

# Podcasting: For Fun & Profit!

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## **Introduction**

### **It's all about you!**

If you grew up in a household where the newspaper was delivered on Saturday morning, you were probably involved in the weekly fight to get the section you wanted. Maybe Dad wanted to read the news, and Mom wanted the lifestyle section. An older sister might want the entertainment, and an older brother might want the automotive section, and the youngest child in the house will probably ask for the comic section.

The newspaper was delivered to the front door, Dad went outside in his slippers and picked it up, and the paper was distributed to the house according to the interests of the people in the family. While the idea might generalize the interests of the people living near house, the weekly newspaper-section-grab is played out across America.

People's lives are busy and not everyone is interested in everything all the time! You don't have the time to cut through the clutter of information, you simply want to get at the thing that interests you, and ignore the rest.

As the information age increases, and the availability of content seems to grow exponentially every single day, the need for organization and selectivity of information and entertainment becomes more and more important.

The Internet has allowed exactly this kind of selectivity, except there is still a sense of you having to go out and find the information you're looking for (for example, through a search engine) and then choose from a list of related choices.

Podcasting has changed that. Podcasting lets you choose the types of information or entertainment you're interested in getting, and then it automates the process by downloading new shows as they are updated.

You'll learn a lot through this book as you go from beginner to pro. But don't lose sight of the most important thing: podcasting can be a convenient way to be entertained or informed, but most importantly, it's a lot of fun!

You're going to hear a lot of technical terms and do a little legwork to get your first podcast into the world, but don't let that slow you down. Have fun with it!

## **What is Podcasting?**

### **What you need to know**

#### **Introduction**

The term “podcasting” can be confusing to some people, because it draws its origin from the combination of the word “iPod” and the word “broadcast.” While you do not need an iPod to enjoy podcasting, the term probably caught on for convenience, and its audible similarity to the word “broadcast.”

**>>>TECHNICAL TERM: PODCAST**

By the end of this book you'll know what podcasting is, be able to find and enjoy podcasts at your convenience, and have the chance to do your very own podcasting! The technical "stuff" is not as scary as some people might think, and you'll be surprised how easy it is to get involved. So if you're afraid that it might be too technical over your head, keep reading!

### **What is podcasting?**

Although we'll get into the technical terms later, podcasting is an audio file that you can listen to on your computer or on a portable device. Note that it does not have to be an iPod, but can be almost any kind of portable audio device, also referred to as an MP3 player. An MP3 player, though, is also a misnomer because these devices will often play more than just MP3 files.

**>>>TECHNICAL TERM: IPOD**

**>>>TECHNICAL TERM: PORTABLE AUDIO DEVICE**

**>>>TECHNICAL TERM: MP3**

## How can I understand podcasting?

If you were to ask someone on the street what podcasting is, most of them will not have any idea what you are talking about. They will ask if you said "broadcasting." You might explain to them that it is a special audio file that you can listen to on your MP3 player. But even then you would not be doing it justice. Here are some other ways of understanding what podcasting is.

In the introduction section you were probably reminded of your childhood when the people in your household fought over the sections of the newspaper that had been delivered to your door. If you can imagine that same newspaper, rather than being delivered in one section to your front door, but being packaged up in individual sections for each member of your family, with the sections that are not read left out completely.

That is one way to think of podcasting: the information that you are interested in delivered to you, without the stuff you don't want. Some people have called podcasting TiVo radio. Another way to think of podcasting is like a radio program that is only about your specific interests and when you click the link or synchronize your MP3 player with your computer, it gets downloaded to you automatically.

### EXAMPLE

It's like you're the owner of the radio station. You tell the DJ what you want to hear and they'll play it for you. All news? All sports? Regular updates on the financial markets? Entertainment news? Information on your industry? No problem, it's all at your personal DJ's fingertips and in moments it's playing in your ears.

And a third way to think of podcasting is a targeted audio program for businesses to add value to their customers and prospects, and for organizations to pass information on to their users.

**>>>SECRETS OF THE PROS!**

**ADD VALUE TO YOUR CUSTOMER'S LIVES**

However you think of podcasting, other people will still give you a funny look because it is still in its infancy. In fact, the term "podcasting" was only coined in 2004! It won't be long, though, and everyone will be talking about it.

### **How does it work?**

Essentially, podcasting allows you to select the things you'd like to listen to, subscribe to them, have them downloaded to your computer or portable audio device, and listen to them when you want to. Once you've subscribed, they will update automatically for you, like a magazine you don't think about until the subscription arrives in your mailbox every month. What is the advantage of a podcast over other types of broadcasting? Podcasts assimilate radio, portable CD players, and satellite radio, into one convenient format, and allow new uses not previously available. So what is it that you can listen to? What kinds of podcasting are available? The answer to those questions is this: everything you can possibly imagine! You will be amazed at the volume and variety of podcasts out there and the possibilities that exist.

