

Podcast User Magazine

- What is an mp3?
- The Lance Anderson Podcast Experiment
- The future of podcasting and radio broadcasting
- Which podcasts should be on your subscription list?

PLUS

- 10 steps to cheap podcasting
- Podcaster accessibility
- Hate iTunes? Try Juice!
- Podshow bashing
- In-depth product reviews

Be a discerning listener.
and a productive podcaster



EDITORIAL



FIRST FOR...

Podcasts and podcasting news

Our monthly schedule and website allows us to keep you up to date with the latest news as and when it happens.

Product and service reviews

Each month, our dedicated contributors will review the latest hardware and software so to allow you to make the right buying choices.

We will also be reviewing a wide variety of podcasts so that you don't have to waste hours of your life. We are kind like that...

Advice and help

Podcast User staff have years of combined experience. So, if you have any problems or would like any information, just email us at

help@podcastusermagazine.com

WWW.PODCASTUSERMAGAZINE.COM

Once more the team at **Podcast User Magazine** have stepped up to the plate and give some great insight, practical advice and observation on all things podcast.

Enthusiasm can only last for a time in new media, or so I thought. It seems that those who are now considered 'old-timers' (those with 18 months or so experience in podcasting) really did think that the bubble would burst and interest plateau. How wrong they were / are.

Podcasting is not the fish and chip paper of yesterday – big businesses and media types are still only just discovering audio and video on demand. The learning curve seems to be steep, and we're still nowhere near the cliff edge, or, when we thought we were safe to hammer in the flag, a new mountain range appears.

The reason for the continual growth? Diversity. So many professions, businesses and folks are still just 'getting it'.

You can sense the diversity in the articles that appear in this issue, and here, on behalf of the team, I have to thank our guest contributors particularly. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as the team have enjoyed putting it together for you.

Please feel free to comment on our blog at www.podcastusermagazine.com, by mail to the author of the article or your general comments by mail to general.comments@podcastusermagazine.com.

Big **BUSINESSES** and media types are still only just discovering **AUDIO** and **VIDEO** on **DEMAND**



Paul Nicholls is our editor. He is a lawyer and the brains behind the Podcast Paul and Jukepod Jury podcasts. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of music. Sadly it's the 80's...

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More Evolution

Another issue, another evolution. As you will see, this month we continue to develop and evolve the layout of the magazine. For all those of you who have any sort of artistic bent, we welcome your input. Please feel free to get in contact and give us the benefit of your brilliance.

The eagle eyed amongst you will notice a ClustrMap somewhere in the magazine. Each month we will reproduce either a ClustrMap or a Frappr Map from a podcaster's website to demonstrate the increasingly global nature of podcasting. Thanks to ClusterMap and Frappr for the permission to reproduce there respective maps. •

Submissions

We are always looking for great new talent. So, if you have a topic that you would like to write about (without turning it into one of those turgid promos for your show) please mail us at submissions@podcastusermagazine.com.

We would be glad to hear from you. And who knows, you might write better than any of us. Now there is a challenge... •

Special thanks...

...go to Mark Hunter who has done some magic with the imagery. We hope you will agree that Mark's work helps to strengthen the **Podcast User** brand. Of course, it also goes to show that Scotland is not just the land of deep fried Mars Bars. •



Another good mix of informative and thought provoking articles. Can't wait to get my podcast station up and running, using all the relevant hints and tips here. In the meantime will have to make do with listening to Mark on the 'tartanpodcast' and Loz on 'blackcountrypodcasting'.

— Jules Procter

www.banburyshire.com

I hope somebody can give a tutorial on audio level compression, this must be the most confusing thing in podcasting.

- What is an audio level compressor?
- How does it work?
- Which is better, a software audio level compressor or a hardware audio level compressor?
- Do you need an audio compressor?

— Don

Thanks for your questions! We are preparing an article on audio compression in Issue 4.

Well done guys. Here's looking forward to #2 and beyond. Totally agree with the review of the R1, but something you

missed was the fact you can connect to a mixing desk via the line in on the R1 to record live gigs. Excellent sound recording equipment with a multitude of applications, I wouldn't leave home without mine.

— Martin (Green Dragon).

Congratulations.

This looks AND reads professional! And I know it will get only better. Good job.

If I had to take a knock, I'd suggest a bit more meat in the product reviews. What we REALLY want to know but can't test on our own – things like how does the pre-amp on the R1 compare to the little iRivers that everyone is using? Are the level meters actually useful or marketing schtik? etc...

Thanks!

— Jeff Oestreich

www.thisandthatpodcast.com

Hi Jeff and Martin

As one of the reviewers of the Edirol R-1 I thought it would be useful to add a couple of points. I can honestly say I wholehearted recommend the R-1 - it's a fab piece of kit.

As to the review, and never having written one before, I/we take all the points/concerns on board and agree with all of them!



To answer some of points raised above more directly:

1. How does the pre-amp on the R1 compare to the little iRivers that everyone is using?
-- don't know. I went straight to the R-1 as it did everything I needed and had the expansion capability I wanted. The reviews that were around at the time looked good and I took a punt. Great punt!

A bit more MEAT in the product REVIEWS

2. Are the level meters actually useful or marketing schtik? etc...

-- The level meter (there's only one) is a good basic level meter with one proviso. It's accurate. Also the built in effects aren't bad at all...

3. Martin's point (left) about the link

from a mixer

-- I have it plugged into my Yamaha MG10/2 mixer on the main REC OUT bus and it's great. I should have mentioned that.

Paul Parkinson

Do you have a comment to make? Please feel free to mail us at general.comments@podcastusermagazine.com or leave a comment on our blog page at www.podcastusermagazine.com

Letters

NEWS

UK Podcasters' License

The MCPS-PRS alliance, representing composers, songwriters and music publishers in the UK have announced a trial license for music podcasters

Described as “the first serious attempt by a European collecting society to support the growth of music podcasting”, the license will allow podcasters to pay a “royalty rate for the Alliance Music Podcast Scheme ...of 12% of gross revenue or the minimum fee per track downloaded as part of the podcast: full-track 1.5p; half-track (less than 50% by duration) 0.75p”.

This doesn't, however, mean you are likely to hear the latest Rolling Stones or Kanye West track on music podcasts (legally) in the near future; no deal has been reached with performers, and record labels will have to be sought on a case-by-case basis to get permission to play music by their

respective artists, so the process, for now at least, remains very complicated. The closest we are to hearing any familiar music in podcasts could be down to AIM, the body that represents independent labels in the UK (around 25% of the industry), who have issued a license at 500 pounds (UK) for 6 months. At this date, however, there is no published list of artists, and take-up from the labels AIM represent is believed to have been slow.

It also appears that the cost to be a commercial music podcaster will be too high for 'amateur' podcasters, and this will be an opportunity only for well-funded commercial ventures. •

Where To Find Your Fix

With such an incredible amount of existing podcasts and more being created every day, it's very easy to find yourself at a crossroads, wondering where do you go from here. Yes, you love the 'Richard Vobes Show', and that 'tartanpodcast' is great, but where does one find that elusive podcast on knitting with Tibetan wool for the beginner?

Maybe I've stretched the point further than necessary, but you get my drift. For me, the first thing I do when I want to find a podcast about a specific subject is go to my old friend Google. I've actually done this a few times, the last being when I wanted to find out if there was a podcast about my beloved Ottawa Senators NHL team. For those of you that don't know your NHL from your P45, it's the "National Hockey League". Yeah, baby, I'm talking ice hockey.

Anyway, I was sitting at work, with a podcatcher with no content (which is hard to believe with 68 subscriptions), and pondering the possibility of there being a podcast for the Senators. I quickly fired up Google, typed "ottawa senators podcast" in the box, click on the [Google Search] button and bam, the second returned answer led me where I wanted, 'The Sens Underground' podcast. So within minutes, I had found exactly what I wanted, subscribed and was listening to an episode (which was really rather good). I tried the same for my old favourite West Ham United, but alas nothing was returned of any use. You can take the man out of the Cockney, but you can't take the Cockney out of the man.

So Google is great if you want to find something specific, but what if you are looking for something without a specific name in mind? Apart from Podcast Launchpad, which is more a review site and resource for all things podcast related, there are quite a few podcast directories, the most popular being Podcast Pickle, Podcast Alley, Odeo, Yahoo

and last, but by no means least, iTunes. I tend to steer clear of directories, however, as they don't tell me enough about the podcasts, and I don't want to invest hours pouring over downloads to determine whether I'm going to like something based on a line or two of description that is usually totally over the top and totally unrepresentative. I find that the best way to find the best in podcasts is through word of mouth. Check out the websites for your favourite podcasts and see what the hosts are listening to. Many podcasters list a 'PodRoll' of the shows they listen to on the side of their home page, and chances are, if you like the podcaster's show, you are probably going to like at least some of the podcasts he or she listens to.

Finally, the missing piece in the hunt for podcast crack is you. That's right, you! By now you've probably got a stack of podcasts you listen to and enjoy regularly. Do your bit by helping other people find the podcasts you love. Mention to your family and friends the wonders of podcasting, and give them some help in setting them up if they haven't yet discovered podcasting. Then help them subscribe to some podcasts you think they will enjoy, and within a short period of time, they will then be sending you some ideas of podcasts they think you will enjoy. There you go — everyone's a winner. •

Links

<http://www.vobes.com>
<http://www.tartanpodcast.com>
<http://www.google.com>
<http://www.sensunderground.com>
<http://www.podcastlaunchpad.com>
<http://www.podcastpickle.com>
<http://www.podcastalley.com>
<http://www.odeo.com>
<http://podcast.yahoo.com>

LISTENER

Hate iTunes? Try Juice

Simon Toon demonstrates an alternative podcatcher

A lot of people hate iTunes. I don't know exactly why this is, but a lot of people, especially users of Microsoft Windows, seem to have an insurmountable prejudice against iTunes. If you're one of these people, but you'd still like a free and easy way to subscribe to podcasts, maybe you should check out Juice Receiver.

Juice Receiver, under its previous name iPodder, was more or less the original podcast-client, born from the Applescript written by Adam Curry. It's free, and can be run on Microsoft Windows,

Macintosh and Linux. It can be configured to work with any media player, such as Windows Media Player, Real Player and iTunes. You can set yourself up with Juice Receiver in just three easy steps.



Download and Install Juice Receiver. The website address is <http://juicereceiver.sourceforge.net/>



Visit the website of a podcast to copy the link for the RSS feed. This is often an orange XML button.



Paste the link into Juice.

To illustrate these steps in more detail, I created some videos that show you just how easy it is to do. The videos can be downloaded here:

<http://slamidol.tripod.com/podcatching.html>

You can have any number of subscriptions in Juice Receiver, so with just one click you can check for shows from all your favourite podcasts! You'll see it really makes it a lot quicker and easier than visiting lots of web pages every day and clicking on links to download individual MP3 files. •

Simon Toon is the creator of the Slam Idol poetry podcast.

