

Can You Hear Me Now?

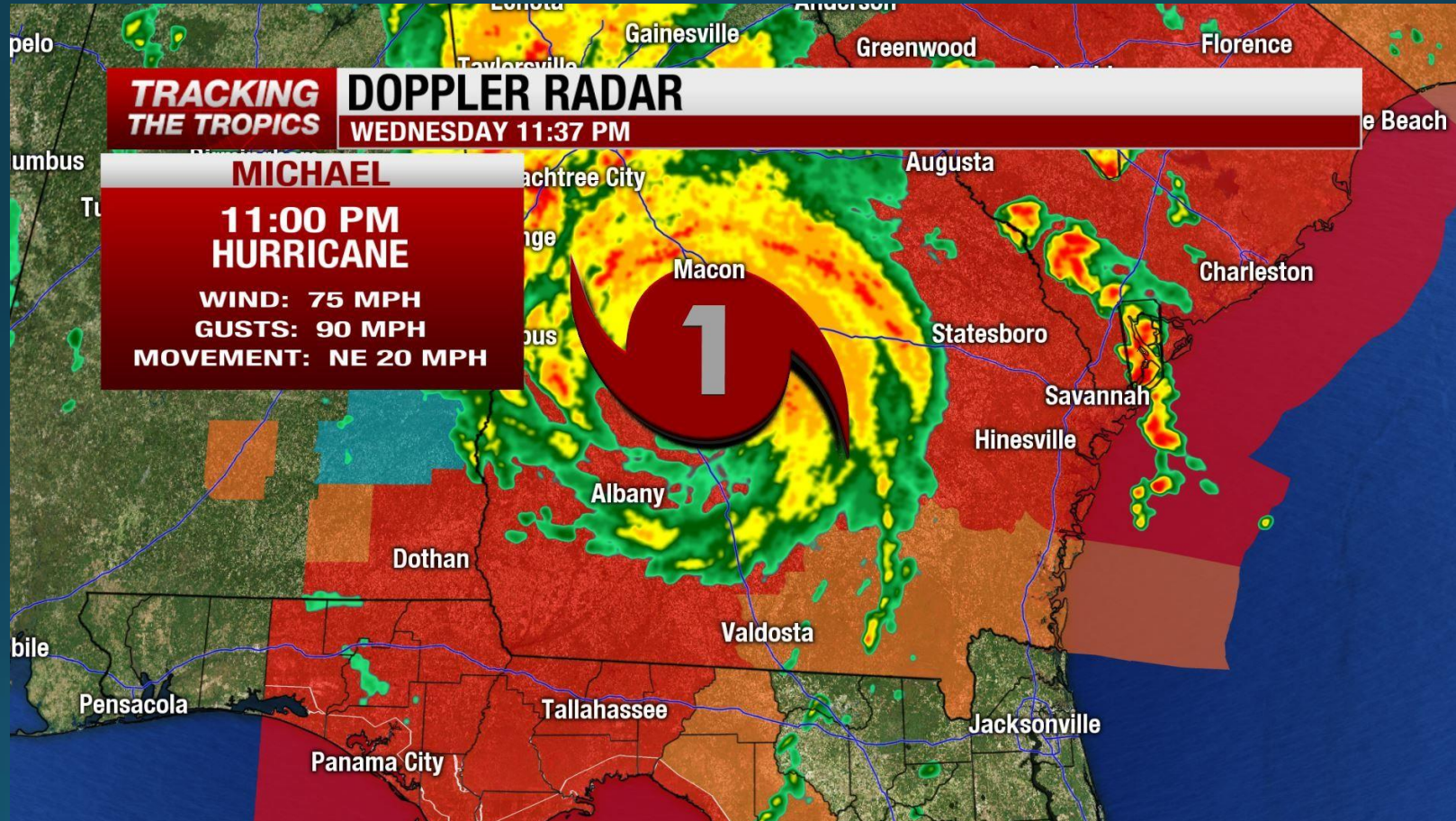
Podcasts as Teaching (and Communication) Tools



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Under the Weather Last Week...



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Under the Weather Last Week...



I'm a trainer, a teacher, an instructional designer, a professor, and a mom.

Translation:

- I'm always learning.
- I'm always helping others learn.
- I'm always looking for new methods for effective content transfer.
- *(Unfortunately) I often lie awake at night thinking about learning and content design.*



Who are you?

How many of you:

- Know what a podcast is?
 - Are new to podcasting?
 - Would like to explore podcasting for your business?
 - Would like to bring podcasting into your classrooms?
 - Are expert podcasters?
-
- Came to the wrong workshop and just now realized it?

