Wherever you get your Podcasts

Language in a decentralized future.

by Roscoe Rubin-Rottenberg | August 23, 2025 | 66 4 💬 2

Podcasts are one of the few examples of media distribution that is both meaningfully decentralized and widely used.

Podcasts are decentralized in a way that AT Protocol specifically aspires to be, where the user doesn't realize it's decentralized.

But podcasts go further in a way that I don't think we talk about enough. Podcasts are decentralized in a way that is not thought of at all by the user, but is implicitly understood through the language used to talk about them.

The RSS of it all

Podcasts are, at their core, RSS feeds. They are really the only form of RSS feeds that actually survived the "death" of RSS as a medium of blogging and microblogging consumption.

While podcasts apps like Apple Podcasts and Spotify take submissions of RSS feeds in order to be included in the app, there are public registries of all podcasts, including ones made available by Apple Podcasts and Podcast Index. This allows smaller apps that podcasters wouldn't submit their podcast directly, to still maintain a library of all the same podcasts as any major app.

The wherever of it all

The true measure of the success of the decentralization of podcasts is the way people talk about them. Listen to anyone promoting a podcast and you'll hear the 5 words "wherever you get your podcasts."

This is especially interesting as I would assume that the vast majority of podcast listeners use Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or maybe even YouTube Music. It would make sense, and is a common practice for other media like music, to simply list out the most popular options for listening to podcasts instead of making such a grand statement.

But for other mediums like music, the statement wouldn't be true. Every platform that a song is on is a platform the artist explicitly submitted it to, whereas many small podcast platforms simply discover podcast RSS feeds without any submission from the creator.