How to Start Your Podcast

Class Outline:

1) What is a podcast?

2) Format & Topics

3) Audio Recording & Editing Basics

4) Web Hosting Services

5) Getting your Podcast on iTunes, Stitcher, Google Play & more

6) Successful podcasting

Expected Outcomes:

1) Understand what a podcast is and the options for creating podcasts

2) Ability to choose from basic recording and editing options to best fit your needs

3) Know how to get podcasts listed, promoted, and gain listeners

What is a Podcast?

- Essentially, **podcasts are episodic series of digital media files**–usually audio–that are released over the internet regularly. They are released in such a way that users can **subscribe** and new episodes will automatically appear on their digital devices (like an iPod, smartphone, or computer). Anyone can create a podcast and get it listed in podcast directories and apps, like iTunes, Stitcher, Google Play, and many more.

Choosing a Format & a Topic

- **The format of a show is how a show is arranged.** Options abound in the world of podcasting. Experiment or combine formats as needed and get feedback from your listeners. Success is often due to the personalities involved and your passion for the topic. When choosing formats, consider the preparation time and logistics different formats require.

- Here's just a few questions to consider:

  Individual, co-hosted or group?   **Conversation, interview or roundtable?**   **Storytelling?**
  Documentary?   **Include Music Cues? Sound Clips?**   **Broken up into segments?**
  Or one simple format?   **Transitions?**   **Set length or varied as needed?**
  Regular release schedule? Or occasional?   **Reviews or Recaps or based on other Media?**

- Topics range pretty widely. Sometimes the more niche a topic is, the better.

- What would **you** want to listen to that doesn't already exist or what show can you do better than anyone?

- Aim to **Inform, Explain, Entertain, Persuade,** or **Inspire**

- Respect the audience, keep it fun and **ENGAGE**

Audio Recording & Editing Basics

You'll be putting out digital audio—so choosing digital audio recording is usually the easiest option. You'll also want your podcast to sound great—listeners are used to professionally produced radio and podcasts!

Microphone

- Built in computer or smartphone microphone (low quality without modification/additions)

USB vs. Analog (XLR)

- USB plug directly into your computer's USB port

- XLR needs other hardware to connect

Popular podcasting mid and low-range microphones (USB): Blue Snowball, Blue Yeti, AudioTechnica AT2020USB Cardioid Condenser USB Microphone, MXL 990 Condenser Microphone, CAD U1 USB Dynamic Recording Microphone, LyxPro HHMU-10 Cardioid Dynamic USB Microphone *Popular portable recorders:* Tascam DR-05, Zoom h1, Zoom h4n
Just start with any mic—and practice, practice, practice!

Headphones

Any headphones will be fine—you don't want feedback noise (you can mute your computer)—but you'll also want to listen to your audio the way your listeners will. So, no need to invest in fancy headphones.

Quiet Space

You want to limit air vent noises, hums, and echoes. Many podcasters use their closets—a small space with lots of padding. Carpets help a lot too, any soft things to diffuse sound. Record close to the mic (12 in) to make your voice the dominate sound. Get the best sound first before editing!
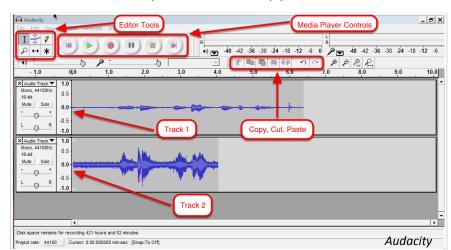
Microphone Extras:

Stands: Some microphones come with stands, others will require a separate purchase.

Shock mount: Suspends your microphone so any vibrations or bumps against your desk/floor/etc. will not pick up. Usually attaches to a mic stand.

Pop filters: Screen in front of mic that helps limit jumps in volume from plosives. Attaches to microphone.

Tip: Know your microphone's "pattern" and settings—where to speak into it to get the best sound

Online Tools: You may want to use services like Skype or Google Hangouts to record remote interviews.

DAW (Digital Audio Workstation)

Software that you can use to record into your computer and edit your audio:

Audacity (Free, Open source), Garageband (Free with Mac), Logic, Adobe Audition, Avid Pro Tools & more!

