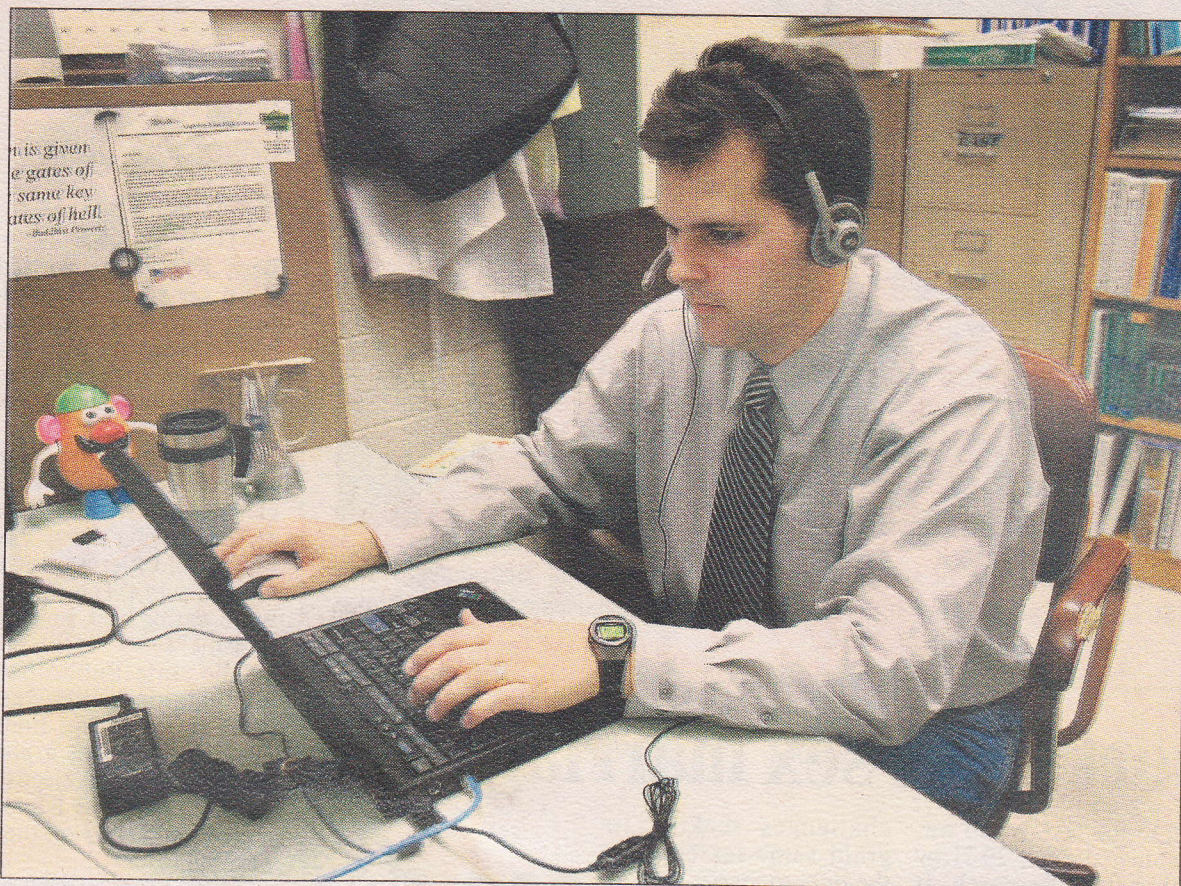


# Classroom lessons turn digital



**APPLETON EAST HIGH SCHOOL** physics teacher Dale Basler works on material for his podcast in his office at the school on Friday.

Post-Crescent photo by Sarah Beth Barnett

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**Monday, October 2, 2006**



# Teacher uses podcasts to connect with students

**A**ppleton East High School science teacher Dale

Basler is a tech-savvy gadget guy who never misses a chance to try something cutting-edge.

This fall, he is using podcasts to take what he teaches in his physics and physical sciences classrooms to a new level.

Every Friday after finishing his lesson plans, Basler puts on a headset with a microphone, plugs it into a laptop computer and records a new episode for students and their parents. Each podcast posted on his Web site recaps the past week's topics in class and introduces what they will learn the next week.

By taking advantage of one of his students' favorite digital devices, he said, "I hope to stay connected with students when they are not in the classroom" via their home computers and the iPods in their pockets.

For those behind the learning curve, "podcast" is derived from "iPod"

**Kathy Walsh Nufer**  
Post-Crescent  
Staff Writer



**"It's a great way to learn about stuff anytime you want, like while doing dishes at night or biking."**

DALE BASLER, Appleton East physics teacher

and "broadcast," and is a multimedia file distributed over the Internet. You can listen online on your computer or with iPods and other portable MP3 players.

Podcasts, which can be downloaded and listened to anytime and anywhere, have taken off like crazy, Basler said, and he wasted no time getting on board.

In June, Basler, president of the Wisconsin So-

ciety of Science Teachers, began co-hosting "Periodicity," a weekly podcast for science educators with Brian Bartel, an Appleton West High School science teacher and WSST president-elect.

For their shows, they have interviewed experts on spinach and E. coli, the emerald ash borer (an invasive beetle), Pluto's planetary descent and converting cheese waste into ethanol.

"No other science teacher association, including the national group, is doing this yet," said Basler, noting that he and Bartel just completed episode 14.

Teachers statewide are just discovering the podcasts, he said, and "feedback is starting to gain momentum. People now request to be on the show." WSST interest inspired Basler, starting his ninth year of teaching, to think about how he might turn podcasts into a classroom tool.

See **NUFER**, C-3

## Dale Basler file

**Age:** 32

**Residence:** Appleton

**Family:** Married with three children, ages 2 to 4.

**Occupation:** Appleton East High School physics and physical science teacher.

**Education:** Master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

**Something you should know:** Basler enjoyed science in high school but good grades did not come naturally. Singing did so he majored in vocal music in college. "I switched to science within the first month after realizing music was only the path of least resistance. Science is my real passion."

## On the Web

To hear a Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers podcast visit:

[www.wsst.org/podcasts.asp](http://www.wsst.org/podcasts.asp)

To hear an East High School podcast, Google: **baslercast**

## NUFER: Podcast a very resourceful tool

### From C-1

A frequent podcast listener, he knew it would be a perfect medium to reach kids. "It's a great way to learn about stuff anytime you want, like while doing dishes at night or biking."

He had heard stories of professors doing lectures on podcasts, but that was not the right fit for his classes.

"That sounded neat, but we don't lecture that much in labs. Then I thought, one thing we don't do is give students an idea what the lesson plan is like and what we're doing this week and next. This would let

kids get into my mind and find out why we do what we do."

East senior Conor O'Hagan, 18, said he listens to Basler's podcasts on his computer.

He admits he was unfamiliar with podcasts and "a little iffy" about the idea at first, but now thinks podcasts are a great resource.

"I've been gone for some classes and it allows me to find out what I missed. I can listen and find out what to review for upcoming quizzes and he gives a preview of the following

week. It's really neat he's doing this," he said.

Basler wants to spread use of podcasts across the teaching profession, and thinks he has just brushed the surface of what he can do with his students through this medium.

"Long term, I'd like to get students into making and producing podcasts as another way to assess them. I hope to see it grow."

Kathy Walsh Nufer writes a weekly education column. She can be reached at 920-993-1000, ext. 290, or at [knufer@postcrescent.com](mailto:knufer@postcrescent.com).