

ASSOCIATION OF MIDWEST MUSEUMS
TECHNICAL WORKSHOP 1:
INTRODUCTION TO PODCASTING FOR MUSEUMS
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>> : Hello, and welcome to the first technical session for Module 6, Technical Workshop 1: Introduction to Podcasting for Museums. This webinar is brought to you by the Digital Empowerment Project, the nationwide initiative organized by the six museum associations and dedicated to providing free, self-paced training resources for small museums. This inaugural series of online trainings focuses on digital media and technology topics and it is made possible by funding by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

My name is Dan Yaeger, Executive Director of the New England Museum Association, my pronouns are in the he/him series and I am your host for today's program. In this era of virtual meetings when digital spaces might substitute for our physical sense of place, it is important to reflect on the land we each occupy and honor the indigenous people who have called it home.

I am speaking to you from Swamp Scott, Massachusetts, north of Boston, the local homelands of the Massachusett peoples. Wherever we are each located let's acknowledge all indigenous nations as living communities, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations.

We, the Digital Empowerment Project, recognize that our organizations and those of our members were founded within a colonizing society which perpetuated the exclusions and erasures of many native peoples throughout the United States and beyond. We ask you to reflect on the place where you reside and work and to respect the diversity of cultures and experiences that form the richness of our world and our profession.

Thank you. And now for a few housekeeping notes before we introduce today's presenter and dig into the content. If you have questions or comments during today's webinar, please use the chat box and we will relay your thoughts to the presenter toward the end of the program. We will address as many of your questions as time allows, but if you have additional questions after the program, we suggest that you visit our website, museum-hub.org and connect with our online community forum.

I would like to acknowledge today's ASL interpreters and let you know that captioning for today's program is embedded in a box just below the YouTube player on our website with controls to adjust your experience.

Following today's program you'll be sent a link to a satisfaction survey. Sharing your experience through this survey will take only a few minutes and will greatly improve our work. We would be grateful for your opinions. Lastly, please follow us on social media to be aware of future programs. Links will be posted in the chat.

And now it is my pleasure to introduce today's presenter, the one and only, Hannah Hethmon. Hannah is the Owner and Executive Producer of Better Lemon Creative Audio, a production company focused exclusively on museums, history organizations, and cultural nonprofits.

She is the author of the popular handbook *Your Museum Needs a Podcast*, a step-by-step guide to podcasting on a budget for museums, history organizations, and cultural nonprofits.

She is a three-time winner of the AAM news awards for podcasting and her first podcast has been selected for collection by the United States Library of Congress. Hannah lives and works in historic Greenbelt, Maryland. Hannah, thank you for being here. Over to you.

>> HANNAH HETHMON: I think I am live; we can hear me? Let me get my slides up. I will jump right in. You can download the slides for this presentation now or at the end by going to TinyURL.com/HHpod1. If you want to have them, I am sure if you miss this they will put in the chat or you can get it afterwards as well. Do not panic.

I am going to put up some of the podcasts I've made here while I say I am going to roll through this information today. I want you to get as much podcasting information intro stuff as we can. And give you everything you need to jump off that and learn more. We

will roll through the information. It might be a bit much, but I am hoping you can look back at the slides and review the material and you will have really good foundation for planning your own podcast project.

So I am coming to you from Greenbelt, Maryland, which is in Prince George's County, the traditional lands of many native and indigenous communities past and present. This is a wonderful land acknowledgment I have stolen from the Prince George's County library, borrowed from them. So what we are going to cover in this webinar is, what is a podcast? Why should museums podcast? How to develop a show concept, right, like what should you podcast about? We will go over production overview, so an overview of the basic steps of podcasting. And then we are going to go over publishing, distribution, and marketing very briefly. I wish I could get more into it, but I don't think we can in the time we have.

In the next two webinars, in webinar two we will cover episode planning, mics and other equipment, and we will go a lot more in detail there, recording your show, and writing a script. And then in episode webinar three in two weeks we will cover what software tools to use for editing, principles of great editing, basics of using any editing software, where to find music and sound effects, how and when to outsource your editing and production and collaborative production models, what if you don't want to do it all on your own, for example.

So let's start with introducing, intro to the podcasting as a medium. What is podcasting? Who listens? And so on. So a podcast -- let's get to the dictionary definition first, starting my middle school essay, what is a podcast? The dictionary defines a podcast as a free radio show delivered on demand over the Internet using RSS technology. RSS feed is important, it means it's not an MP3 hosted on your website you could call that a podcast, but in terms of best practices and yes, there are some platforms that have started to charge for podcast access, but by and large it is still a free medium and the RSS is important because it means it is distributed across multiple platforms so it's really hard to kind of pay wall podcasts, which is what I love about them.

So the way podcasting works, I won't get too technical here, is me in my banana suit. I make an amazing podcast and then I use a podcast hosting provider like blubrry or libsyn and we will get more into those later. And what they do is they create an RSS feed, this kind of code, as you can see at the top of the screen there. In the good old days, which was way before I was podcasting, you would have to write your own RSS feed code in order to push it out to your podcasters, but you don't have to anymore. They will automatically create that code and push it out to SoundCloud, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, wherever people are listening to podcasts.

And that means all you have to do is upload your podcast to the hosting provider in MP3 and, boom, every time you have a new episode it goes automatically out to all of these platforms, which means you can have a podcast that updates regularly on Spotify alongside the most popular podcasts in the world. So that is pretty exciting, that is one of the things I really like about podcasting.

