

Where Do We Stand, Where Do We Go? Mapping the Field of Podcast Research and Journalism

Vera Katzenberger ^{1,*} , Jonas Schützeneder ²  and Michael Grassl ³ 

¹ Institute for Communication and Media Studies, University Leipzig, 04109 Leipzig, Germany

² Institute for Journalism Studies, University of the Federal Armed Forces Munich, 85577 Munich, Germany; jonas.schuetzeneder@unibw.de

³ Institute for Journalism, University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg-Stendal, 39114 Magdeburg, Germany; michael.grassl@h2.de

* Correspondence: vera.katzenberger@uni-leipzig.de

1. Introduction

Taking a closer look at the development of podcasts and their current role in global media use invites an analogy with a well-known concept from economics: the *hidden champion*. Coined by the German economist Hermann Simon in the early 1990s, the term refers to companies that are global market leaders within their respective industries but remain largely unknown to the general public (Simon, 1990, 2009).

Although this concept cannot be directly transferred to media, it provides a useful heuristic for describing the contemporary status of podcasts. For years, podcast audiences have grown steadily around the world. Podcasts have become a core component of digital media use in many countries and play a particularly important role among younger audiences as a source of information, entertainment, and knowledge (Newman & Cherubini, 2025; Rosada et al., 2025). Despite this growing importance, however, podcasts have not achieved the same level of public visibility, recognition, or omnipresence as other digital media formats (Bonini, 2015), particularly compared to social media platforms, which frequently dominate large parts of public discourse.

For scholars, however, the *hidden champion* of podcasts has never gone unnoticed. If the first widely recognised podcast is dated to the interview series published by the American journalist Christopher Lydon in July 2003, whose audio files were the first to be distributed automatically via an RSS feed, and if the term *podcast* itself is traced back to the British journalist Ben Hammersley, who coined it in 2004, then podcast research emerged only two years later, a remarkably short period given the often lengthy cycles of academic research (Hammersley, 2004; Berry, 2015b, 2006; Bonini, 2015): The origins of podcast research are often traced to Berry's (2006) article. Since then, scholarship has accompanied podcasting through its highs—including the enthusiasm of its early years—and its lows, such as the failure of the initial hype to translate into sustained success, before documenting the emergence of the so-called Golden Age of Podcasting from the mid-2010s onwards (Bonini, 2015). Now, after exactly 20 years of international podcast research, we believe the time has come to take a step back, reflect on what has been achieved, and ask: *Where do we stand? And where do we go?*

Over the past two decades, podcast research has grown substantially in both volume and conceptual sophistication, progressing through several distinct phases of development. Early studies primarily approached podcasting as a technological innovation. Later research shifted its attention to podcasts as an emerging medium in their own right, focusing



Received: 14 July 2026

Accepted: 18 July 2026

Published: 11 August 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

on questions of audience use and intimacy, before turning to issues of production, professionalisation, and platformisation. As journalistic podcasts became increasingly established, podcast journalism also emerged as a distinct field of research that now addresses many of the central questions of digital journalism (Körner & Graßl, 2024). In the following, we trace these developments and discuss their implications for future research.

With these introductory reflections of this Special Issue, *Rethinking Journalism in the Age of Podcasts: Perspectives, Possibilities, Boundaries*, we therefore pursue two objectives. On the one hand, we look back on the major developments and research priorities that have shaped the past two decades of podcast scholarship. On the other hand, together with the contributors to this Special Issue, we look ahead to the future of podcast research and outline new directions for the field. In doing so, we also offer a review of key definitions, major media developments, and defining characteristics of podcasting.

2. Understanding Podcasting as a Medium

The first phase of podcast research was largely shaped by the question of what podcasting actually is. Accordingly, early podcast scholarship was dominated by technological and media-historical perspectives. As noted above, the widely cited article by Berry (2006) marks the starting point of podcast research and can be regarded as its foundational contribution. In this article, podcasting is described as a convergent, personalised, and participatory audio medium that democratises production and distribution processes by shifting control over content from established, professional broadcasters to users. However, with the widespread adoption of smartphones and the increasing professionalisation of audio content, podcast research gradually moved away from this primarily technology-oriented perspective and increasingly focused on the distinctive characteristics and practices of the medium itself.

A defining feature of this early phase of podcast research was the debate over the relationship between podcasting and radio. For many years, the central question was whether podcasting should primarily be understood as a technological extension of radio or as a distinct medium with its own specific characteristics. A. J. Bottomley (2015a, 2015b) likewise no longer approaches podcasting from a purely technological perspective. Although he first traces its historical development from RSS-based audio files through their integration into iTunes to the surge in popularity triggered by *Serial*, he simultaneously emphasises that podcasting is “more than a method of audio distribution” (A. J. Bottomley, 2015a, p. 166). At the same time, he challenges the notion of a radical media break and interprets podcasting as “remediation of older radio forms” (A. J. Bottomley, 2015b, p. 179), transferring established traditions of radio drama, community radio, and talk radio into new digital contexts.

Berry (2015a, 2015b), in turn, interprets the success of *Serial* in 2014 as the culmination of a long-term technological, cultural, and institutional development that transformed podcasting from an experimental format into a professional medium and established a new “benchmark for quality” (Berry, 2015a, p. 11). Berry (2016) argues that podcasting can increasingly be understood as a “distinct medium” (p. 7) and proposes defining its specific “podcastness” (p. 11) through its characteristic production, distribution, and reception practices. Podcasting thus emerges as a “hybrid of forms” (p. 17) that simultaneously constitutes a platform and a bundle of distinctive practices and characteristics.

Bonini (2015) offers a media economics perspective. He identifies a “second age of podcasting” (p. 26), beginning around 2012, characterised by commercialisation and the emergence of business models. He argues that crowdfunding, podcast networks, and professional productions transformed podcasting into an independent market that is “no longer simply complementary to radio” (p. 21). He likewise contends that, at the latest

following the success of *Serial*, podcasting had become a “mass medium” (p. 26) and was developing “from narrowcasting to broadcasting” (p. 27). Bonini (2022) subsequently brought these different perspectives on the development of podcasting together in a widely cited theoretical synthesis of podcast research. He argues that podcasting is neither an extension of radio nor a new medium. Instead, he describes podcasting as a “hybrid cultural form” (p. 21) that combines the affordances of radio with those of other media forms, such as journalism, literature, and digital platforms.

