

Podcasts and iPods: Study Tools for the 21st Century

Putting this...



...into this!



Resources for Creating Your Own Podcast and iPod Flash Cards

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How to Create a Classroom Podcast

Below is information on the steps involved in creating an episode of ColeyCast, my 5th grade classroom podcast. The process is divided into four stages: **preproduction**, **recording**, **postproduction**, and **publishing**.

NOTE: Links for underlined terms can be found in the “Web Links” section of this packet.

Preproduction



Before any recording takes place, students first plan and write out what they are going to say. For some broadcasts, students pair up or form small groups. Working together, each pair or group writes a script for its segment (one section of a broadcast) and selects a broadcaster (the person who will do the actual talking during the recording phase). For other broadcasts, students work individually to write their scripts and later on record their

segments. Depending on what the broadcast covers, students sometimes use planning sheets to help organize their thoughts.

We try to keep the length of each ColeyCast under 10 minutes. That way, listeners won't lose interest before the broadcast is completed. We do our best to stick to this, but occasionally the 10-minute mark is exceeded due to large amounts of material.

Although some broadcasts contain a limited number of speakers, the goal is to have every student involved in preproduction. While every student may not lend his or her voice to a broadcast, everyone does have a hand in contributing content to ColeyCasts. Students are assured that if they don't get the chance to be the broadcaster on a current production, they will definitely get the chance to speak in a future broadcast.

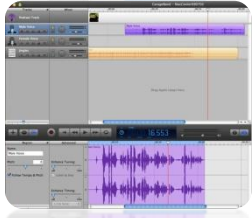
Recording



Once students have finished writing their scripts, they move on to the recording phase of creating a ColeyCast. But before students record, they practice reading their scripts out loud, paying special attention to speaking loudly, clearly, and slowly (it's common for students to speak quickly when they get nervous).

Using a Logitech headset microphone and audio recording software, I record students as they read their segments (the recording is typically done during silent reading). I occasionally use the voice recorder on my iPhone when I need to record multiple students at the same time. For the first dozen or so broadcasts, I used the free audio mixing software Audacity to record the students (Audacity is available for both Windows and Mac). I have since switched to a Mac for my podcasting needs and use GarageBand to record our broadcasts.

Postproduction



After all the students have recorded their segments, I edit the audio. This involves putting the segments in the proper order (as we don't always record them sequentially), adjusting the volume, eliminating background noise, and adding music.

The nice thing about using GarageBand is that the software has hundreds of music samples and loops built right into the program. So instead of having to go to the Internet to look for music, it's all right at your fingertips. Music from outside sources can be uploaded to GarageBand as well. Occasionally, we use additional music for our broadcasts that we acquire from these three sources:

- incompetech.com -- a fantastic collection of royalty-free music by Kevin MacLeod
- [SoundSnap](http://SoundSnap.com) -- a great website offering free music loops and sound effects
- [Partners in Rhyme](http://PartnersinRhyme.com) -- another site offering free music loops and sound effects.
- [JewelBeat](http://JewelBeat.com) – more royalty-free music and sound effects

The great thing about the musical pieces obtained from these sites is that they are "podsafe." This means podcasters can freely use them in their podcasts without having to pay any royalty fees or worry about breaking any copyright laws.

For the first 13 ColeyCasts, I took the finished product and converted the sound file to .mp3 format (both GarageBand and Audacity can convert files to .mp3 format). Using Apple's GarageBand, we now create what are called **enhanced podcasts** (in .m4a format). An enhanced podcast contains chapter markers and artwork. Enhanced podcasts are similar to DVD's, in that listeners can skip to the next chapter of the broadcast, instead of having to fast forward, guessing where to stop.

Publishing



The final step has me publish the ColeyCast to mrcoley.com for the world to hear. Listeners can then visit our website and listen to broadcasts right in their web browsers, or if they prefer, subscribe in iTunes and have broadcasts automatically downloaded to their computers. Subscribing is a great idea because it eliminates the need to check the website to see if new broadcasts have been posted (although we love it when people frequently visit our site). Plus, once broadcasts have been downloaded, they can then be transferred to an iPod and listened to on the go!

In order to submit a podcast to iTunes, you need an RSS feed for your podcast (this is what makes the podcast "subscribable"). If your podcast host does not automatically create an RSS feed for you, you can create one using the free services Blogger and FeedBurner. Step-by-step directions on how to create an RSS feed can be found in the "Podcasting Web Links" section at the back of this handout.

