



Healthcare Industry Embraces Podcasting

**A White Paper
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**A look at how podcasting will
help expand the delivery of
healthcare information.**



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How did the phenomenon start?

In most cases, industry drives consumer goods and the latest trends. These trends can be initiated by public or private companies, but they are the ones who have the funds available to invest in the research, distribution, and manufacturing. The expansion of the Internet is a great example of this phenomenon. Although Al Gore did not "invent" the internet, it was the government that started the ball rolling; they developed the technology to communicate remotely.

That type of investment and product success sometimes comes from a consumer goods company. In the case of podcasting, Apple Computers launched a phenomenon that will change how we receive information, training, education, and entertainment.

According to Creative Labs, podcasting stands for "Personal On Demand broadCAST" (from www.zencast.com/about).¹ However, Ben Hammersley, the Web developer credited with coining the term "podcasting" in an article that appeared in the *Guardian*, says it is purely a contraction of two terms: "broadcasting" (because the content is sent over the net) and "iPod" (as a byword for MP3 players).²

Tom Fadell, a former Philips executive, left his position at Philips to begin developing his concept of a hard-drive based MP3 player. In February 2001, he sold this idea to Apple and the product was announced to the public on October 23, 2001.⁴ This original product only had 5 GB of storage, which would hold up to 1,000 songs.

What is a podcast?

Podcasting is the method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio or video programs, over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on mobile devices and personal computers.² Podcasts started as files, such as a mp3 file, that contained audio material, similar to a radio broadcast, that could be posted online for downloading. This type of format differentiated itself from previous formats because the user could download the file and listen to it without the need to be connected to the Internet, as was necessary with a streaming audio file.

As technology developed, the podcasts were able to present more dynamic audio and video content. In November, 2005, Apple introduced the video iPod. This new device provided the portable player for displaying the video podcasts separate from the computer. The downloaded episodes can then be played, replaced, or archived as with any other computer file.



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As a sign of the impact podcasts and the iPod have made on our culture, the New Oxford American Dictionary declared the term “podcasting” as the 2005 word of the year.

What is the usage of podcasts?

It is estimated that only 20% of podcasts are used on portable media devices; the additional 80% are played on a computer.² This presents an opportunity to provide and expand the market of podcast content for the portable devices.

“As an early-adopter of new technologies, I believe that corporations, especially those in the healthcare industry, can leverage their vast medical and product knowledge to help educate and inform their customers and the community at large,” stated Bruce Stasch, President of Apex Marketing Group. “Today, only 4% of Fortune 500 companies blog and only 6% of Internet users have listened to a podcast, so if a company is looking to move to the front of the pack in information delivery, podcasting and blogs can help them do that.”⁵

How are podcasts delivered?

Podcasts are delivered via the Internet from a host site. People seeking information can find podcasts on a variety of topics for downloading as a file directly to their computer or they can use software designed to transfer music, photos, or videos, such as iTunes, for transferring the files to a portable media device.

The market for portable media devices continues to grow. According to a recent study from In-Stat, this market topped \$4.5 billion in 2004. This was an increase of almost 200% over 2003. This same study identified that 25% of respondents own a digital audio player and that this number will increase to 65 million Americans⁶ and 104 million units by 2010.⁷ On October 18, 2006, Apple Computers reported that they shipped 8,729,000 iPods during the fourth quarter and 39 million units in total for their 2006 fiscal year, which ended September 30, 2006.⁸ That number represents a 35% growth over the same quarter in 2005.⁹

The most popular device for playing podcasts is the Apple iPod. Currently, the iPod has a 76% market share in the United States. This total number reflects sales of the video iPod, the iPod Nano, and iPod Shuffle combined. Based on sales volume on amazon.com on December 11, 2006, the 30 GB video iPod is the second best selling electronics item. Other popular digital media player sales include: the 2GB SanDisk mp3 Player is #4, the



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4GB iPod nano ranks #11, the 1GB iPod Shuffle is #16, and the new Microsoft Zune comes in at #56 for sales in the electronics category.

In addition, the Apple iTunes media transfer software has an 88% market share in the United States. These percentages total up to over 60 million iPod sales and 1.5 billion songs sold via iTunes.¹⁰ There was a new product option as of November 14, 2006. Microsoft launched the newest line of products for media sharing. The new line, called Zune, includes portable media players, software for transferring the media, and an online service for acquiring and sharing media.¹¹

How are copyrights secured on podcasts?

Software is available for podcast files for developing controls to limit the number of unauthorized distributions of copyrighted material. This specialized programming limits the number of computers to which the file can be transferred, the number of burns that can be made of the file to a CD, and the number of uploads to a portable media device. These controls protect the rights of the copyright owner but also promote the availability of content for legal downloads. These formats include WMA (Windows Media Audio) and AAC (Advanced Audio Codec). Some of the distribution sites, such as iTunes, wrap this software in all of the files available on iTunes for a fee.

