Podcasts are audio files that users can download and listen to at their own convenience. Vodcasts are very similar, but they integrate video and audio. People generally listen to podcasts or view vodcasts on their iPod, MP3 player, smart phone or computer. As these recordings are ‘on demand’, users can have control over when and where they listen to or view them, and can listen to them many times if they desire.

Using podcasts and vodcasts in your courses can make the delivery of content more personal and provide an alternative to text-based methods of information delivery. Podcasts and vodcasts also have a useful role in supporting just-in-time-learning and learning across different contexts.

What could you do?

- Record a welcome message to your students at the start of semester, each week, or to introduce particular sections of the course.
- Record assignment feedback instead of providing written feedback.
- If students all seem to be experiencing difficulty about one part of the course, make a short recording to help clarify their problems.
- Get students to make their own pod/vodcasts instead of submitting written work.
- Share pre-recorded pod/vodcasts available on websites such as YouTube, Khan Academy, TED or iTunesU with your students.

Tips

- Make sure recordings are not too long, about 10 minutes maximum.
- Make sure content is of interest to students; give them a reason to listen.
- If you are using material from other parties, make sure you check into your copyright obligations.
What have people done?

- The University of Queensland has an iTunes U channel
- TED-Ed is a repository of educational vodcasts, many of which come with extensive supplementary materials
- The University of Leicester uses podcasts in the fully online courses
- The University of Wisconsin-Madison uses podcasts, and has some interesting resources for lecturers
- Chemistry lecturers at University of Western Australia used student podcasting in their classes for assessment tasks:
- Lecturers from the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Sydney used podcasts as supplementary materials for their lectures and reported that the students found them to be a valuable part of their learning experience:
- Researchers from the Australian Catholic University and Charles Sturt University investigated how student podcasts could be used to strengthen metacognitive and reflective skills