

Podcasting Made Easy

A practical guide to podcasting

by Steve Hart

Equipment

Microphones

Artwork

Recording

Technical advice

Websites

And more...

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Introduction

Hello and welcome to Podcasting Made Easy. Podcasting is becoming an increasingly popular way for people to share news and information. MP3 audio files are a lot smaller than video files, so are easier and quicker to download. Audio can also be enjoyed on the move or while doing other things – it doesn't require people to look at a screen.

My first podcast was made in 2011 when I started a weekly review of business and investment news linked to a consumer magazine I was editing.

Later I moved on to podcasting about careers and employment, and then a weekly news podcast called Talking Point. In 2014 I started a one-hour news podcast that was also syndicated to dozens of internet and low power FM radio stations across the US, New Zealand and the UK (in addition to being on all the best pod-catching sites). For a couple of years I podcast about the WordPress CMS, and currently podcast about real estate.

So quite a few podcasts over the years, each one running its course, and some overlapping each other.

My background is in journalism and broadcast news. So I have got to use some of the best gear there is. But from my home office, I manage to podcast using modest equipment.

I also read the podcast forums and see heated debates on which microphone is 'best', which mixer is better than another, read about people's favourite software, and so on.

My view is that content comes first, audio quality a close second and then the gear. I am a bit fanatical about audio being clean so listeners aren't turned off by poor audio quality.

Does having a top-notch camera make one a better photographer? No. Most of the art of a good photo comes down to experience, technique, composition, and skill. The same applies to any trade.

So when it comes to podcasting, while a certain level of audio quality is expected by audiences, you don't need to spend a king's ransom on gear just to make a recording to share your ideas, views, and information over the web.

And that is the basic premise of this guide, to help you make great podcasts with as little outlay as possible, and help you understand why you would want to podcast at all.

I believe the basics needed to be a successful podcaster are passion and commitment, then the rest will fall into place.

What is a podcast?

In my book, a podcast is an audio recording that is made available to the public for free via websites and pod-catching services such as iTunes, iHeartRadio, and TuneIn etc.

POD stands for Play On Demand, there's one for most any subject you care to mention, and the duration of a podcast can range from a few minutes to an hour or two (not recommended).

Some radio broadcasters release shows, or segments of shows, as downloadable files, and there is some debate among the podcast community as to whether the podcast tag really applies to them – I don't think it does.

Podcasts are typically a sequence of recordings where someone, or a group of people, share their expertise or passion on a given subject at regular intervals. It could be opinion about this week's financial news, global events, or 'how-to' information on things such as learning a skill.

Some people talk about comic book characters, TV shows, films...you name it – if it exists there's bound to be a podcast about it.

Podcasting is a perfect vehicle for anyone to share their knowledge and passion. If you want to start getting 'on the air' to share your passion or expertise, the following pages cover everything you need to get started.

Spotted a mistake, or want me to add or expand on something covered here? Let me know, as your feedback is always welcome via my website. This document is Copyright 2014. My copyright statement is on the last page.

Why oh why?

First off, you need to decide why you want to start podcasting. Do you just fancy the idea of being heard around the world? Is it an ego trip, do you want to raise your profile or drum up business for you or your firm?

If you are employed, and being paid by your boss to produce a podcast for the firm, then you're laughing. You get paid to do something that can be great fun – and you shouldn't have to worry about the cost of the gear you may need.

But if you are in business, perhaps as a freelancer and only really get paid when a client pays you for doing something, then you will need to dig deep to find the stamina to podcast [unless you can make the podcast pay by featuring adverts or being sponsored – that's the trick].

From what I have seen, most of the people who just fancy the idea of podcasting, and who don't really have a game plan – a solid reason to spend valuable time preparing, recording, editing, writing show notes and uploading each episode – abandon the idea of before they have completed 10 shows.

In fact, many podcasts don't make it to seven episodes for this very reason. This is because after the initial buzz of making the first few shows has subsided, making a podcast can become a chore, a chore with no reward – just the self-appointed kudos of having recorded a show and uploaded it to a website.

