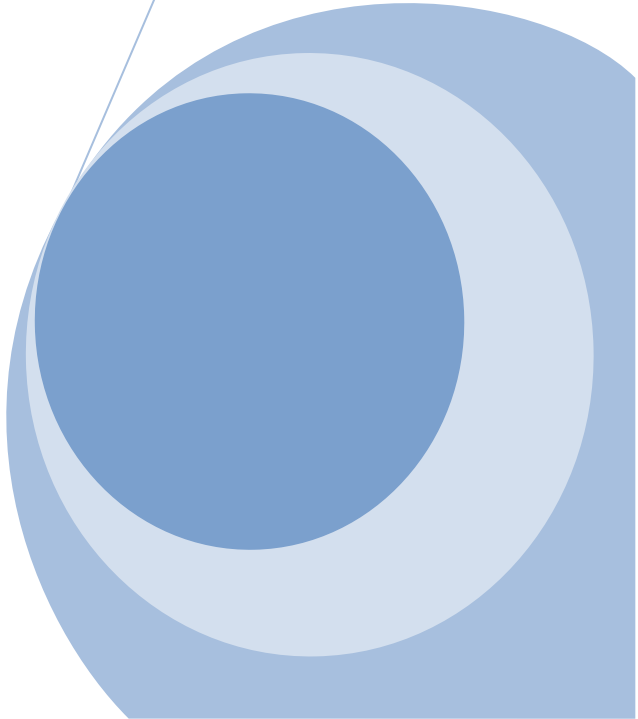




# **Podcast Manual: A Step- by-Step Guide to Podcasting**

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31st of March, 2008**



## Overview

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The next<sup>1</sup> few pages contained within this Podcast Manual-as its name suggests-are aimed at describing the steps involved in the creation of a podcast. These include: Planning the podcast, recording its content, editing the material, and last but not least, uploading and/or publishing it. Needless to say, the equipment needed to create a podcast, will also be discussed as part of the description process. But before we go any further, two very important questions must be answered; the first: **What exactly is a podcast?** The second: **Why is it useful?** In other words, what benefits does it offer to its users?

Well, first and foremost, according to the Webster's New Millennium Dictionary of English, a podcast is a "Web-based audio broadcast via an RSS feed, accessed by subscription over the Internet (Lexico Publishing Group, LLC)." In simpler terms, a podcast allows individuals to share, promote and/or publish audio information, to be heard by a particular audience at their own leisure, through the Web. Secondly, there are a number of ways in which podcasts can be useful. Here are a few examples:

1. A podcast allows you to be the host of your own radio station. That is to say, it provides you with the ability to create a virtual-that is, Internet based-radio station, in which you can create and/or share information with a particular audience (Gunter).
2. You can also "promote a printed book, [an] e-book, or a CD/DVD, series by releasing promotional snippets to a wider audience (Gunter)."
3. Additionally, podcasts allow you to record a "telecast series in which you interview experts [regarding] solutions to problems faced by [your audience] (Gunter)."
4. Lastly, podcasts can also be used to share tips, and other valuable information in regards to a given subject-namely, tips on how to attain a healthier lifestyle-with the audience of your choice (Gunter).

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<sup>1</sup> Original Text-by author

## Planning Your Podcast

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Now<sup>2</sup> that we have addressed the definition of a podcast, and the various benefits it provides to its users, it is time to discuss the first and most important step in process of creating a podcast; that is, planning its content. As one might imagine, the content of a podcast is the most significant factor to be taken into consideration when determining its level of quality. In other words, if the message contained in a podcast is not captivating, and/or interesting to an audience, most likely, the author of the podcast will not be very successful at getting his/her message across. Additionally, the way in which the message is delivered to an audience, also influences its level of receptiveness by the former. That is to say, if the message is delivered in an articulate and captivating manner, the audience is more likely to be receptive to it. Otherwise, the odds of grabbing the listener's attention, and getting one's point across, are diminished. Therefore, a podcast must be thoroughly planned prior to its recording, to ensure an optimum level of quality and/or receptiveness by its intended audience.

