

- » Finding out what podcasting is
- » Creating a podcast
- » Finding and subscribing to podcasts

## Chapter 1

# Getting the Scoop on Podcasting

Sometimes the invention that makes the biggest impact on our daily lives isn't an invention at all, but the convergence of existing technologies, processes, and ideas. Podcasting may be the perfect example of that principle — and it's changing the relationship people have with their radios, music collections, books, education, and more.

The podcasting movement is actually a spin-off of another communications boom: *blogs*. Blogs sprang up right and left in the early 2000s, providing nonprogrammers and designers a clean, elegant interface that left many on the technology side wondering why they hadn't thought of it sooner. Everyday people could chronicle their lives, hopes, dreams, and fears and show them to anyone who cared to read. And oddly enough, people did care to read — and still do.

Then in 2003, former MTV VeeJay Adam Curry started collaborating with programmer Dave Winer about improving RSS (which stands for *Really Simple Syndication*) that not only allowed you to share text and images, but media attachments which included compressed audio and video files. Soon after, Curry released his first podcast catching client. Thus launched the media platform of podcasting.

Podcasting combines the instant information exchange of blogging with audio and video files that you can play on a computer or portable media device. When

you make your podcast publicly available on the Internet, you are exposing your craft to anyone with a computer or mobile device and a connection capable of streaming data. To put that in perspective, some online sources report the global online population is over 4.5 billion users. In the U.S. alone, more than 275 million people own some kind of mobile device or portable media player and every one of them is capable of playing your content!

This chapter is for the consumers of the content (the audience) and those who make the content (the podcasters) alike. We cover the basic steps to record a podcast and lay out the basics of what you need to do to enjoy a podcast on your media player.

If you're starting to get the idea that podcasting is revolutionary, groundbreaking, and possibly a major component of social upheaval, great. Truth is, some have made their marks in society. Some storytellers have reignited the desire for short stories, anthologies, and storytelling. Other podcasts have shone spotlights on criminal injustices. But not all podcasts are so deep. In fact, many of them are passion projects inviting you to join in on the experience!

## Deciding Whether Podcasting Is for You

Technically speaking, *podcasting* is the distribution of specially encoded multimedia content to subscribed personal computers via the RSS 2.0 protocol. Whew! Allow us to translate that into common-speak:

Podcasting allows you to listen to what you want, where you want, when you want.

Podcasting turns the tables on broadcast schedules, allowing the listener to choose not only what to listen to, but also when — often referred to as *time shifted media*. And because podcasts are transferred via the Internet, the power to create an audio program isn't limited to those with access to a radio transmitter.

The simplest reason to podcast is that it's just plain fun! We've been podcasting since the beginning, and we're still having a blast, continuing to get out messages to our worldwide audiences and challenging ourselves with new tricks and techniques in creating captivating media. So, yeah, for the fun of it? Heck of a good reason.

The following sections cover other reasons podcasting is probably for you.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME, WHEN THE NAME IS PODCASTING?

As with most items that make their way into the conventional lexicon of speech, the precise origins and meaning behind *podcasting* are somewhat clouded. Although the domain `podcast.com` was originally registered back in 2002 (nothing was ever done with it, as far as we know), and Ben Hammersley suggested that and many other terms in February 2004 ([www.guardian.co.uk/media/2004/feb/12/broadcasting.digitalmedia](http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2004/feb/12/broadcasting.digitalmedia)), it's generally accepted in the podcast community that the first person to use the term as a reference to the activity we now know as podcasting was Dannie Gregoire on September 15, 2004. Some voices in tech asserted the name held connotations to Apple's popular player of the time, the iPod. Regardless of the intentions, the term was *backronymed* (that is, treated like an acronym and applied to a variety of plausible existing meanings) even with alternative names defiantly offered . . . but to no avail. The term podcasting became part of everyday lexicon.

Since 2004, though, content creators who set up YouTube and Twitch live streams and tell the world "Check out my podcast!" garnered weeping and gnashing of teeth by your authors. We've been what you would call purists, telling people "You can't call it a podcast if you don't have an RSS feed!" However, on finding our own place in streaming, we understood that times change, technology evolves, and even these old dogs can learn new tricks. The term podcast no longer represents the specific technology linked to RSS, but is more about making your content available to a global audience automatically delivered or streaming on-demand. For that reason, we include Chapter 17 to help get you started streaming and seamlessly work it into your podcast's workflow.

## You want to deliver media on a regular basis

Sure, you can include audio, video, and PDFs content in your blog if you have one. Many bloggers create special content and insert them as links into the text of their blogposts. Readers then download the files at their leisure. However, this approach requires manual selection of the content blog hosts want readers to download. What sets podcasting apart from blogging is that podcasting automates that process. A listener who subscribes to your podcast is subscribed to all your content, whenever it's available. No need to go back to the site to see what's new! Once you subscribe to a podcast, the content is delivered to you in the same way as when you subscribe to a print magazine. New content, delivered to you. (See what we did there?)

