

Intermediate Podcasting



From
Idea
to
Episode



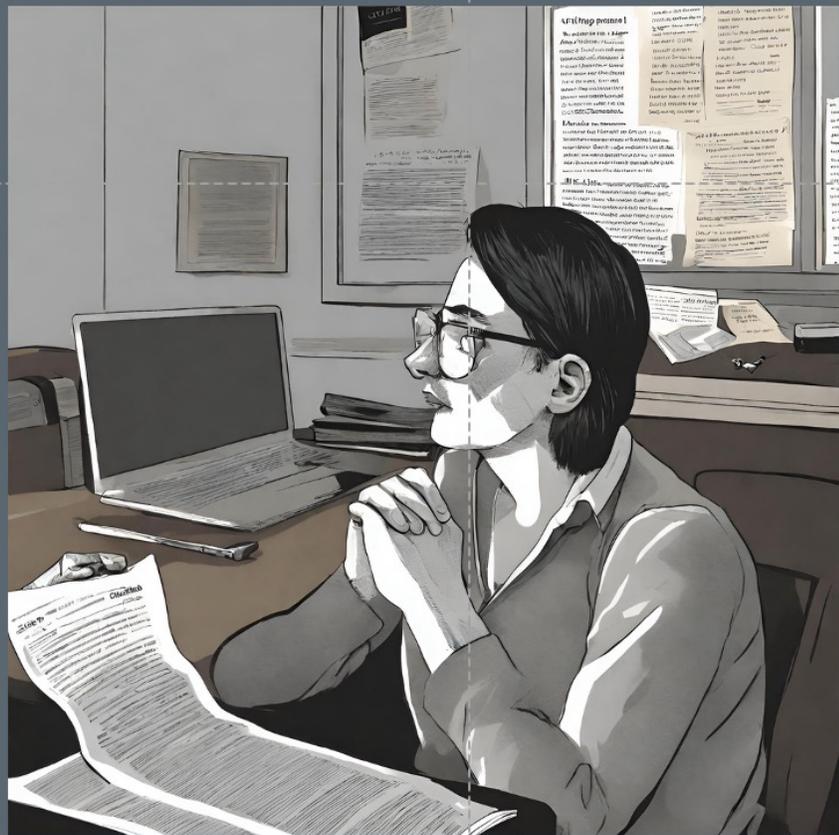
2 hours!

- The scripts
- Setting parameters and scripting
- Structuring an episode
- Assembling your production plan: technologies, participants, and schedule
- Quick introduction to Soundtrap: recording your pitch, group editing session

Parameters and scripting

- What is the premise?
- What about you??? Who are you and why are you doing this? Where are you in all this?
- What are your podcast inspirations for content, format, editing, sound, etc.?
- Who is the audience? What is the tone?
- What is the format (solo / interview / roundtable / mix)?
- How long will episodes be? How many and how often?
- How are you going to record? Edit?
- First episode is the prototype

What are the storytelling implications of a medium?



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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"> • Relate topics to your own experience to reinforce both yours and the listener's investment in the story • Add cues for tone and pacing if you tend toward a breathless or monotonous read out loud style • Expect to practice
Concision and selective (paced) eloquence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solo: Short, clear sentences • Interviews: Questions that build upon one another (leading down a clear path); planned (and spontaneous) probes • Be ruthless: Clear up excessive vocal distractions (um, erm, ah) / rambling / less engaging passages
Sequencing, pacing, and transitions	<p>Show AND tell: Explicit control of flow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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...”) • Interviews: the ”NPR” approach: Short speaker quote + clear, quick introduction of speaker + longer speaker quote • Music or sound effects that fade in / out
Eliciting soundbites	Interview: follow up open ended questions and general answers by asking for <i>specific examples - from the interviewee - and sharing common experiences; re-stage</i> portions where the effect could be improved

First episode prototype: structure

- For the introduction (60 seconds to 3 minutes), choose from:
 - Cold open: Situational teaser of what is to come (e.g., snippet of conversation, narrated reflection or recollection, media report or artefact, field recording from “our story, already in progress”)
 - Host / Narrator setting the scene or establishing the podcast and episode premise
 - Will there be theme music? How will it be used? Will it be layered with a voice over announcement? Typically, this is brief (5-10 seconds)
 - Will you spell out the episode, or keep it “mysterious”? If the latter, consider providing an ultimate destination or objective up front nevertheless

In the thick of it: the episode proper

- Carve up the structure and timing provisionally:
 - Narration
 - Consider the classic storyline structure:
 - Subject (person, place, thing, event)
 - Situation (challenge, mystery, opportunity, etc.)
 - Subject's response (action)
 - Conclusion (resolution of the journey, cliffhanger for the next episode)
 - How will you piece in or inject interview material (if applicable)?
 - Interview(s) and roundtable
 - How will you introduce the conversation and participants?
 - How many questions? Follow up prompts?
 - How will you “inject” yourself to build rapport with interviewee(s) and audience?
 - Don't hesitate to ask a guest to restate an answer

Interviews: release form

- Make the understanding explicit, if not strictly legal:
 - <https://www.jotform.com/form-templates/podcast-guest-release-form>
 - <https://castos.com/podcast-release-form-guest/>

The End.

