Hello there! It's me again, Jesse. Are you thinking of starting a podcast? If so, this guide should be a lot of help!

I've created three podcasts, all of which had very successful lives. That said, while I wrote the content and produced them, I do not deserve the credit for the success of the shows.

The Others, Mazie Meadows, and Cryptid Creatures would have never taken off without the help of a lot of personal mentors and podcasting experts, who made guides of their own.

This FREE guide is a condensed version of what I've learned through my experience, as well as a friendly nudge in the direction of other resources that could be helpful, resources that helped me.

I figured I would break this down into segments to make it a little easier to digest:

1. Why podcast?
2. Materials required.
3. The Process
4. Social Media
5. Boosting
6. Notes

All this said, keep in mind that an alarming amount has changed with podcast hosting since I released Creatures in 2016. FEAR NOT! If anything, the process is even easier. Free hosting cites like CASTBOX (the best) and SoundCloud allow you to host a show for FREE! It won't

be on iTunes, sadly, but it will be available to very large audiences without you having to pay a dime for hosting.

Without further ado, let's dive on in…

1) WHY PODCAST?

It's one question, but the answers are limitless. You can podcast for *you,* simply because it's something you want to do. You can past time for *others,* because you think you have a story worth telling or wisdom worth sharing. You can podcast because a professor is forcing you to, against your will, and you must do it to fulfill an assignment.

But, regardless of the reason, the most important thing is to have fun. If you have bundles of money to throw at the new hobby, then do it! By all means, go CRAZY! But, if not, keep in mind that you can podcast for very, very cheap. Start small, and then build up.

Best of all, podcasting gives you a voice. It's democratic, in some ways, because everybody has the chance to get heard and discovered (there's an anti-democratic argument that can be made about unpublished algorithms on iTunes and other hosting platforms, but we'll pass on this). Use the freedom of the internet and your ideas to make a big splash, and of course, enjoy the ride.

2) MATERIALS:

Podcasting can be very cheap or very expensive. However, no matter the size of your budget, you can probably create some sort of podcast.

Cryptid Creatures cost me about *drumroll* $50 and some time.

Here's what I used:

- **Blue Snowball Microphone ($30)**
- **Libsyn Podcast Hosting ($5 a month.)**
- **Bluehost Website Hosting ($10 a year for domain.)***
- **Audacity Program (Free download)**

(*Note that having a unique website for each podcast is only a requirement on some of the larger sites, such as iTunes. But now there are ways around that, even, such as using Libysn as a host and redirecting that to iTunes. I'm not sure how to do it, but I know it can be done.)

With The Others podcast I got a little more fancy, using the Rode Podcaster microphone, boom arm, and shock mount which cost about $400.

Also, instead of recording in my closet, I built a "sound booth." It is 6′ by 4′ and 8′ tall, and only cost about $150.

**Here's what I used for the DIY sound booth:**

- **9 Ten-foot PVC pipes (1″, schedule 40.)**
- **12 elbow joins of various dimensions (see diagram below.)**
- **PVC Pipe cutter, although a saw will work as well.**
- **A Grommet Kit (the brass-encased holes you can punch in material… I didn't know what they were beforehand.)**
- **6 Industrial size (72′″-80″ inch) moving blankets.**
- **A lamp for the inside, along with a table or whatever else you fancy.**

- **Bag of 100 9 inch zip ties.**

Here is the (rough) diagram and a picture from inside. Enjoy my wild artistic talent:
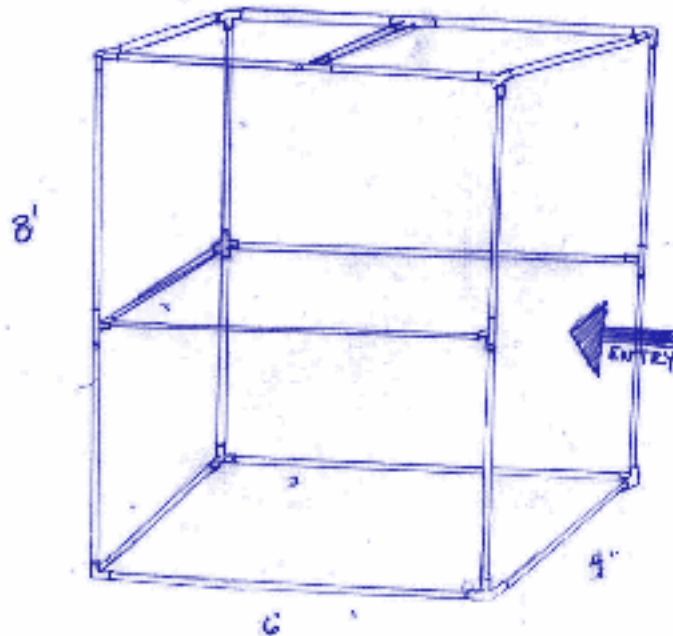
Basically, the booth is a PVC pipe frame with blankets draped over the top and hanging from the sides by zip-ties running through grommets. I know, I know, it's not the fanciest thing in the world. It even sounds silly,

