

# Case Study

Oakington Manor Foundation and  
St Mary Magdalen's RC Junior Schools



## Introduction

*How Oakington Manor Foundation and St Mary Magdalen's RC Junior Schools have been working collaboratively to introduce podcasting into lessons particularly in conjunction with Oak Mag Radio Network (OMRN), the schools' joint online radio station project. Benefits include:*

- *Increased pupil motivation*
- *Personalisation of learning*
- *Improved self-esteem*
- *Improved speaking and listening skills*



## Working together to create a voice

Oakington Manor Foundation School and St Mary Magdalen's RC Junior School are both based in the London Borough of Brent and, between them, educate in the region of 1,040 pupils. Over the past five years, two enthusiastic and dedicated teachers have been working closely together to bring new technologies into their respective schools. Their latest project, Oak Mag Radio Network is an online radio station designed to allow pupils to express opinions and showcase creativity through this highly effective medium. Now, working with Softease, Oakington Manor and St Mary Magdalen's have been able to incorporate a new technology into their classrooms; podcasting.

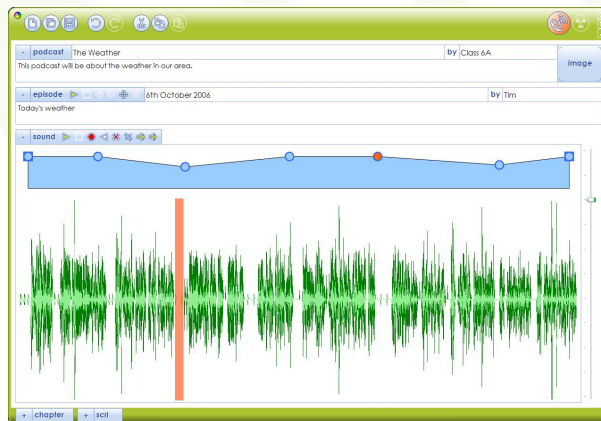
Podcasts are simply sound files that are made in the same way as radio programmes. What makes a podcast different is that it can be automatically downloaded to your computer and then loaded onto your MP3 player without you having to do anything except connect the two together. This is easy and very



convenient. It keeps an eye on requested programmes and goes back to look for updates regularly so that you don't miss episodes of your favourites.

Podium is Softease's latest product designed to enable students of any age to create, edit and publish podcasts from one simple interface. Ophelia Vanderpuye at Oakington Manor Foundation School and Eneas McNulty at St Mary Magdalen's RC Junior have been working together to introduce Podium into their respective schools and have, so far, seen some amazing results.

## The importance of technology in schools



*"In a fast moving, forever changing world, it is crucial for children to be given access to, and embrace, the latest in new technologies," begins Ophelia. "Schools provide a safe and controlled environment in which to introduce new concepts of working and learning and, as well as this, school involvement is imperative to make sure that new technologies are right for education."*

Ophelia and Eneas had been researching the possibility of establishing podcasting as part of their lessons, particularly to support and enhance Oak Mag Radio Network, but had found that available applications were unsuitable for an educational environment.

Eneas explains, *"We had heard of podcasting and had been talking about how to integrate it into the curriculum, but most of the software available was not appropriate for the age groups we work with and didn't support joint projects. With other applications, we would have to do a lot of the work instead of allowing the children to run free with it, making it too hard for us to teach and too much for the children to learn."*



Having worked with Softease in the past, Ophelia and Eneas were delighted when approached by the company to test its latest software application, Podium, due to be launched in January 2007.

Eneas continues, *“As we had been discussing the concept of podcasting for a while and how it would fit in to the curriculum, we were delighted to hear about Podium and jumped at the chance of being one of the first few establishments to use it.”*

*“Podcasting allows children to have a voice and takes them beyond being just consumers to becoming digital content producers. We had this fantastic radio station set up and wanted to take things a step further by enabling students to use this medium to a fuller advantage.”*

The first step when taking part in the Podium trials was to find out what the children wanted to gain. Ophelia explains, *“We got a group of about 50 pupils from both schools and asked them from the outset what we should be using this software for. We discussed and explored numerous opportunities with a view to creating an independent and confident group of podcasters.”*

### **‘A real motivator’**

With Podium in place and a group of enthusiastic students raring to go, Ophelia and Eneas set about guiding and encouraging usage of the software to create entertaining and engaging content for the radio station.



*“We watched Podium turn into a real motivator for the group,”* comments Eneas. *“The kids went wild creating interviews, reviews, news, music, poems and stories. Not only this, but by using the Internet as a medium through which to broadcast to the wider world, they were also becoming aware of what is acceptable and how to engage with different audiences.”*

*“We are really proud of what the children have achieved in such a relatively short space of time,”* comments Ophelia. *“We have seen them create, produce and publish material to an exceptional standard. Music especially has been fantastic because they have been creating and publishing their own, an activity which has proved to be particularly popular.”*

*“Since Podium has been introduced, we have been bombarded by children of all ages and abilities who actually want to participate in every single way and they are never short of ideas! Podium has enabled us to offer the children a blank canvas and we just sit back and watch in amazement as they paint it! It is so easy to use and with all technologies, it never ceases to amaze us how children take these things in their stride. No one has struggled using the software and after just one or two demonstrations from Eneas and myself, they have embraced it wholeheartedly,”* Ophelia continues.

## **Parental involvement**

Not only have the pupils of Oakington Manor and St Mary Magdalen’s been making use of podcasting, they have also been getting parents involved with extremely positive results. During a recent school sports day at Oakington Manor, children interviewed parents on their views of the day’s events. *“Parents are pleased that their children are developing social interaction and interviewing techniques, as well as discovering new talents,”* adds Ophelia. *“They have since been offering professional advice or contacts that work in broadcasting who will be able to help us improve and expand the station.”*



## **The future**

Looking forward, Ophelia and Eneas see podcasting becoming a vital tool for education with endless possibilities for enhancing the curriculum and encouraging sharing of resources.

Eneas comments, *“A lot of teachers don’t quite understand the concept of podcasting at the moment, but as soon as people begin to imagine the potential for this great new technology in education then I think we will see a big leap in creativity from schools across the country.”*

And Ophelia has one final piece of advice for teachers thinking of introducing podcasting into their lessons; *“Go for it! Go for it but be prepared for the enthusiasm. Don’t plan for what you think the class should be learning either, guide them and then sit back and watch in amazement!”*

[www.podiumpodcasting.com](http://www.podiumpodcasting.com)

