



The Basics Of Podcasting

- *What is it?* I like to think of podcasts as a mix of a radio show, audiobook and blogging. Podcasts have been around for years, but are one of the fastest-growing forms of broadcast media, and one that any author can use to help others with advice and promote their own work.
- <https://www.wired.com/story/podcasts-beginners-guide> is a good beginner's guide, as are <https://www.howtogeek.com/345845/how-to-get-started-listening-to-podcasts> and <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/oct/07/how-to-listen-to-podcasts-everything-you-need-to-know>.
- *Who does it?* Anyone. Or rather anyone who has something to say; amateurs and professionals alike. I started back in 2009, and have 120+ episodes to-date: a mix of fiction, tips, editing and interviews.
- *What do they / can you talk about?* Anything. Or rather anything that people would find interesting. You could talk about your writing journey, inspiration, how you published your book, or from how you built your house to your belated-but-epic worldwide gap year. Really anything!
- I recommend working from a script but only loosely. Read directly from the script and you sound like a robot. Use bullet points only then talk naturally. You know your stuff (hopefully!) so you should be able to be chatty, informative. Tools like Audioburst (this link at podcast host Blubrry explains: <https://create.blubrry.com/resources/partners/audioburst>) uses AI-type technology to translate your audio words to provide a full script.
- *Who listens?* Hopefully someone! I'm not totally joking. Like launching a book, it takes time and effort (sharing on social media, for example). The process is record, edit, upload – this gives you an RSS feed (mine is <http://feeds.soundcloud.com/users/soundcloud:users:9496726/sounds.rss>) and once subscribed, new episodes will automatically appear on their devices.
- *How can you listen?* On a computer, iPod, mobile phone, anywhere that can download mp3, mp4 or video files. You can listen but also watch on the likes of iTunes, YouTube and so on.
- *Where can you listen:* The biggest players are undoubtedly Apple's [iTunes](#), Amazon's [Audible](#), and [Google Play Podcasts](#) but there are many others including [Acast](#), [Audioboom](#), [PocketCasts](#), [Stitcher](#), and [Podbay.fm](#) promises to 'stream any podcast in the universe'! BBC Podcasts including Books and Authors, Desert Island Discs, and World Book Club via their own [BBC Sounds](#) (and other sites).
- The Guardian's <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jan/23/five-of-the-best-apps-for-listening-to-podcasts> offers their favourite five podcast apps: Overcast (for iPhones and iPads), Pocket Casts, Castro, Spotify and Deezer. <https://www.androidauthority.com/best-podcast-apps-for-android-223536> lists ten for Android devices, and <https://www.tomsguide.com/us/pictures-story/555-best-podcast-apps.html> lists their favourites, although in a click-to-reveal-each-one 21-slide show.
- Using modern technology such as Amazon's Echo (which uses TuneIn Radio for podcasts) and Google's Home (which uses its own Google Podcasts app).

The 'Tools' You Need To Create Your Shows

- Recording equipment – like listening, all you need is a computer, iPod, mobile phone, anywhere that can record and upload mp3, mp4 or video files. It would also be good to have a separate microphone or headset. <https://discoverpods.com/best-podcast-mic-podcasting-microphone> lists the top 25 microphones and <https://www.reginaldchan.net/best-podcast-equipment> headsets and microphones.
- Recording / Editing Software – I have a Mac and use GarageBand but the most well-known equivalent for PCs is Audacity. <https://www.podcastinsights.com/best-podcast-recording-software> lists those and other options including Logic Pro and Adobe Audition. You could also use iMovie or equivalent (Filmora etc.).
- I originally used Dropbox to store my recordings linking to iTunes with a complex 47-page html file (using DreamWeaver) but now it's much simpler with just a storage site which provides an RSS feed.
- Hosting Site: <https://www.weeditpodcasts.com/8-top-podcast-hosting-companies> lists the top 21 including [Libsyn](#), [Podbean](#), [Buzzsprout](#), [Blubrry](#), and [Soundcloud](#). <https://www.podcastinsights.com/best-podcast-hosting> has a list of 27 hosting platforms!
- I'm currently on Soundcloud but there are limitations, including only one 'feed', which means I can produce only one show, although my episodes can be varied. It means that if I wanted to talk about creative writing and gardening they have to be within the same feed. There was no monthly upload cap which suited me. <https://www.elegantthemes.com/blog/resources/pros-and-cons-of-using-soundcloud-for-your-podcast> has pros and cons for using Soundcloud.
- <https://podbean.com/podcraft> (pricing: <https://www.podbean.com/podcast-hosting-pricing>)
- <https://www.libsyn.com/plans-pricing> - the average 25mb = 13 minutes so you'd have an average of 26 minutes per month with their 50mb \$5 (£3.84 according to Alexa at the time of writing this) plan or 130

