



HOW TO CREATE A PODCAST



a beginner's guide

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1. INTRODUCTION

Podcasts are a great way to reach people outside of when they're sitting in front of a computer. And by "podcast," I'm really talking about on-demand audio content.

Unlike a blog post, a podcast is a content format that your audience can enjoy during their commutes, while they're at the gym, or while they're doing work around the house. Creating a podcast will give you the opportunity to reach people that your traditional text and visual content aren't reaching.

More than 40 million Americans -- or roughly 15% of the population -- regularly listen to podcasts. That's up from 9% in 2008, according to [Edison Research](#).

Part of the explanation for this increase? It's easier than ever to listen to podcasts, with Bluetooth technology now standard in nearly every new car and Apple's podcast app being pre-installed in more than half a billion iOS 8 devices.



Producing podcasts has also become significantly easier, due in part to the rise of user-friendly audio editing tools (like GarageBand and Audacity) and hosting platforms (like SoundCloud).

From a creative standpoint, podcasts can work for almost every industry and subject. Whether you're a salesperson looking to share tips and strategies, or a baseball fan whose dream is to host a weekly podcast about their favorite team, there's no topic too niche.

This Guide ...

will show you how to create and maintain a podcast that your audience will love for less than \$20 per month.

As you've likely discovered, there's a lot of information about podcasting on the web. And as you've also likely discovered, much of this information is outdated and confusing.

In this guide, you'll find succinct, straight-forward instructions (and tips) for getting your podcast up and running.

Thanks for reading!

David Gerhardt

Producer of HubSpot's Podcast, [The Growth Show](#)



2. THE FEED

*Before we dive into the process of creating a podcast, it's important to understand how a podcast actually works. The first thing you need to know? **It all starts with the feed.***

You might be familiar with a blog RSS feed, which allows readers to subscribe to a blog and automatically receive new posts in an RSS reader (like Digg or Feedly).

A podcast uses an RSS feed as well. But with a podcast RSS feed, instead of readers subscribing to receive new blog posts, listeners subscribe to receive new podcast episodes.



Creating Your Feed

While coding your own podcast feed is possible, there are plenty of services that can do this for you automatically. All you need to do is upload your audio files, and those services will provide you with a feed that you can submit to a podcast directory.

In this guide, we'll focus on how to use [SoundCloud](#) for creating your feed, which is what we use for *The Growth Show*. SoundCloud allows you upload three hours of audio for free. After that, it's \$15 per month for a "Pro" account, which gives you unlimited space *plus* all of the stats you'll need for monitoring your podcast.

And considering that Apple software accounts for two-thirds of all podcast downloads (according to [Libsyn](#)), this guide will focus on getting your podcast set up on the [iTunes](#) podcast directory.

3. THE SETUP

Now that you now have a basic understanding of how a podcast feed works, let's talk about the gear that you'll need to actually start recording your podcast.

Software

Almost any audio recording software will do here. If you're on a Mac, GarageBand is free and easy to use and gives you a few settings to play around with for the audio quality/editing. Recording with QuickTime is another solution, but keep in mind that it doesn't offer as many editing options as GarageBand.

If you're on a PC, you can download Audacity, which is also free and easy to use.

Microphone



..... At the lower end of the price spectrum, you can use ear buds that have a built-in microphone or purchase a USB headset.



..... For \$50 on Amazon you can get a [Blue Snowball Mic](#). This is a great sounding mic -- the only challenge is that it records what is directly in front of it, so if you are doing in-person interviews, you and the guest will need to sit right next to each other.



..... The next step up the ladder is the [Blue Yeti](#) for about \$120.



..... If you want to get serious (and have the budget for it), you could get a [Zoom H4N](#) digital recorder or an XLR microphone (plus an XLR/USB interface). But this setup would start at over \$200.

Remote Setup

If you're interviewing a guest for your podcast remotely, Skype is an easy-to-use tool. There's a \$30 add-on for Skype that lets you record all of your calls.

Pro tip: When interviewing your guests on Skype, make sure you're ...

- in a quiet room
- wearing headphones
- speaking directly into your microphone

Chances are your guest won't have a microphone setup like yours, but if they have a headset (or, at a minimum, headphones + their computer's microphone) and can do the interview in a quiet space, the recording should sound just fine.



4. THE CONTENT

Now that you have the software and equipment you'll need, it's time to think about the actual content of your podcast.

