Podcasting: Hands-On Workshop

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Stuart helps attorneys get better at what they do (and enjoy the process) through his entertaining and educational CLE Performances. His expertise is in "Technethics," a term Stuart coined that refers to the ethical issues in social networking and other technology. Stuart also speaks about "Practical Ethics"-- those lessons hidden in the ethics rules that enhance a lawyer's practice.

Mr. Teicher is a Supreme Court appointee to the New Jersey District Ethics Committee where he investigates and prosecutes grievances filed against attorneys, an adjunct Professor of Law at Rutgers Law School in Camden, New Jersey where he teaches Professional Responsibility and an adjunct Professor at Rutgers University in New Brunswick where he teaches undergraduate writing courses.

Why Podcast?

I know what you're thinking. "Podcasting…yahoo! Another new technology!"

Shall we dispense with the sarcasm? Okay, maybe just a little more…so there's this thing called social media—have you heard about it? There's been a little talk about it at ACLEA meetings lately so you may have run across the term. Of course I'm joking…we've all been inundated with talk of social media. Well, podcasting isn't necessarily social media *per se*, but it can be a valuable part of your overall social media effort.

For those of you who have never listened to a podcast before, the concept is quite simple. Here's what it is: an audio podcast is just like a radio show. People record their show and put it up on the internet so everyone can listen to them on their computers or download them to their iPods/mp3 players. I said, "audio podcast" because it's possible to record your show in a video format. The most popular form of podcasting, however, is audio-only and that's the type of program we'll be discussing in this seminar.

By the way, I want to warn you—these written materials may seem a bit on the short side, but there's a good reason. The majority of this break oust session is about watching the hands-on creation of a podcast. You've got to see it to believe it! What

type of content will we be creating in the session? Well, it could be about a number of things….

What are Podcasts About?

In theory, podcasts can be about anything. Are you a deep-sea fisherman who wants to spread your knowledge about the sport? You can do so through a podcast. Are you a dedicated figure skater who has a burning desire to talk about toe-loops and educate people how to do a triple Lutz? Maybe use a podcast for that. **A podcast is simply another tool that can be used to disseminate information to your audience.**

Of course, podcasting is a valuable business tool as well, for it allows you to get critical (or sometimes even frivolous) information to your organization's audience or target market. In podcast episodes you might announce a specific event, you might interview someone in your organization to let your audience learn a bit more about that person, you could educate your audience about a particular pertinent issue in your industry, or you might discuss something about your company that enhances your brand. Of course, any variation of these will work as well as additional things you can think of. The sky's the limit!

From a marketing point of view, the podcast is a part of your overall social media arsenal. Yes, it can stand alone, but its power is increased when utilized as part of a comprehensive program. **The critical part of a social media program is to use the various platforms in a coordinated manner to distribute valuable information to your audience.** Unfortunately, that's lost on a lot of users who get caught up in the

hype and the technical details. To be a worthwhile endeavor we must use technology to distribute valuable information. When combined with a twitter account, Facebook fan page and any other tool you use, a podcast can be a useful part of that effort.

How do you podcast…..

<u>First Things First….There is No Reason to Reinvent the Wheel</u>

When I first started exploring the world of podcasting I was insistent on finding free advice that could teach me how to get it done. Heck, isn't that all the rage these days—free advice on the internet? Toward that end, I spent hours upon hours looking at free sites that purportedly teach you how to podcast. Like everything on the internet, those resources were helpful, but didn't quite explain everything. They each left the tiniest of unexplained holes, but those unexplained items were critical. Imagine driving down a highway when you come upon the only bridge which crosses a river. That bridge is perfectly intact, but for one tiny section having been removed—sure, it may be a small section, but you can't get across the river without it! Eventually I had to break down and think about spending some money. The resource I found was well worth it.

So here is my advice…..go to http://schoolofpodcasting.com/ Incidentally, I have no affiliation with this site whatsoever and I don't know the people that run it in any way. I paid them for a 7 day trial subscription and it was the best $12 I ever spent…well, for technology at least! I learned absolutely everything I needed to learn about the platform. The guy who runs it is a real pro and he speaks to you in a non-technical manner. His tutorials are clear, concise and direct—he tells you what you need to know

without any of the fluff. There are monthly and yearly subscriptions as well (both for more money of course).

Crawl Before you Walk- the Basics, Made Easier:

Before you get started with the detailed information that you'll learn on the site mentioned above, it would be helpful to get an explanation about the basics. I understood these basics going in and it probably made my subscription more effective. So here are the basics of how a podcast works.

The process can be broken down into a few elementary parts: (1) You create the show, (2) then you put it somewhere on the internet where people can get it, (3) then people access it on the internet and listen. Let's just talk about what each of these steps means—we'll get into the "how-to" details in the live program.

(1) Show Creation. The first step is to actually create the show you're going to record. This part of the process has absolutely nothing to do with technology—it's about creating valuable content. Decide what you're going to say- what are the points you want to make sure you convey to the audience? Do you want to interview someone? Lecture? Create a comedy routine with another person? The options are endless and it's all up to you. Just make sure you take the preparation seriously.

