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# A Guide to Academic Podcasting

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IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE

AMPlify
PODCAST NETWORK

# Amplify Podcast Network

The Amplify Podcast Network aims to develop a framework and community for scholarly podcasting through podcast production, peer review, network building, metadata standards, research, and open educational resources (like this!).

Much of the labour involved in creating this guidebook took place in and around Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. We respectfully acknowledge the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səl̓ilw̓ətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), q̓íc̓əy̓ (Katzie), kʷikʷəƛ̓ əm (Kwikwetlem), Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo, and Tsawwassen peoples on whose unceded traditional territories our three campuses reside.

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# Table of Contents

*"Podcasting and academia: Two okay tastes that taste okay together."*
  —Hannah McGregor, co-director, Amplify

# Welcome

THIS GUIDEBOOK is an open educational resource for current and future Amplify podcasters, and anyone interested in how to approach academic podcasting. What is academic podcasting? And why might you want to start an academic podcast in the first place?

Academic podcasting is the communication of scholarly knowledge through the digital medium of podcasting. Podcasting can take on many forms, including interviews, audio documentary, fiction, or experimental sound forms. Podcasting can be a radical, open, and subversive way of creating publicly accessible and community engaged scholarship.

We hope you'll find this guidebook useful in the classroom, in the studio, and even at home, alongside your cup of morning coffee. Think of this as an invitation into the world of academic podcasting that you can return to time and time again throughout the development of your podcast. While this guidebook is far from exhaustive, we hope it will offer you a selection of best practices, templates, and resources that will benefit seasoned producers and podcast newcomers alike.

# 1. HOW PODCASTING *Works*

STARTING YOUR own podcast can be equally exciting and over-whelming, so before you start recording interviews or writing scripts, let's take some time to learn about how podcasting works.

First, you'll need to understand how podcasts are distributed online. Discussions of RSS feeds, hosting services, and Apple Podcasts can sound like a whole new language when you're first starting out, so let's tackle some of the basic terms involved.

## RSS FEED

An acronym of "really simple syndication" or "RDF site summary," RSS is a web feed that, in the case of podcasting, allows your listeners to subscribe to updates (like new podcast episodes) posted to the feed. The RSS feed is typically connected to a hosting service.

## HOSTING SERVICES

Podcast hosting services provide a place to store and distribute your podcast via an RSS feed to different podcast platforms. Some provide analytics, web players, embedded links, and other features to make it easier to engage with listeners and share your episodes.

Popular hosting services include Buzzsprout, Simplecast, PodBean, and Spreaker.

Most podcast hosting services will offer different subscription options with varying price points, so make sure to take the time to consider factors such as the amount of audio storage you'll need, your long-term budget, and the depth of analytics you'd like when deciding on your hosting service plan. Currently, the price range for podcast hosting varies from $5 to $50 per month depending on the service plan.

## PODCAST PLATFORMS/DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Podcast platforms connect your podcast with listeners. They are the outward-facing subscription and streaming services that enable discovery, distribution, and listening in the podcast ecosystem, often via smartphone apps, directories, and web browsers. Podcast platforms function like databases, compiling RSS feeds that users can subscribe to; they do not store the audio files or curate podcasts. Common



**Figure 1**  The order of operations in podcast distribution

podcast platforms include Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Overcast, and Stitcher. That's right: anyone can get a podcast onto Apple Podcasts!

Hosting Services will often make the show distribution process easier by offering links and instructions to submit your RSS feed to a variety of podcast platforms. Pro tip: It can take 24 to 72 hours for some platforms to review and approve your RSS feed and display your podcast so make sure to plan accordingly.

## SETTING UP YOUR RSS FEED

To set up your podcast for distribution via a hosting platform, you'll need a podcast name, show artwork, a show description, format type, show categories, and an audio trailer or first episode to activate your RSS feed. We will talk more about each of these in the sections to follow.

## 2. CHOOSE YOUR PODCASTING *Style*

CHOOSING YOUR style, genre, and format are key to creating a clear plan and overall cohesive sound for your podcast. There are many style questions to consider before you get started. Are you working on a fiction or non-fiction podcast? Will episodes be centred on in-depth interviews, narrative storytelling, or roundtable discussions? Is your host a serious investigator or laidback jokester? Who is your audience? It's also important to remember: Not every podcast has to sound like Radiolab. Embrace that DIY spirit and choose a style that suits the content of your podcast and the voices you aim to showcase.

## WHAT'S YOUR GENRE AND FORMAT?

Choosing your podcast genre and format is the first step to creating your distinct podcast style. Let's say, for example, your topic is Canadian history, the host is a local comedian/history professor, and the format is interviews with different guests each week. The style of the show could be described as a weekly comedy talk-show about Canadian history. Genre: History, Comedy. Format: Interview, Conversational.

It's important to consider the personality of your host and expertise of your team when choosing your style. If you can't settle on your

genre and format right away, try writing out a short description of your podcast first. Cross-reference your description with the list of common genres and formats listed here to help define your podcast.

**Table 1**   Common podcast genres and formats

| COMMON PODCAST GENRES | COMMON PODCAST FORMATS |
| --- | --- |
| Comedy | Interview |
| News and Politics | Panel/Co-hosted Conversational |
| Education | Solo/Monologue/Audio Diary |
| Drama | Non-Fiction Storytelling/Audio Documentary |
| History | |
| Health and Fitness | Fictional Storytelling/Audio Fiction |
| Business | |

## LISTEN TO EXAMPLES

Not sure what genre or style you are most interested in establishing? Get listening! Listen widely for examples of podcasts that appeal to you. Determine what aspects of the podcasts you like and dislike and the reasons for your preferences.

