Kia ora koutou. This episode is about post-production of your podcast. The five topics we will breeze through today are: editing software, hosting platforms, podcatchers, promoting your podcast, and making money off of your podcast. And I want to emphasize that each one of those five items could be not just its own episode by itself but its own podcast series by itself. These are complex items and aspects of post-production. And honestly the technologies are changing every few months, and the kinds of technologies that you choose depend on your interests and your needs and your audience and your goals and your topic. So it's a very, very nuanced process. And I'm not trying to go into the nitty-gritty of all these details right now. Instead, what this episode aims to do is to give a broad overview of the kinds of decisions you'll have to make in the many different steps of post production of your podcast. So treat this episode like an introduction to post production. And then you can dive in deeper to the different aspects and conduct your own research so that you find the right software and applications and web platforms and promotion strategies that suit your own needs. Let's get started.

The first thing I want to say before we jump into any of those five topics is always back up your audio recordings. Back them up on a hard drive. Back them up on the cloud. Back them up in multiple places. If you have a digital recorder that is separate from your computer, do not ever leave those audio files just on your digital recorder. As soon as you get done with that recording, with that interview, with gathering those ambient sounds and sound effects, take them immediately to a computer and back them up locally and on the cloud. Don't do just either. Don't do just the cloud. You don't know where those servers live, where in the world they live, who owns those servers, who protects them, what happens if the power goes out. And don't back them up only locally because what if something happens to your computer? Back them up both locally and on the cloud, two spaces. So that you never ever, ever risk losing your audio files. Okay there's my diatribe at the opening about backing up your audio recordings. Have you done it? Go do it now if you haven't.

Let's begin with the five items of post-production. Editing software. I'll just list a few of the possible options right now and make a couple recommendations about them. Oftentimes, free software is just the right price and provides exactly the specifications that you need. Audacity is the free open source audio editing software, and that software platform has come a long way in the past years. It's actually a very good platform for editing audio, and I highly recommend it if you're looking for a budget friendly application. And if you are looking for some tutorials, I highly recommend the YouYube videos by my colleague Dr Kyle Stedman that's K-y-l-e S-t-e-d-m-a-n. His YouYube videos have over a million and a half hits. They're really, really helpful, and I highly recommend them as learning tools to learn the Audacity audio editing platform. If you're a Mac user, you get Garageband automatically installed. That's also a very good audio editing platform that I can highly recommend. And if you have access through a university or through your employer to the pay-to-play audio editing services, the industry standard services, like Adobe Audition or Pro Tools, then those are also excellent software applications to learn. I am a big fan of Adobe Audition that's one that I've used quite often. And I use to learn different software applications, I particularly love using lynda.com to learn so lynda is spelled l-y-n-d-a. It is a pay-to-play educational online resource, but many public libraries across the world have free access to lynda.com so that people who visit the library can access the lynda.com tutorials from their own computers or sometimes from the computers in the public library. So I recommend checking with your public library, seeing if they have a lynda.com license. Remember that's l-y-n-d-a.com. And if so then, there are fantastic lynda.com tutorials on Adobe Audition and other audio editing software platforms. It's a really, really great resource, so I recommend checking with your public library. So those are the audio editing software platforms. They're all really quite good. And I highly recommend getting familiar with them, so that you can start editing your podcast audio as soon as possible.

Let's move now and talk about the two aspects of the web that you'll need to think about: the hosting platforms and the podcatchers. Hosting platforms. The main thing I have to recommend to you here is choose a hosting platform that suits your needs. The main thing to know about podcasts is that they're actually based on blogging technology. The underlying technology is called an RSS feed, which stands for real simple syndication, which means that people can subscribe to your podcast. And when you create new content and upload it, that content is immediately distributed to the people who've subscribed to your podcast, and they can download it and listen to it and access that content offline. So RSS feeds were originally designed for blogs and written content, and then podcasting found a way to use the same technology to send audio files through the internet. And by the way, while we're talking about audio files, I should emphasize that you'll want for podcasting compressed audio files, which means MP3 files typically. Rather than uncompressed audio files, which are massive, and wave (.wav) is an example of an uncompressed file. So uncompressed files are massive because they contain lots of data. But compressed audio files try to compress all that data down as small as possible to make it easy to circulate on the web. And mp3 files are sort of the premier version of compressed audio files.

