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# Podcasting: An Effective Way of Disseminating Your Work

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Ever considered making a podcast? If you are not sure what a [podcast](#) is, it's a sound or video file that can be downloaded to your own computer or mobile device. The fact that podcasts can be downloaded is their unique advantage unlike, for example, YouTube® presentations which can only be viewed when logged into the Internet. A podcast can be watched or listened to at any time without having to be connected to the internet. This makes them a very popular way for people to listen to information ranging from entertainment programmes to educational material. Podcasting is very attractive to some leading journals such as the [*BMJ*](#) and [*The Lancet*](#) where many articles are supported by regular and

frequent podcasts. At the *Journal of Advanced Nursing (JAN)* we have a blog (*JAN interactive*) where each of my entries is supported by a podcast and, judging from the downloads, these have proved very popular. However, podcasts must be made, and this requires some minimal effort preceded by setting up the podcasting facilities on a computer. Setting it all up takes time, but it only needs to be done once and you are ready to podcast.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO MAKE A PODCAST?

Podcasts can only be made if you have a computer that is linked to the World Wide Web. Podcasts must be made available there to be listened to and/or downloaded. Restricting ourselves to audio—by far the most popular and flexible form of podcasting (they can be listened to in a car, for example, or on headphones as you walk)—the minimum requirement is to have the facilities to produce MP3 audio files. This can be done either by recording into a mobile device such as a dictaphone with facilities to save and transfer MP3 files to a computer, or you can record directly on to a computer, using some type of recording software to produce the MP3 file. Most computers allow you to record speech as they have a built-in microphone, but the best quality will be obtained if you use a peripheral high-quality microphone. This is not essential, but if you become a serious podcaster then the investment in this piece of equipment is worthwhile.

By whatever means you make MP3 files then you will need an editing facility on your computer. There is an excellent and widely used public domain package called Audacity which is remarkably easy to use. You do not have to become an expert at editing, but you will have to trim files at the start and finish and learn how to edit out pauses, coughs, and occasional noises such as doorbells and phones.

Once you have a suitable MP3 file then you are ready to podcast. I struggled for a long time trying 'do it yourself' podcasting which involved so many steps and complicated settings on the computer that I gave up several times. Then I discovered podcast hosting sites. Many offer some free uploads to get started and, thereafter, a modest subscription for continued use. The podcasting site I use is [Podbean](#) and it is very straightforward. You can have a podcast online within a minute complete with the sound file, a title, a picture, key words and a link to your social media sites. In in less than 4 years I have produced over [400 podcasts](#) which have been downloaded nearly 17,000 times. Other podcast sites that I have read about include [Blubrry](#), [Buzzsprout](#), [Libsyn](#), and [Spreaker](#).

## SO, WHAT'S THE POINT?

The point is that people listen to podcasts. If you are wondering if podcasts are worth the time and effort, I think they are. I have rarely had anyone come up to me recently as tell me how much they enjoyed reading an article of mine, but I have had people come to me and tell me how much they enjoy listening to my podcasts. I have also had several emails to that effect. It is hard to tell how many people listen to a podcast and then download, read, and cite the work that is being described in the podcasts. But, at the very least, the main ideas from the articles about which I podcast are being disseminated and the profile of *JAN* is being increased. If only a few people subsequently download and cite the work then that, presumably, includes a few people who may not, otherwise, have done so.

In addition to the articles about which I tweet I also produce 'author service' podcasts which are very popular and these include recordings of writing workshop presentation and also special recordings on a range of topics in academic publishing such as issues around [open access and predatory publishers](#) and the '[Four rules of writing'](#). My series on [academic publishing myths](#) was very popular.

I also podcast all my contributions to *Nurse Author & Editor* such as this one on [PubPeer](#).

I am convinced about the value of podcasting and, having become used to listening to the sound of my own voice, I find it a very enjoyable and not at all time-consuming adjunct to my other activities in academic publishing. My challenge to you, if you are an editor, is to select a few interesting articles on a regular basis and make a short informative podcast about it and consider making this a regular feature of your journal. If you are also an author, then many journals offer podcasting facilities—if you are asked to make a podcast about your article then please take the opportunity.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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