

Podcasting Quick Facts

Podcasting Definition

- By definition, podcasting is more than simply audio and video posted to the web. It also has an RSS feed the user can subscribe to.
- A podcast isn't just for iPods. Media from a podcast can be subscribed to, downloaded, and played back on a computer and many types of portable devices. Many software programs exist that will read and access feeds from a podcast.

Overview of What IT Provides for Podcasting

- USU-hosted web space for audio and video
- A simple web-based interface for:
 - Converting media to a high quality web standard
 - Publishing media to the web
- A blog, with automatic RSS feed, to which uploaded media is posted
- An option to post the RSS feed to iTunes U

Hosting

- IT hosts 3 terabytes of storage for media files on an Apple OSX server.
- The amount of storage space allotted will depend on the number of credit hours of the course, the number of weeks the course runs, and the standard size of an hour's worth of audio and video. These factors will be discussed at the podcast setup meeting and a storage limit will be determined.
- Media files will be stored for a full year unless special arrangement is made to keep them longer. When a faculty member exceeds his or her allotted storage, he or she will be given the option to delete files that are no longer needed.

Web Upload Interface

- The web-upload interface (Podcast Producer) is located at <https://record.usu.edu:8143>
- The software used to upload and convert media is Telestream Episode Podcast.
- An A# and password are required to login. Off-campus access requires a VPN connection.
- On first access, the user may be asked to accept a security certificate.
- The user will see every podcast workflow he or she has access to, but nobody else's.
- A workflow is initially set up for only one A number. If more than one user needs upload access to the podcast, the request needs to go through FACT. The information will be passed to Eric Allen so he can add the additional A number(s) to the workflow.
- Each workflow has two upload options—audio and video. The user must select the option that suits the type of media he or she is uploading.
- The Title and Description are metadata options. What is entered as the title will appear in the podcast as the track title. The description will provide information to subscribers about what the track contains.

- After clicking “Submit” to upload a media file, a visual confirmation will appear indicating the file has been successfully uploaded and accepted for processing. The confirmation *does not* mean the file was successfully converted and posted. It may still fail in processing.
- Users will usually receive an email after media is successfully converted and posted. The email will provide links to access the blog or individual media file, subscribe to the audio or video content feed in iTunes, or download the individual file.
- The confirmation email goes to the user’s preferred email address as designated in Banner.
- After receiving an email, the podcast owners’ next step should be to check the blog to make sure the media is displaying as expected.

Media Conversion

- All video files will be converted to M4V format. All audio files will be converted to MP3 format.
- Leading formats for audio and video are accepted for upload and conversion, including Windows Media, Flash (swf, flv), Quicktime (MOV), MPEG, Real Media, 3GPP, AVI, etc.
- For a full list of supported media formats, see <http://www.telestream.net/pdfs/datasheets/EpisodeSeries Format Support.pdf>

Mac Integration for Podcast Capture and Upload (Podcast Capture Application)

- Podcast Capture is a software application preinstalled on the Mac that provides one-click web-cam video capture, audio capture via a microphone connected to the computer, screen capture, or upload of a media file. It can connect directly to IT’s podcast server (record.usu.edu)
- On most Macs, Podcast Capture is located in the Applications folder > Utilities
- Upon opening Podcast Capture, users are first presented a login screen. The login details are “record.usu.edu” for the server, followed by the user’s university A# and password.
- As with the web-upload option, A VPN connection is currently required to connect to the server from off-campus.
- Currently Mac Podcast Capture is the only program that will connect directly to the podcast server. There are rumors that Apple is planning to release software similar to Podcast Capture for the PC, but this remains a rumor with no timeline.

Blog

- All uploaded media is published to a blog. Each workflow has its own blog. The blog can be accessed by going to [https://podcasts.usu.edu/groups/\[Workflow Name\]/blog/](https://podcasts.usu.edu/groups/[Workflow Name]/blog/). The URL is case sensitive.
- An example blog is the one for the IT Podcasting Demo workflow: <https://podcasts.usu.edu/groups/IT Podcasting Demo/blog/>
- The most recently added items appear at the top. Media files are embedded into the blog and can be played directly by clicking on them.
- Individual media files can be displayed by themselves by clicking on the media’s title header. The URL that appears in the address bar of this page is a direct link to the media file that can be posted in Blackboard, on a web page, or anywhere else the user may choose.

- The blog has an RSS feed, which is readily accessible on browsers that auto-detect sites with RSS feeds
- To obtain the URL of the RSS feed, click on the RSS icon in the address bar. (Note that some browsers, like Google Chrome do not yet autodetect RSS feeds. The user must initially access the blog in an RSS-enabled browser like Firefox, IE, or Safari to get the RSS feed URL and/or subscribe.)
- The URL for the RSS feed can be posted anywhere the podcast owner wants to make podcast subscription available (i.e. Blackboard, a personal web page, a class or project website, iTunes U, etc.).
- Subscribing to a podcast can be done by pasting the RSS URL into an application, like iTunes, that will read the RSS feed. However, most RSS-enabled browsers now provide subscription options directly within the browser when the RSS icon in the address bar is clicked.
- The software used for the blog is produced by Apple and has limited customizability.

