

# Value for Value and Podcasting 2.0: A New Opportunity for Music Distribution

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## Abstract

Musicians have been creating crowdsourcing campaigns to make up for the collapse of the record industry. In addition to being censorship-resistant, Podcasting 2.0 offers new opportunities that bypass credit cards and in-app fees charged by technology companies by using the potential of the Lightning Network to send micropayments.

Keywords: podcasting 2.0, crowdsourcing, crowdfunding, Value for Value, Lightning Network, Bitcoin, micropayments

## Traditional Crowdsourcing

The proliferation of the internet contributed to the collapse of the record business. The loss of revenue from album sales has not been made up with fees paid by streamers, and musicians continue to look for alternative income streams. One way to do this is to go to fans directly with crowdfunding campaigns. Amanda Palmer spent five years dressed up as a bride offering flowers to passersby on the street. She put that experience of asking for support to good use in her successful crowdfunded campaign (see Figure 1) for the Dresden Doll's album *Theatre Is Evil* in 2011, which became the first to raise over a million dollars.<sup>1</sup> In a 2013 TED talk she talked about the art of asking: "I think when we really see each other we want to help...I think people have been obsessed with the wrong question, which is 'How do we make people pay for music?' What if we started asking, 'How do we let people pay for music?'"<sup>2</sup> The subject of this paper is a way of asking for support available through new Podcasting 2.0 technology and the Value for Value model.

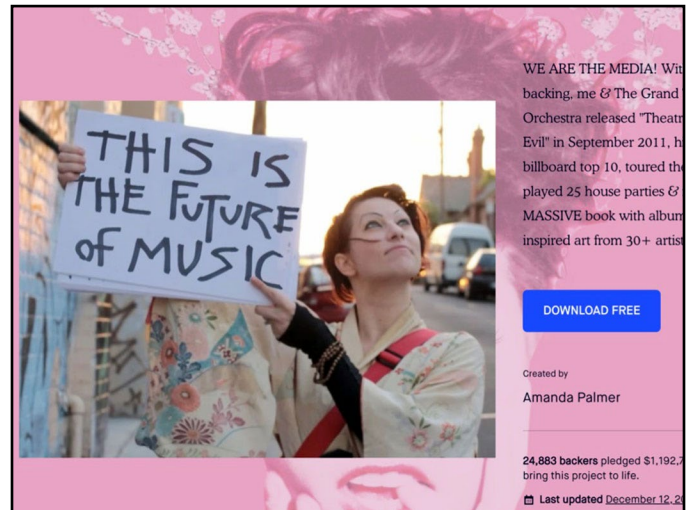


Figure 1. Amanda Palmer's Kickstarter campaign in 2011 was the first to raise over a million dollars for the development of an album.

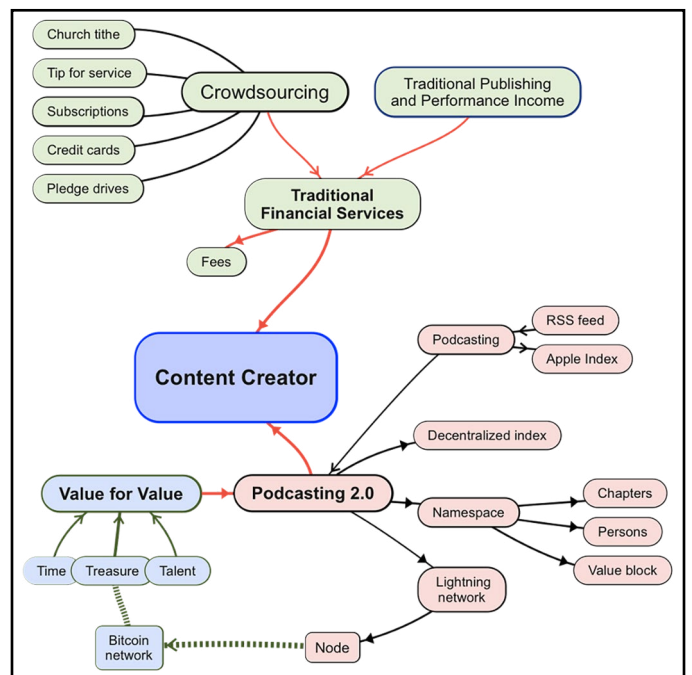


Figure 2. A mindmap showing some of the features of Podcasting 2.0 and Value for Value.