There are a lot of different genres and subgenres of podcasting, so I am going to kind of throw a bunch of museum podcasts and museum-esque podcasts related, adjacent shows at you and kind of illustrate the many types of shows you could be thinking about making.

So there are personal and intellectual journeys like Q&Abe or Texas Story Podcast that ask big questions and go on journeys to find them. There are true crime museum podcasts like Last Seen, which is a museum theft or Finding Van Gogh, another one about museum artwork being stolen. There are shows about, that are narrative journalism or documentary, your kind of traditional audio documentary.

Sparrows Point, American Steel Story is an incredible podcast from the Baltimore Museum of Industry, Distillations from the Science History Museum, a few museums and organizations are making audio fiction, so audio dramas that talk about their subject material, that is really cool. So you don't have to tell nonfiction stories, you can make up stuff. You can do comedy, Museums n' That is a funny show. I did Preservation

Profiles, the National Preservation Institute, your standard interview talk show highlighting professionals in the field. Sparrows Point is done in collaboration with a pretty well-known local public radio producer. So you can do a public radio model. You can do a limited series that has like, Departures has just nine episodes and that is that, they won't do more, it's a limited series, it stands alone as its own fixed investigation of a particular subject.

You can fully script your nonfiction like the Object which writes a story and they tell a story, and they add music and sound effects. That can be a really easy way to do something completely on your own and I couldn't find a museum podcast that does the news, so I just put The Daily there, but there are news podcasts as well. And that is just a start. You can have things that combine, true crime and news, fully scripted, everything -- anything you can think of you can make. There are no rules effectively as long as people like it and it is good, and they want to listen.

But hopefully we will talk about what makes a podcast good to listen to as well. I don't want to just leave you with you can do anything as long as it works. Podcast listening data. You can see on the left here this is the share of the U.S. population that have listened to a podcast in the last month. And the data goes up to 2021, so you can see that since 2008 podcasting has been kind of -- 2013 it was limping along, 2014 things really started to take off, that is when Serial, the true crime show came out, and that had a huge impact on awareness of podcasting, but it is really in the last few years it is kind of booming. And money is flowing into the field and everyone and their mother and their mother's favorite celebrity has made a podcast.

But there are still a lot of room for creativity and innovation and niche audiences. You can see 41 percent of adults in the U.S. listened to a podcast in the last month. So it is a huge share of population. The reasons people listen to podcasts is Number 1, to learn new things. So that works really well with what museums do.

And the next is to be entertained. So keep that in mind if you are making a podcast, it

can't just be a delivery of a textbook. It has to be an entertaining way to learn new things. People want to keep up to date with the latest topics, that might not be as much up our alley. To relax, that is something to think about. Maybe your podcast can capitalize on that, to feel inspired, we do that well, right? To escape and for companionship.

Just some company, I'm sure anybody who listens to podcasts can relate to that, someone to keep you company during the day. And it is a cool idea that the museum could be the perfect one keeping you company, if your museum could keep people company during the day, what a lovely service to offer. While advancing your mission.

Podcast listening data, some more on that. Here is from 2018 to 2021 age groups. So you can see the largest age group in this year is people 12 through 34, but still, people 34 to 54 and even 55 and over, about a quarter of them have listened to a podcast in the last month. So podcasting really spans a lot of age groups, the younger you get the more likely you are to get people.

This 12 to 34 is a huge age range, I am thinking most of that listening is 18 and up, young people are starting to listen to podcasts more, but millennials love podcasts. And then podcast diversity by listening audience. So you can see here that podcast listening is pretty evenly distributed across the population. So most people in the U.S., most groups of people listen to podcasts. It is not exactly in line with demographics, but a lot of that has to do with the last few years more ability for people of different underrepresented voices to start podcasting and it being less of a white male club which is what it kinda started out as. So a lot more women, a lot more LGBTQ voices, a lot more voices from Black communities, Asian-American communities, Hispanic communities and so on, a lot of people talking about things that weren't able to be spoken about on mainstream platforms.

So taking advantage of that. So let's talk about why should you podcast. Content wise. Here are a few reasons why to podcast. There is a growing listener base looking for

long form content, episodes are often 30 to 40 minutes, right? Long form content that informs and entertains. Museums do this really well. We have history, we have art, we have literature, we have the content, we have the long form content, and it is good stuff.

It creates a sense of intimacy and connection with the museum via the familiar hosts and repeated engagement. People are going to listen to your podcast more than they might come to your museum, especially if you don't have a lot of updates or changes to your exhibits or if you're a small historic house museum and you have one tour, they are not going to come every two weeks but if you're releasing a podcast every two weeks, they might listen every time so repeat content and contact.

They can go deeper, podcast episodes can go deeper than most exhibitions can go, especially if you're spanning multiple episodes. And they can ask nuanced questions and wrestle with big ideas. In a way and depth that might be hard to fit onto even the best written panel. Or best written text or even in the limited time and space of a tour. So it allows you to really go deep and get nuanced.

Again, it can platform underrepresented stories and voices and that might mean that you are telling those stories or like if you listen to the last webinar, it might mean just giving the platform to the people who haven't had that platform and to say this is your space to talk. We are just giving you the time and space.

It also allows you to curate content that's not accessible to non-researchers and historians, so oral histories, archives, I work with a lot of oral histories, archives and then oral history archives trying to make documents and oral histories more accessible and more entertaining rather than just saying here is 50 minutes of tough audio from 1930, let's cut it up and let's frame it and let's make it easy to listen to.

