

## What is a podcast?

A podcast is an episodic program delivered via the Internet using an XML protocol called RSS. Podcast episodes can be audio files, video files, documents, or any combination of the three. The publisher or broadcaster podcasts the program by posting the episodes and the XML document to a Web server. The consumer subscribes to the podcast using a client application, such as iTunes, which regularly reads the XML file and downloads new episodes.

Because podcasts can include several of the most common types of media, they can be used to offer many different kinds of programs. Any television or radio program can of course be transmitted as a podcast, as can any lecture, performance, or other recorded event. Using the AAC file format, audio podcasts can include synchronized still images to create a narrated slideshow. In this way, a series of lectures can include the lecturer's voice and presentation slides. In most podcasts, each episode is the same file format, so subscribers can enjoy the program the same way each time. However, some podcasts use multiple media. Language courses, for example, can combine video for a sense of the foreign country, audio for information and ear training, and documents for practice and reference.

A wide variety of programs are emerging as podcasts, because the protocol offers compelling characteristics for publishers:

- The cost of distribution is limited to the cost of data transfer.
- The XML document that ties the podcast together is simpler to create and maintain than most web pages.
- The RSS protocol helps facilitate an ongoing, opt-in, and highly convenient relationship with the subscriber.
- The size of the channel is effectively unlimited therefore can't be dominated by any other publisher or broadcaster.

And podcasts are attractive to subscribers, too:

- Podcasts are free.
- There are thousands of podcasts available from all over the world.
- New podcast episodes appear automatically and can be enjoyed

anywhere, anytime.

## **How can I get started?**

The podcasts directory in the iTunes Store is where you find and subscribe to new podcasts:

The Podcasts section of your Library is where you manage your existing subscriptions and play the episodes you have downloaded:

To find and subscribe to a podcast:

1. Launch iTunes. If you do not have iTunes, download the latest version of iTunes, free.
2. In the left column of iTunes, click on iTunes Store.
3. In the box labeled "iTunes STORE", click on "Podcasts."
4. Explore the wide selection of podcasts by clicking on the various pages and links. Alternatively, you can search for podcasts by entering search terms in the Search iTunes Store field. When iTunes displays results for your search, click PODCASTS to show only podcasts.
5. When you find a podcast you want to try, click Subscribe.

After a few seconds, iTunes will begin to download the latest episode for the podcast you subscribed to. To listen to or watch the episode:

1. Click the triangle next to the name of the podcast to see all the episodes:
2. Double-click on the top episode to play it.
3. To download and play older episodes, double-click on them or click the Get button.

## **How much do podcasts cost?**

All podcasts on the iTunes Store are free.

## **How do podcasts work?**

Podcasts consist of the episode files that you download, and an XML file

that lists all the episodes. When you subscribe to a podcast, iTunes reads the XML file and downloads the latest episode. Each day, iTunes rereads the XML file. If a new episode is available, iTunes downloads it automatically.

For more information on creating your own podcast, see the For Podcast Makers FAQ and the iTunes Podcasting Technical Specification.

## **How does iTunes support podcasts?**

The iTunes client application that you download and run on your Mac or PC lets you subscribe to podcasts and listen to or watch the episodes on your computer, iPod, or Apple TV.

The iTunes Store, which includes a podcast directory, helps you find and subscribe to programs and helps podcasters publicize their programs.

## **Do I need an iPod?**

No. Although you can download podcasts to your iPod to play them on the go, you can listen to or watch podcasts on your computer, using iTunes, or on your TV, with Apple TV.

## **Do I have to have an account at an iTunes Store to get podcasts?**

No. However, you do need an account to submit a podcast to the iTunes Store.

## **A podcast I want to subscribe to isn't available in the iTunes Store.**

It's easy to subscribe to any podcast using iTunes, even ones that aren't available in the iTunes Store. To subscribe, find and copy the podcast's feed URL. In the "Advanced" menu, select "Subscribe to Podcast" and paste the feed URL into the dialog box.

## **Are there video podcasts?**

Podcasts are more than just audio; some of the most popular podcasts in the iTunes Store are video podcasts. Most are playable on iPod with video capability. Additionally, Apple TV supports watching video podcasts on your TV screen.

There are also text-based podcasts. iTunes podcasting supports PDF files, which can be opened on your computer. (iPod cannot display PDF files.)

## **Why won't some video podcasts play on my iPod?**

Some video podcasts, while playable in iTunes, are encoded in formats that are not compatible with iPods. To convert those videos so that they are iPod-compatible, highlight the video in iTunes, right-click on the selection, and choose "Convert Selection for iPod". iTunes will automatically re-encode the video for playback on iPod. Go to the Movies section of your Library to find and play the converted episodes.

## **How can I find podcasts in my language?**

Podcasts are available in many different languages. The easiest way to find them is simply to search using words in the desired language.

The Power Search feature in the iTunes Store includes a language pull-down with the most common languages used by iTunes users. Podcast Power Search is available in the "Quick Links" sidebar on the main iTunes Podcasting Page.

To see podcasts that are popular in other countries, click on the Home icon to go to the main page for the iTunes store. At the bottom of the main page is a My Store menu that allows you to switch to different stores. Once in the desired store, navigate to the Podcasts page. In the Top Podcasts list, for example, you will find podcasts popular in that country.

## **How can I share the podcasts to which I subscribe?**

There are so many podcasts out there, it's tough to know which ones to subscribe to. Make it easy for your friends to find great podcasts by sending them some of your favorites. From a podcast's page in the iTunes Store, select the Tell a Friend option on the right side of the page to send a link to that podcast, along with a custom message, via email. You can also right-click (PC) or ctrl-click (Mac) on podcast art to copy the URL for a podcast in iTunes. There are other ways to share your favorite podcasts. Find more advanced techniques on the Podcasting Tips and Tricks page.

## **Are there parental controls for podcasts?**

The Parental Controls built into iTunes apply to podcasts. Limit your children's exposure to explicit content, or block the Podcasts section altogether, from the Parental Controls section of the iTunes preferences.

## **How do I unsubscribe?**

If you are no longer interested in a podcast to which you are subscribed, highlight the podcast in your Library and click the Unsubscribe button in the lower left hand corner of the screen. To unsubscribe and delete all files related to the podcast, simply press the Delete key after selecting a podcast.

## **Can I put podcasts in a playlist?**

Yes, podcast episodes can be added to a playlist, or smart playlist, like any other track. However, new episodes of a podcast are not automatically added to a standard playlist. See the Get Smart Playlists section of the Podcasting Tips and Tricks page for a guide to enhancing your podcast experience with smart playlists.

## **Can I play podcasts on my iPod shuffle?**

Yes. To play a podcast on iPod shuffle, set the switch on iPod shuffle to play in order. Also, note that the Autofill feature of iTunes will not add audiobooks and podcasts to iPod shuffle. Instead, you should manually

add audiobooks and podcasts to iPod shuffle by dragging them to the iPod shuffle playlist