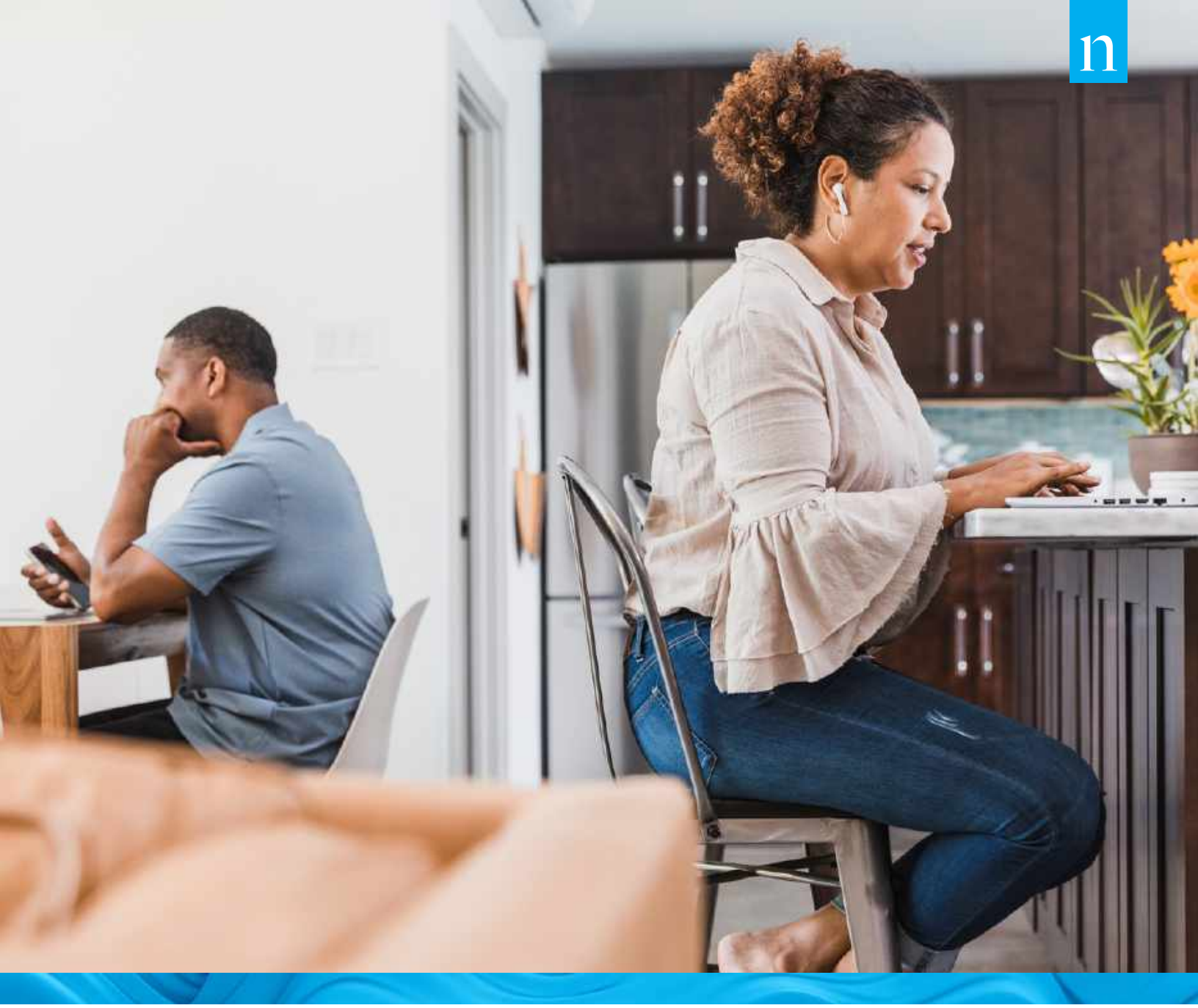


FEBRUARY 2021

PODCASTING TODAY

INSIGHTS FOR PODCAST ADVERTISERS

PODCAST AUDIENCES, GROWING IN DIVERSITY, ARE THE NEW AUDIO OPPORTUNITY

Given consumers' budding on-demand lifestyles, it's not surprising that podcasts have become the darlings of the audio realm—for consumers, content creators and now, advertisers. The wellspring of podcasts has grown into a rising sea, as there were more than 1.7 million titles available for audio-hungry listeners to choose from at the start of this year. That depth of content is a boon for consumers, but it can present a spending dilemma for brands looking to add podcasts to their marketing plans.

