get HEaRd
A media project for women
Presented by WOW Australia and Radio 4EB
Supported by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and the
Queensland Government's Advancing Women in Business Initiative

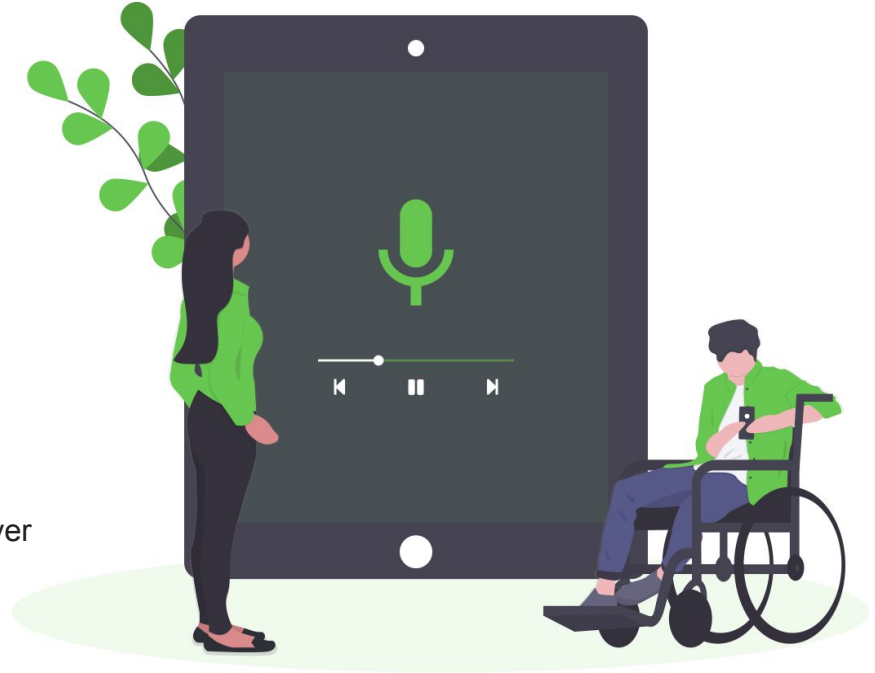# Podcast Basics

WITH MICHELLE BROWN

WHAT'S A PODCAST?

"Podcast" is a blend of words, formed by combining "iPod" and "broadcast". The term "podcasting" as a name was first suggested by The Guardian columnist and BBC journalist Ben Hammersley, who invented it in early February 2004 while writing an article for The Guardian newspaper.

What makes a podcast different to radio?

- The audience has the freedom to listen on the go (e.g on smartphones, in the car, doing the dishes)
- They can subscribe to favourite podcasts and listen whenever they want
- They can be very topic specific, niche content that can connect a community around the world
- They focus on storytelling and one-on-one style conversations

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO PODCAST

There are several things you will need to create a successful podcast, we'll cover things in more detail as we go but here's the basics;

- **Content** – engaging content is central to podcasting

- **Recording equipment** or access to - audio quality is still key even with beginner podcasting

- **Editing software** – for piecing together the recordings and optimizing for online hosting

- **Host server/distribution platform** – an internet server where you load your podcast audio episodes

- **Host web page** – this is usually a page on the on the host server's website where your audience finds your podcast and subscribes to it

