LEARNING MADE EASY

4th Edition

Podcasting

for dummies®

A Wiley Brand

Understand the do's and don'ts of podcasting

Produce unique content that attracts listeners

Build a studio that rivals pro podcasters

Tee Morris
Chuck Tomasi
Professional podcasting pioneers

Foreword by Dr. Pamela Gay
Cohost of Astronomy Cast

Podcasting

4th Edition

by Tee Morris and Chuck Tomasi
Foreword by Dr. Pamela Gay

for dummies®
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Podcasting For Dummies®, 4th Edition

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Foreword

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Podcasting For Dummies*. This book can be your stepping off point to being part of a vibrant community of content creators who are creating every possible kind of content (often from the quiet of the inside of a closet). While anyone can create a podcast, creating a successful podcast requires showing up week after week and working to constantly improve the quality as you build your audience. No show starts perfect, but this book instructs beginners on how to get a good start while also helping old dogs like me learn new tricks.

I still remember exactly where I was when I saw a real-life copy of the first edition of *Podcasting For Dummies.* The year was 2007. Most people still looked at me funny when I said, "I'm a podcaster," but Tee Morris had recognized me by my voice and told me to come check out a book. Back then, I think that's how all of us original podcasters knew each other: We were voices that we carried around in each other's pockets as we worked to teach each other new content (Mur Lafferty's *I Should Be Writing* still leaves me feeling guilty that I'm not writing!). We also emailed and Skyped, working together to define new techniques and to build up our entire community. Opening that first edition book, I felt a thrill to see my show's logo — *Slacker Astronomy*'s logo — listed side by side with the shows I loved most and embedded in a book that could explain to someone how to create a podcast in the exact way I would create a podcast. (Back then I was a GarageBand + LibSyn + WordPress kind of producer.)

Back in 2007, podcasting was just three years old, but already it felt like everything had changed, as we went

from our grassroots origins to mainstream success with the introduction of iTune's Podcast Directory. Already, Tee and Evo were working on a new edition, this time bringing in Chuck Tomasi for added insight. Like me, Chuck was one of the early podcasters, and with his *Technorama* and *Chuck Chat* shows, he interviewed a lot of voices in podcasting, and helped network us together around our craft. Across the years, as podcasting has evolved, this book has evolved, too.

Today, most people know what a podcast is, but creating a stand-out show has actually gotten harder rather than easier. That shouldn't worry you, though. You have this book, and it will introduce you to what's needed to get started. Inside you'll find rock-solid examples of what a good show can look like. Want a science podcast? Got it (That *Astronomy Cast* show? That's me and Fraser Cain!) Want a good tech show? Got those, too. Need insight on production, hosting, promotion? All of it is laid out here. I'm not going to lie. I'll be reading this book to see how I can improve, because 15 years of podcasting later, there are new tools and new best-practices as Spotify, our digital assistants (Hey, Alexa!), and so many other platforms add podcasts to their lineups. There is so much to learn… so start reading!

And welcome to the podcasting community. We're so glad you're here.

—Dr. Pamela Gay, Astronomer and cohost of *Astronomy Cast*

Introduction

Maybe you've been casually surfing the Interwebz (yes, that is a thing!) or perusing your newspaper when the word *podcasting* has popped up. Steadily, like a building wave that would make champion surfers salivate with delight, the term has popped up again and again — and your curiosity continues to pique as the word *podcasting* echoes in your ears and remains in the back of your mind as a riddle wrapped in an enigma, smothered in secret sauce.

Well, ponder no more. *Podcasting For Dummies,* 4th Edition provides the answer to the question — What is podcasting? This book takes you through the always-evolving technological movement encompassing the Internet, digital communications, education, and entertainment. By the time you reach the end of this book, the basics will be in place to get you, your voice, and your message heard around the world — and you can even have a bit of fun along the way.

About This Book

Back in 2005 …

> "So what are you up to, Tee?"
>
> "I'm currently making a podcast of my first novel, a swashbuckling tale that carries our heroes …"
>
> "Uh … what is a podcast?"

Just the word *podcasting* carries an air of geekiness about it — and behold, the habitual technophobes suddenly clasp their hands to their ears and run away

screaming in horror lest they confront yet another nerdy technology that has gone mainstream. Too bad. It has been a long road for podcasting, and it has taken a decade-and-a-half for the platform to go from something nerds are doing in the basement of the science building to a punch line about people who cannot cut it in mainstream media to plot devices in Jordan Peele's reimagining of *The Twilight Zone*. What an evolution!

The funny thing about podcasting — outside of comedy podcasts, of course — is that it isn't that hard to do. When you peel back the covers and fancy-schmancy tech-talk, it's a pretty simple process to make your own podcast. You just need someone pointing the way and illuminating your path.