The Lance Anderson Podcast Experiment

**THE LANCE ANDERSON
PODCAST EXPERIMENT**
"A NEW BREED OF UNDERGROUND HEROES" *DAZED AND CONFUSED* DEC. 2004

STARRING, ALL THE WAY FROM LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
MR. LANCE ANDERSON
PRESENTING HIS "NAIL-BITINGLY OBSSIVE TALE OF THE CHILDHOOD
SWATHEART WHO WAS TOO SHY TO EVEN KISS HIM, WHO WENT ON TO
BECOME ONE OF AMERICA'S BIGGEST ADULT MOVIE STARS."
ALSO PRESENTING IN A TALK SHOW FORMAT...

MR. MARK HUNTER "CHAMPIONING SCOTLAND'S GREAT UNSGINED AND THE FRUIT OF LOCAL INDEPENDENT LABELS' LOINS". ALSO INTRODUCING THE HOTROD CADETS	MESSRS. JON AND ROB A LIVE AND INTERACTIVE TOP TEN. BE PREPARED FOR THE OBSCURE TO THE DOWNRIGHT "BANDWAGON POPULAR"
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CO-HOSTING LIVE AND DIRECT FROM THE AMERICAS,
MR. DAN KLASS
WORLD RENOWNED PODCASTER DAN KLASS WILL BE JOINING US
LIVE VIA VIDEO LINK FROM LOS ANGELES. CO-HOST DAN WILL ALSO TALK ABOUT
HIS YEAR IN ENGLAND AS A CHILD

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LISTENER



Mark Hunter believes that trying out new concepts is what experimenting is all about. And with it comes the chance that things won't always go according to plan.

It was blisteringly cold as the group of podcasters pushed into the small brick structure in the Lancashire back yard that acted as Nigel Paice's home bar and studio. Fortunately Nigel was waiting for them, and the room was cozy and the lighting dim. As Nigel dispensed cold beers, Lance Anderson broke open a bottle of single-malt scotch, pouring generous measures and pressing the squat glasses into the cold fists of the podcasters, podcast listeners and musicians in attendance.

Pods', Mark Hunter of 'the tartanpodcast', and of course Lance Anderson of 'the Verge of the Fringe', without anyone knowing the eventual outcome.

The project was thus: Lance Anderson would fly over from his home in Los Angeles and perform his signature story, 'No, I Didn't Even Kiss Her'. He'd then be joined via live video link-up by the Bitterest Pill's Dan Klass, and together they'd host a podcast panel, which would include Mark Hunter. Mark would introduce live music from the Hotrod Cadets, and finally, Jon and Rob would work through a top 10 list supplied by Lance.

So, what was the eventual outcome? Was the experiment a success? Were any lessons learned? Here's what those involved had to say.

"With a production process that spanned the globe, most of the pre-production meetings for LAPE were conducted via Skype, either late in the evening or very early in the morning," explained LAPE producer Nigel Paice, "the whole production process took several months. It was a true labour of love." Nigel hoped that sponsorship could have been secured to help offset the costs

involved in putting on the live event. "Weeks were spent searching for sponsorship, but we were at least six months ahead of our time. Down the line, companies will be queuing up to attach themselves to a live podcasting event such as LAPE."

Was being ahead of the game a problem for the man whose name was attached to the project?

"The fact that we got ahead of ourselves," said Lance Anderson, "means that we went



© Marisol Martinez

Lance Anderson

As the whisky ran a warming course down throats, jackets were shed and the room got to talking about the evening just experienced, an evening spent in the Rose Theatre, Lancashire, in attendance at the Lance Anderson Podcast Experiment.

Like most experiments, the Lance Anderson Podcast Experiment, or LAPE, was a project tentatively adopted by Glasgow indie band the Hotrod Cadets, Jon & Rob from 'Top of the





ahead of everyone else. Hosting the first event of this kind in the world is something I'm proud we achieved."

Lance is now looking to bring 'Verge of the Fringe' to the Edinburgh Fringe. What about the other participants?

Rob from 'Top of the Pods' was a worried man ahead of time. He explained, "we didn't have our safety net, namely we couldn't edit if anything went wrong. Jon and I are so used to speaking to our listeners with the buffer of a studio between us, and email being the only way we get feedback. Sitting on stage in front of people who were reacting instantly to what we were saying actually turned out to be a

"Hosting the first event of this
KIND in the world is something I'm
PROUD we achieved"

- Lance Anderson

confidence booster." Would they do a live 'Top of the Pods' again? "I'd certainly recommend performing live to any podcaster. We consider ourselves 'newbies' compared to the others on the bill, but we found our feet quickly. Having that immediate response from people and getting to meet fans and fellow podcasters was a real bonus."

Like Rob, the Hotrod Cadets relished the chance to meet fans and some of the podcasters who have been making their music known globally. They performed three acoustic versions of tracks from their album 'Breaking Up' and found a new fan in Lance, who asked the band to provide the new theme music for 'Verge of the Fringe'.

Trying out new concepts is what experimenting is all about. And with it comes the chance that things won't always

go according to plan. Having Dan Klass streaming live via video link from his home in Los Angeles was a disaster waiting to happen. Especially when a faulty ethernet cable had three college IT technicians working for two hours to resolve the lack of an internet connection. An internet connection that was vital to bringing Dan into the experiment. Shortly before the theatre doors opened, the problem was identified and the cable was replaced.

Lance's story 'No, I Didn't Even Kiss Her' was accompanied by a slide-show projected onto a screen behind him, but due to a mix-up, some of the slides were in the wrong order. Lance confessed, "what we really needed was another day to fine-tune all the details. The feedback from the audience was positive, but what they were seeing was really the final tech rehearsal. One extra day would have ironed out all the kinks." But as everyone agreed in Nigel's home bar after the show, experiments don't always go according to plan.

LAPE wasn't without its back-room heroes, the people behind the scenes who kept the wheels turning smoothly. The experiment had great posters to advertise it, which were designed by an artist who goes by the name 'John in the UK'. The event was filmed by 'highblue.co.uk', who were also behind putting up the posters, selling tickets and promoting the experiment. And both Lance and Nigel were helped tirelessly by the partners Marisol and Debbie.

Back in Nigel's home bar cum studio, Lance looked around the room. The warmth of the whisky in his belly matched that of the friendships being formed around him. Along with those who'd taken part in the experiment, either on stage or behind the scenes, was Linda Mills, a listener from Philadelphia who'd flown over especially. At that moment, the realisation that they were part of history, part of the first live podcast experiment struck him. Without missing a beat, Linda raised her glass to the room, "To history!" •

PODCASTER

Building a Podcast Audience

Jack Elias goes in search of an audience

My task is to offer advice on, or at least a look at, how to build an audience for your podcast. I might be a poor choice as author, as I don't really seem to have done all that good a job of it myself, but still, I've seen things which I will try to relate here, and who knows, perhaps I'll make a podcast of it, as I prefer talking over writing

I started podcasting about a year ago, after having listened to Adam Curry's Daily Source Code (www.curry.com) for a while. Adam is known as the "Podfather", and it is generally accepted that he was certainly instrumental in getting some behind-the-scenes technology working that enables all of us to do this and to have subscribers via RSS. And having people subscribe is what we all want. Listeners! Regular listeners! With a regular audience, we can possibly make money. And for some of us, that would be a very good thing.

One thing that Adam Curry does on his show, which has thousands if not tens or hundreds of thousands of listeners, is play audio comments. This is listener feedback that has been recorded and is then played back on a subsequent show. One way I have been successful in gaining a listener or two is to make a pithy, eloquent and oh-so-timely comment, upload it to my web space, and

email a link to it to Mr. Curry. I'm always sure to mention my show's name and website address, spelling it carefully, and invariably afterwards I get a spike in downloads. So that is a method of getting people to check out your show, although not a very good one, because there is no guarantee he will actually play your comment on his next show. This method could be used with other popular shows as well. If there's a podcast you listen

Having people **SUBSCRIBE**
is what we all want. Listeners!

to regularly, and they use audio feedback, you might try it.

There are quite a lot of directories, reviewer sites, forums and more proliferating across the "internets" (there are at least two; ask Mr. Bush). Becoming a member of a podcasting community, such as Podcast Alley (www.podcastalley.com) and Podcast Pickle (www.podcastpickle.com), is another method of cross-promotion. These directories allow you





to list your site, perhaps even link to a promo, and will provide access to your episodes. Merely being listed is not enough. There are tens of thousands of podcasts now, so one must join the community for any hope of being noticed. Register for the forums, read and respond. Provide links to your show in your post's signature. This way, other members who were not aware of you may check you out and subscribe.

Is yours a music podcast? Send a five-minute clip of your show (be sure you mention your website and / or feed address) to Podshow Music Rewind (rewind.podshow.com). Host Marcus Couch is accepting submissions from music podcasters for upcoming shows, which are also played on Sirius Satellite Radio. There are a lot of potential listeners, non-podcast listeners, who might hear your show clip there. And that brings me to an important point about promotion...

Out-of-Frequency Advertising

I was in commercial radio for more than 15 years. We depended on out-of-frequency advertising to gain new listeners (or "increase our cume" in radio parlance, meaning cumulative listeners). The simple premise is this: You can give away concert tickets, cash and prizes of all sorts on your station. But all this does is increase existing listeners' TSL, or "Time Spent Listening". Self-Promotion (that which occurs on your own frequency, or in this case, on your own podcast or website) does nothing to get you any new listeners. It just makes your existing listeners more loyal. So to gain new listeners, you have to go outside your own space. You need newspaper coverage, billboards, ads on TV. This will gain you new listeners who are not already aware of you.

Podcasting is the same. Most of us won't be buying newspaper or TV ads, but we can hook

up with other podcasters and cross-promote ourselves. Do you like a particular podcast? Tell them so, invite them to listen to yours, exchange promos and play them on each other's shows, put links to each other on your respective websites. Leave comments on their site; invite others to leave comments on yours. Most blogging tools now allow comments. Enable them and invite them on your show. You may get some hecklers, but you may find new listeners, too.

The last part of the puzzle would be tracking your subscribers, and this can prove to be difficult. I use Feedburner (www.feedburner.com) for my feed through most aggregators. Feedburner offers some statistics about how many subscribers you have, but my feeling is that it can't be that accurate. My web server logs show hundreds of downloads of each

It's important to note that use of all the featured music first has to be approved by the **ARTIST**, band or management

podcast file, but Feedburner only reports 70 subscribers or so. So people are getting my files either by directly hitting my website or through some other aggregator and not through Feedburner. There are many ways to listen to a podcast. Perhaps, in the not-too-distant future, some of the networks that are starting up will offer better statistics on your subscriber base. Time will tell. I for one would love more detailed information, even if it means changing or re-directing my feed.

