



SEPTEMBER 2021

# PODCASTING TODAY

## INSIGHTS FOR PODCAST ADVERTISERS

# PODCAST LISTENING GOES MAINSTREAM

It wasn't that long ago that growing consumer interest in podcasts sparked questions about whether the newest frontier of audio could ever become an industry. But the questions weren't really about listenership, given the ongoing increase in audiences following the breakthrough success of *Serial* back in 2014. Instead, the questions were more focused on listenership data and ad tech infrastructure—key considerations for brands thinking about meaningful investments in this up-and-coming audio medium.

To the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), the growing influx of listeners for popular titles like *Stuff You Should Know*, *WTF with Marc Maron*, *The Joe Rogan Experience*, *Serial* and *the Daily* were early indicators of something much bigger, and the organization hosted its first advertising upfront event for podcasts in 2015, which has grown from a half-day event into a multiple-day showcase. Today, the library of podcast titles is approaching 2 million, and it shows no sign of slowing down. In fact, the IAB believes U.S. podcast revenue will reach **\$2 billion by 2023**—that's a big jump from the \$842 million generated last year.

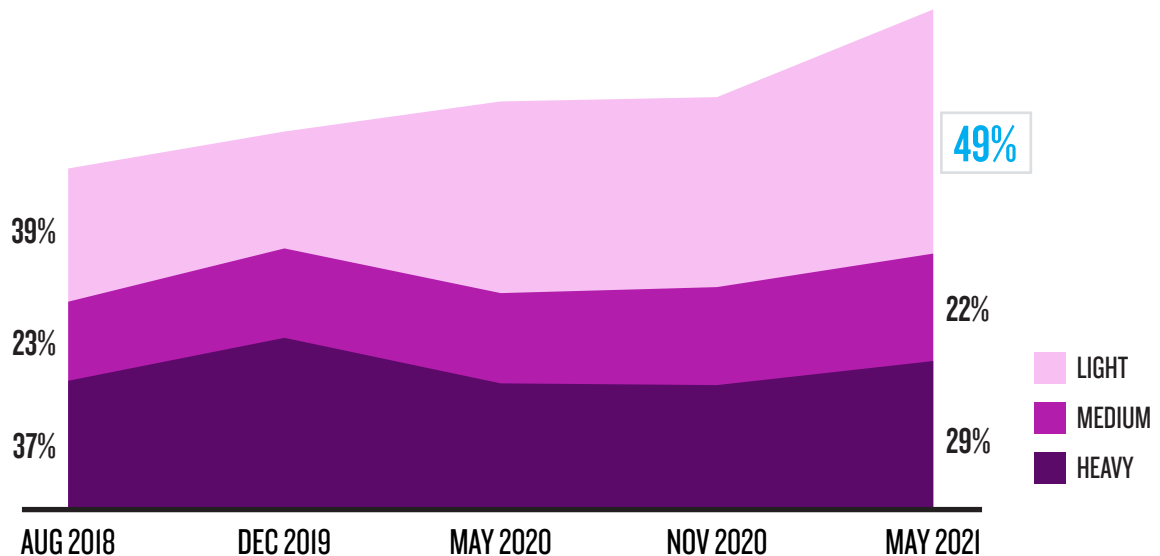
Unexpectedly, the rise in popularity has effectively changed the landscape of the entire market. Rampant celebrity involvement, high-profile platform mergers and podcast-inspired TV programming highlight just how much the podcast industry has developed in just a few years' time.



In addition to having a broad effect on the overall media industry, the maturing of the podcast landscape has broadened the appeal of podcasts well beyond those who have been listening for many years. That's a key shift, particularly as advertisers look to podcasting for whitespace opportunities. Today, almost half (49%) of U.S. podcast listeners are lighter, more casual users: people who listen anywhere from one to three times a month. That's a notable contrast from how the industry viewed the typical podcast listener five or 10 years ago: someone who was more likely to listen to each and every episode from their favorite titles—episodes that are oftentimes released once a week.



## LIGHTER PODCAST LISTENERS DRIVE GROWTH



Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, Adults 18+. Light = 1-3x/month; Medium = 4-9x/month; Heavy = 10+/month.