3. Podcast Use and Audience Reception

With the growing popularity of podcasts from the early 2010s onwards, scholarly attention shifted towards how people use the medium and the needs and gratifications associated with podcast consumption. In one of the first empirical studies on these questions, McClung and Johnson (2010) identified five central motives for podcast use: entertainment, time shifting, library building, advertising, and social interaction. Their findings show that social interaction, in particular, predicts more intensive podcast use. From the users’ perspective, podcasts are characterised above all by their temporal flexibility, as content can be consumed “whenever, and wherever” (p. 83), while also allowing users to selectively choose and archive content.

Chung and Kim (2015) extend this perspective to educational contexts and identify six motivational dimensions: Voyeurism/Social Interaction/Companionship, Entertainment/Relaxation/Arousal, Education/Information, Pastime/Escape, Habit, and Convenience. They demonstrate that both emotional “attachment to the medium” (p. 13) and “perceived affinity” (p. 15) towards the medium are significant predictors of podcast use intensity and the gratifications derived from it. Based on a representative survey of 2000 podcast users, they further argue that podcasts have become a distinct audio platform with their own patterns of use and reception contexts. These findings support Berry’s (2016) argument that podcasts represent more than merely a technological extension of radio.

Boling and Hull (2018) examine how these usage motives manifest themselves in specific podcast genres, using true crime podcasts as a case study. They find that entertainment, convenience, and passing time are the primary motivations for listening, while podcast audiences are simultaneously characterised by high levels of social interaction and community engagement. According to their findings, the appeal of the medium lies primarily in the opportunity to consume content in a “time convenient” (p. 95) manner and in an “easy way” (p. 99).

Building on this work, Perks et al. (2019) were the first to conceptualise the gratifications underlying podcast use. They developed the Podcast Uses and Gratifications Scale, identifying four core gratifications of podcast consumption: Controlling Edutainment, Storytelling Transportation, Social Engagement, and Multitasking. In doing so, they proposed a distinct explanatory model of podcast reception that continues to be widely used in podcast research today. In a subsequent qualitative study, Perks and Turner (2019) further demonstrate that podcasts are particularly appealing because they enable listeners to “learn more and do more” (p. 113). A defining characteristic of the medium, they argue, is listeners’ “enhanced agency” (p. 114), as they actively select content, organise their own media consumption, and flexibly integrate podcasts into their everyday lives.

Beyond individual motivations and gratifications, scholars increasingly turned their attention to the social dimensions of podcast reception. Finally, Pavelko and Myrick (2020) argue that podcast reception extends beyond the act of listening itself and is also shaped by parasocial relationships and online communities. They show that podcasts foster social connections and create shared experiences within an “empowered fanbase” (p. 151). Building on these findings, Schlütz and Hedder (2021) were the first to examine

the emergence of parasocial relationships in the podcast context. In their widely cited study, they demonstrate that hosts' parasocial interaction strategies—such as self-disclosure, direct address, and authentic self-presentation—play a key role in fostering close relationships between listeners and hosts. Podcasts thus create a “focused, intimate reception situation” (p. 460), in which hosts are perceived as “authentic, and competent” (p. 465), allowing parasocial relationships to emerge that can influence audiences' attitudes and behaviours (Chan-Olmsted & Wang, 2020).

4. Voice, Intimacy, and Parasocial Relationships

As research on podcast use and audience reception matured, scholars increasingly recognised that podcasts offer a uniquely intimate listening experience. This insight shifted attention towards intimacy as a defining characteristic of podcasting and gave rise to a distinct line of research. Madsen and Potts (2010) developed the concept of the “voice-cast”, offering a media-theoretical perspective that conceptualises podcasting primarily as a distribution medium for the human voice. They argue that the dissemination of the “acousmatic voice” (p. 33), whose source remains invisible, enables new forms of auditory presence, boundary-transcending communication, and, above all, personal closeness.

Early podcast research thus primarily understood the distinctive sense of closeness created by podcasting as a consequence of its auditory nature. Over the following years, however, this perspective broadened considerably. For example, Llinares et al. (2018b) marked a turning point in podcast research with their edited volume *Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media*. In their introduction, they conceptualise podcasting as a “new aural culture” (Llinares et al., 2018a, p. 4), characterised by a “conversational, informal, personal” (p. 2) mode of communication and a “deeply sonorous intimacy” (p. 2). In the same volume, Swiatek (2018) further develops these ideas through the concept of the “intimate bridging medium” (p. 173). He argues that podcasts feel intimate despite physical distance because the human voice—particularly when listened to through headphones—creates the impression of “whispering in people's ears” (p. 176, as cited in Greene, 2016). This intimacy, he suggests, also facilitates the communication of complex information by enabling podcasts to “bridge knowledge and context-related barriers” (p. 182).

Whereas these early studies primarily conceptualised intimacy as an inherent characteristic of the medium, more recent research has shifted its focus towards the communicative and cultural processes through which intimacy is produced. Euritt (2023) argues that podcasts are “not intimate because of some innate properties of sound” (p. 1). Rather, podcasts “create, or do, intimacy” (p. 1) through voice, listening practices, and cultural conventions. Loviglio (2024) places this argument in the context of podcasting's claims to novelty, pointing out that radio has “always felt intimate” (p. 54). Podcasting, however, further intensifies this form of voice-based intimacy.

A. Bottomley (2024) shifts attention to podcast production culture and criticises the fact that intimacy is “often invoked, [but] rarely defined” (p. 306) in podcast research. Drawing on ethnographic observations and interviews, he demonstrates that intimacy emerges from shared professional understandings of voice, authenticity, and conversational practices. Focusing on professional podcast journalism, Lindgren (2023) argues that this has given rise to a form of “personalised journalism” (p. 704), or “intimate journalism” (p. 716), in which “first-person reporting” (p. 708) and the disclosure of journalists' “own emotions” (p. 716) expand traditional norms of objectivity.

Based on 14 semi-structured interviews with Spanish podcast journalists, García de Torres et al. (2025) show that intimacy is primarily created through voice, microphone proximity, sound design, and authenticity. As a result, “how it is said” (p. 12) often becomes more important than the informational content itself—that is, than “what is said” (p. 10).

Lindgren's (2025) contribution represents a further conceptual consolidation of this line of research. She argues that the relationship between "intimacy and trust" (p. 1) has become a "critical area of investigation" (p. 1) in podcast research. At the same time, she highlights the ambivalence of intimate forms of communication. The central challenge, she argues, lies in "maintaining professional standards while fostering audience connection" (p. 1), as "emotional truth" (p. 4, as cited in García de Torres et al., 2025) can blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, while "techniques of intimate communication" (p. 3) may also serve authoritarian purposes. Podcast research has thus evolved from describing the human voice as a distinctive feature of podcasting to developing a nuanced understanding of intimacy as one of the medium's central, yet inherently ambivalent, characteristics.

