BY WAYNE DENNER

KICKSTART YOUR PODCAST

7 SIMPLE STEPS TO EASILY LAUNCH A PODCAST

'A must read for anyone looking to successfully launch a podcast' Jack Faux

About Wayne

Hi, Wayne here. I'm the host of the Zero Lives Left Podcast which has been running for 3 years now.

I've been developing businesses since my early teens – starting with Wayne's Mobile Disco Roadshow to co-founding Ireland's first Social Networking platform - so I've learned a thing or two in business and from being an early adopter in the social media space – and there is still so much to learn.

The idea behind the Zero Lives Podcast is simple. Forgive the cliché but we're all on a journey. And we all have a story to tell. The podcast's aim is to share those stories with others, discuss the challenges the guests have experienced, how they overcame them and maybe get some golden nuggets of advice that can help us in our own life and career.

Creating and launching my own podcast has always been something I've wanted to do but perhaps, like you, I had no clue as to how to make it happen. I knew I had the knowledge to share that could be useful but could I create something people would want? What equipment would I need? Most importantly - How would I get people to listen to it?

Introduction to Course

Hello, welcome and thanks for signing up for my Podcast course.

You've probably been listening to podcasts now for some time. Perhaps you're even following some folks, like me, on social media and they've been sharing links to their own Podcast. You may have thought 'Hey this is something I think I can do!. I'd like to launch my own Podcast show'.

But how do I start on such a journey?

The Good News is – you've come to the right place. The purpose of this course is to help people, just like you, get started and get your first Podcast up and running.

But before we get into the 'how to' and all that stuff, how about I share with you a little bit of insight into my journey into the world of podcasting.

Now you may likely have come across me before - or have listened to one of my episodes of the Zero Lives Left Business, Career & Life Podcast. I started this about 3 years. It was'nt my first attempt at podcasting. I did run a small lesser-known show called 'The Digital Dilemma'. You can have a little peak over on iTunes to find it.

I decided, after a few episodes of that show, to halt my efforts until I'd a better understanding of what I actually needed to be doing when producing a Podcast.

Next for me came research.. a lot of research. I had questions. Lots of them - just like you. Questions which I'm going to answer in this course, because I know you'll need help, like I did with the answers. Over my 4 years of Podcasting, I've learned a lot of new skills, which I wouldn't have had if I hadn't started the Digital Dilemna. These are skills you'll get to learn if you stick with this. Trust me, it'll be worth it.

Let me toss out a few of the questions/concerns I had at the start;

• **I have no idea how or where to start.**
• **What if no one listens to my show?**
• **My voice sounds terrible when I listen back.**
• **I'm afraid of rambling.**
• **What am I going to podcast about?**
• **Am I going to need to spend a shed load on equipment?**
• **I know absolutely nothing about editing.**

The interesting thing about all of these concerns is that anyone who's started a podcast in the past has had some, if not all of these to deal with - just like I did and you probably have too.

The good news is, in this course we are going to address each of these in some shape or form helping you get the answers that you need.

The Zero Lives Left Podcast has now reached episode 41. It all started from very humble beginnings with just a **USB Audio-Technica AT2020 Cardioid Condenser Microphone** plugged into my MacBook. It's the starting that counts. If you have the right map in hand you'll be able to launch your podcast successfully, like I did, on a shoe-string budget.

So with that in mind let's begin..

Lesson 1

Coming up with your Podcast Format

I've already mentioned my first attempt at Podcasting. Well, it didn't really work.

Why? I know now I didn't really have any type of format in place. I jumped right into recording with very little preparation. The time you invest in the podcast format stage is time well spent. It'll save you a lot of stress, effort and time further down the line. Believe me…

Coming up with a podcast format is what I call the pre-planning stage - it's something you must do before you do anything else. If you pop across to iTunes, you'll notice lots of different types of Podcasts which fall into different categories. Let's take a look at some of the different types:

• Interview Shows (Like the Zero Lives Left Podcast)
• Educational
• News
• Comedy
• Music
• Solo-Cast (Like a monologue)
• Documentary

It's also possible that your podcast may fall into more than one of the above format types. If you take my show for example, it mostly takes place in interview format - but it crosses into the educational format as that's one of the main purposes behind my show.