Give some thought to what type of podcast you want -- is it just you talking? Do you want to have a guest and do an interview? Are you telling more of a story? (*The Growth Show* is an example of an interview format; *StartUp* and *Serial* are examples of a storytelling format.)

Episode Prep

Write out your questions in advance. Some people prefer bullets just to keep things moving smoothly. Some people like to write out full questions and a script. Some people are confident enough to just wing it.

Whatever you choose, prep is key. **Think about what you want the finished product to be like and then work backwards.**

If you're doing an interview, look up the guest on LinkedIn. Find articles they've written or topics they've spoken on and pull together the key themes and topics you want to cover in the podcast. You can also send your guests questions in advance so they can prepare.

Pro tip: Come up with a few questions that you will ask every guest. This will help you get more out of the content, whether you want to do a mashup of everyone's answers to the same question, create a SlideShare, or just tweet out everyone's quote-worthy comments.



5. THE PRODUCTION

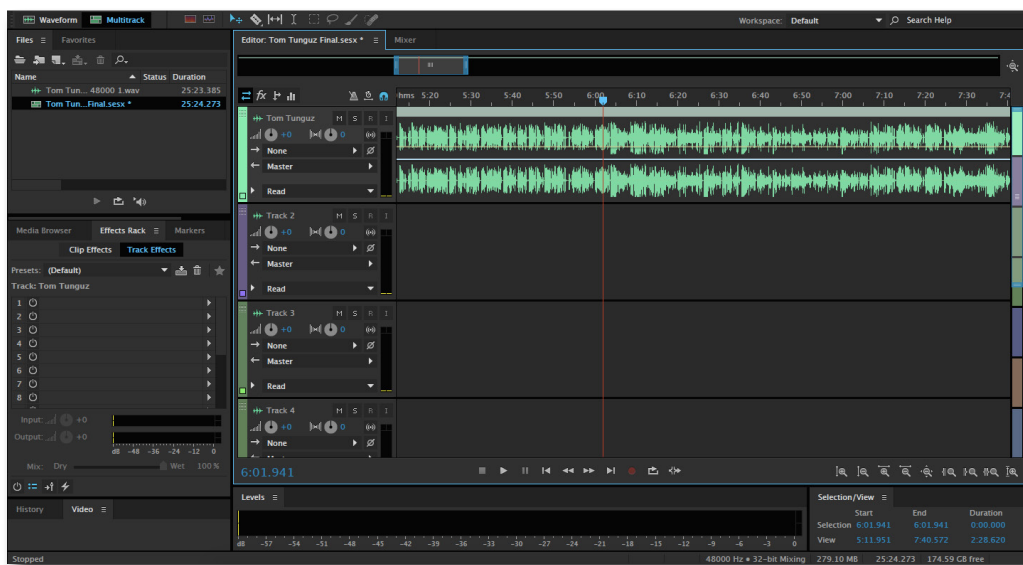
Now that you now have a general sense of the shape your podcast's content will take, it's time to dive into the nitty gritty of producing your podcast.

Editing

It's up to you how much editing you want to do after you've recorded your audio. One of the great things about podcasting is that not everything needs to be a big production or a professional radio show with NPR quality.

That being said, one thing you might want to do to make your podcast sound more professional without spending a lot of time on it is to record a quick introduction and find some music to lead in to your show.

Similar to using images in your marketing, you'll just want to make sure that you have to rights to use the audio (or find a friend to produce something quick for you).

