

# Podcasting 502

RSS Feed

If you are familiar with writing web pages, you know you can not type this code in a word processor. The resulting file will not work. You must use a text editor. Mac users can use Text Edit or your favorite text editor. I like BBedit and SKedit.

Ok, this section can be confusing. Add to this the fact that the xml (a programming language like HTML) RSS format is utterly unforgiving. If you make the smallest possible mistake, your RSS file will not validate and will not work. Be certain to check your completed RSS file in an RSS validator like <http://feedvalidator.org/>. It's free.

You can find additional support information about how to work with RSS and the iTunes store metatags in the Podcast section of the iTunes store presently associated with the link <http://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts/faq.html> and <http://www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts/techspecs.html> . And don't forget to read about the official RSS standard at this link: <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss> . These are the resources that I used to teach myself how to write and RSS feed file.

If you are a Mac user, iWeb will take care of this entire process for you! If you are the geek type like me and want to dig into the guts of the RSS file, take a look at Feeder, a little program that is available at <http://www.reinventedsoftware.com/> . This program is an excellent way to create your RSS file and learn what is going on in the process.

Below is the RSS code from the index.xml (feed) file for MabryOnline.org's Podcast Central as of this writing. I removed all of the items in the file except for one item, the video podcast: The Alamo book report. You can put many items, each item contains a podcast, in one RSS feed file. Again, for ease of understanding, here, in this example is only one item.

The bold black print should be replaced with your information. The URLs in this file should all be changed to relate to your content except for the ones where I specifically indicate not to change them. I would suggest clicking on the the links to see where they go. By comparing the information here to Podcast Central as listed in the iTunes Store at this address: <http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=73888013&s=143441> and also at <http://mabryonline.org/podcasts/> you can gain an understanding of where the iTunes metatags show up in the iTunes store and what other links relate to as well.

The code to the index.rss file begins below. Except for bold print and URLs, it must not change.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
```

*Do not change this URL.*

```
<rss xmlns:itunes="http://www.itunes.com/dtds/podcast-1.0.dtd" version="2.0">  
<channel>
```

*This code describes your entire podcast. Think of this as describing the whole CD.*

```
<title>Podcast Central</title>  
<link>http://mabryonline.org/podcasts/</link>  
<description>CHANGE_THIS_TEXT_TO_DESCRIBE_YOUR_PODCAST.</description>  
<generator>WHO_IS_GENERATING_THIS_FEED_FILE</generator>
```

*This code is standard. Do not change this URL. If you want to learn more than you may ever want to know about RSS, go to this link yourself.*

```
<docs>http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss</docs>
```

*I indicated that you don't edit this code. However, if your podcast is not in English, you would.*

```
<language>en-us</language>
```

```
<copyright>Copyright: WHO_OWNS_YOUR_COPYRIGHT</copyright>
```

*The format and accuracy of this code is critical. You can not alter the format at all in any way whatsoever, just the date and time. (This is why I use a feed generator! It always gets this right.)*

```
<pubDate>Wed, 14 Dec 2005 19:15:24 -0500</pubDate>  
<lastBuildDate>Wed, 14 Dec 2005 19:15:24 -0500</lastBuildDate>
```

```
<category>Education</category>  
<category>K-12</category>
```

*This is the image that will appear in the iTunes store and the link associated with the image. (In other words, clicking on the image will take you to this link.) The maximum height and width for this image are 144 x 144.*

```
<image>  
<url>http://mabryonline.org/images/podcast_central_rss.jpg</url>  
<title>Podcast Central</title>  
<link>http://mabryonline.org/podcasts/</link>  
<width>144</width>  
<height>144</height>  
<description>Podcast Central @ MabryOnline.org</description>  
</image>
```

*This information appears directly in the iTunes store.*

```
<itunes:author>MabryOnline.org</itunes:author>
```

```
<itunes:subtitle>A collection of podcasts for the students and parents at Mabry Middle School.</itunes:subtitle>
```

```
<itunes:summary>This collection of podcasts is produced by the students, teachers, and administration of Mabry Middle School to enhance communication among all of the stakeholders in our school community. We hope you enjoy keeping up with our school.</itunes:summary>
```

*These keywords will facilitate hitting your podcast when people search the podcast section of the iTunes store.*

