

BE YOUR OWN RADIO



A LOW COST, OPEN SOURCE
WAY TO MAKE PODCASTS

WELCOME

Hello and welcome to **Be Your Own Radio** – a podcast series and zine detailing an inexpensive and easy way to make podcasts. It will take you through everything you need to know to start making your own podcasts, from writing, through recording to publishing. The podcast and zine are designed to work both as standalone resources, and also in conjunction. Hear the podcast and find lots of online resources, all the links in this document at: beyourownradio.co.uk

A word about the reasoning behind Be Your Own Radio. There are already resources telling you how to make podcasts, what this one offers is: Open Source, inexpensive, ubiquitous devices (we're not here to tell you you need to be lots of expensive gear with affiliate links, you can use the equipment you've already got) and we take you all the way through to advanced things like compression, EQ.

About me: Why should you listen to what I have to say? Well, there's lots of incorrect information out there about audio on the Internet. I have a degree in sound engineering, years of experience in live sound and studio engineering, years as a studio manager at a community radio station, and I'm currently completing a PhD at Falmouth University in Broadening Participation in Community Radio, using the very methodologies outlined in Be Your Own Radio... The information here has been developed through years of working with people of all ages and abilities to create broadcast content.

Why a zine?

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1: BASICS

This is a small zine which attempts to outline the cheapest and easiest way to prepare audio content for podcasting or broadcasting at the time of writing (2019). For easier downloading and more information go to beyourownradio.co.uk

WHAT'S A PODCAST?

History of Podcasting

iPod + broadcasting = podcasting

The name has stuck although the device is now somewhat defunct.

Mic Recording device Editing
Mastering Publishing / broadcasting

Publish free on the internet (podcasting)

Difference from Radio

What's Special About a Podcast

Intimacy. Not listened to at the same time,
etc

Structure and Style

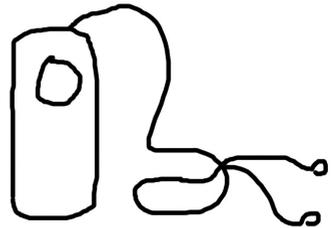
One person, two or more

Go wild

Music or no?

Coming up with an idea

Broadcast on Community Radio



2: RECORDING

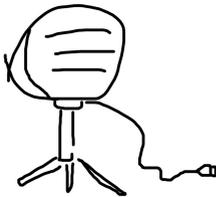
MICROPHONES

The first part of any recording is the microphone.

BUILT-IN MICROPHONES (EASIEST)

Microphones in laptops/computers vary wildly from great to unusable. Smartphones these days usually have decent quality microphones. Try using the microphone in your laptop or phone and see what the results are. It's always handy to know what quality they are for occasions when you need to make a quick recording even if you don't use them as your main set up.

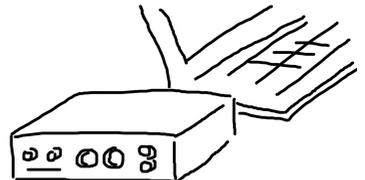
USB MICROPHONES



USB microphones these days are cheap and decent. For a show with one (or two) presenters this is a great way to improve on the quality of the inbuilt microphone. Recommended Blue Snowball. Pick them up on eBay.

USB AUDIO INTERFACES

Best quality, most complicated. You might also want a mixer. Levels, levels, levels... Get the best level. Record at 24 bit, if you can. Sample rate 44.1kHz Portable Digital Recorders



Setting levels so no distortion and least noise.

Recording Tips:

Find a good room

Listen for background noise

INTERVIEWING TIPS

Ask your interviewee to repeat back the questions you ask – this way you can edit your voice out and make a nice monologue.

Wind noise will ruin any recording, so if you have to record outside _use headphones_, a deadcat or windshield if you've got one, and find a sheltered spot.

3: SOFTWARE + EDITING

AUDACITY

Audacity is a great free open-source piece of software which will allow you to record into your computer. Go to audacity.org to download for free. Also recommended to download the LAME MP3 encoder if you want to work with MP3s (you will).

