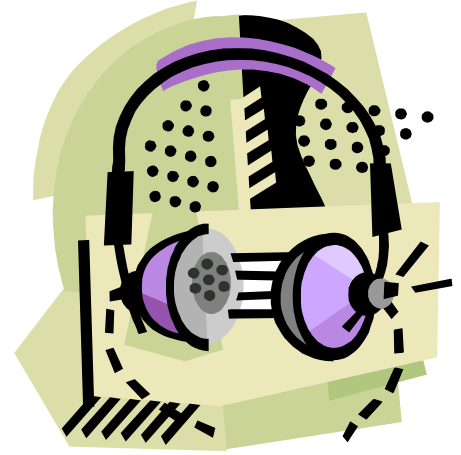


The ABCs of Authoring Online Listening Activities

Creating listening activities for Web-based learning involves both pedagogical and technological considerations. In some ways, technology is light years of our efforts to effectively craft them for teaching and learning purposes. Therefore, trying to blend both concerns is paramount for success. Here are some considerations in integrating technology with pedagogy.



1. **Identify Your Audience and Prepare Your Content:** The first step is to identify who you are targeting in preparing online content. You don't want to recreate something already done, nor do you want to prepare multimedia that can't be used easily by your audience due to limitations in Internet connectivity issues. Search the Internet first and see what is already out there.

With your audience in mind, additional issues you will need to consider include the types of exercises you create, the levels of your audience, and how you write the scenarios for the listening activities. Whatever direction you decide, follow the police of LESS is MORE. In other words, don't let the glitz of Webpage design overshadow your content.

2. **Recording and Editing:** Once you have carefully considered your audience and written your content, you need to record and edit your media files. As part of this process, you need to prepare your "recording" studio which might include a couple of microphones, shielded audio cables, recording software (e.g., audacity.sourceforge.net or nch.com.au/wavepad), and a homemade pop screen (for reducing pops and hisses in the recordings).
3. **Encoding Media Files:** Now, you need to encode the audio files into your preferred format which might depend on your audience and the player software they have installed on their computers. Two major formats include Windows Media™ (www.microsoft.com) and RealMedia™ (www.real.com). Other options include QuickTime™ and MP3. Keep in mind that audio prepared for high-speed connections will download like molasses through a straw on slow, dial-up connections.
4. **Putting Media Online:** If you are creating your own Website outside of your regular job, then you probably need to have your sited hosted by an independent company. In other words, you need a Web host which will allow you to put your files on one of their servers so people can have access to your Webpages. The challenge is finding one that will be here today AND tomorrow because these types of companies come and go. Consider a company you can call toll-free 24/7 with a complete money-back guarantee, so you can get help when problems arise.

Davis, R. S. (2002). How to build a multimedia website for language study. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 8(2).
URL: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Davis-MultimediaSite>

Multimedia Web Sites for Improving Listening Comprehension Skills

These sites represent a very small collection of multimedia resources on the Internet.

[media format | online use and/or downloadable | level]

ESL Oriented

- *Breaking English* - (news and commentaries)
<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com>
[MP3 | download | intermediate to advanced]
- *Daily ESL* – (everyday conversation topics)
<http://www.dailyesl.com>
[Win | online | high beginning to intermediate]
- *Encarta Dictionary* - (dictionary with audio)
<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/dictionaryhome.aspx>
[MP3 | online | all levels]
- *English Language Listening Lab Online* -
<http://www.ello.org>
[Flash, MP3 | online-download | beginning to advanced]
- *English Listening Lounge* – (unscripted interviews)
<http://www.englishlistening.com>
[Flash | online | beginning to advanced]
- *ESL Podcast* –
<http://www.eslpod.com>
[MP3 | download | intermediate to advanced]
- *Eviews* – <http://www.eviews.net> (interviews)
[MP3 | download | intermediate to advanced]
- *EZ Slang.com* – (daily conversation with idioms)
<http://www.ezslang.com>
[Win | online | intermediate to advanced]
- *Fonetiks* – (pronunciation)
<http://www.fonetiks.org>
- *Focus on English* – (conversational English)
<http://www.focusenglish.com>
[Real | online | beginning to advanced]
- *Learn a Song Podcast* – (folk songs)
<http://www.manythings.org/songs>
[Flash | online | beginning to intermediate]
- *Learning Resources* –(news stories)
<http://literacynet.org/cnnsf/home.html>
[Real | online | intermediate to advanced]
- *Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab* –
<http://www.esl-lab.com>
[Real / Win | online | all levels]
- *English Trailers* – (movie previews)
<http://www.english-trailers.com>
[QuickTime | online | intermediate to advanced]
- *Train Your Accent* – (accent reduction training)
<http://www.trainyouraccent.com>
[Win | online | intermediate to advanced]

General Audience

- *BBC World Service* -
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/>
[Real | online | beginning to advanced]
- *Digital Story Telling* -
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/digitalstorytelling>
[Real | online | beginning to advanced]
- *History And Politics Out Loud* – (famous speeches)
<http://www.hpol.org>
[Real | online | advanced]
- *Living on Earth* – (environmental issues)
<http://www.loe.org/>
[Real / MP3 | download | advanced]
- *National Geographic* -
<http://pulseplanet.nationalgeographic.com>
[Real / Win | online | beginning to advanced]
- *National Public Radio* – <http://npr.com>
[Real / Win | online | beginning to advanced]
- *Online NewsHour* -
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/newshour_index.html
[Real / Win | online | beginning to advanced]
- *Pulse of the Planet* – (nature and science)
<http://www.pulseplanet.com>
[MP3 | download | advanced]
- *Radio Diaries* - <http://www.radiodiaries.org>
[Real / MP3 | download | advanced]
- *Sound Portraits* – Documentaries of everyday people
<http://www.soundportraits.org>
[Real | online | intermediate to advanced]
- *Voice of America Special English* –
<http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/>
[Real / MP3 | download | advanced]

Music and Songs

- *National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Kids' Page* - <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/music.htm>
[midi | online | beginning – intermediate]
- *Yahoo! Launch* - www.launch.com
[Win | online | beginning to advanced]
 - Microsoft – <http://www.microsoft.com>
 - RealNetworks – <http://www.real.com>
 - Sanako – <http://www.sanako.com>