There are all sorts of settings that you can play around with in different DAWs. You can cut out ums and pauses or unwanted sections or change the sound by choosing different settings—like lowering the midrange noises, or correcting the volume so the overall podcast volume is relatively even. (There are many services out there that will do this "mixing" for you. Try *Auphonic* for volume correction.) We recommend YouTube for getting started with audio editing!

Hosting & Distributing Your Podcast

Just like hosting a website, your podcast files will need a "host," a dedicated space on an Internet-connected server so that users can find your files online. You'll want a server that can handle your files and a large amount of downloads from your listeners!

In order to get your podcast into iTunes, Stitcher, Google Play and other "podcatching" services, you'll need to create an RSS feed. An RSS feed is a web-based document that allows users to subscribe and get automatic updates from your podcast—and other podcasts all in one place. If you don't create an RSS feed, listeners would have to manually update your website, download your episodes, and place them on their devices.

You can do this yourself, with the advantage of "owning" your podcast feed and having more control...**but**...

Example of an RSS Feed, written in XML

```xml
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<rss version="2.0">
<channel>
 <title>RSS Title</title>
 <description>This is an example of an RSS
feed</description>
 <link>http://www.example.com/main.html</link>
 <lastBuildDate>Mon, 06 Sep 2010 00:01:00 +0000
</lastBuildDate>
 <pubDate>Sun, 06 Sep 2009 16:20:00 +0000</
pubDate>
 <ttl>1800</ttl>

 <item>
  <title>Example entry</title>
  <description>Here is some text containing an
interesting description.</description>
  <link>http://www.example.com/blog/post/1</
link>
  <guid isPermaLink="true">7bd204c6-1655-4c27-
aeee-53f933c5395f</guid>
  <pubDate>Sun, 06 Sep 2009 16:20:00 +0000</
pubDate>
 </item>

</channel>
```

...there are a few major obstacles:

1. You'll need to be relatively tech-savvy.

2. Running out of storage space or having your personal server go down would limit your audience.

3. Mistakes in code can stop listeners from getting your content or your show being listed in "podcatchers" like iTunes, etc.

Hosting & Distributing Services

A hosting & distributing service can make this process much easier and more reliable by offering a place to upload your files and creating an RSS feed for you. The only downside would be the service closing, difficulty switching to a new service, or switching over to a monetized model. These are all obstacles that can be overcome and most

Libsyn.com	Blurburry.com	Soundcloud.com	Podbean.com
Largest, long-running, trusted, reliable	Long-running, trusted, reliable	Podcast support since 2008—long development and history...	Past issues with control over RSS feed/customer service...but have been apparently resolved
Embeddable player	Embeddable player that offers seamless support for Wordpress websites	Very cool embeddable player that has social media component—and very easy to share clips (might consider using in addition to another service)	$9/month for unlimited plan—most affordable
More stats as you go up in cost—basic stats with $7, Advanced with $20	"Professional Stats" with basic ($12/month) plan and up		Most affordable integrated monetization options (less overhead)
Can sell back catalog easily		Has a FREE option with basic stats. Pro for $7/month, Pro Unlimited for $15/month	

Note: the vast majority of mobile podcast listens are on the native iOS app. Check iTunes for chart of hosting/distributing services: https://itunespartner.apple.com/en/podcasts/partnersearch

Getting your Podcast on iTunes, etc.

iTunes is the place to be for podcasts (some estimates = 70% of listens!). Other popular "podcatchers" include Stitcher, Google Play, Spotify, Miro, and TuneIn. Many other services pull from iTunes, so you won't need to submit to them as well. For a full listing: https://podcastplaces.com.

Check out iTunes Partner pages to learn all of the steps in depth:

https://itunespartner.apple.com/en/podcasts/overview

Before submitting to iTunes (or other podcatches):

- Podcasts must be in: M4A, **MP3**, MOV, MP4, M4V, PDF, or EPUB file formats

- Artwork must be square — must be 1400 x 1400 pixels at least, and up to 3000 x 3000

- Unique title (check iTunes first)

- Validate your feed (use http://validator.w3.org/feed/)

- You have to have one episode up, hosted and in your RSS feed (it can be a teaser/trailer), before submitting to iTunes. Make sure your website is publicly available.

