Podcast Development For Professional Online Presences

2025 Introduction

This document is a copy of blog posts I made during the development of a series of podcasts in 2013. The blog was originally hosted at https://professionalonlinepresence.com/changingthelearninglandscape.

I have left in the original links for now, but unfortunately most of the external resources no longer exist, including those hosted by the Higher Education Academy (now known as Advance HE) themselves, who originally funded this project.

Contents

Post #1 - Professional Online Presences

Welcome to this blog about my experiences on the Higher Education Academy project, **Developing Podcasts To Assist Students With The Production Of A Professional Online Presence**. The work is funded under the **Changing the Learning Landscape** stream.

The project combines together two topics which interest me, employability and podcasts.

The main purpose of the funding is to allow me to develop experience in creating podcasts. I have current experience creating videos, but working without the visual element is quite a change.

The topic of the podcasts is based around my current work on Professional Online Presences. This is the collection of web sites and online profiles which students (or any other individual) can use to represent themselves online.

The podcasts are to be based around an existing set of eight Professional Online Presences talks which I have already produced for the Higher Education Academy, allowing the idea of repurposing to also be explored. This is also an area which I teach with my own students at Birmingham City University.

This blog will form a collection of topics relating to my experiences around Professional Online Presences and of developing the podcasts.

Post #2 - Changing The Learning Landscape Bid

Here is a copy of the information from original bid for funding from the HEA Changing the Learning Landscape pot.

(with minor edits to remove outdated contact information)

Application form
Workshop attended: Use of Social Media in Science and Technology Learning and Teaching
Your details: Dr Thomas Lancaster, Senior Lecturer in Computing, Birmingham City University
Project proposal: Developing Podcasts To Assist Students With The Production Of A Professional Online Presence The project involves the development of a series of eight podcasts for students. The podcasts will be promoted directly within Birmingham City University and used in the Professional Practice 2 module on the BSc Computer Science, BSc Business Information Technology and BSc Information Communications Technology courses. They will also be made available for colleagues within the wider university and at other Higher Education Institutions to use with their students. It is essential that students now have their own Professional Presence on the web that tells other people about them. When students come to apply for jobs, employers often search for students online. In disciplines such as Computing, students are expected to provide urls directly on their application forms. Many students do not consider the implications of an online Professional Presence being missing, being negative in tone, or not accurately selling what the student can do beyond the pages of a CV. A Professional Presence may be as simple as a LinkedIn profile, but generally a web site with portfolio elements and a set of interlinked social media profiles would be recommended. The project builds upon a set of eight PowerPoint presentations created as part of a previous HEA workshop (Enhancing The Employability Of Computing Students Through An Online Professional Presence) as well as existing teaching practices used at Birmingham City University: http://www.bcu.ac.uk/tee/events/previous-events/employability-workshop The intention is to repurpose the existing materials to provide the structure for the eight podcasts. Some reorganisation of the presentations will be required to make these work in a manner suitable for the audio medium. The eight topic covered are shown in Table 1. <table><tr><td>1 - Overview</td><td>5 - Video</td></tr><tr><td>2 - Preparation</td><td>6 - Web Sites</td></tr><tr><td>3 - LinkedIn</td><td>7 - Promotion</td></tr><tr><td>4 - Facebook</td><td>8 - Advanced</td></tr></table> **Table 1 – Proposed Topics To Be Covered In The Podcasts** The intention of using podcasts is to make the material available for provision to universities where staff themselves are not savvy about website production and social media use. This will also be more suitable for students to prefer the audio style of learning. It is also hoped that the podcasts will promote the available of the wider training resources, which are

available for free use at all Higher Education Institutions, and these will be further promoted when disseminating the findings from the production of the podcasts.

Alignment with the workshop

The proposed project aligns clearly with the topic of social media from the workshop.

The teaching and learning resources being developed use the podcast form of social media, which was promoted heavily during the workshop. The overarching topic on which the resources are being produced is also social media, since using sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn successfully is one of the main parts of establishing a Professional Presence.

Additionally, one of the aims of the workshop was to encourage delegates to explore the use of new social media technologies that they had not explored before. I have no previous experience of delivering podcasts, so this funding will allow me to research and develop that field, and to provide details of my own amended practice.

How will your project help embed learning technologies?

The area of creating an online Professional Presence is not one that is yet widely taught within UK higher education, but it is one which can lead to immediate interest and change to practices. Since many students already use social media extensively, this is an area which they find engaging.