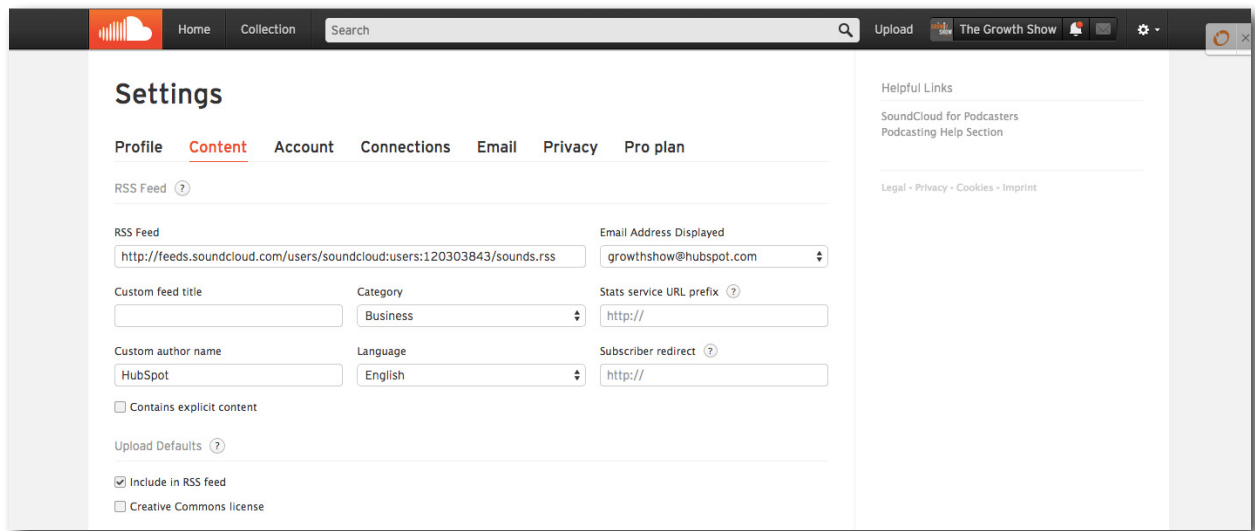


Pictured above: a screenshot from Adobe Audition, the editing software I use to produce The Growth Show.

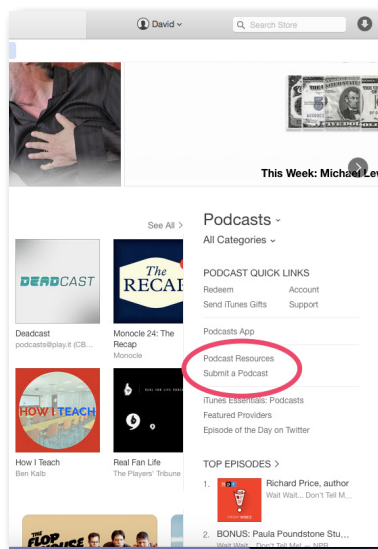
Activating Your Feed

Now it's time to create and open your [SoundCloud](#) account. After signing into your account, you'll need to get access to their podcasting program. [You can find everything you need to know about signing up for the program here.](#)

After you get accepted into the program, you'll be able to activate your RSS feed on your SoundCloud account (pictured below).



Once your RSS feed is activated, you can submit that feed directly to iTunes (pictured below). Getting accepted might take a day or two, so be sure to plan in advance before you launch.



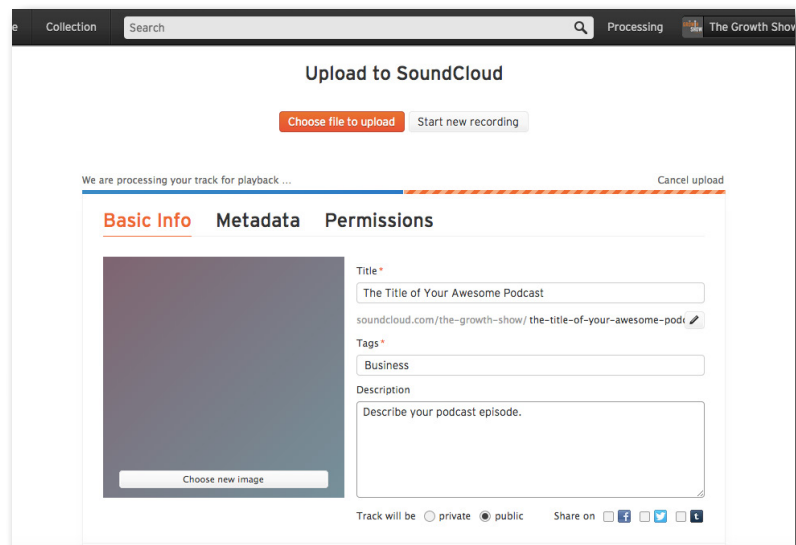
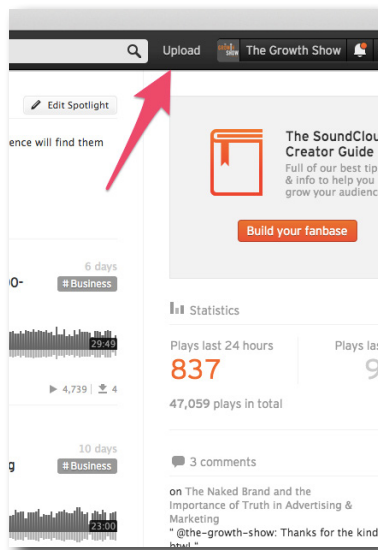
Design Considerations

iTunes requires a logo/cover image that is at least 1400 x 1400 pixels and a maximum size of 2048 x 2048 pixels. [They have more information about this in their FAQ's](#), but if you need an image, you can easily create your own using [Canva](#) and selecting their Podcast Cover template.