The evolution of podcast engagement over the past few years highlights two principal storylines:

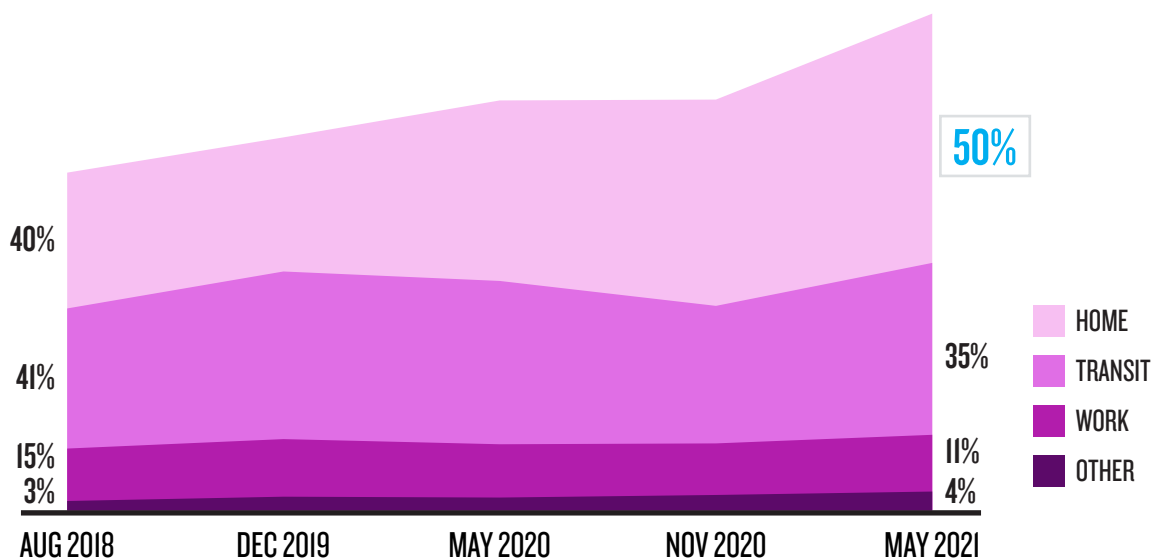
1. Consumer interest in new, engaging content from across the media landscape continues to grow, and podcast content has proven to be an attractive option among the media diets of millions of Americans, especially during the global COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The pandemic paused the growth of heavy podcast listeners. With revised lifestyles and schedules over the past year, this isn't unexpected. Yet while the percentage of heavy listeners declined slightly last year, we're now seeing it increase, [rising from 25% earlier this year](#) to just under 30% as of May. So we know there is a segment of the population that was very engaged with podcast content before the pandemic arrived, and that audience could continue increasing its engagement if the conditions (or content) are right.



Importantly, the pandemic has not had a negative impact on overall podcast engagement. Listener growth did flatten during the second half of last year, but it has ramped up notably in 2021, largely due to an increase in at-home listening. The rise in at-home use is counter to historical podcast engagement, and again, speaks to the growing appeal of the industry to consumers who had a lot more time at home. According to [Nielsen Podcast Buying Power](#) data, the percent of the adult U.S. population listening to podcasts has grown more than 40% in the past three years.

## PODCAST GROWTH RESUMES IN 2021

AT-HOME LISTENING DRIVING THE OVERALL GROWTH



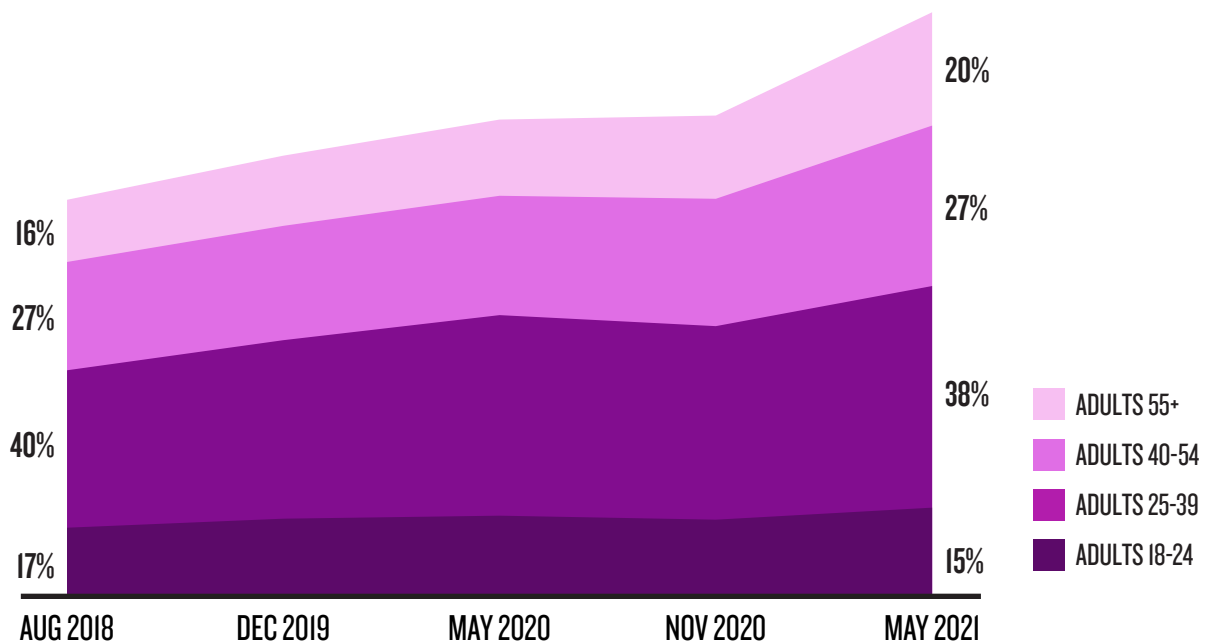
Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, Adults 18+