The project is learning technology based, since it is set of learning resources that are being produced using a new type of technology. Podcasts are accessible to students, many of whom are continually listening to information, whether during travel, at home, or just between classes. The use of this technology is intended to help students to take in this valuable information.

Within my own practice, I have no previous experience of developing podcasts. This requires my own research of the most suitable tools to use and the best methods to present the. It also requires the development of "hands on" experience so that I can help other academics who are thinking of using podcasts. Thinking towards the longer-term, it is hoped that, if a method of producing podcasts quickly whilst also maintaining quality can be developed, it may be possible for me to provide additional podcast teaching for other subjects.

How could your project help promote skills and practices among colleagues and students?

The training, in the form of podcasts, will be made available directly for students. This will enable them to develop their own Professional Presences. It is hoped that colleagues will also note the availability of these resources directly to their students.

The availability of the resources will also be widely advertised using my own social media channels and blog, and it is anticipated that the HEA will also be able to promote these. I intend to note the availability of both these resources, as well as the initial set of teaching materials during presentations and I will be able to present about the experiences of producing the podcasts at other HEA events.

My experience of teaching this material to my own students is that it is timely, and that they find the use of social media within teaching engaging. By considering and improving their own Professional Presence, students can be expected to be more able to demonstrate their own

readiness for employability, which will ultimately help to get more students into more appropriate career positions
Funding requested: £500
Justification for the funding The payment for this is intended as a contribution towards the time release needed to develop podcasting experience and to produce and promote the podcasts. Some of the funding will also be set aside to allow for attendance at the cluster event. It is anticipated that this will most likely take the form of a presentation at the 2014 HEA STEM Conference, although this will depend on the preferred dissemination methods once these are made available.

In my initial explorations of this area I have already made a slight adjustment to the intended dissemination, with an agreed move to focus more on blog content than an official academic paper. This seems sensible given the topic and the social media focus of the funding. However, it is still hoped that it may be possible to present this through other academic talks, or perhaps a workshop format. Some dissemination through posters should also be possible.

Post #3 - Developing Podcasts To Assist Students With The Production Of A Professional Online Presence – Video Introduction

Here are thoughts about the project and the road ahead to get the podcasts created.

https://youtu.be/29nupdzQVsE?si=iDkeBtrbdsZs-GNk

The podcasts that are going to be developed (as identified in the bid and based on existing resources) are:

1. Overview (The Internet and its role in employability)

2. Preparation (Claiming identities and preparing profiles)

3. LinkedIn (Using LinkedIn for marketing)

4. Facebook (Preparing Facebook accounts for public consumption)

5. Video (Using YouTube for self-promotion)

6. Web Sites (How to produce a personal web site)

7. Promotion (Making full use of the social media opportunities)

8. Advanced (Monitoring sites and demonstrating expertise)

Post #4 - Quick Note About The Professional Online Presence Terminology

I've decided to use the terminology "Professional Online Presence" for this project.

The reason is, I feel that the wider research and practitioner area is using that terminology, as opposed to "Professional Presence", which I have used in the past.

Of course, both of these are largely interchangeable, but it just makes it easier to keep everything consistent. Also, I feel that the word "online" helps to put everything into context.

Post #5 - Existing Resources About Professional Online Presences

I thought that it would be useful to include links to existing resources, talks and papers relating to Professional Online Presences.

Now, although I consider myself one of the early adopters in this area, there are a lot of other people looking at tangential work on social media use. So, it's impossible to provide a comprehensive list or look at the different interpretations of what a "Professional Online Presence" is within the confines of this short project. But, I do hope that there will prove to be of interest to people looking to discover more about this field and who are wanting to explore this area with their students.

I am always available to assist with offering talks and professional development opportunities to staff, or presenting my own research in this field.

I also want to acknowledge Sue Beckingham's work in this area. Sue is a really champion of Professional Online Presences, and her approach greatly complements what I am doing. There are lots of interesting resources on Sue Beckingham's SlideShare channel.

Social Media Branding For Computing Professionals

These are the slides from a talk I delivered for the British Computer Society, looking at the work I do with students and how this can be used with professionals.

Developing Student Employability Through The Creation Of Online Professional Identitites

Slides from a Higher Education Workshop I delivered at the University of Salford.