By uploading the image you create as your profile image on SoundCloud, iTunes will automatically make that your podcast's cover image (assuming you've already submitted your feed).

Uploading Episodes

In SoundCloud, click "Upload" (see below) and select your recording from your computer's hard drive or wherever you happen to have it stored. Then simply add the title, tags, and a short description (see below) and hit "Save" to publish your new episode.



Pro tip: Have multiple episodes recorded before submitting your feed to iTunes. The last thing you want to do is scramble to record another episode after you release your first one. Plus, you will get more downloads right out of the gate if you launch with multiple episodes.

6. MARKETING & MEASURING

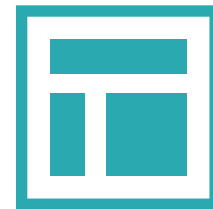
*Having a podcast doesn't mean that people will actually **discover** your podcast, nor does it mean that your podcast will be a success. In the final section of this guide, we'll explore tips and techniques for marketing your podcast as well as for measuring its performance.*

Marketing Tips

- **Think about SEO.** Create topics and titles with a targeted audience in mind and work backwards to write a title that will catch someone's eye.



- **Have a website for the podcast.** Some people like to have a dedicated website to send people to where they can post all of the episodes with some additional content. There are trade-offs to this approach — you'll “own” more of the audience by driving them to your site, but you might cannibalize some of your iTunes downloads in the process.



- **Write about the podcast on your blog.** Create a blog post to promote each episode. You could even include a transcription. But at a minimum, give a short description of what the episode is about, as well as highlights, quotes, and (if applicable) a photo of your guest(s).



- **Start an email list for people interested in the podcast.** Have a dedicated email list so you can tell people when new episodes are out. Give them exclusive access to additional content and sneak peeks at upcoming episodes.



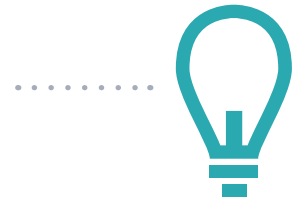
- **Promote the podcast on social.** You may even want to create dedicated Facebook and Twitter accounts to give people a place where they can talk about your podcast.



- **Consider some cross-promotion.** Reach out to websites and blogs that deal with a similar topic as your podcast and see if you can cross-promote. Or see if you can read an ad on your podcast in exchange for a guest post on an influential site.



- **Check out Reddit's [r/podcasts](#) group.** This is one of the best places to find ideas and information about marketing and growing your podcast.



Measuring

The most important metric when it comes to podcasting: **are people listening?** And the way you can tell if people are listening is by measuring downloads.

Unfortunately, iTunes doesn't give you any download data, but you *can* get download data from your SoundCloud account. Here are the two types of download data you should look at:

- **Monthly Downloads.** Make sure they're growing each month and make note of what activities moved the needle that month.

- **Downloads Per Episode.** Take an average of how many downloads there are per episode. This will give you a good sense of how many people are subscribed to the feed.

A Final Thought ...

While it's important to know what it takes to produce a podcast, all of the fancy equipment and marketing ideas in the world won't save you from a podcast that no one wants to listen to. There's no silver bullet for creating a great podcast, but the best way to start is by producing great content. The core principles of inbound marketing apply the same to podcasting.

This is a great time to get out there and start a podcast. Podcasts provide you with an opportunity to reach your audience in a whole new way, and the relationship the audience has with you is unlike any other piece of content. (Your voice is literally in their ears for 20-30 minutes on-demand!) And one of the best things about podcasts? Anyone with a microphone and a laptop can create one and start growing a loyal audience. Just focus on creating something that a few people love and the rest will follow.

Now that you understand the steps and the work that go into creating a podcast, it's time to think about creating one for your business or hobby today.

Thanks for reading!

David Gerhardt

Producer of HubSpot's Podcast, [The Growth Show](#)



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