As podcasts become a bigger part of our media culture, they're attracting broader audiences. The growth in listeners is happening across all age segments as more consumers discover and start listening to podcasts.

## PODCAST GROWTH IS HAPPENING ACROSS ALL AGES

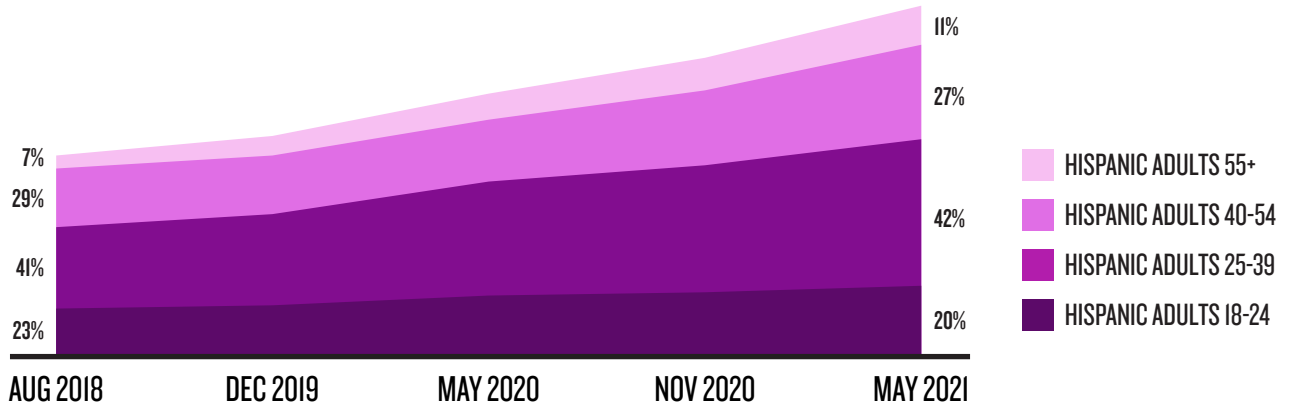


Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, Adults 18+

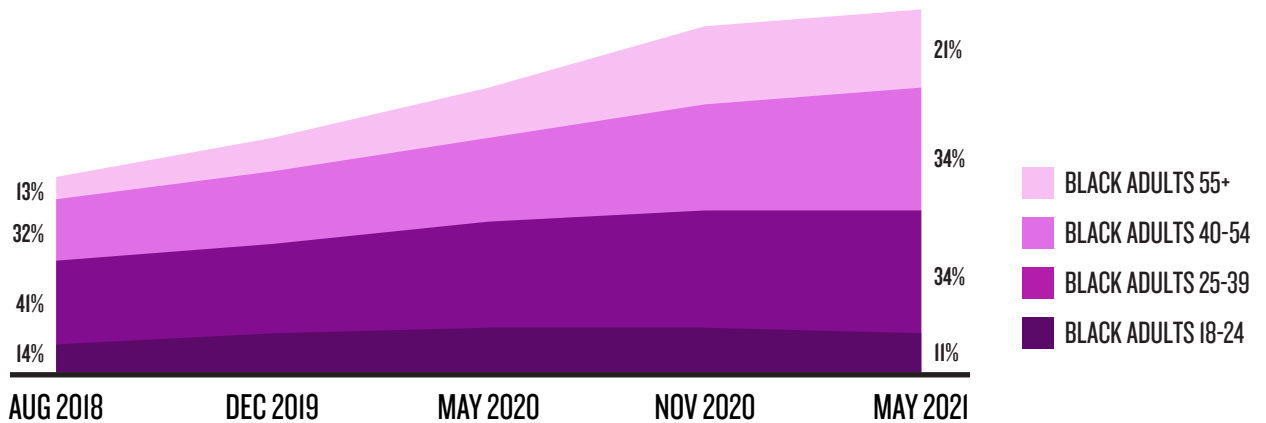


This trend is also playing out across diverse audiences including Hispanic, Black and Asian consumers.