Enhancing the Employability of Computing Students through a Professional Online Presence HEA Workshop

This was an interesting workshop, hosted at Birmingham City University, which I organised. This brought together lots of speakers with experience of different aspects of the whole Professional

Online Presences movement ([a useful review of the workshop from the Open University can be found here](#)).

Professional Presences For Academics HEA Workshop

Resources from a workshop I organised looking at how academics could enhance their own Professional Online Presence (excellent for demonstrating their own interest in the area to encourage students).

Using Professional Online Presences to Enhance Computing Student Employability

Paper from the Higher Education Academy STEM Conference 2014, reviewing how teaching about Professional Online Presences to students could be seen to improve their employability prospects ([copies of the slides from the talk can be viewed here](#)).

Teaching Students about Online Professionalism: Enhancing Student Employability Through Social Media

A book chapter I contributed to the "Cutting-Edge Technologies and Social Media Use in Higher Education" textbook looking at the benefits of Professional Online Presences and how students could construct their own.

A number of [posts on Professional Online Presences on my blog](#) may also be interest. Feel free to add to the discussion on any of them.

Post #6 - A Simple Process For Developing The Podcasts

Having now undertaken a lot of background reading about creating podcasts (most of it online), I've now decided on the process that I'm going to use to produce the podcasts in an efficient manner. This will hopefully end up with the podcasts available on iTunes so that they can be easily found and listened to.

I'll review the process at the end of production to see if I can simplify it. At this point, the process isn't intended as a full tutorial, but instead a summary to help me through compiling the Professional Online Presence podcasts. It also isn't the only way that they can be developed, but rather one which works within the time, equipment and budget I have available – and also my existing skill base.

Step One – Decide On The Theme And Topics For The Podcast

This is already done. Unusually, for a podcast series, this is a fixed length (eight podcasts).

Step Two – Develop The Content For Each Podcast

Again, the content has been predetermined by the existing resources. However, some review to check that the content will work in an audio form is still needed. I also intend to work with some additional notes.

Step Three – Record Each Podcast

I am using Camtasia Studio, which is the same software I use to create videos. I intend to have the PowerPoint slides open and my notes, although I will only keep the audio portion of the podcast.

Step Four – Edit The Podcasts

I intend to do minimal editing. After all, a podcast is rather like a live radio show, so there is no expectation of this being word perfect. I am not going to add music to the podcasts (which can create a "can of worms" in terms of copyright issues) or include guests. The resulting podcast will be saved as an MP3 file.

Step Five – Develop Podcast Graphics

To get the podcast listed on iTunes, a 1400 by 1400 JPEG file is needed. I will probably develop this using my limited graphics skills (although offers to do this for me are welcome). I will either use stock photography from a site such as rgbstock.com, or perhaps a backdrop of my own Professional Online Presences.

Step Six – Host The Podcasts

I will use my own server space to host the podcasts and link them within a WordPress installation using the [PodPress plugin](), which is recommended in a number of places. I am going to use a new WordPress installation for this, on a separate subfolder of the site. This will be solely to host the podcast feed (which I will publicise in different places). PodPress will produce what I am told is really an RSS feed, which can be submitted to iTunes.

Step Seven – Submit To iTunes

The end result, which I hope will be easily facilitated with the WordPress feed.

Step Eight – Publicise The Podcasts

These will go on the route web address on this site (http://professionalonlinepresence.com – although at the time of writing this post, there is nothing there). I've not decided exaclty what form that site will take yet. The main Changing The Learning Landscape project should be able to help with the publicity.

There is some overlap between the steps, as it wouldn't make sense to submit all eight podcasts in one go. So, some of the development will happen whilst the other podcasts are being developed.

I also don't expect that this will be as "plain sailing" as the simple process works out, but I'm used to working through technical challenges.

Post #7 - The Podcast Cover

Every podcast needs to have a cover photo to be submitted into iTunes. Here's the one that I came up with after a few hours on Paint.net.

It's not as eye-catching as many of them out there, but I think it suits the needs for this project.

The top half is a word cloud, made using one of my favourite resources, wordle.net.

The bottom half is a stock photo from rgbstock.com.

