

ALWAYS-ON LEARNING

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DISCLAIMER:

Some of the techniques in this document involve changing the way your device works. You should always back up your device before installing new software or making any changes to your settings.

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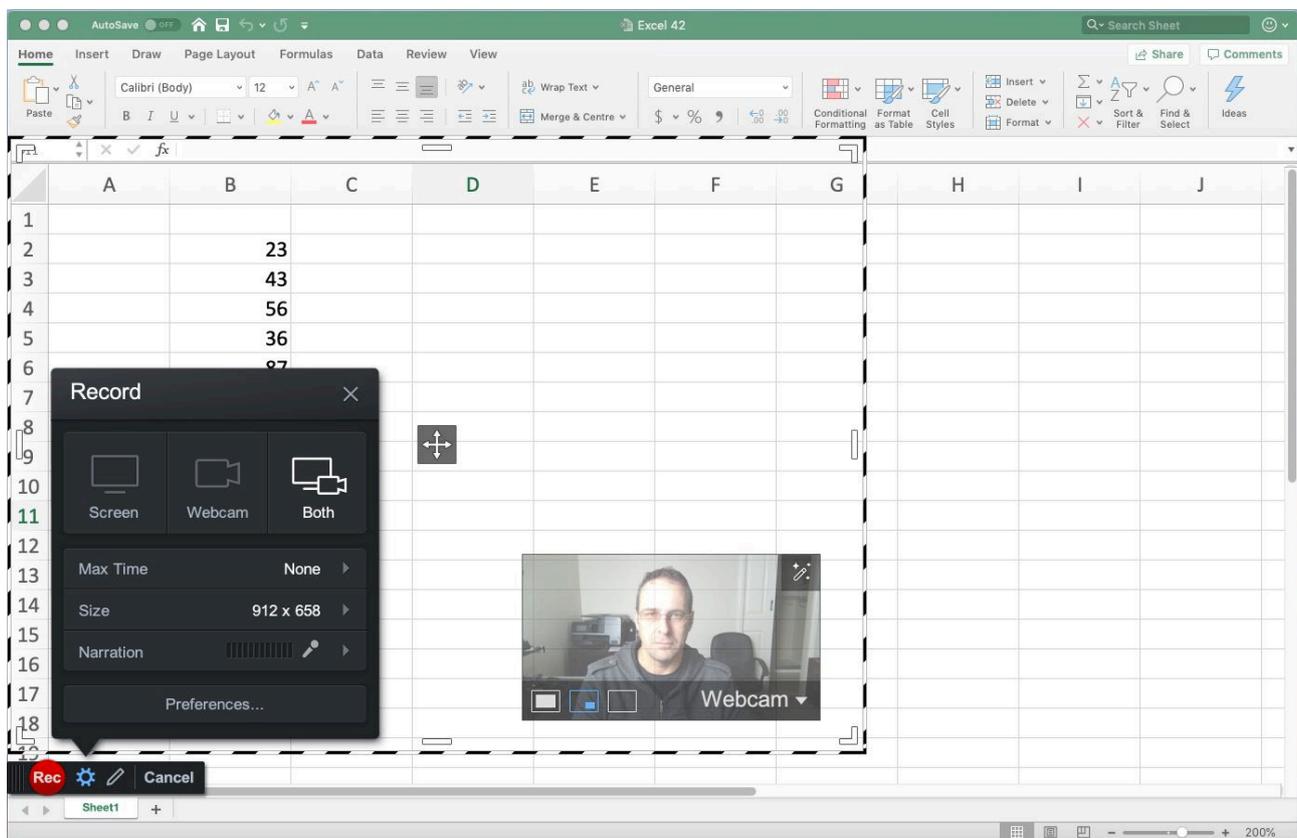
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Make a screencast on your mac or PC

ScreenCast-O-Matic (Mac or PC)

ScreenCast-O-Matic (www.screencastomatic.com) is a really great option for making screencasts using a computer. It allows you to record up to 15 minutes, allows you to record your webcam video as well as your screen, allows publishing directly to YouTube and allows downloading in MP4 format. Best of all, it's cheap - or even free if you don't want any bells and whistles.

Start by dragging the handles on the marquee to define the area of the screen you want to capture. If you are recording your webcam, you will see the video window on your screen. If you prefer, you can record the entire screen. This is what you would do if you wanted to record a PowerPoint presentation, for example.



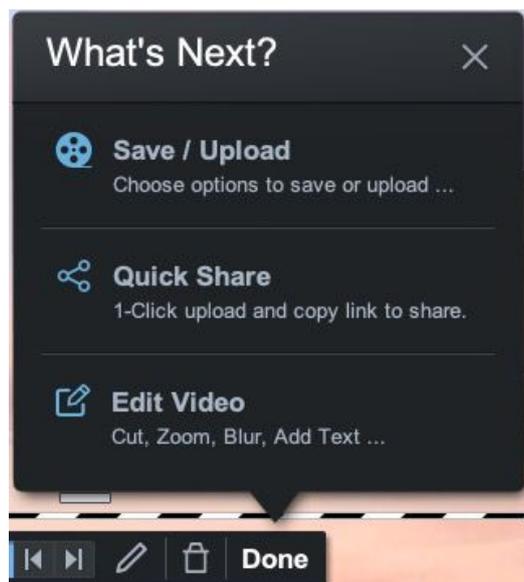
Before you start recording, there are a few things to check.

1. If you want to record your webcam as well as the screen of your computer, click on the “Both” button in the preferences pop-up (pictured below). You may need to select your webcam by clicking the small disclosure triangle beside “Webcam” in the little cameo video screen. The cameo video screen can be moved anywhere within the selected area of the screen if you don't want it to be in the lower right.
2. Check that in the preferences pop-up, the app is set to record using the microphone you want to use. To check this, click the disclosure triangle beside the microphone beside “Narration” in the preferences pop-up window.
3. In the webcam cameo video window, you will notice a small magic wand icon in the upper right. Clicking this gives you some very useful options. One is to flip the video horizontally,

which is very useful if you like to point at things on the screen. If you don't flip horizontally you will find that you are pointing in the wrong direction! The other checkbox in the same window allows you to remove or 'key out' the background colour. You would use this if you have a green screen.

Once you click the red 'Record' button, Screencast-O-Matic will give you a 3-second countdown and then start recording.

While recording, the area of the screen that is being recorded will be framed with a red line. Note that it is possible to pause the recording to move things into the red box, or even to resize the part of the screen that is recorded.



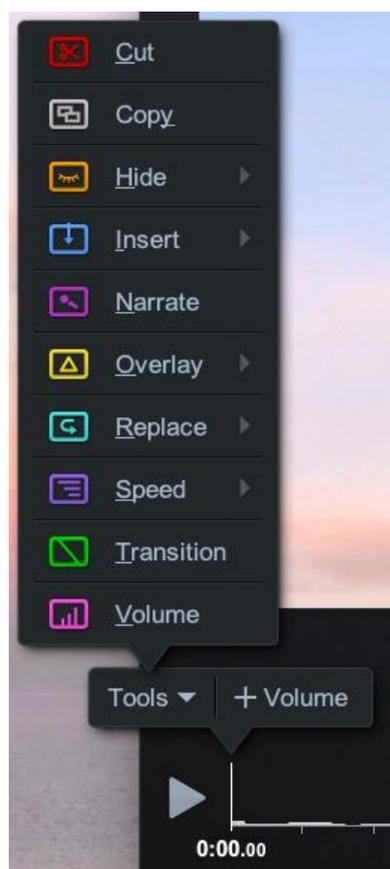
To finish recording, press the blue pause button, then press "Done". You are then presented with three options for what to do next.

(A) You can choose "Save / Upload" to choose options for uploading your video to [Screencast-O-Matic.com](https://www.screencast-o-matic.com), YouTube or other services.

(B) You can "Quick Share". This will upload the video in the background to Screencast-O-Matic and immediately put a link to the video on your computer clipboard, so you can share the video even while it is uploading.