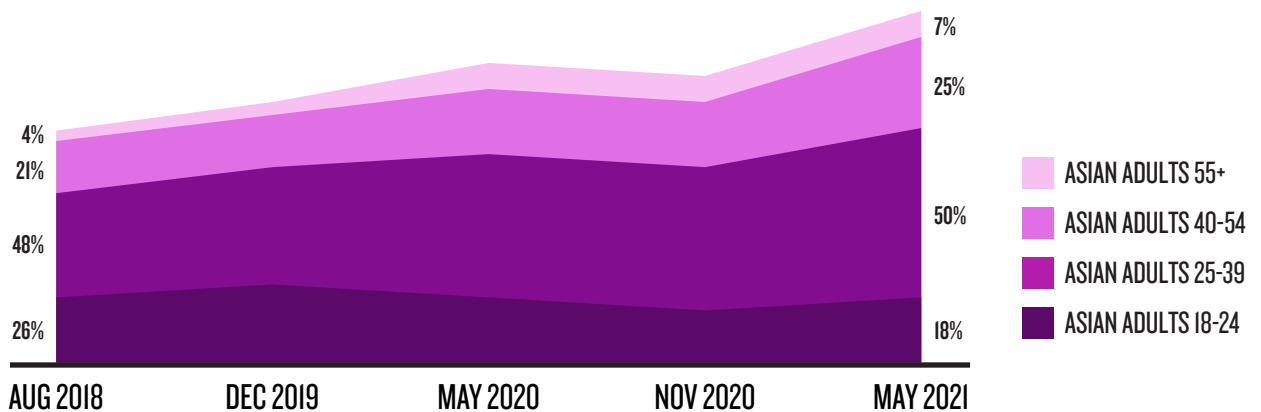
## HISPANIC PODCAST GROWTH ACROSS AGES



## BLACK PODCAST GROWTH ACROSS AGES



## ASIAN PODCAST GROWTH ACROSS AGES



Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, Adults 18+

# PODCASTS CONTINUE TO DELIVER CRITICAL AD KPIs FOR BRANDS

The increasing appeal of podcasts to general audiences is exactly why brands and agencies need to be tracking engagement with them and [leveraging the opportunities](#) in their marketing strategies and campaigns.

“The growth of podcasting has brought a massive opportunity for advertisers to reach highly engaged, niche audiences,” says Arica McKinnon, Vice President, Client Consulting at Nielsen. “While the industry has made strides to capture metrics like downloads, brands have been challenged to understand the impact of ads. Today, those challenges are fading.”

Podcast advertising—particularly when read by the host—drives stronger brand recall punch than more traditional forms of advertisements. For example, Nielsen’s Podcast Ad Effectiveness (PAE) solutions have found that host-read ads drive a brand recall rate of 71%, which subsequently creates high levels of consumer interest, purchase intent and recommendation intent.

What’s more, longer ads (60 seconds+) drive even higher lifts among consumers. When it comes to seeking more information about a brand, longer ads are nearly 70% more effective in this category than shorter ones. The lift scores for purchase intent and recommendation intent are both 40% higher for longer ads than shorter ones. Lastly, not only do longer ads generate stronger engagement, they also drive brand recall: nearly three-quarters of listeners were able to recall the brand after hearing a longer ad.