minutes with their 250mb \$25 plan. This is fine if you're starting from scratch but I had 121 episodes to upload when I relaunched so went with Soundcloud. I may change when my year's subscription is up.

- www.blubrry.com/addpodcast.php then click on 'Create Account Now' (middle left). There isn't an option to connect with Facebook etc. so you'll have to fill in your details to sign up. You'll then get sent an email with a link to confirm you're genuine. You'll then be sent to the home page so use the link above again to direct to the correct page. Paste in your feed link then create your 'Web Friendly Name', e.g. www.blubrry.com/yourshownamehere. The 'Community Category' for writing would be Arts. Agree to the (standard) terms and conditions then click on Submit. Once approved, the episodes will then appear on your dedicated page (in my case: <https://www.blubrry.com/baileyswritingandeditingtips>). This lets listeners subscribe via Apple, Android, email, and share via social media: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, email).
- Things to consider include how *often* you want to upload content and how *much space* they're going to take up. Some packages / plans are limited to these (and other remits).

Once you have your RSS feed...

- <https://itunesconnect.apple.com> (using standard Apple ID, accept Terms of Service) leads to... <https://podcastsconnect.apple.com/my-podcasts> (submit for review).
- <https://podcasters.spotify.com> is the link you need to apply for your podcast to be connected to Spotify, and <https://podbean.com> then scroll to the bottom of the page: Support (formerly Resources) / Submit your Podcast, for Podbean. You can also submit to iTunes from there: <https://help.podbean.com/support/solutions/articles/25000013780-submitting-your-podcast-to-itunes>
- Content (including guests): as well as talking about you and your life, it's a great idea to have guests, whether they're friends or strangers with something to say on your topic. That way you get more content and your listeners get a fresh voice. Your guests also get their 15 minutes (or more) of 'fame' and in the process – if they have one – their product promoted free of charge. As well as interviewing other writers, I've read out their fiction (flash fiction, short stories and poetry) which they love, especially those who aren't British and love my accent!
- As well as a logo / picture (freebies include Pixabay, Morguefile), you'll need a jingle. Mine (East Ender) came from GarageBand but there are various sites where you can download free / low-cost jingles inc. <https://audiojungle.net>, <https://producer.musicradiocreative.com/free-jingles>, and <https://www.musicscreen.org/royalty-free-jingle-music.php>. NB. Don't use any music or photographs that either don't belong to you or you haven't downloaded from a free site or bought from a paying licenced one.



The Type Of Formats And Genres You Could Include

- Audio or video? Most podcasts are audio only but you could certainly mix the versions. iPod, iPhones, Android phones, tablets and computers will play both formats and video still means someone can listen rather than watch. Audiobooks are my favourite format and I 'listen' via my Kindle Fire's text-to-speech!
- Advice – the self-help market is huge and there's always space for someone new. Magazines love new contributors and podcasts listeners are the same.
- Your experience – you may well have experience that will be interesting to others. While it may not directly be self-help, it will be helpful.
- Your writing – you're writers so what better way than for your listeners to hear your work, whether it's a short story or novel chapter. If they enjoy what they listen, they may go and buy your book.
- Fiction or Non-Fiction – there are readers of both formats so if you write one or the other or both, you can talk about it. Regardless of format, make sure you know what you're talking about and someone out there will know more than you and may catch you out on something.
- I'd recommend uploading at least two episodes your first time, the first inc. your biography so listeners have something to move on to, like a book series – always a favourite of agents, publishers, readers.
- NB. as well as the content, you'll need a description for each episode, including your website and / or Amazon page, as well as keywords that represent your content and think obscurely, e.g. #podcastsaboutwriting rather than #podcasts or #writing. What would you ask for in a search engine?
- All this forms your metadata which is essential in getting the podcast accepted by iTunes etc.

