

How to PodCast for Free

By Nancy Munro



Podcast – Weblog—Blogging--- iPod seems like everyone has had exposure to at least one of these new digital mediums in the last year. These new digital communication tools appear to create simple, low-cost education and entertainment. I consider myself pretty tech savvy compared to the average person so I decided to take on the task of learning how to create my own podcast. Keep in mind when I say I'm tech savvy I am not a programmer and have no desire to learn how to write code or html. With that being said I looked for podcasting tools that someone at my level could use.

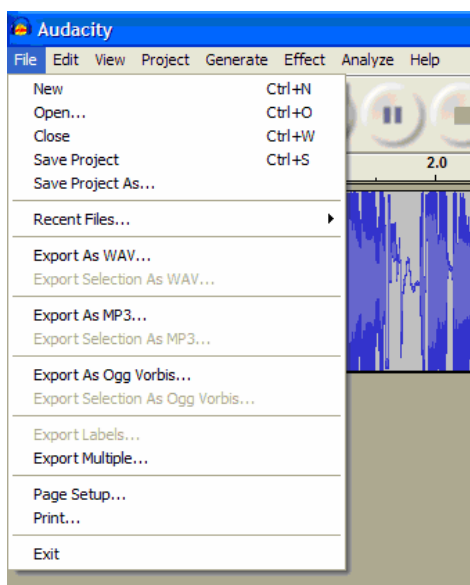
Using some guidelines that I acquired from a mini podcast workshop, I felt pretty confident that I fully understood all of the steps. Working with virtually no budget I set out to podcast to a world of new followers who would be anxious to download my latest broadcast of whatever knowledge spewed through my digital version of on-demand radio.

What I quickly found out was there are multiple steps involved in order to get from point A to point B. I'm sure there are others ways to go about this but I wanted to see if I could create a podcast with little or no investment. I'm going to walk you through the steps that I discovered.

There are three steps in the process of creating a podcast

1. Record the MP3 file
2. Create the RSS feed (podcast) from the MP3 file you created
3. Publish and syndicate the podcast, so that your audience can find and download it

Step #1 Record the MP3 file



This was by far the easiest step in the whole process. I have experience recording synchronous (live) webcasting sessions and editing these for asynchronous (on-demand) playback so this may be why I was very comfortable with this process.

Audacity is a great free audio recording software tool that I used for creating an MP3 file. I went to their website downloaded the software and I was ready. Using a \$15 computer headset I bought at a local electronics store, I simply plugged in my headset, positioned the microphone for the right audio level then hit the record button and it began recording everything I said.

When you have completed your recording, you can then export as an MP3 file by selecting this choice in the File selections (see screen shot above). Name the file what you want to and it will place in a folder.

Here are a few tips for recording your audio ...

- I strongly recommend that you write a script of your recording. Nothing is worse than trying to listen to a recording of someone who speaks poorly, stutters, and has a long string of “umms and ahhs” between their thoughts.
- You can also add some punch to your recording by adding music or sounds clips in between or playing in the background. Please make sure you have the rights to any music you use for these purposes.
- You can also use two different voices in an interview or panel discussion format. I have been told you can use Skype to record Voice over IP conversations that could also be used to record MP3s, but I was not able to explore this option.

Recording Tips:

- Write a script
- Add music or sound clips in the background or between clips
- Use multiple voices in an interview or panel discussion style

Step #2 Create the RSS feed

RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication. It's a file format that is used by computer programs to organize content that is distributed through Web sites across the Internet. You need to create an RSS feed so that Web sites can recognize and distribute your audio file as a podcast.

To import my MP3 file to create an RSS feed, I used **AudioBlog**. They have a 7-day free trial which was plenty of time for me to figure out how to do this and a very low monthly fee if I chose to continue the service. You can also use their service to host a blog and record audio, but I didn't use these services from them.

Once you're logged into AudioBlog

1. Import your previously recorded MP3 file. To do this, click on the **Audio Tab** and then select “Upload Audio”. Then browse for your MP3 audio recording file that you recorded earlier. Highlight the file and click.

2. Now that your audio is loaded, you can now create a podcast. To do this, click on the

Podcast Tab and select the “New Podcast” option (see picture below). Here you will create the file name, description, genre and other options that will be associated with your podcast once it is broadcasted.

3. When you complete all required fields, click “Save Changes Now.” You will see a screen that will assign the RSS or XML language to your file name.

Now you have to place the desired

audio file into this feed. At the bottom of the screen that shows your new RSS feed (podcast), there’s a box that informs you that you do *not* have any audio or media loaded in this feed. Click on the option of adding a new post in this box. You’ll see a screen that will upload your audio file. (See picture to the right).

On the next screen, the Media Enclosures menu allows you to select the audio files that you downloaded in previous steps. Select the RSS file you created from the pull-down menu. Once you hit “Save Changes Now” your podcast is created.

Step #3 Publish and Syndicate the Podcast

To automatically syndicate your podcast, select this option in New Podcast field. Once you’ve selected the automatic syndication option and saved your changes then your podcast is on its way to the various RSS broadcast channels.

If you want to be sure to have this podcast iTunes ready, you have to complete several additional steps. AudioBlog will help you with the final step of getting your file ready to broadcast to iTunes for syndication

1. Select the **Podcast Tab** and then **View Posts**. Select the audio file you want to broadcast.
2. Click on the iTunes Tab. Check the box that shows “click to activate iTunes tags” in order to publish to iTunes. Complete all of the other fields and hit “Save Changes Now”.
3. Then look for the **Publish Tab** in View Posts. This tab will show the XML addresses for your blog and other distribution services where you can post your RSS feed to allow others to access the file.

The last step is to post your podcast to iTunes. I hadn’t ever really logged into iTunes before, but all my teenaged children managed it so how hard can it be? I downloaded the free iTunes player and created a free account.

4. Look for the Music Store on the left hand side of the screen and select Podcast. You will see a several choices of programs.
5. In the middle of the screen that lists the programs, click the graphical button to **Submit a Podcast**.
6. When you see a page that prompts you to enter your Podcast Feed URL, cut and paste the XML address that you created in AudioBlog (step 3 above): To do this,

- go back to PodCast Tab on the AudioBlog. Click on the file you wish to publish to iTunes. When you see a choice of tabs, select the **Publish** tab and then scroll down half-way on the page until you see **Publish to iTunes**. Highlight this URL and select **Highlight All**.
7. Then go back over to the iTunes site where you are prompted to enter the podcast URL. Place a live cursor in this field and then pull down the browser’s Edit menu and select Paste. Your file will appear in the blank field. Click **Continue**.



This will send your file to iTunes. They will not post immediately but will send you an email within 24 hours to let you know whether or not they have posted your file.

I'm glad to say my file was posted and I feel confident that I can do this again. Now I just have to figure out what my next one will be ---- maybe a podcast on how to podcast.

This article was compiled as a result of my own Web research. If any one of my readers has suggestions about how to streamline this process, please write to me at nancy@bluestreaklearning.com. I would be glad to update this article and add your name to the credits.

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