## PODCAST ADVERTISING DRIVES HIGH BRAND AWARENESS AND PURCHASE INTENT



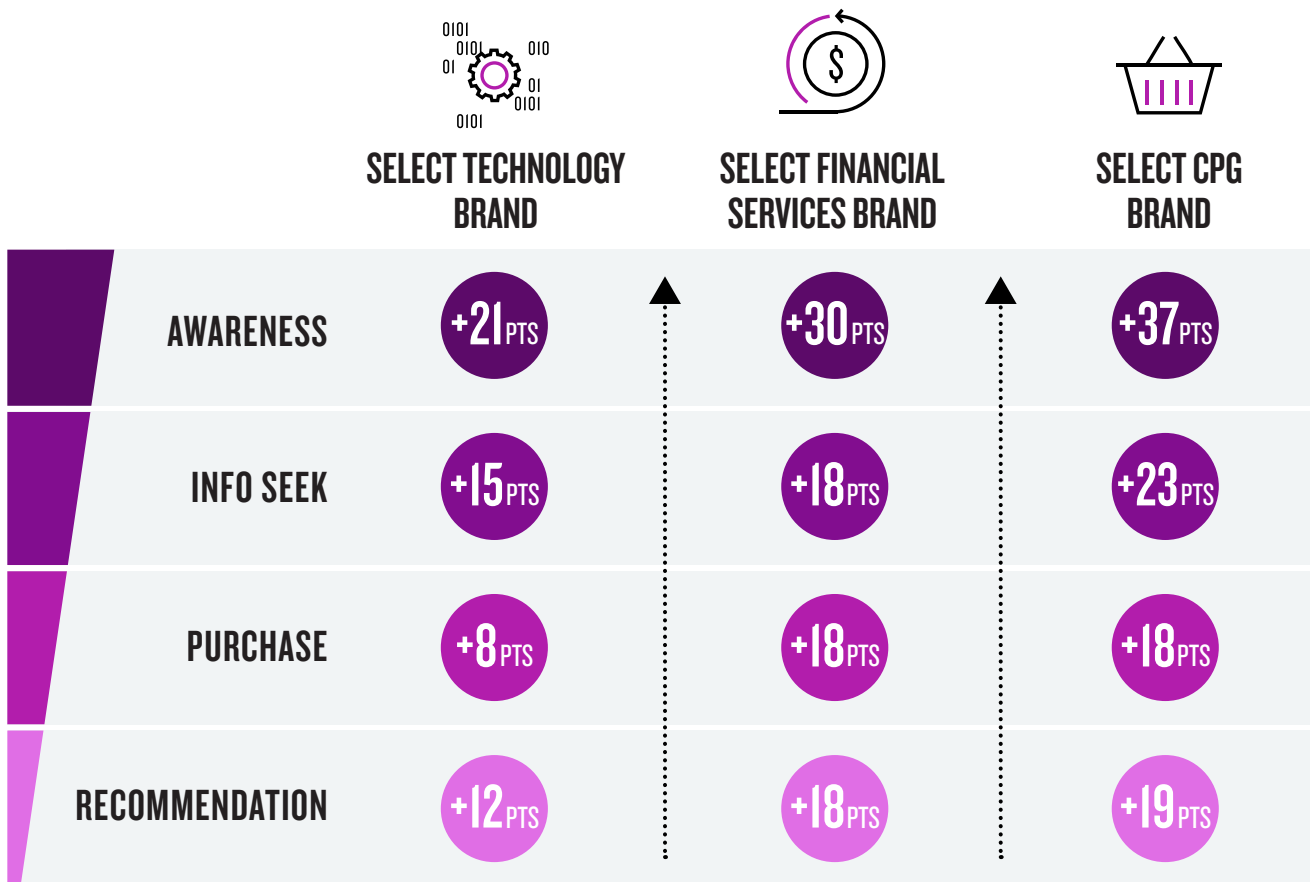
Read as: Podcast advertising drives 12 percentage points in brand awareness

Source: Nielsen Podcast Ad Effectiveness (PAE) Norms Database, 2021, top 2 box results



Podcast listeners are even more engaged with ads from specific industries. According to Nielsen’s Podcast Effectiveness Norms Database in Q2 2021, the financial services, technology and consumer packaged goods (CPG) industries are notable for high ad recall. The chart below highlights key ad metrics for select brands in these categories as a result of podcast advertising.

## TOP-PERFORMING BRANDS IN PODCAST ADVERTISING BY CATEGORY



Read as: Podcast advertising for a select tech brand drives 21 percentage points in brand awareness  
 Source: Nielsen Podcast Ad Effectiveness (PAE) Norms Database, 2021, top 2 box results

# NEW INDUSTRY, NEW AD STRATEGY

Importantly, brands shouldn't approach podcasts with the same advertising strategies that they use in traditional, mass-reach media. Given the wealth of data about podcast listeners, brands have the ability to engage with listeners who are the most receptive to learning about their products and services.

For example, nearly 74% of podcast listeners have some form of financial investment, with the 401k being the most common option at 54% of listeners (followed by 39% for IRA and 32% for stocks/options). Given the high percentage of money-minded listeners, financial services providers have an already-educated audience to engage with. Case in point, a notable financial investment brand was recently grappling with creating a sense of trust, credibility and excitement with consumers amid a time of rapid change, uncertainty and technological advancement.