5. Production Cultures and Professionalisation

As research increasingly understood intimacy as something that is actively produced rather than inherently embedded in the medium, scholarly attention naturally shifted towards the conditions under which podcasts are created. This gave rise to a growing body of research examining production practices, production cultures, and podcasters' professional self-understandings.

For a long time, this research primarily focused on independent podcasters. Based on a qualitative survey of 147 independent podcasters, Markman (2012) shows that they predominantly operate as "Pro-Ams" (p. 549), that is, as amateurs who work according to professional standards and organise themselves within participatory "Produsage-Communities" (p. 549). Podcasting thus emerges as a way of producing radio while remaining "free of the constraints" (p. 561) of traditional broadcasting institutions.

Building on this work, Markman and Sawyer (2014) demonstrate that independent podcasters are not primarily motivated by economic incentives. Instead, motivations such as self-expression, community, and the continuous improvement of content are far more important. Accordingly, they interpret podcasting as an expression of a so-called produsage culture based on "community, feedback, and continual improvement" (p. 20), sustained by producers who pursue their work with professional aspirations despite the absence of financial incentives and who apply "high standards" (p. 32) to their productions.

Drawing on 16 semi-structured interviews with independent podcasters and industry experts, as well as participant observation within the Australian podcasting scene, Jørgensen (2021) characterises independent podcasters as cultural entrepreneurs. The study shows that they seek cultural, social, and symbolic capital rather than economic capital. Podcasting thereby functions as a "space of play" (p. 151), in which creative autonomy enables new formats, storytelling approaches, and production practices.

Berg (2021) complements this perspective. Based on a quantitative content analysis of 552 independent podcasts from Denmark, she describes independent podcasting as a "participatory media practice" (p. 112) situated between traditional radio and digital content creation. Her analysis further shows that easily produced conversational and interview formats dominate contemporary podcast production.

More recent research on podcast production conditions indicates that podcasting has increasingly become established as a professionalised field of communication. Based on large-scale online surveys of more than 1000 podcasters, Katzenberger et al. (2023, 2025) and Katzenberger and Keil (2024) show that although many podcasters have no formal journalistic training, their professional self-understanding is nevertheless strongly oriented towards journalistic norms. In particular, they emphasise the importance of entertainment, education, and information within podcasters' professional role conceptions. In particular, the German podcasting community has been the subject of extensive research on profession-

alisation (Katzenberger et al., 2022a, 2022b), yet further international comparative research on podcast producers and their professional self-understandings is needed.

6. Genres, Topics, and Niche Formats

With the increasing establishment and professionalisation of podcasting over the past two decades, podcast research has expanded its focus to a wide range of genres and fields of application. One major area of research concerns science podcasts, which are conceptualised as dialogic formats of science communication that enable new forms of knowledge dissemination and public engagement (Birch & Weitkamp, 2010; MacKenzie, 2019; Aufderheide et al., 2020; Leander, 2020; Dernbach, 2022). Another prominent line of research examines educational podcasts as flexible teaching and learning tools that combine narrative forms of communication with time- and location-independent access (Drew, 2017a, 2017b; Karla & Hoffmann, 2019; Karla, 2020). By far the largest body of work, however, has focused on journalistic podcasts, analysing their distinctive storytelling practices in formats such as journalistic true crime podcasts (Boling, 2019; Nee & Santana, 2022) and advice podcasts (Katzenberger & Klinghardt, 2026). In addition, individual studies have examined more specialised formats, such as political podcasts, which are explored as emerging spaces of political communication (Euritt, 2019; Seeber & R  th, 2022).

7. Platformisation, Distribution, and the Economics of Podcasting

As podcasting became increasingly professionalised and commercially successful, scholarly attention also shifted towards the platformisation, distribution, and economics of the medium. Sullivan (2019) describes podcasting as an originally open, RSS-based medium that has become increasingly shaped by platforms such as Apple, Spotify, and Google. Like other media, podcasts are fundamentally transformed by platformisation, with competition for user data, in particular, driving increasing “industry consolidation” (p. 1–2). At the same time, efforts to optimise discoverability and audience reach promote the emergence of “walled gardens” (p. 6), that is, closed platform ecosystems in which podcasts are distributed exclusively (or preferentially) within individual platforms and are therefore removed from the open RSS infrastructure.

This infrastructural transformation also raised broader questions about the economic organisation of podcasting. Gallego (2022) extends this perspective to the platform economy of the audio industry more broadly. Using Spotify as a case study, he shows that podcasts are increasingly treated as a “standalone product” (p. 114) and as a key component of new business models. The strategic expansion “beyond music” (p. 117), he argues, marks the transformation of music streaming services into comprehensive audio platforms in which podcasts simultaneously contribute to brand building and data-driven value creation.

The implications of these economic developments become particularly evident in studies examining platform exclusivity and competition. Colbj  rnsen (2024) illustrates this topic through the conflict between Joe Rogan and Spotify. He argues that platformisation gives rise to new “distribution circuits” (p. 2169), characterised by exclusivity and closed platform ecosystems. Podcasts have thus become a central instrument enabling platforms to “stand out from the competition” (p. 2173) and are increasingly embedded within a system of “tighter regulation and corporate governance” (p. 2181).

At the level of monetisation, Bonk and Kubinski (2023) demonstrate that the professionalisation of the podcast market has also transformed the advertising economy. In contrast to traditional advertising formats, successful podcast advertising increasingly relies on hosts’ authenticity, credibility, and parasocial relationships with their audiences. Podcast research has thus shown that platformisation and commercialisation are becoming increasingly influential in shaping the economic conditions under which podcasting operates.

8. Podcasts and Journalism

The increasing adoption of podcasts by news organisations also gave rise to a distinct line of research on podcast journalism. Since the mid-2010s, scholars have increasingly examined how podcasts are transforming journalistic roles and practices. One of the earliest research priorities concerned the transformation of journalistic storytelling through podcasts. Drawing on a qualitative case study of three U.S. podcasts, [Lindgren \(2016\)](#), for example, demonstrates the emergence of a form of Personal Narrative Journalism that combines “personal and subjective approaches” (p. 24) with journalistic reporting, experiments with “journalistic forms” (p. 24), and thereby renegotiates the “boundaries between journalism and storytelling” (p. 33).

Building on this work, [McHugh \(2016\)](#) argues, based on a qualitative expert study, that podcasts have given rise to a new genre of journalistic audio storytelling whose defining characteristic is the close relationship between host and audience. Podcast producers are “free to make up” (p. 66) their own rules and develop a more informal, host-centred form of journalistic narration.