When planning a podcast, there are some factors one must take into consideration. Among these are: Determining who your audience will be, choosing the kind of message you would like to share, setting the length (with respect to time) of your podcast, and last but not least, determining the format of your podcast; be that an informative podcast, an interview, or if it simply involves recording your own ideas, opinions, and concerns in regards to a particular subject (Gunter). Once the general format of the podcast is chosen, one might consider using occasional humorous remarks to deliver his/her message, in order to keep his/her listener engaged, and interested in the content of his/her podcast.

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<sup>2</sup> Original Text-by author

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## Recording Your Podcast

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With the planning process behind us, it is now time to begin our discussion about the equipment needed to initiate the recording process. In order to record a podcast, one needs an external microphone, headphones-optional; it optimizes sound quality-and last but not least, recording software (Fariwar, Start your Own Podcast). The most commonly used recording software is known as **Audacity**. Here are some helpful tips on how to work with Audacity:

1. Open<sup>3</sup> the program.
2. Make sure external microphone (if any) is plugged in. (If one is using Windows, this can be done by going to “**Control Panel**,” and clicking on “**sound and audio devices**.” Then look under “**sound recording**.” Your microphone should be recognized in the drop down menu.
3. Click on the “**Record**” button; (red button).
4. Record the content of podcast.
5. Once done, hit the space bar, or the stop button, to cease recording.

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## Editing Your Podcast

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Once the recording process is completed, one can make changes or adjustments to the content of his/her podcast. Such a procedure is known as editing. The editing process also involves working with Audacity. The preceding<sup>4</sup> software can be used as an editing tool to: “combine multiple takes,” get rid of unwanted sounds, as well as, to “delete [long], awkward pauses.”Moreover, Audacity can be used to add a musical background to the podcast, and other “embellishments (Fariwar, Give your podcast professional polish with Audacity).”

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<sup>3</sup> Source in reference to steps 1-5: (Begginer's Tutorial For Audacity )

<sup>4</sup> Source: (Fariwar, Give your podcast professional polish with Audacity)

## Editing Options

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As previously noted, Audacity provides various editing tools to its users; (refer to previous page for more information). This portion of the podcast manual focuses on how to use this editing software, in order to give a podcast a polished and professional finish. One of the first options mentioned in this manual is the ability to combine multiple tracks together, and edit them in such a way, that the audio sounds as fluent as it possibly can. That is to say, the goal in “mixing” multiple tracks together, is to extract the best of each track, and delete whatever is unwanted (Fariwar, Give your podcast professional polish with Audacity). So, here is how it can be done:

1. Open<sup>5</sup> the “**Project Menu.**”
2. Click on “**Import Audio.**”
3. Go to “**File browser**” to locate the file/audio you wish to import.
4. Repeat steps 2 & 3 to import multiple files/tracks.
5. Once the importing process is complete, get rid of unwanted material by highlighting the sections of “waveforms” you wish to keep, then press the “**delete**” button.

One can also add a musical background to his or her podcast if he or she wishes to do so. However, one must consider adding a subtle musical background. That way, the audio contained in the podcast, will not be overpowered by it. Let’s begin describing the process: First, one must open both the section of the narration to which he/she wishes to incorporate the musical background, and the chosen musical track to be incorporated into the podcast (Fariwar, Give your podcast professional polish with Audacity). Be aware that the section which contains one’s narration must be the top track, and the musical track should be located on the bottom.

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<sup>5</sup> Source in reference to steps 1-5: (Fariwar, Give your podcast professional polish with Audacity)

The next step is to create a fade; (optional). This step is not necessary if one wishes that the musical background be played throughout the entire podcast. As its name suggests, the “fade in” feature, allows its users to determine when the background music will begin (fade in) and when it will end (fade out) throughout the time intervals of the podcast. Here is how a “fade in” can be incorporated into the musical background:

1. Highlight<sup>6</sup> the first couple of seconds of your musical track.
2. Then, click on “**Effect**”: (Fade In).
3. Lower the volume level at the end of the music track; so it slowly fades way as it overlaps with the beginning of your voice track.
4. Click on the Envelope tool (it looks like a blue line with arrows) located in the toolbar in the upper left hand corner. Click on the upper edge of the music track’s waveform; select the point where you want the fade to begin.
5. Adjust the narration track so it begins at the appropriate moment. Select the Time Shift Tool (the double-pointed arrow) then click-and-drag the narration track, so that it is lined up with the spot at which one wants his/her background music to begin playing.
6. Lastly convert your edited audio file into an MP3 file before uploading it to a website. This can be done, by opening Audacity’s **File Formats:** preferences, and selecting the option that applies from the Uncompressed **Export Format menu**. Then, open that file in iTunes and convert it to an MP3.

