

FOR RELEASE JUNE 15, 2023

A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S.

True crime is the most common topic; 15% of the top podcasts focus on news

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, June 2023, "A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S."

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How we did this

This study takes a close look at key characteristics of top-ranked podcasts. It is a continuation of work that Pew Research Center has done analyzing [podcasts as a part of the news and information landscape in the U.S.](#)

This analysis examines 451 top-ranked podcasts. Researchers identified these top podcasts by analyzing daily lists of the top 200 podcasts on Apple Podcasts and Spotify from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022 (chart data provided by Podchaser, Inc.). The average chart position of each podcast that appeared on either list was calculated, and the top 300 podcasts from each site were included as top podcasts. By combining these lists so that podcasts that were among the top 300 on both sites were not counted twice, researchers identified 451 top podcasts.

A team of trained researchers then analyzed these 451 podcasts to determine podcast affiliation, topic, format and other key characteristics of each podcast. Additional data on episode length and frequency was analyzed after collecting data on all episodes published in 2022 through the Spotify and Apple Podcasts APIs.

Here are the [detailed tables](#) for this report, and the [methodology](#).

Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder. This is the latest report in Pew Research Center's ongoing investigation of the state of news, information and journalism in the digital age, a research program funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, with generous support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

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A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S.

True crime is the most common topic; 15% of the top podcasts focus on the news

Although it's much newer than other media like television or books, the podcast ecosystem has created a rich library of content covering a wide range of topics both popular and niche.

A new Pew Research Center study of 451 of the top-ranked podcasts in the United States shows this diversity of subjects: No single topic is the main focus of more than a quarter of these podcasts.

True crime is the most common topic, making up 24% of these top-ranked podcasts – perhaps reflecting the early [popularity of Serial](#). The next most common topics are politics and government (10%); entertainment, pop culture and the arts (9%); and self-help and relationships (8%).

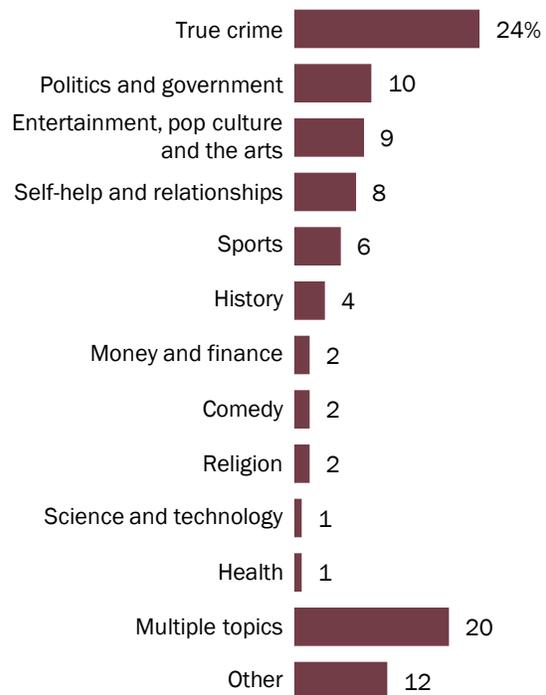
There are also a number of podcasts that don't fit into any of these topics (12%), such as fictional radio stories and teams of people playing the role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons.

One-fifth of these top podcasts – which are those with the highest average daily rankings on Apple's and Spotify's lists of top podcasts in a six-month period in 2022 – discuss multiple topics. Many of these podcasts are like talk shows, with the discussion flowing across topics.

The list of top podcasts generally reflects the interests of U.S. listeners. Among the 49% of U.S. adults who said in a 2022 Center survey that they listened to a podcast in the last year, entertainment, politics, history and true crime were all among [the most common topics](#) these podcast listeners turned to.

About a quarter of top-ranked podcasts are about true crime

% of top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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[What is a top-ranked podcast?]

To create a list of top-ranked podcasts for this study, researchers collected the top 200 podcasts from the daily top charts on [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#) from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022, (chart data provided by Podchaser, Inc.). Although exactly how each site compiles its list is not public knowledge, it is assumed to broadly reflect the site’s most popular podcasts, perhaps along with some other podcasts the site sees as being buzzworthy. For each podcast, researchers calculated the average chart position for each day the podcast appeared on the top charts, removing any podcasts that had not appeared on these charts for at least seven days or were not primarily in English. The top 300 podcasts with the highest average chart position on their respective listing sites were then considered “top-ranked podcasts.” Podcasts that appeared on both listing sites were then merged, adjusting for duplicates. This resulted in 451 unique top-ranked podcasts.

To assess the presence of news in the podcast universe, researchers also looked at how many of the top-ranked podcasts are focused primarily on news and current events, finding that 15% of the podcasts studied fit this description.

News-focused podcasts can be about any topic, though most are about politics and government (49%) or sports (29%). Many have their roots in talk radio, and some, like *The Dan Le Batard Show with Stugotz*, are directly connected to radio shows.

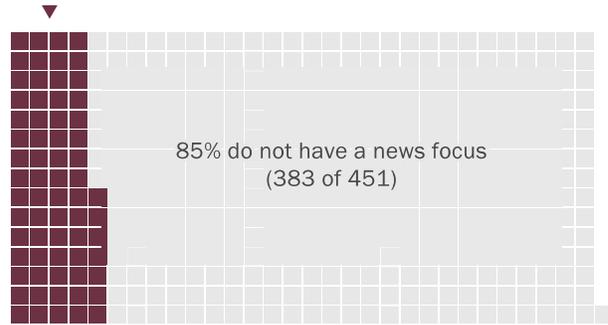
Across topics, the most common format among news-focused podcasts is commentary (49%), while smaller shares – 22% each – are centered around deep reporting (podcasts that do in-depth examinations or analyses of a topic or story) or interviews. Just 6% are news summaries. Commentary is especially dominant among sports podcasts (82%).

News organizations have been [investing in podcasts](#) for several years, and some [produce podcasts about news](#) and other topics. They have had some success in this area: 18% of top-ranked podcasts are affiliated with one of several dozen news organizations, such as NPR, *The Wall Street Journal* or *The Ringer*. About half (51%) are affiliated with some other kind of organization, such as *Wondery* or *iHeartRadio*, and 31% of top podcasts have no affiliation (i.e., they are independent).

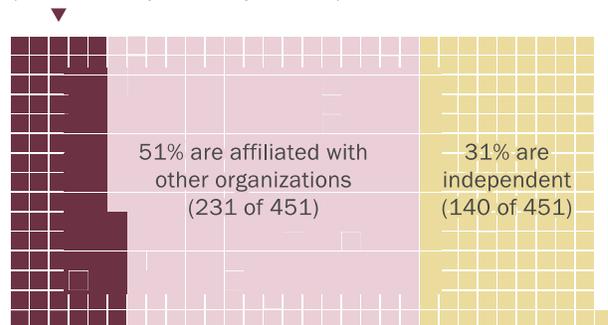
Current events likely come up on podcasts more frequently than these figures may suggest. Two-thirds of U.S. podcast listeners say [news is discussed on the podcasts they listen to](#), according to a recent Center survey, and a similar share (64%) say they listen to podcasts to stay up to date about current events. This disconnect may be the result of podcast formats or other factors. For example, some podcasts might discuss news topics in passing, even if they do not focus on news exclusively. This analysis did not capture this type of news reference.

15% of top-ranked podcasts focus on news, and 18% are affiliated with a news organization

15% have a news focus
(68 of 451 top-ranked podcasts)



18% are affiliated with a news organization
(80 of 451 top-ranked podcasts)



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Independent podcasts are those that are not affiliated with a larger podcast network or company. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Podcasts are often [viewed as a relatively easy way](#) for anyone to tell a story. But actually getting an audience for that storytelling is more difficult, and podcast producers use several means to grow and connect with their audiences. Most of the top-ranked podcasts studied are available on four major listing sites – Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and Stitcher – and roughly three-quarters have a website.

