Apple Bits

Doctors put patients in charge with
Apple's Health Records feature

ABOUT NEOAC

We are an informal group of Apple users and enthusiasts. We have members of all levels of computer expertise using all types of Macs and Apple products.

Annual dues are $20.00 per family. In September, the cost for a new membership through the end of the year is $10. To join or renew your membership, you can either pay at a meeting, on our web site or mail a check made out to "NEO Apple Corps" and send to the post office box noted above.

Dues include access to our listserv (an online bulletin board where you can post questions and/or comments at any time), a PDF of our monthly newsletter and the opportunity to participate in our monthly raffle for valuable Apple and Apple-related products.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
Thanks to those members who have renewed. Dues are $20 and include any family members that you can claim on your taxes. Membership privileges include participation in the raffles, the listserv, and picnic attendance. Prospective members should fill in the form on the last page.

MEETINGS
Unless otherwise noted, NEOAC meetings start at 9:30 a.m. on the fourth Saturday of each month at the Strongsville Public Library.

Strongsville Public Library
18700 Westwood Drive
Strongsville, OH 44136
(directly behind the police station)
440-238-5530
<**DIRECTIONS**>

NEXT MEETING
May 19 (1 week early)

UPCOMING MEETINGS
June 23
July 28 (picnic)
August 25
September 22

Five Apps That Play Podcasts Directly from Your Apple Watch

JULIO OJEDA-ZAPATA

https://tidbits.com/2018/04/09/five-apps-that-play-podcasts-directly-from-your-apple-watch/

Listening to podcasts when you're out and about can be an enjoyable, enlightening, and efficient use of time, but sometimes — when you are exercising, say — you want to leave your iPhone behind.

In the past, you might have solved the problem by loading podcasts on one of Apple's tiny iPods, but non-iOS iPods are no longer readily available (see "Apple Discontinues the iPod nano and iPod shuffle," 31 July 2017).

What about that Apple Watch on your wrist? Apple provides no way to move podcasts from iPhone to Apple Watch, but a handful of third-party apps do offer this functionality.

I have been testing five such apps and — spoiler — I'm not ecstatic about them. They all have rough edges and varying degrees of glitchiness.

But they do what they claim: turn an Apple Watch into a modern-day iPod (at least for podcasts) by copying the audio files from the iPhone to the watch. Link AirPods or other Bluetooth audio devices to your Apple Watch, and you are good to go.

Each app has its own approach — with pros and cons — for achieving this watch-as-iPod feat, so there is something here for everybody.

Outcast: The Full-on Podcast Client
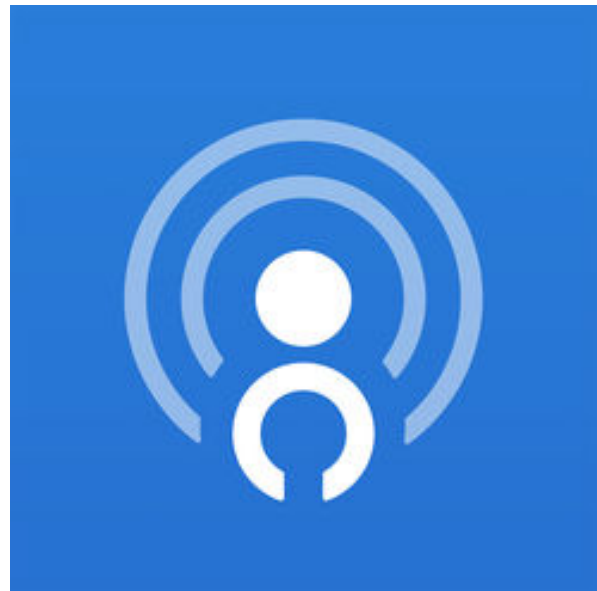
Outcast ($0.99) is a rarity: a full-featured, phone-like app distilled onto the tiny Apple Watch screen. Although it must exist as an iOS app to also provide a watchOS app, Outcast focuses on the Apple Watch and provides little corresponding iPhone functionality.