Then technical considerations for the why podcast question. There is a low-tech barrier and low threshold to high-quality competitive content. So versus video it is much easier to make a professional sounding podcast or a podcast that sounds good and your

average listener will enjoy versus video.

Audio only means you can play around with side effects and voices to spark your listener's imagination. I like this audio fiction podcast called *Girl in Space*, which is an epic space trauma made by one woman in the Midwest on Audacity, a free platform, because you can just use space sounds to evoke the spaceships and aliens and cyborgs, and she doesn't have to have millions of dollars in special-effects budget.

Editing audio is more about having a good ear than having fancy software tech skills. Again it's much easier to edit audio than video in my opinion. And I think everyone else is, too. Audio alone, again, it is pretty easy to get the hang of the editing software, it's more about having an ear for what sounds good.

And you can reach your audience where they are, whenever they have time for you. If they have time for the museum at 4:00 am in the morning when they are on their way to work that's when you can reach them and that's a pretty special skill and they could be driving, there's not many other forms of social medium or media that you can get to your audience directly while they are driving.

While they are commuting and so on. Why should you not podcast is an important question to ask yourself. My book is called *Your Museum Needs a Podcast*, but, in fact, not every museum needs a podcast. This is not like social media; everyone should have a social media presence. It takes a significant time and/or financial investment. So you can spend a lot of money, or you can spend a lot of time or combination of it. But you are not going to do it for no money and no time. That is not just happening, I just want to warn you now, podcasting is a pretty intensive project. And you will need to keep at it for longer term to build up your audience. So just like -- you can't make one podcast and put it out there, you can, but you are not going to have the kind of return on investment, the reason for podcasting I really think you need at least six episodes in a season and if you can do nine, if you can do six, and then come back for another season, if you can podcast somewhat continually for a year or two you're going to build

up a much better audience, you're going to see that return on investment in terms of all of the things we talked about.

It is not a quick marketing tool. So if you're thinking, how can we promote? No. Stop. That is not the answer, the answer is not podcasting. It's how we promote XYZ, podcasting is probably not the best way to do that for your time and money. I like to think of it as programming. As an exhibition. If you're putting it into advance your mission it's usually not going to return you directly money or promotion or sales or ticket sales to make it worth the time and effort. Now, over time it might increase those things, but that is not the primary reason you should be podcasting, it won't be effective that way.

So that is the kind of why briefly, the what. Let's talk really quickly about podcast production overview of everything involved and we will get into more of these more in the other webinars. So you've got five stages of podcast production. Here is my little flowchart. Planning, you have to plan. This is really important. [indiscernible] how you're going to talk about it, how to strategy. Two, recording. You have to record some audio. Three, you have to edit it, make it sound good, add some music, add some sound effects if you want. Four, distribution. That RSS feed going out via your podcasting host to Spotify, Apple, whatever. And then marketing, five, I'm including this because this is an important stage in podcasting. If you make a podcast and you put it on the Internet, people will not necessarily come.

You really need to market podcasts. There is no algorithm for delivering podcasts to any podcatchers, it's really first -come first served, so if people are subscribed to this American life and your podcast and your podcast is the most recent episode that is going to be at the top of their podcast list. So the goal is to use marketing to get people subscribed and then keep them engaged with good content means you can reach them at the same level, you are right up there with popular shows, but you have to reach people first and you have to convince them to try your podcast and then to subscribe. We are going to skip over planning and come back to that in a second. Recording, you

will need some form of microphone. I won't go into that right now, we will talk a lot about this in webinar 2, so I hope you'll come back next week and listen to me get a little nerdy about my equipment, but if you won't you can take a look, I think you can see it, this is my NT-USB Mini, it is super cute and tiny. And it is my favorite microphone. So if you're going to get one microphone, just get that NT-USB Mini. It is awesome. But there are a lot of different tools you can use, everything from using smart phones to expensive shotgun mics. So don't feel like if you aren't a tech person that you can't podcast.

These are the two fanciest podcast set-ups I have probably have ever had. And you can see neither of them is that crazy. It's really just microphones plugged into a hand recorder, a mic plugged into a laptop, sometimes these days in the pandemic it is really just a decent microphone on the desk and an online recording platform and then people doing a backup on their smart phone voice memo app.

So again, we will go into that more in the next webinar, but don't be overwhelmed by that wall of microphones I just showed you. It is not that complicated. Tech is surprisingly not that important. You just got to get to a certain threshold audio quality. Part of your writing, your recording phase, might be writing and recording a script, whether that is the entire thing you can be recording interviews, but you can also be recording your narration. So these are just some screenshots from scripts that I have. On the left the pink is the transcription and the italics, I always write my script in italics so I can tell the difference. So I like to work these up in Google Docs.

And this lets you either in a longer episode of more documentary style or you might switch between narration and interview to break things up and explain and extrapolate to interpret the audio. Or on the right is a podcast where we just have a brief introduction that is basically the same in every episode with a little variation on a theme. Then there is the audio interview between the host and the guest, then a little outro at the end. So your narration could be small but you're probably going to need at least a little bit of narration in your podcast, just to open and close it.

So you need to write and record your script. Phase three, you're going to edit your podcast with a DAW, Digital Audio Workstation. So you could use GarageBand to edit your podcast. It is free. Audacity is free, a little harder to use, a little clunkier, but there's lots of free resources out there, Descript is a supercool platform that you can use as you edit, you cut the text and it adds the audio. And there's a free version and it goes up to \$24 a month, but the free version is not bad, actually, so that is a really fun one to check out.

