



SFU computing science students Oleg Titov (left) and Dmitry Nasanovich developed a digital audio recording system that will allow students to listen to lectures on their iPods and MP3 players.

## Podcast lectures let SFU students go wireless

### EDUCATION |

Some students can listen to their profs anywhere

BY MARKE ANDREWS  
VANCOUVER SUN

Next time you see a 20-year-old tuning out the world as she listens to her iPod, don't assume she's grooving on Shakira or Red Hot Chili Peppers. She may be studying.

Simon Fraser University is making available podcasts of lectures from more than 125 courses per semester at the Burnaby campus. Using a password, registered students and professors can tune in to them on their iPods and MP3 players.

You must be a student or teacher of these courses to receive the digital audio recordings, obtained by registering with [podcast.sfu.ca](http://podcast.sfu.ca),

although podcasts of public lectures by special guest speakers are available to the public.

So far, lectures are only available to students at the Burnaby campus, and not every course is available in podcast, but David Kaufman, director of the university's instructional development centre, said the university will soon make podcasts available to students at its downtown and Surrey campuses.

The fully automated technology was developed by SFU computing science students Dmitry Nasanovich and Oleg Titov. It began almost two years ago as a pilot program, but has spread due to high demand by the students.

Kaufman says thousands of students have tuned in to the podcasts.

There is no cost for downloading either class lectures or public lectures.

Other universities have used podcast lectures on a small scale, but SFU is the first in Canada to do it "on a produc-

tion-level large scale," says Kaufman.

Eighteen rooms in the Academic Quadrangle, and 10 rooms in the West Mall Complex, are hard-wired for recording, and wireless recording is available in other locations. Files of the lectures are available for listening within an hour of the lecture's completion. All class recordings are deleted once final exams have been written.

The lecturer holds the copyright to the material.

Canadian universities, including SFU, have used digital audio recordings of course material for online access for several years, but this new technology allows students greater access to lectures.

"By creating some software here, people have the ability to download to their iPod any one of these courses," says Kaufman.

SFU has also created [sfutv.ca](http://sfutv.ca), a Web-based television service, which is used to promote services such as the podcasts.

"If someone famous comes to give a talk at the university, we digitally record that," says Kaufman. "We're also taking some of the lectures that might be interesting to the public, such as criminology, and getting the faculty members to give us a little five-to-10-minute sound bite of the lectures so that it can be downloaded onto an iPod."

"It's a way that our university can start passing along our knowledge and expertise and become a better citizen."

Asked if it's possible for a student to cut all their classes and get their lessons via podcasts, Kaufman says, "It's possible to skip lectures. We're trying to move courses away from being solely lecture-based and more toward active learning, so that there's more activity in the courses."

A sales clerk at the SFU Microcomputer Store said he wasn't aware of any student buying an iPod for the express purpose of tuning in to lectures.

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## Industrial land shortage looms in Lower Mainland



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In the rush to make room for more and more people to live, the Lower Mainland is running out of space for us to make a living.

It's not just a dearth of office space in the downtown core — the region also has too little developable industrial land. Some of what could be home to industry is already used for housing or other purposes, some is set aside for open spaces or for specialized port or airport businesses, and some is badly located or environmentally inappropriate. And mostly in just one part of the region — 80 per cent of it is south of the Fraser River, and 46 per cent is within the city of Surrey.

Christina DeMarco, a planner with the GVRD, says there are about 6,800 acres of vacant industrial land in the region today, but it could be all filled up by 2020.

Ron Bagan, managing director of Collier's International corporate real estate offices in Western Canada, says all that competition for the land base means that fewer than half those 6,800 acres are actually available, and the crunch could come well before 2020.

Meanwhile, Bagan told a breakfast seminar held Thursday by the Urban Development Institute that the price of what industrial land is available in the region has shot up about 50 per cent in the last two years.

There has been a tendency for many years not to worry too much about industrial land shortages because — as every study shows and as is as plain as the nose on your face — the regional economy is shifting more and more toward the kinds of jobs that need offices, not plants.

But DeMarco and senior Vancouver planner Ronda Howard, who are both involved in a detailed studies of the region's growth, highlighted a point that's not so obvious.

