

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT

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## Podcast Audio Resources for Conflict Studies

by Bill Warters

**A**cademics have become increasingly interested in the learning opportunities associated with downloadable audio files that can be automatically loaded onto iPods and other portable media players. The phenomenon is commonly known as podcasting.

As explained by the Wikipedia, "[Podcasting](#) is a term used to describe a collection of technologies for automatically distributing audio and video programs over the internet using a publisher/subscriber model. It differs from earlier online collections of audio or video material because it automatically transfers materials to the user's computer (and music player) for later consumption; it is one example of push technology. Podcasting enables independent producers to create self-published, syndicated "radio shows," and gives broadcast radio or television programs a new distribution method." (Hear more from the Wikipedia on podcasting in this [23-minute reading from LearnOutLoud](#) - click on the Mp3 symbol next to "Hear Sample" to get going)

In order to be a consumer of podcasts, there are some basic steps that are needed to get you going. The easiest way for iPod owners is to use iTunes to subscribe to podcasts using the iTunes built in podcast directory. More commonly, and for people without an iPod, the following steps are usually involved:

- You install a [podcast client](#) (Doppler, Ipodder, iPodderX,

Nimiq, NetNewsWire)

- You subscribe to a podcast feed (RSS)
- Every time a new audio file is published, your podcast client software will download it
- If you have a portable MP3 player (iPod, Zen, Rio), the files are automatically transferred to it and added to the podcast's playlist.
- You listen to the show/mix/music when and where you want.

There are a number of good sources of podcast ready content that may be of interest to people working in the conflict studies field.

## Conflict Learning Audio

[Conflict Learning Audio](#) is the podcasting site I've developed using some free software (Loudblog) running on my own server to host my own and my students podcasts on conflict-related topics. At this point it is produced on a time-permitting basis, with the most recent posting being a student conflict briefing developed for a class they are taking with me this semester.

## A World of Possibilities

Interesting audio is also available from the [A World of Possibilities](#) weekly syndicated radio program. This show is a project of the Mainstream Media Project, a nonprofit public education and strategic communications organization that uses the mainstream broadcast media to raise public awareness about new approaches to longstanding issues. A full archive of audio programs are available, including a group of shows categorized under the topic "[Conflict Resolution and Leadership](#)". Guests have included various well-known conflict resolution practitioners such as Mari Fitzduff (Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland), William Ury (Harvard Program on Negotiation), Laura Chasin (Public Conversations Project), Benjamin Barber (author of Strong Democracy) and Linda Lantieri (expert on Peacemaking in Schools). A World of Possibilities radio programs are available via a podcast feed if you use a podcast-friendly feed reader or podcatching client.

## Negotiating Tip of the Week Podcast

The [Negotiation Tips](#) podcast features Josh Weiss from the Harvard Negotiation project. He presents short overviews (5 minutes would be typical) of key negotiating concepts in an easy-going manner. The homepage for the podcast provides an online flash player if you want to listen to an individual episode, or you can subscribe to the podcast using your "podcatcher" of choice, including via a one-click add-me-to iTunes subscription button.

## Beyond Intractability "Audio Mash-ups"

Sometimes you find online audio of good quality, but it is not served up as a podcast (ie people can't subscribe to it) or it is not presented in an order or by selections that interest you. One interesting solution to this problem is the [WebJay](#) online playlist builder. While a bit puzzling at first to use, it is quite a flexible tool for arranging online audio content. To demonstrate how this might be used in our field, I quickly pulled together a conflict assessment primer audio "mash-up" that is available [here](#). You'll see a link in the upper right that provides the podcast feed for this collection. It was built using audio clips from the fine collection available at [Beyondintractability.org](#). While not yet served up as a podcast, the [BeyondIntractability audio content](#) has been categorized already thanks to the good work of Heidi and Guy Burgess and provides expert interviews adding up to over 100 hours of online audio (with transcripts) featuring stories from 70+ experts. Definetely worth investigating.

## War News Radio - College Students as Broadcasters

Swarthmore college students are now producing a regular podcast entitled [War News Radio](#). Their goal is to have War

News Radio fill the gaps in the media's coverage of the war in Iraq by airing new voices and perspectives, both personal and historical, in a balanced and in-depth manner. The show is archived so you can catch up on the show whenever you have time by subscribing to their blog newsfeed or visiting their site. Good content on a weekly basis.

## Directory of Higher Education Podcasts

For a broader view of the podcasting world as it relates to higher education, you will find links to many interesting shows within the iPodder.org directory under the [higher education category](#). More useful higher education-related information on podcasting is available at the [Educause site](#).

## Exploring the Possibilities

As you can see from this brief set of examples, the world of free learning content is really expanding with the growth of portable audio players. Another exciting development is the wide availability of free audio chat programs like [Skype](#) and [Gizmo](#) that permit you to talk to and record conversations with people around the world at no cost.

I believe conflict studies faculty, students, mediators and trainers of conflict skills are all in a good position to take advantage of these tools in their work. All it takes is some time to explore and a willingness to experiment. The results can be quite rewarding. While there is much more to be said about using podcasts in learning, my hope is that this piece will get you pointed in some useful directions.