

**The AirSafe.com Podcasting Production Manual: A How-to Guide for
Developing a Basic Audio or Video Podcast**

By Todd Curtis

rev 10 November 2011

Published by Speedbrake Publishing at Smashwords

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ISBN: 978-1-887674-16-4



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In 1996, Dr. Todd Curtis created the web's most popular airline safety site, AirSafe.com. His aviation safety expertise has been featured by numerous news organizations, including the New York Times, and he has appeared on CNN, CBS, Fox News, Discovery Channel, Al Jazeera, the BBC, and National Public Radio. He holds a PhD in aviation risk assessment from the Union Institute, as well as engineering degrees from MIT, the University of Texas, and Princeton. Ten years after the debut of the web site, Todd created the podcast The Conversation at AirSafe.com to support the work of the AirSafe.com web site. This manual lays out in a systematic fashion the steps taken to create and maintain The Conversation at AirSafe.com, and provides organization or individual interested in producing and maintaining a podcast with the guidance necessary to give that podcast a good chance at success.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction to Podcasting

If you are reading this, you probably have seen a video on a site like YouTube, or downloaded an MP3 of an interview to play on your computer or your iPod. You might have even thought that you could create a video and share it online with your friends. If this sounds like you, and if you have access to even the most basic personal computer, you can create a podcast, and then take that podcast and share it with the whole world.

This book is about my experience with putting together podcasts for the aviation safety web site AirSafe.com. It isn't a book about aviation safety, or even about podcasting technology, but rather one about the lessons and insights I gained from creating and maintaining a podcast production system. While podcasting doesn't have the media hype that it had a few years ago, the things that podcasting can do are still relevant to the modern Internet. The things that you could learn from this book, specifically how to apply a systematic production and distribution process to a podcast, could make it much easier to either start podcasting or to become a more effective podcaster.

Before There Was a Web

Once upon a time, in fact any time before 1989, there were no browsers, web sites, Google, or YouTube, and definitely no podcasting. If you wanted to communicate with the public using an audio or video production, there were few options outside of commercial radio or television stations, and those options were beyond the reach of most people. Some cable systems provided training and equipment that allowed anyone to produce a television show that could be broadcast on a dedicated public access cable channel. Also, some local radio and television stations had limited amounts of time devoted to public affairs programs where groups and sometimes individuals could broadcast a show in a time slot that was usually too early or too late to be of interest even to infomercial producers. As you can imagine, few people were able to take advantage of these options, and the audience for these kinds of shows was quite limited.

The Early Days of the Web

For the first decade or so of the web, publishing something online meant you had to create a web site. That meant that you had to do things like negotiate with an ISP to host the site (and paying some money), going to another company to get the rights to a domain name (and paying more money), either hiring someone to create the web site or taking the time to buy a few books and learn how to build a web site from scratch (even more \$\$\$).

The Web Now

If you are thinking about putting content online, you don't have to spend money up front or develop a lot of new skills. You can still make web sites, but if you just want to test the online publishing waters, you can go out and set up a blog for, and put text, pictures, and media like audio and video on it. Speaking of video, if you create one, you don't need a web site or a blog to promote it, just upload it to YouTube (for free), and tell all your Facebook friends about it (another free service), and use Twitter to send out notices to followers (yes, this service is also free).

Creating content is getting easier as innovations make it easier for the average person to publish online. However, if you plan to cross over from being a creator of audio or video

content to being a podcaster, it calls for a change of mindset. The creation process can still be fun, but the fun has to be backed up by reliable processes and systems if you want to be a podcaster.

What the Heck is Podcasting?

One definition for a podcast is a series of audio or video digital media files that are both released over time and distributed using the Internet. That definition doesn't really tell the story. You can have audio or video files on a web site or blog, and that is a form of distribution, but the real power of a podcast lies in being able to do several things:

- * Create audio or visual media that communicates, entertains, or educates.
- * Create multiple shows or episodes over a period of time.
- * Make these shows available online for people all over the world to enjoy.
- * Allow anyone to easily subscribe to the podcast and receive new episodes.

The last point is the real key. If you are creating new works on a regular basis, and you either have an existing audience or want to develop a larger audience for your work, then you should make it easy for that audience to find and enjoy your work. Having them available on a web site or blog is a first step for reaching your audience, but it shouldn't be the only way for you audience to obtain your work. Creating a system where the audience can choose to have new works delivered automatically makes it much more convenient for your audience, and takes you beyond the world of a producer of a collection of multimedia files and into the world of podcasting.

OK, so give me an example of how this works

I'll give you my favorite podcast example. AirSafe.com is a site dedicated to aviation safety and aviation safety policy issues. I created my first audio podcast in 2005, consisting mostly of reviews of aircraft accident investigations and interviews with aviation safety experts. In 2007, I added video episodes as well. To promote and distribute the podcast, I talked about it on my web site, notified mailing list members of new shows, added blogs that featured the podcast, made the podcast available in iTunes, and included the video episodes on a variety of video sharing sites, including YouTube.

The podcasts, both audio and video, didn't start out fancy or sophisticated, and my marketing and advertising efforts were not that great in the beginning, but over time I improved the quality of the episodes and the size of the audience by applying the knowledge I gained and the lessons I learned from making and distributing the podcast. While the tools I used to create, distribute, and promote the podcast continue to expand and evolve, the basic approach to the podcast hasn't changed—Give the people what they want, and just a little bit of what I think they need.

So what does it take to make a podcast?

You don't have to have years of experience to put together a good and popular podcast. What I'll tell you in this manual will help you get up to speed quickly and will help you avoid many of the problems that can doom your podcasting dreams. In my opinion, you have to have at least a general idea of what to do and what not to do. More importantly, you have to have a very good idea of why you are doing it.

OK, now what? How do I make a podcast?

The next section gives you a broad overview of the podcasting process. That will be

followed by a couple of case studies of actual podcasts. Finally, I'll provide you with additional checklists, guidelines, and resources for making your own podcast.

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CHAPTER 2: The Grand Plan for Your Podcast

Do you really need some kind of grand plan to create a podcast? For the serious podcaster, the answer is yes. A successful podcast doesn't have only one episode, but many episodes produced over a long period of time. If you intend to create many episodes, then it helps to have some structure to the process to make it more likely that the quality of the shows improve over time. If you think that you can go ahead and start your podcast without prior planning, you could certainly make a podcast, perhaps with hundreds of episodes, but the learning process will be easier, shorter, and much less painful if you take the time to go over a few basics.

The Key Things You Need for a Successful Podcast

Making a podcast is a combination of desire, organization, and technology. The technology part is getting easier because thousands of groups and individuals around the world are working hard to make the process of creating and distributing podcasts easier and cheaper (so cheap that many of the resources you need are free). Organizing the people and resources to make a podcast happen is not that difficult either, in part because many podcasters have been willing to provide anyone who is interested with examples of how to create and run a successful podcast, as well as examples of how to run one into the ground.

In my opinion, the key to a successful podcast is desire. This kind of desire isn't the enthusiasm that an individual or a group has at the beginning of a new project, but a higher level motivation that will keep a person or a group focused and moving in the right direction in the face of distractions, setbacks, and roadblocks. In other words, if you set out to make a podcast because it sounds like a good idea, then the podcast will likely not last. Like with many other things online, podcasting is a method or a tool that helps you do something more important.

I could go on for hundreds of pages about what podcasting is and how to make a podcast, but that territory has been covered quite well by the authors of the many how-to podcasting books on the market (I own a few of them myself). My goal here is to introduce you to the AirSafe.com style of podcasting, and to give you enough background information and supporting material to create your own system for planning and producing a podcast.

Eight Pillars that Support Your Podcast

What follows in this section is my description of how desire, organization, and technology combine to create a podcasting system. I've taken these three general concepts and put them into eight specific categories or tasks that I feel serve as the foundation for any well-managed podcast.

1. Mission: Why would you need to have a mission to create a podcast? Let's put it this way. If you're going to put in the time and energy to do a decent job, you have to have some reason that drives you to do this, something that'll give you the inspiration or the motivation to overcome the problems and obstacles that will happen between a decision to make a podcast and a completed episode.

2. Team: Every podcast has several distinct tasks that have to be addressed. Those

tasks may be completed by one person or by a whole team of people. Even if there is only one person involved in the process, all of these tasks must be coordinated if you want to produce consistently good results.

3. Leadership: Someone has to take responsibility for the podcast, and that includes overseeing the planning, production, and distribution of each episode.

4. Resources: If you have access to a personal computer and the Internet, you may need very little additional equipment to produce a podcast. However, a podcast also has to rely on a variety of other resources to be successful, including things like blogs or web sites where the podcast can be found, and other online resources such as search engines or subscription services that connect the podcast with its audience.

5. Communications: There is an ongoing need to keep team members, guests, audience members, and everyone else involved with your podcast aware of what's going on. Whether it is by IM, tweet, mailing list, or blog, you will have a variety of communication needs before, during, and after each episode.

6. Systems: You're going to need basic hardware and software to make a podcast happen, but the systems that can make or break a podcast, things like search engines, blogs, and subscription services, have to be understood well enough so that you can use them to create and maintain a relationship with your audience

7. Legal Foundation: Luckily, you don't have to hire a lawyer, or know much about the law to understand how to keep out of legal trouble with a podcast. However, like a lot of other risks, a little bit of education and prevention ahead of time can help you avoid a whole lot of hassles in the future.

8. The Podcast: Why is the podcast the last thing on this list? The biggest reason is that if you don't deal with all of the previous seven issues, a problem with any one of them can take all of the fun out of making a podcast, and more importantly make it hard for a podcast to survive. In other words, if you don't deal with the previous seven areas, you would have not created a solid podcasting process. A solid process does not guarantee success, since the ultimate success of a podcast is determined by the audience. However, without a solid underlying system to produce, promote, and distribute your content, even a podcast that an audience loves will likely fail.

The next eight chapters go over each of these eight sections, and afterwards I'll show you two podcasting case studies from AirSafe.com and how I addressed these eight areas.

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CHAPTER 3: What's Your Mission?

Creating a podcast takes time, dedication, and more than a little bit of work. When you start the process, the obvious goal is to complete it and put it in front of an audience. That goal is not the mission of creating a podcast. The mission is the larger reason that you are doing this. While there is no limit to what the mission could be, in my opinion, a mission that can motivate both the leadership and the team members is one that clearly does one of two things: increase the level or extent of something that's good or positive, or reducing the level or extent of something that is bad or negative.

If you're already in an organization such as a school or business, and if your organization has a mission statement, then your current mission statement should be the foundation of your podcast's mission. If your group doesn't have a formal mission statement, or if you are doing this podcast independently of any formal group, then you should figure out what the mission should be for your podcast. My suggestion for coming up with a mission statement is to think about what drives you to make the podcast. Imagine what goal is so important that thinking about that goal is enough to inspire you to overcome the obstacles that will no doubt come between you and a finished podcast.

The written mission statement should be short enough to recite in a normal speaking voice in under 10 seconds, and clear enough to be understood by the average 10-year-old. If you can meet those two basic criteria, then you are on the right track. You are free to change that mission at any time, but before you read any further, take out a piece of paper (or turn on your laptop or iPad) and write your mission statement down right now.

Example of a Bad Mission Statement

If your mission statement has one or more of the following characteristics, it is not a good mission statement and should be changed:

- * When you read it to yourself and you have no idea what it means.
- * You are the only person who understands what it means.
- * You could use the same statement for making podcasts or making popcorn
- * It uses business school jargon instead of plain English.
- * You can't remember it because it is too long, too boring, or too ridiculous.
- * It is ambiguous or could be interpreted very differently by different people.

Example of a Good Mission Statement

If you have a good mission statement, it should make sense to you, to the other people regularly involved in the podcast, and to the others who may work on the podcast. Good mission statements often have more than one of the following characteristics:

- * It's clearly written.
- * It's easy to remember the key parts of it.
- * It's short (one or two sentences).

