

Author Directions: Navigating your success in Podcasting

The Power of Podcasting:
Tips on Speaking Directly to Your Audience



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Introduction

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As a published writer, you are aware of how critical it is to have a sound strategy in place to increase your exposure and position yourself among other industry experts in your field. One strategy that is often overlooked but has the power to set you apart is the art of podcasting. This popular tool for speaking directly to your audience has catapulted itself into one of the fastest growing mediums to find and absorb content. The growth of podcasts was initially driven by faster internet speeds, the rise of the smartphone, and public appetite for true-crime documentaries such as *Serial*. Today, podcasts cater to diverse and specialist topics and have loyal communities. According to the most recent data from Infinite Dial (Edison Research), over 90 million people in the US listened to a podcast in the last month, which means a massive opportunity for authors to reach those who may not consume content in other forms. One reason for the enduring popularity of podcasts, as Routledge author Dr Siu-Lan Tan notes, is that too many people have “screen fatigue” and that “listening to podcasts is a great way to be mentally engaged while not having to stare at a screen”. This guide will showcase the benefits of podcasting, how to get started, and the different options available.

The Benefits of Podcasting

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Out of all the content marketing strategies that are available today, audio content is arguably the most personal. Sound lends itself to an entirely new experience for the listener, allowing them to hear your authentic voice as you talk passionately about your work, its impact on your field or why it is relevant in this ever-changing world. Podcasts have gained popularity in the past 15 years because they allow your target audience to meet you in a digital space, building trust and credibility at virtually no cost. If you want to increase your local and global presence, this option affords you incredible opportunities. The benefits of podcasting include the following:

1. **They're easy to consume on the go.** Whether you're getting ready in the morning, commuting to work, hitting the gym or lounging around, podcasts can be consumed anywhere. As long as you have a digital device such as a computer, smart phone, or portable audio device, podcasts are intuitively easy to search, download and listen to no matter where your day takes you.

2. **Enhanced discoverability.** With the growing popularity of this medium, you have the opportunity to reach a brand new audience segment you might have missed with other content forums (such as websites, blogs, social media, etc). If you cater to a niche group on a consistent basis, you will garner a loyal and devoted fan base which will increase your reach to new potential listeners.
3. **They're more cost effective to produce than video.** Swap out expensive camera equipment for a mic and instantly record, edit and upload your content to an audio file on your computer, phone or tablet. More details on the logistics of this will be later discussed. Podcasts are free to host online, listen to, and download. As the audience grows there is more chance to attract sponsors and monetize your platform.
4. **Guest speaker interviews:** Having a guest speaker on your podcast, such as a colleague or another expert in your field, will instantly boost your credibility and authority. It will give your audience the chance to learn from their past, while increasing your professional network.
5. **Aid in boosting sales:** If you include a "call to action" at the end of your podcast, your listeners will have a clear path to find your book online and purchase it. This could include directing them to your landing page on Routledge or CRC Press, or increasing traffic to other personal sites such as articles, social media, blogs, websites, etc.

How to get started – launching your own podcast

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The single most important thing you should keep in mind when creating a podcast is your audience. They will dictate how your content is perceived, and the better you serve your audience, the more successful your podcast will be in building brand awareness and positioning yourself as a leader in your field of expertise. Before logistical considerations, determine the basics and set a clear goal for the podcast you have in mind. What topic will you explore? How long will it be? Should you include expertise from leaders in your field? What is the message you want to communicate? And, most importantly, what is your call to action to engage listeners on a deeper level? Once you've set a clear goal for what you want to achieve with this podcast, tailor it to the target audience intended for your book. Keep in mind that you don't have to keep coming up with new themes or ideas – rather keep your audience informed and up-to-date with what is happening in your field and the podcast will virtually create itself.

Podcasting Process:

1. **Plug a microphone into your computer.** There are various affordable USB microphones available on the market, which will give you professional sound quality without the pro cost. For better quality, you may want to consider an audio-interface for your computer which will allow the use of studio level microphones.
2. **Install a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW).** Free software is available for both Mac and Windows operating systems, e.g Audacity, Garageband, Cubase LE.
3. **Create an audio file when you record yourself speaking.** This can then be saved to your computer for later when you decide where to host the end result.
4. **Edit your audio file.** You can be as creative or conservative as you like here, but popular tools such as Audacity or GarageBand will give you the basics you need to sound your absolute best.

