

Podcasts: Understanding, Creating, and Deploying them



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Today's Goals

1. What is a **podcast**?
2. How do I **get** podcasts?
3. How do I **play** podcasts?
4. **Why** should I care about podcasts for **education**?
5. How do I produce my own **audio** podcasts?
6. How do I **deliver** (deploy) my own podcasts?

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Demos

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1) What is a **Podcast**?

- It must be nothing, since the "podcast" is not in my dictionary.
- It is something only children do.
- It has something to do with fishing.
- It is a radio talk show.
- It is a music file.
- It is a TV program.
- It is a lecture.

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Podcast Definition¹

- **Podcasting** is a new format for distributing **audio** and **video** content via the **Internet**. Actually, podcasting is just multimedia content enclosed into an **RSS** file.
- **RSS** means Really Simple Syndication. RSS is a special format based on **XML**. In fact, RSS feeds are **XML** files containing data according to the RSS specification, and usually located on a **website**.
- **XML**: an **HTML**-like file for handling data.
- **HTML**: Hyper Text Markup Language

1 - <http://www.rss-specification.com/sitemap.htm>

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Rick's Podcast Definition

A method of obtaining (**subscribing**) computer files (**episodes**), usually **audio** (mp3) or **video** (m4v), from a **catalog** (RSS feed, XML) on the **Internet** (website), and having them **automatically** delivered to your **computer** and then to your **iPod** (or other multimedia player)

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2) How do I **get** podcasts?

- **Computer** (Mac or PC)
- Knowledge as to where to get the podcast
- Podcast software (**aggregator**)
 - (Not) Browsers (IE, Firefox, Safari, + others)
 - (Not) Blackboard and other LMS's
 - Best Method: Apple's **iTunes** (free from Apple)
 - Winamp (at SAU)
 - **Not** Windows Media Player
- "Subscribing" - Adding the podcast URL to your aggregator

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iTunes: An Aggregator Manages the Podcast

- **Reads** the RSS feed file (i.e., the catalog)
- **Displays** the catalog of episodes to you
- **Downloads** the episodes
- **Tracks** which episodes have been viewed
- **Removes** episodes/podcasts
- Periodically (automatically) **re-reads** the RSS file and **updates** the catalog
- **Coordinates** the podcast with your portable multimedia player (iPod)

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3) **Playing** Podcasts

- **On your computer** (free players)
 - iTunes
 - QuickTime Player
 - Other multimedia software players (RealPlayer, Adobe Flash Player, Nero)
 - Key is .mp3 (audio), and .m4v or .mp4 (video)
- **On your portable device**
 - **iPod** (my recommendation)
 - Zune
 - Other devices?
 - Cell phones?

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4) **Why** should I care about podcasts for education?

- **Captures and shares** knowledge and ideas
- **Understood** by students (Fad? Cool?)
- **Mobile/Portable** format (computer-less)
- Allows students to learn when they want (**asynchronous**). **Efficient** education!
- **Automatic** delivery. One-step, done! (subscription)
- **Tolerates** slow computer network
- Can support "classroomless" education (i.e., "online")

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Benefits Summary

- **For the student**
 - Able to learn when most ready
 - Able to use time more effectively
 - Able to repeat
 - Able to slow down, speed up
- **For the instructor**
 - Able to help students learn more efficiently
 - Better use of time
 - Class during inclement weather and other natural disasters
 - **Added flexibility**
 - Conferences
 - Ecuador

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Benefits Summary

- **For the University**
 - ?
 - ?
 - ?