Beyond storytelling, podcast research has increasingly turned its attention to questions of journalistic authority. In their qualitative case study of *The New York Times* podcast *Caliphate*, [Perdomo and Rodrigues-Rouleau \(2022\)](#) conceptualise transparency as a “meta-journalistic performance” (p. 2313) through which podcasts make journalistic practices visible and thereby establish “journalistic authority” (p. 2311). [Lindgren and Bird \(2024\)](#) further show that the distinctive audio aesthetics of journalistic podcasts can foster trust, closeness, and understanding, while at the same time creating opportunities for the spread of misinformation.

More recently, these individual findings have increasingly been integrated into broader theoretical frameworks. With *Podcast Journalism: The Promise and Perils of Audio Reporting*, [Dowling \(2024\)](#) presents the first monograph to conceptualise podcast journalism as a distinct object of inquiry within podcast research. Already in the introduction, he argues that podcast journalism fundamentally transforms journalistic production practices and professional norms. In particular, the reporting process becomes increasingly transparent, such that revealing journalistic uncertainties makes reporting “more credible and trustworthy” (2024, p. 7). At the same time, podcast journalism develops its own “podcast consciousness for journalism” (p. 9), characterised by narrative depth, transparency, and reflexivity. In this way, podcast journalism responds to the demand for “more deeply contextualised and complex storytelling” (p. 10) while addressing the challenges of an accelerated digital news environment.

Building on this monographic foundation, recent edited volumes have further expanded the theoretical and empirical discussion of podcast journalism. With *Podcast in the Future of Journalism: Exploring Forms and Formats of Audio Storytelling in Digital News Media*, [Perrotta \(2025b\)](#) presents one of the first internationally oriented edited volumes to systematically examine podcast journalism. In the introduction, [Perrotta \(2025a\)](#) synthesises the central developments in podcast journalism and describes it as a distinct journalistic practice that transforms journalism, storytelling, and audience engagement by combining factual reporting with narrative forms of storytelling. At the same time, she positions podcast journalism as a key area of innovation within digital journalism, opening up new forms of journalistic production, audience engagement, and international collaboration. Building on this framework, [Perdomo and Lindgren \(2025\)](#), in a chapter of the volume, develop one of the first theoretical frameworks for podcast journalism. They identify the “centrality of conversation” (p. 41) as the defining characteristic of journalistic podcasts, in which journalists act as “sense makers” (p. 41), collaboratively interpreting complex events together with their audiences. Finally, [Katzenberger and Krause \(2026\)](#) recently showed

that journalistic podcasts now extend far beyond the distribution of journalistic content and have increasingly become “journalistic premium products” (p. 187, translated) that form an integral part of the digital and branding strategies of media organisations and media brands.

9. Open Questions in Podcast Research and Journalism

The preceding review of podcast research demonstrates that podcast research has become increasingly differentiated over the past two decades. With the growing establishment of journalistic podcasts (Dowling, 2024; Whipple et al., 2023; Newman & Gallo, 2019), they have emerged as a distinct focus within the broader field of podcast research. Building on this overview of current scholarship, we identify several avenues for future research on journalism and podcasts. Based on the existing literature as well as current debates in both academia and journalistic practice, we consider the following themes and research questions to be particularly relevant.

9.1. Journalistic Roles

As a hybrid format situated between traditional and new media (Bonini, 2022), podcasts also shape journalists’ professional roles and public perceptions. This is particularly evident in new forms of presentation, hosting, and interview constellations that have emerged through podcasting. We therefore ask:

- Which professional roles, role conceptions, and journalistic positions do podcast formats reinforce, expand, or newly create?
- How are these roles enacted in practice, and what technological, thematic, and interactional dimensions characterise them?
- What lessons can be drawn, particularly with regard to journalism’s role as an independent source of information in times of misinformation and increasingly fragmented political communication?

9.2. Journalistic Topics

Podcasts are increasingly understood as a journalist’s investigatory toolkit (Francoeur, 2025). New genres and established topic areas are merging into successful formats that are being adopted internationally, particularly in the fields of true crime, concise news briefings, and audiobook-like presentations of in-depth investigations. At this level, we ask:

- Which (new) topics and genres are currently gaining prominence, and how does existing research assess these developments?
- How are investigative and other critical topics and formats presented, and which technological characteristics shape their production and presentation?
- What role do local, national, and international contexts play, and which forms of cross-border cooperation appear particularly promising?

9.3. The Organisation of Journalistic Podcasts

Much of the existing research on journalistic podcasts has focused on content and the analysis of individual case studies. By contrast, the organisational dimension of podcast production has received comparatively little attention, despite the fact that organisational factors are highly relevant for understanding and shaping this broader transformation (García-Avilés et al., 2018; García-Avilés, 2021). We therefore ask:

- How can the production and production processes of journalistic podcasts be conceptualised more precisely in an international comparative perspective?
- Which trends and concrete production strategies have been identified in both academic research and journalistic practice?

- Which media organisations and podcast brands are particularly influential in this context, and what lessons can be learned from them?

9.4. Podcast Use and Future Development

Despite numerous successful initiatives and outstanding flagship formats, the broader environment for digital journalistic content remains complex and challenging. Sceptical assessments of its future are widespread (Newman & Cherubini, 2025). Examining the use and reception of journalistic podcasts therefore offers valuable insights into the future development of the medium. We ask:

- How can journalism be reimagined in this challenging environment, and what do current podcast audience figures reveal about future opportunities and potential?
- Which audience groups and socio-demographic patterns emerge when podcast use is analysed across markets, topics, and presentation formats?
- How can interaction between audiences and podcasters be conceptualised, and which case studies provide particularly valuable guidance for future developments?

9.5. Theoretical Foundations of the Field

The questions outlined above reflect the strong practical orientation of research on journalism and podcasts. At the same time, recent scholarship has increasingly emphasised the need to refine, test, and expand its theoretical foundations. Numerous points of intersection exist between journalism studies and podcasts as a medium. These include, for example, the development of a “framework for understanding how public discussions about journalism shape its norms, boundaries, and legitimacy” (Carlson, 2016). Similarly, Ekström and Westlund’s (2019) concept of the “dislocation of news journalism” highlights one important theoretical intersection. Building on these perspectives, we ask:

- What might a contemporary podcast-specific theoretical framework look like that meaningfully integrates both established and emerging dimensions of podcast journalism?
- Which connections can be identified between podcast research and content-related, organisational, and actor-centred approaches in journalism theory, and how might these be further developed?
- How can these insights contribute to broader theoretical perspectives on journalism as a public service in democratic societies or to normative models of an inclusive and well-informed public sphere?

