Carlos E. De La Cuesta

NEW-TECHNOLOGIES-MEDST255-SP2018

Profile of an Internet Technology

Due: February 13, 2018

Podcasts are video and audio content used to educate and entertain via a digital device. Ben Hammersley first used the word “podcast” in 2004 in his article “Audible Revolution” for The Guardian newspaper. The term refers to Apple’s new technology the iPod as a new medium for listening to digital content. “Cast” of podcast makes reference to the term broadcast. Unlike traditional radio broadcasts and television broadcasts though, the podcast allows amateurs and professionals alike access to a new accessible platform to broadcast their content. There is no need to fulfill the requirements of publishers, producers, government, sponsors or editors – making it much easier for the average person to use and create. Podcasts are also unique from traditional broadcasts because it allow listeners “on demand” access to the content. Listeners and viewers can decide when, where and how they want to access the content.

In 2004, Adam Curry, a former video jockey for MTV, wrote a computer program to download audio content onto his iPod. He is often credited as the inventor of the podcast along with Dave Winer. The following year, Curry releases a podcast called “Podshow” with Ron Bloom. Despite initially wanting to provide video content as their podcast, Curry quickly realized that audio content was much easier to upload and download than video content due to the internet broadband restrictions of the time – 2005. As a result, many of the podcasts we know today are primarily audio podcast.

Within the last two decades, podcasting has evolved to include a wider range of content. Despite the early reference of the name “podcast” to the iPod, podcasts today are accessible from the majority of digital devices. Podcasts also cover a wide range of topics and purposes from educating listeners, promoting products, to entertaining audio shows. Moving from the early days of sponsor-free content, many podcasts today are beginning to include advertisements in order to create profits. Podcasts are also available on an increasing number of platforms. Beginning in June 2005, podcasts were added to the iTunes platform with a catalog of downloadable content. In the following years, websites such as Yahoo and Google had their own directories. Despite their rise in listenership, Yahoo has since closed their directory in 2010. In 2006, 11% of the population of the United States actively listened to podcasts according to Edison Research. By the following year, there was a two percent increase of listeners in the U.S. population. Since then the numbers have risen to a reported 40% of the U.S. population listen to podcasts regularly.

Three examples of podcasts on the Internet can be found in the form of content sponsored by educational institutions, news content made by public radio stations, and entertainment podcasts. An example of a podcast sponsored by an educational institution can be found on the iTunes University platform. This branch of the iTunes library through Apple gives educational institutions around the world the power to video broadcast their lectures and classes onto a public platform for millions to access. This platform carries content from schools such as Harvard and Stanford, among others, giving individuals access of content they might never have the chance to access first hand and in person. This not only opens up the door to education for many without the luxury to attend ivy league universities but also allows learners to access knowledge and content on their own time and at their own pace. This type of platform is not limited to iTunes University. There are an increasing number of other services such as Coursera and Udemy.

Another example of podcasts on the Internet is news podcasts made by public radio stations. In addition to broadcasting their content in the traditional manner on the radio, many public radio stations led by the example set by WNYC in New York make their content available in podcasts form for people to download and listen to whenever they want. This is extremely important as it continues to make radio content relevant and available to people who do not have easy access to radios. Due to the rise of digital devices and the fall of radios, this integration of podcasts into the traditional broadcasts have allowed public radio stations to keep up with changing demands and survive in a changing media market.

The last example of podcasts on the Internet can be found in entertainment content made by individuals or organizations. An example of this is the podcast series “Lore.” Started in 2015, “Lore” is a low budget horror podcasts made by Aaron Mahnke in his home. Despite its low quality recording with voice echoes, the content was entertaining enough to gain Mahnke over 5 million listeners a month. “Lore” is just one example of content made for the entertainment of listeners by an individual. Since its launch and successful, “Lore” has been approached by Amazon Prime Video to be formatted into a television series. This is an increasing trend with popular podcast shows. Ironically, the audio podcast format is transforming back into video due to popularity and changes in Internet structure.

In conclusion, video and audio podcasting is a great medium either for entertainment or information because of it availability and because of the diversity of content. Because it is free for both the creators and the listeners, it allows anyone to share their opinions with the world with just a few simple tools. Due to its simplicity and ease of use, the podcast community has grown and continues to grow at a tremendous rate. Even for being less than two decades old, it already boasts a listenership of 40% of the U.S. population. As it continues to evolve and grow, it will continue to shape and change the way people access education, news and entertainment globally. In the future, podcasts may evolve and expand to include applications such as company training conferences and workshops, reality podcasts shows, tourist walking guides through different cities and much more.

**Sources:**

B, C. “The Rise of the Podcast Adaptation.” *The Economist*, The Economist Newspaper, 12 Oct. 2017, www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2017/10/sampling-ideas.

Goldberg, Kevin. “The History of Podcasts.” *Discover the Best Podcasts | Discover Pods*, 26 July 2017, discoverpods.com/history-of-podcasts/.

Hammersley, Ben. “Audible Revolution.” *The Guardian*, 11 Feb. 2004, www.theguardian.com/media/2004/feb/12/broadcasting.digitalmedia.

“History of Podcasting.” *Blubrry Podcasting - Podcast Hosting, Statistics, WordPress Hosting, Syndication Tools and Directory*, create.blubrry.com/manual/about-podcasting/history-of-podcasting-new/.

McElhearn, Kirk. “ITunes U: Free Education to Make You Smarter.” *Macworld*, Macworld, 20 July 2016, www.macworld.com/article/1163267/education/get-smarter-with-itunes-u.html.

Murtha, Jack. “WNYC Is Leading Public Radio's Transition to Public Podcasting.”*Columbia Journalism Review*, Columbia Journalism Review, 13 Jan. 2016, www.cjr.org/the\_feature/wnyc\_public\_radio\_podcast.php.

Watson, Stephanie. “How Podcasting Works.” *HowStuffWorks*, HowStuffWorks, 26 Mar. 2005, computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/basics/podcasting.htm.

“What Is a Podcast.” *International Podcast Day*, 2018, internationalpodcastday.com/what-is-podcast/.