Some of these podcasts also experiment with other ways to engage their audiences. About half of top podcasts (51%) produce a video to accompany most episodes. Many of these videos show the podcast being recorded, providing a more engaging experience for viewers. And 8% have a discussion forum or [Discord server](#), to directly engage with their fans or allow fans to connect with each other.

We studied 451 podcasts that had the highest average daily ranking on Apple and Spotify from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022. This new report builds on the Center’s [recent survey of U.S. podcast listeners](#) to give context around what podcast audiences are listening to.

[The rise of podcasts]

Podcast listenership in the U.S. has [increased steadily since 2013](#). In 2014, the [popular true crime podcast Serial](#) was released, becoming the fastest podcast to reach 5 million downloads on iTunes. Years later, this was followed by investments in podcasts by platforms like Spotify, which paid at least \$200 million for an [exclusive deal with The Joe Rogan Experience](#) in 2020.

In a recent survey, Pew Research Center found that [49% of U.S. adults have listened to a podcast in the past year](#). However, as podcast audiences continue to grow, some podcast hosts have been accused of [spreading unsubstantiated false claims](#), and others have [drawn backlash for offensive content](#).

This report is the latest from the Center’s ongoing research into podcasts. Previous reports covered [how Americans engage with podcasts](#), [which podcasts they listen to most](#), and the [differences in engagement with podcasts](#) depending on factors like age and race.

About half of top-ranked podcasts have a video component

% of top-ranked podcasts that have each type of outreach



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Discussion forums could include a Discord server. Refer to methodology for details.
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
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Other key findings from this analysis include:

- **Top-ranked podcasts use a variety of formats:** 38% feature deep reporting or explain a topic, roughly a quarter (23%) are interview shows, and 16% are based around commentary.
- **True crime podcasts tend to feature deep reporting, while other topics use a more diverse set of formats.** The vast majority of top true crime podcasts (95%) use deep reporting. In contrast, politics and government podcasts are roughly evenly split among interview (33%), deep reporting (28%) and commentary (28%) formats, while an additional 9% are news summaries.
- **Most top-ranked podcasts have a single host.** A majority of top podcasts (58%) feature a single host, while roughly four-in-ten (37%) have multiple hosts.
- **Top-ranked podcasts tend to be less than an hour long.** For six-in-ten top podcasts, the average episode length in 2022 was less than 50 minutes.
- **Many top-ranked podcasts turn to their audiences for financial support.** Around half of top podcasts (47%) ask for audience support through options such as subscriptions, donations or merchandise for sale. The Center's recent survey of U.S. podcast listeners found that 13% have [paid for a podcast subscription](#) and 12% have bought merchandise.

1. Podcast topics

While podcasts cover a broad range of topics, true crime is by far the most common topic of top-ranked podcasts.

About a quarter of top podcasts (24%) are primarily about **true crime** – often investigations into murders, scandals and other criminal acts. Many of these focus on a single crime across the series, such as *The Execution of Bonny Lee Bakley*, an in-depth investigation of Bakley’s murder and her connections to Hollywood celebrities (including her husband Robert Blake). Other top podcasts cover several crimes. For example, *Morbid* often spends one or two episodes on each incident.

The topics of top podcasts that follow true crime include **politics and government** (10%); **entertainment, pop culture and the arts** (9%); and **self-help and relationships** (8%).

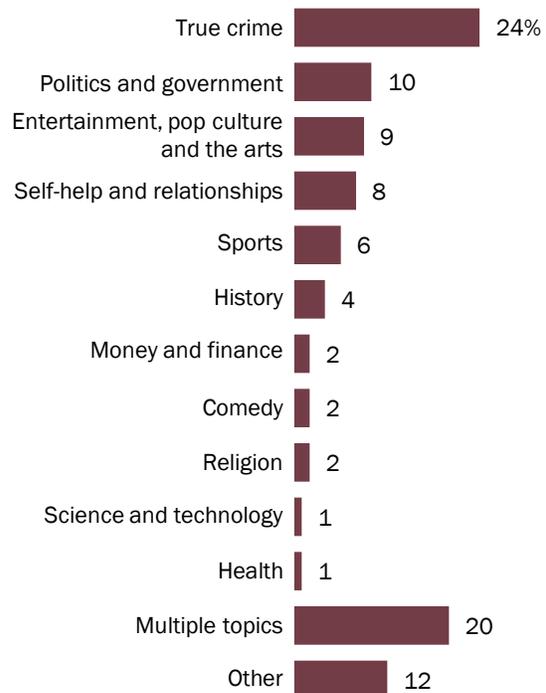
Top-ranked podcasts about politics span across the ideological spectrum, from conservative-oriented podcasts like former Trump adviser Steve Bannon’s *Bannon’s War Room* to *Pod Save America*, a podcast hosted by several former Obama staffers.

Top-ranked entertainment podcasts, meanwhile, tend to cover specific areas of entertainment or pop culture, like *The Official Game of Thrones Podcast*, which offers listeners a behind-the-scenes view into the popular TV series, or *Brain Structure*, which is hosted by video game designer Hideo Kojima. But some entertainment podcasts are broader in scope, such as *Vulture’s* pop culture podcast *Into It*, hosted by Sam Sanders.

Self-help podcasts are about everything from personal finance (e.g., Dave Ramsey’s *The Ramsey Show*), to leadership (e.g., *Dare to Lead* with Brené Brown) or broader motivation (e.g., *The Mindset Mentor*).

About a quarter of top-ranked podcasts are about true crime

% of top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Another 6% of top podcasts are about **sports**, while 4% focus on **history**.

One-in-five top-ranked podcasts focus on **multiple topics**. These tend to follow one of a few formats: In some, each episode is about a different topic, while in others the host(s) talk about a range of topics within the same episode, such as The Joe Rogan Experience or Suburb Talks.

Many of the topics that are common across these top podcasts are also among the most common [topics named by U.S. podcast listeners](#). Roughly a third or more of U.S. podcast listeners regularly listen to podcasts about entertainment (46%), politics (41%), history (40%), true crime (34%) and self-help and relationships (32%).

2. How podcasts connect with their audiences

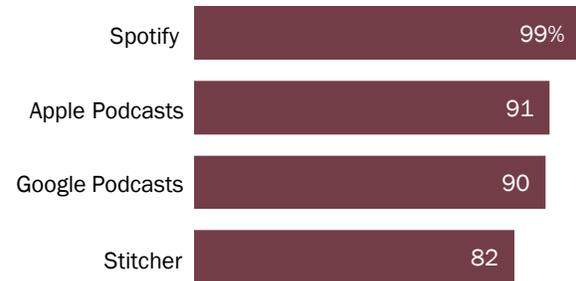
Finding and maintaining an audience for a podcast can be challenging, so most podcasts make their content widely available. The vast majority of top-ranked podcasts studied are available on several major listing sites, with few podcasts exclusive to one site.

Nearly all top podcasts (99%) are available on Spotify, and roughly nine-in-ten top podcasts are available on Apple Podcasts (these two sites were used to determine podcast ranking). To see if these podcasts were also available on other listing sites, researchers then looked to see if each podcast was on Google Podcasts and Stitcher. Majorities of these top podcasts are also available on these other sites (90% and 82%, respectively), and 81% of the podcasts examined can be found on *all four* of these sites.

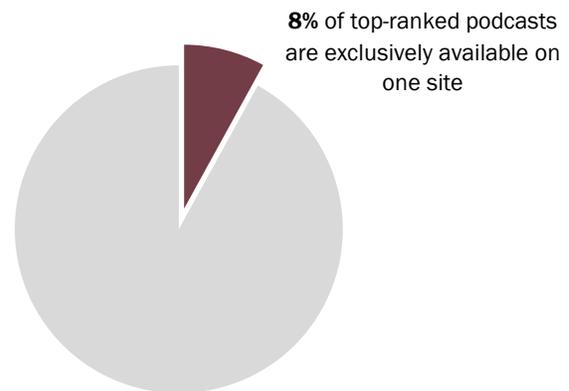
Among the top podcasts studied here, 7% are exclusive to Spotify, which has been experimenting with exclusive rights deals. Spotify has a [\\$200 million partnership with Joe Rogan](#) to bring The Joe Rogan Experience exclusively to the site, and it has [purchased several podcast industry companies](#). At the same time, however, Spotify recently [canceled several exclusive podcasts](#) and [relaxed its exclusivity rules](#) for certain podcasts. Less than 1% of top podcasts are exclusive to Apple.

