
PODCAST MANUAL



UNITED SOCIETIES OF BALKANS

Podcast manual

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With the support of:



Table of Contents

Introduction 3

Planning your podcast 4

Finding a concept

The listener

Content 5

Interview

Script

Music

Sound

Recording 12

Overview of the equipment

How to start the computer up in OS X

Recording your voice

Editing

Recording outside the studio

Exporting your final project

Distribution 19

Uploading to Balkanhotspot.org

Sharing via social media

Online resources

Introduction

There is a new revolution going on in the radio: The on-demand revolution. Where radio used to be something you listened to in your car or kitchen. Today you can listen wherever and whenever you want via your mobile phone. This enable us to create radio content that people can listen to wherever they are in the world and whenever they want. So here is a guide to podcasting via balkanhotspot.org.



Planning your podcast

Before you go into the studio you should decide what you want to do. What will the show be about, who will participate and what do you need to prepare before the recording. Be sure to have a deadline. If not, the show will never be finished.

Finding a concept

It is a good idea to think of a concept for your podcast; something that ties it all together. Maybe there should be an overall theme or maybe you would like to make a program about a specific kind of music. Either way; do some research on other podcasts and how other people do it. It is a good source of inspiration and a way for you to see if the concept you would like to do already exists. If so, try to come up with something that makes you different from the rest.

The listener

It is also a good idea to imagine who your listener could be. Are there other people than just you who find this interesting? Or could you come up with something that could attract more listeners.

Content

Here are some ideas for how you can build your podcast with different sections.

Interview

Inviting guests to participate in your show can be fun for both you and the listener. But, if you decide you want to interview someone it is very important to prepare properly for the interview.

- **Research:** Make a research on both the subject but also the person you want to interview. The information about the person you are interviewing can help you ask relevant questions instead of background questions.
- **Planning:** Write down your questions and create a structure so you have an idea of how you want the interview to develop. You might want to divide the interview into different subjects, so you have a clear overview of what you want to talk about.
- **Open versus closed questions:** It is very important how you phrase your questions. You want to ask open questions like: *“How are you today?”*. This will immediately force the person to talk and answer with a full sentence. Whereas *“Are you okay today?”* is a closed question because the person can only answer “yes” or “no” and then the conversation stops.



- **Listen:** Remember to listen to the person you interview. You want the person to answer your questions but be open to change in the situation. Maybe the person will answer something that surprises you. Then it will be a good idea to ask some more questions about that instead of just continuing with the questions you planned. You can always go back to your questions and continue with them afterwards.
- **Your voice:** Be aware that your voice is in the recording and therefore always present. When we talk to people we tend to say “hmm”, “yes” or “oh really” but it can be a bit distracting to listen to in a podcast. You can edit out your voice afterwards but it takes time and it is much easier to practise not to say anything when the person speaks. Use your body language by smiling and nodding.

Script

In many radio shows it sounds like the hosts are improvising all the time. But in reality almost everything is written down and planned in every detail. The hosts are just good at making it sound natural. Writing a script for a podcast is not the same as writing for a magazine or any other text. In a normal text the reader will have the opportunity to read it again if something was difficult to understand. In a podcast, on the other hand, the listener will probably not listen again but just turn it off if it is too complicated. You need to catch the

listener right away, so make sure to write in a way that is easy to understand.



- ***Set the scene:*** The very first sentences in your script are some of the most important ones, since this is where you catch your listener's attention and make them curious. Just like in an article in a newspaper you want to attract the listener and set the scene. Maybe you could describe something that will make the listener picture how it looks like: "Imagine you're on a beach...". Or you could ask a question related to the theme of your podcast: "Have you ever wondered why...". In this way, the listener will feel engaged and have something to relate to.
- ***Conversational:*** As mentioned above you want your script to sound like you are talking naturally. Try to write in an everyday language as if it was a conversation with

someone. Imagine how you would say it if you were talking to a friend and avoid the more formal, “written” language you use when you write a text.

- **Sentences:** Avoid long sentences as it can be difficult to follow along when you listen. Ask yourself, what you would like to say and how you can make this point in a clear, simple way. When you read your script out loud you will most likely find out when a sentence is working or not. If it is very long it will be difficult for you to read it in a natural, conversational way.

Music

Using music in a podcast is a very good tool. On the radio hosts often play a full song and it can be a nice way to get a break from the talking. In a podcast you do not need that, so only include music when it is relevant. Playing a whole song can even be too long sometimes. Since you are pre-recording you have the opportunity to edit and play around with how you use the music. It can be a very powerful tool to tell the story.

- **Fade the music:** Avoid playing a song with the same volume all the time while someone is speaking. Play around 10 seconds and then fade down while someone is talking. Turn it up again for a while to create a break in between the talking. In this way the story will seem more

dynamic and the listener will have a break from concentrating on the talking.

- ***Change of topic, change of music:*** Changing from one kind of music to another can be a way of telling your listener that now the topic changes. So the music marks a change in the story.
- ***Emphasizing a point:*** Maybe you interview someone with an interesting story and the person says something “game changing” or a very strong statement. By stopping the music this sudden silence will automatically emphasize the specific point/statement.
- ***Less is more:*** Music can be very nice but it can also be distracting. Sometimes it can be much more powerful to leave it out. Be aware of when the music is complementing your point, or the mood you would like to create, and when it is working against you.

