Podcast Creation for In-Home Use
An Overview of Podcast Creation Methodology Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

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Abstract

Making an effective podcast is more complex than just using your laptop mic to record your thoughts to post on your favorite social media, there are methods or approaches with which to achieve the best results. My project was to overview the methods for making effective audio podcasts and making them available professionally and accessibly to an audience using a subject matter revolving around 3D printing. The resulting example podcasts and the framework used to create them was examined using Bloom’s Taxonomy to assess the formation and delivery of the content for maximum information retention and engagement of the listener. The final goal of this research was to examine and identify the most important characteristics in meaningful audio development for creating podcasts that will properly deliver subject matter and engage the listener. I did an audio-only podcast using a standard Windows computer to create a short series of 15–20-minute podcasts to exemplify the points I discuss in this research. The hope for this research was to outline and display this discipline in a meaningful overview, I particularly planned to use Bloom’s Taxonomy to review this subject matter in how it can be used as a framework for making effective podcasts.

Links to podcasts

Episode 1: https://archive.org/details/episode-1_202105

Episode 2: https://archive.org/details/episode-2_202105

Episode 3: https://archive.org/details/episode-3_202105
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Approval</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Literature</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Outcomes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Podcast Creation for In-Home Use: An Overview of Podcast Creation Methodology Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

Introduction

Podcasts embody what is arguably the essential promise of the Internet: a means for surprising, revealing, and above all ennobling encounters with people, things, and ideas we did not know (Weiner 2014). Podcasting for all intents and purposes is a precision art. Absorbing knowledge and learning is always a much simpler process when it is an enjoyable and seemingly effortless one, a task that is much easier said than done. A podcast that makes you feel as though you are just part of an everyday conversation is anything but an everyday conversation, its one that has taken great care and consideration to seem natural and flow effectively.

Since roughly the early 2000s podcasting has taken a center role to media consumption in the modern era with a defining moment in 2020 when Joe Rogan closed the largest podcasting deal to date with Spotify, estimated by Forbes to be worth over one hundred million dollars (Shapiro 2020). This was a monumental moment for many reasons, not the least of which is that this deal overshadows one of the largest talk radio hosts of all time, Howard Stern, who has a deal with Sirius XM’s satellite radio service to provide content estimated by Forbes to the tune of $93 million dollars (Shapiro 2020). Although the gap is somewhat small, the difference in this valuation paints an important picture of the changing tastes of the average consumer as we approach the mid-21st century. This example is the largest as of the year 2021, I believe we can expect that field to be a lot more competitive going forward.

Podcasting can be akin to professional athletes or actors in that from the layman’s perspective it can often be made to look very simply done. We have conversations with our friends and family every day that we find interesting, so in that sense, podcasting should be easy. An effective podcast is one that sells that very idea to you. Much like when we hear our
own voices played back to us, the conversations we have can sound differently than when we hear it from a third person perspective. We may not be as endearing or interesting as we thought and to that respect podcasting very much requires effort and care.

I have examined the best practices and methods for podcasting as well as the intricacies that go into producing effective and popular content in that medium and tested my hypothesis. Specifically, my podcasts are about 3D printing which is something I have recently learned about and undertaken as my own hobby, and I will discuss the reasoning for why that topic can be relevant for effective content with supporting literature. I will also discuss how someone who has made a name for themselves this industry is successful in the way they package and promote their content, as well as supporting literature for the best methods for that as well. I plan to use a cross section of literary sources from academic scholars, medical journals, and scholarly entertainment reviews for the purpose of showcasing the diversification in content all share core tenants in their execution as podcasts.

**Review of Literature**

**Select a proper direction for starting a podcast** To identify how to start an effective podcast I examined two articles one written by Jonah Wiener and another written by Roberta Kwok wherein they examine the primary points of making podcasts both educational and effective. First and foremost, the thing to keep in mind is that podcasting is an intimate medium as compared to others even in the same category such as talk radio. A quote by Jad Abumrad referenced in Weiner’s article identifies that podcasting is a form co-authorship such as a painting where the narrator is creating the painting, but the listener is holding the paintbrush (Wiener 2014). This is further underscored by the fact many people listen to podcasts alone on
their headphones often when they are doing something else invigorating like working out or doing chores and listening to the host and their guests informally in their own voices (Kwok 2019). Keeping in mind the setting in which the viewers will likely intake this material is important, whereas someone who is a talk radio host might design their content for those commuting and in vehicles for instance you must identify the type of delivery best suited for your subject matter. Identifying that subject matter as a unique niche is important as your podcast is a vehicle for surprising, revealing, and above all ennobling encounters with people, things, and ideas we did not know (Weiner 2014).