To get started with Outcast, you first tell it what podcasts you like, either by entering a podcast's feed URL into the iPhone app or browsing the app's directory of podcasts on the watch by network (such as Relay FM) or topic (such as "technology"). There are lots of topics listed but only a handful of networks shown, so app maker Crunchy Bagel has work to do there.

Alternatively, if you've already subscribed to podcasts in certain iOS podcast apps, like Pocket Casts or Overcast, you can migrate those

subscriptions to Outcast. This is accomplished by exporting your podcast list from your iOS podcatcher in OPML format. When you do so, you are prompted to pick the destination; select Outcast, and your podcasts are installed on your watch. Apple's iOS Podcasts app does not have an OPML-exporting option.

All your podcasts appear on the Apple Watch in a scrollable menu. Tap one, select an episode, and tap a download button beside it to pull it down using Wi-Fi — or, in the case of certain Apple Watch Series 3 watches, cellular LTE.

Downloaded episodes appear in their own little menu. Tap one for a full set of playback controls. When you finish with that episode, click the trash button to purge it and free up precious space on your Apple Watch.

I'd like to sing Outcast's praises unreservedly, but it suffers from too much funky behavior. I experienced slow or stalled downloads, playback hiccups, and missing album art. Regardless, Outcast is an impressive feat of Apple Watch app development, and I like it enough to keep using it on occasion.

MiniCast: The Episode Transfer Utility

MiniCast (free) is at the opposite end of the complexity scale, functioning as little more than a transfer tool to help you move episodes from iPhone to

Apple Watch for playback on your wrist.

Once you've installed the MiniCast app on your iPhone, you'll interact with it via the standard iOS share sheet. In your iPhone's podcast app, select an episode and tap the share button. (If MiniCast's Send Podcast To Watch option is not visible, add it by tapping More and flipping its switch.)

At this point, an animated full-screen alert on the phone prompts you to tap a Send To Watch button. You'll see a listing for the episode appear on your watch, but you'll need to tap it and then tap a download button to complete the file transfer. At that point, you're ready to play the episode.

MiniCast works reasonably well, but the file transfers were slow enough to cause me toe-tapping impatience. At least the app alerts you when the download is done. Transfer speed tends to be an issue with all the apps I tested, which might be a dealbreaker

for those who don't like to schedule time for pre-workout setup.

(One performance tip to try: David Smith, author of the Workouts++ app featured later in this article, suggests you might be able to move files to the Apple Watch more quickly with this technique. Start the transfer and then switch off Bluetooth on the iPhone temporarily in Settings > Bluetooth, forcing the watch to use the much faster Wi-Fi. Once the transfer is complete, turn Bluetooth back on. Let us know in the comments if that works for you.)

Playback in MiniCast works as expected. A force touch reveals delete and scrub options.

MiniCast's creator smartly concluded that podcast addicts would want to stick with their favorite iOS podcatchers, and offered a podcast transfer capability that works reliably (if sometimes slowly) within any such iPhone app. The main problem I hit is that episode playback doesn't stay synced between the iPhone and Apple Watch, since you're using entirely different apps on each.

Podface: Podcast App with Workout Features

Podface (free) is a simple iPhone podcatcher that can also transfer episodes to your Apple Watch. As a bonus, it has a workout-related flourish.

To start using Podface, you must enter keywords to search for your favorite

podcasts or look for shows you might like (it doesn't offer a browsable podcast directory). Once you've found the show you want, click the microphone icon next to it, and recent episodes appear.

You have two options with each episode: play it on the iPhone by tapping a speaker icon, or migrate it to your Apple Watch by tapping the watch icon. The latter function starts once you confirm the transfer on the Apple Watch.

In a nice touch, Podface provides a watch complication that morphs from a microphone icon to a progress circle for at-a-glance monitoring of current downloads.

Once the episode is on your Apple Watch, you select and play it as you'd expect, and as with MiniCast, you can force-touch the playback screen to skip around in the episode and delete it.

The Podface iPhone app is useful in other ways. Its Featured screen shows suggested podcasts based on your usage. And the Recents screen lets you track which podcasts you have accessed.

