

# Podcasts 101



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## **Podcasts**

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## **Podcasts**

Do you ever record key components of your lectures, assignment instructions, or graded feedback? Do your students enjoy listening to podcasts or radio style shows perhaps on iTunes or iTunesU? Do you ever need to accommodate students with visual impairments or auditory preferences for learning? Do your students bring their iPods or MP3 players to class? Have you ever considered podcasts?



A podcast is a digital audio file, usually an MP3, that one downloads from the Internet through a RSS feed. One can download podcasts from a media player like iTunes or iTunesU to an MP3 player or iPod, iPhone or smartphone, iPad or ereader, laptop, or desktop computer. If you subscribe to an RSS feed, you get the latest podcast in a series of broadcasts similar to a radio-style show.

The word podcast is a combination of iPod and broadcast. Podcasts can take other forms such as a video podcast - a vodcast or a podcast novel - an audiobook.

## **Variations**

### **Video Podcast**

The main difference between a video and a video podcast is the host technology. iTunes, YouTube, and Vimeo support video podcasts with MP3 or QuickTime (MOV). One can augment an audio podcast with photos, videos, titles, chapter markers, music, jingles, sound effects, bumpers, and credits. When sharing a podcast, consider including a transcript or closed captioning for ESL learners, the hearing impaired as well as those with a visual-linguistic preference (CAST, 2012) (Gardner, 2011). A transcript can also help students, especially ESL learners, to prepare for a listening activity (CAST, 2012).

### **Podcast Novel**

The main difference between an audiobook and a podcast novel is the host technology. iTunes supports audiobooks with MP3 or ePub. One can listen to their audiobooks downloaded from the Apple iBooks store on iTunes as well. Similarly to a video podcast, one can augment the audiobook with photos, titles, chapter markers, music, jingles, and sound effects. Consider including a

transcript where possible for various learning styles and abilities (CAST, 2012) (Gardner, 2011).

Librivox hosts podcasts and audiobooks for public domain books. Most of the podcasts use MP3 or OGG files and some have electronic text files as well. One can also subscribe to an RSS feed through iTunes. The site welcomes volunteers to read entire novels. What a great activity for theatre art students to record a dramatic play or early childhood education students to record a children's story!

## **Examples**

Use your imagination. What could you record? What could your students listen to or record? What would be an appropriate activity for your discipline? Only you know what would be authentic to your field of study, your curriculum, and your students. To get started, consider these ideas:



### **Faculty of Animation, Arts and Design**

- Song
- Radio or TV newscast
- Screenplay
- Art critique

### **Faculty of Business**

- Interview
- Case study
- Personal anecdote
- Site tour

### **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

- Audiobook
- Guest speaker presentation
- Poetry reading
- Literary critique

### **Faculty of Applied Health and Community Studies**

- Clinical demonstration
- Role play
- Public service announcement
- Commentary

### **Faculty of Applied Science and Technology**

- Equipment demonstration
- Lab tutorial
- University lecture series
- Walking tour

### **Faculty of Continuing and Professional Studies**

- Design series
- Advertisement
- Speaking and listening activities
- Health tip minute

## **Merits**

Podcasts and mobile assessments enhance the student experience (Toth, 2011) and performance (Powell, 2010) (Morris, 2010) (McKinney, Dyck, & Luber, 2009). There is a link to higher grades (Morris, 2010) (McKinney et al., 2009), more motivation, and more self-direction with podcasts (Powell, 2010). The audio in a podcast appeals to auditory learners (Gardner, 2011) and the control of the pace appeals to various learner abilities (CAST, 2012) as well as adult distance learners (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012). English as a Second Language (ESL) students, in particular, can practice their listening, public speaking, or pronunciation skills for reflection, peer critique, or graded assignment. Podcasts are good for demonstrations when integrated with learning tasks.