To interview guests from a variety of business, career and life backgrounds or experiences who can share their own insight and advice to educate and inform listeners.

Some podcasts also have more than one host and that's ok. But in my case, it's just me as that's the format I find works best for me.

How long should my episode be?

As a rule, you want to keep your show to 30-35 minutes, max, per episode. This can seem like a very long time - but it's not. When I started out, most of my early episodes ran to nearly an hour - which was just too long.

Looking back now it's clear that it was a result of poor planning on my behalf. Not keeping the person I was interviewing on track and on time.

How frequently will you release new shows?

Originally I wanted to release 1 new episode per month which would be 12 over the course of a year. When I first got started I was so excited to be doing something new. But as time passed, I had a low listener rate due to not promoting the episode enough each month. Also a month flies by and it became harder to achieve.

Let's look at an example in the image below from my Zero Lives Left Podcast;

If I draw your attention to the area in red and arrow pointing, this was my total release activity in 2017. You will notice that for the whole period of 2017 I only managed to release 2 actual episodes of the podcast over a 12-month period. Why Wayne I hear you ask?

Simples.

Again. Poor Planning on my behalf

You can also see that for this year, 2018, I'm actually on target as I've already released 4 episodes. All because I placed more focus on planning my episodes and ensuring that they get released regularly.

I feel that, as a podcast creator, it's important to regularly release episodes of the show. It helps keep your audience engaged and coming back for more - plus if they subscribe to your channel they'll receive a notification as soon as you push out a new episode. They're more likely to listen if you're pushing out your content on a regular basis.

What segments will you have in your episode?

There are a couple of things to think about here when it comes to segments.

I've listened to a few folks recently who've launched podcasts which don't really have any segments. The concern with this approach is it doesn't have much of a structure - all parts of the podcast roll into one.

Before you start recording anything, it's worth spending a little time sitting down with a pen and notebook and coming up with a proposed running order for your show. Below is an outline of mine;

1. Pre Intro (Wayne)
2. Podcast show jingle
3. Introduction (2 – 3 mins max)
4. Main Interview (Wayne with guest) (25-28 mins)
5. Recap/Key Takeaway's (Wayne) (5 mins)
6. Closing Jingle

That's pretty much the structure of my show and guess what? It works. Sticking to this approach has been far more effective. Following this structure has resulted in being able to produce more episodes, in a timely manner. Something which listeners and subscribers expect now and are happy with.

Will you have music in your Podcast?

In my early episodes of the Zero Lives Left Podcast I didn't use any music within the show itself - apart from the intro at the opening and the closing jingle of the show.

For a period of time (due to personal time constraints) I out-sourced the post-production (editing) of my podcast to another individual – who made some slight adjustments to the format of my show - adjustments which I still use to this day.

One of the adjustments was to add in some background music within the introduction and recap segments of the show - similar to when you're listening to a radio station, where the DJ will have some music playing, at a lower level when he's talking. This small change really helped add a different dimension to the show, raised momentum and energy going into the main interview and delivery of the recap segment.

Important Note - I am not a lawyer so the following should not be considered as legal advice of any sort!

When considering using music within your Podcast be sure to check the Copyright laws. Copyright laws can be complicated, tricky to understand and sometimes vague. My best advice is, if you're in any doubt - don't use it.

When searching you'll probably see the following:

• Creative Commons Music - For more information **Click Here**
• Fair Use

It's worth looking into each of these just to make sure you've an understanding of what they cover and the licenses and permissions relating to the music you want to use.

Remember we're working on a shoe-string. We certainly don't want any surprise fines!.

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Royalty Free Music

Another alternative which doesn't require you to pay royalties every time you use it is royalty-free music. How it works is, you pay a fee which gives you the right to use it. However, even when it comes royalty-free, it may still have some restrictions so again it's important to read the 'usage' guidelines before purchase.