(C) You can choose "Edit Video". This allows you to do quite a few things such as:

- adding subtitles,
- adding background music,
- increasing or decreasing the speed of the video,
- adding titles,
- creating blur/focus areas.
- importing other videos
- cutting out sections of your recording.
- turning off the cursor or webcam
- adjusting the volume in parts of the recording
- recording a narration over the top of the video



While I think Screencast-O-Matic hits the sweet-spot for most teachers in terms of price, simplicity and features, if you want instructions and details for one of the other tools, you can download them in PDF format from here: <http://bit.ly/28-2-14>

Screencast-O-Matic Paid versions.

The free version of Screencast-O-Matic is quite functional, but very basic. It lacks the ability to do all but the most basic editing, lacks the ability to use a green screen, and the ability to draw on the screen using built-in pen tools.

There are two tiers of paid plans, which while they cost *something* are still very cheap in comparison to other comparable products.

<h2>Deluxe</h2> <p>\$1.50/month (billed yearly)</p> <p>Go Deluxe</p> <p>Advanced recorder and video editing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Easy video editorRecord computer audio (Windows)Import narration and musicScripted recordingsDraw and zoomScreenshot toolCreate captions with Speech-to-TextGreen Screen Filter	<h2>Premier</h2> <p>\$4.00/month (billed yearly)</p> <p>Go Premier</p> <p>Video editing, plus personalized sharing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">NEW! Stock Library BETAAuto Transfer iPhone/iPad Videos to EditorSecure backup for recordingsBranded ad-free siteAdvanced sharing and collaborationVideo playlists using channelsAdd password and set visibilityExtra bandwidth <p><i>Plus, all Deluxe features!</i></p>
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In addition to the above individual paid plans, you can also sign up as an institution. Depending on the number of computers you want to run it on, the pricing changes. The prices below are the prices for ten licenses. It gets relatively cheaper the more licenses you buy.

Screencast-O-Matic | Screencast-O-Matic.com | Free or \$15 per year

Team Deluxe

\$9.50/mo

Savings of \$5.50/Month! **37% Off.**

[Go Team Deluxe](#)

Empower your team with easy to use editing tools!

-  Easy video editor
-  Record computer audio (Windows)
-  Import narration and music
-  Scripted recordings
-  Draw and zoom
-  Screenshot tool
-  Create captions with Speech-to-Text
-  Green Screen Filter

Team Premier

\$17.50/mo

Savings of \$22.50/Month! **56% Off.**

[Go Team Premier](#)

Score all of the Deluxe features and host your videos on a custom branded site.

-  **NEW!** Stock Library **BETA**
- Auto Transfer iOS Videos to Editor
-  Secure backup for recordings
-  Branded ad-free site
-  Set roles for team members
-  Advanced sharing and collaboration
-  Video playlists using channels
-  Add password and set visibility

Plus, all Deluxe features!

Lessons in Their Pockets

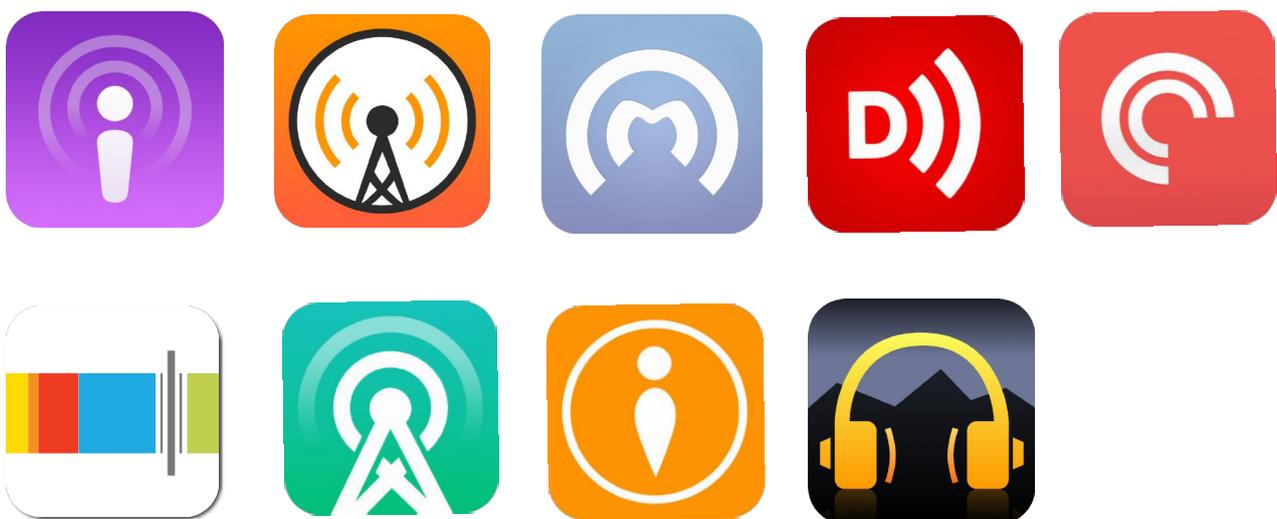
Podcatchers

It has never been easier to subscribe to educational podcasts. Previously you had to subscribe to podcasts using iTunes on a computer and then sync or copy them to your mobile device for listening.

There are numerous podcast catching apps available for Android and iOS operating systems, that let you download podcasts directly to your mobile device - most are either free or a few dollars. A simple search in the relevant app store will yield a smorgasbord of choices. Universally these give you the ability to search for and subscribe to podcasts, choose how often you want it to check for new episodes, whether you want it to download new episodes as they become available, or only when you are connected to WiFi and so on. They also usually offer the option to vary playback speed and to skip by various amounts of time (typically 30 seconds) forward or backward. On iPhones and iPads, Apple's "Podcasts" app is pre-installed. It is a decent player with some advantages that are not found in other podcast apps - such as the ability to sync with iTunes and the ability to be controlled by Siri. Downcast is also really good if you want more granular control over how your podcasts behave (in terms of downloading, deleting finished episodes, and tweaking skip forward and backward controls, etc.)

One of my favourite podcast catchers on iOS is Overcast. What stands Overcast out from the crowd is its "Smart Speed" option, which shortens silences, which reduces the listening time, without changing the actual playback speed. Ingenious! It also has a "Voice Boost" function which is useful if you listen to podcasts that are not recorded using high quality equipment (ie. many amateur podcasts). The Voice Boost seems to make such amateur podcasts sound fuller, as though the gain were increased. This is not really useful on podcasts that have been recorded using high quality equipment.

There are also many programs available for subscribing to and listening to podcasts on a PC or Mac. The most obvious is iTunes.



