

Getting started

Starting to listen to podcasts is straight-forward and you can get going very quickly. However, beginning to record your own podcasts requires a little more planning. Before getting started, you should consider: who's your audience? What's your approach? What equipment do you have? Where will you publish your podcast? However, don't be put off - a bit of extra planning before you get started will certainly pay off!



Ten things to try

1. Listen to entertainment podcast produced by the BBC or other media organisation. Get used to searching for podcasts and listening to them at your convenience.
2. Next search for podcasts related to your research, teaching or role. As you listen, note down your reactions - what makes you keep listening? Or what loses your attention?
3. Got an ipod or other media player? Get used to subscribing and unsubscribing to podcasts using either iTunes or Juice.
4. Record a reflective podcast after a conference or event.
5. If you're a teacher, record a number of short revision podcasts for your students.
6. Need to update your team? Don't send an email, record an audio update!
7. Want to learn more about producing a good podcast? Attend the Netskills one-day Podcasting workshop.
8. Listen again to your first few podcasts and return to your good and bad experiences as a podcasting listener. Perhaps ask a colleague for their comments? Critique your style and make sure you're not falling into bad habits!
9. Starting to get used to recording your shows? Finding podcasting beneficial? Great! Sounds like your practice has been affected. Now plan your next steps - how many episodes and how often?
10. Learn the basics of how to manipulate and edit audio recordings using dedicated software. (Hint: Audacity is free, excellent, user-friendly and well supported!)

Podcasting

Tune in where you want, when you want!

Web2practice: Guides to emergent technologies & innovative practice

Audio broadcasting is changing; improved technology and faster internet connections are enabling more people to record and distribute podcasts. Listeners can tune in at their convenience!

In its simplest form, a podcast is an audio file that is broadcast through the internet. You can therefore listen anywhere, anytime, either at a computer or when "on the move" using a mobile media player. A wide range of content is available as podcasts, including traditional broadcast media as well as whole lectures, short project updates or personal reflections after a conference.

Listeners can also subscribe to podcasts through RSS* meaning that new 'shows' are automatically downloaded as soon as they're released.

Producing a podcast is also relatively straightforward and anyone with the right software, a microphone and a reliable internet connection can begin podcasting to a worldwide audience. However, it's worth considering who your listeners might be and what style is going to engage them. Good podcasts tend to be only two or three minutes long and are more conversational than formal. A top tip for new podcasters is to think of their podcast as a conversation with a friend, rather than a presentation to a large audience.

"I've used audio to give feedback to students and also to create interesting case studies"

* You can find out more about RSS in the Web2practice RSS guide!



In Practice

“Podcasting has made a significant impact on my work - using it I was able to create a book discussion with teenagers”

The internet and improved access to technology has led to the wide use of podcasting for a range of innovative purposes. Podcasting embraces the spoken world and it's success isn't surprising when you remind yourself that we learn to speak before we learn to write!

Researchers will find that many conference presentations or research seminars are available as podcasts soon after the event. Some researchers are also using podcasts to keep co-investigators informed of progress on funded research projects. Text based reports are the norm, but once they've adapted their practice, some researchers find providing audio updates easier and quicker to record.

Administrators are using podcasts for marketing and news. On a personal level, they're also benefiting from the availability of podcasts for the professional development. There are a wide range available that can be listened to on their desk computer or using an ipod or other mobile device.

Teachers are using podcasting in a range of creative and effective ways with their students. Some are recording their lectures, assignments, supplementary material or revision as podcasts for download. Audio feedback is also being trialled at a number of institutions. Students of journalism have long recorded audio assignments, but other subjects are now also embracing this medium. Does yours?!



Who's using it?

The JISC-funded Sounds Good project has investigated whether digital audio can be used to give students quicker, better feedback on their work?



Find out more by reading their website and listening to their project podcasts:

<http://www.soundsgood.org.uk>

What are the risks?

“I can never bring myself to listen to a whole podcast unless it's very well produced to keep my engagement.”

There are some practical risks involved with starting to podcast. It can be time consuming and not everyone is comfortable in front of a microphone or has the best voice for audio recording. However, a little patience and some careful planning can help to overcome these issues.

If you upload your podcast to a web service, find out who retains ownership of the content. Be sure to read and understand the terms of use for any web2tool you begin to use and rely upon in you practice. IP, copyright and legal issues should be taken into consideration when podcasting, especially if you are including music in your 'shows'. For further guidance, visit the web2rights project website:

<http://www.web2rights.org.uk/>



Find out more...

<http://web2practice.jiscinvolve.org/>