Below are 2 websites which are worth a look when searching for royalty-free music.

https://www.instantmusicnow.com/
https://audiojungle.net/

YouTube also offers a free music audio library which can be accessed on this URL
https://www.youtube.com/audiolibrary/music?feature=blog.

However, they use this disclaimer; 'YouTube cannot give you information about legal liability or other issues that can occur off the platform. You may wish to consult a qualified legal representative if you have questions about your use of music'.
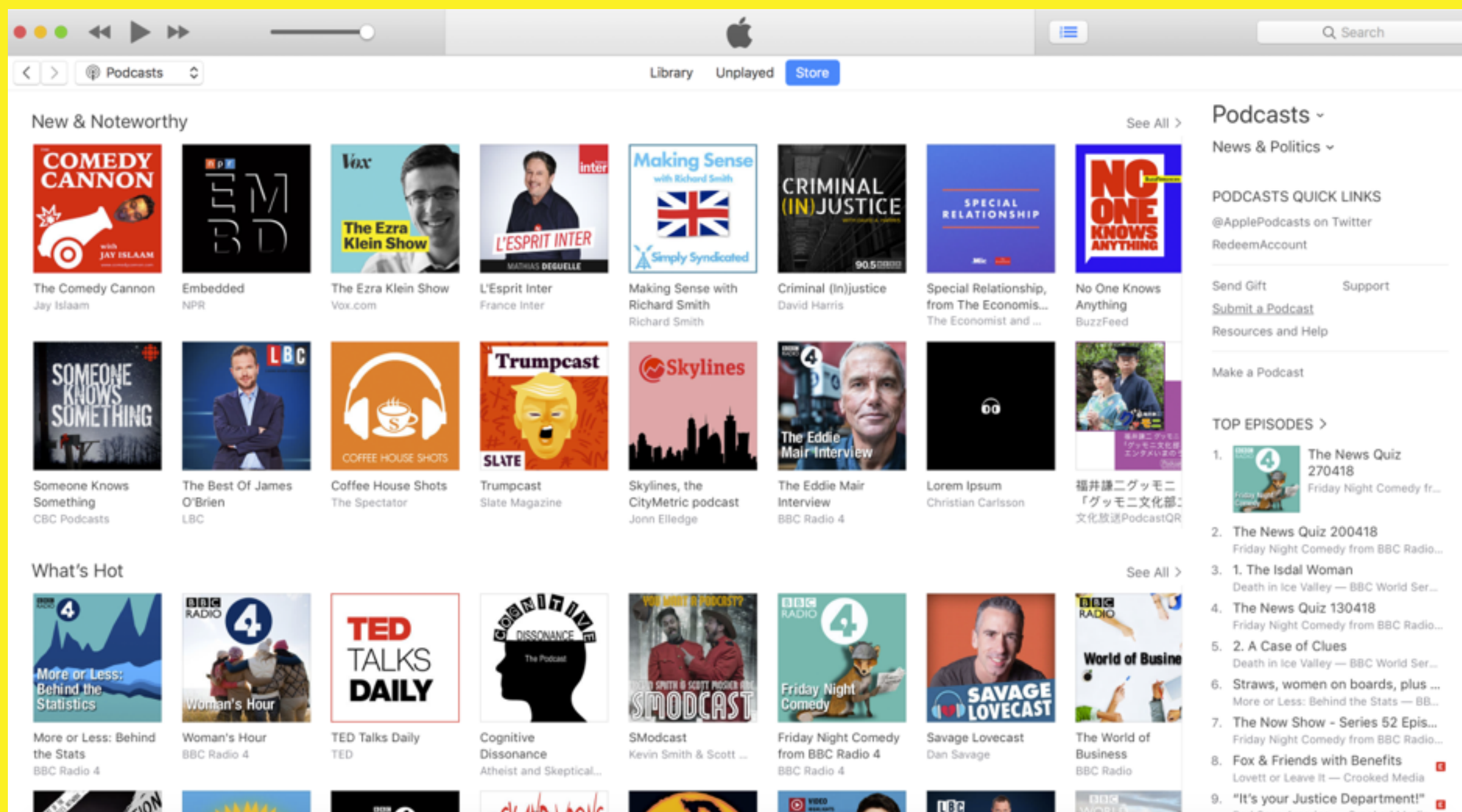
Podcast Artwork

This is essential. Vital. Crucial. I think I'm making myself clear.