## THE BUDGET FACTOR

When choosing models, consider the resources available to you and the amount of labour you want to devote to the podcast. See the Templates and Resources on the Amplify Podcast Network site for more on Budgets.

## TRY IT ON FOR SIZE

Test or pilot production can be a great way to try out a particular style before you dig into producing a full episode or season of your podcast. If you are planning to do an interview-based show, why not practise your interview chops on a friend or colleague first? Try different interview approaches, tones, and questions. Test runs will also give you a chance to get familiar with your recording equipment—but don't worry, we'll be covering technology in more detail was well!

# 3. *Plan* YOUR PODCAST

ONCE YOU'VE chosen a podcast style, it's time to break down your idea and figure out how much advance planning it will require. If you're making an interview podcast, that advance work will include booking guests, researching and writing interview questions, and choosing a platform for recording interviews. If you're planning to make a sound essay or audio documentary, you'll need to do significantly more advance planning.

## PLANNING YOUR CONTENT

A clear sense of style—including format and genre—is the foundation on which you build an outline of the specific content and overall structure of your podcast. Below are a few questions to get you started. Note that the questions start broad and get more specific as they go; they are intended to lead you from big ideas to the practical details of making a podcast. Consider creating your own dedicated podcast planning journal to keep track of your answers.

- What is the podcast genre and format you have chosen?

- What are the questions driving your podcast?

- Who is the intended audience?

- Will you be the host or narrator of the podcast, or will there be a host or narrator working with you? What role will each person take?

- Will you be interviewing anyone? Who are your subjects? Where will you interview them?

- How many episodes will your podcast have and how often do you want to release a new episode to your RSS feed?

- How many episodes will you make? Will they be self-contained or part of an ongoing story? What will tie them together?

- If you are planning a podcast series with an ongoing story or theme, what content will your series begin with? How will the series end? Or will it end?

- Describe the kind of tape you will need (e.g. voices, sounds, effects, music, etc.).

- What equipment/resources will you need? Do you have access to those resources? [See Chapter 4 for more on equipment.]

## TITLE AND TAGLINE

Once you've defined for yourself a podcast style, established your intended audience, and determined the podcast's season or series structure, it's time for the fun of creating a podcast name and tagline (also referred to as a 'logline'). Your podcast show title and tagline should reflect the style and tone of your show.

Begin with a list of ideas, and if you can't choose right away, come back to it throughout your planning and production process. Google your potential names to check if there are competing podcasts with

the same name. Bounce ideas off friends and colleagues and see what resonates. Once you've chosen a name and put it out into the world, it's hard to change it, so choose wisely.

Your tagline is a snappy single line of text you will find yourself reusing time and time again to quickly convey the style of your show. Think of it as an emotional one-sentence summary of what your show does, or is, for your listener. It's great for your social media, business card, RSS feed summary, and more. Here are a few examples for inspiration:

- *Secret Feminist Agenda*: "Because feminists are inherently interesting"

- *The SpokenWeb Podcast*: "Stories about how literature sounds"

- *Hidden Brain*: "A conversation about life's unseen patterns"

- *Distillations*: "Using stories from science's past to understand our world"

## BUDGETS BIG AND SMALL

Work within your budget. Regardless of the form your podcast takes, make sure to gauge your production aspirations in accordance with your budget and your time. Do you have funding through a grant or university initiative? Is a Patreon or crowdfunding campaign possible? Are you a solo podcaster or part of a team? Podcasts can be made with budgets big or small, but it's essential to plan according to how much time and money you have to put into the project.

We've included a budget template to get you started. Once you've out-
lined a project budget, you can transfer your budget into a spreadsheet
or your preferred budgeting tool so you can keep track of your costs
and make changes as the project progresses.

## CREATE A SCHEDULE

Like any project, creating a schedule with key dates and deadlines is
an important aspect of planning your podcast. Once you have a sense
of your content, financial budget, and overall project timeline, you
can begin to create a schedule. Effective scheduling can help make a
large project much more manageable by breaking it down into smaller
tasks and milestones. You'll first want to catalogue all the tasks that
will need to be completed to broadcast your podcast. This could be a
breakdown per episode, season, or series, depending on your chosen
structure.

Organize your tasks across your project timeline. We've included a
basic scheduling template to get you started.

Rather than simply assigning a deadline to each task, estimate the
time each task will take you from start to finish. You'll get better at
scheduling as you gain experience, but when in doubt err on the side
of giving yourself more time than you anticipate needing! In creating
your list of tasks, you'll begin to organize them in their necessary
order—editing before review and export for release, for example—
and then you can productively schedule a feasible start and end date
for each of the tasks for your schedule.

Once you've completed your initial scheduling template, you may
choose to translate your schedule into a visual format such as a

spreadsheet or a Gantt chart, so that, in addition to your written task catalogue, you have a visual aid to provide a clearer overview of how the project will unfold. Keep in mind that your schedule will likely change over time. That's okay. Planning ahead isn't just about setting deadlines and hitting milestones; it's also about managing your own work habits and learning as you go. Knowing what tasks lie ahead when you hit a snag in the road will better prepare you to recalibrate and choose the best way forward to complete your work.

# 4. GET FAMILIAR WITH *Tech*

TECHNOLOGY can feel like a big hurdle to beginning your own podcast, but it doesn't have to be. There are plenty of resources out there to help you familiarize yourself with the basics of audio technology, from portable recording devices to editing software. In this chapter and the next, we have outlined some of the key tools you'll need to record your podcast, including suggestions of some of our favourite recording hardware to get you started. Check out the Amplify Podcast Network site for additional resources on recording, editing, interviewing, and more.

