

Podcasting 101

The sound of public engagement

With Marc Bragdon (mbragdon@unb.ca)



Podcasting challenges

- Being an army of one
- Expectations of an audience (writing / performing / editing)
- Behaviour of sound
- Wrangling technologies
- Wrangling interview subjects (if applicable)



Audio as a medium of communication

What are the storytelling implications?

	READING	LISTENING
Working example	Article / Post	Podcast
Medium	Light	Sound
Navigation	Multi-directional	Linear
Performance	Solitary	Communal (broadcast)
Meaning	Words and visuals	+ Voice and sounds
Personal Mobility	Limited	Full

Make it personal

Science
AAAS

Podcast Episode

**Looking for life on an icy
moon, and feeling like a rat**

Science Magazine Podcast

- **Relate topics to your own experience**
- **Add cues for tone and pacing to your script**
- **Perform at 150% (unless you already do)**
- **Expect to perform a few takes**

Balancing concision and eloquence



Podcast

UNB in 30

Marc Bragdon

- **Solo: Short, clear sentences**
- ***Be ruthless:* Minimize vocal distractions (um, erm, ah) / pauses / rambling / less engaging passages**
- **Ask interview subjects to restate good answers that initially ramble to the point**



Podcast Episode

Subtitles On: Why is movie dialogue so hard to understand?

[Twenty Thousand Hertz](#)



Podcast Episode

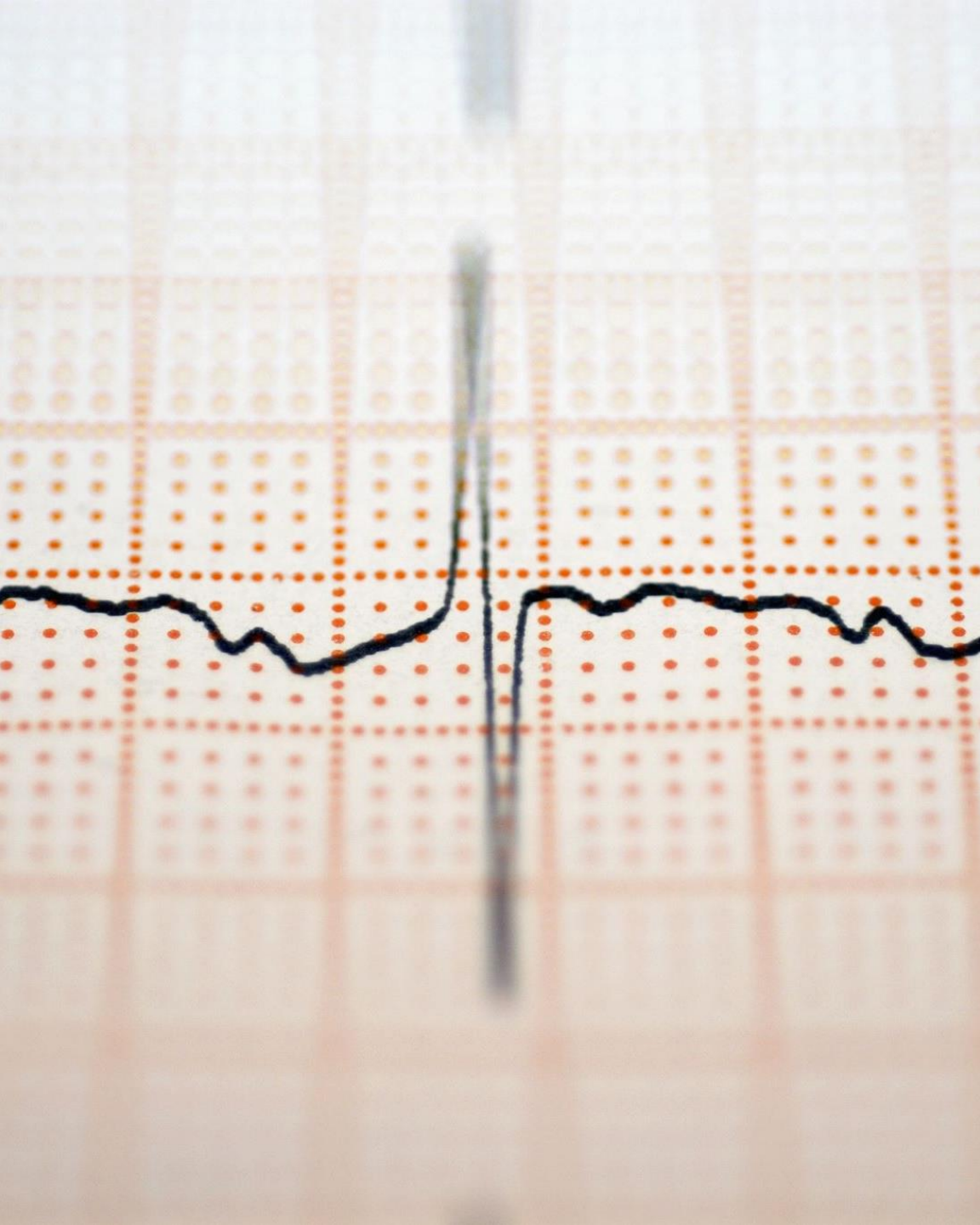
Hark | 4 | Do You Hear What I Hear?

Threshold

Control the flow

- 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...”)
- Add music or sound effects that fade in / out between segments or reflect shifts in narrative tone – don’t over do it.

