

Interactive Podcasting and the Future of Internet Television

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“Interactive Podcasting” is a term that is yet to be uttered by the podcast masses. However, in its infant stages it poses a direct threat to the special features market of DVD’s, and as it grows, it will certainly revolutionize the way we view television forever.

What is “Interactive Podcasting” you may be asking.

In an article I wrote a few months back I made this statement,

“Podcasting in my opinion is the genesis of Video Internet Technology. That is, the merging of what we know as the “internet” and current broadcast, cable or satellite programming. It has long been discussed that the internet and television would one day be one in the same. But there has not been much talk into how this transition, into a new future of “Informative Entertainment” or “Intelligent Programming” will develop.

Video podcasting has opened the floodgates for internet television to directly compete with traditional broadcast television. Over the next few years, companies like Microsoft and others who have already introduced home T.V. set-top boxes, which will stream internet feeds directly to televisions in your home. This is the birth of home internet television in its purest form.

Everyone owns a DVD or two, right? If not, you have at least watched one, I hope. Now, when you put a DVD into the machine and turn it on, it takes you to a menu screen. This menu screen gives you options to choose from, such as scenes, extras, director’s cut and so on. These extras are huge draws for DVD sales, like Shrek, Star Wars, etc. The reason they are a big success, is because they put the power of choice in the hand of the user. Whatever your choice may be, the DVD will follow, and execute.

So what if podcasting had the ability to implement “user options”? What if you were watching a Video Podcast, and have the ability to choose different features of that podcast by simply placing your cursor over the screen and choosing your option. What if you had the ability to alter and control video, with the same user applicability that you can on a webpage or search engine.

Podcasting has just ventured into the video phase, where everyone from amateur producers to billion dollar media companies are scrambling to figure out how to make this medium useful, and of course, profitable. So as the medium evolves, the user will demand more from the industry, and a response will be absolutely necessary, in order to make digital media as viable and powerful as a DVD and VHS tapes once were.

The response society will need, is to make digital content as interactive as a physical product would be and then some.

Because what good is the new “Pirates of The Caribbean Movie” being delivered to your home set-top media device, if you can’t choose to watch how they produced the new spectacular sword-fighting scene you heard about?

Right now podcasting is the first step in the direction of internet television, it has opened the door for subscription based technology to thrive on the internet. And that is the birth of internet cable television in its purest form. So as the podcast masses start to grow into the hundreds of thousands and millions of viewers per podcast show, the industry will start to add user options to its shows, and these options will be interactive in their nature.

For example, let’s say you are watching a popular video podcast like What I Want Fitness (<http://www.WhatIWantFitness.com>). This show features personal training advice from an instructor, and during the session you are watching, you see a particular exercise that you really liked, and would like to see more variations of. So what if you could take your mouse and click on the trainer’s bicep, and as you did that, the screen would open a list of bicep exercise shows that are available, as well as text on the bicep muscle structure. You could then instantly transition to a new bicep exercise, or maybe click on the text to learn a little more about the muscle you are training.

Now this is a very simple example, but very true to the power of interactive podcasting, and eventually interactive iTV. Podcast shows that start implementing these features will attract a huge viewer response ratio, where a show will then be able to alter its programming in direct relation to the data and feedback it is receiving from its viewers. This will only make programming better in the future. If 75% of the viewers are choosing to look at resistance related exercises, then the show will be able to get that data from web statistical information, and implement the changes to serve their audience better on the next show.

As this power is implemented by the major media conglomerates of the world, internet television will take off, and the merge of the television and the internet, will have occurred.

You see, until practical applicability of interactive programming is made prominent, internet television will not see its true potential. But once it does catch on, Interactive Podcasting will be seen as the birth of this revolution in media delivery.

Now, if we could just get the browsers to keep up and give us the support we need in the xhtml level.

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