



## **Portable science: podcasting as an outreach tool for a large academic science and engineering library**

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# Outline:

- What is podcasting
- Why we decided to podcast
- How we do it
- Podcasting 101
- How much it costs
- Where we host podcasts
- What are the next steps



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# What is podcasting

- Common characteristics for the Web 2.0 tools: collaborative in nature, interactive, and dynamic.
- Definition - "a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program -- is typically made available on the web for downloading to a personal audio player " (McKean 2005).
- Podcasting is really a dynamic term, now synonymous with any audio or video file that listeners download and play on a digital player (Barsky & Lindstrom 2008)

# Statistics

- Pew survey – 20% in 2005  
(Pew Internet 2006).
- eMarketer – 18.5M in 2007 and potential for 65M by 2012  
(eMarketer 2008).
- In academia – 70% of undergrads  
(Oliver & Goerke 2007).



# Why podcasting ourselves?

- University of British Columbia is Canada's second largest university
- Home to very strong Faculty of Science and Faculty of Applied Science
- The departments we serve present hundreds of talks during an academic year for the students, faculty, and the broader community.
- Can we record and preserve some of them? We decided to try!

# How we do it?

- We decided to start with the department of Physics and Astronomy - <http://www.physics.ubc.ca/>
- Offered to assist with creating, hosting and maintaining podcasts
- Podcasts themselves generated interest from faculty

# Podcasting 101

- First, find appropriate content. Content is crucial -- substance trumps style. Quality will keep people coming back for more.
  
- Gather required hardware and software. Podcasting is very simple and cheap.
  - Audacity (free) - <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>
  - USB microphone - Samson CO1U USB Condenser Mic - \$50-90 CAD
  - [cIRcle](#) - the University of British Columbia's Institutional Repository (and iTunes U.)

# Podcasting 101

- Convert the final audio files to MP3 format and upload them online, then the audio files need to be streamed using an RSS feed.
  - One simple way is via a blog - <http://blogs.ubc.ca/scienglib>
  - Another way is link from a web site for manual download (not a real podcast)
  
- Promote your podcasts
  - Students and faculty can be the best word-of-mouth promoters
  - Quality will be what keeps subscribers coming back for more.

# Podcasting 101

- Evaluate and learn from your experience
  - Don't promise too much
  - Don't stretch yourself too thin
  
- Use statistics to measure the impact of podcasts
  
- Use statistics to show the value of podcasts

# A typical podcast

- Real life presentation
- Non-linear narrative
- Captures questions from the audience
- May have historical relevance

# Hosting podcasts

- Most podcasts take a lot of space. Our podcasts are approximately 1MB for 1 minute of recording in MP3 format
  
- Storage becomes cheaper now, and so are your options:
  - Your institutional repository. Do you have one? If yes, it can take both audio and video files and even stream them online (with a plug-in)
  - Library or departmental website
  - iTunesU – do you have a subscription?
  - Storage for a fee:
    - [Box.net](#)
    - [OmniDrive](#)

# Future directions

- We would like to expand:
  - To other departments: Computer Science and Chemistry are our first candidates, particularly the Distinguished Lectures series
- American Physical Society Northwest Section Annual Meeting
- New skill set for librarians
- Podcasting takes time and energy and scheduling
- Video recording and archiving



photo by [delgaudm](#)

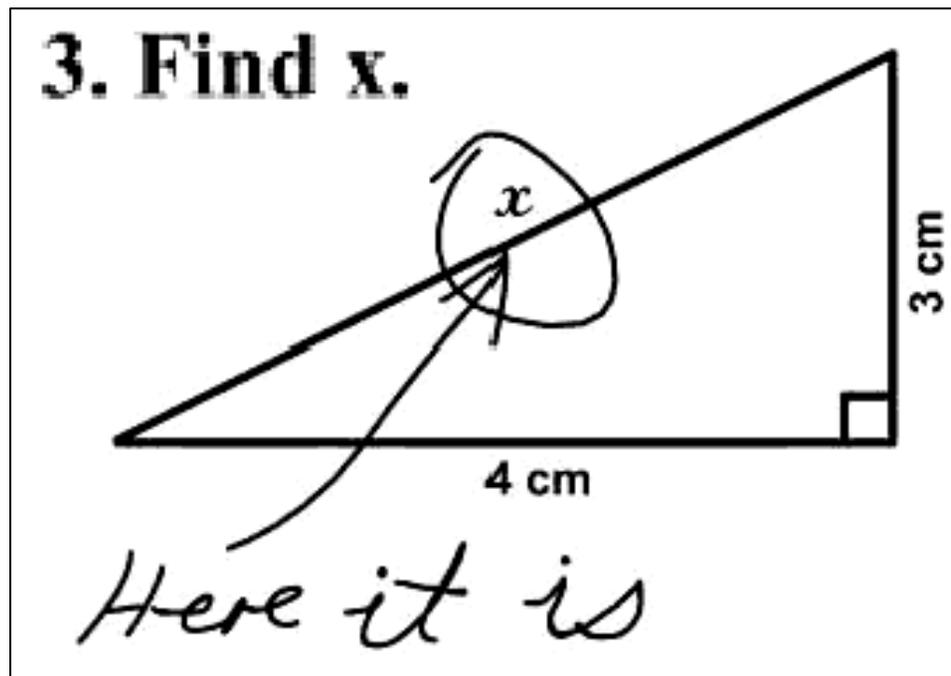
# Summary

- Podcasting might increase student satisfaction and instructional flexibility
- Our podcasting experiences are mutually beneficial for the library and our academic community both at UBC and internationally
- We expect podcasting phenomenon to grow and we want to be a part of it!

# References

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Questions?



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