Podcasting at the UW: An Evaluation of Current Use

UW Pilot Project
Introduced podcasting in large-lecture courses

Timeline
Autumn 2005: 4 courses
Winter 2006: 13 courses
Spring 2006: 20 courses

Evaluation
Surveys of students enrolled in courses using podcasts
4,419 students in 17 courses
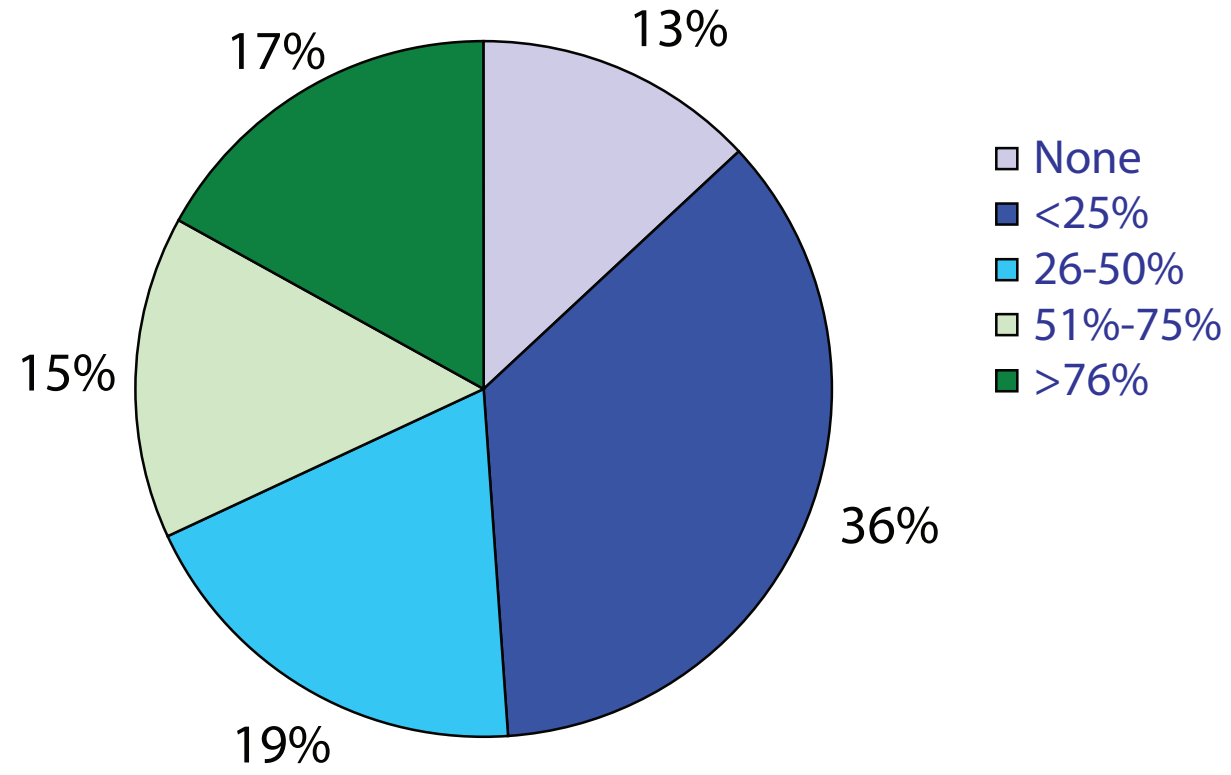222 respondents (5%)
Report online at http://catalyst.washington.edu/projects

Changes for spring 2006
Instructor survey
Expanded student survey
Improved contact procedures

What percentage of the podcast recordings did you listen to?

Legend:
- None
- <25%
- 26-50%
- 51%-75%
- >76%

13%, 36%, 19%, 15%, 17%

Do you own an MP3 player?

- No — 26%
- Yes — 74%

How did you listen to the course podcast?

- On a computer — 86%
- On an MP3 player — 14%

The availability of the course podcast...

