# So You Want to Start Up Your Own Class Podcast?

Why a class podcast?

Podcasting is one way for students to become producers of content for the Internet and not simply consumers. Having a real audience that responds to what students have to say increases their motivation to read, write, speak, and listen critically. It teaches students to be accountable for their ideas and opinions. And it's a great deal of fun!

PortablePD.ca

As part of our "Teacher Learning and Leadership Program," we have created a new blog/podcast called *PortablePD.ca* (*PortablePD.edublogs.org*). It is intended to be a place for teachers to ask questions, give advice, and share success stories about their experiences with podcasting and other classroom technologies. We encourage everyone to visit the site and leave comments.
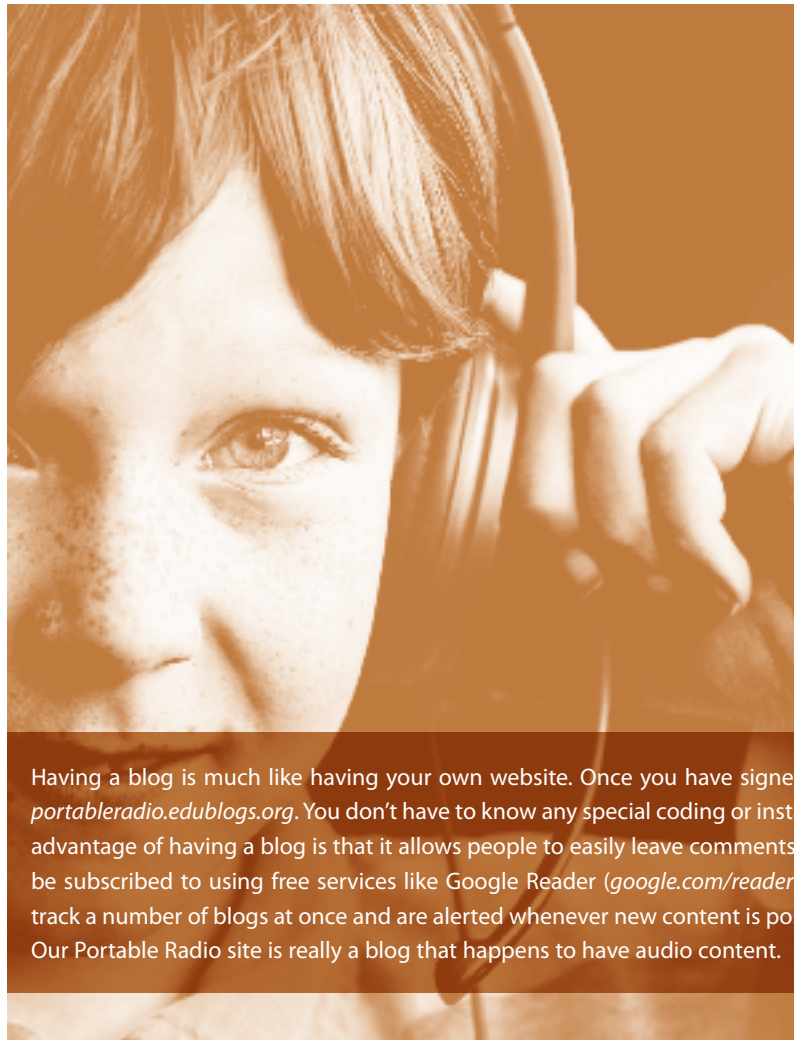
Creating your first podcast

1. Do your research. Listen to as many podcasts as you can. *Portable Radio* is a great place to start and we provide links to other podcasts there as well.

2. Hook up a microphone to your computer (think cheap at this stage – microphones can often be found in dollar stores). Record some audio. Get some practice working with audio editing programs. Audacity (*audacity.sourceforge.net*) is a free download and works very well.
   Once you feel comfortable enough with the software get your students to do some recording. Think small. Two to five minutes is a great way to test the waters and figure out what works for you and your students.

3. Give your podcast a memorable name. Sign up for a blog. We use free blogs offered at *edublogs.org*. The blog is a convenient way for people to find, listen to, and comment on your podcast.

4. Using your blog, post a description of what is going on in your first episode. Scroll down a little further to see a section that allows you to upload your audio MP3 file. After you have uploaded, click "send to editor."

   Congratulations! You now have an official podcast that can be accessed by anyone in the world with an Internet connection. Start advertising your podcast's web address: send newsletters to parents, get a link to your podcast added to your school's website, mention it in your emails – do whatever it takes to get the word out.