- **A digital strategy** – also could be called a marketing or promotional plan to ensure that you are getting your podcasts out so you can gain listeners and followers.
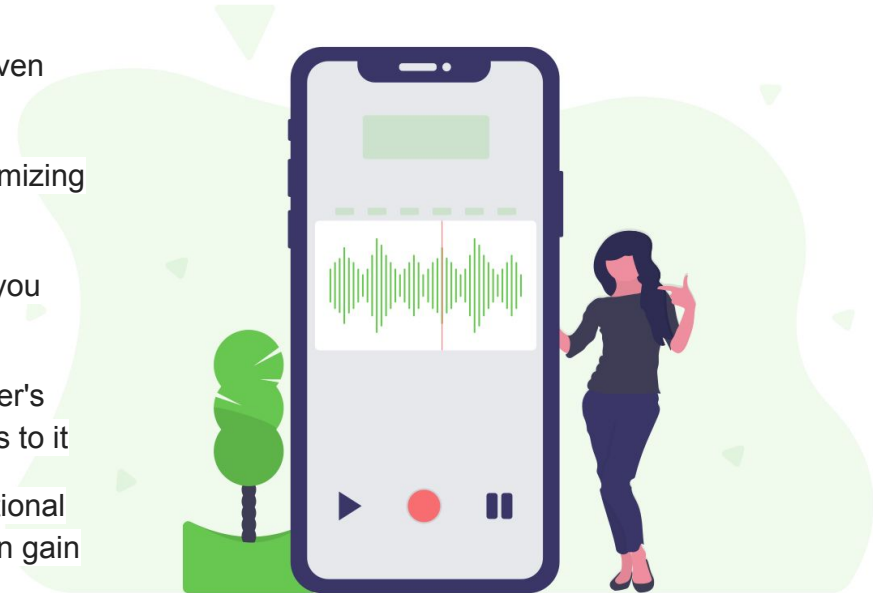
PODCAST STYLES

You can have your own style of podcast, but generally they will fall into one of the below broadcast formats, having a think about which style you might prefer for your own podcast may help you focus on the structure and content.

- **The Interview style**; usually featuring regular guests and interviews and may include a few hosts

- **The Solo Podcast**; run by one person and may cover specific topics or many

- **The Panel Show**; a group of hosts discussing different topics relating to the podcasts main focus

- **Conversational/Co-hosted podcast**; similar to interview format but more casual

- **Storytelling;** could be historical content or fictional, can include one host or more

- **Audio drama**: similar to old-fashioned radio plays featuring sound design, multiple characters etc.

EPISODE PREPARATION

For great sounding audio content, preparation is key! Even if it's a basic idea for structure of the ep, use a runsheet to help keep you organised and on track.

Some things you might need to think about when putting together the podcast;

- **Scripting**; will you have dot points to refer to, no script at all and totally wing it, or fully scripted. Be mindful of fully scripting or winging it, you can sound like you're reading direct from a piece of paper - or with no notes you can lose track of what you want to talk about.

- **Interviews**; will you have anyone guest on your show? If you do, you may want to prepare a list of questions.

- **SFX & music** (licensing); if you want to make your content engaging, you may want to think about sound effects and backing music.

- **Stings/pre-recorded elements**; Creating an appealing podcast intro will help you start each show with a formula and introduce new listeners to who/what you cover.

- Perhaps content warnings if your show is not suitable for younger audiences or features explicit/difficult content.
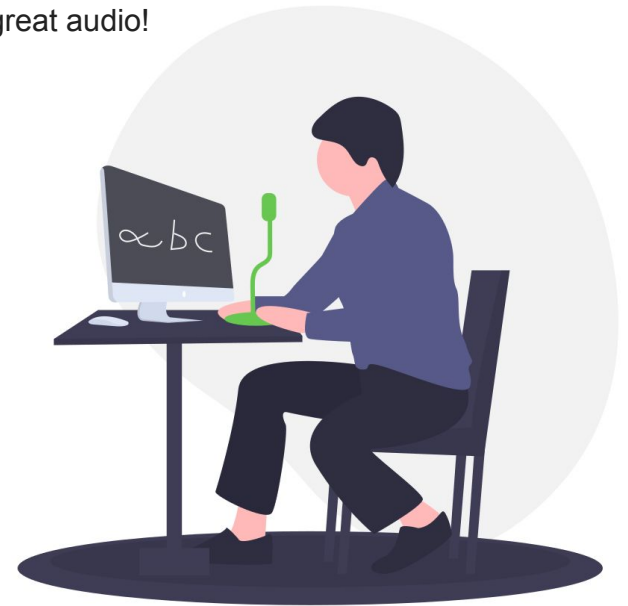
RECORDING CONTENT

Requirements - Ability to record vocals with little sound interference is your main goal, if you're just starting out and don't have access to a studio, there is a basic list of things you'll need. But consider using a studio that's already set up for recording, local radio stations offer hire, some libraries have rooms available to the public. Will save you money and the headache of trying to capture great audio!