## Crowdsourcing

Figure 2 shows some of the avenues for crowdsourcing in the past, including the church offering plate, tips in the service industry, Patreon subscriptions, and pledge drives on public television. Non-cash donations that go through the banking and credit card system are subject to fees that take a bite out of the money that would otherwise go to content creators. Chinese software giant Tencent has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars from fans to artists and opened the way for Apple mobile apps to allow tipping. In the United States platforms like Twitch, YouTube Live, TikTok, and Facebook Live make it possible for presenters to earn thousands of dollars from their audience. A significant part of crowdsourcing revenue is eaten up by the tech companies. Apple and Facebook take about 30 percent of the donations that flow through their apps. Tencent takes a whopping 70 percent, and PayPal and Patreon from 3 to 10 percent. Podcasting is still in its early days, but offers an opportunity for musicians to retain a larger share of what their fans send them. Podcasting 2.0 offers a new opportunity to support content providers with much lower transaction fees since it allows users to send funds directly to those they wish to support in the form of Bitcoin micropayments.

The porn industry has been a driving force in many areas of tech, including VCRs, affiliate programs, user-friendly payment systems, video compression, streaming services, and the speed and bandwidth of the internet itself. It is faced with many of the same problems as musicians in terms of the abundance of free content and they have been looking for other income streams like podcasts and interactivity. Figure 3 shows part of a screen with a highlight added to the “Give GOLD” button. Viewers are able to watch and interact with a performer through comments. Research has shown that impulse buying increases when the time delay is reduced between the moment of enjoying the product and payment. Having the payment button in close proximity increases the likelihood of a payment from the audience. Amazon noticed that many items were being left in shoppers’ carts, and the implementation of the “Buy Now” option on the product pages has increased sales.

## Podcasting

In 2000 Adam Curry came up with the idea of podcasting, and two years later had convinced Dave Winer to add it to the RSS specification. An RSS file is a text file that defines where the various assets are for a piece of digital media. It includes information such as the name of the episode and the addresses of where graphic, audio, and video files are hosted on a server on the internet. Curry made an index of where all the RSS feeds were stored, which could then be accessed by podcast playing apps. Steve Jobs asked him if Apple could get a copy of the index, which was then built

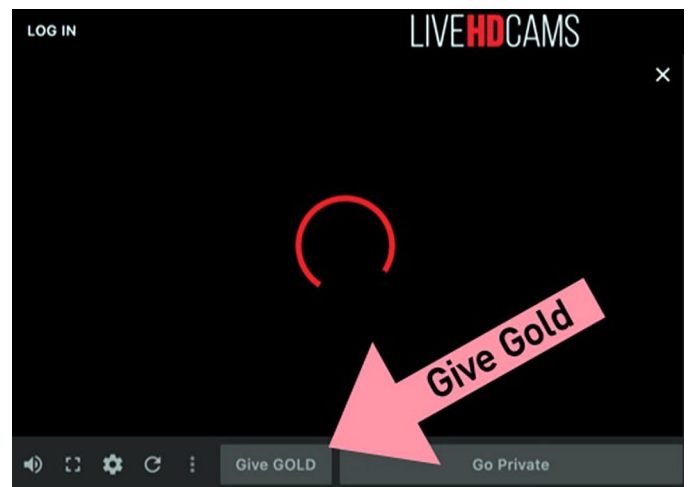


Figure 3. The tipping button is right underneath where the performer would appear.

into iTunes in 2005. For over a decade Apple did a good job of keeping it updated while making it available to other apps so that they could access the podcasts described there.

Writing an RSS feed by hand is not for the faint of heart. Podcast hosting companies often offer their podcasters a software utility to help format a podcast’s details into the proper machine-readable format. I use the podcast hosting company JustCast for my podcasts. Figure 4 shows a part of its RSS generation process. After uploading the jpg thumbnail of the cover art for my album *Peace Pieces* the host shows what the artwork URL address will be for the file.

