Welcome to episode six, Subscribing to Podcasts: An Update.
It might seem that subscribing to a podcast isn't an appropriate topic, six episodes into a podcast series but so much has changed recently that I thought I would bring everybody up to date.

First of all, you don't have to subscribe to a podcast to be able to hear or read each episode. If the podcaster provides a link to a webpage that lists all the episodes, you can go to that page periodically and listen to back episodes and check to see if something new has been posted. For the CSU Long Beach Tech Tips that page is at: www.csulb.edu/lats/itss/design/techtip.html.

I'll be discussing several websites today that have long, complicated URL's or web addresses. You don't have to scramble to write them down however because most of them are listed at the Tech Tips website and all of them are provided in the transcript file that is included with today's episode.

What is the advantage of subscribing to a podcast if you can hear every episode just by going out to the website?

If you subscribe, that means you would automatically get the next episode delivered to your computer as soon as it is available.
For this Tech Tips podcast, I have instructions on how to subscribe using a variety of software options. Go to www.csulb.edu/lats/itss/design/subscribe.html.

As explained on that web page, there are several ways to subscribe and the list grows longer all the time. At one time, subscribing to a podcast meant using iTunes. However, there are problems with iTunes. It is not particularly friendly to people with vision problems, although the programmers at Apple are starting to do something to correct the situation.

If you do have iTunes installed on your computer, there is an address you can go to using your web browser that will launch iTunes and take you directly to my Tech Tips podcast listing. I've listed the address in the transcript file.
http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=220113557

Using that address will cause your computer to launch iTunes, and display a button that will subscribe you to Tech Tips. When you click the subscribe button, you will see the list of episodes downloading into

the podcasts area of your iTunes. Future episodes will show up automatically.

Lately, there are quite a few alternatives to iTunes.
That URL I gave you earlier took you to my podcast by way of the Apple iTunes application but typically a podcaster would provide a shorter address that can be used in any software that allows you to subscribe by URL. Typically, a podcast URL ends with a file of type XML, rather than the usual HTML.
In the transcript of this episode I've provided the URL or address of my own podcast.
http://www.csulb.edu/lats/itss/design/xml-files/tech-tips.xml

Two very familiar applications have recently been added to the list of applications that know what to do with a podcast URL. They are the Internet Explorer web browser (version 7) and the FireFox web browser (version 2). If you paste a podcast address into either one of these browsers, you will be presented with a button that allows you to subscribe. Clicking on the subscribe button will cause the podcast episodes to show up as book marks in your browser. As new episodes or chapters are posted by the podcaster, new bookmarks are added to your web browser.

This same podcast URL that typically ends with the letters XML can be used with any of the applications that are known as news feed readers. Also known as RSS readers. Many of you might already be using one of these as your web browser's home page. Specifically, I'm talking about the My Yahoo page (http://my.yahoo.com/) or the iGoogle home page (http://igoogle.com) which you can customize to present you with continuous news, weather and stock updates. They can also keep you updated with any podcasts to which you might be interested in subscribing.

One particularly interesting feature of subscribing to a podcast using the My Yahoo home page is that it asks if you want to be notified any time a new episode is available. You can be notified by email or by text message on your cell phone. Now there's no excuse anymore for missing the latest Tech Tip.

There are some new iTunes imitators. One of these is Juice: The Cross-platform Podcast Receiver. The Windows version of Juice claims to be accessible to the blind and visually impaired. It works a lot like iTunes but will play your files through the Microsoft Media player on a PC, instead of using the QuickTime player. However, it doesn't know

what to do with the PDF text file transcripts that some of us include as part of our podcasts. I also include my transcripts both PDF files and in the lyrics area of the MP3 audio files.
Juice is available at: http://juicereceiver.sourceforge.net/

Lyrics, by the way, are visible to you if you are listening to my podcast with the latest version of the Windows Media Player. If you are using iTunes, you can select an audio file listed in iTunes and then go to the top menu and select FILE, get info. The info box includes any lyrics or transcripts that might have been provided by the songwriter or podcaster.

Another iTunes imitator is Primetime. If you're interested in exploring the features of Primetime, go to http://geekswithblogs.net/lance/articles/PPR.aspx

This is by no means an exhaustive list of applications that will allow you to subscribe to a podcast but it should be enough to get you started.

I'm Walter Gajewski. Thanks for listening to CSU Long Beach Tech Tips.