Then you find that only 30 people downloaded your latest podcast, you get zero feedback from listeners (who are more fickle and uncaring than you can ever imagine), your calls for donations via a PayPal 'donate' button to keep the show 'on the air'

fall on deaf ears, and slowly you begin to wonder why you are doing it at all. Which is the key question. Why?

It's the first question you need to ask yourself. Yes, making a podcast is great fun, but why are you doing it? Just because you can? Not good enough!

If you fancy a career in broadcasting, then maybe fronting a podcast is one way to get some exposure and experience of speaking into a microphone, interviewing people, producing a show, adding music, and dropping in jingles. It could help form a showreel for you to send to radio stations, and in this case, falls under the 'market your brand / raise your profile' subject heading.

But it does take a lot of time, and it's not quite the same as being live on air. But it could make for a good experience nonetheless.

However, there are plenty of internet radio stations around crying out for DJs to volunteer their time to host shows, and if you fancy that then see: www.forum.internet-radio.com/volunteering/

Trawl through the podcasts on iTunes or Miro etc and you'll quickly figure out that the vast majority of podcasts are made by people with a service to offer and use their podcast to promote their products or service.

So, what's your area of expertise and passion? You can decide by answering this simple question: what can you talk about to friends without a moment's thought? In short, what subject do you know inside out and enjoy talking about?

Okay, so you may have a hobby that you can talk about, and it may also be that you hope to turn that

hobby into a paying job at some point. Perhaps podcasting about it will steer you onto that path. Alternatively, perhaps you can talk for 10 minutes each week on the week's latest news from within your industry.

The bottom line is, what's in it for you? Are you podcasting for your employer on their dime [great]? Or are you podcasting for yourself, in the hope your phone will ring as a result? Or do you just want to share your passion for a particular hobby?

You must decide where you are going with your podcast before you start. Your four guiding words are: Vision, Goal, Plan, Purpose.



Duration

How long should each podcast run for? There are plenty that run for an hour or two. Others share snippets of information in shows that last for less than 10 minutes. Now, to keep people's attention for 15 or more minutes the content has to be pretty compelling and attention grabbing.

Also, consider this, the average journey time for someone going to work is about 25 minutes. The beauty of podcasts is that people often listen to them while travelling.

Because of this single fact, and because people don't generally have an hour to spare, nor are many people up to the job of holding someone's attention for much longer than 15 minutes, I believe the optimum duration of a podcast must be between three and 15 minutes.

Yes, podcasts can be entertaining, but their primary purpose is to share information that people can use. And if you can share it quickly, then do so – your listeners will thank you for it.

Far too many podcasts feature two blokes laughing and joking between themselves and think listeners are entertained by this. How does that help the listener? Where's the value?

Frankly, I have no time for these podcasts. Good on them, all the best – but it's not for me (because I don't have the time).

When I listen to podcasts I need to know 'what's in it for me?'. What am I being offered that I can't get anywhere else, and how much time do I have to give away to get it?

Podcast intro

I don't know why but too many podcast producers have music / jingle intros that last for a minute or more. Sometimes I have been listening to a podcast for three minutes before the show proper actually starts. Let's be clear.

If someone has downloaded your podcast, they more or less know what they have got. It's not like they just turned on the radio and aren't sure what programme is coming up.

If someone has downloaded your podcast then you don't need to keep selling it to them within the podcast itself.

Keep your introduction short and to the point. For example: "This is

[your name] and welcome to this week's [name of] podcast – you can find full show notes at [your website] – this is episode 26."

If you want to use a piece of music to help brand your show, grab a short piece of (royalty free) music – five seconds or so. But do get into delivering your content within 10 or so seconds of the podcast starting.

If you must babble on about something inconsequential, do it at the end of the show.

You on the air

Be yourself. Don't pretend to be like a DJ you hear on the radio with their deep rich voices that are heavily compressed and digitally processed beyond recognition.

Don't try to emulate someone else (they've already done that) – be true to your voice and personality. If you are honest with your listeners it will come through in the recording, and you won't trip up as much while speaking.

