



Podcasting

“Podcasting offers educators and students remarkable opportunities for their voices to be heard in their local communities or the around world. One could think of podcasting as blogging without writing or as a way for every class to have its own radio station. You have the power to get in on the ground-floor of this new media phenomena and express yourself today!”

Gary Stager - Educational consultant, author, teacher educator

Definitions

Podcasting

Podcasting is a way to share audio or video files on the Internet. The files are coded in a special way so that if you subscribe to a podcast, every time it changes, you get a new file downloaded to your computer. The coding is called RSS.

RSS

Really Simple Syndication. Look for this symbol.



Need more vocabulary or history?

Wikipedia article on podcasting
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>

Where to Start

Start your journey with the resources on the next page.

- Find resources that match your needs, budget, and equipment.
- Experiment. It's not going to work the first time.
- Find out where you and your students can post the podcasts.
- Include your students in your learning adventure.

Podcasting Questions and Answers For Educators

Why should I care about podcasting?

- 1) Podcasting is an opportunity for student creative expression. Just like writing or making movies, podcasting offers an authentic experience in planning, creating for a real audience and creativity.
- 2) The technology can be easily learned by anyone, and then used by students and teachers to communicate with each other, parents, the community and the world.
- 3) Podcasting offers students of all ages and ability levels a learning experience that scales as they grow and improve their skills. Students who may have trouble writing or expressing themselves verbally may find a voice with this medium.

How is this new and different?

Blogs (web+logs) have exploded world-wide and are an example of what is being called Web 2.0, or “the read/write web”. Students can become producers and writers in an authentic context with a real audience. Podcasts extend this to audio and video – the “read/write/listen/watch/make web!”

Unlike a simple web page, podcasting and blogging sites offer intuitive ways to collaborate, link to other related sites, keep them fresh, and communicate with others.


Do you have to have an ipod to podcast?

No you don't. However, Apple has made it very easy to do. You can podcast with Windows and Mac computers, and listen with any MP3 player.

What is coming in the future? Is it worth waiting for?

Coming in the future is a convergence of tools that make it easier to blog with audio, video, or photos. It's sometimes tempting to wait for “it” to happen, but it's never going to stand still. Your kids aren't going to stand still either.

Podcasting for GenYES Students

Podcasting is a way to share audio files on the Internet, just like blogging is a way to share online writing. The files are coded in a special way so that if you subscribe to a podcast, every time it changes, you get a new file downloaded to your computer. The coding is called RSS. 

Podcasts For Learning

- * Guided audio tours of your school or classroom - maybe in several languages!
- * Class news reports
- * Language practice - English or others
- * Interviews and oral histories
- * Vocabulary and spelling practice
- * Storytelling and dramatic readings
- * Book reviews and library news
- * Collaborative podcast—many students can record, respond, and contribute to build a podcast
- * Read books aloud for younger readers

What Can GenYES Students Do?

- * Create a podcast webpage for your school and help teachers add their own audio to it
- * Collect podcasts about one subject for a teacher and put them on one easy-to-find webpage
- * Start a podcast for a weekly event (like recording a spelling list so students can practice at home.) Show your partner-teacher how to keep it up to date and how parents can subscribe
- * Create podcasts for a teacher to use in their class
- * Teach the students in the class how to create their own podcasts

Plan	Record	Edit	Publish
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who will listen to your podcast and what will they learn?• Where will you post the files?• What do you need to record the audio? (microphone, recorder, or other hardware)• Will there be other audio needed? (sound effects or music)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Record short segments to avoid mistakes• Listen to your recording to make sure the audio is good enough• Find sound effects or music	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transfer your audio file to a computer• Edit the audio to get rid of mistakes and empty spaces• Listen to your audio to make sure it is what you want. If not, record again• Add music or sound effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put the file on a web page so other people can find it• Test it to make sure it works• Tell people it's there so they can listen to it

Podcasting Resources

Teachers can use these websites to find podcasts, learn how to create podcasts, and how to post them on the Internet. Depending on your students, you can share these resources with them or create your own lesson plan to teach them podcasting. Your students may surprise you with how quickly they can pick up this skill.

Where to start

Podcasting with Gary Stager - For veteran and newbie podcasting educators. Comprehensive tutorials and toolkits. Hardware and software recommendations for every budget. Students can use it too. <http://stager.org/podcasting.html>

Learning in Hand - Great website by an elementary school teacher with step-by-step descriptions of how he teaches and uses podcasts in his classroom. <http://learninginhand.com/podcasting/index.html>

The 411 for Flashing 12s – How to make a podcast. Translation: the information (dialing 411 in the U.S. connects you to the information operator) for people who don't even know how to set up their electronic equipment (and so have 12:00 flashing on the clock). <http://www.podcast411.com/f12.html>

The Goal - Creating Podcasts

Yes, you can listen to podcasts and find podcasts that will enhance student learning in any subject area. But don't stop there. The power of podcasting is in creating them -- for both you and your students.

