

Podcasting Business Learning: Addressing the New Learning Styles for Generation Y

Stevina Evuleocha, Steve Ugbah

California State University

Abstract

The quest for an ideal medium to deliver business content to Gen Y learners has led instructors to consider the Internet, since digital content that exists in databases can be manipulated by a range of programming services (Shim *et al.*, 2006). Shim *et al.*, have also asserted that web development has been hampered by bandwidth and difficulties of “back end integration,” consequently, impacting the presentational aspects of data and user interfaces (Yang & Tang, 2005). Innovations in computer and software technologies appear to have ameliorated the technical difficulties, resulting in the emergence of new media such as podcasting, webcasting, videostreaming, blogging, and Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language (SMIL) technologies (Shim, 2002). These new media streams can be integrated into traditional lectures, thus enhancing the educational environment (McLaughlin, 2006), particularly for Gen Y learners. This paper discusses the efficacy of podcasting in business education, reviews the characteristics of Generation Y (Gen Y) learners, discusses learning styles and theories that support mobile learning, reviews learning styles of Gen Y learners, and discusses whether adaptations are necessary to address the updated needs of this new generation of learners in the business communication context.

Introduction

The optimum delivery format of information and instruction to a new generation of business learners has continued to generate discussions among business instructors. Studies such as those by Callaghan *et al.* (2000) show that traditional lectures can be one of the least effective methods of teaching. Also, of significant concern is the current demand for accountability and assessment in higher education, and the call for greater acceptance and appreciation of individual differences. Studies have suggested that an integration of multimedia and instructor-led guidance would improve educational outcomes (Braun, 2002; Garcia-Morales & Llorens-Montes, 2006; Littman, 1995; Pagell, 1996; Smagt, 2000). Therefore, business instructors are now re-examining their commitment to teaching and learning and searching for new ways to improve teaching, particularly for a new generation of learners—Generation Y (hereafter referred to as Gen Y). As Canfield (1992) aptly stated, “knowing the kinds of learning experiences that students most value may help business instructors develop alternative course structures that provide a better fit between their instructional goals and the learning style preferences of their students” (p. 1).

The quest for an ideal medium to deliver business content to Gen Y learners has led instructors to consider the Internet, since digital content that exists in databases can be manipulated by a range of programming services (Shim *et al.*, 2007). Shim *et al.*, have also asserted that web development has been hampered by bandwidth and difficulties of “back end integration,” consequently, impacting the presentational aspects of data and user interfaces (Yang & Tang, 2005). Innovations in computer and software technologies appear to have ameliorated the technical difficulties, resulting in the emergence of new media such as podcasting, webcasting, videostreaming, blogging, and Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language (SMIL) technologies (Shim, 2002). SMIL is markup language for describing multimedia presentations. These new media streams can be integrated into traditional lectures, thus enhancing the educational environment (McLaughlin, 2006), particularly for Gen Y learners. This paper discusses the efficacy of podcasting in business education, reviews the characteristics of Gen Y learners, discusses learning styles and theories that support mobile learning, reviews learning styles of Gen Y learners, and discusses whether adaptations are necessary to address the updated needs of this new generation of learners in the business communication context.

Podcasting defined

Podcasting is the process of capturing an audio event, song, speech, or mix of sounds and then posting that digital sound object to a Web site or “blog” in a data structure called an RSS 2.0 envelope (or “feed”) (Meng, 2005). RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication and is an accepted standard of XML tags used to define objects which can be subscribed to through an “RSS news reader.” Using specialized news readers like iPodder or iPodderX, users can subscribe to a Web page containing RSS 2.0 tagged audio files on designated web pages and automatically download these files directly into an audio management program on their personal computer like iTunes, Windows Media Player, or MusicMatch. Even though the term “podcasting” implies that an iPod is required to podcast, they can be used on a variety of digital audio formats and play on almost any MP3 player or portable digital audio device, as well as any brand of desktop computer or laptop. When a user synchronizes his or her portable audio device with a personal computer, the podcasts are automatically transferred to that device to be listened to at the time and location most convenient for the user.