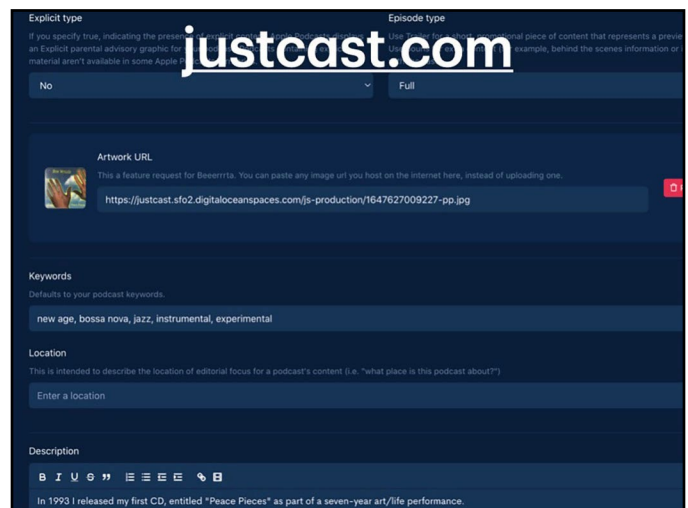


Figure 4. Using the JustCast utility to create an RSS feed for *Peace Pieces*.

After the user finishes loading in all the various assets the software compiles the information into an RSS feed. Figure 5 highlights the URL address for the artwork in the RSS file which tells the podcast player where to find it at the point where it is supposed to be displayed by the podcast player.

```

<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<rss version="2.0" xmlns:itunes="http://www.itunes.com/dtds/podcast-1.0.dtd" xmlns:atom="http://www.w3.org/2005/Atom" xmlns:dc="http://purl.org/dc/elements/1.1/" xmlns:podcast="https://podcastindex.org/namespace">
  <channel>
    <title>Peace Pieces</title>
    <link>http://robertwilley.com</link>
    <description>
      <![CDATA[<p>In 1993 I released my first CD, entitled "Peace Pieces" as part of a seven-
      <li>Roland Sound Canvas module</li><li>Yamaha KX76 keyboard controller</li><li>Korg Wavestatic
      <li>Panasonic SV-3700 DAT recorder</li></ul><p><br></p><p>Software:</p><ul><li>Studio Vision
      Instruments (Robert Willey)</li></ul><p><br></p><p>The sounds and processes had a big effect
      half the album's songs. It allowed the user to set boundaries on random events that varied
      working in this environment comes through in the recordings. The era ended when my Macintosh
      Apple's operating systems. The other important piece of software, Studio Vision also went by
      could be linked together, resulting in clear jumps from one texture to another. The computer
      <a href="http://willshare.com/willeyrk/creative/papers/ALGIMP/" rel="noopener noreferrer" tar
      <br></p><p> Apple Macintosh
      Yamaha KX76 controller</p><p> Mackie mixer</p><p><img src=
      tone module</p><p> Lex
      </description>
    </channel>
    <language>en</language>
    <pubDate>Fri, 18 Mar 2022 18:08:43 +0000</pubDate>
    <lastBuildDate>Fri, 18 Mar 2022 18:08:43 +0000</lastBuildDate>
    <copyright>copyright 2022 Robert Willey</copyright>
    <image>
      <title>Peace Pieces</title>
      <url>https://justcast.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/js-production/1647631442119-pp.jpg</url>
      <link>http://robertwilley.com</link>
    </image>
  </rss>

```

Figure 5. The RSS feed file contains the names and locations of all the assets, including the address of the cover art (highlighted). The file is stored on the host's server and read by podcasting apps.