It doesn't have to be perfect the first time, and the mission statement may change over time, but make no mistake, your podcast will have a mission or a purpose. If you take the time to think it thorough and write it down, you will have a better chance a keeping your

podcasting developing process more focused. For AirSafe.com, the mission is to provide the public with good information about airline safety and security. The podcast existed to support the work of the web site, so there was no need to come up with a new mission or a different mission statement.

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CHAPTER 4: Who's On Your Team?

Making a podcast is not a solo activity. Even if you are working by yourself, the goal is to create something that you will share with others, and if you are successful, eventually other people will be involved with your podcast either directly or indirectly. Whether you are working alone or with others, there are several tasks or roles that have to be fulfilled when you create a podcast episode. Those roles would include the following:

Technical manager: responsible for overseeing hardware, software, and other technical resources.

Legal advisor: responsible for making sure that the podcast team understands and follows the organization's rules, and the basic rules for creative works (issues such as copyright and fair use).

Episode producer: responsible for organizing and managing the resources needed for a podcast episode.

Talent coordinator: responsible for finding content and guests for a podcast episode.

Podcast manager: responsible for overseeing issues affecting the podcast as a whole.

Marketing manager: responsible for making the current and potential audience aware that the existence and availability of the podcast.

Fulfillment manager: responsible for the processes that allows a user to download, view, or hear one or more podcast episodes.

Technology advisor: responsible for evaluating changes in technology and online resources and recommending how take advantage of them.

Podcast Mentor: an outside person who provides practical and independent advice on the podcast.

Depending on the podcast, one or more of the roles may even be accomplished without involving people. For example, a podcast mentor could take the form of a book (including this ebook), magazine, blog, web site, or other resource that can be consulted to address specific issues.

You may be able to rely on technology to do some or even all of the work for a particular role. For example, Apple's iTunes system allows any podcaster to register their podcast with Apple. By doing so, anyone with the iTunes software on their computer can easily subscribe to your podcast. Whenever you add a new episode to the podcast, any subscriber will be notified when they check for updates. The iTunes system performs part of the marketing role because it allows people to easily find podcasts by subject matter or keyword, and part of the fulfillment role because it can be used to download the podcast.

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CHAPTER 5: Leadership

No podcast gets made unless someone is willing to organize and manage the resources needed to create them and to make sure that they are available to audience. If you are making the podcast alone, then you have to be willing to fulfill that role. If you are part of a group that is making the podcast, then there will likely be one leader who will ensure that both completed episodes go out the door, and that the organization's upper management will support and promote the podcast effort. It doesn't matter if a podcast is a solo effort or a group effort, unless someone is willing to accept the responsibility of overseeing, managing, and promoting the podcast, it may be very hard to create more episodes once the initial excitement dies down.

Solo Leadership

Technology makes it easy to create a podcast with only one person, but creating a whole series of episodes over a period of time will also take some discipline. As a leader, staying true to the purpose or mission of the podcast will be much easier if you have dealt with the tasks of the previous two chapters, defining the purpose of the podcast and determining the podcast production roles that have to be fulfilled.

One test of your leadership skills will be whether you had the discipline to carry out the first two parts of the podcast production process and to hold yourself accountable. An easy way to do this is to write things down and refer to them later. If you have done your job, you will have developed the following three things: a mission statement, a general description of the team functions, and a plan to carry out those functions.

Leadership of a Group

When there are two or more people involved in your podcast production, someone will be the leader or the manager. If you are doing a podcast within a larger organization, then the leader or manager has likely already been chosen or assigned. If the person has an interest in doing the podcast and a willingness to work through the issues that will likely come up, then leadership should not be a problem. If there is a problem with the leader's motivation, energy, or enthusiasm, or if the larger organization doesn't care about the outcome, it may be time for you to consider whether you want to stay around.

If you are going to be the leader of the group, then how you approach the situation will depend on your circumstances, the motivation of the other team members, and your willingness to manage both the podcast production process and the relationships among the team members.

Telling you what management techniques would work in this situation is well beyond the scope of this book. However, one thing is clear. If you are working with others, you have to understand both their motivations for being involved and what they plan to get out of the experience. If what they want is compatible with the mission of the podcast, then you'll likely not have any problems. If their goals or motivations don't fit the goals of the podcast, then it is probably best if that person leaves the team. If that happens, you may have to either find a replacement, or shift the responsibilities of the other team members in order to fill the gap.

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CHAPTER 6: Money and Other Resources

The easiest part of the process for a beginning podcaster is finding resources. Most personal computers come equipped with the hardware and software needed to create a basic audio or video podcast. Depending on your long term plan, you may or may not have additional expenses to keep the podcast going. Having the resources available over the long term is key to keeping the production process. In addition to a personal computer, you would need online access, the ability to record and edit the audio or video content, and the means to make the content available to the public. The general kinds of resources, and their likely costs, are summarized below:

Online Access Costs

For podcasting, you need to have the ability to not just go online, but also to upload your finished podcast. Any basic personal computer has the hardware and software needed to upload the podcast. You would need the ability to either upload those files from your hard drive, from a location on your computer network, or from a thumb drive or other data storage media that you connect to the system. You probably won't be able to upload files from a public terminal at a place like a library, but you should have no problem from a computer at home, school, or work. You will also need to be able to download much of the software or content that you would need for your productions. While you could get by with dial-up access, it would be much less time consuming if you had DSL or some other kind of high speed access.

Distribution Costs

In order to make the podcast available to the public, each episode has to be available online. If you want to give your audience an opportunity to download your episodes, for example if you wanted to use iTunes as part of your strategy, registering your podcast with iTunes would be free, but you may need to pay a service provider to allow your actual podcast files to be freely accessible 24 hours a day. If you happen have a web site where you can also place files on that web site's server, that would be an option to consider for your podcast files. You can also take advantage of free storage options like the Amazon S3 service that allows you to place your podcast files on Amazon's servers. If you use the free version of the service, you would be able to have your audience download a large number of files each month. Should your podcast become quite popular, simply move over to the paid service.

One free option for videos is to sign up for a YouTube account where you would place your episodes. Even if you have your video podcast files elsewhere online, you may want to add a YouTube option for your audience because some of them may prefer to visit YouTube to see their episodes rather than downloading files using a service like iTunes.

Marketing Resources

Unlike the final scenes of the movie *Field of Dreams*, people don't magically appear just because you create an attractive destination. A podcast needs an active marketing effort to make potential users aware of the podcast and encourage those users to either download a single episode or to subscribe to the entire podcast. There are usually a combination of online and offline marketing resources one can use, including combinations of Twitter, Facebook, word of mouth, mailing lists, blogs, offline

advertising, and web sites.

Some, like word of mouth, Twitter and Facebook, are free, but you may incur some ongoing costs for things like a web site. Mailing lists and blogs may be done for free or may be for a cost, depending on what options you want to use. Even the free options have costs. If you and your team are not getting paid to run the podcast, then the cost is your time and effort. If you outsource some or all of the work, or if working on the podcast is part of a team member's paid job, then there will definitely be real money spent to make the podcast.

The marketing effort may even be helped by outside resources. For example, podcasters who register their podcast with iTunes make it easy for iPod, iPad, and iPhone users (as well as anyone who uses iTunes on their PC) to find their podcasts, and to download one or more episodes into their computer or their iPod. It costs nothing to use this system, but it will take time and effort to take advantage of this resource.

Content Costs

There is always a cost to producing a podcast. Even if all the team members work without pay and you acquire the content at no charge, at the very least it will take both time and energy to create each episode. How much time, energy and other resources you may use will depend entirely on your subject matter and your intentions. If your format is a monologue featuring the show's host, or a conversation between the host and a guest over the phone, the financial cost is likely zero and the effort needed to produce that episode will be minimal. If you have to hire a crew to travel to a location to interview your guests, the cost may easily climb into the thousands of dollars for that one episode.

Equipment Costs

Depending on the kind of podcast you are doing and the kind of equipment you already have, you may not have to spend any money at all. For example, if you have MacBook laptop and you plan to have an audio only podcast where you will provide all of the content, you already have in your laptop a microphone and audio editing software. If you were to add more equipment, the first step is likely a microphone for improving sound quality. Beyond that, the sky's the limit. However, unless you had a need to produce something that is of professional or broadcast quality, you may not have to spend more than \$100 in accessories to get going.

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CHAPTER 7: Communications

There are two kinds of communication that have to be managed for any podcast, communication among the team members who are directly involved with creating, managing, producing, promoting, and distributing the podcast; and communication with the audience of the podcast. Basic communications resources that you will want to use will include email and phones (including online calling options like Skype), as well as resources such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and web sites. If the podcast is to remain useful, many of these communications tools will have to be up and running at all times.

In the case studies, I'll provide you with examples of how communication issues were handled for different kinds of podcasts or podcast audiences, as well as practical advice on how to reduce the amount of time and energy spent on the routine aspects of podcast production and management.

Team Member Communication

Although podcasts are either an aural or visual medium, you have to be willing to write things down in order to communicate. While it is important to have face-to-face communication skills, most of the time the people involved in producing a podcast don't have to be in the same room, so written communications will likely work best. Also, a successful podcast may be around so long that new people will get involved and others will drift away. Achieving high level goals such as staying true to the podcast's mission and more basic goals like maintaining consistent quality between shows is much easier if things are written down.

For the core team members, it is usually a good idea to standardize how people communicate. One easy way to do so is to insist on email for routine communications so that there is an easily searchable record of what was said and when it was said. If your members are already a part of a formal organization like a business, you likely already have a communications system in place. If so, then use it.

Communicating with the Audience

After the podcast is up and running, you have to have a way to review your audience feedback to figure out if it had the desired effect or reached the desired audience. Feedback includes anything you learned about the response to the show, as well as any praise or complaints from the audience. The most basic feedback is how many times the episode was downloaded or played. Other things to consider include the comments left on a blog, YouTube account, or Facebook page; and any changes in the number of active email subscribers, Twitter followers, or Facebook friends.

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CHAPTER 8: Planning, Production, and Distribution Systems

Your systems are the heart of the podcast production process. If you have systems that work well, then you and your team will have an easier time creating shows, and your audience will likely see regular additions of new content as well as a consistent improvement in the quality of their experience. There are a few basic types of hardware and software systems that you need for a podcast, and many more that are related to the management of the podcasting process and the management of your podcast's audience.

Recording Hardware

Many new computers, especially laptops, come with built-in microphones that are good enough for recording speech. If your computer doesn't have one, you can buy a basic microphone for well under \$30 that can plug directly into the USB port of your computer. If you are creating a video podcast, most consumer camcorders and smartphones will allow you to download video into your computer. You can also use a webcam or your computer's built-in video camera for recording video. Keep in mind that if you are creating a video podcast, and you are able to gather all the visual content you need from outside sources, then you may not even need to own or use your own camera to produce the podcast.

Recording and Editing Software

For audio recording, Apple and Windows personal computers both come with software that allow audio recording and editing, with Apple's GarageBand software being quite a bit more capable than what is included with a Windows computer. Audacity is an excellent audio recording and editing program that works on both Apple and Windows computers. Appendix 1 has details about how to download this program.

For editing video, Apple computers include the iMovie video editing program, and computers running the Windows operating system also have a video editing program included (though it's not as robust as iMovie).

Preproduction Planning

Before you make a single show, it helps to think through how it should be done. This preproduction planning includes making general marketing decisions, including what online resources you may be able to use.

Once you've decided on things such as the podcast title and its intended audience, then there are several specific tasks that you should complete before you launch the podcast, including any extra work that you must do to distribute episodes using outside resources like iTunes and YouTube.

Related activities that should take place around this time include your initial marketing efforts and completion of any online podcast support activities such as creating one or more blogs to promote the podcast, redesigning your web site to accommodate podcast related resources, and planning initial media releases or other media related events. If your podcast is supporting one or more ongoing activities or projects, your initial efforts should be focused on making those involved in those ongoing activities and projects aware of the new podcast.

Podcast Launch Process

When the first show is completed, you should systematically inform your initial audience, as well as implement the appropriate parts of your marketing strategy. This is a one time process, but one that may take an extended amount of time to complete depending on the objectives you developed during the preproduction phase.