**Conceptual Framework for Podcasting** Examining podcasting from an overhead the object is generally to inform and educate about a variety of topics depending on the author. Some celebrities use podcasting to share with others about what is going on their lives or what they plan on doing, some scientific communities use podcasting to showcase their research and hold publicized forums with others. Although the subject matter and audiences of an audio podcast can vary wildly there are basic tenants they share in terms of information delivery. With the core goals of educating and informing in mind it is important to anyone looking to create a successful podcast to engage the user in a meaningful way. Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Outcomes (Bloom 1956) is a theoretical framework of an acclaimed set of learning outcomes within the educational field that can also be used to give direction for creating a successful podcasting experience. An overhead of the taxonomy states that the best learning outcomes are achieved through active involvement. For our purposes you can conceptualize that goal as “How can the podcast make the user feel like they’re a silent partner to a real-life conversation going on wherever they are listening?” in the case of audio podcasting.
To better define the relationship between this framework and audio podcasting we will be using Bloom’s original taxonomy design and his student Lorin Anderson’s updates of that design. Anderson’s updates were done under a more diversely examined approach "representatives of three groups [were present]: cognitive psychologists, curriculum theorists and instructional researchers, and testing and assessment specialists" (Anderson, & Krathwohl, 2001 P.28). Anderson’s updates which we will use as a more modern adaptation for our podcasting framework is designed to be a more active and palatable method for teaching in the 21st century, namely by transferring Bloom’s six major categories from nouns to verbs, knowledge was changed to remembering, comprehension and synthesis were retitled to understanding and creating (Orey 2010). Using the sourced diagram, we can examine the original taxonomy and its changes.

Figure 1: Bloom’s Taxonomy Terminology Original & Updated

Exhibit 1: Terminology changes "The graphic is a representation of the NEW verbiage associated with the long familiar Bloom's Taxonomy. Note the change from Nouns to Verbs [e.g., Application to Applying] to describe the different levels of the taxonomy. Note that the top two levels are essentially exchanged from the Old to the New version." (Schultz & Overbaugh 2005) (Evaluation moved from the top to Evaluating in the second from the top, Synthesis moved from
Overbaugh and Schultz (2005) define the taxonomy levels as questions regarding the student’s individual accomplishments at each stage, and at each stage is broken down in terms for easy referencing for content delivery.

- **Remembering**: Can the student recall or remember the information?
  - Retrieving, recognizing, recalling, defining, listing, duplicating, repeating, defining, duplicating, reproducing

- **Understanding**: Can the student explain the ideas or concepts?
  - Constructing, interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, explaining, describing, locating, recognizing, reporting, selecting

- **Applying**: Can the student use the information in a new way?
  - Executing, implementing, choosing, demonstrating, employing, illustrating, interpreting, solving, using

- **Analyzing**: Can the student distinguish between the different parts?
  - Differentiating, organizing, appraising, contrasting, comparing, criticizing, testing, discriminating, distinguishing, examining, experimenting, questioning

- **Evaluating**: Can the student justify a stand or decision?
  - Judging, critiquing, checking, arguing, defending, selecting, supporting, evaluating

- **Creating**: Can the student create a new product or point of view?
  - Reorganizing, generating, planning, producing, assembling, constructing, designing, developing, formulating

These updated points of educational engagement (Anderson, & Krathwohl 2001) relate directly to Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Outcomes (Bloom 1956) and although they were designed as an overview in which to create successful educational content, this framework can be used to produce audio content that can be effective for almost any content creator for any listener. For my project I had scripted my content around these tenants and from there examined the resulting content to see how close or far I came to reaching all these objectives. Wherein the above says “Can the student..” my lens was “Can the listener...” under the same pretext to
showcase and exemplify how this taxonomy is a useful theoretical framework for creating effective podcasts.