Most top-ranked podcasts are available across major podcast listing sites

% of top-ranked podcasts that are available on each listing site



% of top-ranked podcasts that are only available on one listing site



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Podcasts were selected using Spotify and Apple Podcasts and then looked up on each of these four listing sites. Exclusive podcasts are those that are only available on one listing site. Refer to methodology for details. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022. "A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S."

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Podcasts originated as an audio-only form of media, but in recent years many podcasts have experimented with producing a video component, which may engage audiences in a different way. About half of top-ranked podcasts (51%) release some kind of video that accompanies their episodes, almost always on YouTube.

These videos take different forms. About three-in-ten top podcasts (29%) include video of the hosts recording the podcast itself. One example is Caresha Please, which, like some other podcasts, is recorded in an elaborate set, giving the podcast a unique visual brand. Spotify exclusive Call Her Daddy and Viall Files by Nick Viall, both of which are recorded in a studio, are other examples of this style.

One-in-five top podcasts have a video component that is a static (or mostly static) video. The SmartLess podcast is one example of this approach, with the podcast audio played over an image of the podcast’s logo and a simple soundwave animation.

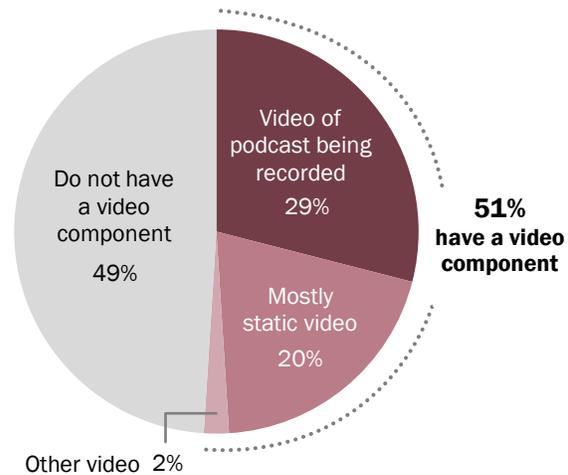
Regardless of the format, YouTube is by far the most popular video-sharing platform for podcasts: The vast majority (97%) of podcasts with a video component make it available on YouTube. A small share of these podcasts use other sites, including 6% that use [Rumble](#), the next most common site.

In addition to being available on major listing sites and video sharing sites, many podcasts use other methods to connect with their audiences. Roughly three-quarters of top-ranked podcasts have a website (73%). Podcasters use these websites to introduce their show, provide news and other updates to their audiences, share links to listing sites that host their show, and [offer merchandise for sale](#).

Additionally, 8% of top podcasts have some kind of online discussion forum where their audiences can connect with each other, or even with the creators directly. For example, the true crime podcast Murder, Mystery & Makeup has a Discord server with about 27,000 members at the time this report was written.

About half of top-ranked podcasts have a video component

% of top-ranked podcasts that have each kind of video component



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022. “A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S.”

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3. Podcast ownership and funding

A popular perception of podcasting suggests that [anyone can start a podcast](#), enabling independent voices to reach large audiences. But running a podcast and getting an audience can be both time-consuming and expensive, with costs relating to equipment as well as advertising, guest booking, research and other expenses. Top-ranked podcasts often [make money from advertising](#) (although this study did not examine this revenue stream), and many ask their audiences for financial support.

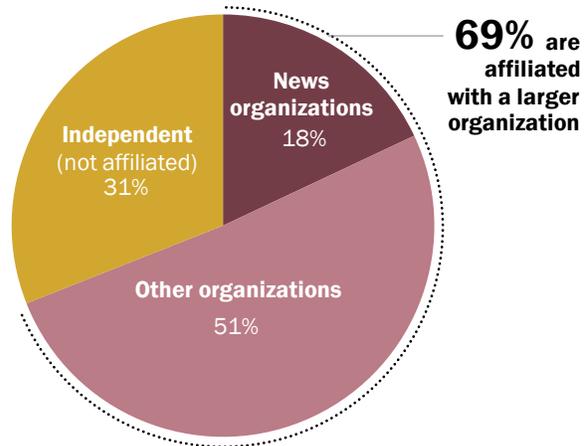
But affiliation with a larger organization – a podcasting network or company or a news organization – can mitigate these costs, though funding levels [may be declining](#). In fact, a majority of top podcasts (69%) are connected to a larger organization that produces and distributes podcasts, including about one-in-five (18%) that are affiliated with news organizations. Some of these are [news-focused podcasts](#) like The New York Times’ The Daily and The Daily Wire’s The Ben Shapiro Show, but others are not, such as Making Space with Hoda Kotb from NBC.

About half of all top podcasts (51%) are affiliated with an organization that is not primarily focused on news. Many of these organizations are focused on podcasts and related content, such as Pushkin Industries, Lemonada Media or Barstool Sports. But recent years also have seen a [wave of consolidation](#) in the podcast industry, with several podcasts and their parent companies being purchased by larger organizations. For example, Wondery, which publishes dozens of podcasts, was [purchased by Amazon](#) in 2020, while [Spotify bought The Ringer’s catalog of podcasts](#) the same year. And more traditional audio companies like iHeartMedia also publish several top podcasts.

About a third of top-ranked podcasts (31%) are independent. These include podcasts from relatively unknown hosts, such as Your Own Backyard (which investigates the 1996 disappearance of Kristin Smart), as well as from public figures (e.g., The Megyn Kelly Show).

Majority of top-ranked podcasts are affiliated with a larger organization

% of top-ranked podcasts that are affiliated with ...



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Independent podcasts are those that are not affiliated with a larger podcast network or company. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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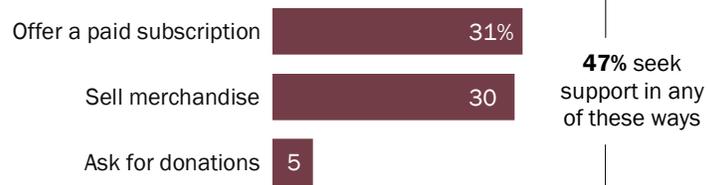
About half of top-ranked podcasts seek financial support from listeners

About half of top podcasts (47%) seek out audience support, either by offering paid subscriptions, asking for donations or selling merchandise.

Roughly three-in-ten (31%) invite their audience to buy a paid subscription to their podcast, which offers listeners added benefits like early access or bonus episodes. A similar proportion (30%) sell merchandise, such as T-shirts and coffee mugs. Just 5% ask listeners directly for donations.

Roughly half of top-ranked podcasts seek audience support via subscriptions, donations or merchandise

% of top-ranked podcasts that ...



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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A recent [Pew Research Center survey](#) found that 13% of podcast listeners in the U.S. have paid for a subscription to a podcast, and 12% have bought a podcast's merchandise.

Independent podcasts are more likely to seek out audience support than those connected to a larger organization

Whether top-ranked podcasts ask listeners for support also varies based on their ownership, with independent podcasts particularly likely to ask for support.

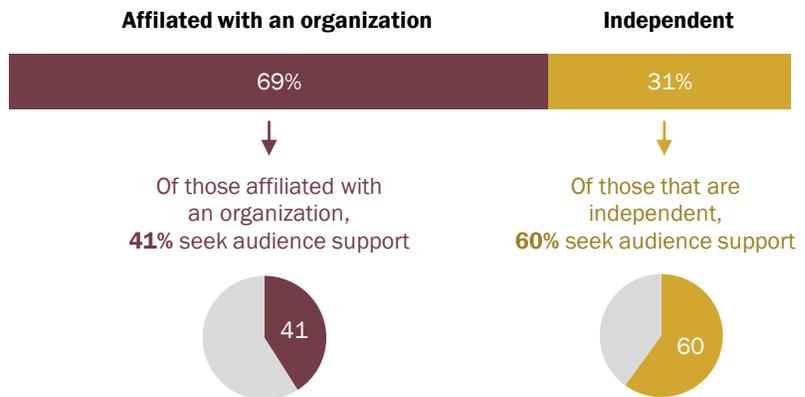
Six-in-ten independent top-ranked podcasts ask listeners for support through paid subscriptions, direct donations or selling merchandise, compared with 41% of podcasts affiliated with a larger organization.