## THE RECORDING SPACE

Audio recording is more about "where" and "how" than what you use. When recording voiceover narration or interviews for your podcast, you'll want to choose a quiet, non-reverberant space. A sound studio is ideal, though you can create your own quiet recording space in a closet or even under a blanket-covered ironing board. In contrast, you may prefer to capture the character of a particular location in the recording. If you're interviewing an architect on the design of a particular building, for example, you may want to walk with them through the space during your interview to capture the unique sound of the space in that moment.

When choosing your recording space, ask yourself if the space/environment is an important character, or if voices are the only sounds you want to hear. Keep in mind that you can always mix in ambient sounds during post-production.

## MICROPHONES AND RECORDERS

It is easy to spend a fortune on microphones and recording equipment, but good quality podcasts can be made with modest budgets, too. If you are just starting out, or are working on a low- to no-budget podcast, many public and university libraries are now equipped with podcast studios or makers' spaces. Contact your local library to see if they have facilities and equipment available to borrow or rent.

If you have a small budget available for a few tech items, purchasing your own microphone and portable recorder is a great investment, especially if you plan to make an ongoing series or produce multiple podcasts in the future. In the end, all a podcaster needs to get started is *one microphone* and an *audio recorder*.



**Figure 2**  Common podcast audio equipment

## Portable Recorder/Audio Interface

You don't need a big mixing board or professional studio to start making your podcast. Whether you're recording in a professional studio or in a blanket fort in your apartment, a digital portable recorder is a key item in every producer's audio kit.

The Zoom H4N is an example of a popular audio recorder for podcasters because of its built-in stereo microphone, double audio inputs, and reasonable price point. Zoom and Tascam both offer devices starting at $100. There may also be rental options available if you need something more robust for just a few days or a single project. When choosing a portable recorder, consider the following: How many audio inputs will you need? In other words, how many microphones are you recording at once? Will you need to purchase an SD card and batteries to use the recorder? Do you want to be able to record directly into your computer editing software? What are the most important features to you?

## Versatile Starter Mics

A basic handheld dynamic microphone such as the Shure SM58 or Sennheiser e935 is a great starter mic for any audio producer's kit. Their well-designed durable build is great for vocals and versatile enough for many recording scenarios, whether for a musician live on an outdoor stage or a podcaster in their home office. These microphones use an XLR audio cable plugged into an audio interface, so you'll need an XLR cable and a portable recorder/audio interface to get recording.

## Microphone Upgrades

Want to upgrade your microphone? There are plenty of resources online to help navigate your next purchase. Here are a few recommendations to get you started: For your DIY studio voiceovers, consider a broadcast-quality vocal mic such as the Shure SM7 or AudioTechnica AT2020. For investigative podcasts and storytellers looking to record their own sound effects, a shotgun microphone, such as the Sennheiser MKH416 or Rode NTG3, can be a great addition. Shotgun mics help focus in on particular sounds and reduce surrounding noise, especially when recording in the field.

## USB Microphones

The Blue Yeti USB microphone series has become an iconic symbol of DIY podcasting. They are celebrated for their plug-and-play ease of use. With a USB microphone that plugs directly into your computer, no additional audio interface is required. Some even include their own recording software. There are many models to choose from, with notable contenders from audio companies Blue, Rode, and Shure. The USB mic can be a budget-conscious all-in-one option, especially for the solo podcaster, but keep in mind that it isn't very portable.

## Accessories (windsocks/stands)

What about the whooshing wind and those pesky popping plosives? Reduce these unwanted sounds with the help of a windsock or windscreen. Depending on the microphone you use, the cost of such accessories varies, but in a pinch, you can craft a DIY windscreen using a pair of nylon stockings. If you're feeling particularly crafty, try making a windsock using an oversized sponge. A microphone stand or adjustable boom arm to hold up your microphone and keep your hands free can also be a great accessory for your DIY podcast studio.

Ensuring that you capture a good recording from the outset will make for a smoother editing process in post-production.

## HEADPHONES

Your new best friend. Whether you use rental facilities or record on the go, a good pair of headphones is the one item that you will need no matter where or what you're recording. Built-in computer and smartphone speakers aren't meant for audio production. Monitoring your audio using headphones while recording will help you avoid losing a great interview to distorted audio or a broken microphone. Headphones are also critical when editing your episode, unless you have excellent studio speakers. We suggest closed-back over-ear headphones to block out external sounds and headphone bleed on your mic.

## AUDIO SOFTWARE

Every audio producer has a particular DAW (digital audio workstation) they prefer. There are lots of free options out there to get you started. Audacity (Mac, Windows, Linux) or Garageband (Mac) are examples of free audio software that provide the basic toolset to record, import, and edit your audio into something great. If you're interested in trying out other DAWs used in the broadcast industry, or if you're already familiar with audio editing and want something more sophisticated, there are free trials available for professional software, such as Pro Tools, Adobe Audition, and Hindenburg. No matter what you choose, jump in and have fun. Give yourself time to play around and look up the tutorials you need to feel comfortable assembling your work. See Chapter 5 for more on audio editing.

# TECH TIPS FOR PREPARING TO RECORD

*Listen to the space.* Are there any dominant sounds causing noise on your recording, such as a refrigerator, a computer, or traffic? What about music? Background music can make editing difficult, unless you're deliberately showcasing the environment in your recording. To avoid an editing headache, see if you can block or turn off the source of noise, or adjust your location before you begin.