For the word cloud, I just took all the text that's been posted on this blog to date. Therefore, the word "professional" is separate to the other words in "Professional Online Presence", but in this case, I think it works.
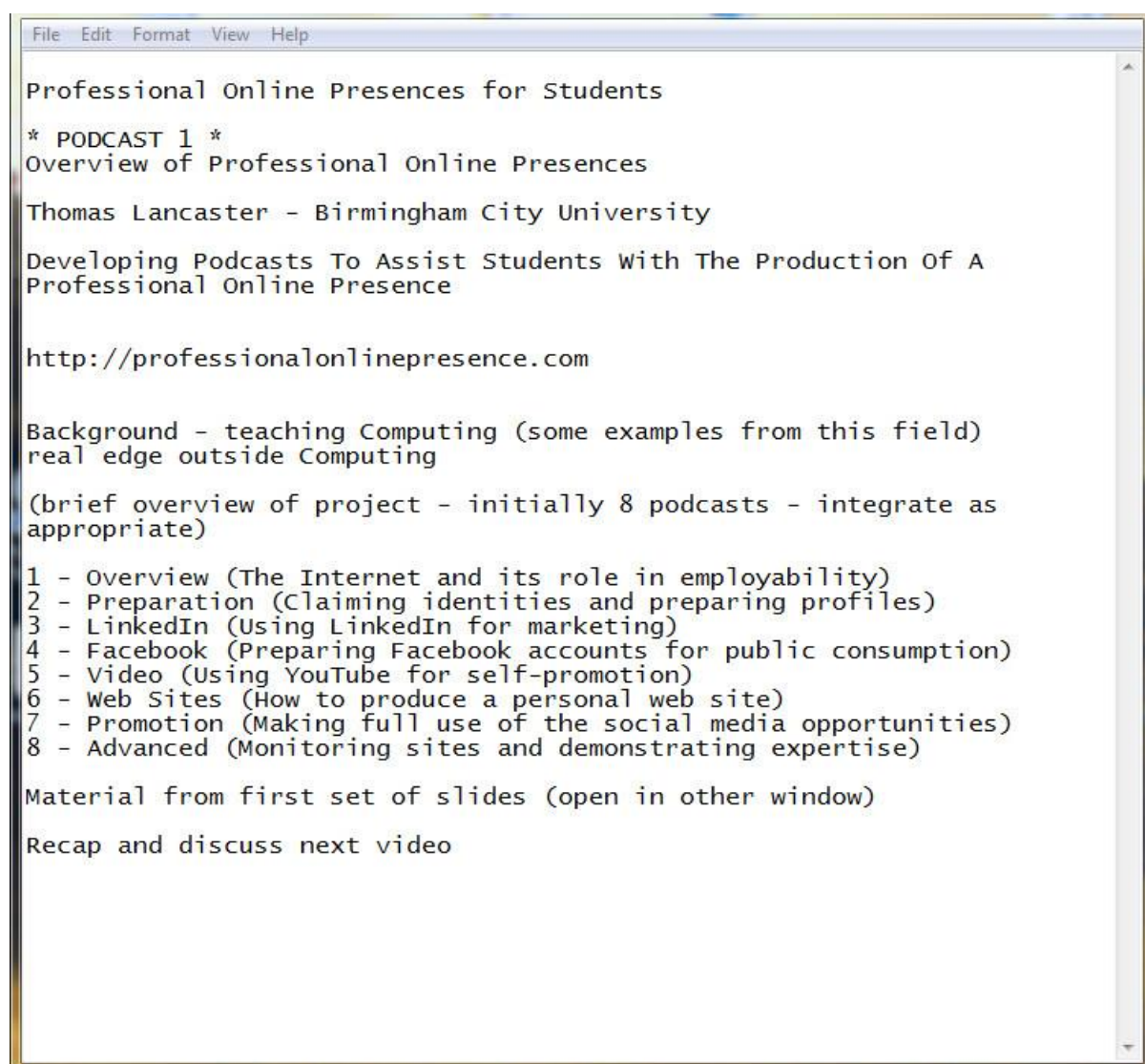
The cover image also looks okay when it's scaled down to icon size, which is needed for the PodPress WordPress plugin amongst other sites, which is good.

Post #8 - Producing The First Podcast In The Series

I wanted to provide an update about the process I used to record the first podcast.

I've found that I worked well with two monitors. The first monitor, I had the slides opened. The second monitor, the comments I'd made about where I wanted to talk about the podcast series as a whole and deviate from the original slides.