Where to host your podcast once created:

As important as your audience is in creating your podcast, they are equally (if not more) important when deciding what platform to use when promoting the podcast. Before you make any decisions, make sure you have a clear understanding of where your target audience digests information – because where your audience is, you must be to engage, educate, and influence. Once this knowledge is obtained, that is where you can host the final product to make sure it is promoted effectively. Popular websites and apps include Podcast One, Anchor, Cast Box, Stitcher, iTunes and YouTube. There's also SoundCloud, where Routledge has [an account](#) that hosts author-generated audio content and interview clips.

Once you find the perfect venue to promote your podcast, you'll want to think about integrating it with other mediums to strengthen your overall marketing strategy. Repurpose and publish the content on your personal website, college affiliate site, blogs, articles, social media, or any other forum or organization you are a part of that can help push your podcast forward. Podcasts have a high rate of shareability since they are quick to listen, so be intentional and frequent with where you share them as this can create a huge domino effect in your brand awareness. Another great tactic successful podcasters have implemented to drive engagement is rewarding your loyal listeners. Offer special discounts, a free chapter access, or an invite to an upcoming book launch or speaking engagement to make them feel valued. Word spreads like wildfire, and if you build a great base, there is a high probability that base will share with their friends.

Tapping into existing podcasts as a guest speaker

If you're not confident in producing your own podcast, or simply lack the time, fear not - there are plenty of established podcasts that welcome guest speakers. One such case study is Routledge author and music psychologist Dr Siu-Lan Tan, who contributed regularly to a popular music podcast. [Score: The Podcast](#) features interviews with film, television, and video game composers and other Hollywood insiders and industry professionals, focusing on the topic of film scores. Previous guests include Oscar Award-winning composers Justin Hurwitz, Steven Price, and Mychael Danna. Dr Siu-Lan Tan's segment 'The Inside Track' is featured in many episodes.

Siu-Lan explains that her involvement with Score has resulted in numerous benefits and opportunities:



"Many people have reached out to me because they heard the podcast or saw the film that inspired it (*Score: A Film Music Documentary*), and this has allowed me to meet many composers and film music experts that I wouldn't otherwise have met and from whom I can learn a lot. One of the rewards of being involved in podcasts is that there's a potentially rich social element, putting us in touch with a greater variety of people and resources than when only working within strictly academic boundaries.

Moreover, I've also learned to look at my own research topic from new angles. When I was first asked to create material for the podcast, I only had a few themes in mind, but with each segment I began to see new ideas flowering – some of which could lead to new research questions or book chapters in my academic work. It has opened up my thinking, because preparing material for a different audience forces me to step off the well-worn trails, and I have seen how these 'detours' can inform and freshen my scholarly work."

If you'd like to learn more about Dr Siu-Lan Tan's experience and her top tips for aspiring authors looking to get into the world of podcasting, read the [full Q&A](#) on our website.

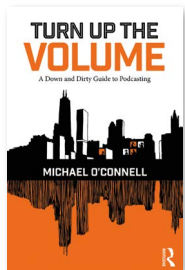
Another option worth exploring is the [New Books Network](#) – an online consortium of author-interview podcasts spanning the Humanities, Social Sciences and STEM. The NBN publish 100 scholarly interviews a month and received 11,000,000 downloads in 2018, offering academics unprecedented access to eager book-loving audiences. If you would like to submit your book to NBN for consideration, please review the [guidelines](#) and ask your marketing contact to send a review copy.

Are you affiliated to any societies or organizations that host a podcast? For example, [PsychCrunch](#) is a podcast from the British Psychological Society that explores how findings from psychological science can make a difference to everyday life. Each episode covers a different topic and guest speakers are invited to share their research. It's always a worthwhile exercise to examine your existing connections to determine whether there are any opportunities such as this that can be leveraged.

Conclusion

Podcasting is a great addition to any content marketing strategy if you desire to consistently tune in with your audience to build trust and share value. There are no limitations to this forum, and it can be easily created and shared on every platform. Make sure to measure the effectiveness of your podcasts to ensure that you're getting the desired response rate and feedback from your listeners. A great way to measure results is to directly ask your audience through panel discussions and surveys. This will provide a great conversation around the topic of interest and may just give you new ideas for a new podcast or even new book!

References



Serial and the growth of podcasts - *Turn Up the Volume: A Down and Dirty Guide to Podcasting* (9781138218031)

90 million people in the US listened to a podcast in the last month - <https://www.podcastinsights.com/podcast-statistics/>

[Podcast Q&A](#) with Dr Siu-Lan Tan

New Books Network - Author-Interview Podcasts for Scholarly Books <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2018/08/29/have-content-will-travel-author-interview-podcasts-for-scholarly-books/>