After a decade of audience growth, podcasts have become an extremely appealing advertising platform. And with broadening appeal and strong listener engagement, brands should be looking to them as a more personalized way to connect with audiences who are maxed out on visual inputs. Importantly, podcast advertising—particularly when delivered by the podcast host—drives stronger brand recall punch than more traditional forms of advertisements. For example, Nielsen's podcast effectiveness studies 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. As a result, the ad dollars being directed toward podcasts continue to rise each year, with the IAB forecasting that ad spend will eclipse $1 billion this year.

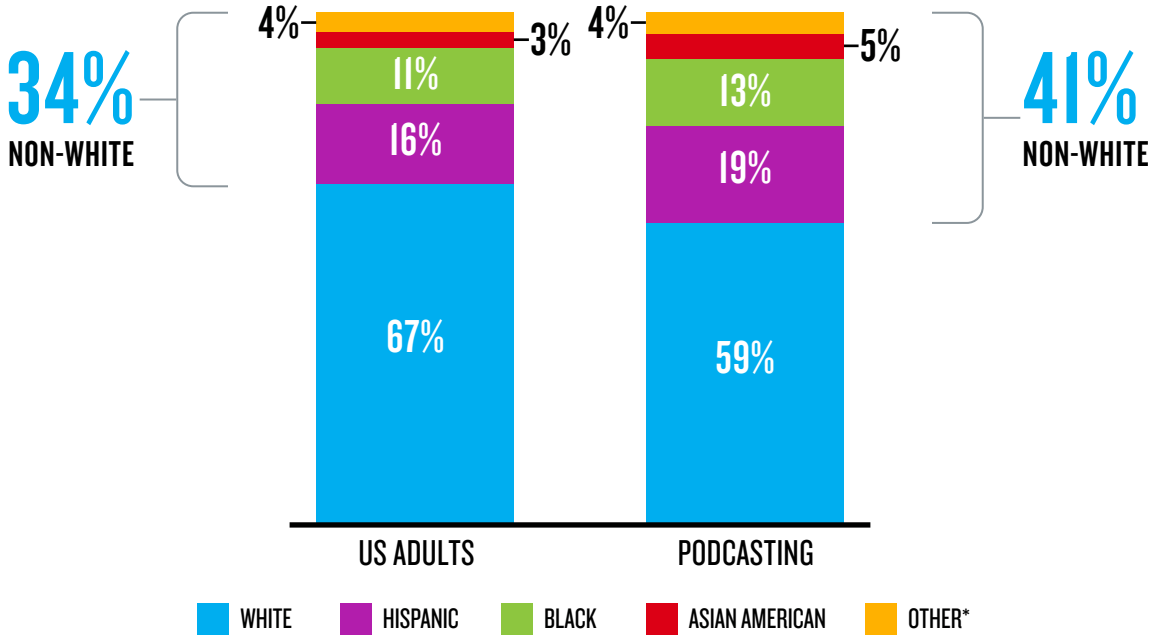
But as rich an opportunity as podcasts have become, the crowded and ever-expanding universe of podcasts means brands and marketers have an over-abundance of options to consider as they develop their media plans. Some might argue that advertising in the most popular podcasts would be the ideal way to engage audiences en masse. But in a world that is moving away from cookies and toward actual people, smart brands are looking to engage the right consumers with a well-tailored message rather than casting a big net and hoping for the best.

TRACKING THE DIVERSITY OF THE U.S. PODCAST AUDIENCE

While the growth in podcast listeners in the U.S. over the past decade has been dramatic, audience diversity is following a similar path as our national population, as non-White podcast audiences have grown faster than White audiences. In fact, as of last year, the U.S. podcast audience was more diverse than the U.S. itself.

Across ethnic groups, Hispanics have gravitated to podcasts more than any other, as the reach among this group increased from 1.1 million in 2010 to 6.8 million in 2019. That represents a growth rate of 6x, which is well above the 4x rate of growth among Whites.

