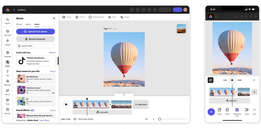
Adobe Express

Audio experience

DESIGN LEAD • ADOBE XD • GROWTH & MONETIZATION

How can editing with audio be simple and quick for non-designers, yet nuanced for seasoned users?



Adobe Express Desktop and Mobile App

intent

Make users audio editing experts

Adobe Express enables non-designers like educators, students, creators, and small businesses to produce high-quality content quickly and easily. Its wide-ranging user base, spanning casual creators to enterprise teams, demanded a solution that balances simplicity with capability.

The objective was to design an audio editing experience that integrates intelligent automation and AI-assisted tools, providing accessibility for beginners while maintaining creative control for advanced users.

role

Dream. Define. Execute.

I joined the team in 2023 as a Design Lead for the Audio Editing experience in Adobe Express. Over two years I collaborated with 3 Product Managers, 2 Engineering teams, 1 Junior Designer, Computer Scientists, and Content team to define the 0-n experience (MVP-scalable patterns) for editing with audio in Express.

From strategising the product and timeline with the PMs to getting leadership buy-ins through early vision decks, sharing at E2E walkthroughs at design crits, collaborating with the design-system teams to define new patterns and delivering final designs to engg. and constantly updating the experience through active user testing. This project allowed me to lead the audio design vertical by exploring new paradigms in creation, inventing intuitive editing patterns, and thereby bringing video and audio editing capabilities to a much broader audience.

design challenge

Audio editing for the masses

The challenge was to create an audio editing experience that could scale across skill levels, making editing accessible and intuitive without compromising creative control. Additional constraints included integrating AI-assisted workflows, ensuring low Friction onboarding, and designing patterns that could be consistently applied across video and audio features.

Success required rethinking existing paradigms, inventing new interaction patterns, and designing a cohesive system that could adapt to multiple user needs while remaining easy to learn and efficient to use.

Design for all
Serve diverse user base students to enterprises

Balanced workflows
Beginner friendly while enabling advanced control

Smart AI
AI enhanced workflows to fasten the editing process.

Scalable
Consistent and adaptable across devices.

strategy

Have your cake & Eat it too

The ultimate goal was of letting users create their own cherry-topped-cake at the click of a button. But we had to make sure we helped them choose and add the right ingredients, mix them together as per their taste, extract the most out of their ingredients if they wished to. For this we broke down the process into a non-linear workflow but every step setting us up for the final goal - Don't just help. Serve!

Help choose ingredients
LOWER ENTRY BARRIER
Multiple entry points
Empty states
Suggest audio

Enable users to do more
ROBUST ARCHITECTURE
Simplified workflows
Single click edits
Fade audio
Slip edit

Same recipe, extra taste
EXTRACT FROM AUDIO
Enhance speech
Animate characters
Auto Captions

Don't just help. Serve.
AUTOMATE
Sync to beat
Text to video

In a nutshell

Don't just help. Do it.

01 Eliminate frustrations

LOWER ENTRY BARRIER

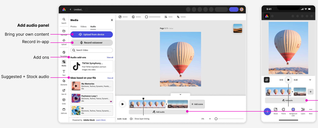
Edit workflows are non-linear. And most of our users were not used to existing video editing paradigms. So, we laid out the foundation of the Add Audio workflow with:

Support different audio types:

1. Suggesting stock music based on their file,
2. Record voiceover over their video,
3. Audio Add-ons like trending music, TikTok inspiration, etc.

Multiple entry points:

1. Toolbar/ Nav: Upload media
2. Media Panel: Access to all audio files
3. Timeline: Empty states + Add



02 Enable users to do more

ROBUST ARCHITECTURE

The Audio Properties panel and the Timeline are the two surfaces where the user can tweak audio properties.

1. Add audio entry point,
2. Waveform to help work with audio tracks,
3. Slip edit audio,
4. Supported multiple audio tracks with subsequent update,

Audio Properties panel

Enhance speech

Adjust audio

Fade audio

Timeline states

Empty state

Audio track + waveform

Fade audio

Multiple audio tracks

03 Extra flavors

EXTRACT FROM AUDIO

Integrated AI features to extract more out of their audio tracks:

1. Animate from audio: This proved to one of the top audio related features as they could create animated characters from a voiceover.
2. Auto captions: To let users create captions with in-built editable font + animation styles, transcript, remove filler words, etc.

04 Don't help. Serve.

AUTOMATE

The north star! Add beats to their audio and Edit videos, images to chosen audio beats at the click of a button.

future

Scratching the surface

Over the course of this two year long design journey there has been a steady use of audio features in Express and an overall positive impact on the App. Constant user feedback as well as early engagement with users has allowed us to make timely updates, move goal posts, and realign as per the evolving creator economy landscape.

This is only a succinct summary of an entire audio design vertical that is possible to be shared in the public domain due to NDAs, and sensitive product information. To understand how we approached the challenge and strategised the journey of taking audio editing in Express from 0 to N can only be explained through a detailed case-study.

Want to see the case study?

Get in touch for a deep-dive.

© 5 Maanf Haque 2025