Community Podcasts Toolkit

Welcome to the Community Podcasts toolkit – a Do it yourself guide to making your own podcasts !

If you have been wondering how to get started, this guide will help you learn,

What you need
How to plan a podcast
How to record
How to edit
How to share !

But first !

What is a podcast ?

A podcast is a digital audio program that you can listen to anytime and anywhere on the internet. With digital technology becoming more accessible, now you can start your own radio program online. There are apps and online platforms that help you create and upload your own podcast!

Tune into some of these amazing podcasts to hear the magic yourself and get an idea of some of the styles and themes you can explore !

The Sanskaari Saas Podcast	The Taste of India
De taali – Life of a transgender	Gaatha story
	Puliyabaazi
Everyday 101	Puraani dilli waalon ki baat
Living with a river	How to citizen
Incarnations	

Why a podcast ?

We have all heard radio playing somewhere or the other - at home in the kitchen, or in the market, a construction site, at the barber's shop and even in a bus or

auto-rickshaw. Radio, or audio programs are popular because they can be heard while working or being busy with any other chores. They connect with the audience through sound and voice, and are often interactive, almost like a companion speaking to you or telling you a story. And another advantage with podcasts is that you can pause then, replay them and hear them multiple times at your convenience!

Let's revisit some of the main differences between a radio and podcast are :

Radio	Podcast
Radio is broadcast through airwaves and can be heard in a limited radius/region.	A podcast is broadcasted online and can be heard anywhere in the world.
Radio needs licenses and can be owned by the govt. or a private company, as well as by ngo's and registered organisations in the form of community radio.	A podcast can be created and uploaded by a private company, an individual or a collective by setting up an account/channel on an online platform
Radio programs are produced mostly in studios and are often live programs.	Apart from studios, podcasts are also being produced at home or in public spaces too.
Commercial radio can monetize their airtime and earn revenues by hosting ad campaigns, etc.	Podcasts produced can also generate revenues based on the number of times they are heard and through monetizing content with public/private companies.
Radio requires more technical equipment	Podcasts can be produced with basic technical equipment.

With mobile phones and internet becoming important modes of communication, people now have access to many more channels of news and entertainment – whether it is Youtube or Netflix, and for audio programs Spotify, Gaana.com, Soundcloud etc. Podcasts are becoming a good way to take a break from screen time and enjoy more attentive and immersive listening experiences!

This also means many more programs are being produced and in various languages and are available on an online library for those who have access to Internet, barring some platforms which require a paid membership. But don't let that stop you from listening and making your very own podcasts!

So let's Begin !

Welcome to your own podcast ! If this is the first time you are making a podcast – making a few decisions might help you get started !

- Do I want to make a podcast alone or with a team
- Do we want to make a podcast in one location or different locations

Once you know, you can start putting your technical resources together. You need,

- A smart phone
- A minimum of 1 GB storage space on your device
- Internet connection/mobile data

Yes ! That's good to get your podcast going ! There are some devices which can help improve quality and save time which you can use if the resources are available with you or your team – like a lapel mic for recording or a laptop to make editing easier.

Once you have your team and resources organized, dive into discussions and explore what kind of podcast you are going to make. This will help you arrive at a theme and imagine the possibilities of creating content around your theme. This is also a good time to get to know each other and reflect on our thoughts and opinions.

Some useful points for discussion and reflection while planning a podcast –

- Is your podcast going to be a monologue, or have interviews and conversations with others
- Will it include facts and research, or will it only share personal experiences or both ?
- Think of a basic flow or structure for your podcast episode – how do you introduce the podcast, what are the different sections you include and how you end a podcast.
- What is the length of each podcast that you are aiming to make.
- Are you making one podcast or a series of podcasts on the theme?
- Who is the audience you want to have these conversations with and how can you include them in your interviews and stories
- Planning spaces for recordings, indoors - smaller rooms work better as compared to larger rooms which have a lot of echo, for outdoor locations – safety and quality of sound recording/background sound levels, etc.
- Are there any creative skills that you want to prepare and share related to the theme – poems, songs, play recitals etc.
- Are there some peers and resource persons who can give you feedback before uploading your podcast ?

There are some things you must keep in mind and read up about to ensure your podcasts do not violate any ethical or legal standards/policies in place in your region.

All radio and podcast programs must be factually correct, not promote harmful social norms or create/reinforce disharmony among communities, respect the privacy and consent of all participants, and take into account guidelines and policies for producing programs published by concerned government departments. While entertainment is a free space to indulge yourself in for

creating podcasts, broadcasting news may not be allowed as any misinformation and misrepresentation of facts may occur – that is why news agencies have to obtain licenses - for example, in India from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in India.

