iSci 3A12: Climate Change

Fall 2023

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Week 8: Introduction to your podcast deliverable

Date: October 30, 2023
Instructor: Jay Brodeur

Introduction to Podcasts

Your podcast: Purpose & requirements

What makes an effective podcast

Standard podcast elements

Planning your podcast

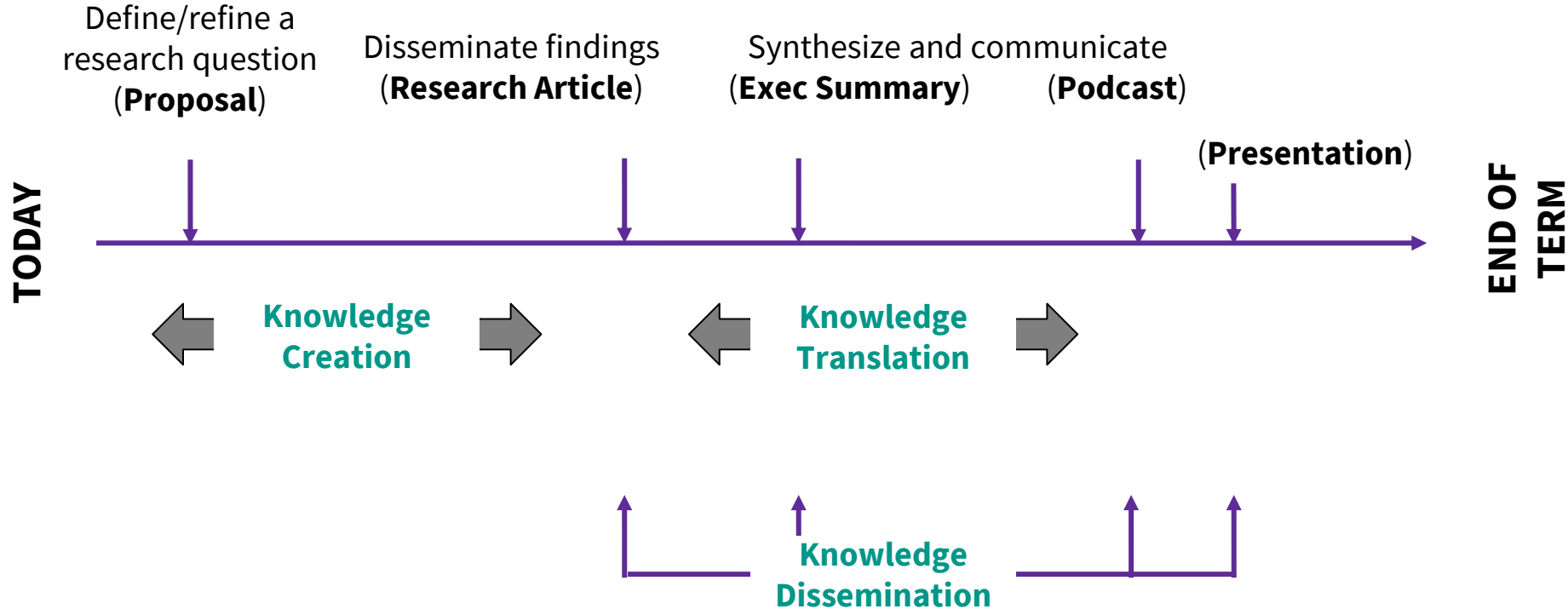How to record and create a podcast

Your Podcast: Purpose and Requirements

Your task: Effectively communicate topics, issues, and concepts

Your audience: A general, educated public

Choosing a topic:

➢ A lot of freedom and flexibility

   ◆ Presenting background information, discussing current issues, dispelling climate change myths, etc.

➢ Your *focus should be different* from that of your other deliverables, but some overlap is acceptable.

Major Group Research Project

Assessment (more info in your project pack)

Element	Points
Scientific Content: • Important elements of the topic are presented with acceptable thoroughness and accuracy • Appropriate background information is given, where needed • Information is appropriately contextualized and connected to each other and the broader narrative • Uncertainties and shortcomings of results and scientific understanding are discussed	/40
Effectiveness of Communication: • Content is presented throughout the episode (intro, body, outro) in a manner that is engaging and interesting for the listener • Episode is presented at an appropriate level for the audience and terms are explained where necessary • Episode uses a narrative structure that engages the listener and enhances the overall message • Content is arranged and presented in a clear and organized manner	/40
Production Quality: • Episode format adheres to established guidelines for podcast series • All audio (vocals and accompanying media) are clear, consistent, and edited/combined effectively • Episode incorporates other media (where appropriate) in a manner that improves the listening experience and impact of the podcast.	/20

What makes a quality podcast?

