



Podcasting Formats and Software The options, advantages and disadvantages of each

Below are observations of file formats and software you may run into when working with Podcasting and its related functions.

Media Formats

- **.mp3** – the most popular audio file format. Can be played on just about any software media player and portable media player. Small file size with good quality.
- **.wav** – The Microsoft audio format. Can be played on just about any software media player. Large file sizes with good quality.
- **.mp4** – MPEG 4 – video compression technology
 - **.mp4** – video file format. Good video quality.
 - **.m4a** – enhanced podcast format. Combines audio and still pictures.
 - **.m4b** – enhanced podcast format. Combines audio and still pictures.
 - Enhanced podcasts – these are files that incorporate audio and pictures to create an interactive media file. Somewhat comparable to a slideshow. You have more flexibility in creating the file, but depending on what you want to do, this may not be the best format for your project.
 - **.m4v** – video file format. Good video quality. The supported video format for the iPod and iTunes.
- **.mov** – quicktime video format. Supported in iTunes.
- **.wmv** – windows media video. Only supported with Windows media player. Will not play in quicktime or on a mac.

Quicktime Pro formats

- **Movie to hinted movie-** .mov. Should be used when streaming video files.
- **Movie to ipod** - .m4v. the supported video format for the iPod
- **Movie to MPEG-4** - .mp4. Video file format.
- **QTL – Quick time media link** - .qtl. A text file that links to quicktime streaming media.
- **H.264** – video compression. Video compression technology that shrinks file size and produces great quality.
- **Movie to apple tv** - .m4v. Supported video format for iTunes.
- **Movie to quicktime movie** - .mov. Quicktime video format. Supported in iTunes.

Software

Basic use

1. Mac – VODcaster

- The purpose – You already have your audio **and** video files created and produced and you want to make a podcast as quickly as possible.
- Free
- Creates the XML for you

Disadvantages:

- Have to move up the podcast files manually to a web files hosting site

PC – Spunkicast

- The purpose - You already have your audio files created and produced and you want to make a podcast as quickly as possible.
- Free
- Creates the XML for you

Disadvantages:

- Has built in FTP but has some issues. So the easiest way is to move up the podcast files manually to a web files hosting site.
- Audio files **only**.

Intermediate use

1. Mac – Profcast

- The purpose – records a presentation (PPT or Keynote) as you give it and can create a podcast.
- Records slide timings
- Must use a microphone to record voice
- Uses m4b format, to create enhanced podcasts
- Must publish as a podcast separately, ---Creates RSS XML for you
- Can save as a media file without the RSS file
- Can send to iWeb and GarageBand for enhancement
- Can publish via built in FTP for you
- \$27 a license.

Issues:

- Does not capture PPT animations because it uses the .m4a/b format.
- Does not capture audio embedded in slides (yet!), because of the .m4a/b format.

Conclusion:

- Since you can add audio to your slides from within PPT and create a movie as well with Office 2004 for mac and only use VODcaster to create the XML, you don't need this program.

- Since .m4a and .m4b formats use still pictures for enhanced podcasts, these formats do not capture animations in PPT slides and audio and video in slides. So this is very limiting which supports the conclusion that the use of enhanced podcasts is pointless when using PPT. Use the video format instead.

2. **Mac – Microsoft PowerPoint 2004**

- Purpose – can convert a presentation into a quicktime movie. Built into PowerPoint.
- Keeps most of the animation from the presentation in the movie.
- Keeps the embedded audio in the movie if the presentation has it, using the record narration function.
- Slide show>record narration, voice audio recording for PPT presentations.
- Free with Office for Mac 2004.
- Don't need quicktime.

Disadvantages

- Have to import the converted movie into a podcast creating program.
- .Mov files can be very large when converting a PPT presentation to a movie in PPT. PPT is not a video creating program, so you are going to get average video quality.

PC – Microsoft PowerPoint 2003

- Same as Mac PPT
- But can't convert presentations to a movie on PC. Have to use/buy a third party converter.
- Can save PPT slides as jpegs and import them into Quicktime Pro. Record an audio track in Quicktime and import that. The only issue is slide timings, which is limited in Quicktime. This may also be a tedious process.