*Position your microphone properly.* In addition to using your windsock, hold or place your microphone at a slight angle to avoid the dreaded popping p's or plosive sounds. The mic should be neither too close nor too far, normally 4 to 6 inches, from your mouth. Take the time to hear the difference in recording quality depending on the distance and angle of the microphone until you've got it just right. Monitoring your recording closely with your headphones will help you find the right angle and distance.

*Do a levels test.* If using a portable recording device such as a Zoom H4N or recording software with a USB microphone, make sure to set your levels before you record. Start with a throwaway question, such as "What did you have for breakfast this morning?" If you anticipate laughter during recording, ask your guest to do a test laugh, or simply tell a joke to break the ice and adjust the record volume accordingly. When monitoring levels on a digital recorder, you'll want to average between -18 and -10dB (decibels). Make sure to monitor not only with your eyes but with your ears! Headphones are a must.

*Record.* Once you've eliminated background noise, positioned your microphone correctly, and tested your levels, it's time to record. Always double check that you're recording before you begin.

## TECH TIPS FOR VOICEOVER NARRATION

*Optimize your recording space.* A big empty room is the enemy of the clear, intimate podcasting voice. Professional recording studios are treated by acoustic engineers with acoustic foam, baffling, and acoustic shields to optimize the space for recording. You can aim for a similar effect with your own DIY setup by reducing the size of the space you are recording in and adding sound absorptive materials. You will often find audio producers surrounded by a pillow wall, sitting in a blanket fort, or standing in their bedroom closet full of clothes when they need to record a voiceover at home. Try it to hear the difference!

## TECH TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

*Test your equipment in advance.* The night or morning before your interview, make sure to test your equipment to make sure it's all in working order. If you score that interview with a favourite artist, colleague, or idol, testing in advance can avoid technical delays.

*Arrive early to the location.* Budget enough time to set up your equipment and test it again on location. This step can help ease anxiety and build confidence with your technology, so you can focus on conducting the interview.

*Start recording beforehand.* Start recording well before your interview begins and keep it rolling after, too. Some of the best audio happens outside the "interview" context. Action sounds and ambience can help set the scene in your edit.

# 5. THE BASICS OF *Audio Editing*

YOU'RE FAMILIAR with your tech and have begun recording your podcast. What's next? Audio editing! Post-production might sound like it comes after everything is recorded but it is often an ongoing process. Organizing your session right from the start can help make for much smoother editing sessions as you work toward getting your podcast published.

## CHOOSING YOUR DAW

In Chapter 4, we introduced DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations). Each audio software has its own pros and cons, including cost, versatility, computer compatibility, and ease of file sharing with others in your team. For some of the most common DAWs and a few of their pros and cons, see Table 2.

## AUDIO EDITING BEST PRACTICES

While each DAW has its own particular interface, capabilities, and keyboard shortcuts, there are some key practices that can be applied to your audio editing workflow no matter what software you use.

Table 2  The pros and cons of common digital audio workstations (DAWs)

| DAW | PROS AND CONS |
| --- | --- |
| **GarageBand** | This program has a decent recording and editing suite and is free on Macs, but is built primarily for musicians, not podcasters. |
| **Audacity** | Free and straightforward to use. However, it uses destructive editing (alters the original audio files) so make sure to back up your files first! |
| **Adobe Audition and Pro Tools** | Both programs offer many sophisticated options, including sound filters and the ability to edit audio to video. They're expensive, but are industry standards in many media production workplaces. |
| **Hindenburg** | Excellent combination of simple interface with powerful options. This software is also designed specifically for podcasting, with built-in loudness controls and loudness normalization. |

- Save backups of your original audio in case anything is lost during the editing process. For more on best practices for preservation, see Chapter 9. Be organized. Keep your DAW session files and audio files in well-labelled folders where you can find them.

- Use free music and sound effects sites to build an audio brand without violating copyright.

- Take advantage of multiple tracks to layer voices and sound together. Listen to transitions in other podcasts to get a sense of what this sounds like when done well.

- Establish a style guide for your podcast early and then stick to it. Stylistic considerations should include, among other concerns, the length of your intros and segments; the audio cues you use (and when you use them); and how heavily you edit each episode's audio (e.g., do you take out every "um"?). These decisions will contribute significantly to your podcast's tone.

- Use your ears to gauge the volume of your file but also make use of the digital dB meter in your software. Check your RSS platform and community forums for suggestions on loudness, volume, and file format. You can even import the audio file of a favourite podcast into your DAW editing session to compare how it sounds and looks.

- Before exporting your file, scan through your DAW editing session to make sure all your tracks and files are in place (nothing missing, nothing shifted out of sync).

- Always listen again after exporting to ensure your file is the proper length, includes all intended tracks, and there were no issues in the digital encoding process such as audio gaps or processing errors.

# 6. ARTWORK AND VISUAL *Design*

BY NOW your podcast is sounding great and you've settled on a catchy title and tagline to go along with it. Maybe you've even signed up for a podcast hosting service and have planned your episode release schedule. Before your podcast is officially released into the world, though, you'll want to take some time to decide on your podcast artwork. A potential listener's first impression of your show might in fact be based entirely on the show's artwork, glimpsed while scrolling through their podcast app.

## COVER ART DESIGN

Not only is cover art important to attract an audience, it's also a standard requirement with podcast platforms when you submit your RSS feed. Take the time to brainstorm ideas for your cover. Do you want to use a real image as a starting point? Will you design a minimalist logo? Creating a design brief can be helpful in communicating a concise and clear design concept that you can apply to your cover art as well as other visual assets like your website and promotional material. Your design brief should include an objective (what you want the artwork to convey), a list of key terms that describe the aesthetic you want, your target audience, and examples and images to inspire and help visualize the look you're after.
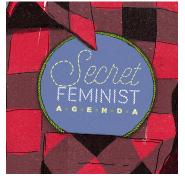
Keep in mind that podcast cover art is tiny, so you'll want to keep the text minimal, or it won't be legible. Podcast cover art should be a minimum size of 1400 x 1400 pixels and a maximum of 3000 x 3000 pixels, 72 dpi, in .jpeg or .png format. Make sure to confirm sizing and artwork recommendations on your preferred podcast platform.