Planning process for an individual podcast

Before you lay down a single track for a new episode, you should first decide on what kind of episode you want to do. Once you have made that decision, you will have a good idea of what kind of resources you would need, including hardware, software, content, and people.

Content Collection and Creation Process

No matter how simple the podcast, you have to have some idea about where your content is coming from, and what you have to do to ensure that you are able to use that content once you acquire it.

Editing Process

This will depend on whether you are doing an audio or video podcast, and on what kind of software you use.

Episode Launch Process

For each new episode, in addition to uploading the content, at a minimum you should tell the audience that the show is available. Depending on your podcast, that could include updating a blog or Facebook page, and sending out notices to your mailing list members or Twitter followers. You may want to do additional things to encourage current audience members to participate, and also to reach out to new audiences who may be particularly interested in the topic of the podcast episode.

Technology evaluation and implementation process

The online world is changing so fast that in any given month there may be two or three things that catch your attention. You have to decide if it is worth your time and effort to incorporate new options into your podcasting process.

Podcast Distribution Process

The thing that makes a podcast different from a collection of multimedia files is the ability to have the episodes distributed to subscribers. Basic options for subscribers include getting notified when new content is available, getting new content automatically delivered, or downloading older content. Whatever your combination of options, you should make sure that the audience can easily find the podcast, and understand their options for enjoying the episodes.

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CHAPTER 9: Legal Issues

The Internet is all about free expression, but it doesn't mean that there are no rules. If you understand just a few basic things about the legal realities of podcasting, you will be able to avoid problems with lawyers, Internet service providers, or your organization.

Most of the legal issues are taken care of by common sense. First, if you want to use someone else's work in your podcast, ask permission. Second, assume that anything that ends up online will be around for a long time, so don't do anything that may come back to haunt you next week, next year, or even 50 years from now. Third, don't threaten anyone, break the law, or spread lies about others online. Finally, if it doesn't feel right, don't do it.

Copyright

Let's move from common sense to basic online legal realities. Probably the most important reality revolves around the use of copyrighted material, both the copyrighted material that you produce whenever you create a podcast episode, or the copyrighted material that you may use as part of the contents for your podcast.

In this chapter and in the case studies later in this book, I'll show you some very basic steps you can take to protect your copyrighted material and to safely use the copyrighted material of others, but first, there are a few basic things that you need to know about copyright:

It's easy to create copyrighted material: In the US and in most other countries, almost anything that you create and put online is copyrighted and has basic copyright protections.

Most everything online is copyrighted: A very important exception is materials that are in the public domain, and can be used freely by podcasters.

Owning a copyrighted work gives you limited use of it: Simply owning a copy of a copyrighted work (like a book or music CD from your personal collection) doesn't give you the right to freely use that work in your podcast.

Sometimes you can freely use copyrighted material: This is a concept called fair use, and the concept can be a podcaster's best friend.

Fair Use and Public Domain

Two concepts related to copyright that are very important to podcasters are fair use and public domain. Fair use allows you to sometimes use copyrighted material without first getting permission from the copyright holder. There are a number general guidelines for what constitutes fair use, and it may be hard to identify when fair use ends and copyright infringement begins. The case studies will look at fair use in some detail.

Material in the public domain does not have copyright protection and can be used freely. In general, copyright expires a few decades after the creator of the work dies, and most material produced over 100 years ago is in the public domain. Newer material may be in the public domain if no copyright was ever claimed.

Rule Breaking

This is a very easy section to understand. Don't break the rules when you make your

podcast. This goes for local, national, or international laws; online usage rules of your school, job, or family; or the terms of service of an online service provider. If your school, job, online service provider or anyone else you deal with has written rules or guidelines related to podcast production and distribution, review them. If you don't need to review them now, at least make note of where they are so you can review them on short notice.

A Note on Legal Advice

If you need more sophisticated legal advice, by all means go out there and do the appropriate research or hire the appropriate expert. I am not a legal expert, and if you decide to act on any of the information in this document, you do so at your own risk.

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CHAPTER 10: The Podcast

The podcast is the last of the eight pillars that are the foundation of a solid production process because in some ways it is the least important. If you have taken the time to deal with the first seven steps in the podcast production process, creating the actual podcast episodes will be much easier. Rather than spending time and energy to repeatedly going over routine administrative and technical issues, you can instead spend more time on more important issues like organizing the content for your shows, or attracting the right team members to your production.

Generally speaking, you make a podcast in order to satisfy an audience. Even the most well executed podcast with fantastic content may not draw an audience. If that happens, in one sense the podcast fails. However, if you had used all eight pillars of the podcasting production process, you would still have in place a system that you could use again and again to either create new podcasts, or to create content and serve an audience using whatever new online communications medium that may come about in the future.

The following points are suggestions for the beginning podcaster. If you follow this advice, you will have a better chance of having more fun with your podcast and getting a lot more out of the process:

Start with reasonable goals: No matter why you are doing a podcast, you should have one or more goals that are measurable and reasonable, such as launching the first episode by a particular day or producing a specific number of shows in the first month.

Start cheap: Do what you can with what you already have. After you review the case studies and other materials, you'll see that you probably don't have to spend an extra dime to complete the first few podcast episodes

Start simple: Don't try to do too much with your early podcast episodes. If you start with a solid foundation in the form of a reasonable plan for producing episodes, you can easily add extras later.

Start short: In the beginning, limit the number of things you do with your early episodes. One big way to do this is to limit the duration of your early shows. Once you get comfortable with producing shows, then you can think about putting more content into your shows.

Always have a plan: No matter how smart or capable you are, podcast production is easier if you have some kind of structure to work with. The plan could be a checklist for routine actions, or it could be a script you write, rewrite, and rewrite again before you turn on the microphone or the camera.

The case studies in the following chapters are based on my experiences creating and running audio and video versions of the Conversation at AirSafe.com podcast. Each case study will follow the general eight-step development process described in this book, with details about the hardware, software, and production techniques used to create the podcast episodes.

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## **CHAPTER 11: The First Airsafe.com Podcast**

When I first decided to come out with a podcast in early 2005, it was to support the ongoing activities of my aviation safety web site AirSafe.com, which been up and running since 1996. At that time, starting a podcast in 2005 was like starting a web site in 1996 in that it took a little bit of work and dedication to find out how to get it done. Because AirSafe.com had very little money and no staff, I had to do some research to figure out what I didn't know, and where I could get some education. Unlike the case in 1995 when I first started to figure out how to build web sites, search engine technology had greatly advance and it was much easier to find online information about podcasts. Between what I found online and one or two books that I bought, I a clear idea of what I had to do to get things started had more than enough to get going.

My experience with creating web sites gave me several advantages. The most important was that I had a built-in audience from visitors to my site. The second was that many of the eight pillars of podcast production that I described earlier had already been completed in order to support the web site. The first step in my podcasting process was to understand what the mission of the podcast would be.

### **Mission**

The AirSafe.com web site was created to provide the public with useful information about aviation safety and security. The particular focus of the site was providing factual and timely information on events that involved the deaths of airline passengers, as well as providing useful information about other issues of concern to the traveling public.

The major strategy to support that mission was to use the Internet as the primary means of both providing information to, and communicating with the public. Initially in 1996, the strategy was to have the information reside only on a web site. As search engine technology evolved and search engines became the biggest generator of web site traffic, I added a second strategy of updating and redesigning the web site to make it much easier the find the site using search engines.

The increasing use of personal electronic devices like the iPod led me to choose podcasting as a third online strategy that would help to better serve the AirSafe.com audience. Podcasting provided an additional way for the audience to interact with the information provided by AirSafe.com. For example, the Internet is unavailable in places that, like the cabins of most passenger jets, lack easy online access. Now, with an iPod or other audio device, users could access AirSafe.com content in the car, at the gym, or in the stratosphere. Having a podcast didn't change AirSafe.com's mission, but the podcast gave AirSafe.com more ways to accomplish that mission.

### **Team**

Because I had an established network of audience members and organizations with an ongoing relationship to AirSafe.com, I was able bring in some of them as passive or active team members. For example knowing what pages generated the most search engine traffic to the site provided me with insights into what kinds of shows would likely be popular. Knowing what web sites linked to AirSafe.com gave me a good idea of which web site owners I might approach for story ideas. Other passive team members included

the people and companies that provided information about podcasting in web sites, blogs, and podcasts, as well as those that provided offline resources in books and magazine articles about podcasting.

I turned some of the passive team members who were in the aviation safety arena into active team members by inviting them to be a guest for one or more shows, or by asking them to help market the podcast.

Because the podcast supported the web site, and because I was already responsible for overseeing all work and all decisions involving the site, my podcast team consisted of one member, namely me. My plan was to do all of the podcast production and content creation on my own for the first few shows, and to possibly include others in the process as I became more familiar with the needs of the production.

The initial shows were all planned to be ones where I could perform all aspects of the production and did not have any guests. As I got more comfortable with the process, I added shows that included guests. For each of the guests, I made them a part of the team by doing four things:

1. Making them aware of the mission of AirSafe.com.
2. Explaining why I wanted to do an interview.
3. Describing how the interview may be used.
4. Getting their consent to use their interview in the podcast and on the web site.

The guests were active team members only until the interview was completed. Once their interview was recorded, edited, and made a part of one or more episodes, they would be a part of AirSafe.com for as long as the web site continues to exist.

After more than six years, the AirSafe.com podcast team has the same composition, with one permanent member (me), temporary members who are on the team for individual shows (usually guests), and passive members like my podcasting mentors. Expanding the number of permanent members will depend on the direction of the show. The most likely outcome is that my company will maintain ownership and control over the podcast, but that others could be brought in to perform some or all of the duties needed to produce additional shows. This would include guest podcasts from producers who would create shows that meet AirSafe.com podcast standards. Before I would make such a move, I'd formalize the production process by creating an operations manual containing instructions for every necessary part of the process. This way, the production duties that are now carried out by me could eventually be assigned to others.

### **Leadership**

Figuring out who would lead my podcast effort was easy. I made all the planning and management decisions before, during, and after each show was produced, and controlled the copyrights to the show, so that made me the leader. Because the podcast was created to support the previously existing web site, all major decisions regarding the podcast were based on what I thought would be consistent with the mission of the web site.

As I made more podcast episodes and found out more about how people relate to podcasts, I came to realize that people find and use podcasts in ways that are very different from the ways that visitors use traditional text-based web sites such as AirSafe.com. For me, a key decision was to take action and develop additional online



resources to exploit those differences in order to better serve the audience. These resources and procedures are described in more detail in the next section.

### **Money and Resources**

There are two kinds of resources needed for podcasting, human and technological. For the AirSafe.com podcast, managing human resources was easy since the only people involved usually consisted of myself and the occasional interview guest. For technological resources, the podcast relied on the existing online access and computer hardware already in use for AirSafe.com. The available computers had no built-in microphones, so I spent about \$100 a microphone and other audio accessories.

While my computers (at the time all Windows based) could record voice audio inputs, they didn't have the capability to edit audio. I added a highly recommended and free program called Audacity, which allowed me to edit and record audio, and to export the result as an MP3 file. A couple of years after I started podcasting, I purchased a MacBook, which came with GarageBand audio software. While quite capable, I decided to keep using Audacity and to make it the common audio editing software for all of my computers. Appendix 1 has more about Audacity and how you can download and install it on a PC or a Mac.

Because the podcast was designed to support the existing audience for the web site AirSafe.com, I decided to use of the web site's servers to host the audio files.

### **Communications**

This support process was largely in place before the podcast was created. I used the same tools for podcast related communications as I did for normal web site related business. The three most important tools were email, telephones, and mailing lists. I acted as my own production team; so most of my podcast related communications were with guests of the show, with AirSafe.com mailing list members, or with the service providers associated with the podcast.

For reaching out to the audience, I used several marketing resources that were already being used for the AirSafe.com web site, including email mailing lists, links on high-traffic AirSafe.com pages, and pages within the site that were designed to support the podcast. The podcast was also prominently featured on the site's home page and on other pages on the site. Taken together, these actions made it easy to focus advertising and marketing efforts on people who had already shown a strong interest in topics covered by the podcast.

