

# Podcast

## Virtual News

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et's break it down with first things first. What is a podcast?

A podcast is an audio program that you can download from the Internet and listen to when you want. Remember VCRs? Think of a podcast as recording a radio show from anywhere in the world to hear later, at your convenience.

Think about it, instead of listening to the same songs on your commute to work, you can select whether you want to listen to movie reviews, what happened "this week in tech", or "how stuff works", an analysis of the stock markets, or even radio plays.

The word Podcast is a mash up of Broadcast + iPod, since Apple's iPod was the first platform on which you could listen to one.

At least six million listeners worldwide choose to channel news, information, infotainment, music, and even books at the click of a mouse. According to the Pew Research Centre, 40 percent of Americans listen to at least one podcast.

Wherever you are, you no longer need iTunes or an iPod to listen to your favorite shows. With smartphones, all you need is an Internet connection to download the podcast and the time to listen.

So, now that you understand what it is, let's figure out how you can make your own podcast. It isn't rocket science. It's actually rather simple.

The first thing you'll need is an idea of what you want to podcast about. Think it over carefully. Make a series outline and see how sustainable it is. How many episodes can you do? Work out a duration. Most people don't like to listen to something for too long. If you're sticking to only one topic, keep it under 10 minutes if

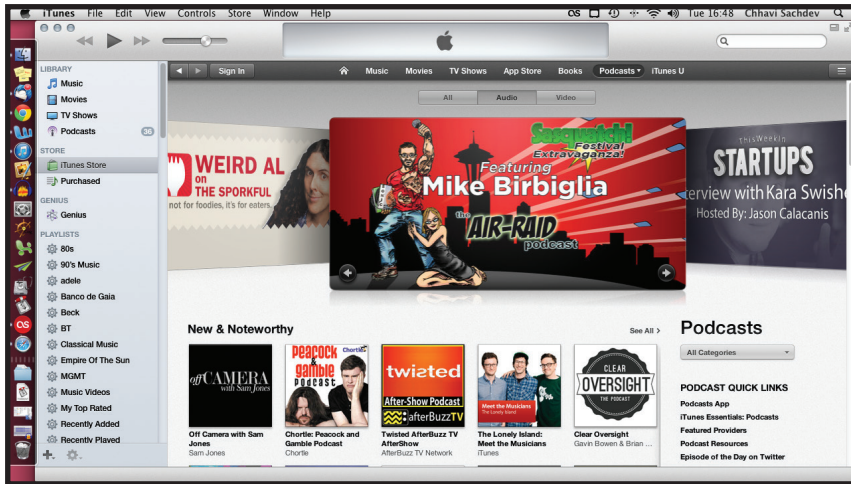
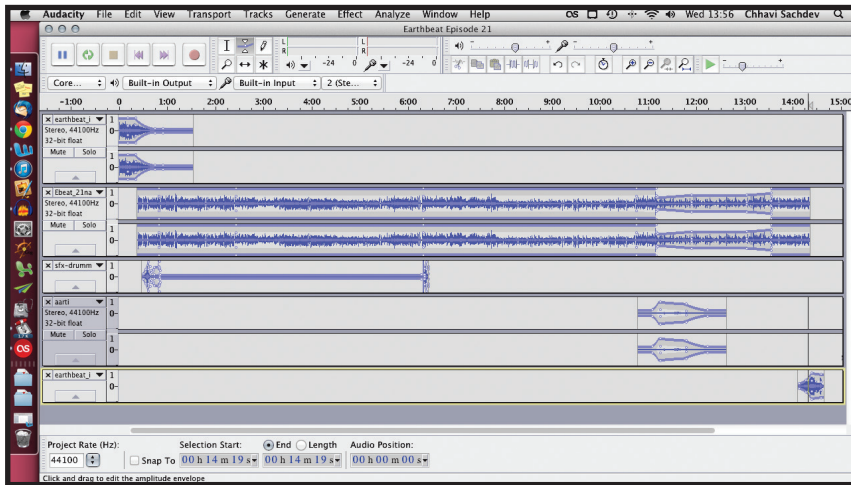
you can.

Once you have a subject, you are ready to record. For this, you'll need good audio equipment. Yes, you can plug in a USB headset with mic into your laptop, but it isn't really going to give you broadcast-quality sound. And listeners are picky. Bad quality will not win you any fans. Professional podcasts are recorded in studios but even if you're just doing this for a lark, do invest in a good condenser microphone and digital recorder. Or you can go with an all-in-one hand-held portable recorder by Tascam, Marantz, or Samson. (Fig 1: Samson's Zoom H2)

Next, set up your recording environment so it's quiet. Choose a place with few hard angles and less glass. Carpets, books, all help dampen ambient sound.

Finally, get sound editing software on your computer. If you're on a Mac, you can use Garageband. Or get freeware like Audacity (for both PC and Mac). There are tutorials online but if you can work in Office, you can probably use Audacity without a problem. Studios usually use the Pro Tools suite but that's an expensive and specialized software suite. (Fig 2: Audacity screenshot shows multiple tracks being edited)





Once you've recorded and edited your project, you can bounce it as a wav file, which is more robust and has greater clarity, or as a smaller mp3 file.

Now you're you have to let the world know your podcast is live.

There are two steps involved in this. One is getting your podcast a feed.

Upload the audio file to your server or host so it has a place to live.

If you have a Wordpress account, you can use a plugin to make it podcast ready.

Or you can set up an RSS feed using Feedburner.

The second step is making it available in an aggregator, so people can subscribe to it. The most common platform for this iTunes. On your computer or your smartphone,

iTunes will automatically update shows when new episodes are released.

It's really rather simple once you break it down. And if you do start podcasting, you'll find yourself in such august company as the *Wall Street Journal*, the World Health Organization, National Public Radio, *Oprah* and, so many more.

If you need further help, send your questions to [chhavi@sonologue.com](mailto:chhavi@sonologue.com)

Happy podcasting! And DO try this at home.

*Chhavi Sachdev has been a radio journalist and podcasters with Sonologue for years. She also heads content at AudioCompass. Find her on twitter at any of these companies.*

## HOW TO LISTEN TO A PODCAST

To get your podcast, you need first to locate it in a directory. You can search for it by title or keyword. Then you download it using a podcatcher—a site or program that pulls the shows on to your computer. One program that does both these things for free is iTunes—it's a directory as well as an aggregator/podcatcher. If you don't have iTunes, you can use Juice, Podomatic, Podcast Alley, Odeo, and a plethora of others. I recommend iTunes or Juice for ease of use. Even Google Reader on your iGoogle page and Netvibes will work.

If you like a podcast, getting future episodes is a one-shot thing. In a podcast directory, click on the "subscribe" field next to the podcast you want. It will show up and update itself in your podcatcher whenever there's a new episode. Then you can either listen right there, or you can sync up your mp3 device—your Zune/iPod/Creative or even your phone. Download it as an mp3 file and...voila! You're good to go.

### PODCAST DIRECTORIES

- iTunes
- ([www.apple.com/itunes/#podcasts](http://www.apple.com/itunes/#podcasts))
- [podcastalley.com](http://podcastalley.com)
- [podomatic.com](http://podomatic.com)
- [Odeo.com](http://Odeo.com)

### PODCAST AGGREGATORS and RECEIVERS:

- iTunes
- Juice
- NewsFire RSS
- Podget

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