If you have the budget to hire a designer, then your design brief will help you get started. Reach out to fellow podcasters with logos you like to ask who designed them, or contact a local artist or graphic designer in your community. If you plan to design your visuals yourself, there are different software options available for the purpose, depending on your skills. Try an online design platform such as Canva and experiment with ready-made templates.

## ADDITIONAL VISUAL ASSETS

Your podcast cover art is the key piece of visual design for your podcast. From there you may want to take your design brief and expand it to include image banners, gifs, or animations to use on your website or social media.



**Figures 3 and 4**   Cover art for the podcasts *The SpokenWeb Podcast* and *Secret Feminist Agenda*

After your cover art is complete we suggest you design your social media banners next. Canva provides templates for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. You can use your banner as a header on your media one-pager (see Chapter 8 for some DIY tips). Make sure your banner shares the aesthetic of your cover art.

# 7. *Publish* YOUR PODCAST

IF YOU post something up on the Internet and don't promote it, is it really published? What defines "published" in the world of podcasting?

Once you've recorded your podcast and are ready to share it with the world, it's time to decide on a podcast hosting option for your RSS feed (see Chapter 1 for an explanation of RSS feeds and hosting sites). Publishing your podcast requires more than just uploading the audio file. Writing show descriptions, choosing keywords, and opting for transcriptions are all part of the publishing process.

## HOSTING YOUR PODCAST

There are many different platforms available to showcase your podcast. If you are particularly tech-savvy, you may choose to create your own RSS feed via WordPress or SoundCloud and individually submit your podcast to each platform (Apple, Google, Spotify, etc.). Many podcasters streamline the process, however, by using a hosting service such as Libsyn, Simplecast, or Podbean. As we discussed in Chapter 1, hosting services can also include additional features, such as embedded players and listener analytics in their subscription price.

## WEBSITES

You don't technically need a website for your podcast if you choose to use a hosting service. Still, the question of whether you want a website is an important one. Is the aim of your podcast to showcase your research? Do you have additional content, like blogs or videos, that would enrich the podcast experience? If so, a website could make a valuable addition to your podcast publication plan.

The next choice is whether to house the podcast as a subpage on an existing website, or create a unique website for the podcast. Your decision should be determined by the style and goals of your podcast, and whether they match those of your existing webspace. If you opt to create a dedicated podcast website instead, keep in mind you will need to budget for website hosting fees as well. For examples of a few different approaches to podcast websites, check out the Additional Resources page on the Amplify Podcast Network site.

Check out other podcast websites, including ones hosted through podcast hosting services, to see which styles you like best. The cost of purchasing your own website domain and hosting it through a service such as Wordpress or Wix can vary so make sure to shop around and choose what suits your style and level of commitment to building the website. Check your public and university libraries for resources and workshops.

## KEYWORDS AND TRANSCRIPTION

Whether you choose to create your own website or just use the hosting service's podcast webpage, sites can be more easily discovered through thoughtful use of show descriptions, keywords, and transcripts. All podcast platforms grab the show and episode descriptions

from your RSS feed. Be sure to write clear and concise descriptions for your show and for each episode, including keywords users might search. Such efforts to ensure that prospective listeners can find your podcast are designed to address "search engine optimization," or SEO.

Transcriptions can also improve SEO for your podcast in addition to making your show more accessible to a larger audience. While not all podcast platforms currently pull transcription data from RSS feeds, it won't be much longer before this becomes a standard option. In any case, many hosting services will allow you to input a transcription for each episode, which can then be viewed on your hosting service's podcast webpage. If you've opted to make a dedicated website or subpage for your podcast, you can make the transcriptions available there as well. The transcription process itself takes time and will add additional costs to your budget, so make sure you've added transcription to your timeline *and* your budget. But consider this: Accessibility is essential for some, helpful for all.

## JOURNAL PUBLICATION

Alternative formats of scholarly publication are beginning to surface in various disciplines and their corresponding journals. For instance, *BC Studies: The British Columbian Quarterly* now accepts "scholarly podcast" submissions to their peer-reviewed journal, accompanied by a short abstract and bibliography. Increasing numbers of journals are also turning to podcasting to showcase and discuss the work of their authors. If you're involved in a journal or research association, why not start a conversation about accepting scholarly podcasts for publication? If you do, let us know!

# 8. FIND YOUR *Audience*

NOW THAT your podcast is published online, how will your audience find it? Keywords and thoughtful show descriptions can make your show more discoverable, but with so many podcasts out there, finding your audience can take some extra legwork. Building an audience begins with knowing who you want to reach and then figuring out where they hang out online.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Whether it's Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or Tumblr, social media is a key way to engage and establish an audience for your podcast. Nevertheless, you don't need to do it all. In fact, you may have more success focusing on one or two social media platforms to build your audience. Consider where your audience spends most of their time online. If your audience is fellow academics, ask your friends and colleagues where they spend their time online. Some podcasters have success simply using their personal accounts and embedding a hashtag for their show into relevant posts. Others choose to create dedicated social media for their podcast, so they can separate their podcast posts from their personal ones.