You will need;

- Mic, leads and pop filter (XLR vs USB options)
- Audio interface (may not require if you go with USB mic)
- Mic Stand
- Headphones
- Soundproofing
- Computer for editing
- Software

Handy items;

- Portable Audio Recorder
- Or mic/adapter for mobile phone

EDITING CONTENT

Once you have recorded your audio you will need to edit it with software. Some examples include;

- Audacity (Free)
- Adobe Audition ($30 per month subscription)
- ProTools (Paid)
- Logic Pro X (starting from $600)
- Ableton Live ($99 upwards)
- Garageband (Free with Mac)
- Hindenburg (Paid)

Audacity is a good one to start out with since it's free and you can use to record and edit with. However it can take a little bit of learning to get the hang of it.

PACKAGING CONTENT

Think of a podcast just like any audio package, there's a start a middle and an end.

Start - Your introduction to the podcast. You might want to create a jingle or sting that kicks off every episode, then introduce what the podcast is and what you might be covering that episode.

Middle - This is your main content, whatever your podcast might be about.

End - sign off, thank your audience, tell them what's on the next ep etc.

Main things you might want to include in your intro and outros;

- Name of your podcast
- Host/s of the podcast
- Purpose or tagline of the podcast
- Any other important info like sponsors or disclaimers

If it's pre-recorded then you want to keep it relevant for every podcast episode, after you play the intro/sting, you can then introduce the episode topic, any guests or other relevant info.
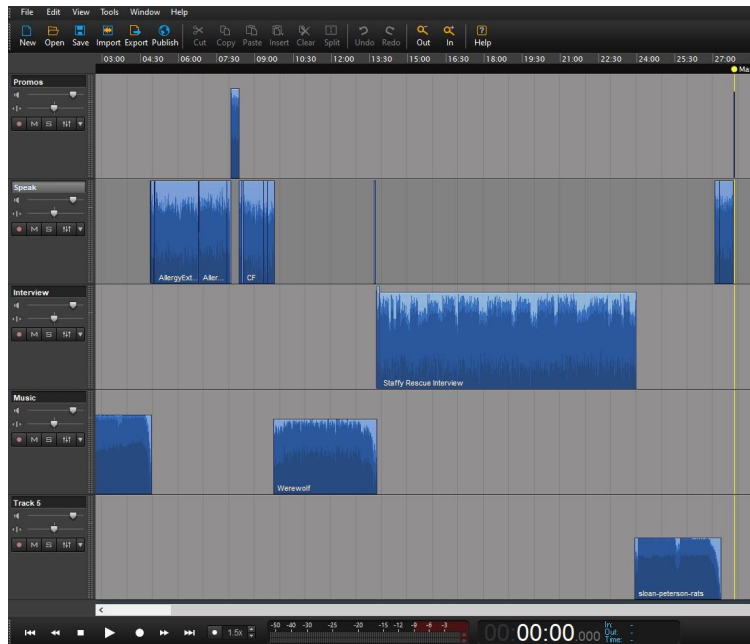
LEGALITIES & COPYRIGHT

