

Making Podcasts and Webcasts: Getting Started

Congratulations, you're decided to make a podcast and/or a webcast! Now here comes the harder part; turning that awesome idea into something other people can listen to or watch! Here are a few things to know to get started.

Equipment

The most important (and obvious) piece of equipment needed to create your podcast or webcast is a computer. Most computers on the market meet the requirements to do basic audio and video editing; even if your personal machine doesn't fit the bill, there are lots of computers on campus that will. Check the Evans Library or the various computer labs throughout the Olin Complex.

Most computers come with a built-in microphone, which is usually passable for recording your audio. While this microphone is convenient, it most likely will not give the best audio quality for creating a professional-sounding podcast or webcast. An external microphone is recommended.

If your webcast requires some live-action footage or the like, another thing you might need is a camera. Most people have some form of video-recording capability, whether it be with something as simple as a smartphone to a webcam to more advanced digital equipment. At the most basic level, all you need is a camera with a microphone.

Luckily for FIT students, there is a variety of A/V equipment, including those mentioned above, available from the Information Technology department. They even have an entire production studio you can use! Check them out [here](#) to explore the options.

Editing Programs

Okay, now you have the media content you need for your super cool podcast or webcast; now you need something to make it cohesive (and pretty). There are no shortage of programs you can use to complete these tasks.

Audio Software

Audio software has two main functions — recording and editing. Most programs make recording as simple as clicking a red button and editing usually requires just knowing how to copy and paste. Here are a few audio editing programs that are easy-to-use to get you started.

- ▶ Garageband — This iLife program comes pre-loaded on Macs. Here are some [tutorials](#) on how to use this program.
- ▶ Audacity — One of the most popular freeware programs for audio editing. Here is the site for the [free download](#) and with tutorials.

- ▶ Wavepad — Another popular and free program that is easy to use. Click for the [free download](#).

There are many other audio editing software programs out there that may be more to your tastes. Check out [this article](#) for more programs.

If you want to invest some money into your software, [Adobe Audition](#) comes with Creative Suite 6, though this program is a bit more advanced than the other programs previously mentioned.

Video Software

If you know how to use PowerPoint or Keynote (and we have a feeling that you do), you can turn your presentation into a video! Both of these programs have recording options where you play the slideshow while recording a voice over. The program will then give you the option to save your file in a video format.

For how-to instructions in PowerPoint, click [here](#).

For how-to instruction in Keynote, click [here](#).

Using software specifically designed for video editing will help you do some fancier tricks with your footage and give it more of a polished and professional look. Both Windows and Mac operating systems actually come with their own video editing software that you can use.

- ▶ iMovie — This iLife program comes pre-loaded on Macs. Here are [video tutorials](#) on how to use this program.
- ▶ Windows Movie Maker — This program is usually included in Windows 7, but may need to be downloaded for earlier versions of Windows. Here is the [free download](#) in case you don't already have it and some info on [how to get started](#) with this program.

These two programs are great for beginners, making it easy to import, organize, and edit your media quickly and professionally, but also work for intermediate to advanced movie makers. On top of those programs, there are a bunch of free programs out there that are also relatively easy to install and use. Here are a few other free ones that may work for your video editing needs:

- ▶ Camtasia ([free 30 day trial](#))
- ▶ Wax ([free download](#))
- ▶ Pinnacle VideoSpin ([free download](#))

Most video editing software, including those mentioned above, also has built-in audio editing so you can simultaneously work on the visual and audio portions of your movie. If you are a bit

pickier about your sound quality, you can use the audio editing software mentioned above in conjunction with these programs.

For the more advanced filmmaker who wants to invest in the best editing software, [Final Cut Pro](#) and [Adobe Premier Pro](#) may be for you. Save your nickels, though, because these programs are pretty pricey.

Another Thing to Consider...

Copyright Issues

One major thing before publishing any media is to check that it properly follows copyright laws. When possible, make sure that you have explicit permission to use media that is not yours. In some cases, it is impossible or impractical to obtain permission to use certain materials; if this happens to you, follow the guidelines of the [Doctrine of Fair Use](#) to help determine if or how to use the material. Here are some other general rules to stick to when making materials for public distribution;

- ▶ Don't use just any picture off of the internet! — Just because something is on the internet does not make it yours to use; putting the website where you found an image on the bottom-right corner does not cut it either. The easiest way to avoid copyright issues with images is to use those in the [Public Domain](#). Another way is to use images with a [Creative Commons license](#). Here are some websites that will be your best friend in this endeavor:
 - [Wikimedia Commons](#)
 - [U.S. Government Photos and Images](#)
 - [Library of Congress](#)
 - [Flickr Creative Commons](#)

- ▶ Buying music doesn't mean you own it — Many recent, high-profile lawsuits made it clear that you can't illegally obtain or distribute music. Included in that illegal distribution is using any part of a copyrighted song, even for non-commercial purposes, without permission and/or paying hefty royalty fees. The myth that using 30 seconds or less of a song is allowed is just that — a myth. Your best bet, like with images, is to use music in the public domain or to find royalty-free music and sound effects. Most sound and movie editing software, including those mentioned in the above sections, come with their own royalty-free clips for your worry-free use. Many websites also have a free collection for education/non-profit purposes. Here are a few to get you started:
 - [Royalty-Free Music](#)
 - [SoundBible](#)
 - [Free Music Archive](#)

- ▶ Get the rights right — Getting volunteers, whether they are family and friends or random people, for your media projects can be easy and fun. Even though you may know a person, issues of permission and liability still exist and can cause trouble down the road. The easiest way to avoid problems with distribution is to get written permission to use a person's image or content. Having any participant sign a release form will help by clearly stating the rights of the media content. To obtain a release form to use for F.I.T.-related media, contact the [Marketing Department](#).