### Podcasting 2.0

Over the years, the number of podcast RSS feeds in Apple's index gradually increased. In 2018 they de-platformed Alex Jones by removing him from the index, which had the effect of taking him out of Apple podcasting, but also made it impossible for users of other podcast player programs to find his work. In 2020 Adam Curry, Dave Jones, and their partners decided to add new functionality to podcasting that would make it resistant to censorship and not be dependent on companies like Apple, Google, Spotify, or Amazon that can change the terms of service and disrupt a podcaster's business. It is risky to build a business on another company that can change who can participate and how they will be compensated. Podcasting 2.0 was built on a decentralized index that now has over four million RSS feeds listed. New features were also added by adding new namespace tags that can be used in RSS feeds, three of which appear in Figure 6. Podcast episodes can now be divided into chapters, each with its own artwork. The people involved in the production can be defined as persons, and the value block specifies to

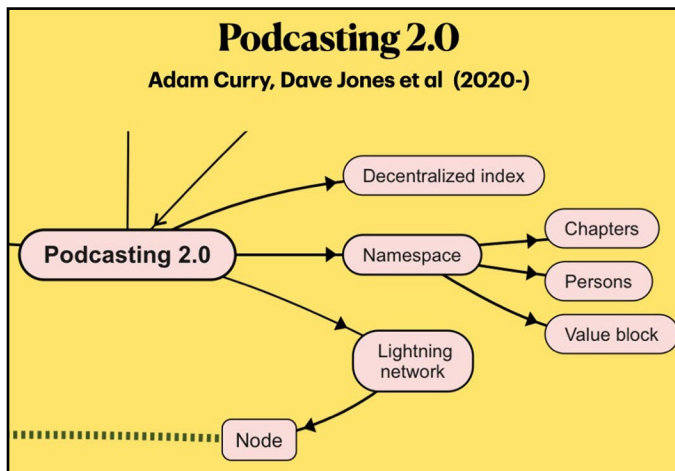


Figure 6. Podcasting 2.0 includes new namespace tags like chapters, person, and the value block.

whom and in what percentage each participate will be paid from revenue.

The <medium> tag extends the types of media that can be recognized in a podcast, such as music, documentaries, audio books, newsletters, and books. Chapter art is displayed in a Podcasting 2.0-enabled app, making it easier for listeners to search for and jump to locations of interest (see Figure 7).

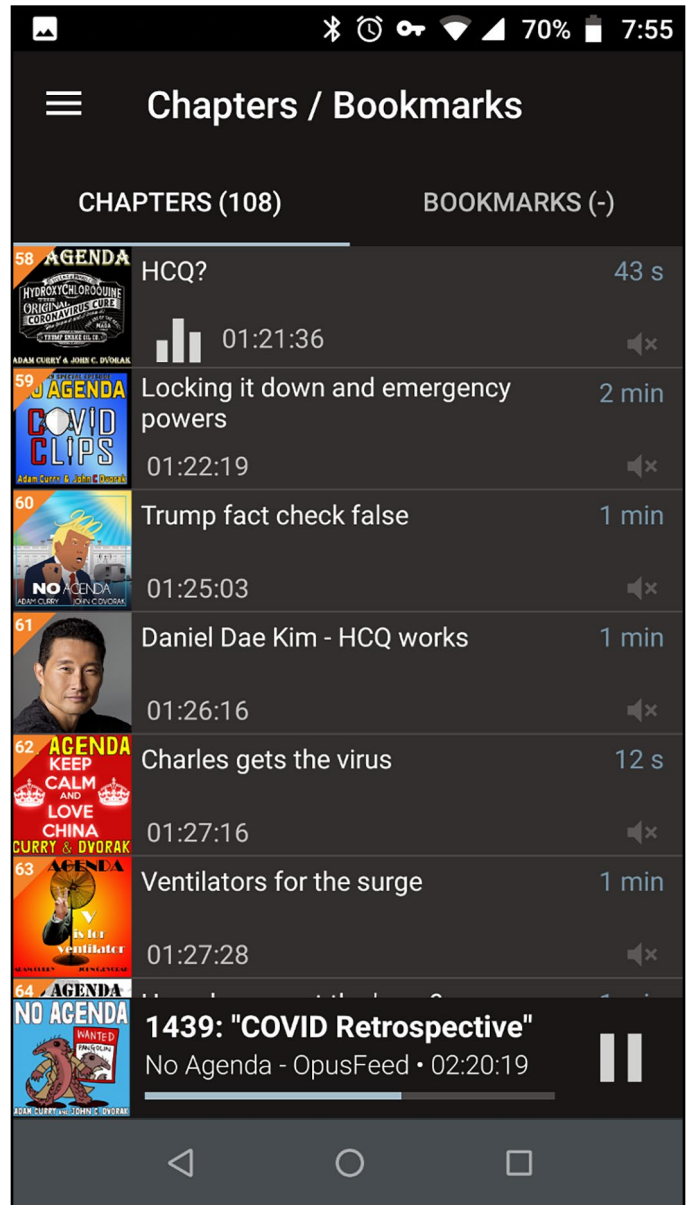


Figure 7. New namespace tags include transcripts, chapters, and soundbites. Clicking on a chapter marker will cause the player to jump to specific points in the program.