## You want to reach beyond the boundaries of broadcast media

In radio, unless it is satellite radio, the number of people who can listen to a show is limited by the power of the transmitter pumping out the signal. Same thing with broadcast television, depending on whether you are using antenna, cable, or satellite dish to receive programming. Podcasting doesn't rely on or utilize signals, transmitters, or receivers — at least not in the classic sense. Podcasts use the Internet as a delivery system, opening up a potential audience that could extend to the entire planet.

No rules exist (yet, anyway) to regulate the creation of podcast content. In fact, neither the FCC nor any other regulatory body for any other government holds jurisdiction over podcasts. If that seems astounding, remember that podcasters are not using the public airwaves to deliver the message.



**WARNING**

Just because the FCC doesn't have jurisdiction, you're not exempt from the law or — perhaps more important — immune to lawsuits. You're personally responsible for anything you say, do, or condone on your show. Additionally, the rules concerning airplay of licensed music, the distribution of copyrighted material, and the legalities of recording conversations all apply. Pay close attention to the relevant sections in Chapter 5 to avoid some serious consequences. When it comes to the legalities, ignorance is not bliss.

## You have something to say

As a general rule, podcasters produce content that likely holds appeal for only a select audience. Podcasts start with an idea, something that you have the desire and knowledge, either real or imaginary, to talk about. Add to that a bit of drive, do-it-yourself-ishness, and an inability to take no for an answer. The point is to say what you want to say, to those who want to hear it.

Podcasts can be about anything and be enjoyed by just about anyone. The topics covered don't have to be earth-shattering or life-changing. They can be about do-it-yourself projects, sound-seeing tours of places you visit, or even your favorite board games. A few rules and guidelines are common in practice, but at times you may find it necessary to bend the rules. (That can be a lot of fun in itself!)

Some of the most popular podcasts are created by everyday people who sit in front of their computers for a few nights a week and just speak their minds, hearts, and souls. Some are focused on niche topics; others are more broad-based.

## You want to hear from your listeners

Something that is a real perk with podcasting: accessibility. On average, most audiences have a direct line of contact between themselves and the podcast's host or hosts. Podcast consumers are more likely to provide feedback for what they listen or watch, probably traceable to the personal nature of a podcast. Unlike popular talk shows that follow strict formulaic approaches, podcasts offer their audiences — and the creators behind the production — control, options, and intimacy traditional broadcast media cannot. It is that appeal that attracted major production studios like NPR, ESPN, Disney, HBO, and many others to podcasting. The connection of podcasting with audiences would pave the way for streamers, and now podcasting and streaming are synonymous with one another.



REMEMBER

When you ask for feedback, you're likely to get it — and from unusual places. Because geography doesn't limit the distance your podcast can travel, you may find yourself with listeners in faraway and exotic places. And this feedback isn't always going to be "Wow, great podcast!" Listeners will be honest with you when you invite feedback.

## Creating a Podcast

There are two schools of thought when it comes to creating a podcast: the "I need the latest and greatest equipment in order to capture that crisp, clear sound of the broadcasting industry" school of thought, and the "Hey, my laptop has a built-in microphone, and I've got this cool recording software already installed" school of thought. Both are equally valid positions, and there are a lot of secondary schools in-between. The question is how far you're willing to go.

But allow us to dispel a few misconceptions about podcasting right off the bat: You're not reprogramming your operating system, you're not hacking into the Internal Revenue Service's database, and you're not setting up a wireless computer network with tinfoil from a chewing gum wrapper, a shoestring, and your belt, regardless if MacGyver showed you how. Podcasting is not rocket science. In fact, here's a quick rundown of how you podcast:

- 1. Record audio or video and convert it to a download-friendly format.**
- 2. Write a description of what it is that you just created as a blog post.**
- 3. Upload everything to a host server.**

Yes, yes, yes, if podcasting were that simple, then why is this book so thick? Well, we admit that this list does gloss over a few details, but a podcast — in its most

streamlined, raw presentation — is that simple. The details of putting together a single episode start in Chapter 2 and wrap up in Chapter 8; then Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 12 walk you through all you need to make the media you create into a podcast.

So, yeah, podcasting is easy, but there's a lot to it.

## Looking for the bare necessities

You need a few things before starting your first podcast, many of which you can probably find on your own computer. For these beginning steps, we focus on audio. Here's what you should keep an eye on:

» **A microphone:** Take a look at your computer. Right now, regardless of whether you have a laptop or desktop model, Windows or Macintosh, your computer probably has a microphone built into it — or a USB port for plugging in a microphone. Yes, even your mobile phone has a microphone, or it wouldn't be much of a phone, now would it? Many earbuds even include a microphone.

Position the microphone in a comfortable spot on your desk or table. If you're using a laptop, it should be somewhere on your desk that allows for best recording results without hunching over the computer like *Young Frankenstein's* Igor. (That's *EYE*-gor.) Check the laptop's documentation to find out where the built-in microphone is located in the unit's housing. For the mobile phone, hold the device as if you are making a call, the way it was intended. Holding the device any other way can degrade the audio quality. If you are using the microphone earbuds set included with the phone's purchase, you may need to do some experimentation.