The Lengths Of Episodes You Might Consider

- Mine are 7 mins (a piece of flash fiction) to 2 hours 6 minutes (an interview)! It doesn't matter how long (or short your episodes are) but, like book chapters, your viewers will likely prefer to listen (view) a complete episode if possible. My favourite podcast, Writing Excuses has the intro tagline of '15 minutes long because you're in a hurry and we're not that smart.' They so are!

- I list the ones I listen to and others later in these notes but one especially targeted to self-publishing authors is The Self-Publishing Formula (<https://selfpublishingformula.com/spf-podcast>) which Mark Dawson with debut novelist James Blatch co-host.
- Troubador (Matador) has just released their first quarterly podcast, a 40-minute collaboration about the industry. This is audio (but with a static screenshot) on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvSe5jg3wPw> and audio only via <https://audioboom.com/channels/4992487> (with links to Apple, Spotify and RadioPublic).
- Why keep it short? Attention span and people live busy lives. Equally, if they have time, they'll like to have longer episodes, especially if it's an interview with an author they'd like to get to know better. As the saying goes, 'variety is the spice of podcasting'. I might just copyright that. ☺
- FYI, my 'Bailey's Writing and Editing Tips' podcast on iTunes is <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/baileys-writing-editing-tips/id1458816787>.



Going It Alone Or Collaborate?

- Going it alone – do you have enough content? There's nothing stopping you producing all the content yourself but will you have enough to say long term?
- Collaborating – who can you collaborate with? A co-presenter or guest? I've mentioned above about the benefits of having guests but how about a co-presenter? I have a crime-writing friend, Alison Morgan, with whom I've hosted a couple of workshops (at Bedford Library) and we plan to do podcasts together as 'The Morgen and Morgan Show'! And the joy of modern technology is that you don't have to physically be together. The likes of Skype and Zoom means you don't even have to be in the same country. Do let your guest know whether it's going to be audio or video as they might not want to appear on YouTube in their dressing gown. ☺

Finding Your Niche

- Like any venture, research the market. There are loads of writing-related podcasts available (see the end of these notes for links to a handful) but a new voice will invariably mean new content.
- What do you have to say that's new? Even if you only share your writing, that's new. Your journey to writing will be different from anyone else's.
- What is your USP? Do you have something different to share? Think about what you have to say that not everyone else is saying and this could be your Unique Selling Point.

For Pleasure Or Profit... Or Both?

- *Pleasure – advantages:* people love free, especially if you're sharing useful, interesting or fun info. Blogging started off as people journaling whether it was road trips, gardening or cookery projects.
- *Pleasure – disadvantages:* podcasting (and blogging / vlogging) takes time. If you have plenty then that's fine. If not, be selective about what you say and when. You could make your podcasts short (10-15 minutes is good) so you can publish often (like blogging, once a week is advisable).
- *Profit – how much does it cost?* Apart from your time, your only cost is likely to be hosting your audio files. iTunes and the likes works off an RSS feed so you'd need to store your recordings somewhere that will provide an RSS feed. Space invariably costs money. Some of the hosts I've mentioned have free options but these come with limitations. You can always start with free and upgrade (or move host) if you find it's not sufficient for you. You also need to invest in good equipment, although iPhones / Androids can produce very high quality recordings but you'd then need the software to edit it.
- *Profit – how do you make money out of podcasting?* You could find sponsorship from relevant companies, e.g. a publisher if you're talking about the creative writing industry, or a florists if your regaling your gardening project. There's really no topic that you can't talk about. You can also advertise your own books (but subtly – no 'please buy my book') but a new way is by subscribers paying an one such is a Patreon – see <https://www.patreon.com>, where you would offer exclusive content to those paying subscribers and you can set different levels of benefit. Self-publishing gurus Joanna Penn and Mark Dawson use this system (as will I) to subsidise their third-party costs (e.g. a producer, editor etc.) and they thank new Patreons in each show so you could get a mention. Share your episodes on the likes of YouTube. The more views and thumbs up you get, the more likely you are to attract paying advertisers.
- Raising your Profile can be a 'Profit' so even if it costs more than you end up making through direct income (sponsorship, product promotion, Patreons), it will raise your profile. People will google you (other search engines are available) and maybe sell a few more copies of your books. Writing your novel, collection of poetry or short stories, or non-fiction book is only the start of the journey. Marketing is the most difficult but ultimately rewarding, financially at least, aspect, and podcasting is a form of marketing but more subliminally; you're providing a service, or at least entertainment, and people will remember you... which leads me on to...

