ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 5 - number 144 Wednesday 3 february 2021

How to create podcasts for online courses

The ideal eLearning content for multitasking people who don't like to appear. The podcast: how to design it and engage learners.

We are accustomed to thinking of **video content** as the main channel for entertainment, training, involvement of students in an online course and of network users in general. In fact, the spread of **podcasting**, i.e. the technology of transmitting and receiving files for downloading, shows that audio is just as effective and gets an increasingly positive response from students.

With a smartphone and a podcast, commonly understood as audio recordings of voices and music in the form of episodes, learners can immerse themselves in **training** without having to use their hands, perhaps busy putting the information they hear into practice. Not all trainers or voice actors are comfortable showing themselves on video, so the podcast becomes a viable alternative even for a less expansive instructional designer. Here is a brief outline of how to **design an effective podcast for your online course**.

Tools for making podcasts

The starting point for **creating a podcast** is to have suitable tools for recording and editing audio files. These tools can be downloaded or used online or can be incorporated into your own authoring tool. Whatever tool is used, the most important thing is that it integrates perfectly with your **LMS**. Obviously, a good microphone and a room with good acoustics complete the basic kit for making quality podcasts.

How to structure your podcast

The next step is to think about the structure the podcast should have. The most useful tool is a storyboard, which is a tool to help outline the visual and of course the auditory aspects of the podcast:

- What are the **aims of the course** - general aim, specific aims, expected outcomes
- How the podcast starts - music and sound effects
- Who is the **narrator** - the trainer, a voice actor, an expert in the field...
- The model that the podcast will follow - introduction, explanation, application of the contents in the working environment, appointment to the next episode
- The **mode of delivery of the podcasts**: synchronous in live mode or asynchronous to be enjoyed autonomously by the learners

At this stage it is best to focus on the broad outline of the content of each episode and the creation of a template that can be adapted as needed. As an example, the trainer can decide that there will be 12 episodes, divided into three parts marked by a sound effect, a particular music. Each episode has a theoretical introduction and practical examples and concludes with the intervention of the learners or subject matter experts (if live) or challenges for the next episode.

As always in eLearning, the prerequisite for this is to start with a **needs analysis** of the beneficiaries to know what they need to learn and how.

Telling a story with the eLearning podcast

Next, you need to develop the **script** for each episode trying to make the most of the **storytelling** elements, making the podcast more engaging. Don't forget that the aim of the podcast is to motivate learners and entertain them so that they can better achieve their learning objectives or review the knowledge they have learnt in a playful way. Choosing a **character** that the beneficiaries of the course identify with, with realistic problems to be overcome from episode to episode, maximises the students'

involvement and helps them to better remember the knowledge they have learnt.

How to use podcasts within an online course

The podcast can be used both as an activity within the course and as an assessment tool. In the first case, you need to think about how to include quizzes or exercises in your LMS to assess whether students have actually achieved the learning objectives. In the second case, it is the podcast itself that is used as a quiz. By asking students to make their own podcasts, preferably in groups, you can assess them in an engaging way.
With the right tools, quality podcasts can be made starting from the beneficiaries' educational needs and preparing a storyboard and script to tell a story involving students and experts in the field. The podcast is also a cool way to evaluate the knowledge learnt.

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