10. Overview of the Special Issue

Our Special Issue addresses several of these questions and thematic areas from a range of international perspectives. In total, it comprises ten contributions published between October 2025 and June 2026. In the following, we briefly introduce these articles using the framework outlined above.

In the area of theoretical foundations, David O. Dowling’s article, “*Theorizing Podcast Journalism: Toward a Medium-Specific Framework for Audio Reporting*”, provides a comprehensive and nuanced overview of podcast theory and its development. The author systematically develops a podcast-specific theoretical framework and situates it within existing theoretical approaches. In doing so, he identifies three defining characteristics of podcast journalism: intimacy, expressed through personal narratives and parasocial relationships; reflexivity, reflected in metajournalistic transparency and postmodern approaches to evidence; and democracy, manifested either through progressive inclusivity or through its opposing, counter-public forms. Together, these core conventions establish podcast journalism as a distinct form of narrative digital media and provide an excellent theoretical foundation for the remaining contributions to this Special Issue.

Closely related is Sarah Elizabeth Witmer's contribution, "*What the Hell Can Journalism Even Do': Metajournalistic Discourse Through Podcast Performance*". Her study examines the podcast *Question Everything* as an innovative example of metajournalistic podcasting. Drawing on approaches from trust research, she investigates—based on in-depth interviews with host Brian Reed and producer Zach St. Louis, as well as a textual analysis of all 27 episodes of the first season—how self-reflexive narrative storytelling simultaneously critiques and reimagines journalism. The article makes an important contribution to theorising metajournalistic discourse by identifying four central mechanisms: (1) inviting and exploring criticism, (2) performatively establishing transparency in editorial and production processes, (3) experimenting with forms of journalistic knowledge production, and (4) deliberately embracing uncertainty and ambiguity.

These theoretical perspectives provide an important foundation for understanding podcast use. In this regard, the article by Lilian Suter, Hans Knobloch, Pascal Streule, Caroline Feder, Svenja Deda-Bröchin, Nico Lypitkas, and Gregor Waller, "*On the Interdependence Between Podcast Design and Usage Motives in German-Language Podcasts*", offers valuable insights. The authors address the previously rather one-sided conceptualisation of usage motives by examining the relationship between podcast design and listeners' motivations. Using a qualitative multi-method approach, they analysed 30 podcasts through repeated listening sessions and conducted 16 expert interviews to develop a typology of podcast design. In addition, they carried out 29 semi-structured interviews with listeners to investigate usage motives across different design types. Their analysis identifies three fundamental forms of podcast design—Story, Talk, and Factual—each characterised by distinct structural and aesthetic features. Furthermore, the findings indicate that factual podcasts are primarily associated with cognitive motivations, talk podcasts with social motivations, and story podcasts with affective motivations. Overall, the study suggests that usage motives are closely linked to podcast design and that podcast formats and audience needs mutually influence one another.

A different perspective on podcast use is offered by Tania Fernández-Lombao, Esther Medina-Ferreiro, and Madalena Oliveira in their article, "*Digital Audio Developments and Public Value Under Debate: The Case of National and Regional Spanish PSM*". The authors examine the transformation of public service media (PSM) within the contemporary audiovisual ecosystem, focusing on platformisation in digital audio and podcasting in Spain. Of particular interest is the balance between new forms of audience gratification and the core values of public service broadcasting. Drawing on dimensions such as universality, quality, independence, diversity, and accountability, the authors compare these normative principles with the platform strategies of selected public broadcasters in a qualitative multiple-case study. Their findings show that public service media incorporate these public values into their platformisation strategies to varying degrees. At the same time, they identify substantial challenges that must be addressed to fully realise the potential of their digital strategies.

These developments are closely related to changing conceptions of journalistic roles. Gabriela Perdomo and Mia Lindgren address this issue in their contribution, "*The Journalist-as-Guest Format in Daily Deep Dive Podcasts: Building Authority Claims Through Metajournalistic Conversation*". The authors examine how daily deep-dive news podcasts establish journalistic authority and legitimacy through the Journalist-as-Guest (JAG) format. Using deep analytical listening to analyse eight daily news podcasts from Canada and Australia, they identify new dimensions of journalistic roles, particularly concerning personal intimacy and parasocial relationships with audiences. They distinguish three key mechanisms through which this format constructs journalistic authority: recurring self-referential

statements about journalistic culture, deliberate disclosure of reporting and production processes, and the strategic presentation of journalists as subject-matter experts.

A related perspective is offered by Anamaria Filimon-Benea and Ioana Vid in their article *“Narrative Techniques in Romanian Podcasts: A Qualitative Case Study Analysis”*. The authors examine the storytelling techniques employed by Romanian podcasters and their influence on audience engagement. Using a case study approach, they analyse selected representative podcasts, focusing on how producers structure narratives, integrate cultural and societal elements, and employ techniques such as thematic coherence, character development, and progressive disclosure. Their findings reveal additional dimensions of journalistic roles, particularly through immersive and emotionally engaging forms of storytelling. They further demonstrate that these narrative structures play a crucial role in sustaining audience attention over time and fostering close relationships between hosts and listeners.

Both contributions highlight important connections between journalistic roles, content, and thematic framing in podcast journalism. These issues are explored further by Maria Rae, Dylan Bird, and Dominic Knight in their article *“Weaving in the Brosphere: Podcasting, Hegemonic Masculinity, and Bypassing Journalism in the 2024 US ‘Podcast Election’”*. The authors examine the 2024 U.S. presidential election, widely described as the “podcast election”. Donald Trump’s appearances on podcasts targeting young male audiences were widely regarded as a decisive factor in his electoral success among this demographic. Drawing on the theoretical concept of counter-publics, the study combines deep analytical listening with critical discourse analysis to examine five in-depth podcast interviews with Trump. The findings show that intimacy, authenticity, and an informal conversational style are central features of Trump’s political communication in podcasts. Furthermore, the analysed podcasts promote notions of masculine superiority while largely excluding women from public discourse. The study therefore provides important insights into the societal consequences of an increasingly male-dominated and politically conservative podcast landscape, which the authors conceptualise as the “Brosphere”—a distinct communicative environment closely related to, yet separate from, the explicitly misogynistic “Manosphere”.