What Makes a Good Podcast?

The Plan

✓ Tell a story

✓ Engage your audience

✓ Be organized

The Content

✓ Engaging introduction

✓ Be concise

✓ Strong conclusion / wrap-up

The Production

✓ High-quality audio

✓ Careful editing

✓ Ambient audio

Planning

➢ What is the purpose of your podcast?

➢ Who is your audience?

➢ How will you engage your audience?

➢ What topics will you discuss?

➢ How should you present your information?

➢ How much production time / equipment / expertise do you have?

Tell a story

Engage your audience

Be organized

The Plan

Presentation Style

Documentary-style

Story-telling / narration

Interviews

Dialogue

News segment

Panel discussion

Fictional or nonfictional?

Segmented or single-topic?

Satirical or serious?

Characters? Narrator?

Tell a story

Engage your audience

Be organized

The Plan

Consider Your Podcast's Style

Consider the podcasts that you listened to as part of your homework (both professional and student-created).

➢ How would you describe their presentation styles and formats?

➢ How do they differ from each other?

➢ What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of each of these styles?

➢ How do they vary in terms of engagement, as well as quality and quantity of scientific information?

➢ How do these styles vary in terms of production requirements?

➢ What elements of these styles should your podcast incorporate, given time/resource constraints?

Segmenting Your Content

Greeting
Intro music
Opening "sting" / lead-in

Listener Mail
Respond to listener emails/phone call/tweets

Topic Segment
Introduction
Main Content

Commercial Break
Real or Fictional

Tip of the Week
New things / news items

Wrap-up
Recap / Review / Credits
Outro music

Engaging Introduction
Concise
Strong conclusion / wrap-up

The Content

To Script or Not to Script...

Why you **_should_** script your podcast to the word:

➢ It coordinates & organizes your presentation

➢ It allows you to focus on delivery (and not content)

➢ Fewer takes = less time and less editing = less frustration

➢ Easier to transcribe (if necessary)

Why you **_shouldn't_** script your podcast to the word:

➢ Your presentation may sound too 'scripted': robotic and formal

Recommendation:

➢ Script your podcasts to ensure thoroughness

➢ Practice until you don't need to read it word for word

➢ Once you're comfortable, you can improvise

Engaging Introduction
Concise
Strong conclusion / wrap-up

The Content

Location and Equipment

Choose your recording location carefully.

Things to consider:

➢ Ambient noise

➢ Room size and materials

➢ Required recording time

Set up your equipment

➢ Type of microphones

◆ headset | dynamic | condenser

➢ Positioning

➢ Filters (e.g. pop filter)

High-quality audio
Careful editing
Ambient audio

The Production

Location and Equipment

Lyons New Media Centre (Mills Library)

➢ *Microphones*

➢ *Audio recording booths*

➢ *Portable sound baffles*

Learn more at library.mcmaster.ca/spaces/lyons

High-quality audio
Careful editing
Ambient audio

The Production

Location and Setup

Approach 1: Record your own part asynchronously & mix

1. Record your part with your phone and an audio recording app
2. Share the file with your designated audio editor(s)
3. Use editing software to splice together parts

This will work well when each member has a distinct part and there is little/no dialogue
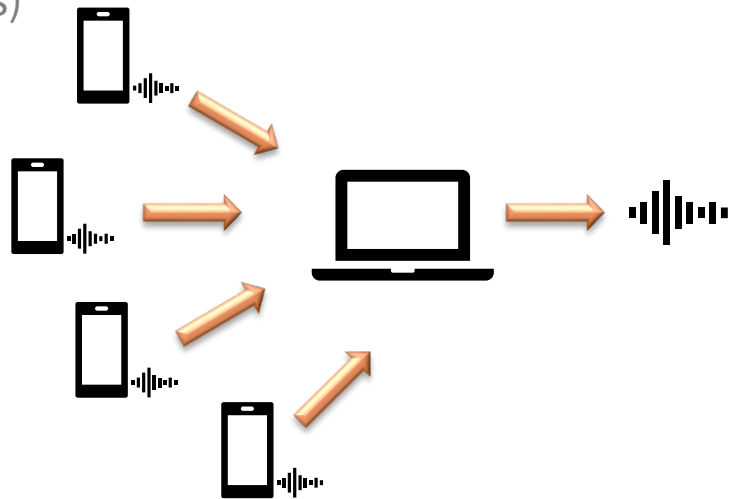
High-quality audio
Careful editing
Ambient audio