Because Podcasts are globally accessible, opposed to traditional media like radio and TV, they aren't bound as strictly to ACMA (Australian Communications and Media Authority) codes of practice, so rules around swearing and offensive material do not apply. However, all other broadcast laws and regulations do apply – such as defamation, copyright, racial vilification and so on, as podcasting is a form of publishing.
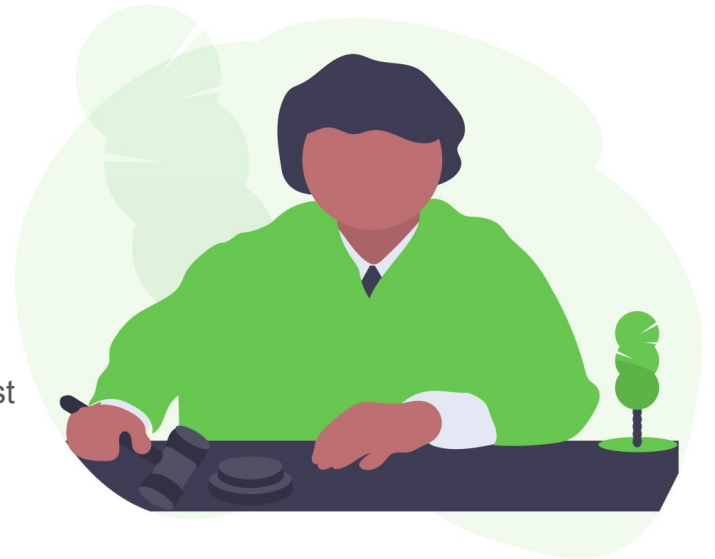
You can also read through the Creative Commons 'Blog, Podcast, Vodcast and Wiki Copyright Guide for Australia' - https://creativecommons.org.au/publications/blogguide/

Different podcasting platforms have their own requirements when it comes to copyright material, read the fine print about copyrighted material in the terms of service as you begin to use a new platform to distribute your content.

Including music in your podcast can cause a bit of a headache, you need permissions from the artist or the right to broadcast via licensing, in Australia you would need to be covered by APRA AMCOS and PPCA.

Best to just use copyright free music or get written permission from any friends who may let you use their music (if they are on a label it may not be this easy mind you!).

HOSTING
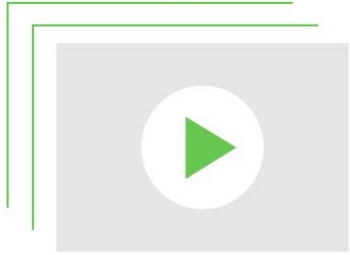
One of the main things people get stuck on when they get started in podcasting, is how to get it out to listeners. There's a few steps to distributing your podcast and you need to prepare your episodes for hosting and distribution.

Using one of the existing podcast platforms is a good idea as it helps you with everything you need and we'll cover more on the next slide.

Metadata

Metadata is is useful information about your podcast and makes it easier to find your podcast when searching. Metadata as it's displayed in your media playing software - such things as Track title, Album, Artist. When you bounce/export audio, software like Audacity will ask you to fill in these fields.

RSS Feeds

RSS stands for "rich site summary" and is a simple way of staying up to date with the delivery of content, for example, tracking episodes of podcast releases. You will need an RSS feed to distribute your podcast.
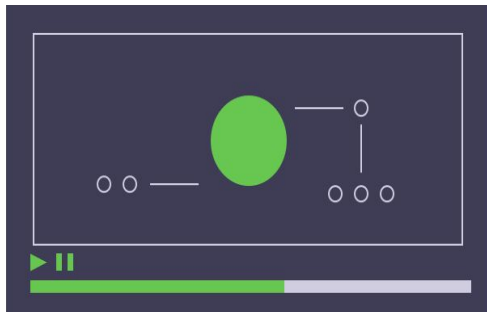
DISTRIBUTION

Some of the popular hosting platforms that will distribute for you include;

- Whooshkaa
- Podbean
- Buzzsprout
- Libsyn
- Transistor
- Simplecast
- Soundcloud
- Podomatic

Some of these will cost and some are free, most can help host your episodes, create an RSS feed, submit to the major podcast listening platforms and more.
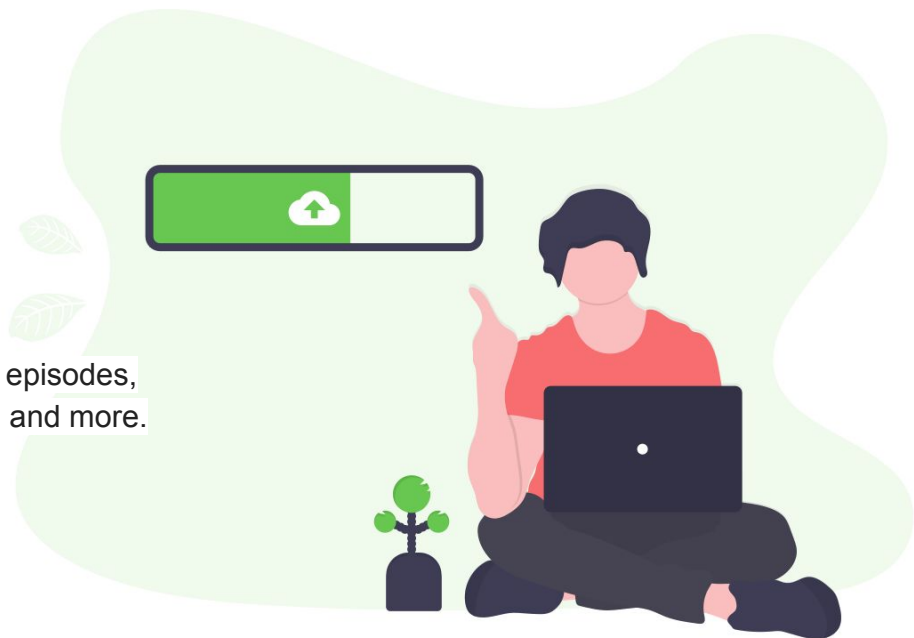
PROMOTION

Once you have a podcast set up, it's not as easy as just waiting for listeners and followers to find you, you need to get out there and promote the podcast and new content.

Think about creating a **website**, even if it's a free Wordpress or Blog site.

Think about **social media**, create a Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter account - but only if you'll use them regularly, as social networks and their algorithms are about continuous engagement. You can't just create a page and then not post regularly, as your audience may not as engage with your content if they don't know what's coming up on the podcast.

Make a **media contact list** (see if you can find someone who works in a similar area who has one prepared)

Organise **cross promo** with other podcasts of similar size, plug each others' shows.

Join facebook **groups** for fellow podcasters

Have a **launch party**. Physical events in the real world help to build excitement around your show's release, and to connect community.

AUDIENCE METRICS

Once you start your podcast, you want to track who your listeners are and how they're accessing your podcast. Why? Well firstly, it helps to know you're not just putting out something you've spent a lot of time and energy on and you've got no one listening. Secondly, if you want to make money from your podcast, then you will need to grow your audience, the best way to grow your audience is to know your audience! With a clearer understanding of your listening audience and the right promotional pushes, you might be able to earn some income.

Depending on your hosting service provider, you should have access to some analytics, like how many listens, where people are located, listening sources (itunes, spotify etc)
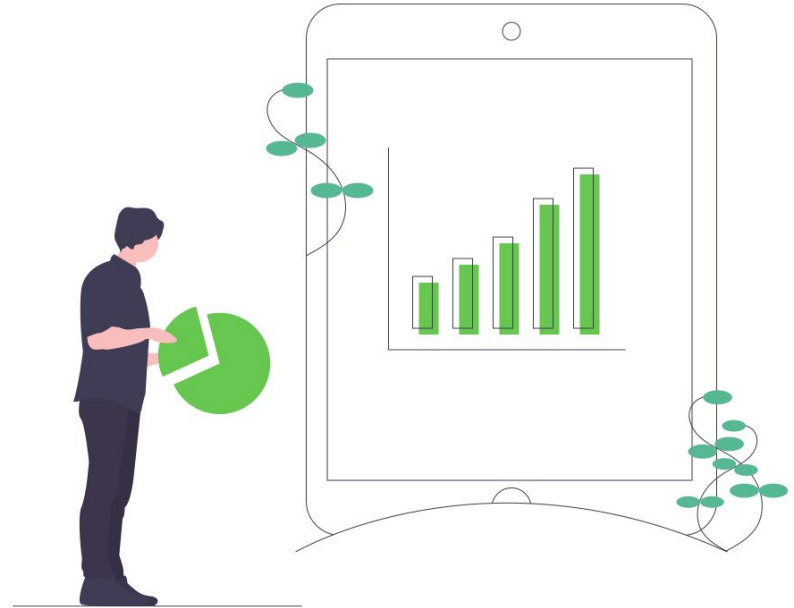
THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

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