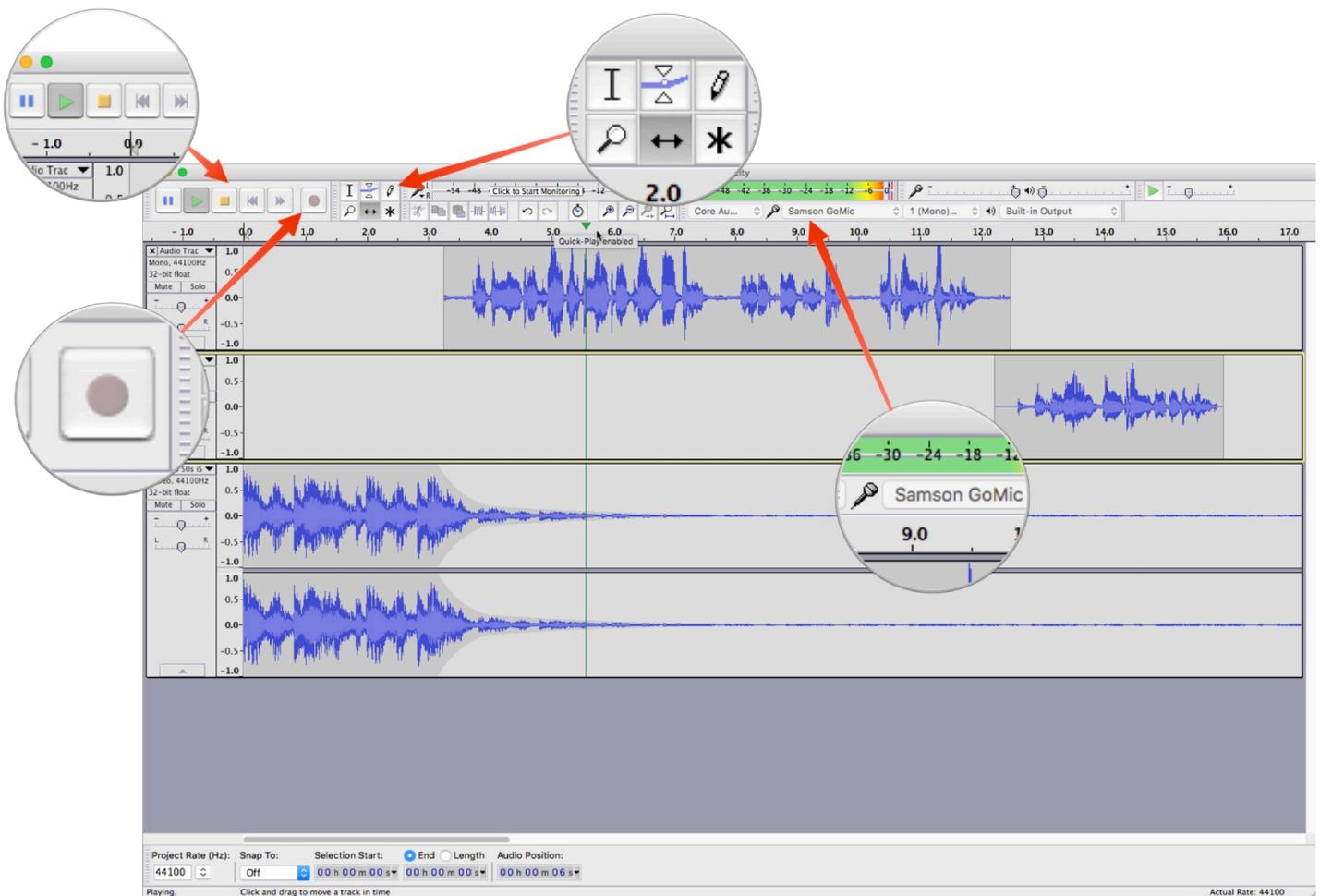
For a More Polished Podcast Audacity

If you want to make a really good quality podcast, including jingles and sound effects, Audacity is a free, open source, multi-track audio editor that is as good as you will find without spending a significant amount of money for a professional software package like Logic or Adobe Audition. Because it is very full-featured, the interface looks overwhelming to the uninitiated, but don't let that put you off. It's actually quite easy to use once you get the hang of it. For a podcast, you really only need a handful of the available tools. If you are not familiar with using an audio editor, I have prepared a 21 page document on Audacity which you can download separately from here:

<http://bit.ly/audacityinstructions>

Audacity is available for both Mac and Windows.

Audacity | www.audacityteam.org | \$free



BOTTOM LEFT: RECORD
TOP LEFT: PAUSE, PLAY, STOP, SKIP TO START, SKIP TO END.
TOP RIGHT: TOP ROW - SELECT, ENVELOPE (CHANGE VOLUME), DRAW. BOTTOM ROW - ZOOM, TIME-SHIFT, MULTI-MODE.
BOTTOM RIGHT: SELECT MICROPHONE.

Recording Audio Podcasts on iOS, Android or web using Anchor

Anchor is a relatively new podcasting platform available on both iOS and Android.

Anchor makes it easy to record a podcast right from your phone, or computer and upload it to everywhere podcasts are distributed, including the iTunes podcast directory and Spotify.



Anchor is able to be free because it is possible for listeners to donate money to you through the anchor platform. If they do, Anchor takes a cut of the donation.

One great feature of Anchor is that listeners can submit questions to you through the platform.

Anchor | iOS App Store, Google Play Store, Anchor.fm | \$free



Recording Audio Podcasts on Android using SoundCloud



Clyp (see previous section) is not a good choice for Android users. The Good news is that the SoundCloud app for Android includes a basic voice recorder, which is almost as simple to use as Clyp, but has the added advantage, that your recordings are saved to SoundCloud which provides an RSS feed for your students so they can subscribe to your podcast. That is a *huge* advantage over Clyp, because it allows students to listen in their podcast app of choice.

Like the free version of Clyp, SoundCloud’s free tier allows a total of 3 hours of recordings. After that, you can either delete old episodes or upgrade to “Pro” for US\$16 per month.

SoundCloud gives some basic editing options, too.

Once you have created a free SoundCloud account, opening the app on your Android device and starting a recording is straightforward.



SoundCloud | Google Play Store | \$free / \$16 per month

Recording Audio Podcasts on iOS using AudioCopy + SoundCloud

SoundCloud's app on iOS does not contain a record function. Fortunately this shortcoming is easily overcome using another free app: AudioCopy.

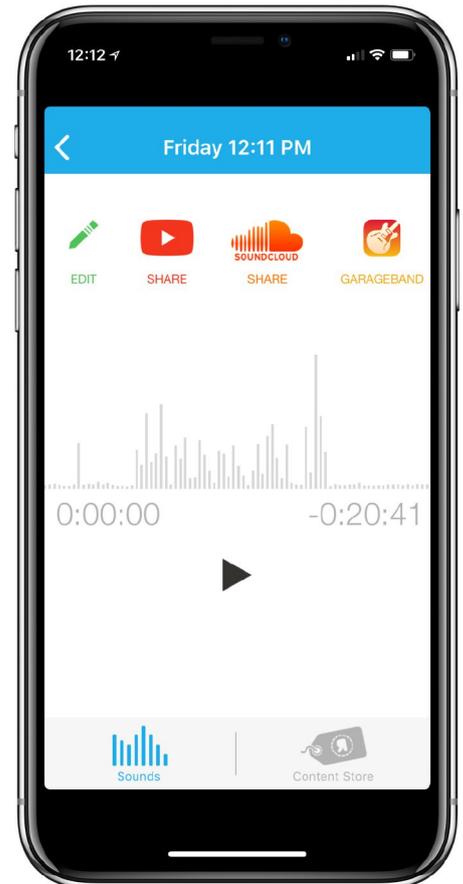
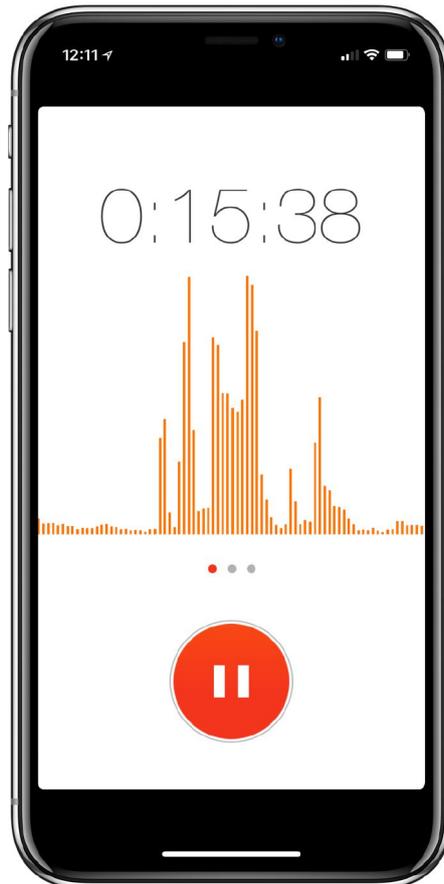
The functionality and feel of AudioCopy is very similar to that of the Android version of Soundcloud. You simply press record, speak your words and then press stop. Once you have done that you can send the audio to your Soundcloud account.



The only way in which this is a disadvantage for iOS users, is that it's an extra step to set it up in the first place. You have to create a Soundcloud account, and then in AudioCopy, you have to enter your Soundcloud account details so the app can post to your SoundCloud account. It takes an extra few minutes to set up - but once that's done, it's just as easy and just as good.

To set up your RSS feed address in SoundCloud, log into your SoundCloud account on your computer, click the ellipsis icon (...) at the top right of the screen, and select "Settings". Then click the "Content" tab within the "Settings" window.

You can fill in the fields if you want to (I suggest you do), and **MAKE SURE TO TICK** the small box labelled "Include in RSS feed". It won't work if you don't tick that box. I have included below a screenshot of my own Content Settings. Copy the RSS feed and share that with your students.