Your new podcast needs some kind of a brand. iTunes and other podcast services will display your show's artwork so it's important to think about this at the format stage. You'll have to get your creative juices flowing. At the very least hire a decent designer to come up with your new show artwork for you. And give him a really good, concise brief on what your brand means.

I really can't stress enough how important good quality design work is. It can make your podcast stand out from the crowd and even get browsers to stop at yours when they're searching for new shows to listen to. This artwork is often a subscriber's first impression of your podcast. So make it count.

Cover art must be a minimum size of 1400 x 1400 pixels and a maximum size of 3000 x 3000 pixels, 72 dpi, in JPEG or PNG format with appropriate file extensions (.jpg, .png), and in the RGB colorspace. To optimize images for mobile devices, Apple recommends compressing your image files.

Below is an example of Podcast cover artwork on iTunes in the New and Noteworthy and What's Hot section.

If you are looking some help creating your Podcast artwork and you don't have access to a graphic designer, check out Mashmob, Belfast, headed up by Jude. They're great at 'getting it' and creating imaginative, clean designs you'll be really proud of, in no time at all.

Custom album art starts from £175. You can check out their design portfolio by **Clicking Here** If you don't have a brand the guys at Mashmob can also help you with that - it's who I use.

When it comes to choosing which format will work for your show it seems like a lot of work. But planning time as with anything is so valuable. Think it through, as this will save you a lot of time, issues, money and stress in the future, make your podcast process so much more efficient and the experience a lot more enjoyable for your listeners and successful for you.

Lesson 2:
The first 3 episodes

Ok. So you've got your format all researched, planned and sorted. If so then you're ready to start thinking about your first 3 episodes. not recording them just yet! But thinking through what's going into each of the episodes.

You're probably wondering 'Why 3 episodes?'. Why not start with just one. That's a very good question - I'll explain.

There are a number of reasons why launching your new podcast show with multiple episodes is more effective than just one. Here's a few of those reasons:

• With 3 episodes you're able to showcase more of your content than if you just launched with one.

• You want to get people to subscribe to your show? Right? Well if they can only listen to one episode it might be more difficult for them to hit the subscribe compared to if they are able to listen to a few and get a flavour for what your content and approach is like. Get them hooked and they'll subscribe.

• When it comes to podcasting, consistency is important. It sets expectations and also gives you a little time to get on top of the upcoming episodes. Remember with each episode you produce and push out, trust is developed with your listener which boosts your reputation as a podcaster.

• Another Big Plus with launching 3 episodes is the extra boost in SEO. More podcast websites and search engines will pick your episodes up and help contribute to the 'findability' of your show – which helps gain more listeners.

At this stage of the process it's important to sit down and jot out a rough plan as to what is going to go into your first 3 episodes. If, like me, you're doing an interview/educational style podcast then you'd want to be thinking about the following:

• Episode Themes

• Potential guests (you need 2-3 possible guests as the first one you ask might not be available, also think about the guest and how big their audience might be)

• Proposed questions for your guest (I suggest coming up with 6-8 questions based on thorough research to focus your questions)

• How will you record? Via Skype, In-Person using your Smartphone (we'll come back to this later)

• Any other factors to consider such as time zones, on location issues etc.

Lesson 3:

Basic but essential Podcasting Equipment

When it comes to gear and tech this is perhaps my favourite part!
BUT I must urge caution.

Much as you'd like to, please don't run out and start buying all sorts of expensive gear - before you have a good understanding of what you need in terms of equipment for your Podcast. For the purpose of this course I'm only going to cover the basic essential equipment you need to get your podcast up and running.