Usually the built-in microphone in a laptop is located close to the edge of the keyboard or near the laptop's speakers. Some models tuck it in at the center point of the monitor's base.

» **Recording software:** Check out the software that came with your computer. You know, all those extra applications that you filed away, thinking, "I'll check those out sometime." Well, the time has arrived to flip through them. You probably have some sort of audio-recording software loaded on your computer, such as Voice Recorder (PC) or GarageBand (which comes pre-installed with new Macs).

If you don't already have the appropriate software, here's a fast way to get it: Download the version of Audacity that fits your operating system (at <https://audacityteam.org>), shown in Figure 1-1. (Oh, yeah . . . it's free.)



TECHNICAL  
STUFF



TIP

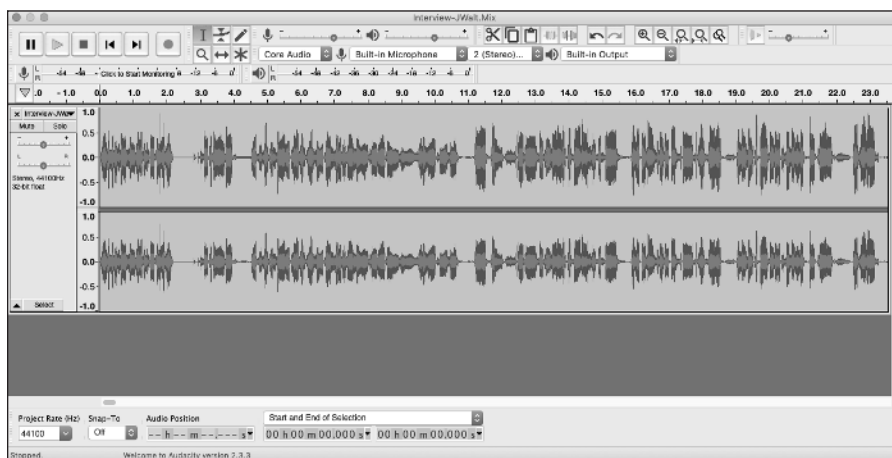


TIP

» **An audio interface:** Make sure your computer has the hardware it needs to handle audio recording and the drivers to run the hardware — unless, of course, you have a built-in microphone.

Some desktop computers come with a very elementary audio card built into the motherboard. Before you run out to your local computer vendor and spring for an audio card, check your computer to see whether it can already handle basic voice recording.

For tips on choosing the right mic and audio accessories, be sure to check out Chapter 2. Chapter 3 covers all the software you need.



**FIGURE 1-1:**  
Audacity allows  
you to edit audio  
and create MP3  
files.

## Recording your first podcast

When you have your computer set up and your microphone working, it's time to start recording. Take a deep breath and then follow these steps:

### 1. Jot down a few notes on what you want to talk about.

Nothing too fancy — just make an outline that includes remarks about who you are and what you want to talk about. Use these bullet points to keep yourself on track.

All this — checking your computer, jotting down notes, and setting up your recording area — is called *preshow prep*, discussed in depth in Chapter 5 by other podcasters who have their own set ways of getting ready to record.



TIP

2. **Click the Record button in your recording software and go for as long as it takes for you to get through your notes.**

We recommend keeping your first recording to no more than 20 minutes. That may seem like a lot of time, but it will fly by.

3. **Give a nice little sign-off (like “Take care of yourselves! See you next time.”) and click the Stop button.**

4. **Choose File → Save As and give your project a name.**

Now bask in the warmth of creative accomplishment.

## Compressing your audio files

Portable media devices and computers can play MP3 files as a default format. While there are many other audio formats in existence, MP3 is the preferred format for podcasting because so many digital devices and operating systems recognize it. If your recording software can output straight to MP3 format, your life is much simpler.

If your software cannot export directly to MP3, it should be able to save to a WAV (Windows) or AIFF (Mac) file, which are raw, uncompressed, and can get rather large. In this case, save your raw file from your first software package and then use Audacity to import the file and export it as MP3. We get into those details in Chapter 3.

Congratulations — you just recorded your first audio podcast! Easy, isn’t it? This is merely the first step into a larger world, as Obi-Wan once told Luke.

## Uploading your audio to the web

An audio file sitting on your desktop, regardless of how earth-shattering the contents may be, is not a podcast. Nope, not by a long shot. You have to get it up on the Internet and provide a way for listeners to grab that tasty file for later consumption.

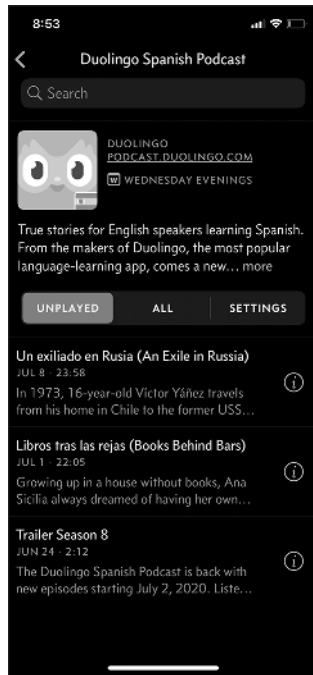
If you already have a web server for your blog, company website, or personal website, this process can be as easy as creating a new folder and transferring your newly created audio file to your server.