- made me more likely to attend class. — 5%
- made me less likely to attend class. — 16%
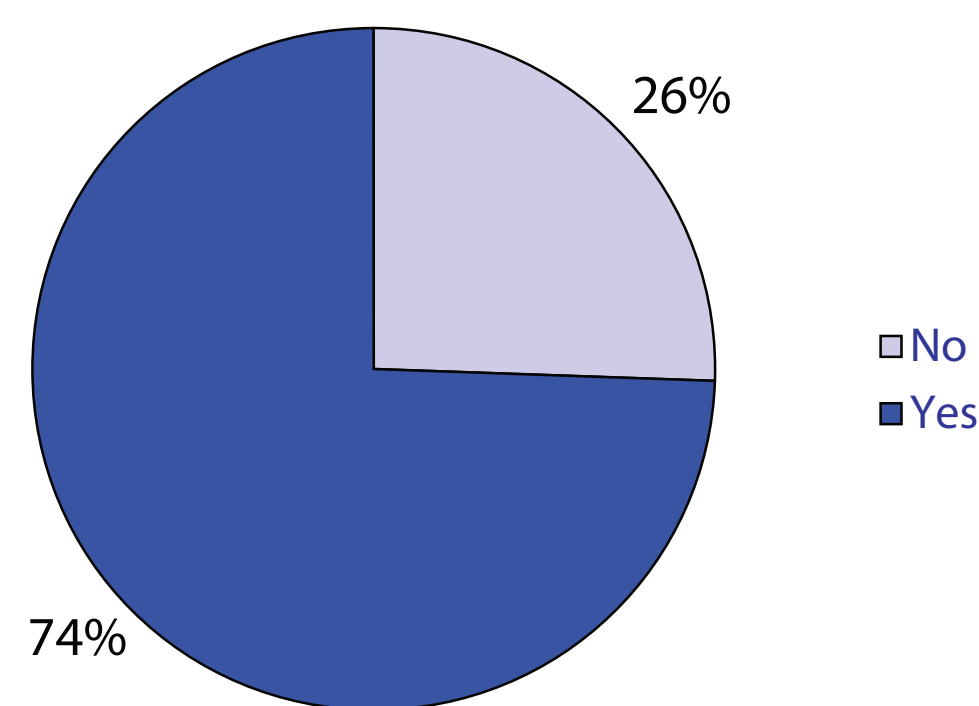- had no impact on my attendance. — 79%

Podcast: "A digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player."

New Oxford American Dictionary (2005 word of the year)

"The first time you hear the story, you listen with the aim of understanding. The second time, you get the lead in, the particulars, and are more able to determine what is crucial to the problem and is an interesting aside."

"It allowed me to be more engaged during the lecture and not just furiously taking notes. If I missed something I wanted to include in my notes I could go back to the podcast and fill in what I missed."
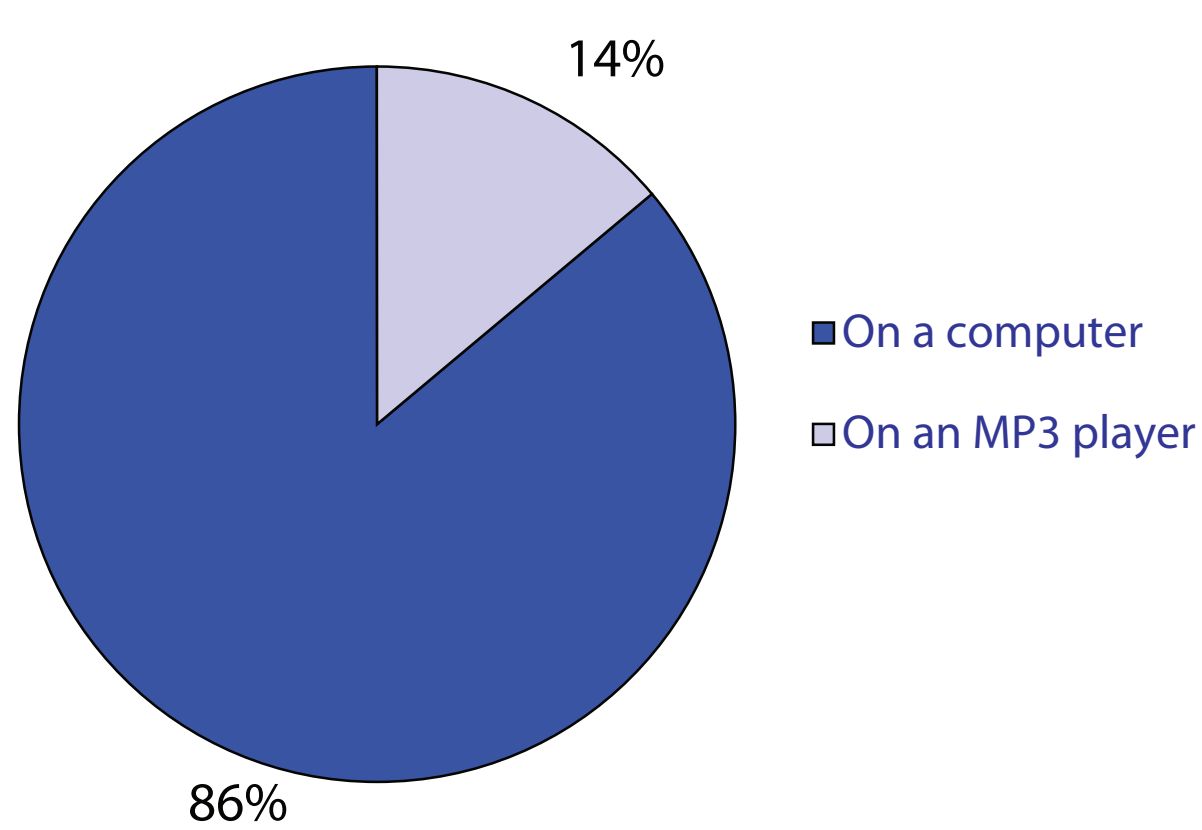
Strengths of podcasting