Artwork for our "Deerfield Public Library Podcast"

When you're ready to submit:

- https://podcastsconnect.apple.com/

- Sign in with your Apple ID (or create one)

Try Google Play and Stitcher too—you'll need an account and you can submit your RSS feed:

https://play.google.com/music/podcasts/publish?u=0#

http://www.stitcher.com/content-providers.php

Click to toggle between grid view and table view

Click to add a new podcast

iPhone in Business: Talks w/ IT L…
Owner
● Submitted for Review

Special Event: Two Dots with Spec…
Owner
● Submitted for Review

Space
Owner
● Active

Special Event: Meet the Community…
Owner
● Submitted for Review

Podcast was successfully submitted for approval and is now waiting for review

Podcast is active on the iTunes Store and Podcasts

Successful Podcasting

Best Practices

- Titles and descriptions: keep them short, direct, and specific (ex. not "Our Community Bulletin")

- Show notes: Include at least a sentence in the "show notes" of each episode that explains what the epi-sode is about, who your guest is, etc. Some podcasts in-clude times maps for listeners. Be sure to include relevant links as well.

Clear titles let listen-ers see what they're getting

	Name	Description	Released	Price
1	#4: Julie Morrison, Illinois...	State Senator Julie Mor... ℹ	4/13/2017	Free
2	#3: Deputy Chief Ray Lars...	Deputy Chief Ray Lars... ℹ	3/5/2017	Free
3	#2: Vicki Street, Executive...	Executive Director of t... ℹ	2/7/2017	Free
4	#1: Mayor Harriet Rosenth...	Deerfield's current Ma... ℹ	1/11/2017	Free
5	Veteran's Day Audio Tour...	Use this audio walking... ℹ	12/26/2016	Free
6	Deerfield Illinois Cemeter...	Use this audio walking... ℹ	12/26/2016	Free

6 Items

Building your listeners

- Decide what success is for you

- Median number of listens is around 140 downloads in 30-60 days

Long titles hide the topic/guest

	Name	Time	Released	Description
1	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 13 – Legale...	1 hr 43 min	Sep 14, 2009	For September 12, 2...
2	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 12 – What ...	1 hr 27 min	Sep 9, 2009	For September 5, 20...
3	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 11 – Philos...	1 hr 15 min	Aug 26, 2009	For August 22, 2009 ...
4	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 10 – A Who...	1 hr 18 min	Aug 17, 2009	Today on the show: -...
5	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 9 – Microso...	1 hr 41 min	Aug 10, 2009	Today on the show: -...
6	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 8 – You Do...	1 hr 20 min	Aug 4, 2009	Today on the show: -...
7	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 7 – Did Pal...	1 hr 26 min	Jul 28, 2009	Today on the show: -...
8	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 6 – Geeks, ...	1 hr 53 min	Jul 19, 2009	Today on the show: -...
9	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 5 – many n...	1 hr 32 min	Jul 14, 2009	Today on the show: -...
10	TNR Podcast Weekly Recap 4 – the Bin...	2 hr 9 min	Jul 5, 2009	Today on the show: -...

Same with descriptions (show notes).

- Stick to a schedule

- Social media—all of it!

- Get your guests to share your episodes

- Get notable guests & gain credibility

- Show Notes

- New and noteworthy section of iTunes

- Monetization—Advertising in podcasts is a big deal and can be lucrative, but you often need 20,000 downloads per episode for most advertisers to consider your show. Other options are online "tip jars" like Patreon or Kickstarter.

- Giveaways or contests—any other type of promotion can help! Word of mouth too!

Back to basics—Make your show worth listening to!

- Experiment with tone: sound natural, be yourself, and work on your verbal crutches

- Get feedback from listeners

- Notes, outlines, checklists for workflow—anything that you'd do for a big, regular project

Podcast Networks

In recent years various podcast networks have grown. They do most of the work for you—producing, ed-iting, promoting—for a share of ad revenue (or in the hopes of future revenue). There is often cross-promotion with other podcasts in their network, guest or host trading, and possibly a common theme or tone. As with any contract, make sure you know the risks and read the fine print.

Usually, joining a network makes sense for podcasts that already have big followings. Some popular podcast

Notes: