THE BASICS OF
PODCAST PRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

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▸ 02. Recording

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01. PODCAST FORMAT

CHOOSING A PODCAST FORMAT

▸ First and foremost be sure to read the full assignment details and rubric so you are 100% sure what you will NEED to complete.

▸ Lets review some good questions (to ask yourself) to help clarify your ideas and work towards choosing a "standard" format for your podcast.

▸ Remember the three rules for podcasting success?

  ▸ Plan

  ▸ Plan

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▸ TIP: Listen to several different podcasts (pick some of the top ones) and "see" for yourself how the pros do it. Think about how you can emulate a similar style that you enjoy listening to.

GENERAL PODCASTING FORMAT

▸ Topic (or genre) of your podcast will help determine your program format

▸ Keep format consistent

▸ Podcasts are linear in form, and thus contain a beginning, middle, and end

▸ Start strong & end strong

▸ Decide if you will outline your show, or script it

▸ Plan out your format and develop a show plan for each episode

SCRIPT VS INTERVIEW

‣ Most podcasts can be categorized as either a scripted show, or a live interview style (conversational) show.

  ‣ There is no right or wrong way here, you should select the type you are more comfortable recording (or that you have been assigned).

‣ Either way you decide to go, you need to plan out your show. You have a set time limit, and lots of information to cover, so planning is key to ensuring you pack all your info into your show.

‣ Lets explore the benefits and limitations of each style…

SCRIPT DRIVEN PODCAST SHOW

▸ **Benefits**

  ▸ You don't have to come up with talking points, or topics, you have everything you need written down.

  ▸ For many "first time podcasters" scripting is a good way to ensure you get your information recorded with limited "ums" and mistakes.

▸ **Drawbacks**

  ▸ If not read with inflection, the narration can sound "forced" or "canned" with little emotion and leave the audio sounding flat.

  ▸ People can get nervous reading aloud knowing they are recorded and may make lots of mistakes reading and need to re-do their sections over and over.

INTERVIEW STYLE PODCAST SHOW

▸ Benefits

  ▸ Has a natural feel, the audience feels as if they are "at the table" of the conversation.

  ▸ Spontaneous tangents, funny moments, create genuine feel for audience.

▸ Drawback

  ▸ Personality of members can be "too" much.

  ▸ Rely on hosts to ensure they have a "broadcast" voice to entertain the listener.

EXAMPLE FORMAT: INFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGY SHOW

▸ Technology Show (using the research prompts)

  ▸ Introduction of hosts (you & guests) with music

  ▸ Succinct introduction of topic chosen

  ▸ Discussion of historical aspects of topic

  ▸ Discuss the impact of the topic in current context

  ▸ Discuss any controversial aspects of your chosen topic

  ▸ Discuss your views on the future directions of your topic

  ▸ Provide a succinct conclusion based on your research and discussions

  ▸ Wrap up / "sign off" / conclusion

  ▸ Outro with music

FORMAT TIPS & TRICKS

▸ Consider using a hybrid of script and interview…

   ▸ Script the facts, the important info you can't recall by memory etc.

   ▸ Frame the scripted sections within the interview or conversation

   ▸ Use an outline to keep track of where you are (time and content)

▸ Practice reading / speaking aloud early to get used to the "red recording light" nerves.

▸ Choose a topic you are interested in. If you are bored, your listeners will also be bored.

▸ Relax. Try to enjoy a hot beverage (tea / coffee, etc.) and have fun!

02. RECORDING

HARDWARE & SOFTWARE OVERVIEW

▸ At its simplest, podcasting is just audio recording, try not to overthink or over "worry" about fancy and expensive audio gear. Yes there are lots of it out there, but you can achieve high quality recordings with simple gear.

▸ This overview is intended for those who may not have any experience recording a podcast, so if you already know what you're doing… stick with what works.

▸ It is strongly recommended that if you have access to a sound booth or other professional equipment at your campus, spend some time trying out the gear, but remember you can easily record and create a podcast with your own equipment.

HARDWARE OVERVIEW

▸ A computer (laptop or desktop) Apple / PC / Linux

▸ *Optional* Mobile device (tablet or smartphone) not all are well suited for podcasting, but most newer higher end devices will have good capability.

▸ *Optional* Handheld digital audio recorder such as a Zoom H6 or similar.

▸ A Microphone (internal / usb / or XLR)

   ▸ Internal: these are typically lower quality but still decent if you are close enough to your machine to be recorded. Be careful of "computer noise" (fans, CPU's, etc.)

   ▸ USB: there are many great USB microphones that you can attach to your computer even some that are made specifically for podcasting. See if you can use a mic from campus to try it out. NO NEED TO BUY ONE.

   ▸ XLR: an analog mic that will require additional gear to connect and bridge into your computer. If you are experienced with audio production this might be a good route, if not, it may be best to stick with an internal mic or usb mic.

SOFTWARE OVERVIEW

▸ **Recommended Software (for all)**

   ▸ Apple MacOS Platform

      ▸ GarageBand

      ▸ Audacity

   ▸ Microsoft Windows

      ▸ Audacity

▸ **Advanced Software**

   ▸ Adobe Audition

   ▸ Apple Logic Pro

   ▸ Digital Audio Workstation

   ▸ Traction

   ▸ Pro Tools

RECORDING TIPS & TRICKS

▸ Avoid noisy environments. Stay away from fans, HVAC, and traffic noise.

▸ Use towels or blankets to block doors, windows, and other areas of noise.

▸ To create a "dead sound area" you can make yourself a fort with blankets and pillows to record under. OR use a sound booth ;)

▸ Practice / test your sound. Record a few seconds and play it back to evaluate the quality of sound. If its noisy, try to relocate or turn things off to make it more quiet.

▸ Try to record the entire show in one go - don't stop when you make mistakes, just pause and restart the section etc. you can go back and delete the mistakes later.

03. EDITING & RENDER

EDITING TIPS & TRICKS

▸ Allow for a soft open (do not start with audio in the first second).

▸ Remove mistakes, long pauses, and any "ums" "huhs" and erroneous sounds you can. Tightening up your track will improve quality.

▸ When using music or other sound effects etc. be sure to "duck" (adjust the volume) under the audio track so that it does not compete with the voice track.

▸ Music and effects should be treated like seasoning in your cooking, a little can go a long way and make the dish better, too much and you ruin the meal.

▸ Utilize video tutorials on lynda.com, or YouTube etc. to learn how to use the tools in your software platform.

SAVING & RENDERING

▸ Save. Save. Save. Always save your work. If you aren't sure, save again.

▸ Keep your working file (this is the file you are editing in GarageBand or Audacity etc.) this is where you edit and make your changes etc. This is not your final file. This one you can always come back to to make a change or edit. Save this, save often.

▸ When you are ready to output (Render) your audio file, you will have several options from your software platform. The most universal format is mp3.

▸ Save out your work as an *filename.mp3 this will ensure the greatest playback ability with your audio file.

▸ You can always output several versions from your working project file, so feel free to experiment to see how the other options impact quality etc.

GET STARTED!