If that last paragraph left you puzzled and you’re wondering what kind of mess you’ve gotten yourself into . . . relax. We don’t leave you hanging out in the wind. Chapter 10 covers everything you need to know about choosing a web host for your podcast media files.



A podcast *media* file can be any sort of media file you like — audio, video, or even an interactive PDF. While our primary attention is on audio, you can use all the tips we give here to handle other types of media.

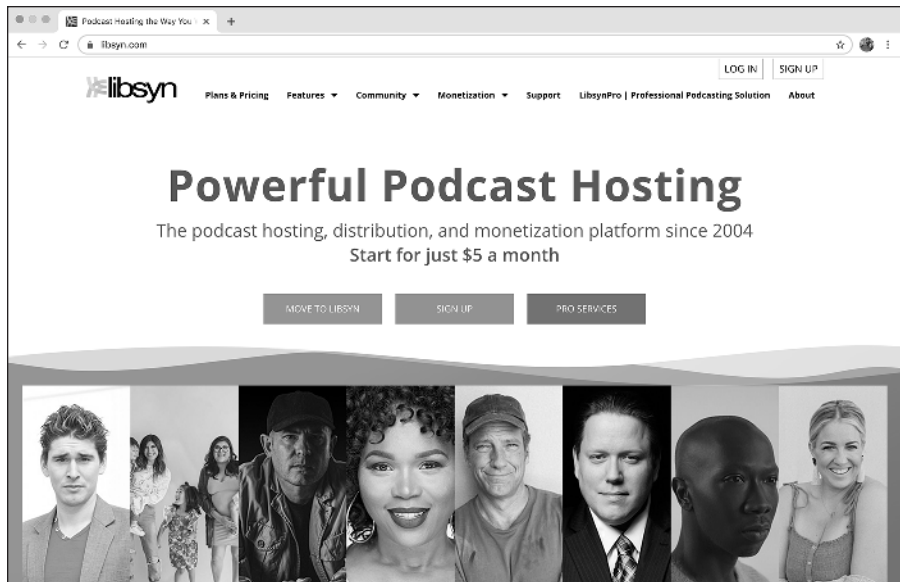
After you upload your episode, you need to have an RSS (*Really Simple Syndication*) file generated to deliver it. That happens automatically on a blog. The RSS describes where to find the media file you just uploaded. Nearly all software for blogging (called *blog engines*) support RSS, but not all support podcasts. You may need to add a *plug-in*, a downloadable extension that make podcast support a simple affair. This generated RSS file is your *podcast feed*. People who listen to your podcast can subscribe to your show by placing a link to this podcast feed in their podcast application, such as Apple’s Podcast, Overcast (shown in Figure 1-2), Stitcher, and Spotify. All these apps are looking for your podcast’s RSS, and list it in their *directory*, which is exactly what it sounds like — a digital catalog of podcasts that are available to you.



**FIGURE 1-2:** Podcasting can happen in various kinds of media. Whether it is audio (seen here), video, or interactive PDFs, your podcast can deliver content relevant to your audience.

Yes, we know . . . this all sounds really complicated. But we assure you, it’s not. Some hosting companies, such as LibSyn (<https://libsyn.com>), specialize in taking the technological “bite” out of podcasting so that you can focus on creating your best-sounding show. With LibSyn (shown in Figure 1-3), moving your file to a web server is as simple as pushing a few buttons while the creation of the RSS 2.0 podcast feed and even the accompanying web page are automatic.

**FIGURE 1-3:**  
LibSyn handles  
many of the  
technical details  
of podcasting.



If you want to take more control over your website, podcast media files, and their corresponding RSS 2.0 feed, look at Chapters 9 and 10. In those pages, we walk you through some essentials — not only how to upload a file but also how to easily generate your RSS 2.0 file using a variety of tools.

## Grabbing listeners

With media files in place and an RSS 2.0 feed ready to be recognized by your podcast app of choice, you're officially a podcaster. Of course, that doesn't mean a lot if you're the only person who knows about your podcast. You need to spread the word to let others know that you exist and that you have something pretty darned important to say.

## Creating show notes

Before you pick up a bullhorn, slap a sandwich board over yourself, and start walking down the street (virtually, anyway), you have to make sure you're descriptive enough to captivate those who reach your website. First, you're going to want to describe the contents of your show to casual online passersby in hopes of getting them to listen to what you have to say. That blog post you created to help deliver your media is that place. This is where *show notes* take form and give people a rundown of what you're talking about.



REMEMBER

You can easily glance at a blog and get the gist of a conversation, but an audio file requires active listening to understand, and it's quite difficult to skim. In effect, you're asking people to make an investment of their time in listening to you talk, read a story, or play music. You need some compelling text on a web page to hook them.