Independent podcasts are about twice as likely to offer a paid subscription as podcasts affiliated with an organization (47% vs. 23%). Similarly, independent podcasts are more likely to sell merchandise, with 42% offering this option to listeners (versus 24% of those with an affiliation).

One-in-ten independent top-ranked podcasts seek donations, versus just 2% of those affiliated with a larger organization.

Top-ranked podcasts affiliated with a larger organization are less likely to ask listeners for support

% of top-ranked podcasts that are ...



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Independent podcasts are those that are not affiliated with a larger podcast network or company. Refer to methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
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4. Podcast format

Podcast hosts use a mix of formats and structures to tell stories, convey information and hold discussions. These approaches differ in a number of ways, including the number of hosts and the overall format – such as an interview-based show vs. one centered around reporting or commentary – as well as the frequency and length of episodes.

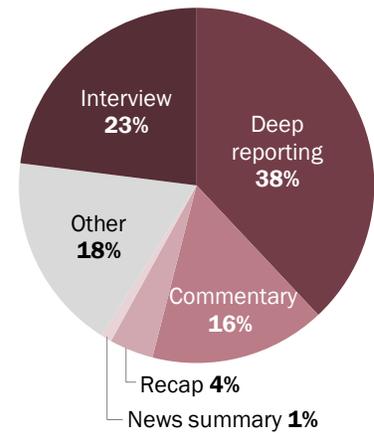
Roughly four-in-ten top-ranked podcasts (38%) use **deep reporting**, in which the podcast does an in-depth examination or analysis of a topic or story. Some that follow this format include true crime podcasts such as *Small Town Murder* and *My Favorite Murder*, in which the hosts break down evidence about different crimes, and *History is US*, a podcast that focuses on race and American history.

Other common formats include those in which the host or hosts **interview** a guest or group of guests every episode (23%), and those in which hosts offer their **commentary** on a given subject (16%). A small share of the podcasts examined involve hosts giving a **recap** of episodes of TV shows or other media (4%), such as the *Always Sunny Podcast* or *Office Ladies*, and 1% are **news summaries**.

About one-in-five top podcasts (18%) use another type of format, such as soundscapes or a team playing through a *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign.

About four-in-ten top-ranked podcasts focus on deep reporting

% of top-ranked podcasts with each format



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Deep reporting podcasts are those that do an in-depth examination or analysis of a topic or story. Refer to methodology for details on each type of format.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Some podcast topics are more likely to be tied to specific formats than others. For example, the vast majority of true crime podcasts (95%) use the deep reporting format.

Politics and government podcasts, however, are about evenly split among interview (33%), deep reporting (28%) and commentary (28%) formats, with an additional 9% that are news summaries. Recaps are the most common format among entertainment podcasts (36%), while most sports podcasts (82%) use the commentary format.

Vast majority of top-ranked true crime podcasts use a deep reporting format

% of top-ranked podcasts within each topic area that follow each format

	Deep reporting	Interview	Commentary	Recap	News summary	Other
Entertainment, pop culture and the arts	5%	24%	14%	36%	-	21%
Politics and government	28	33	28	2	9	-
Self-help and relationships	-	39	5	-	-	55
Sports	4	7	82	-	-	7
True crime	95	3	-	2	-	-
Multiple topics	11	47	22	1	1	18

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Deep reporting podcasts are those that do an in-depth examination or analysis of a topic or story. Refer to methodology for details on each type of format. Topics with fewer than 25 podcasts and those in the "Other" topic category not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Top-ranked podcasts most often have a single host

A slim majority of top podcasts feature a single host (58%), though the host often is joined by guests. For example, In the Bubble with Andy Slavitt is hosted by Slavitt, but he is regularly joined by guests. A smaller share of top podcasts feature multiple hosts (37%) – such as *Adulthood*, which is hosted by Michelle Buteau and Jordan Carlos. And 6% of top podcasts do not have a host; these are often fiction podcasts that have a narrator or a cast of voice actors, like *Batman Unburied*.

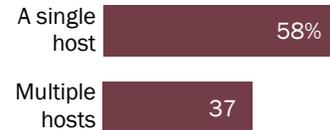
Podcasts about true crime and politics and government are especially likely to have a single host (67% and 63% do, respectively), while most sports podcasts have more than one host (71%), reflecting their roots in sports talk radio.

The number of hosts top podcasts have also differs by the overall format of the show. Top podcasts that use a deep reporting (65%) or interview (78%) structure are much more likely than commentary (35%) or recap (25%) podcasts to have a single host.

Of U.S. podcast listeners who named a top podcast in a [recent Pew Research Center survey](#), about a quarter (27%) say they feel extremely or very connected to that podcast's host or hosts.

More than half of top-ranked podcasts have a single host

% of top-ranked podcasts with ...



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. 6% of top-ranked podcasts have another kind of host structure and are not shown. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Most podcasts' episodes average less than an hour in length

Most podcasts are not quick listens – but relatively few are significantly longer than an hour per episode.

Just 6% of top-ranked podcasts averaged less than 20 minutes per episode in 2022, while just over half (54%) were longer than 20 minutes but less than 50 minutes. About four-in-ten top podcasts (37%) averaged about an hour or more per episode, including 18% that averaged more than 70 minutes.¹

Overwhelming majority of top-ranked podcasts averaged longer than 20 minutes per episode in 2022

% of top-ranked podcasts that averaged ___ per episode in 2022

Less than 20 mins	More than 20 mins, less than an hour	About an hour	Longer than about an hour
6%	54	19	18

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Episode duration data was not available for 3% of podcasts. "About an hour" indicates an average episode length of 50-70 minutes. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Top podcasts on certain topics tend to have longer episodes than others. For example, about a quarter or more of top podcasts about sports (36%) or entertainment and the arts (29%) averaged at least 70 minutes in length during the six months studied, larger shares than for other topic categories studied.

Podcasts that release videos are also longer than others, on average. Roughly a quarter (28%) of podcasts with videos released alongside an episode averaged 70 minutes or more between April and September of 2022, compared with just 8% of podcasts without video.

¹ To determine the average episode length, researchers collected metadata from the Apple and Spotify APIs on each podcast episode published during 2022 by each top-ranked podcast studied here.

How frequently podcasts release episodes

Of the 451 top-ranked podcasts included in this analysis, most (61%) released episodes at least once a week during the study period, including about a quarter that released multiple episodes per week.

Top podcasts that focus on sports are the most likely to release more than one episode per week (57%).

Most top-ranked podcasts release episodes at least once a week

% of top-ranked podcasts that released new episodes ___ in 2022



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Frequency data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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5. Podcasts and news

The vast majority of top-ranked podcasts do not focus primarily on news and current events: 15% of the podcasts examined in this study are focused on news. That said, news is a common part of the podcast experience for the majority of listeners – two-thirds of U.S. podcast listeners said in the [2022 survey that they had heard news discussed on podcasts in the last year](#).

There are several possible reasons for this, including that many podcasts that do not *primarily* focus on the news occasionally discuss news-related topics.

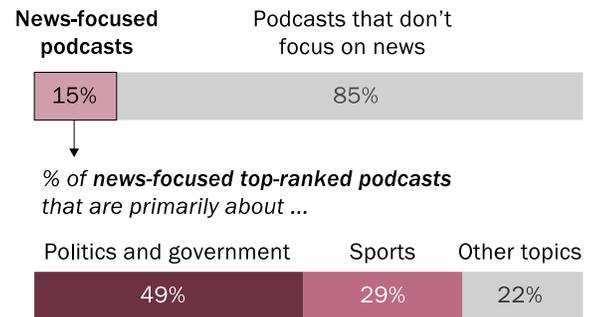
News-focused podcasts can be about a range of topics, including sports, entertainment and politics. Still, about half of these news-focused podcasts (49%) are about politics and government. These include podcasts like The Dan Bongino Show and The Kyle Kulinski Show, both of which feature commentary on daily political news.

