Audio Podcasting Tip Sheet

Podcasting has continued to be a popular method for sharing and broadcasting audio in a social media dominated world. The word "podcast" originated in 2004 by way of Ben Hammersley. While the word factored in "pod" from the iPod, 1 Apple's original MP3 music player, podcasting reaches beyond Apple products to any computer web browser and mobile device.

Audio has evolved to support hyperlinks, interactive art and text notes (often called show notes) right in the audio file you can distribute. Let's explore the basics of podcasting.

[1] Wikipedia - Podcast - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcast

> **"Audio is an under-leveraged tool for the digital business world. It's the most portable thing you can share."**
>
> *Blane Warrene*

Audio Benefits

For those more inclined to speak than write - or more comfortable sharing concepts and ideas via spoken word versus long form text - audio is your medium. Likewise audio can reach into and emerge from many formats.

- Google Hangouts (audio can be repurposed from the video recording - YouTube offers an audio only download for Hangouts on Air).
- Narrated presentations (via tools such as Camtasia and Brainshark)
- Pre-planned recorded conference calls and/or webinars.
- Skype calls, which can be recorded and offer high quality if each participant has a healthy internet connection.

Podcasts are like any other content - some basic planning considering:

- Topics and themes important to your audience
- Choosing length and format (solo, guests, panels)
- Calendar
- and lastly - some prep work on the tools you may use.

Tools of the Trade for Recording Audio

1. Using Garage Band, Hindenburg or Audacity to record your own voice track
2. Narrating over slides using Camtasia, Brainshark
3. Recording all callers on a Skype call-in
4. Having each caller record their own Skype line and send it to you for mixing

Some handy audio apps can be helpful. These include:

1. For Mac users Audio HiJack is incredibly useful. It allows you to record any audio source on or plugged in to your computer as an independent audio track. These can later be utilized in the tools mentioned above.

2. For PC users, Soundtap or Total Recorder achieve the same results as Audio HiJack.

Tips for your Podcast recording space and process

Something went bump…
The key is having a noise-free space. This is not always easy - so some pre-planning can make the difference. Think about background noise, which can come from:

- Squeaky chairs, ringers, computer sounds - be aware of all the nosies that could disrupt your recording, Don't forget house sounds, open windows, etc.
- If you have a microphone that supports a pop-screen - this can eliminate those pesky "p's" and "t's" that naturally cause extra noise in our speech.

Listening carefully during recording and playback will not only help you identify unanticipated noises - but also will help you learn going forward what space work best for recording.

- Headphones - they need to be comfortable and with some quality. Some good examples include Audio-Technica ($69) and Sennheiser ($99).
  - Playback speakers - buy a decent pair to really hear all the nuances of your recording. These will also reward you with wonderful sounding playback for other audio and video on your computer. Our preference is in the middle of the budget range from KRK for $299 (the pair).
  - Review - retake - don't hesitate to run a couple takes each time - you will find the best.

Also - as you become more comfortable with recording audio - you can find ways to take best of clips and mash them up.

Accessories

1. Snowball Mics offer good quality and available with gear options for desktop mics, portable and for iOS-ready mics.
2. XLR Mic for a step up toward professional quality. We like the MXL series.
3. Boom stand - buy a desk or boom stand for $20-30
4. iOS Connector for XLR mics $49
5. Connector to PC and Mac for XLR $79

The Podcast File

When recording - the audio tool you choose will allow you to have more than one track.
Consider it like separate columns in a spreadsheet. They are related but you can control them independent of one another. Our recommendation is to keep these separate tracks. This allows for:

- Editable intro music and introductory welcome
- Main podcast track with content (can be multiple tracks if including multiple participants)
- Exit track for music
- Exit track for goodbye and teaser for next episodes

As you build your experience working with audio - this leaves room for easy edits - advertising and/or sponsorships - changes in music - special offers or event promotion.

Finally, as we mentioned at the beginning, audio files now support tags and embedded information.
This allows you to add text as show notes into the ID3 tags as it is helpful when interacted with on devices - i.e. on mobile devices or in music software on PC and Mac - a listener can find the content stored in tags and view it while listening.

Submitting and Distributing Your Audio

If you intend to podcast regularly - you will need to consider how you want to host and share your episodes or editions.

We highly recommend using a hosting service that specializes in podcasts and understands the technical elements of distribution and tracking podcasts online. Blubrry and Libsyn both offer these services.

These services will help you stay current once you submit your podcast to iTunes - and maintain compliance with iTunes standards. Examples include your podcast logo (or episode graphic) which is currently a high resolution png image file that measures up to 1400x1400 pixels. See iTunes specs and guidelines.

Appendix References

iTunes
Podfeed
SoundCloud
Stitcher