I love and use Hindenburg Journalist, I think it is the simplest, the best, the easiest way to edit podcasts. But if you are going to use something like Adobe Audition or ProTools or the other ones, you can use those as well, whatever you are comfortable with.

Use it. As long as it sounds good in the end that is really all that matters, and we are going to go way more into this in webinar three, in the third workshop. So phase four, publishing and distribution. This is what you're going to need to publish a podcast. You need a podcast hosting service; these are a bunch of them. I like libsyn, if you don't want to do any research use libsyn. Anchor is the one that is free, but the rest are not that expensive, it's a few bucks a month.

You need at least one episode or a trailer, which we will talk about in a bit, in an MP3 format so you will need your first MP3. You will need a name for your show, some cover art, a show description, and you will need an Apple ID that is connected to a credit card to submit it to Apple Podcast, even though it does not cost anything.

This trips some people up so just know that you'll need that. That's phase four and we will talk about marketing shortly, but first I want to jump back to phase one, planning. Show development and planning. It is really important to plan ahead and start with a great concept. So you want to ask the big questions, what impact do we want to have on our listeners? How will this advance our mission in a way that other programs and media that we do can't? How much time can we commit to this podcast? How much

money can we commit to this podcast? And how much money do we want to commit to this podcast? How many episodes do we want to make and how long will the show run?

This first question is a really important one, do you want people to be happy, sad, inspired? Remember the reasons people listen, really think about when they finish listening to your episode what are they going to feel? What is the impact going to be? I really want you to think ahead and plan that before you even start making the show. You really need to work with your audience in mind, which, hopefully, shouldn't be too unfamiliar of a concept for museum people.

Then you might have some idea of what you're going to podcast about. So I want to give you this, but then how do you narrow that down? Can you just talk about the Civil War? That might be a bit broad. How do you choose what to podcast about? So my friend Ian Elsner runs the podcast Museum Archipelago and he has this brilliant metaphor that I bring out in every webinar that I do. Let's say you want to do a podcast about Star Wars. That is too much. Lucas Films does not have the biggest Star Wars podcast, there are thousands and thousands of podcasts, let alone the other media out there.

You need to niche down to find a specific part of that universe to focus on. Let's say you are like, okay, I'm going to make a podcast about Ewoks, so now you have your niche topic, your topic has gone from topic to niche topic. There is still a lot to talk about and Ewoks are people interested in the sociology of Ewok culture, are they interested in the biology of Ewoks? Like what is the science behind how they exist? Are they interested in the cinematography? How did they, how were they created, how were they filmed?

What is the technical stuff behind that? Or perhaps we are looking at people who are interested in dressing up as Ewoks, so Ewok cosplayers. So that gets us to the unique perspective. What angle are you taking to look at this niche topic? So Star Wars is too

big, you need to get down to a niche topic, but even once you find your niche topic you need to find your unique perspective. What perspective are you bringing to this topic that no one else is? So when you have created your Ewok cosplayer show it is going to be the only one out there and anyone Ewok cosplayers has to listen, and they are going to be delighted to have content that is specifically for them and then you'll be able to connect with all of the top people in the community and grow it that way.

I hope that makes sense. So niche topic, unique perspective. Smaller niche is better in podcasting, the more niche you can go, the better. Don't be afraid to go too niche. So then once you have your topic here are some things to keep in mind. Stories and narratives are more entertaining than facts. That is a fact. Stories and narratives are more memorable than facts. That is a scientific fact, and I can't go into it too much here, but believe me, I have read some books on it, I have looked at some NPR stories, I am 99 percent sure that that is the accurate science, stories in science narratives is how we remember things, it's how we think, it's our brain works.

So if you want someone to remember the story, remember the history that you're telling them, framing it as a story or narrative is important. And you can think about it this way. Stories are things that, things happen to a character in a story. There's a beginning, a middle, and an end. So fiction is almost always a story. A narrative may not have beginning, middle, end, but there is a sequence of actions. So your NPR radio story is usually where they go a little bit longer, there's a sequence of actions, things are happening. It is not just the section where they say this happened, this event, this event, this event, the bullet, anything more than the headline.

We're drawing out, explaining what happened, giving a sequence of actions. So try to explain that a bit better. There are a lot of different types of narrative you can use. So when you're planning your podcast you have your topic, what are you going to talk about in that topic? I really, really want you to think about stories and narratives. So there are story narratives, story arcs, things happen, there's a character, there's a happy ending, you might have an explanatory narrative, where someone travels from

point A to point B and along the way we learn stuff.

There are memoirs, you have a vignette, which is a little tiny story, painting a picture. There's bookend narratives where you tell a little bit of story, explain things in fact and bookend it with a little bit of story. Which I put on the slide twice. And a narrative interview, so even if you are doing an interview podcast you want your guests to be telling stories.

So on one hand you can tell the story and on the other hand your guests can tell the story. So when you are asking questions you might say, tell me the story of how you came to be the person in charge here? And they will tell you that story rather than what is your job title, I am the person in charge, that is a fact.

The story of how they came to be here, that is a narrative. So think and think and think where is the story, where is the narrative in this history? How can I make this into a familiar format? And I'm putting this book here because I am just glossing over the surface of this, but this book will allow you to go much, much deeper into how to make nonfiction compelling, which will also help you if you're a history museum or an art museum in talking about your other content. I highly recommend this book.