In my next level podcasting course I'll go much deeper into the equipment end of things - exploring other options which you may want to consider as your podcast develops.

The items I've outlined here are what I feel, from my experience, to be essential items for starting into the world of podcasting. They're what I've used and still use in my Podcast productions.

Microphone

Right now there are a lot of decent options in the market place for podcast microphones, all ranging in price. A good microphone is important. Remember, people will be listening to your podcast. They don't want a poor audio experience. They need to be able to hear you clearly, without any difficulty. So with that been said please don't solely rely on your built-in laptop or smartphone microphone. Your listener expects quality audio or they'll go elsewhere.

Unfortunately, audio quality is often overlooked. Dialogue should be clear, without distractions and its worth remembering you might have a good quality microphone and still get poor quality audio. How so Wayne you say?

Well if you're recording in an environment which has a noisy AC unit in the background or your window is open and you can hear building or construction work going on outside, audio can be poor. So when it comes to actually choosing your microphone you'll see 2 different types of microphones that you really need to know of for Podcasting;

• Dynamic microphones
• Condenser microphones

As we're focusing on getting your podcast up and running I'll keep it simple. I plan to cover the above options and differences in microphones in my next level podcasting course.

When I was looking for an affordable microphone for my podcast I opted for the **Audio-Technica AT2020 Cardioid Condenser Microphone.** The AT2020 is a USB microphone which plugs directly into your computer/laptop USB port. The microphone offers high quality sound and is the entry level choice for many podcasters. It comes with a tripod desk stand with folding legs for secure and easily-portable table top use.

Image Credit: Amazon.com

Another item I highly recommend you pick up for your microphone is a pop filter. The purpose of a pop is to help keep your plosives from making a nasty sound on your recording.

So what are plosives? Well simply put plosives are mainly created by words that start with the letter 'B' or 'P'.

Your pop filter will also help reduce wind being picked up and reduce breathing sounds which your microphone may pick up.

The good news is pop filters are not expensive. The one I use is available on Amazon at just £6.99. To pick one up **Click Here**

Image Credit: Amazon.com

And finally.

While the **Audio-Technica AT2020 Cardioid Condenser Microphone** comes with a tripod desk stand, I've found it's very easy to knock the stand or move the table its sitting on. This will result in the microphone picking up other sounds in your recording which you may only notice on playback or when you're editing.

To stop this, you'll need an adjustable desktop fold mic suspension boom arm. **The one I use is also available on Amazon costing £20.99**