Just as the Internet has allowed pretty much anybody to create visual files of information and entertainment, called web pages, podcasting has allowed virtually anybody to create audio files of information and entertainment. While the technical details are not important here, all someone needs in order to become a podcaster is a computer and an Internet hook-up. You don't even need a microphone to create your first podcast. (You may want to get one later, but you don't need one now). In fact, if you have a telephone and can browse the Internet, you will be able to listen to podcasts and even create your first podcast by the end of the next

chapter!

Who can podcast? Anyone can podcast! We'll go into much greater detail later about who might want to podcast, but generally speaking, there are several reasons why everyone would want to podcast:

- Organizations like churches and nonprofits will podcast to keep people up to date with what's going on, providing news, seminars and speeches, meeting transcriptions, etc.
- Businesses will podcast to maintain their name in the marketplace, offer information on products or strategies, and position themselves as the expert in their industry.
- Individuals will podcast if they have something to say to the world. Opinions, rants, and artistic offerings are all fair game in podcasting.

Podcasting formats are as varied as the types of podcasts available. Some podcasts are like monologues where one person simply shares their ideas into a microphone for the listener to hear. Other podcasts are a dialogue between two or more people and may or may not follow format. Some podcasts are unscripted while others seem to be very scripted. Podcasting contain music, interviews, and while audio podcasts are quite popular now, audio/video podcasts are slowly gaining popularity as well.

### **All the history you need to know... and nothing else**

The history of podcasting is well chronicled. But you're not reading this book to get a history lesson. You're reading this book to develop a new hobby or business or enhance an existing one. So we've condensed the information here so you can get up to speed in about thirty seconds.

The idea of sending files of sound over the Internet is not new. It was just a matter of taking existing elements, like MP3 and RSS, and reworking them to allow technological visionaries to create a new form of communication.

Personal web journals called web logs, or “blogs” have been around for a while so people could voice opinions and provide information to others. People use these blogs as a personal platform so it was only natural to add files of sound to their textual offering.

RSS was a file format for sending sound but was not extensively used. It was developed into RSS-with-enclosures, allowing someone to attach MP3 files.

When attached to an RSS file, these sound files could be sent automatically to subscribers, people who were interested in hearing what the person had to say, and downloaded to be heard at their convenience.

The term “podcasting” was coined in 2004 and in just a few months it went from being an unknown concept and an uninvented word to a Google-search result in the millions! Podcasts are springing up nearly every day, like weeds. But good weeds!

Now everyone is jumping on board the podcasting bandwagon from politicians, pundits, professionals, producers, and even pornographers. Anyone with something to say or a product or service to sell or an opinion to share can podcast... and many already are!

### **Advantages/Disadvantages**

Podcasting, just like any other technology, has advantages and disadvantages. There is one primary factor that is both an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time: podcasting is the unexplored country, the Wild West of technology. This means that anyone with something to say has an opportunity to say it, whether they have political views they want to share at the world, or success tips to help people improve their lives. And the result is you’re going to get podcasts which provide real value and podcasts which waste your time and podcasts which could potentially offend. You’ll get podcasts with nothing to say and podcasts that say way too much. Until a regulatory body is established that will bring some structure to the industry,



podcasting is open to anyone and everyone who wants to get in on it, whether the things they have to say are of value to people or not. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time. Seeing what kind of podcasts are out there, though, and selectively choosing the ones you want, will allow you to take advantage... of the advantage!

## **How can podcasting help your business?**

If you have a business, podcasting has many applications that allow you to get in front of your customers, get your name out there, and ultimately make you more money. Later in the book we'll show you ways that you can use podcasting to add value to your customer's lives. And at the end of this book we'll show you 10 ways that will help you make money with podcasting whether you own a big business or small one. It's a great way to boost your business with a very small investment of money and time.

If you are not ready to make the leap to full-time podcaster, there are other ideas that we've included in our "business podcasting" suggestions. For example, you can podcast on an area of the industry you currently work in as an employee. Show yourself to be interested in learning more about the business and you could find yourself considered as an up-and-comer when the next round of promotions happens at your office.

Alternatively, you can moonlight outside of your job as a podcaster. You can do this on a free basis as a hobby or in the capacity of an entrepreneur looking to eventually build your part-time business into a full-time career. You'll learn much more about these options later in the book.

## **Similar concepts**

Palmcasting is a similar concept to podcasting, except it applies to PDA devices which can receive and play podcasts. Punchcasting is a way of receiving podcasts in your smartphone

without having to sync it onto your computer first. It requires that you have a smartphone with RSS.

## **The future of podcasting**

The future of podcasting is wide open right now because it is still a fledgling industry without a regulatory body. While podcasting is just catching on and only a couple years old, people are already talking about “zencasting” or “vidcasting” which is similar to podcasting but contains video as well.

But it doesn't stop there. Visionaries will see beyond podcasting and even though it is exciting and new, technology advances so rapidly that it will get old very quickly. What is around the corner and how will podcasting influence it?

Soon, we may find highly interactive vidcasts that are automatically made available to us without us having to subscribe to them, based simply on our browsing or online buying habits and the technology will be streamlined enough that computers will automatically come with the programs that go out and “catch” the podcasts without having to download additional programs.

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