At 29%, sports also is a common topic among news-focused podcasts, with podcasts from sports commentators such as The Bill Simmons Podcast, as well as some from athletes themselves, like The Draymond Green Show.

A substantial share of news-focused top podcasts (13%) are about multiple topics. These podcasts tend to cover different topics across their episodes, including The Ezra Klein Show and All-In with Chamath, Jason, Sacks & Friedberg.

Of the 15% of top-ranked podcasts that focus on news, half are about politics and government

% of top-ranked podcasts that focus on news



Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts; N=68 news-focused top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Nearly one-in-five top-ranked podcasts are affiliated with a news organization

Another connection between podcasts and the news can come in the form of an affiliation with a news organization. About one-in-five top-ranked podcasts (18%) have this type of affiliation, including podcasts associated with NPR, The Wall Street Journal and The Ringer.

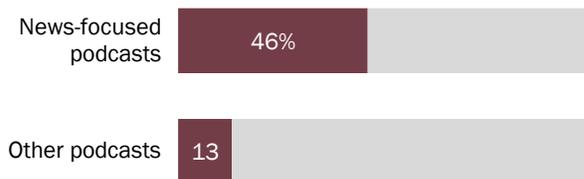
Not all podcasts published by news organizations are focused on news, but podcasts that do focus on news are more likely than other podcasts to be affiliated with news organizations (46% vs. 13%).

Podcasts about certain topics are more likely to have an affiliation with a news organization. Just under half of top podcasts focused on politics and government (44%) are affiliated with news organizations, as are 36% of those focused on sports. Self-help (8%) and entertainment (7%) podcasts are less likely to be connected to news organizations.

A [recent Center survey](#) found that 20% of podcast listeners say any of the podcasts they listen to are connected to a news organization – similar to the 18% of top podcasts with such a connection – but there also is also some uncertainty among listeners. Roughly the same percentage (21%) say they do not know whether the podcasts they listen to are connected to a news organization.

Just under half of news-focused podcasts are affiliated with a news organization

% of top-ranked podcasts that are affiliated with a news organization



Note: N=68 news-focused top-ranked podcasts; N=383 other top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
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News-focused podcasts are far more likely than others to be structured around commentary

About half of top-ranked podcasts that focus on news (49%) are [structured around commentary](#). These podcasts feature a host or hosts providing their analysis and opinion on current events, such as podcasts about politics like the Candace Owens podcast and sports podcasts like Slow News Day with Kevin Clark.

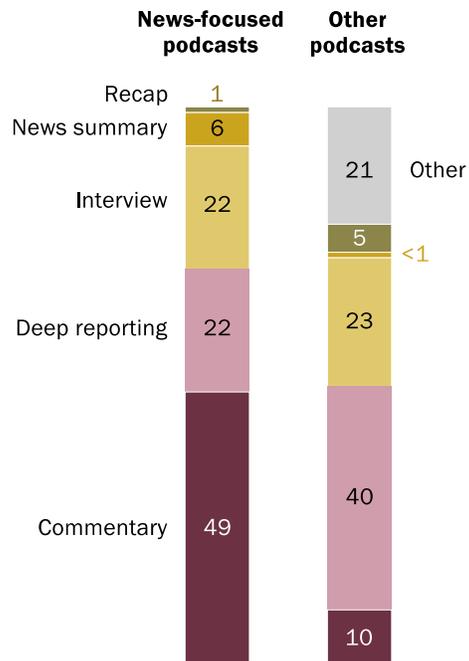
The next most common formats are deep reporting and interviews, which are each featured in 22% of news-focused top podcasts.

By contrast, the deep reporting format is the most common format for podcasts that are not about news (40%), followed by interview-centric podcasts at 23%. Commentary podcasts make up just 10% of podcasts that do not focus on news.

In addition, 63% of all news-focused top podcasts have a [video component](#), making this more common than among other top-ranked podcasts (49%).

About half of news-focused podcasts are structured around commentary

% of top-ranked podcasts with each format



Note: N=68 news-focused top-ranked podcasts; N=383 other top-ranked podcasts. Deep reporting podcasts are those that do an in-depth examination or analysis of a topic or story. Refer to methodology for details on each type of format.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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News podcasts tend to be longer, published more frequently than others

Overall, news-focused podcasts tend to be slightly longer than other top-ranked podcasts. About half of news-focused podcasts (49%) are about an hour or longer, compared with 35% of top-ranked podcasts that do not focus on news.

Podcasts that focus on news also tend to be produced more frequently. Roughly half of news-focused podcasts (54%) released episodes more than once a week on average during the study period, far greater than the share of podcasts that are not focused on news (15%). This includes 16% of news-focused podcasts that were released daily, compared with just 4% of other podcasts.

Top podcasts that do not focus on news were released less frequently: 83% were released weekly or less frequently in 2022, compared with 38% of news-focused podcasts.

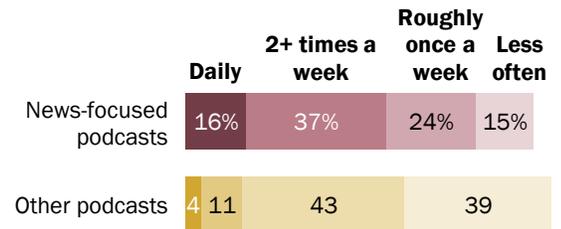
News-focused podcasts tend to be longer than others ...

% of top-ranked podcasts that are 50 minutes or longer, on average



... and are published more frequently

% of top-ranked podcasts that release episodes ...



Note: N=68 news-focused top-ranked podcasts; N=383 other top-ranked podcasts. Frequency data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
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Acknowledgments

Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder. This is the latest report in Pew Research Center's ongoing investigation of the state of news, information and journalism in the digital age, a research program funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, with generous support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the Center's news and information research team, communications, design, digital and editorial teams. Find related reports online at journalism.org.

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Appendix A: Detailed tables

News focus

% of top-ranked podcasts that focus on news and current events

	%
Have a news focus	15
Do not	85

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Affiliation with larger organizations

% of top-ranked podcasts that ...

	%
Are affiliated with a larger organization	69
News organization	18
Other organization	51
Do not have an affiliation (Independent)	31

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Main topic

% of top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic

	%
True crime	24
Politics and government	10
Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts	9
Self-help and relationships	8
Sports	6
History	4
Money and finance	2
Comedy	2
Religion	2
Science and technology	1
Health	1
Multiple topics	20
Other specific topic	12

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Format

% of top-ranked podcasts with each format

	%
Deep reporting	38
Interview	23
Commentary	16
Recap	4
News summary	1
Other narrative format	18

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Host structure*% of top-ranked podcasts with (a) ...*

	%
Single host	58
Multiple hosts	37
Other host structure	6

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Frequency of episode releases

% of top-ranked podcasts that released new episodes ___ in 2022

	%
Daily	6
2+ times a week	16
Roughly once a week	40
Less than once a week	36
N/A	3

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts.
Frequency data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
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Average episode length

% of top-ranked podcasts that averaged ____ per episode in 2022

	%
Less than 20 minutes	6
20-49 minutes	54
50-70 minutes	19
More than 70 minutes	18
N/A	3

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Episode duration data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Audience support*% of top-ranked podcasts that ...*

	%
Seek any audience support	47
Offer a paid subscription	31
Sell merchandise	30
Ask for donations	5

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Listing site

% of top-ranked podcasts that are available on ...

	%
Spotify	99
Apple Podcasts	91
Google Podcasts	90
Stitcher	82
All four sites	81

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Exclusives

*% of top-ranked podcasts that are
only available on ...*

	%
Spotify	7
Apple Podcasts	<1
Google Podcasts	-
Stitcher	-

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Video availability*% of top-ranked podcasts that ...*

	%
Have a video component	51
Do not have a video component	49

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Video platforms

Among top-ranked podcasts that have a video component, % that have video available on ...

