



AI Tools and Workflow for ISACo's Content Creation

Shared with NCCAE on October 22, 2025

Podcast Production Tools and Software

Overview

At the Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo), our podcast production process integrates several modern tools to streamline everything from scriptwriting and narration to editing and final publication. Each tool plays a specific role in creating professional, consistent, and engaging episodes for our listeners.

Below is an overview of the main software and services we use, including their functions, notable features, and current subscription costs (as of October 2025).

ElevenLabs (Voice Cloning and Text-to-Speech)

Purpose: Generate narrated audio using cloned or AI-generated voices.

Description: ElevenLabs offers advanced text-to-speech and voice-cloning technology, allowing users to replicate a speaker's voice for consistent, natural-sounding narration. It supports multiple voices, languages, and emotions, making it ideal for podcast narration and AI-generated dialogue.

Pricing:

- Free Plan: 10,000 credits* / month (\approx 10 minutes of audio)
- Starter: \$5 / month (30,000 credits, instant voice cloning, commercial license)
- Creator: \$22 / month (100,000 credits, professional cloning)
- Pro: \$99 / month (500,000 credits)
- Enterprise: Custom pricing for large-scale production

*Credits correspond to the number of characters or minutes of generated speech. The Starter or Creator tiers typically suit small organizations producing regular episodes.

Google NotebookLM (Script Development and Narrative Structuring)

Purpose: Draft scripts and conversational narratives using uploaded research and notes.

Description: NotebookLM, developed by Google, allows users to upload source documents and generate summaries, outlines, or scripts based on the content. It's especially useful for developing conversational storylines, summarizing policy briefs, or preparing narrative transitions.

Pricing:

- Free with a Google Account (base features)
- Google One AI Premium Plan: \$20 / month (for extended features and higher usage)

NotebookLM integrates with Google's Gemini models. While free for light users, larger teams or heavy usage may require the paid plan.

Soundstripe (Music and Sound Effects Library)

Purpose: Provide licensed music and sound effects for podcast intros, transitions, and beds.

Description: Soundstripe is a royalty-free audio library offering a wide selection of music tracks and sound effects cleared for use in podcasts, videos, and online content. Subscriptions include unlimited downloads with perpetual use licenses.

Pricing:

- Creator (Personal): \$9.99 / month (annual billing)
 - Pro (Commercial): \$19.99 / month (annual billing)
 - Pro Plus (Includes video assets): \$33.99 / month (annual billing)
 - Enterprise: Custom pricing for organizations needing multiple seats or additional legal protections
-

GarageBand (Audio Editing and Production)

Purpose: Record, edit, and mix multi-track podcast episodes.

Description: GarageBand is Apple's free digital-audio workstation for macOS and iOS. It supports multi-track editing, audio layering, sound effects, and transitions—all with a user-friendly interface ideal for podcast production.

Pricing: Free (included with macOS and iOS)

GarageBand offers more than enough capability for small- to mid-scale podcast production. For more advanced mixing or mastering features, Apple's Logic Pro is the natural upgrade.

ChatGPT (Scriptwriting and Editing Support)

Purpose: Assist with script drafting, conversational tone, and editing.

Description: ChatGPT is used to brainstorm episode topics, draft scripts, refine narrative flow, and polish written content for clarity and engagement. It can also generate show notes or summaries for publication.

Pricing:

- Free Plan: Access to GPT-3.5 model
- ChatGPT Plus: \$20 / month (access to GPT-4 and faster responses)
- Team and Enterprise Plans: Variable pricing for multi-user organizations

AI-generated scripts should always be reviewed and edited for accuracy and tone. The Plus plan offers significant performance and quality improvements over the free version.

Summary

Together, these tools form an efficient production pipeline:

- **ChatGPT** and **NotebookLM** handle ideation and scriptwriting.
- **ElevenLabs** provides narration using cloned or AI voices.
- **Soundstripe** adds music and effects.
- **GarageBand** brings everything together in the final mix.