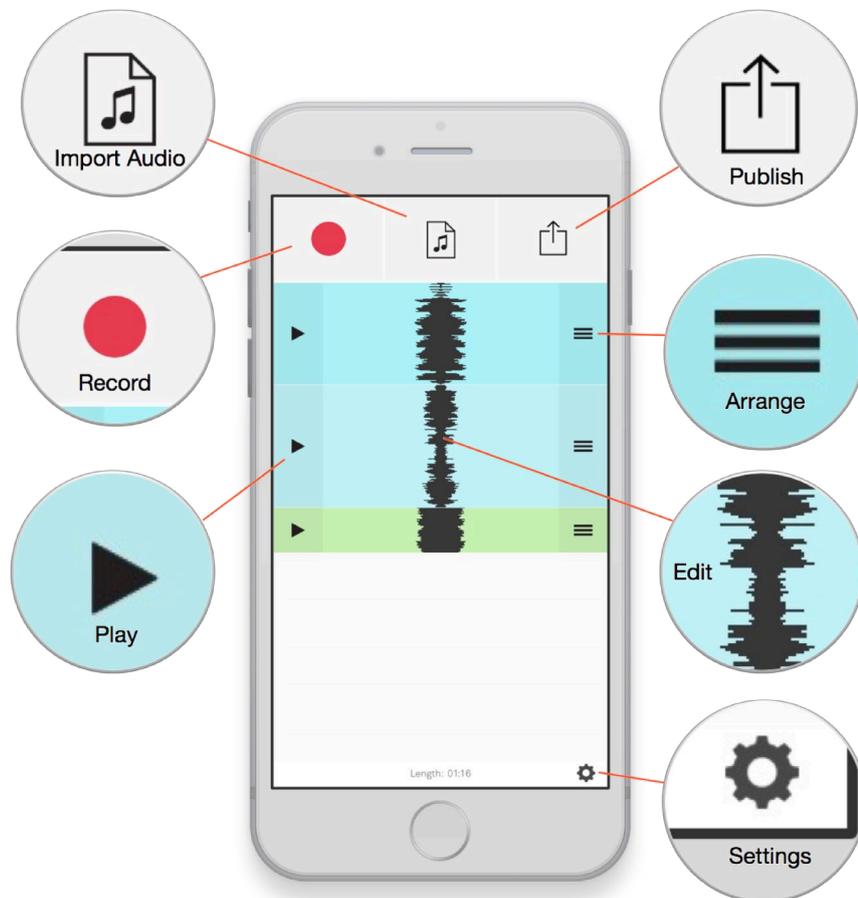
AudioCopy | iOS App Store | \$free

End-To-End Podcasting

Opinion and SoundCloud

Opinion is a fantastic podcasting option for teachers. It is very easy to use and remarkably feature-rich. It allows you to:

- record your voice using the built-in microphone, or an external microphone.
- edit your recordings after you have recorded.
- bring in audio from other places on your iOS device such as from music in the Music app, audio files saved in your Dropbox folder or iCloud Drive. This means, for example, you can bring in some music created in GarageBand Live Loops, to use as an intro to your podcast.
- add a title and description of the episode.
- add a picture from your camera roll to serve as cover art.
- publish your podcast, direct to the internet from the app.
- download the podcast to to your device to share in other ways.



A basic account is free, but I would recommend paying the freemium price of \$6 for unlimited recording time.

NOTES:

If you record with an external microphone, you will need to disconnect it to hear the playback of your podcast.

Opinion is *not* a multi-track editor. Therefore all audio is arranged sequentially and one recording cannot overlap another. For example you cannot talk over music. If you want to do that on iOS, I recommend GarageBand or BossJock.

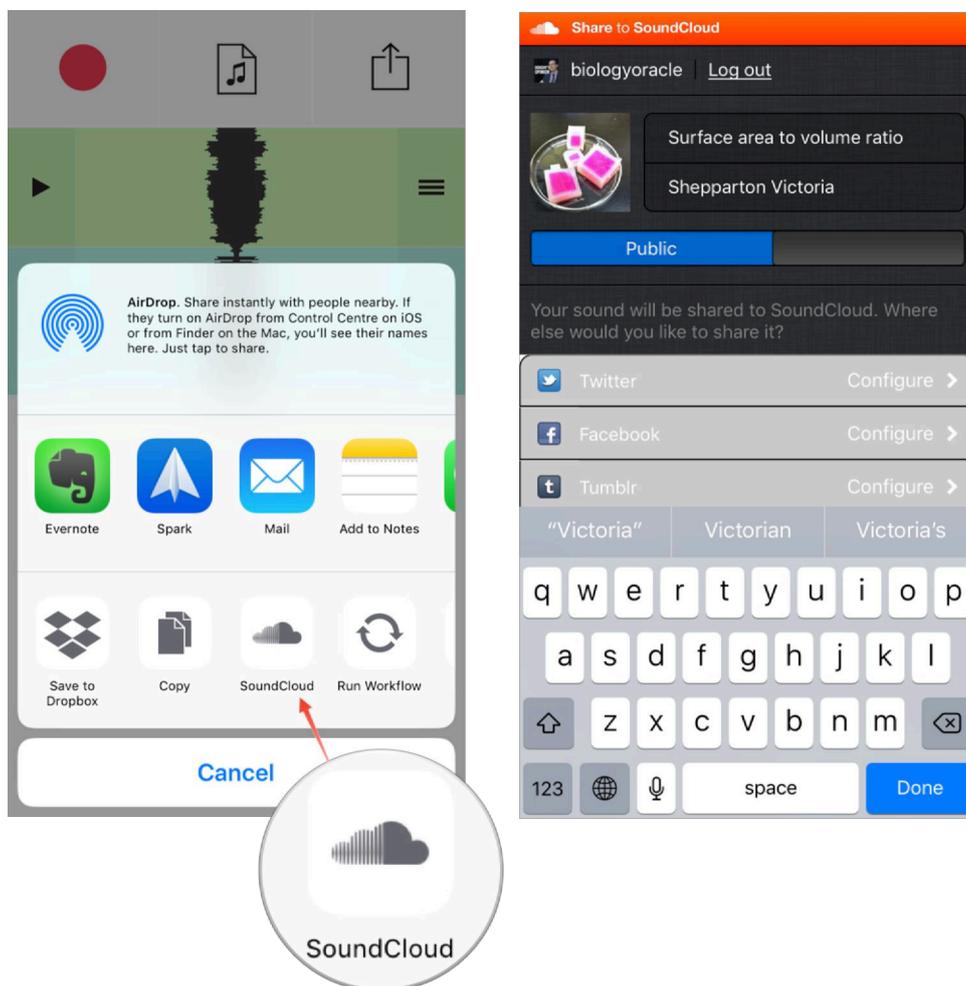
PUBLISHING YOUR PODCAST

You can export your podcast to any podcast server. There are many excellent services available. If you don't already have a podcast server, try SoundCloud. It is free and works very well with Opinion.

First you will need to create a free account at soundcloud.com and download the SoundCloud and SoundCloud Pulse apps on your phone. Once you have done this, log in to your SoundCloud account on those apps.