By the end of this session, you will know:

- What podcasting is
- Why podcasting is a powerful content delivery tool
- What skills are necessary for podcasting
- What equipment you need to produce podcasts
- How podcast content is formatted (structured)
- How podcasts created a unique classroom learning experience
- How podcasts can be used by different organizations
- How you can engage with podcasts

Podcasting is one of the fastest growing areas of content production today.



A podcast is an audio program that can be downloaded and played anytime.

- Often produced as a series
- Usually produced around a specific topic for a specific audience
- Audiences can subscribe to a series or download individual episodes
- Content is downloadable, so it can become accessible at any place and at any time
- Episodes remain accessible



Several podcasts have become very popular and have loyal followings.



History, documentary, fiction, business, technology, finance, design, science, culture, education, foreign languages...

Several brands have also created successful podcasts.

GE:

The Message

- Award-winning sci-fi podcast
- Integrates GE technology in compelling storyline

eBay:

Open for Business

- Small business and entrepreneurship podcast
- Shares small business stories and start-up lessons

Basecamp:

The Distance

- Business longevity podcasts
- Interviews business owners open for 25+ years

Spotify:

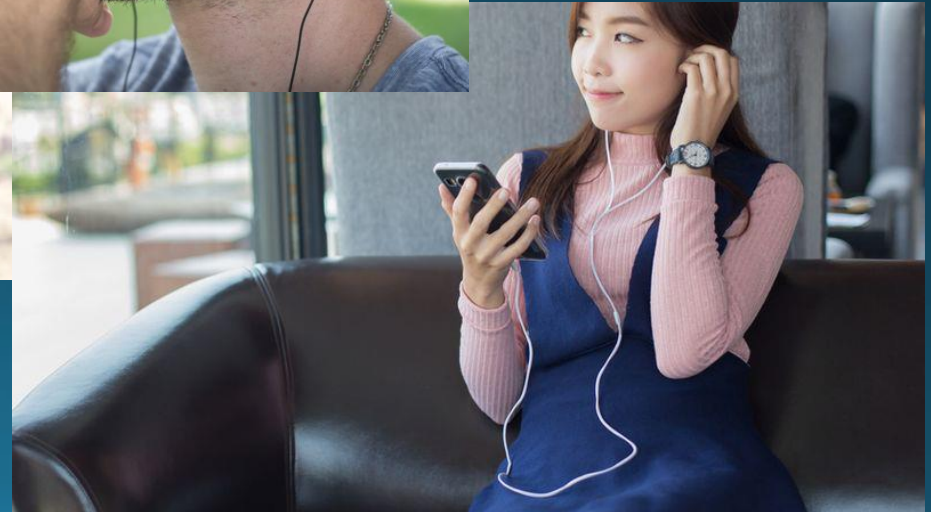
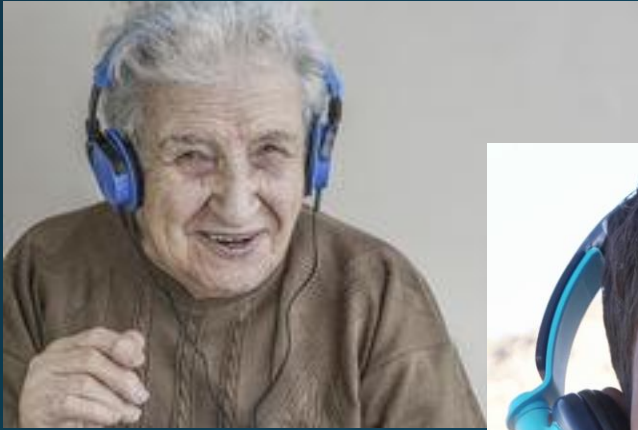
Unpacked

- Music, film, and tech festival podcast
- Interviews creatives at festivals

Podcasting is particularly unique compared to other forms of content.

- Supports auditory learners (captures attention)
- Brings personality to brands, topics
- Builds community around podcasts (great for marketing)
- Contributes to SEO (search engine optimization)
- Captures over 67 million listeners per month
- Retains listeners for entirety of message (85% completion rate)
- Provides downloadable, portable, repeatable content
- Provides multiple “entry points” for audiences
- Works without Internet connection (after downloading)

If podcasts are reaching people...



...Maybe we should consider creating podcasts.



Podcasting requires a certain skill set.

- Writing (structured content, scripts)
- Editing (content, audio)
- Organization
- User analysis and user-centered design
- Speaking
- Interviewing
- Creativity

Sound like anyone you know?