Podcasting originated from the so-called Web 2.0 that depends on push technologies to deliver content. Push technologies is terminology used to define the breadth of technologies used to send out information to users, whether or not they are tuned in. The updating process is usually an inconspicuous one. With that in mind, Podcast creators can have their content delivered to subscribers as soon as it becomes available, without typing a URL to download the information. Students can subscribe to podcasts and have the content delivered automatically to their device management software. This allows for the asynchronous delivery of content, much like TiVo for TV (Dixon, 2006). Many have compared podcasting to Tivo or a DVR (digital video recorder) because of its “time-shifting” ability (Meng, 2005, p. 1). In some aspects it is similar, but it is also different in that the recorded content is delivered in its final format to a portable device that is independent of the recording device.

Podcasting in business education

According to Salomon (1979), context, task, and learner are all factors in the selection and effectiveness of a specific medium for pedagogy. Hence the call to explore how different media might interact with and influence various processes of learning (Kozma, 1994). The vast and diverse population across the Internet supports the “narrowcasting” of specific information, including podcast programs, to a new generation of learners, particularly Gen Y. Podcasting also has the ability to transcend constraints of time and scheduling by offering what has often been referred to as “radio on demand” (Bongey, Cizadlo, & Kalnbach, 2006). This could be one explanation for the medium’s enormous popularity and applicability in the face of even the most esoteric of topics. According to a recent Bridge Ratings research, podcasts are “catching on with iPod users” (Bridge Ratings, 2005, p. 1).

The increasing popularity of podcasting has been captured in *The Horizon Report* (2006), a collaborative effort of EDUCAUSE and The New Media Consortium. Personal broadcasting, including podcasting, has been listed among the top two technologies being implemented in higher education today. *The Horizon Report* also predicted a “Time-to-Adoption Horizon” for this technology of one year or less, and concluded that personal broadcasting was at the leading edge of a wave that will last for the next several years. This trend also includes image-enhanced podcasts and video podcasts (vodcasts), which are viewable on a PC using podcast receivers like iTunes or Juice and are also fully portable using the Video iPod. The existence of Apple’s iTunes University, the efforts of Purdue University to podcast over 90 courses (Read, 2005, p. A32), and the expansion of the lexicon to include previously unheard of words — such as course-casting — are clear indications of the apparent efficacy of podcasting for educational purposes (Apple, 2006).

Podcasting is differentiated from webcasting in that it uses an aggregating RSS (Really Simple Syndication) web feed, or enables downloading and saving from a URL (Holtjana & Fiona, 2004). A podcast has a persistent site, capable of synchronizing with a portable multimedia device, such as an MP3 player or iPod, whereas webcasting is streamed from the internet and requires the user to be connected to the internet while playing or viewing the webcast files. VODcasting (also called “vlogging”) - the “VOD” stands for “video-on-demand” - is almost identical to podcasting.

The current understanding of podcasting is strictly related to audio content and differentiates from video format by introducing terms such as “VODcasting” (also called “vlogging”) or “video-on-demand podcasting” (Meng, 2005, p. 1). The difference is that the content is video versus audio, and the content is more likely to be played on a laptop than a PMA (personal media assistant) due to vodcasting’s newness and relative expense. However, the distinction between podcasting and VODcasting is starting to blur, since podcasting can refer to both audio and video output for a comprehensive understanding.

Among the latest trends in information technology, podcasting has emerged as technology of keen interest to academics, practitioners, and other technologists (McLaughlin, 2006) as both a trend in communication technology and a new paradigm (Anderson, 2006; Bourges-Waldegg & Hoertnagl, 2005). Many universities are currently evaluating podcasting, and some have

launched a variety of programs which utilize the technology. The implications of the podcasting technology are beginning to be realized. For example, the most common current university podcast usage is providing university or department news to staff and students using RSS feed to supplement the traditional paper versions of newsletters. Universities are also utilizing podcasting technology to make guest lectures available to wider audiences, such as staff, students, and alumni who were unable to attend the lectures.