Here's another way to think about it. Again, I'm just throwing these ideas at you to get your brain thinking. What is a story? This is from out on the wire, which is another great book. The formula is this, I am doing a story about X, the topic, and what is interesting about it is why. I am doing a story about the Civil War and what is interesting about it is that we are telling the story of Jewish Civil War veterans.

That nobody knew about before until we found this record, and that's an actual project that is going on that I got [indiscernible] about recently, that is really interesting.

I'm doing a story about the Civil War and what is really interesting about it is we are talking about how medical advances in the Civil War advanced modern medicine and

are still impacting us today. So if you're just doing a story about X, and you don't have a what's interesting, a why, that's where your story is going to fall flat, that is where your podcast is going to fall flat.

So, really, write down this formula and try to apply it to your show concept and then we will talk about episode planning a bit more in the next webinar, but episode planning as well. You have to have some sort of story going on in your podcast to get people from the beginning to the end.

Otherwise, you might as well just print up a blog and let them read the facts and write them down. Then you have to think about consistency, what is going to keep your audience coming back over and over and over? What is that familiar something in your show that from each episode to the next they are going to say I love the show because in every episode this happens, or I get this perspective. So it could be a reliably entertaining or informative host, like Ologies, the podcast with Ally Ward. Or by the book, these are two of my favorite podcasts. I know these hosts are funny and insightful and wonderful and I'm just going to feel like I love them, and they are brilliant every time.

I always want to hear their perspective. Those shows also have a familiar format. In each episode they do the same thing. Ologies in each episode she asks serious and silly questions to a different kind of scientist. I can get a predictable format; I know what is happening and by the book in every episode these two hosts are going to try to live by the rules of a self-help book and come back and report how it went.

So I know what is happening, I don't know exactly the content, but I know it is a familiar format, I know what I like. It could be a totally fresh approach to a familiar subject. Ologies is a funny and silly and irreverent way to look at science in a way that not a lot of other shows are.

Now, you can also keep your audience coming back by wanting to know what happens in the end, the end of each episode, the end of the series. Wind of Change is a fantastic

series that asks the question, did the CIA write the famous Scorpion song wind of change to try to take down the Soviet Union?

If you start that podcast you are going to want to get to the end of the series and answer that question and with history and art and all of these things we have so many big questions that we can ask that you can extend and get your audience, ask the question in the beginning of your episode and get them to the end of the episode, get them to the end of the series wanting to know what happens in the end.

That show also has really compelling characters and in history and art and science and everything museums do, we have amazing characters, individuals, animals, places can be characters as well that people can feel connected to and feel invested in and want to know more about and get passionate about.

The other thing that might keep people coming back is a surprising perspective. That you thought you knew. So throughline asks questions about the history and the present that are familiar topics like let's say policing, but what is the real history of policing? What is the real history of our town? What is the real history of this aspect of the Civil War? So they might come and say the topic is always familiar, but I learned something new and I learned to see it from a different angle every time.

So consistency, what would keep people coming back each episode? Okay, so that has been a ridiculously brief look at story and show development. Hopefully in the end if you have any questions about that and you want to throw your show concept in the questions, in the chat at the end, maybe we can workshop it a bit and play with that. Because I know that is a big question that people often ask. But due to time constraints we are going to continue on to distribution and marketing.

Finding my place. The things that you will need to distribute and promote your show. Is branding. So you need a title, and your title needs to tell a potential listener as much about the listener as much as possible. So Chasing Cosby in the top left corner there,

I'm pretty sure we can figure out what that show is about, it's brilliant cover art, brilliant title as well. So your cover art likewise should grab their attention and be easy to read in a thumbnail size. That's really important. It should be small and convey the mood and the tone. That episode, that cover art is amazing, Chasing Cosby, the darkness of it, the bright sweater that is iconic.

Arts Matters, that is a fun and exciting artwork that makes me interested. Getting Curious with John Conger Ness is a great title and his silly face there, his little silly face lets you know that this is going to be not so serious of a show.

There's going to be a little humor in it. I love the hidden island it's from Prince Edward Museums in Prince Edward Island in Canada and that's just a beautiful cover art that kind of suggests mystery and makes me want to listen. I don't know, it's just beautiful.

So your description of your podcast is like a book jacket blurb. So the description tells the listener what they will get if they listen, it teases exciting things, intrigues them, do not neglect this step. I'm going to spend an extra 10 seconds of my webinar time here to tell you, do not neglect this step.

I see so many museum podcasts they put all of this effort into their show and then they put it up and they might have artwork that did not get the attention it needs and a description that this is a podcast from so-and-so museum.

Which is a huge waste of space. If you wrote a whole book and went to the effort of publishing it you would not put any old cover and any old description and say this is a book by the author. You would put a lot of work into that cover, a lot of work in that title, a lot of work into the description because this is one of the ways to get people to try your podcast and to subscribe and that will get you in their feed along with this American life and other big shows, right? That will help you be there for them every time you listen, release an episode.

Okey-dokey. Moving on. You're going to need a homepage of some sort. You need a place for your podcast, it needs to live either on your website or this is a website on the left that I made using the tool podsite from radio public. I didn't list this here, but it is podsite from radio public and it's kind of like a ready-made podcast website that you can pay for and just fill in the details and it looks cool.

You can have just a page on your website, you can do blog posts, whatever, but there needs to be a main place in your website where your listeners can access the podcast in its entirety, the links, the extra materials. In other words, make it easy to find your show and make it easy to share your show.