Helped students catch up when they missed a class

Helped students prepare for homework and exams

Helped students fill in gaps in their notes

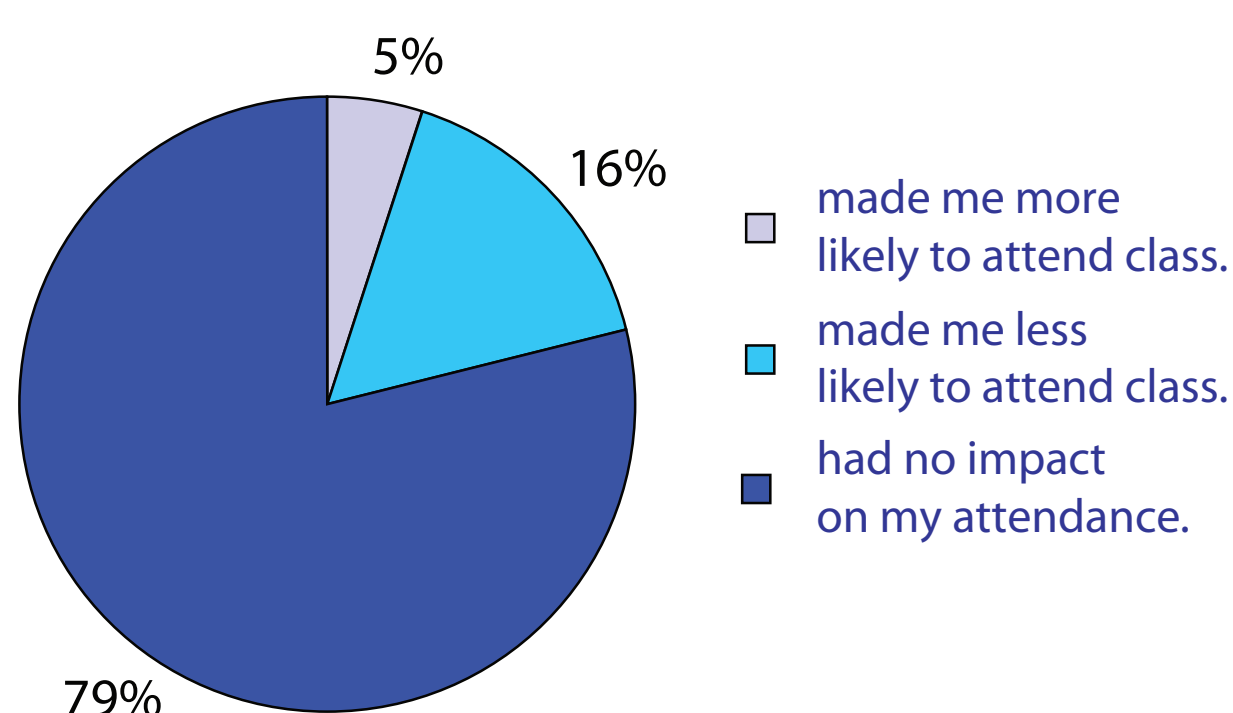Clarified concepts discussed in class

Weaknesses of podcasting

Difficult to search for specific information within a recording

Cannot capture visual materials or class discussion

Tempted some students to skip class

Not available in enough courses

Podcasts Online: http://www.css.washington.edu/blog