In addition to communicating with team members, audience members, and guests, the other ongoing communication needs were with the various service providers. In most cases, I could manage the resources needed for podcasting without having to communicate with a live person. The rare times I had to talk with someone, usually by email, was when a critical resource hosting the web site went offline.

Additional marketing resources developed specifically for the podcast included:

- \* Submitting the podcast to the Apple iTunes system,
- \* Incorporating podcast summaries, including links to individual episodes and to iTunes subscription links, into sites controlled by AirSafe.com,

- \* Submitting the podcast to podcasting directories, and
- \* Creating press releases for new episodes and distributing them using free online press release services such as PRLog.com and openPR.com.

In order to submit the podcast to iTunes, I had to create an RSS feed, which among other things included information about the podcast and about each individual episode. I used Google's Feedburner service to do things like creating blocks of code that could be inserted into a web site in order to create links to recent podcasts. These links were automatically updated each time there was a new podcast entry.

AirSafe.com was my main web site and the primary online asset that supported the podcast, but I also had other supporting online assets such as the blog AirSafeNews.com and an opt-in mailing list. Each time a new episode was launched, I'd add a related post to the blog, and would ensure that every mailing list member was notified. When I started incorporating Twitter and Facebook into the work of AirSafe.com, that too was linked to the blog so that the part of my audience that relied on those services would be informed as soon as a new episode was launched.

### **Planning, Production, and Distribution Systems**

After going through the process of defining my overall mission and the role of podcasts in supporting that mission, it was clear to me that the podcast would focus on the subjects that were of interest to my web site's audience. The site had a mixture of content, with the most popular being high media interest events like plane crashes; aviation safety and security policy issues, and the analysis of individual aircraft accident investigation reports. The process for producing the factual portion of a podcast's content would also follow the same general process for developing written content for the web site.

#### ***Prelaunch Actions***

The web site already had an audience composed of casual visitors, frequent visitors, and mailing list members. While researching the subject of podcasting and the experience of particular podcasters, it became quite clear to me that successful podcasts depended on three things, a well-designed RSS feed; making the podcast easy to find using a search engine, and including the podcast within Apple's iTunes system.

This last item was particularly important for several reasons. First, in order to subscribe to a podcast, a user had to use some kind of software or online application. There were many free options available, but by far the most important one was Apple's iTunes software. It not only allowed users to search for and subscribe to podcasts within the iTunes database, it also allowed users to manage many different kinds of audio and video files on their computer's hard drive.

When creating the RSS feed associated with the podcast, I followed Apple's instructions and made sure that the feed had all the information needed for iTunes, as well as the information needed by other popular online podcast directories.

#### ***Launch Activities***

The official launch of the podcast was in two phases. In the first, I placed the feed and the first episode in a podcast directory on my web site's server. I tested the feed to make sure it was valid, and made sure that I could subscribe to the podcast using iTunes. I also

made a podcast home page within the AirSafe.com web site, as well as links to allow users to subscribe to the podcast using iTunes.

This podcast page (at [podcast.airsafe.org](http://podcast.airsafe.org)) gave visitors three ways to access the podcast:

1. By downloading or playing a single episode.
2. By subscribing through an RSS feed.
3. By subscribing through Apple's iTunes software.

The second phase of the launch was making the current audience for the site aware of the podcast. This was done primarily through the web site's mailing list. I also contacted a few owners of aviation safety web sites and encouraged them to tell their audience about the podcast.

### *Choosing a Podcast Subject*

The decision system was a simple one. I would create a podcast episode about a type of event that in the past had attracted a lot of media attention and web site traffic (plane crashes, hijackings, major policy decisions, releases of accident investigation findings for a major accident, etc.). I'd also make podcasts for other events if they had the potential to attract an audience and if it supported some aspect of the web site.

### *Planning Process for an Individual Podcast*

For each episode, the subject of the podcast dictated what had to be done, but the overall process for each show was quite similar:

- \* Come up with a show topic that is both relevant to AirSafe.com and that could attract a significant audience.
- \* Figure out what kind of content I need for that topic (either content I created or content I acquired from elsewhere).
- \* Figure out what other resources I needed (recording equipment, written or recorded consent statements from guests, etc.)
- \* Write a rough outline of the show.
- \* Write a detailed script for the show.

The two keys to the episode planning process are the outline and the script. The basic outline of each program included the following:

**The introduction:** A one sentence welcome to the show followed by very short description of that show's topic. This portion typically takes up the first 15 to 20 seconds.

**The overview:** A short description of what is in the episode that usually includes any necessary background information. Sometimes the introduction is complete enough to perform this function. This section is also short, typically less than 90 seconds.

**The main topic:** Depending on the show, this portion could be less than a minute long or close to 45 minutes long. The structure of this section depends on the subject matter. For example, a show about a plane crash would start with a summary of the basic facts of the crash, the airline involved, the number of passengers and crew, and the number of fatalities. This would be followed by a review of the safety record of the

airline, and aircraft model, and sometimes the country where the event occurred. If the information were available, I would include factors that were suspected to have caused the event. The last part of a plane crash show would include a description of the status of the investigation, and an identification of the group heading the investigation.

**Call to action:** This is usually in the form of an invitation to visit a specific page on an AirSafe.com related web site to obtain further information. This is also a short segment, typically about 10 seconds long.

**Sign off:** Here I thank the listener by using the show's standard closing line of "Thanks for listening, and I'll see you next time."

An example script from one of my shows is included in Appendix 2.

### *Content Collection and Creation Process*

This process is different for each show, and which process I use depends on the type of show I'm doing. The main types of shows were breaking news, radio or television interviews where I was the person being interviewed, original AirSafe.com podcast interviews, shows featuring a specific aviation safety or security issue, and shows about the work of AirSafe.com:

**Breaking news:** There is usually a significant spike in site visits and podcast downloads for aviation safety related events that are getting heavy media coverage, and it is important to quickly create and launch a podcast about the crash. Most breaking news podcasts deal with plane crashes, so I use the basic outline structure I described above. I would rely on a combination of major news media outlets, selected aviation safety sites, and media organizations near the site of an event to gather basic information on the event.

**Radio or television interviews:** If my podcast consists of a radio interview or a television interview, I'd first review the interview and edit out those portions that I don't want to use. What remains would be the main topic of the podcast. For the overview portion of the podcast, I'd write up a synopsis of the interview and put that in the script. I'd also write up and record separately the introduction, call to action, and signoff sections.

**Guest interviews:** This would be similar to shows featuring radio or television interviews in that the final written script will include every word from the podcast except for what was in the actual interview. I would also write the script after the interview was completed and the guest's portion of the interview was largely edited. Prior to recording the guest interview, I'd have a conversation or email exchange with the guest about what would be discussed and how the recorded interview would be used.

**Highlighting a safety or security issue:** This type of show uses the same basic outline used for breaking news shows, but I would typically draw my material from different sources such as engineering studies or policy analyses.

**AirSafe.com promotional show:** This type of show uses the same basic outline used for breaking news shows. The call to action section will always recommend a visit to a specific AirSafe.com page or to some other resource that is controlled by AirSafe.com.

### *Collecting or Creating the Audio Content*

Most of the audio content for AirSafe.com podcasts comes from one or more of the following sources:

**Microphone:** A microphone connected to my computer and recording my voice using the Audacity audio recording and editing.

**Existing Content:** Previously recorded audio content downloaded from the web, or from offline resources such as CDs or previous podcasts. I avoided potential copyright either by using material that was in the public domain and could be used without permission under the fair use copyright exception, or by using material where I received the copyright owner's permission.

**Streaming Audio:** I'd sometimes record live audio streams using programs such as Audacity or Skype, or Audio Hijack Pro. When using my Windows computer, Audacity was my choice for recording a live stream created by a third party like a radio station. With my MacBook, Audio Hijack Pro does this same function.

**Telephone:** Telephone calls were recorded using Skype for one-on-one conversations, or a conference call service (my favorite is Basement Ventures at <http://thebasementventures.com>) if it were a group conversation.

### *Editing Process*

The Audacity audio recording and editing program is used for all AirSafe.com audio editing. This is a free program that can be used to manage multiple tracks of audio input, and can export the final result as an MP3 file. Resources for downloading and using Audacity are available in Appendix 1. There are also plenty of web sites, podcasts, articles, and other material that can guide you through the basics of how to use it. For now, a good place to start is the web site [how-to-podcast-tutorial.com](http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com). There are online video tutorials at <http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com/17-audacity-tutorial.htm>.

### *New Episode Launch Process*

The launch process for a new episode was relatively simple. After the episode was completed, the file with the RSS information was updated, and both the new episode and the RSS file were uploaded to my web site. Initially I would advertise the new episode through the web site's mailing list. More recently, I've developed a more comprehensive process that uses a combination of dedicated pages on the web site, mailing lists, blogs, and online press releases to make it easy for non-subscribers to find out about the podcast.

### *Episode Evaluation Process*

Each AirSafe.com episode has two goals; to have as many downloads (potential listeners) as possible, and to have listeners take some kind of measurable action. Each episode has at least one call to action at the end of the podcast, typically a request to visit a particular page for more information.

The podcast episodes, and any supporting web pages, were all hosted on the main AirSafe.com server. The ISP provided daily traffic numbers for both the MP3 files and the web pages, and I used Google Analytics for additional traffic data for the support web pages.

A successful episode often had a significant number of downloads in the first few days

after it was published, followed by a higher than average number of daily downloads compared with the other episodes in the series. Also, there may be significant spikes if a high traffic site links to the podcast, or if there is a high interest by the news media in the subject matter in the podcast.

If an episode's call to action was a visit to a URL within AirSafe., then I used my existing tools for analyzing web site traffic. I used other measurements if the call to action was for the listener to do something that did not involve visiting a page on the site.

### ***Distribution Process***

All of the completed podcast episodes were located in a directory on the same server used by AirSafe.com. Links to the individual podcasts were provided in multiple locations on the site, as well as in the AirSafe.com related blogs that mentioned a particular podcast episode. Those who subscribed to the podcast through iTunes or through some other podcast subscription service, or who may have encountered a link to an episode on some other web site also ultimately downloaded their episodes from this same directory.

### ***Technology Evaluation and Implementation Process***

Technology evaluation, which is part of the long term planning process, was split into evaluating the technology used in the podcast production process, and evaluating both new and established online services, software, collaboration tools, and publishing options to see which ones should be tested and considered for inclusion in the podcasting process.

The basic philosophy I used for evaluating the podcasting production process was that if it was working well enough, there was no reason to make radical changes (If it ain't broke, don't fix it). Once my initial recording and editing tools were in place, I made very few changes in the first couple of years. Buying a slightly fancier microphone was about as far as I went.

When it came time to upgrade my computer, I decided to purchase a MacBook, in part because unlike my Windows computer, the MacBook was set up to make it easy to make both video and audio podcasts. When I made the switch, I ended up not using the GarageBand audio editing software that came with the operating system because I found Audacity to be much more convenient for the type of recording and editing I was doing.

One unexpected benefit of using the MacBook was its built in text to speech function. I use it to read the drafts of my scripts. Hearing the words I wrote definitely helps to eliminate clunky or confused language, and also gives me ideas for changing the script that I wouldn't have gotten otherwise.

### **Legal Issues**

Most of the legal issues involving the AirSafe.com podcast had been previously addressed years before the podcast was launched. The technology of the Internet didn't affect the two key legal issues faced by the site, dealing with intellectual property issues and avoiding accusations of defamation. The latter was the easiest to deal with. I also had strict rules about the site's content, mainly that all data would be from publicly available sources and that I would avoid speculation and stick with the facts, rather than opinions, when it came to talking about accidents.