Another important contribution to the thematic dimension of podcast journalism comes from Annika Geuß and Michael Wild. In *“Context Is Everything: Podcasting as an Opportunity for Journalistic In-Depth Analysis”*, they examine how political journalism can distinguish itself within a fast-paced information environment through in-depth contextualisation, thereby contributing to the functioning of democratic societies in a digital age. Their study focuses on the highly polarising controversy surrounding appointments to the German Federal Constitutional Court in July 2025, commonly referred to as the “Brosius-Gersdorf case”. Their content analysis applies a theoretically informed analytical framework encompassing topics, contextual dimensions, and relational levels to identify different forms of contextualisation. The findings demonstrate that the analysed podcasts provide comprehensive and in-depth contextualisation, particularly with regard to political and societal evaluations. In doing so, they offer audiences valuable orientation and support the formation of independent, well-informed opinions.

The fifth thematic focus of this Special Issue addresses the organisation and management of journalistic podcasts. Lourdes Moreno Cazalla, Luis Miguel Pedrero Esteban, Mario Alcudia Borreguero, and Manuel de la Chica Duarte contribute to this discussion with their article *“Audio Journalism Experiences in Spain: Moving to a Hybrid Model of Podcast Production in News Media Publishers”*. The authors investigate how Spanish newspapers and news agencies are adopting audio journalism and the extent to which podcasts have become instruments of narrative, strategic, and economic innovation. Their analysis covers 138 original podcast productions from 15 news organisations. The findings reveal a

substantial expansion of journalistic podcast offerings, particularly daily news podcasts, narrative series, and conversational formats. At the same time, considerable differences emerge between media organisations. While the audio division of the Vocento media group demonstrates a particularly strong capacity for innovation, other publishers have thus far made only limited use of the creative potential of the audio medium. Overall, the study shows that podcasts are increasingly becoming a driving force behind the transformation of print journalism by strengthening editorial identity, expanding journalistic offerings, and creating new opportunities for monetisation.

Closely related is the contribution by José M. Legorburu, Elvira García de Torres, David Parra-Valcarce, and Concha Edo, “*Between Immediacy and Depth: Evolving Journalistic Practices in Spanish Newspapers’ Daily News Podcasts*”. Focusing again on Spain, the authors investigate the objectives, characteristics, and production processes of daily news podcasts. Based on semi-structured in-depth interviews and a content analysis of selected podcast episodes produced by Spanish newspapers, the study provides new empirical insights into contemporary production practices. The findings show that daily news podcasts were primarily introduced to strengthen media brands and increase audience reach. Owing to their strong listener numbers, they have since become well-established journalistic news formats. The study further demonstrates that newsroom production processes have evolved considerably, with specialised podcast teams now working closely with editors-in-chief, correspondents, and special correspondents, all of whom have assumed central roles in the production of daily news podcasts.

Together, these current and theoretically rich contributions substantially enrich both our Special Issue, *Rethinking Journalism in the Age of Podcasts: Perspectives, Possibilities, Boundaries*, and the international field of podcast research more broadly. At the same time, they open up new opportunities, challenges, and directions for future scholarship on podcast journalism. We would therefore like to express our sincere gratitude to all authors, reviewers, and the editorial team of *Journalism and Media* for their trust and constructive collaboration. We look forward to continuing this collegial exchange and to witnessing the future development of podcast research.

Acknowledgments: ChatGPT (5.5) was used to support proofreading, language editing, translation, and stylistic harmonisation. All AI-generated suggestions were reviewed by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

List of Contributions

1. Dowling, D. O. (2025). Theorizing podcast journalism: Toward a medium-specific framework for audio reporting. *Journalism and Media*, 7(1), 2. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7010002>.
2. Fernández-Lombao, T., Medina-Ferreiro, E., & Oliveira, M. (2025). Digital Audio developments and public value under debate: The case of national and regional Spanish PSM. *Journalism and Media*, 6(4), 183. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6040183>.
3. Filimon-Benea, A., & Vid, I. (2025). Narrative techniques in Romanian podcasts: A qualitative case study analysis. *Journalism and Media*, 6(4), 175. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6040175>.
4. Geuß, A., & Wild, M. (2026). Context is everything: Podcasting as an opportunity for journalistic in-depth analysis. *Journalism and Media*, 7(1), 32. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7010032>.
5. Legorburu, J. M., García De Torres, E., Parra-Valcarce, D., & Edo, C. (2026). Between immediacy and depth: Evolving journalistic practices in Spanish newspapers’ daily news podcasts. *Journalism and Media*, 7(1), 28. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7010028>.
6. Moreno Cazalla, L., Pedrero Esteban, L. M., Alcudia Borreguero, M., & De La Chica Duarte, M. (2026). Audio journalism experiences in Spain: Moving to a hybrid model of podcast production in news media publishers. *Journalism and Media*, 7(2), 91. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7020091>.

7. Perdomo, G., & Lindgren, M. (2026). The journalist-as-guest format in daily deep dive podcasts: Building authority claims through metajournalistic conversation. *Journalism and Media*, 7(3), 132. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7030132>.
8. Rae, M., Bird, D., & Knight, D. (2026). Weaving in the brosphere: Podcasting, hegemonic masculinity, and bypassing journalism in the 2024 US 'Podcast election'. *Journalism and Media*, 7(2), 119. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7020119>.
9. Suter, L., Knobloch, H., Streule, P., Feder, C., Deda-Bröchin, S., Lypitkas, N., & Waller, G. (2026). On the interdependence between podcast design and usage motives in german-language podcasts. *Journalism and Media*, 7(2), 86. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7020086>.
10. Witmer, S. E. (2026). 'What the hell can journalism even do?': Metajournalistic discourse through podcast performance. *Journalism and Media*, 7(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia7010020>.

