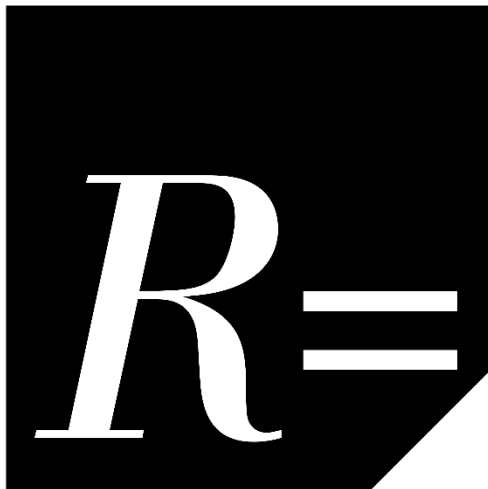


Protocol for Recording Pubcasts – Abridged and Annotated Audio Recordings of Peer-Reviewed Literature

Prepared for ResearchEquals by

Hannah L. Harrison, PhD
Marine Affairs Program
Dalhousie University

Philip A. Loring, PhD
Arrell Food Institute
University of Guelph



www.ResearchEquals.com

Academic PubCasting Protocol

Produced for ResearchEquals by Philip A. Loring and Hannah L. Harrison

ResearchEquals is an open source and community-driven research publishing platform that allows researchers to publish their process step by step, sharing the building blocks of research continuously and in chronological order, instead of publishing entire projects as papers. All research outputs can be published, regardless of whether they are text, data, code, or anything else, and each steps is assigned a Digital Object Identifier (DOI).

This protocol provides guidance for developing “PUBCasts” —abridged and annotated readings of academic writing, narrated by the author.

Cite As: Harrison, H.L. and Loring, P.A. 2023. Protocol for Recording PubCasts – Abridged and Annotated Audio Recordings of Peer-Reviewed Literature. ResearchEquals.



© 2023 Hannah L. Harrison and Philip A. Loring. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which means that you can use, modify, and distribute this document freely, as long as you attribute the original work to the author.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Background

PubCasts are abridged and annotated audio recordings of peer-reviewed scholarship, inspired by a passion for podcasts, demystifying science, and the power of the human voice. PubCasts were [conceived by Dr. Hannah Harrison and Dr. Philip Loring](#) with the goal of making peer-reviewed research more accessible and digestible to general audiences and scholars alike. These recordings focus on trying to communicate a published research article in an engaging and accessible way and give the researcher an opportunity to explain a concept, give a short anecdote about the research experience, or emphasize a main point while presenting their work. Our hope is that PubCasts will give researchers and academics a new way to engage with the literature, and for the non-academics out there, a way to hear about new science in a more interesting and digestible way.

Protocol

This document lays out the steps for developing and recording your own PubCast.

Step 1: Abridging

Take time to read through your article and decide what you can skip or summarize. Please do not read the entire paper verbatim. Instead, think about how you can summarize some sections (methods, for example) into a few key points.

Here's some tips:

1. Do not read the abstract, keywords, or any other part of the manuscript that is not the body of the text. DO read the title in its entirety.
2. Do read section headings! This helps the listener refer back to the text or follow along.
3. Do not read in-text citations. If there is a particular key citation you want to mention, go ahead and include it in an annotation section. Otherwise, refer the reader to the references.

Step 2: Annotating

Prior to recording, think about what “extra” information you would like to share with your listeners. The annotations, or parts where the reader steps out of reading the texts and explains in lay terms more complicated parts of the text, are an essential feature of a PubCast. We recommend including at least 2-3 annotations, or asides, in your PubCast.

Here's some tips:

1. In advance, consider which parts or concepts of your paper are most dense or least easily understood to a lay (or even scientific) audience. Summarize the concept into a few sentences and key ideas. When you reach that section of the paper, summarize the concept using the key points.
2. When annotating, it's encouraged that you take a slightly more casual tone. One purpose of annotating is to make the narrator/author more of a “Real Life Person” to the listener. So, while remaining professional, don't be afraid to let your personality and personal flavor shine through. Show passion for your work!
3. In annotations, it's okay to stutter or stammer a bit, as long as it doesn't take away from the main points. Don't over-edit these sections. It's okay to have a slightly adlib feel.