While listening, the new artwork pops up at the point each new chapter starts (see Figure 8).

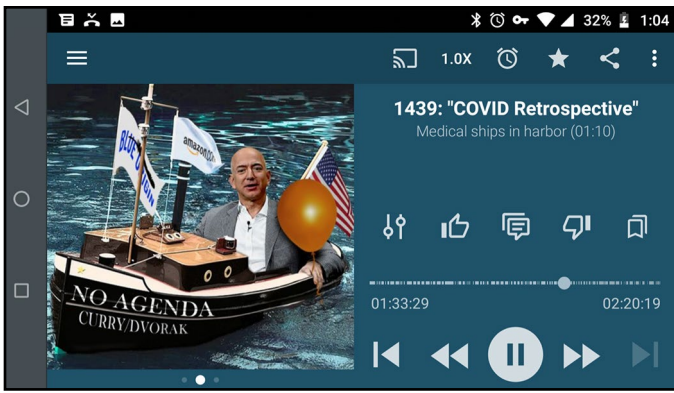


Figure 8: The chapter art pops up in the player, facilitating a richer media experience.

### Podcasting 2.0 Apps

Podcasting 2.0 incorporates a payment system using Bitcoin, the programmable money system that runs natively on the internet. A fee is offered to miners to record each transaction on the blockchain ledger, and it takes up to ten minutes to settle. Podcasting 2.0 takes advantage of the Lightning Network, a second layer that runs on top of Bitcoin to allow secure off-chain transactions. The choice of using Lightning turned out to be a wise one, since it has continued to grow in popularity. The Lightning Network charges much lower fees and settles transactions more quickly, making it ideal for creating a system of micropayments, which has many positive features for musicians getting support from their fans. A micropayment transaction of a few cents would be absorbed by the process of writing it to the Bitcoin ledger. Lightning is much faster and cheaper.

The <valueRecipient> tag can function like a mini contract, making it easy to create splits among composers, performers, engineers, producers, artists, programmers, guests, and anyone else with whom one wants to share revenue. In the future it could offer a way to untie the Gordian Knot of impediments to sampling, where samples could be licensed from record companies and composers. In the meantime, Podcasting 2.0 works best with original content since no agreement is in place with SoundExchange or other agency to license copyrighted material from publishers and record companies.

Able Kirby and Sir Spencer decided to record an album, *Stay Awhile*, as a proof of concept for utility of Podcasting 2.0 to distribute music. They discuss their process of collaborating remotely on recording the tracks and their vision for decentralized music on the podcast AbleKraft (see Figure 9).

Figure 10 shows the <valueRecipient> block from the RSS feed where the split is defined. Each recipient needs to have a Lightning node to send payments to. The community is looking for ways to simplify the onboarding of musicians making it easier to create Bitcoin wallets and nodes. I have



Figure 9. The Podcast Index's listing of *Stay Awhile* shows graphically the 50/50 royalty split between its creators.

created a website [MusicCasting.org](http://MusicCasting.org) to share what I have learned in the process of setting up a node and linking it to my podcasts.

```
<podcast: value type="lightning" method="keysend" suggested="0.000010000">
  <podcast: valueRecipient name="AbleKirby"
    address="02f1962328552371769881a9f49c192c0df261f3e0bdf4cd68a4f6d449cc6fd4ad"
    split="50"/>
  <podcast: valueRecipient name="SirSpencer"
    address="03ecb3ee55ba6324d40bea174de096dc9134cb35d990235723b37ae9b5c49f4f53"
    split="50"/>
</podcast: value>
```

Figure 10. This <value> block specifies a 50/50 split and includes the address of each participant's Lightning node public key in order to correctly route their share.