**Professionalism and Marketing for your audience** With the conceptual framework in mind, deciding who your target audience is for a podcast is a core tenant to the direction you will take everything. Is this going to be for your friends only? Are you hoping to make money? Is this for a scholarly review or project? The easiest way to achieve this goal is to create a hypothetical person as a listener and design all content to be geared to their liking (Wolpaw & Harvey 2020). Conceptually placing yourselves in the shoes of the listener and what you would want to hear in their place is a great way to try and check your own confirmation biases as a creator versus a listener. What makes sense as a creator may not always translate into something your listener would want to hear.

A good example for identifying a podcast audience is to imagine if you are an attending physician making a podcast to supplement a lecture for med students. You may have different objectives for your listening than a first-year medical student who are trying their hardest to memorize the basics of anatomy and physiology. A short communication article written by Alireza Jalali and Safaa El Bialy about medical students employs this practice in the mindset of those looking to become doctors, the students in the medical field being those with extreme demands of time and effort to learn their subject matter. A short podcast is a good option as an asynchronous teaching method for them to supplement the complex lectures, as medical students are faced with the constraints (Jalali and Bialy 2019).

We also want to remember that professionalism is a key point in creating content and things such as unchecked background noise or disorganized content are the easiest way make
your podcast sound unattractive. The proper location, time and the availability of filters are significant factors to eliminate the chances of sound disturbances (Van Damme and Yaeger, 2016). When marketing to your audience you will have to keep in mind exactly what they will want to hear, that includes what they do not want to hear, so things such as dogs barking or loud HVAC systems in your home are key factors to avoid best you can. This can be done by picking a key location as well as investing and finding good editing software. Podcasts need to be skillfully edited before they are uploaded to an audience. Audacity is an example of one free editing program that proposes numerous editing choices like noise exclusion that perfectly eliminates the sounds in surroundings like a fan or heating unit in the background (Jalali and Bialy, 2019).

Choosing Hardware and Software to create and edit with

There are many variables to consider about your podcast before deciding which hardware or software you will use to create it. For starters, the host will need to invest in basic microphone technology, recording software and potentially editing software which will depend on the type of computer and type of content you are looking to deliver. A cheap and effective way to create high quality audio podcasts is to invest in a basic microphone for proper deliverance of your voice, a boom stand to reduce microphone movement noises, and a screen or filter to help with reducing popping sounds (Wolpaw & Harvey 2020). And assuming you are using a computer and not a professional digital recorder which would come pre-enabled with this type of software, you will need to find digital editing and recording software, or something that does both. Table 1 below describes some various cost options for hardware and software when it comes to picking a podcast, designed by Wolpaw & Harvey in their analytical review of effective podcasting.
Of course, individual budgets and the target audience for your podcast will weigh heavily on exactly what you are going to be using for your gear. In the above table by Wolpaw & Harvey we can break down a few categories, products, and prices to consider amidst many others.

**Delivering high quality audio** After you have created your podcast audio content and completed editing, you are going to want to upload it to your audience. Regardless of who is going to be listening there are going to be key factors that you are going to want to employ to host it effectively and in a way that is also useful to you. The selection of a podcast hosting service should always be done in the backdrop of the following factors (Van Damme and Yaeger, 2016 p.71);

(a) *Free for beginners*: A good majority podcast hosting providers provide free basic service to new users. It’s good to start with something free for use because it gives us that initial introduction of what you will need to get started and what features you may want from there. It is important to keep in mind however with a developed and increased circle of listeners, the host site may
suggest minimal charges to sustain storage and bandwidth expenses so be sure you are aware of their limitation caps before choosing.

(b) Storage: Digital storage is provided by the host site for the recorded audios, videos, and images. When choosing an online host be sure you are aware of the amount of space you will be given.

(c) Bandwidth: Bandwidth refers to the amount of data made transferable by the hosting site. Bandwidth and its utilization vary according to the hosting site; therefore, it is significant that enough data is allowed by your host to better put up with your needs. If this is just going to be a podcast for your friends something with low bandwidth would be fine, but for a professional audience you will want a site that can provide good amounts of bandwidth for your users.