## **Reinforcement**

Podcasts can supplement face-to-face (F2F) teaching with a preview or review of

key concepts from class. To go beyond the class, students can find podcasts on iTunesU for research projects. They can listen to step-by-step guided instructions before, during, and after practising a skill set - pausing at several points to practice, apply, and review. Students can watch a demonstration before completing a lab, clinical, or studio assignment. Watch a short two-minute video about how Herron College of Art and Design instructor Corey Jefferson posts podcasts demonstrations of ceramics techniques on iTunesU: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/8Jy7LEFQYY4>

## **Accessibility**

Students can pause, rewind, slow down, and repeat a podcast as many times as they wish; they can learn at their own pace. For students with physical or learning disabilities, a podcast might be a better alternative to narrate answers to a test, an essay question, or presentation (CAST, 2012). English as a second language (ESL) students can practice listening skills or record their voice and practice their pronunciation and speaking skills. Any student with an auditory preference (Gardner, 2011), could record their notes before or after class, while on a site tour, or when brainstorming for a project. Podcasts are portable; one can download a podcast to his or her smartphone, MP3 player or iPod, iPad or ereader, laptop, or desktop computer to listen to, watch, or read any time, any

place, any pace, on-demand without the need for Internet or electricity (Simonson et al., 2012).

### **Challenges**

You may be tempted to use podcasts to replace lectures in a online course or flipped classroom model. However, podcasts are less useful for simply repeating lecture or PowerPoint information (Tam, 2011). Some may love the audio option to deliver lessons, especially if they have an iPod and microphone. Others will find the technology curve steep. Likewise, some students may welcome the opportunity to create podcasts, while others will struggle with the technology.

### **Lecturing**

While there is a time and place for lectures, especially dynamic guest speakers, a straight podcast lecture is no better than a regular classroom lecture. It is still passive learning and teacher-centric unless there are integrated learning tasks or content-based questions (Tam, 2011) (Toth, 2011). To use a lengthy lecture series from iTunesU, students would need guided questions and tasks. A short professor podcast with an industry anecdote that introduces a case study or a rationale for an approach can be a great warm up activity to captivate the learner. Likewise, a short re-cap or news flash of the key points to ponder and reflect on can be a great warm down or wrap up activity.

### **Recording**

There is a little bit of a learning curve to become technologically savvy at recording podcasts; however, the result is highly rewarding, long lasting, and time-saving as you have something polished that can be reused over and over again. One needs the right software and hardware like a computing device with sound card and an echo cancelling microphone, respectively. Many of us are insecure about the sound of our own voice or worried about sounding monotone. To overcome this, smile when you record your voice; it will make you sound more pleasing. Also, speak slowly, articulate, and annunciate; watch your volume, pitch, and diction.

### **Instructional Design**

Use a backwards design approach. First, start with your learning outcomes. Second, create your assessments. Third, plan your instructional activities. Finally, choose a technology to enhance the lesson.

### **Design**

Consider your curriculum; look carefully at your accreditation standards, graduate attributes, program learning outcomes, course learning outcomes, and lesson learning outcomes. Will a podcast fulfill the learning outcomes? How will you evaluate what the students learn from a podcast? What technologies will you and your students need to learn in order to



listen to, record, or share a podcast? Will a podcast enhance the learning experience?

### **Develop**

Browse the Internet or iTunes to listen to podcasts. iTunes is a media library created by Apple computers. Anyone can download audio and video files such as podcasts, music, movies, TV shows, and audiobooks; create playlists; and share their files across several computing devices. One can also organize their apps and books through iTunes. Although there are some free files on iTunes, most files have a modest fee. In addition to iTunes, Apple also hosts iTunesU. Universities, that have an account, can upload free educational files on iTunesU.

Alternatively, record your own podcast. To do so, you will need a headset with echo cancelling microphone and a computing device with recording capabilities. Most mobile devices and laptops can record sound but some desktop computers cannot. Consider scripting what you want to say and organizing your talk. Remember to smile and to speak slowly, clearly, and loudly.

### **Deliver**

Decide what students will do before, during, and after the podcast. For instance, you may require that students answer a quiz, complete a journal entry,

or perform a skill. During the podcast, you may have a list of guided questions like a scavenger hunt or activities like sketching or reflecting for students to complete. Prior to the podcast, you may preview and review vocabulary through a crossword puzzle; concepts through a mind mapping activity; or demonstrations through a lab experiment. The podcast should be authentic, active, and applied.

