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AD

Podcasts sprout in cyberspace

Newport Beach man is among pioneers of a new method for delivering content other than music to portable MP3 players.

By JAN NORMAN

The Orange County Register

It's Thursday noon and insurance executive Michael W. Geoghegan is sitting in front of a microphone in his Newport Beach basement.

Pulsating rock music rises, then fades out.

"Welcome to 'Reel Reviews: Films Worth Watching,'" he says. "I'm Michael Geoghegan. ...We're easy to reach on the Web at 'M W G blog dot com.'"

He sounds like a radio broadcaster, but he's a "podcaster."

Instead of sending his show over the airwaves, Geoghegan uploads it to the Internet, where fans download it to their iPods. That puts him at the forefront of podcasting - a fast-growing innovation that builds on the combined popularity of the Internet, talk radio and portable MP3 players.

Podcasting's growth has been phenomenal. An Internet search for the term returned fewer than 100 results in September, when podcasting started to take off; now the tally is 1.23 million. Podcast shows now number in the thousands, ranging from church sermons to music by unsigned British bands.



POD PROGRAMMING: Michael Geoghegan of Newport Beach does a movie review "podcast" from the studio in his home theater. If you have a computer, a microphone and some free software, you also can be a podcaster.

MARK RIGHTMIRE, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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Podcasting sources

More information about podcasting is available from several sources: Michael Geoghegan's "Podcast About the Podcast" is available at his Web site, www.mwgblog.com. (Click on "podcasts" in upper right corner and scroll down the page.)

Directories of podcasts can be found at www.podcastcentral.com, www.ipodder.org, www.podcast.net, and www.podcastalley.com

Orange County Podcasters and Portable Media Enthusiasts: for

Among the reasons for podcasting's popularity: Anyone with a computer, a microphone and some free software can create shows. Audiences can subscribe for free, receive each show automatically and listen whenever they want.

The term podcasting stuck because of the popularity of **Apple's** iPod for downloading audio files from the Internet, but enthusiasts are quick to point out that any portable MP3 player works.

"Reel Reviews" fan Todd Storch in Dallas found out about podcasting while he was working on his own Web log - popularly called a "blog."

"I listen to six or seven (podcasts) regularly," Storch says. "I dump (podcasts) to my iPod and listen while running around or at my kid's soccer practice."

Although Geoghegan is a podcasting pioneer, he insists he's not technically adept. He's just a fan of old movies and the owner of an insurance wholesaling company. In early October, when he was searching the Internet for some iTunes software, he came across the term "podcast."

That put him at the forefront of the new technology, which former MTV video disc jockey Adam Curry began to popularize in September. Curry launched the first audio programming, other than music, that listeners could subscribe to and automatically download, using 1999 software.

"I had to jump into it," Geoghegan says. "A lot of the (early podcasting) shows were about podcasting. I couldn't compete with those guys, but I know movies."

On Oct. 17, he plugged a \$50 Radio Shack microphone into his Apple laptop, played a little introductory music, and started talking about "The Get away," a 1977 movie starring Steve McQueen.

THE FUTURE OF MP3

Almost immediately, Curry heralded "Reel Reviews" as the MP3 players' future, because it provided programming other than music. Within three weeks, Geoghegan and "Reel Reviews" were mentioned in half a dozen news articles about the technology.

Because people can subscribe to "Reel Reviews" without actually visiting the Web site, Geoghegan has no idea exactly how many listeners he has, but he's stunned by the fact that he has an international audience. "This morning I had e-mails from New Zealand, Denmark and a bunch from the United States.

meeting information and membership, visit www.podcasting.meetup.com/2/

Podcast and Portable Media Expo: Nov. 11-12, Ontario Convention Center. For more information, contact Tim Bourquin, TNC New Media, tim@tncnewmedia.com or (949) 488-2407

The online encyclopedia entry at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting gives a brief definition of podcasting, how-to instructions, and extensive links.