(a) Write the Show

Taking this seriously means resisting the temptation to "wing it." Too many people embark upon creating a podcast by having a few ideas about what they sort-of

want to say and figure out the content on the fly. Those are the podcasts that don't last. On the other hand, listen to a few classics and you'll see that the more preparation you put into the content development, the better the actual show (to see what I mean, go to iTunes and check out The Bowery Boys Podcast or anything in the Howstuffworks.com family of podcasts).

(b) Record (produce) the show

So now we're getting technical. You actually have to get your show onto a recording. This means getting a microphone and a program that records audio on your computer, or maybe getting a digital recorder. Whatever your poison, pick one. The schoolofpodcasting.com site has a great tutorial about potential equipment, including free programs you might want to use such as "Audacity." Depending upon your particular needs, you can get fairly technical at this point. Certainly, if you have a production department, then the details of recording could be left up to them. But let's assume that you don't…

Here's the skinny on the technicalities…like most things, this can become as complicated as you'd like. You can take a microphone, tape an interview without worrying about input levels and other details and you can create a decent product. For some people that would be good enough, myself included! Other people want to master all the details of production and get as close to a professionally created project as possible. I have a tremendous amount of respect for those people, I'm just not one of them! But that's what I mean by saying that it can be as complicated as you like.

I would, however, recommend watching the tutorials where the details are discussed because you'll gain a greater understanding about the process. Also, you may hear about some "fatal flaws" or critical tips that you wouldn't otherwise have learned on your own. Invest the time in watching the tutorials, even if you only expect to produce a basic podcast—it's well worth the effort.

(2) Putting the Show on the Internet.

(3) Releasing the show to the world.

Here's how the audience gets your podcast….I grouped these two together for the time being because it's easier to explain…In order to give the world the chance to hear your program, you need to place it someplace they can get at it. They need access to the program. For instance, if you wrote a book, you might put that book in a library. Then, anyone who wants to read it can come to the library and take it off the shelf. In the case of podcasts, imagine that after you finish recording your podcast show, you likewise put it someplace where people can come to get it, except in this case you're storing it on a website somewhere. The rub however, is that the listeners don't actually grab your recording and thumb through it like taking a book off a shelf— they use a podcatching software (like iTunes) that goes to the place you've stored your podcast recording (the website) and that software opens it for you and lets you listen. It's done that way for a few reasons.

One reason is because, technologically, the podcatching software needs to translate the computer language into something you can understand. The other reason it's done that way is because the podcatching software not only grabs your program and

lets you listen to it, but it also goes back periodically and automatically checks to see if new podcast episodes have been released.

Now that you have a less-than-basic understanding, let me give you some more details to fill in the blanks. You'll then have a "basic" understanding of how podcasts work. I'm only going to list these steps briefly, however, because we'll be going into them more deeply in the live program (that's why I've left you some room below- for notes).

Now You Can Walk- the Basics made Basic:

RECORD IT. After editing it, save it as an .mp3 file

TAG IT- Use the ID3 tags to attach proper identifying information to the program (Among other things, that helps people who may stumble upon your podcast to track back to your website to find the podcast)

LISTEN TO IT. Make sure that the finished product sounds right—that it's recorded properly, that there are no gaps in sound, static, etc.

START A WEBSITE AND A BLOG. You'll need to create a website where you store the file you've just recorded (we'll talk about situations where you already have a website during the program). So to do this you need to buy a domain name and a hosting package…

--BUY A DOMAIN NAME: The domain name is your website's name. But a website that functions properly is more than just a name-- it needs a place to operate, just like a business. In the real world you need a business name and an office to actually process the work you're going to do. In the virtual world that office is the "host." A domain plus a host makes a fully functioning website.

--BUY A HOSTING PACKAGE OR (BETTER YET)START A WORDPRESS BLOG. You can attach your domain to any host (office/home). When you attach it to a host, people who go to your domain name will be directed to the host you've selected. For podcasting, use a blog as your host—point your domain to your blog. Using a Wordpress blog is the easiest way to do this because that program (Wordpress) has certain functionalities that makes podcasting easier (as you'll see below).

UPLOAD YOUR RECORDING-- You've saved the mp3 file to the hard drive of your computer, but now you need to place that file on the web where it can be accessed by the podcatching programs. Do this by uploading the file to your host (in this case, your host is your Wordpress blog). It's easiest to upload it with an FTP program. By the way, you'll hear me tell you at the seminar that I think Network Solutions is the best program to use for all of this.

CREATE THE RSS FEED- Your computer needs to create the signal that will actually transmit the program you recorded to people's listening devices. That's the RSS feed. In order to listen to the blog, the audience subscribes to that RSS feed. An RSS feed is analogous to a magazine subscription—when you subscribe to the RSS feed, your podcatching software is asking the blog to send the signal (a bit of programming language) to you so you can hear it on your listening device. The RSS feed is that bit of programming language that, when read by the podcatcher programs (like iTunes) allows them to play the program.

The reason I told you to use Wordpress and Network Solutions, is because not only can you store your podcast recording on your Network Solutions generated Wordpress blog easily, but you can also use Wordpress to create the RSS feed. What you're actually doing is telling Wordpress where your file is located on the web and

asking Wordpress to create the programming code that will be sent to iTunes to let

iTunes broadcast your podcast.

Set up a FEEDBURNER ACCOUNT. You will use the program/website called

Feedburner to actually send the RSS Feed (the bit of programming you just created in

Wordpress) to iTunes or other podcast readers.