To address its challenge, the brand began advertising in podcasts. After being exposed to the brand's ad, 79% of listeners were able to recall the financial services brand, which is notably higher than Nielsen benchmark norm of 65% for the financial services industry. Almost half of respondents described the advertising as "trusted" and "convenient." The advertising also received high brand fit scores, which contributed to high agreement with brand attributes and high recall scores.





# TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE BUILDING AN INDUSTRY

In 2005, the word podcast was added to the Oxford English Dictionary. Back then, the podcast audience was primarily composed of tech-savvy listeners. Fast forward a dozen years and suddenly content companies were paying out significant amounts of money to secure exclusive rights to some of the most popular shows. Then in 2020, amid the uproar of the global pandemic, an array of mergers and acquisitions began to carve out strategic relationships that will formulate the podcast industry of tomorrow.

Not only does the consolidation speak to the fact that podcasts are in fact an industry, it addresses many of the challenges that advertisers faced in earlier days: navigating a fragmented array of delivery mechanisms and platforms that prompted many questions about scalability. Today, the questions largely center around where to invest, especially as the landscape continues to expand. Thankfully, those questions are more easily answered, given the wealth of information available about who's listening and how engaged they are with what they're listening to.

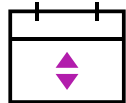
"During the pandemic, the increase of podcast listening indicates volumes about the staying power and the continued rising popularity of the medium," says Bruce Supovitz, SVP/National Audio Services at Nielsen Audio. "Our Podcast Buying Power service helps advertisers identify where they can efficiently and effectively reach consumers, while our Podcast Ad Effectiveness solutions prove time and time again that advertising in the podcast environment works. These are exciting times for podcasting!"



# PODCASTING TODAY APPENDIX

The following pages break down the audiences to each of the major podcast genres included in Nielsen's Podcasting Buying Power service.





# TOP PODCAST GENRES BY AGE GROUP

(BASED ON ALL PODCAST USERS, BY AGE)

PERSONS 18+		
1	COMEDY	43%
2	NEWS	38%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	31%
4	TRUE CRIME	28%
5	EDUCATION	28%
6	MUSIC	26%
7	BUSINESS	25%
8	ARTS	24%
9	HEALTH & FITNESS	23%
10	HISTORY	23%

PERSONS 18-34		
1	COMEDY	50%
2	SOCIETY & CULTURE	34%
3	TRUE CRIME	33%
4	NEWS	31%
5	EDUCATION	29%
6	MUSIC	25%
7	BUSINESS	24%
8	SCIENCE	24%
9	ARTS	23%
10	TV & FILM	22%

PERSONS 18-49		
1	COMEDY	47%
2	NEWS	35%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	33%
4	TRUE CRIME	31%
5	EDUCATION	29%
6	MUSIC	26%
7	BUSINESS	25%
8	ARTS	23%
9	SPORTS	23%
10	SCIENCE	22%

PERSONS 25-54		
1	COMEDY	44%
2	NEWS	37%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	31%
4	TRUE CRIME	30%
5	EDUCATION	28%
6	MUSIC	26%
7	BUSINESS	26%
8	SPORTS	23%
9	HEALTH & FITNESS	22%
10	ARTS	22%

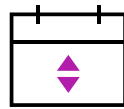
MEN 25-54		
1	COMEDY	46%
2	NEWS	40%
3	SPORTS	35%
4	BUSINESS	32%
5	MUSIC	26%
6	SCIENCE	26%
7	SOCIETY & CULTURE	26%
8	HISTORY	26%
9	TECHNOLOGY	25%
10	EDUCATION	24%

WOMEN 25-54		
1	COMEDY	42%
2	TRUE CRIME	41%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	38%
4	NEWS	34%
5	EDUCATION	33%
6	ARTS	29%
7	HEALTH & FITNESS	28%
8	MUSIC	26%
9	TV & FILM	23%
10	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	22%

PERSONS 55+		
1	NEWS	49%
2	COMEDY	29%
3	HISTORY	29%
4	ARTS	27%
5	MUSIC	26%
6	SOCIETY & CULTURE	26%
7	HEALTH & FITNESS	25%
8	EDUCATION	25%
9	GOVERNMENT	24%
10	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	23%

How to Read: This chart ranks the top podcast genres among each age group and gender. Among 18-34 year-old podcast users, Comedy is the top genre with 50% listening.