Having a blog is much like having your own website. Once you have signed up, you will be given a web address. Ours is *www.portableradio.edublogs.org*. You don't have to know any special coding or install software on your computer. It's all done online. The advantage of having a blog is that it allows people to easily leave comments about what they see or hear. Furthermore, blogs can be subscribed to using free services like Google Reader (*google.com/reader*) and Bloglines (*bloglines.com*). That way, people can track a number of blogs at once and are alerted whenever new content is posted without having to individually visit each address. Our Portable Radio site is really a blog that happens to have audio content.

by **André Charlebois**

It may sound like a cliché, but technology is all around us. We find it in our homes, vehicles, workplaces, and schools and use it to ensure convenience and comfort.

Les Technologies d'information et de communication (TICs) can be useful tools to help teachers of French as a second language and their students meet the main objective of the program: communication, oral and written.

La technologie en action – Branchons-nous sur la technologie!

"Comment dit-on?"

Technology has its own vocabulary, which is not always part of everyday life situations. The following non-exhaustive French list of technological hardware and peripherals could be useful for teachers and students:

Le micro-ordinateur de bureau: le clavier, l'écran, le moniteur, la souris, le boîtier tour, les enceintes acoustiques

L'ordinateur portable : le clavier, le lecteur de CD ou de DVD, l'écran ACL, la fente pour carte PC, la fente pour carte mémoire, la clé USB

Le vidéoprojecteur, l'écran de projection, la télé-commande[1]

What about vocabulary related to communication, an important part of the TICs?

educational blog – *le blogue éducatif, le cyber-carnet éducatif*

podcast – *le balado*

podcasting – *la baladodiffusion*

surf the Web – *naviguer dans Internet*

webcast – *la webémission[2]*

Les TICs dans la classe de français

As any teacher of French knows, it is of the utmost importance to plan according to the curriculum and the needs of students in a particular class. Here is an example how a video podcast could be used in the classroom, to reinforce a theme.

Saviez-vous que...?

Grade: Intermediate level (grades 7 and 8)
Program: French as a Second Language – Core, Extended, or Immersion
Theme: Famous Canadians
Activity: Un roman – *Dans la maison d'Anne … aux pignons verts!*
Curriculum Overall Expectation: Grade 8 – French as a Second Language
Core: Listen to and talk about simple oral texts in structured and open-ended situations
Immersion: Listen and respond to a wide range of spoken texts and media works.[3]

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Une mise en situation possible…

1. Following the study of a unit on famous Canadians, ask students to create groups of two, select a topic of interest, and seek some relevant and unique information on that topic. For example: What house in Canada is visited by the most people?
2. Ask students to integrate technology as an element of their presentation.
3. The website *archives.radio-canada.ca* is a useful source of pertinent and reliable information about Canadian culture. It provides webcasts and podcasts of its radio and TV broadcasts about famous Canadians.

Note: Teachers can subscribe to the weekly *Cyberlettre des Archives de Radio-Canada* or the *Cyberlettre pour les profs* by accessing the website *radio-canada.ca/jeunesse/pourlesprofs.* These free resources will prove very useful for you and your students.

Teachers who want their students to make fuller use of technology can create a podcast for other students to learn from. This activity can also be used as a means of sharing information with another class elsewhere in the province or in Canada. It becomes a virtual student exchange between two schools or two communities (See page 25).

Une rencontre visuelle et virtuelle

Grade: Junior or Intermediate level
Program: French as a Second Language – Core, Extended, or Immersion Social Studies, History or Geography
Curriculum Overall Expectation: Grade 5 – Social Studies
Use media works, oral presentations, written notes and descriptions, drawings, and tables to present information about processes or sequences of events[4]

Les étapes à suivre

1. Find a class elsewhere in Canada to twin with your class. You can ask the Société éducative des visites et échanges au Canada/Society for Education Visits and Exchanges in Canada (SEVEC) *sevec.ca* to help you find such a twin.
2. Students videotape a conversation or a brief message to be sent to their twin class. Transmission will be faster and easier if a digital video camera is used. You may also need to obtain permission from parents or guardians to film their children.
3. The initial message may be a presentation of participants. The followup message should address the content as set out in the curriculum expectations.
4. There are many possible topics. One suggestion is to choose a celebration and describe how it is observed in your family, your school, and your community.
5. These virtual visits could lead to an actual visit between the two classes – what an enriching experience for both groups of students!

La technologie – mon alliée!
The website *radio-canada.ca/jeunesse/pourlesprofs* provides reliable information for students to use as they research and produce a final task to demonstrate their learning.

Technology will never replace an eloquent, friendly, smiling, inviting, and devoted French teacher. Instead, let's use this tool and make it our ally and meet the needs of all our students.

Que la techno soit votre meilleure alliée! **V**

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NOTES

1. *Le français au bureau,* Sixième édition. Ste-Foy: Les publications du Québec, 2005.
2. Office québecois de la langue française – *oqlf.gouv.qc.ca.*
3. Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French, Grades 4-8, 1998.
4. Ontario Ministry of Education, The Ontario Curriculum, Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8, Revised.