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## Technology & You: Listening for Listings via Podcasts



Even people who've heard about podcasting might think it's only for listening to music or maybe a popular radio show. But Miami Beach sales associate Zahara Mossman uses podcasts to send audio messages about properties to real estate buyers. It's cutting-edge, and Mossman may be one of the first real estate professionals in Florida to use podcasting.

"If you can download a song onto your iPod or any other playing device, you can download a listing," says Mossman, owner of Zahara Properties, LLC, a division of Beachfront Realty. Mossman won't reveal what it costs her to be on the cutting edge of technology, but believes the investment will pay off. "It's

### Mossman's Tools

**Cell Phone:** Samsung Palm Phone  
**Desktop:** Dell  
**Digital Camera:** Olympus  
**Laptop:** HP  
**PDA:** Palm Pilot  
**Software:** Microsoft Office (Outlook, Word, PowerPoint)

### 4 PODCASTING PROGRAMS

1. [Audacity 1.2.3](#), Audacity Developer Team — free for download (Windows, Macintosh or Linux);
2. [ePodcast Producer](#), Industrial Audio Software — \$249.95;
3. [FeedForAll 1.0](#), NotePage Inc. — \$39.95; (781) 829-0500;
4. [WebPod Studio](#), Lionhardt Technologies — from \$89.95;

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### Heard on the Wires

"When people ask [if] the housing "bubble" is ready to burst, my answer is "Yes." There's a buying frenzy all over Florida, especially in the south, where tiny cottages are selling for \$300,000-plus, and waterfront condos are going for \$700,000 to \$1 million."

### Lee Carlson

Charles Rutenberg  
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costing me a pretty penny, but in the long run I know it will be worth it — it already is. I'm getting referrals like you wouldn't believe; it's incredible."

*Editor's Note: Visit <http://www.CNET.com>, <http://www.PCMag.com> and <http://www.podcastingnews.com> for additional software selections.*

Licensed since late in 2004, Mossman says she closed \$7 million in sales during her first seven months in the business and has \$20 million in the pipeline, waiting to close or in negotiations.

Here's how she podcasts and how she's leveraging the technology to further her business.

### **1. Capturing "Podders"**

Subscribing to automatic Internet feeds to get news or the latest postings on favorite Web sites is not new. But now these really simple syndication (RSS) technologies allow multimedia feeds of all types of files — including Mossman's MP3 audio files — over the Internet. Using software such as iTunes (available free at <http://www.Apple.com> and compatible with PC Windows and MAC OS machines), podders search the iTunes directory for audio file providers like Mossman. Mossman also offers ways home hunters can subscribe on her Web sites, <http://www.zaharaproperties.com> and <http://www.podcastrealty.com>.

Each time Mossman adds a new listing, her podders are sent an MP3 audio file about the listing. (Note: Podcasting is an emerging technology with limited industry experience and standards. Users who receive files from unknown sources may risk exposure to malicious software.)

Of course, visitors to her Web sites can click to listen to the same audio files about listings. Mossman gets up to 50 downloads a day from her main site, [www.podcastrealty.com](http://www.podcastrealty.com), alone. She says they are worth more than just a "hit" because visitors actually have to click on a link at the site, which takes them to the podcast download page.

### **2. Podcast New Listings**

When Mossman gets a new listing, she telephones an automated robot program, known as a bot, and describes the listing property as if she were having a conversation about it over the phone with an interested buyer. In each of her podcasts, she announces her name, the city she's podcasting from and her company name, and then describes the property and all of its amenities.

When she's finished, the bot automatically uploads the recording as MP3 files to her Web logs (blogs) at her Web sites. The RSS technology takes over and sends the latest podcast to her subscribers.

### 3. Buyers' Eyes and Ears

"Now, [buyers] don't even have to be at the property in order to see and learn all about it. We are their eyes and ears," she says. "If you [the buyer] are in Beverly Hills, for example, and you want to purchase real estate in the South Florida area, we go to the property, take digital photos or virtual tours of it while [recording] an honest description of what we are looking at as we walk through it. Then, we place our podcast description along with the digital photos or video on a private [Web] page for your eyes only."

### 4. Enhanced Listing Presentations

Mossman says podcasts add an extra layer of credibility to the marketing services she offers. "The first thing I do [at listing presentations] is explain what I can do for clients — what type of marketing I'll be using and who we will present the property to," she says.

"Next, I would obviously put the listing on the podcast site and some of my hundreds of connected blogs. I also own thousands of domain names."

### 5. Broadcasting the Idea

Mossman hopes her Web site will soon be able to provide consumers with podcast listing descriptions from local real estate sales associates in every city and state — even globally.

"I'm creating the directory for other podcast Realtors to podcast their local listings on my site," she says. "I am creating the database necessary to provide this service. You won't believe the amount of phone calls and requests that are coming in, not only from agents, but from developers and buyers from around the world."

The downside is that if the server of one of the Web hosting companies she uses goes down, then her business is down. "I have no control of that whatsoever. One time it was down for two days, and it made me very nervous, but it does get fixed."

"I definitely think it's been one of the best investments I've made," says Mossman. But always on the lookout for ways to adapt cutting-edge technology for her own use, she is also working on a newer technology called a "vlog" (video log). "It will be the next step — an explosive combination of digital photography or virtual tours with easy access to information. If you can envision it, you can make it happen," she says.

*This column, designed to offer examples of how salespeople and brokers are using the software in their offices, won the Best Regular Column from the Florida Magazine Association for the past two years. The column is for general information only.*

*Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the views by Florida Realtor® magazine or the Florida Association of Realtors (FAR).*

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