

Hi, I'm Rose and welcome to week 3 of your podcasting class. A little bit about me. I'm currently the host and producer of a show called Flash Forward. And over the past 10 years. I've worked on shows all the way from tiny one person Productions up to Big Show's like Radiolab and ESPN 30 for 30. So I've seen the whole gamut when it comes to production styles. And this week. I have the somewhat unenviable task of trying to teach you production in three six minute videos.

So here are a few disclaimers. I'm not going to be able to cover everything. Production is complicated. There are a lot of moving parts depending on what kind of show you have your production schedule and your production setup is going to be different. So what I'm going to try to do is give you an overview things to be thinking about and for every video I'll post a ton of links for further resources for things that I've talked about in case you want to dig a little bit deeper.

Here's a second disclaimer since I don't know you yet. I don't know what you're working with. So some of you might have access to really great studios that. See you might be working with in a newsroom that already has a great recording situation. Some of you might have nothing. So I'm going to kind of ride in between those two things and more going to assume you don't have a huge budget. You don't have a ton of stuff to work with and we're going to talk a little bit more about maybe an indie production. Something that you're doing by yourself or maybe with a couple of other people that doesn't have a huge team. That doesn't have a big. So that's the kind of way I'm going to go. Most of these videos will be about ways that you can kind of bootstrap your own production.

If you happen to be lucky enough to have an awesome studio already. That's great. I think hopefully some of this will still be useful to you. But just so you know, I'm going to mostly be talking to folks who don't have all of that access.

Okay. So production. Production is complicated. We're going to break this down into three different videos. So video one is going to be about recording tools. What are the things that you should use to record the audio that will ultimately become your podcast. That's this video. We'll get to that in a second.

Video two is going to be about recording techniques. What are some of the best practices when you go out and you need to record your sound? How can you make sure you're getting good audio to start with?

And video number three is going to be about how to take that audio that you've recorded, how to edit it a little bit and then how to get it out into the world as a podcast.

Okay, you ready to get started? Great. Okay recording. What should you use to record your podcast? Well that depends on a lot of different things. What kind of podcast you're making and how much money you have to spend. So last week Tobin talk to you about show development. Figuring out what your show actually is and it's really important that you do that first before you start thinking about buying microphones of any kind because the kind of show that you have is going to dictate the kinds of microphones you should be using. Right? If you have a show where it's you reading from a script recording something straight and that's it. Just

one voice. That's going to mean a different microphone and a different recording setup than if you have a show where you're going out on the street and recording people outside or in their homes or something like that.

So we're going to talk about a couple of different ways you can record. What kinds of setups might be best for what kinds of podcasts and all of that. So microphones. If you ask an audio geek about their favorite microphone, they will spend 15 minutes at least talking to you about why their favorite is better than everybody else's favorite. You can really fall down a rabbit hole, but it comes to talking about microphones and I'm going to try to avoid that rabbit hole as much as possible in this video because we don't have that much time. Instead what I'm going to talk to you about is different kinds of recorders, different kinds of microphones, and what combinations of those things might be most useful to you.

So let's look at some recording devices. Microphones. These are many microphones. Different ways you can record. Okay, so I have here a variety of different recordings setups. None of these are particularly fancy. They're all things you could probably afford on your budget. If you have a ton of money by a nice microphone by all means but here's some middle-of-the-road baseline options. So you can think of your recordings setup in two parts: your recorder and your microphone. Sometimes your recorder and your microphone are the same thing. So like in this you have these two microphones right here. And your recorder it's all in one handy, dandy, very old and dusty recorder. This was the first recorder. I ever purchased.

The other way you can do it is with a plug-in to your phone. So this is a little microphone that you can plug into your phone. You can tell this is also old because when's the last time you saw a phone that had that kind of plug-in situation, but these kinds of things you can plug into your phone and use with voice memos and get a little bit better sound. This is the zoom it has again two microphones on top but it also has ports for external microphones here. That is what this is. This is an external microphone. This is a shotgun microphone and windscreen just in case people breathe a lot or I'm outside. And this plugs into your microphone.

When it comes to external microphones there are all kinds. This one I have here is called a shotgun microphone. This is what it looks like. But there are lots of other different kinds of external microphones that you can get to plug into your recorder. Each type of microphone is going to have a different range. So this shotgun microphone is going to pick up a different area of sound than another kind of mic. The shotgun mic is designed to really just pick up the real little pocket of sound right by someone's mouth. Some microphones require that your recorder sends power to the microphone. This is called phantom power and some recorders don't send enough power to work with some microphones. So this setup this mixing and matching can be kind of tricky. I'll include a bunch of links to guides for microphones and recording setups. So since we don't have time to get into the nitty-gritty here.

I'm going to assume that most of you are just starting out and don't necessarily want to spend a ton of money on super fancy microphones and audio interfaces. These are all pretty basic setups. This one in particular is very easy. You just plug it right into your iPhone. If you have a very old iPhone for this one. Most of these devices that I'm showing you here are handheld and they're really best suited for when you need to go out and go into the field and interview somebody in person on the street something like.

