

tools like Yahoo! 360° and TypePad. In addition to creating a blog, some services also make it easy to create a central place where you can share your life through photos, music, recommendations and more. For example, you can blog and share photos about your favorite (or least favorite) class, weekend road trips, your Greek rush experience, or even the dorm food. You can also post your own personalized song list based on your music preferences, and share your ratings and reviews of local restaurants or clubs.

When I was in college, I remember having to tell the same stories about my friends, my classes, my grades, over and over again during regular long-distance phone calls, and they weren't cheap! Today, blogs and online community services let family and friends get your updates whenever they want to just by visiting your blog.

Q: I've been seeing podcasts popping up all over the Internet. What is a podcast? What's required to get started with podcasting? Is this something students can do?

Podcasting is free Internet radio, but with a twist. Basically, podcasts are online radio programs or audio blogs that you can listen to whenever or wherever you want – on your computer or portable MP3 player. The great thing is that you can sign-up for automatic delivery of a podcast program and get new shows delivered right to you as soon as they're published. If you have an iPod or any other MP3 player, it's easy to download shows so you can take your favorite podcasts with you and listen to them between classes, at the library or at the gym. Most people don't realize that you can even listen to podcasts right on the Web without having an MP3 player and without downloading any software.

There are already all sorts of podcasts available. From your favorite radio shows with hilarious prank calls or new band interviews, to random people talking about college sports, celebrities and movie reviews – you can find, listen or subscribe to a wide variety of podcasts very easily on Web sites like Yahoo! Podcasts (<http://podcasts.yahoo.com>) or CollegeRadio.com (<http://www.collegeradio.com>).

Anyone can create a podcast with basic equipment right in their dorm room. For those of you who are interested in creating your own podcasts, it's a fun process and something that I encourage you to try. Some great tools, like Audacity or GarageBand, are available to help you record and edit your podcast show.

Q: I've heard that there are some new Web-based e-mail products that function like a client, such as Microsoft Outlook or Eudora. Can you tell me where I can get this kind of product?

The new Web applications are becoming increasingly sophisticated and interactive. Technologies such as Dynamic HTML (DHTML), sometimes called AJAX, allow for the creation of services which run in the Web browser, but act very much like regular PC clients.

There are a couple of new Web mail products which use these technologies and function much more like desktop e-mail clients. Both Yahoo! and MSN are testing Web mail products along this line, and they are expected to be widely available in the coming months.

For those of you looking for an improved Web mail experience, the new Yahoo! Mail which is in the "beta" testing stage, looks and acts like a desktop e-mail application. It's a much faster experience with new features such as drag and drop e-mail organi-



“Podcasting is free Internet radio with a twist...listen whenever or wherever ...on your computer or portable MP3 player.”

zation and message preview. And just like the existing Yahoo! Mail, it goes where ever you do. As long as you have an Internet connection, you can access your e-mail at any time, without the need to download software.

All Yahoo! Mail users will be able to use the new version of Yahoo! Mail as soon as the beta testing is complete. To sign up for the beta, please go to:

<http://whatsnew.mail.yahoo.com/>



© Leah-anne Thompson

For those of you who use Hotmail, you're also in luck. MSN Hotmail is also testing an updated version of its Web mail product. :)