```
<itunes:keywords>mabry middle school podcast central</itunes:keywords>
```

*Your podcast will have a red explicit label if this is set to yes.*

```
<itunes:explicit>no</itunes:explicit>
<itunes:image href="http://mabryonline.org/images/podcast\_central\_itunes.jpg"/>
<itunes:owner>
  <itunes:name>MabryOnline.org</itunes:name>
  <itunes:email>mabrypodcast@mac.com</itunes:email>
</itunes:owner>
```

*If this is set to yes, your podcast will not appear in the iTunes Store.*

```
<itunes:block>no</itunes:block>
```

```
<itunes:category text="Education">
  <itunes:category text="K-12"/>
</itunes:category>
```

*This item section is like a single track on a CD. Everything in this section of the code describes this particular item, not the entire podcast, which is like the whole CD. You can many items in a single RSS feed just as you would have several tracks on a CD.*

```
<item>
  <title>TITLE_OF_THIS_PODCAST_EPISODE_GOES_HERE</title>
```

*The link below is associated with the title above. If the user clicks the title above s/he will be taken to the link below. You would then want to use the link below to provide information or context about/for your podcast.*

```
<link>http://mabryonline.org/podcasts/archives/2005/12/the\_alamo\_book.html</link>
```

*Take extreme care with this section of the code. You may only replace the part that is bold.*

```
<description><![CDATA[<p>
In 2004 two eighth graders, Cameron and Matt, made this "book report." This project demonstrates how effectively students can convey their work through video.
</p><p>
```

*You can see from this code that I use a "button" to link to the podcast files. I use a different type of button for each type of podcast: mp3, enhanced, and video. I think this helps the user understand better what to do. The one included here is the video gif button.*

```
<a href="http://www.cobbk12.org/~mabry/podcast\_enclosures/The\_Alamo.m4v">
</a>
</p>]]></description>
```

Again, getting the date format below exactly right is completely essential. The information at this link (<http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss>) should assist you.

```
<pubDate>Wed, 14 Dec 2005 19:15:15 -0500</pubDate>
```

This enclosure is the actual podcast file. Each different type of podcast has a different file type. .m4v files have type="video/quicktime", .mp3 files have type="audio/mpeg", and .m4a files have type="audio/x-m4a". You can find the length of your file by getting information (Windows users think of this as properties) about the file. You may not use commas in the length or your feed will not validate and will not work.

```
<enclosure url="http://www.cobbk12.org/~mabry/podcast_enclosures/The Alamo.m4v" length="29613930" type="video/quicktime"/>
```

I must admit I don't know what this is, but I don't think it is required—but could be wrong about that. I suspect it is part of a permalink to the file.

```
<guid isPermaLink="false">the-alamo-book-report-vp</guid>
```

```
<itunes:author>Matt and Cameron</itunes:author>
```

```
<itunes:subtitle>A "book report" (video podcast) created in 2004 by then eighth graders Matt and Cameron.</itunes:subtitle>
```

A window appears with this information when the user clicks on the round "i" associated with the podcast in the iTunes store.

```
<itunes:summary>In 2004 two eighth graders, Cameron and Matt, made this "book report." This project demonstrates how effectively students can convey their work through video.</itunes:summary>
```

```
<itunes:keywords>book report alamo matt cameron</itunes:keywords>
```

```
<itunes:explicit>no</itunes:explicit>
```

The format of the time is also unforgiving. You must get it exactly right.