Here are the notes I made to work from on the second monitor.

```
File   Edit   Format   View   Help

Professional Online Presences for Students

* PODCAST 1 *
Overview of Professional Online Presences

Thomas Lancaster - Birmingham City University

Developing Podcasts To Assist Students With The Production Of A
Professional Online Presence


http://professionalonlinepresence.com


Background - teaching Computing (some examples from this field)
real edge outside Computing

(brief overview of project - initially 8 podcasts - integrate as
appropriate)

1 - Overview (The Internet and its role in employability)
2 - Preparation (Claiming identities and preparing profiles)
3 - LinkedIn (Using LinkedIn for marketing)
4 - Facebook (Preparing Facebook accounts for public consumption)
5 - Video (Using YouTube for self-promotion)
6 - Web Sites (How to produce a personal web site)
7 - Promotion (Making full use of the social media opportunities)
8 - Advanced (Monitoring sites and demonstrating expertise)

Material from first set of slides (open in other window)

Recap and discuss next video
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The recording used Camtasia, converted to an MP3 audio. It took me a few goes to get going how I wanted, but in the end, I went for a version created in a single take.

I didn't exactly stick to the order on the slides, or in the accompanying notes, but I found these to be an excellent pointer to make sure that everything necessary got included, and to make the repurposing as efficient as possible.

Two things to work on now. First of all, recording the other podcasts in the series, and second, getting everything to work with iTunes. I'll probably do these in parallel.

Post #9 - Submitting The Podcasts To iTunes
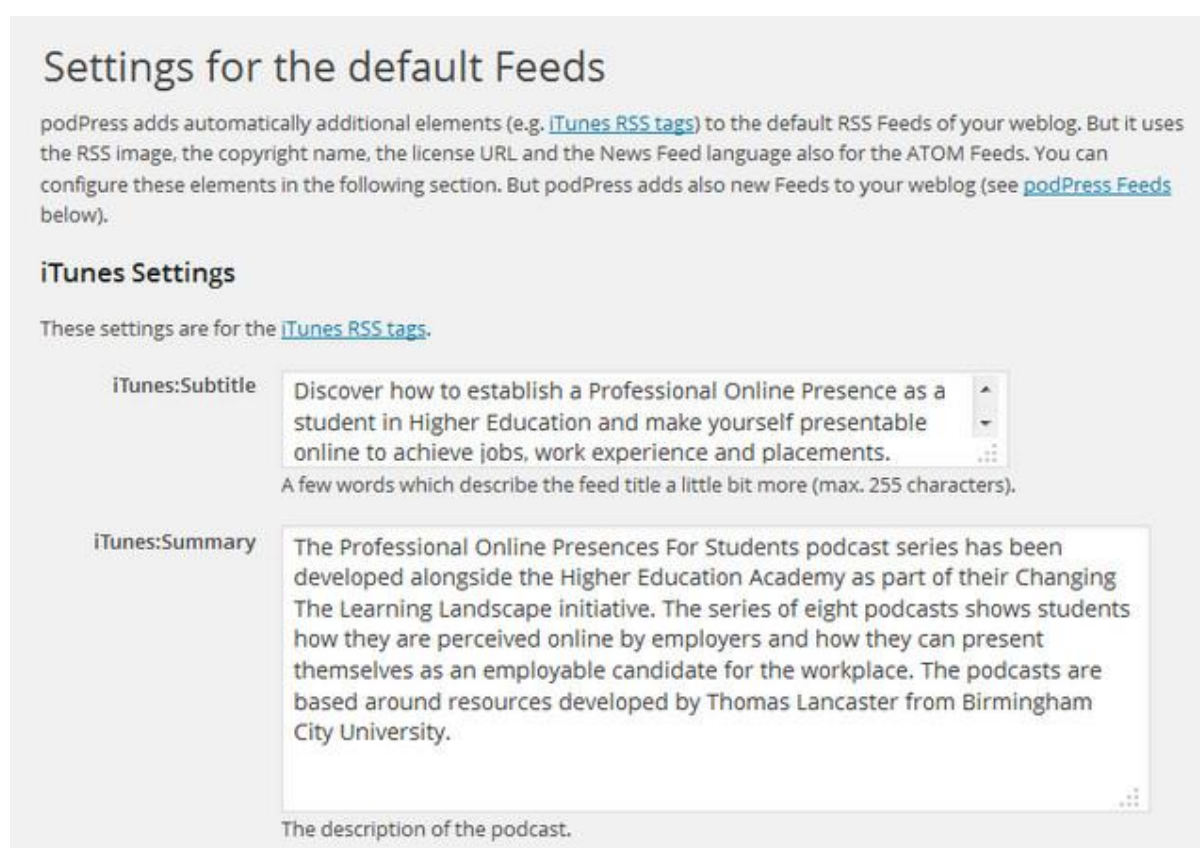
What a challenge!

I'm at the stage now with a full set of podcasts all recorded as MP3 files.

But it has taken a full day of technical challenges to get the feed (which currently contains the first podcast) submitted to iTunes.

Here's the process I've been through.

I set up another WordPress installation on the server, with a small amount of information, installed the usual plugins and spent quite a while on the server .htaccess to make this play nice with this current blog.

Then I installed podPress and created a post with my first podcast. Lots of settings to get right.

After that, I went to my existing iTunes account and tried to get it to accept my feed. Several of the feeds produced by podPress would not validate, and nothing would go through iTunes.

Went through lots of forum questions with people having their own set of problems.

Eventually got it working after moving around many settings and going for the most basic feed (the blog url with just /feed afterwards).

Now to wait and see if iTunes will accept the podcast, after which I will put the rest live.

I've decided not to link to the blog, as it's mainly there just for hosting and I have different plans for making resources for Professional Online Presences available through the main site.

At this stage, I can't recommend self-hosting and podPress as the best way to put up podcasts, as so much depends on technical expertise and seems server specific. And, I haven't even scratched the surface with this one (simple podcasts, no traffic and statistics recording etc).

