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Quick Takes–
What are Podcasts?

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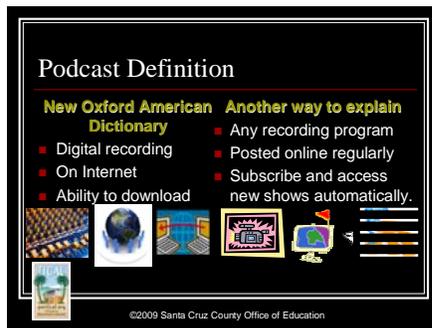©2009 Santa Cruz County Office of Education

Hello. My name is Jason Borgen and I'm the program coordinator for the TICAL project. We all have seen students and adults alike carrying around iPods and mp3 players with them wherever they go. This Quick Take will give you a quick glimpse into podcasting and its use in educational communities for teaching and learning as well as for effective communication.

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This Quick Take Covers…

■ What are podcasts?
■ Where can they be found?
■ How can they be used?
■ How can we create our own?
■ TICAL Resources

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This quick take will provide you an overview of what a podcast really is. We will also provide you with places on the Web where you and/or your students and teacher can locate podcasts to help enhance the curriculum and the learning experience. We will show some specific examples on how podcasting can be used, how to create your very own podcast from scratch using a microphone and computer, and of course, we will provide you some resources housed in the TICAL database to assist you with increasing the use of podcasts in your school community.

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Podcast Definition

New Oxford American   Another way to explain
Dictionary   ■ Any recording program
■ Digital recording   ■ Posted online regularly
■ On Internet   ■ Subscribe and access
■ Ability to download   new shows automatically.

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The New Oxford American Dictionary claims a podcast is a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player, but the generally accepted definition has expanded to include video as well as audio.   The term was originally derived from a combination of "broadcasting" and "iPod ™. An alternate definition is any type of recording program including Audio, video,

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or screen capture that is posted aka published online on a regular basis AND Is available through "subscribing" aka podcatching via a program of choice, such as iTunes, rather than having to go back to the website to retrieve the latest episode.

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How can Podcasts be used?

- Administration
  - School messages
  - Communicate to parents/public
  - Professional development for teachers
- Classroom
  - Interventions
  - Remediation
  - Enrichments
  - Multiple Representation

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Podcasts can be used for both Administration and of course, in the classroom. Administrators can communicate messages via podcasting including schoolwide events to teachers and students. Also, podcasts can be created providing parents and the community information such as school and district test results and new facility proposals. Also, several podcasts already exist to assist educators with ongoing professional development. Podcasts can be used in the classroom for intervention and differentiated purposes, remediation of content, enrichment of content, and podcasts provide the diverse learning population with multiple representation of content in audio and video form from different prespectives.

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Although podcasting was derived from iPods you have several options to listen or view podcasts. Of course, you can always use any iPod or digital music/video player. But, you can also use any computer, or you can burn the podcast to a CD or DVD to play on any CD or DVD player. So, do you really need an iPod to be a podcast connoisseur? Absolutely not! You have several options.

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Remember a podcast is not just an audio or video online. It is an audio or video show that regularly produces episodes that you can receive automatically once a new show is published. To be able to subscribe you need a type of "aggregator" or program that automatically looks for new shows of programs you subscribe to. There are a variety of programs out there to podcatch, but the most widely used program is iTunes. iTunes itself also has a searchable database of podcasts you can browse through for one click subscribing.

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iTunes is a free program you can download if you do not have it already. To browse through the podcast directory simply open the iTunes program, click on podcasts in your navigation pane, click on podcast directory. You can search for specific topics or browse the categories provided. Education is one of the categories and iTunesU usually consist of free lecture series by colleges such as Stanford and MIT—could be great for AP students!