An unexpected event years before the launch of the podcast had led to me taking

significant legal steps to protect anything publish through the website, including the podcast, from most legal difficulties. One day in 2000, I received a call from a law firm expressing concern about one of my pages. CNN had quoted some of the data from AirSafe.com in a critical story about Air Zimbabwe. The law firm informed me that their client was unhappy with CNN's story, and they wanted me to remove some of the data from my site. To make a long story short, I changed nothing about the site, but I changed many things about the way I did business, including creating specific guidelines that made it very unlikely to have any claim of defamation stand up to any legal challenge.

When it came time to create the podcast, it was clear that all the things I did to protect the intellectual property in the web site would be appropriate to the podcast. Among those actions were the following:

- \* Following the rules when using the copyrighted material of others.
- \* Including a copyright notice wherever appropriate.
- \* Always getting permission from guests for audio or video recordings

For an audio podcast, rather than including a verbal copyright notice, I included the notice on all pages that supported the podcast. Whenever I had a guest, I would have him or her consent to having their voices recorded, and to allow their voice recordings to be used by AirSafe.com. That consent would have to be recorded in some way, either in writing by email or in an audio recording. This step was completed before each interview.

### ***Fair Use and Public Domain in the Podcast***

Because much of what I did was news or public policy related, I could freely use bits and pieces of copyrighted written or recorded materials, such as short portions of a news broadcast, within a podcast episode. Also, many of my shows were based on factual information, which can't be copyrighted, even if the data were in a copyrighted document. Material in most government documents, for example airline accident investigation reports, are usually in the public domain.

### **The Podcast**

The podcast adhered to the mission of AirSafe.com, which was to provide the public with useful information about aviation safety and security. It also adhered to my philosophy of how to satisfy my audience—Give the people what they want, and just a little bit of what I think they need. While the podcast was a completely different way of delivering content, I saw no reason to change my approach when it came to what type of content would be in the podcast.

Shortly after I launched the web site AirSafe.com in 1996, it became clear to me that the strength of the web site was presenting reference information, especially data and analyses of data, that would not have to be frequently changed and that could be organized in a consistent and logical way. Being able to link between pages allowed me to build into the web site the ability for a visitor to flow smoothly between pages with related content.

Podcasts have different kinds of strengths, one of which was the ability to engage the audience on a different level. It wasn't a replacement for the mostly text based information on the site, but it was an excellent resource that supplemented existing information. A podcast could also stand on its own, which was necessary since I planned

to allow people to subscribe to the podcast or download individual episodes without having to visit AirSafe.com.

When it came to the overall podcasting process for the audio podcast, I followed the suggestions I mentioned earlier:

**Start with reasonable goals:** One of the early goals was to provide content that expanded on material that was already in the site. Once I got more experience, my goal was to produce shows more frequently.

**Start cheap:** Using the capabilities built into my computer, and free software I downloaded from the Internet, I only spend about \$100 for a microphone and associated hardware. If my notebook had a built-in microphone, something that is standard for most new laptops, I would have spent no extra money.

**Start simple:** The early shows consisted of me as the narrator, with no guests, and only a few extras like opening and closing music. Over time I added things like interviews or combining and editing multiple tracks of audio content. What was clear to me after few shows that whether it were a simple show or a complex one, the more planning I did ahead of time, the easier the show would be to complete.

**Always have a plan:** This piece of wisdom took a while to develop. Things always went more smoothly, and with much less aggravation, if I had a plan in place for a show. If it were just me talking, I'd write and rewrite my script before I recorded the show. If I had a guest, I'd do background information on the guest and the subject matter, and would have numerous questions lined up ahead of time.

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## CHAPTER 12: The Video Version of the Podcast

About a year after I began the audio podcast, I decided to look at video podcasts as an option. This wasn't a different podcast, but rather an expansion of the original podcast to include video episodes. While the process for a video podcast was in many ways exactly like that of an audio podcast, the marketing aspect was entirely different. The biggest difference is the way online users find or distribute videos is very different from the way that audio is discovered and distributed.

To understand that difference, just think of YouTube. Launched in December 2005, it quickly became extremely popular (the first big hit was the Saturday Night Live rap video "Lazy Sunday"). Just as iTunes is the 900-pound gorilla of audio podcasts distribution options, YouTube played that role in video distribution. However, I'm getting ahead of myself. Read on and you'll see how AirSafe.com's video podcast developed.

### **Mission**

There was no difference between the basic mission of the audio and video version of the podcast. It was conceived as a video version of the audio podcast. The main difference was in the tactics used to accomplish that mission, tactical differences that I'll discuss below.

### **Team**

I used the same team I used for the audio podcast. I was able to do my own video editing work (details below), so no additional people were added to the team.

### **Leadership**

The same story held true for leadership. I didn't need to make any changes for the video podcast.

### **Money and Resources**

In order to create and distribute video podcasts, I used a few additional resources:

**Video recording hardware:** Video podcasts have three kinds of visuals, digital photos, video, and other graphics. I used a digital camera to capture some visual content. In my case, I already owned a camera, so I made no additional purchases. I also used my existing audio equipment from my audio podcast for the audio for the video podcast.

**Video editing software:** When I first began my video podcasts, I used the Windows Movie Maker program that bundled along with the Windows operating system. When I purchased a MacBook, the iMovie video editing program was included. For me, iMovie was much easier to use, so became my main editing program.

**Photo management system:** The earliest podcasts used relatively simple visual elements, mostly still photos and presentation slides. Software to manage and edit these visual elements were already available, so no additional costs were incurred.

**Additional distribution channels:** Video sharing sites like YouTube were added to the existing channels because of their popularity and because it made it possible for potential new audience members who preferred to use video based information to

discover the work of AirSafe.com without having to visit any of the existing AirSafe.com web sites. In 2010, I added Facebook as an additional distribution channel to attract potential audience members who are very comfortable with using social media tools to connect with a like-minded community. Facebook, like all the video sharing sites, was free, so no efforts other than becoming a registered user were necessary.

### **Communications**

All the communications processes and procedures for the audio podcast were used for the video podcasts. In addition, the communications tools within YouTube and Facebook were used to communicate with audience members who preferred to provide feedback through those options.

### **Planning, Production, and Distribution Systems**

From the very beginning, the video podcast was required to be useful for those who had the ability to play videos and those who only had the ability to play audio. Because of that requirement, all the essential information in the show was contained in the audio podcast. To make that process easy, a key decision was to use the audio podcast episode as the audio track for the video version of that same episode.

The production of a video podcast episode was really three separate processes: the development of the audio track, the development of the visual elements of the episode, and editing the audio and visual elements for each video podcast.

#### ***Overall Preproduction Planning***

There was no real difference in most areas of preproduction planning compared to the audio podcast. The one exception was the length of the episode. Because YouTube was by far the most popular video sharing resource, the videos were designed around a key YouTube's limit of having videos that were less than 10 minutes in length. It was possible to break up longer videos into shorter segments, but I decided to keep things simple and keep all the video episodes shorter than 10 minutes. Starting in 2011, this limitation was lifted for videos submitted through the AirSafe.com YouTube account.

#### ***Prelaunch and Launch Actions***

The only additional task was registering with at least one video sharing service. My research showed that YouTube was by far the most popular of these services, so I made sure that I set up AirSafe.com's YouTube account to create a "channel" (at [youtube.com/airsafe](https://www.youtube.com/airsafe)) that has links to all of the podcast's uploaded videos, plus background information about the podcast. While YouTube was the first service I used, I added several others as well. I later signed up to use the video management service at TubeMogul.com, a service that allowed me to upload a video to TubeMogul.com, which would then submit it to all of the video sharing sites that I used.

There was no separate launch activities associated with the video podcast since the videos were incorporated into the ongoing podcast.

#### ***Choosing a Podcast Subject***

The decision to make a video podcast depended on whether the podcast had compelling visual elements. If there were none, I would only produce an audio episode (MP3). If

there were visual elements, I'd create three versions of each episode, the audio MP3 version, a WMV video version, and either an MP4 or M4V video episode. The WMV versions could be played with the video players available on all personal computers using the Windows operating system, and either MP4 or M4V files could be played on Mac personal computers, or on iPods (and later iPhones).

### *Planning Process for an Individual Podcast*

The main difference between the planning process for the audio and video episode is the addition of a plan for the visual elements. The style of the early video podcasts was initially influenced by PowerPoint type presentations, in part because most podcasts were informational in nature. Because the videos had to be usable if played on an iPod screen, these slides had relatively large text sizes. Over time, the emphasis changed from adding explanatory slides to focusing on visual elements to tell the story. The unique things I do for visual elements of the video podcasts include the following:

**Breaking news:** The emphasis was on using visual elements that were readily available, including television news reports, photos or videos submitted by eyewitnesses, and reports from the investigating authorities.

**Radio or television interviews:** Radio interviews tend to be longer format shows, typically beyond the 10 minute limit that I imposed on videos, so these were kept as audio only shows until the AirSafe.com YouTube account was allowed to exceed the 10 minute limit. The graphics were relatively simple for radio shows, typically a single static image. Television interviews tended to be relatively short, and of course they already included video content, so they were ideal for video podcasts.

**Guest interviews:** Like radio interviews, these also tend to be longer format shows that were audio only until the AirSafe.com YouTube account limits were changed.

**Highlighting a safety or security issue:** This kind of show usually had graphics culled from news sites, government reports, and aviation organizations. Also, PowerPoint type slides worked well with this kind of show.

**AirSafe.com promotional show:** For these shows, I included photos or graphics from the product or service that is being profiled.

### *Video Editing Process*

The video editing process for AirSafe.com's podcasts started with the audio podcast as the foundation, which meant that the elapsed time of the video podcast was the same as that for the audio podcast, and drove how the visual elements were arranged, with visual transitions coordinated with the transitions in the audio track.

Windows Movie Maker allowed basic logos and captions to be placed of withinof video segments. However, since most of the visual elements were PowerPoint type slides, I used PowerPoint or the OpenOffice presentation program to create slides. Those slides were exported as GIF files, and those were then placed into the video using Windows Movie Maker.

When I transitioned to a MacBook, I kept the same basic process, but I used iMovie in place of the Windows video editing program, and Keynote, Apple's presentation manager program, to create slides. However, I kept Audacity as the audio editing program, in large

part because I found it easier to edit audio using Audacity than with GarageBand (the audio editing software that came with the MacBook).

### ***Launching a Podcast Episode***

The launch process for a video podcast was similar to that for the audio podcast, but with a few extra tasks. The most important task was to upload the video to TubeMogul.com, which would in turn upload it to all the video sharing sites I used, including AOL video, Veoh, DailyMotion, and Metacafe.

When I mentioned the podcast in one of AirSafe.com's blogs or web sites, I'd include links to the video files stored on AirSafe.com's servers. While this was done for the audio podcasts with a single link to an MP3 file, there would be three links with each new video podcast. One for the MP3 file for the audio version, one for the WMV file, and one for either an MP4 or M4V file. In addition, I'd also embed the YouTube video of the episode in key pages of the site. Because video files are much larger than the audio files for the podcast, having the embedded YouTube option allowed visitors with slower connections to see the video without downloading it onto their computer.

### ***Episode Evaluation Process***

Video podcasts are evaluated the same way as audio podcasts. I use additional traffic services provided by TubeMogul to determine traffic through all the video sharing services I use, plus additional analysis tools provided by YouTube. The YouTube account provides valuable services such as analyzing the average time that a viewer spends watching a video. After a few months, the detailed YouTube data made it clear that most viewers have a short attention span. If there isn't something compelling in the first 30 seconds then the viewers were likely to stop watching. With these insights, over time the videos were redesigned so that a summary of the podcast plus other key information about the show are heard and seen by viewers in the first 15-20 seconds.

### ***Technology Evaluation and Implementation Process***

This process was largely covered in the AirSafe.com audio podcast case study. The one additional part of the process was keeping track of video related developments for production and distribution of online videos. Other than the change to using the MacBook video editing process, there were not significant additions or changes to the production process.

### **Legal**

The issues associated with the video podcast were no different from those of the audio podcast, and were addressed in a similar way.

