

Here at the Press Center we have two different audio recorders to choose from: the H4N (4) and the Tascam (2). While they have many similarities, this guide will help you figure out which one will work best for your project.

Zoom H4N

Pros:

- More intuitive, less buttons on the front to figure out.
- Can record 4 Channel. This essentially means that you can record a left and right channel through XLR while also recording left and right channel through the recorder itself at the same time. This should yield two different audio files.
- Has stamina mode for longer battery life.

Cons:

- Uses battery extremely fast. Also, the battery icon is not always accurate.
- Produces a high pitched hissing sound if an external microphone is powered through phantom power when the battery is low. The solution is to not use phantom power or to use the wall charger/full batteries if you do.
- Clunkier scroll wheel and volume adjustments.
- XLR inputs do not lock.
- Can only record in-unit audio through two unidirectional built in microphones (left and right) as opposed to having an omnidirectional option as well.
- Worse construction, mostly plastic.

Tascam DR-100mkII

Pros:

- Two battery options, longer life. You can power the Tascam through AA batteries as well as a lithium ion battery that comes with the unit. You can set one as the primary power unit and the other as a backup. The recorder will keep recording even if you take one of the batteries out and will seamlessly switch to the other power source.
- XLR inputs have locks to ensure that they do not slide out during recording.
- Recorder has both a unidirectional and an omnidirectional input (as well as XLR and Line). This means that you can record in all directions (omni) or in a specific direction that the microphone is pointed towards (uni).
- The scroll wheel and volume control are easier to operate.

- The volume control allows you to adjust both left and right channel volume together or to adjust just one or the other (inner wheel is left channel and outer wheel is right channel).
- Easier access to SD card.
- More solid construction.

Cons

- Less intuitive, front button layout can seem intimidating to someone new to the Tascam.
- Larger

Common Features (frequently located within the menu):

- Pre-Record: You can set this option to capture up to two seconds of audio prior to actually hitting record. It must be tracking and this will likely use more battery.
- Limiter: A feature that cuts off audio levels before they peak. This would be helpful if the volume level is drastically changing throughout the recording.
- Phantom Power (48V): Use this to power external recorders if they do not have batteries of their own or if they are dead.
- Low-Cut Filter: Filters out low frequency noises such as wind or mic handling. Each recorder has various frequencies that you can set to be the cut off limit. The lower the number, the more sound will be cut off (note: this can potentially distort the audio). However, you will be able to hear high frequency noises more clearly.
- XLR inputs: You can choose between recording from the built in microphone or to record better quality directional audio through an external microphone with XLR cables.
- MP3/WAV Options: Different quality formats in both MP3 (lower quality) and WAV (higher quality).
- Hold: Once the hold feature is in place (located on the left side of each recorder), you will not be able to activate any buttons until it is turned off. This is helpful during recording if you are worried about accidentally bumping any buttons.