

Blogs and Podcasts

Using WordPress and Gabcast for Simple Personal Broadcasting



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=Shortcut =Advice =Caution

Introduction

Blog and **podcast** are terms you may be familiar with but never have had officially defined. A **blog** is a publicly available web-based journal. The entries on a blog are usually updates on a regular basis and are displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogs generally offer commentary from a personal point of view. The term blog can also be used as a verb; to blog means to maintain or update a blog. Most blogs have a subscription feature allowing readers to automatically receive updates from the blog without having to visit the blog website.

A **podcast** is a series of multimedia files (usually audio mp3) that are distributed over the internet. Like a blog, a podcast is usually updated on a regular basis and includes a subscription feature allowing users to download the newest episode once it is available. Individual podcast files generally are available for listening online or can be downloaded for playing from a computer or an mp3 player.

These instructions will take you through the basic steps of setting up a blog and a podcast using free online tools. You do not have to download or install any software to use these tools. The blog and podcasting tools, WordPress and Gabcast, will be used in combination to demonstrate best practices in podcasting. Be aware that these tools are not supported by OTS.

Summary

Blogs and Podcasts

1. Registering for a WordPress account
2. Selecting a theme for your blog
3. Registering for a Gabcast account
4. Creating a Gabcast channel
5. Recording a podcast
6. Subscribing to your podcast

Registering for a WordPress Account

The first step in setting up this blog is to register for a WordPress account.

1. Go to <http://wordpress.com>. Select the **Get a WordPress Blog now** link.
2. Fill in a preferred username and email. Select the checkbox indicating you agree to the terms of service and click **Next**.



- If you will be using this blog as a class tool with students contributing to the blog, you may want to create a class email account to use for registration for your blog.



- If you are unable to move on to the next step, you may have chosen a username that has already been selected by another WordPress user. Try a variation on the username.

3. Record the URL for your blog. Enter a title and select a language for your blog. Choose whether or not you would like your blog to appear in public listings. Click **Signup**.



- You can modify your blog's privacy settings after setting up your account, if necessary.

4. You should receive a message by email indicating your blog has been created. Check your email for the activation message.

5. Click on the activation link to activate your WordPress account. You will be taken to a WordPress page that will provide you with your username (from Step 2) and an automatically generated password. Record your username and password. Click **Login**.

6. Enter your username (Step 2) and password (Step 5). Click **Login**.

7. Go to the **My Account** menu and select **Edit Profile**.

8. Fill in any profile information you like. This information will be

displayed in a link from your blog. You may also reset your password here. When you are done, click **Update Profile**.

Selecting a Theme

Your blog will automatically appear with a default theme and page layout. You have the ability to modify the appearance and layout of your blog as well as to determine which widget (tools) are available from your blog.

1. Go to <http://www.wordpress.com> and login with your username and password.
2. Click on the **My Dashboard** link.
3. Select the **Presentation** panel. Choose a theme for your blog by clicking on the theme's name. After you select a theme, you may preview your blog by selecting the **View my blog** link. You can return to the **Presentation** panel by clicking the **Back** button in your browsers or by selecting **Presentation** from the **My Dashboard** menu.
4. Depending on the theme you select, you may be able to customize the header images, font color, and other style elements of your blog. These choices will appear under the **Presentation** panel.
 - **Custom Image Header** allows you to upload your own image to replace the image header in your theme.
 - **Sidebar Widgets** allows you to control which tools, such as a calendar, search function, and a link to an archive, will appear in the sidebar of your blog. You should include **Archives** (automatically creates a link to past posts to your blog), **RSS** (creates the syndication feed that allows users to subscribe to your blog), **Search**, and **Links** (allows you to post useful links) in your sidebar widgets.
 - **Edit CSS** lets users with CSS knowledge alter the color and layout of a blog theme.
5. After making any changes, click on the **Save Change** button.

Registering for a Gabcast Account

Once you have established your blog, you are ready to create your podcasting account. Follow the directions below to set up your Gabcast account.

1. Go to <http://gabcast.com>.
2. Click on the **Sign up now** button.
3. Click the checkboxes next to the Terms and Conditions. Click **Submit**.
4. Enter the information requested on the **Account Details** page. Click **Submit**.
5. Go to your email to activate your Gabcast account.

Creating a Gabcast Channel

Once you have your Gabcast account, you can set up your podcast. Each distinct podcast is called a **channel** on Gabcast.

1. Go to <http://gabcast.com>.
2. Login with the email account and password used to create your Gabcast account.
3. Select **Create a new channel**.
4. Enter a **Title** and **Description** for your channel. People will see this information in their aggregator when they subscribe to your podcast.
5. Enter a numeric **Channel Password**. Record this password so you will remember it later.
6. Select the Audio Blog category from the dropdown menu.
7. Edit any additional information on this page.

8. Select the **Add new blog** link. Use the dropdown menu to select WordPress from the available list.
9. Enter your WordPress username and password.
10. Choose to embed the Flash player in your blog. This will allow users to play your podcast directly from your blog page without downloading the file.
11. Click **Add**.
12. Click **Submit**.

Recording a Podcast

Now that you have a channel, you are ready to record an episode of your podcast. You should prepare for your podcast prior to recording, by making either an outline for your episode or writing out a script.

1. Dial the following number: 1-800-749-0632.
2. Enter your channel number followed by the pound (#) sign.
3. Enter your numeric Gabcast password followed by the pound sign.
4. To create a new post, press 1 on your phone to record.
5. Once you are done recording, press the pound sign.
6. If you would like to listen to your podcast before publishing it, press 1. If you are ready to make your podcast available for download, press 2.
7. You may either post a second podcast or end the call.

Subscribing to the Podcast

Once you have set up your blog and recorded the first episode of your podcast, you can provide instructions for subscribing to your podcast on your blog.

1. Sign in to <http://www.gabcast.com>.
2. Select the **My Channels** tab.
3. Click on the name of the podcast you would like to add to your blog.
4. Click on the **click to subscribe** button.
5. Click on the orange broadcast icon next to **RSS Clients (including iTunes)**.
6. A new window should open. This is the RSS feed for your podcast. Copy the URL for your feed from this page. It is in the format <http://www.gabcast.com/casts/channelnumber/rss/rss.xml>.
7. Sign in to your WordPress account and go to your blog.
8. From the **Write** panel, select **Write Page** subpanel.
9. Enter a descriptive page title, such as "Subscribe to the _____ Podcast."
10. In the page content editor, add instructions about how to subscribe to a podcast. You may want to use the sample instructions below. Make sure to paste the URL from your podcast feed into the instructions.
Sample text: "To subscribe to the _____ podcast, follow the instructions below:
1) Copy the following link: _____.
2) Paste the link into the subscription field of your podcasting software. This process may vary depending on your software. Look for a button that says "Add" or Subscribe".
For further instructions on how to subscribe to the podcast using iTunes, go to <http://www.infopeople.org/resources/itunespodcasting.html>.
For instructions on how to subscribe to the podcast using Juice, go to <http://oneminutehowto.com/Subscribe/Subscribe.asp>."
11. Once you are done writing your page, select **Publish**.