If you are too busy being someone else on air, the content will suffer – because your mind won't be where it needs to be – on the subject at hand or the words you are saying.

Talk about what you know, say it in your own voice, be honest with yourself and your audience.

An old rule from my radio days is to talk to the microphone as though it is your best friend, and share your news in a natural, chatty style.

One of the golden rules of radio broadcasting, which podcasting effectively is, is to imagine you are talking to one person. Yes, many people may hear your podcast, but each person will likely listen in isolation. And even if a room full of people are listening, each one will

listen in their own way.

So do remember this is a one-on-one experience for each listener. Talk to your microphone as if it were your best friend.



Going solo

Should you host your podcast on your own, or present the show with a co-host or two?

There are merits in each case, and yes, you could feature a co-host so long as they really do add value for the listener. For example, for a techie podcast, one person might be an expert in software, the other an expert in computer hardware. This is an ideal compliment of knowledge and experience. But two people talking about the same thing from the same perspective? I'm not sure where the value-add is for the listener.

I have also heard podcasts that feature four or five people, all chipping in talking about music and movies. Frankly, after the first 10 minutes I can't tell who is speaking.

Also, if you do team up to podcast with other people, then you have to all agree on when and where you record the show. This can lead to

people not turning up, being late, can lead to inconstancy for the listener, frustration for you, and it can all slip very quickly.

It can also prevent you from finding you have half an hour to spare one day, and using that time to record a podcast. With a podcast partner you may lose the option to be spontaneous – unless you work with them and they are as flexible as you are.

Bottom line, my preferred method is to keep it simple, go solo, and to perhaps invite on a guest now and again.

Depending on the subject matter you may be able to record two or more shows in a day, and then time them to be released over the coming weeks.

Yes, there are people who say you should set a routine for recording podcasts, to put it in your diary every week – and that's fine if you have a job with a set routine.

Frequency

How often should you release a podcast? I think in most cases, weekly is best as it helps build a regular habit with listeners. Release a podcast once a month and they will forget you.

The frequency is also dependent on your content. If it's a daily wrap of business news, then once a day is obviously needed. But don't bite off more than you can chew – it has to be managed in the long term. Once a week is a good start.

How long does it take?

A podcast that lasts for 10 minutes will not take 10 minutes to produce and post online. My rough guide is that podcasting takes 10 minutes per

finished minute. Because there is the preparation to get your thoughts and notes together. Recording it. Recording it again because of the mistakes you made the first time, post production [editing out mouth clicks, erms and ahs], and adding music. Then exporting and converting your finished recording to MP3, adding meta data, uploading the MP3 to the web server, creating a web page for the episode on your website, writing show notes, double checking – listening to the podcast and checking your show notes – and then publishing.

All up, your 10-minute podcast could take one to two hours of your life – every week.

Equipment

Boy, we could write a whole book on the equipment options for podcasters. But let's get one thing straight – all you need is a quiet room, a microphone, a computer, recording software (or a good quality digital recorder), and the ability to save or convert your recording to an MP3 (mono 80k is typical for a speech-based podcast).

You may also need what's called ID3 tag software. This allows you to add the cover art to your MP3 file, as well as add 'hidden' data such as show name, show number, and your podcast feed URL address etc.

As for audio hardware...sure, there are plenty of podcasters who have expensive microphones, compressors, limiters, top-end recording and editing software such as Adobe Audition, studio quality monitor speakers for playback, expensive headphones, and a mixer.

You don't need them all to start podcasting. Ultimately, content [what

you are talking about] overcomes most things. i.e., if what you are saying is interesting, you are engaging, and people can understand what you are saying (they can hear your voice clearly) then you are home and dry.

All the rest falls under 'nice to have'. Plenty of people use the free Audacity recording software www.audacity.sourceforge.net (available for PCs and Macs), or GarageBand (Mac only).

Both are fine for recording and editing your shows, to remove mistakes and unwanted noises (if you are so inclined).

Yes, you can spend a lot of money on gear – but will it make the content any more interesting? No it won't. While it may improve the overall technical quality of your podcast, most listeners won't care too much.

