



THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF DISTANCE LEARNING

## A Beginner's Guide to Podcasting (Or just creating audio and delivering it online.)

*So you wanna be a rock 'n' roll star? Then listen now to what I say. – The Byrds*

### Step 1: Decide on a program format.

Podcasting evolved from the idea of a regular radio broadcast, so think in terms of timeliness and serial updates. For example, these might be course podcast programs:

- Current events and this course
- A summary of this week's main ideas
- Checklist for next week in Dr. Smith's class
- Weekly concert excerpts
- Bird calls of the American Southwest

### Step 2: Plan your episodes.

The episodes are the actual content that—one hopes—your listeners will be interested in hearing. Weekly? Monthly? Ad-hoc? How long? Scripted or impromptu? Sound effects or just voice? One voice or more? One take or edited?

### Step 3: Produce audio files.

The audio files are what listeners will download and play in order to hear your episodes.

- **The script.** While you may want to experiment with unscripted episodes, consider writing out what you plan to say in advance—if for no other reason than to provide a text alternative for hearing-impaired students. Plan on nothing longer than 2-5 minutes at first.
- **The hardware.** Your computer may have come with a microphone and audio recording/editing software, or you can obtain them inexpensively. Radio Shack sells inexpensive USB mics; gaming headsets sold at Best Buy also have decent mics. You can also record via a separate device like a digital voice recorder or iPhone and transfer the audio file to your computer.
- **The software.** You'll want some way to edit the audio files, whether to cut out errors or to add music or other effects. A popular and free audio recording studio is *Audacity* ([audacity.soundforge.net](http://audacity.soundforge.net)), but you might have other software preloaded on your computer.
- **The recorded file.** Once edited and finalized, you need to save or export the file in MP3 format. Depending on the equipment and software used, this may require jumping through a few hoops—or it may be simply a Save-As function. Audacity requires a one-time setup of the [MP3 encoder](#) after which you can simply save files in MP3 format.

#### **Step 4: Create the Podcast Channel.**

This is the address that listeners will go to in order to obtain the audio files. You only have to create the channel once, then add subsequent episodes as they are created.

- The simplest way is to go into Blackboard, click the Content Collection tab, and under “My Content” create a folder called “podcast” (lowercase, without quotes). Set the permissions for this folder to public, and upload your MP3 files here. Detailed instructions are in an Appendix at the end of this document.
- You can also create a podcast channel using a free podcast hosting service like [podbean](#).

Once the channel has been created, upload your MP3 files to it. You’re a podcaster!

**Step 5: Publish the Channel.** Your listeners will need to know where to look, so provide a link. Here’s an example from one course site:

#### **How to Obtain Podcasts**

Below you will find each podcast episode listed separately. If you prefer, you can directly download the MP3 and corresponding text transcript one at a time by clicking the links.

If you are familiar with RSS channels or iTunes, you can simply subscribe to this podcast channel for automatic updates. Either:

- Point your RSS reader to <http://podcast.fsu.edu/jsc06d/> and download the podcasts as they appear, or
- Launch iTunes, go to the iTunes Store and add the [podcast address](#), or simply follow [this link](#) if you have iTunes installed. Sync it to your iPod if you prefer, in which case you can collect recent podcast segments automatically.

Podcast 1: iPod Touch and Convergence

[Direct MP3 Download](#) | [Text Transcript](#)

Podcast 2: Tips for Discussion Forum Participation

[Direct MP3 Download](#) | [Text Transcript](#)

Note that in the example provided, the address for the podcast stored in Blackboard (step 4, first option) is <http://podcast.fsu.edu/username>, where “username” is replaced with your FSUID. Direct iTunes access to this podcast (“this link” above) would use the URL <http://podcast.fsu.edu/username>.

**Be sure to test everything out before publishing the address!**

### Notes, tips, alternatives:

- The sample language above tells students how to subscribe to the podcast in iTunes and automatically synchronize episodes to their portable iPods. If they do that, you have truly created a Podcast.
- If you are not planning to create a whole series and/or don't feel the need to be a "podcaster" per se, simply upload the MP3 file to public web space and create a link to it from your course site, or in an email, etc.
- If you want separate channels, you can create subfolders under the podcast folder in Bb. Their addresses will be in the form  
<http://podcast.fsu.edu/username/subfoldername/>.

### For further reading:

- [Publishing Podcasts via iTunes](#)
- [Poducate Me – a new guide to educational podcasting](#)
- [Exploiting the educational potential of podcasting](#)
- [Consensus: Podcasting Has No 'Inherent' Pedagogic Value](#)

### Audacity Resources:

- [Video tutorials](#)
- [Detailed step-by-step instructions](#)
- [Information about sound effects](#)
- [Audacity Wiki](#)

## **Appendix: Hosting Podcasts in Your Blackboard Content Collection**

### **Step 1. Create a podcast folder in the CC.**

- a. Log in and click the Content Collection tab.
- b. Click My Content (should be appearing already).
- c. Click Create Folder.
- d. Title the new folder “podcast” without quotes, leave other settings at default.

### **Step 2. Allow the public to access the folder without Bb login.**

- a. Back on My Content page, click the icon in the Permissions column out to the right of your new folder’s name.
- b. At the top of the Managing Permissions screen, click Permit Anyone.
- c. On the next page, just leave “Read” checked and click Submit.
- d. Back on the My Content page, verify that the icon in Permissions column for podcasts folder is the public-access icon: an open hand holding a globe and paper.

### **Step 3: Add Content.**

- a. Click the “podcast” folder’s name to go into it.
- b. Click Upload and select Upload Files.
- c. Browse to locate .mp3 file, select, and Submit to upload.
- d. Verify that file is located in the podcasts folder.
- e. Optional: next to the file, click the dropdown list (double down-arrows) and under Metadata - General add a name and description that will show up in some aggregators (e.g. iTunes).

### **Step 4: Publish address of feed and market the content.**

Your feed’s address is <http://podcast.fsu.edu/username/> (replace “username” with your FSUID). See the main Podcasting instructions for more information on how to tell students about your podcast.