



Fact Sheet

Pod Casting

July 2007

No, it's not the latest game that your youngsters are playing - but it could be a useful and innovative way of getting your marketing message and news out to your customers!

Even the BBC has started using pod casting as a way of getting their message across.....

Our E-Business Advisers discuss how you could make this technology work for your firm:

1. What is Pod Casting?

The name Pod Casting is a derivation:

“Pod” - from iPod, the Apple MP3 player and
“Casting” - from broadcasting.

It's simply a way of broadcasting, via your web site and your visitors' computer, to their MP3 players - not just Apple iPods.

(MP3 is a particular type of extremely common audio data file.)

Pod Casting allows users to subscribe to a “feed”, via your web site, to receive new files automatically.

Visitors to your web site can easily download audio files into their computer, then from there onto a portable MP3 audio player, so they can listen to them later - e.g. while commuting to work.

As many new mobile phones incorporate MP3 players, your customers don't even need a separate MP3 player.

Podcastings popularity is growing amazingly quickly - the technology involved has only really

been utilised post-2003, with the first usage of the term “Pod Cast” appearing in the Guardian newspaper in February 2004.

At the date of writing, searching Google for “How to Podcast” returns over 11 Million entries!

2. How does it work?

Using easily available software, you (the “podder”) can upload material to your web site. You just need a microphone for your computer and a broadband Internet connection.

Using equally easily available software, your site visitor (“podcatchers”) - can download this material to their computer, then onto their MP3 players if they want to, or they could listen to the file on their computer.

Technically, this uses the RSS 2.0 XML format, which effectively manages news “feeds”.

If your web site visitor has a broadband, “always-on” Internet connection, the podcasts can be set to automatically download in the background, e.g. overnight.

This uses podcatcher software, which automatically checks for updates and downloads them.

This particular way of pod casting was only developed very recently. Danny Gregoire registered web sites with the “pod cast” term in September 2004, based on the concepts and



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software developed by the ex-MTV “Video jockey” and broadcaster Adam Curry and his associates.

3. Some example of usage

There are already numerous examples of commercial and non-commercial podcast usage.

- There are many examples of commercially - offered audio training courses, for example www.sbanetwork.org
- Musselburgh Grammar School, Scotland, podcasts foreign language audio revision work for its students.
- Some museums and other visitor attractions have started to offer podcasts of new attractions, audio guides etc.
- Even some churches have started to use podcasts - known colloquially as “Godcasts”!

For example, St Mark's Anglican Church, in Clayfield, Queensland, Australia podcasts sermons from their evening services to parishioners who can't attend due to poor health or disability.

There are many other ways in which you could use podcasting in your business.

Some ideas are:

- Technology commentaries.
- Audio Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for your products.
- Event announcements.
- Audio Tours of your web site.

- Travel and holiday reviews and commentary.
- Personal fitness training by podcast.
- Diet coaching by podcast.
- Preventative health care guidance via podcast.
- Pet care - e.g. dog training via podcast.
- Financial planning news podcasts.
- Musical Artist updates for fans podcasts.
- Audio seminars on usage of your products by podcast for your customers.

4. Useful Links

www.ipodder.org - Directory of podcast history, how-to information, links to resources etc. Run by one of the people who started it all - Adam Curry.

www.apple.com/podcasting - Apple Computers web site, devoted to their iTunes and iPod products. Has links to many podcasts.

www.podcast411.com - Straightforward podcasting tutorials and much more!

<http://podca.st> - Easy to understand site, in its own words - “aimed at non-technical people who want to know what all the podcasting fuss is about”