

# Podcasting 101

The sound of public engagement

With Marc Bragdon

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# Learning outcomes via the 90 Second Podcast

- Write a listener-friendly script for the trailer of a hypothetical podcast on one of the following topics:
  - Trends in [your field of research or study]
  - [Your field of research or study] for children
  - Everyday [your field of research or study]
  - The story behind [favourite book, song, movie, artwork, etc.]
  - My amazing life (stories from the field)
  - Another topic of your choice
- Use a microphone and recording/editing software to best effect in recording your script
- Add and blend music and/or effects (sound design) into your recording
- Edit and mix the audio to *optimize the listening experience* in recording/editing software
- Render the audio and (hypothetically) upload to a podcast streaming service



## UNB IN 30



21.05



23.45

Podcast Hosted by Kalkidan Burke

30 minute  
Journeys  
toward  
2030



# UNB in 30

with Kolawole Ojo

30 minute journeys towards 2030







What are some of your favourite podcasts?

Why?





RECORDING  
IN PROGRESS

# What *isn't* podcasting?

- Audio from recorded live events (e.g. lectures and colloquia) intended for a captive audience
- Pressing record, hitting stop, and uploading

# What is Podcasting?



# Audio Storytelling



# Planning and writing for a medium

	READING	VIEWING	LISTENING
Working example	Article	Instructional YouTube video	Podcast
Meaning	Word choice, graphs, tables, etc.	Word choice, physical dynamics, tone of voice (choice of music and sound)	<b>Word choice, tone of voice, choice of music and sounds</b>
Medium	Light	Light (and sound)	<b>Sound</b>
Direct Receptors	Eyes	Eyes (and ears)	<b>Ears</b>
Invoked Receptors	All	All	<b>All</b>
Navigation	Flexible	Mostly Linear	<b>Linear</b>
Personal Mobility (while engaged)	Limited	Limited	<b>Full</b>

# Audio scripting and sculpting (editing) implications: Create, don't re-create an experience

Scripting elements	Examples
Planning for sounds	Real and imagined settings, mood music and <i>evocative tonal effects</i> to accompany the script
Make it personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relate topics to your own experience to reinforce both yours and the listener's investment in the story</li><li>• Add cues for tone and pacing if you tend toward a breathless or monotonous read out loud style</li><li>• <i>Expect to practice</i></li></ul>
Concision and selective (paced) eloquence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solo: Short, clear sentences</li><li>• Interviews: Questions that build upon one another; planned (and spontaneous) probes</li><li>• <i>Be ruthless</i>: Clear up excessive vocal distractions (um, erm, ah) / rambling / less engaging passages</li></ul>
Introducing new subjects / making transitions obvious	<p><i>Show and tell</i>: Explicit control of flow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pause and set the stage; explicitly wrap up a section and introduce the next ("So...up to this point we've learned about the background of X, X's motivations and X's expectations, and next we'll explore how X's experience of Y has been shaped by these...")</li><li>• Interviews: the <b>"NPR" approach</b>: Short speaker quote + clear, quick introduction of speaker + longer speaker quote</li><li>• Music or sound effects that fade in / out</li></ul>
Eliciting soundbites	Interview: follow up open ended questions and general answers by asking for <i>specific examples - from the interviewee - and sharing common experiences</i> ; re-stage portions where the effect could be improved

# Exercise 1: Writing

- Write a script for the trailer of a hypothetical podcast on one of the following topics:
  - Trends in [your field of research]
  - [Your field of research] for children
  - Better living through [your field of research]
  - The story behind [favourite book, song, movie, artwork, etc.]
  - My amazing life (stories from the field)
  - Another topic of your choice
- First thought, best thought! We will be working fast.
- Follow template structure: [https://unbcloud-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/mbragdon\\_unb\\_ca/EbB\\_FxMOWM5AtwcJzCne8eoB2sQPcQq57oRycfSiimXZLQ?e=WDhP4R](https://unbcloud-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/mbragdon_unb_ca/EbB_FxMOWM5AtwcJzCne8eoB2sQPcQq57oRycfSiimXZLQ?e=WDhP4R)