For those who listen to podcasts while exercising, Podface has a basic fitness feature: it begins tracking your physical activity when you hit play on a podcast (there is no option to disable this, that I can see). Then, when you tap End Workout, the app shows you elapsed workout time and how many kilocalories you have burned. That's it. You can opt via a toggle whether or not to save workouts.

Podface works reasonably well, but sits in a weird place, being neither a full podcast app nor a full fitness app. As a result, it's unsatisfying.

WatchPlayer: Like Podface but Without Fitness

If you like Podface's approach but have no interest in its fitness feature,

another app called WatchPlayer ($0.99) provides roughly comparable functionality and adds a trick or two of its own.

Like Podface, WatchPlayer lets you use keyword searches to find podcasts you know or might like. Tap a search result and it's added to your Feeds screen. Tap it again and you get an episode list.

Tapping an episode starts a download but not a transfer to the Apple Watch. Switch to a Files screen to transfer episodes to the Apple Watch — I managed to get episodes onto the Apple Watch, and to play them, though not without difficulty.

I got a number of "Session could not be started between iPhone and Apple Watch" error messages. The iOS interface often froze on me, as well, making WatchPlayer by far the most frustrating app I tested.

In addition to a Send to Apple Watch option, WatchPlayer offers a Download with Apple Watch option. This latter choice seems to be a way of downloading episodes directly from the Internet onto the watch, but my attempts to do so went nowhere.

Finally, WatchPlayer has a Send Feeds to Apple Watch option that seems to be a way to create a menu of subscribed podcasts, but the Feeds screen on my watch remained stubbornly blank no matter how many times I tried a feeds transfer (see below).

WatchPlayer has another unique feature — a second audio-control screen on the watch that, instead of starting playback of an episode on the wrist gizmo, does so on the iPhone, which makes the app a remote control of sorts. This worked perfectly for me.

Although WatchPlayer is similar in design to Podface, and has a few clever touches of its own, it's nevertheless one app I cannot currently recommend based on its off-the-charts malfunctions compared to its competitors. Perhaps it will improve in an update.

Workouts++: A Workout App with Podcast Features

I had previously never used the free Workouts++ (I'm more of a Strava, Zwift, and Apple Workout guy), but the

I enjoyed using all of these apps, and Outcast and Workouts++ in particular. I liked being able to transfer podcast files to my Apple Watch so I could

app seems like a terrific exercise-tracking tool for iPhone- and Apple Watch-equipped fitness enthusiasts. As a bonus, it has podcast features.

Getting started with podcasts is similar to Podface and WatchPlayer. Click a + button in the upper-left corner, and Workouts++ prompts you to search for a podcast using keywords. Shows you select get added to the Subscriptions screen. Recent episodes are shown on a separate Podcasts screen. Tap an episode and a watch transfer starts.

When playing a podcast on your watch, you can regulate playback speed and jump to a particular point in an episode via a timestamp in the Seek To screen.

Remember, Workouts++ is primarily a workout app, so it will not even let you play a podcast until you start a workout. The audio-playback interface is one of several screens for the exercise session, and it isn't accessible otherwise.

Sneaky! But like it. I may even give Workouts++ a whirl to see if it might become my new workout buddy, with the podcast capability as a nice bonus.

Pondering Apple Watch Podcast Apps

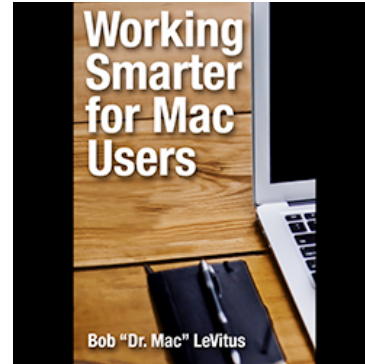leave my iPhone behind while on bike rides and power walks.