This is why we're here: to be that candle in the dark, helping you navigate a world where anyone can do anything, provided they have the tools, the drive, and the passion. You don't need to be a techno-wizard or a super-geek. You need no wad of tape holding your glasses together, and your shirt tail need not stick out from your fly. Anyone can do what we show you in this book. Anyone can take a thought or an opinion, make an audio file expressing that opinion, and distribute this idea worldwide. Anyone can capture the attention of a few hundred — or a few thousand — people around the world through MP3 players hiding in computers, loaded on smartphones, strapped around biceps, jouncing in pockets, or hooked up to car stereos.

Anyone can podcast, and anyone can listen.

Podcasting, from recording to online hosting, can be done on a variety of budgets, ranging from frugal to Fortune 500. You can podcast about literally anything — including podcasting for its own sake. As blogging gave the anonymous, the famous, the almost-famous, and the

used-to-be famous a voice in politics, religion, and everyday life, podcasting adds volume and tone to that voice.

Podcasting is many things to many people; but at its most basic, it's a surprisingly simple and powerful technology. What it means boils down to a single person: you. This is a platform delivering your message around the world, connecting the Global Village in ways that the creators of the Internet, RSS, and MP3 compression would probably never have dreamed. It is the unique and the hard-to-find content that can't find a place on commercial, college, or public access radio.

You're about to embark on an exciting adventure into digital media distribution, and here you will find out that podcasting is all these things and so much more.

How to Use This Book

Podcasting For Dummies, 4th Edition should be these things to all who pick up and read it (whether straight through or by jumping around in the chapters):

- A user-friendly guide in how to listen to, produce, and distribute podcasts
- A terrific reference for choosing the right hardware and software to put together a sharp-sounding podcast
- The starting point for the person who knows nothing about audio editing, recording, creating RSS feeds, hosting blogs, or how to turn a computer into a recording studio
- A handy go-to think tank for any beginning podcaster who's hungry for new ideas on what goes into a good podcast and fresh points of view

» A really fun read

There will be plenty of answers in these pages, and if you find our answers too elementary, we give you plenty of points of reference to research. We don't claim to have all the solutions, quick fixes, and resolutions to all possible podcasting queries, but we do present to you the basic building blocks and first steps for beginning a podcast. As with any *For Dummies* book, our responsibility is to give you the foundation on which to build. That's what we've done our level best to accomplish: Bestow upon you the enchanted stuff that makes a podcast happen.

This book was written as a linear path from the conceptualization stages to the final publication of your work. However, not everyone needs to read the book from page one. If you've already gotten your feet wet with the various aspects of podcasting, jump around from section to section and read the parts that you need. We provide plenty of guides back to other relevant chapters for when the going gets murky.

Conventions Used in This Book

When you go through this book, you're going to see a few ⌘ symbols, the occasional ⇒ , and even a few things typed `in a completely different style`. There's a method to this madness, and those methods are conventions found throughout this book.

When we refer to keyboard shortcuts for Macintosh or Windows, we designate them with (Mac) or (Windows). For Mac shortcuts, we use the Command key and the corresponding letter. For Windows shortcuts, we use the

abbreviation for the Control key (Ctrl) and the corresponding letter. So the shortcut for Select All looks like this: Command+A (Mac) / Ctrl+A (Windows).

If keyboard shortcuts aren't your thing and you want to know where the commands reside on menus, we use a command arrow (⇒) to help guide you through menus and submenus. So, the command for Select All in the application's menu is Edit ⇒ Select All. You first select the Edit menu and then Select All.

When we offer URLs (web addresses) of various podcasts, resources, and audio equipment vendors, or when we have you creating RSS feeds for podcast clients, such as Apple Podcasts, Overcast, or Spotify, we use `this particular typeface`.

Bold Assumptions

We assume that you have a computer, a lot of curiosity, and a desire to podcast. We couldn't care less about whether you're using a Mac, a PC, Linux, Unix, or two Dixie cups connected with string. (Okay, maybe the two Dixie cups connected with string would be a challenge; a computer is essential.) In podcasting, the operating system just makes the computer go. We're here to provide you tools for creating a podcast, regardless of what OS you're running.

If you know nothing about audio production, this book can also serve as a fine primer in how to record, edit, and produce audio on your computer, as well as accessorize your computer with mixing boards, professional-grade microphones, and audio-engineering software that will give you a basic look at this creative field. You can hang on to this book as a handy reference, geared for audio *in podcasting.* Again, our book is a

starting point, and (ahem) a trusted starting point at that.