On the positive side, I'll personally feel more comfortable setting things up if I do a follow-on series of podcasts, so this has been a useful (if frustrating) learning experience.
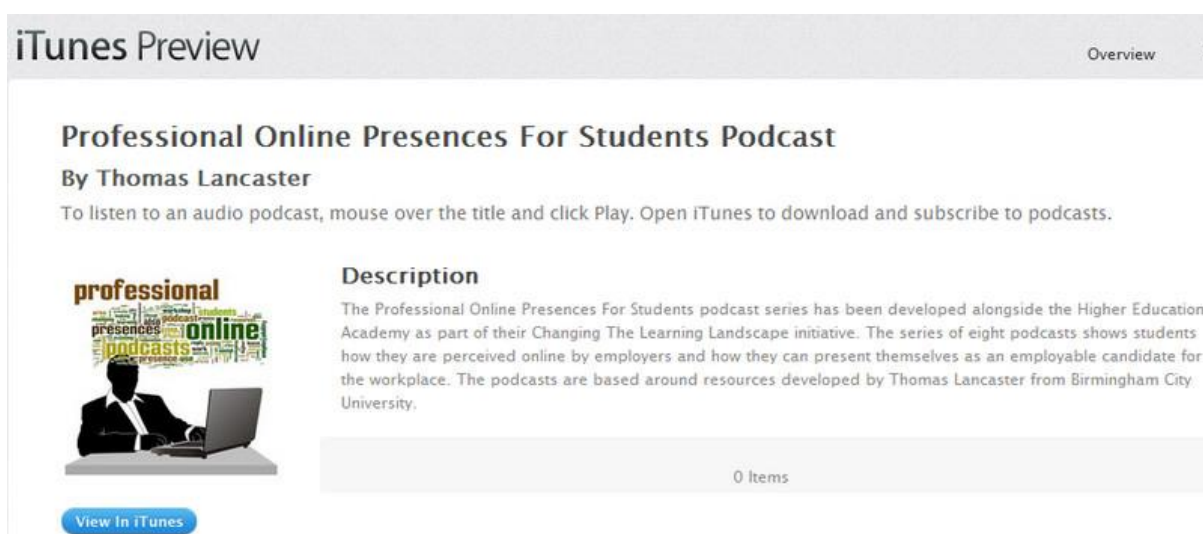
Post #10 - Podcasts Showing On iTunes

The podcast feed has been accepted and the podcasts are starting to show up iTunes.

Here's what a the page on iTunes looks like when you subscribe to the podcasts with most of them visible:
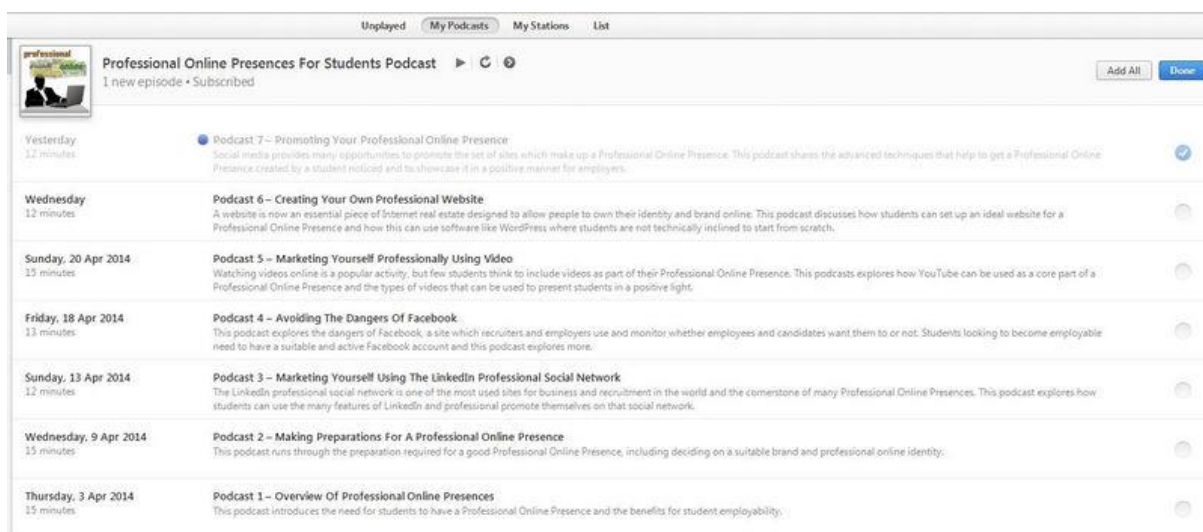
And here's the iTunes preview if you're thinking about subscribing.

It is currently showing the wrong number of episodes, but I understand that iTunes corrects itself over time.

The previous page, and the link to more information in iTunes itself, can be found at:

https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/professional-online-presences/id869563062

Post #11 - HEA Resources On Podcasting

One area which I think is worth some consideration at this stage in the CLL Project is the HEA's wider existing resources on podcasting. During this project, I've looked at many websites trying to grasp general ideas, but have deliberately not focused in particularly on academic resources.

I recently attended the Higher Education Academy STEM Conference, and there were several debates there about how lecture recordings could be provided to students. Podcasts were discussed as a method, but really this just meant an audio recording of a lecture.

Personally, I don't find that method particularly useful, since I feel that a podcast (or any form of audio training) should be produced exclusively for that medium. It also doesn't really work for my delivery style, as it's very rare that I give anything approaching a traditional lecture. My sessions tend to be in smaller groups and much more interactive.

One strength of recording lectures in this way that was discussed was that students noticed the imperfections and that helped them with their learning. For instance, they would attend a lecture, remember when a student had an outburst of coughing, and would recognise that in the recording, helping jog their memory.

Whether there is a psychological advantage would be an interesting area to explore further, but the general consensus of the academics in the room was that simple recordings of lectures are not the best way forward for most subjects.

I was also sent a link to a number of JISC resources on podcasting and associated topics, with particular mention of accessibility. There are certainly some interesting papers there.

I must confess that I haven't developed this series of podcasts with accessibility in mind from the start. One reason is that the information is all available in a visual format as well (the original PowerPoint slides), which act as an overview and summary. I certainly can see a benefit to having summaries alongside podcasts (if not, full transcripts) and that should be feasible for many types of podcasts, not just the simple one-person presentations liked I've produced.

