

Podcast – A New Format in Journalism

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Abstract: This scientific article provides a comprehensive and skillful exploration of what a podcast is, its origins, its role and significance in journalism, and its potential as a new media format.

Keywords: Audio file, podcast, format, brand, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, YouTube, Podbean.

Introduction: In recent years, podcasts have become a favorite source of information and entertainment for millions of people around the world. Once perceived as simple audio files, podcasts have now evolved into one of the most powerful tools in the media landscape. Podcasts can convey almost any kind of information—interviews with experts, lectures on fascinating topics, stand-up comedy, and more. According to Ekaterina Plakunova, head of the UpMarketing communications agency, all of this can be accessed through podcast content.

A podcast is a rapidly growing new media format that consists of audio or video programs made available on the internet for listening or viewing. Unlike traditional radio or television programs, podcasts are consumed on demand, giving users a high level of flexibility.

The word "podcast" is a blend of "pod" (as in "earbuds") and "broadcast." It was first coined by British journalist Ben Hammersley in his article "Sound Revolution." The concept of podcasts gained momentum with the launch of Apple's iPod, and the format began to develop rapidly in the early 2000s. As internet access expanded, more people began creating and distributing their own content through social networks and dedicated platforms. The key feature of this format is the ability to listen or watch it whenever and wherever one chooses.

Primarily in audio form, podcasts cover a vast range of topics, including politics, culture, technology, health, education, and more. According to statistical data, there are currently over 5 million podcasts with more

than 70 million episodes available to listeners. Anyone can find content that suits their interests—from political commentary to true crime stories.

There are several popular platforms for podcast consumption worldwide. Among the most widely used is Spotify, which hosts not only music but also podcasts. Other well-known platforms include Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, YouTube, and Podbean. In Uzbekistan, YouTube is the most popular platform for podcast listening, as it does not require registration, has no access restrictions, and only requires an internet connection and a device. Locally, various types of podcasts are common, including interviews, psychological discussions, political commentary, and educational content.

These podcasts feature guests discussing topics ranging from politics and culture to personal stories. Podcasts are not only tools for entertainment or information but can also serve as powerful means of social influence. They often tackle pressing societal issues, conduct interviews, and organize discussions on various social, political, and cultural topics. In doing so, podcasts help generate new ideas, promote innovation, and encourage the free exchange of opinions.

Historical podcasts, interviews with participants of current events, and conversations with prominent or talented public figures create an engaging environment that makes listeners feel as if they are part of the narrative. The live dialogue format enhances this effect, producing a realistic conversational atmosphere.

Educational podcasts are aimed at knowledge transfer. Their topics may range from popular science to specialized subjects. Such podcasts enable listeners to gain new skills, broaden their horizons, and learn about recent developments across different fields.

Podcasts are convenient and accessible for listening across various devices, such as smartphones, computers, televisions, radios, and more—provided there is internet access. Another significant advantage of podcasts is their flexibility: users can listen or watch them at any time, pause and resume, or replay content as needed. Additionally, episodes can be downloaded and used offline. Listeners can also engage with hosts and guests by sharing feedback or asking questions.

It is crucial to define the podcast's format, topic, and target audience in advance. The more clearly the content is specified, the easier it is to attract a loyal listener base. Studying the interests of potential subscribers and tailoring the content to meet their expectations is also essential. The audio format requires attention, and many users may become distracted or miss key points, especially if the topic is not engaging enough.

Today, podcasts have become not only tools for entertainment and education but also powerful marketing instruments. Companies now use podcasts to promote their brands, communicate their missions, showcase expertise, and build trust with their audiences. This format helps businesses connect more personally with customers while providing valuable information in an easy-to-digest format.

For example, large tech companies use podcasts to share information about new products, and marketing agencies produce podcasts offering practical advice and case studies. Such projects serve not only as sources of information but also as tools for customer engagement.

Podcasts are a modern and versatile format that combines entertainment, education, and marketing functions. From amateur productions to high-quality professional programs, podcasts have become firmly embedded in the lives of millions across the globe. They offer opportunities to learn, enjoy stories, and meet new people, all while remaining highly accessible and open.

As a popular and interactive medium, podcasts play a vital role in providing audiences with content tailored to their interests and needs. Their unique features and the opportunities they offer set them apart from traditional media. In the future, podcasts are expected to become even more widespread and serve as an effective platform for sharing news and ideas worldwide.

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