Plan how you will share your podcast with your students or how your students will share their podcast with you and their classmates. It is possible to upload a podcast file to the learning management system (LMS) to share, comment, and critique in a virtual fair in a discussion forum; at Sheridan, we have the Campus Pack Podcast tool, which links to the learning management system. Since audio files can be quite large, we can set up a channel on iTunes, YouTube, or Vimeo, upload our podcasts, and then post a direct link to these social media sites in the discussion forum. By adjusting the privacy settings and respecting Netiquette (Shea, 2004), students can also post comments and reviews on these social media sites directly. Students and faculty can subscribe to any of these podcasts to get the latest episodes, too.

### **Technology**

We can download, listen, record, upload, and share a podcast. We can download a

podcast from iTunes and iTunesU, Librivox, and other web-based sites to listen to on an iPod or MP3 player, iPhone or smartphone, iPad or ereader, laptop, or desktop computer. We can record a podcast with an iPod, GarageBand, Adobe Audition, Audacity, or Campus Pack with an echo cancelling microphone. We can upload and share a podcast on a website, iTunes, YouTube, or Vimeo.

### **Equipment**

**Sound Card.** You will need a computer that has a sound card.

**Media Player.** You will need a computer that has a Media Player, like Windows Media Player, VLC Media Player, Apple QuickTime, or iTunes.

**Headset with Echo Cancelling Microphone.** When recording, it is important to use a headset with an echo cancelling microphone. Otherwise, we get really bad slapback from the speakers on the computing device even if there is a built in microphone. Check your computer for the appropriate type of headset to use. Some computers only have a USB port for audio, some have only a headset port, some have both a headset and microphone port, and some have a USB and a headset and microphone port. Once you know what kind of port you have, you can purchase

a headset with either a USB drive or headset and microphone jack.



### **Apple**

The Apple family works well together to listen to, record, share, and organize podcasts. With an echo cancelling microphone, one can record an audio podcast directly to their iPod, iPhone, iPad, MacBook, or iMac and share or organize on iTunes. We can plug our iPod or MP3 player into modern digital instruments that have a MIDI system like a piano or guitar to record, edit, or notate our own music. At Sheridan, there are a few iMac computers in the Learning Commons, nevertheless, your Faculty might consider purchasing a mobile [Apple iPod Learning Lab](#) - a mobile cart that can store, charge, and sync iPods for classroom use. Many students today have a MacBook or iMac that comes with the [iLife](#) Suite including GarageBand, iMovie, and iPhoto we can also download the GarageBand, iMovie, and iPhoto apps to an iPad or iPhone.

Be aware that when we create a media file, like a song, podcast, or movie, on a Mac, the raw files lives on that computer.

We can only edit them on that computer. When polished, we can share them as MP3 files. However, if we want to make changes, we need to go back to the computer where the raw files live. Alternatively, we can download the MP3 file to a different Mac computer and start the edit process.



[iLife](#) The suite works seamlessly together to share audio, photo, and video files. If you have recently purchased or been issued an iMac, MacBook, or iPad, all of the Mac retail stores offer one-hour workshops as well as one-to-one and group training in their respective stores. Check out your nearest retailer for dates and times.

[GarageBand](#). With Apple iLife GarageBand, we can record audio podcasts, record musical instruments, and edit our podcasts with photos, videos, chapter markers, music, jingles, and sound effects. To learn how to create podcasts with GarageBand, view the Apple GarageBand online help pages: [Get started with GarageBand](#)

[iPhoto](#). With Apple iLife iPhoto, we can import, edit, and share photos. To learn how to use iPhoto, view the Apple iPhoto online help pages: [Get answers fast](#)

[iMovie](#). With Apple iLife iMovie, we can further enhance an audio file, not just with photos, videos, chapter markers, music, jingles, and sound effects, but also with titles, bumpers, credits, and transitions. To learn how to create videos with iMovie, view the Apple iMovie online help pages: [Get answers fast](#)

[iTunes](#). With Apple iTunes, we can share our podcast in the media library as well as organize our playlists; download and subscribe to podcasts, audiobooks, movies, and TV shows; and make comments. To learn more about creating an iTunes channel, read the Apples support pages: [Making a Podcast](#).

