

Podcasting Overview

Description

Learn what podcasting is and explore its educational uses.

Tools

- iTunes 4.9 or later
- Internet access

What Is Podcasting?

Podcasts are the new phenomenon of professional and homemade audio broadcasts available on the Internet. Unlike traditional radio shows with set schedules, podcasts can be listened to at any time in the iTunes application or on an iPod. With iTunes 4.9, Apple took podcasting mainstream by building into iTunes everything you need to find, subscribe to, manage, and listen to podcasts. You can even publish your podcast to iTunes (as long as it's free of copyrighted material) and reach a potential audience of millions.

Types of Media Included in Podcasts

In its most popular form, podcasting is a way for people to selectively subscribe to audio content over the Internet. This audio content can then be automatically downloaded to a computer or mobile device, like iPod. Think of a podcast as a radio show that you can listen to whenever and wherever you want. When listening to podcast audio on iPod with a color display, the content may have an associated cover image (similar to album art for iTunes music). The content may display images synchronized with the audio track. Also, chapter markers can be embedded that allow listeners to jump to specific sections of the content.

If you are listening to enhanced audio in iTunes, the cover art and synchronized images are displayed in the album art window (at the bottom-left of the iTunes window). Access to chapters is possible from a pop-up menu at the top-right of the iTunes window. The author of the content can also display a web link overlapping any of the displayed images (in the album art window). This makes it possible for the podcast listener to access related web content in their default browser when listening in iTunes.

Podcasting can also be used to distribute PDFs, graphics, and digital video. This provides a convenient, subscription-based model for distributing educational materials.