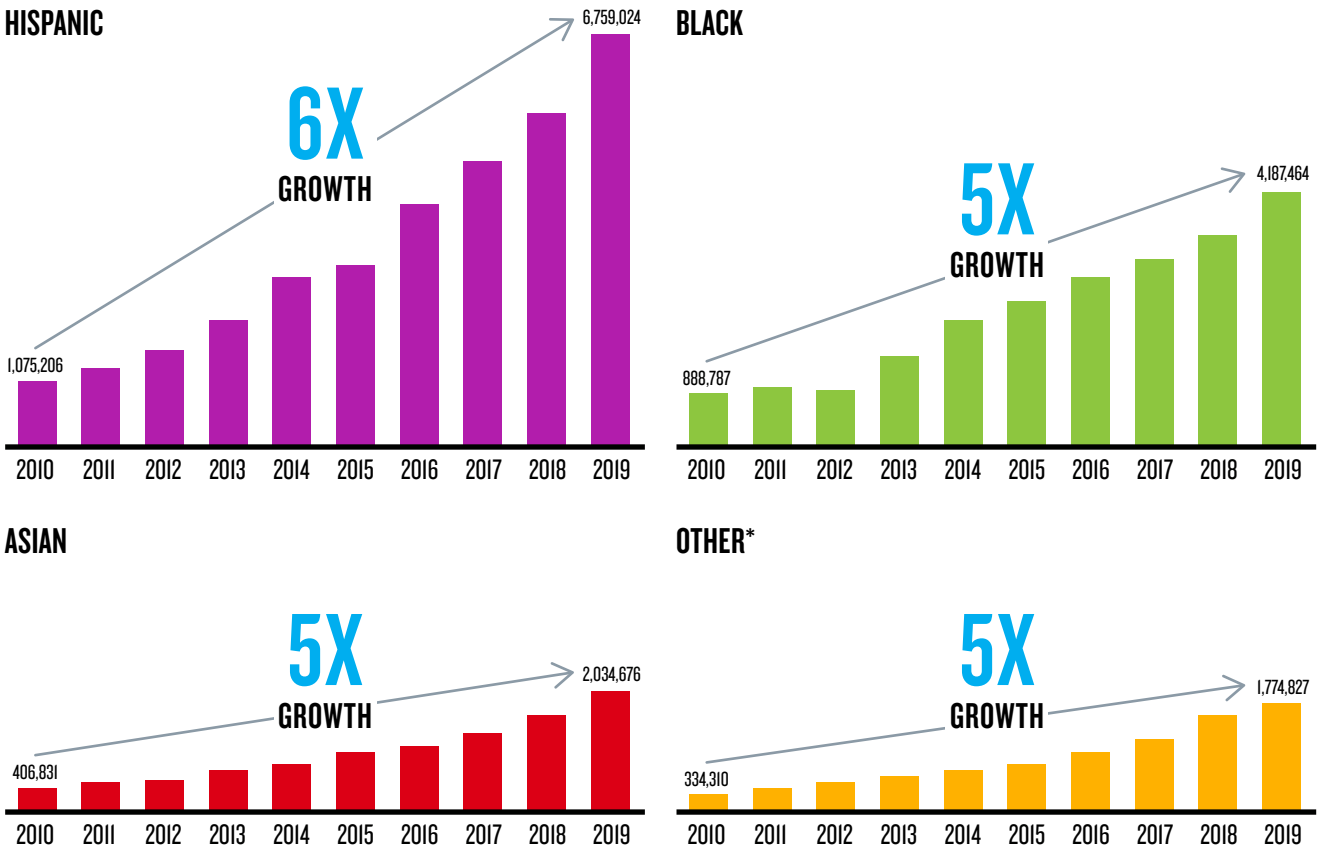
PODCAST LISTENERS ARE NOW MORE DIVERSE THAN THE U.S. POPULATION



Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (USA+) Total US adults 18+ vs. monthly podcast listeners

*Survey respondents may select OTHER when self-identifying race. This option includes 'other non-Hispanic,' 'other Hispanic,' as well as 'American Indian/Alaskan Native,' or multicultural respondents.

DIVERSE PODCAST AUDIENCES ARE GROWING FAST



Source: Nielsen Scarborough USA+, Release 1 2010-2019, Adults 18+, Watch, listen or download a podcast in past 30 days

*Survey respondents may select OTHER when self-identifying race. This option includes 'other non-Hispanic,' 'other Hispanic,' as well as 'American Indian/Alaskan Native,' or multicultural respondents.

Not only is the growth of the Hispanic audience noteworthy, but the podcast genres that Hispanics engage with are notably different from other listeners. For example, kids and family podcasts rank highest among Hispanic consumers, a genre that doesn't even rank in the top five genres among Whites or Asian Americans. For those familiar with Hispanic consumers, the preference isn't that surprising, given their strong family ties and abundance of multigenerational households. In fact, Hispanics are the youngest ethnic group and are 40% more likely to live in a multigenerational household, and these households are the nexus of the Hispanic community.