Blog Access

- The blog is public by default. The podcast owner can request to make it private when meeting with the FACT instructional designer. That request will go to Eric Allen, who will make the blog password protected.
- Currently the blog does not accept university A numbers and passwords, so the decision to make a blog private removes from the instructor his or her ability to access the blog. The RSS feed can still be posted in iTunes U, where access can be controlled, and the podcast owner will still be able to use the direct linking options provided in the confirmation email. However, it should be carefully noted that making a blog private limits the podcast owner's options for accessing media.

iTunes U

- The login page for USU on iTunes U is <https://podcasts.usu.edu> or <http://itunesu.usu.edu>
- Login using a university A number and password.
- Some podcasts on USU iTunes U are public, requiring no login to access. These can be accessed by clicking the iTunes USU Public Link below the login.
- The instructional designer will ask the podcast owner in the initial meeting if a presence on iTunes U is desired. If so, he or she will arrange the initial setup of the space and paste the RSS feed from the blog into iTunes U.
- The podcast link in iTunes U will be placed on a college-specific page under a department-specific heading, if applicable.
- Only the RSS feed of the podcast will be posted to iTunes U. No media will be stored on Apple's servers unless it is directly uploaded from within iTunes U (which only instructional designers and iTunes administrators will be able to do).
- iTunes U checks once daily for new media files posted to the podcast. A media file uploaded to the podcast will take up to 24 hours to appear in iTunes U, even though it will appear immediately on the podcast blog.
- A customized icon for the podcast can be provided for display in iTunes U. Otherwise a generic icon will be used.

iTunes U Access

- A podcast posted in iTunes U can have access restrictions placed upon it. The three options include
 - Access limited to only students who login with their A# and password and are enrolled, in Banner, in a specified course.
 - Access limited to only visitors who are logged in with a university A# and password.
 - Public access—open to all visitors, whether authenticated or not. The podcast will then appear under the “public” link.
- If a visitor does not have access to the podcast, the podcast will not appear in iTunes U.
- NOTE: If access to the podcast is restricted in iTunes U, but the blog is public, media will still be publicly accessible via the blog.

Steps for getting started

1. An individual wanting a podcast should contact the FACT Team (preferably his or her department’s assigned instructional designer).
2. An instructional designer will meet with the individual to discuss his or her needs and the purpose of the podcast. He or she will provide training on what the individual needs to know and help answer questions. From the discussion, storage limits and time frames will be determined. Instructors should be prepared to discuss the following:
 - The course the podcast is for (if any); the number of credit hours; and the length of time it will run.
 - The type of media to be used.
 - The average length of each media file.
 - The amount of time the media needs to remain available online.
 - How the instructor wishes to allow access and where he or she wants to post the podcast or links to individual media (including whether he or she wants an iTunes U presence).
3. Within about 48 hours, the instructional designer will set up the workflow and contact the instructor when the podcast is ready.
4. Once the podcast is ready, the instructor should test it by uploading a media file and ensuring that all works as expected (understanding that media may take up to 24 hours to appear in iTunes U).

Capturing Media

- **Audio:** The most basic option for media capture is a simple digital audio file, recorded on a computer or hand-held MP3 recorder. Some editing is recommended.
- **Screencast Video:** This is the typical option for recording PowerPoint lectures, software demonstrations, problem solving sessions, and more. Popular screencasting software includes Camtasia (purchase) or Jing (free) for the PC and Podcast Capture (free) or Screen Flow (purchase) for the Mac. The difference between free and a purchased screen capture software is usually in the ability to edit and, in some cases, output multiple media formats.
- **Other Video:** Instructors should be encouraged to think creatively about what they would like to capture on video to share with their class, campus, or the world. Useful devices like the Flip video camera are great for capturing unique educational moments beyond the

classroom. Some podcast owners may wish to work with IT for help with more professional levels of video capture and editing.

- For assistance and direction with media capture, podcast owners should work with their assigned instructional designer.

Copyright

- Fair use of copyrighted material, as a rule, does not allow for the downloading of creative works unless prior permission is obtained. This applies even if students can't get to the download without a username and password.
- Since podcast media is, by definition, downloadable, prior permission must be obtained before posting material that someone other than the podcast owner owns the copyright for.
- An instructor who has copyright-restricted material he or she wishes to stream online in accordance with fair use standards should contact FACT. This sort of media will usually be handled through a means other than podcatsting.