PODCASTING

Podcasts are multimedia files (usually audio in the MP3 format, but they can be other types as well) that are distributed via RSS feeds. In other words, you can subscribe to a podcast and new episodes will be downloaded to your computer when you open your "podcatcher." (iTunes is one "podcatcher.") You don't need an iPod—or even an MP3 player—to access podcasts.

A new form of mass communication, podcasts are created by both media professionals and "ordinary" people. The range of topics and speakers makes them a rich source of materials for language learners; creating podcasts encourages students to develop their oral communication skills.

Applications and Sites to Explore

- iTunes (http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/)

- Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net/)

- Feedburner (http://www.feedburner.com/fb/a/podcasts)

- PodOmatic (http://www.podomatic.com/)

- GarageBand (included in Mac OS X)

- Podcast Maker (http://www.potionfactory.com/podcastmaker/) *

- ProfCast (http://www.profcast.com/public/index.php) *

- WebPod Studio (http://www.lionhardt.ca/wps/) *

* Trial version of Podcast Maker and ProfCast can be downloaded to the MMLL's Macs; you can download a trial version of WebPod Studio to an MMLL PC.

Find and Subscribe to Podcasts Using iTunes

There are a number of podcast directories to help you find interesting podcasts. Commercial media (radio, tv, newspapers) also produce podcasts; you can find links on their sites. The iTunes podcast directory is a good place to start. Open the iTunes Music Store, click on podcasts, and look for the podcast directory. Search for your desired language to see what's available. **Quick hint: from the menu at the bottom of the US iTunes Music Store home page, choose the store for your target language and use that podcast directory.**

Creating Podcasts

All one needs to create a podcast is a way to create an MP3 and a way to distribute the file through RSS.

Applications like **Audacity** (installed on all the MMLL PCs) allow you to record and edit audio on your own computer. Services like **Odeo** and **PodOmatic** provide both the ability to record and to distribute your files.

"Enhanced" podcasts combine audio with images and links. A good example of an enhanced podcast is that of PomPomPom (search for it in iTunes), which is available in 3 – 4 languages. You can use **GarageBand** on a Mac to put together an enhanced podcast.

Video podcasts can be created with any digital video software and distributed as RSS enclosures. However, iTunes only recognizes certain types of video files.

Applications like ProfCast, Podcast Maker, and WebPod Studio exist to facilitate the creation and distribution of podcasts.