(d) Statistics: The views, downloads and subscribers constitute the podcast statistical data. The access to statistics is significant because it acquaints us with listeners and their whereabouts, be sure to know how this information will be provided to you when picking a host site.

Methods

Design For my podcasts I sourced a design that was methodical and easy to replicate. Using Figure 2 below, Fernandez et al’s (2015) framework for designing, editing, and distributing content for podcasts I built and followed a comprehensive plan. Coupled with using Bloom’s taxonomy as the lens for the content I was able to create a methodical easy to follow podcast about the history and use of 3D printing in five fifteen-minute episodes. In this section I will break down how I used these three pillars, and the six frameworks of Bloom’s taxonomy to frame and create my podcast.
Focusing on the Design aspect, as mentioned, I used Bloom’s taxonomy to mold my content into something both educational and entertaining for the listener. The following quote sourced from Fernandez in relation to bloom’s taxonomy describes the three major domains I had to choose from when creating my podcast; “Bloom (Bloom, 1956 as cited in Fernandez, 2015) established the taxonomy for distinguishing three main domains: (1) cognitive (intellectual knowledge and skills), (2) psychomotor (physical skills), and (3) affective (feelings and attitudes).” (Fernandez, 2015 p. 318). Based on your desired direction, you can decide which domain is appropriate, and any of the three can be used depending on if you were creating a podcast based on skill building or leisure discussions for instance. For our purposes we are interested in the cognitive domain. Each piece of the cognitive domain and how I employed them to inform the design portion of my podcast is as follows.

**Knowledge (Remembering, Episode 1)** This podcast episode is focused on keywords and big points about 3D printing and the industry. Such as what is additive manufacturing or the
styles of 3D printing that we have access to. Bloom (1956) identifies this portion of learning as being able to recall data or information. There are two primary objectives this episode which focus simply on giving the listener a framework for what 3D printing is and how long it has been around. The listener should be able to easily repeat this information when finished.

**Comprehension (Understanding, Episode 2)** Now that we know what 3D printing is, our focus then turns to; why does it matter? What is so important about 3D printing that I chose to make this episodic? Should the listener care about this, who is using this and why? This is focused around understanding the meaning, translation, interpolation, and interpretation of instructions and problems that come with the technology of 3D printing and builds on the concept and knowledge building in episode 1.

**Application (Applying, Episode 3)** This episode takes a step back from the overall description of 3D printing knowledge and why it is important on a macro-level. Application takes this into a more micro approach in how the listeners can employ this knowledge in their own home. The main idea of application is to use a concept in a new situation or unprompted use of an abstraction. Applies what was learned in the classroom into novel situations in the workplace. What around the listeners home could be improved with 3D printing? What is already being done elsewhere?

**Analysis (Analyzing, Episode 4)** This takes a step forward back into the macro level. The reason this level is important is to separates materials or concepts into component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood. This is primarily for making sure the listener distinguishes between facts and inferences. In this episode I talk about the competing ideologies in 3D printing and how the listener can distinguish what they see and hear about the
Podcast Creation for In-Home Use: An Overview of Podcast Creation Methodology Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

technology into fact or fiction. For instance, as the technology improves there are new methods that not everybody agrees upon. Some will swear by using a glue stick on their printer bed for instance, when this is an old method that is made outdated by printer beds that are much better polymers for reacting to heat and printing materials.

Synthesis/ Evaluation (Evaluating/Creating, Episode 5) My final episode touches on the items in each of the individual projects and brings it to a head for the listener. The point of this step in the taxonomy and this episode is to build a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure, which finally allows the listener to make judgments about the value of ideas or materials. After listening to this episode, the listener can understand this technology as well as some of the facts and fictions surrounding them, they are armed with a knowledge of where to begin looking and how to identify the best components to print for their needs.

Recording and Editing Recording and editing becomes a key tenant of creating podcasts. The following picture, figure 3, (Bronson, 2021) describes the lifecycle that I am employing for my podcasts.