Podcasting has revolutionized education and particularly higher education by enabling up-to-date content, addressing multiple intelligences and allowing for the anytime/anywhere delivery of instructional content. Podcast content can include but is not limited to audio and video recordings of lectures, incidental content (e.g. interviews, narrations) and generally any audio and video content. For example, Stanford University offers audio lecture content, but also offers videos of their sports activities. Other extensions also allow for the updating of content via the telephone and attaching podcasts to blogs. Much as the so-called Web 2.0 is evolving, the use of podcasting in academia continues to adjust to these changes and the ways podcasting can impact Gen Y, the net generation.

A cursory look around today's college quadrangles depicts students tuned in with earbuds securely fastened, a laptop and PDA in their backpacks, camera-phone affixed to their belts. Campus life now includes downloading lecture notes, viewing course videos and taking quizzes via class web sites; checking e-mail every 15 minutes, interacting with friends locally and globally courtesy of IM (Instant Messaging); blogging; MMORPGing (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Play Gaming); downloading music/video files in MP3/M4A formats; sharing multi-megapixelated jpeg photos with online friends via highspeed Internet connections. Podcasting popularity has been on the rise since 2004. As Table 1 shows, eMarketer claimed that by 2008 podcasting in the U.S. will have an audience of 25 million and an estimated 50 million by the end of the decade (Matthews, 2007).

Table 1. US Podcast Audience, 2006, 2008 & 2010 (millions)

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Active podcast audience who download an average of one or more podcasts per week

2006
10.0
3.0

2008
25.0
7.5

2010
50.0
15.0

Recently Apple iTunes 4.9 added podcast subscriptions and also allows information marketers the ability to have their podcasts listed in their vast directory in order to target more customers.

Just how big is the potential reach of podcasting? Consider these numbers: More than 22 million US adults own an iPod or other MP3 player 13% of men and 9% of women, 20% of the lucrative 18- 28-year-old market owns an iPod or other MP3 player, and 29% of the people who own an iPod or MP3 player have downloaded a podcast (Rainie & Madden, 2005). This translates to 6 million U.S. adults who have downloaded podcasts; a truly impressive figure considering podcasting is still a relatively new technology. The keys to the early success of podcasting are that it offers great choice and convenience, attributes that lend themselves to increased use by Gen Y learners.

Gen Y learners—An overview

Who are these Gen Y learners? This cohort is known by different labels which include: Generation-D, Net Gen, Millennials, Newmills, Nexters, Thatcher's Children, Generation Next, Echo Boomers, and Digital Generation (Sweeney, 2005). They are the first ubiquitous cohort of learners raised on and confirmed experts in the latest, fastest, coolest, greatest, newest electronic technologies on the planet. By many accounts, the beginning and ending dates defining the

parameters of Gen Y vary from beginning dates from 1977-1982 to ending dates from 1994-2003. Estimates of the size of the group vary as well with figures ranging from 73 million (The Millennials, 2004) to 100 million (Howe & Strauss, 2003). Regardless of the definitive figure for the population of Gen Y, all normalizing population guesstimates reflect that this generation is the most influential generation, at least in terms of size, since the Baby Boomers.

Gen Y learners utilize abundant technologies for studying, social networking, and “edutainment” (Kvavik & Caruso, 2005). This reality is also buttressed by Junco & Mastrodicasa’s (2007) survey results of U.S. college students presented in Table 2. As Table 2 shows, there is a high penetration of technologies students can use for podcasting. Using technology in and out of the classroom provides multiple benefits of convenience, connectivity, and control in the learning process. Kvavik & Caruso also found that specialized technological skills such as online-library searching, mandatory for numerous course requirements, concomitantly demands additional improvements from the service provider side. Moreover, EDUCAUSE discovered that the instructor's IT skills pose the greatest challenge upon student engagement and learner satisfaction. Therefore, to interface successfully with Gen Y, business educators must adopt and become proficient using learning technologies themselves; in other words, business educators must keep pace technologically with their students.

