

Disney Podcasts: The Magic On Your Time

by *Thomas Cackler, PassPorter Guest Contributor*

Imagine that tomorrow instead of listening to the same boring radio program during your commute to work, you could instead listen to a fun-filled romp of a show that deals with your one of your favorite topics.

No, a major conglomerate hasn't bought out your local radio station again. Welcome to the world of podcasts! With this recent phenomenon, you can keep up to date on your favorite subject in places and times you never thought possible. At the gym, around the house, or anywhere you go (if you have a portable media player), podcasting allows a fan is the ability to take news, opinions, and entertainment about their favorite topic wherever they go.

Let's start by clearing up a few common misconceptions about podcasts. The biggest misconception about podcasts is you need an iPod or an MP3 player. This is not the case! All you really need to start enjoying podcasts today is a computer, speakers, and a high-speed Internet connection. Since many of the show files are large, the high-speed connection will allow you to download the file in a reasonable time. While you can use some specialized software for being notified about and retrieving the podcasts, as long as you have the essential equipment, you are all set.

Perhaps the best way to think about podcasting is in terms of Internet radio. While streaming media on the web isn't new, podcasts allow you to download the information and listen to it at your convenience. If you want to know more about podcasting and how it came about, Wikipedia has a great summary on the topic. Likewise, Yahoo has an excellent information site at podcasts.yahoo.com. Finally, many books and articles exist describing the technical aspects of this new broadcasting medium. If you want to know more, a simple visit to your favorite search engine should start you in the right direction. However, since you don't need to know how it works to enjoy it, we'll skip the technical details for this article and instead focus on how you can enjoy these shows.

Now armed with your new familiarity of podcasting, you might wonder what type of information is out there. As you might imagine, the world of all things related to a certain Mouse and his friends have inspired a wide range of outstanding podcasts. Of note are the official podcasts of both Walt Disney World and the Disneyland Resort. These include

interviews with Imagineers, attraction previews and reviews, and often interviews with celebrities and their thoughts on the parks. For example, recent episodes of Walt Disney World -- Plugged In (the official podcast of Walt Disney World) featured interviews with lead Expedition Everest designer Joe Rhode. These two podcasts are great for getting a behind the scenes peek at the magic of Disney.

Additionally, dozens of unofficial or fan-based shows have sprung up across the World Wide Web. What do these other podcasts include? If you think of your favorite Disney Internet forum or e-mail list, a given podcast will most likely include similar things. News, rumors, reviews, previews, and trivia often make up the core content of these unofficial podcasts. Some even specialize in bringing you audio recorded on your favorite Disney attraction or from your favorite park show! Disney podcasts are a great way to stay plugged into the magic of the parks between visits.

It is important to remember, however, that these podcasts are much like listening to your local talk radio station where "the views expressed are those of the hosts, guests, and callers and not necessarily the views of the Walt Disney Company." Remember, since these are similar to an audio version of your favorite Internet forum, e-mail list or newsletter, the information presented is strictly up to the host of the show. Most are extremely good about properly distinguishing rumors from facts, but sometimes what the hosts say as fact on one podcast makes its way onto other shows and into the general Internet community. Just like anything else you might read online, your best bet is to verify the information before treating it like fact.

Now that you are interested, it is time to actually go out and find these shows. Finding new shows is relatively easy. A simple web search using terms like "Disney Podcast" or "Travel Podcasts" will bring up several hits. Likewise, visiting a podcast directory like Podcast Pickle, Podcasting News or PodZinger to name a few will have listings with a simple search under similar phrases. Another surefire way to find out about travel or Disney podcasts is to ask at your favorite Internet forum or e-mail list. iTunes and Yahoo have recently launched free podcasting services that do an excellent job of walking you through the entire process from finding the podcasts to downloading and how to play. Finally, a new blog has started featuring a directory of Disney Podcasts that will include both listings and additional tips on enjoying the shows. (Author's Note: This blog is something I have started to help my Disney friends keep up to speed on the podcasts.)

If you'd like to give a podcast a try, check out Episode 19 from WDWToday.com. which has an interview with Deb Wills and Debra

Martin Koma, authors of PassPorter's Walt Disney World For Your Special Needs guide.

As you can imagine, the world of podcasts opens up entirely new avenues for fans to find out more about their favorite topics. While the technology can be a bit intimidating, it is certainly worth the effort to discover this treasure trove of incredible entertainment. By spending a small amount of time investigating the sites mentioned here and discovering the new shows, you will find hours if not days of entertainment and information. Soon you will look back and discover that the hardest part of listening to podcasts isn't installing a piece of software or updating a feed, it's finding time in the day to listen to all the great content about the most magical places on earth.

About The Author: Thomas is a web site coordinator and freelance web designer. A veteran of five trips to Walt Disney World and one Disney Cruise since 2002, Thomas is a member of several online Disney communities including the PassPorter forums where he shares his knowledge and love of the Disney Parks with anyone who will listen. He lives in Iowa with his wife Julie and nephew Joey. Thomas is also the author of [PassPorter's Festivals and Celebrations at Walt Disney World book](#).

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