So you have a blogging technology with an RSS feed circulating mp3 files throughout the internet, and you want to start your own podcast, so you need three things to make this podcast vision come to fruition for you. The three things you need are: a web domain (which means a url, a web address); you need web hosting (right, because that web site has to live on a server somewhere in the world); and you need media hosting (because audio files are bigger than the web text often times, the website itself, so you need a separate kind of media hosting site). Now the good thing is that audio files and mp3 files, because they're compressed, are not very big at all actually, especially compared to video files (which can be huge). So oftentimes the extra space for media hosting of audio files, MP3 files, is actually not that much larger than the traditional web hosting that you would need. So you need web domain, web hosting, and media hosting. The good news is most platforms nowadays combine all those three things together, so you don't have to buy them separately. And in fact a lot of the different providers create special packages for you that suit your needs.

So I'll talk first about a couple platforms that are currently free. And the thing to flag here with all this is that these platforms and providers are changing all the time. They're updating their plans. They're providing new incentives and new resources, and you would need to always go and research these in advance to see what's the latest information about these. Right now, Anchor is a free resource, a free platform for creating and hosting your podcast. It auto-generates a web domain for you. It automatically does all the web hosting and the media hosting on the backend for you. It is a free service for doing all aspects of podcasting. It's quite user friendly, especially to beginners. It's owned by Spotify right now. And of course, as you know, Spotify has both free versions and non-free versions. The free versions have advertisements, so keep an eye on Anchor right now, moving forward and see how its plans change with relation to Spotify having bought it. But right now it's a user friendly, easy, straightforward service that's free. You can also use wordpress.org.

So if you own your own web domain or url, you can apply Wordpress to that web domain, which is an open source web building platform that's free. And then you can apply various plugins like Blubrry to help facilitate running a podcast out of your Wordpress website. So that's another way, especially useful to people who are already familiar with working with Wordpress and people who want to have a little more customizability: they want to have their own web domain rather than an Anchor.com web domain, if you want to have your own style and vision to your website. If the website matters a lot to you, then wordpress.org allows you to build your own website off of a domain that you've purchased elsewhere. Whereas Anchor is just about building your audio for your podcast. So wordpress.org with Blubrry and other plugins can help you do that. Those are two free possibilities: Anchor and Wordpress.

There are also a variety of other platforms with varying prices and qualities and features. And many of these other platforms have free starting plans that'll allow you certain amounts of uploads per month. And some of these platforms are Libsyn, which has been around for a long time; Soundcloud, which has been around also for a while and is very popular with musicians. You can also look at the platform Spreaker or Podbean or Buzz Sprout or any number of other platforms that are out there. Take a look at what they have to offer in terms of pricing and quality and features, and see how good their free plans are, if they interest you. And find a platform that suits your own needs. So to summarize the platforms: Anchor is really useful for quickly starting a podcast where the website doesn't matter as much and it's mostly about the audio content. Wordpress is useful for customizing a website that really matters to you in addition to the audio content, and for that you'll have to buy your own web domain and url. And then there are a variety of other platforms that offer some range from free to pay-to-play services with a few more features and more customizability than Anchor, so they're situated somewhere between Anchor and Wordpress on that spectrum and those services again are Libsyn, Soundcloud, Spreaker, Podbean, Buzz Sprout, and dozens, dozens more.

Next with the web, let's talk about podcatchers. Podcatchers are the applications that users use to search for and subscribe to podcasts. So rather than visiting your actual website, users can go into their local podcatcher app and search for content that they like. When they find it, they can then subscribe and download those episodes. This is what podcatchers do. They are the interface for the users to access your podcast. Where, for you the producer, the website is your interface for creating and uploading your podcast content. Podcatchers, the most popular ones, are: Apple podcasts, Google podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, and dozens, dozens more. When you have created the first episode of your podcast, you then have to distribute it to all the podcatchers. You have to let them know, "Hey I'm a new podcast in the world. Please regularly download my content so that users who use that podcatcher can find my content." So the first time you release your first episode of your podcast, you'll have to do what's called sending your RSS feed to these different podcatchers. Now some of the hosting platforms will automatically send this information out for you, and that's one of the services that they provide. However, if you're doing it on your own with a free platform, no problem. It's quite easy to just copy the url for your RSS feed and go to these different Apple, Google, Spotify, Stitcher podcatcher platforms, and each one of those has a very simple two or three step process for pasting the url for your RSS feed into their information, and making sure that those podcatchers are aware of your new podcast. So you only have to do that the first time you release your first episode. After that, it's done automatically for you. But it's worth flagging that one thing to consider is whether you do that manually, if you have for example a free hosting platform that you're using, or whether you've chosen a platform that will do that process for you. So there's a bit of information about both hosting platforms on the web and podcatchers.

