

How to create a Zune podcast from an audiobook or other files you already have

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20081217-00

December 17, 2008



Raymond Chen

Here's a trick one of my friends taught me.

The Zune has two styles of audio playback, one for music, and another for podcasts. For music, clicking right and left move you by song, and when you switch to another album, then come back to the first album, it starts you over at the beginning of the album. On the other hand, for podcasts, clicking right and left seeks through the episode, and when you return to a podcast, it resumes from where you left off. This is nice, because podcast episodes tend to be long, and the sequence is usually important.

But what if you want the podcast behavior for songs? For example, you might have a book on ~~tape~~ CD or a lecture series that you downloaded to your Zune. When you stop a chapter in the middle, you want to resume where you left off, not from the start of the chapter—and certainly not from the start of the book!

Here's the secret: Before adding the content to your Zune collection, use Windows Explorer or Windows Media Player or some other metadata-editing tool to do two, possible four, things:

- Change the Genre to *Podcast*,
- Set the album title on all the episodes to the title of the book (or lecture series, or whatever),
- Confirm that the file creation times are sequential: Episode 1 should have the earliest creation time, and so on.
- Optionally, set the title of each episode to “Chapter N” or something similarly meaningful.

Once you have the metadata set correctly, you can import the files into your collection. The Zune will see the Podcast genre and create a new podcast named after the album. *It will show up in the Podcast section, not in the Music section.* The tracks of the album will be treated as

podcast episodes, and the file creation time is used to determine the chronology of the episodes. Set the podcast properties to “Oldest episodes first” and you now have your book on Zune ready for listening.

What if you already added the files to your collection? Well, you can move them to a temporary directory outside your collection (thereby removing them from the collection), do your metadata editing, then move them back (re-adding them).

As a shortcut, you can avoid the remove/edit/re-add cycle by editing the metadata while the files are still in your collection, then opening an Explorer window and dragging/dropping the files from Explorer into your Zune music collection (even though they’re already there). This sometimes is enough of a nudge to tell the Zune client, “Hey, go look at these files again, I changed something.” Remember, even though you dropped the files into your music collection, they will show up in the *Podcast* section. It will look like they disappeared, but really they just moved.

I’ve had mixed success with the drag/drop approach, so I’ve gotten into the habit of playing it safe and doing the remove/edit/re-add thing.

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