Plenty of people get by using a budget USB microphone plugged into their PC. But have a look around your home and see what microphone you may have at hand. Plug it in, give it a go, and see what you think. Experiment.

I guess I have two things I want to share under this section:

- 1) Don't allow a lack of top quality gear to get in your way – use what you have, and do it anyway.
- 2) Don't spend a lot of money just to start podcasting, because if it does fizzle out in a few months' time (as many do) then you won't have spent a lot of money for little gain.

Microphones

There are two basic types of microphone; condenser and dynamic. For home 'studios' that do not have much in the way of soundproofing or acoustic treatment, I'd opt for a

dynamic microphone.

The Shure SM57 is popular. These mics only really pick up sound that is close to them (they are often used by live performers). They are ideal if you happen to have noisy surroundings.

Having said that, you do want it to be as quiet as possible when recording. TV off, aircon off, windows and doors closed, curtains drawn to help deaden the reverb sound of your voice as it bounces off hard flat surfaces.

Condenser microphones are highly sensitive, and can pick up a snail clearing its throat from three miles away. Condenser mics often deliver a far crisper sound than dynamic mics, but in my opinion, to use a condenser microphone you really need a soundproofed room and acoustic tiles on all flat areas to reduce sound from bouncing off hard surfaces.

Condenser microphones also need to be powered, either by a battery inside the mic, or by the mixer they are connected to (via 48 volt phantom power). Not all mixers provide a phantom power option.

USB microphones are well worth considering. These can be plugged directly into the USB socket of your computer and have risen in quality during the last few years.

However, if you use a USB microphone, and plug your headphones into the audio output socket of your computer, you will most likely hear a delay between saying something and hearing it in your headphones. This is down to what's called 'latency' – the speed at which your computer processes sound.

If using a USB microphone, be sure to buy one that features a

headphone socket as part of the microphone housing to avoid the latency issue.

The alternative is to use an external mixer that features a headphone socket. So your mic and headphones are both plugged into the mixer, and your mixer's output is plugged into your recording device.

Also consider that each mic has a different sound, and once you start buying microphones, and you are serious about podcasting over a number of years, you will go through a few until you find the one that is perfect for your voice. Try before you buy if it is possible.

If a friend has a mic you like the sound of, borrow it and see if it suits your voice.

Headphones

Listening to your voice through headphones while you speak means you'll hear any mouth clicks (keep a glass of water with you when recording to reduce mouth noises).

You'll also hear if next door's barking dog is picked up by your mic as well as any other noises.

However, plenty of people say that by not wearing headphones you will get a more natural sounding recording. So try recording with and without headphones and listen for the delivery you are happier with.

Recording equipment

Most people use their computer to record their podcasts. But a few opt to use an external digital recorder.

One reason for using an external recorder is that some people have found the soundcard in their computer introduces unwanted crackle, hiss and hum to their recordings.

Make no mistake, your recordings need to be as clean as possible.

Having an audio recorder separate from the computer, particularly when the mic goes through a mixer, keeps these sound issues out of the way – as well as reduce the risk of what's known as 'earth hum'.

Sometimes the combination of a computer, mixer, external speakers, and other computer add-ons can cause an earth loop – and the humming noise caused by this is really hard to resolve.

Once a recording has been completed with an external recorder, the digital file is copied to the computer for editing and post production/output.



Interviewing guests

Your podcast may do just fine with you sharing your news and ideas with listeners. But now and again you might want to feature a guest on your show. If they can sit with you, and you have two decent microphones (one each), then you can probably pull it off.

However, it's likely you'll want to interview someone who can't visit you, perhaps because they live too far away.

Google Hang Outs and Skype are perfect for this. I use Skype with a paid-for add-on from Ecamm (www.ecamm.com) called Skype Recorder.

It allows users to record all Skype conversations automatically, and provides a recording that you can split. I.e., you can separate your voice from that of your interviewee's into two separate tracks – and that allows you to level off volumes on each track independently, and remove unwanted noises that may appear on one side of the conversation, but not the other.

