Podcasting Guide for Librarians

Podcasts are the new radio shows. Since podcasts are broadcast online, anyone can get creative by podcasting any topic for free or at low cost! To get started, record your audio, fix it up, upload it to a podcast host, and let people know you're out there!

Listeners can subscribe to receive alerts when a new show is posted and listen at their leisure. Podcasts are great for spreading quality information, news, entertainment, marketing, community outreach and a whole lot more.

Learn more about What is a Podcast is from The Podcast Host.

Step-by-Step Guide to Podcasting in the Library

Some libraries start podcasts that are made by library staff, other libraries make equipment available for patrons to create their own podcasts. Luckily, the process is similar for both of these routes. Here are the main steps covered in this Guide:
1. Planning
2. Choosing Equipment
3. Recording & Editing
4. Putting it Out There & Marketing

Planning

There are a variety of small decisions that go into planning a podcast for your library. This Podcast Planning Worksheet puts all the questions in one spot to make planning easy for everyone. If you're working in a team, the Worksheet helps everyone get on the same page as the podcast takes shape.

In this Podcast Planning Worksheet you will start by choosing a topic and deciding which type of podcast you would like to make. Check out The Seven most Common Podcast Formats: With Examples to learn about these formats. Discover the Pros and Cons of Podcast Types to decide which one is right for you.

With your decision in mind consider who is going to make the podcast. The podcast will need to be scripted, recorded, edited, uploaded to a podcast host, and marketed so potential listeners know the podcast exists. Sometimes one person does it all, other times a library will designate tasks to different staff members, students, library patrons or volunteers. Make sure you have an individual or group of people who are accountable for completing their tasks, otherwise your podcast might fall to the wayside!

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Choosing the Equipment

The last question in the [Podcast Planning Worksheet for Librarians](#) is about which equipment you will need. Beginners can start small with equipment, then expand as needed. In general, you will need a microphone, a computer or smartphone, audio editing software, a podcast host, and any applicable software for marketing.

Here are some recommended options for beginners:

Microphone

- **USB Cardioid Condenser Microphone** (connects directly to USB on computer)
    - Great for one-person speaking directly in microphone
    - Doesn't pick up as much background noise
    - USB connection
    - Make sure it has a tabletop tripod included.
    - Some have an XLR to USB signal converter (it's a cord adapter)
    - Try these brands:
        - [Audio-Technica ATR2100x](#) (~$100)

        - [Shure SM58-CN](#) with [XLR to USB Adapter](#) (~$120 for both)
        - [Blue Yeti](#)- settings for cardioid, bidirectional, omni & stereo (~$130)
- **Omnidirectional USB Microphone** (picks up multiple voices)
    - If you're recording in a quiet space and need to pick up multiple voices with one microphone, this is a good option.
    - Can pick up more background noise than the Condenser
    - USB Connection
    - Make sure it has a tabletop tripod included
    - Try these brands:
        - [Blue Yeti](#)- settings for cardioid, bidirectional, omni & stereo (~$130)
        - [Blue Snowball](#)- settings for condenser or omni (~$70-100)
- **Smartphone**
    - If you already have a smartphone, try this first to experiment.
    - You can always upgrade if podcasting is popular in your library.
    - Audio is generally better with a separate microphone rather than the built-in microphone on the smartphone.

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Audio Editing Software

- **[Audacity](#)**
  - Free and plenty of tutorials
  - Works on Windows, Mac, and Linux
  - Can trim audio, add layers, background sound, sound effects, etc.
- **[Reaper](#)**
  - Low cost audio editing software (Annual subscription)
  - Works on Windows and Mac
  - Supports MIDI instruments
  - Can trim audio, add layers, background sound, sound effects, etc.)
- **[Adobe Audition](#)**
  - Great if you already have Adobe Creative Suite
  - Works on Windows and Mac
- **Built-in Audio Editor in Podcast Host**
  - Many podcast hosts include a basic audio editor
  - Check to see if this fits your needs before investing money
- Also try Musician on a Mission's [Free Audio Editing Software Recommendations](#).

Podcast Hosts

A Podcast Host stores your audio files and allows listeners to subscribe and receive new episodes as they are made available. Some podcast hosts also include basic audio editing for an all-in-one podcast experience.

Here are some good podcast hosts with free options for beginners:
- [Buzzsprout](#)
- [Podbean](#)
- [Anchor](#)
- [Spreaker](#)

Podcast hosts sometimes change their offerings. Here are some things to watch out for as you choose a host:
- Check for bandwidth limits. How many podcasts do you plan to distribute? How large is each audio file? Does this capacity fit your needs?
- Are there download limits? Does the price increase after a certain number of downloads? How many followers do you think you will get each month?
- Are you working as a team? Does the platform allow for team members?
- Are you using WordPress? Does your host work with WordPress?
- Is the platform easy to use? How much time do you have to learn?

Recording & Editing Audio

Depending upon the type of podcast you are doing, audio might be recorded and edited differently. A solo podcast will be easy to record and edit with a single microphone. Panel or conversation style podcasts might be recorded through multiple microphones and have to be layered together and edited track by track.

If you're just starting out, try Audacity, the free audio editor, to get your feet wet. Get comfortable with the new software using this YouTube tutorial to learn How to Record and Edit Your Podcast.

As you listen to more examples of podcasts and learn more about what an audio editor can do, you will have a better idea of which editing skills you will want to learn.

Starter Tutorials

Start with these comprehensive overview tutorials of your preferred audio editing tool. Watch the full tutorial series, or just the parts you need to get started:
- Audacity Tutorials from TJ Free
- Reaper 5 Explained Tutorials from REAPER Mania
- Adobe Audition CC Complete Course from Udemy on YouTube
- Find tutorials for your chosen podcast host's audio editor. Use the keywords from the glossary or the tutorial titles from the YouTube playlists above.

Audio Terms Glossary

As you learn more about audio editing, you will run across a lot of unfamiliar terms. Musician on a Mission provides a glossary with Audio Terms: Every Term DIY Musicians Need to Know.

Use this glossary to find the right keyword to search for a tutorial of the skill you need.

Putting It Out There & Marketing

Now that you have a podcast set and ready to go, it's time to upload the episodes to your chosen podcast host. Buzzsprout, Podbean, Anchor, and Spreaker have both paid and free options that are beginner friendly.

Use these YouTube tutorials to get started with these popular podcast hosts:
- Getting Started with Buzzsprout
- Podbean 2020 Beginner Introduction
- How to Start a Podcast with Anchor
- 4 Steps to Starting Your Podcast with Spreaker

Canva for Marketing

Some podcast hosts automatically post your podcast on your chosen social media platforms. If it doesn't or you want to do more, use Canva to make a fun image that is already optimized for popular social media platforms. Canva offers templates and color palettes for easy design. Get started with this How to Use Canva for Beginners tutorial.

Popular Marketing Options

Try these options to get the word out there about your new podcast:
- Cut a short clip of your podcast as a "teaser trailer".
- Make a 'people behind the podcast' video for advertising.
- Send a clip of your podcast to a local radio station.
- Post a link to your podcast on your library's website.
- Work with local schools and retirement homes to recruit volunteers and listeners.
- Ask patrons to submit topic ideas and episode recommendations.
- Host a Podcasting Workshop in the library.
- Set up an audio equipment makerspace station.
- Use your podcast as a training example in makerspaces.
- Conduct a live recording for fans and curious makers.

Questions?

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