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## TEACHING AND USING EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

### Eighteen Website Details Every Podcaster Must Know

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*Whether you're hobby podcasting or small business podcasting, there are 18 things you need to do on your website to make sure your listeners and readers can find you and listen to your show. Tips such as making it as easy as possible for your listeners to click and listen, subscribe to your email newsletter or explain how to subscribe to your RSS feed all come in handy, especially for newer listeners.*

Podcasting is an excellent way to communicate your ideas and passion to your listeners, no matter if your podcast is about dogs and cats or small business marketing or you're hosting a hobby podcast with your spouse over your kitchen table.

The smallness – the intimacy of one-on-one communication – is what makes podcasting so attractive.

So if you've spent hours, days, weeks or months working on your podcast, congratulations! The podcasters I know are a hard-working, passionate bunch of folks.

But when I check out their websites, many of them come up short.

Why is that? Do you want all that hard work to go for naught? Of course not.

When it comes to posting your podcast online and creating your podcast website make sure that it's as EASY AS POSSIBLE for your listeners to LISTEN TO YOUR PODCAST, FIND YOU, SUBSCRIBE, CONTACT YOU and NAVIGATE your site.

It sounds simple, but so often I find websites that leave something obvious out, such as a link to subscribe to the podcast, or a way to listen online without having to download the file, or a way to contact the podcaster.

So in the interest of helping your website viewers and podcast listeners, here's a list of 18 important details that I believe you should attend to when it comes to the 'housekeeping' of your website.

1. MP3 link. Probably the most obvious, your direct link to the MP3 (or other audio or video) file makes it easy to click and save or click and listen.

2. Streaming flash audio optimized for 56K. This is less common among podcasters than I think it should be. Here's why it's important: there are still a lot of folks that like to listen while they surf – and a lot of people who still access the web through dial-up. Yes, the number of broadband 'net users is increasing, but dial-up is a way of life for millions of people. If your podcast is optimized for a 56K flash audio stream, it means that dial-up users can easily listen.

3. RSS Feed. This makes your audio or video file a podcast. Without it, there's no way for your listener to automatically know when you've released a new episode.

4. How to subscribe. Thousands of people are getting online every day – and they've never been on a website before. They don't know what a podcast is. They don't know how it works. But if you have content they want, make it easy for them. Include instructions on how they can easily subscribe or listen to your podcast. Explain in easy-to-understand language.

5. iTunes subscribe link. Get listed in iTunes and plug an iTunes button on your site. Millions of people use iTunes to listen to music and podcasts. This makes it easier for those users to subscribe to your podcast.

6. E-mail list. Do you have an email list? They're easy to set up and if you're podcasting, it makes sense to have another way to keep in touch with those listeners. Set up a list and put a 'subscribe here' box on your main podcast page.

7. About YOU. Tell your viewers/listeners who you are, what you do, why you do it. Letting your listeners know more about you makes you more real to them and will keep them coming back.

8. Podcast show notes with links. All podcasts should include notes on what the listener will find, and be sure to include links to any person, business or organization or subject that you discussed.

9. Search engine optimization. When writing your show notes, consider your topic keywords, and use those keywords frequently so that your readers can easily see at a glance what your podcast is about – and the search engines can easily scout out your page and index your site properly. The goal is to make it obvious to both your human readers and the search engine crawlers what your show is about.

10. Yahoo and MSN links. Millions of folks find content through Yahoo and MSN. Get your podcast listed in their podcast index and include the links.

11. Podcast archive links. Recycle your listeners to your older content. There are a number of reasons to keep your old podcast posts alive and well on your website. First, if a listener finds your podcast interesting, it gives them older episodes to browse and perhaps listen to. Second, the deeper your website goes with keyword-rich posts and content, the better you site looks to search engines. Third, it shows any new listener how long you've been at it. If you've recorded a hundred podcasts your listener perceives a level of depth and experience from you that they wouldn't perceive if you have only a half dozen podcasts. As an added note: it might be a bad idea to put a Google site search function on your main page so that viewers can look for specific topics.

12. Photo of host(s). The more you can communicate about your virtual self, the more your listener understands you. If they like what they see, they'll want to come back for more. If they don't like what they see or hear on your podcast chances are you wouldn't have gained any benefit from having them as a listener. So grab a good photograph and post it prominently.

13. Contact information: include ways for viewers to get a hold of you. Have a contact page that includes your e-mail address or contact page response form, phone number, and if you

feel comfortable with it – your physical address. Make sure your visitors can contact you. This may seem like a no-brainer, but I keep running across websites that don't make it easy. If you are able to set up a dedicated telephone line for listeners to record their comments, you can easily incorporate those comments into your podcast – which in turn will spawn more comments.

14. Invitation to send in feedback. Now that you've got the contact page in place and the telephone recorder, make it obvious that you WANT them to call and offer feedback. This might mean something as simple as putting a small graphic or note on your podcast page that says "Let us know what you think of our recent podcast interview with...!"

15. Copyright and trademark information. You may not have gone through the process of actually trademarking your name or show title, because in more cases it isn't really necessary, but you certainly own the copyright on all material you create. Post a notice to that effect.

16. Privacy information. If you ask for people's personal information, your privacy policy should spell out what you will do with that information. If you don't have a privacy policy in place, get one! Check out other websites to see what their policy is and model it after them, if that makes you comfortable. Or, just use your common sense and create a policy. It may be something as simple as a couple of paragraphs explaining that you and only you have access to their information and that you won't share it with anyone. Without a privacy policy many folks will feel hesitant about giving you their name and email address.

17. Navigation menu made easy. One easy way to test your site's navigation is to have a friend who hasn't seen the site sit down and try to make their way around your site. Follow their trail and see what they come up with. Then ask if they're able to find your archives, or figure out how to contact you, or download the latest podcast, or subscribe, or read your privacy policy.

18. Any products or services you offer should be displayed as well. While it may not be (and probably isn't) the main topic of your podcast, it's probably at least related. So create a small graphic that links to your products or services page so visitors can easily check out your offerings.

After writing this, I double-checked my website and realized I was not following a couple of these suggestions – but that's okay! Not every podcast or website is suitable for all of these details.

For instance, having a telephone comment line for my podcast was not really a workable or feasible thing. So it's not a part of my site. But I believe that most everything else is in place.

And of course, all of this didn't happen overnight. All websites should be works in progress. Just when you think you've done the final bit of polishing and re-writing, you'll find something else you'll want to add.

So keep up the good work, and keep working on those website details!

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