

PODCASTING FAQ's

Enjoying Podcasts (Finding, Playing and Subscribing)

What is a podcast?

Podcasting is a Web-based form of broadcasting. Podcasting allows users to listen to exactly *what* they want, *when* they want, and *where* they want.

The most definitive and widely used definition of podcasting can be found in Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

Podcasting is the method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio or video programs, over the Internet using syndication feeds, for playback on mobile devices and personal computers. The term, coined in 2004, combines "iPod", a popular portable audio device, and "broadcasting."

The term podcast, like 'radio', can mean both the content and the method of delivery. The host or author of a podcast is often called a **podcaster**. Though podcasters' web sites may also offer direct download or streaming of their content, a podcast is distinguished from other formats by its ability to be downloaded automatically using software capable of reading feeds like RSS or Atom.

Usually a podcast features one type of 'show', with new episodes released either sporadically or at planned intervals such as daily or weekly. In addition, there are podcast networks that feature multiple shows on the same feed.

What hardware and software do I need to listen to a podcast?

You do not need an iPod. All you need to listen to podcasts is a computer with an Internet connection, headphones or speakers, a Web browser, and media player software (i.e., QuickTime, Windows Media Player, Real Player).

To manage subscriptions to podcasts, you will need "podcatcher" software. iTunes is widely used and is one of the easiest for beginners. It contains a large directory of podcasts and comes bundled with a media player. You can download iTunes (**Mac or Windows**) from www.apple.com.

How do I find podcasts?

You can search for podcasts on a particular topic using search engines like Google. That is probably the safest way to search for podcasts. There are also a number of podcast directories. Most directories include a list of most popular or most highly rated podcasts. Unfortunately most of them also list podcasts with titles that would probably be blocked by filtering software. Even the iTunes Music Store lists some podcasts with explicit content. The incredible breadth of content available, however, makes it worth wading through directories. (If you want to explore podcast directories, google “podcast directories”.)

To find Podcasts using iTunes, go to the Music Store. Click the podcasts link on the left side of the main page. You can browse the most popular podcasts listed on the right or browse by the categories listed on the left. Click on a podcast title to see a list of recent episodes. To download a single podcast episode, click the Get Episode button next to the episode. You may need to scroll to the right to see the Get Episode button.

You can also use iTunes’ search feature to search the Music Store for podcasts.

How do I play podcasts from Web sites?

Podcasts are media files (usually MP3 files but other formats can be used), so all you need to play podcasts is an MP3 player or a computer with a media player such as QuickTime, iTunes or Windows Media player. Most podcasts are available from Web sites and you can simply click on a link to play them.

For example, to play the University of Nebraska’s Real Nebraska video podcast, go to realnebraska.unl.edu. If you click on the photo in a gray frame next to each podcast issue, the video podcast should automatically play in your computer’s default media player.

To play the University of Nebraska’s popular Backyard Farmer program, go to <http://byf.unl.edu/>. Click on the date of recent program from the list on the left side of the screen. From the page with information on the program, click on the View Program link. Backyard Farmer is optimized for use with RealPlayer. If you have a recent version of RealPlayer installed, the program should begin player. If you do not have a recent version of RealPlayer, detailed information on installing the program is provided at <http://byf.unl.edu/help/>

How do I play podcasts from iTunes?

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list of recent episodes. To download a single podcast episode, click the Get Episode button next to the episode. You may need to scroll to the right to see the Get Episode button.

How do I subscribe to podcasts?

You can subscribe to podcasts so that each new episode is automatically delivered to your computer. You will need podcatching software to manage your subscriptions. iTunes now supports podcasts and is probably the easiest option for those new to podcasts.

There are several ways to subscribe to podcasts using iTunes. The exact method of subscribing may vary from podcast to podcast. To subscribe to podcasts within the iTunes Music Store, click on the subscribe button next to the podcast description.

If you are at a podcast Web site, look for the iTunes logo. You will usually either find directions for subscribing using iTunes or clicking on the logo will begin the process of subscribing.

For example, to subscribe to the University of Nebraska 's video podcast *Real Nebraska* from the Real Nebraska Web site (admissions.unl.edu/realnebraska/main.asp) click on the iPod icon after the episode description. A pop up window gives you the following directions: "To subscribe to the vodcast of *Real Nebraska*, copy the following URL into your iTunes software: feed://admissions.unl.edu/RSS/rssvodcast.xml (select 'Advanced>Subscribe to Podcast.')"

Some podcast Web sites now offer 1 click links. To subscribe to podcasts from Podcast411 (www.podcast411.com), I just clicked on the iTunes 1 click link in the upper right hand corner. Backyard Farmer also offers a one-click iTunes subscription option from their home page.

Is there a cost to subscribing to a podcast?

Many podcast are free but some of the more popular podcasts are moving to a paid subscription to download.