Buy some credits on Skype and you can call people on their mobile and landlines directly from your Skype app. So if someone you want to interview doesn't have a Skype account, or a reliable/fast internet service, you can call them on their 'normal' phone.

I've experimented and always return to Skype for podcast interviews. If you go down this track, do a few test recordings with friends first.

Artwork

If you have looked through any podcast library (such as iTunes) you will have seen all the logos and artwork associated with every podcast listed. Depending on how artistic you are, you may be able to create something quite nice. But plenty of people keep the artwork basic.

Having said that, the guys at iTunes do like to see nice looking artwork. The more eye-catching it is, the more likely someone browsing a podcast library will click on it.

In my view your artwork should include:

- Your show name
- Your name
- Your website URL
- Your logo or your photo

Have a look at the podcast artwork

on iTunes and decide which style appeal to you, and then emulate their look and feel when creating your artwork.

But, do keep your colours and fonts consistent across your podcast artwork and your website / business logo etc so it all ties up and looks professional.

Your podcast artwork needs to be in two sizes. 1700px by 1700px (at 72dpi) for iTunes, and 300px by 300px (at 72dpi) for your RSS feed.

Each podcatcher will have their own specs for your show's artwork - so ensure your artwork is flexible so it can be adjusted to different shapes, while remaining consistent.

Hosting

For people to hear and download your podcasts, you need to have the MP3s stored online somewhere. Plenty of podcasters upload their MP3 files to a folder on their website hosting plan (where their website pages/files are stored).

Others use dedicated podcast services such as www.Libsyn.com or www.Blubrry.com to name just two.

If you are just starting out, I reckon you can pop your MP3 files on the same server your website is hosted on (assuming you have a self-hosted website and enough storage space (check with your hosting company if you are unsure)).

Use an FTP program to access your site's folders, create a folder for your podcast, and save your MP3 files in it. If your podcast starts getting very popular – with huge numbers of downloads (thousands) – then you will need to consider having the files professionally hosted so your listeners get faster and more reliable downloads.

Shared website hosting plans, which is what most people have, aren't always ideal for mass downloads of digital files, and some hosting firms get a bit picky about their servers being 'abused'.

On average one minute of MP3 audio at 80k is just under one meg in size.

If saving files to your website account, there are two things you need to consider; storage space for your files, and your monthly bandwidth allowance.

Imagine one podcast is 5meg in size, and 200 people download it in one month, that will take one gig of bandwidth.

What is the monthly bandwidth allowance from your website hosting company?

Website

Talking of hosting, unless the podcast is directly linked to a website / business you already have, it is worth buying the domain name and creating a website specifically for your podcast.

This helps build the brand, helps people find you, and provides a clear point of contact for listener feedback.

For the uninitiated, there are two elements to every website. The domain name or URL, i.e. www.SteveHart.co.nz

Then the pages and digital files that make up a website have to be stored by a web hosting company – so people can access your website on their computer/mobile device etc.

When it comes to websites, I can't help but totally recommend a self-hosted WordPress website. I find them just so easy to manage and work with. Not only that, but plugins such as the podcast plugin from

Blubrry (wordpress.org/plugins/powerpress/) makes sharing your podcasts with the world an absolute breeze.

Let me know if you need help thinking up a name for your podcast, or finding a suitable web domain name.

Recording your first podcast

Recording your first podcast is always very exciting. The trick is to keep it simple, and not to over-stretch yourself – don't set yourself up to fail.

By now you have got your topic sorted, perhaps even decided on a short piece of intro and outro music. You may even have paid for a professional podcast intro.

With your notes ready – use them as a guide, not a script – and the place nice and quiet, sit yourself in front of the mic with a glass of room temperature water (some people say eating a crisp apple before you start helps reduce mouth noise).

Record your show, and check your recording levels so that when you speak the recording is not too soft, or too loud. If you are able to see a visual guide to the recording levels as you speak, try and get them to bounce between minus 3db and minus 12db (–3db to –12db).