Figure 3
Podcast Creation for In-Home Use: An Overview of Podcast Creation Methodology Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

For my purposes I have created the audio in a batch of five episodes which is not atypical in the industry. When it came to recording and editing, I had a few key choices to make about the length of the podcast both in individual episode time and the number of episodes. From my own experience listening to podcasts and based on the literature I examined I went with 5, 15-minute episodes about my topic of 3D printing. “The introduction of podcasts in blended-learning courses was as accepted innovation by teachers and students. The types of podcasts used, and its length were generally accepted by students, except the interview that was too long (37 minutes). The length indicated by the students for the interview should be 15 minutes, the most. Most students listened again to the podcasts to review them or understand more details” (Carvalho, 2009 P.3631). Carvalho’s sentiments echo the choice I made here in splitting up these podcasts as I did. Alternatively, I have lined these up in the spirit of Bloom’s taxonomy six pillars, focusing on the points of both Synthesis and Evaluation together in my last episode. This gave me a rigid formula to keep my content relevant in the time constraint and focused on what was coming next to keep the content relevant going forward.

To find relevant hardware and software I made a lot of considerations to the user such as technology fluency, budget, ease of use and desired audience. I decided that it made the most sense for users at home looking to create a basic podcast to err on the side of most cost-effective for quality, so you could reasonably do this project on a small budget and from there understand the nuances and quality controls that come with the indivual parts. The podcast creator can evaluate their needs after they have gained some experience with low-cost tools. The first decision you must make is based on your operating system, in my case I am using a Windows machine, however the components I used are largely cross-platform applicable. For
Podcast Creation for In-Home Use: An Overview of Podcast Creation Methodology Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

my software choice in terms of recording and editing I decided to use a program that can be downloaded for free online called Audacity. “If you are just getting started, then, the old audio faithful Audacity is the best place to begin cutting your own podcasts. It’s not a true Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) and lacks a couple of almost essential features for editing multiple tracks and clips together, but it is easy to learn and is capable of producing excellent results” (Oxford, 2017 p. 2). Audacity mixes accessibility (can be accessed from any Mac or PC) with ease of use and cost effectiveness and was what I went with for my podcast and can record and edit your audio from one location. Notably I also am the only person going to be speaking on this podcast so if you are going to have multiple sources of audio you may make considerations on your program based on that, however, for one speaker audacity works particularly well. I used audacity for several purposes including capturing my audio and then editing it down to a reasonable measure. Cutting out lulls in my speech such as “ums” and times when I took a moment longer to decide the direction of the next subject were uses of audacity. This is an important step as audio quality can destroy an interesting topic. “While audiences will tolerate pixelated video and compressed music, however, they won't tolerate sound that isn't clear and well recorded. Too much background noise, distortion, clipping or anything that unintentionally draws attention away from the words being said will see a podcast switched off and deleted from a smartphone or tablet” (Oxford, 2017 p. 1-2). As Oxford says, your content can be great, but if your audio is poorly put together it will not matter long enough to keep the user interested. Once I was done recording audacity made it simple to edit, save, and store the MP3 file to be hosted online.
Hardware can be a difficult area based on budgetary constraints as components can be quite expensive. There are several schools of thought to what makes the best podcasts hardware wise, and while you could go all out and spend thousands of dollars on microphones and equipment there are easier solutions. For my purposes, I went with a hybridized solution in the form of a headset based on the following quote from Oxford. “The first of those is always, always wear headphones. Always. When you are recording, when you are editing, when you are listening back for a particular cue. It is the only way that you can hear everything that has been captured. And invest in good headphones too. Apart from improving your editing technique, you may miss a click or a bad edit because your speakers are too low grade to hear it, but if your audience is listening on good quality headphones or even earbuds, then they will quickly pick up any problems you have missed. If you're a limited budget we'd suggest you go all out on top quality headphones and settle for merely decent microphones.” (Oxford, 2017 p. 2) I gave myself a $100 budget in this area and decided to employ a headset with an attached microphone called a Hyper X Cloud Alpha. As Oxford mentions you can waste a lot of time by recording something that you do not realize sounds terrible, so I decided to buy a pair of headphones with a built-in microphone. The headphones are much better quality and constitute the bulk of the price. However, the microphone piece can be easily upgraded, so this seemed like a solid choice to capture both audio delivery and response objectives.

