

Podcasts – Radio for the Internet?
By Peggy Gaffney

What is a podcast? Well they are in many ways similar to a radio program created by non-professionals to be shared with people of like interests. However, this isn't Fibber McGee & Molly. These are usually talk broadcasts that could be interviews, discussions, lectures, readings or just someone chatting about something that interests him.

So what value do they have to writers? How many of us can afford to take classes and continue our education on a daily basis? How many can afford the time to attend workshops to hear ideas in your field? If the answer is that you don't have time or the money, the podcast might provide an answer.

How do you get a podcast and what does it cost? There are many ways to receive podcasts and more growing every day with iPods, interactive cell phones and a fascinating collection of pricey gadgets. However, the cheapest and probably most practical way won't cost a thing.

On your computer you access the internet and go to the site for iTunes. You can follow the directions to download the iTunes program into your computer. Once this is done, you click on the iTunes Store and find the word podcasts and click on that. When it shows you some of the thousands of podcasts on every subject, go to the upper right hand corner and you'll find a search section. If you type in "writers, writing" up will come a long list of shows on these topics. Most of these are free and can be had by just clicking on the subscribe button and downloading them. Cost for most of them is nothing.

A sample of the shows available include: Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty tips for Better Writing, Writers on Writing, AmericanWriters.com – Creative Writing Podcast, I Should Be Writing, The Writing Show, Holly Lisle On Writing, WrimoRadio: The Official National Novel Writing Month Podcast, Writers Talking, Write Away: Podcast of the Texas A&M University Writing Center, "The Kissy Bits" Romance Writing Without Cooties, Odyssey: SF/F Writing Workshop Podcast, Scottish Writers' Podcast, Writers Voice, Behind the Black Mask: Mystery Writer Revealed, Tech Writers Voices: Podcasts on Technical Writing, Litopia Writers' Podcast, Writers in the Sky, Arthur Slade.com, Writing for Young Adults, Tips for Media Writers, Kelly Writers House Podcast, Mom Writers' Talk Radio, Little Red's Writing Hood, Confessions of a Struggling Writer, Mark Moxon - Travel Writer, Novel Writing with Brian Jepsen, Lit Law for Writers on the Go!, Femslash Writer's Corner, The Kwantien Writers' Guild and Writer's Voice.

Now these are only a sample of writing podcasts and each might have 20 to 50 episodes so the wealth of information is mind boggling. Also these are just ones on writing, there is also marketing, self publishing and speaking to say nothing of the podcasts on your specific genre. For example, I have been listening to a number of podcasts and one appealed to me to the point of my sending the moderator copies of my books along with the online information to point her to my website and a nice note about how much I enjoyed her weekly broadcasts. The next thing I know, she is reviewing (very favorably)

my books on her show and telling everyone to go to her webpage where my contact information will be listed. She has a listening audience of a half-million. I was delighted.

The best part of the podcast world for me is that these podcasts can play on my computer any time I want and they don't interfere with other programs. So as I work on sizing photos for my next book, I can at the same time listening to a half hour discussion of yarn and knitting or writing mysteries or marketing self published books.

So give podcasts a try. Listen and learn. Maybe some day you'll want to do your own. If you think you might, there are even podcasts telling you how to do that as well. It may not be Fibber McGee but its "radio" for a new age and something we can all enjoy.

Peggy Gaffney is the author of the knitting book series The Crafty Dog Knits Books whose books cover the dog breeds Samoyed, Labrador Retriever & Golden Retriever. Shes is also the designer of a collection of knitting patterns issued under the label Kanine Knits.