

# Podcasting Basics

Here is what I can tell you about getting started in podcasting. A podcast is a simple idea. It is an audio file that you can play on your computer (or iPod or other MP3 player). Instead of streaming it through applications like Realplayer, you actually download the file and it's yours forever. Podcasting has been around for a few years and has become popular because of three things:

1. **iPods** – People can take these downloaded audio files anywhere.
2. **RSS (Really Simple Syndication)** – This is a syndication technology that tells the user when you've updated your website or podcast without requiring them to receive email updates, or check the site frequently for updates.
3. **iTunes music store (iTMS)** – This allows you to browse their directory of podcasts and subscribe to the ones you like. It uses RSS to automatically download the latest podcast from the podcaster's website, and then sync this with your iPod when you connect to your computer.

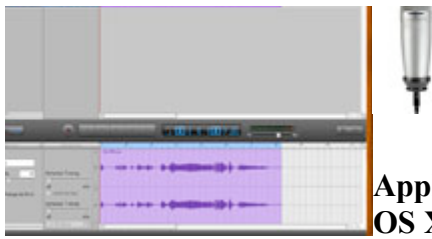
## Things you'll need to start podcasting:

- Software for recording your podcast
- A decent microphone
- A website... for most of you, Simple Station is happy to host all your podcasting needs.

## Software:

If you are using a **Windows (PC)** or a Mac (if you don't have Garageband) we highly recommend an open source recording application called **Audacity**. It is called “open-source” because there is no company that owns the rights to the programs code, and consequently the program is developed and maintained by programmers who work on it during their free time. I've used it for several years and it's improved steadily over those years. It allows you to record from your computer's built-in microphone or an external microphone.

For more information check out [Audacity's website](#).



Apple just released a new version of their **Garageband** software for **Mac OS X** that makes podcasting much easier. It records multiple tracks just like Audacity, but will also help you format your podcast with images and submit your podcast to be listed on the iTunes music store (where people can browse a directory of free podcasts). Garageband is sold as part of the [Apple iLife package](#) which is bundled with the purchase of any new Mac.

## Microphone:

While your computer may have a built-in microphone, you'll want to get something external that won't pick up the hard-drive sounds and droning fans. The difference is pretty noticeable between your built-in mic and a USB one that plugs into any USB port.



**Podcasting microphone recommendations:** Try a [Logitech USB Desktop Microphone, which is \\$25 on Amazon.com](#). It has really good reviews for podcast recording and has some basic noise canceling features.



The next step up would be a [Logitech Microphone/Headset Combo, which is currently \\$37.50 on Amazon](#). This offers better noise cancellation, and microphone distance can be set.

The next step up would be a microphone in the \$100 range. These mics significantly step up the quality of your production and many people are using the [Samson C01U Condenser Mic](#).

## Website:

In order to publish your own podcast you need to have a website so you can make your podcasts available for download to the masses. This involves things like bandwidth (how many podcasts per month you're allowed to transfer from your website to users) and RSS feeds. It's common to actually store your podcasts on a separate website that has lots of bandwidth, and then just link to these files from your site. Libsyn is one of the more popular companies doing this ([www.libsyn.com](http://www.libsyn.com)). They'll also take care of the RSS feeds and iTMS (iTunes Music Store) notification. Another great service is the one that [Big in Japan's](#) Podserve tool offers.

So with these tools and applications you can now make your mark on the podcasting world with relative ease.