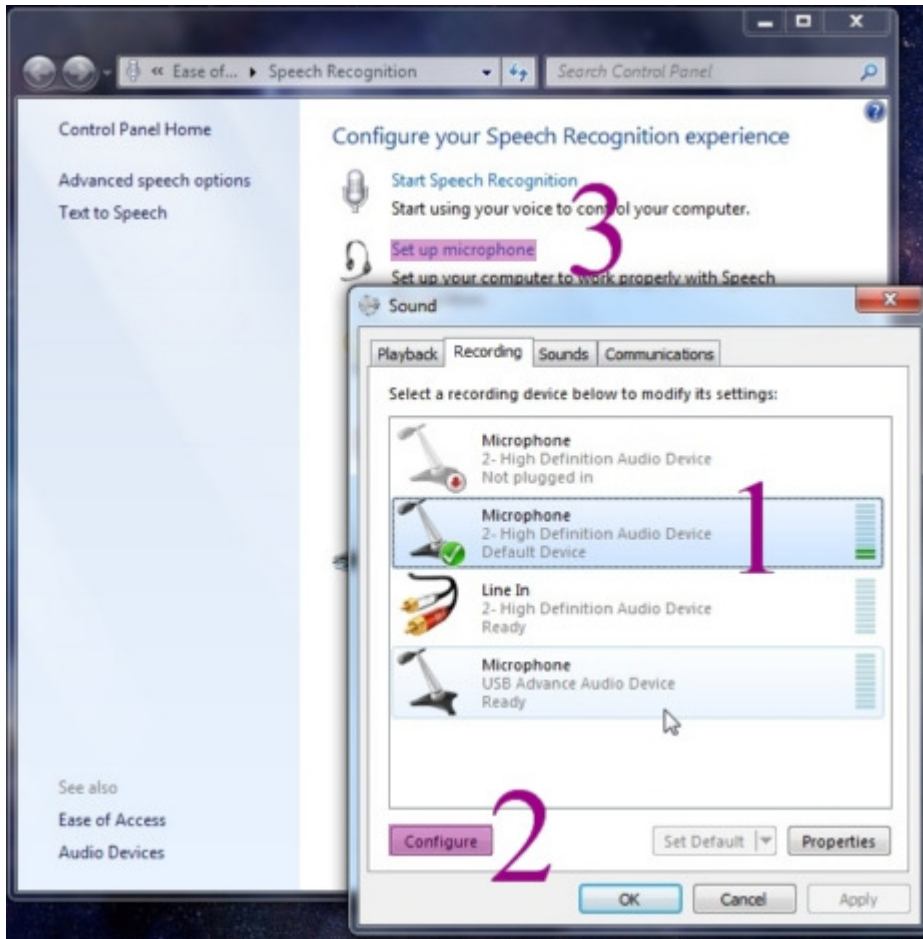
If you find that your microphone is not recording it might be because the volume is set too low or muted altogether. To solve this problem click on the preferred voice recording device and click on the *Properties* button.



In the *Properties* window, click on the *Levels* tab. Here you can see and set the sensitivity level that the microphone will work at. You should check to see if the level is either too low or set to mute and change it to more desirable level.



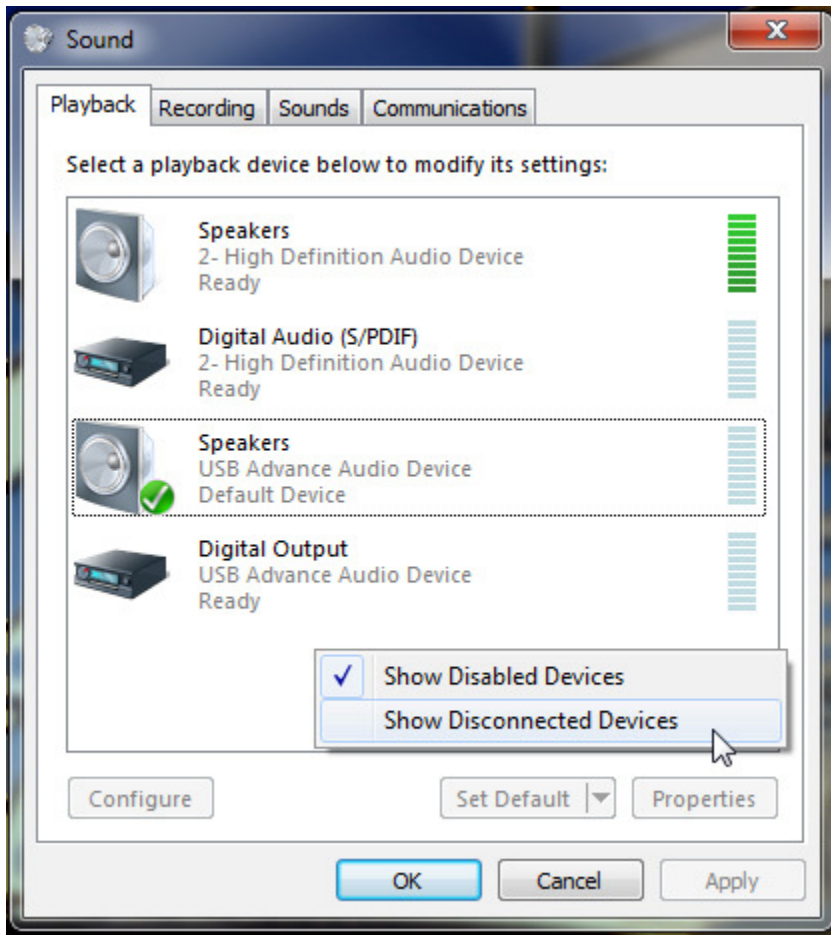
Now, if you have gone through all the steps necessary to have your microphone record and it is still not working, go to the *Recording* tab. In the *Recording* tab, click on the desired recording device and then on the *Configure* button. A new window will appear and in that window click on the *Set up a microphone*.



Windows 7 will make you take some simple to follow tests to make your microphone work properly.

## Troubleshooting: I Can't See my Sound Device Listed

If you can't see your sound device listed make sure it is plugged into your computer correctly and that the appropriate drivers for the sound device are installed. If these steps are done, yet you don't see your device listed in the *Sound* window, it might be hidden. Right click somewhere in the list of devices from the *Sound* (or *Recording*) window and click on '*Show Disabled Devices*' from the contextual menu. If you see it now, right click on it and select *Enable*. After this, you will now be able to set it as default.



**NOTE:** You can also click on the *Disconnected Devices* to see if the device is unplugged. However, for this to work, the drivers for the audio card must have been installed (by you or automatically by the operating system) on your current Windows 7.

## Conclusion

As you can see, setting the default audio devices for playback and recording is done pretty easily in Windows 7. If you have ideas or problems regarding this topic, don't hesitate to share them with us via the comments form below. Also, don't hesitate to take a look on the list of recommended articles below. You will find other useful information about how to customize the sound on your system.