Sound like anyone you know?



Podcasting equipment can be simple...



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...Or complex.



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At a minimum, you need:

- Computer
 - Microphone
 - Speakers
 - Sound editing software
 - Audacity (freeware)



But better equipment yields better results:

- Computer
 - Sound editing software
 - Adobe Audition
- Microphone (or two, or three)
 - Boom arm
 - Pop filter
 - Cables
- Noise-cancelling headphones
- Soundboard
- Room-dampening materials

A functional podcasting studio is easy to create.



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Start your process by planning your podcast.

Select:

- Topic
- Audience
- Format
- Podcast name

Write:

- Intro/Conclusion
- Script (send to your team, guests in advance)

Podcast formats differ based on content, audience, and other factors.

Introduction

- Opener
- Agenda

Main Content

- Q/A
- Featured Guest
- Livecast

Conclusion

- Pitch
- Action
- Closer

Integrate media to enhance your podcast.

- Music
- Sound effects
- Cover art

Publish your podcast to reach your audience.

Typically, publishing requires:

- A website
- A media host (blubrry, libsyn, PodBean, Spreaker)

You may also publish to a directory to make your podcast even easier to find:

- iTunes
- Spotify
- (RSS feed)

Our Podcast Story

TCO 485: Social Media Management

- Writing for social media
- Strategies for social media engagement
- Management of multiple platforms
- Audience assessment
- Social media creation
 - Podcasts
 - Blogs
 - Microblogs (Twitter, Instagram)
 - Website copy

Special thanks to the Mercer University Research that Reaches Out Office for providing a grant to support this research project.

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Our students set up our new sound lab.

New purchases:

- Two microphones with pop filters
- Two headsets
- Small soundboard
- Velvet backdrop (for sound barrier)

Previously owned:

- Mac
- Adobe Audition



Our students assessed real client needs.

- Students conducted interviews with clients.
- Students assessed current audience needs.
- Students completed a social media audit of existing web presence.

Students proposed a new social media plan for their clients.

- The social media plan consisted of:
 - Background/context of the situation
 - Social media audit
 - Audience analysis
 - Social media strategy
 - Social media calendar
 - Social media content



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Why use podcasts as a course project?

Students gain skills and experience in:

- Audience analyses
- Communication strategies
- Research and planning
- Audio, hardware, and software use

Students encounter podcast content multiple times--audience analysis, research, planning, recording, editing, and playback.

Podcasting could serve many types of courses.

- Create a podcast per textbook chapter.
- Host a podcast about a social issue or current event.
- Promote community events through a podcast series.
- Create podcasts for research projects at the university.
- Create podcasts for a host organization (client).

Outcomes from our course were very positive.

- 11 out of 13 students (84.6%) cited podcasting as their favorite media form to develop during the class.
- Students reported improved interviewing skills.
- Students reflected on the importance of relaxing, remaining conversational, using vocal inflection, and using stories when speaking publicly.
- Students learned about scheduling, planning, and coordination while interviewing guest speakers and sharing a single sound lab.
- Students reported learning how to work with new hardware (sound equipment) and software.
- Students found the work to be creative and interesting.

Outcomes, continued

- Many students recognized the large time commitment required to produce a single podcast.
- Several students reported an increased interest in engaging with podcasts in the future; a few mentioned audio technology as a specific career interest.
- One student noted, “I’m interested in becoming more transparent within writing and having a better ability of expressing thoughts. Podcasts were interesting and a step outside of my comfort zone. However, after doing so, I became more interested in developing better content.”

So what?



Engage with podcasts wherever you are.

- Assign a podcasting assignment to students.
- Start your own corporate branded podcast.
- Host a personal podcast about a special interest or hobby.
- Seek out podcasts where you can promote your work or products.
- Share your expertise with podcast audiences in your profession.
- Sponsor a podcast episode or series.
- Guest host a podcast episode on a relevant topic.
- Call in to podcast Q/A sessions.
- Listen to podcasts.

Podcasting offers unique opportunities for students and organizations alike.

With proper guidance, an equipped lab, and a compelling purpose, students should find podcasting to be a rewarding experience that can further enhance their technical abilities and communication capacity.

Organizations may find podcasting to be a compelling way to build communities, expand brand recognition, and share content with audiences.

Resource:
The Podcast Host
(<https://www.thepodcasthost.com/>)

Find out more about Mercer's BS in Tech Comm or online MS in Tech Comm Management. www.mercer.edu/tco

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