A list of modern podcast apps that are implementing the new 2.0 features can be found at [newpodcastapps.com](http://newpodcastapps.com) (see Figure 11). [CurioCaster](http://CurioCaster) was the first to work in a browser, making it easy to try out the new features without installing any new software.

Compatible apps		
<a href="http://newpodcastapps.com">http://newpodcastapps.com</a>		
Podfriend app, podcast player, open source	Chapters, Funding, Location, Person, Sat Streaming, Search, Transcript, Value	Web, Windows
CurioCaster app, podcast player	Alternate Enclosure, Boostagrams, Chapters, Funding, Sat Streaming, Search, Transcript, Value	Mobile, Web
Fountain app, podcast player	Boostagrams, Chapters, Person, Sat Streaming, Search, Value	Android, Web, iOS
mp.money app	Alternate Enclosure, Chapters, Funding, Search, Transcript, Value	Web
Castamatic app, podcast player	Boostagrams, Chapters, Funding, Sat Streaming, Search, Value	iOS
Breez app, podcast player, open source	Chapters, Sat Streaming, Search, Value	Android, iOS

Figure 11. The top of the list of Podcasting 2.0-enabled apps.

## Value for Value

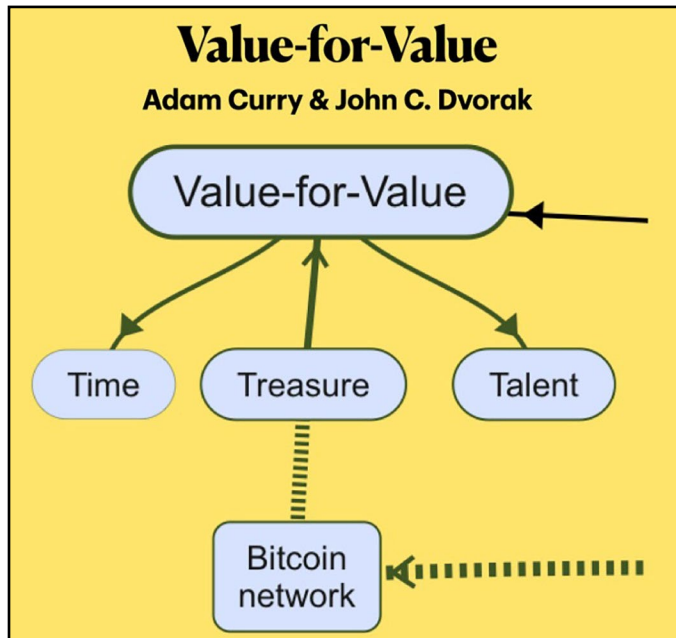


Figure 12. Value can be sent as time, treasure, or talent.

John C. Dvorak and Adam Curry developed and have used the Value for Value concept to support their *No Agenda* podcast for over a decade. They decided to go directly to their listeners instead of relying on advertising in order to be free of censorship. The pitch basically goes, “We don’t want to use paywalls to try to limit access or to rely on advertising. We give you our content for free and ask you to decide how much value you have received from it. Put that into a number that is meaningful to you, and send that to us in the form of time, treasure, or talent.” An example Curry sometimes uses for comparison is the cost of a pair of movie tickets and a tub of popcorn. He laments that iTunes priced every song at 99 cents, and says that the Beatles’ song “She Loves You” is worth much more than that to him. In addition to the financial support that has allowed them to support themselves and their families, they have also received donations in the form of time and talent, resulting in a rich media experience that incorporates the audio clips, jingles, and remixes that their “producers” send in, and benefit from the skills from people who maintain their servers, create chapter markers, a mechanism for submissions of episode and chapter art, a merch store, a meetup site, and a platform for chatting during the live broadcasts.

Podcasting 2.0 apps allow the users to set a nominal default rate of support to content creators. While you are listening, you can automatically be streaming fractions of Bitcoin in the background, which can easily add up to exceed what one would earn from Spotify. CurioCaster allows listeners to “boost” them in two ways. A “sat” (satoshi) is worth one hundred millionth of a bitcoin. With the preferences set as

in Figure 13, a listener has set their preferences to stream 100 sats (about 2 cents) a minute, and if they feel the urge to send more at some point can click on the “Boost” button to send 1,000 sats (20 cents), along with a “Boostagram” comment. Comments can be made privately to the hosts, or available cross platform to listeners using any other podcast player app.