Podcasting And Social Media

- Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. – social media is your best friend. Audio and visual content is an incredibly popular medium with people while they walk their dogs, commute or relax while taking a break from the television. People love to learn so if your podcast is in any way informative, they'll find you if searching for your topic and hopefully subscribe.
- blogging – I recommend WordPress. I've blogged since 2011 and am coming up to nearly 500,000 hits... without costing a penny. Like most things, the more you put in (up), the more you get out. Post at least once a week. Share useful information, tell your visitors your news. Try to avoid the hard sell (unless it's from your sponsor – but explain that it takes time and money to put together this invaluable information). Like anything, get people to like you first and they'll be interested in what you have to offer. WordPress also reblogs other WP users' content so you don't even need to create all your posts!
- vlogging – these days of viewers watching rather than reading text, it's a great idea to put some (or all) of your podcast episodes on video, whether it's as part of your show or on the likes of YouTube. You can come across as very personable on your podcast but you can be even more personable when your viewers can see you.

The bottom line, as the cliché goes, is the more content you put out there, the more chance there is that people will see you.

Examples Of Other Existing Podcasts (Most Available On Different Platforms)

- Radio 4's Books and Authors: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nrsfl>
- Joanna Penn's The Creative Penn: <https://www.thecreativepenn.com>
- Desert Island Discs (2,194 episodes!): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnmr/episodes/player>
- The Guardian Books Podcast: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/series/books>
- The Penguin Podcast: <https://www.penguin.co.uk/podcasts>
- Dr Linda Papadopoulos's The Psychology Behind: <https://audioboom.com/channel/the-psychology-behind-->
- Read Like a Writer: <https://www.podbean.com/podcast-detail/ae2pw-7371d/Read-Like-a-Writer-Podcast>
- Reading and Writing: <http://readingandwritingpodcast.com>
- The Reading Room: <https://readingroom.podbean.com>
- NPR Radio's Selected Shorts: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/381443486/pri-selected-shorts>
- Mark Dawson's The Self-Publishing Formula: <https://selfpublishingformula.com/spf-podcast>
- Others include: 'The Story Studio', Julie Duffy's 'Story a Day', 'Two Crime Writers', 'World Book Club', 'The Worried Writer' and my favourite... Writing Excuses (www.writingexcuses.com).
- <https://thewritelife.com/writing-podcasts> lists others including 'I Should Be Writing' and 'Grammar Girl'.

Other Writing-Related Podcasts Include:

- Banging Book Club: <https://play.acast.com/s/bangingbookclub>
- Sentimental Garbage: <https://play.acast.com/s/sentimentalgarbage>
- The Babysitter's Club Club: <https://play.acast.com/s/the-baby-sitters-club-club>
- What Should I Read Next?
<https://play.acast.com/s/whatshouldireadnextbooktalkreadingrecommendationsliterarymatchmaking>
- You're Booked: <https://play.acast.com/s/booked>

Useful Websites

- Produce a Podcast: <https://www.thepodcasthost.com/editing-production/best-podcast-making-app>
- Where to Host your Podcast: <https://www.thepodcasthost.com/websites-hosting/best-podcast-hosting> mentions [Buzzsprout](#) | [Podbean](#) | [Spreaker](#) | [Podcast Websites](#) | [Blubrry](#) | [Libsyn](#).
- Podcast Hosting and Submission Made Simple (iTunes, Stitcher, Google Play): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fbdB-pmWFA> recommends Libsyn and Buzzsprout.
- How to start a Podcast and Get your Podcast on iTunes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RzcDqwSO3c>
- How to Get your Podcast on Spotify – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ROtO17hJEU>
- Submit your Podcast RSS URL to iTunes, Stitcher, Podbean and Blubrry: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7AjfWS1z1Y>
- Podcast Alley use to host podcasts but is now just a site sharing information about podcasting. <https://www.podcastalley.com>

Do contact me if you have any queries, would like more information, or to interview me! ☺

Morgen