An alternative view of accessibility presented in one of the papers is that these can be a bonus to students who need to review different materials. A recommendation is made for shorter podcasts, or longer lectures to be edited into chunks, which I think agrees with the ethos I've taken in my own recordings.

Some of the feedback from the papers suggests that students need a lot of reminding to listen to podcasts, even if these are produced to convey crucial information, such as feedback on assessments. They also stressed the need for them to be presented enthusiastically and with high quality audio. I hope I've managed to do that, and certainly plan to prominently position the podcasts in my own modules next year (although they will be treated as supplementary/review material – and they are not there to replace regular teaching).

Post #12 - Other Podcast Directories

I've just had a frustrating time trying to submit the podcast to directories other than iTunes.

Out of the ones suggested by podPress, only one was accepting links and that came up with a registration error.

There are lots of podcast directories out there, but I'm really not convinced that any of them are widely used. And certainly not worth a long trawl through to collect a few listeners each.

For this particular podcast series, I'm convinced that iTunes is the right directory, and that other people will find it through recommendations from the HEA and their lecturers. I'll better spend the time working on publicising the availability of the podcasts here and in iTunes myself.

Post #13 - Putting The Professional Online Presences Site Live

The [first version of the main site](#) is now live, containing information about Professional Online Presences in general, as well as links to the podcasts.

As usual, this wasn't totally plain sailing. I wanted to link to the individual podcasts in iTunes, but the only links I could find went to a summary page (and, for some reason the first podcast is missing, although it shows once you are "subscribed" to it). As a workaround, I've linked to the original audio files.

This is very much a first draft, so there's some information and links to resources along with the podcasts.

One thing I'd like to add is make the teaching resources previously developed for the HEA more visible. They're not available in a convenient format as of yet.

I'd also like to update the resources and add some other useful resources. Feel free to send me any that you think could be included. Likewise, some of my own older talks and resources aren't up on my SlideShare account, but could be included.

There's scope for some examples of Professional Online Presences as well (any students who I've taught want to volunteer for that)?

The whole site could be much more visual. This is just one of the WordPress themes out of the box. The theme has an annoying feature of adding hyphenation in some browsers (e.g. Firefox, but not Google Chrome) which I have to track down as well.

Finally, there's potential for a blog with commentary on the latest developments of Professional Online Presences.

I don't want to overcommit myself with this one, as I also have my main site and blog to maintain, my contract cheating site, and my contributions to the Birmingham City University blog. So, I'm more than happy with everything that is on here, as it's in a useable state, but of course, this could always be futher developed.