Keep at it. Persistence is key. And if you find any great ideas, let us know. •



PODCASTER

© Ante Vekic

deeper and wider

Chuck Tomasi goes deeper

When I made the decision to start podcasting in November 2004, my original thought was, “Hey, I’ve already got an RSS-capable blog. I can add the enclosure tag to the file, record and upload my content, and I’m done.” The second thought was “How do I get more listeners?” and I started sending promos to other shows, visiting topic related forums, and all the other typical things you read about in the podcasting books and articles today. Now I realize that a successful podcast is not all about numbers of listeners, but loyal listeners.

Not too long ago, in my ‘day job’, the mantra of the sales group was ‘deeper and wider’. The idea is to take existing customers and expand their exposure to the services you have to offer. I have found that this same philosophy applies very well to podcasting. Nearly every podcaster wants listener involvement, whether it is email, audio clips; they want feedback and they want contributions. To accomplish this, consider different ways for listeners to interact not only with you but with each other. Build a community around your show. Are you offering a mailing list for listeners to converse with each other? How about a forum? What about a chat room?

Now turn podcasting on its ear; do you offer an audio or video streaming feed while you do your show? WHAT?! Podcasting is all about time-shifted audio. The content gets downloaded and listened to on the listener’s terms. Why should a person be around at a certain time on a certain day to catch your show? The answer is simple: build it and they will come. Some of your fans simply cannot wait for the content to be delivered. Granted, this doesn’t work for edited and polished shows, but a lot of podcasts are ‘live to hard drive’ and cannot afford the time to edit

Yes it’s work. You probably figured out that

podcasting was more work than you expected just after your recorded your first show. The good news is that it doesn’t have to be expensive to make most of these ideas work. Free mail lists are available through Google or Yahoo. Free chat rooms can be done with IRC channels or a low-cost, platform-independent, flash program such as FlashChat (<http://tufat.com>) (\$5US). Forums can be downloaded and configured for free with programs like phpBB2 (<http://www.phpbb.com/downloads.php>). Streaming audio can be a bit more involved. You can do audio streaming for very little cost with a product such as Nicecast (<http://www.rogueamoeba.com>) on the Mac, or Shoutcast for Windows (<http://www.shoutcast.com>).

If you are really brave, you may even want to try a live video stream with a system such as CamStreams (<http://www.camstreams.com>). Your computer encodes the stream and sends it to CamStreams, where they host it to multiple viewers. You can host up to 15 viewers for free or pay a subscription and allow more viewers. This has been very successful for The Richard Vobes Radio Show (<http://www.vobes.com>), who does a webcam stream about five days a week. Yes, some of his listeners watch him podcast. It is quite entertaining.

Implementing one or more of these ideas is a strategic move. If you provide more ways for listeners to get involved, they will. You will build loyalty and perhaps have an offering that similar podcasts in your category don’t have. You should not feel your primary podcasting mission is getting more listeners. Develop a community around your podcast, and you will have more loyal listeners. ●

Chuck Tomasi is the host of Chuckchat Freestyle
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Get Your off Arse

(How to make Award-Winning Sound-Seeing Tours)

Richard Vobes goes out and about

Oh, how I hate that term ‘sound-seeing’, it just sounds like baby speak! I much prefer the description ‘Audio Tour’, but then I am English and as a Brit, something more concise hits the spot. That aside, this month I thought I would give away the secrets to creating a superb podcast while in the great outdoors.

There is nothing better than hearing the ‘real’ sounds of a steam train pulling out of station or the noise of the thronging crowds at a busy Saturday market, complete with hawkers shouting their prices and selling their wares. It draws the listener into another world – the universe of the podcaster.

In the early days of podcasting it was enough to simply step outside with MP3 recorder and cheap lapel mic and walk along the Californian streets and give an attempted descriptive narration of the sights and sounds around. I remember Adam Curry doing just this in one of his Daily Source Codes and the podcasting community going ballistic in response with accolades of how clever he was to take his recorder out into the streets. I gave a wry smile and thought, local radio here in the UK have been doing this and better since their inception way back in the dim distant past of the last century. This was nothing new!

After listening to five of this 45-minute podcast, I was bored, desperately wishing the presenter would move it on and have a purpose. But alas, no. It was the freedom to be able to do just that which seemed to excite our

podcast presenter – but for me as a discerning listener, it became a monotonous slog!

So how do you make an audio tour compelling, informative and listenable all at the same time? This is exactly what I wish to explore here.

The fantastic nature of podcasting means that you do not need to be a professional journalist or a scholarly historian to present a great audio experience for your listener. Just keep to some basic guidelines, and you will have a terrific podcast.

Choosing your subject. What makes a

There is nothing **BETTER** than hearing the ‘real’ sounds of a **STEAM** train

good tour? Listening to the sound of the ocean, a walk across the shingle or a trip to the supermarket? Perhaps something more adventurous, such as exploring the history of a nearby castle, a public house, a famous murder in your town or broadcasting a personal challenge like jumping out of an aircraft and doing your first free fall. At the end of the day, anything can make a good subject. It’s what you do with it and how you approach it that counts. We shall use the



PODCASTER



example of visiting an event in the local area – a village fayre, perhaps.

What does the listener want to hear? This is the key. You are making the podcast for someone to listen to, so it is essential that you stand in their shoes and determine how you can tell the story of the event so they experience the next best thing to actually being there.

Recording the atmosphere of the event is, of course, going to be important: the noises that people make, the sounds of the fun fair, the screams of the girls as they plummet in the big dipper and the music and clatter of the Morris Dancers as they dance and jangle their bells and smash their sticks together in gay abandon.

Telling the story. You will probably want to inform the listener a little about the event, so a brief description of where you are and the sights you can see in general terms at the start are essential. Try to describe the scene as visually as you can. What colours are the stalls, what is the mood of the place? How does the weather affect the situation and the villagers? What is the age range of the people attending? ...and give us an example of what they are dressed in. Remember, with the global nature of podcasting, you are describing people who may be very different from those who are listening.

Talk to people! There is nothing better to improve the audio tour than to actually point the microphone in someone's face and get them to speak. New voices wake the listener and make them listen more intently. So walk up to people with all the confidence of a BBC reporter and introduce yourself, telling them what you are doing and ask them an open-ended question.

There was a time when the early podcasters, almost embarrassed at what they were doing, would try to engage people in conversation

and secretly record it using a lapel microphone tucked away behind a shirt collar or jacket pocket. For one thing, this is just plain bad form and wrong. To record someone without their knowledge is in my book really out of order, especially if you intend to broadcast it (regardless of whether it's in a podcast with only 20 listeners). Secondly, the recording quality is just plain dreadful and not worth the effort – or lack of effort!

People on the whole are more than happy to talk to someone who looks like they know what they are doing. Also, they are far more

New voices wake the **LISTENER**
and make them listen more intently

receptive to giving a radio interview than talking with a TV crew.

Poke the microphone in their face! Whatever type of microphone you have, you will need to get it close to the subject. If there is a lot of background noise, then this is even more important. I personally monitor the recordings all the way through with a pair of lightweight headphones. I believe this is essential, because very often the human ear doesn't hear (or rather chooses not to hear) a lot of the really annoying and loud background sounds which can render the interview next to useless.

Make sure the recorder is actually recording. I still occasionally make this mistake and have spent ten minutes getting the deep and intimate truth out of someone, thanked them profusely and moved away gleefully in the knowledge that I have the recording of the century, only to discover to my chagrin that I forgot to turn the bloody recorder on!

Once your interview is over, I try whenever possible to give them a card with the





website address so they can access the podcast and hear themselves. It's just a common courtesy, seeing as they are giving you content for your show free of charge, and in addition, people love to hear themselves on the radio, so they could become a new listener!

When there is a lull everywhere you go, there are times when the event is at a low point and not a lot is happening. In these cases just stop and go have a cup of tea. Have a break from recording and talking. It's very easy to get into a habit of recording for the sake of recording. Many of us podcasters love the sound of our

Once your INTERVIEW is over, I try whenever possible to give them a card with the website address on it

own voice and can jabber on incessantly. It can become extremely dull to the listener, who may use that magic fast forward button. So switch off and recharge your mental batteries. Besides, the tea lady may be the perfect person to interview to give a different perspective on the proceedings.

Final thoughts and equipment required. When finished, don't forget to give a roundup of the event and your impression and feelings. Ending on a personal note is always nice.

Remember, you don't have to rely on your great presenter skills there and then. You can just gather all the source material and bring it back to the computer for editing later. You may want to do some research and add a voice-over track and perhaps some musical interludes later on to make it sound even more professional.

So what should you take with you out in to

the field? Well, a portable recorder that can capture the best audio quality you can afford is ideal. The Edirol that was reviewed in Issue 1 of Podcast User Magazine is an example of an excellent piece of kit. Some of the smaller and cheaper MP3 players that say they record are not as good as perhaps the salesman tells you they are.

A microphone is essential. Many people still record with the cheap and nasty onboard mics. They really are only suitable for dictation purposes and will not give a rounded and quality sound. I use a AKG reporter's microphone with wind shield. It's big and says what I am here to make: A Recording.

Lapel microphones are OK, not ideal, but you can get some reasonable recording with them outside. But again, they will need to be insulated from the wind, and make sure you get this very close to your subject.

A pair of headphones to monitor is a good idea. You can hear what is actually being recorded and can adjust the microphone position and volume accordingly. More importantly, you can hear if the wind is blowing and distorting everything, which it so easily can. Honestly, you are blind without a pair of headphones. Also, it means you can check back that you have actually recorded something in the first place!

Batteries, a camera and a friend to go along with you for moral support and to carry everything and to buy you ice creams, makes the outing just that little more fun! •



Richard Vobes is the most prolific podcaster in the UK. He produces and presents the Richard Vobes Radio Show. Richard won the Sound Seeing Tour Award for the best audio tour in the Podcast Awards 2005

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REVIEW|

Samson C01

Condenser Microphone

Chris Matson

I had always heard that if you can only afford to get one piece of ‘pro’ podcasting equipment, you should get a decent microphone, so it was with great anticipation that I ordered my Samson C01 condenser mic last autumn. A week later the package arrived. The average retail price in the US is still about \$70, which is great for an entry-level mic if you’re budget-conscious like me.

Well protected inside a rigid plastic case with foam padding on the inside, the ‘made-in-China’ C01 first gave me the impression of how heavy it was. At 2 lbs (900 grams), the 7 inch (18cm) long mic was also quite chunky. Inside the box was also a swivel stand mount (US standard 5/8” thread with an adapter for European mic stands). In other reviews, they say the C01 is “built like a brick”, which it certainly feels like.

