

## **Harnessing new methods of online communication**

Panel discussion at IABC AIP May 4, 2006

### **Donna Papacosta – Much ado about podcasting**

Podcasting is the publication and syndication of audio files on the Internet using RSS. A podcast is portable; you can listen on your computer or on any MP3 player. What differentiates a podcast from any old audio file is the subscription model.

#### *Examples*

##### *External communications*

Whirlpool produces *The American Family* to deliver meaningful information to its target market; it's not a show about products.

##### *Training*

Organizations are increasingly using podcasts as a way to package training resources. An example cited is the work the Otter Group is doing for Merrill Lynch, replacing the "big black binder" with a video iPod.

##### *Investor Relations*

IBM's Investor Relations Department is producing a series of podcasts called *IBM and the Future of...* Topics include IBM and the Future of Banking, The Future of the Automotive Industry, etc. They show potential investors that IBM is forward looking and involved in a wide array of opportunities.

##### *Internal communications*

Remember the old audio tapes companies used to distribute to the field? They're being replaced by podcasts. Right now the VP of Sales of Altana Pharma is doing a podcast for field reps. He's even interviewing other executives in his company. Employees love it, and Altana just won a Gold Quill award.

##### *Fundraising*

Some organizations are using podcasts for fundraising. For example, the YMCA of Oakville is supporting its annual giving campaign with an audio clip that lets donors hear directly from the people they are helping.

#### *Don't worry!*

New media don't replace old media. When TV came along, it didn't cause the death of radio, but radio changed. As communicators, we need to know about podcasts. If your clients haven't yet asked you about podcasting, they will!

#### *You don't need to be a geek to podcast.*

To produce a podcast, you need a microphone, a computer, software (Audacity is free), a server to host the files, and a feed.

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## Podcasts for you to check out

### *PR/communications/marketing podcasts*

- *Inside PR*, a Canadian show from Thornley Fallis  
<http://www.thornleyfallisgroup.ca/prworks/>
- *Better Communications Results* with Lee Hopkins <http://www.leehopkins.net/podcasts/>
- *For Immediate Release: The Hobson and Holtz Report* with Shel Holtz and Neville Hobson <http://www.forimmediaterelapse.biz>
- *Across the Sound* with Joseph Jaffe <http://www.acrossthesound.net/>
- *For Your Approval* with Ron Shewchuk  
[http://ronshewchuk.blogs.com/for\\_your\\_approval/](http://ronshewchuk.blogs.com/for_your_approval/)

### *My podcast*

Trafcom News Podcast – <http://trafcom.typepad.com/podcast> – where you'll find these shows, mentioned today, and more. Shows are grouped by number, for example:

- #8 No fluff, no spin: Whirlpool's *American Family*
- #12 Can the iPod replace the big black binder: An interview with the Otter Group

### *Other podcasts mentioned today*

- IBM and the Future of... <http://www.ibm.com/investor/viewpoint/podcast.phtml>
- Official IABC International Conference podcasts <http://blogs.iabc.com/ic/>
- The American Family <http://www.whirlpool.com/custserv/promo.jsp?sectionId=563>
- The YMCA of Oakville audio is at the Y's Web site at <http://www.ymcaoakville.com>. Click on "Hear our stories"

### *Unofficial pre-IABC Conference podcasts*

All found on the Trafcom News Podcast pages: <http://trafcom.typepad.com/podcast>

- #25 "Brainstorming" with Sam Harrison
- #24 "The 'It Factor': Do you have it, can you get it," with Mitch Joel
- #23 "The barbecue as a metaphor for communications," with Ron Shewchuk
- #21 Tod Maffin on 21<sup>st</sup> century communications
- #19 An interview with IABC International Conference chair Jane Sparrow

### *Where to find podcasts (just a few of the directories on the Web)*

- <http://www.podcast.net>
- <http://www.podcastalley.com>
- <http://www.digitalpodcast.com>

My blog also offers information on podcasting: <http://trafcom.typepad.com>.  
Contact me if you want to know more!