**Figure 5**    #SecretFeministAgenda twitter post example

**Figure 6**    #SpokenWebPod twitter post example

## SCHOLARLY PLATFORMS

In the world of scholarly podcasting, social media may not always be the best place to find your audience. In fact, association listservs, newsletters, conferences, and institutional press releases can be just as effective in getting the word out. How do you find new books in your field? The same platforms can be effective ways to help your colleagues find your podcast.

## TIPS ON REACHING YOUR AUDIENCE

- Make a podcast trailer. Before you release your first episode, release a trailer and share it. This is a great way for audiences to get a taste of your podcast in a quick one to two minute bite.

- Stay engaged and make sure to post to your social media whenever you have new episodes, announcements, or related content to share.

- Make a one-pager to share with media, organizations, friends, and colleagues with your show name, description, show trailer link, image, and contact info. Include whether you're available for interviews or guest spots on other podcasts.

- Reach out with care to media, organizations, influencers, and community. Be thoughtful in your outreach by including why this particular episode or podcast would be interesting to them. Make sure to include show links they can easily listen to and share.

- Consider cross-promotion with other podcasts. Record a short podcast promo; have other show hosts mention your podcast; offer to be a guest on other podcasts. Invite guests with an established audience, return the favour, and grow your audiences together.

- Make business cards, stickers, or postcards. Having something small with you to hand out when you find yourself in conversation about your podcast is a great habit to get into. Take them to conferences and pass them around.

- Build listener interaction into your podcast format. Invite your listeners to engage with you via social media, leave their comments on Apple Podcasts, and send you feedback or thoughts to share in the next episode.

- Build episodes around events with established public interest. Consider ways in which your podcast topic may

relate to current events or popular discussions and devise ways to connect your work to what's going on in society at large at the time of your anticipated episode release.

## NEXT STEPS

Once you have a few episodes released on your RSS feed and listenership begins to increase, you may want to consider amping up your marketing approach. You don't need a big marketing budget to expand your reach. While some platforms like Castbox, Pocket Casts, and Overcast offer paid ad slots and sponsored placement to promote your podcast, there are other ways to promote your show without adding yet another budget line. Apple Podcasts and Stitcher, for example, both have online forms podcasters can use to submit their podcast for feature consideration. Their editorial team will want to know why your show should be promoted and why now.

In addition to platform outreach, once you have a one-pager to send out to media, why not make a spreadsheet of all the outlets, including blogs, academic listservs, and social media groups, you want to connect with? You can then easily keep track of who you have contacted and when. Promotion is an ongoing project for any podcast.

# 9. *Preserve* YOUR PODCAST

SO YOU'VE created your scholarly podcast, published it, and worked hard to build your audience. Mission accomplished, right? Not quite. As with all digital projects, podcasts need to be archived properly so that they don't turn into digital dinosaurs in two or five or ten years when you stop updating the site or paying for your hosting service.

While the Library of Congress has begun to identify significant podcasts for preservation, your plan shouldn't be to hope that the LoC takes care of it for you! Chances are your university has an institutional repository where you can submit work for long-term preservation. Adding your podcast to your institutional repository will have added benefits as well, such as generating a stable URL or a DOI (digital object identifier) that will make your podcast easier to share in academic settings. Some podcasts preserved in institutional repositories are even discoverable on Google Scholar, adding another platform through which new listeners might find your work. If you don't have access to an institutional repository, you can also explore discipline-specific repositories, such as the Humanities Commons.

Good preservation begins with good file management. Adopt and maintain a regular system for naming your files and organizing them

in folders from the very start of your podcast journey. Ensure that you are consistently backing up your files, ideally in multiple locations. As the archival saying goes, lots of copies keeps stuff safe! It's great to back up your files to Dropbox or Google Drive, but consider also regularly saving them to an external hard drive.

## WHAT TO PRESERVE

When you're making decisions about preserving your podcast, think about what information you want to save. At a minimum, you need to preserve your final episode files, but consider the value of preserving a little bit more:

- *.wav files.* While podcasts are generally shared as mp3s, the mp3 file format uses lossy data compression, discarding particular data to reduce file size. The lower the sample and bit rate of the mp3, the lower the sound quality. The archival standard for sound is the .wav file. If possible, get into the habit of exporting your episodes as both .mp3 for publication and .wav for preservation.

- *Images.* We've established that podcasts aren't *purely* audio media, and the visuals you've chosen to include with your podcast are important! Make sure to save your album art in a high resolution .jpeg or .tiff file, along with any images you included as part of your episode show notes. Speaking of show notes…

- *Show Notes.* The material you create to accompany individual episodes is an important part of your podcast's history. If you get into the habit of keeping show notes in a separate document, it will be even easier for you to preserve them as you go, and lower the risk of losing important information if your website ever goes down.

- ***Transcripts.*** Transcription helps with accessibility and SEO for your podcast but it's also a valuable form of preservation. When you're preserving your podcast, make sure to include your transcripts as well, in a searchable format, to aid in long-term preservation and discovery.

- ***Metadata.*** Much of the information about how podcasts circulate is captured in their metadata. Metadata is crucial for library and repository use. Media historians looking back at podcasts will want to know about categories and genres, explicit tags, run times, and more.

## AMPLIFY PRESERVATION TOOL

The Amplify Podcast Network is building a preservation tool focused on capturing podcast metadata along with the other kinds of information tied to podcasts that we've discussed here. But don't wait! Now is the time to start organizing and backing up your files. Trust us: it will be much easier to preserve your podcast in the long term via an institutional or disciplinary repository if you're already in the habit of keeping your files consistently named and well-organized. Just think of it as doing a favour for your future self!

