

About Podcasting

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Podcast Ready - Podcast Adoption Made Simple

Podcast Adoption For the Masses

I had a chance to interview Russell Holliman, Founder of Podcast Ready, who has created a technology that allows people to find, manage and share audio and video podcasts quickly and easily. Podcast Ready's, "myPodder" delivers podcasts directly to any digital device, including your computer, PDA, and/or memory card/stick. The Podcast Ready site also features a great podcast directory where podcasters can submit their feed.

Beyond this, users can purchase a [mobiBlue Cube Player](#) which comes equipped with Podcast Ready software to subscribe to and download podcasts, as well as record their own voice and listen to the radio.

The technology behind Podcast Ready's products is simple. In the beginning, we took the functionality of the podcast receiving applications that were out at the time and made them into a self-contained application that required no installation.

This was done so that the receiving functionality could be placed on any USM device (universal storage media) and used while connected to any computer without the user having to do anything.

The reason for this was to make it as easy as possible for people buying devices to be introduced to podcasting – it's preloaded and ready to use right out of the box.

I discovered you through a post on a [BusinessWeek Online](#) blog where you posted a comment and said, "Podcast Ready is addressing the issues of understanding and obtaining podcasts." How do you help subscribers/users "understand" podcasts? What specifically, (in your research) have you discovered hinders the general public from adopting podcasting in this regard?

We're seeing anywhere from a 20%-50% "stream" rate on podcast sites, meaning that up to 50% of listeners are going to the podcast's website and streaming the content directly. When surveyed, the majority of these users cited the fact that they didn't understand that podcasts we're RSS delivered content, that they could subscribe, and the alternate ways time shifting can help one utilize content.

By placing the podcast technology simply and squarely in the hands of users "out of the box" we're helping them to understand these concepts very quickly and easily.

This understanding and the actual methods for subscribing are what we have found to be the biggest road blocks to adoption. Our application and related web services strive to remove these obstacles and get the consumer using podcast technology immediately.

How are you advertising in stores like Target and Wal-Mart? Meaning, what specific language are you using for people to understand that your MP3 players are built to help facilitate podcast listening? Have you done tests to see that new adopters will understand this language?

Currently our products are shipping with information about Podcast Ready on the packaging that reads:

"The easiest way to find, manage, enjoy, and share podcasts! Podcast Ready enables your [CUBE](#) to manage and receive podcasts from any internet-enabled PC without installing any software. Podcast Ready's web services, www.podcastready.com, interact with the CUBE to help you find and enjoy high-quality content from anywhere, and share it easily with your friends. With a vast directory and a patent-pending "one-click" subscription process, Podcast Ready on the CUBE makes listening to your favorite shows easy."

Interestingly enough, this has just begun. Up until this point "podcastready" products were on store shelves unlabeled and largely un-marketed. Even still, of the customers that have purchased these products we have seen a 78% adoption rate of our service.

really like your quote, "Our goal is to help bring podcasts to the mainstream public and make it as easy as possible for people to find and enjoy the content they want." Realizing that you're in business to sell great products/services, why do you have such a passion for podcasting specifically? What got you interested in podcasting?

The business that we're in is a product of our passion and our belief that podcasting has the potential to be a fundamental technology moving forward. Keeping in mind that "podcasting" refers to the delivery mechanism and not the content, podcasting can become the de facto standard for delivering not only media content, but all kinds of information and data. I truly believe that RSS will be as important to a company's online presence in 3 or 4 years as a URL is today.

But stepping away from the technology, I am very passionate about podcasting because I do see it as a fantastically powerful publishing tool. Never before have people been able to produce and distribute, to a global audience, an audio or video production so cheaply and easily. It's an incredible phenomenon.

I personally became interested in podcasting while working on an RSS-related project. I was developing a system to distribute data sheets (PDF files) via RSS, so when I started to read about this movement, I was intrigued. My first thought was that it was a very clever way to use RSS technology – to distribute radio shows. I quickly became enamored, though, by the creativity of the producers – the content was unlike anything else I had access to. And as more people began podcasting, I suddenly found that at no time during the day was I listening to anything I didn't like – my daily selections were made by me and controlled by me and for the first time in years I had the office radio (connected to my MP3 player of course) on all day.

What are some of your favorite podcasts and why?

One of my most favorite podcasts is [Escape Pod](#). It's a weekly podcast of a science fiction short story. It was one of the first such podcasts and to my knowledge is the only one that pays the authors for their content. I am a huge fan of the genre and it just seems to fit very well into a podcast format.

Another one of my favorites is [History According to Bob](#). This is a podcast produced by a history professor in which he relates a different (often unknown) tale about history. He has a great sense of humor and a great way of telling stories.

I'm only guessing, but I feel that my tastes are probably quite different from what most people would listen to, and that is the great thing about this medium. For the first time I have access to a virtually unlimited supply of content that I enjoy.

You have a "featured podcasts" section on the homepage of your site. Can podcasters send in their feed/site URL for submission to be potentially listed on your site?

Most definitely. As it is now, any new podcast entered into a user's list from outside the directory gets placed into the directory. Some of the developers scan through the shows and change up the front with their favorites. Once the site comes out of beta this summer though, a lot of placement will be automated based on popularity, newness, etc.; one of the goals of the site is to give new podcasts exposure so that they don't get lost in the crowd of established shows.

What are some of the future products/services coming from *Podcast Ready* you can share?

If all goes according to the plan, this summer should prove to be very exciting for Podcast Ready and its users. First, the website is scheduled to come out of beta. We're doing a complete redesign on the site including the user interface – we're very excited about this. With the new site will come new functionality. For instance, users will be exposed to new, relevant content far easier than they can today on any site. We're releasing a slew of tools for those that wish to incorporate podcasting (audio and video) into their existing social network pages. We're also going to greatly expand our presence on MP3 devices and cell phones this summer, putting access to the vast amount of content into the hands of a whole new audience. This, together with some tools we're releasing for the content creators, we hope will go a long way to helping the podcast community realize their own goals for their podcasts.