At this time I didn’t purchase the optional shock mount (street price, approx. US\$30), but with its brushed metal exterior it looks pretty sturdy without it. A heavy-gauge mesh grill protects the capsule, with its 3/4” (19mm) diaphragm. Connected by a



Having had six months to use it now, I’m VERY HAPPY with this ‘solid’ performer

standard gold-plated XLR connector, this mic features a very bright blue LED phantom power indicator, which some people say is too bright, but I use it to correctly align the mic with my pop filter. There are no other

buttons or controls. The slim manual comes in four languages (English, French, German and Spanish) with basic instructions. Annoyingly, there were inconsistencies in the technical specs section (incorrect measurements and badly converted units – the English specs said the mic was 62cm long, for example!).

There is a USB version of this microphone available from Samson, too (the C01U, with a USB connection directly into your PC or Mac and a software pre-amp that includes input level meter, volume control, high-pass filter





and phase switch).

Having never used a condenser mic before, I was surprised at how sensitive it is. In my early test recordings, it picked up every single breath and lip-smack. Experimenting with the cardioid pickup pattern, I was soon able to position the mic so that it no longer picked up the sounds of my keyboard or mouse clicks. And with careful adjustment of the mixer controls and speakers, I could set it up to eliminate feedback from my ‘monitor speakers’. Other models, like the C03, have a switchable pickup pattern, but for basic podcasting, this does the job.

The C01 is capable of recording quite loud sounds (maximum SPL handling is 136dB), and the frequency response is certainly good enough for the vocal work that I’ll be doing with it (response is quoted at 40Hz to 18kHz).

Having had six months to use it now, I’m very happy with this ‘solid’ performer. It does its job well, is easy to set up and use and feels like it will last a long time. For anyone who is new to podcasting, with a limited budget, who needs a good basic condenser mic, I’d say try the Samson C01. •

Chris Matson is a British-born, self-described “IT guy” who lives in Montana and is an active member of the Richard Vobes Radio Show forums. Chris’s podcasts can be found at
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Podcasting Hacks

By Jack Herrington. Foreword by Dan Gillmor

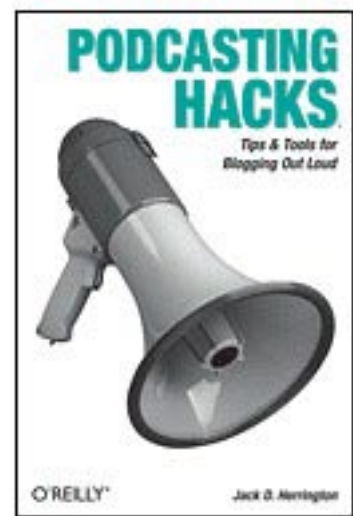
James Hastell

Don’t be put off by the title ‘hacks’, it’s an Americanism that has no relation to breaking into computer systems but rather is used to describe a quick and easy solution to a problem.

This is a definite ‘how-to’ book that can be read from cover to cover or dipped into for reference. The book is divided for two main audiences; there is a chapter for tuning into podcasts, but most of the book is for podcasters, with information on starting out, quality sound, interviewing, blogging, publicity, basic editing and advanced audio. If you are considering breaking in to podcasting or just want to know what’s involved, then this is the book for you.

One aspect is prominent: it covers both PC and Mac, which will be good news for many and makes this a well-rounded book indeed. The book is well researched and presented in a format that is easy to understand. The author has taken great care to cover all the angles according to the size of your wallet, showing how to record and edit using free software such as Audacity, the difference between a condenser microphone and dynamic microphone and even some Perl scripts to make your own autocue (you may never use it, but it’s there!).

As for technical readability, if you can read a newspaper, you can read this book. The conventions used are clear and simple, the subjects are covered in great depth and they include many things that might not have occurred to you at first. There is also an element of humour from the author, who makes you feel as if you’re being talked to, rather than talked at. In summary, *Podcasting Hacks* is a very comprehensive, enjoyable read that makes you want to get up and do it. Published by O’Reilly Price £11.55 (Amazon): USA \$24.95. •





Geoff Tinnion

Podcasting, for me, has the edge over any state or commercial attempt to present a subject that is an especially heart-felt one. Podcasters also have the edge because they are far more accessible to the subjects and to the listeners than broadcast journalists are. Podcasters 'take' the opportunity to present a subject dear to their hearts, whereas the 'day-jobber' journalist often simply 'gets' the opportunity. The podcasters implicitly have the advantage in my opinion because they want to talk about a subject. No one tells them that they must.

We as listeners are very lucky, too. We can get to know the presenters very well and judge them more easily. This accessibility gives us many advantages.

1. You get a better feel for how they tick.
2. You can tell if they are genuine.

Using the extreme examples from my own experience, I have found that getting to know a podcaster can go in two directions: I have avoided a podcaster because I do not share that person's egotistical goals, or I am totally in awe of what that person stands for.

My mate Podcast Paul is one fine example of the latter type of podcaster. Paul wrote in Issue 2 of **Podcast User Magazine** that he (in my own lingo) felt that the BBC would/could/will do a better job than he of explaining the issues surrounding the plight of those in Swaziland. Well, I disagree. It means more to me that someone went out there on their own personal mission rather than on an order from the office. His every heart-felt recording communicated his feelings more than any trained official or presenter could do. To me, a podcaster of this kind has an edge on any 'day-job' broadcaster.

Personally, I am glad to know that Paul's approach is not uncommon. To me it feels very genuine and so easy to connect with. Please let me know of more examples, and I will be sure to promote them. •

Rip-Off Radio

Geoff Tinnion

Are you short of ideas for your show at the moment or would like to try out something new? Well, maybe it's time to rip off someone! Thankfully, we at **Podcast User Magazine** are going to make it easy for you. Starting in the next issue, we will publish tips that you can try out without any feeling of guilt or fear of reprisal (from us, at least). Just look out for the little blue tip bars. Now, all we ask is that you give us the opportunity to hear and comment on the end result; think of all that lovely publicity you will get! If you have an idea or tip that you would like to get published, we'd also like to hear from you. Please send all contributions to me at the email address below.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Geoff Tinnion can be contacted at geoff.tinnion@podcastusermagazine.com

Business Models (Feedback)

The following two responses were received after publication of Paul Pinfield's Podcasting Business Models article in Issue 2 of **Podcast User Magazine** (pages 29 – 32).

I recognise the issues you raise in the article – how to monetize what is most likely to remain as free content. You quite rightly identified the two sides of the publisher's coin – advertising and subscriptions. Any publisher of content creates that content with an audience and advertiser in mind. Although podcasting is a new technology and it offers low cost global distribution it does not, in my view, alter the fundamentals of the business proposition. Who is the customer and what are they prepared to pay for?

So – I believe your models one (advertising) and two (subscriptions) are simply the classic 'publishing' model. What they have in common is original content that builds an audience which generates revenue from advertising only (OK – sponsorships as well – but that's advertising too) or if you have premium content (or your name is Ricky Gervais) you can charge a subscription for.

Model three – the free model to build a listener base – is not a business model really. It is an exit strategy with fingers crossed in the short term. However, I can't really knock it – that's how Google started.

I would suggest that in addition to the 'publisher' model there are at least two other viable business models:

The 'Producer' model – creating podcast content for paying customers whether for internal corporate communications or external marketing and PR.

The 'Aggregator' model – collecting podcast content then monetizing it in some way by adding value or services – e.g., by focusing on a specific market and filtering the quality of the content (e.g. StreetIQ.com in the financial sector – they are a publisher too) or by brokering ads e.g. Fruitcast.com.

In a piece of primary market research I commissioned on behalf of a client we asked: "Would your organisation outsource podcast content production?" 27% said 'yes' and another 58% said 'yes, depending on content'. Only 15% said 'no'. It appears most companies would prefer to outsource rather than DIY.

The missing link to me on monetizing podcast content – either for individual producers or more interestingly for aggregators – is a mechanism for collecting lots of small amounts – say per download. Would I begrudge paying 10p or more for Podcast User? Certainly not if it was easy and seamless. How do iTunes make any money out of their 20,000+ podcasts?

If anyone knows how I'd like to be the first to know.

Kind regards

— Phil Shankland



There has been a lot of talk about ‘monetizing’ of podcasts lately. This is a hideous word that really took hold about ten years ago, when it was just beginning to dawn on businessmen and entrepreneurs that the emerging World Wide Web might just go on to become a whole new marketplace. The theory was that if you could innovate faster than everyone else, or come up with a big idea (always called a ‘proposition’) and get it off the ground, then the money would follow, and many fingers got burned investing in these ‘blue sky’ ideas during the internet gold rush of the late 90s. There were some success stories naturally, and the big ones are still making money, but mostly these were hastily conceived business ventures which acquired venture capitalist cash and operated, for however short a time, as a ‘proper’ business.

There are some businesses appearing in the podcast arena now of course. The most well known being Adam Curry’s Podshow, and like those before it this company has venture capital funding. But for the most part, when podcasters use the term ‘monetizing’ they are not thinking in terms of using a new idea or innovation to create an entirely new business, they are simply trying to find a way to generate revenue from their own activity. Some appear desperate to do so, and I do wonder why that is.

I don’t know about you, but for the most part I have trouble seeing individual podcasts in these terms, and if podcasters are in it for the money I believe they are also in for disappointment in the long term. In a world where everything else is free, it is going to take something really special to persuade people to part with money for it. It is early days, but the ‘Ricky Gervais podcast’ (distributed by The Guardian newspaper in London) was very successful as a free download, and indications are that people are willing to pay to continue to receive it. Ricky Gervais clearly has something of value to offer.

But it is dangerous to presume that the success of the ‘Ricky Gervais podcast’ proves that people will pay for such content in large numbers. Perhaps he is successful simply because he is (just about) the only podcast that can be paid for right now. What will happen when there are 100, 1000, or 1,000,000 entertainment podcasts all asking for your money?

Last year I came up with the ‘faith, hope and charity’ analogy when thinking about making money from podcasts. ‘Faith’ represents the paid podcast –where the podcaster has absolute faith in their ability to receive money from their listeners. No pay, no play. ‘Charity’ is the tip jar option, where listeners are invited to contribute in the form of a donation, but there is no expectation of regular income. Interestingly, this mechanism has recently been successfully adapted by Comedy 365 as an invitation to ‘buy them a pint of Guinness’ – which is not only in keeping with the show, it also puts the amount being requested into a real world context. Finally ‘Hope’ is the middle ground, and I likened this to the ‘shareware’ funding model for software. This is a mechanism that is based on trust. A little more than a request to contribute, but without an absolute requirement to do so.

Other options will evolve. Some podcasts are already taking advertising, but having followed with interest various attempts to generate income from podcasts over the last year, I have to conclude that for the most part, podcasters will be better off putting their energy into entertaining us for their own enjoyment. •

— Adrian Pegg

Mark presents the world famous
tartanpodcast

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My name is Mark Hunter and I'm a Podshow basher. I realise it's not big, it's not particularly clever and it isn't much of a sport. In fact, bashing Podshow is like shooting a very large, slow-moving fish swimming in a small barrel.