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5) Producing Podcasts

- What can be delivered??
 - **Audio**
 - Stereo & mono
 - mp3
 - **Video**
 - m4v, mp4
 - 640x480 & 320x240 (iPod)
 - **PDF files**
 - **"Zip" files**
 - (Anything)
- 2 – Refer to Apple's Specifications

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Producing Audio Podcasts

- Two production requirements:
 1. Content files (audio and/or video)
 2. RSS feed file (only one)

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Producing Content

- **Digital recorder**
 - Microphone
- **Digital recording software that can produce mp3 files**
 - Audacity (free)
 - Adobe Audition or Soundbooth
- **Demonstration**

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Recording Tips

- Plan and practice (educational podcasts)
- Use a good quality dynamic microphone
- Put microphone on a stand, not in your hand
- Face the microphone away from the noise
- Record 44.1 kHz stereo, down sample from there.
- Avoid recording outside
- Avoid recording near fans or fluorescent lights
- Avoid crowded rooms
- Turn off the phone and window air conditioner
- Close the door
- Record at 3 a.m.

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Producing the RSS Feed File (the Catalog)

- What does it look like?
- **Creating the RSS Feed**
 - Notepad or MS Word (text file)
 - Blackboard
 - Website (GoDaddy)
- **Software approach (my preference)**
 - Feed Editor (PC)

Demonstration

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6) How do I **deploy** podcasts?

- Move your RSS feed file, and your content to the Internet, usually with FTP software.
- **Website**
 - SAU
 - Mediacom
 - Personal website (goDaddy, and others)
- **Inform your students (world)**
 - iTunes
 - Website – post URL
 - Blackboard and other LMS's

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Review: Steps for Deploying

1. Create the content files
2. Create the RSS feed (catalog) file
3. Put the content and feed files on the "Internet"
4. Test the feed
5. Inform the public where to find the catalog's location (URL)

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Podcasts on Blackboard

- **Advantages**
 - **Cost:** free to you
 - Creates RSS feed file – no worries
 - Relatively easy to upload files
 - Good **security**
- **Disadvantages**
 - **Does not synchronize** with your multimedia player
 - Maintaining files more difficult

Demonstration

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My Methodology

- I produce primarily **videos**
- I use **Audition** (sound) and **Premiere** (video)
- Website files are on my laptop
- I manage my website using **Dreamweaver**
 - (Old method was Frontpage)
- Create and edit feeds with **Feed Editor** software
- Provide podcasts via **iTunes**, my website (**goDaddy**), and **Moodle** (LMS)
- Encourage students to use an **iPod**

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Disadvantage of Podcasts

- **Time** (i.e., your time)
- **Quality**

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End

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Apple's iTunes Store

- **A commercial distributor**
 - A cataloging service, not a container
 - Free podcast service
 - Big and easy audience
 - Wants location of your RSS feed file, nothing else
 - Audited by Apple
 - No experimentation
- **After posting, make note of the information Apple sends to you**

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Learning More

- Many online resources

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Email to David Pogue³

Hi David,

Hope this makes it to you. You might remember me as the fellow who briefly spoke with you, after your presentation, about the value of carefully edited videos in education. I told you that I would send you a link to some of my examples.

Go to http://www.rjerz.com/save/STBE333/Videos/Flash/multi_video_player.swf. These are a number of support videos for my course in Operations Management. One of my most enjoyable videos is the one titled "Ch01/02 - Excel Productivity", which you should see to the left menu picker.

This video is not "professionally" produced. Instead, I did this myself. I think one point about it that viewers (hopefully) won't notice is that some of the Excel video is actually playing at double "real-time" speed. This is one of my points about educational videos - the ability to compress time (said differently, the ability to squeeze more knowledge into a person's brain within a certain period of time.)

Anyway, hope this gives you a sense of what I am doing. I also podcast some of these videos for my students. You can find some for my MBA-level course podcasts on the iTunes store by searching for my last name.

I enjoyed your presentation at Educomm. I also miss your podcasted articles.

Sincerely,

3 – New York Times Technology Columnist, CBS news correspondent

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Response from David Pogue

Date: Wed, 30 Jul 2008 19:46:51 -0400
 Subject: Re: Educomm08 - Videos in Education chat
 From: David Pogue <david@poguman.com>
 To: Rick Jerz <Rick@rjerz.com>
 Thread-Topic: Educomm08 - Videos in Education chat
 Thread-Index: AcjynonBoCLKKFJ65ES7g4nXvnPsYg==

Great work, Rick. Fascinating, really... A taste of the future!

Dp

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