PODCASTING for Art Teachers

Craig Roland

The boom in portable MP3 players, most notably Apple's iPod series, has spawned many new innovations in how people make use of this technology in their daily lives. Perhaps the most popular application to emerge recently is podcasting, a new form of multimedia broadcasting over the Internet. While podcasting is still in its infancy, it has the potential to make art education content available to anyone, anytime and anyplace.

What Is Podcasting?

Wikipedia defines podcasting as a "method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio programs or music videos, over the Internet for playback on mobile devices and personal computers" (**en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting**). Although the term originated from combining "iPod" and "broadcasting," you don't actually need an iPod to listen to a podcast—any MP3-compatible media player or computer will do.

Podcasts are usually produced as a series of radio-style programs, with different episodes broadcast over the Internet on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. For example, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art offers monthly podcasts that feature interviews with exhibiting artists, gallery talks by curators, and lectures by art historians (**www.sfmoma.org/education/edu_podcasts.html**). Once a podcast has been aired, it is typically archived on the Web as a downloadable MP3 audio file.

How to Listen to a Podcast

There are two ways to listen to podcasts. You can subscribe to a podcast series with special aggregator software (such as iTunes or Windows Media Player) which uses RSS feeds to inform you when new podcasts are available, which you can then choose to download to your computer. Your other option is to download individual podcasts manually from a Web site to your computer. Either way, once you add

a podcast to your iTunes or Media Player library, you can listen to it on your computer or transfer it to your MP3 player for portable listening at a later time.

Please note that most podcasts currently are in the MP3 format and emulate radio talk-show programs. However, with the advent of video iPods, more and more podcasters are using the MP4 format that allows them to combine audio and video content in their broadcasts—voice, music, graphics, animation, and video—a trend that will undoubtedly appeal to artists and art educators.

> **Podcasting has the potential to make art education content available to anyone, anytime and anyplace.**

Where to Find Podcasts

Although podcasting is only two years old, it has experienced phenomenal growth. There are thousands of amateur and professional podcasts being produced daily, covering everything from art to movie reviews, to news and sports.

An excellent place to begin searching for podcasts is the iTunes Music Store (**www.apple.com/itunes**), which lists hundreds of freely available K–12 podcasts in its education directory alone.

How to Create Podcasts

An excellent site for students and teachers to learn how to create and publish podcasts is Yahoo! Podcasts (**podcasts.yahoo.com**). You can click on "Getting Started" and "Publish a Podcast" for a clear tutorial on creating your own podcasts. Yet another site worth checking out is the Education Podcast Network (**epnweb.org**), sponsored by the Landmark Project, which lists a growing number of educational podcasts including many related to visual arts education.

Students as Podcasters

To get some idea of what art students can do with podcasting, check out the podcasts created by Advanced Placement Art History students from two Washington, DC area high schools who were assigned to research a work exhibited at the Renwick Gallery of American Craft and then produce a podcast about the piece (**eyelevel.si.edu/2006/05/a_sound_take_on.html**). Also, see the "unofficial" audio guides that a group of students (who call themselves "Art Mobs") from Marymount Manhattan College produced for the Museum of Modern Art (**homepage.mac.com/dave7/Art-Mobs/FileSharing52.html**).

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