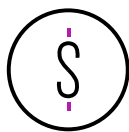
Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, May 2021 (Listeners Only), Adults 18+



## PODCAST GENRES RANKED ON MEDIAN AGE OF AUDIENCE

1	COMEDY	36	11	ALL PODCAST LISTENERS	39
2	TRUE CRIME	36	12	SPORTS	39
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	37	13	BUSINESS	39
4	LEISURE	37	14	ARTS	39
5	FICTION	37	15	MUSIC	40
6	KIDS & FAMILY	37	16	HISTORY	41
7	SCIENCE	37	17	HEALTH & FITNESS	41
8	TV & FILM	37	18	NEWS	42
9	TECHNOLOGY	38	19	GOVERNMENT	43
10	EDUCATION	38	20	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	44

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, May 2021 (Listeners Only), Adults 18+



## PODCAST GENRES RANKED ON MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF AUDIENCE

1	FICTION	\$67,885	11	ALL PODCAST LISTENERS	\$82,590
2	KIDS & FAMILY	\$68,382	12	EDUCATION	\$83,491
3	MUSIC	\$68,534	13	HEALTH & FITNESS	\$84,256
4	ARTS	\$71,002	14	HISTORY	\$86,844
5	COMEDY	\$76,317	15	TECHNOLOGY	\$88,828
6	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	\$76,782	16	SOCIETY & CULTURE	\$90,145
7	TV & FILM	\$78,576	17	SCIENCE	\$90,291
8	LEISURE	\$81,261	18	NEWS	\$90,521
9	GOVERNMENT	\$81,640	19	SPORTS	\$94,874
10	TRUE CRIME	\$82,063	20	BUSINESS	\$95,076

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, May 2021 (Listeners Only), Adults 18+



# PODCAST GENRES GENDER BREAKDOWN

(AUDIENCE COMPOSITION, SORTED ON WOMEN)

		MEN	WOMEN			MEN	WOMEN
1	KIDS & FAMILY	22%	79%	11	COMEDY	56%	44%
2	TRUE CRIME	37%	63%	12	MUSIC	56%	44%
3	ARTS	39%	61%	13	NEWS	58%	42%
4	HEALTH & FITNESS	41%	59%	14	LEISURE	59%	42%
5	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	41%	59%	15	GOVERNMENT	63%	37%
6	SOCIETY & CULTURE	45%	55%	16	HISTORY	66%	34%
7	EDUCATION	47%	53%	17	SCIENCE	66%	34%
8	FICTION	51%	50%	18	BUSINESS	67%	33%
9	TV & FILM	52%	48%	19	SPORTS	82%	18%
10	ALL PODCAST LISTENERS	54%	46%	20	TECHNOLOGY	82%	18%

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, May 2021 (Listeners Only), Adults 18+



# PODCAST GENRES DUPLICATION GRID

(WHAT % OF LISTENERS TO EACH GENRE ALSO LISTEN TO OTHER GENRES)

	ARTS	BUSINESS	COMEDY	EDUCATION	FICTION	GOVERNMENT	HEALTH & FITNESS	HISTORY	KIDS & FAMILY	LEISURE	MUSIC	NEWS	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	SCIENCE	SOCIETY & CULTURE	SPORTS	TECHNOLOGY	TRUE CRIME	TV & FILM
ARTS	100%	22%	25%	25%	31%	17%	24%	17%	24%	28%	24%	16%	20%	16%	24%	11%	13%	19%	23%
BUSINESS	23%	100%	21%	36%	15%	33%	30%	19%	18%	17%	18%	25%	24%	16%	17%	26%	28%	13%	13%
COMEDY	45%	36%	100%	35%	56%	35%	36%	38%	39%	43%	49%	35%	25%	35%	38%	44%	33%	45%	47%
EDUCATION	30%	40%	23%	100%	20%	24%	41%	22%	35%	25%	21%	23%	33%	27%	24%	19%	27%	20%	14%
FICTION	24%	11%	23%	13%	100%	10%	10%	21%	15%	20%	15%	12%	10%	17%	13%	7%	13%	24%	20%
GOVERNMENT	13%	24%	14%	15%	10%	100%	14%	20%	14%	10%	15%	23%	16%	17%	13%	16%	17%	11%	11%
HEALTH & FITNESS	23%	27%	19%	33%	13%	18%	100%	14%	32%	20%	20%	18%	29%	19%	20%	19%	16%	16%	14%
HISTORY	16%	18%	20%	18%	26%	26%	14%	100%	11%	19%	19%	24%	20%	30%	21%	21%	22%	24%	16%
KIDS & FAMILY	11%	8%	10%	13%	9%	8%	15%	5%	100%	9%	11%	8%	18%	5%	9%	5%	4%	11%	8%
LEISURE	21%	13%	18%	16%	20%	10%	16%	15%	15%	100%	14%	15%	10%	17%	17%	15%	22%	13%	20%
MUSIC	27%	19%	30%	20%	22%	23%	23%	22%	27%	20%	100%	22%	22%	18%	21%	31%	21%	21%	31%
NEWS	27%	39%	31%	32%	25%	51%	30%	40%	29%	31%	32%	100%	34%	42%	42%	39%	39%	30%	35%
RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	15%	17%	10%	20%	10%	15%	22%	15%	29%	10%	14%	15%	100%	13%	16%	13%	10%	12%	11%
SCIENCE	15%	15%	18%	21%	21%	21%	18%	29%	11%	21%	15%	24%	16%	100%	20%	17%	44%	19%	15%
SOCIETY & CULTURE	32%	21%	27%	27%	22%	24%	27%	29%	25%	29%	25%	34%	28%	28%	100%	20%	26%	36%	34%
SPORTS	10%	23%	22%	14%	8%	19%	18%	20%	11%	18%	25%	22%	16%	17%	14%	100%	21%	15%	24%
TECHNOLOGY	9%	18%	12%	16%	12%	15%	12%	16%	7%	20%	13%	17%	9%	33%	13%	16%	100%	9%	13%
TRUE CRIME	23%	15%	30%	20%	39%	17%	21%	30%	28%	20%	22%	22%	20%	25%	33%	20%	16%	100%	35%
TV & FILM	20%	11%	23%	10%	23%	13%	13%	15%	15%	23%	24%	19%	13%	14%	23%	23%	17%	26%	100%