MIXXX

Mixxx was designed to be used by DJs in nightclubs to create dance music mixes but it can also be used to do live radio shows or record a podcast performance.

Editing Your Recording

Audio Formats

Bit Rates

Sample Rates

4: FINISHING TOUCHES

MUSIC

It's not a requirement but most podcasts have some sort of music. Intro Beds. Audio furniture.

You can't just put your favourite piece of music underneath because it's probably copyrighted. Platforms such as Mixcloud allow copyrighted music although this isn't strictly speaking a podcast.

So you have two options: find some music which allows you to use it or create your own music.

If you're lucky enough to have musician friends you can ask them to create something for you – be sure to credit them for their work.

Creative Commons is a way that creative types can release their work and allow it to be used without payment in other people's projects. Usually the only requirement is that you fairly credit them somewhere in your project. This can be a mention in the podcast and/or a link in the show notes to their artist page.

Best websites for creative commons/copyright-free music:

Making your own music

It's entirely possible to make your own music for your show using some of the tools we've already outlined. If you're a musician why not have a go recording your own music using Audacity. It has all the functionality you need to create multi-track recordings with reverb, EQ etc.

Even if you're not a musician it can be fun to give it a go with whatever you've got to hand.

LMMS

LMMS is a good alternative for creating electronic music. It's kind of an open source version of a very popular piece of software for electronic musicians called FLStudio. It's not as fully-featured as FLStudio but it does allow you to create some quite complex electronic music, and it's

what I used to create the music for the BYOR podcast.

Sound Effects/Other

It's not all just about the music. What about some sound effects for

Mastering

This is a thorny topic but it's worth talking about. Up until now we've mentioned about keeping the levels healthy. Mastering is where you add the final polish and prepare your audio for whichever platforms you're publishing to.

This usually involves (in a professional context) some eq and compression.

Different levels required by different platforms: Spotify -16dB LUFS

S: PUBLISHING

ANCHOR

Anchor is a free Smartphone app that allows you to record a podcast quickly and easily. This is a great place to start if you want to

CONTENT

Making an image for your podcast

Anchor has a reasonably good mechanism for creating an image for your show, but it is pretty basic.

Canva.com is a great resource which allows those of us without Graphic Design skills to create professional images for a variety of occasions. It has templates for podcasts in the right resolution for all platforms.

SHOW NOTES

One of the things that makes podcasting its own unique medium is the ability to attach show notes to the audio. These can explain and add context to the show, provide further information, links to resources and websites mentioned in the podcast.

Typical shownotes should include

A brief description of what's in the show.

Follow ups to anything that's mentioned in the show.

What can really annoy listeners is if

SCRIPTING

FURTHER READING

If you're finding it all rather easy now...

6: TAKING IT FURTHER

COMMUNITY RADIO

If you master the skills in this zine you have all the skills to get involved with your local Community Radio station. Most are always on the look out for volunteers and it has some advantages compared to internet broadcasting or podcasting... For example, you have an instant audience, you have a platform which promotes your work

Other Software

It may be that you are finding Audacity somewhat frustrating if you start to do complex shows. Audacity is fantastic when you're starting out because it is so simple and there's not much to learn or confuse you. However it does have limitations and can be an obstacle or slow you down once you start producing more complex content. Having said that, I still use it all the time for simple editing and file conversion. If you're in the mood for something more advanced we recommend..

Reaper

First proviso: Reaper is not open source software, so doesn't fully fit with our methodology. Having said that, pragmatism is the key. Reaper will allow you to use it for free and a license is only \$60, so if you are getting serious about podcasting we recommend paying - you won't regret it. Reaper is a fully-fledged DAW up there with the likes of Cubase, Logic and Pro Tools. Indeed many professionals, myself included prefer its workflow over those tools.

THANKS

Created by Jerry Padfield

If you have any suggestions for improvements or additions please get in touch. I hope this is useful...

Credits & Licensing

Scribus

Bye