Table 2. US Students’ Use of Technology

Percent

Own a computer
97%

Own a cell phone
94%

Use Instant Messaging (IM)
76%

Have a Facebook account
75%

Own some type of portable music and/or video device such as an iPod
60%

Download music using peer-to-peer file sharing
49%

Use websites as their primary source of news
34%

Own a blog and 44% read **blogs**

28%

IM users logged on 24 hours a day/7 days a week

15%

Howe and Strauss (2003) identified seven core traits reflecting the general personality characteristics of Gen Y. These traits are special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, conventional, pressured, and achieving. The first three traits are inextricably linked to the parents of Gen Y who are typically nurturing to a fault, and personally have financially invested in their children, earning the title, “Helicopter Parents,” for their frequent and intense involvement or hovering in many aspects of their children's lives.

Members of Gen Y feel internal and external influences to perform at the very highest levels, and they manage to achieve success, whether that success comes in the form of athletic, academic, financial, social, or whatever form. Frand (2000) created a list of expectations, beliefs, and behaviors of the members of Gen Y. These qualities include the belief that technology is important but that computers are not obligatorily considered technology, since they have always been a part of their lives. Examples of technology would include recent advances along the lines of such innovations as: Podcasting, Blue Tooth, RSS, Wi-Fi, and a multitude of ring tones from TV's Family Guy to the latest pop hit. Other mindset criteria for Gen Y include the preference of using the Internet (web browsing) over television watching; the ability to perform different activities at the same time (multitasking), and staying connected. Gen Y students often multitask by listening to a lecture while checking their e-mail and text-messaging their friends. Frand (2000) asserts that Gen Y students prefer to type than write anything by hand. Because information is constantly changing, what a Gen Y student can do is considered more important than an accumulation of knowledge that may soon become outdated.

Other attributes that lend themselves to Gen Y using podcasting as an educational tool, including the following: (1) They are gamers and as such are used to trial-and-error as a way to get to the next level whether the next level is found on the latest version of Halo or life in general; (2) with the introduction of digital manipulation of images and data, they may have difficulty discerning fact from fiction even though they are more fluent in visual literacy than any other generation; (3) patience is not one of their virtues as they are used to instant gratification and have zero tolerance for delays; and (4) they are well aware of branding as they have been aggressively pursued by advertisers and marketers since early childhood (Frand, 2000). As a result, Gen Y people know the power of being a consumer and will switch to any competing brand that meets their needs. A consequence of a life lived within a bubble of brands and consumerism is a blurring of ownership. Many Gen Y students confuse processes like cutting and pasting with creating, finding with production, and/or buying with the nuances of ownership. Rationalizations heard frequently include: “Why should I rewrite something I agree with – just click on the link and read the original”; “I found this web site so I decided to use it”; or “I bought this so the information belongs to me.” They are unapologetic digital cognoscenti, connoisseurs: Digerati (Shih & Allen, 2007). All these pose significant challenges to business instructors as they attempt to teach Gen Y students using traditional classroom techniques with little attention for

their affinity to mobile learning which podcasts provide. We will now examine learning styles that support podcasting as a form of mobile learning.

Learning styles and theories that support mobile learning

Most pedagogical theories fail to encapsulate the unique qualities of mobile learning. This is because they are theories of teaching, centered around the assumption that learning occurs in a classroom environment, mediated by a trained instructor.

Any theory of mobile learning must embrace the considerable learning that takes place outside the classroom which can be personally initiated and structured. It must also account for the dynamic nature of learning. A relevant theory of learning must embrace contemporary accounts of the practices and development of learning. Learning is a constructive process, involving the active construction of knowledge. Hence, theories of learning must meet the following criteria: They must account for both formal and informal learning, they must analyze the dynamic context of learning, and they must theorize learning as a constructive and social activity (Edirisinha & Salmon, 2006).

