

Podcasting 101

All information taken from *Educator's Podcast Guide* by Bard Williams

What is podcasting?

Podcasting is, "the ability to create or listen to audio or video content, called a **podcast**, via the web, either live, or downloaded for later viewing/listening on your desktop, laptop or on a mobile device like a smartphone or many MP3 players like the Apple iPod." (p.6)

How is it different from downloading regular audio and video files from a web site?

It's different because the content is usually updated regularly and you can receive this new content via a subscription.

What do I do if I find a podcast I like and want to listen or watch the updates on a regular basis?

iTunes and other podcast programs (like Juice, Podcast Turner and NewsFire) let you subscribe to podcast streams you like. You control at what interval you'd like to receive the information. The technology used to subscribe is called RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and it's the same technology that send the the news feeds you see on a site like CNN. The new content is then waiting for you when you're ready.

Why would students like using podcasts to learn? They're . . .

- available anytime
- (can be) more compelling than some classroom activities
- great for students who learn better by listening
- easy to access
- changing all the time
- easy to create and post

Why might teachers use podcasting in the classroom?

"Podcasting offers options for learners with diverse learning needs and many learning styles. If the podcast is a video podcast, it offers the **visual learner** an option for review and reflection. The **auditory learner** can play and replay content indefinitely. The **kinesthetic learner** can play the time-shifted content outside of school when movement is free." (p.8)

How can schools use podcasts?

Podcasts are best used not as an "island of content" but rather in the context of learning. Some ideas include:

- **curriculum enhancement**-more information about a topic, as a lesson starter and background information, lesson extension or enrichment
- **promoting programs and activities**-newscasts and recordings of live events so that people who can't attend have a way of participating (concerts, fairs, etc.)
- **a research tool**-collecting podcast addresses or resources on a specific topic, creating your own directory of resources to share with others, listening to podcasts and taking notes

- [sharing school news](#)-schools can offer podcasts of school news so that parents can subscribe daily and receive the news and listen online or download to a digital music player
- [archiving lessons](#)-students who miss a class can review the content and students who need to hear it again have that opportunity
- [field recordings](#)-the ability to record audio into an iPod allows for amazing field note-taking. Students can share their observations and record interview while they are still in the field.
- [study support](#)-repetitive listening helps students who didn't understand the material the first time or who need to hear it again to focus on critical material.

Where should I search to find good podcasts?

You can find podcasts on the Internet. One way is through iTunes-you can scan the directory that lists thousands of podcasts. Using iTunes, you can search by name, category or the most downloaded/popular podcasts. You can also use a search engine to find a topic (i.e. podcast elementary school reading) then copy and paste the podcast URL (web address that ends with "xml" or "MP3") into iTunes.