	%
YouTube	97
Rumble	6
Podcast's website	3
Spotify	2

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Video type

% of top-ranked podcasts that have each video type

	%
Video of podcast being recorded	29
Mostly static video	20
Video repackaged from a TV show	1
Other	1

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Website availability*% of top-ranked podcasts that ...*

	%
Have a website	73
Do not have a website	27

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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**Discussion forum or
Discord server***% of top-ranked podcasts that ...*

	%
Have a discussion forum or Discord server	8
Do not have a discussion forum or Discord server	92

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Format, by topic

Among top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic, % with each format

	True crime	Politics and government	Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts	Self-help and relationships	Sports	Multiple topics	Other topics
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Deep reporting	95	28	5	-	4	11	42
Interview	3	33	24	39	7	47	17
Commentary	-	28	14	5	82	22	8
Recap	2	2	36	-	-	1	1
News summary	-	9	-	-	-	1	-
Other narrative format	-	-	21	55	7	18	32

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Affiliation with larger organizations, by topic

Among top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic, % that are ...

	True crime %	Politics and government %	Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts %	Self-help and relationships %	Sports %	Multiple topics %	Other topics %
Affiliated with a larger organization	84	79	71	53	79	54	65
Not affiliated with an organization (Independent)	16	21	29	47	21	46	35

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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News organization affiliation of podcasts, by topic

Among top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic, % that are ...

	True crime	Politics and government	Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts	Self-help and relationships	Sports	Multiple topics	Other topics
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Affiliated with a news organization	21	44	7	8	36	14	9
Not affiliated	79	56	93	92	64	86	91

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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News focus, by topic

Among top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic, % that focus on news and current events

	True crime	Politics and government	Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts	Self-help and relationships	Sports	Multiple topics	Other topics
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Have a news focus	1	77	-	-	71	10	5
Do not	99	23	100	100	29	90	95

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Host structure, by topic

Among top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic, % with (a) ...

	True crime	Politics and government	Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts	Self-help and relationships	Sports	Multiple topics	Other topics
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Single host	67	63	43	68	29	56	57
Multiple hosts	31	37	45	29	71	40	29
Other host structure	2	-	12	3	-	4	14

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Frequency of episode releases, by topic

Among top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic, % that released new episodes ___ in 2022

	True crime	Politics and government	Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts	Self-help and relationships	Sports	Multiple topics	Other topics
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Daily	1	23	5	3	7	4	5
2+ times a week	6	23	17	16	50	12	16
Roughly once a week	55	23	45	26	21	42	38
Less than once a week	36	19	31	53	18	41	39
N/A	3	12	2	3	4	1	2

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Frequency data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Average episode length, by topic

Among top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic, % that averaged ____ per episode in 2022

	True crime	Politics and government	Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts	Self-help and relationships	Sports	Multiple topics	Other topics
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 20 minutes	5	9	7	8	-	2	10
20-49 minutes	79	49	36	53	29	37	59
50-70 minutes	7	16	26	21	32	33	15
More than 70 minutes	7	14	29	16	36	26	15
N/A	3	12	2	3	4	1	2

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Episode duration data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Topic of news-focused podcasts

% of top-ranked podcasts that are primarily about each topic

	News-focused podcasts	Other podcasts
	%	%
True crime	1	28
Politics and government	49	3
Entertainment, pop culture, and the arts	-	11
Self-help and relationships	-	10
Sports	29	2
History	3	4
Money and finance	1	2
Comedy	-	2
Religion	-	2
Science and technology	-	2
Health	-	1
Multiple topics	13	21
Other specific topic	3	13

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
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Affiliation of news-focused podcasts

% of top-ranked podcasts that are ...

	News-focused podcasts	Other podcasts
	%	%
Affiliated with a larger organization	79	67
Not affiliated with an organization (Independent)	21	33

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
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News organization affiliation of news-focused podcasts

% of top-ranked podcasts that are ...

	News-focused podcasts	Other podcasts
	%	%
Affiliated with a news organization	46	13
Not affiliated with a news organization	54	87

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

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Format of news-focused podcasts

% of top-ranked podcasts with each format

	News-focused podcasts	Other podcasts
	%	%
Deep reporting	22	40
Interview	22	23
Commentary	49	10
Recap	1	5
News summary	6	<1
Other narrative format	-	21

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

“A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S.”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Host structure of news-focused podcasts

% of top-ranked podcasts with (a) ...

	News-focused podcasts	Other podcasts
	%	%
Single host	56	58
Multiple hosts	44	35
Other host structure	-	7

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

“A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S.”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Frequency of episode releases of news-focused podcasts

% of top-ranked podcasts that released new episodes ___ in 2022

	News-focused podcasts	Other podcasts
	%	%
Daily	16	4
2+ times a week	38	11
Roughly once a week	24	43
Less than once a week	15	39
N/A	7	2

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Frequency data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
 "A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S."

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Average episode length of news-focused podcasts

% of top-ranked podcasts that averaged ____ per episode in 2022

	News-focused podcasts	Other podcasts
	%	%
Less than 20 minutes	6	6
20-49 minutes	38	56
50-70 minutes	25	18
More than 70 minutes	24	17
N/A	7	2

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Episode duration data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

"A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S."

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Video availability of news-focused podcasts

% of top-ranked podcasts that ...

	News-focused podcasts	Other podcasts
	%	%
Have a video component	63	49
Do not have a video component	37	51

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.
"A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S."

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Audience support by affiliation with a larger organization

% of top-ranked podcasts that ...

	Affiliated with a larger organization	Not affiliated (Independent)
	%	%
Seek any audience support	41	60
Offer a paid subscription	23	47
Sell merchandise	24	42
Ask for donations	2	10

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.
 Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

"A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S."

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Average episode length of podcasts with a video component

% of top-ranked podcasts that averaged ____ per episode in 2022

	Podcasts with a video component	Podcasts that do not have a video component
	%	%
Less than 20 minutes	5	7
20-49 minutes	42	65
50-70 minutes	22	16
More than 70 minutes	28	8
N/A	3	4

Note: N=451 top-ranked podcasts. Episode duration data was not available for 3% of podcasts. Refer to methodology for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 451 podcasts that were in the top 300 in average U.S. daily rankings on Spotify and Apple Podcasts from April 1 to Sept. 30, 2022.

"A Profile of the Top-Ranked Podcasts in the U.S."

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Appendix B: List of top-ranked podcasts

Names of the 451 top-ranked podcasts included in this report

- 20/20
- 12 Hour Sound Machines for Sleep (no loops or fades)
- 2 Bears, 1 Cave with Tom Segura & Bert Kreischer
- 48 Hours
- A Kansas State of Mind
- Acquired
- Adam Carolla Show
- Adulthood with Michelle Buteau and Jordan Carlos
- After Hours with Alex Cooper
- Against The Odds
- Against the Rules with Michael Lewis
- Alex Wagner Tonight
- All Relative: Defining Diego
- All There Is with Anderson Cooper
- All-In with Chamath, Jason, Sacks & Friedberg
- The Always Sunny Podcast
- Am I the Jerk?
- American History Tellers
- American Hostage
- American Scandal
- Anatomy of Murder
- Andrew Schulz's Flagrant with Akaash Singh
- Angie Martinez IRL
- ANMA
- Another Russia
- anything goes with emma chamberlain
- Archetypes
- Archewell Audio
- Are You Garbage? Comedy Podcast
- Armchair Expert with Dax Shepard
- The Athletic Football Show: A show about the NFL
- The Atlas Obscura Podcast
- Aubrey Marcus Podcast
- Back to the Barre
- Back to the beach with Kristin and Stephen
- BADLANDS
- The Ballad Of Uncle Drank
- Banned
- Bannon's War Room
- Banter
- Barstool Pick Em
- Baseball Is Dead
- Batman Unburied
- BE KIND TO EVERYONE
- Behind the Bastards
- The Ben Shapiro Show
- The Best One Yet
- Betrayal
- The Bible in a Year (with Fr. Mike Schmitz)
- The Bible Recap
- The Big Conn: The Official Podcast
- The Bill Simmons Podcast
- The Bill Simmons Podcast: The Interviews
- Björk: Sonic Symbolism
- Black Girl Gone: A True Crime Podcast
- Blood Ties
- Bloodthirsty Hearts
- Blowback
- Blurry Creatures
- Bob Does Sports Podcast
- Body Stuff with Dr. Jen Gunter
- Bone Valley
- The Book Case
- The Book Of Wrestling
- Borderline Salty