But what if you want something where you're just in your room with one other person or yourself doing a sit down interview? These are maybe not necessarily the recording devices that you want to use. There's actually a really simple solution here if you are just starting out and you're on a budget and that's USB microphones. I don't have one in my office because I don't use one but these are mics that plug into your computer via a USB cable. You might have seen them before they look like this. So your most common USB mic is called the Yeti. The nice thing about these is that you plug the mic right into your computer, fire up a piece of software like GarageBand and you are all set. Now some people purely hate the USB microphone. I think they're great. I think you should absolutely use one when you're starting out.

Okay. So those are a couple of different microphone options. Now, let's walk through a couple of different podcast types and talk about what might be your best bet in terms of recording device. So let's say that you have a podcast that's just you talking, reading a script something like you must remember this where it's mostly her voice reading from a script. That's going to require maybe a standalone mic. You might want to USB mic where you're just sitting in the room in front of it. You can put it on the table and read.

If you're doing something like you're going out in the field and interviewing people, that's going to require probably more of a recorder and a microphone set up. Okay, because you're going to want to be able to move it around you're going to want to be able to follow people. You don't want to be tethered to something that's heavy that sits on a desk. That's a pretty obvious distinction, right?

Okay, but all of those assume that you are going to be in the same room with whoever or whatever you want to be recording, but obviously that might not always be the case. So what do you do if you want to record someone who you're not physically next to. Well, there are a couple of different options. The first one and the most expensive but also the most professional is something called a tape-syncer. This is what NPR and a lot of the big podcasts do. What they do is they find somebody who's in the area of the person that you want to talk to. And they hire them to go to that person's house and record their end of the conversation. So you would be talking to them on the phone. And then this person in their room would be recording them while that all happens. That costs money of course, you need to hire someone to go do that for you. And if you're interested in finding tape-syncer in various cities, there's a great talent directory that AIR has. I'll post a link to that in the notes for this video. Tape-syncers are great because they get really good sound but they do cost money and you might not have the budget for that.

So if you don't here are a couple of other options. One of them is Zencast. I know a lot of people who swear by Zencast and that's a website where you go in, you get your link. You send your interviewee a link and they pull it up and it records both ends of the conversation and sends you both of those files afterwards. That's great. It costs about \$20 a month to use Zencast and it works great for some people. The other thing you can do is record on Skype. There are a variety of plugins for Skype that record. I use one called Ecam. It's \$40 total. You buy it once and I've used it for years and it records while you're talking to somebody on Skype. Now the downside of this Skype recording situation is that you are recording the line that Skype gives you so, you know when you're talking on Skype and it gets kind of crunchy and crinkly or you can't really hear them or they break up. All of that is what your file is going to sound like because it's just recording whatever Skype gives it. This is one advantage of the Zencast. It's actually recording the audio on their end before it actually comes through the tubes of the internet to you.

But there's one way you can kind of work around this Skype thing and that's what I mostly do for interviews and I call it the DIY tape sync. What you can do. Is you can ask people to talk to them on either their landline

or via Skype. And then you ask them to take their own smartphone and record their end of the conversation using whatever audio recording app they choose. So if they have an iPhone voice memos is built into the iPhone. It's one of those apps they don't actually allow you to delete even if you want to. So people with iPhones pretty much always have that.

If they have an Android you might have to walk them through downloading some sort of voice recording app, but it's not that complicated. Now the key to this trick is that they have to be using the phone that they are not talking to you on. So most phones make it very difficult, if not impossible to record the call that is actually happening. This is for a variety of reasons. So you need to be talking to them either on a landline or via Skype and then have them use their phone separately to record.

I do this for almost all my interviews for Flash Forward because it actually works pretty well. Modern smartphones have pretty decent microphones on them and it's free to do. So most of the time this works great. You then just have them send you the audio file at the end and you can use that. Now you do probably want to record a backup just in case. This system doesn't work or they don't press record or they accidentally delete the file at the end. And that's where Ecam comes in handy. I call on Skype. I record my backup just in case. And every so often I do have to use it, but that's kind of how I get around some of these recordings situations and it's sort of a free easy way to get decent sound while not having to spend money on hiring someone to go record that sound for you. If you have a great budget, you should absolutely hire a tape-syncer. If you don't that's a workaround.

One additional tip on this DIY tape-sync is that you want to ask your interviewee to use headphones if they are talking to you via Skype. Because if they don't then your voice is going to come out of the computer and get picked up by their smartphone while they're recording their voice and you generally don't want that to happen. You usually want to keep those two tracks separate. You can use your questions and use your interview later if you want to but you probably don't want the version that's coming out of their terrible computer speakers and being recorded by their smartphone. So make sure they're wearing headphones.

Okay. So those are some of the ways that you can record sound either in person or over the internet. In the next video, I'm going to talk about recording techniques. Some of the do's and don'ts of how to actually gather that sound. Where you should hold the microphone. How you should sort of conduct your interviews. Making sure you get the best possible sound because you really do want to get the best sound you can at the beginning so you're not fighting with it later on. Okay. See you in a bit.