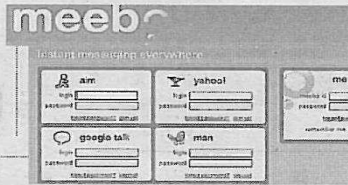


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MEEBO.COM | Meebo is a free one-stop site to instant message on AIM, Yahoo!, MSN, Google Talk, ICQ and Jabber. It works anywhere you have Web access: at home, on campus, in Rio or Riga. No need to download and install software. Just log on from anywhere and start IMing. —Howard Wolinsky



HOWARD WOLINSKY

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TECHNOLOGY ON THE GO | Businesses are tapping into the conveniences, revenue streams iPods can bring

They're not just play things

Podcasting isn't only for music videos, sports programs or other entertainment anymore.

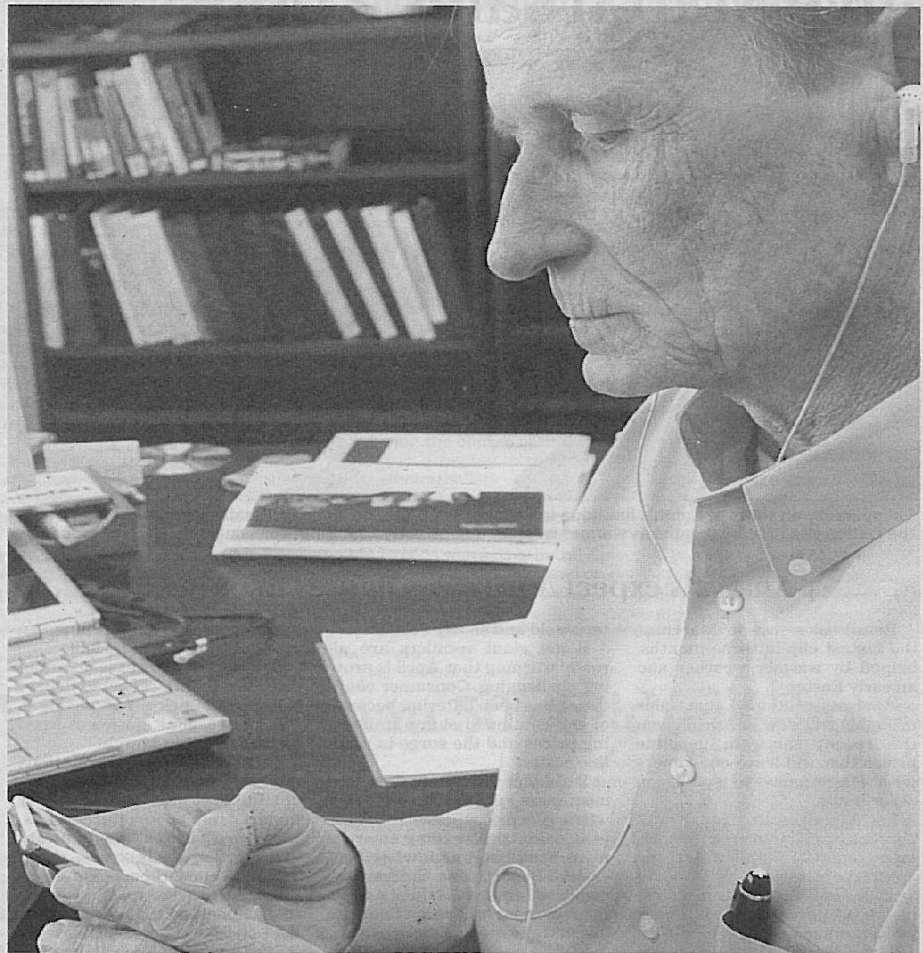
LaRue Highsmith, veteran producer of educational programming for health professionals, recently began spicing up his online media mix by offering physicians, clinical lab professionals and others the option of downloading his Webcast programs as podcasts at his Web site at www.dnaMedEd-Cafe.com.

Highsmith, founder of Dane Garvin Ltd. in Glenview, said podcasts — video or audio recordings that are downloaded for access later on iPods or other media players — are a natural extension of Web conferencing.

Podcasting, a method of publishing audio and video files on the Internet for downloads to iPods, MP3 phones and other devices, has emerged as a new medium in recent years, used heavily by young people who want to view music videos, listen to books or sports shows, or downloads of "The Daily Show" at Apple's iTunes.com site.

Pew Internet & American Life Project reported in November that the audience for podcasts is small, only 840,000 last year, but it is projected to reach 56 million by 2010.

Highsmith said podcasting offers many advantages for mobile professionals: "Not everyone can make it to a Web conference. Podcasting enables more people to view a conference at their own convenience. They download a conference to their iPods and can watch the conference on the go, while waiting in an airport, on an



Herb Pyles, vice president of business integration and marketing for Chicago-based InterCall, said his company began offering podcasts a year ago after inquiries from customers. | JEAN LACHAT/SUN-TIMES

airplane or at lunch."

He estimates that podcasting increases the audience for his conferences by about 15 percent, which in turn boosts the fees he can charge his clients, such as Abbott Laboratories. Professionals who attend the courses can earn professional education credits.

Herb Pyles, a vice president involved with technology development at Chicago-based InterCall, the world's largest conferencing company, said some early adopters in business have spotted podcasting as a new way to reach their audience.

"We began offering podcasts a year ago when our customers started asking about

them," he said.

Pyles said podcasts are a good fit for companies that want an effective and less costly way to distribute information online such as from weekly sales meetings, training sessions, orientation for human resource departments and quarterly earnings reports.

He said that pharmaceutical companies, investment bankers, electronics companies and financial companies have been using the service.

InterCall converts conferences to MP3 files for audio and MP4 for video. The files are then posted on servers run by InterCall or its clients.

Highsmith said he has found

that the podcasts of his programs, which are recorded by InterCall, are especially popular among professionals 45 and under.

"They are the ones who have iPods," he said.

Pyles expects podcasting to catch on in the business world: "We're just in the early stages of business applications."

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