It is good to share some of this information with all participants of your podcasts so they are aware and give informed consent to being a part of your initiative! So produce podcasts responsibly !

Spend at least 3-4 sessions organizing your thoughts and ideas, finding out more than what you already know about the theme and updating yourself – and no harm to do a little fact check since what you will say on your podcast will have a direct impact on the thoughts and opinions of the listeners !

If you choose to make a monologue style podcast –

- Script a brief introduction about what the podcast is about
- Decide points for discussion, fact list and a script or flow for what you wish to say
- Script a brief outro/ending with credits for the content and any message you would like to give listeners

If you choose to make an interactive interview style podcast –

- Plan out interview questions – starting with sharing some personal anecdotes helps introduce the voices in the podcast and also make them more comfortable while recording. This also helps listeners gain a context and relate to who and where the conversation is being had.
- Decide who will conduct the interviews and who will be interviewed – you can speak to peers, parents, teachers, neighbours, shopkeepers, social workers, artists and more to get different perspectives on your theme.
- Take consent and availability of those participating in your podcast before hand and fix a time and schedule for each interview.
- While conducting the interview, be open to listening, different views and avoid interrupting or speaking over each other.
- Based on the interviews, do some research and add missing facts or reinforce messages with facts.
- Collect related sounds and prepare art – music/poetry etc. on the theme to make the episode more exciting

Apart from the conversations – do invest some time in building a sound library - the soundscape of the podcast – how a space is bought alive for the listeners is also very effective in engaging audiences. This could include sounds from your daily life and activities – like the sound of cooking in a kitchen, a street vendor passing by, birds, etc.

Remember that your audience cannot see you. So the sounds you use are the only way to make your podcast immersive and interesting. It is also important to understand that every topic / discussion may not need background

sounds but every background sound needs a very good reason to be in your podcast. Choose wisely!

Now that you have a plan in place – it is time to start recording !

How to record on your device ?

While most smartphones have pre installed sound recorder/voice recorder apps, there are a number of free apps available on your app store to improve the quality of your recordings.

Try the 'Dolby On' app – it takes just 125mb of space apart from the space the content that you record will take.

What makes something like 'Dolby On' better than my phone's native recording app?

Dolby On is a free app that helps users record, modify, enhance and share recordings from their phones. The major benefit of using this app is its noise reduction and enhancement capabilities. Most smartphones have very basic microphones in them that may not always sound pleasing. The environment that you record in may have a lot of noise and your voice or the interview you want to record may not sound clear enough. Apps like 'Dolby On' are designed for people who make audio recordings for social media. The app automatically applies noise reduction to your recordings and also allows you to enhance the recordings before you upload them to your desired platform.

How to use the app ?

Recording

When you open the app you will be asked for permissions. You will have to allow

the app to use your microphone and your storage in order to use the app. After that you will see the recording screen that should look something like this. On the top left corner you can see the level meter. This tells you if the sound you are recording is being optimized for correct loudness. If this changes to an exclamation mark (!) then the sound you are trying to record is too loud and you should move away from the source.

In the bottom center of the screen you can see the big microphone symbol. Pressing this button starts your recording. Once the recording begins the timer on top starts and the button changes to a square. Hitting this button again will stop the recording. The buttons on either side of the Microphone symbol allows you to record video with dolby audio (left) and live stream to twitch (right) and are not important for our toolkit. The button on the lower left allows you to access your dolby recordings. The button on the lower right gives you access to the settings.
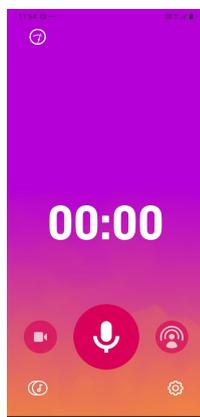
Organising and Enhancement -

After the recording you will see the circle on the top right with a track number. This is what you just recorded. You can click on this to rename, share and modify the track. Creating a podcast can lead to making a large number of recordings so it is very important to name your files in a way that you can access them easily when you need them. We suggest using a naming convention such as -

"SUBJECT/EPISODE_INTERVIEW NAME/SOUND DESCRIPTION_TAKE/OPTION_DATE"

In the lower left corner you can find the "Tools" button. Clicking this button will give you a number of options. After adjusting any of these tools you can either choose to discard the changes by clicking the cross on the left or the tick on the right.

1. **Style -** Dolby allows you to change the character of each recording. Think of this as an Instagram filter for your recordings. We encourage all users to try all the available styles and see what works best for each recording. It is not necessary for you to use any of these. One style might not suit all recordings so feel free to experiment and choose the one that works best for you. And sometime the raw sounds that are captured are best when left in their natural form – so hear their effects out and decide !

