

Overview

This helpsheet tells you about how to get started with making a podcast. It provides useful information and links for those who wish to find out more.

What is a podcast?

Podcasting is basically publishing radio style sound recordings on a website. It's like a radio show stored as an MP3 file. The word 'Podcast' (from 'ipod' and 'broadcast') is used to describe a number of things, from simply posting an MP3 file on a website to creating and publishing regular broadcasts which listeners can subscribe to and download each broadcast to play back on their PC or MP3 Player. A true podcast uses this facility and is updated regularly with new 'episodes.' By podcasting, you can broadcast to the world without the need for specialist equipment or a licence.

Why make a podcast?

Podcasting is a great way to share work. It gives pupils a real and mass audience for their work and so increases motivation. Sound is an exciting and engaging medium to work with – a change from print and paper. Here are some examples of how schools are using Podcasting across the curriculum.

- Record poems and stories the pupils have written.
- Play songs and music that the children or young people have written and recorded (but take note of copyright laws – see below)
- Make a news programme. It could be school news, world news or news from history.
- Make an outside broadcast from a field trip or sports day and publish it on the school website.
- Have a school radio station with jokes, pupil interests, competitions, interviews etc. and 'podsafe' music (see below.)
- Make a recording to help with revision. Work with the pupils/students to record key facts, processes and information for any subject area.
- MFL – make a broadcast in another language.
- Make a recording to give information to pupils in the school, e.g. advice for new pupils.

Examples of podcasts in schools

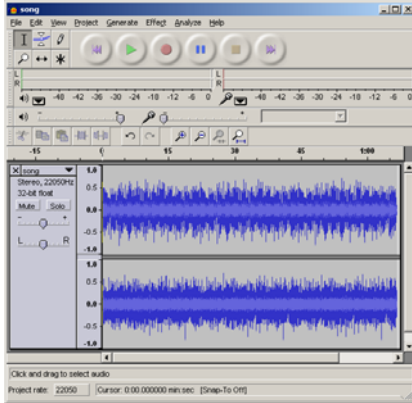
There are thousands of podcasts on the internet. Many schools around the country have made some excellent recordings which are well worth listening to for inspiration.

http://www.sandon.herts.sch.uk/our_school/podcasting.html

<http://www.stlukes.herts.sch.uk/radio/>

<http://www.chauncyschool.blogspot.com/>

What do I need to make a podcast?



Podcasts are generally recorded straight onto a computer, so all you need is a computer and a microphone. You also need some software to record and edit your broadcast. One free example of this is Audacity which is a powerful open source audio-editor. It will do everything you need to make a recording. Download it from <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>. There are some tutorials available from <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/tutorials>. Other free and commercially available sound editors are available. Softease make a program called Podium which is designed as an all-in-one podcasting program for

schools, with which you can plan, record, edit and publish a podcast.

Many MP3 players have a recording facility which means you can record away from the computer and download the recording to your PC as an MP3 file, ready for editing. You can also buy higher-quality dedicated MP3 Recorders, for recording on the move.

Publishing your podcast

Make sure you save your finished recording as an MP3 file. Now you are ready to upload your file and create your podcast. The simplest way to do this is to upload the file to your school's website and simply link to it from one of your webpages. When a visitor clicks on the link, the MP3 will begin to play. However, if it is a big file it may take a while before it starts playing. Another alternative is to 'stream' the MP3 file. This means that it will start playing as soon as you click it. To do this you can use a Flash MP3 player, which can be added to your webpage. There are lots of these available for free on the internet, with their own instructions.

Advanced

You might like to let listeners subscribe to your podcast so that they can automatically download every broadcast you make to their 'aggregator' or 'podcatcher' (which is a program such as i-Tunes.) This requires something called an RSS feed, which is a piece of code written in XML format. The code is saved as an RSS file which is uploaded to your web space along with your MP3 files. Subscribers add a link to your RSS file to their aggregator, which then regularly checks the feed to see if the podcast has been updated.

This is a bit more complicated, but again there are lots of websites with tutorials on how to do this. A good one can be found at <http://www.stager.org/podcasting/guide.html>

And as podcasting gets more popular, free and commercial tools are becoming more and more available to create the RSS feed for you. Podium creates this RSS feed for you automatically when you publish your podcast.

Examples of free RSS tools are Podifier, Listgarden and RSS Builder.

How do I receive a podcast?

To subscribe to a podcast that uses an RSS feed you need to use a program called an Aggregator, or Podcatcher. The most well known is i-Tunes, but there are others available and they are generally free. They work by allowing you to enter the web address of the RSS file, and the program can then automatically download the sound files and notify you when new ones are available,

When you visit a website than is promoting a podcast that you can subscribe to, you will often see a web address ending in 'XML' which you need to copy and paste into your aggregator. An example is:

http://www.thegrid.org.uk/downloads/home/hgfl_podcast.xml

This is the RSS feed for Hertfordshire Grid for Learning's podcast. If you copy and paste this link into your aggregator, you have subscribed to this podcast!

Alternatively you might see an RSS icon on the page, which looks something like this:



This icon is often linked to the RSS file. You need to copy the link and paste it into your aggregator. To do this in Internet Explorer, right-click on the icon and select **Copy Shortcut**.

If you are using i-Tunes, you can go to the Advanced menu, choose 'Subscribe to Podcasts' and follow the onscreen instructions.

Important

First and foremost, when recording a broadcast, follow the usual precautions regarding the safety of the pupils involved. You should not use full names, and obviously never give out any personal information about pupils or staff. There is information about web-safety on the HGfL at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/schoolweb/safety/>

Secondly, it is important that you respect copyright laws. You cannot include any commercially available music in your broadcast. However, there is a lot of 'podsafes' music available online which you can use. Also, through E2BN you can access Apple's FreePlay site which full of music which is free for educational use, and is especially useful for short clips and jingles.

Better still, make your own music!

E2BN resources including Freeplay Music: <http://mp.e2bn.net/myportal/7.cfm>

Podsafes Music Network: <http://music.podshow.com/>

Podsafes Audio: <http://www.podsafesaudio.com/>

Is your school podcasting? If so, please let Chris Carter know at Hertfordshire Development Centre. He would like to hear about it and we can place a link to your podcast on the HGfL to share your work and inspire others.

Contact: Chris Carter, Hertfordshire Development Centre, Tel: 01582 830119

Email: chris.carter@hertscc.gov.uk



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