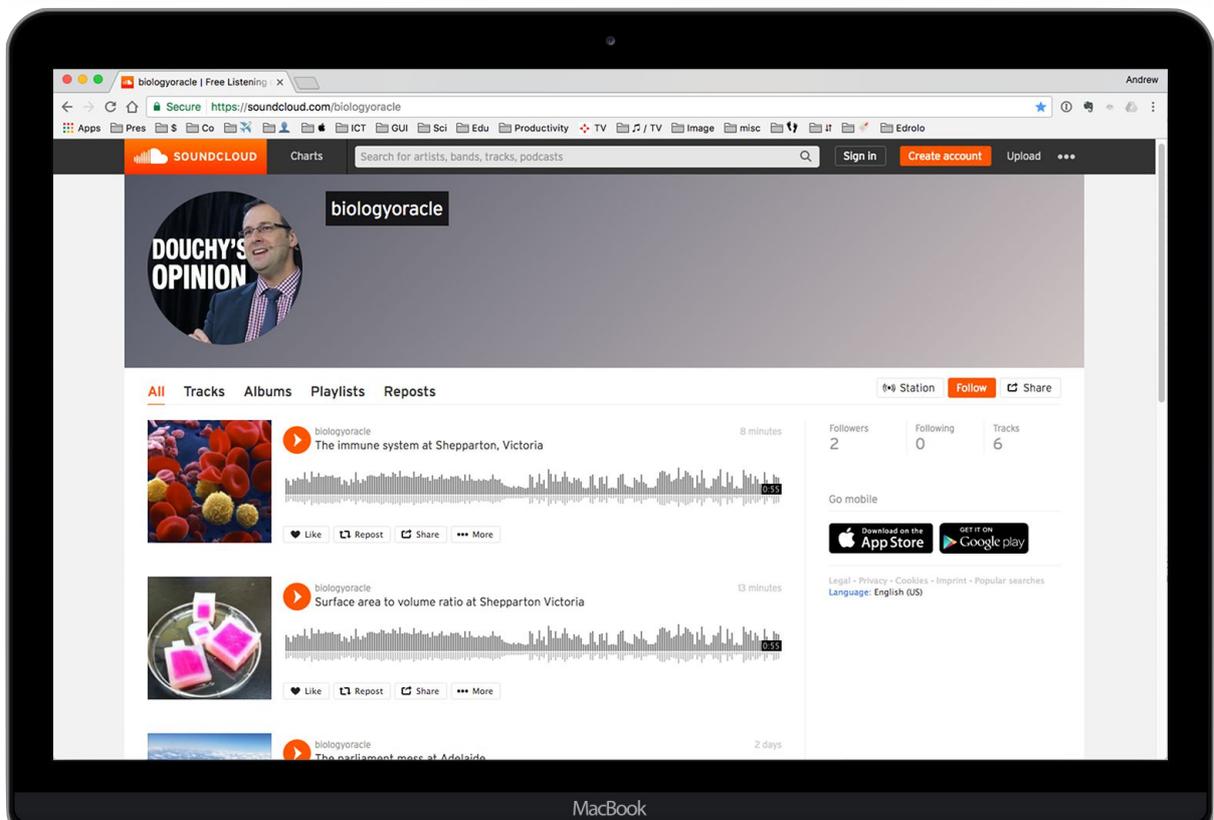
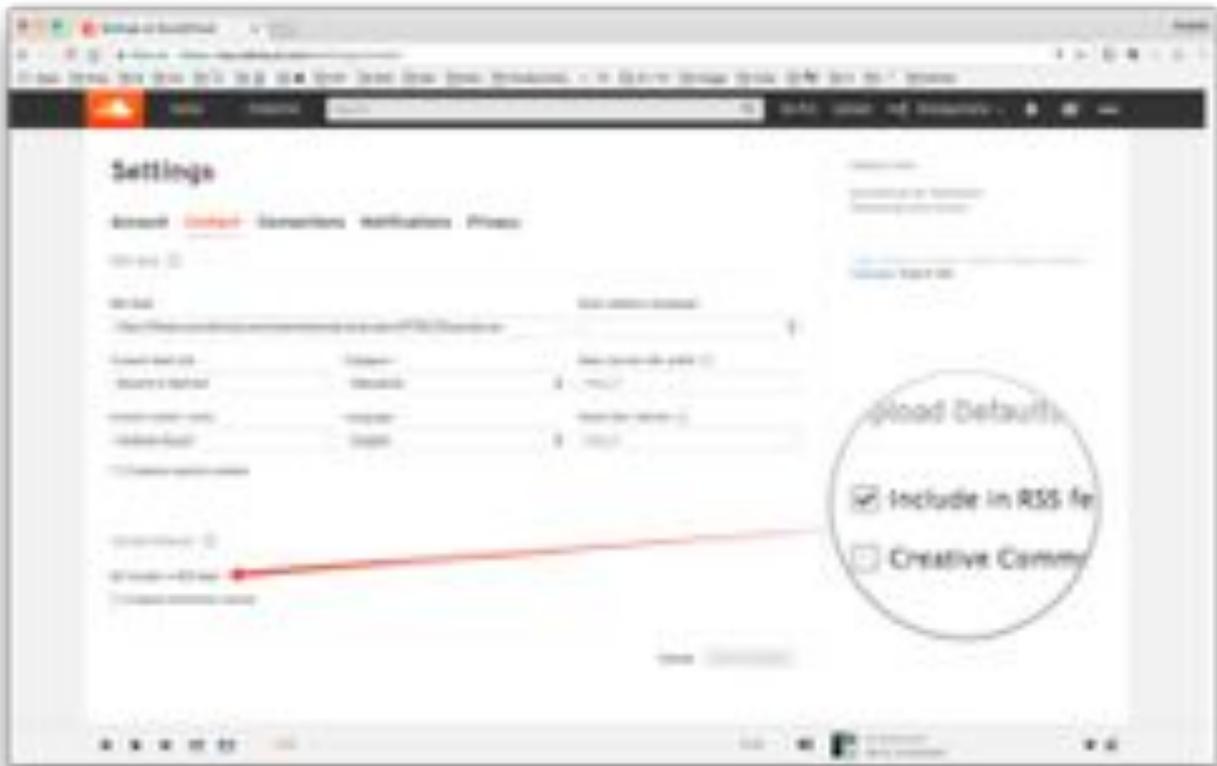


Now, when you press the 'share sheet' button in Opinion (the third and last button on the Opinion tool bar at the top of the screen), you will be able to choose to share your podcast to SoundCloud.



The best thing about using Opinion in combination with SoundCloud (or other similar service) is that it provides an RSS feed for your podcast, so that students can subscribe to your podcast from the Podcasts app (or another Podcatcher app) on their phone, tablet or computer. That way, when you make a new episode, your students' will receive it automatically. To set up your RSS feed address, log into your SoundCloud account on your computer, click the ellipsis icon (...) at the top right of the screen, and select "Settings". Then click the "Content" tab within the "Settings" window.

You can fill in the fields if you want to (I suggest you do), and **MAKE SURE TO TICK** the small box labelled “Include in RSS feed”. It won’t work if you don’t tick that box. I have included below a screenshot of my own Content Settings. Copy the RSS feed and share that with your students.



Opinion | www.madewithopinion.com | \$free/\$6

Make your own Podcast Jingles

GarageBand Live Loops

If you or your students are going to make a podcast and publish it to the internet, you either need to use royalty free audio, get permission to use copyrighted material, or make your own music. Up till recently, making your own music was out of the question for most of us. But Live Loops changes that.



Live Loops is a feature found (only) in the most recent few updates to Apple's GarageBand app for iOS. If you don't see it in your version of the app you will need to update to a newer version.

Live Loops is remarkable. You don't need to know anything (at all! - literally) about music to make original, cool-sounding musical compositions in various styles of music that you can use in your creative projects, copyright-free.

You simply choose a genre (Rock, Reggae, Jazz, House, Dubstep, etc) then select any combination of the loops in the soundboard. It really doesn't matter what you choose, you *can't* make it sound bad! You can change loops mid-stream, just by tapping on them, but even if you tap a loop at an inappropriate time, it will wait a few seconds then start so that it matches the beat of what you already have playing.

You can record what you play, and since your recording is an original composition you have the rights to use it as a jingle in your podcast. Export it to Dropbox as an m4a file, and import it to BossJock Studio or Opinion!