2. **Noise -** The noise reduction is on by default for all recordings made on Dolby. If you feel that your recording requires more noise reduction then push the slider beyond five. Listen carefully for the changes that are being made to your audio. If the subject that is being recorded is being affected negatively by the noise reduction then turn the noise reduction down to a level that is better.

3. **Tone -** All sounds can be loosely divided in three layers. Bass, mids and treble.

Bass is the lower sounds such as the rumble of a large vehicle, the roar of a lion or the sound of breathing closely on a microphone. Very often you will find that turning the bass down slightly reduces some of the noise in a recording. This is because the sound of every room is often in this range. This might be because of distant sounds of traffic or people, the hum of electricity in the room and even the sound of your own hands holding the phone.

Mids have the sounds that our ears are most sensitive to. Almost all the major sounds that we pay attention to lie in this region. All human voices, cats, dogs and other sounds designed to grab our attention such as horns and sirens are loudest in this range. If you are recording an interview and you want it to sound clearer then you can make a slight boost to the mids. However, making too much

of a boost will make your recording sound harsh and unnatural. Making small boosts or cuts is the key to using all of these tools.

Highs contain the sounds that are very shrill and help us determine how close or far a sound is. All the "S" sounds lie in this region. Making small boosts here will make the recording sound a little more exciting and close. Be careful of overdoing this because it may make your recording sound very unpleasant if this is pushed too much.

As with all the tools in audio, experiment to find the best sound that you can get from the tools available to you and always try to make things sound natural instead of trying to hide inadequacies. A natural sound with some noise or disturbance is better than a very processed sound that is hard to understand.

4. **Boost -** Pushing this slider will make your recordings slightly louder. However, this will make the noise in your recording louder as well. Use this tool very judiciously.

5. **Trim -** Trim allows you to remove audio from ***the start or the end of your recording***. You can use this to remove any sounds that are unimportant to your recording at the beginning or end of your recording.

Saving and Sharing -

To the right of the tools button you will find the share button. Clicking on that will give you a number of options.

To save the audio to your phone, click on "Save Audio". Now you can find this file in the appropriate directory in your phone. It usually tells you where your file has been saved!

If you wish to upload your track directly onto your sound cloud account you can do so by selecting that as well.

Note - You will require the Soundcloud app on your phone to share to Soundcloud directly from Dolby.
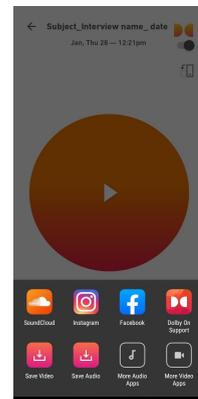
Things to remember while recording –

- If your own voice is not essential to the recording then place the phone closer to the person who is being interviewed
- Closed small spaces are ideal for recording. Try to move away from constant sources of noise such as electric fans, windows, crowds etc.
- Avoid interrupting the interviewee as two overlapping voices can never be separated in the recording. *Tip - Count to 2 in your head before speaking and ask the interviewee to do the same.*

- All microphones, including the one in your phone have something called "handling noise". This is the sound that the mic catches from surfaces that are in direct contact with the microphone such as - your hand, a table (any movement on the table will make a noise), strong wind etc. Do whatever you can to limit this noise. Place the mic close to the source that is being recorded in a way that it doesn't move. If you are holding the phone in your hand then don't move it in your hand and hold it steady, avoid being in windy places when recording with your phone. If you want an easy solution, check out some DIY videos of how to make mic/device stands from recycled materials at home! Make sure they are sturdy!

- Always name your recordings in a proper manner immediately after you record. This is very important so as to not miss any files while editing and finding them directly instead of listening to each and every recording.

Tip - Keep a notebook and a pen and take notes for which recording you might want to use later. This speeds up the editing process by a lot.

During COVID-19, visiting people living far away for interviews and discussions might be difficult or impossible – in that case, you can conduct interviews and conversations through one on one phone calls or conference calls which can be recorded with the call record option available in your phone. Once again consent and respecting each other's privacy and safety is important to build trustful participation and ensure these are in place before proceeding.

Cube ACR is a free call recording app that you can use if your phone doesn't have the ability to record phone conversations.

Next step is editing !

Editing – remember you have 3 goals

- Listen to your content carefully and ensure all information is ethically sound and factually correct.
- Edit and remove parts that may be repetitive, irrelevant or not clear.
- Add sounds and music, and enhance the quality of your recordings to bring them alive.

The Dolby app can help you trim the audio. This means that you can cut out parts from the beginning and the end of your audio recording.