Finding podcasts

The Educator Podcast Network - Professional issues, student produced content, and subject specific content. <http://www.epnweb.org/>

Postcast Alley – A general podcast portal. Find podcasts, search for your favorites, and find out how to make them. Using podcast portals are a good way to find podcasts, but you may not want your students using them without supervision. http://www.podcastalley.com/what_is_a_podcast.php

School podcasts

Radio WillowWeb is a podcast for kids and by kids from the students at Willowdale Elementary School in Omaha, Nebraska. <http://www.mpsomaha.org/willow/radio/index.html>

Hopkinton High School & Hopkinton Middle School Library Podcast - 7th & 8th graders in Contoocook, New Hampshire nominate books, read the books, and choose a winner each year. <http://www.hopkintonschools.org/hhs/library/podcast.html>

Podcast Bangladesh - Produced by students and teachers at International School Dhaka. <http://podcastbangla.blogspot.com/>

Other resources

Wikipedia Podcasting Entry – An encyclopedic description of podcasting with a huge list of links. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>

Copyright and Legal Issues - This chart by Hall Davidson gives a good summary of multimedia copyright issues of interest to educators: <http://www.halldavidson.net/copyrightchart.html> For more complex podcasting legal issues: http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Welcome_To_The_Podcasting_Legal_Guide

Blogging - Will Richardson wrote the book (literally) on blogging for education. The more you learn about podcasting, the more you will rely on blogging resources like this site. <http://www.weblogg-ed.com/>

Teaching Podcasting

OK, you've read too many websites and are ready to get started. What's next?

Technology Research - Where's the Cookbook?

There is no one-size-fits-all cookbook for podcasting. Your hardware, software, and policies at your school site will determine a lot of what you can and can't do. You will need to know:

- What hardware and software is available? Do you need to purchase something or find free tools?
- Investigate school policy on uploading files to the server, student use policies, privacy policies, and filtering/blocking issues. Resist the temptation to keep your podcasts private. The power of podcasting is sharing them with the world. You may have to take on some policy issues to do this, but it's worth it.
- If you do not have access to a server, investigate "hosted" blogging tools like Blogger www.blogger.com
- **TIP** – keep a blog about making your podcast and keep it online. This will become your cookbook. You will be able to refer to it, have students use it, and share it with colleagues.

Class Planning - Where's the Learning?

Use the four-step process on the Student Podcasting handout to ensure an educational experience from start to finish. Try to move to students creating their own podcasts as quickly as possible. Even though there are many fine podcasts created to be classroom content, your students deserve the chance to be active producers and creators, not just passive listeners (and so do you!)

Consider allowing students into the process of figuring out how it all works. This depends, of course, on how old your students are and their ability to do independent investigations. However, even the youngest students can be put to work figuring out which microphones work well or practicing editing audio. There are added benefits of student involvement at an early stage:

- They will "learn how to learn". They may not realize that there are so many options or that there are valid educational uses of web audio and video
- They will be more forgiving of software and hardware glitches if they had a hand in choosing it, and will understand the tradeoffs better
- They will find more things than you will on your own and they will experiment with gusto. As the technology is changing rapidly, you may find that having every new class investigate new podcasting options is a time-saving technique in the long run.

Try it - Wasn't that Easy?

This will not work the first time - but don't give up! This is an "aerial" view of what to do:

1. Record an audio program on your computer or digitize a program recorded on a tape recorder. If the file is not in MP3 format, convert the .wav, .mov or .aiff file to .mp3 format. There are lots of tools available for converting audio file formats.
2. Upload the file to a web server.
3. Create an RSS feed so your users may subscribe to your channel (program).
4. The listener's podcasting software, like iTunes (www.itunes.com) iPodder (www.ipodder.org) checks regularly to see if your channel has been updated. If there is new programming, the file will be automatically downloaded and copied onto their iPod. You may still listen to the file on your computer if you do not own an iPod.

Credits: Aerial view adapted from Gary Stager - Quick and Dirty Podcasting Guide <http://stager.org/podcasting/guide.html>
List of ideas for podcasting in the classroom adapted from GenYES teacher Lucy Grey - Podcasting Guide <http://lists.topica.com/lists/friday5/read/message.html?sort=d&mid=912480374> GenYES and Generation YES are registered trademarks of Generation YES Corp. All other marks are properties of their respective owners.