### **The Podcast**

The video podcast was never meant to be separate effort from the audio podcast. The goal was to keep the differences between audio and video podcasts to a minimum, while taking advantage of the additional distribution opportunities offered by YouTube and other video sharing sites. The suggestions I made earlier for the beginning podcaster were relevant for the audio podcast from the earlier chapter, and they are still relevant for the video podcast:

**Start with reasonable goals:** For my early video podcasts, my goal was to become

familiar with the differences between producing and distributing audio and video episodes. Once I became familiar with these differences, it made it easier to make adjustments to take advantage of what the video format had to offer over the audio format.

**Start cheap:** I didn't plan to buy additional equipment. I found that it was relatively easy to make compelling episodes using graphics made from presentation programs, video clips from outside sources, and still images from either my own photo collection or from various online sources.

**Start simple:** Early on, my visual content consisted of slides, still photos, and a few captions. I later added video clips to the mix, but the core video style hasn't changed much.

**Start with reasonable goals:** One of the early goals was to provide content that expanded on material that was already in the site. Once I got more experience, my goal was to produce shows more frequently.

**Always have a plan:** The early plan focused on getting the video production process under control. Once that was done, the focus expanded to figuring out how to use free online resources to systematically expand the audience for the video version of the podcast.

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## CHAPTER 13: Example of a Podcast Plan for a School

If you have gone through the preceding case studies, you have more than enough background to start creating your own podcast. In what follows, I'll take you through a proposed podcast creation process for a podcast that supports the mission of a school. I'll compare the issues the school would face with the issues faced by AirSafe.com, and suggests ways to deal with those issues.

### **Eight Pillars That Support the Podcast**

While a school may be a nonprofit educational entity that would have a completely different mission from AirSafe.com, anyone involved with a school's podcast will still have to deal with the same kinds of planning, organizational, and legal issues. I'll assume that the podcast will involve students in a significant way, and that they will be responsible for most or all aspects of the podcast.

- 1. Mission:** The mission of the podcast should directly support some part of the school's mission. If you can't figure out how the podcast supports the school's mission, then there is no need to go forward.
- 2. Team:** For the podcast to have any useful educational value, students must have a critical role in the planning and development of the podcast. Because of the limitations that students normally have, for example limitations on making contractual obligations on behalf of the school, there will be some key areas where faculty and staff must take the lead. In all other areas, students should be free to have as much responsibility as they are willing to accept.
- 3. Leadership:** Like with just about any formal, school-sponsored activity involving students, there will be an adult who is responsible for overseeing that activity, and usually one or more students who are responsible for at least some decision making, planning, and operation of that activity. Given that many children and teens are able and willing to master the tools and techniques associated with the podcasting process, they should also be encouraged to take the lead in producing and managing the podcast.
- 4. Money and Resources:** If a school has Internet access and if students have regular access to one or more personal computers, then most of the resources needed to produce a successful podcast already exist.
- 5. Communications:** If a podcast episode or podcast series were to be created and used completely within the school by faculty, staff, and students, then there may not be any significant communication issues. If there is a need to contact people outside of the school, there will definitely be a need to come up with clear rules as to who can communicate with the outside world and what role the faculty or staff members have in that process.
- 6. Planning, Production, and Distribution Systems:** There should be no significant differences in what systems a school would use to create, distribute, or market a podcast, and what any other podcaster would use.
- 7. Legal Issues:** In the US, the most important legal issue that would affect most schools is that younger students may not be allowed to sign up or use some online

resources. Most online services don't allow children under the 13 to sign for an account, which means that one or more adults will likely have to be responsible for arranging and maintaining such services.

**8. The Podcast:** Once again, the podcast is at the end of the list because if the previous seven items are not addressed, it is unlikely that the podcast will be successful. The idea of making a podcast is likely to be far more exciting to the students than the idea of working through organizational or legal issues. However, the key to a successful podcast, whether in school or out of school, is to have a firm idea of the importance of the other seven areas before anyone picks up a camera or microphone.

### **Mission**

A podcasting project should not be the reason a school creates a mission statement. Any school should have some kind of mission statement written down somewhere. You may recall from earlier in the book that my own theory is that any good mission statement should have two qualities: first, the average ten-year-old should be able to understand it, and second you should be able to say it in ten seconds or less. Even if the school's mission statement fails to meet these two criteria, the podcast's mission statement should still meet them.

### **Team**

The roles played by the team don't change for a school-sponsored podcast, but some roles would be best filled by a student, and others by a faculty or staff member.

**Technical manager:** This person is responsible for overseeing hardware, software, and service resources. While a student may fill this role, it is likely that a school already has a staff member or teacher who fulfills this role.

**Legal advisor:** In addition to the regular legal issues like copyright and fair use, schools have additional limitations, often based on school policies, when it comes to what students or student organizations can do. A teacher, administrator, or other school employee take the lead in this area.

**Episode producer:** If it will be a student-oriented podcast episode, then one or more students should take on that role, with teachers or other adult advisors in a support role.

**Talent and content wrangler:** Like the episode producer, this role is best filled by a student.

**Podcast manager:** A successful podcast will likely last for years, and that longer term focus is best provided by a member of the faculty or staff.

**Marketing manager:** This is likely a shared responsibility between the students and the adults. Coordinating some marketing efforts will involve entities outside of the school, so this is best done by an adult, but creating and testing various marketing strategies, especially new ones, is probably best led by students.

**Fulfillment manager:** Since this will involve using outside online resources, this would be best done by an adult.

**Technology advisor:** The task of evaluating the relevant technology and making recommendations on what to use is best done jointly between students and staff since

children and adults tend to have divergent, though complimentary, approaches to using various online technologies.

**Podcast mentor:** Finding a person or group that has experience producing podcasts and a willingness to work with a school is ideal, but finding that combination may be difficult. Fortunately, there are a number of resources, including books, web sites, blogs, and other podcasts that can satisfy that mentor role by providing both advice and examples of what to do and what not to do.

### **Leadership**

Realistically, it is unlikely that an elementary school would have students with the capability, motivation, and maturity to manage a podcast. In a middle school or a high school, it is also unlikely that any podcast will maintain the students' interest unless the school is willing to let the students assume the responsibility of running large parts of the show. A podcast is similar to any other ongoing student run organization or ongoing project in that without leadership contributions from both students and staff, it won't survive.

### **Money and Resources**

The resources needed for a school-sponsored podcast are no different from the resources used for the audio or video podcasts that were described in earlier sections.

### **Communications**

A school-based podcast provides an excellent opportunity to teach students several things about the importance of communication within the school and with people and organizations outside of the school. Internally, everyone involved with the process will have to become comfortable with checklists, procedures, production manuals, and other written materials that help provide a consistent look and feel to the podcast, and to smoothly bring new students into the production process.

Developing the production process is a collaborative effort; doing so should help to bring the school community together in two ways. First, by encouraging those directly involved with the podcast to communicate with one another, and second by providing a tool for communicating both within the school and with the larger community.

Having a podcast makes it necessary for the school to develop an external communication policy, or to follow an already existing policy. A school should already have rules in place that deal with any communication with the outside world, especially online communications like email and instant messages. That policy should be clearly understood by anyone involved in the podcast, especially students. Probably the easiest thing to do is to designate a single faculty or staff person to coordinate any external communications.

### **Planning, Production, and Distribution Systems**

Podcasting systems are associated with tasks that fall under one of two general categories: those that are done once and those that are done every time a new episode is created. How those systems work will be no different than the way I described them in earlier sections. Who is involved in creating or operating those systems will depend on both the system and the most sensible role that should be played by students, staff, or outsiders.



Systems that are directly related to producing a podcast series include the following:

**Overall preproduction planning:** Preproduction planning for the initial podcast, or for any major revision of the of the school's podcasting process, has to involve both students and staff. This is one of those tasks that represent a learning opportunity for the students and the staff as both sides get a better understanding about how they view the Internet and what it can do for the school.

**Prelaunch actions:** Some prelaunch activities, specifically creating an initial RSS feed, are one-time activities that are best performed by the school's technical staff. Most other prelaunch activities that will be done only once, for example naming the podcast, are best done jointly by students and school staff.

**Podcast launch process:** Enthusiasm will be at its height when the podcast launches. This is the time to get as many people involved as possible, and to make sure that the entire school community is made aware of the podcast and how to find it.

**Decision system to determine what additional episodes should be made:** This where all sides should put in their two cents, and to get everyone to agree on what kinds of shows will be made. This is an ongoing activity since the kinds of shows that students and staff will want to make will evolve once the podcast is up and running.

**Planning process for an individual podcast:** With the exception of a microphone, which can be purchased for well under \$100, all the resources needed should be readily available to most schools. At the beginning, everyone should be made aware of what is involved in the process, and also aware of who is responsible for managing those resources, and what resources (specifically computers, time or space set aside for interviews or meetings, etc.) will be made available.

**Content collection and creation process:** This aspect should be largely the responsibility of the students, more for practical reasons than anything else. Given that the means by which content can be collected will constantly evolve (Skype, online videos, live audio streams, and cell phone videos just to name a few), it is much more likely that the students will be more willing to master and exploit these new and different ways of getting content.

**Editing process:** The staff of the school should stay away from this activity, except to give advice as to how the final result should look or sound. After all, in the average school, who is more likely to have the extra time and energy to do the detailed and meticulous task of audio or video editing?

**Episode launch process:** Because each new episode requires an update of the RSS feed this will likely be the responsibility of whoever updates or manages the school's web site, blogs, mailing lists, or other online resources used to host the podcast files or promote the podcast.

**Episode evaluation process:** This is another task that is best done by all involved.

Other systems that were always running in the background are related to your overall online strategy. While these systems benefit the podcast, they will likely also support all of the other things that you do online:

**Communications process:** External communications, including any contact with potential guests and podcast subscribers, should be run through whatever process the

school has for all external communications.

**Marketing and promotion process:** For those aspects of marketing and promotion that go beyond the students, staff, families, and other parts of the school's immediate community, the creative parts of this process should involve everyone associated with the podcast, but the execution of this process (emails, letters, web site updates, etc.) should pass through a responsible staff member.

**Technology evaluation and implementation process:** Most of these related activities will likely be done by a faculty member or staff member. That includes things like downloading free software, trying new online applications or tools, or buying new hardware or software. On the other hand, most of the suggestions of what new innovations to try will likely come from students, who are far more likely to be exposed to new online and offline technological innovations.

### **Legal Issues**

Schools are subject to the same legal restrictions as anyone else when it comes to issues like copyright and libel. One of the legal areas where schools have to pay particular attention are those US federal laws concerning online privacy of children. The most important of these is the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which became law in 2000. In short, COPPA requires that web sites get permission from an adult before collecting information from children under the age of 13. The practical effect is that for most free online services, children under the age of 13 can't sign up for an account. For schools, that means in most cases a school employee has to be the registered users for any online service that the school's podcast needs to use.

Internally, whatever policy the school has on students' use of the Internet should be reviewed to see if any part of the policy will affect the podcast. For example, if the school's Internet use policy expressly forbids students from downloading or uploading files, or from using certain services such as YouTube, then either the policy should be changed to allow students to do that for podcast related activities, or the podcasting procedure should be adjusted to comply with school policy.

### ***Copyright***

The good thing about copyright is that it is automatically given to original works like podcasts. This gives the school the right to use and reuse any podcast material in any way that it pleases. While copyrights are a good thing, the school should also take basic steps to protect that copyright.

One thing that should be done is to make sure that the school can use the raw material that makes up the podcast. Most schools have some kind of process where parents grant the school permission to use a child's image in school publications. The school should obtain the same sort of permission to use a student's voice or image in podcasts. For outside guests who may be a part of podcast, for example someone who is interviewed by the students, there should be some kind of written or verbal permission from that guest to use their voice or image. At AirSafe.com, that is usually done by either having a guest respond to an email where I ask for that permission, or by recording their verbal acknowledgement at the beginning of an interview.

### ***Fair Use and Public Domain***

Schools have a lot of leeway when it comes to using copyright material for educational purposes. In short, almost anything goes. However, when it comes to a podcast, a school has to be careful. It's OK to use a song from the latest pop sensation in a presentation that will be used only in class, but it may be a big problem if that song is used in a podcast episode that is available to the public. When in doubt, avoid using anything that is not clearly in the public domain.