At this setting, it will give you some headroom should you raise your voice a little. What you don't want is to record your voice at zero db – full volume. Because you will end up with sections being distorted – and there is nothing you can do to fix it, apart from recording those sections again.

Pop your headphones on, speak, and listen to yourself. Keep an ear out for background noise (such as



birds tweeting outside, the office printer humming, or your computer's fan).

Open your show with a nice warm welcome, tell listeners who you are and what's coming up.

End the show with a request that people subscribe via iTunes etc, to rate your show, and check out your website for more information (i.e. to read your show notes).

What to tell people in every podcast

- Your name.
- The name of your podcast.
- Your website address/URL.
- Episode number.
- What's coming up in this show.
- If you are covering topical issues you should tell listeners the date (because they may listen to it in three years' time...), but if you are offering more generic / timeless information then adding a date may not be a good idea as you want your podcasts to sound as fresh as possible.

Okay, with your voice recorded, your first show almost done, save your recording to a folder called Podcasts. Name the recording: showname-episode#.WAV Open it up in an audio editor and go over the recording to see if any sections need re-recording, or if you want to chop out any unwanted comments,

mumbles or noises.

Once you have the recording just how you like it, use your audio software to Normalise the whole recording to -3db. Use your preferred audio editing software to add your intro and outro music (if you want).

Once the show is completed, export it as an MP3 file (80k Mono 44.1k - ideal for speech only podcasts). Now use an ID3 tag software app to add your artwork to the MP3 file along with meta data etc. The larger the file size of the artwork attached to your MP3, the larger the file size of your MP3 – so make artwork no larger than needed (i.e.; don't attach your 1700px iTunes artwork to the MP3 – make a smaller versions of say 100px square).

Do a search for ID3 software, there are some free ones around for the PC, but I use a Mac, and so use ID3 Editor (a paid-for app).

Now, upload the MP3 to wherever it is you are storing them, place the MP3's URL in the podcast field in a Post on your website, publish, and check to see it appears in your dedicated podcast RSS feed. You need a dedicated feed for podcasts (you don't want to send random text-only posts to iTunes etc).

Your first podcast

Okay, your first podcast is in the bag, all done, uploaded and free to the

world. Now what? Well, podcatchers such as iTunes actually like to see two or three episodes already online before they list your podcast in the iTunes directory – it's not a hard and fast rule because people at iTunes make the decisions. But that's what I hear through the podcast grapevine.

But with one podcast listed it's time to submit your Podcast feed to all the podcatchers you can. So, number one is out the way – done and dusted. Now you need to start planning numbers two and three. It's a good idea to plan shows in advance, because that way you can say during podcast number one what is coming up in podcast number two, and so on i.e., you want to promote your next podcast to encourage people to come back next week.

Even if your show is news driven, and you don't exactly know what's happening in advance, you may have a regular feature in the show that you can point to; "And next week in our section on WordPress plugins we'll be looking at...".



Writing show notes

Notes about each podcast you make are essential. These show notes go on your website, one post for each podcast. The purpose of show notes is to not only let readers know what's in the podcast if they visit your website, but for search engines to log your pages too.

So if someone searches for something you have covered, they will find it via the text on your website. Comprehensive and SEO keyworded show notes are a must (and these keywords should also feature in the meta data of your MP3s).

Your show notes might even be the basis for a press release too. So build on your show notes every week to make a press release and send it to all the press releases sites you can – including trade websites, local news sites, anywhere you can (build an email list of media outlets that may be interested in your podcast).



Coming second

Chances are you will not be the first person to start podcasting about your chosen topic. And you won't be the last. There's always a bigger fish.

Just because someone may already be podcasting about your area of expertise doesn't mean you should not go ahead and do your own podcast – far from it.

First off, no matter what the subject matter, you will bring your own style and spin to it. And while one listener may not like the other podcaster's take on the subject, or their voice / delivery style / accent etc, they may enjoy yours.

Sure, there may be some cross-over on the topics you and other podcasters speak about, but so what?

And as we all know, podcasts do come and go. So who's to say that any existing podcasts will still be around next week – they may be about to pull the plug on their show, and then in you come to fill the void.

