

Podcasting: An Amateur Production for Library Visitors

by

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Paper provides the historical background of podcast alongwith definitions given by various scholars. It also provides relation between RSS and Podcast . Gives in detail the various steps invloved in podcasting along with use ful open source softwares and free sites available for podcasting .Also enlists of academic libraries using podcasting .

Introduction

Web 2.0 technologies empowers librarians and information specialists to converse, communicate and collaborate with library clients as never before, and even reach non-users in new and exciting ways that might capture their attention. Blogs can offer them timely and interesting library related news. Wikis can hold information right from library policies to specialized reference collections and creating a library presence on social networking sites enables libraries to reach people in their comfort zone.

Web 2.0 may be described as web sites using participatory and collaborative technologies, which is growing at an amazing rate. Web Sites like MySpace, YouTube and Wikipedia attract millions of visitors everyday and are some of the most hit web sites on the Internet.

Phase two of the World Wide Web has brought with it an development for amateur productions, opening the door of would-be talk-show hosts to become modern radio stars. Recent advancements in and awareness of web 2.0 RSS technology, combined with the popularity of MP3 players, have given the ordinary person the ability to syndicate audio to world.

Podcasting

In September 2004, a new word Podcasting was invented. The word “podcasting” is a hybrid word derived from a combination of Apple’s “iPod” portable media and the shorting of the word “broadcasting.”

Podcasts are digital recording that are made available on the internet for downloading to a personal computer or portable audio player using an RSS feed. They are digital audio files that are created to be heard and shared.

Definitions

Jerry Franklin described podcasting as “Podcasting is the method by which multimedia files-usually audio files, but increasingly video files as well-can be distributed over the internet for play back on a computer.”

Siew-Rong Wu illustrated podcasting in these words “Podcasting refers to making of audio or video programs and the publication of them on the internet so that these programs may be downloaded to personal computers or mobile devices.”

Mckean described as “a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program-is typically made available on the web for downloading to a personal audio player”

Barsky & Lindstrom defined as “Podcasting is really a dynamic term, now synonymous with any audio or video files that listeners download and play on a digital player”

In a nutshell, Podcasting is a new type of online media delivery. Selected audio files are published via the internet and by allowing users to subscribe via an RSS feed to automatically receive new files. Podcasting allows to create online talkshow or radio program, with content of choice. However, the term podcast has from its inception described the distribution of digital media files, including video and audio via RSS enclosures and hence the terms video podcast, vodcast or less commonly vidcasts are redundant.

An enhanced podcast is an audio podcast that can display images simultaneously with audio. These can contain chapter markers, hyperlinks, and artwork; all of which is synced to a specific program or device. When an enhanced podcast is played within its specific program or device, all the appropriate information should be displayed at the same time and in the same window, making it easier to display materials. Enhanced podcasting is considered to be a very practical way to present information. This new technological phenomenon is becoming more prominent in schools, universities and businesses; as it is an efficient way to present school and university lectures, slide shows, video clips, and other presentation materials of the like.

Really Simple Syndication (RSS)

RSS is a family of Web feed formats used for syndicating content from blogs or Web pages. RSS is an XML file that summarizes information items and links to the information sources. It informs users of updates to blogs or Web sites they're interested in Web or blog RSS feeds are typically linked with the word “subscribe,” an orange rectangle, or with the letters XML or RSS in an orange box. Feed reader or aggregator programs can check a list of feeds on the user's behalf and display any updated articles they find. Popular Web browsers have built-in feed readers or aggregators, and you can easily add feeds to your Web page. Atom is another syndication specification aimed at resolving issues of multiple incompatible RSS versions.

Podcast and RSS

More and more libraries are working with blogs, wikis, del.icio.us, Flickr, and other Web 2.0 sites that offer RSS, and many librarians are using aggregators like Bloglines to pull in RSS for consumption. The link between RSS and podcasting is that a podcast is an RSS feed with an enclosure. In very basic terms, an RSS enclosure is just some type of multimedia content: an MP3, AVI, MPEG, or other media file. Technically, an enclosure can be any sort of binary content (RSS could be used to “feed” program updates, called appcasting), but for the purposes of a podcast we’re limiting those enclosure types to media files, almost always in the form of an MP3 for audio or an MPEG for video. Thus, RSS has established itself through wide usage and implementation. It is the essential delivery mechanism for podcasts.

Since anything that plays well with RSS can potentially be distributed via a podcast that can leverage these feeds in lots of fun ways. Want to highlight some of podcasts on web site? Include the RSS feed in the HTML, and anyone visiting page will see and can grab the audio or video they are interested in if you enable downloads.

How to create Podcast

Audacity – Overview and Availability

Audacity is a free, cross-platform application for recording and editing sound files. The first thing to do, of course, is download Audacity. It’s available on the SourceForge Website, “the world’s largest Open Source software development Web site,” at: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>. Instructions for downloading and then installing the program are straightforward, and are available on the same site.

There are also multiple sites offering a variety of plug-ins you can use to enhance Audacity’s capabilities further.