# Audio Recording



# Properties of sound

- Pressure or intensity (volume, measured in decibels - *db*)
- Dynamic range (range of intensity of a given sound event)
- Frequency (of sound waves: the pitch, as measured in hertz – *hz*)
- Tone (relationship of multiple frequencies)
- Reverberation (rebounding and decaying through space)
- Direction (though space)

# Audio recording and editing correlates

Property of sound	Recording control	Editing control (Audacity)
Volume	Gain (microphone)	Amplification / Fade in and out
Dynamic range	Practice and intention	Compression / Normalization
Frequency	Practice and intention	Pitch correction
Tone	Practice and intention	Equalization (EQ)
Reverberation	Distance from microphone, size of space, textures and angles of surfaces within	Reverb
Direction	Stereo / omnidirectional recording (microphone)	Panning



# Recording Technical Aspects

- Microphones:
  - Directional (shotgun, cardioid, dynamic) vs omnidirectional
  - Mono (single source/signal) or Stereo (multiple sources/signals)
  - Don't stand too close, too far
  - Use a pop filter if you can (for hard vowels)
- Environment:
  - "Studio" – with sound isolation and dampening, not too cavernous, soft and/or angled surfaces
  - "Field" – Invest in (or borrow) a purpose-built (smartphone) microphone with a windscreen on the mic
- Application:
  - Audio software (desktop, phone app, or cloud) for (some) control
- Virtual Interviews:
  - Apply aspects above to preparing interviewee(s)
  - Desktop apps will require interviewee to send you audio file
  - Cloud apps (e.g., Zencastr) may integrate interview recordings

# Microphone recommendations

- Blue Yeti for studio recording
  - 4 directional settings
- Shure MV88 for field recording
  - Great mic, great app
  - Get a windscreen as well
- Rode Wireless Go for live events (good for filming too)

HIL RC Audio Studio:  
<https://lib.unb.ca/researchcommons/audio-studio>

UNB Equipment Pool:  
<https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/cetl/classrooms/equipment/equipment.html>



# Exercise 2: Recording

- In one of eight designated rooms, attach provided microphone to your laptop and record the audio script using Audacity software and **following the Recording section (Audacity tab) here:**



<https://guides.lib.unb.ca/guide/396>

- As much as you can, breathe from the belly.
- If you make a mistake, do one of the following:
  - pause, and continue where you left off,
  - stop and start over, or
  - stop and start from where you left off.
- Also record to a separate track **about 90 seconds of room (ambient) sound** that you can use later to cover editing cuts or for weaving in imported tracks. You may want to mute any other tracks. The recorded tracks can all overlap for now.
- Save your project.

# Recording Rooms

Audio Studio (321C)	At2035 + Focusrite interface (USB C)
Lightboard Studio (320C)	Blue Yeti (USB A)
319A Group Study Room	Blue Yeti (USB A)
319B Group Study Room	Blue Yeti (USB A)
319C Group Study Room	Blue Yeti (USB A)
319D Group Study Room	Blue Yeti Mini (USB A)
Marc's Office (320B)	AT2035 + Focusrite interface (USB C)
319F Group Study Room	Blue Snowball (USB A)



# Yeti recording settings

## **STEREO MODE**

Uses both the left and right channels to capture a wide, realistic sound image—perfect for recording acoustic guitar or choir.



## **CARDIOID MODE**

Well-suited to podcasts, vocal performances, voice-overs and instruments. Cardioid mode records sound sources that are directly in front of the microphone, delivering rich, full-bodied sound.



## **OMNIDIRECTIONAL MODE**

Picks up sound equally from all around the mic. It's best used in situations when you want to capture the ambience of "being there"—like a live recording of a band's performance, a multi-person podcast or a conference call.



## **BIDIRECTIONAL MODE**

Records from both the front and the rear of the microphone—ideal for recording a duet or a two-person interview.





# At2035 + Focusrite Scarlet 2i2 interface



# Editing and Sound Design

# Exercise 3: Editing and Sound Design

A chance to refine and mix tracks to optimize the listening experience.

Follow steps in the subject guide:

<https://guides.lib.unb.ca/guide/396>

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Note that you will be adding at least **one music track** and **one sound effect track** from the recommended sources.