Don't make people go, what is the real link for this? That should be obvious. And then for each episode you may want to release show notes, so an individual blog post or a page for each episode with episode details, transcripts, photos, links, et cetera.

Transcripts are really important for accessibility. I really, really, really recommend including a transcript with every episode. And what you can do with the transcript is you can turn it into a blog post. You can post it right into the text of the website as on the bottom so that it also acts as like SEO for people who are searching for Jewish soldiers in the Civil War and you have created a podcast episode about that, your transcript, if it is searchable on the website, if it's accessible by Google, will help direct people to your podcast if they are looking for that subject.

So I did a podcast about Iceland and a lot of people searching for Icelandic museums have found my show because of the SEO thing because the words were all over my website. So a transcript really helps with that, that's an added bonus beyond the accessibility concerns.

You can do this just as a regular blog post, you can make sections on your website, you don't have to have a brand-new website or anything. But try and don't neglect this step. I'm spending way more time on this end space here because I think a lot of museums

make really great shows and then they do not put the effort and time into marketing them and making them accessible. And thinking about the delivery. And then their shows don't -- aren't successful and it's not because it is missing great content, it's because they haven't focused on that distribution and marketing stage that is so important.

So distribution. I mentioned podcast hosting. So I will refresh this slide here. So once you have your show basically ready to go or you are in the final stages of making it, you have your podcast website page that you have developed, you are basically ready to launch, that is when you need your podcast hosting service.

So blubrry, libsyn, Spreaker, buzzsprout, there are thousands of them, and they'll do the same thing, so don't worry about doing too much comparing and contrasting. But podcast hosting platform, that is the important thing.

Here are the steps for publishing and distributing your show because this is the information you are not going to find anywhere else. So I will roll through this, you can look at this slide to check it later. Choose a podcast hosting provider. You need to set up your show details on the podcast hosting provider and upload your trailer or first episode.

Use the service's distribution options to submit your show to as many podcasters as possible. Google, Spotify, et cetera. Once it is set up on there, you're going to grab your RSS feed, which is a URL from the hosting service distribution section and submit it to Apple Podcast via podcastconnect.apple.com. This is very specific stuff I am giving to you because it's really hard to find, it is really simple to do, but hard to find this information.

Five, you have to wait for up to a week for your show to show up on all of the podcast platforms. So plan that time in for your launch. It won't just show up instantly. You need to wait until it is fully up. After that every time you publish an episode, it should be

almost instantaneous. And you can use this amazing website called Pod.Link to find all of the links for the different platforms your show is on. If you are like, how do I get my Apple link? How do I get my Google link? Pod.Link. This is an amazing tool so write that one down.

Once you distributed your show -- sorry, I skipped ahead. One of the best tools for launching a show is to create a trailer. And I'm not going to play this because we are running low on time, but if you look at any of my shows you will probably find trailers. This is about three minutes, two to three minutes of audio, and it is just the best clips from your show, just grab the best set of snippets from your podcast, lay it over some cool music, add in a little bit of narration saying the podcast is going to be about this, it's coming out here, if you want. Or you could just put the clips over audio if you want to be really bare bones.

And this will allow you to test out your hosting issues before you release a full episode to make sure you've got it all ready to go, before you launch, before you release that first episode out there. And then you can promote the trailer and kind of have a little bit more of a launch effect, like a movie premiere. Have your trailer, the trailer's out, check out the trailer. This is also a little tiny bit that people can listen to and see oh, is this the kind of thing I want? So I really recommend using a trailer to get everything started, it is a great way to kick off your show launch and your launch is really important, you want to build as much buzz as you can around that show launch.

And once you have your show -- sorry, once you have your show launched you are going to entice your listeners in with expanded and bite-size content. Now, I will start with bite-size content. That trailer that just started playing that I don't have time to play you, I used this amazing tool called headliner.app and it is free, you can upload an audio clip and turn it into a social media video with captions and photos or if you have video, you can play video behind it silently.

And you will have see these online, the text flashing by. So these little snippets are a great way to get people from social media tasting and teasing and engaging with your

show before they make the big decision to go to their podcast app and subscribe. Then I've already kind of talked about expanded content, that's on the left, turn your transcript into a blog. Write a blog about what else is going on, write a blog that kind of uses the highlights of your episode and then includes the pictures that people might want to learn more about and then the blog can point people to the podcast and the podcast can point people to the blog.

And that will help give you more content, but also direct people to the podcast. So expand and bite-size that content in any way you can, headliner.app is the social media videos are the best way to market a podcast.

I hope that is clear. I'm trying to pack a lot into this webinar for you. So I hope you all are following along. Another thing important to remember is that podcasts are evergreen content. So this is a tweet from The National Archives, I made podcasts for them for the last two and half years. One of the first episodes we ever created was about this spy Noor Inayat Khan and then two years later she got a blue plaque, a kind of monument in London. So The National Archives was able to comment on that current event by saying, by the way, if you like her, we have a podcast all about her.

So podcasts are not like social media posts that they kind of come and go. They are evergreen content. Once you put all of the work and effort and time into a podcast, use every opportunity to really bring that up to be like we have a podcast, we have a podcast about that. Because people are excited to know that they can learn more about it. This is something they are interested in, they can go to that podcast, or they can get that deep dive to go beyond the headline that there is now a plaque memorializing Noor Inayat Khan, who was she, really? Let's go to that podcast and let's go deep into the records and really learn more about her life and her story.