Admittedly, Podshow sometimes make it easy to bash them. Yes, they're large and they move slowly, but they also manage to give themselves one black eye after another: The un-Expo, where they inexplicably snubbed the Portable Media Expo and Podcast Conference. The Quit Your Day Job campaign, which could be understood to imply that podcasters have low-paying, crappy little jobs they can't wait to quit. And the press release announcing the Podshow Distribution Network. That was a cracker. "So, where do we go to see this new network?" people asked after reading the press release. No web address was supplied. "Does it really exist?" people wanted to know. Lovers of Libsyn, the podcast hosting and distribution company, cried foul play at the same press release, interpreting some of the comments to be derogatory against Libsyn.

The other morning, it came to me that, while Podshow is a big, slow-moving fish in a small barrel, it also has a passionate, quick-thinking engine room. And while we may focus on its outward appearance, we may be wary of CEO and self-proclaimed 'serial entrepreneur' Ron Bloom and we may listen intently to Adam Curry's Daily Source Code for disingenuousness, let's instead focus on the people you neither see nor hear.

What about the team that created the Podsafe Music Network?

The vision was to have a space where independent bands and podcasters could come together. Podcasters play their music, the bands get feedback and now they can make their music available to purchase. The vision is now a reality. We have an effective website where we can go and search for music based on influence, genre or geography. While I admit to knowing nothing about building web databases, even I can see the team behind the PMN are talented people, producing a massively successful site used by thousands of podcasters and independent bands and artists on a daily basis.

And that brings us to the unseen Podshow Distribution Network. Well, when I say unseen, that's not strictly true. It's unseen by most of us. But according to the people who have seen it – and yes, it does exist – it is incredible. The team of eight who have been bunkered down, working on the PDN have, it would seem, done an amazing job, creating something that could change the way listeners interact with podcasts.

So, here I am wondering what this dedicated team of developers thinks when they hear that people doubt their hard work has produced results. Not being a developer myself and not knowing the team personally, I find it hard to speculate on their feelings, but I can try and put myself in their shoes. And doing so makes me feel that, while Podshow as a company is easy to bash, mock and sneer at, the heart of the company is made up of honest, hardworking, passionate people who truly desire better things for podcasters. In fact, describing them as honest, hardworking and passionate makes them sound like most of the people they're developing the PDN for: podcasters. Is it their fault that their day job is working for Podshow? No, it's just their day job, and they're neither the voice nor face of the company.

And for me that means I'm going to be easing off on the Podshow bashing. •



MUSIC

Streaming Live Audio to the Masses!

Internet radio services such as Shoutcast have been around for a few years. I still remember trying to broadcast myself and a few friends over my 33k modem and failing miserably just over two years ago. With the popularity of podcasts on the increase it now seems that, despite time-shifting of content being a major factor for many listeners, a lot of podcasters are ready to try their hand at streaming their shows live.

Recently Lance Heath of the Digital Experience podcast decided to take the concept of streaming a live show one step further with 'An Evening with Whitney Steele'. Being a music podcaster, I thought it would be interesting to sit down with him (virtually, of course) and find out more about it.

Phil Coyne: How did the session come about?

Lance Heath: I had taken on promoting Whitney's music through my show and other areas for quite a while. Her CD was featured on my show a number of times and was a popular prize during the giveaway on show 50.

I had talked with Whitney about several avenues to promote her music through podcasting and suggested a live show all about her and the stories behind the songs. She was excited about being able to tell more about her as well as show her talent of performing live. By the time the show was to happen she had two new songs, and we featured them on the show.

PC: What was the response from your listeners when you announced the session?

LH: Everyone was amazed and delighted that they would be able to hear her perform live and talk about her experiences making the CD. They couldn't wait to hear more about how I had put it together and got her to be on the show. I had also received several questions to ask her through email.

Lots of podcasters such as CC Chapman, all the tech podcasts and Friends in Tech helped promote the show as well, which was a big help and naturally brought in some more listeners.

Podcasting and independent
ARTISTS have bonded to become a
huge driving **FORCE** for musicians

Some were not able to listen that night or had some problems getting the stream, and this is another reason why podcasting is so popular. If listeners were not able to be there for the live show, they wouldn't miss out because the show was recorded and put up the following week for download. The podcast edition of the show has seen a



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greater popularity because people want on-demand entertainment, and podcasting facilitates the need and desire for it.

PC: How did it go on the night? Any unexpected problems?

LH: I've performed in a few bands in the past and worked on sound projects for other bands as well as stage shows and mobile audio entertainment for

Shoutcast: Old men of audio many years, so to think that there won't be any unexpected problems is just fooling yourself.

Recording and producing the show was easy. One of the things that made it smooth on the end of sending the audio stream to the servers was Rogue Amoeba's sponsoring part of the show by offering their product NiceCast to take care of all of that.

There were a few unexpected problems with the servers that were supplying the feed to the listeners. Some found the stream inaccessible, while others had no problems. In talking with the company that hosted the stream, they are unsure why this problem occurred.

On the positive side, Whitney is a wonderful person to work with. She was so at ease and open during the interview that it was a wonderful experience for both of us.

PC: Do you see a future for podcasters working with musicians to broadcast exclusive sessions?

LH: Absolutely. Podcasting and independent artists have bonded to become a huge driving force for musicians to broaden their exposure to more people than would have been possible a year ago. I myself had no idea how much great music was out there from independent artists until I started my show.



Most independent musicians pour a lot of blood, sweat, tears and their own dollars into recording their music and producing a CD, and I think they deserve the attention that podcasters are bringing to their art. One of the best things about the relationship between independent artists and podcasters is that the musicians are accessible for

special sessions and events that wouldn't be possible otherwise. The podcaster can then deliver the real story behind the band or artist and the music they create.

PC: Anything else special coming up on your show?

LH: Specials such as the one I did with Whitney don't have to be limited to musicians. It can be visual art as well, though that might include other obstacles still to overcome. Keep a look out for more special events with up-and-coming visual and audio artists on my show in the future. It's going to be a great year. •

Lance can be contacted via email at digitalxp@gmail.com or through his website at <http://digitalexperiencepodcast.com>



Phil Coyne: Host of the Bitjobs for the Masses! podcast

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BUSINESS

Chris Skinner is a radio producer who has a dream of making a sitcom about a cricket team made up of techno DJ's, with David Hasselhoff as the lead. One of the 1st British Podcasters, Chris's show Simulacrum has won a worldwide audience. Chris has recently grown an ear.

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The laws of podcasting, or rather lack of, are going to be increasingly controversial as audiences grow, thus listeners must challenge themselves not to take all things at face value

The worldwide, regulation-free nature of podcasting has seen dynamic, innovative programming developing that often puts established broadcasters to shame. But whilst this creative explosion has been great for the listener, it isn't entirely fair to condemn traditional programmers.

Unlike mere podcasters, radio and TV networks are bound by strict laws, rules and guidelines relevant to the nation from which they broadcast. These are often extremely prohibitive so as groups of people (often minorities, children or those with public reputations) are protected, and in many cases this is quite right, too.

Podcasting, a great example of 'narrowcasting', has fewer listeners to worry about, and with their 'explicit' tags and small promotional budgets, podcasts will generally only be heard by an audience that knows exactly what to expect. A show doesn't have to worry about what type of listener could be there in the morning, for example, and this is what has allowed it to do more things. If an American podcaster breaks the rules for the regulatory body for British television and radio, even though the programme can be heard by Brits, it is of no concern to the producer, and this also is quite right, too.

Potty-mouthed comedians, religious groups and those with political agendas are reaching increasingly large audiences at the moment and the blatant lack of regulation for these shows could become a major talking point.

Many politicians have taken advantage of podcasting to spread the message, and charities have, too. Greenpeace, for example, use podcasting in hope of raising campaign awareness. Much of this narrowcast podcasting, however, is quite uninspirational stuff: the London Labour party merely broadcasts unchallenging, bland interviews with local MPs, and George Bush's podcast is another way to access his existing weekly state radio address. But some projects, such as the newly launched Tory Radio (<http://www.toryradio.com> run by an activist from the British Conservative party) will aim to be an influential voice from within the party in a way not previously possible. It could end up just being a mouthpiece for the party leadership, but it has the potential to be a thorn in the side of spin doctors and give those of a similar political persuasion a clearer idea of what happens in Westminster.

Whilst most listeners will know exactly what to expect, groups could put messages over in more sinister ways – what's stopping party activists setting up, say, a weekly 'satirical' show, with a more subtle agenda? Well, in truth, nothing.

We could get 'Angry Andy' the shock jock with an anti-drugs view, strong stance on immigration and national identity and support of 'freedom of speech' – these are all British National Party beliefs though, and would people be so keen to listen if they knew he was funded by them? And what about 'Local Sue' who is opposed to planned wind farms proposed in her area; what's stopping this being nothing more than the mouthpiece of the British Nuclear Energy Society?

Regulation would be impractical, and almost impossible to enforce on an international scale (and I confess there's a good chance that my own podcast would suffer), but we have to be more conscientious and objective than ever before, and that will be increasingly difficult. •

The Revolution Has Begun

Caviar or Dog? We decide

There is only one way to find out. So, fix yourself a drink and prepare to be enlightened as Janet, Grant, Paul and Paul guide you through this month's pick of the good, the bad and the ugly...



Janet Parkinson is better known as GeekgirlUK. Along with her husband, Paul, she presents the Flashing12 podcast. There are some who think that Janet generally gets the better of Paul.

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Global Voices

Podcast User Magazine is regularly downloaded in nearly 80 countries, so we thought we'd better hit the road and visit some of those countries, at least metaphorically. Watching the progress of podcasting globally is a big job, but Brazil's an interesting start since it's a country that's determined to be noticed.

Welcome Brazil!

Brazil was recently declared the 'Open Source Nation' by Gilberto Gil, the country's Minister of Culture. A vocal supporter of Creative Commons and a former chart-topper himself, Gil is reported as saying, "A world opened up by communications cannot remain closed up in a feudal vision of property. No country, not the US, not Europe, can stand in the way of it. It is a global trend. It's part of the very process of civilisation. It's the semantic abundance of the modern world, of the postmodern world – and there's no use resisting it".

With Brazilian music running through his veins, this Open Source spirit (he has even released some of his own songs under the Creative Commons License allowing anyone to alter these tunes as they wish) and true free-thinking mind, Gil is determined to bring the heart and soul of Brazil and its music to the rest of world. He has thrown down the gauntlet.

So where does podcasting fit in to this?

It's really very simple: Brazil's determination to stand up and be noticed has enabled her people to start podcasting and push their culture out to the rest of the world. With music being such a dominant feature of Brazil's past, present and future, it is not surprising to discover that of the handful of Brazilian podcasts out there, nearly all of them focus on music. What is most interesting is that most of the Brazilian podcasts I've come across are presented in English. Keep your ears to the ground, because I think we'll be hearing a lot more of them from now on.