Show notes are designed to quickly showcase or highlight the relevant and pertinent contents of the audio file itself. A verbatim transcript of your show isn't always necessary, but we do recommend more than simply saying "a show about my day." Chapter 11 discusses ways to create your show notes and offers tips and tricks to give them some punch.

## Getting listed in directories

When you have a final media file and a solid set of show notes, you're ready to take your podcast message to the masses. You can get listed on some directories and podcast-listing sites, such as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Stitcher, and BluBrry (explained later in this chapter). Potential listeners visit literally dozens of websites as they seek out new content, and getting yourself listed on as many as possible can help bring in more new listeners to your program.



WARNING

A huge listener base is a double-edged sword: More demand for your product means more of a demand on you and the resources necessary to keep your podcast up and running. We recommend working on your craft and your skills, as well as getting a good handle on the personal and technological requirements of podcasting, before you embark on a huge marketing campaign. When you're ready, Part 4 has more details about marketing. Part 4 spends a lot of time talking about the various ways you can attract more listeners to your show and ways to respond to the ideas and feedback that your listeners inevitably provide. Many podcasters are surprised at the sheer volume of comments they receive from their listeners — but when you consider how personal podcasting is (compared to traditional forms of media distribution), that's really not surprising at all.

## There's an App for That

You have the media file, an RSS feed, and accompanying show notes. You're all set, but ask yourself, "How do podcasts get from the web to my device so I can watch or listen?" To access all this great, new content, you need a *podcatcher*, an application that looks at various RSS feeds, finds the new stuff, and transfers it from the Internet to your computer or mobile device automatically. In this section, we take a look at some of the different podcatching apps available for your listening/viewing needs.



REMEMBER

You may think you need an iPod for all kinds of reasons, but you really don't need one to podcast. Allow us to state that again: You do not need an iPod to listen to or create a podcast. You don't even need an iPhone to listen to or create a podcast, either. The only "I" you need is yourself. As long as you have an MP3 player — be it an application on a Mac, an application on a PC, mobile phone, or any portable device you can unplug and take with you — you possess the capability to listen to podcasts. Depending on the MP3 player, you may even be able to create your podcast on the device as well, but to listen, all you need is a device that can play audio files. This includes your computer.

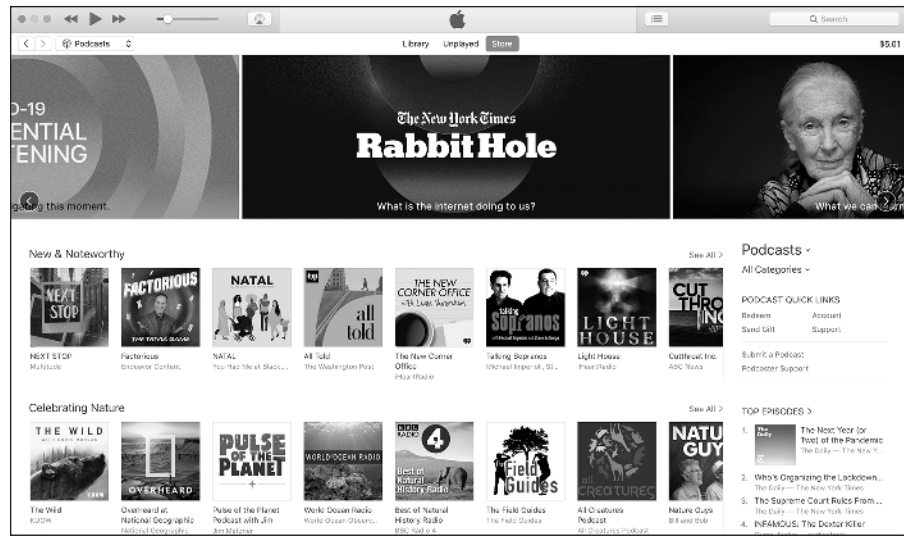
The following sections represent only a starting point for getting access to podcasts. Any attempt at a comprehensive list would be instantly obsolete. Podcasting continues to grow in popularity, and new podcasting apps are coming out all the time. And remember, you can listen to podcasts on all sorts of devices besides computers — smartphones, tablets, AppleTV, Roku, and more!

## The old-timer: Apple Podcasts

With iTunes launching its own podcast directory and a podcast-ready version of its player in June 2005, podcasting went from what the geeks were doing in the basement of the Science Building to the next wave of innovation on the Internet (which was, of course, developed by the geeks in the basement of the Science Building). Plenty of contributing factors helped push podcasting mainstream, but iTunes introducing a push-button subscription method was a huge step forward. As always, such a step into the mainstream market brought some dismay to the original podcasters, finding themselves overshadowed by larger media entities. Now, recognizable giants like NPR, *The New York Times*, ESPN, BBC, and so on dominate Apple's podcast directory (shown in Figure 1-4). What about the indie podcasts — the ones that started it all? Would they be forgotten? Go unnoticed? Languish unsubscribed? Well, at first, it seemed that many of the original ground-breakers that the podcasting community knew and loved (*Comedy4Cast*, *Evil Genius Chronicles*, *Coverville*, *GrammarGirl*) might get lost in the stampede. But not yet, as it turns out.