- Born to rule: When Charles is King
- The Break Up Break Down
- Breaking Bread
- Breaking Points with Krystal and Saagar
- The Bridge
- Broad Ideas with Rachel Bilson
- Broken Doors
- BROKEN: Jeffrey Epstein (BROKEN: Seeking Justice)
- Buried Bones
- Bussin' With The Boys
- Call For Help
- Call Her Daddy
- Call Me Curious
- Can You Don't?
- Candace Owens
- Caresha Please
- Casefile Presents: Matty
- Casefile True Crime
- Chameleon: Hollywood Con Queen
- The Charlie Kirk Show
- Chins & Giggles
- The Chris Cuomo Project
- Circle Time
- Club Random with Bill Maher
- Cold Cases
- The Comment Section with Drew Afualo
- Conan O'Brien Needs A Friend
- Conspiracy Theories
- Conviction
- Cool People Who Did Cool Stuff
- CounterClock
- Creeps and Crimes
- Crime Junkie
- Crimehub: A True Crime Podcast
- Crimes of Passion
- Criminal
- The Criminal Makeup
- Crooked City: The Emerald Triangle
- The Daily
- The Daily Beans
- Daily Dad Jokes
- The Dan Bongino Show
- The Dan Le Batard Show with Stugotz
- The Danny Brown Show
- Dare to Lead with Brené Brown
- Dark History
- Dateline: Missing In America
- Dateline NBC
- DAVI THE SCAPEGOAT
- Dead and Gone
- Dead End: A New Jersey Political Murder Mystery
- Death of an Artist
- The Deck
- Devious Dads
- Die Of Laughter
- The Digital Sisterhood
- Dispatches From Myrtle Beach
- Dissect
- Distractible
- The Domonique Foxworth Show
- Don't Be Sour
- Donut Racing Show
- The Draymond Green Show
- The Dropout
- Dumb Blonde
- Dungeons and Daddies
- Dynasty by Vanity Fair
- Echo Park
- Epic: The Vela (Epic: Ctrl-Alt-Destroy)
- The Execution of Bonny Lee Bakley
- The Ezra Klein Show
- Facing Evil
- Fantasy Focus Football

- Fantasy Football Happy Hour with Matthew Berry
- Fantasy Football Today
- Fantasy Footballers - Fantasy Football Podcast
- FantasyPros - Fantasy Football Podcast
- Fast Politics with Molly Jong-Fast
- Father Wants Us Dead
- FBI Retired Case File Review
- Fed Up
- Financial Feminist
- The First Degree
- First Person
- Flamingo
- Fly on the Wall with Dana Carvey and David Spade
- Forensic Files II
- Freakonomics Radio
- Freaky Folklore
- Fresh Air
- Cover Up: Ministry of Secrets (Fringe Network: Alien State)
- FULL SEND PODCAST
- Funny Cuz It's True with Elyse Myers
- Game Of Thrones: Season 8 Redux
- Games with Names
- The Genius Life
- Get Sleepy: Sleep meditation and stories
- Ghost Church by Jamie Loftus
- Girls Next Level
- The Glenn Beck Program
- Global News Podcast
- GoJo with Mike Golic Jr.
- Good Cult
- Good Guys
- Good Influences
- Good Inside with Dr. Becky
- Gorillaz presents: The Stuart Potcast
- The Great Gatsby
- The Group Chat
- The Happiness Lab with Dr. Laurie Santos
- Healing with David Kessler
- Heaven Bent
- Hell and Gone
- Hidden Brain
- Hideo Kojima presents Brain Structure
- History is US
- Hot Money: Who Rules Porn?
- HOTD: A House of the Dragon Podcast
- The Hottest Take
- The House of Halliwell / A Charmed Rewatch Podcast
- How to Be a Better Human
- How to Talk to People (How to Build a Happy Life)
- Huberman Lab
- I Survived
- I Was Never There
- Idiot
- Impulsive with Logan Paul
- In the Bubble with Andy Slavitt
- In the Land of Lies
- Inhuman: A True Crime Podcast
- Internal Affairs
- Into It: A Vulture Podcast with Sam Sanders
- It Could Happen Here
- It's Me, Tinx
- Name Redacted Podcast (Jared Carrabis Podcast)
- The Jeff Gerstmann Show – A Podcast About Video Games
- Jocko Podcast
- The Joe Rogan Experience
- Joe Rogan Experience Review podcast

- The Joel Klatt Show: A College Football Podcast
- The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast
- The Jordan Harbinger Show
- The Journal.
- The Juice with Solomon Georgio
- just a little shady
- Kasich & Klepper
- The Kill List
- KILLED
- Kliq This: The Kevin Nash Podcast
- The Know For Sure Pod
- Knowledge Fight
- Kuper Island
- The Kyle Kulinski Show
- The Langley Files: CIA's Podcast
- Last Day
- Last Podcast On The Left
- Law&Crime Sidebar
- Le Monstre
- The Letter
- Lex Fridman Podcast
- Lights Out
- Listening In
- Live From ...
- Live Wild with Remi Warren
- Locked Inside
- Lovers and Friends with Shan Boodram
- Luna Storytimes
- Maintenance Phase
- Making Space with Hoda Kotb
- Malicious Moms
- The Martha Stewart Podcast
- The Martyrmade Podcast
- The Matt Walsh Show
- Mean Girl
- The Megyn Kelly Show
- The Mel Robbins Podcast
- On Display with Melissa Gorga
- The Michael Knowles Show
- The Midnight Miracle
- Mind of a Monster: Aileen Wuornos
- The Mindset Mentor
- Missed Fortune
- Modern Wisdom
- Monday Morning Podcast
- Money Rehab with Nicole Lapin
- Morbid
- More Than A Feeling
- Morning Cup of Murder
- Morning Wire
- The Moth
- Mother Country Radicals
- Motivation Daily by Motiversity
- Motive
- Move With Heart
- MrBallen Podcast: Strange, Dark & Mysterious Stories
- Mufti Menk
- True Sunlight (Murdaugh Murders Podcast)
- Murder, Mystery & Makeup
- Murder Sheet
- Murder With My Husband
- My Favorite Murder with Karen Kilgariff and Georgia Hardstark
- My Story Animated Podcast
- My Unsung Hero
- Mythology
- Mythology Sagas: Thor & Loki
- National Park After Dark
- New Heights with Jason and Travis Kelce
- No Compromise
- Normal Gossip
- Not Skinny But Not Fat
- NPR News Now

- Off Leash
- Off The Pike with Brian Barrett
- Off the Record with DJ Akademiks
- Office Ladies
- The Official Game of Thrones Podcast: House of Dragon
- Ologies with Alie Ward
- On My Mind with Ava Jules
- On Purpose with Jay Shetty
- On with Kara Swisher
- The Operator With Rob O’Neill
- Oversharing
- PAIGE by Paige.
- The Palcast
- Pardon My Take
- Park Predators
- PBD Podcast
- Perfect Person
- Persona: The French Deception
- The Pink Moon Murders
- PlanBri Uncut
- Planet Money
- Please Don’t Tell Anyone
- Pod Meets World
- Pod Save America
- Podcrushed
- Ponte Las Pilas
- Power Trip
- Pretend – a true crime podcast about con artists
- The Problem With Jon Stewart
- The Prof G Pod with Scott Galloway
- Project Unabom
- The Prosecutors
- The Rachel Maddow Show
- Radio Rental
- Radiolab
- Raised By Ricki with Ricki Lake and Kalen Allen
- The Ramsey Show
- The Randy Rainbow Podcast
- R&B Money
- REAL AF with Andy Frisella
- Real Ones with Jon Bernthal
- Real Time with Bill Maher
- Reality with The King
- Rebel Robin: Surviving Hawkins (A Stranger Things Podcast)
- The Refine Podcast
- Relaxing White Noise
- The Rest Is History
- ReThinking
- Revealing Your Secrets with Alyx Weiss
- Revisionist History
- Revolutions
- The Ringer’s Philly Special
- The Ringer-Verse
- Ripper Magoo Podcast
- Rituals
- The Roman Atwood Podcast
- Rotten Mango
- Rule of Life
- Run, Bambi, Run
- The Run-Up
- The Saad Truth with Dr. Saad
- Sacred Scandal
- Scamfluencers
- Scary Horror Stories by Dr. NoSleep
- Science Vs
- Scotland Yard Confidential
- The Secret Room | True Stories
- The Seduction
- Sent Away
- Serial
- Serial Killer: A True Crime Podcast