This integrated workflow keeps production costs manageable while ensuring ISACo's podcasts maintain a professional, consistent sound.

Example AI Prompts Used for Podcast Creation

Overview

AI tools play an essential role in ISACo's podcast development process. They help generate, refine, and edit scripts that balance accuracy, clarity, and tone. Below are examples of prompts used with **ChatGPT** and **Google NotebookLM** to create episodes of *Counties Count*, ISACo's educational podcast hosted by Executive Director Joe McCoy.

Each prompt is carefully designed to elicit a specific style or tone—whether conversational and engaging or straightforward and news-like—while maintaining focus on issues important to Illinois counties.

ChatGPT Prompts

Prompt 1: Conversational, Engaging Style

Purpose: Create scripts that are fun, conversational, and lightly humorous—similar to the style of Tim Ferriss or Joe Rogan—while remaining informative and politically aware.

Prompt Text: Act as a podcast scriptwriter. The scripts you create are fun, have a touch of humor, and are in the style of Tim Ferriss and Joe Rogan. The name of the podcast is "Counties Count" and it's hosted by ISACo Executive Director Joe McCoy, who aims to educate people about topics and issues affecting counties. The scripts you create are informative and fun but also take into account political challenges that affect the pursuit of what is beneficial for counties. Your task is to write a script for the next episode of the podcast based on the content provided below. The script will have an intro, 3 sections of content, and an outro. Start by only writing the intro then ask for permission and wait for permission to proceed before writing each of the 3 sections and the outro. You will fail at your task if you do not wait for confirmation to proceed before writing each of the 3 sections and outro.

How It's Used: Employed when ISACo wants a conversational or narrative-style episode that blends education with entertainment, allowing for a personable listening experience.

Prompt 2: Straightforward Informational Style

Purpose: Create scripts in a neutral, factual tone suitable for legislative updates or policy briefings.

Prompt Text: Act as a podcast scriptwriter. Write a script that conveys the subject matter in a straight-forward informational style similar to a news program. The name of the podcast is "Counties Count" and it's hosted by ISACo Executive Director Joe McCoy, who aims to educate people about topics and issues affecting counties. Please use the content provided below to draft the script.

How It's Used: Best for weekly legislative recaps or content where clarity and neutrality are prioritized over conversational tone.

Google NotebookLM Prompts

Purpose: Google NotebookLM is used to create conversational podcast scripts between two virtual hosts, generating natural dialogue that helps listeners engage with policy or legislative topics.

Prompt Text: The hosts should begin by welcoming listeners to another episode of the Illinois State Association of Counties' Counties Count Podcast. At the end of the podcast, the hosts

should thank the audience for listening and tell them that we look forward to their joining us for the next episode. The hosts should always refer to the Illinois State Association of Counties by its full name, not the acronym “ISACo.” Any reference to “NACo” should be pronounced as “NAYCO.”

How It’s Used: NotebookLM produces a dialogue between two hosts, with branded introductions and closings, keeping tone consistent and accessible.

Example AI Outputs

Overview

The following examples show how the same topic—*county-level disaster recovery funding*—can be written in different styles by ChatGPT and NotebookLM.

ChatGPT Example Output

Conversational and Engaging

Welcome back to *Counties Count*, the podcast where we unpack the issues shaping Illinois counties—from budgets to broadband—and everything in between. I’m Joe McCoy, Executive Director of the Illinois State Association of Counties. Today we’re talking about something that doesn’t make headlines until it has to: disaster recovery funding. ...

Straightforward Informational

This is *Counties Count*, a production of the Illinois State Association of Counties. I’m Joe McCoy. ... In this episode we’ll discuss disaster recovery funding for counties and the challenges local governments face during the reimbursement process. ...

Google NotebookLM Example Output

Host 1: Welcome everyone to another edition of the *Illinois State Association of Counties’ Counties Count Podcast*.