Additionally, the Sociocultural Theory of Learning (Rogers, 2002) posits that learning takes place in a social context, and the forming and re-forming of concepts need not necessarily take place only at the level of the individual, but that collaborative group work and sharing with peers (and others) can be a powerful way of confronting one's own conceptions (pre-conceptions), contributing to the need to restructure one's cognitive schemas. So learning is perceived as being as much about communication as it is about content. Of course, communication is not confined to peer-to-peer. It can involve teachers, experts, experienced colleagues, workmates, friends, and family. The mobile environment makes a significant contribution to this process. By facilitating the rapid access to other users any time/any place, sharing content, knowledge, experience and gossip, Gen Y learners can develop 'communities of practice' (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002) as well as informal discussion groups, as and when needed to optimize their learning processes.

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) compartmentalizes the way people learn into eight categories: Musical, rhythmic, spatial, mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and natural. This theory has been used as the launching pad in the design of instructional and curricular content. The theory provides instructors with specific indicators and their corresponding strategies to best serve students who show one or more of the intelligences.

Along with the theory of multiple intelligences go the learning styles; learning styles refer to the ways people learn, which then are categorized in three areas: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual learners are the type of learners who need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to fully understand the information that is conveyed. These types of learners, characteristic of Gen Y, learn best from visual displays including: diagrams, illustrated

textbooks, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts and handouts. Auditory learners learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard. Auditory learners often benefit from reading text aloud, listening to audio books, listening to music and using a tape recorder to record narrations or lectures. Tactile or kinesthetic learners learn best through a hands-on approach, moving, doing and touching. These learners are very active in exploring the physical world around them.

Podcasts, therefore, are attractive to Gen Y learners because they can learn at their own pace, listen to the audio or video object as many times as they want to, and rely on time shifting to attend classes as well as to learn. With all this said, podcasting technology is of particular use to auditory and visual learners. It serves auditory learners who have shown musical and verbal intelligence, thus allowing them to retain up to 90% of the information received.

Similarly, it is believed that podcasts can influence the level of interaction within a class. In an online course, podcasts can trigger discussion around the audio or video object, or assist in developing or enhancing searching skills. The defining attribute of podcasting has to do with the independence the Gen Y learner experiences as a result of a course enhanced with audio or video files that convert the learning experience into a portable one (Morales & Moses, 2006).

Learning styles and Gen Y learners

In the 21st Century classroom, the student wants to control the how, what, and when a task is completed. Social media and other web-based technologies are well suited to provide avenues for students to engage in a social, collaborative, and active dialogue in the online learning environment with their peers and instructor. A study conducted by the UK-based NESTA FutureLabs reported that education should be reversed to conform to the learner, rather than the learner to the system, and that social media should be used to enable learners to study and be assessed according to their own learning style (BBC, 2005).

Online learning theory and pedagogical practice also center on the concept that learning needs to be situated in a social and collaborative context. Discussion among peers can make the often invisible community threads more visible and accessible, and may lead students to find others in the group who share the same interests (BBC, 2005). Gen Y students are hardwired to look at the variety of available technologies and then construct their own learning path and content based on their intrinsic learning needs. As students go through process of choosing, utilizing, integrating, and sharing content it provides opportunities for them to be actively engaged, provide and receive feedback, as well as acquire, share, and make use of community knowledge.

More importantly, this new digital pedagogy emphasizes providing students with a broad range of technology tools, thus allowing them to use them as a means to construct their own understanding and knowledge. As a result, students are highly motivated to discuss content, solve problems together, and apply new concepts which relate to their own practice. This approach also provides students with access to flexible, self-paced, customizable content, on-demand opportunities for learning, and the ability to create and share student-generated content (BBC, 2005).

