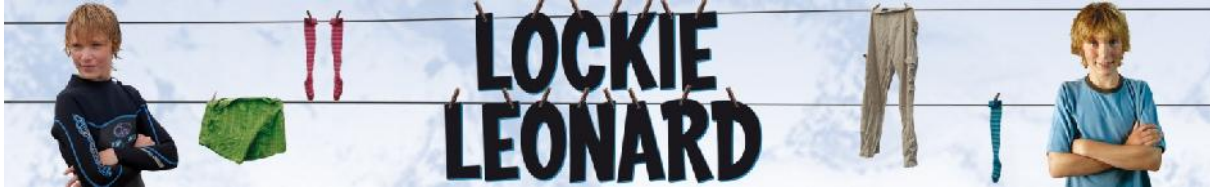## Worksheet 40: Podcasting



**Student name**: _____

**Teacher:** _____Class:_____

**Working individually or in small groups, you are to produce a series of short, Lockie Leonard podcasts.**

These could include such items as:
- interviews with characters from the series
- frequently asked questions answered
- info-bites about various issues raised in the series, for example, aspects of growing up and adolescence, mental health including depression, love and so on.
- monologues by characters other than Lockie Leonard

Record these digitally so that these could be uploaded to the school's website, MP3 players or mobile phones.

Sites that assist you to make a podcast:
- ABC: http://www.abc.net.au/rollercoaster/click/features/podcasts/default.htm
- The University of Sydney: How to create Podcast: http://www.usyd.edu.au/podcasts/create.shtml

An excerpt from **C NET**: http://www.cnet.com.au/software/music/0,239025669,240055727,00.htm

### Step 1: What is a podcast

*Podcasts are recordings distributed across the Internet as downloadable MP3 files. You don't have to have Apple's popular player to create or listen to podcasts. All you need to start your own is a microphone and software.*
*A podcast can be anything: your political views, mock interviews with your pets, or something practical like a "live" trade-show report to share with coworkers.*

### Step 2: Tools for podcasting

*Before you even get started, you should have the following:*
- *A headset with a noise-cancelling microphone*
- *A portable MP3 voice recorder*
- *Podcasting software (such as Audacity or iPodcast Producer)*

*Before you pick up the microphone, you should do some planning.*
- *Listen to some of the more popular podcasts to get a feel for style and content. A good place to start is Podcast Alley or iTunes.*
- *Write an outline to help you avoid long, awkward silences in your show.*

*Once you have a sense of what a good podcast should be, you can focus on hardware. Other than a computer, the only hardware you need is a microphone.*

*Many of the latest MP3 players have line-in jacks so that you can plug in an external microphone. Make sure yours can record at a decent sampling rate -- at least 32Kbps for MP3 and 44.1KHz for WAV.*

*Tip: If you're parked in front of a PC and don't have headphones plugged in, be sure to mute your speakers. Otherwise, feedback could ruin your recording.*

### Step 3: Podcast-recording software

*You can rely on programs such as iPodcast Creator to facilitate the podcasting process. You can use a program as simple as Windows' Sound Recorder to capture your podcast, but something a bit more sophisticated would be better. One popular podcast tool is Audacity, an open-source audio editor and recorder. It's available for Windows, Mac, and Linux, and it includes a number of useful features and plug-ins. Also you can use Industrial Audio Software's aptly named iPodcast Producer.*

*Tip: If you decide to use Audacity, download and install the LAME MP3 encoder so that you can save your recordings as MP3 files, the preferred format for podcasts.*

### Step 4: Record your podcast

*Technical glitches can ruin an otherwise perfect podcast, so start with a few sample recordings to test the software, adjust volume levels, and make sure everything works.*
*Try to keep your show casual, conversational, and continuous. Remember, if you make mistakes, you can always edit them out later.*

*Tip: Some audio-recording programs, such as iPodcast Producer, let you add intro music, sound effects, and other audio in real time. That's usually easier and less time-consuming than adding it later. It goes without saying that if you include music in your podcast, you should respect copyright laws.*

### Step 5: Edit and save podcasts

*After you've finished your show, save it as a WAV file. That will give you a "master" file to work from and a backup in case you have a problem exporting to MP3.*

*Now it's time to edit. In most cases, that means cutting out mistakes and long stretches of silence. In Audacity, as in most audio editors, you can find and remove silent patches easily. Just look for areas where the waveform becomes an almost straight line. Select that area (much the same way you select text in a word processor) and hit Delete. Ideally, you should now save your recording as an MP3 file, preferably using a 32Kbps to 64Kbps bit rate.*

*Tip: Make your podcast jazzier and more professional by adding loops, snippets of music used for everything from opening the show to introducing specific segments. Find thousands of freely available loops at Flash Kit.*

### Step 6: Publish your podcast

*Now it's time to get your podcast out there.*
*If you have access to an FTP server, just create a new folder and upload your MP3. If you don't have an FTP server, you'll need to find a site that will host your podcast. A good place to start is Ourmedia.org. For now, it's free and doesn't limit file bandwidth, but the site screens all podcasts and will remove any content it deems inappropriate.*

*The last thing you need to do is upload a podcast feed, an RSS file that includes a description of your podcast, a link to the corresponding MP3, and other information. You can create this file in a number of ways. The free ways are to do it yourself (you'll need to know XML, though), to use the free podcast RSS-feed generator at TD Scripts.com, or to use the generator available to Ourmedia users. Generators are also part of third-party software apps such as iPodcast Producer, as well as some fee-based hosting services.*