GarageBand | www.podomatic.com | \$12 (free with new iPad)

Setting up a proper podcast Feed RSS with Podomatic.com

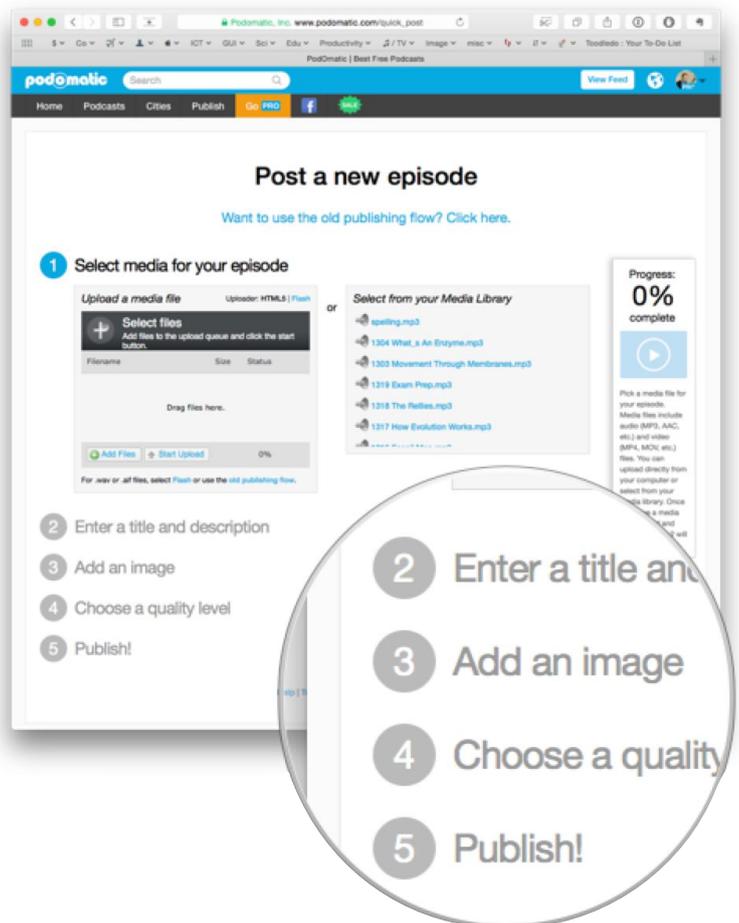
If you make a podcast, I would highly recommend syndicating your podcast so that people can subscribe to it using a “podcatcher” such as iTunes on a computer or any Podcast app on a mobile device. The advantage of doing this is that your students don’t have to constantly check if there is a new episode to download, nor wait for it to download. Instead, they can set up a notification for new episodes, then simply stream them or set or set up their app to download them automatically in the background! For this purpose I use podomatic.com, which makes publishing your podcast as simple as 1, 2, 3 (4, 5)!

Using Dropbox to share your podcast is certainly easy - but it is also fairly limiting. For example, you can’t add any additional notes to your podcast, a pretty picture to serve as album art. Also if your audio file is large, Dropbox will not do anything to optimise it.

A better solution is Podomatic. www.podomatic.com. It takes a bit more setting up than JustCast - but it’s still very easy, and has lots of features that allow you to change the way your podcast looks and behaves.

Once you have a free Podomatic account, adding new podcast episodes to it is a simple 4-step process.

Podomatic | www.podomatic.com | \$free/tiered pricing plan



Publishing your Podcast to your Students' Devices

RSS with JustCast

The easiest way I know to push your podcast out to all your students' devices, is to create an RSS feed from Dropbox (If you don't have a Dropbox account, sign up for free at <http://www.dropbox.com>).

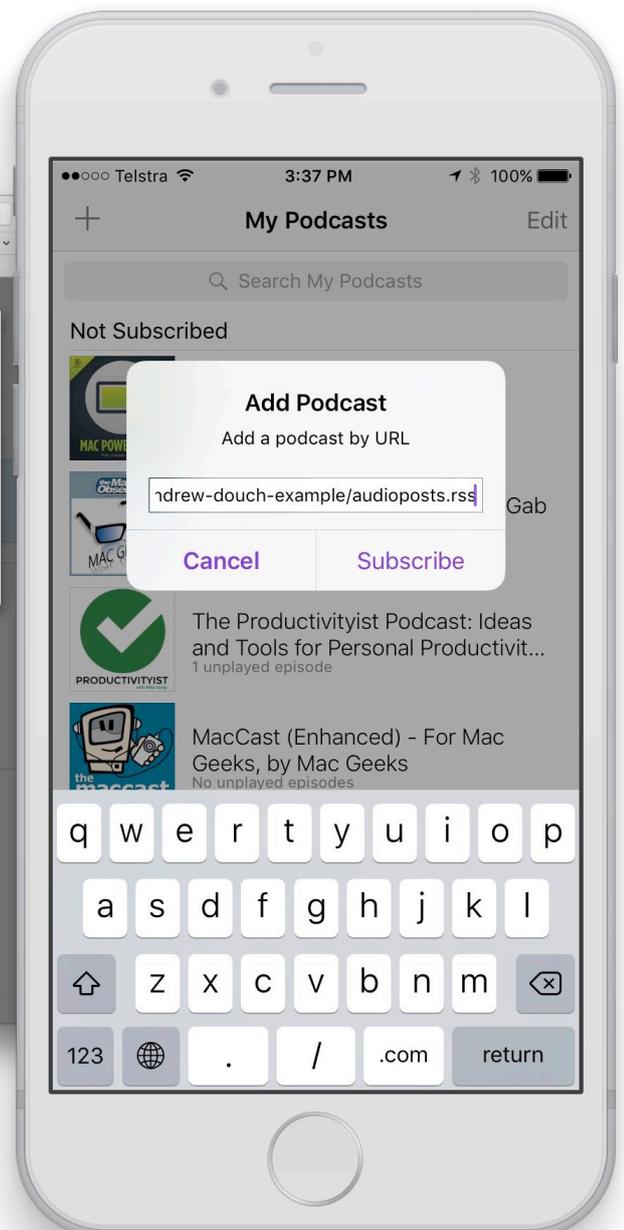
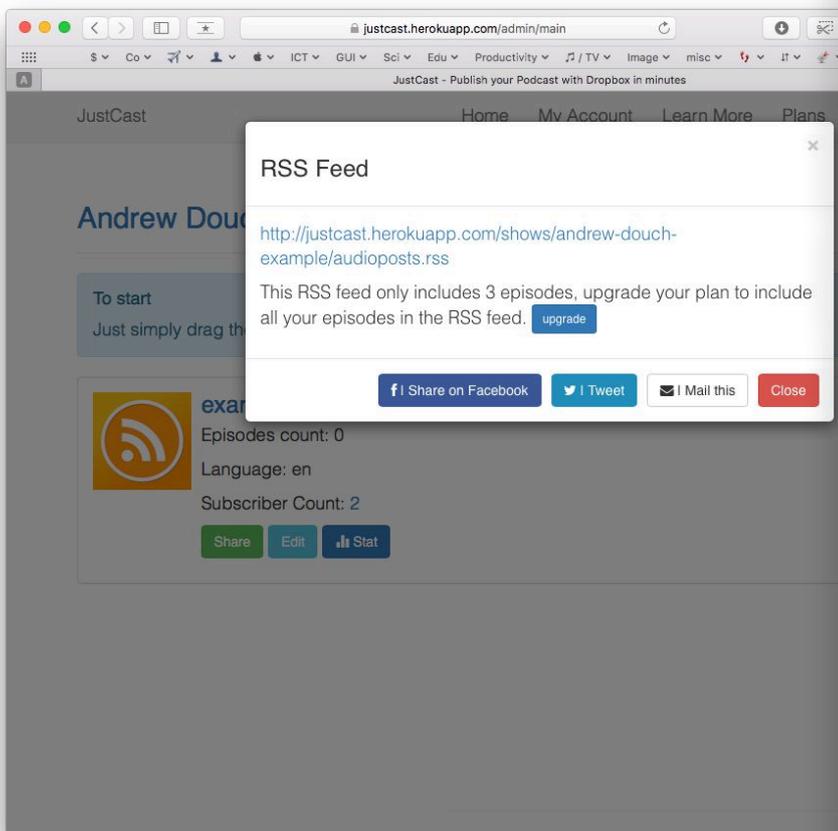
Step 1. In your web browser, go to JustCast (<http://justcast.herokuapp.com>). Click the Get Started button and give JustCast permission to create a JustCast folder in Dropbox.

Step 2. (Still on the JustCast page), click the "Share" button and copy the RSS feed address (give that to your students - they will need to type it into the Podcast app on their device).

Step 3. There is no step 3. You're done! Now if you want to share a podcast (or any audio) with your students, simply put it in the JustCast folder in Dropbox: You'll find that in Dropbox > Apps > JustCast > example.