CAVIAR	◆◆◆◆◆
LOBSTER TAILS	◆◆◆◆◆
FISH AND CHIPS	◆◆◆◆
WINKLES	◆◆
DOG FISH	◆
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PODCAST REVIEWS



Music from Brazil – www.buenaonda.com.br/mfb

For a podcast that started only in February '06, 'Buenaonda' is brave and ambitious in its format.

Producing the same podcast in three different versions (English, Spanish and Portuguese) the interviewees and presenters speak in each language for each podcast. These are then made available on three different RSS feeds. Add a multilingual website to the mix and you realise they have quite a challenge on their hands. Their dedication is to be applauded.

Each month they intend to introduce a different musician, and their first show gives a good insight into Brazilian music and culture. Now that's what I call multicultural! As a first show I'm quite impressed. I hope they can keep it up.

FISH AND CHIPS



Avolta Jr – Brazilian Rare Grooves – www.thepodcasters.com

Claiming to be the world's first Brazilian music podcast, this weekly show brings you a mix of Bossa Nova, Samba Soul and other tracks from the 1950s to the 1980s. This show lets the music do the talking, so don't expect a conversational style, but the quantity and quality of the music will soon get you in the swing!

LOBSTER TAILS



BossaNova.fm – blog.bossanova.fm and bossanova.fm

This one completely fooled me. Extremely well produced and presented in English, a professional site (with video clips of musicians, too) to back it up and uber-cool Bossa Nova Brazilian music, this podcast instantly hooked me. Then I discovered that its creator, Claudio, is actually a Chilean living in Madrid! But oh, well.... Who cares where you're based these days? It's as Brazilian as you'll get!

CAVIAR



Next month I'm lifting the covers of Dutch podcasting, so all you 'Nederlandse mensen' send me your top picks, snippets of news, information and gossip. I'm on my way....





Grant Mason is a professionally self-conscious Scot, if that were possible. However, he still manages to produce the fabulous Three From Leith podcast

<http://www.threefromleith.com>
grant.mason@podcastusermagazine.com

Extra Super Action Show

– <http://www.extrasuperactionshow.com/index.html>

As the strangely mild Scottish winter approaches its end, a young man's thoughts should turn to summer. Yet I'm finding it difficult to blow away the mental dust that's settled during hibernation. My entire system has degenerated into a sluggish, slothful mess. I need to be lifted out and plopped back into high-revving, here-comes-the-summer mode; I need a podcast that provides the aural equivalent of a heavy Doc Martin delivered with some accuracy to my nether regions to provide the kick-start. And so it is with great gladness that I navigate through my iRiver to the Extra Super Action Show, hosted by the genius that is 'Big Mike'.

ESAS (Extra Super Action Show) is a short but stunningly crafted slice of sledgehammer podcasting, with possibly the highest production values of any podcast I've ever heard. Short narratives by Big Mike (ace drummer and musician) are delivered in his trademark deep, slow vocal style which oozes charm and charisma; yet the biting wit, savage Rottweil-esque snarl and acid-drenched comments are always there, ready to burst through at any moment. Then we're assaulted by the music: heart-pounding, brash, bowel-moving, spittle-covered yet ultimately astounding punk, usually preceded by a few bon-mots from his teenage sage daughter.

I'm not usually a fan of punk, but the music just fits the show like a safety-pin through the nose. Glorious rabble-rousing stuff, yet still capable of pulling you up short with unexpected surprises like Country & Western star Merle Haggard being played. Never predictable, never dull, it really does live up to its extra-super-action moniker. All hail to Big Mike, the God of short, sharp shocks.



Top Of The Pods – www.topofthepods.com

Birds do it. Bees do it. Even educated fleas do it. But never, ever let Rob hear you suggest that women fart. It makes him feel ill to know that they could possibly do something so sulphurously vile, which is why co-host Jon will keep talking about it whilst they count their way down through a top ten list in the hilarious and universally loved Top Of The Pods. The premise is simple -- these two Peterborough pals take a top ten list of their own devising or one sent in by a listener and talk through it in a top ten countdown. Topics range from the ordinary (crisp flavours) to the technological (keyboard shortcuts) to the downright weird (lost plotlines for Back



PODCAST REVIEWS



to the Future movies). Rob plays the straight man, assiduously taking notes to remind him of where he'll have to bleep out the rude words uttered by Jon, who loves to swear and sneak in as many double-entendres as he can, in between guffawing at Rob's scatty pronouncements ("isn't Tel Aviv in Spain?" or "I wonder if we have any deaf listeners to Top Of The Pods?"). Either Rob is terminally bewildered or there really is a need for better education in the UK. Look out, too, for their good automatic weapon-wielding buddies from the US of A, Hank and Eugene, or the Tourettes Monks, who make occasional forays into their shows.

The guys know that building a good rapport with their audience is key to their success, so as well as encouraging listener list submissions they're branching out into Skype calling to foster even greater audience participation. One look at the community that's growing on their comments pages (as well as their subscriber figures) shows just how well this is working. But key to their success is the fact that they're just plain funny; the humour is never forced, and it is completely spontaneous, resulting from a comment or an aside that takes on a life of its own. They appeal to all ages, and the show is deliberately kept family-friendly -- just listen to the number of teenage audio comments they're getting these days.

Top show – always in my own personal Top Ten and guaranteed to have me making a fool of myself on the bus to work most days as I try to suppress the laughter and fail.



CAVIAR

Old Wave Radio – New 80s Music – <http://new80s.blogspot.com/>

Were you a teenager in the 80s? Do you hanker back to the age of the New Romantics, A Flock Of Seagulls, lip gloss, eyeliner, luminous pop-socks, Frankie Says t-shirts and big hair? Well, now you can relive 'the best of the sound of the late 70s and 80s, from legendary bands of the future', as Danny The K's strapline promises. Though new shows are fairly infrequent, they're always more than worth the wait. Podcaster Dan ('The Bitterest Pill') Klass has hit the magical nostalgia button and it's an aural treat; given the current love affair with those new-80s popsters such as the Killers and their ilk, he's onto a sure-fire winner.

Hang on for this rollercoaster ride through the twisting and uncannily familiar sounds of bands who drip with talent and have that knack of sounding modern yet hauntingly retro.





Music stores must be doing a roaring trade in second-hand 80s synths and guitar effects pedals from the evidence here. I feel like a teenager again, albeit one with far more appreciation of the musical arts. Do yourselves a favour and roll back the years with Danny. You'll be glad you did. Just try to avoid heading for the eyeliner on your next trip to Tesco's lads, eh?

CAVIAR



Paul Nicholls is our editor. He is a lawyer and the brains behind the Podcast Paul and Jukepod Jury podcasts. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of music. Sadly it's the 80's...

<http://www.podcastpaul.com>

<http://jukepodjury.blogspot.com>

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There are loads of different types of podcast out there, bouncing around the myriad fat pipes. There aren't that many that are really... unique. I've been listening to three shows that are definitely different. I love the quirkiness of different, and the following three shows are definitely worth a listen.

Dissident Vox – www.dissidentvox.com

This has to be one of my favourite all-time podcasts. I was gutted when John announced he wouldn't be podcasting from late last year and elated when I found a new episode pop back up. John Buckley, the presenter, is a real enigma, yet he's a fascinating and genuine family bloke who deeply cares for 'Mrs Vox' and his subject matter at hand. John may not thank me for pigeon-holing him as a 'conspiratorist' and he'd be right; I can't pigeon-hole John but I can, after a fashion, tell you about his show.

John must spend every waking moment of his life researching and considering every aspect of politics as he always has something to say about the media or world events that really makes you think. This isn't a light-hearted show — you need a serious head on, but you will be challenged and will have a deep respect whether or not you agree with John because of the depth of his knowledge and time committed to research. John has a natural ability to keep your attention with his serious, articulate slant on politics.

Definitely something different, but deeply refreshing and incredibly addictive. Look out for the amazing 'day in the life of a year' videocast.

CAVIAR



PODCAST REVIEWS



The Word Nerds – www.thewordnerds.org

The English language fascinates me; it is, after all, my tool of the trade.

Dave Shepherd, Howard Shepherd and Howard Chang chew the fat each week about all things language and do so in a knowledgeable, non-patronizing, friendly and educational way. Messrs Dave and Howard(s) take a surgeon’s knife to the Oxford English Dictionary and explore the meaning, root and history behind words, language, nuances, mannerisms and everything English (and occasionally German and Chinese).

If you’re a lover of the English language, this really is a must listen.



The Naked Scientist

– http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/Shows/streaming_media.htm

This is a great show presented, in the main, by Dr Chris Smith and featuring a number of other guests, including the exceptionally Yummy Dr Helen Hendry. This easily accessible BBC show explores science in a fun way with a bunch of very, very clever people. You do feel drawn into the ‘team’ of folks. You will come away from listening to an episode with an encyclopaedic knowledge of some description but will have enjoyed the ride.

More PhDs than you can shake your stick at, but not in any way stuffy, and extremely well produced to boot.

I never enjoyed or understood science at school. I can see this show as a real boost for those in the same boat, as you can’t help but enjoy the experience.



30 With Thom – <http://30withthom.blogspot.com>

When it comes to it, most podcasts are simply a selection of music and some chat. So, unless a podcast has a particular aim, the show lives or dies on the strength of the host.

However, every so often a podcast surfaces which offers both a great host and more than just music. ‘30 With Thom’ is





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just such a podcast. The host, Thom Turner, has a style that is devoid of arrogance and bombast. Listening to him is like having a relationship with someone who just wants to tell you about the great music that he has discovered. He concentrates mainly on guitar-based music, so if that is your bag, you should check him out.

So, what else does the show offer? Well, how many other shows allow you to hear from the local blacksmith? Sounds odd, but these conversations really work. Thom and Duke get together to chat about some humorous topic or other that generally involves someone suffering a humiliation or some bizarre infliction of pain.

In addition to Duke and the music, Thom has taken to running a series of games on the show that variously involve guessing the meaning of obscure words and guessing the untrue statement from a choice of three. These are a nice touch.

With only four shows under his belt, Thom has a show that is still developing. However, this is a very promising start, which I hope is going to lead to a large audience. Look out for the shows that Thom will be doing whilst doing voluntary work in Louisiana. Thom and some friends from his local church will be heading down there on 10th April for ten days to help rebuild some of the many homes that have been destroyed. I wish him good luck. •

CAVIAR



University of Central England (UCE), the New Technology Institute (NTI) and other partners have teamed up to offer '5 days of Apple'.

NTI are an accredited Apple Training Centre and have a podcasting day on May 10th 2006 in Birmingham, UK.