### ***Privacy and Security***

The same kind of precautions that the school takes for printed publications or the web site should extend to the podcast. Common sense protections include not providing a student's full name, address, schedule, or contact information in any part of the podcast.

### **Podcast**

Have you heard the joke about the dog that spends all day chasing cars, but is totally confused about what to do the first time it actually catches one? Well, don't be that dog. Think of the audience as the car. Once you catch their attention, you have to have a plan to keep their attention. To give the podcast a better chance of success, you might want to consider to the following suggestions:

**Start with reasonable goals:** As you have seen from the rest of this document, there are a lot of steps in the podcasting process. Set your schedule based on what has to be done before the first podcast launches, and on the amount of time and energy you and the others involved in the production can give to the process. Another obvious thing to keep in mind is the school's calendar. Ideally, the podcast schedule, both production and distribution, should make sense given the school's schedule.

**Start cheap:** If you have Internet access and basic personal computers, you really don't need to spend significant amounts of money. More specifically, put a \$100 limit on all initial expenditures, including the kickoff party you should have after you launch the podcast.

**Start simple:** How simple? How about an audio-only podcast that has no more than three people in speaking parts and no additional music?

**Start short:** How short? Take a poll of the students in the school and find out the length of the most popular music video of the day. Make sure that the first five podcasts are at least 30 seconds shorter. Is this an arbitrary time limit? Yes it is. Do you have a better idea for the ideal length of a podcast? If you do, write to me at [tcurtis@airsafe.com](mailto:tcurtis@airsafe.com).

**Always have a plan:** That plan should be written, and it should be less than a page long for each major function, such as a checklist for routine actions to be completed for each podcast, the proposed script for a show, or a list of tasks to be completed after each show is finished. Remember, if the podcast is to be an educational tool, the process can't just reside in the minds of a few enthusiastic students and staff members, it has to be in a form that future students can learn from and build on.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Downloading and Using Audacity**

The instructions in this appendix were taken from the article “Audacity 101” by Dr. Pat LeMay Burr and Joseph Kirby, Web Site Magazine, May 2008, pp. 34-35, accessed 29 September 2008 from <http://www.websitemagazine.com/content2/PDFs/podcasting-audacity-registered.pdf> and currently available at <http://www.websitemagazine.com/content/blogs/posts/pages/AUDACITY-101-Free-Podcast-Production-for-Your-Website.aspx>

If you are the least bit intrepid you can add value to your website with a podcast in a matter of minutes. The tools you need include free, open source Audacity software and a good headset microphone costing less than \$30. If you have these items, then you’re ready to go.

### **Audacity Software**

Audacity reproduces recordings — ranging from voice memos to arias and compressed business podcasts — making them ready for posting online.

You can download, install and use Audacity without any associated costs or licensing problems. As is common with open-source software, there exists a loose-knit community in cyberspace offering help and adding improvements.

Audacity is an ideal utility for use in growing businesses with limited budgets, by moderately experienced techies who have no new software phobias, and is particularly fun for people who are not afraid to delete first efforts then try again.

### **Audacity Applications for a Website**

Audacity allows you to create, compress and post a variety of online audio podcasts to tell your organization’s story, explain how to use products and services, describe how to find your place of business and detail how to take advantage of special offers of the week or month. Such product demonstrations, how-to podcasts and simple repair advice audio can enrich a site immensely.

Interviews with happy clients, advance notice of new services, offers of qualifying for free delivery and directions for how to place orders can also act as positive shopping reinforcements for customers. The podcasts may also be added to various pages and may feature different voices, in addition to your own.

### **Getting Started**

Audacity records the podcast to an AUP file extension, and as long as you stay in the AUP file extension format, you can continue to edit the file you have created. When you are satisfied with the final product, export the AUP file using the option under FILE. The LAME software encodes it, and it becomes an MP3 compressed file. More on this later. For now, the two download sites are:

1. Audacity 1.2.6: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>
2. LAME MP3 encoder: <http://lame.buanzo.com.ar/>

### **Step 1: Download Audacity and LAME MP3 Encoder**

In your browser, navigate to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>. Click on the “Download

Audacity 1.2.6” link. After the new page loads, go to the recommended download link and click “Audacity 1.2.6 installer.” Choose SAVE FILE when the download window pops up.

Next, navigate to a location where you would like to save your files. At this location, create a new folder in which you will store your new file. Type in a name for your new folder— something like “PODCAST TEST”— and ENTER. Then, double-click the folder, give your first test file a name and SAVE. After completing these steps, close any open windows.

To complete the download process, you must download the LAME MP3 encoder. This file is linked from the Audacity Web page, so return to the Sourceforge site.

After navigating to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>, click on the “Download Audacity 1.2.6” link. Go to the “Optional Downloads” area and select “LAME MP3 encoder.” On the new page, choose to go to the “LAME Download Page” under the Windows subheading.

Next, choose to download the file `libmp3lame-win-3.97.zip`, and click OK to save the file to disk. Store the file in the folder that you created earlier, (where the Audacity file is already stored) and SAVE. Finally, close any open windows and prepare for the next step.

### **Step 2: Install Audacity**

Both software files are now downloaded, but neither is yet installed. So, in this step, we will complete the Audacity installation.

Go to the location where you saved the file and double-click “`audacity-win-1.2.6.exe`.” Then, in a sequence of three clicks, choose NEXT, then (after reading) I ACCEPT THE AGREEMENT, then NEXT.

Continue to click NEXT until you get to the INSTALL option then choose INSTALL to begin the installation of the main files.

After you complete the step above, uncheck the box for “Launch Audacity” and click FINISH to close the installation program. Finally, delete the installation file that is no longer needed and go to the next step.

### **Step 3: Extract the Lame MP3 Encoder**

Note: This section assumes that you have WinRAR, an extraction utility, installed. This utility, or one like it, is needed to extract the LAME MP3 from its ZIP format. WinRAR 3.71 is recommended and may be downloaded from <http://www.winrar.com/download.html>.

Now that Audacity is installed, extracting the LAME MP3 encoder is next. This encoder “exports,” or converts the AUP file extension sound recordings into a compressed MP3 format.

Go to the location where you saved the LAME MP3 encoder zip file and double-click “`libmp3lame-win-3.97.zip`.” Close the purchase box window that pops up, then double-click the “`libmp3lame-3.97`” folder.

Highlight the “`lame_enc.dll`” file that sits within the zipped archive, and then click

EXTRACT TO in the menu bar area. Select the location where you would like the extracted file to go, click OK to begin the extraction and close any open windows.

When you have completed the above steps, the “lame\_enc.dll” file should be in a folder called “libmp3lame-3.97.” This folder will be located in the storage location that you specified earlier. Remember where this file is located, because you will need to access it later.

#### **Step 4: Set up Sound Properties**

Now is the time to set up the speaker and microphone sound properties. This involves first checking the sound properties in Audacity, then checking the sound properties in Windows.

First, start the Audacity program by double-clicking its shortcut on the desktop, then check the audio settings in the menu bar to ensure that speaker and microphone volumes are set at the desired level. Before testing your settings with a recording, ensure that Window’s sound properties are also correctly configured.

To audit Window’s sound properties, right-click the speaker icon located in the Taskbar, and select “Adjust Audio Properties.” Ensure that the “Mute” box under “Device Volume” is not checked and that the volume-slider is positioned to a level that is audible.

Click the “Audio” tab at the top of the window and ensure that the proper “Sound Playback” and “Sound Recording” devices are selected. Next, click “Volume” in the “Sound Recording” area of the window and ensure that “Mute All” is not checked and that the microphone is at an audible level. Close the top window and click OK.

Test the recording and playback volume by doing the following:

- Press RECORD (the red icon at the top) and say a few words into the microphone.
- Press STOP (the amber square icon) to discontinue recording.
- Press PLAY (the green arrow icon) to listen to the recording.

If you like what you hear, continue on to the next section. If not, experiment to adjust your sound properties settings.

#### **Step 5: Ready Set, Go!**

Finally, Audacity and LAME are ready for use. Start the Audacity program by double-clicking its shortcut on the desktop. Press RECORD and read from a prepared script that tells online customers where your business is located and how long you have been in business. Press STOP. During this test, users often like to use the built-in microphone on their computer, but production for a finished MP3 file depends upon a dedicated headset microphone for quality.

As you are speaking during this initial test, you will see sound waves — measurements of your own voice being recorded. If you see a flat line, nothing is being recorded, so press STOP, then EDIT, UNDO RECORD, then RECORD to start over.

After you have recorded this test podcast, click PLAY and you will hear your first podcast recording in its AUP uncompressed format.

## **The Final Export to the MP3 Compressed Podcast Format**

Now, just for fun, step through the process of exporting the AUP production file (meaning converting and compressing it to a smaller size file) into an MP3 file format.

A major purpose of this export and compression process is to decrease the file size. In Audacity, three file extensions are possible — AUP, WAV or MP3. The largest file size is the production mode of AUP, and the smallest is MP3. If you remember the many times you have abandoned a website that took too long to download because of large file sizes, then you know why you always want to compress the finished podcast to an MP3 format before posting it online.

To export the AUP file, click FILE in the Menu area and select the EXPORT AS MP3 option. Navigate to the preferred storage location, type in a name for the file and SAVE.

Read the box and click YES to help Audacity locate the “lame\_enc.dll” file location. Then, navigate to the location where you stored the file — the location you wrote down earlier.

Select the “lame\_enc.dll” file and click OPEN. Type names in the title and artist prompts, then click OK. Your AUP file just became an MP3 podcast!

The last task in Audacity 101 is to save the podcast file containing all aspects of the sound clips into a master folder that might be labeled, for example, WEBSITE PODCASTS. This master folder is your personal reminder that while any files still in your Audacity folder named PODCAST TEST are in production mode, the files in your WEBSITE PODCASTS folder are the finished products.

Go to FILE in the menu and select the SAVE PROJECT AS option. Navigate to the location where you want to store the now-MP3 file, type a name for the project, and SAVE. Congratulations, you now have completed your first professional podcast, and you did it with free software!

### ***About the Authors:***

Dr. Pat LeMay Burr teaches podcasting in the MBA program at University of the Incarnate Word, where she is building a volunteer group to help institutionalize the XO Laptop (One Laptop per Child Program) in developing nations.

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## **APPENDIX 2: Example Podcast Episode Script**

The following was the script that I used for a podcast produced shortly after the crash of a airliner in Spain. The script served several purposes, with the most important being refining my message so that as much useful information about the event was presented efficiently. This written script became the basis of the supporting marketing materials, including the blog associated with the podcast, and the online press release created to support this episode. Note that at the end of the podcast is a call to action, in this case an invitation to visit a web page for additional information. You can see that page, along with links to the audio and video content, at [airsafe.com/podcasts/show62.htm](http://airsafe.com/podcasts/show62.htm)

Welcome to the Conversation at AirSafe.com, with your host Dr. Todd Curtis.

This is show #62 - Crash of Spanair MD82 on 20 August 2008

The aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff on a scheduled domestic flight from Madrid to Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. Early reports indicated that the left engine experienced a major malfunction during the takeoff. The aircraft was able to get airborne, but the crew set the aircraft down in a area to the right of the departure runway. The aircraft broke up and there was a severe post-crash fire.

There were 162 passengers and 10 crew members on board, and 153 of the 172 occupants were killed. Among the passengers were 20 children and two infants. Both infants reportedly survived. Many of the 19 survivors suffered burns, some of them serious.

This was the first fatal event for Spanair, the second largest of the five airlines in the SAS group. At the end of June 2008, there were 65 aircraft in the Spanair fleet, averaging 13 years old. The fatal event aircraft was built in 1993.

This was the second fatal jet event for the SAS group, with the previous fatal event occurring on an SAS MD87 in Milan, Italy in 2001.

This was also a code share flight with Lufthansa, and that airline reported that seven of their passengers had transferred to the Spanair flight from a previous Lufthansa flight.