But none of these apps is sufficiently dependable, polished, or full-featured to make me consider ditching Pocket

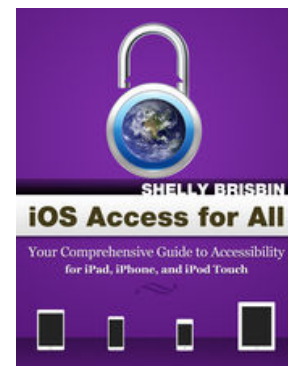Casts or Overcast, which I have used interchangeably over the years. Outcast, as a full-bore podcatcher on the Apple Watch, comes the closest.

It would be great if a top iOS podcast app offered an option to move podcasts episodes to the Apple Watch. In fact, Overcast provided such a feature until recently, but developer Marco Arment removed it, explaining in a blog post that watchOS 4 has too many limitations to make an Apple Watch podcast app deliver the quality and functionality that users expect. At the moment, he believes that standalone podcast playback on the Apple Watch isn't ready for prime time. Based on my experiences while testing these apps, I can't disagree.

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Working Smarter for

iOS Access for All

The Joy of Tech® by Nitrozac & Snaggy

Panel 1: I'VE CREATED AN APP THAT CAN *TRANSLATE* WHAT YOUR CAT IS SAYING! — WOW!

Panel 2: WHAT IS SHE SAYING? — MEOW MEOW MEOW!

Panel 3: SHE SAYS SHE REJECTS THE APP'S PRIVACY POLICY.
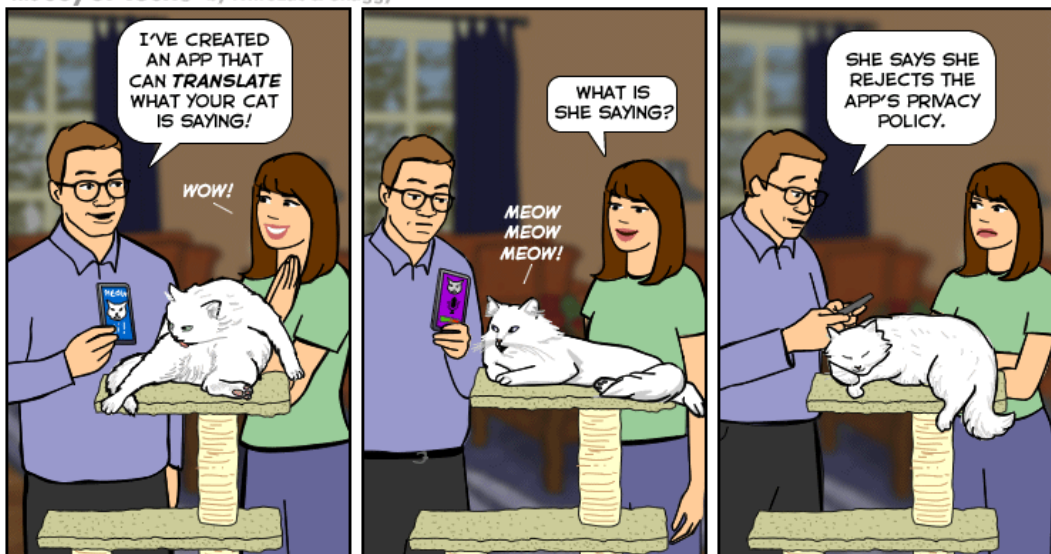
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Doctors put patients in charge with Apple's Health Records feature
APPLE

https://www.apple.com/newsroom/
2018/03/doctors-put-patients-in-
charge-with-apples-health-records-
feature/

When Dr. Robert Harrington, cardiologist and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at Stanford, sees patients, they frequently pass him stacks of printed medical records and spreadsheets, hand-drawn charts or their smartphone with notes and photos. Occasionally, they'll enter his office with grocery bags full of medications to walk him through the

details of their care. "People hand you all sorts of things these days," he says, "and more data is almost never bad, but when they show up with paper, how do you summate that?" He's hired a skilled team to take on the Herculean task of pulling it all together. "It is a labor intensive, very tedious task."