# 10. MAKE YOUR PODCAST *Count*

THE FINAL hurdle for any scholarly podcaster is figuring out how to make your podcast "count," in whatever way matters to you. Some academics are working to include podcasting in their research output, others frame it as part of their commitment to service, and still others are happy to use podcasting as a way to build collaborations and generate new ideas.

We're hopeful that more university presses and journals will follow the examples set by Wilfrid Laurier University Press, *BC Studies*, and others by accepting podcasts as forms of scholarly publishing. In the meantime, here are a few approaches you might adopt to help your podcast count.

## GRANT FUNDING

Explore funding opportunities that focus on knowledge mobilization or supporting open access work. Many research grants include funding for knowledge mobilization, so you may be able to incorporate podcast funding into a larger research grant. A podcast associated with a grant (e.g. from SSHRC or the NEH) may be considered as more "legitimate" scholarship from the perspective of traditional academic lenses.

## PEER REVIEW

While industry norms for peer reviewing podcasts are still very much in development, peer review offers one clear pathway for counting your scholarly podcast. University presses including Wilfrid Laurier University Press and Michigan State University Press have been experimenting with accepting podcasts for peer review. Digital humanities and technology studies journals, such as *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*, will accept scholarship in multiple media, while the journal *Reviews in Digital Humanities* publishes reviews of born-digital scholarship, including podcasts. There may be other journals in your field that are also open to accepting podcasts!

## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH

Many colleges and universities are investing in community engagement and have created funds and resources to support community-engaged research. If your podcast involves connecting with or talking to communities beyond academia, explore what resources your institution might have available. While community-engaged work is often counted as service, this is another way to make podcasting count towards your academic work. For an example of a community-engaged scholarly podcast, see *Below the Radar*, created by SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement.

## OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Is your podcast an open educational resource? Could it be adopted into courses in your subject area? Are people already using it to teach? Gathering evidence of your podcast's use for teaching is another way to include it on your CV. You can also explore funds and resources

your institution may have dedicated to the creation of open educational resources.

However you frame your podcast, including it on your CV and asserting its legitimacy helps to contribute to the transformation of traditional attitudes toward scholarly outputs. Talk about your podcast at conferences, share episodes on social media, and always include it in summaries of the work you do!

# Templates and Resources

TOGETHER we've explored some of the best practices, key considerations, and next steps to get your scholarly podcast from idea to publication. In this section you will find templates for a Podcast Project Checklist, Podcast Budget Template, Podcast Schedule, and Episode Planning Worksheet. Additional resources, and individual PDF templates are available on the Amplify Podcast Network website.

# PODCAST PROJECT CHECKLIST

This checklist corresponds to the topics and action items we've covered throughout the guidebook. Use the checklist as a reference point as you work through each stage of your podcast project. We encourage you to expand and modify each section to fit your specific project needs. Happy Podcasting!

## PRE-PRODUCTION

### Step 1: Choose Your Podcasting Style

- ❏ Topic/focus of podcast
- ❏ Genre and format
- ❏ Frequency of episode release (limited run vs. ongoing series)
- ❏ Intended audience
- ❏ Podcast title
- ❏ Podcast tagline
- ❏ Short show description

### Step 2: Budget and Schedule

- ❏ Create a financial budget
  - ❏ Funds listed, e.g. crowdfunding? grant money? DIY?
  - ❏ Costs listed, e.g. equipment, workers, honoraria
- ❏ Create a podcast schedule
  - ❏ Schedule production for each episode
  - ❏ Schedule episode release

- ❑ Schedule podcast-related events and social media
- ❑ Schedule regular reviews of project, including budget and timelines

## Step 3: Equipment and Personnel

- ❑ Host, producer, additional team members secured, as needed
- ❑ Audio equipment, acquired and familiar
- ❑ Editing software, acquired and familiar

## Step 4: Research and Development per Episode

- ❑ Episode topic chosen
- ❑ Episode topic research complete
- ❑ Interviewees secured, as needed
- ❑ Episode structure and narrative outline
- ❑ Use Episode Worksheet

## PRODUCTION

## Step 5: Developing Your Podcast Sound

- ❑ Choose/acquire theme music for podcast
- ❑ Choose/acquire transition music for podcast (optional)
- ❑ Record an intro for your podcast (optional)
- ❑ Produce a podcast trailer

## Step 6: Audio Recording per Episode

- ❑ Procure or record audio: Interviews, narration/voiceover, ambience, sound effects, music

- ❑ Use the Episode Worksheet to plan what you'll need for each episode.

- ❑ Review tape to ensure completeness

- ❑ Prep tape; make selections and script episode as needed

- ❑ Record additional narration or sound as needed

## Step 7: Podcast Visuals

- ❑ Design your podcast artwork

- ❑ Design social media templates for Instagram and Twitter

## POST-PRODUCTION

## Step 8: Audio Editing per Episode

- ❑ Import, organize and edit tape

- ❑ Add podcast intro, music beds, ambience as needed

- ❑ Review your edits

- ❑ Listen again for story/narrative and revise accordingly

- ❑ Polish your mix

- ❑ Listen again for necessary adjustments to processing, volume, effects

- ❑ Export episode audio as .mp3 to publish

## Step 9: Episode Text and Materials

❑ Transcribe episode audio

❑ Choose episode title

❑ Write episode description and show notes

❑ Create works cited or references as needed

❑ Prepare episode photos or graphics as desired for social media or website

## PUBLISH YOUR PODCAST

## Step 10: Setup and Activate RSS feed

❑ Sign up for hosting service

❑ Add podcast title, show artwork, keywords, description to account

❑ Schedule podcast trailer on first episode release in hosting platform

❑ Distribute show to main podcast platforms via hosting service

## Step 11: Your Website and Social

❑ Set up website and social media accounts

❑ Add artwork, title, tagline, show description to website and social

## Step 12: Per Episode Publication and Promotion

❑ Upload audio and show notes to hosting platform

❑ Schedule episode release on hosting platform

❑ Add episode show notes and additional materials to website

❑ Embed audio player and/or download hyperlink from hosting platform

❑ Share to social media and other outlets as desired

## PRESERVE YOUR PODCAST

### Step 13: Back Up your Audio Files

❑ Export your final episode as a .wav file (archival standard)