By 30th April 2006, NTI are asking podcasters to submit 2 minutes of content in any format (i.e., audio, video, print...).

The six best will be invited down to NTI and given a video camera to work with. Those chosen will be working with EA Games; the best judged entrant of the six will win a £900 box set of 'Final Cut Pro', software used by the BBC and the makers of Harry Potter.

Entrants will need to ensure that they can get to the NTI Building to take part.

If you're a podcaster, and can get yourself into Birmingham, UK on 10th May 2006, get creative; submissions should be sent by email to neil.emery@uce.ac.uk
 Best of luck! •



Hey, I'm a podcaster!

This is how I did it

Alan Carr blames Pete Travis

It's all Pete Travis's fault. I met him at an 'I.T. in Education' conference in Manchester last November. I work for a Cheshire college of further education with a responsibility for ILT (the use of IT in teaching and learning), so I had attended to keep abreast of current developments, grab the

I managed to **KEEP UP** until we reached RSS feeds.

free pens and take advantage of the generous catering.

Delegates were expected to attend a variety of seminars, and my choices included blogging and podcasting. I hadn't a clue about either of these web developments, so I felt that I should try and discover what they were all about. The fact that many of the other choices were far too dull to seriously contemplate also influenced my decision.

Pete performs a similar role to mine in a Coventry college and had been brought in as a guest speaker because of his podcasting expertise. With his partner Fiona, he is responsible for Flo-Joe Radio, a podcast for students preparing for the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English Exam.

In a large seminar room (seating for 100) Pete had an audience of just six people -- he must have wondered why he had bothered to give up his day -- but, unphased, he bravely took up the challenge of de-mystifying podcasting in 45 minutes.

I managed to keep up until we reached RSS feeds. Let's be honest here, the technology is called Really Simple Syndication. Really Simple??? Someone was having a laugh when they came up with that -- it's a good job that the adopted standard wasn't Moderately Easy Syndication, or podcasting would still be an intellectual exercise for geeks!

Back at college I was involving myself with streaming audio. I got it to work on the network and I even put a demo on the blog >>>



that I had recently started. I tried to tell myself that it was podcasting, but I wasn't really convinced, so I took a long look at Peter's

I DECIDED at this point to JUMP IN and create a podcast

notes. The time had come to finally crack open the podcasting puzzle.

Things happened quite quickly after that. I learned how to use Audacity with multiple tracks, chopping and arranging audio and melting it down to a single MP3. That was the easy bit, but I needed a hand with the rest, so I bought 'Secrets of Podcasting' (by Bart G Farkas – if that's him on the cover he is as geeky as his name suggests) and printed a stack of tutorials off the net. Now the 'Really Simple' protocol was becoming a bit clearer. I decided at this point to jump in and create a podcast. If I was going to be able to explain the whole story to sceptical college lecturers, I

would need to have actually been there, done that, got the RSS feed.

I decided that I would make a music podcast, so the initial stage was to find out who was already doing that, listen to the shows and discover what music was available. I was astonished to find so much good material available for free (but I wasn't sure from where) and such great podcasts delivering the episodes to hungry podcatchers. (Podcatcher is now my favourite I.T. word and I use it whenever I can in blogs and at work.)

Putting off the difficult RSS issue, I looked around for a webhost. Now, I've not mentioned this so far, but one of my self-imposed project requirements was that it should be FREE.

The second part of this article will reveal if that was feasible, what mistakes I made and who I approached for advice. •

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Your first time then?!

James Hastell

OK, what's your podcast going to be about? Best get a piece of paper and write a few ideas down? There is no subject that can't be covered, anything from music to maths, knitting to knots, and yes, even naughty ones, too.

Perhaps you should be looking at why you're

doing it. Is it to please yourself or to inform, entertain and educate others? Whatever the reason, it's a good one; there will always be someone out there who will love it.

You could just copy the style and content of someone else, of course, but that throws originality out of the window. You need to



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stamp your own personality on your podcast from the start, or at least look at building up your personal spin on your subject. The presentation can be as important as the content. You need to clearly inform the kind listener of details. Remember that you are working in audio only, so description is vital to build up a picture of your subject.

Model trains (don't laugh!) can be an example; if you are an enthusiast, then be enthusiastic about them. Have the sounds of a railway in the background as a backing track. It will fill a vital gap in the imagination. You may not notice the music playing in the film on the TV, but believe me, you'd notice if it wasn't there.

Don't limit yourself to what you know. Podcasting creates a learning curve, and you need to look deeper, to get to know the ins and outs and diversity of your subject. This discovery can be very rewarding and can

encourage future 'casts.

Remember that podcasters can be a self-critical bunch at the best of times, and your first attempt may not even be published by you but left to languish on your computer. Listen and re-listen to what you have done, and get a second opinion. Someone with no interest in model trains will listen to the sound quality, whilst an enthusiast will listen to the content; you can hope that they will give an honest opinion, but publish your podcast anyway!

After you publish, be prepared to be disappointed. For quite a while, no one will be beating a path to your door, metaphorically speaking. Give your podcast audience time to grow. Publish your link in every podcast listing you can find, no matter how large or small. Contact people with similar interests and tell them your podcast exists. You never know, it may start a trend! •

Presenting Your Podcast

Paul Nicholls

I blogged the following on my site a while ago; I thought that some of the content might be helpful to those wanting to get a better feel for presentation:

By profession, I'm a lawyer. I get paid to talk, and talk I have done, from criminals languishing at Her Majesty's pleasure, to judges, clients, conferences and of course the good folks who listen to my podcast.

First, I make no bones about the fact that I'm a little technically challenged. Second, I'm not some self-professed guru – hardly. I've seen a common thread in the way you should and should not address folks in every setting.

Podcasting is not just about technical expertise. I've spent a bit of money on my

lovely mixer and have a great microphone, but that really is just the start.

I often get emails from budding podcasters, I know a lot of folks who podcast will have had the same experience.

The requests I receive are asking me less about the tech side and more in relation to structure, content and presentation. Presenting a podcast actually has a lot of similarities to discussing matters with a client or presenting in court.

Presentation is key, I find, and I know that I am certainly not Mr. Perfection here, but I have used my voice professionally now for 20-odd years and learnt something along the way. My 16 months in podcasting is also teaching me a





few tricks in the podcast arena, too.

I know that much of what I may say may well be common sense or not fit your style. Not all will be relevant, either. I've cribbed some content from an email I sent to a new podcaster who asked for some advice. I hope some may be of relevance to you:

1. I always talk as though I'm chatting to a group of mates in the pub. Don't worry about performing, otherwise it'll sound stilted. I learnt this while talking to a judge or jury – people always warm to you if they think YOU are talking to them and not an assumed persona. It's the difference between fake and genuine. If you talk in court like you're Perry Mason, people will think you're mental. Talk like you're a DJ from radio KJYUZ 105.6 FM or like a 1950s BBC broadcaster and your podcast audience will assume you're a couple of sandwiches short of a picnic.

Check out Lynn Parsons, www.lynnparsons.net. Listen to the speed of articulation and the friendly, confident banter. You'll see my point.

2. Audio quality goes a long way, both naturally and technically. A clear voice is a much easier experience than a crackly quiet, voice. Saying this, even worse is good quality audio and a mumbling, quiet monotone voice which will make anyone immediately reach for the 'Off' button.

3. Use limited notes. This is really important; if you've ever mooted or sat in on a debate, this highlights my point.

Just have headnotes rather than an entire script; it'll bring the intonation out in your voice and your personality – another court trick. Headnotes with subheadings keep you on track; written script can straightjacket and impersonalise. Podcasting is about realism, so keep it real.

4. Prepare, prepare and... prepare. You will struggle if you don't have the material at hand.

Don't ever use the words "I've not got much to say really..." I've heard that a couple of times and wondered why I should continue to listen and waste my time.

5. One of my preferences, but, don't cut out 'erms' and pauses so the sound is plastic and sanitised. When you speak to your friends or family, you don't emulate a BBC shipping forecast, so again, keep it real. If you're new and struggling, you may benefit from a few edits, but don't worry excessively about this.

A CLEAR VOICE is a much easier experience than a QUIET voice

6. Keep the language simple and clear; I paid £15,000 (\$25,000) for a top advocate / Deputy High Court Judge to present a very complicated Chancery Case recently at court for one day. This chap was the top barrister in his field. I was bowled over by his simple use of language and engaging, relaxed style, and it taught me a great deal.

The move in legal circles of late has been to keep English plain and clear. It's so much easier to deal with and much more accessible by the public at large.

Folks I speak to professionally want someone who they can relate to, not someone who thinks they're on a different planet. Your listener is no exception.

7. This is really important. Speak slower than you usually do in conversation, particularly for listeners whose first language is not English or those who struggle with an unfamiliar accent. Slowing the speech is another court trick. It commands the listener to listen and really take note rather than miss bits and glaze over.

A challenge for you if you're a podcaster: As daft as some of the tips and tricks sound, I guarantee they'll work. •

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My Interview Philosophy

David Van Nuys

My interview philosophy is both a function of the type of podcast I'm doing and my background training and experience. I am a clinical psychologist, and my podcast ('Shrink Rap Radio') is one in which I interview other psychologists, as well as therapists of various stripes, counselors and others who have some involvement with the broad field of psychology or psychotherapy.

In my show, I'm looking for guests not only to inform but also to reveal something of their inner selves and something about whether their expertise in psychology has been of any use in dealing with their own personal issues. I want to know the ways in which they have been able to apply their academic learning to their own lives. I believe that this sort of self-disclosure will hook my listeners and give them something they can identify with. My goal is to bring it from the academic or professional level down to the universal human level.

This feat of revelation may not be easy to achieve. My professional colleagues may be somewhat guarded, used to hiding behind their professional persona. Part of the challenge for me, then, is to make them feel safe within a fairly short period of time. One way I can get them to be open with me is for me to model that same behavior, letting bits of my own personal history slip into the discussion.

Actually, I wear two hats. In addition to my training as psychologist and psychotherapist, I am also a market research consultant. In this latter capacity, I have led hundreds of focus groups with consumers and business-to-business customers for a wide variety of corporate clients. Focus groups are essentially group interviews. I also have conducted many individual in-depth interviews for market research purposes.

As I reflect on my philosophy of interviewing, I realize that it is heavily influenced both by my training as a psychotherapist and my training in market research.

What we are seeking in podcasting are great interviews.



© Jon Wisbey



What makes for a great interview?

- Great guests
- Great questions
- Great listening
- Great responding

Great Guests

There's not much to say here. Personally, I'm looking for people in and around the field of psychology who are doing interesting things, who can talk about their work with some enthusiasm and who are willing to be somewhat open about struggles they have had to overcome to get where they are.

Great Questions

The best questions are open-ended rather than being able to be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. I think the best questions are evocative, stimulating discovery not only for me and my listeners but, sometimes, for the person I am interviewing. It's great when my question gets them to have a little 'ah-ha!' experience or to achieve a better formulation than they have ever been able to articulate before.