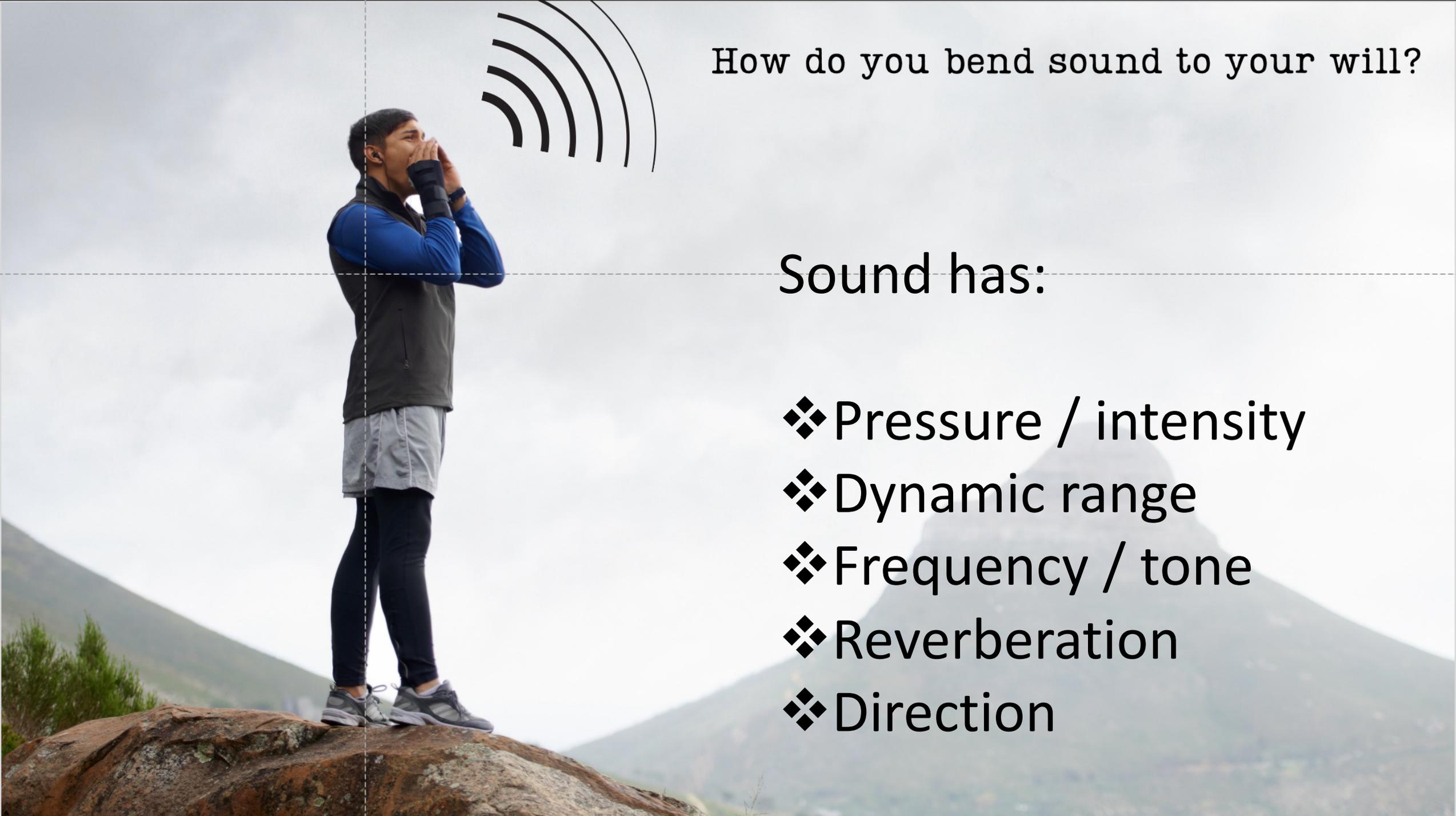
- Consider summarizing the episode
- Will you suggest further resources on your podcast site (see Releasing / Marketing)?
- Consider teasing out the next episode
- Will there be end music – the opening theme, something else, overtop of narration or stand alone?
- Will there be credits?



Tools of the trade

Recording guidelines

- Choose a single location, consistent circumstances, and consistent technology (microphones, apps) for narration and interviews
- Have remote interviewees record under optimal circumstances (this will be relative)
- Practice your delivery, review, and develop the proper tone – this goes for narration AND interviews (workshop both)



How do you bend sound to your will?

Sound has:

- ❖ Pressure / intensity
- ❖ Dynamic range
- ❖ Frequency / tone
- ❖ Reverberation
- ❖ Direction

Audio recording and editing correlates

Property of sound	Recording control	Editing control (Audacity)
Volume	Gain (microphone)	Volume /Amplification / Fade in and out
Dynamic range	Practice and intention	Compression / Normalization
Frequency	Practice and intention / autotune filter	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

Editing guidelines

- We will be using Soundtrap: <https://www.soundtrap.com/>
- Be ruthless with brain-fog, ho-hums, and overruns
- How will you use sound design?
 - Sound effect? Music?
 - Creative Commons, licensed, original?
 - Panning sounds to create dimensions and depth
 - EQ to balance, improve, and fill out soundscape
 - Compression to even out dynamic sounds
 - Adding or subtracting reverb

Releasing / Marketing

- Spotify for podcasters: <https://podcasters.spotify.com/>
- Instagram and/or X account? Meaningless without broad engagement in recruitment and target-community and – content related conversations

Schedule

- Planning (scripting, recruitment, workshopping narration and interviews)
- Recording
- Editing
- Releasing
- Promoting
- Repeat

<https://www.soundtrap.com>

- Record your script
- Import into Soundtrap (you will create an account)
- Add theme music or sound effects
- Editing functions:
 - Fades
 - Panning
 - Voice effects / EQ
 - Export