❑ Name all final episodes with a consistent naming convention

❑ Store final episodes on a back-up drive or cloud storage

### Step 14: Ensure Long-Term Discoverability

❑ Submit your podcast episode to an institutional or scholarly repository

❑ Include all pertinent documents, including transcripts and show notes

# PODCAST BUDGET TEMPLATE

Key items to factor into your podcast budget are listed below. Use this template to plan your project budget. Use software (e.g. Excel or Google Spreadsheets) to efficiently track expenses and income. Expand and modify sections to fit your specific needs.

| ITEMS (Provide room for each line item to track expenses). | COST | DATE PAID |
|---|---|---|
| **Recording Equipment** (e.g. computer, audio recorder, micro-phone(s), headphones, and accessories) | | |
| **Editing Software** (e.g. Hindenburg or Pro Tools DAW subscription; external effect plugins) | | |
| **Publication Costs** (e.g. Hosting service subscription, domain name, website hosting, transcription) | | |
| **Promotional Costs** (e.g. ads, business cards, stickers, pins) | | |
| **Personnel Costs** (e.g. graphic designer, host, musician, producer) | | |

| GROSS BUDGET ($ available for project) | ESTIMATED INCOME (e.g. ad revenue, future grants, crowdfunding for fiscal year or project span) | AVAILABLE BALANCE (expenses deducted) |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |

| PAID BY/TO | METHOD OF PAYMENT | RECEIPT? (Y/N) | REF NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

# PODCAST SCHEDULE TEMPLATE

Here is a basic schedule to get you started on the planning of a podcast season or limited-run series. We encourage you to expand and modify this template to fit your specific project scheduling needs. You may opt to make a schedule for each episode. Use the Podcast Project Checklist as a reference as you schedule each stage of your podcast project.

| PODCAST NAME | PROJECT TIMELINE | |
|---|---|---|
| *Sample Podcast* | Season 1: August 20XX – 20XX | |

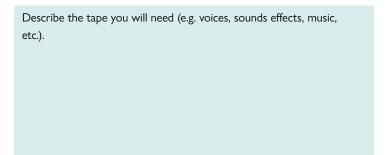| TASK ITEM | WORK TIMELINE | DUE DATE |
|---|---|---|
| **Pre-Production** | | |
| Choose your podcasting style | Month 1, Week 1 | August 8th |
| Create financial budget and podcast schedule | Month 1, Week 2 | August 15th |
| Reach out to potential guests x 10 | Monthly, Week 2 (August – May, 2 months ahead of release) | Monthly |
| Purchase equipment and software | Month 1, Week 3 | August 22nd |
| **Production** | | |
| Choose podcast theme music | Month 1, Week 3 | August 22nd |
| Record podcast intro | Month 2, Week 1 | Sept 5th |
| Produce podcast trailer | Month 2, Week 2-3 | Sept 19th |
| Interview recording per episode x 10 | Monthly, Week 4 (Aug– May, avg 5 weeks ahead of release) | Monthly |
| Host recording per episode x 10 | Monthly, Week 1 (Sept – June, month ahead) | Monthly |

| TASK ITEM | WORK TIMELINE | DUE DATE |
|---|---|---|
| **Post-Production** | | |
| Edit episode x 10 | Monthly, Week 2-3 (Sept – July, 3 weeks ahead) | Monthly |
| Review and revise episode edit x 10 | Monthly, Week 3 (Sept – July, 2 weeks ahead) | Monthly |
| Episode show notes x 10 | Monthly, Week 4 (Sept – June, 1 week ahead) | Monthly |
| Export and upload episode materials x 10 | Monthly, Week 4 (see above) | Monthly |
| Transcribe episode audio x 10 | Monthly, Week 4 (see above) | Monthly |
| Review budget and schedule | Annually (based on length of project) | Annually |
| **Publication & Marketing** | | |
| Podcast artwork design | Month 1, Week 1-3 | August 22nd |
| Acquire hosting platform/set up RSS feed | Month 1-2, Week 4 – Week 1-2 | Sept 19th |
| Publish podcast trailer | Month 2, Week 4 | Sept 27th |
| Publish episode x 10 | Monthly, Week 1 (Weds, Oct – Jul) | Monthly |

# EPISODE PLANNING WORKSHEET

Use this template to plan the story, structure, and audio needed to bring each podcast episode to life. Make use of the text boxes provided or expand on each question in your podcast journal. Modify or add questions to fit your specific needs.

What is your topic? What is the story you want to tell?

What are the questions driving your story?

Pick one key question from those above to drive your story, then respond to the following prompts about that version of the story.

What is the overall tone or mood?

What is the structure? How will the series begin and end?

Is there a host or narrator other than you? What is their role?

Will you be interviewing anyone? Who? Where? How often will interviews appear in the series?

Describe the tape you will need (e.g. voices, sounds effects, music, etc.).

What equipment/resources will you need (e.g. microphone, recording space, recording device, headphones, computer, editing software, hosting service, etc.)? Do you have access to these resources?

You've now determined a story, a driving question, and a sense of the tape and resources you need. Before moving into episode production, be sure to schedule episode tasks and update your podcast budget as needed.