If you go looking for iTunes on your Mac and cannot find it, it could be that you have upgraded to Catalina (2019) or later. The monolithic iTunes app has been replaced with a separate podcasts app (along with another for music and a third for shows and movies). As for the Windows edition, fear not — as of this writing, you can still get iTunes for Windows (available for download at [www.apple.com/itunes](http://www.apple.com/itunes)). Whether using Apple Podcasts or iTunes on your desktop, the software lends an automatic hand to people new to podcasting, where to find blogs that host podcasts, and which podcast directories list the shows that fit their needs and desires — now they, too, can enjoy a wide range of podcast choices.

**FIGURE 1-4:**  
The Apple  
Podcast directory.



Subscribing to podcasts using Apple Podcasts is easy. Just follow these steps:

## 1. Find the podcast of your choice.

You can do that by

- Browsing the list podcasts from the Browse option on the left side.
- Viewing the popular podcasts by using Top Charts below that.
- Searching by using the Search box in the upper left.

## 2. When you find a show that you are interested in, click the image to get to the podcast page and then click the Subscribe button.

After your podcast finishes downloading, you can find the new episodes by going to the Listen Now section in the left column of Podcasts, or get specific shows or episodes from your library (also on the left).

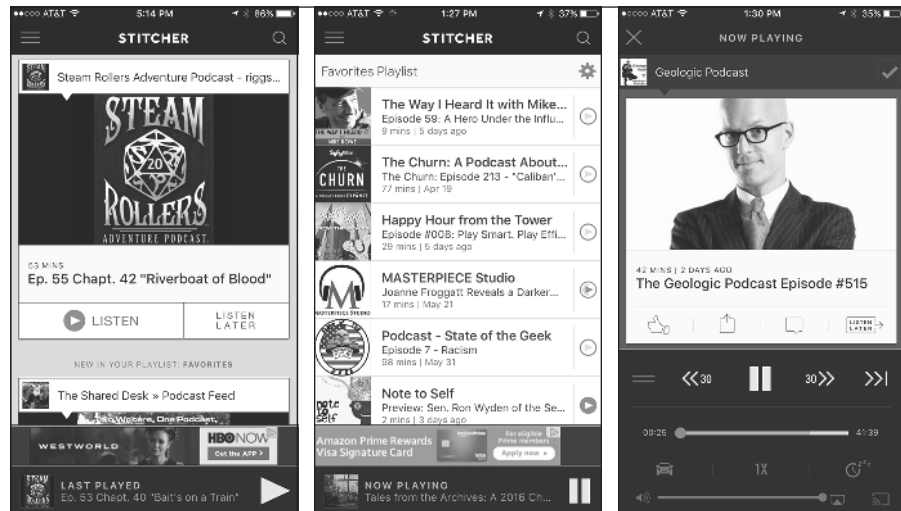
# Podcasting on the go: Stitcher

As smartphones and tablets became more and more prevalent, the notion of having “an app for that” grew in demand. Finding and subscribing to podcasts in the early days was possible on a mobile device, but a bit clunky. The stage had been set for a new kind of interface that was just as easy and elegant to use on your mobile device as it would be on a computer.

Enter Stitcher.

Stitcher Radio (<http://www.stitcher.com>) with an app available for both iPhone and Android) debuted in 2008 and has quickly become a must have for not only podcasts, but for radio shows coast-to-coast and around the world (see Figure 1-5). On the app or on their computer, members of the Stitcher community “stitch” together on-air feeds from radio stations and podcasts both from professional and amateur studios into personalized stations all readily available on your mobile devices.

**FIGURE 1-5:** Stitcher Radio, bringing podcasts and talk radio to your mobile device in a feed that customizes to your listening habits (left), can organize subscriptions on a Favorites list (middle), and gives you control over the episode playing through your smart device (right).



Once you set up a free user account on Stitcher, finding a podcast for your personal feed is only a few taps away:

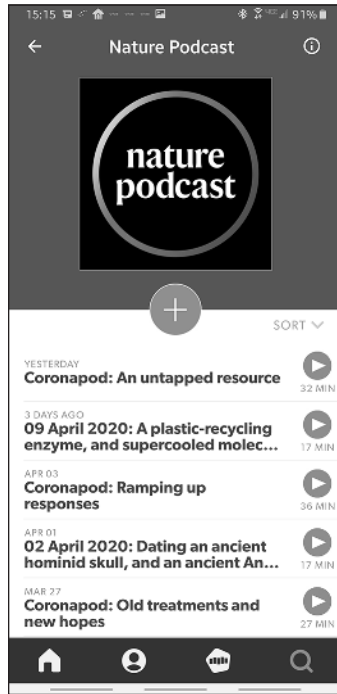
1. **Launch Stitcher on your mobile device.**
2. **Sign in with either Facebook, Google, or your Stitcher account.**
3. **Find the podcast of your choice.**

You can do that by

- Tapping on the Search icon in the bottom right corner.
- Swiping up through the offered feeds on your Front Page. (The more you use Stitcher, the more shows matching your interests will appear here.)