These 3 items are all you'll need to start recording good quality audio right away. There are of course, other types of microphones, all ranging in quality. But I want to give you an example of good quality entry level microphone equipment, along with a few extras to help. In my next podcasting course I'll share further insights into microphones as well as my current microphone set up.
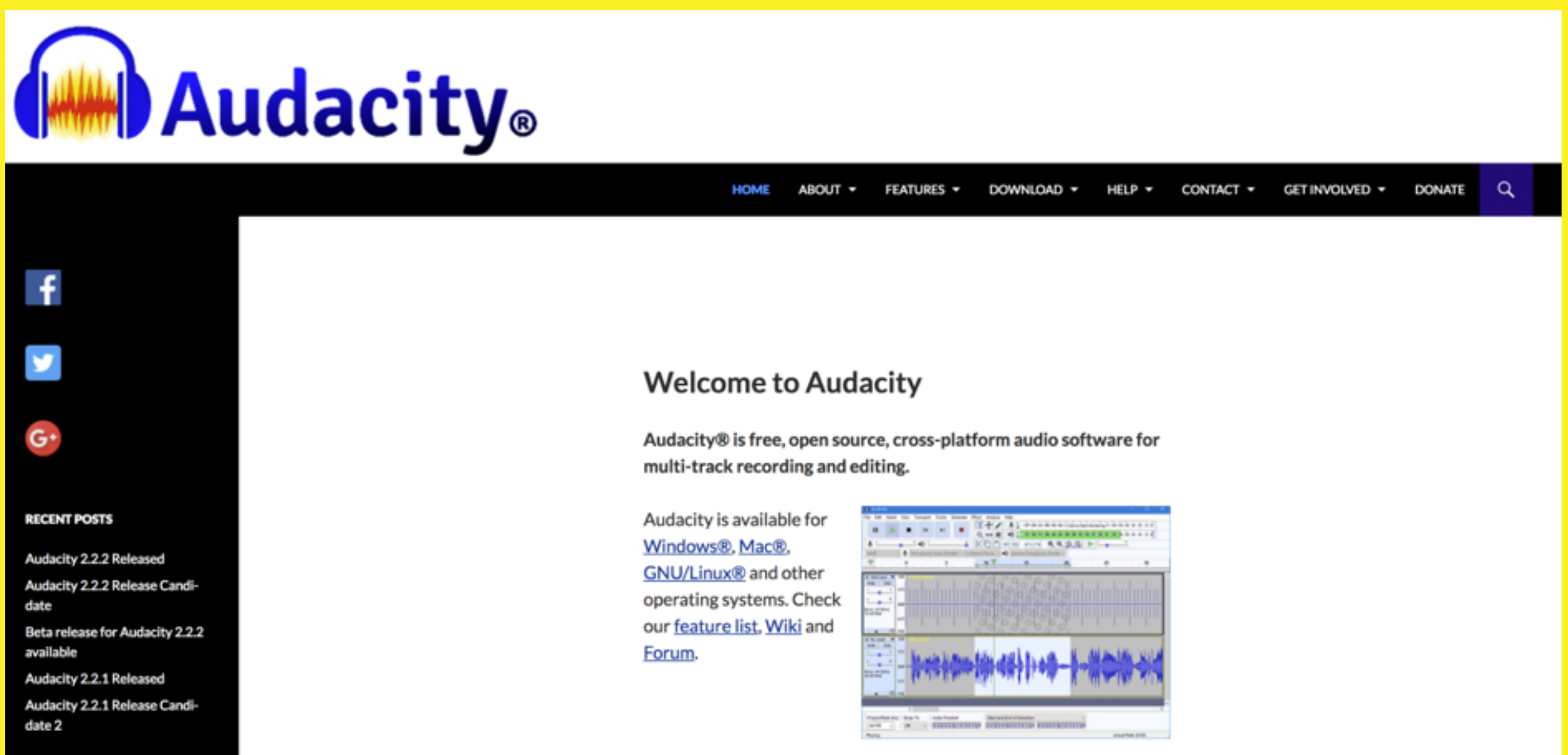
Lesson 4:
Recording Software & Editing

Similar to microphones there are many options on the market for recording software to record your show. If you are a Mac user for example, you can record and edit your podcast show using 'Garage Band'.

This comes with your device. However it also comes with limitations, which is why some Podcasters, such as myself opt for other options to give more flexibility in the post production stage.

A great option for recording software when starting out is Audacity. Audacity is a free open source digital audio editor and recording computer software application, available for Windows, macOS/OS X, Linux and other operating systems.

Source Audacity Website 30/04/2018

When I launched my Podcast Audacity was what I used. Getting the hang of the interface is pretty straightforward.

It's easy to use and will provide you with most of the features you need, including the ability to multi-track. This is handy if you've different segments you need to drop into your show.

Couple of pointers to consider when editing your show using Audacity or any other software;

• Listen back to the show once you've recorded. Remove any 'ums' or 'uhs' or repetitive words such as 'and' which people tend to use frequently
• Shorten any long silences to help tighten up your recording or interview
• Delete the silences at the start and end of the recording
• Edit out any areas of word stumbling or overused words.

Remember you are not trying to make the podcast perfect. You're not aiming for perfectionism – you're aiming for an authentic experience.