but it is giving me great sound and, like I said, it also cost me about $150 dollars. If you're determined to have a booth, then this works great. Try comparing the price to the booths on Amazon (spoiler: they can cost thousands of dollars).

The other option, if you don't want to build your own booth or have a place to put it is very simple: use a closet. It's not perfect, but the hanging close work to absorb a lot of the reverb, and the audio will be pretty clean. Then use a "noise eraser" with audacity or another program, sample the ambient background, and erase that specific sound from the recording. Presto, a little editing magic and a closet recording can sound *nearly* as good as something done in a booth.

Recap: Podcasting can be inexpensive or very expensive, depending on your budget. Cryptid Creatures cost about $50 to produce. The Others cost right at $650. Other shows can cost *way* more.

3) THE PROCESS
Basically, here are my steps to making a fictional podcast to post on iTunes:

1. Come up with idea.
2. Write scripts.
3. Record an episode.
4. Edit the episode. (This can be several steps in itself.)
5. Upload website to an RSS feed (in my case, this was Libsyn.)
6. Enter the RSS feed url into your website's installed reader (a free widget.)

7. Uploaded podcast will appear on iTunes, and a lot of other podcast apps use the same crawlers as iTunes, so they will pick up your show almost immediately.

Obviously, with a nonfiction show, some of the concepts are the same, but there is less scripting and more research (usually). Use my example, but keep your unique project in mind. I'm only offering a loose model.

Unfortunately, that is a lot easier said than done. Thank good news for you all, however, is that there are a lot more technologically-savvy people on the internet that can help explain some of the wrinkles of podcasting. I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel. Instead I will send you to the best in the business.

For questions regarding creating a website on Bluehost, I recommend Michael Hyatt, who authored a post about setting up a self-hosted Wordpress blog (which will be a cheap host cite for your podcast and provide an online hub where listeners can connect with you and with each other) in 20 minutes. View it [HERE.](#) If you choose to go this route, this should be one of your first steps. But keep in mind that Wordpress is not the only viable option. I use Wix for www.jessehaynesauthor.com, and really like their product too! Setting up the RSS feed is just a tiny bit more complicated.

And equally helpful is Mr. Pat Flynn, host of Smart Passive Income. Pat put together a 6 video series of how to start a podcast using Libsyn and a Bluehost website, and this is the very same thing that I used to help launch the first of mine. [HERE](#) is his amazing guide, but don't forget about me after you see how clean and advanced it is. <3

4) SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is just as important to a podcast as actually having the podcast itself. At least if you want listeners (and what is the point of a podcast if nobody listens to it?).

Followers: There are a number of ways a podcaster can get followers, but the most important thing I can possibly think of is to not only HAVE a twitter account for the show, but also give it a SHOUT OUT at the end of every show. ("If you like the show, please follow me on twitter @titlehere to keep up with all the exciting updates.")

Having a base of loyal followers on twitter is crucial to having the show succeed. Word of mouth can help a podcast take off! You can always tell your friends about the show and have them listen, but Twitter is a powerful tool because it is so far reaching: a message can be seen all around the world by pressing a button. If you have a fan base of listeners from across the map, word of mouth is more likely to spread a consistent following.

Still, that leaves the question of how to get followers beyond just giving a social media shout out at the end of the show.There are a couple things that have worked for me.