Lastly, I am coming in fantastically on time. I am so proud of myself. Lastly, how do you tell if you did good? How do you know if your podcast is successful? The only relative benchmarks out there are libsyn, they release their stats monthly, or relative

stats monthly, so you can compare yourself. But they take -- they represent such a huge section of the U.S. market that I think this is pretty representative. And honestly, if you're in another country this is a good benchmark. It's not going to be exact or precise but it will give you a measure of where you are. So what you want to measure with the podcast is downloads per episode after 30 days.

30 days after release, how many downloads did you get? And then keep track of that number. You can see a chart on the left where I kept track of one of my podcasts, my first podcast when I started it, and of course, if I would have just looked at the numbers I might have seen, but you can see over time that number, that 30 days number, is starting to go slowly up, which means I am gaining more subscribers than I am losing.

Over time I am getting slowly more and more downloads on each new episode. So that is the kind of measure to say is my audience growing? Is my subscriber base growing? So downloads after thirty days. If you get 150 downloads per episode in the first 30 days, you are probably in the top 50 percent of podcast episodes released that month in the U.S. So you're not going to get thousands and thousands of views, probably, it's not like a Facebook video or YouTube video, so you need to keep in mind. I like to think of it, again, in terms of programming. If you had 150 people showing up to your program every week, every other week for six months, would you be happy? Would it be worth the time and effort you put into it?

If you do get up to 1200, which is totally doable, if you are applying that marketing, and paying attention to planning, good branding, and marketing, if you get 1200 you'll be in the top 20 percent. So if you get somewhere between 150 and 1000 downloads, that is fantastic.

Way to go, good job. So when you're doing your planning make sure you save these numbers to show to whoever's in charge and prepare them to not see 50,000 downloads. Because it's probably not going to happen. If it does, good for you. But the ideally over time you are more likely to build your podcast audience over time than go

viral. You can see on my little chart here I had one podcast early on that did much better than the others. But podcasting is a slow, steady build.

Not a viral moment. And that is the end of my presentation. Again, you can download the slides at tinyurl.com/HHpod1. And I hope that has given you a lot of podcast stuff to think about without overwhelming too much. We will slow down a lot more in the next two webinars and dive into the recording and editing aspects. That's it. Back to the hosts.

>> : All right, awesome. Thank you, Hannah, that was terrific. You can take another sip of your water or whatever it is you're drinking there. Slow down. We have a couple minutes for questions. So add them to the chat if you would like. One of the things I am seeing, and I know from experience people ask me, what does it take to be a podcaster? And the assumption is that you have to have a background in some kind of technical engineering and sound engineering and the like. And, of course, you have a degree in sound engineering, correct?

>> HANNAH HETHMON: No.

>>: Medieval studies and English and whatever, right? So anybody can do this.

>> HANNAH HETHMON: I have a degree in English literature, anybody, even someone with a literature degree.

>> : So I'm joking but --

[multiple people talking]

What got you into this, how did you get from medieval Norse studies, or whatever, in Iceland, to I want to do podcasting, this is my career. You certainly weren't thinking that as you were banging out these and whatever. But podcasting captured your imagination somehow and what was it that went into it? And what inspired you and what can inspire the folks to do it?

>> HANNAH HETHMON: I had never done audio, I had never done video stuff, just a lot of writing. I went back to Iceland after I got my masters for a Fulbright in Iceland and I wanted to tell stories about museum culture in Iceland, I wanted to tell stories about the museums, there's always weird and small museums. I wanted to talk about them, and I wanted to tell their story of what they are from the inside.

And I did not want to use photography because Iceland is so over photographed, I couldn't compete. So I picked up, as you know, Dan, I picked up a little technical leaflet that you had done for ASLH with [indiscernible] like how we made our podcast and it was just here's a microphone, here's a recorder, we use this to edit and I just said, fine, I will do those things, no other research and I went to Iceland and I spent nine months there and I had a lot of time on my hands. I just went around, and I learned on the go, I recorded stories, some of them did not turn out that well.

But I found there was this amazing way to get really close and intimate with people and to really connect with them and I just fell in love with that way of storytelling and over the course of time I kind of started looking more and more into tech and improving my tech game, but I started out by just picking up a microphone and a recorder and being like, yep, that sounds good enough, let's go. And I think what worked was focusing on story and getting excited about how do I tell the story in a way that is really exciting and hasn't been done before.

And how do I get my audio just good enough that people will be able to hear that story that I want to tell? And every time I think my audio quality got much, much better and now I am a professional producer. But I really, I still consider myself a tech minimalist, which is a fancy way of saying I don't like to like research microphones. I will find a good one and that is good enough.

>> : One of the beauties I think of podcasting is that you know your audience sort of depends on what you're, where you are at any given time. There's a certain casualness

to it, when you start out especially there's a lot of forgiveness, it's like we're just getting things rolling here, we are experimenting. And you do get better over the course of time. It's surprising how much you become more proficient at it and so forth, which is a good thing. How do you see podcasts change over the last few years? I do know listening now there is a certain level of sophistication out there that is probably just generative over the course of time. But has podcasting changed? And another question is so has the pandemic influenced how podcasting is being treated by museums?