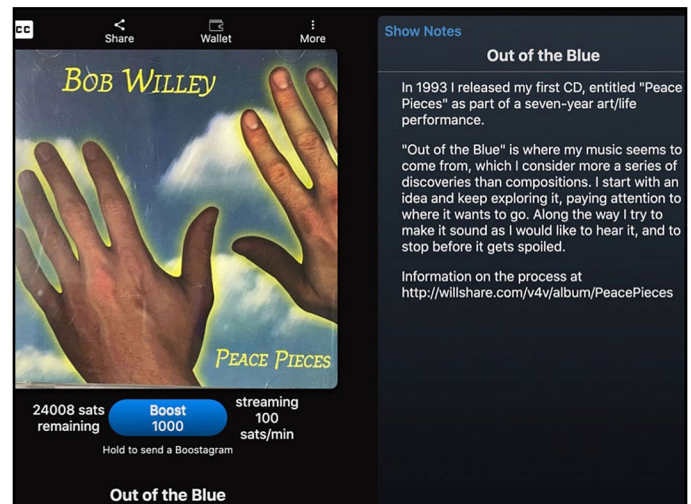


Figure 13. CurioCaster gives the listener an option to continuously stream sats and intermittently send an additional boost.

## My Podcasting 2.0 and Value for Value Projects

During the past year I have been transitioning my business to the Value for Value model. Now deep into my Golden Decade as a senior citizen, time and energy are at a premium. I don’t want to go anywhere I don’t want to go, wear clothes I don’t want to wear, be around people I don’t want to be around, or rent my time doing things I don’t want to do. I only want to do the things that I love doing, that engage my individual combination of skills and interests. When taking on side jobs to my academic work, I don’t agree to do things that I won’t love to do, and in those cases any financial reward is just a bonus. Instead of quoting a fee, I ask people to consider what value they are getting, and to give me that, and find that it is usually close to what I in the past would have asked for, and I am willing to work, in effect, on a sliding scale for people who don’t have money in the bank. I am also open to the possibility of encountering people in the future who will be in a position to offer more. Gaining confidence in asking for support will be necessary to make the system profitable.

I have repurposed four albums of music already released on BandCamp and Spotify, and am starting new podcasts—one of playalong tracks, and another on how to develop independence playing Brazilian rhythms on drumset. [The video presentation](#) of this paper demonstrates how “boosts” are sent from Podcasting 2.0 apps and are received on my RaspBlitz Lightning node (see Figure 14).



Figure 14. My RaspiBlitz: a combination of a \$50 Raspberry Pi computer, free software, and \$150 hard drive combine to create an online cash register and payment processing system.

I invented a web app to help people sing songs together by synchronizing lyrics on cell phones and am asking users to send support through PayPal, checks to my P.O. box, or Bitcoin to my Lightning node.

I created a website to help onboard musicians to Podcasting 2.0 and Value for Value ([MusicCasting.org](https://musiccasting.org)) with links to these projects and the resources I used to create and manage my node, and to the service providers that I am using, like Voltage (for a second node) and JustCast (podcast host). In addition to financial support, I welcome the time and talent of others to help develop the SongSync app, and to contribute additional background tracks.

The info screen on the RaspiBlitz indicates its public key address on the Lightning Network (see Figure 15).

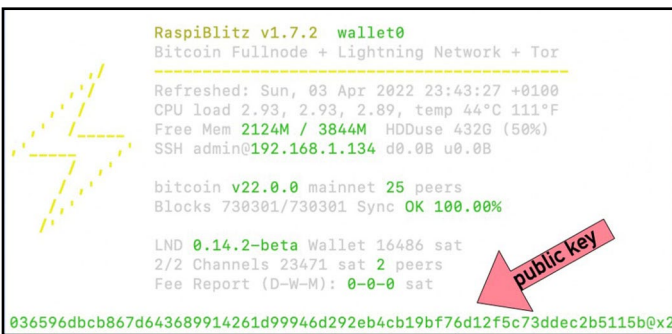


Figure 15. The RaspiBlitz display shows my public key.