For more examples listen to this podcast: <http://transom.org/2015/remixing-the-music/>

Sound

Besides using music in your podcast, sound is also a nice way of either emphasizing something or give your podcast an “identity”.

- ***Intro:*** In most podcasts they have some sort of intro or jingle in the beginning, which is played in every episode.

In this way, the listener will recognise the show when they hear the intro. You do not have to create your own tune, a small part of a song that you like can also work as an intro. The name of your podcast could also be said in the intro.

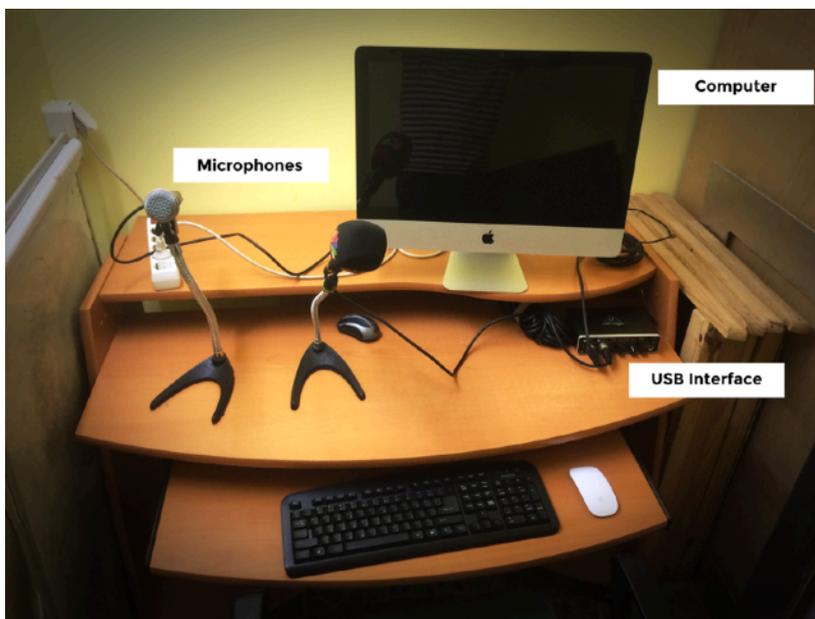
- **Outro:** In the end of your podcast you can consider creating an outro; something to end your show properly. You can create something new but it can also be a good idea to use the same jingle as the one in the beginning. This will “tie” it all together and the listener will remember the jingle even better.
- **Sound effects:** This can be a fun way of emphasizing something. If you imagine someone telling a story about how they got married maybe you could let church bells play in the background. In this way the listener gets the feeling of “being there themselves”.



Recording

Overview of the equipment

The setup in the radio studio is quite simple. We have a computer with a USB audio interface where you can connect two microphones. The software we use in this guide is Garageband - but there are several softwares to choose from.



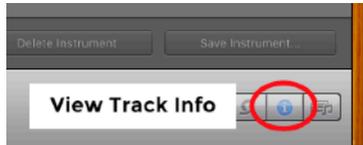
How to start the computer up in OS X

The computer in the radio studio runs both Mac and Windows. For radio we will use the Mac version. To start the computer in Mac, press the power button on the left side and

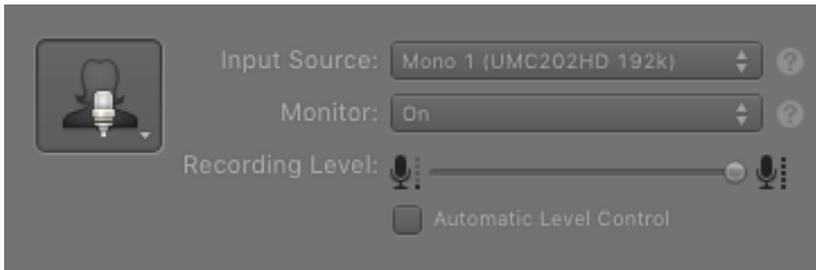
hold down the “alt” key on the keyboard. Choose the drive called “+”. Open Garageband and plug in your head-phones.

Recording your voice

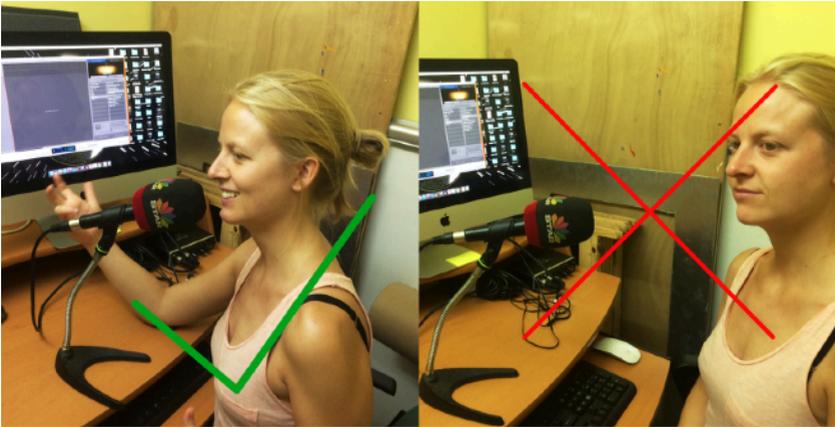
In this guide we will set up both microphones. If you need only one you can simply make one track instead of the two tracks described below.