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TICAL Resources

- **Radio TICAL—www.portical.org/podcasts**
- **The Education Podcast Network (EPN)**
- **EDTech Talk**
- **Thornburg Center**
- **Education Podcasts**
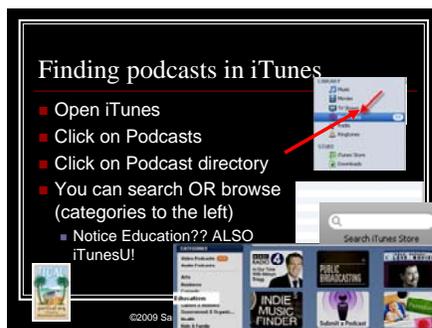
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iTunes is not the only place to locate quality podcasts for education. Other podcasts used by practicing educators are Radio TICAL, the Education Podcast Network, EdTech Talk, the Thornburg Center podcasts, and this extensive list of educational podcasts.
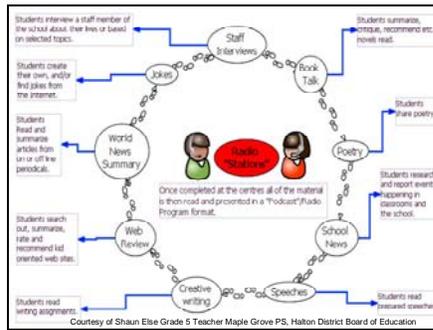
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Creating podcasts

Three Steps Only!
- CREATE   [What YOU do]
  - Make an audio file
  - Audacity, Garageband, or online tools like GCast
- DISTRIBUTE   [What YOU do]
  - Move the audio file to a web server
  - Yours, your districts, a hosted solution
- ACCESS   [What THEY do]
  - RSS feed
  - Your clients subscribe/podcatch

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Now you have the ability to locate podcasts created by others, let's talk about how to create your own podcast so you can assist your community podcast development. You can create a podcast in 3 easy steps: create the podcast, distribute the podcast online, and access the podcast through your podcatching program. Creating a podcast is done by recording an audio or video file using a program installed on your computer such as audacity, Garage Band, or even through a telephone using GCast. You may also want to add some background music as well to make the podcast a bit more novel. The next step is to distribute the podcast online. You need to transfer the file to some web server. This may be your district's server or there are several online that will host your podcasts for you. Lastly, to determine access to your podcast you must test the RSS feed using a program such as iTunes so assure people can subscribe to the program. You are now a podcaster!

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Courtesy of Shaun Else Grade 5 Teacher Maple Grove PS, Halton District Board of Education

This graphic organizer, created by a 5th grade teacher in Canada, shows several practical ways podcasts can be created in the classroom to help enhance the curriculum and make learning more meaningful—every student wants the opportunity to see there work available to the world, or at least their community! This example centers around thinking about a podcast show as a radio station thus students have several options for show segments.

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Pros and Cons	
Pros	Cons
Personal	Equipment needed
Increases communication	Time consuming
Enhances creativity	Internet connection needed
Integrates a variety of skills	May need parent permission

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Just like every new tool, we must look at the pros and cons of implementation. Podcasting is very personal and can be individualized. It can exponentially increase communication among peers as well as into the community. Students have the ability to create their own show thus students really build on creativity skills. Podcasting can be used in every content area and no matter what, students will have to be effective writers, speakers, and technicians. Some things to think about when podcasting is you will need equipment such as microphones and computers. Creating a podcast is time consuming, an internet connection is needed to post the podcast and to access others. Also, due to the fact that these podcasts may be made public to the world, you may want to notify parents and even receive permission before letting a student "on the air."

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To learn more about creating podcasts, you may want to check out Gary Stager's "Podcasting in Education" resources. Feel free to browse all podcasting resources in the TICAL's database to see what educators are currently using for podcast resources.

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Thanks for viewing this quick take. Please help spread the word to use new and emerging tools, such as podcasting, to increase student achievement. Feel free to contact me with any questions you have about podcasting.

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