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Palm Beach Community College introduces podcasting

(Lake Worth, Fla. - Feb. 7, 2006) Palm Beach Community College has implemented new technology that allows students, faculty and staff to download interviews and lectures to their iPod, MP3 player or other audio device and listen to them on the go.

Called podcasting, the technology is becoming increasingly popular at colleges and universities across the country as they develop ways to make learning more convenient and keep up with the new generation of technologically savvy students.

"It's another tool that can be used by the faculty to engage students," said Jeannine Burgess, PBCC's director of instructional technology.

The term podcast comes from two words: Pod from iPod, the audio player made by Apple Computer and cast from broadcast. Podcasting is digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program made available for downloading to any computer or audio player that accepts the standard MP3 format, not just iPods.

PBCC began testing [podcasting](#) in January with an interview with Juan Williams, a senior correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR) and political analyst for Fox News Channel, who was the keynote speaker for the seventh annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Breakfast. The College plans to establish an online library of podcast interviews with other distinguished guest speakers and community leaders. Now, several faculty members are jumping on board and planning to use the technology in their classes. Podcasting also will be among the features at PBCC's faculty and staff Development Day March 30.

Adjunct Professor Sandy Oakley will begin using podcasting this term to fulfill a requirement that students in her online Spanish classes meet in person at least three times during the term. For students who work or live outside the county or state that will be difficult, she said. So, she's planning to use podcasting as an alternative for those students.

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Students must have access to a computer with a microphone and must download the free Audacity podcasting software. She will record questions or record a message in Spanish and they must record a response, upload it and send it to her.

"It just makes it a more convenient way for them to meet the requirement," she said. "That's what distance learning is all about, to make it convenient for everyone." And, she said podcasting has other benefits. "I think my assessment of students may be more accurate when I can listen to their podcast individually rather than in a class with many students."

Burgess learned about podcasting at the League for Innovation conference in Dallas last fall, and she came back to PBCC excited about introducing the technology here.

"More and more colleges and universities are jumping on board," she said. "We don't want it to replace the lectures. We want to supplement the lectures to engage the student and help students become more successful. I see so many ways we can use it."

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