How to Read: Read this chart by first going down and then to the left. Start with a genre in the vertical column, then go down and to the left to match up with another genre. For the Arts genre (first column), 23% of listeners also listen to Business genre podcasts, and so on.

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, May 2021 (Listeners Only), Adults 18+



# 9 PODCAST NETWORKS & OVER 150 OF THE LARGEST PODCAST PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IN NIELSEN'S PODCAST BUYING POWER SERVICE

Audacy
Barstool Sports
Cumulus Podcast Network
ESPN
iHeartRadio

NPR
PodcastOne
SXM Media
Univision

## COMPREHENSIVE CONSUMER INSIGHTS AVAILABLE IN THE PODCAST BUYING POWER SERVICE

OVER 2,000 CATEGORIES FEATURING ADVERTISERS WITH SPECIFIC BRAND NAMES

**RETAIL BEHAVIORS**

- Shopping Centers
- Malls
- Department Stores
- Drug Stores
- Supermarkets
- Convenience Stores
- Discounters
- Mass-Merchandisers
- Specialty Shops
- Clothing Stores
- Sporting Goods
- Furniture Stores
- Coupon Usage
- Online and Offline

**PRODUCTS/ SERVICES**

- Alcohol Beverages
- Non-Alcohol Beverages
- Automotive
- Banking & Financial
- Computers
- Fast Food & Restaurants
- Home Improvement
- Healthcare
- Insurance
- Travel
- Business-to-business
- Internet Usage
- Telecommunications

**ENTERTAINMENT/ LIFESTYLE**

- Sports Involvement
- Events Attended
- Sports Attended
- Leisure Activities
- Personal Activities
- Voting Behavior
- Personal Demos
- Household Demos
- Lifestyle Changes
- Smoking Behaviors
- Electricity Providers

**MEDIA**

- Newspaper
- Radio
- TV-Broadcast
- TV-Cable
- City/Regional Magazines
- Out-of-Home
- Direct Mail
- Yellow Pages
- Computer
- Online/Internet
- Social

## ABOUT NIELSEN

Nielsen Holdings plc (NYSE: NLSN) is a leading global data and analytics company that provides a holistic and objective understanding of the media industry. With offerings spanning audience measurement, audience outcomes and content, Nielsen offers its clients and partners simple solutions to complex questions and optimizes the value of their investments and growth strategies. It is the only company that can offer de-duplicated cross-media audience measurement. Audience is Everything™ to Nielsen and its clients, and Nielsen is committed to ensuring that every voice counts.

An S&P 500 company, Nielsen offers measurement and analytics service in nearly 60 countries. Learn more at [www.nielsen.com](http://www.nielsen.com) or [www.nielsen.com/investors](http://www.nielsen.com/investors) and connect with us on [twitter.com/Nielsen](https://twitter.com/Nielsen), [linkedin.com/company/nielsen](https://linkedin.com/company/nielsen), [facebook.com/Nielsen](https://facebook.com/Nielsen) and [instagram.com/lifeatnielsen](https://instagram.com/lifeatnielsen).





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