

Podcasting Basics

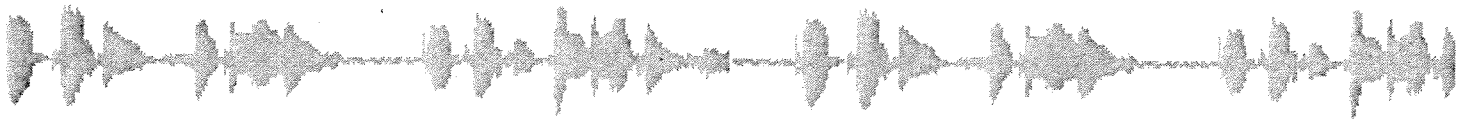
A presentation to:

NCSL Legislative Research Librarians Staff Section

By Laura Kunkel, Editor

Written by Steve Miller, Chief
Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau

October 20, 2006



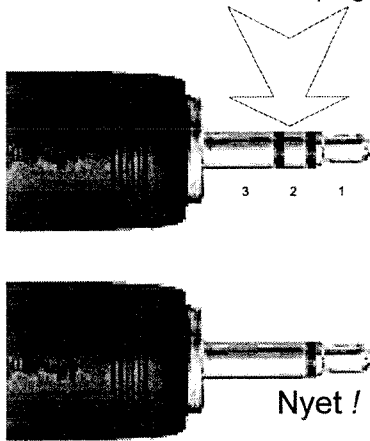
pod • cast \ˈpād-kast\ *n* (2004) : a digital audio or video file posted to a Web site, usually stored with special syndication coding to enable others to automatically receive the file. The file can then be played either on a computer or on a portable MP3 player. The word is based on “iPod” and “broadcast,” although you don’t need an iPod to create, publish, or listen to podcasts.

Recently, wide availability of digital audio and its ease of use set the scene for new and inexpensive approaches to media. Podcasts burst upon the scene in August 2004. By February 2005, Google showed 200,000 hits for the word, and a year later, 200

million hits. Podcasting is a logical result of the sale of hundreds of millions of portable digital audio and video players, including 60 million iPods. The LRB began podcasting in March 2005, with the goals of reaching a younger audience, highlighting the LRB’s publications and services, and presenting the legislative process in a positive light.

Typically, LRB podcasts present an interview with the author of a recent LRB publication. The LRB’s library-oriented podcasts have included a discussion of our OPAC, an interview about our monthly acquisitions list, and interviews with authors of our monthly annotated bibliography, *Tap The Power*.

Computer microphones have a three-conductor plug that looks like a stereo plug. The mic draws power from the computer. Older mics use a two-conductor plug.



Technology needed

Hardware: We use two inexpensive computer type microphones and one “Y” adaptor so both microphones can run into the computer’s audio input jack. Microphones cost about ten dollars each. Total cost: under \$30.

Software: Free audio recording software is easily available and of surprising high quality. “Goldwave” and “Audacity” are both fully-featured recording and editing suites. When you download one of these programs, also get the software plugin called “LAME,” so you can convert the final audio output to MP3 format.

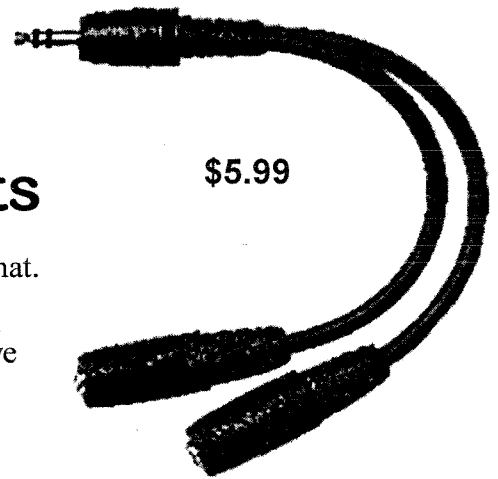
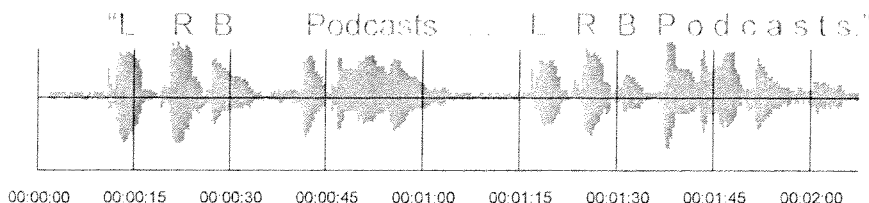
Recording and editing podcasts

Overview: We use two people with two microphones in an interview format. We strive to keep the interview short, at about five minutes (a little longer than a Top 40 song). The interviews are very lightly scripted—generally we address three or four questions which easily fill the time slot, with a fairly standard opening and closing.