Podcasting how-to

- 1. Podcaster uses microphone** attached to computer to record the show. (Advanced podcasters use more sophisticated equipment.)
- 2. Podcaster records and edits** show using audio editing software such as the free Audacity program.
- 3. Podcaster saves show** as an MP3 file.
- 4. Podcaster uploads new show** to Internet computer server, creates a link on his Web site and updates his RSS feed (Really Simple Syndication), which "announces" to the Internet that a new show is available.
- 5. Podcaster gets noticed by word of mouth**, mention on Web logs (blogs) or other podcasts, and being listed in directories of podcasts.
- 6. Listeners can either download the show** directly from the site or install free software like iPodder, which automatically downloads shows they subscribe to from the Internet.
- When podcaster posts a new show, **iPodder automatically finds the RSS feed** and downloads it to subscriber's

That blows me away."

So far, podcasting is essentially a nonprofit endeavor, although it might eventually generate money from advertising, paid subscriptions, syndication or consulting agreements. At this point, though, there's no money in podcasting, Geoghegan said.

His wife is supportive of his hobby, but he usually works on his podcast shows at night, after she and the two children are asleep, so he doesn't take away from family time.

Recently he signed a deal for "Reel Reviews" with DVDTalk.com, a popular site about everything related to digital video disks.

Geoghegan is so enthusiastic about podcasts that he encourages friends to start them. An Orange County podcasters' group meets at his home.

In mid-January, Orange County residents and wine enthusiasts Leigh Older, Brian Clark and Jay Selman took up the challenge, recording the first podcast for graperadio.com. Geoghegan is their executive producer. The show takes the format of "Reel Review" further by offering not just wine reviews but interviews with experts and other information for wine lovers.

The men, none of whom has any experience in radio, met in a friend's studio to record the first 18-minute episode. They plan frequent editions, but because of the nature of podcasting, their future offerings don't have a regular schedule.

STANDING ROOM ONLY

Podcasting got a boost at a Northern California blogs convention in November, where a workshop or a standing-room-only crowd, including Geoghegan and Newport Beach attorney Craig Williams.

Williams' blog, "May It Please the Court," has a huge following with its up-to-the-minute analysis of cases. When TheLaw.com Web site recently syndicated Williams' work, he offered to podcast it, too.

"When I came across podcasting," he says, "I sent the link to my Website developer and said, 'Make

Podcasting feeds consumer demand for personalized content and instantaneous information, he adds. "I don't have a radio show now. You reach people all over the world, and the (Federal Communications Commission) controls you."

DVDTalk founder Geoffrey Kleinman says, "This technology is so compelling. Podcasting is bigger than TiVo (to which it is compared) because it's portable."

ENDURANCE RADIO

Portability of the programs is the most important feature for podcasters like Tim Bourquin of Laguna Hills, Calif. of EnduranceRadio.com for triathletes.

"Athletes don't sit at their computers," he says. With podcasting, "they can download my show and listen to it while they train."

computer or a connected iPod or other portable media player.

8. **Listener plays the show** on the computer or on a portable MP3 player.

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Ventura resident Mark Geiger listens to EnduranceRadio while marathon training.

"I was looking for training tips online and found EnduranceRadio," he says. "I downloaded one (show ton of sense to me.)"

Bourquin describes EnduranceRadio as a labor of love, but he's hoping the rise of podcasting will be show company he owns as well. He's putting together a Podcast and Portable Media Expo for Nov. 1 Ontario Convention Center.

Although entry-level podcasting is virtually free, Geoghegan is evidence that enthusiasts can spend a on what is a hobby.

After he lost one of his "Reel Reviews" shows because of a computer glitch during recording, Geogh portable broadcast unit, professional earphones and microphone and sound engineer's board and se home.

"If I played golf, I'd buy a fancy set of Calloway clubs," he shrugs. "This is my expensive set of golf cl

CONTACT US: (714) 796-7927 or jnorman@ocregister.com

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