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# How the coronavirus is affecting podcast downloads

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5-7 minutes



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As the world changes fast, what effect is the coronavirus having on podcasting?

**There are more covid-19 podcasts than ever.** — Acast tells Podnews that there's been a continual increase in the number of podcasts covering the coronavirus — with more than 1,400 podcast episodes now hosted on its network since Jan 22. These episodes, which reference “corona” or “covid” in the episode titles have been downloaded more than 27.5 million times globally to date. Every day Acast is seeing a steady increase of corona-related episodes being published and listeners tuning in. For example, on March 1 there were 12 episodes released and 277k listens, compared to March 18 when there 96 episodes and peak number of 1.3 million listens — a 370% increase in listens between the two days.

In the UK alone, Acast claim 1.6 million listens of coronavirus podcasts since January 22. Following the government's first cobra meeting and conference on March 12, there was a 13% increase in listeners of coronavirus podcasts on March 13.

**Media consumption is changing** — Spotify's total music streams are [globally down by 11.4% last week](#), say MBW. In Italy, where the effects of the virus has been strongest, music streaming is down by 33% since Feb 7th, and down by 13% last week.

**Bandwidth use is increasing by about 40%** — Netflix has been asked to [lower the bandwidth of its streams](#) by some countries. They've agreed. In the UK, [BT say daytime internet use has increased by 35-60%](#) - but that it's still tiny in comparison to the evening peak, and isn't causing issues. In the US, Verizon says [web traffic is up by 20%](#); and surprisingly social media use is flat. Spain has seen an [internet traffic increase of 40%](#), and [Nokia sees that too](#) (they run mobile phone networks in many countries). Cloudflare, which operates content delivery networks, is also [seeing increases of up to 40%](#).

**Most podcasts are seeing drops in consumption of about 20%** — “I'm seeing about a 15% decrease in downloads for [Get Sleepy](#). Which is odd because we're a bedtime podcast and going to bed is one of the only habits that hasn't been affected by the pandemic. My guess is less people are stressed about getting up early for work/class etc...” - Michael Brandon

[Ride Home Media](#)'s daily shows are seeing average of 15% fewer downloads. The exception is, of course, [Coronavirus Daily Briefing](#), which “is adding 5,000 download every day”, says Brian McCullough.

“We're an independent publisher with a stable of 12 shows. We're down 19% for the last two weeks over the previous two weeks.” says someone wanting to keep anonymous. Someone else tells us: “we're seeing a drop of around 15% - but our rankings are a little better than usual. This makes us think that it must, indeed, be across the board”.

“Our show, [The Unfiltered Gentlemen](#), is down about 20%. We've received feedback in the past that people love listening on their commute, so imagine the numbers will continue to decrease for a while.” - Greg Jones

“[The Integrated Schools Podcast](#): we're down about 20%. Our last episode didn't have guests with followings, so that may be part of it.” - Andrew Lefkowitz

Lindsay Graham from [Airship](#) shared their actual download numbers: of the three currently-releasing podcasts, the figures are down by, variously, 22%, 17% and 19%. “The caveat for Week 12 is that it's not over yet, but it looks like I'm down 20% across the board,” he adds.

[The Program audio series](#), a fiction “historical podcast set in the future”, is down by around 30%, says Ivan Mirko S.

**However, not everyone’s down.** — “My [Podrunner](#) podcast has actually seen increased downloads, I think because it’s a workout-music series and people are using it for home workouts as gyms close. My [Groovelectric](#) DJ podcast downloads are also up, maybe because I have begun “lockdown mixes” intended to reflect the current mood and be positive. Donations, however, which I have relied on for years, are way down, as people -- understandably! -- deal with their own priorities.” - Steven R Boyett

“My podcast [It’s All Cobblers To Me](#), a football podcast about Northampton Town FC, is showing as having had a 11% increase in listens over the last 7 days. This may, of course be due to our subject matter (sport) having been postponed and people wanting to know our thoughts on it. We have also put into place a plan of action to keep our audience entertained by recording special interviews with fans and well known figures (players, journalists, commentators etc) about their favourite memories following the club.” - Charles Commins

“I host [The Unofficial Shopify Podcast](#), an entrepreneurship podcast with 1 million downloads approximately over four years. Our downloads are essentially unchanged the last two weeks. We think it’s because our audience is entrepreneurs, and e-commerce is a lifeline for people right now. For that reason we’re doubling down on content creation to help people keep their businesses going.” - Kurt Elster

“[In The Moment](#) has seen a slight increase of 2%: but we’re about improving your wellbeing and in the alternative health section, so that probably explains it!” - Sarah Orne

**In conclusion:** — we think that most podcasters can expect a small decrease, with 20% the rough guideline for now. It remains to be seen how tighter restrictions affect this further, though.

The comments are open, below.

—James is the Editor of Podnews, and was first involved in podcasting in January 2005.

## Comments