

# HOWTO | Create Your Own Podcasts

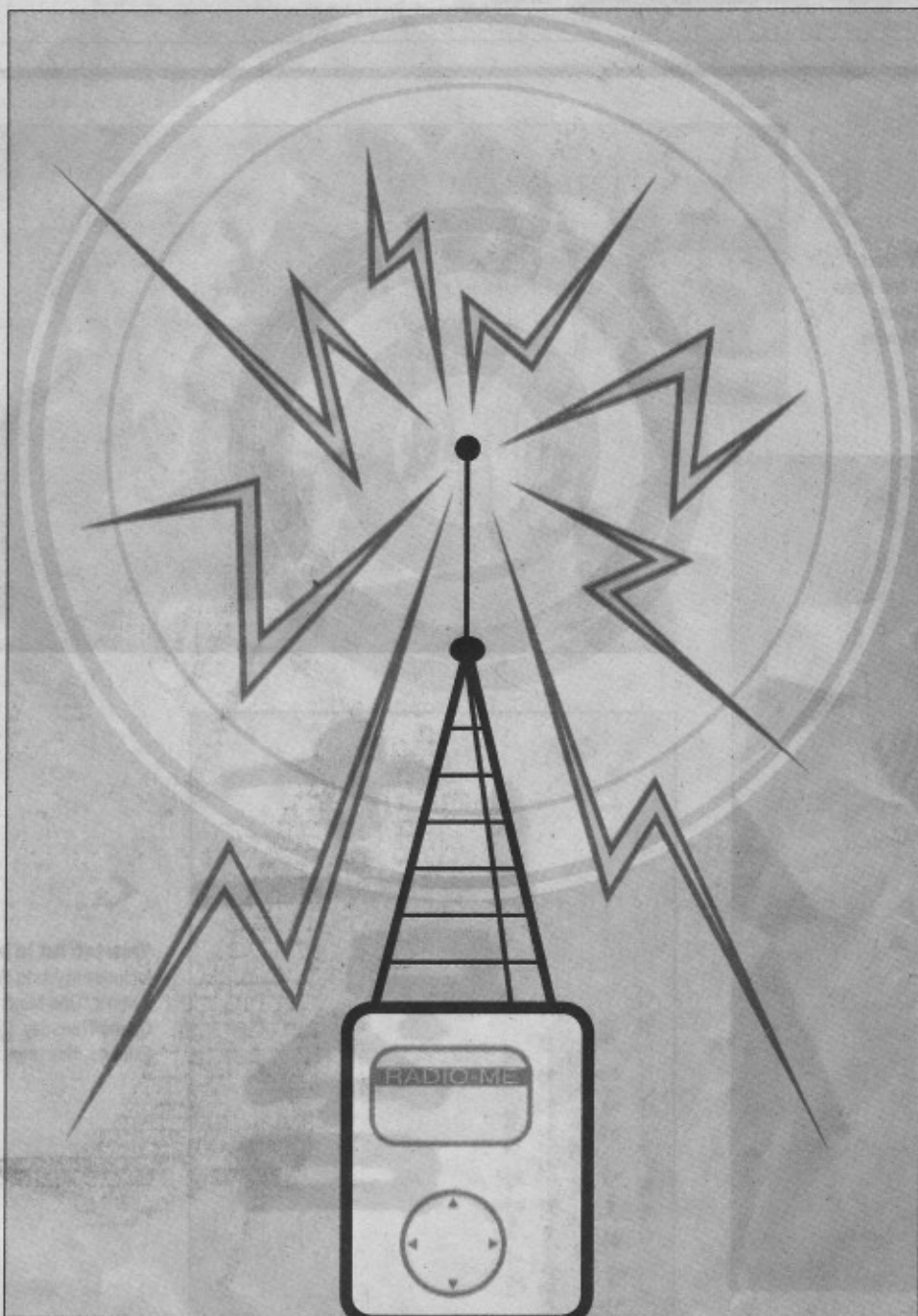
**C**ommercial-free broadcasts, a smorgasbord of topics and music you've never heard before. Nope, we're not talking about satellite radio — we're talking podcasting. If you haven't heard of it by now, it's high time you come out of your cave: Pioneered by former MTV VJ Adam Curry, a podcast is basically an audio blog, a program recorded into an MP3 file that you can post or pick up at sites online. You don't need an iPod — or a Mac — to create or listen to one, and unlike commercial radio, podcasts don't have to conform to FCC regulations, so there's no limit to what you can say. Want to showcase your best friend's band or embark on an expletive-filled rant about the state of the union? Here's how.

**TUNE IN.** Before getting creative, see what's already out there. Browse through Web sites such as Podcast.net, and you'll find entries dealing with movies, technology, personal fetishes and the like. If you find one so captivating that you must hear every episode, subscribing for updates is easy: Go to iPodder.org (another podcast directory) and download the software application that fetches podcasts — you can program it to automatically pull in your favorites as often as you like. Then listen at your convenience using an audio player, such as iTunes or Windows Media Player, or transfer it to your portable MP3 player.

**BUILD YOUR OWN (CYBER) RADIO STATION.** What's a pundit without a mouthpiece? You'll need one to get heard — try Logitech's USB Headset 250 (\$39; [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)), which is both PC and Mac friendly. (Alternatively, you can connect a microphone — sans earpiece — into your computer's line-in jack and use speakers or headphones to track the sound.) To record your broadcast, we recommend Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net>), a free open-source program that lets you record live audio on PCs and Macs. You'll also need to download Audacity's MP3 encoder separately to translate your files into MP3s — the podcast format of choice.

**TECH SPECS.** Listeners will download your podcast from the Web, so you don't want your file to be too large. You can minimize a file's size by lowering both the sampling rate (which determines the sound frequency range) and bit rate (the file space taken up per second of audio) of your recording. First, set the default sampling rate to 16-bit (Audacity lets you do this under the preferences menu). Then try tweaking until you find one that works for you. A high bit rate (around 160 kbps, or kilobits per second) is great for music but overkill for the sound of your voice, in which case 48 kbps would be fine. After a sound check, plug in your mic or headset and let 'er rip. Once you've finished, you'll want to export the recording as an MP3. Your next step is to edit the ID3 tag for your MP3, which names the file so listeners will know what it is.

**WORLD WIDE WEB CELEB.** Your final step is to upload the podcast to your blog or Web site. (If you don't have your own, Ourmedia, a grass-roots project, plans on permanently hosting podcasts later this year for a nominal fee.) Most blogs and Web-hosting programs make it easy — just



BY J.D. KING FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Listen up, world! I have something to say, and thanks to podcasts, the FCC can't stop me.**

attach your MP3 file to a new blog entry. Word of mouth might land you on iPodder or another podcast fetching site (once iPodder catches on to you, it automatically checks for updates, so they only have to hear about you once) or you can submit it to them yourself. Now sit back and wait for the accolades — or rotten tomatoes.

— Louis Ramirez

Want to know how to do something? Send your questions to [howto@washpost.com](mailto:howto@washpost.com).