```
<itunes:duration>5:40</itunes:duration>
```

```
</item>
```

```
</channel>
```

```
</rss>
```

Below is the entire RSS file without my added comments about any lines of the code. Following the guidance above, change it to meet your needs, validate it (see page 1 of this document), name the file "index.xml" (without those quotation marks) and then upload it to your server. Check it out in Safari or an RSS aggregator like PulpFiction. If it works properly, tell all of your friends the URL of your RSS feed file (the index.xml) so they can subscribe to your podcasts! Then go to iTunes to submit your feed. Fingers crossed...

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
```

```
<rss xmlns:itunes="http://www.itunes.com/dtds/podcast-1.0.dtd" version="2.0">
```

```
<channel>
```

```
<title>Podcast Central</title>
```

```
<link>http://mabryonline.org/podcasts/</link>
```

```
<description>CHANGE_THIS_TEXT_TO_DESCRIBE_YOUR_PODCAST.</description>
```

```
<generator>WHO_IS_GENERATING_THIS_FEED_FILE</generator>
```

```

<docs>http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/rss</docs>
<language>en-us</language>
<copyright>Copyright: WHO_OWNS_YOUR_COPYRIGHT</copyright>
<pubDate>Wed, 14 Dec 2005 19:15:24 -0500</pubDate>
<lastBuildDate>Wed, 14 Dec 2005 19:15:24 -0500</lastBuildDate>
<category>Education</category>
<category>K-12</category>
<image>
  <url>http://mabryonline.org/images/podcast\_central\_rss.jpg</url>
  <title>Podcast Central</title>
  <link>http://mabryonline.org/podcasts/</link>
  <width>144</width>
  <height>144</height>
  <description>Podcast Central @ MabryOnline.org</description>
</image>
<itunes:author>MabryOnline.org</itunes:author>
<itunes:subtitle>A collection of podcasts for the students and parents at Mabry Middle School.</
itunes:subtitle>
  <itunes:summary>This collection of podcasts is produced by the students, teachers, and
administration of Mabry Middle School to enhance communication among all of the stakeholders in
our school community. We hope you enjoy keeping up with our school.</itunes:summary>
  <itunes:keywords>mabry middle school podcast central</itunes:keywords>
  <itunes:explicit>no</itunes:explicit>
  <itunes:image href="http://mabryonline.org/images/podcast\_central\_itunes.jpg" />
  <itunes:owner>
    <itunes:name>MabryOnline.org</itunes:name>
    <itunes:email>mabrypodcast@mac.com</itunes:email>
  </itunes:owner>
  <itunes:block>no</itunes:block>
  <itunes:category text="Education">
    <itunes:category text="K-12" />
  </itunes:category>
</item>
  <title>TITLE_OF_THIS_PODCAST_EPISODE_GOES_HERE</title>
  <link>http://mabryonline.org/podcasts/archives/2005/12/the\_alamo\_book.html</link>
  <description><![CDATA[<p>
In 2004 two eighth graders, Cameron and Matt, made this "book report." This project demonstrates
how effectively students can convey their work through video.
</p><p>
<a href="http://www.cobbk12.org/~mabry/podcast\_enclosures/The\_Alamo.m4v">
</a>
</p>]]></description>
  <pubDate>Wed, 14 Dec 2005 19:15:15 -0500</pubDate>
  <enclosure url="http://www.cobbk12.org/~mabry/podcast\_enclosures/The\_Alamo.m4v"
length="29613930" type="video/quicktime" />
  <guid isPermaLink="false">the-alamo-book-report-vp</guid>
  <itunes:author>Matt and Cameron</itunes:author>
  <itunes:subtitle>A "book report" (video podcast) created in 2004 by then eighth graders
Matt and Cameron.</itunes:subtitle>
  <itunes:summary>In 2004 two eighth graders, Cameron and Matt, made this "book
report." This project demonstrates how effectively students can convey their work through
video.</itunes:summary>

```

```
<itunes:keywords>book report alamo matt cameron</itunes:keywords>  
<itunes:explicit>no</itunes:explicit>  
<itunes:duration>5:40</itunes:duration>  
</item>  
</channel>  
</rss>
```

Important note: I have made the code you need to change bold as a convenient way to show you what to edit. When you save your RSS file (name it index.xml), you must save it through a text editor which should take out all formatting (the bold). If for some reason your code is bold, you have not used a text editor and your file will probably not work. In the post at [MabryOnline.org/Resources4Educators](http://MabryOnline.org/Resources4Educators), I gave several recommendations for text editors on the Mac. Be sure to use one of them. Text editors do not allow special text attributes in the computer code--such as bold. These special attributes would confuse a computer trying to read the code.