What is a Podcast?

Below is a definition of podcasting pulled from Wikipedia[1] that provides you with information about podcasting, its roots and some of the technical aspects surrounding podcasting.

Podcasting is the method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio or video programs, over the Internet using syndication feeds, for playback on mobile devices and personal computers. The term as originally coined by Ben Hammersley in an article in the Guardian on February 12, 2004[2], was meant as a contraction of "broadcasting" and "iPod".

The term ***podcast***, like 'radio', can mean both the content and the method of delivery. The host or author of a podcast is often called a ***podcaster***. Though podcasters' web sites may also offer direct download or streaming of their content, a podcast is distinguished from other digital audio formats by its ability to be downloaded automatically using software capable of reading feeds like RSS or Atom.

Now, what makes podcasting special is that it allows individuals to publish (*podcast*) radio shows that interested listeners can subscribe to. Before podcasting you could of course record a radio show and put it on your website, but now people can automatically receive new shows, without having to go to a specific site and download large, non-updated files. Podcasts are designed to include talk shows, tutorials, music, or other audio content, but even past this, sky is the limit.

Here's a step-by-step guide to making your *first* podcast.

- **Create your audio content.** The content can be anything you like, including audio books, music, "radio" type shows, interviews, or even sermon. There's no formula for creating the audio content. In fact, one of the beauties of podcasting is that your shows can be anything that you want them to be. There are already podcasts of all sorts.

  It also doesn't matter what platform or application you use to record the audio. One option to consider is Audacity[3]. Its open source, cross-platform, free and let's you mix together multiple audio files. On the Macintosh, GarageBand[4] is a popular choice, because it is free and powerful.

  Save your finished audio show at maximum quality in the native format of your audio application. That way you can go back and edit it or reuse it and you'll have a good version.

- **Convert the file to MP3 format.** Once you have your audio content, you need to save it in MP3 format. MP3 is the defacto standard format for podcasts. Stick with MP3 unless you've got a very good reason for using another format. Using anything but MP3 will mean that some users may not be able to use your podcast.

  Use the minimum bit rate that provides good results. Here are some suggested settings:
    - 48 - 56k Mono - sermons, audio books, talk radio
    - 64k+ Stereo - music, music & talk combinations
    - 128k Stereo - good quality music

  Make sure you save it with an .mp3 file extension

- **Publish your MP3** - save your MP3 files to your web server, and test them with any MP3 player. The files can go anywhere on your site, but you may want to put all of them into one directory, so they are easy to find and manage.

- **Create your podcast newsfeed** - Podcast feeds are RSS files that describe your podcast, along with information for each show. An RSS file is just a text file that links to your MP3 file.

  For a brief introduction of to RSS, check the article Understanding RSS Feeds. For details on RSS, check the RSS 2.0 Specification. The specification includes an example file that can be used as a starting point for creating new RSS files.

  You can use any text editor to create an RSS news feed. However, most podcasters use blogging programs or other applications to automatically generate newsfeeds.

  If you have a blogging tool that lets you reference enclosures, just create an item for each MP3 file you publish, and use URL of the audio content as your enclosure. If your blogging tool doesn't support enclosures yet, don't worry, it will soon because of the popularity of podcasts

  In the meantime, you can edit your RSS file with any text editor to add the enclosure tag. Here's an example from the Trade Secrets podcast newsfeed:

  <enclosure url="http://static.podcatch.com/manila/gems/un/TS20041107.mp3" length="49885056" type="audio/mpeg"/>

  RSS newsfeeds normally feature news Items that contain a Title, Link, and Description. Each item in a news feed provides meta-information about a URL on the web. In the case of a podcast newsfeed, each Item describes the content of an audio file referenced by the enclosure URL. Save your RSS file with an .rss or .xml extension.

  Normally, you'll want to have one news feed that contains all of your recent podcasts, ordered from newest to oldest.

- **Publish your podcast news feed** - transfer your podcast RSS file to your webserver, like you would any other content. Validate it using an online RSS validator[5]. If the podcast news feed is valid, it's ready to be published to the web.

  That's it! Check your podcast and publicize it. Several designers have come up with some great podcasting logos, so make sure you make it easy to find your podcast.

  Don't forget to add your site to the Podcast Directory (*http://www.podcastingnews.com/forum/links.php*).

For more on Wikipedia's definition visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting.

Above procedures were obtain care of podcastingnews.com

Related materials visit the following links:
http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com

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[1] *http://wikipedia.com*
[2] *http://technology.guardian.co.uk/weekly/story/0,16376,1683937,00.html*
[3] *http://audacity.sourceforge.net*
[4] *http://www.apple.com/support/garageband/podcasts/*
[5] *http://feedvalidator.org*