[iTunesU](#). Sheridan does not have an iTunesU channel, but some schools like Stanford University now offer massive online course (MOCS) through [iTunesU](#): [http://www.youtube.com/embed/A\\_CMdCXQA-M](http://www.youtube.com/embed/A_CMdCXQA-M)

[iBooks](#). With Apple iBooks, we can listen to our audiobooks downloaded from the Apple iBooks store and organize through iTunes.

[YouTube](#). To set up a YouTube channel to host your podcasts or video podcasts, make comments, rate, or subscribe to

channels, you will need a Google account. To learn how to set up a GoogleAccount, read the support pages: [Google Accounts and YouTube](#). To learn how to set up a YouTube channel, read the support pages: [Create a channel](#)



[Vimeo](#). With Vimeo, we can share podcasts or video podcasts, create channels, set up and moderate groups, make comments, rate, and follow channels. To learn more about how to use Vimeo, go to their [Help Center](#).

### **Adobe**

[Audition](#). At Sheridan, we have the Adobe [Creative Suite 6](#). The suite includes Audition which we can use to record and edit audio. The Sheridan Library has a subscription to Lynda.com where you can find video tutorials on how to use this software: [Audition CS6 Essentials Training](#). To learn how to use this product, you can also go to the Adobe TV tutorials: [Getting Started with](#)

[Audition CS6](#). Adobe has also launched their [Creative Cloud](#) for the suite.

[Audacity](#). If your computing device has a sound card, you may be able to create a podcast with the open source Audacity. The Sheridan Library has a subscription to Lynda.com where you can find video tutorials on how to use this software: [Up and Running with Audacity](#). From the [Audacity](#) website, you can [download](#) the software for free. Use their [Tutorials](#) to learn how to use the software. If you have a dated computing system, there are also legacy downloads for older operating systems.

### **Campus Pack**

**Podcast.** At Sheridan, we have the Campus Pack suite which links to the learning management system (LMS). The suite includes a Podcast tool. We can record a podcast, include a photo, transcript, or web link, and share with the LMS, iTunes, or YouTube. To learn how to use the tool, watch the video tutorials on [how to set up Campus Pack Podcast in D2L](#) and [how to create a podcast with Campus Pack podcast](#) or refer to the handout [How do I Create a Podcast with Campus Pack and D2L?](#)

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## **Glossary**

**GarageBand.** Part of the iLife suite for Apple computers. Software to create podcasts.

**ePub.** A file format for ebooks published on iBooks and iTunes, Amazon Kindle, and Barnes and Noble NOOK.

**iTunes.** A media library created by Apple computers. Hosts music, podcasts, movies, TV shows, and audiobooks.

**iTunesU.** A part of iTunes strictly for post secondary institutions to host educational podcasts.

**Media Player.** Computer software that plays sound.

**MP3.** An abbreviation for Moving Pictures Expert Group (MPEG). A patented digital audio encoding format often called MP3. Similar variations are MP4, M4A, and M4V.

**MIDI.** An abbreviation for musical instrument digital interface. Connects musical instruments and computers to record, edit, and notate music.

**OGG.** An open source audio and video file format developed by the Xiph.Org Foundation.

**QuickTime.** Multimedia software to create digital video developed by Apple. File type saved as MOV.

**RSS.** An abbreviation for rich site summary also known as really simple syndication. A family of web feed formats to publish blog entries, podcast episodes, and video broadcasts through a web channel. The web feed or RSS reader - the aggregator alerts subscribers that new episodes are available.

**Sound Card.** Computer hardware to input and output sound.

**USB.** An abbreviation for universal serial bus. A type of cable connector for communication and power between computers and electronic devices.

**VLC.** An abbreviation for the VideoLAN project. An audio and video media player.

**WAV.** A waveform audio file format also known as audio for Windows.