Audio Recording



Physics of Sound

- **Volume** (measured in decibels - *db*)
- **Dynamics** (range of intensity)
- **Frequency** (measured in hertz – *hz*,, ranging through low (bass), Mid, and High (treble))
- **Space** (direction and reverberation)

2026: The Cold Open

What do I hope to get out of this year?

E.g., “I want to strike a better balance between work and play”

“Get up early and go to the gym”

“Win friends and influence people”

“I just don’t want to fall and slip on the ice”

Audio recording and editing correlates

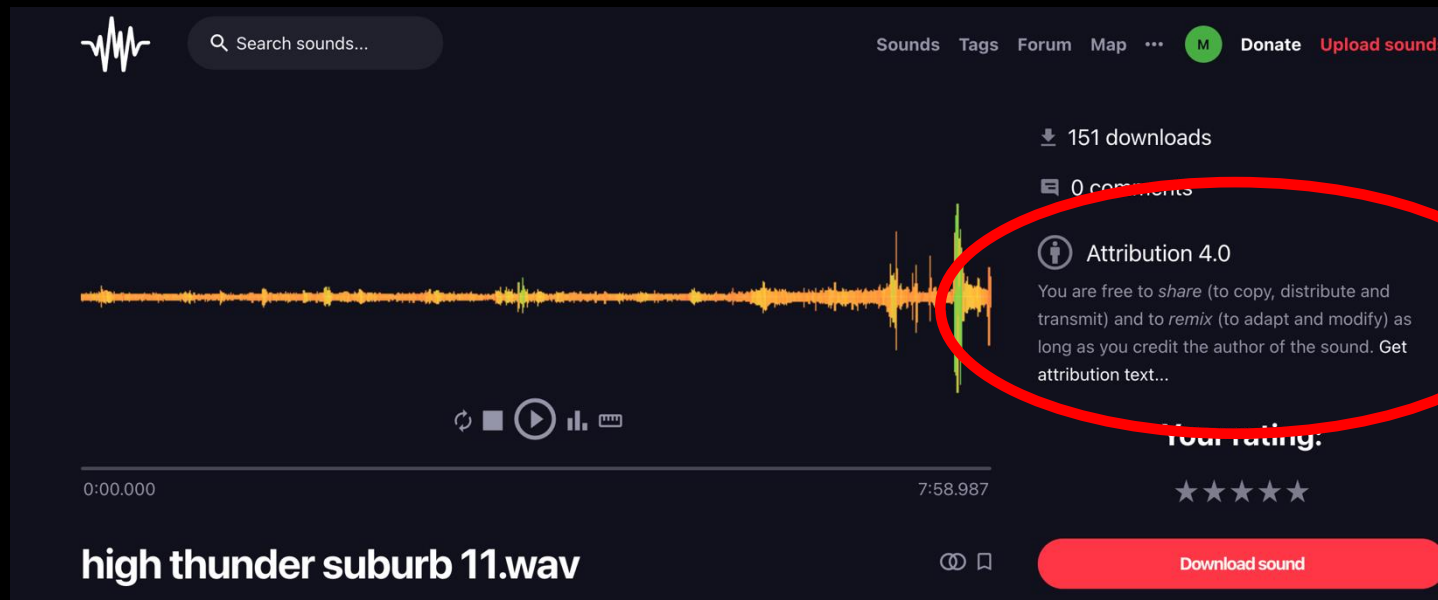
Property of sound	Recording control	Editing control (Audacity)	Effect (when intentional)
Volume	Gain (microphone)	Volume /Amplification / Fade in and out	Focus
Dynamic range	Practice and intention	Compression / Normalization	Texture and Depth
Frequency	Practice and intention	Equalization (EQ)	Balance and Depth
Reverberation	Distance from microphone, size of space, textures and angles of surfaces	Reverb	Focus and Depth
Direction	Stereo / omnidirectional recording (microphone)	Panning	Focus, Balance, and Depth

Recording hazards

- Reverb (sound bouncing around):
 - Easy to add, hard to subtract
 - More reverb suggests large spaces or distances; control through room/space textures and size of spaces and distance from microphone
- Gain (mic sensitivity / input volume)
 - Easy to boost, hard to refine overdriven recording (distorted)
 - Check levels prior to recording, err on the side of quiet (lower gain)
- Breathing and other unintended noises
 - Possible to mitigate during recording and/or editing
 - Cut script into breath-size chunks / lean back in between or when taking a breath
 - Record a separate track of room/space ambience to cover any de-amplification during editing, or copy "dead air passages" and paste in a separate covering track

Sound design resources

- freesound.org | soundtrap.com | upbeat.io | GarageBand | Ableton
- Make and record your own music and sound effects
- Copyright considerations and attribution



The screenshot shows a sound file page on freesound.org. The file is titled "high thunder suburb 11.wav" and has a duration of 7:58.987. The page includes a search bar, navigation links (Sounds, Tags, Forum, Map), and a "Donate" button. The sound file is displayed as a yellow waveform. To the right of the waveform, the following information is shown: 151 downloads, 0 comments, and the Attribution 4.0 license. The Attribution 4.0 license text is circled in red. Below the license text, there is a "Your rating:" section with five stars. At the bottom right, there is a red "Download sound" button.

Search sounds...

Sounds Tags Forum Map ... M Donate Upload sounds

151 downloads

0 comments

Attribution 4.0

You are free to *share* (to copy, distribute and transmit) and to *remix* (to adapt and modify) as long as you credit the author of the sound. Get attribution text...

Your rating: ★★★★★

0:00.000 7:58.987

high thunder suburb 11.wav

Download sound