

It's time for episode 14 of Tech Tips from the California State University, Long Beach. I'm Walter Gajewski and today I present part two of Create Your Own Podcast. To get the most out of today's episode, make sure you're familiar with the material presented in episodes five and thirteen.

Actually, if you were able to follow the instructions in episode 13 and you placed an audio file and a text file out on a web folder, you could make that material available to the world right now as links on a web page.

In fact, to make your podcast episodes accessible to people who can't use the iTunes software, you should duplicate your podcast as a web page. You can see my web page version of this Tech Tips podcast at <http://www.csulb.edu/lats/itss/design/techtip.html>.

The difference between the web page and an actual podcast is that with a podcast, listeners automatically receive the new episodes delivered to their computer as soon as they're published.

To make your podcast something to which people can subscribe, you have to write an XML file. I've already written one for you. All you have to do is change a few lines to customize the file for your particular podcast.

Start by going to the web page that has the text you need. It put it out at:
<http://www.csulb.edu/lats/itss/design/xml-files/xml-sample-file.html>

If you look at that page, most of it is a bunch of cryptic gobbly gook. Don't let that scare you. The only words you have to replace are the lines printed in bold face type.

To start, highlight all the text on the page. Actually, highlight all except the last line that reads Last Modified 12/7/07.

Now that the text is highlighted you can copy the text to your computer's invisible clip board with a Control-C (hit the "C" key while holding down the control key).

Next, you should launch a text editor. You can use a word processor, like Microsoft Word but it is easier to do this with NotePad, or better yet, with WordPad. Either of these can be launched from your PC's start menu. Click on START, then ALL PROGRAMS, then ACCESSORIES and finally WordPad.

Now you can paste your text into the new, blank document. Click in the document and then do a Control-V (hit the letter "V" while holding down the control button).

Now you have to save this file. Go to the top menu and select FILE, SAVE.

When the dialog box opens, select a folder that will contain the file and make sure that you use the drop down menu to select the correct file type. You should Save as type TEXT DOCUMENT. For the file name use any simple single word without spaces or punctuation (except a hyphen) and I recommend avoiding upper case letters.

Do not accept the default extension of TXT. The file must have the extension xml.

So, the final file name would be something like `podcast.xml` or `tech-tips.xml`.

Now you can replace all the text that originally appeared in bold face type. You'll have to refer back to the web page because your text editor will not retain any type face formatting.

You will first replace the words "Put the title of your channel (podcast) here."

Replace that with the actual title of your podcast.

The same is true of the next line that says "My Name"

You'll notice that some bold face text on the web page is red in color, instead of black. This text also needs to be replaced but you have limited choices available for the replacement text.

For the tag that says LINK, this should be the address of some web page you would like to bring to the attention of your listeners. In my case, I put the address of the web version of my podcast in this space. Note that you have to include the complete address, including the cumbersome `http://`.

The iTunes subtitle can be just about anything that gives a bit more explanation of what your podcast is all about.

The first time you see iTunes summary, that refers to a lengthier summary of what you are trying to provide to the subscribers of your podcast.

Be careful of the copyright entry. The text you replace should consist of the current year as a four digit number followed by a space and then your name. The gobbly gook that precedes the year should remain as is.

Once again, your name and email address are pretty straight forward.

When you get down to the line that specifies the `itunes:image href`, note that you are going to put a web address inside of the quotation marks. This address should indicate the location of a JPEG image that is of 72 dpi resolution and be 300 by 300 pixels in size. Actually, some other size and resolution should work but iTunes prefers those specified dimensions. This address should be the location of the JPEG directly, not a web page that has the JPEG on it.

The next two entries in red are an iTunes browse category and sub-category. These entries are limited to a select few special words.

To see the approved list of categories and their approved subcategories, go to the website <http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/podcaststechspecs.html> and click on item number seven, iTunes Categories for Podcasting.

You've taken care of all the text that describes your podcast channel and now you can enter the text that relates to the first episode of your podcast channel.

The TITLE, AUTHOR, and SUBTITLE are pretty self explanatory.

The iTunes summary can be a lengthy description of this particular episode or you can copy your entire transcript of the narration and paste it into this area. Whatever you provide as the iTunes summary here will show up on the screen of your listeners' video iPods.

The enclosure URL is the location of the MP3 file you uploaded to the web space at the end of TechTips episode 13. Note that the URL goes inside quotation marks. To be sure you have the correct location address, first put it into the address area of your web browser. If you have the correct address, your browser will find the audio file and play it for you.

The tag marked LENGTH is actually the file size of your MP3 file. This has to be a number entered without any punctuation. If you don't want to bother with this, it won't make any difference, just leave it as it is. If you do want to adjust this to match your particular file, find your file on your computer and right-click on it. Select PROPERTIES. You will see the files "size on disc" listed in bytes. Use that number but remember, no spaces, no commas.

Going back to your XML file, the next entry is the GUID. This can be identical to the enclosure URL but notice that you are not using quote marks this time.

The publication date MUST be in this exact format.

The DURATION tag is the running time of your MP3 audio file in minutes and seconds.

The iTunes keywords can be any search terms separated by commas.

All the remaining entries are almost identical to those we used for the MP3 file except that now you should make reference to your PDF text file. Once again, if you want to make sure you have the correct URL address for this file, enter it into your web browser and the text should come up on your screen in the Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Make the publish date of this PDF text file item a few minutes earlier than the date of the MP3 file.

That's it. You have completed your XML file. Make sure you save it and make sure you remember where you saved it because every time you produce another episode, you will add information to this same file.

In fact, you should see a notation near the bottom of this file that says "Place the next episode below." That is where you would recreate all the MP3 item information and all the PDF text item information that pertains to episode two of your podcast. You can copy and paste all the item one information and then modify it to reflect the details of episode two.

However, make sure you leave the episode one information in place. In effect, as you add more and more episodes to your podcast, this XML file will get longer and longer.

After you have saved your XML file, use FTP software to upload a copy of the file out to your web space. It will now reside in the same location as the previously uploaded MP3 and PDF files.

That's it. You have a podcast. The address of that podcast is the URL location of the XML file you just uploaded. For example, my TechTips podcast address is:
<http://www.csulb.edu/lats/itss/design/xml-files/tech-tips.xml>

You can subscribe to it by using that address in the latest version of Internet Explorer or the latest Firefox web browser.

If I want to subscribe using iTunes, launch iTunes.

Click on iTunes Store. Once you are connected to the Store, go to the top menu and select ADVANCED and then select "Subscribe to Podcast. . ." from the drop down menu choices.

When the URL dialog box opens, enter the address for the podcast. To avoid typos, you should probably copy and past the address into that dialog box. Remember, the last part of the podcast URL will be your podcast XML file.

Once you enter the podcast location in the iTunes URL dialog box, click on OK and iTunes will find and download your podcast, provided you are on the Internet at the time.

Have fun podcasting and feel free to email me with any questions. You can reach me at walter.gajewski@gmail.com.

For TechTips, I'm Walter Gajewski. That's it for now.