Create a new voice project in Garage-band. In the lower right corner choose “View Track Info” and select your first track. Choose podcasting in the effects window and adjust to your needs. Next, adjust the settings as follows:



Next, adjust the second track, but choose “Mono 2” in “Input Source”. Now sit close to the microphone like shown on the picture. It is very important to sit close to the microphone. If not you will get annoying background sounds.



From the menu choose “Track” and then “Enable Multitrack Recording”. Now you can enable recording on one or both tracks.



Last, adjust the input levels on the USB Interface so it sounds good in your headphones. You want the input level to be as high as possible, without the voice sounding distorted. Now press the record button and start recording :)



Editing

Editing software gives you the possibility to edit unwanted bits of the recording. This could be a 'eh' or if someone made a mistake during recording. You can also restructure your interview if it makes sense or add music to your broadcast (highly recommended).

To get a full overview of the possibilities for editing in Garageband watch this tutorial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOAqMkTmlvM>



PHOTO: LORENZO SCIUCA

Recording outside the studio

Sometimes you need to do an interview outside of the studio. For that you can use a dedicated audio recorder or just your cellphone. It is basically the same techniques as recording in the studio - except that you have to be aware of your surroundings. A car passing by or an air conditioner making noise can be annoying for the listener.

- Find a place with low background noise. Do not meet at a café. Meet in an office instead.
- Hold the microphone close to the mouth of the person you interview

When you are ready to edit, transfer the files from your cellphone to your computer and drag them into Garageband. Now you can start to edit them.

Exporting your final project

When you are finished editing go to the menu and choose "Share" -> "Export Song to Disk". Choose "Compress" and "Compress Using Mp3 Encoder". Choose the settings you want, but be aware that the file size cannot be bigger than 64 megabyte.



Distribution

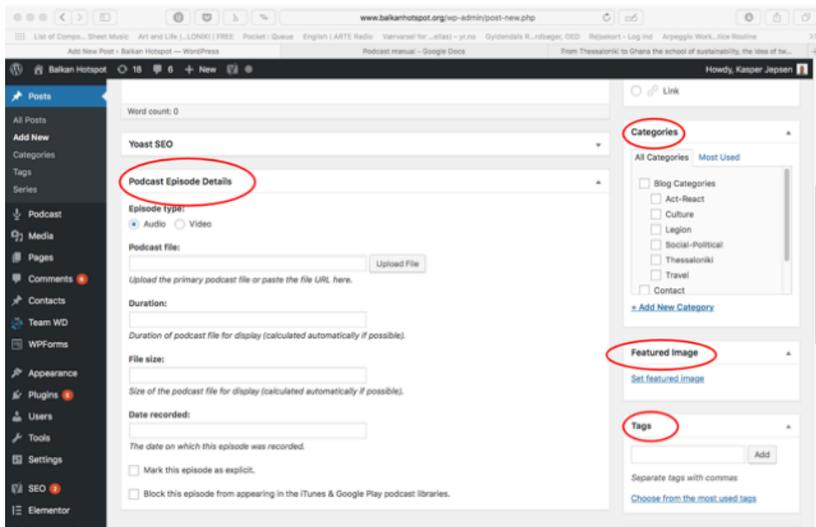
Uploading to Balkanhotspot.org

Go to www.balkanhotspot.org/wp-admin/ and login with your user. Click “Posts” -> “Add new”.

Important! Due to technical reasons you should not use the menu called “Podcast”. Upload your podcast as a normal post instead!

Add a title and a description to the podcast. The description should capture the interest of the listener and can also have information about guests, music played or photos from the event you were covering.

Next, scroll down and find the area called “Podcast Episode Details”. Here you will upload your audio file. Leave the other fields blank.



Find a good image for your podcast and add it in the area called “Featured Image”. You can also insert the photo into your post if you want it.

In the “Categories” area, choose “Radio”. In the “Tags” area you can add as many tags as you like. Use tags relevant for the podcast.

Sharing via social media

People will not be able to find your new episode themselves. You need to share it via social media. Use the Balkan Hotspot Facebook page and your own. You can also share it in relevant Facebook groups and of course with the people you interview.

To attract more listeners you can consider making a promo video for your podcast. Take the best clips and add pictures or video. It should not be longer than 1 minute. And remember subtitles since many people watch videos without sound on social media. Check out this Facebook page for inspiration: www.facebook.com/thislife

Online resources

These sites offer various guides and tips to make your podcast even better. Be sure to check them out.

Transom: www.transom.org

BBC Academy: www.bbc.co.uk/academy/production/radio

NPR Training: www.training.npr.org/category/audio