Host 2: Thanks for joining us! Today we’re diving into disaster recovery funding and what it means for Illinois counties. ...

Host 1: Thanks for listening, and we look forward to your joining us for the next episode of the *Illinois State Association of Counties’ Counties Count Podcast*.

Key Differences Noted

Aspect	ChatGPT	Google NotebookLM
Output Format	Single-narrator script	Two-host conversation
Tone	Conversational or formal	Dynamic and colloquial
Strength	Structured and efficient	Engaging and relatable
Weakness	Less spontaneous	May need editing for length

Use of the Plaud Note in the Workflow

What Is the Plaud Note?

The **Plaud Note** is a compact AI-powered voice recorder that captures audio and converts it into searchable text. It is often described as a credit-card-sized recorder that attaches magnetically to a phone and syncs with the Plaud AI app. Key features include high-quality recording, automatic transcription, executive-summary generation, and the ability to export transcripts into report formats.

Typical Cost and Plans (2025):

- Device: ≈ \$159 (one-time purchase)
- Free Plan: ~300 minutes transcription / month
- Pro Plan: ≈ \$19.99 / month (1,200 minutes + AI Pro features)
- Annual Unlimited Plan: ≈ \$239.99 / year

How It Fits into ISACo's Process

1. **Recording:** Used to capture presentations and legislative hearings.
2. **Transcription:** Audio uploaded to the app for accurate text conversion.
3. **Executive Summary:** Prompted within the app to create concise summaries of key points.
4. **Downstream AI Use:** Executive summaries are fed into ChatGPT to generate podcast scripts, articles, social posts, or other outputs.

This workflow reduces manual notetaking and ensures accuracy while accelerating content production.

Prompting Plaud Note and Integrating Outputs

Common Prompts

1. Executive Summary

Please generate an executive summary of this recording. Highlight key points, themes, and conclusions discussed. Include speakers and any decisions made.

2. Key Takeaways

Summarize this meeting into 3–5 key takeaways for county officials.

3. Structured Report

Create a report with sections for Background, Discussion Summary, Key Points, and Next Steps.

Example Workflow

1. Plaud Note records hearing → transcript + executive summary.
2. ChatGPT prompt: *Use the following executive summary to create a 5-minute podcast script for “Counties Count.”*
3. ChatGPT produces a script.
4. ElevenLabs voices it. GarageBand mixes it with Soundstripe music.

Benefits

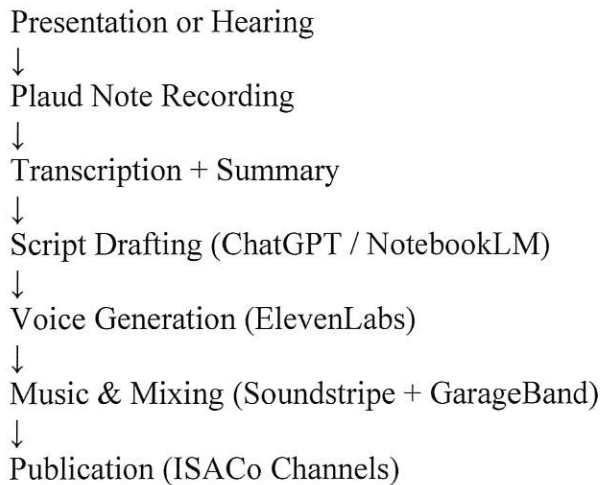
- Time savings and accuracy.
- Multiple content formats from one recording.
- Consistent branding and messaging.