>> HANNAH HETHMON: Yeah. I think podcasting, let's talk first about what, podcasting has become a lot more maybe professionalized, but it has become a lot more mainstream and that means there's a lot more celebrities, Apple and Spotify are pouring billions into it. But I still think there is a lot of room for independent podcasting and independent podcasting is more or less the same as it has been. People making audio documentaries are doing it the same way that NPR people have been doing it. For many years. They are not going to be the flashy ones in the headlines that you see. Unless they are true crime. But it is pretty similar to the way it's always been in that perspective. The pandemic has had a huge shift in podcasting because we are all doing it remotely. I gotta update my book, I'm working on a second edition of my book because my book focuses all on in-person recording. I haven't done in-person recording in almost two years now and I'm realizing how there are so many more tools for doing remote recording and it's so much simpler and it's even less tech-intensive.

And I think overall we have all accepted a lower audio quality standard and that is great for museums. That is great for independent podcasters. The minimum threshold that you need to meet has lowered and people are more used to hearing that remote audio as long as it is done well, I'm still not telling you to put bad audio on your podcast. But I think it's also opened up the world that you can interview anyone anywhere in the world and make incredible connections.

It has brought podcasting up to where the rest of the Internet has got us with making connections and meeting people all over the world.

>> : Right. Well, I really appreciated what you said though about you need to think carefully about it. Anybody can do it, but it's like you have to really be able to weave it into your mission and also, it's not without time and cost. What in your estimation -- what is the go no go thing, when somebody is deciding, okay, we are going to do a podcast, what are the factors that you say, look, we just can't possibly do this because of X. Are there sort of common strands there?

>> HANNAH HETHMON: I think the presenters in the first webinar last week talked about this. That your formula kind of has to be determined by your capabilities. So if you have five hours a week to dedicate to this, an interview podcast like the five plain questions that was talked about, that is a great simple format to use, don't go crazy, keep it short, keep it simple.

And try it out. I think doing a pilot episode is a great way to even if you don't publish it, it's a great way to get a sense of what the time will be involved. If you want to make something huge and you don't have the time or money, that is an issue. If you don't have any time to dedicate to it and you want to outsource it then you have to have a budget, you just have to do it and you're going to be spending anywhere from \$500 to probably \$3000 an episode depending on what you're doing. I would say \$500 would be minimum if you want to hire somebody external.

I really feel like if you have some time during the weeks, if you have time and you have a good ear. Now, of course, if you don't have a good ear you probably don't know you don't have a good ear, but get someone else to listen, it can be really helpful to make it in a team and have someone else listen and give you feedback.

I think time is the big one. It is going to take you time or money. That is just one or the other. Sometimes both. But if you have a lot of time you can do it for basically free.

>> : Here's a question from Jen listening in. I'm at a small local history museum and I'm

curious about possibly doing a podcast that wouldn't be about one specific topic. Maybe short seasons on different topics relating to rotating exhibits, for example. Do you have any insight into how museum talks about a bunch of different topics might make a cohesive show time?

>> HANNAH HETHMON: Yeah. That is something I did not talk about is seasons, thematic seasons. That is totally doable because you might not want to talk about let's say you're doing an exhibit on, I'll go back to the Jewish soldiers in the Civil War. You can only do -- you might only, might want to do five or six episodes on that. So you can do thematic seasons, but what you need to do then is to have something else, consistency. That consistency is really important.

If your content is not a consistency between themes, what is? In each episode are you going to talk to a contemporary person who has an understanding of this? Are you going to have five episodes in each season where you bring in a scientist, an artist, and a doctor to talk about it? Are you going to use the records in your archives to uncover a surprising aspect of it? Or are you just going to have a very high-quality story format where each season I know I am going to get really personal stories with some cool music, like what is the consistency between? If people like season one, it is all about the Jewish soldiers of the Civil War, what is going to draw them to season two, which is all about how our town reacted to the New Deal?

What is going to be the continuity between those two things and one of the examples I would use is I'm doing a show with -- I'm not going to talk about that actually, I can't talk about that. Well, I'm doing a show with the Archives of American Art called Articulated, and the first season, the first set of thematic is about the New Deal. That's why I am thinking about that. And they are using the oral histories from their collection, these are oral histories done in the 1960s, they are terrible audio quality by and large, it's been so much work to make them sound good.

But we are curating clips of those. I'm just an editor on the show. Curating clips of

those in between narration. So you get a scholar talking and explaining and illustrating with clips, kind of like an audio documentary using archival footage. They are going to move onto another topic that is totally different, and I can't say what it is now. Totally different at all. But the format is going to be the same. You want to hear the voices from this oral history collection of people talking about art with educated curators giving you narration in a very scholarly manner to work you through this and educate you.

You are going to go from season one to season two and you're probably going to like both of them. Now, you are going to lose some people transitioning from themes. But there has to be something, consistency of format there.

>> : Well, all right. Thank you, Hannah. That's terrific. I'm really glad we are going to be able to chat again over the next couple of weeks so we can kind of follow up on some of these themes. And I know we've got a ton of questions from both attendees, and I have a ton as well. For you. So that is great. I am looking forward to that. So we are going to wrap up today. We are out of time. I would like to thank everyone for attending the program today. And, of course, thank you, Hannah, for your expertise.

If you enjoyed this program, then please do us a favor and share it with your networks. We really appreciate participation of everyone in the field and hope that we see you again in the chat for future programs. After each module all four videos will be available on the website as well as a complete toolkit of resources provided by our presenters. Stay tuned to museum-hub.org for more information on upcoming events.

And please join us next week for tech workshop number two as Hannah leads us through episode planning, writing and recording your podcast. We will see you then. Thanks for joining us.

[end of webinar]