The first is being a "twitter tramp." It's kind of like the name suggests–you follow anybody and everybody who might be interested in the show. It's not all that efficient, but it can be effective. It's all about niche audiences and finding the people who will be interested in what you are (not) selling. With Cryptid Creatures, for instance, I was targeting people interested in cryptozoology. To find people to follow I would search terms like "Crypt" or "Sasquatch" on twitter and follow

people who tweeted about said keywords. About 1 out of every 4 people I followed this way followed me back (I repeat, not efficient).

Another way to find people is to target a podcast that already exists in a niche similar to yours. For Cryptid Creatures, I used Aaron Manke's "Lore." Every day for a month I would follow the new followers on Lore, which was usually about 100-150 people, and about 1 out of every 3 followed me back. Maybe this is poaching, but it proved to be more effective. Those people were already podcast listeners, and not only that, but listeners who were into the same kind of show, so they liked my show as well. Many began to tweet about it, and that's how Creatures went from 300 downloads and episode to 5K downloads an episode in a month's time.

The other way to get followers that proved very effective is something I tried with The Others. I bought 50 postcards on vistaprint.com with the podcast logo on the front and a short message on the back. ("Thanks for the support. It means a lot… etc.) I signed them, and my voice actor did as well.

During the release of the seven episodes, I would run frequent contests on social media. "Retweet this tweet to win a special, autographed postcard!" "Tag a friend in the comments who might like this show to win." Something like that. And I would be sure to have a direct url to the episode in the tweet as well. People love free stuff, and the retweets spread like wildfire. It drew a lot of interest to the show, and between the postcard stamp and expense of printing the cards, I spent about $0.40 per price, but the tweets were getting literally thousands of views, so the 40 cents-per-tweet were worth it. Considering the attention it gained the

show and that most of the recipients left an iTunes review, it was definitely money well spent.

5) BOOSTING

Again, social media marketing can be a HUGE TOOL! It depends on the site you work with and the subject of your show, but I used social media marketing with The Others. As a trial run, I used the same funds on first Twitter and then Facebook. The impressions and interactions are different between the two cites, but I tried to compile the overall results below to share.

First week of marketing:

- Platform: Twitter
- Funds used: $15.
- Listeners before (Ep. 3): 24,220
- Listeners after (Ep 4): 27,831
- Percent Increased: 14%

First week of marketing:

- Platform: Facebook
- Funds used: $15.
- Listeners before (Ep. 4): 27,831
- Listeners after (Ep 5): 33,981.
- Percent Increased: 22%

Assessment: From episode to episode, I was averaging about a 10% increase, so if you factor that in, then Twitter boosted it an additional 4% and Facebook was a 12% increase.

For just $15 dollars, that is a reasonably good increase in thousands of listeners, and Facebook made it much easier to target an audience. (For example, I set it to program males from age 18-35 who listen to podcasts and interact with adds. Twitter is not that specific.)

Winner: Facebook marketing, but narrowly. This surprised me, since Twitter seemed to draw a lot more followers.

6) NOTES:

Podcasters, in general, are a helpful breed of people. If you are stuck or want to know the best way to tackle a project, just join an online forum of community (Facebook has a great one). It might be flooded with people who are getting 30 downloads a show, BUT those people know about audio nonetheless. They can troubleshoot most problems and offer good ideas. The hardest part is wading through the information overload and trying to select the best pieces of info, but if you can handle that challenge then it will be a tremendously helpful resource.

Also, the first 24 hours of the podcast are vitally important. For iTunes and the other hosts to find the show and start supporting it (referring to the charts algorithm), the show needs to get as many downloads and reviews as possible. That being said, this is where you get to be a "horrible person." Email/text/facebook all your friends. Send them a link and a plea for a review–trying to sound as not desperate as possible, of course–and kindly ask them to help. Many of them will. Most probably won't. But if you can get 30 reviews out of 300 friends, it will be well worth your time. Trust me.

And now…

THANKS!

I mean it. If you've made it this far, you're either invested or you're crazy. Either way, I hope this has helped you come up with a better feel of what it might take to start a show.

Like I said, this way isn't the only way. It might not even be the best way, depending on what you're after. It is, however, a very good way, and I know from experience that it is tried and true.

If you start on the show, please feel free to email me at jessehayensauthor@gmail.com with any questions or concerns. I will be thrilled to help.

Thanks for your time, and good luck with your podcasting future!

- **JESSE HAYNES**