References

- Aufderheide, P., Lieberman, D., Alkhallouf, A., & Majiri Ugboma, J. (2020). Podcasting as public media: The future of U.S. news, public affairs, and educational podcasts. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 1683–1704.
- Berg, F. S. A. (2021). Independent podcasts on the apple podcast platform in the streaming era. *MedieKultur: Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 37(70), 110–130. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Berry, R. (2006). Will the iPod kill the radio star? Profiling podcasting as radio. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 12(2), 143–162. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Berry, R. (2015a). A golden age of podcasting? Evaluating serial in the context of podcast histories. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 22(2), 170–178. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Berry, R. (2015b). Serial and ten years of podcasting: Has the medium finally grown up? In M. Oliveira, & F. Ribeiro (Eds.), *Radio, sound and internet* (pp. 299–309). LASICS.
- Berry, R. (2016). Podcasting: Considering the evolution of the medium and its association with the word “radio”. *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 14(1), 7–22. [\[CrossRef\]](#) [\[PubMed\]](#)
- Birch, H., & Weitkamp, E. (2010). Podologues: Conversations created by science podcasts. *New Media & Society*, 12(6), 889–909. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Boling, K. S. (2019). True crime podcasting: Journalism, justice or entertainment? *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 17(2), 161–178. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Boling, K. S., & Hull, K. (2018). Undisclosed information—Serial is my favorite murder: Examining motivations in the true crime podcast audience. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 25(1), 92–108. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bonini, T. (2015). The “second age” of podcasting: Reframing podcasting as a new digital mass medium. *Quaderns Del CAC*, 18(41), 21–30. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bonini, T. (2022). Podcasting as a hybrid cultural form between old and new media. In M. Lindgren, & J. Loviglio (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to radio and podcast studies* (pp. 19–29). Routledge. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bonk, T., & Kubinski, M. S. (2023). *Winning over listeners with podcast advertising: Exploring the podcast audience's perception of commercial messages in podcasts and the role of podcast hosts*. Available online: <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hj:diva-61070> (accessed on 10 July 2026).
- Bottomley, A. (2024). Sensational voices: Discourses of intimacy in podcast production culture. In M. Hilmes, & A. J. Bottomley (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of radio and podcasting* (pp. 306–320). Oxford University Press.
- Bottomley, A. J. (2015a). Podcasting: A decade in the life of a “new” audio medium: Introduction. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 22(2), 164–169. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Bottomley, A. J. (2015b). Podcasting, welcome to night vale and the revival of radio drama. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 22(2), 179–189. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Carlson, M. (2016). Metajournalistic discourse and the meanings of journalism: Definitional control, boundary work, and legitimation. *Communication Theory*, 26(4), 349–368.
- Chan-Olmsted, S., & Wang, R. (2020). Understanding podcast users: Consumption motives and behaviors. *New Media & Society*, 24(3), 684–704. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Chung, M.-Y., & Kim, H.-S. (2015). College students' motivations for using podcasts. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 7(3), 13–18.
- Colbjørnsen, T. (2024). Joe Rogan v. Spotify: Platformization and worlds colliding. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 30(6), 2168–2186. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Dernbach, B. (2022). Hineinhören in die wunderbare welt der wissenschaft. Podcasts als medium der wissenschaftskommunikation. In V. Katzenberger, J. Keil, & M. Wild (Eds.), *Podcasts* (pp. 307–332). Springer Fachmedien. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Dowling, D. (2024). *Podcast journalism: The promise and perils of audio reporting*. Columbia University Press. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

- Drew, C. (2017a). Educational podcasts: A genre analysis. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 14(4), 201–211. [CrossRef]
- Drew, C. (2017b). Edutaining audio: An exploration of education podcast design possibilities. *Educational Media International*, 54(1), 48–62. [CrossRef]
- Ekström, M., & Westlund, O. (2019). The dislocation of news journalism: A conceptual framework for the study of epistemologies of digital journalism. *Media and Communication*, 7(1), 259–270. [CrossRef]
- Euritt, A. (2019). Public circulation in the NPR Politics Podcast. *Popular Communication*, 17(4), 348–359. [CrossRef]
- Euritt, A. (2023). *Podcasting as an intimate medium*. Routledge.
- Francoeur, C. (2025). Audio journalism: An epistemology of bodily engagements with sounds. *Journalism Studies*, 27(5), 690–708. [CrossRef]
- Gallego, J. I. (2022). New synergies between the podcast and music industries: Spotify plays the rhythm. *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 20, 105–121. [CrossRef]
- García-Avilés, J. A. (2021). Journalism innovation research: A diverse and flourishing field (2000–2020). *Profesional de la Información*, 30(1), e300110. [CrossRef]
- García-Avilés, J. A., Carvajal Prieto, M., & Arias Robles, F. (2018). Implantación de la innovación en los cybermedios españoles: Análisis de las percepciones de los periodistas. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 73, 369–384. [CrossRef]
- García de Torres, E., Legorburu, J. M., Parra-Valcarce, D., Edo, C., & Escobar-Artola, L. (2025). Intimacy in podcast journalism: Ethical challenges and opportunities in daily news podcasts and documentaries. *Media and Communication*, 13, 8994. [CrossRef]
- Greene, S. (Ed.). (2016). *Market domination for podcasting: Secrets from the world's top podcasters*. Morgan James Publishing.
- Hammersley, B. (2004, February 12). Audible revolution. *The Guardian*. Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2004/feb/12/broadcasting.digitalmedia> (accessed on 10 July 2026).
- Jørgensen, B. (2021). The “cultural entrepreneurship” of independent podcast production in Australia. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 28(1), 144–161. [CrossRef]
- Karla, J. (2020). Kaffeepause-Podcast: Erfahrungen mit der produktion und dem einsatz von podcasts für die wissenschaftskommunikation in der lehre. *Kommunikation@gesellschaft*, 21(2), 13. [CrossRef]
- Karla, J., & Hoffmann, S. (2019). Podcasting in digitaler lehre und wissenschaftskommunikation. In T. Barton, C. Müller, & C. Seel (Eds.), *Hochschulen in zeiten der digitalisierung: Lehre, forschung und organisation* (pp. 173–182). Springer Fachmedien. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Katzenberger, V., & Keil, J. (2024). All ears on? A survey on podcasters’ profiles, practices and self-perceptions. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 24(2), 209–227. [CrossRef]
- Katzenberger, V., Keil, J., & Wild, M. (2022a). Hinter dem mikrofon: Podcaster* innen im deutschsprachigenRaum. In *Podcasts* (pp. 23–50). Springer Fachmedien. [CrossRef]
- Katzenberger, V., Keil, J., & Wild, M. (2022b). Mehr als die summe seiner teile: Entwicklung, forschungsstand und definition von podcasts. In *Podcasts* (pp. 1–19). Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. [CrossRef]
- Katzenberger, V., Keil, J., & Wild, M. (2025). The podcast revolution? Exploring journalistic pioneers beyond legacy media. *Journalism and Media*, 6(1), 20. [CrossRef]
- Katzenberger, V., & Klinghardt, K. (2026). Smart, spezialisiert, segmentiert: Digitale ratgebermedien. In U. Sauerbrey, T. M. Menzel, & F. Hemmerich (Eds.), *Digitale ratgebermedien* (pp. 109–121). Ergon. [CrossRef]
- Katzenberger, V., & Krause, T. (2026). Das gehört gehört: Die rolle von podcasts für die digitale medienlandschaft und innovatives storytelling. In V. Katzenberger, T. Krause, & G. Mehling (Eds.), *Brücken und brüche* (pp. 176–201). Halem. [CrossRef]
- Katzenberger, V., Schützeneder, J., Grassl, M., & Keil, J. (2023). Infotainers, mediators, or watchdogs? Mapping the field of news podcasters and their role conceptions in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. *Journalism and Media*, 4(3), 820–834. [CrossRef]
- Körner, M., & Graßl, M. (2024). Podcasts. In K. Meier, J. A. García-Avilés, A. Kaltenbrunner, C. Porlezza, V. Wyss, R. Lugschitz, & K. Klinghardt (Eds.), *Innovations in journalism* (pp. 171–177). Routledge. [CrossRef]
- Leander, L. (2020). Wissenschaft im Gespräch: Wissensvermittlung und -aushandlung in Podcasts. *Kommunikation@gesellschaft*, 21(2), 1–24. [CrossRef]
- Lindgren, M. (2016). Personal narrative journalism and podcasting. *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 14(1), 23–41. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Lindgren, M. (2023). Intimacy and emotions in podcast journalism: A study of award-winning Australian and British podcasts. *Journalism Practice*, 17(4), 704–719. [CrossRef]
- Lindgren, M. (2025). Balancing intimacy and trust in audio journalism. *Media and Communication*, 13, 1–5. [CrossRef]
- Lindgren, M., & Bird, D. (2024). Listening to the pandemic: Podcasting COVID-19. In M. Lewis, E. Govender, & K. Holland (Eds.), *Communicating COVID-19* (pp. 45–64). Springer. [CrossRef]
- Llinares, D., Fox, N., & Berry, R. (Eds.). (2018a). Introduction: Podcasting and podcasts—Parameters of a new aural culture. In *Podcasting: New aural cultures and digital media* (pp. 1–13). Palgrave Macmillan. [CrossRef]
- Llinares, D., Fox, N., & Berry, R. (Eds.). (2018b). *Podcasting: New aural cultures and digital media*. Palgrave Macmillan. [CrossRef]