If you don't have a website and need a place to host your podcast, there are several free or inexpensive options out there. Check out the [podcast hosting options chart](#) located in the “Podcasting Web Links” section at the back of this handout.

How to Submit Your Podcast to iTunes

Once your podcast is ready to share with the world, why not submit it to iTunes? It works on both PCs and Macs, it's free, and it has a built-in podcasting section that makes it a snap to search for, listen to, and subscribe to podcasts.

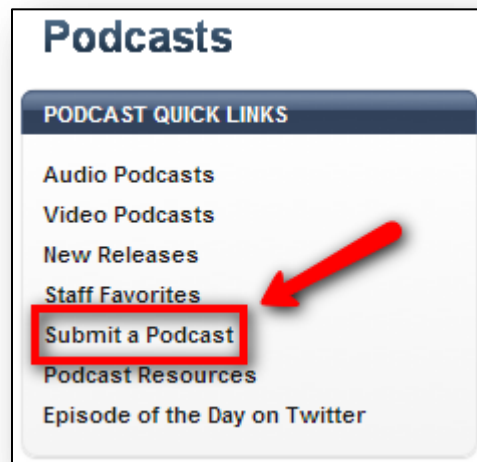
Submitting your podcast to iTunes is a simple process and does **not** require you to republish your broadcasts to iTunes. Basically, all you're doing is providing iTunes with your RSS feed and the details of your podcast (name, author, etc.). That way, iTunes knows where to go to get your podcast when listeners want to listen and/or subscribe.

To submit your podcast to iTunes, complete the following steps:

- Once in iTunes, go to the **iTunes Store**.
- Click on **Podcasts** at the top of the iTunes window.




- Now click on **Submit a Podcast** on the right-hand side of the screen.



- Enter your RSS feed in the “Podcast Feed URL” box.



If you're not sure what your RSS feed is, look for an icon like this  on your podcasting page. Clicking the image should give you your feed address.

- Follow the onscreen instructions to complete the submission process. It typically takes 24-48 hours for your podcast to be cataloged in the iTunes podcast directory.

How to Create iPod Flash Cards

Creating a set of flash cards to be viewed on an iPod is actually quite simple. If you know how to create a Microsoft PowerPoint or Apple Keynote presentation, you're only a few steps away from having your own set of iPod flash cards. To create a set of flash cards, complete the following steps:

Creating the Flash Cards

1. Create a PowerPoint presentation, where each slide represents a different flash card (this is the most time-consuming step in the process).
2. When creating your presentation, here are some things to consider:
 - Use a font that is easy to read and not too fancy. Tahoma, Arial, Verdana, Comic Sans, and Times New Roman are common, reader-friendly fonts. My font of choice for iPod flash cards is Tahoma.
 - Use a large font size. When viewing flash card images on a small iPod screen, the larger the font size the better. When I use the Tahoma font, I typically try to keep the size around 60, and I do my best never to go below 48.
 - Keep your backgrounds simple. I try to stick to solid colors or backgrounds with a very faint texture. Busy backgrounds tend to make the text more difficult to read.
 - Try not to put too much information on any one slide. Too much text on an iPod screen can be confusing.
3. **PowerPoint users (Keynote users skip to Step #5):** When you are finished with the presentation and are ready to convert it to flash cards, click **File > Save As**. In the "Save as type" or "Format" drop-down box, select **JPEG**. Then select the location in which you want to save your flash cards and click the **Save** button. Depending on your version of PowerPoint, you may be prompted with the question "Do you want to export every slide in the presentation or only the current slide?" If so, click the **Every Slide** button. You will then be informed that each slide in your presentation has been saved in a separate folder at the location on your computer that you specified.
4. Next, open the folder containing the new flash card images you just created. You'll notice the images are named "Slide1", "Slide 2", "Slide3", etc. What you now need to do is take a few moments and rename the first nine slides ("Slide1" through "Slide9"), inserting a "0" (zero) before each number in the image's name. *(If you're using PowerPoint for Mac, this may already be taken care of for you, and you'll be able to skip this step.)*



Old Name	New Name
Slide1	Slide01
Slide2	Slide02
Slide3	Slide03
Slide4	Slide04
Slide5	Slide05
Slide6	Slide06
Slide7	Slide07
Slide8	Slide08
Slide9	Slide09

This is necessary to ensure your slides stay in the correct order. Computers typically order files alphabetically. Files with the same names but different numbers at the end of the file titles are ordered numerically.