**Distribution and Hosting** My goals for picking a podcasting host came down to accessibility, ease of use, and cost effectiveness. I created a free account with a website called “The Internet Archive” at archiver.com which I uploaded my audio files to. It makes everything easily accessible with a low entry barrier for users to learn, as well as being free it has a high
cost-effectiveness for audio podcasts that will not be used proprietarily. This is not always the best choice to go with as metrics are not something you can easily track. “Platform’s track download metrics differently. A platform that tracks download numbers as well as spatial information, download devices, etc., can be very useful when quantifying the reach and potential impacts of the podcast. Most platforms require a monthly fee to host a podcast and store the episodes. The monthly fee is related to the number of episodes you upload and storage you require” (Bronson, 2021 p. 3600). Although for my considerations I did not choose a website where it’s possible to track metrics, that is a key component in identifying that your audio is being well received.

Research Outcomes

Applying Bloom’s taxonomy (1956) and its overview of the cognitive domain strongly support the creation of a desirable content structure for audio podcasts. An audio podcast is a cohesive experience that can easily be executed incorrectly without proper attention discipline of the subject. A primary issue many podcasters face is the inability to maintain a consistent flow and experience when discussing a subject as it can be particularly difficult to judge a podcast objectively on a subject you already know all about. Using the structure of Bloom’s taxonomy this issue is well abated in terms of delivering the subject matter. The taxonomy gives the podcast’s host the ability to have a dedicated set of information to cover periodically that helps foster a strong understanding of the delivered content.

In my content example for podcasting which was breaking down a brief history and use of 3D printing I debated quite a bit on what to cover in that realm. For instance, there are advantages to having a robust understanding of manufacturing techniques to give the listener
some perspective about why 3D printing is such a remarkable design. However, using Bloom’s taxonomy, I observed that there really was no reasonable way to cover that information briefly in a way that would allow the listener to retain the information and use it valuably. The taxonomy had a direct result in keeping the podcast content direction organized which in turn allowed me to create a seamless experience with my subject matter. Staying in the constraints of 15 minutes an episode and using each episode to dissect a particular portion of the taxonomy related to my subject allowed me to create a well-designed podcast.

There were a few limitations to consider with my approach, namely that for a more well-refined test I would have preferred to cover multiple subject matters with this approach as well as use a variety of different hardware and software to give more weight to the choices that can be made when attempting to work in this medium. For example, if I could cover this on a Windows computer as I did and then compare those results under similar circumstances inside of a Mac computer with a different subject and perhaps different audio hardware and software, we would have a more quantifiable comparison of quality and understanding. Moreover, I would have preferred to study different approaches that would either show inferiority or superiority to using Bloom’s approach more clearly.

As far as my choices for hardware, software, and hosting I believe this method to be a sound low-cost option for delivering podcasts. Although spending more money would have likely yielded a higher quality the decisions, I made allowed me essentially to meet all my base objectives for audio delivery as follows.

- Consistent audio volume throughout all podcast examples
Podcast Creation for In-Home Use: An Overview of Podcast Creation Methodology Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

- Audacity Editing removed dead air and allowed me to sort through any background noise and improved overall quality.
- My choice of spending more on headphones than a microphone allowed me to make decisions that delivered a better podcast than spending more on a microphone.
- Archiver.com made all pieces easily accessible for users to access and for free.

The above points meet all the criteria for delivering an acceptable podcast. As previously mentioned, there are certain things that will put podcast listeners off right away regardless of content. I believe my software and hardware choices in coordination with well delivered content using bloom’s taxonomy that I was able to create a well curated podcasting experience.

Conclusions and Future Outlook

Podcasting is still a new medium and there are many who are still looking to perfect the art of the craft. This example proves to us that the principles of Bloom’s taxonomy show we can employ an old method of delivering information into a modern format. It also demonstrates that the theoretical framework of this educational model is multi-faceted in the amount of uses it has. I believe moving forward this information can be used to inform and hone the industry as it moves into the center stage into big areas such as apple, Spotify, and ‘s radar. Podcasting will only increase in size and scope employed by the population and from there so will the range of creators and listeners who stumble across poor formats and deliveries for their subjects. As the internet continues to take hold in society so with it do the technologies its supports, including podcasting.
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Podcast Creation for In-Home Use: An Overview of Podcast Creation Methodology Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/ten_years_in_your_ears/2014/12/what_makes_podcasts_so_addictive_and_pleasurable.html.