The public key is added to an RSS feed using the host's authoring utility (see Figure 16). The RSS authoring utility writes an RSS feed, which now includes the public key for the node where donations will be sent (Figure 17). Helipad is a software program that runs on the RaspiBlitz to monitor boosts as they arrive (Figure 18).

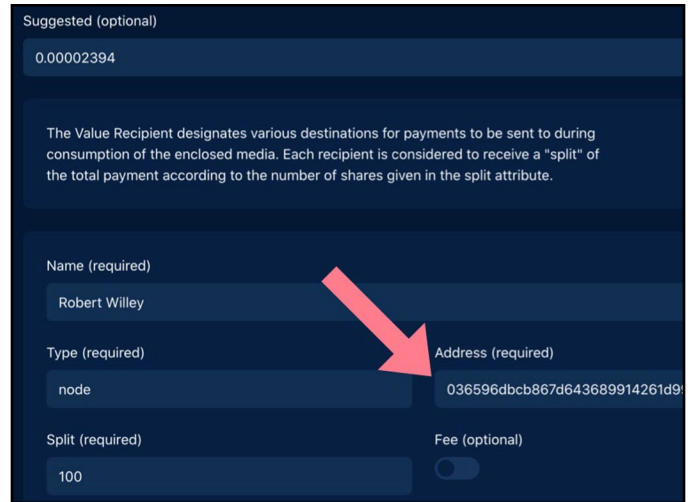


Figure 16. The public key is put into the JustCast utility program to create the RSS feed for my podcasts.



Figure 17. The utility writes the public key for the node into the RSS feed for a podcast.

value_msat	value_msat_total	action	sender	app	message	podcast	epi
3092	4850000	5000000	2	"Dr Dub"	"CurioCaster"	"A thousand points of light!"	"Peace Pieces" "So
3048	9500000	10000000	2	*	"CurioCaster"	*	"Peace Pieces" "So
31618	9500000	10000000	2	*	"CurioCaster"	*	"Into the Blue" "Ma
3475	4750000	10000000	2	"Robert"	"CurioCaster"	"1000 from curiocaster"	"Peace Pieces" "No
3630	4900000	5000000	2	"@rkwilley"	"Fountain"	"Go Music 2.0! from Dr. Dub"	"Peace Pieces" "Ou
11388	1173000	1234000	2	"SirSpencer"	"CurioCaster"	"Test boost!"	"Peace Pieces" "No

Figure 18. Helipad reports on the boosts and comments as they are received on the RaspiBlitz.

### A New Opportunity

Bitcoin can be an investment opportunity and store of value, especially for those who bought in during its early days (see Figure 19). While it may still be part of a long-term investment strategy, a bigger opportunity for us today may be to become involved in businesses that are built on it. I am now spending hundreds of dollars to earn pennies, but am operating nodes to have a concrete place to organize new concepts and develop a vocabulary about servers, nodes, liquidity, and fees, and see it as cost-effective in comparison to paying services like PayPal and Mastercard.



Figure 19. People who bought Bitcoin before 2021 have enjoyed a big run up in value.



**Robert Willey** teaches music industry and songwriting, and has written books about Creole Fiddle, Brazilian piano, Music Production, Music Industry, Music Appreciation, and the History of Rock and Roll. More information at [rkwilley.com](http://rkwilley.com).

## Endnotes

1. Amanda Palmer, “Theatre Is Evil: the album, art book and tour,” *Kickstarter*, Dec. 12, 2018, [www.kickstarter.com/projects/amandapalmer/amanda-palmer-the-new-record-art-book-and-tour](http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/amandapalmer/amanda-palmer-the-new-record-art-book-and-tour).
2. Amanda Palmer, “The Art of Asking.” *TED Conferences, LLC*, Feb. 1, 2013, [www.ted.com/talks/amanda\\_palmer\\_the\\_art\\_of\\_asking?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/amanda_palmer_the_art_of_asking?language=en).



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**PROCEEDINGS  
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