A few recording tips:

- Don’t talk directly into the mic. This avoids “popping” Ps, Ts, Ds, and Bs.
- Prepare! Re-read material before the recording session, but do not use the printed material during the recording session. A brief outline will trigger the correct talking points.
- Be enthusiastic, almost over the top. The recorded version will sound much flatter than it feels during the recording session.
- Quiet surroundings are good, but not absolutely necessary.
- If you flub a question or an answer, simply repeat from a point a few words prior to the flub. You can easily edit out portions.

Editing: Editing software shows you a timeline with the sound waveform from which you can cut or move portions. It’s easy to learn.



Two voices can be recorded by a single microphone.

Web site syndication

Overview of syndication using XML:

XML is a markup language that denotes semantic content, such as “author,” “date,” or other metadata.

Each time you update information on your Web site, your readers can receive notices of the updates via syndication. Your Web site must include information encoded with special XML tags (referred to as either “RSS” or “Atom”) to create feeds, and your readers need special software to receive the podcasts.

Your webmaster will use another program to create the XML tags needed to publish your podcast as a syndicated feed on your Web site. Here’s some sample XML code showing tags for one podcast:

```
<item>
  <title>LRB Podcasts: Governor's veto power</title>
  <link>http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/podcasts/mp3/hurley_071305.mp3</link>
  <description>Peggy Hurley discusses the Governor's veto power</description>
  <category>Wisconsin Legislature</category>
  <guid isPermaLink="false">hurley_071305</guid>
  <pubDate>07/13/2005 00:00:01 GMT</pubDate>
  <enclosure url="http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/podcasts/mp3/hurley_071305.mp3"
  length="4161704" type="audio/mpeg" />
</item>
```

You should add one of these symbols to your Web site to show that it contains syndicated material (e.g., text, photos, audio, or video).



The original symbol for all syndicated material.



New symbol for syndicated material, now called “feeds.”



Older style symbol that specifically refers to podcasts.



Guess what this is?

Receiving podcasts from the Web

Hardware needed: a computer or a computer and a portable MP3 player.

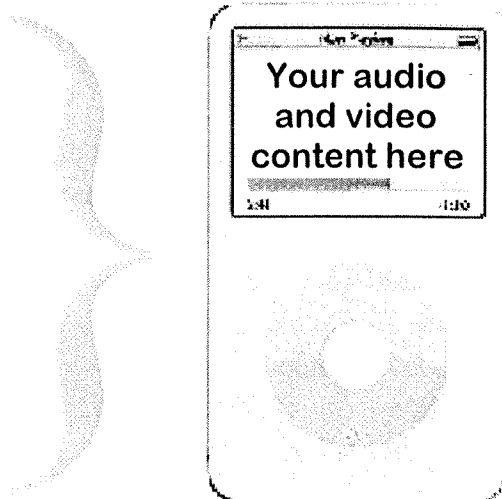
Software needed: To automatically receive podcasts, the listener must use special aggregator or “podcatching” software, which runs in the background after he or she has subscribed to a podcast. Apple’s iTunes is the leader in the field. The program automatically connects to the Web sites to which the listener has subscribed and looks for new podcasts. When a new podcast appears on the Web site, the program will download and add it to their music (sound) library. If the listener uses an iPod, the next time that he or she plugs their iPod into the computer, the computer will download the podcast to the iPod.



His master's podcast.

Library podcast suggestions

- A tour of the library.
- Research tips.
- Annotated bibliographies.
- Descriptions of programs or interviews with special guests.
- Patron book reviews.
- Recent acquisitions.
- Frequently asked reference questions.



Resources

Audio recording and editing software:

Audacity software (free):
<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Gold Wave software (free):
<http://www.goldwave.com/>

When downloading either Audacity or Gold Wave, you should also download the LAME encoder plugin.

Syndication software (RSS generator):
<http://softwaregarden.com/products/listgarden/>

iTunes (for receiving podcasts) (free):
<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>

Good How-To sites:

<http://www.sitepoint.com/article/professional-podcasting>

<http://www.infotoday.com/cilmag/apr06/eash.shtml>

<http://www.sirsidynixinstitute.com/viewvideo.php?vid=20060524>

Examples of podcasts:

Personal blog of Jim Miles at the Buffalo Law School
<http://checkthisout.libsyn.com/>

Curtin University of Technology (Australia)
<http://library.curtin.edu.au/podcast/index.html>

Mann Library at Cornell University
<http://www.mannlib.cornell.edu/computing/podcast/>

Ohio University:
www.library.ohiou.edu/libinfo/vtour/podcast/

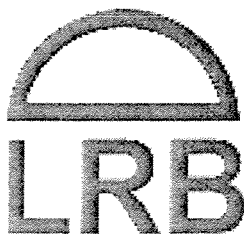
Pritzker Military Library (Chicago)
<http://www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org/podcast/index.jsp>

The Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau:
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lrb/podcasts/>

How to get your podcasts listed in

iTunes Music Store:

<http://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts/techspecs.html>



Wisconsin Legislative
Reference Bureau