But if you want to cut out parts from the body of the recording or stitch two separate parts together then you will have to use another application.

Lexis Audio Editor is one free app that allows you to do this. This is a basic introduction to this app. Refer to the videos on this app available online for a more in depth understanding and practice some of your editing skills in your free time to make the most of this platform.

The opening screen from Lexis looks like this.

To bring new audio into the app you can either record it directly into the app (Dolby offers better quality) or click on the three vertical dots on the top right to open the options menu and click on "**Import/Mix**" -> "**Load playback sound**".

You can now select a file from your phone as shown in the picture and load it by clicking "**Open**" .
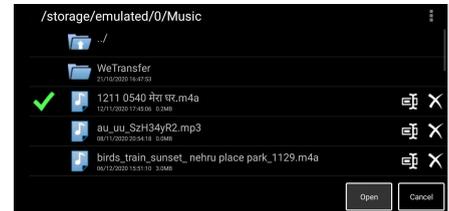
After loading the desired file you can use the two white arrow markers on either side of the file to select any portion of the file.

After selecting your section you can click on the top right vertical dots again to get the options for adding effects, cutting/pasting etc. Remember that effects are only applied to the selected area and pasting happens in the area to the right of the selected area.

You can also add another recording to your edited file by going to the "Import/Mix " option. The imported tracks will appear to the right of the selection.

After you are done with your editing you can click on the save option in the top to save your new edited file. And you have a podcast ready for upload !
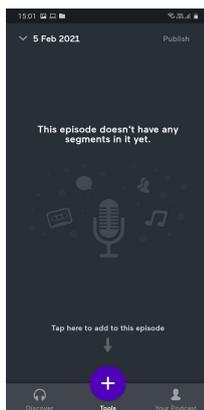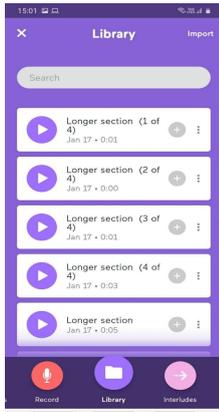

Another app you can use to quickly stitch different files together and add music and sound effects to your podcast is Anchor.

Open Anchor and hit the "+"icon to add your files. You can add files from your library or record them directly on to the app (not advised).

You can choose music between sections or as a background from anchors library from the "interludes option"
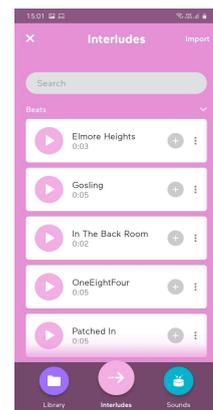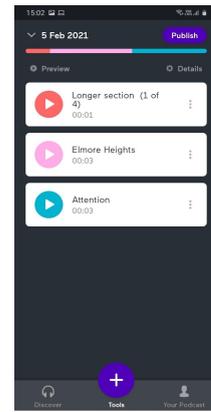
You can also select sound effects to add to your podcast from the "Sounds" option.

After this you can preview and publish your podcast. Add a title, description, your description, show name etc as prompted.

Achor will take anything between 4 to 12 days to publish your podcast to all major podcast streaming services such as Spotify.

Caution - Your podcast might get rejected if you have used anyone elses creation or property without obtaining the rights from them. Make sure your content is not infringing anyone's copyright. *Eg. - Do not use/ perform any popular songs or dialogues from movies – read about why copyrights should be respected - be original and be creative***.**
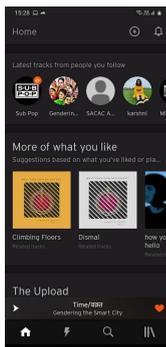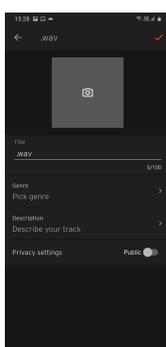
If you want to share your podcast on a free hosting open platform like Soundcloud then you can do so directly from the Dolby app (explained above) or from the Soundcloud App.

Click the circled up arrow to upload.
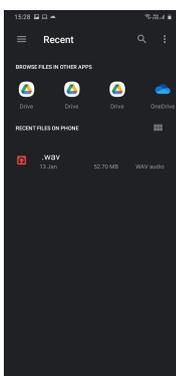
Select the file you want to upload.

Add Title, Genre, Description and a picture (Like you would for instagram or Facebook) and click the Tick symbol on the top right corner.

And share your podcast with the world!

We hope this little guide supports you in your discovery of podcasts and the world you can create with your very own podcasts !

Sunayana Wadhawan, Delhi
Amartya Ghosh, Delhi

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