This was the 15th fatal event involving the MD80 series aircraft. Four fatal events have been in Europe, and four in the US. The aircraft began commercial operations in 1980, with the first fatal event in 1981. This latest crash was the eighth fatal MD80 event since 2000.

The Spanish Government is leading the investigation, with assistance from several US organizations, including the FAA, the NTSB, Boeing, and engine manufacturer Pratt & Whitney.

Additional information about this event, including updates or findings from the investigation, will be available at [spanair.airsafe.org](http://spanair.airsafe.org).

Thanks for listening, and I'll see you next time.

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## **GLOSSARY**

### ***A-B-C***

Acceptable Use - A set of rules or guidelines that limit how a resource such as Internet access may be used.

Audio Hijack Pro - Audio editing and recording software program.

Blog - Short for Web log, this is a type of web site that features a series of regularly updated entries, usually displayed in reverse chronological order. These entries typically includes some combination of text, graphics, or multimedia files.

Blogging - The act of contributing to or maintaining a blog.

Call to Action - A request to take an action that will benefit both the person making the request and the person targeted with the request. For example, for a podcast a call to action may be a request at the end of a show to visit a web site for more information.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act - See COPPA.

Content - The text, graphics, and other information that is contained in an email, web page, or file.

COPPA - Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. A US federal law that sets restrictions on the online collection of personal information from children. To comply with the law, an online service provider may do things such as restrict children under the age of 13 from using the service or require verifiable consent from a parent or guardian of a child between the ages of 13 and 17 before letting that child use the service.

Copyright - A form of intellectual property protection that is provided by the laws of most countries. In general, it applies to most written and visual works. It is usually necessary to get the permission of a copyright holder before using a copyrighted work. See also Fair Use, Intellectual Property, and Piracy.

Cyberspace - The nonphysical reality created by a computer or by a network of computers. The term is often used as a metaphor for describing the Internet.

### ***D-E-F***

Defamation - A false statement that causes harm to someone's reputation, or that causes that person to become a target of public contempt, hatred, ridicule, or condemnation. If the statement is spoken, it is referred to as slander, and if written or broadcast, as libel. See also Libel and Slander.

Desktop - A personal computer that is composed of several components including a keyboard, display device, and a separate unit that contains the data, software, and the electronics. This also refers to the icons and other graphics visible on a computer's display when no applications are running. See also Laptop.

Download - The transfer of data or files from one computer to another. See also Server.

DSL - Digital Subscriber Line. A technology for high-speed Internet access using standard phone lines that allows the line to be simultaneously used for Internet access and

for making and receiving phone calls. DSL bandwidth is typically higher than the bandwidth of a dial-up connection and lower than that of a cable modem. See also Dial-up, Cable Modem, and Broadband.

Email - Electronic Mail. A generic term for messages composed and transmitted on a computer network. See also Header, Subject, From, To, Cc, and Bcc.

Fair Use - The legal use of copyrighted material without the permission of the copyright holder. See also Copyright and Piracy.

Feed - A data format used to provide users or subscribers with frequently updated content. See also Podcast.

File - An organized collection of data that can be saved or retrieved by a computer. Typical file types include, audio files, graphics files, text files, and video files.

File Extension - Extension.

File Name - The name of a computer file. Usually, such names include a file name extension that is specific to the format of the file. For example, "partylist.mp3" is an audio file, and "partylist.txt" is a plain text file.

First Amendment - An amendment to the Constitution of the United States that among other things guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press. See also Free Speech.

Free Software - Software that can be obtained and used without cost, can be used for any purpose, and that can also be copied and distributed without cost. See also Open Source.

Free Speech - The right to express opinions, information, or ideas in public or in private, regardless of content, without interference by a government. See also First Amendment.

FTP - File Transfer Protocol. A network communication protocol for transferring files or data from one computer to another in a network. This is the protocol commonly used to upload files to a web site.

### ***G-H-I-J-K***

GIF - Graphics Interchange Format. This is one of the common formats for encoding photographs and other visual information. GIF encoded files have the ".gif" extension.

Host - A computer that is connected directly to the Internet rather than indirectly, such as through the computers of an ISP.

Information - Any communication or reception of knowledge such as facts, data, or opinions that can be transmitted, accessed, or stored using some medium.

Instant Message or Instant Messaging - IM.

Intellectual Property - Products of human intellectual effort such as inventions, musical performances, or written works that may be protected or controlled through copyrights, trademarks, or through other means. See also Copyright, Fair Use, and Piracy.

Internet - A worldwide collection of computer networks that uses several protocols whereby computers and other devices can communicate with each other. Email, instant messaging, and the Web are three of the most widely used applications on the Internet.

See also Cyberspace.

Internet Service Provider - ISP.

iPod - A hard-drive- or flash-memory-based portable media player from Apple Computer. The device can play media in various audio and video formats, including MP3, MP4, and M4V. See also iTunes and Podcast.

iTunes - A software program from Apple Computer that can be used to manage media files on a user's hard drive. While iPod users must use iTunes in order to manage files on the iPod, the software can also be used independently of an iPod. In addition to managing medial files on a user's hard drive, it can also be used to download content both paid and free audio and video content from Apple's online store. Users can also use the software to search for and subscribe to podcasts that are registered with Apple. See also iPod and Podcast.

ISP - Internet Service Provider. An entity, usually a commercial enterprise, which provides access to the Internet, typically for a monthly fee.

### ***L-M-N-O-P***

Laptop - A portable personal computer that contains within a single package a keyboard, data storage medium, display screen, and all the other necessary components. See also Desktop.

Libel - A false statement, written or broadcast, and that causes harm to someone's reputation, or that causes that person to become a target of public contempt, hatred, ridicule, or condemnation. See also Defamation and Slander.

Link - These are coded parts of a web page that when selected allow a browser to access some other resource on the Internet. A link may appear as highlighted, colored, or underlined text, or as part of another element of a web page, such as a picture or some other graphical element.

Mailing List - A list of email addresses that is managed by an organization or an individual and that is used to send email to those on the list.

Media Converter - Software or online applications that can convert a media file from one format to another. Typically, the conversion is from one audio format to another or one video format to another. Some may be able to take a video format, separating the video and audio tracks, and saving the output as an audio file.

Media Player - Software or hardware that is able to play one or more types of audio and video files. See also iPod and iTunes.

Minor - A child under the age of 18.

MP3 - Moving Pictures Group Experts Layer 3. This is a format for a type of audio file that is often used for music and podcasts. This kind of file has an ".mp3" file extension.

MP4 - Moving Pictures Group Experts Layer 4. This is a video format commonly used for video podcasts and that can be played on iPods and iTunes. This kind of file has an ".mp4" file extension.

M4V - This very similar to the MP4 format, but it also allows producers the option of

adding copying and editing restrictions. This kind of file has an “.m4v” file extension. See also iPod, iTunes, and Media Player.

Multimedia - A file, web page, or other resource that contains more than one type of information, usually a combination of audio, graphic, or text information.

Net - See Internet.

Network - A group of two or more computers that are able to communicate with one another.

Open Source - Software or other intellectual property that is freely distributed and can be modified without restriction by users. See also Intellectual Property.

Operating System - The basic software of a computer that controls all other software in the computer and any devices that are connected to the computer.

Opt-in - A policy where a user explicitly agrees to allow a web site or some other service provider to collect, use, or share personal information.

Opt out - A policy where a user can explicitly request that a web site or some other provider of a service not collect, use, or share personal information.

Password - A combination of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, or other characters used to access a program, a computer, or a computer network.

PDF - Portable Document Format. This is a document format that can be viewed using a widely available and free PDF document reader. Documents created in a variety of other formats can be saved in this format.

Personal Information - Data that can be used to identify or locate a person. Data includes, but is not limited to, user names, passwords, address, telephone number, job title, school, date of birth, and credit card numbers.

Photo Organizer - A type of software that is used to manage the graphics files on a computer.

Photo Sharing - The process of uploading, organizing, and distributing photos or other graphic information online, usually through web sites dedicated to this function.

Podcast - A series of audio or video media files that are released over time and distributed using the Internet. This term also refers to the method of delivery.

Post - A message entered into a newsgroup, blog, chat room, web site, or other online resource.

Presentation Manager - A type of software used to create, edit, and display presentations by using a combination of text, drawings, graphics, audio and other media. See also Office Application Suite.

Privacy - The ability to control the amount of access that others have to your personal information and the amount of control that others have over your online experience.

Privacy Policy - A written policy associated with a web site that explains how data from users may be collected and used. Such policies may allow the user to opt-in or opt out from activities of the site.

Program - See Software and Application.

Public Domain - Intellectual property that is no longer under copyright protection, has failed to meet the requirements for copyright protection, or that was intentionally provided to the public free of copyright restrictions. Works in the public domain may be used freely without the permission of the work's creator or former copyright owner.

### ***Q-R-S-T-U-V***

Registered User - A person who has to go through some kind of registration process in order to use a particular online service. See also User.

RSS - Really Simple Syndication. A file format that allows users to subscribe to content the Web. This is the file format used for podcast feeds. Like a web page coded in HTML, an RSS formatted feed has a unique URL. See also Feed, HTML, Podcast, and URL.

Server - A computer that responds to requests for services or for information made by other computers in a network.

Slander - A false statement that is spoken and that causes harm to someone's reputation, or that causes that person to become a target of public contempt, hatred, ridicule, or condemnation. See also Defamation and Libel.

Social Networking - Online services that encourage personal or group interaction by allowing users to easily publish and exchange information about themselves using online tools and applications such as email, instant messaging, chat rooms and blogs.

Software - A set of logical instructions that either controls the behavior of computers and other electronic devices, or that provides some specific kind of functionality.

Stream - The process of playing online audio or video content on a computer in real time (live) rather than being first downloaded or saved into a user's hard drive. See also Real Time.

Text Message - A brief electronic message sent and received through a wireless network to or from a wireless device such as a cell phone or pager.

Trademark - A combination of one or more words, phrases, symbols, or designs that identifies and distinguishes the source of the goods of one party from those of others. See also Service Mark, Copyright, and Intellectual Property.

### ***U-VW-X-Y-Z***

URL - Uniform Resource Locator. This is an addressing system that uses a combination of characters and numbers to uniquely identify and locate each resource on the Web. For most web pages, the characters "http://" precede the address. Some browsers do not require a user to type the characters "http://" to recognize the address.

User - A person who is accessing an information system or network, either directly or indirectly. See also Registered User.

Username - See User Name.

User Name - The name used to access a particular application, software program, online application, or network.

Video Sharing - The process of uploading, organizing, and distributing videos online, usually through web sites dedicated to this function.

Voice Over Internet Protocol - Also known as VOIP or VoIP, this is a protocol and associated technology that allows users to make and receive telephone calls by using an Internet connection.

VOIP - See Voice Over Internet Protocol.

Web - A portion of the Internet that allows users to access data and services using a browser.

Webcam - A camera that is connected to a computer and that can be used to send live images to a web site, chat room, or some other part of the Internet.

Web Log - See Blog.

Web Page - One page of a document on the Web. It is usually a file that is written in HTML and stored on a server. Typically, each page has links to other online resources. Each page on the Web has an address called a Uniform Resource Locator or URL. See also HTML and Server.

Web Site - A set of related web pages that share a common domain name. See also Domain Name.

Window - A rectangular space on a computer screen that is created by a browser or other software.

Windows - A class of operating system software created by the Microsoft Corporation. The majority of existing personal computers use some variation of Windows.

WMV - Windows Media Video. This is a media format created by Microsoft. While it can be used for streaming audio or video content, it can also be downloaded for later feedback. All computers running the Windows operating system has the Windows Media Player software that can be used to play this type of file. This kind of file format can't be played on the iPod portable media player or the iTunes media player software. This kind of file has an “.wmv” file extension. See also iPod, iTunes, and Media Player.

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## CONTACT THE AUTHOR

If you have reached this far, congratulations on your dedication and on your desire to create a great podcast. If you want to know what I'm doing, especially what new podcasts I may have coming up or what other work I'm Doing, feel free to contact me or to connect with me online.

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