It's so easy I can't believe it works. Yet it does. A free JustCast account lets you have up to three audio files shared at one time.

JustCast | JustCast.herokuapp.com | \$freemium



Record Interviews for your Podcast

TapeACall

TapeACall is an iPhone/Android app that allows you to record both outgoing and incoming phone calls. You simply open the app, tap the + button, then tap the merge calls button. TapeACall creates a conference call between you, the person you are talking to and a private server, which records the conference call. After the call is finished, the app downloads the recording from the server so that you have the recording on your phone. From there you can export it to Dropbox, from which it can be loaded into BossJock Studio, Opinion or another podcasting app. The recording can also be exported to Facebook, Twitter, Google Drive, Evernote or Mail. (I would recommend using Dropbox however because that makes it simple to bring it into other apps such as BossJock Studio (which allows importing from Dropbox but not Google Drive, for example).

TapeACall | [App Store](#) | **\$10.75 per year**



Getting great sounding recordings using The Blue Yeti Microphone

The Yeti Microphone by Blue, is an excellent podcasting microphone, that has a simple USB interface. Unlike most USB microphones though, it has built-in gain control, a variable pickup pattern, and a 3.5 mm headphone jack, which allows you to plug in headphones or earphones.



Cheaper, more portable, iOS friendly - Still Great.

The Samson Go Microphone

The Samson Go is not as flexible (or quite so capable) as the Blue Yeti, but it costs \$100 less (about \$79) and is small and portable. It can either stand on your desk or clip onto your laptop lid, or iPad. When traveling, the microphone folds down into its stand, which then acts as its case - ingenious.

Because it draws significantly less power than the Yeti, it can also be used to record on an iPad (with the Apple lightning-USB adaptor that comes as part of the camera connector kit).

Although small and fairly inexpensive, the Samson produces very good results - not as great as you'd get from a Blue Yeti, Rhode Procaster or Samson Meteor, but surprisingly good - and certainly much better than you will get from the built-in microphone in your laptop computer.

While the Samson Go works great with an iPad or iPhone, If you are looking for a microphone for that purpose alone, there is a growing range to choose from, which have a lightning plug built right in. If you search google for iPhone external microphone you will find a dozen or so. Apple sells a few as well (if you want to stick to the Apple-endorsed brands). One such microphone which gets excellent reviews is the Shore MOTIV MV88 (pictured below). At \$250 it's not cheap, but it obviates the need to use a lightning to USB adaptor and USB cord the way you do with the Samson Go.



Making Compelling Slides for Screencasts

The first thing most teachers do when they are asked to give a presentation, is to open PowerPoint or some other slide-ware application, and start creating slides.

It is much more effective to plan in analogue. Before creating any slides, start brainstorming, create a set of notes, draw a concept map or flow diagram. Thinking this way is much more effective because it helps you to identify the key points that you will present, before you get distracted by slide themes, bullet-points and animations.

Begin by identifying the one central point of your presentation. Ask yourself what you would say if you were only given three minutes to speak. This central point is important because later you may well find that you have to eliminate material from your presentation and knowing what your main point is, will help you to choose which parts to leave out, because they don't strongly support your central point. If you don't really know what your central point is, then your talk is likely to lack focus and direction and it will contain too much "stuff" that doesn't take the audience in any specific direction. In most cases, the title of your presentation will ultimately reflecting your main point. That is as it should be.

As you are planning your presentation, build in a sense of story. Depending on the presentation topic, you may actually tell stories in your presentation, but if not, consider adding elements of story to your presentation, no matter what the topic. Our brains have evolved to think in stories and we find them naturally engaging and appealing

Once you have identified your main point, divide the content of your presentation into three main sub-topics (or three "acts"). If you have many things to talk about, divide each subtopic into three as well.

There is something about the number 3 that works very well in a presentation. If you divide your presentation into threes, you will find that it is more satisfying and memorable to your audience. This goes for giving examples, too. You may have 5 examples of a particular point that you are making. You will be best to eliminate two of them, leaving just the three best examples. It is hard to do this, but your audience will find your examples more memorable if they are in a three-pack.

One of the key elements of any story is a natural rhythm of tension and release. This may take the form of posing a problem or question, and then answering it, before posing another question and answering that, and so on. You may raise a curious question at the beginning of your presentation, and promise to resolve it at the end (with a twist, perhaps, to leave your audience reeling from the surprise!).

Almost all good stories have a villain or adversary. Find one for your presentation. The antagonist will help the audience to rally behind you (their conquering champion). If you are trying to show why something is good or important, your message will be more effective if there is something opposing it, something to compare it to.

There was a time when we were impressed by what computers could do. PowerPoint presentations with movement and sound effects and cool slide transitions were all-the-rage. It's 2013 now, and nobody is really impressed by that any more. I think it's better to leave it out, unless the motion is illustrative in some way. If the motion helps you to tell your story, then it is good. But if it is simply movement for the sake of movement it is distracting and will detract from your message. Cut it out, no matter how cool it looks to you. This is the main reason I don't use Prezi.

The same can be said for images. If your slide contains graphics that are illustrative, if they evoke mood, if they help you to tell your story then they are great! But many PowerPoint slides I see have template designs with swooshes of colour or floral patterns or some other design element that does nothing to enhance the message. It would be better to have a plain black slide with white text, because that will not detract from your message.

Slides are much more effective when they don't contain too much text. In a document the text tells the story and needs to be there. In a presentation, you tell the story! The slide is there to support you as you do so. Putting text on the screen is counterproductive. Psychologists report that people are *less* able to understand information if it is presented in both verbal and written form at the same time! (Cognitive Load Theory).

A sentence, a title, a quote - these can be very effective. A paragraph of text however is not effective. If you have a lot of written information that you want the audience to take away and read later, put it in a text document (like I am doing here!). But when you stand up to speak, don't put the text on the screen. At best it's boring. At worst it compromises your message.

Most presentations include slides with long lists of bullet-points. It's no wonder they do, because when you create a new slide in PowerPoint or Keynote, the default slide is a bullet-point slide which beckons you to start filling in the points! My advice is not to use bullet points at all - unless you are making a true list. A true list is a list of items which you want the audience to see all at once because each is more effective if it is seen in combination with the others in the list. If on the other hand, you simply have five things to say about a topic, don't use one slide with five bullet points; use five separate slides. There are a number of reasons for doing this. Firstly, your slides will look much nicer. This is especially true if you use large, high quality images that illustrate the point you are making and help your audience to make an emotional connection to the point. Secondly, they help the audience to focus on the single point you are making as you are making it.

No doubt the reason we tend to put lots of information on one slide is because we grew up making text documents and we didn't want to waste paper, so we put lots of information on each page to reduce the page count. That doesn't matter at all in a presentation - so go ahead, be as wasteful as you want!

Consider the colours and colour combinations you use on your slides. There are no hard-and-fast rules about what colours to use, but you should take the time to consider how the colour you have chosen will make your audience feel. Will it enhance your message or work against it?

Likewise, carefully consider the fonts you use on your slides. Typically serif fonts (like the one you are reading now) are more legible when you are reading lots of text on a page. This is not true on a computer screen though, and besides, your slides don't contain much text, right? So readability (that is the ability to read the text fast) is not very important on a slide. What is important is what message

your choice of typeface conveys to the audience. You should consider what it might remind them of - have you seen a similar font in a particular company's advertisement, for example? One of the most important things to remember here, is that you are not choosing a font because you like the way it looks, or because it is cool or funky or unusual. Your choice of font should be based on whether it helps you to tell your story. If the font you choose enhances your message, then it is a good choice. If it is distracting, it is a bad choice no matter how nice it looks.

Also never use Comic Sans or Arial as these fonts are reviled by many. Papyrus and Marker Felt are hated almost as much.

One way to get high quality, royalty-free images is to form the habit of taking photographs of things when you see them. You will be surprised how hard this is. Other sources of high quality images include:

- www.morguefile.com
- www.unsplash.com
- www.pixabay.com
- www.pxhere.com

- search.creativecommons.org
- commons.wikipedia.org

- www.istockphoto.com
- www.shutterstock.com

Images look much nicer when you adhere to the "Rule of Thirds". If you divide your slide into three both horizontally and vertically, then place the key elements of your slide on the intersections between the (imaginary) lines, they will look much more balanced and powerful than if you place objects randomly on the slide. Photographers and artists have known about this since ... forever! But it applies just as much to slide design as it does to painting a landscape.