End-to-End AI Podcast Production Workflow
--

Step-by-Step

Step	Tool(s)	Purpose	Output
1	Plaud Note	Record event audio	Audio file
2	Plaud App	Transcribe + summarize	Transcript / Summary
3	ChatGPT / NotebookLM	Draft script	Podcast script
4	ElevenLabs	Generate voice narration	Voice audio
5	Soundstripe + GarageBand	Add music / mix / edit	Final audio
6	Review + Publish	Upload and share episode	Published podcast

Text-Flow Visualization



Advantages

- Efficient and repeatable workflow
- Professional sound with minimal staff time
- Adaptable outputs for articles and social media

Implementation Tips

1. Start with free tiers to learn the workflow.
2. Build a prompt library for consistency.
3. Create review checkpoints before publication.
4. Document brand standards for tone and naming.

Repurposing Plaud Note Summaries for Social Media

Overview

The summaries and transcripts generated by the **Plaud Note** offer a powerful foundation for social media storytelling. By distilling complex policy discussions and legislative hearings into concise, plain-language insights, these summaries make it easy to produce informative and engaging posts for **Facebook** and **X (Twitter)**.

This approach ensures that ISACo's communications stay timely, accessible, and consistent across platforms, allowing important county issues to reach audiences beyond traditional newsletters and podcasts.

Creating Facebook Posts

Purpose:

Share clear, visually engaging summaries of legislative activity, county initiatives, or policy developments.

Best Practices:

- Use two to three short paragraphs (under 100 words total).
- Include plain-language descriptions that explain “what happened” and “why it matters.”
- Add relevant hashtags and tag partner organizations when appropriate.
- Link to related *Counties Count* podcast episodes or ISACo articles.

Example Post:

COUNTIES COUNT UPDATE

This week, the Senate Local Government Committee discussed legislation aimed at improving coordination between counties and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. County representatives emphasized the importance of flexibility and funding for local response efforts.

ISACo will continue working with lawmakers to ensure counties have the resources they need to serve their residents effectively.

 Listen to the latest *Counties Count* episode: [link]
#CountiesCount #IllinoisCounties #PublicPolicy

Creating Posts for X (Twitter)

Purpose:

Deliver quick, digestible updates that highlight one key takeaway or quote from a Plaud Note summary or hearing.

Best Practices:

- Limit to 1–3 short sentences (under 280 characters each).
- Use plain language and an active tone.
- Include one or two relevant hashtags and a link to longer content.
- Avoid jargon or acronyms unless well known to the audience.

Example Posts:

Counties urged lawmakers to extend FEMA reimbursement timelines during today’s House hearing. Read more about it on our website [link].

“Stronger coordination means stronger counties.” Highlights from today’s House Counties and Townships Committee hearing, via the *Counties Count* Podcast. #IllinoisCounties

Using ChatGPT to Generate Social Media Posts

After Plaud Note produces an executive summary, you can prompt ChatGPT to automatically generate social media content.

Example Prompt:

Using the following executive summary, create three Facebook posts and three X posts that summarize the key takeaways in a professional, engaging tone. Each post should encourage readers to learn more or listen to the latest Counties Count episode.

This ensures fast turnaround and consistent messaging while freeing time for strategic review and audience engagement.

Benefits of Social Media Repurposing

- **Efficiency:** Transcripts and summaries become ready-to-post content.
- **Engagement:** Short-form updates drive traffic to ISACo’s longer-form content.
- **Consistency:** Messaging aligns across newsletters, podcasts, and social media.
- **Reach:** Posts help educate policymakers, officials, and the public on county issues in real time.

Conclusion

ISACo’s *Counties Count* podcast and communication strategy illustrate how emerging AI tools can streamline professional storytelling. From live recording through the **Plaud Note**, to script generation with **ChatGPT** and **NotebookLM**, to voice production and editing with **ElevenLabs**, **Soundstripe**, and **GarageBand**, each component of this workflow saves time while maintaining message clarity and consistency.

By pairing transcription-based summaries with creative AI tools, ISACo transforms everyday information—like hearings and presentations—into multi-format content that informs, educates, and engages Illinois counties and their residents.

This integrated model not only modernizes podcast production but also serves as a replicable blueprint for peer organizations seeking to enhance communication, accessibility, and public awareness through responsible use of artificial intelligence.