3. **Mac and PC – Quicktime Pro**

- The purpose – record and edit audio and video
- Present a movie as a slide show, frame by frame
- Create a slide show using jpegs (Can save your PowerPoint slides as jpegs and import them into quicktime)
- Annotate a slide show
 - Mac – record and add to selection and scale
 - PC – record and add a separate audio track
- Create an image from a movie
- Convert a file into quicktime (.mov)
- Select a playing part of a movie
- Cut, copy, delete movie parts
- Work with tracks (video, audio, text)
- Multiple movies in the same frame
- Poster frame
- Playback settings

- Many exporting options
- Creating a chapter list (which is ridiculously tedious and difficult!!)

Disadvantages

- Can't manipulate slide transition time very well.
- The process of adding chapters is ridiculous
- Have to import the movie in to a podcast creating program
- \$25 a license

4. **iWeb-Mac**

- Purpose – create a web page using built in templates that includes adding blogs, podcasts.
- Easy publishing. You already have your content (audio and video created)
- Creates the RSS/XML for you
- Can publish via FTP, built in.
- Comes with every mac.

Disadvantages

- Can not create, record, edit audio/video.
- \$30-\$40, part of iLife
- Mac only.

Other software

Audacity

- An open source audio editing program
- Free
- Mac and PC versions
- Can create and convert files to .mp3.

Camtasia Studio

- Desktop screen recording software
- Exports into many file formats. Flash, WMV, AVI, MOV, Real Media, Gif animation, Camtasia for Real Player streaming, M4V
- PC only
- \$300. Academic pricing available.

Captivate

- Desktop screen recording software
- Supports limited file exporting formats. Flash and HTML only.
- PC only
- Conclusion: use Camtasia for creating video for podcasting.
- \$500. Academic pricing available.

Snapz Pro X2

- Desktop screen recording software
- Mac only
- Exports into quicktime .mov formats which is compatible with podcasting.
- \$

Screen Mimic

- Desktop recording software
- Mac only.
- Exports into quicktime .mov formats which is compatible with podcasting.
- \$

PDF Creator

- Open source PDF creating software
- Free
- Mac and PC

Core FTP lite

- FTP software
- PC only
- Free

Crimson Editor

- HTML/XML editor
- Free
- PC only

Anapod Explorer

- Software for transferring files from an ipod to your computer.
- PC only.
- If an ipod is set up in disk mode, you don't need any software to get files off of an ipod. They are hidden files. Simply unhide them and click and drag over to your computer. This may be necessary if recordings or other files become corrupt and if the files won't transfer to your computer.
- Free

iPod viewer

- Software for transferring files from an ipod to your computer.
- Mac only.
- If an ipod is set up in disk mode, you don't need any software to get files off of an ipod. They are hidden files. Simply unhide them and click and drag over to your computer.
- Free

iWriter

- Allows you to add text documents and audio to an ipod. It uses the Notes application so you can read text off of an ipod.
- Mac and PC
- \$

Flip 4 mac

- Allows you to play .WMV files on a mac. Adds a plugin to quicktime.
- \$

Text Wrangler

- HTML/XML editor
- Free
- Mac only

iMovie

- Mac only
- Comes with every mac
- Create movies, enhanced podcasts

Advanced use

1. GarageBand

- Purpose – can create audio, video, and enhanced video podcasts.
- Can create/record audio and video
- Work with tracks
- Add chapters or markers
- Add episode artwork
- Uses .m4a format for enhanced podcasts only.
- Can export to iWeb
- Comes with every mac
- \$30-\$40, part of iLife

Disadvantages

- Have to export to another application that creates the podcast.

Other

- Need usb microphones for the macs, standard mini jacks won't work because the microphones have to be usb powered.
- Need instructions on the use of iTunes on how to subscribe to podcasts and manage them.
- People's computers need to be updated to the latest version of Quicktime and iTunes when working with podcasts.

Conclusion

- Users may have to use a combination of programs depending on what they want to do.

iTunes U

- Course management web portal.
- Don't have to use any program to create any xml.
- You simple just have to upload the files.
- Can upload supported audio and video files.
- Can upload .pdf documents

Quicktime, Real, Flash Streaming

- The idea of providing on demand audio and video content.
- Requires separate server setup.
- Requires the use of supported file formats.
- Used to complement audio and video needs that podcasts can't provide.