The major players in the digital distribution markets, such as Apple and Microsoft, offer different digital rights management software programs for their operating systems. This software includes FairPlay for the Apple platform and Digital Rights Manager for the Windows platform. The industry is currently working on developing a standardized method for digital rights management to help ease the compatibility of files across various platforms.

How can podcasts be applied in the healthcare industry?

The ideas for how to implement podcasts in business are unlimited. Since podcasts can now be delivered via a variety of mediums, the types of podcasts also vary pretty significantly. Some samples of delivery formats for podcasts include:

- via television monitors
- via computers
- via iPods (video or audio)
- via mp3 players (audio only)



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- via LCD projectors
- entertaining videos to build brands
- informative clips from subject matter experts
- build demo clips for sales representatives to use on sales calls
- training tools for students (auscultation, medical terminology, client communication)

How are podcasts being used in the healthcare industry?

Companies currently use podcasts to deliver sales information, release information to the press, provide educational information for customers, and as actual products. Here are a few real-world uses:

University of California, Los Angeles: Physicians in the Department of Radiological Sciences at UCLA found the iPod to be a great tool for storing and discussing the memory-intensive files for CT, MRI, and PET scans. The iPod also provided a great way to sidestep the \$100,000 to \$200,000 workstations needed to view the hi-res scans. As of 2006, UCLA has more than 3,000 users signed up to use the new system, including such uses as a tool to discuss images with colleagues and patients and as a tool to remotely discuss cases.

“It’s amazing. [With iPods], people are carrying around 60GB in their pocket, when I don’t even have 60 GB on my computer,” said Dr. Osman Ratib of UCLA. “That’s the beauty of adopting consumer technology. This has a major impact on clinical use, and in particular, on the academic environment, because it gives you the ability to share and communicate very large data sets by just putting them on a device that you can carry in your pocket.”

Duke University: In 2004, Duke University established the Duke Digital Initiative (DDI). Under this program, the university distributed free iPods to all first-year students in 2004 and free iPods to undergraduate students enrolled in courses requiring iPod devices in 2006. As a result of this program, the number of students using iPods for coursework has grown by 428% since the establishment of the DDI. The DDI has incorporated iPods into 42 courses for the spring 2006 semester, including some healthcare courses like Community Health Nursing, Physical Assessment & Diagnostic Reasoning, and Spanish for Health Professions.

“ I used a photo iPod this fall in my Functional Anatomy of the Human Brain course to house a visual glossary of 500 human neuroanatomical structures and comprising text descriptions, images, and corresponding audio pronunciations,” said Mark Williams, an instructor at Duke University.

Pearson/Prentice Hall: Although established in the company's business publishing



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unit, Prentice Hall established a very integrated sales-training program that includes a sales simulator delivered through the company's web site and played on each sales representative's iPod. In addition to training, the company now delivers the latest sales tools, product wisdom from the subject matter experts, and a series of online, radio programs called "What's Your Point?". These radio programs are designed to reinforce key messages, introduce book authors, and keep reps updated on an ongoing basis via an informative and entertaining format.¹²

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine: Johns Hopkins Medicine recently announced its new health podcast, a lively discussion of the week's medical news and how it may affect their patients. The podcasts are five to seven-minute programs offered for free. They are hosted by Rick Lange, M.D., chief of clinical cardiology, and Elizabeth Tracey, director of the Hopkins Health NewsFeed, a radio news service program.
(<http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/medical/Podcastsinstructions.html>)

University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing: The School of Nursing at the University of Pennsylvania started a web site for posting a variety of podcasts from students, peers, and professors. The most recent series of podcasts included a student's experiences in a radio talk-show format that discussed how she worked through Hurricane Katrina.
(<http://www.nursing.upenn.edu/podcasts/>)

McGraw-Hill: This publisher of healthcare titles recently launched their Access Medicine web site. On this site, customers can access online versions of the publisher's titles. They also air free weekly podcasts and video podcasts demonstrating teacher/student interactions. (www.accessmedicine.com)

Nestlé Purina: To keep their customers up-to-date with the latest information about good pet care, the company established a web site dedicated to podcasts. This content includes audio and video formats and provides users with the option to subscribe to weekly podcasts for free.

How are podcasts implemented?

Podcasts can be as simple or as elaborate as the author wants to make them. The content can be an edited video clip compressed for web delivery; a new "radio" broadcast can be recorded in a studio or recorded at a conference; a Flash presentation can be created from existing material; or a completely new program can be developed as a stand alone product. Rumors in the industry show that interactive (touch) screens as well as a Bluetooth-capable



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device are in the works for iPods and screens may move into a wide-screen format. For now, there are many, many options for using this medium to deliver your message, information, and service.

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