My favourite interviewers ask great questions, as well as do a great job on each of the dimensions I am discussing. My role models in this regard include Bill Moyers (especially his PBS series of interviews with Joseph Campbell), Terry Gross of 'National Public Radio's Fresh Air', and Moira Gunn on 'Tech Nation', which is both on NPR and redistributed as a podcast through 'IT Conversations'.

Great Listening

Drawing upon my background as a psychotherapist, I think of psychoanalyst Theodor Reik's book, 'Listening With The Third Ear', in which he emphasizes that the aspiring therapist needs to listen not only to the content of what the interviewee is saying but also to his or her own intuitions that are triggered by that content. In other words, it's listening below the surface. There is the

content of what is being said, but the way it is being said may communicate other messages. Similarly, what is not being said is also a communication.

Another major influence from the world of psychology is Carl Rogers, who founded a whole school of psychotherapy around the simple act of what he called 'active listening'. Except that listening is not so simple. 'Active listening' suggests that the act of listening is not a passive one. It involves the real work of paying attention. When we talk about paying attention, the word 'pay' implies that it costs us something in terms of time and energy to really listen at a deep level, to put ourselves into the speaker's shoes and to empathically feel what they are feeling, to give them the gift of real attention.

If we are really honest with ourselves,

The BEST questions are open-ended rather than being able to be answered with a simple YES or NO

attention is what we all seek. That's certainly true of us podcasters who want nothing more than an audience, the bigger the better! But it is also generally true of all human beings. When we are little kids, it's "Mommy, look at me! Mommy, look at what I can do." As we grow up, we learn to seek attention in subtler ways, but the hunger for it never goes away.

Great Responding

So, to get a really great interview, we must give that gift of attention. But how does the interviewee know we are really listening? Especially, if the interview is conducted via phone or Skype? By giving great responses, that's how.

It's not enough just to say "uh-huh" from 

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time to time. Carl Rogers teaches us that good listening is active listening and that involves making responses that indicate what you have heard and that build on it. Rogers has often been caricatured as simply parroting back what the client said. However, if you ever have the opportunity to watch a film of one of his sessions, I defy you to anticipate what his next response will be in any interaction. It is never formulaic.

Listen to an interview by Terry Gross, Bill Moyers, Moria Gunn or one of your favourite interviewers and notice not just the questions they ask but the way they respond to their interviewees answers. You'll discover that's where a lot of the magic happens.

Final Thoughts

My approach to interviewing has been influenced by my market research experience as much as by my background in psychology and psychotherapy. I learned my market research chops by apprenticing myself for a number of years to a very talented and successful marketing consultant. One of the things he drilled into my head over and over again is the importance of being curious. You have to really want to find out, to be interested in all the little details, to convey fascination. If you are fortunate to have that as one of your native traits, you'll make a great therapist, market research consultant, or podcast interviewer. If you are not born with that sort of deep curiosity, you'll need to work on cultivating it.

In the world of focus groups, we prepare something called a 'discussion guide' or 'moderator's guide', which is an outline of the topics that will be covered in the group interview. This outline is generally a collaborative effort between my corporate

clients and myself. It ensures that I know what they are trying to find out and provides a sort of roadmap as to how we will get there. It is important that I not follow the guide slavishly, that I feel free to allow the interview to flow spontaneously but, at the same time, to steer it in the right general direction and make certain we arrive at the right informational destination.

This practice has bled over into my approach to podcast interviewing. Currently, I write out my interview questions and I even provide them to my guest so that they will not be caught flatfooted. They seem to really appreciate this courtesy. I'm not sure whether or not this practice short-circuits some of the potential life and spontaneity of the interview.

I do know that I feel more secure having worked out my questions ahead of time. With more podcast experience, I'm finding that I'm getting better at departing from the 'guide' and spontaneously 'riffing' with the guest. The 'philosophy' that I have outlined here represents an ideal to which I still aspire rather than skills I have fully mastered. It's a learning process, and I am but another pilgrim on the road to podcast-interview nirvana. •

David Van Nuys presents the
Shrink Rap Radio podcast

<http://www.shrinkrapradio.com>
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Beginners Guide to Podcasting... on The Cheap!

Colin Meeks

You've read through the first two issues of **Podcast User Magazine**, listened to a few podcasts and thought, hey, I'd like to do that. The only thing putting you off is the expense of it all. You'll need a high-end whizzy PC, a mixer, an expensive microphone, cables galore and maybe a copy of that \$300 heavyweight program they call Adobe Audition to record everything.... Well, actually, no. Let's throw all of that out of the window and get you on the road to your first podcast for my favourite amount of \$0. OK, so maybe we'll have to stretch that slightly, but maybe not; it all depends on what you have lying around. In any case, this is going to be one really cheap and cheerful podcast.

Step 1. You'll Need a Computer

OK, so you are going to need a computer. To do podcasting, you don't need a high-end, state-of-the-art machine. In fact I'm sure an old computer in a right state will probably suffice. For the sake of this article, let's assume that you have a computer or at least have access to one. This is probably the biggest step to podcasting. Yes, you can do without a computer to create your podcast by using an MP3 player that supports recording or by using your hi-fi system, but you are still going to need a computer to upload your efforts. Also, using a computer makes it much,

much easier to edit your final creation.

Step 2. You'll Need a Microphone

If only podcasting were as easy as shouting at your computer. Unfortunately, we are not quite there yet, so you're going to have to get friendly with your computer and plug something into its sound port. Many new computers come with a cheap headset or a little tiny plastic microphone that has a little sleeve that you can stick to your monitor. These mics are more than adequate to get you started.

Step 3. Audio Recording Software

So your computer is sitting there, looking at

**OK, so you are going to need
a computer**

you blankly. Remember, computers are stupid. They'll only ever do what you tell them to do. To record a podcast, you are going to need some software. Microsoft Windows comes with a handy little piece of software called "Sound Recorder". This is by no means the tool you will want to use to create a podcast, but it's useful for playing with your microphone. I can highly recommend the free software program called Audacity. This is available for the PC,



PODCASTER



Mac OSX and various variants of Linux. You can find this software by going to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>. It really is an excellent piece of software, and you sure can't beat the price!

Step 4. Decide on a Format

You've decided to create a podcast, but what format do you want to produce? There are far too many genres to list here, but some of the most popular ones are discussion, music, comedy, beercast and reviews.

Creating a PODCAST that is easy to find and accessible will require you to create a FEED

Step 5. Practice

The main art to podcasting is finding your voice. You are going to make mistakes, litter your speak with 'errs', 'umms' and other vocal devices to give your brain time to think, but just run with it. The more you practice, the easier you'll find it. Spend a few hours recording your voice and getting comfortable with the mic. Then record a few paragraphs of text, or think of something off the cuff to say. Next, put yourself in the position of the listener and see if it's something you can imagine yourself listening to. Maybe you can also get some feedback from family or friends.

Step 6. Get yourself a blog

Many podcasters, especially those new to podcasting, find that creating a blog is a great way to begin podcasting. There's no point having a podcast if people have no way to find it. Head over to Blogger, <http://www.blogger.com> and sign up for a free account. By default Blogger will give you a web address that consists of your username

followed by blogspot.com, so if your username is [colinisastar](http://colinisastar.blogspot.com) your web address or URL will be <http://colinisastar.blogspot.com>.

Step 7. Podcast Hosting

This is one of the areas that you will have to consider carefully. This step is free, but please be aware that you are no doubt going to have to stump up some cash eventually. There are a lot of free web-hosting services about and they are ideal to get your feet wet, but you are not going to want to depend on them if your podcast becomes even a little popular. Please remember that. Find yourself a free hosting service by going to <http://www.freewebspace.net>.

Once you decide that podcasting is for you, I can thoroughly recommend using Libsyn <http://www.libsyn.com> for all your hosting needs. There is a cost attached, but it's very minimal. You need to be very careful when using a traditional hosting service for your podcast. Nearly all the services I know of give you only a limited amount of bandwidth, usually between 1 GB and 20 GB. The average podcast of 30 minutes will take up approximately 15 MB of disk space for a show with a purely discussion format in low bitrate quality and about 30 MB for a mix of music and discussion at a higher rate. If you manage to get 100 people downloading your show, that's between 1.5 GB and 3.0 GB of bandwidth, and that's just for one show! Hosting services will want to charge you extra for all additional bandwidth used, so be careful. Libsyn will give you 100 MB of storage a month and unlimited bandwidth for just \$5 per month, or 250 MB of storage and unlimited bandwidth for just \$10 per month.

Step 8. Creating Your Feed

Creating a podcast that is easy to find and accessible will require you to create a feed. This allows your show to be downloaded by people with podcatching software. This is probably one of the more complicated processes concerning podcasting.





Fortunately, there is a great service that runs almost seamlessly with the blog you created earlier. This service is called Feedburner <http://www.feedburner.com>, and it is probably the most popular of the feed-creating services. And best of all, it's free. Basically this gives you a feed address that looks something like <http://feeds.feedburner.com/colinisastar>, then whenever you update your blog, your feed will be automatically updated. For this to work properly, you are going to have to enable the creation of a feed within your blog.

Step 9. Creating a podcast

The usual process that you will go through for each podcast is probably something similar to the following:

- Create an outline or a rough draft of what you want to talk about
- Record your show
- Upload show to your host (free or paid) or Libsyn
- Create and post your show notes on Blogger, with a link to the MP3
- Send emails to those associated with your podcast, such as your guests or featured artists

Step 10. Enjoy

You've done all the hard work for your podcast

and, as with a good shampoo, you'll be rinsing and repeating and rinsing, ad infinitum. The one thing that's important above all else is that you enjoy doing your podcast. For the first few shows, it can all seem like a thankless task, but nothing quite matches that first email from someone really digging what you are trying to achieve.

So as you can see, you don't need a stack of cash to get started, but be prepared. Once you start getting into podcasting, you are going to want to get better equipment. Here's a few ideas for where you might want to go next:

- A new high-quality microphone (\$50+)
- A mixer to allow you to use your new high-quality microphone (\$50+)
- More disk space at somewhere like Libsyn (\$5+ per month)
- A reliable, paid hosting service (\$5-\$20 per month)
- A domain name, so you can have your web page be something more memorable, like www.colinisastar.com (\$12 per year)

I've tried to be as thorough as possible in composing these 10 steps, but I've no doubt that I've probably overlooked something. If you have any questions or are unclear over anything, do not hesitate to contact me. •

The Tartan podcast ClustrMap



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The logo features a grey Wi-Fi signal icon above the text. 'Podcast' is in red, and 'User' is in white inside a red circle.

Podcast User

NUMBER ONE FOR PODCAST NEWS, REVIEWS AND TIPS

**Issue 4 will be
available on
1st May**

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