With everything that goes into podcasting, there are some things this book is not now, nor will ever be, about. Here's the short list:

- We're not out to make you into an übergeek in RSS or XML (but we give you all you need to make things work — even get you Spotify-ready).
- We figure that if you get hold of Audacity, GarageBand, or Audition, you can take it from there (but we give you overviews of those programs and a few basic editing examples).
- We're not out to teach you how to get rich quick through this platform. While we teach you how to produce a podcast, there is no magic formula in making the next *Serial* or *Slow Burn*.

If you are looking for a terrific start to the podcasting experience, then — in the words of the last knight guarding the Holy Grail in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* — "You have chosen wisely."

How This Book Is Organized

The following sections give you a quick overview of what this book has to offer. And yeah, we're going to keep the overview brief because we figure you're eager to get started. But the fact that you're reading this passage also tells us you don't want to miss a detail, so here's a quick bird's-eye view of what we do in *Podcasting For Dummies.*

Part 1: Podcasting on a Worldwide Frequency

Part 1 goes into the bare-bones basics of how a podcast happens, how to get podcasts to your listening device of choice, and how to host a podcast yourself — ending up with a few places online that offer podcast feeds you can visit to sample the experience and (later on) to let the world know "Hey, I've got a podcast, too!"

Part 1 also helps you pick out the best hardware and software you need to start podcasting.

Part 2: The Hills Are Alive with the Sound of Podcasting

Consider this part of the book *Inside the Actor's Studio,* part DIY Network, and part WKRP (with your host, Dr. Johnny Fever … *boooouuugaaar!!!*). This is where we offer some techniques the pros use in broadcasting. Podcasting may be the grass-roots movement of homespun telecommunications, but that doesn't mean it has to sound that way (unless, of course, you *want* it to sound that way). From preshow prep to setting your

volume levels to the basics of audio editing, this is the part that polishes your podcast.

Part 3: So You've Got This Great Recording of Your Voice: Now What?

The audio file you've just created is now silently staring at you from your monitor (unless you're listening to it on your computer's music player, in which case it's just defiantly talking back at you!), and you haven't a clue what your next step is. We cover the last-minute details and then walk you through the process of getting your podcast online, finding the right web-hosting packages for podcasts, and putting together show notes that give listeners a glance at what your latest episode is all about.

Part 4: Start Spreadin' the News about Your Podcast

You have your podcast recorded, edited, and online, but now you need to let people know you have this great podcast just waiting for them — and that's what we explore in Part 4. With the power of publicity — from free-of-charge word-of-mouth (arguably the most effective) to investment in social media, you have a wide array of options to choose from when you're ready to announce your presence to the podcasting community.

Part 5: Pod-sibilities to Consider for Your Show

The question of why one should podcast is as important as how to podcast. We cover some basic rationales that many folks have for sitting behind a microphone, pouring heart, soul, and pocket change into their craft each and every day, week, or month. We then look ahead to streaming on Twitch or YouTube as a possible interactive addition to your podcast's workflow.

Part 6: The Part of Tens

Perhaps the toughest chapters to write were these: the *For Dummies* trademark Part of Tens chapters. So don't skip them because we'll be über-miffed if you fail to appreciate how hard we busted our humps to get these chapters done!

Right — so what do we give you in our Part of Tens? Along with giving you ten reasons why podcasting is something important to do, we also offer suggestions for what's out there, how they sound, and how you can benefit from them. Finally, we close with words of wisdom from some of the podcasters who have been podcasting the longest. Read … and then you decide.

Authors' note: Keep in mind, the podcasts we cover here are currently active at the time of writing this edition. Some of these podcasts may thrive and continue producing killer content. Some may disappear like ill-fated voyagers tempting the Bermuda Triangle. Remember this as you might find a podcast in these pages that's no longer podcasting.

Icons Used in This Book

So you're trekking through the book, making some real progress with developing your podcast, when suddenly these little icons leap out, grab you by the throat, and wrestle you to the ground. (Who would have thought podcasting was so action-packed, like an MCU movie, huh?) What do all these little drawings mean?

Glad you asked.

TIP When we're in the middle of a discussion and suddenly we have one of those "Say, that reminds me …" moments, we give you one of these tips. They're handy little extras that are good to know and might even make your podcast sound a little tighter than average.

REMEMBER If the moment is more than a handy little nugget of information and closer to a "Seriously, you can't forget this part!" factoid, we mark it with a Remember icon. You're going to want to play close attention to these puppies.

WARNING Sometimes we interrupt our train of thought with a "Time out, Sparky …" moment — and this is where we ask for your completely undivided attention. The Warnings are exactly that: flashing lights, ah-ooga horns, dire portents, or your local DM saying "Roll for Initiative." They're reminders not to try this at home because you'll definitely regret it.

TECHNICAL STUFF These icons illuminate the "So how does this widget really work …?" moments you may have as you read this book. The Technical Stuff icons give you a deeper understanding of what the wizard is doing behind the curtain, making you all the more