

## **Script for Podcasting in Education in the New Media Age - Episode 1**

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Welcome to Podcasting and Education in the new media age, a series of reflections about Podcasting and its role within Education today.

The reason for creating this podcast is precisely due to one of the main reasons why podcasting is so relevant for Education and schools today. Recently I have given several presentations about podcasting to audiences from schools as well as other educationalists and School advisors in the UK. Rather than simply provide notes, or presentation slides, I wanted to provide a living and breathing example of how podcasting can be such a useful tool as part of our everyday working lives. So here we are, and here goes!

Well, first of all, lets start with some basic facts. What exactly is a podcast, and what do you need to be able to make and listen to them?

According to Wikipedia, Podcasting is "the practice of making audio files available online in a way that allows software to automatically detect new files and download them." Technically this is accomplished by using RSS feeds to provide information about a collection of audio files in MP3 format. Be aware that the term podcasting is sometimes misleadingly used to refer to one off audio broadcasts that can be downloaded from the Internet . These are not, strictly speaking, true podcasts, which should always be a 'series' of episodic broadcasts.

Podcasting lets anybody with a microphone, a computer and an internet connection publish audio broadcasts that can be listened to by people anywhere in the world. Because the barriers to entry are very low, podcasting is rapidly becoming a popular way for people share audio broadcasts. Podcasts are free and can be automatically downloaded to both your computer and your portable media player - neither of which ,incidentally, have to be made by Apple - so they can be listened to whenever convenient; anytime and anywhere.

In an educational context...

...podcasting can be used by both teachers and pupils and is fast attracting significant interest from all educational sectors. It is a quick, convenient, and low cost way to extend lessons both within and beyond the classroom. From simply recording existing lessons to developing new and extended course materials, teachers and pupils alike can take advantage of the many benefits of downloadable content contained in educational podcasts. Using podcasting as part of a child's daily educational life has many potential advantages:-

[Benefits - 1]

In the classroom, Podcasts have a number of key benefits.

- \* Firstly podcasts can relate to any curriculum area, such as a weather diary in geography, experiments in science , MFL, drama and music . Creativity is assured no matter which subject is the focus. Any age range or ability group can create a podcast, and it is especially powerful to hear secondary-age children contribute to the podcast of their former primary school - a superb tool for improving transition.

- \* Podcasts can provide bespoke materials to support any learning situation with audio material for learning "on demand", anytime and anywhere.

- \* There is tremendous potential to support or extend the work of any pupil with special needs, and a podcast could be especially useful for children who miss sessions, e.g. due to illness.

[Benefits - 2]

Podcasting could certainly play an important role in establishing and developing links between the school, other educational establishments and the community at home.

- \* Some schools already use podcasting as an effective way to communicate with parents on a regular

basis, for example via a regularly broadcast school newsletter rather than or in addition to a printed version.

\* Since materials are recorded there is complete flexibility in creating resources that would be particularly appropriate for children or adults with a reading difficulty or who have English as a second or third language. Any language could easily be used as the medium for the podcast itself.

\* Furthermore, podcasting could bring a whole new approach to homework. For example, via the use of audio notes to reinforce learning or for revision, just as this recording has been intended.

### [Benefits 3]

Possibly the greatest area of impact that podcasting could have relates to the personalised learning agenda, as children benefit enormously and in many ways, from making podcasts.

\* Firstly, podcasting provides children with a potential audience of thousands for their work so they must learn quickly about tailoring their podcasts for different, and possibly large audiences.

\* In order to achieve their desired broadcast quality, pupils have to concentrate significantly on improving their speaking and listening skills. Moreover, this will have a major knock-on effect for their writing and recording skills, for example, when writing scripts and setting up interviews etc.

\* Without a doubt, publishing their own podcast is hugely motivating for pupils. Indeed, web publishing is truly the zeitgeist for the modern generation. It is how they interact with each other and the rest of the world every day - and they are remarkably comfortable and adept at it.

This motivation stems, at least in part, from the fiercely strong sense of ownership they derive from producing their own works. This is also clearly manifested by their desire to push themselves and produce broadcasts of sometimes breathtaking quality.

\* By learning how to produce a podcast, pupils are not only extending their ICT skills and capabilities, they are learning to embrace new technologies in a relentlessly changing world.

\* Collaborative working and teamwork skills are further real benefits of Podcasting. Many hours of work are required for example, to produce a school radio broadcast, or develop some creative writing or musical composition.

\* Finally, there is a fantastic level of real-world feedback to be obtained from podcasting. The broadcasts can be truly interactive and the audience can be invited to participate by emailing their comments to the school. This gives invaluable feedback to the children about their work from their actual audience, often quite literally from around the world.

### Summary

A podcast is a series of audio broadcasts, not just a one-off.

Delivered automatically for you to listen to anytime on your computer or mp3 player.

There are a plethora of reasons why podcasting should be used as an important tool to facilitate learning across the curriculum.

In the era of Myspace and other social networks, self-generated content that is published to the web is clearly key to motivating the modern generation and unlocking their creative talents.

It should be clear, therefore, that Podcasting, without a doubt, has the potential to make a hugely significant impact on the learning and teaching in our schools today.

In forthcoming episodes I will talk more about the specifics of how to podcast, discuss and play samples from some of the best school podcasts available, and also interview people involved in podcasting today.

So that's it for today's episode. If you have any comments or feedback please send them to [jwatson@softease.com](mailto:jwatson@softease.com). Thank you for listening.