

## Increasing Student Engagement through Audio Recording and Podcasting

A podcast is a series of digital media files (either audio or video) that are released episodically and often downloaded through web syndication. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcast>)

### Possible Class Uses For a Podcast/Audio Recordings

Use	Description
News Articles	Publish your own radio news show! Great way to integrate technology into Social Studies and Language Arts!
Daily Homework	Put your homework list online so parents can check. This can be especially helpful when students are sick or away on a trip.
Reflections on Learning	Have your students reflect on what they have learned, and what it means to them! A wonderful addition to your assessment arsenal, and terrific for special needs students that have fine motor difficulties.
Showcase of Student Work	Have students read their work for the rest of the world to share! A phenomenal way to motivate students to do their best work! They can share work with relatives out of town. Also, students can engage in peer assessment of each other's projects.
Literature Circles	Let students have an online book talk! Or listen to a podiobook and help struggling readers!
Public Service Announcements	Have your students record messages about issues important to them. Help generate civic pride and duty!

### Why Podcast?

Students have a "real audience"

If you allow comments, they can get authentic feedback

Great verbal/oral work for kids

### What Do You Need to Podcast?

#### Step One: Record

You need to have some way to get audio onto your computer. This can be done in many ways. The simplest of which is just plugging a mic into your computer. USB mics are wonderful (if you have access to one) because they draw their power directly from the computer, and can be used with any system. You can also use some mp3 players (such as the iPod or iRiver) to record while on the go.

### **Step Two: Edit**

While some choose to publish their podcasts “as is” with no further editing, there are some simple and not so time consuming tricks that add a lot of “flash” to your presentation. Audacity is a free multi-platform audio editing program where you can trim recordings, join many recordings together, and even add sound effects or music to the background. You can also use Aviary.com’s online audio editor “Myna” – complete with free music tracks!

### **Step 3: Publish!**

The final step in the podcasting process is to publish your creation for the rest of the world to listen to it. Once you have converted your audio file to an mp3 file, it is ready to put on the web. You will need to find a host with enough storage space to upload your file to, and then provide a link to your podcast on a blog. Some companies such as Our Media and DivShare offer free unlimited space for podcasters. Thanks to the blog’s RSS feeds, software like iTunes and Juice (formerly iPodder) can alert listeners when you have a new podcast available so that they can listen to it.

## **Recording/Editing Programs**

### **Mac Based**

Garageband (<http://www.apple.com/ilife/garageband/>), iMovie (<http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/>)

### **Cross Platform**

Quicktime Pro (Windows or Mac) (<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/>), Audacity(Windows, Mac, or Linux) (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>)

### **Web Based**

Myna (<http://aviary.com/online/audio-editor>)

## **FOIP/Student Safety**

As always keeping our students safe is our first priority. But how do we do that when we’re putting information out for everyone to see? We have to use common sense. Remember that in Canada you must get written informed consent from the parents or guardians before posting any work, information, or name of a student. Once you have that, just follow a few simple rules:

1. Use only the student’s first name. In the case of two students with the same name use the middle initial or numbers to tell them apart..
2. Make sure all correspondence (ie. comment notification) is sent to your e-mail account, not the students.
3. Talk about internet safety with your students, and remind them not to put any personal information in their podcasts.

If these precautions are taken, and a FOIP release form is signed, you have done everything in your power to protect the child, and will have shown due diligence.

## Copyright

One thing that podcasters need to be aware of is copyright. You can't just add any audio clips to your shows. You need to ensure that any music or commentary you add is royalty free, or that you have written consent of the copyright holder to use that segment. Flash Kit, Free Play Music, and Jamendo have many royalty free (and monetarily free) music loops that you can easily, and legally, add to your podcast.

## Creative Commons

When you and your class create a podcast it is automatically protected under copyright laws. All rights are reserved. No one else can distribute, share, modify, or use this item other than to listen to it. However sometimes we may want to waive some of these rights so that others can use our work more freely. This is where Creative Commons comes in. By using a simple checklist from the Creative Commons Website (<http://creativecommons.org>), you can choose how your work can be used. This is a legal/international copyright agreement used all over the internet.