



What is a Podcast and How Can I Use One?

This article is for people that have absolutely no idea what a podcast is, how they can use them and why they would want to bother at all.

Definitions

The word “podcasting” is a portmanteau combining the words “broadcasting” and “iPod.” In case you don’t know or don’t keep up with popular technology an [iPod](#) is a portable music player produced by [Apple Computers](#). Apple was lucky/smart enough that their brand was wrapped into a term for a new technology much like the Sony Walkman becoming the popular name for a portable radio/cassette player or inline skates being called “rollerblades”, which is brand name for a company that produced inline skates.

The most popular format of a podcast is MP3.

Wikipedia: MP3 is a popular digital audio encoding and lossy compression format. It was designed to greatly reduce the amount of data (10:1 compression is common) required to represent audio, yet still sound like a faithful reproduction of the original uncompressed audio to most listeners. In popular usage, MP3 also refers to files of sound or music recordings stored in the MP3 format on computers.

Ahh, right. Some of that definition is quite technical, but all you really need to know is that an MP3 is a popular audio file type for podcasts. There are other audio file types that are used for podcasting but in general as long as you have a music player on your computer you should be able to listen to a podcast file.

Podcasting is a form of audio broadcasting on the Internet. The reason it became linked with the iPod in name was because people download podcasts (audio shows) to listen to on their iPods. However you don’t have to listen to podcasts only on iPods; you can use your computer with some music software such as Windows built-in [Media Player](#) , [Winamp](#), or other portable music players (iPod competitors) such as [Creative Zen](#) or [iRiver](#). It really doesn’t matter, as long as you have some way to play music on your computer you will be able to listen to podcasts.