Let's now talk very briefly about promoting your podcast and making money. Again these are very very big topics. I just want to offer a few items of overview to be thinking about. In terms of promotion, word of mouth still matters. Think about how many times have you learned about a new podcast from simply a conversation with your mates or talking with your family and whānau. Word of mouth still matters a lot. So create good, good content with high audio quality with a good story, and people will talk about your podcast to their friends and their family and their whānau, and your podcast will spread and grow. Word of mouth matters, and it starts by creating good content. Other ways that you can promote your podcast: obviously, social media. Twitter and Facebook are big popular places to do that. Many podcasts also upload YouTube videos of their podcast. Some people actually shoot videos of the interviews, and others might simply upload a single still image with the audio of the podcast running underneath it. But because YouTube is such a popular place where people go and search for content, many people use youtube as a key social media website to complement the promotion of their podcast in other venues. So social media can be quite helpful.

You might also cross-promote on other podcasts with similar topics. So if you know friends or colleagues who are working on similar topics and have their own podcast on that topic, reach out to them. Say, "Hey I've got this new thing why don't you check out my first episode. I'd be happy to promote your podcast on mine. If you like the content that I have on my first episode, would you be interested in promoting my content? Maybe we could do an interview. I could interview you. You could interview me." Cross-promoting is a really great way to find podcast lovers who have similar interests and to get their attention and direct it towards your podcast. Lastly, and it's quite obvious, but five-star ratings matter a lot. So encourage people to rate you early and often. Get your earliest listeners to rate you, give the five stars, write a few words of why they love your podcast, and that will help you bump up in the algorithms that the podcatchers use to circulate content to listeners. That's the swiftest of overviews of promotion.

Let's talk briefly about making money because this is quite simple. It's really difficult to make money on podcasts based on advertisements. Really difficult. You need typically over a hundred thousand listeners to make advertisements a worthwhile endeavor to try to make money off of. So oftentimes making money off of advertisements is something that you do late, late, late in the process, years into the process. Once you have a steady and regular following of people who are dedicated to your excellent content that you've been producing, then that's the time when you can make a pitch to advertisers based on specifically who you know your listeners to be. Advertisers really, really care about what kinds of listeners are really engaged in your podcast because that matters to the kinds of content they want to advertise to those listeners. So it's quite difficult. You have to have lots and lots of listeners to make some money. But it's not out of the question down the road if you have a very popular podcast.

In the meantime, if you're interested in other venues for making money, you could check out Patreon. p-a-t-r-e-o-n.com. Patreon is a web-based service that allows dedicated fans to subscribe--with money--to the work that artists create. So if you create a popular podcast, you can connect it to Patreon, and then people can donate x amount of money per month, per week, to listen to and support your content. It's a way for creators to try to make a little bit of money based on the individual donations of specific listeners. So Patreon is one possible way that you could make a little bit of money based on the creative content that you're putting out there and circulating to the world.

And lastly, instead of trying to make money with the podcast itself, you might could use your podcast to direct listener traffic to other venues, to point them to your website where you have some products that you've been making, to point them to performances, to point them to services that you provide. The podcast can be a tool that doesn't generate income on its own, but rather points users and listeners to other aspects of things that you do that may be related to money and income. So there is again the briefest of overviews. There's tons of content on the web about promoting and making money on a podcast. But it's worth keeping in mind that making money is typically quite difficult with podcasts right now.

So that is a very swift overview of the post-production process for podcasting. Again we talked briefly about a variety of editing software options at the beginning; we talked about hosting platforms and podcatchers; and then we talked at the end about promoting your podcast and making money off of it. Thanks for listening. Kia ora.