So go ahead, build your own audience and perhaps listen to other podcasts to get ideas, hear what they are covering, and maybe even interview each other in your respective shows.

I find most podcasters to be quite supportive of each other, rather than competitors against each other.

Podcatchers

Podcatchers include iTunes, Miro, TuneIn, Spreaker, Stitcher, iHeartRadio and anywhere else you can find truckloads of podcasts listed.

The key thing to remember is that few of these podcatchers store your MP3 files, they merely link to the files where they are stored, via your RSS (URL) feed.

You won't know what your podcast RSS feed is until you have your website organised or have your files hosted at somewhere such as Libsyn, Blubrry or some other podcast hosting service.

So it's one step at a time. Make your podcast, upload it, and then get the RSS feed. FYI – one dedicated podcast RSS feed will link to all your podcasts (you don't need an RSS feed for each MP3/podcast episode).

Now, if you do use WordPress with the free Blubrry plugin, you will have a direct line to iTunes.

The plugin comes with a link to to have your podcast considered for inclusion on the iTunes directory (you will need to have an iTunes account and have your artwork ready).

Here are some of the places to send your podcast RSS feed to:

- iTunes: <http://bit.ly/1hrjvHs>
- Stitcher: stitcher.com/content-providers
- GooglePlay: <https://play.google.com/music/podcasts/publish>
- Miro: <http://www.miroguide.com/accounts/login/?next=/submit/>
- Libsyn: libsyn.com/podcast-source-submit
- TuneIn: tunein.com/broadcasters
- Blubrry: www.blubrry.com
- PodOMatic: podomatic.com
- Spreaker (free and paid plans): www.spreaker.com
- Doubletivist: www.doubletivist.com/contact
- Huge list of directories: www.podcast411.com/page2.html

Marketing and advertising

If the whole purpose of your podcast is to drum up business, then you need to be able to make direct contact with your listeners. Now, you won't know who in the world is downloading your podcasts, so you need listeners to connect with you, to have them visit your website and sign up to receive emails from you.

You may also offer to send subscribers additional industry tips and information, as well as an email every time you publish a new podcast – using what's called an RSS driven email campaign via MailChimp.com or Aweber.com for example.

I use MailChimp.com (at the time of writing it's free if you have fewer than 1000 subscribers).

In addition, you want to promote every podcast you make on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn (and any other social networking sites you belong to) – this too can be

automated so when you publish a post it is automatically sent to your social networks.

Be sure to mention your podcast within relevant industry groups on LinkedIn and Facebook.

Encourage listeners to follow you on Twitter, and join you on your LinkedIn and Facebook pages.

Leave no stone unturned in promoting every podcast you make, and be sure to really 'sell' your podcast when promoting it: "In this week's WordPress podcast, I cover how to build ten websites in ten minutes – the easy way."

Add the URL to your podcast in your email signature [and the email signatures of your staff]. If you interview someone, have them link to the podcast from their website, and have them mention it to their networks.

You can also market your podcast to the hundreds of internet radio stations – whose owners are always looking for free content. There may also be companies that will welcome having your podcast on their website.

For example, Blubrry, Spreaker and Stitcher offer a free podcast embed code to place an audio player [featuring your show] on any website. Share the code with everyone [more listeners means more of your bandwidth though].

Making money

Making money as a direct result of podcasting is hard. Few people will pay to listen to a podcast (so charging for access to them is really a non-starter in my experience).

So how does one make money from podcasting?

1) If your podcast features interviews with people, and you can



deliver a big enough audience (I suggest 1000s of people), you could consider charging people to appear on your show and be interviewed by you.

This falls under the advertisement-feature / branded content type scenario, where someone comes on your show, talks about their business and product in a casual way (but are really expecting to generate business for their company). However, this really needs to be made clear to your listeners.

2) You can sell advertising spots to companies. Again, you need a big audience and low advertising rates. You may also need to cover a niche area, where specialist firms need to connect with your audience – i.e., their customers are your listeners.

