

Curatorial Podcasts
Chaired by Nicole Cahill and Sara Beam, Bata Shoe Museum;
Reporter, Veronica Quach

Section 1	
Summary	The Bata Shoe Museum began podcasting in October 2008. Monthly podcasts are available at http://www.batashoemuseum.ca/podcasts/index.shtml
Background	It was felt that the Bata Shoe Museum’s collection worked well with the podcasting concept and encouraged curatorial staff to select artefacts that were currently not on display to highlight in the podcasts. Since then we have had a monthly “Shoe Story” to highlight interesting items in our collection. In our second year, we did a special series to correspond with our Renaissance exhibition “On a Pedestal” in order to provide extra information and background for some of the exceptional artefacts
Challenges	We wanted to draw more interest to artefacts in our collection that are not currently on view in the museum (only 5-10% are on display), encourage people to examine them up close, while also driving traffic to our website and social media.
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an artifact • Research • Choose supporting photographs • Write the script • Record the mp3 file <p>Set up by a professional IT person, but using technology which can be easily taught to the staff who are not as comfortable with technology – Sarah recording in-house, then Nicole posting it on the Bata Shoe Museum’s website and social media.</p> <p>Decide year’s output in one session e.g. Year 1=Fashion; Year 2=Era; Year 3=Shoe Stories. Try to be relevant e.g. Justin Bieber’s shoes are very popular right now.</p>
Intended outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expose some of The Bata Shoe Museum’s less often displayed materials and/or pieces that have wonderful stories that are not clear at first glance. • Allows people outside the Museum to access the collection in a way that is portable, visual and auditory. • Build and promote a subscription based podcast series through RSS, which will allow interested listeners to be automatically informed when a new podcast is posted. • Focus and provide information on specific exhibitions, with a focus on increasing education to a higher degree than can be provided on labels. In this way the podcasts are useful to those

	who have seen an exhibition as well as those who have not.
Intended outputs	Posted on Bata website on a monthly basis, to coincide with our eNews bulletin; then posted on social media at various times throughout the month.
Section 2	
Obstacles and issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging to keep up because Sarah has many roles in the institution • No on-site person to do ‘tech help’ but staff have been able to learn the technology slowly
Actual outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcasts are one of top 3 things opened on website! • Ask for feedback, not necessarily by coming to the building but by response to social media • Most people open podcast from e-Newsletter – “Likes” on Facebook and reTweets on Twitter
Actual outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 podcasts to date • Outreach on social media
Section 3	
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t have to be 100% technologically savvy to do this! ‘Learn as you go’ is OK • Greatest support network is family and friends e.g. ask friend to help edit, respond • Education needs to work closely with curators to get content and produce the podcasts. Collaboration is a must.
Next steps	Continuing making podcasts. Try to cover a variety of shoes and interests. We plan to ask schools/university to help with more professional recording.

Questions and answers are drawn from two sessions, each with 9 participants.

Question: What is a podcast?

Nicole & Sarah – An audiofile that you can download or stream or access on iTunes. Ours are about 1 ½ minutes long. Most people stream the podcast from our website.

Question: What do you want people learn from the podcasts?

Nicole & Sarah – We are not trying to seize a “teachable moment” here. The podcasts are intended to be educational but we’re also trying to start a conversation with the listener. They’re intended for the masses, not for academia.

Question: Why do you post monthly?

Nicole & Sarah – We find this frequency works well for us. We're just two people who are *not* technologically savvy. This is not hugely time consuming even for us.

Question: How do you choose the objects?

Nicole & Sarah – A podcast is a different medium than an exhibit. It allows artifacts to shine that don't tie into a themed exhibit or are too fragile to put on display.

Question: Don't people want to see images of the pieces?

Nicole & Sarah – Users can look at a static image on the website while streaming audio. There is also a slideshow available on YouTube (Main image and approx. 4 pictures).

Question: Do you read a script or are you interviewed?

Nicole & Sarah – Basically it's me reading a script while being recorded. My photo is on the website so listeners can see who I am. I talk as if I am telling a story. I like it to sound conversational. Occasionally I deviate from the script so we no longer post transcripts on the site. You can do a more complicated podcast with interviews, pictures, etc. but we haven't the time or the staffing for that.

Question: Are the podcasts available in languages other than English?

Nicole & Sarah – Eventually, we hope to translate the podcasts into 14 of the most commonly spoken languages in Toronto. But currently, owing to the cost of translation, the podcasts are available only in English.

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Nicole Cahill, Public Relations and Social Media Coordinator, The Bata Shoe Museum

Nicole Cahill's Post-Graduate Diploma in Public Relations from Humber College in Toronto and Master of Arts Degree in History from Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador combine to make her a perfect fit as Public Relations and Social Media Coordinator for the Bata Shoe Museum.

Since 2008, Nicole has worked to incorporate new forms of web-based marketing and social networking into the Bata Shoe Museum's marketing plan. As well as increasing the Museum's online presence, she contributes to more traditional types of marketing and public relations to increase awareness and understanding of the Bata Shoe Museum and its mandate; among tourists, the local, national and international community, educational groups and the media.

Sarah M. Beam-Borg, Exhibition Manager / Assistant Curator, The Bata Shoe Museum

Sarah Beam-Borg brings curatorial, educational, project management and footwear history experience to the position of Exhibition Manager / Assistant Curator at the Bata Shoe Museum.

She received an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Waterloo, a Museum Management and Curatorship Diploma from Sir Sandford Fleming College and an Honours Bachelor of Education from Lakehead University.

She started her time at the Bata Shoe Museum in 1997 as a curatorial/conservation intern and was hired on completion of the placement as the Collections Manager, eventually working up to the position of Exhibition Manager and Assistant Curator. In that time she has worked extensively with the BSM collection doing research, artifact handling and preparation, exhibition planning and installation, copy writing and editing for galleries and publications, lecturing, coordinating inter-institutional loans, project management and media interviews.

Sarah combines her interests in world cultures with a fashion enthusiasm that makes for a perfect fit.