

**Recording your Sermons, Lessons, and Workshops for iPod users.
Or, how I created some simple podcasts.**

By

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For the last couple of years I had been interested in mp3 players (an mp3 is a computer file that contains a sound recording – sermon, music, etc.) and iPods (basically the Apple Company’s version of a super mp3 player). In the Fall of 2005, I gave my wife some unmistakable hints that I wanted a 30 gigabyte iPod for Christmas. The hints worked.

I downloaded iTunes from www.apple.com/itunes/download/, hooked up my iPod and I was in business. One of my first downloads was from the “podcast” genre area of iTunes. I went to Religion & Spirituality, then Christianity where I happened upon Nassau Presbyterian Church’s podcasts by Rev. Dr. David Davis. I had heard Dr. Davis at an installation service at Paoli Presbyterian Church and enjoyed his message. This adventure then got me interested in learning to record sermons and workshops for use in courses and other training programs.

As in most areas of technology, there are a hundred different ways to get anything done. This article will explain just one way to get a sermon or lecture recorded and turned into a podcast. It may not be the simplest way, but it works. (There are times in life that I discover a solution to a problem and then stick with it, despite the fact that there are other preferred ways of getting the job done.)

The first step is to record the sermon or talk. To record the sermon, I used an Olympus WS-200s recorder. These can be purchased for about \$100. The advantage of using this device is that it digitally records in a format that can be directly played by your computer. It also is a USB connector that plugs directly into your computer. The format that it uses is “WMA” (Windows Media Audio). Your windows based computer will play these files automatically. In other words, with no additional work, you can listen to the recording on your computer.

The next step is to turn this WMA file into an MP3 file. To do this, I used a software package called “Advanced WMA Workshop” (from www.litexmedia.com for about \$25). This software will convert your WMA file that you recorded to an MP3 file. [You should convert the file and send it to a different directory than your WMA file.] It will also provide the file size in bytes. This number is important in the next step of the process.

The next step is used to turn the MP3 file into a true podcast. This is done by embedding the MP3 in a coded file called a RSS (Really Simple Syndication) file. There is more information about this at: <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss> but it’s outside the scope of this article. I want to show you exactly how to get your recording, which is now an MP3, into a podcast that can be published on iTunes.

Here is what you do.

Use your text editor called Notepad. You can get to this by going to Start, All Programs, Accessories, Notepad. The reason you will use this editor is that it will not add special characters into your work. So, open up Notepad and create the following file:

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
  <rss version="2.0">
    <channel>
      <title>Presbytery of Donegal Sermon Podcast Program</title>
      <link>http://www.donegalpby.com/podcasts/be\_bold.mp3</link>
      <description>Rev. Marion Haynes-Weller's Sermon for The
Synod of the Trinity</description>
      <language>en-us</language>
      <copyright>2006</copyright>
      <lastBuildDate>Thur, 9 Feb 2006 21:43:00 EST </lastBuildDate>
      <webMaster>cgross@donegalpby.com</webMaster>
      <ttl>60</ttl>
      <item>
        <title>Presbytery of Donegal Sermon Podcast Program No. 1</title>
        <description>The Rev. Marion Haynes-Weller's Sermon - Be Bold</description>
        <pubDate>Thur, 9 Feb 2006 21:43:00 EST </pubDate>
        <enclosure url="http://www.donegalpby.com/podcasts/be\_bold.mp3" length="9133581"
type="audio/mpeg" />
      </item>
    </channel>
  </rss>
```

Important notes:

You will change the title of the podcast to suit your needs.
The link will be to the place that you will store your MP3. This will typically be your website or folder in your website that stores your mp3 files.
The description is self explanatory.
Language is en-us which means English in the U.S.
The lastBuildDate is a date which MUST be in that format.
The ttl item is ‘time to live’ and I can’t explain what this does. See the [blogs.law.harvard](http://blogs.law.harvard.edu) site referenced above.
Every RSS needs at least one “item,” which is the next section.
In this section, you reference the “embedded” enclosure which is your mp3.
Again, you will put the location of your uploaded mp3 file. (you have to store it somewhere on the internet – probably at your website)
Note that the length is a large number, but without commas. This is the number that you get from your WMA converter. It is the size of the MP3 that you created.
This RSS file must be saved as “some_filename.rss” (don’t let your editor add “.txt” to it)

This RSS file does not have all of the optional fields so will not show the author, the running time, and many other possible features. It will, however, be accepted by iTunes for publication.

The final step is to upload this filename to a website. If it is done with care, it will be an acceptable podcast. To know if it works, you can open iTunes, go to Advanced, then Subscribe to a podcast and enter the URL (Universal Resource Locator – which is an internet address – ie. http://www.donegalpby.com/podcasts/be_bold.rss) of your podcast.

The URL of your podcast is the exact location of where you stored your RSS file, along with the filename. For example, my example file was called “be_bold.rss”

It was uploaded to: www.donegalpby.com/podcasts/be_bold.rss

Once your podcast works, you can go to the front page of iTunes, select the Podcast genre (from Inside the Music Store) and from that page, you can select “Submit a Podcast.” You simply enter the data needed. The primary info will be the URL that contains your “rss” file. This one must successfully reference the mp3 file as mentioned above.

For more information on creating “RSS files,” often called, “feeds,” go to www.google.com and enter - feedburners or look at: www.feedburner.com or checkout www.feedforall.com For the specifications of podcast feeds for iTunes, go to the following link: <http://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts/techspecs.html> This will help you with the various fields that iTunes uses in their program.

I hope that this helps you get your podcasts created! My wish is to expand the number of sermons, workshops, and courses that are available in our work of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. For a great 13 minute presentation on transforming your church, check out this one: www.donegalpby.com/podcasts/vital_trg1.rss This is a presentation by the Rev. Marion Haynes-Weller on the transformation of Kreutz Creek Presbyterian Church in Hellam, PA. You will be blessed by this presentation.

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