4. When you find something you like, tap the show's image.
5. To subscribe, tap the plus sign (+) just below the show's image.

The show appears in your favorites list (see Figure 1-6). Click the play icon next to any episode to listen right now.



**FIGURE 1-6:**  
Tapping the plus  
sign for any  
podcast adds it to  
your Favorites  
Playlist.

Stitcher is not only a terrific option for podcast audiences as the service is available on a variety of platforms, including playback through your browser, but Stitcher also interfaces seamlessly with many makes and models of automobiles. Plugging your smartphone into your car's USB port is immediately recognized, and your car's media center immediately picks up where you left off.

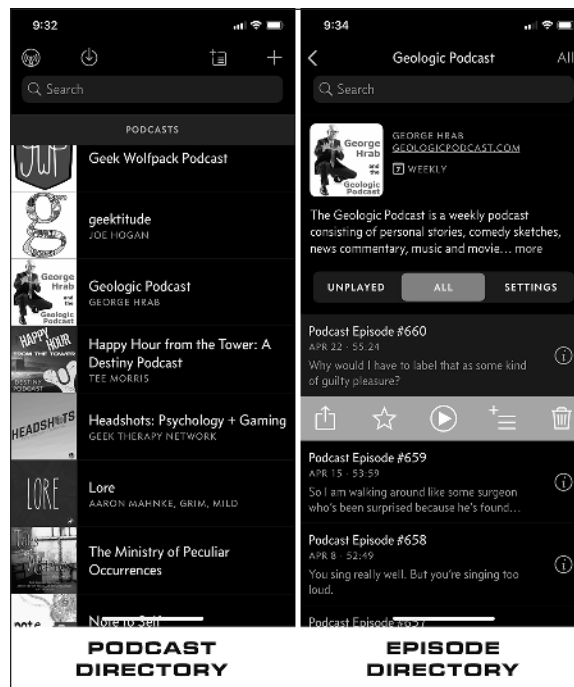
## Welcome the game-changer: Overcast

When it came to Apple and podcasting, the early days of the Apple Podcasts app were a bit tumultuous. Playback was awkward, interfaces were less than intuitive, and crashing was not uncommon. In 2013, developer Marco Arment introduced a modest app designed for subscribing and listening to podcasts at the XOXO festival. Ironically, he unveiled the app during a talk on competition and the risks and

benefits of how crowded the creative field had become. It's ironic as this app, Overcast (https://overcast.fm), received rave reviews with *The Verge* and *The Sweet Setup* calling it “the best podcast app for iOS” for many years.

Along with its stability, Overcast offers what podcasting apps of that time lacked: simplicity. Subscribed podcasts were listed alphabetically. Going into a podcast, episodes could be listed by unplayed episodes or all episodes available, as seen in Figure 1-7. The settings for the app and even the podcast itself could be controlled from the app. You can also play episodes back faster or slower than their original speed, and you can pick up from where you leave off.

**FIGURE 1-7:** Overcast is an app that offers a simple interface in finding your subscribed podcasts (left) and organizing your podcasts.



Once you set up your free account and download the app, finding a podcast for your personal feed is only a few taps away:

1. **Download and launch Overcast on your mobile device.**
2. **Sign in with your account.**
3. **Find the podcast of your choice.**

You can do that by

- Tapping on the Search Directory field across the top.
  - Scanning the various podcasts offered in Overcast's categories.
  - Adding a podcast's URL manually by tapping the Add URL option in to the top-right corner.
- 4. When you find something you want to know more about, tap the podcast.**
  - 5. Once you find a podcast you want to listen to, tap the Subscribe button.**

Arment kept things simple in this app's UI (short for *user interface*) and created an elegant interface that makes Overcast a “must-have” for those on the iOS platform, even with Apple Podcasts available everywhere.

## Podcasting with the G-man: Google Play Music

Not to be outdone by Apple and the iOS developers, the diversified search engine service Google, the people who bring you Google Drive, Google Docs, and Google Voice (which we discuss later on), offers Google Play Music (at <https://play.google.com/store>) for Android users. It is exactly as it sounds: Google's version of the Apple iTunes (before the breakup), all in one.