Once you’ve downloaded and installed Audacity, download and install a LAME encoder. The LAME Encoder is a simple plug-in software that converts Audacity project files (.aup) into the .mp3 format generally used for podcasting. Numerous LAME encoders are available on the Web; SourceForge directs you to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/faq?s=install&item=lame-mp3>,

Recording Content

The next step, of course, would be to record your content. There are countless methods of recording; Audacity is, in fact, neither the most frequently used nor the best tool for this task. In addition, recording content can in and of itself be a significant undertaking. What follows here is one extremely simple and relatively inexpensive

To record your sound files directly into an iPod you need an inexpensive peripheral, called a Griffin iTalk. The iTalk turns the iPod into a recording device. Follow the iTalk instructions and record your content. For optimal results, conduct your recordings in a quiet environment (such as a conference room), and hold the iTalk approximately three to five inches away from your mouth and a little off to one side.

When your recordings are finished, connect your iPod with your computer and copy the recorded files (called Voice Memos on the iPod interface) onto your computer. The files will be .wav files.

Importing Sound Files

Now it's time to import your sound files and begin editing them into a discrete podcast. From the Audacity Project menu, select Import Audio, and select your files as you would with any standard desktop application. Each individual sound file you select will appear in its own track, as an extended series of peaks and valleys called a waveform, in the main Audacity window.

Producing the Podcast

There are seven steps involve in podcasting which are listed bellow:

1. Editing each sound file individually for quality and flow (e.g. removing unwanted passages)
2. Creating the musical intro
3. Ordering and assembling all speech files
4. Creating the musical close
5. Making final adjustments to ensure consistent volume throughout
6. Mastering the podcast
7. Exporting the podcast as an .mp3

Publishing the Podcast

When the podcast is ready for publication, then it's time to examine hosting options for storing and distributing the podcast to your listeners. You will need to find a host (or web server) that is reliable and in many cases inexpensive (or free!).

Usage of podcasts in libraries?

Library Tours (can even be downloaded to smart phones)

- Story hours / Story Time (record your kiddy librarians)
- Information Literacy and Research Help (check out the many already in iTunes, etc.)
- Library updates and library news
- Collecting and indexing good free podcasts (found through the podcast search engines)
- Local history (collected from veterans, pioneers, local characters, etc.)
- Teen book/DVD/Game reviews (collected by the circulation desk)
- Music collections
- Audiobook collections (ON iPods and MP3 players)
- Library events (like Science Fair help, Literacy nights, author readings)
- Library debates
- Archiving class lectures
- Library marketing podcasts (how to use RSS, databases, VR, etc.)
- Training
- Library gadget petting zoos (for staff and patrons)
- Public speaking training (partnering with groups)

Podcasting in Academic Libraries

- Library Tours
- Database Tutorials
- Recordings of Library Events and Lectures from guest speakers
- Introductions to Library Staff – including explanations of what they do
- Highlight certain areas of the collection – bring them to life
- Bibliographic Instruction
- Library News
- Book Discussions
- Library Events

How Libraries are Using Podcasts: Some Examples

Library Tours

The library at Mohawk College (ON, Canada) has created a BRAINcast series that includes tours of their library websites, electronic resources, and library catalog, as well as a walking tour of the physical library at <http://braincast.libsyn.com>.

The Alden Library at Ohio University allows students to borrow an iPod to take a seven floor tour of the library and gives them a choice to select the version recorded by a librarian or by a student at: <http://tinyurl.com/2zwms6>

The following is a list of libraries and affiliated organizations that are currently podcasting and offering selected podcast resources service:

[Arizona State University Libraries](#) (podcast feed)

[Bridgewater State College Central Connecticut State University's Elihu Burritt Library](#)
(podcast feed)

[Claude More Health Sciences Library University of Virginia](#) (podcast feed) [Cornell University Library](#)

[Curtin University of Technology Library and Information Service](#)

[Dowling College Library Omnibus](#) (podcast feed)

[Elon University Library](#)(podcast feed)

[Emory University Woodruff Library](#) (podcast feed)

[GPC Decatur Campus Library](#) (podcast feed)

[Lewis & Clark Law School Podcasts](#) (by the Boley Law Library) (podcast feed)

[The Lunar and Planetary Institute](#) (podcast feed)

[Mercer University \(Atlanta\) Library](#) (podcast feed)

[Mohawk College Library](#) (podcast feed)

[Moraine Valley Community College \(podcast feed\)](#)

[Muskingum College Library \(podcast feed\)](#)

[National Library of Medicine \(podcast feed\)](#)

[Ohio University Libraries \(podcast feed\)](#)

[Oklahoma Department of Libraries \(podcast feed\)](#)

[The Sheridan Libraries at Johns Hopkins University \(podcast feed\)](#)

[\(University of California, Santa Cruz University Library \(podcast feed\)](#)

[University of North Carolina at Greensboro Libraries \(podcast feed\)](#)

[Washington State University Libraries \(podcast feed\)](#)

[Western Kentucky University Libraries \(podcast feed\)](#)

Conclusion:

Podcasting is not just for iPods, is a method of distributing multimedia files. It appeals to today's generation of learners. Podcasts should be hosted on blogs or other medium that enables user commenting. Allow your listeners not only to join the conversation, but to provide you with valuable feedback and insight into what works and what does not with your podcasts. Whether you are creating a lecture or book discussion podcast, let the world know about your efforts. Issue a press release about your new shows, spotlight it on your library website and be sure to list your show with major podcast aggregators such as iTunes.

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