But be warned, any advert lasting longer than 10 to 15 seconds is likely to turn off your listeners. So adverts need to be short, sweet, and relevant to your audience.

If your podcast is about this week's movie release, and you have an advert about accounting software then that won't fit. Keep ads relevant to your audience.

Research by Edison [here] does suggest that marketing to podcast listeners is a growing phenomenon, as they tend to be "intelligent, have high disposable income, and are open to new ideas".

A big selling point is that the ad will be a part of the podcast recording forever – even when it

is downloaded or listened to in the months and years to come.

3) Affiliate schemes. This is where you place adverts on your website in the hope a visitor or 20,000 will click one and earn you a few cents. Google ads are popular of course, but the pay rates are low (cents per click). One or two people may click your PayPal donate button if you put one on your website, but to be honest, most people will listen to your podcast without visiting your website (because they'll listen via iTunes etc).

4) Talk about relevant industry products during your podcast, with affiliate purchase links on your website/show notes – drive people to your website for extra information, a special offer, and content.

Making good money purely from podcasting is not impossible, but is uncommon. Which is why the vast majority of podcasts are produced as a marketing tool to raise their profile and generate business.

Your copyright

Copyright is very simple to understand. If you create something that is your own original work, then you own the copyright to it. You do not have to fill out a form to establish or prove ownership. Therefore, it is likely (unless you are reading out someone else's text, or are employed to podcast), that you will own the rights to your work.

I release my podcasts under a Creative Commons license. Using a license helps make people understand that the work is owned by the creator, and puts restrictions on how the podcast may be used by people who download it.

For example, you may not want

your podcast to have adverts added to it by someone else and then re-posted somewhere or broadcast without your permission. You may not want sections cut out, or to have sections of your podcast form a part of someone else's podcast or radio show.

See www.CreativeCommons.org to decide which one (if any) of its free licenses is best for you.



Royalty free music

The term 'royalty free music' can be confusing for people who read 'free music' as opposed to what it actually means – 'royalty free' music.

So what does the term 'royalty free' mean? When a radio station, for example, plays music they have to pay royalties for every song they broadcast. But with royalty free music, you don't need to pay a royalty fee every time it is played.

With royalty free music there is often a high upfront cost for the track, but nothing more to pay – no matter how many times it is played.

In other words, once you have paid the supplier of the royalty free music, you can use the music commercially without having to pay any money (royalties) to the creator or owner of the music every time it is broadcast or used.

Normally, royalty free music is sold under a license - i.e, as an owner of the license, you are free to use the

music for podcasts, radio, TV, film soundtracks etc, but you can't sell the music track because you don't own it.

There are plenty of websites and people around who will provide music to you without charge, or any ongoing costs, and a few are mentioned below.

Some release their music under a Creative Commons license – there are various versions of this particular license – so always check the fine print to avoid a lawyer's letter alleging breach of copyright/license.

Free music

www.betterwithmusic.com
www.freemusicarchive.org

Paid-for music

www.newsbeds.com
www.JingleImagingGroup.com
www.royaltyfreemusic.com
www.istockphoto.com/music-clips

Podcast intros

www.fiverr.com

Software

www.rogueamoeba.com/freebies
www.mediahuman.com
www.audacity.sourceforge.net
www.commedia.org.uk
www.getmedia.org.uk

Conclusion

I hope this guide has given you enough information to get started on your podcasting ambitions.

Podcasting can be great fun, give you an easy way to share your passion and expertise, and provide a great way to connect with people around the world.

The online audio revolution is well underway as many traditional

radio stations around the world can testify to – their business models are being disrupted by podcasts and internet radio in much the same way the newspaper industry was hit by the online revolution during the late 1990s.

We are entering a world of cable TV and cable radio. TV broadcasters such as Sky, with its satellites and huge networks are being undermined by the likes of Netflix and other online streaming services.

Radio 2.0. Please see my report, How the net is disrupting radio here: <http://bit.ly/1u3puOk>

Author's note

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the content of this document, no responsibility will be taken by the author (Steve Hart) for any inaccuracies, or for any consequences of your reliance on the information presented.

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