The use of social technologies provides students with an opportunity to self-assess their understanding (or lack of) of the current course topic with their peers. Moreover, as students utilize social technologies to share their thought processes and provide feedback to their learning community, they are able to help each other work through cognitive roadblocks, modify their perceptions, and negotiate their own views while simultaneously building a collaborative peer support system. In addition, collaborative project-based learning environments help students develop critical thinking and problem solving skills—both essential skills for Gen Y to compete in a global knowledge-based society (Edirisingha & Salmon, 2006).

Implications of podcasting in the business communication context for Gen Y

As stated throughout this paper, Gen Y population is believed to have unique characteristics that are different from preceding generations such as Gen X (those born between 1961 and 1981) and Baby Boomers. This belief in generational uniqueness has been acknowledged historically. According to historians Hollander and Germain (1992), marketers as early as in the 1920s recognized the value of the "youth market" (Giles, 1922), and they regarded the college market as one of the most coveted of all segments (Burns, 2000; Dumont, 1929; George, 1920). The college market is particularly attractive for studying the behavior of the younger generations for a variety of reasons: (1) their sheer size makes them an important market; (2) they are often trendsetters; (3) they acquire preferences for goods and establish brand loyalties that continue long after the college years; (4) they are expected to attain a high standard of living after graduation; (5) they set examples to the remainder of the population by being more receptive to new products (e.g., students tend to be early adopters); and (6) they influence parental choices for major purchases (Russell, 1926).

The pedagogical implications of podcasting and are numerous. There are some simple and obvious uses, like recording classroom lectures and making them available for student notes. Even though this is technically easy to do, not only would a standardized recording process have to be set up, but more importantly, a permissions based distribution architecture would have to be established to limit access of the class content to approved class members. This could be done through WebCT and Blackboard architecture, or something completely new -- pointing to the fact that global content management and distribution in the academia is a growing issue.

Beyond simple recordings of lectures, a variety of other uses to enhance learning can be imagined for podcasting -- in fact many of these are already being tested. Here are some ways that podcasting might be used in a business communication course:

Writing/Grammar: Students can receive frequent grammar exercises and revision material via podcasts in a self-paced environment to assist them with the frequency of practice required for the purposes of continuous writing improvement.

Business Presentations: Student-generated podcasts can allow business communication instructors to include a peer evaluation component to the impromptu business presentation assignment which can in turn serve as feedback that can essentially help the presenter with improvements on the final speech.

Employment Interviews: Student generated podcasts of interview role plays will enable students to not only participate in the role play interview, but also to evaluate other peer interview candidates by offering them constructive feedback while allowing for practice opportunities.

Team Projects: Both the capabilities of mobile devices and their wide context of use contribute to their propensity to foster collaboration. Mobile devices can easily communicate with other devices of the same or similar type, enabling learners to share data, files and messages. Given the social context within which collaborative team work is carried out, students can have rapid access via podcasting to team members any time, any place, while sharing content, knowledge and experience in a 'community of practice,' as well as informal discussion groups, as and when needed to optimize their learning in a collaborative environment.

The common denominator that enhances the efficacy of podcasting for GenY learners irrespective of subject matter is the uniform attraction that podcasting holds for this optimally social networked generation. For now, it is safe to say that other business learners can also benefit from this new technology. However, beyond the technical opportunities and issues, podcasting raises other broader significant issues for academia such as the following:

- How does podcasting challenge the current "talking head" model of classroom lectures? If all lectures are available via video and/or audio, do students need to go to class? How often? Why? How do we keep students in class?
- Who owns the content, the school, the instructor, or the user? Can this content be used outside of the university community? How is it protected or secured to the owner or subscriber?
- Who's going to edit the content? What are the guidelines for editing? What's real; what's not?
- How is copyrighted material tracked and/or verified?
- Can we make money from this?