# Audio recording and editing correlates

Property of sound	Recording controls (Microphone, space, you)	Editing control (Audacity)
Volume	Gain	Volume (tracks) / Amplification (selections from tracks)
Dynamic range	Practice and intention	Compression / Normalization
Frequency	Practice and intention	Pitch correction
Tone	Practice and intention	Equalization (EQ)
Reverberation	Distance from microphone, size of space, textures and angles of surfaces within	Reverb
Direction	Stereo / omnidirectional recording	Panning

# Final Words

# Listener-oriented podcasting

(there is no other kind)

- Sufficient Research (your topic, your audience)
- **Storytelling** specificity (personal investment)
- Congruent Tone
- Well executed Format (solo, interview, roundtable, etc.)
- Clear Structure
- Overt Transitions
- Quality **Recording**
- Artful **Editing**
- Compelling **Sound design**
- Savvy Promotion

# Planning for sound

- Room / location sampling (recording) for background and continuity
- Field recording with phone + mic for purposeful, illustrative effects
- Music, sound effects download services (Uppbeat, Freesound, Epidemic, etc.) or Digital Audio Workstation software with instruments, loops and advanced EQ:
  - Garageband (Mac)
  - Ableton, Cubase, FL Studio (PC)



# Podcast Distribution





PODCAST  
**UNB in 30**

Available on 2 platforms >

Share

Public site

OVERVIEW

AUDIENCE

EPISODE RANKINGS

Plays ⓘ

**215**

All-time

Plays per episode ⓘ

**20**

On average

Audience size ⓘ

**33**

Last 7 days

Spotify followers ⓘ

**18**

NEW



**Podcast performance**

Last 30 days ▾

Daily ▾

Plays ⓘ



# Alternative Podcast Editing Platforms

## Soundtrap

### Key Features

- unlimited projects
- free instruments, sound effects and loops
- auto tune

### Ease of-use

- beginner friendly

### Pricing

- free plan (many options available)
- for more features there are monthly plans.

## Anchor

### Key Features

- video to audio feature
- all in one platform; create, edit and distribute

### Ease of-use

- beginner friendly

### Pricing

- free

## Zencastr

### Key Features

- looping, fading and volume control features
- encrypt voice chats feature

### Ease of-use

- user friendly

### Pricing

- free plan (many options available)
- professional plan \$20 / month
- growth plan \$49/ month

## Adobe Audition

### Key Features

- noise reduction features
- advanced audio track restoration and compression
- batch processing capabilities

### Ease of-use

- for experienced podcasters

### Pricing

- yearly subscription - \$239.88
- monthly subscription - \$20.99

## Riverside

### Key Features

- remove sections feature
- video podcaster friendly
- tools for fine-tuning audio

### Ease of-use

- beginner friendly

### Pricing

- Free plan (many options available)
- Standard Plan \$15 / month
- Pro Plan \$24/ month



File

Edit

Settings

Tutorials



Saved!



Un



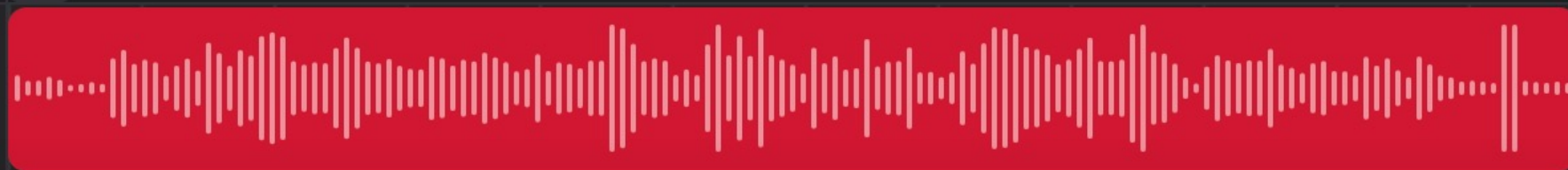
Mic



R



Vol



Pan



Sweep



Volume

# Soundtrap

Automation is limited to 1 track per project. Upgrade to get full feature!

Upgrade

Instrument



# Podcasting support at the Harriet Irving Library Research Commons