Starting today, patients of NYU Langone Health, Stanford Medicine and nearly 40 other health systems representing hundreds of hospitals and clinics can view their medical records right from their iPhone. The

updated Health Records section within the Health app helps consumers see medical information from various institutions organized into one view and receive notifications when their data is updated. This information can help patients better understand their health history, have informed conversations with physicians and family members, and make future decisions. Health Records data is encrypted and protected with the user's iPhone passcode.

As a self-proclaimed former inner-city kid, Boston Red Sox fan and "data guy," Dr. Harrington says "any time you can put information in patients' and doctors' hands and allow there to be more informed decision making, that is the best of all." In a world where patients have more technological access to data than ever, a platform like Health Records is, in his words, "an important maneuver for patient empowerment and the way the world needs to be."

Years ago, a patient who had trouble breathing came into Dr. Paul Testa of NYU Langone's emergency department and showed their Medical ID on their iPhone. The phone provided Dr. Testa with relevant information — like allergy details — to be able to support the patient's care. "With that information, I could make inferences about who my patient was when they couldn't tell me themselves," he says. "Now, there's a

whole different world on our patients' and my phone."

As Chief Medical Information Officer at NYU Langone, Dr. Testa works to improve the digital experience for patients and colleagues that gives them more power and better care. Eight generations of his family have practiced as physicians and he is invested in improving the family trade through technology.

When it comes to patients coming into the ER, Dr. Testa says "there's always some chaos that got you there" and he points to technology helping to facilitate more meaningful conversations. For example, he implemented a new service for ER doctors through Apple Watch's push notifications. Today, 35 doctors can request notifications for vital lab results so they see the results and respond quickly as well as be notified as their patients progress through the system from arrival to discharge. He believes Health Records "is an incredible first step to being able to have the patient take possession of their own information," but more importantly, "it highlights where we're going to end up."

The new Health Records feature was previously available to patients who joined the Apple Beta Software Program. Today, patients from nearly 40 health institutions listed below can view their medical records simply by updating their iOS software on their

iPhone. Further information for health institutions is available <u>here</u>.

Northeast and Mid-Atlantic United States

- AtlantiCare
- Geisinger Health System
- Johns Hopkins Medicine
- LifeBridge Health
- MedStar Health
- NYU Langone Health
- Partners HealthCare
- Penn Medicine
- Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals, Inc.
- Valley Medical Group P.C.
- Yale New Haven Health and Yale Medicine

Midwest

- Cerner Healthe Clinic
- CoxHealth
- Mosaic Life Care
- Nebraska Methodist Health System
- OhioHealth
- Rush University Medical Center
- Southwest General Health Center

- Truman Medical Centers
- The University of Chicago Medicine

South

- Adventist Health System
- BayCare Health System
- The Duke University Health System
- Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare
- Mission Health
- Ochsner Health System
- Ortho Virginia
- TSAOG Orthopaedics
- UNC Health Care
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center
- WVU Medicine

West

- Cedars-Sinai
- Dignity Health
- Eisenhower Health
- Providence St. Joseph Health
- Scripps Health
- Stanford Medicine
- UC Irvine Health
- UC San Diego Health

Membership Renewal Form

For those members who wish to mail in their renewal, simply print and fill out this page, include check or money order for $20 (made out to NEO Apple Corps) and mail to:

NEOAC
P.O. Box 361782
Strongsville, OH 44136

Name (first last):

_____

Email address (Please include even if opting out of Google Group, so an acknowledgement of the receipt of your check can be issued; a written receipt will be available at the next meeting.):

Street Address:

_____

City, State & Zip Code:

_____

New or Renewal: circle one
1. New
2. Renewal
3. Lifetime member

Are you part of a family membership? circle one
1. No
2. Primary member (the one who paid)
3. Secondary member (everyone else)

What computer model(s) do you own?
(e.g. Mini, MacBook, iPhone, iPad)

_____

What is the primary OS you use?
(e.g., Snow Leopard? Lion? Mountain Lion? Mavericks? Yosemite? iOS? Other?)

_____

Years using a Mac: circle one
1. less than one year
2. 1-3 years
3. More than 3 years

Opt out of Google Group
Do you want to receive listserv email?
1. Yes
2. No