Lesson 5:

Podcast Intro (or Jingle as most people call it)

Your podcast intro is the first audio people hear when they start a new episode of your show. In the case of The Zero Lives Left Podcast it's actually the second piece. The first is 'You are listening to the Zero Lives Left Podcast - Episode **'

The intro script from each of my episodes includes the following;

• Podcast title and overview
• Music or sound effects
• Host Name

Your intro into the episode needs to be short and snappy - 30-60 seconds max. I tend to keep the same intro for all of my episodes as it's mainly used as a description of the overall podcast. After the intro I tell listeners what's coming up on the episode.   That's the next piece of audio.

You'll also need to create an outro script. Similar to the intro this is the final piece of audio to wrap up the episode cleanly. I use:

• Thanks for listening to the Zero Lives Left Podcast
• Host Name
• Call to actions:
- (Check out Wayne's new book The Students Guide to an epic Online Reputation..and Parents too!)
- Don't forget to subscribe to the podcast on iTunes
- See you next time!

Once you've come up with the script you want to use for your show intro and outro you need to source someone who can voice and produce it for you.

When it comes to voice talent options there are plenty of great options. I've used this guy Josh McLellan, based in Canada who offers voiceover services. He operates out of Fiverr Click Here to view his services.

Fiverr can be a bit of a hit or miss on some of the services which are on offer but I've found Josh does a great job.

Lesson 6:

Publishing & Hosting your Podcast

The terms publishing and hosting your podcast are interconnected. Your podcasts need a home – a place where each of the episodes will be hosted.

There are a number of free and paid providers in the marketplace. In fact most of the paid providers will have some sort of free option where you can trail or test the service. They'll also enable you to publish your show to directories such as iTunes, All Cast, Stitcher Radio.

For the most part, most of the features they offer will be similar. However one main difference between providers is that some set the monthly fee based on monthly storage space required, bandwidth needed and also type of podcast stats required whereas others set a monthly fee based on hours needed per month.

When I started out podcasting the hosting solution I used charged a monthly fee based on the storage space required with stats. Depending on the monthly subscription you opt for - starting from anything from $5 up. This determines how many episodes per month you can create.

Let's take an example with Libsyn. I was on the $15 per month option which gave me access to 250mb of space where I could upload content to each month. The storage quota for each account is reset on the 1st of the month. Once your quota resets, your files from the last month no longer count against quota.

However, I found a small problem with this approach. Some months ago I had the time and wanted to push out more than one podcast. I wanted to release 2-3 episodes but ran into issues. I didn't have enough space on the 250mb and would have had to upgrade my account. I liked the service Libsyn provided but felt this would a major pain, having to wait and having a space restriction in place for $15 per month.

I did some research into what other providers were offering and came across my current provider **Buzz Sprout.** They work slightly differently in that for your monthly fee you're allocated X hours of space. For example I'm on the $12 p/mth option and this allows me to upload 3 hours of content per month. If you break that down to 30 minutes an episode, you could effectively push out 6 episodes per month before you need any extra space.

All accounts come with 250GB Bandwidth per month and depending on the length of your episodes, that should cover you for 20,000 - 40,000 episode plays per month.

I'm pretty happy I moved across to Buzz Sprout. The user interface for podcast creators is straightforward to use plus you get access to stats to see how your podcast is performing. If you're looking for a decent affordable podcast host I'd definitely check them out. **Sign up via my 'refer a friend' link** and we'll both get a reward once you upgrade to a paid account with them.

Publishing your Podcast

With your podcast set up and your episodes recorded it's time to publish.

Most people think of iTunes as the main directory but there are some others which you may want to push your show to. In order to publish you must have an RSS feed which you submit to iTunes and other directories.

You podcast host will be the place where your RSS feed is generated. Here's an example of a RSS Feed URL from Zero Lives Left Podcast https://feeds.buzzsprout.com/160055.rss generated by the podcast host I use, ie Buzz Sprout.

Remember you must complete all of the information when uploading your podcast to your host this includes:
• Episode Title
• Episode Description
• Episode Summary
• Artist / Guest
• Publish Date
• Current Episode Artwork
• Tags

iTunes will also require you to complete the following;
• Title
• Description
• Artwork
• Category (at least 1)
• Language
• Explicit or not