The Production

Location and Setup

Approach 2: Use the Lyons New Media Centre's podcast recording booth

1. Record your part with your phone and an audio recording app
2. Share the file with your designated audio editor(s)
3. Use editing software to splice together parts

High-quality audio
Careful editing
Ambient audio

The Production

Location and Setup

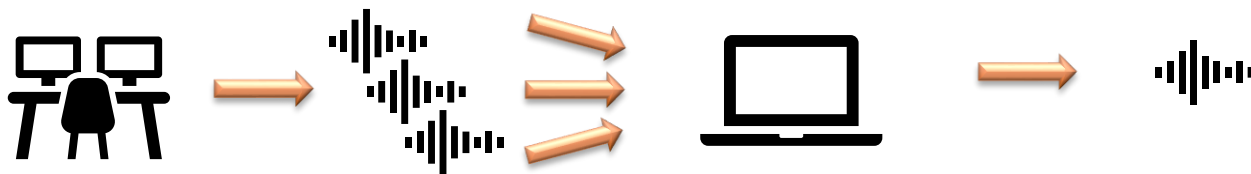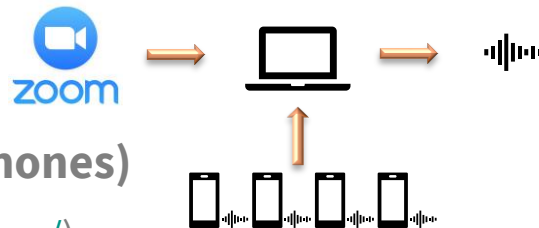**Approach 3: Record in a Zoom call (& with your own phones)**

1. Assemble group in a Zoom call (https://mcmaster.zoom.us/)
    - ◆ Provides a lower-quality group recording, but allows interaction and exporting audio
    - ◆ Record your Zoom meeting → record your parts together → download & edit .m4a audio
2. **(OPTIONAL)** record your own audio using your phone and an audio recording app
    - ◆ Provides higher-quality individual recording, but must be mixed together.
    - ◆ Start recording when you begin the Zoom recording
    - ◆ Share the file with your designated audio editor(s)
3. Use editing software to splice together zoom and phone audio (whichever works best)

High-quality audio
Careful editing
Ambient audio

The Production

Recording, Editing and Exporting

Recording

➢ Reading vs reciting your script
➢ Dealing with mistakes
➢ Maintaining energy and enthusiasm

Editing

➢ Catching and fixing mistakes
➢ Reducing breathing / ambient sounds
➢ Ensuring appropriate pauses
➢ Avoiding cut-off 'heads' and 'tails'
➢ 'Ducking under' voices

Saving & Exporting

➢ Always save / work with a high-quality (lossless) copy

➢ Export in an appropriate format (.mp3 for submissions)

➢ Consider file size & distribution

High-quality audio
Careful editing
Ambient audio

The Production

Software and Additional Audio

Software

➢ Audacity (**FOSS**, cross-platform)

➢ Garage Band (Mac, $$)

➢ Adobe Audition ($$$)

➢ ProTools ($$$$)

Additional Audio Sources

➢ Ambient / Field audio?

➢ Royalty-free music

◆ Google it!

➢ Copyright - Fair Dealing

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fair_dealing_in_Canadian_copyright_law

Where to get help

Lyons New Media Centre media creation tutorials

https://library.mcmaster.ca/services/media-creation-tutorials

Lyons New Media Centre media consultation services

https://library.mcmaster.ca/services/mediahelp

High-quality audio
Careful editing
Ambient audio

The Production

Standardizing Our Podcasts

1. Common Identification

◆ Podcasts must open with:

   "***You're listening to McMaster University's Integrated Science podcast series on climate change***."

2. Sting and Introduction

◆ Your introduction must identify the title of the episode and provide an overview of contents

◆ e.g. "Today's episode: 'Dog gone'. Cats from around the world discuss their plan to kidnap and enslave their partners in domestication"

Jay's Demo

Viewable on the project website

or at

bit.ly/iSci-CC-podcast-demo

Next steps

Meet with your project groups and do the following:

➢ List and discuss what you liked / disliked about the prescribed podcasts (or any other science-focused podcasts)
   ◆ What worked? What didn't? How might they be improved?
➢ Consider the previous prompts about style & substance
➢ Brainstorm and discuss ideas for presenting the content of your podcast.