Conclusion

This paper has examined the efficacy of podcasting as a possible learning delivery method for Generation Y, and discussed whether adaptations are necessary to address the updated needs of this new generation of learners in the business communication context. The podcasting movement has provided an excellent delivery medium for instructors, students, and staff. Students have been able to unleash their creativity in many ways. From narrations and video recordings, to radio shows and home-made recordings, to spontaneous archival of audio and video, learning has found the perfect ally in podcasting to create an on-demand anytime/anywhere delivery of instructional content that will also serve place-based learners.

A small but growing number of easy-to-use tools have emerged on the market. This is encouraging. However, issues such as ownership and privacy of the content continue to limit the scope of use of the technology in academia. Many institutions such as the University of

Chicago are establishing studios where podcast-caliber content can be produced both by faculty and students. Once the content has been created however, there is still a fragmented process to make the content available. The process, while not difficult, is cumbersome enough to prevent some from adopting the technology into their curriculums. This is unfortunate. However, this is not seen as a particularly strong deterrent to those who are convinced of its worth, and have a model for its use.

Educators are turning PowerPoint presentations into podcasts, while others are using it to provide detailed audio explanations of frequently asked questions or as a tool for students to practice their vocabulary at home. Students can also create their own podcasts to interact with instructors or other students. In short, podcasting for educators adds a new dimension to teaching by making it a "cool" interactive communication between teachers and Gen Y students.

The implication of podcasting for business communication is quite simple. It enables instructors to reach students through a medium that is perceived as both "cool" and a part of their daily lives. For a technology that only requires a computer, microphone and internet connection, podcasting has the capacity of advancing a student's education beyond the classroom. Educators need to perceive devices like iPods and other portable media devices not as distractions to learning; rather, capitalize on it and turn them into effective tools for learning.

Podcasting and VODcasting, and their pending derivatives, are not fads. They are very real and very practical distribution technologies. The ability to time-shift content versus traditional broadcast distribution models has the potential to expand business communication teaching and learning opportunities significantly. The supporting technologies are relatively inexpensive and surprisingly easy to use.

The rapid evolution of audio-photo-video recording capabilities through phones and proliferation of inexpensive hand-held devices will create a flood of multimedia content. They will be immediately adopted by the current class of students and will be looked at with disinterest or uncertainty by many of the current faculty. Both distribution technologies will quickly create demand for more bandwidth and storage for that content, both for academic purposes and student social activities. They will intensify the need for a centralized content management and monetization infrastructure, as well as an education support architecture to assist business communication faculty in integrating these technologies into their courses.

But in this challenge is also the opportunity to provide all new classes of services for on-campus, distance and lifelong learners. In fact the greatest opportunities for these technologies are in the ways they will be used that have not been imagined yet. The portable and on-demand nature of podcasting makes it worth pursuing, implementing and supporting.

The use of podcasts in business communication is sure to expand as business communication instructors are now designing and delivering hybrid business communication courses that have online and offline modules. Hence, more pressure will be put on vendors and implementers to provide easy to use, stable, rights-protected, and secure podcast platforms. While integration of podcasting in business communication is nascent, it is an area that warrants more research.

Podcast technology alone may not change much; however, how it is used, who uses it, and where it is used in delivering pedagogical content will continue to stimulate much scholarly inquiry.

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Biographies

STEVINA U. EVULEOCHA, Ph.D. is associate professor of Marketing & Entrepreneurship at California State University, East Bay (CSUEB). She teaches a variety of courses including corporate communication and business communication. Her research interests include but are not limited to learning styles, crisis communication, multicultural marketing, and social marketing. Dr. Evuleocha also directs the CSUEB University Honors Program.

STEVE UGBAH, Ph.D. is professor of Marketing and Entrepreneurship at California State University, East Bay (CSUEB). He teaches marketing research, business communication, managerial communication, and international marketing. Dr. Ugbah has published scholarly papers on information management, business communication, new communication technology, innovation, and marketing. In addition to teaching and writing, Dr. Ugbah is a consultant specializing in health care, program design and evaluation, and marketing research.