4. When you finish an annotation, you can get back into reading by saying, “Now, back to the text.”

Step 3: Recording

Recording your PubCast can be a time-consuming process until you get the hang of it. It’s normal for your own voice to sound strange or uncomfortable at first – don’t worry, you get used to it! Preparing your space and your voice are key steps to a quality recording. Good equipment can also help (see next section), but ultimately your recording will sound best if you take time to prepare your article and yourself.

Here’s some tips:

1. Prepare a quiet space. Eliminate background noise, muffle echoes, and find a quiet setup so your chair/desk/etc. doesn’t squeak.
2. Get yourself some water and tissues. Speaking is thirsty work, and you may realize you sniffle more than you thought!
3. Warm up. Practice reading the intro script aloud several times before recording. You may find you need to read aloud the first few paragraphs of your paper before recording them as well. Humming or singing through your full vocal range is a great way to warm up.
4. Speak slowly and clearly, and try to maintain a similar pace throughout the reading. Smile while speaking – it makes your voice sound warmer! Remember, people can’t see you, and so your diction and enunciation needs to be clean and crisp in order to be easily understood. If you’re not sure how to pronounce a word, look it up.
5. Record whole, complete, error-free sentences (and preferably paragraphs) at a time. Then pause the recording to breathe, prepare for the next sentence/paragraph. DO NOT start recording segments from mid-sentence if at all possible. While it is possible to edit parts of sentences together, it is very time consuming! It’s much better to record whole, error-free sections at a time and pause recording in between.
6. Try to avoid taking a deep breath directly into the mic. Heavy breathing and “mouth sounds” (smacking sounds from saliva) can be surprisingly loud, so if you need to take a big breath or swallow, turn your head away from the mic for a moment.
7. Watch your volume levels. If you have a quiet voice, you may have to turn up the gain and push yourself to be loud and clear. If you have a loud voice, you might need to turn down the gain before recording. You can always turn it back up again after recording if needed.
8. Finally, do a trial run. Record the first few sentences, then listen back to yourself before recording major sections of your paper. Better to fine-tune your approach on a little bit of script than the whole thing! And remember, you can always break up the recording sessions. Speaking aloud is very tiring. Try not to record for more than 45 minutes at a time (some papers take several hours to record accurately).

PubCast Script

We have developed a sample script to introduce your PubCast, and to close your recording. Feel free to adjust the script to suit your own style and context.

Intro:

Hello and thank you for listening! My name is [name and affiliation], and you are listening to a

“PUBCast”, an abridged and annotated reading of a research publication or product, read by me, the author. The goal of PUBcasts is to tap into the power of the human voice and help people connect with science in an accessible way.

PubCasts keep things straight forward, so you won’t hear the in-text citations, long acronyms, or other details that make wading through a paper more challenging. But, like all peer reviewed research, this work stands on the shoulders of researchers who came before. So, I/we strongly encourage you to visit the paper online and see the full reference list, as well as enjoy the tables and figures that help explain some of the more interesting findings.

And of course, we would love to hear your feedback. You can find my/our contact information in the online details [or wherever else] of this pubcast.

Today’s paper is [TITLE], written by [AUTHORS, in paper order]. This paper was published by [JOURNAL] on [DATE] in [ISSUES DETAILS]. You can read the full text and see the affiliations and other details about the authors at the [JOURNAL WEBSITE].

Outro:

Thanks for listening to this reading of [PAPER TITLE], by [AUTHOR NAMES], published in [JOURNAL NAME]. To learn more about the author of this paper, visit [YOUR WEBSITE]. To learn more about PubCasts and learn how to record one yourself, visit ResearchEquals at www.ResearchEquals.com.

Equipment & Files

Our team uses Røde NT1-A and SHURE SM7B microphones with pop filters to record our PubCasts. These microphones require pre-amps, and we use the Focusrite Scarlett 2i2 and Steinberg UR-22. High quality headphones are also very helpful, particularly in the editing process. We use AKG K240 Studio headphones. Less expensive microphones and headphones, or even the microphone built into your computer will likely be just fine for the casual PubCast recording.

To produce our PubCasts, we have used several software packages, including [Audacity](#) which is free and open-source. For more sophisticated levels of editing and production, we use a professional version of Hindenberg. However, for most PubCast production, professional software is probably unnecessary.

We generally output our PubCasts as .MP3 files, which reduces the file size compared with M4A and WAV formats.