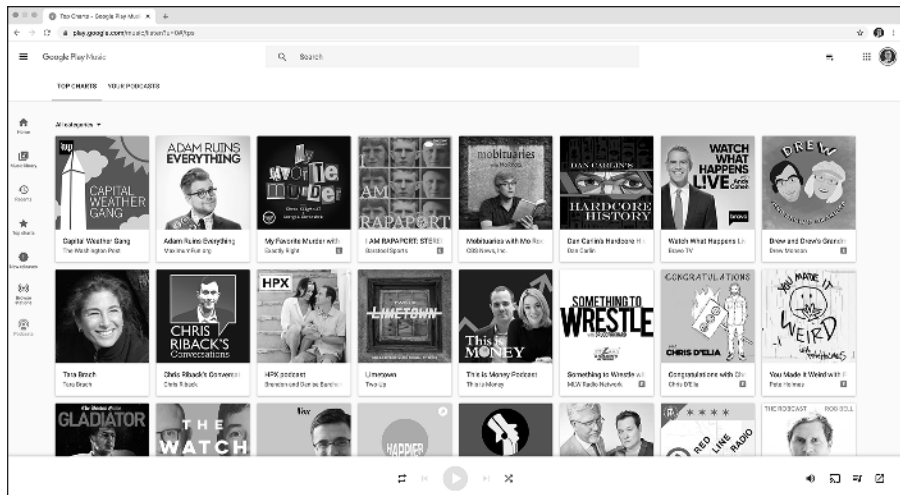
Google Play, shown in Figure 1-8, works with the Google Play Music app to bring podcasts to you in the same way as Stitcher and Apple Podcasts. A few extra steps are involved in getting podcasts subscribed and playing on your phone. Once you download Google Play Music and sync it up with your Google account:

- 1. Launch Google Play Music on your mobile device and then tap on the Menu option in the top left of the app screen.**
- 2. Select Podcasts from the options.**
- 3. Find the podcast of your choice.**

You can do that by

- Tapping on the Search icon in the top right corner side.
- Tapping on the All Categories option to reveal the top rated podcasts of categories and subcategories of interest.
- Swiping through Top Charts, podcasts that are either promoted or popular. This is the main page of Google Play Music's Podcasts directory.

**FIGURE 1-8:**  
Google Play, an  
alternative for  
Android users.



#### 4. When you find the podcast you want to listen to, click the **Subscribe** button.

Google Play Music offers a series of options for you to complete before subscribing.

- Select Auto-download if you want the latest content to update automatically.
- Opt-in for a push notification when new content downloads.
- Select a Playback Order if you want podcast episodes to go from oldest to newest, or newest to oldest.

#### 5. Choose your option and tap **Subscribe** again.

Google Play Music's UI is targeted mainly towards music, although with podcasts, it gets the job done. Granted, if your loyalties are not to one operating system, Spotify works for both iOS and Android users. Regardless of which app best suits you and your digital lifestyle, it's good to know options are out there, and available for you.

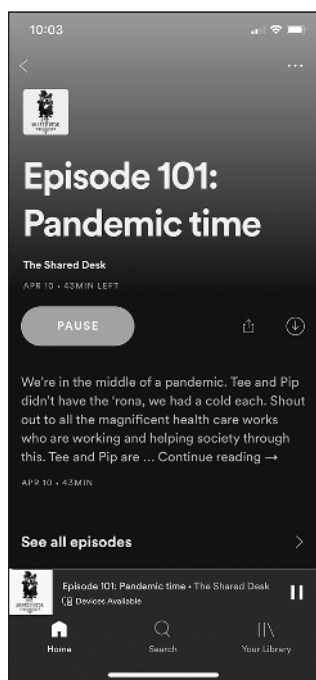
## A new 800-pound gorilla: Spotify

For nearly a decade, the king of podcasting app was Apple iTunes, but like all technology, the crown must get passed. When you say Spotify, most people will think of streaming music, but in 2015 it added support for podcasts. It was exclusively set aside for music artists and broadcast media productions, and in 2018, Spotify simplified its application and screening process and now brings podcasting to millions of listeners worldwide (see Figure 1-9). The desktop app requires

you to make a download from Spotify's site (<https://spotify.com>). Once installed, log in or create a free account.

1. **Use the Search box in the top left to enter a podcast name or click Browse on the left and select Podcasts.**
2. **When you find a podcast you like, take one of the following actions:**
  - Click the play icon to listen immediately.
  - Click the heart icon to save it to your library.
  - Use the three-dot menu and choose Follow. This is Spotify's way of subscribing to a podcast.

Now you can quickly find the podcasts you follow by clicking Podcasts on the left under Your Library.



**FIGURE 1-9:**  
After years of offering music from all artists of all genres, Spotify now brings podcasts to millions of subscribers.

The Spotify mobile experience is very similar:

- 1. After signing in, tap Search on the bottom to search and browse podcasts.**
- 2. Tap the Follow button or listen to an episode directly from the list.**
- 3. Followed podcasts are available from Your Library at the bottom of the screen and tapping Podcasts (in big letters at the top).**

To listen anywhere, click the down arrow on any episode, and it will be available in your Downloads list under Podcasts.



WARNING

At the time of this writing, Spotify only approves audio podcast feeds for its directories. Any episodes that are offering other forms of media will be rejected. In order to get your feed approved for Spotify, you will need to assure that all your episodes are audio. You can still have posts on your blog featuring embedded videos and special downloads, but you will not be able to use the RSS feed as a delivery method.

## Other Podcast Resources

It goes without saying that this book is a snapshot in time, and you will likely want to keep up on the latest news and information of the podcasting world. There are plenty of resources online and in meat-space (real live human beings) where you can ask questions and exchange information. A quick search of LinkedIn, Meetup.com, Facebook, and yes, even Google, can reveal a wealth of resources after you're done reading this book and listening to our podcast.