Next step is some more publicity, including a post on my main blog, and looking at any other sites that are available.

Still a few finishing touches to do to finish off this project properly. This includes the paperwork for the HEA and a consideration of digital literacy. I also want to put together a few general findings from the work. I also want to look into the potential for a poster, paper or some other forms of presentations as well.

Post #14 - Digital Poster

Here is a Digital Poster created to sum up the main results and findings from the project.

https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/lancaster-cll-posterpodcasts/35404808

Podcast Development

A blog detailing the development available at:

http://professionalonlinepresence.com/changingthelearninglandscape

The eight podcasts in MP3 format are available at:

http://professionalonlinepresence.com/podcasts

Podcasts also available on iTunes

1 – Overview Of Professional Online Presences	5 – Enhancing Professional Online Presences With Video
2 – Preparing For Professional Online Presences	6 – Development A Professional Online Presences As A Websites
3 – Using LinkedIn For Professional Online Presences	7 – Strategies For Promoting Professional Online Presences
4 – Using Facebook For Professional Online Presences	8 – Advanced Employability Tactics For Professional Online Presences

Higher Education Academy - Changing The Learning Landscape
GEN773 - Developing Podcasts To Assist Students With The Production Of An Online Professional Presence
Thomas Lancaster, Birmingham City University

@DrLancaster   http://ProfessionalOnlinePresence.com   Poster Slide 2 of 3

Podcast Lessons

Podcasts should be developed as a series of short audios (10 to 15) minutes.

Don't just audio record lectures and assume that they will be *"good enough"*. Repurposing and rerecording parts of existing lecture notes works for some subjects

Time needs to be allocated to produce podcasts to a high standard

Focus on creating podcasts using information that works in a non-visual format

Podcasts do not have to be perfect. So long as the sound quality is good, slight wording errors and corrections are fine

Audio recording is simple, but the technical challenge comes from making the podcasts available and getting them listed on iTunes

Main personal goal of the project was met . This was to develop podcasting skills, whilst also providing useful employability open educational resources for students

Higher Education Academy - Changing The Learning Landscape
GEN773 - Developing Podcasts To Assist Students With The Production Of An Online Professional Presence
Thomas Lancaster, Birmingham City University

@DrLancaster   http://ProfessionalOnlinePresence.com   Poster Slide 3 of 3

A number of areas which I feel also represent important lessons from the research are also included.

Post #15 - Video Version Of Project Findings

Here's a short video where I go into the information on the Electronic Poster in a bit more detail and discuss some of my project findings.

https://youtu.be/a9F7gkNTJBI?si=0j9srY8Vp0WMIsbn

I also talked about the findings more on my blog.