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BCS White Sheet

6 Easy Steps to Podcasting **Is it really that easy?** **by Darryl Gregory**

So you want to produce a podcast. Sounds like aliens will be popping out and you will be shouting for help as you sink underneath a lot of technical mumbo-jumbo. Well you can rest easy because it really is easy to produce an audio file and send it out through the internet. Yep, that's all a podcast is: an audio file. You record something onto your computer (digitally) and then propagate it over the World Wide Web so that listeners can download it or *subscribe* to it. It's that easy. But there's more. There's always more and that's where some of the complexity comes in, but even that is not so technical and only gets as technical as you want it to become.

Let's lay out the steps first and then talk about each one in detail.

1. Write your copy. Storyboard your show.
2. Record your audio. What hardware and software do you need?
3. Edit the audio. Add music, intros, outros.
4. Save the audio as an mp3.
5. Let everyone know how to subscribe: your RSS feed.
6. Propagate the audio to the Internet.

Step 1 doesn't need to be complicated, but you do need to know what you want to talk about and how you're going to say it. Unless you can talk off the top of your head really, really well and say relevant things about your topic or the music you're about to play, then you should write a script for yourself. If you want to sound like you are talking off the top of your head then just write down the essential points and not word for word what you will say. When you storyboard a show you lay out the events in the show.

>Intro music>voice over introducing the show>script #1>song>script#2>outro music<

By laying the show out and storyboarding it you will have a show that flows and has form so that it keeps the listener's attention.

Step 2 is easier than you think, you just need a few items of software and hardware. The software you will need will be something that allows you to record audio into your computer. These days computers are coming bundled with multi-media software, so you are likely to already have something on your computer. Apple bundles something called Garage Band with all of its Macs. Garage Band is easy to use and you can do everything you need to do plus it comes with royalty free music and loops to add to your podcast. The next thing you'll need is a microphone. You can't use just any type of microphone unless you have an outboard mixer and an interface that will make that mixer talk to your computer. The simplest solution is to buy a USB microphone. There are plenty out there and they are relatively inexpensive. Once you get a microphone, you just plug it in and boot your software and start talking.

Step 3 is where things can get a little technical. You don't want a podcast show with a lot of umms and huhs and coughs. A written script will help, but editing helps even more. Digital audio software allows you to move audio around like text in a word processing application. It also allows you to cut and paste and trim the audio. So if you are doing a radio style show with music and dialogue in between, you don't have to wait until each song is over to say your dialogue. You can record all your dialogue and then assemble the show from all your dialogue files and music files. Neat and simple.

Step 4 is just a matter of saving your completed show as an mp3 file. There are different types of audio file suffixes .wav and .aiff are two common ones. .mp3 is the file type that is used across the Internet because the files are relatively small. On most digital audio applications there is an option too save your file as an mp3. Click this option and the rest is history.

Step 5, the RSS feed. In order for listeners to subscribe to your podcast you will need to create an RSS feed for your podcast. The easiest way to do that is by creating a blog and attaching your audio file to it. You can then use the blog's RSS feed as your podcast feed. If you don't know anything about blogs you can get a free one at Google or Yahoo. If you are not using a blog format, then you will need to create an RSS feed for the podcast some other way. Unless you're good at coding (I'm not) I urge you to get an application that writes the feed for you. I use a very inexpensive piece of software called Feeder (www.reinventedafotware.com). I type in all the info that it needs to know and it spits out a feed.

Now that you have your feed you can tell people to subscribe by having them type your RSS feed into a Feed Reader. A feed reader is as simple as a Google, Yahoo, MSN Homepage. How do you think all those news stories get onto your startup page? RSS feeds. Your listener just types in your feed and whoops there it is. You can also add your podcast to the iTunes directory. Anyone can do this and it's free. Just go to the iTunes site, submit a podcast and follow the directions on how to upload and set up your podcast.

Creating a podcast is easy. There are a lot of resources out there to help even videos on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hrBbczS9I0>). Remember when you are

doing this to have fun. If it's not, then get someone else to do the dirty work and you do what you find exciting to do in the process.