## Uploading/ Publishing Your Podcast

Once the podcast is converted into an MP3 file, one needs to find a Web host to which the audio MP3 files can be published and/or uploaded. As a last step of the publishing process, it is necessary to create a **Really Simple Syndication** feed; also known as **RSS** feed/document (Fariwar, Start your Own Podcast). An RSS feed is nothing more than “a family of web feed

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<sup>6</sup> Source in reference to steps 1-6: (Fariwar, Give your podcast professional polish with Audacity)

formats used to publish [and/or upload] frequently updated content; such as, [blog](#) entries, news headlines, and [of course], [podcasts](#) (Wikipedia Foundation, Inc)”. The easiest and cheapest way to find a web host, and create an RSS feed, is by means of a Weblog (Making a Podcast with Blogger and FeedBurner). One can easily create a blog by going to [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com). When the webpage is opened, it will prompt the user to follow three easy steps to create a blog. Here they are: Create an account, name your blog, and last but not least, choose a template (Blogger). Once your blog is up and running, create an entry, then click on the “**Link**” button to add a link, and include your MP3 file(s) in your blog post(s). Keep in mind, that once one creates his/her posts and selects the “**Link**” button, the computer will prompt the individual in question, to provide a URL for his/her MP3 link (Making a Podcast with Blogger and FeedBurner) . When the previous step is completed, follow the steps listed below to create an RSS feed:

1. Click on **settings**; located on the right-hand side (Blogger).
2. Then go to **Site Feed**, and look for a **FeedBurner** link (Blogger)
3. Type your blog’s address into the prompted box (Fariwar, Start your Own Podcast). Don’t forget to check the box located slightly further to the right, entitled “I’m a podcaster.”
4. The computer will then prompt you to identify your feed source. Make sure to choose the **RSS** source. Then, click **Next** (Feedburner, Inc.)
5. Provide the information requested. When finished click on **Activate Feed** (Feedburner, Inc.)
6. Congratulations! You have successfully created an RSS feed.

Now that the RSS feed has been created, one can return to the blogger page, click on the “**Customize**” feature, then click on “**Layout**” and select the box labeled “**Add a Page Element.**” Once that’s done, the computer will prompt you to provide a feed address. Once the feed address

is recognized, click on “**Save Changes.**” Lastly, develop/create a new entry. One can also choose to add a label/tab to his/her post, as well as, other information regarding the content of his or her podcast, in addition to, “technical data;” file size is a perfect example of a piece of technical information one might consider including in his/her entry (Fariwar, Start your Own Podcast). Once the previous step is finished, one can pat oneself on the back, because the publishing process is completed!

## Conclusion

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So, it is finally time to look back, and reflect on the topics that have been discussed throughout this **Podcast Manual**. It began by defining a podcast, and listing some of the benefits offered to its users. Among which were: The ability to host your own web-based radio station, the ability to interview experts in regards to subjects that are of interest to one's intended audience, and so on (Gunter). Additionally, the fact that there is a direct correlation between the amount of time spent in the process of planning a podcast, and the level of quality and/or receptiveness by its audience was also addressed. Moreover, the third topic tackled in this manual involved describing both the process of recording a podcast, as well as, the software needed to do so.

Furthermore, the editing procedure was the fourth subject to be discussed. It was mentioned that Audacity can not only be used as recording software, but also as an editing one. In addition, it was noted within this manual, that Audacity provides its users with various editing options. These include: The ability to delete unwanted noises, awkward pauses, as well as, the freedom to add a musical background to your podcast in order to give a more "professional polish" to it (Fariwar, Give your podcast professional polish with Audacity). Lastly, the publishing process was described. In short, the uploading and/or publishing process involves finding a Webhost, and creating an RSS feed; both can be done by developing a Weblog (Making a Podcast with Blogger and FeedBurner). It was discussed, that the fastest and easiest way to do so, is by using a "blog-creating" software-also known as-a blogger.

Well, this is it. Here's to hoping this **Podcast Manual** was useful to those are interested in embracing the world of podcasting!



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