When creating your slides, pay attention to negative space (or ground) not just to the objects you are putting on the slide (the figure). In Gestalt theory, the ground is just as powerful as the figure. Leave plenty of space around objects (look at the slide above for example). It's tempting to fill every inch of a slide, but it's much more powerful, and the images and text you do put on the slide will be that much more effective, if you leave lots of "ground" around them.

The gestalt principle of continuance, suggests that your slides will be more powerful if the images you include, lead the eye toward the most important elements on the slide. This may be to the text or heading on the slide. Again, notice the image above and how the scientist's gaze, and forward-leaning posture leads our eyes to the quote. The image right is another good example of the principle of using continuance. We immediately look at the dancer, but then our eyes follow his body up toward the title, and quote.

A third aspect of gestalt theory deals with "closure". When you see part of an image - especially if it is a familiar image, your brain fills in the missing parts of the image. By deliberately cutting off part of the image, the mind perceives the image to be much larger and more dynamic than if the entire image

was shown. It is almost as though the image is so large and vibrant that the slide cannot contain it. Consider the two slides below. In each I have used the same photograph, the same text in the same font, but by cutting off most of the house and flames, the viewer feels much more involved with the subject of the picture.

As a general rule, it is not a good idea to include faces in your slides - unless of course the point of the slide is the face you are showing. Our brains are highly attuned to human faces. When you look at a slide that has a face on it, you instinctively look at the face to the exclusion of the rest of the slide. If the face is not the important part of the slide, then having it there will detract from your message. When you look at a slide with both a face and some important information, (observe yourself) you naturally look at the face first, then the text, then back to the face and that is where your attention stays. With other objects, you tend to look at the object, then the information - which is where your focus rests. That is much more effective.

The use of animation should also be used sparingly, and *purposefully*. All presentationware tools including Keynote and PowerPoint have ways to animate text, slide transitions, etc. These can sometimes be useful, but are rarely impressive anymore.

Three animation effects that are often very useful, and are quite impressive are described below.

1. Create a blurred version of an image. Introduce the slide with the original image, then have that image “fade” or “Dissolve” leaving a blurry version of the same image, onto which you introduce any text to the slide. This not only looks cool, but also focuses the attention of the audience on the text, while keeping the supporting image in their mind. To do this, place the image on the slide and make it blurry, by clicking on the image, then in the PowerPoint toolbar click the “Artistic Effects” button and choose “Blur”. If the image has not been blurred enough, click on the “Artistic Effects” button again, and choose “Artistic Effects Options”. Then in the window sidebar on the right, drag the “Radius” slider to increase the blur effect. Next type your text on top of the blurry image (in a text box). Finally place the same image (a non-blurry version of it) on top of the slide. Then click the “Animations” tab in PowerPoint and set an exit animation to “Fade”. In this way, while showing your slides, when you click, the clear version will fade out leaving the blurry version and some text. It’s very effective.
2. Embed an automatically playing video on an image, within a slide. This creates a great illusion that the image is ‘alive’, without being too distracting. To do this, you first need to make one part of the image transparent (see next section). Then place the image on top of a video on a PowerPoint slide and your audience will see the video playing through the transparent sections of the image. It helps if you click on the movie, click on the Playback tab, and change the playback mode from “In click sequence” to “Automatically”. That way, when you advance to that slide, the movie will already be playing.
3. Path animations. In PowerPoint, an element on a slide can be instructed to move around a slide, following a path which you can draw with your mouse. To do this, click on the object to select it, then click the Animations tab in PowerPoint, Find the Path Animations section and within that choose the “Draw Scribble” or “Freeform Path” or “Draw Path” (it has different names in different versions of PowerPoint). Then draw the path that you would like the object.

Advanced Image Editing

Adobe Photoshop

Adobe Photoshop has been around for decades and is the industry standard image editor. It is, however very expensive at \$14 per month! That's a justifiable expense if you are a professional photographer or image editor. For a teacher however, given that you may only use it occasionally it's more than most are willing to pay.

Serif Affinity Photo

Serif Affinity Photo is a viable alternative to Adobe Photoshop and at \$62 (one time purchase) it is a fraction of the cost.

My Advice on which to buy

I have both Photoshop and Affinity Photo, but I have quite quickly moved to using Affinity Photo for almost everything that I used to do with Photoshop. There is just one thing that I can do easily with Photoshop that doesn't work nearly as well in Affinity Photo (Mockups/Smart Objects). Everything else I need to do I can do just as well in Affinity Photo, and there are several things I do often that are much faster and easier in Affinity Photo than they are in Photoshop! If you plan to pay for an advanced image editor, my advice would be to go with Affinity Photo. You can download a free trial of each of them though, so you have nothing to lose by putting them through their paces to see which works for you best.

Advanced Image Editing Techniques

Removing unwanted objects from photos

Both Photoshop and Affinity Photo have the ability to remove objects from photos and patch the background so that it looks like the object was never there.

In Photoshop, you choose the 'Spot Healing Brush' tool from the tool bar on the left (if you hover your mouse over the tools it will name each in turn). In Affinity Photo, you use the "Inpainting Brush Tool" which is in a submenu that opens when you click the Healing Brush tool on the left hand side (It looks very much like in Photoshop). Once you have found the tool (that was the hard part), paint over the object you want to remove, and then wait a few seconds and like magic it disappears!

Note: you can change the brush size by pressing the [and] keys on your keyboard.

Making one part of a slide focussed and others blurry

To lead your students' eyes to the part of the slide you want them to look, you can blur all parts of the slide except where you want them to look. This can easily be done in either Photoshop or Affinity Photo. In Photoshop choose Filter > Blur > Iris Blur. Then move the iris to where you want the point of focus to be. (It's pretty obvious when you see it). In Affinity Photo you do exactly the same thing, except the tool is called "Depth of Field Blur".

Make parts of images transparent

This is one of the most compelling reasons to pay for a professional grade image editor. While you can make parts of an image transparent in PowerPoint using the “Remove Background” tool as described on page 10, or in Keynote using the “Instant Alpha” tool in the Image tab. But these will only get you so far. It’s OK for a solid, smooth-edged object like a TV screen, but if you try to select around a person’s head, their hair will look like it’s been chopped out crudely with scissors.

Both Photoshop and Affinity Photo are *amazing* at this. First you select your object using any of the selection tools (Usually I use the “Quick Selection Brush” tool in Photoshop or the “Selection Brush” tool in Affinity Photo. They do the exact same thing. Alternatively you can select around the object using the “Lasso Tool” (Photoshop) or the “Freehand Selection Tool” (Affinity Photo). Often for very fine jobs I choose the Polygonal Lasso Tool (Photoshop) which is in a submenu when you click and hold on the Lasso Tool icon. In Affinity Photo there is no polygonal lasso tool. Instead, you hold the shift key on your keyboard when using the Freehand Selection Tool. It does the same thing as Photoshop’s Polygonal Lasso tool.

However you select your object, you don’t have to be ultra precise about it. When you have selected the object, click the “Refine Edge...” / “Refine...” button above your photo. You can then paint around the edge of your object to refine the selection. It’s really quite something!

Once your software does its magic, in Photoshop click the “Decontaminate Colours” checkbox before clicking “OK”. In Affinity Photo, change the Output menu from “Selection” to “New Layer with Mask”, then “Apply”.

To use the image you have now created with a transparent area, you must export the image as a PNG file. In Photoshop go to File > Save As... and change the format to PNG. In Affinity Photo, go to File > Export and choose PNG (which is probably set already for you).

Perspective and Distort

If you want an image to be tilted/angled on a slide. You can do this easily.

In Photoshop, go to Edit > Transform > Distort. Then drag the corners of the shape to wherever you want them to be.

In Affinity Photo, click the small Perspective tool on the left (second from the bottom). If the “Mesh Warp Tool” is in that position, click and hold that and in the pop-up menu that appears, change it to “Perspective Tool.”