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# 8 TIPS FOR CREATING AN ENGAGING, COST-EFFECTIVE PODCAST

**FOR A GROWING** number of publishers, podcasts are proving to be a valuable way to extend their brand, reach a larger target audience and generate revenues. 2010 was the year that more advertisers got on board. Here in Canada, ad dollars are migrating onto the podcasts offered by media companies such as the CBC. And in the United States, leading podcast producer Leo LaPorte charges advertisers an unprecedented \$40/thousand downloads for a spot on his This Week in Tech podcast. Below are a few tips to get your magazine in on the audio audience.

1. If resources are scarce, one programming option is to record a conversation between editors about what readers will find in the latest issue. The equipment costs are minimal, as all you need is a digital recorder and a couple of microphones. Basic audio editing software is available for free online, with sites like Audacity offering excellent platforms.
2. To make your podcast engaging for the listener, put some thought into which stories your editors are excited about and place them front and center in the conversation. If there's an interesting backstory to how an article came about, or an anecdote that makes a story that was written three months earlier more timely, incorporate that into your conversation.
3. A great conversation takes a bit of planning, so script some elements, such as an introduction to the episode as well as intros to the individual segments. Sketch out the flow of the conversation in advance and make sure everyone involved has a cheat sheet to keep you on track. That's not to say spontaneity goes out the window, but there are few things more awkward for listeners to endure than lengthy pauses and a sense that no one knows where to go next. This pre-planning takes a bit of time, so assign it in advance.
4. When you're scripting the elements, remember: you are not writing a print piece. The words you are crafting will be spoken, so write in a conversational way. If what you have

written would sound out of place coming out of someone's mouth sitting across from you at a dinner party, rewrite it. The Poynter Institute has a terrific free online course on "Writing for the Ear."

5. Your writers can be a great source of audio. Many freelancers work in both print and broadcast, and have the equipment and skills to gather wonderful sounds in the field. If a story has a natural opportunity for sound, work out in advance with the writer an agreement on what they could provide to bring some life to your podcast. If they have already produced an item for radio, most writers would be happy to sell second rights to the audio.
6. If you are going to produce a podcast, make sure it is available on iTunes. This is the most popular platform that listeners use to access podcasts. Apple makes it easy for creators to upload their finished products and podcasts are usually approved by Apple within a day or two of submitting the first episode. Once your first episode is up, be sure to stick to a regular schedule of releasing new episodes.
7. While it's important to be on iTunes, it's your job to make sure potential listeners know your podcast exists. Promote it through the pages of your magazine and use social media to share snippets of audio. Spreadable media is a great way to share content across platforms and broaden your listener base. Use your website and free networking tools like Facebook and Twitter to promote your podcast, and include a link to a brief clip of audio (under three minutes) that serves as a teaser to drive podcast subscriptions.
8. Listeners want two options when it comes to listening: they want to be able to listen to it directly from your website or they want to be able to download it into their smart phones or mp3 players. Offer a "Listen Now" widget, which takes them to the embedded mp3 on your site, and a "Listen Later" widget which takes them to a page that offers them access to subscribe to the podcast version.

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