



EDTECH INNOVATIONS NEWSLETTER



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Podcasting



This is a term that immediately generates interest whenever it's uttered. Even if we're not sure what it is, we feel like we need to be doing it! So what is it; why do we want to do it; and how do we do it?

What is it?

Contrary to popular usage, podcasting is neither the production of multimedia content nor the streaming of such content across the web, on-demand. It is the distribution of multimedia (audio & video) content via the Web using a technology known as **RSS** (Really Simple Syndication) feeds. These "feeds" are distribution services to which one can subscribe. Once subscribed, you will, more or less automatically download multimedia files as they are added to the feed. These files may be simple audio files or audio/video files (in which case we sometimes call the process **vodcasting**).

Why do it?

Why go to the trouble of podcasting when you could just drop your multimedia files onto a web/video server

and place a link on a web page or LMS content page? The principal advantages of podcasting are that it automates the content delivery process and that it allows the media files to be downloaded so that they can be viewed offline on a computer or transferred to a portable device such as an iPod (thus the term **podcasting**).

How do I do it?

To podcast, you must first create or acquire multimedia content and then set up your RSS feed. Creating audio content just requires a computer, an inexpensive microphone and a free or cheap piece of audio recording/editing software such as [Audacity](#) (free) or [Camtasia Studio](#) (not) on the PC or Garageband on the Macintosh. Video recording is best accomplished with a digital camcorder. The video can be processed with editors such as iMovie (Mac) or Windows Movie Maker (PC). You can also make video podcasts from screen recordings such as those created by [Camtasia Studio](#).

RSS feeds consist of a single

file in a format known as XML. You can create this feed file manually, by using helpful websites like [RSSfeedgenerate.com](#), or by using an inexpensive feed generator program like Feed-ForAll, <http://www.feedforall.com>. You just place the feed file & your multimedia content on a web-server somewhere & place links to your podcasts on webpages or pages in your Blackboard courses.

For more detail on podcasting (and making them accessible) try this link.

<http://www.dgiberson.org/scholar>

Subscribe to a video podcast about podcasting at: <http://www.dgiberson.org/pcast/scholar.xml>

Subscribe to an audio podcast of "The Machine Stops", a prescient short story of Web 2.0 written in 1909 (!), at http://www.dgiberson.org/pcast/machine_stops.xml



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Special points of interest:

- Podcasting for everyone!
- Enhance your online or enhanced class with multimedia, without having to create it!
- Break your dependence upon Microsoft—use free office software!
- Vista Tip: Put links to journal articles from your college library's databases right into your online course!



Multimedia Resources for Online Learning

As much fun as creating your own multimedia learning objects for your online or web-enhanced class can be, it's nice not to have to re-invent ALL of the wheels on the bus. There are literally thousands of such resources in just about every discipline available on the Web, and most of them are free & legal to use in your own courses.

Katie Palacios has been compiling a list of sites offering these learning objects for quite some time now, & she has just put up a Google Docs web page containing the fruits of her researches. This page can be accessed at :

http://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dd58d6nz_424qv65bsdc&invite=fx5smbf

Here are just a couple of the incredible resources available here:

Merlot



Accessible at

<http://www.merlot.org/>, this is a vast, peer reviewed, resource of reusable learning objects in just about every discipline you can imagine. For instance, here's a Merlot Editor's Choice that would be invaluable to any Biology professor wanting to include a segment on genetics in their online site.

DNA from the beginning (<http://www.dnafb.org/dnafb/>) is a complete introductory treatment of classical & molecular genetics.

TED Archives



Accessible at

<http://www.ted.com>, this site contains video presentations given at the famous

Technology, Entertainment, Design annual conferences where the world's smartest people come together each year to give the presentations of their lives—in 18 minutes each.

Any computer instructor wanting an amazing introduction to the birth of the computer could link to George Dyson's presentation at http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/george_dyson_at_the_birth_of_the_computer.html.



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Free Office Suites

Tired of seeing your students begging themselves to buy Microsoft Office or just doing without personal productivity software? Like to give them an alternative? Unless you're teaching Microsoft applications, there are at least two very good alternatives that are completely free (and legal, even moral :).



Open Office (<http://www.openoffice.org>) is a powerful,

free office suite descended from Sun's Star Office, a defunct competitor to MS Office. It contains a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation application, a database, and more. It even looks a lot more like Office 2003 & earlier than Office 2007 does. These apps will open & save files in MS Office format, so one can work in both systems. The new Open Office 3 (in beta) will even open the dreaded .docx and .xlsx files. The suite can be downloaded free from the

web.



Google Docs

(<http://docs.google.com>) is a free, web-based application service that works through your web browser and also includes all major personal productivity apps. You even get free online storage for your documents!

Both of these systems work on PC, Mac, or Linux & are a great alternative to MS Office.

Vista Tip



Looking for a few good articles to energize your course readings list? Before you jump on Google Scholar, try your campus library web site. Each library has links to tens of thousands of reputable articles on current topics, all at your fingertips. You can search these article databases from the comfort of your own home or office, via the Web. Once you've found an article, you can copy and paste a link to

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it directly into your Blackboard course, just like you would a web site link. This way you can guide your students to the exact article and not worry about them trying to find it on the Web. A caveat: your students will be prompted for a password or student ID number (CSID) to see the article from their home computers. Contact your campus librarian for more information about linking library resources to your course.

Please Contribute!

We'd love to publish your 75-200 word article here. Please send us your best technology tip or resource so we can share it with everyone!

You can send your submission to Dave Giberson at dgiberso@sdccd.edu