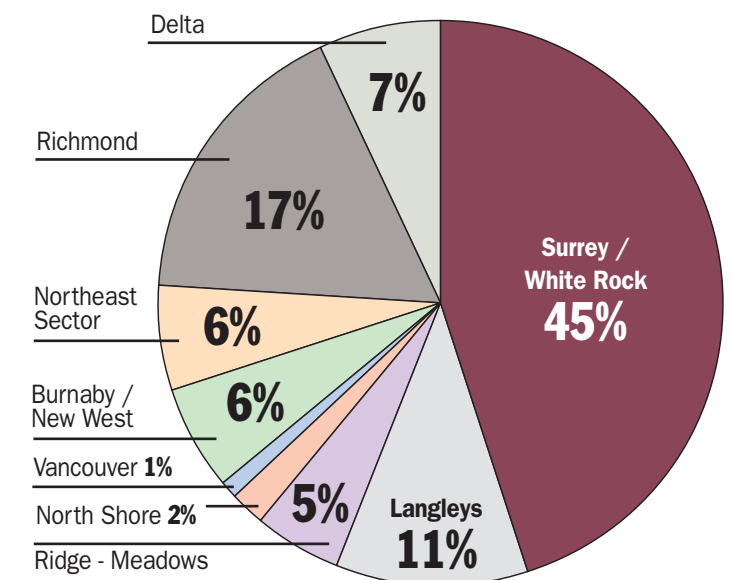
It's that, while white-collar sectors — especially business and commercial services, as well as education, health and social services — have been and will be the huge drivers in job creation here, they're not the only job sectors that are growing. Everything is — albeit the traditional blue-collar jobs at a much slower rate.

Thus, while activities like manufacturing and primary industry continue to shrink as a percentage of the regional economy, they're nevertheless showing slow but steady growth in the total number of jobs and total economic contribution they make.

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### Vacant industrial lands

Most available property in the Lower Mainland is south of the Fraser River.



VANCOUVER SUN

## Single detached housing starts up, multiple starts down in May

HOMES | Figures no surprise to CMHC analyst after multiple starts rose over several months

BY MICHAEL KANE  
VANCOUVER SUN

Housing starts in Greater Vancouver took one step back in May while prices continued to climb and home builders continued working flat out in the face of high demand and low supply.

Starts dipped 29 per cent to 1,270 units compared to the same month last year, according to figures released Thursday by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. Single detached starts were up 18 per cent to 490 units while multiple starts fell 44 per cent to 780 units.

That came as no surprise to Cameron Muir, senior market analyst with CMHC in Vancouver, who said "a short-lived dip" in new construction activity is typical after rising multiple starts over a number of months.

"We had three big months — February, March and April — which were huge in terms of

housing starts, particularly on the multi-family side," Muir said in an interview.

CMHC says the lull is only temporary. Starts are expected to climb eight per cent to 20,500 units this year, the third-highest total ever and the highest in more than a decade.

Year-to-date, housing starts in the Vancouver metropolitan area are up 19 per cent to 8,667 units, compared to the same period last year. Single detached starts are up 40 per cent to 2,251 units while multiple starts are up 13 per cent to 6,146 units, compared to the first five months of 2005.

Muir said new home inventories remain historically low — 10 times lower than six years ago — while demand is being driven by a healthy economy, robust job growth, rising wages in many sectors, strong consumer confidence and borrowing rates that have inched up but remain rela-

tively modest.

"What we have seen is demand in excess of what builders and developers have been able to build to date and that's one of the strongest reasons for prices to rise as strongly as they have."

CMHC expects prices to rise between 10 and 12 per cent this year, in line with construction costs, which could suggest some easing in the months ahead as affordability concerns drive more buyers from the market.

Prices for single family homes are already up 25 per cent in the first five months of this year, compared to the same period last year, according to the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver. Prices for condos are up 14 per cent and townhouses are up 13 per cent.

Year-over-year, the board says prices are up 30 per cent for detached homes, 21 per cent for condos and 16 per cent for townhouses.

Statistics Canada released data Thursday showing new home prices up only 6.1 per cent in the

Vancouver area for the 12 months to April, below the national average of 8.2 per cent, but the agency's Albert Near acknowledged that the survey's methodology is under review after criticism that it fails to accurately reflect the Greater Vancouver marketplace.

StatsCan excludes apartment condos which dominate the Vancouver new homes market and critics say the survey is over-reliant on tract home builders, who tend to be more active in the lower-priced, outer suburbs.

Nationally StatsCan's new housing price index rose 1.2 per cent in April, the biggest month-to-month increase since April 1989. Prices advanced in 14 of 21 metropolitan areas surveyed with Calgary leading the way for the seventh month in a row with a monthly increase of 4.7 per cent.

StatsCan registered a 0.9 per cent increase in Vancouver area prices in April, placing the metropolitan area fifth behind Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Montreal.

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