Order of Images Without Renaming Slides (slides <u>not</u> in correct order)	Order of Images With Renaming Slides (slides in correct order)
Slide1	Slide01
Slide11	Slide02
Slide12	Slide03
Slide13	Slide04
Slide14	Slide05
Slide15	Slide06
Slide16	Slide07
Slide17	Slide08
Slide18	Slide09
Slide19	Slide10
Slide20	Slide11
Slide21	Slide12

You can see that by inserting a "0" before the numbers in the first nine slides, you are making every slide contain a two-digit number, thus ensuring your slides will be displayed in the proper order on your computer and/or iPod. Your flash card images are now ready to be distributed to your students! *Note: If your set of flash cards contains 100 images or more, you will need to insert "0" or "00" (for the first nine slides) before the number in every slide title, making every file contain a three-digit number and ensuring your slides will be ordered correctly.*

5. **Keynote users:** When you are finished with the presentation and are read to convert it to flash cards, click **File > Export**. At the top of the window that appears, click the **Images** icon. Make sure the **All** button is selected to ensure that a flash card is created for each and every slide. In the "Format" drop-down box, select **JPG (variable quality)**. Click **Next**.

6. Name your set of flash cards in the "Save As" box and select where you want the set saved. It is recommended you save the flash cards in a separate folder in order to keep them organized. Click **Export**. Your flash card images are now ready to be distributed to your students!

Creating a .zip File

1. More than likely, you are now going to want to post the flash card images on your classroom website for students and parents to download. To do so, you'll want to create a **.zip** file containing all of your flash card images. A .zip file is a single file that acts more like a file folder. It contains one or more files that have been compressed to reduce file size. .zip files are great because, when posted online, they allow users to download a single file (containing multiple other files) instead of having to download each file separately.
2. If you use a PC, right-click on the folder containing your flash cards images, select **Send To** and then **Compressed (zipped) Folder**. If you use a Mac, control-click the folder and select **Create Archive of "Folder Name"**. There are also several third-party programs that can create .zip files, such as WinZip (\$29.95) and Free Zip Wizard.
3. After your .zip file has been created, upload the file to your website. Visitors can then download the file, extract the images, and sync them to their iPods.

Syncing and Viewing Instructions

1. Open iTunes and connect your iPod to your computer. Then click the **Photos** tab.
2. After making sure you've selected the location of the folder containing your flash cards, click the box next to **Sync photos from:** and then click **Sync**. Your flash cards will then be uploaded to your iPod.
3. To view your flash cards, select **Photos** from your iPod's main menu. Then select the set of flash cards you wish to view (it will be the same name as the folder containing your flash cards). Scroll through the flash cards by clicking the next button on your iPod's scroll wheel.

Note: These viewing instructions apply to iPod Classic and iPod Nano. Users of iPod Touch or iPhone should follow the steps for viewing photos that accompanied their device.

References:

Vincent, T. (2008, February 9). iPods Episode #09: Photos Part 1. Retrieved July 13, 2008, from Learning in Hand Website: <http://cdn.libsyn.com/vincent/iPods09.m4a>

Vincent, T. (2008, March 1). iPods Episode #10: Photos Part 2. Retrieved July 13, 2008, from Learning in Hand Website: <http://cdn.libsyn.com/vincent/ipods10.mp3>

"ZIP (file format)." Wikipedia. 15 Jan 2009 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZIP_\(file_format\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZIP_(file_format))>.

Podcasting and iPod Flash Cards Web Links

Web links for all of the underlined terms in this handout, as well as many other resources such as tutorial videos, can be found on the following web pages:

- **Podcasting Resources – Web Links and Tutorial Videos**
<http://www.mrcoley.com/podcasting>
- **iPod Flash Cards – Over 50 Sets of Free iPod Flash Cards**
<http://www.mrcoley.com/flashcards>
- **iPod Flash Cards Resources – Web Links and Tutorial Videos**
http://www.mrcoley.com/flashcards/flashcards_resources.htm

Headset microphone image courtesy of www.logitech.com

iPod Nano image courtesy of Pierre Alan Lepetit, Wikimedia Commons

All other non-screenshot images courtesy of Microsoft Office Online, Wikimedia Commons, and IconsPedia.com