- Loviglio, J. (2024). From radio to podcasting: Intimacy and massification. *The Velvet Light Trap*, 93, 52–54.
- MacKenzie, L. E. (2019). Science podcasts: Analysis of global production and output from 2004 to 2018. *Royal Society Open Science*, 6(1), 180932. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Madsen, V., & Potts, J. (2010). Voice-Cast: The distribution of voice via podcasting. In *Vocal aesthetics in digital arts and media* (pp. 33–60). The MIT Press.
- Markman, K. M. (2012). Doing radio, making friends, and having fun: Exploring the motivations of independent audio podcasters. *New Media & Society*, 14(4), 547–565. [CrossRef]
- Markman, K. M., & Sawyer, C. E. (2014). Why pod? Further explorations of the motivations for independent podcasting. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 21(1), 20–35. [CrossRef]
- McClung, S., & Johnson, K. (2010). Examining the motives of podcast users. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 17(1), 82–95. [CrossRef]
- McHugh, S. (2016). How podcasting is changing the audio storytelling genre. *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 14(1), 65–82. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Nee, R. C., & Santana, A. D. (2022). Podcasting the pandemic: Exploring storytelling formats and shifting journalistic norms. *Journalism Practice*, 16(8), 1559–1577. [CrossRef]
- Newman, N., & Cherubini, F. (2025). *Journalism, media, and technology trends and predictions 2025*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. [CrossRef]
- Newman, N., & Gallo, N. (2019). *News podcasts and the opportunities for publishers*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Available online: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news-podcasts-and-opportunities-publishers> (accessed on 10 July 2026).
- Pavelko, R. L., & Myrick, J. G. (2020). Muderinos and media effects: How the my favorite murder podcast and its social media community may promote well-being in audiences with mental illness. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 27(1), 151–169. [CrossRef]
- Perdomo, G., & Lindgren, M. (2025). Elements of podcast journalism, an emerging framework. In M. Perrotta (Ed.), *Podcast in the future of journalism: Exploring forms and formats of audio storytelling in digital news media* (pp. 27–44). Roma Tre Press.
- Perdomo, G., & Rodrigues-Rouleau, P. (2022). Transparency as metajournalistic performance. *Journalism*, 23(11), 2311–2327. [CrossRef]
- Perks, L. G., & Turner, J. S. (2019). Podcasts and productivity: A qualitative uses and gratifications study. *Mass Communication and Society*, 22(1), 96–116. [CrossRef]
- Perks, L. G., Turner, J. S., & Tollison, A. C. (2019). Podcast uses and gratifications scale development. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 63(4), 617–634. [CrossRef]
- Perrotta, M. (2025a). Introduction: Journalism in listening mode. Models, co-productions, and the new podcast ecosystem. In M. Perrotta (Ed.), *Podcast in the future of journalism: Exploring forms and formats of audio storytelling in digital news media* (pp. 15–26). Roma Tre Press.
- Perrotta, M. (Ed.). (2025b). *Podcast in the future of journalism: Exploring forms and formats of audio storytelling in digital news media*. Roma Tre Press.
- Rosada, J., Koch, E., Burmester, A. B., & Clement, M. (2025). The impact of smart speakers and podcasts on news media consumption. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, 22(3), 187–204. [CrossRef]
- Schlütz, D., & Hedder, I. (2021). Aural parasocial relations: Host–listener relationships in podcasts. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 29(2), 457–474. [CrossRef]
- Seeber, L., & Rüdth, A. (2022). Politische kommunikation über podcasts: Die etablierung eines modernen kommunikationskanals? In V. Katzenberger, J. Keil, & M. Wild (Eds.), *Podcasts* (pp. 119–149). Springer Fachmedien. [CrossRef]
- Simon, H. (1990). Hidden champions: Speerspitze der deutschen wirtschaft. *Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft (ZfB)*, 60(9), 875–890.
- Simon, H. (2009). *Hidden champions of the 21st century: Success strategies of unknown world market leaders*. Springer Fachmedien. [CrossRef]
- Sullivan, J. L. (2019). The platforms of podcasting: Past and present. *Social Media + Society*, 5(4), 205630511988000. [CrossRef]
- Swiatek, L. (2018). The podcast as an intimate bridging medium. In D. Llinares, N. Fox, & R. Berry (Eds.), *Podcasting: New aural cultures and digital media* (pp. 173–187). Palgrave Macmillan. [CrossRef]
- Whipple, K., Ashe, I., & Cueva Chacón, L. M. (2023). Examining podcast listeners’ perceptions of the journalistic functions of podcasts. *Electronic News*, 17(1), 40–66. [CrossRef]

Disclaimer/Publisher’s Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.