- Serial Killers
- Serious Trouble
- Sex With Emily
- The Shane Dawson Podcast
- Shark Attacks in Paradise
- Shawn Ryan Show
- Short History Of...
- ShxtsNGigs
- Significant Others
- Sinister Societies
- Slow Burn
- Slow News Day with Kevin Clark
- Small Talk is Dead
- Small Town Murder
- Smart Money Happy Hour with Rachel Cruze and George Kamel
- SmartLess
- Smoke Screen: Just Say You're Sorry (Smoke Screen: Puppy Kingpin)
- Snapped: Women Who Murder
- Solitaire
- Someone Knows Something
- Something Was Wrong
- Sound Barrier: Sylvester
- Sounds Like A Cult
- Speaking of Psychology
- The Staircase Podcast
- Standoff
- Barstool Baseball (Starting 9)
- Stolen
- Strange and Unexplained with Daisy Eagan
- Strict Scrutiny
- Stuff You Should Know
- Suburb Talks
- The Sum Of Us
- Sunday Scaries by Headspace
- The Sunshine Place
- Suspect
- Sword and Scale
- Sympathy Pains
- Take Your Shoes Off w/ Rick Glassman
- Talk Ville
- Tana's Toxic Tips
- Teachers Off Duty
- The Teacher's Pet
- Tenfold More Wicked
- The Tennis Podcast
- The Terminal List Podcast with Jack Carr
- Therapy and Theology
- Therapy Gecko
- The Thing About Pam
- Think Fast, Talk Smart: Communication Techniques
- This American Life
- This Changes Everything
- This Is Actually Happening
- This Past Weekend
- The Tim Dillon Show
- Tin Foil Hat with Sam Tripoli
- Titans Of Nuclear | Interviewing World Experts on Nuclear Energy
- The Toast
- Tom Rinaldi Presents: Wesley
- TRIGGERnometry
- The Trojan Horse Affair
- True Crime with Kendall Rae
- Truthers: Tiffany Dover Is Dead*
- Trying Not to Care
- Twin Flames
- Two Hot Takes
- UK Unknown
- Undisclosed
- Unexpected with Hannah Love
- Unf*ck Your Brain
- Unlocking Us with Brené Brown

- Unraveled
- Unsealed: Tylenol Murders
- Unsolved Murders: True Crime Stories
- Up and Vanished
- Up First
- Uprooted
- V Interesting with V Spehar
- Very Scary People
- The Viall Files
- Vibin' & Kinda Thrivin'
- The Video Archives Podcast with Quentin Tarantino and Roger Avary
- Vigilante
- Violating Community Guidelines with Brittany Broski and Sarah Schauer
- Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!
- We Can Do Hard Things with Glennon Doyle
- WeCrashed
- What Happened To Sandy Beal
- What Was That Like
- White Eagle
- Who the (Bleep) Did I Marry?
- Who Killed Daphne?
- The Wilderness
- Will Be Wild
- The Wire at 20
- Witnessed: Devil in the Ditch (Witnessed: Mystic Mother)
- Wolves Among Us
- Workin' On It with Meghan Trainor & Ryan Trainor
- You Can't Make This Up
- You, Me & Mike
- Your Magic
- Your Mom's House with Christina P. And Tom Segura
- Your Own Backyard
- You're Wrong About

Methodology

This study takes a close look at key characteristics of podcasts. It is a part of Pew Research Center’s examination of the role of podcasts in the news and information environment in the U.S.

Researchers conducted an audit of 451 “top-ranked podcasts,” which are English-language podcasts that appeared on top podcast charts regularly in the U.S. between April 1 and Sept. 30, 2022. This analysis looked at several key podcast characteristics, including podcast topic, format and availability.

This is the latest report in Pew Research Center’s ongoing investigation of the state of news, information and journalism in the digital age, a research program funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, with generous support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Podcast selection

Researchers determined which podcasts were top ranked through an analysis of daily chart data from Apple Podcasts and Spotify for the period April 1 through Sept. 30, 2022. Apple and Spotify podcast chart data provided by Podchaser, Inc. This daily chart data showed the top 200 podcasts on each site for each day during this period.

For each podcast, researchers calculated the average chart ranking during this period (excluding days on which a podcast was not in the top 200). Podcasts that appeared on the charts for fewer than seven days during this period were removed to ensure that this dataset did not include podcasts that were only popular for a short time.

Once the average chart position for each podcast was calculated, researchers identified the top 300 English-language podcasts on Apple Podcasts and the top 300 English-language podcasts on Spotify. These two lists were then combined, with researchers taking steps to ensure podcasts that were in the top 300 podcasts on both platforms were not included twice. Researchers performed this de-duplication through both a computational approach based on the podcast name and a manual review. After this process, the final sample was 451 podcasts.

Content analysis of top-ranked podcasts

Once the sample was drawn, a team of coders was trained on a set of variables that analyzed key characteristics of each podcast. This content analysis was conducted from Feb. 9 to April 21, 2023. Coders first examined the site where the podcast appeared on the top charts. They then conducted an internet search for each podcast in order to find its website and its listing on any of the four major podcast listing sites studied here: Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and Stitcher. Information used to code the podcasts predominantly came from the podcast’s website, when

available; from each podcast’s description on these listing sites; and from listening to portions of each podcast. For the last component, researchers listened to the first 2-5 minutes and last 2-5 minutes (excluding any time used for advertisements) of at least two and as many as five of the most recent episodes for each podcast.

Inter-rater reliability (IRR) was tested using Krippendorff’s alpha on all variables that required judgement on the part of the coder.

Below are the main measures and their alphas:

- News focus (0.758)
- Affiliation (0.722)
- News media affiliation (0.910)
- Main topic (0.768)
- Format (0.798)
- Host structure (0.805)
- Video type (average: 0.733)
- Paid subscription (average: 0.672, min: 0.469)
- Merchandise (0.644)

Podcast episode data

Frequency and duration were determined by examining the collection of all episodes published by these top-ranked podcasts in all of 2022 (including dates outside the April-September range used for selection). Researchers used a custom python script to collect metadata on each episode from the Apple Podcasts and Spotify APIs, depending on where the podcast was available.

To calculate duration, researchers averaged the length of all podcast episodes published by these podcasts during 2022. Each podcast was then categorized as generally producing episodes in 2022 that were on average less than 20 minutes, at least 20 minutes but less than about an hour (or 20-49 minutes), about an hour (50-70 minutes), or significantly longer than an hour (70+ minutes).

To calculate frequency, researchers divided the number of episodes produced in 2022 by the number of days between the publication dates of the first and last episodes published in 2022 (e.g., if a podcast’s first 2022 episode was published on June 1, and the last one on June 30, the number of days for that season was 30). This was done to treat podcasts that produce seasons with a limited number of episodes the same as podcasts that run throughout the year – otherwise, every podcast with a season would have an artificially low frequency. Podcasts were then categorized according to this frequency.

Podcasts that did not produce any episodes during 2022 (but still were in the top 200 charts during the analysis period) or that did not have any available episodes at collection time were not

included in this part of the analysis. Fourteen podcasts did not produce any episodes during this time period, so a resulting total of 437 podcasts were analyzed for frequency and duration.