DIFFERENT PODCAST GENRES APPEAL TO DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

TOP 5 PODCAST GENRES MOST INTEREST IN LISTENING TO – RANKED BY CONCENTRATION INDEX





WHITE	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	OTHER*
HISTORY 110	TECHNOLOGY 137	MUSIC 143	KIDS & FAMILY 137	ARTS 119
SCIENCE 108	SCIENCE 126	HEALTH & FITNESS 122	TECHNOLOGY 116	MUSIC 117
SOCIETY & CULTURE 107	BUSINESS 123	RELIGION 122	MUSIC 115	COMEDY 113
NEWS 106	NEWS 110	KIDS & FAMILY 120	ARTS 109	RELIGION 106
TRUE CRIME 106	SOCIETY & CULTURE 110	GOVERNMENT 115	LEISURE 108	KIDS & FAMILY 105

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

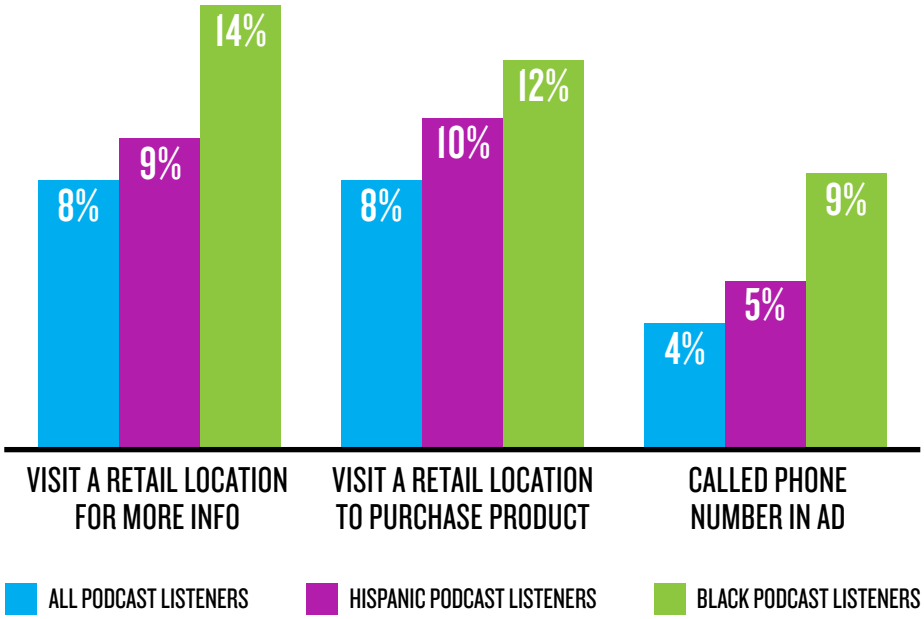
How-to-read: Top genres are ranked among each demographic group based on an index comparing the composition – or concentration – of the audience to each genre by each group, with the entire universe of all podcast listeners. Kids & family genre podcast listeners are 37% more likely to be Hispanic – to have a higher concentration in that genre – than among all podcast usage in general when pulling crosstabs by race.

*Survey respondents may select OTHER when self-identifying race. This option includes 'other non-Hispanic,' 'other Hispanic,' as well as 'American Indian/Alaskan Native,' or multicultural respondents.

That doesn't mean, however, that podcast creators and advertisers should be solely focused on Hispanic audiences. In looking at how Hispanic and Black consumers react to retail advertising they hear in podcasts, Black audiences are notably more likely to take action, including visiting a store to make a purchase.

BLACK AND HISPANIC LISTENERS REACT TO RETAIL

ACTIONS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF HEARING AN AD IN A PODCAST



Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

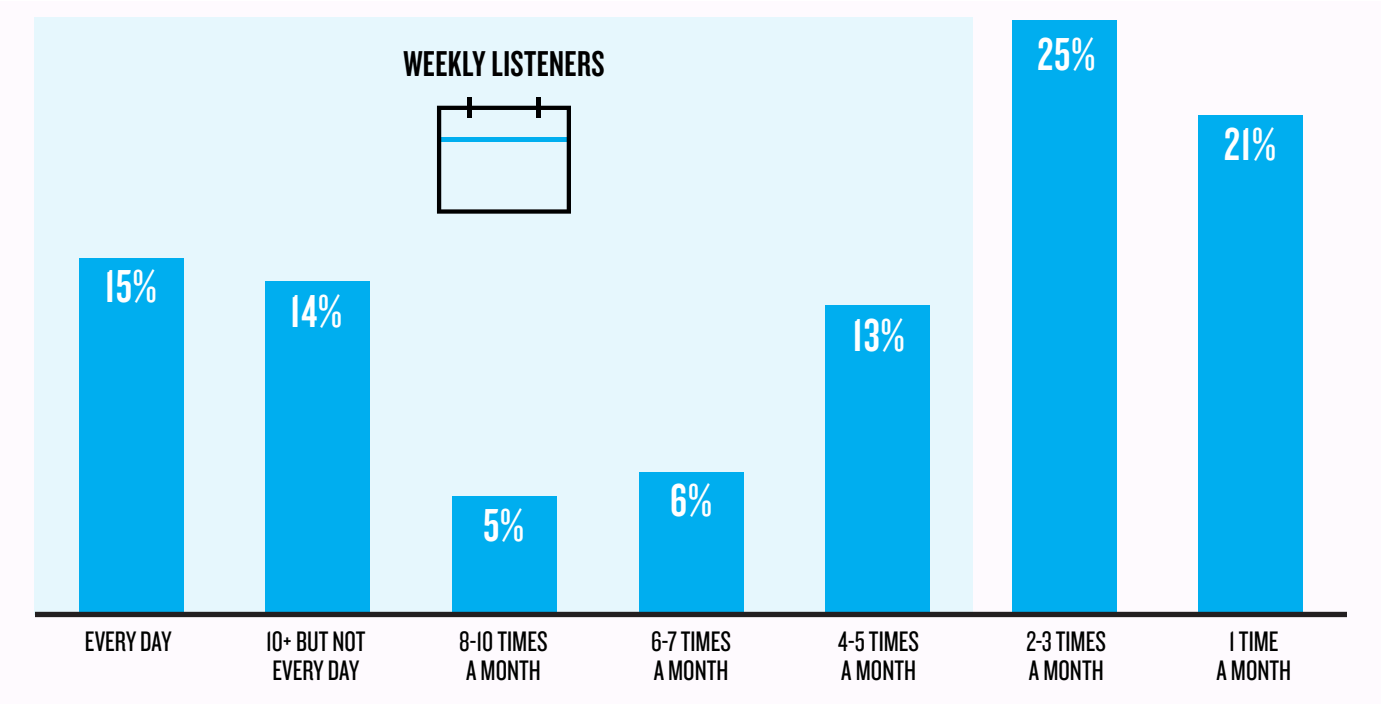
PODCAST LISTENERSHIP WITHSTANDS THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19

In addition to affecting every aspect of daily life, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered traditional audio listening habits. When U.S. consumers were forced into lockdown in March of last year, commuting to work decreased and audio consumption dropped. As the year progressed, however, audio use, including podcasts, rebounded—as consumers learned to change their media habits despite the life changes that COVID-19 brought on.

Importantly, the pandemic has proven the resiliency of podcasts, despite the reduced amount of time that consumers spend in their vehicles. While heavy podcast listenership remains somewhat flat on a year-over-year basis (about 25% of U.S. podcast listeners listen 10 more times per month), the attraction of podcasts has broadened, with notable growth of light podcast listeners (those who don't listen every day). In fact, more than half (53.8%) of U.S. consumers 18 and older who listen to podcasts listen at least once a week.

FREQUENCY MATTERS: HALF OF LISTENERS LISTEN WEEKLY

HOW OFTEN DO YOU LISTEN TO PODCASTS?



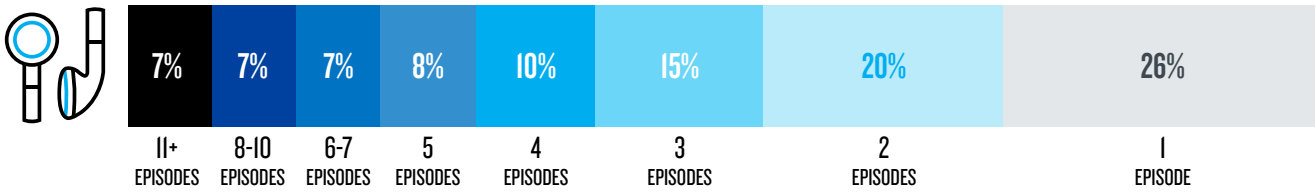
Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Listener Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

Flat usage trends among heavy podcast listeners are far from surprising. This group is 24% less likely than the general population of 18+ consumers to listen at home and are 50% more likely to listen at work. So as much of the professional workforce continues to work from home, this group will largely remain static in terms of growth. Heavy listeners do, however, listen out of the home at other locations, including the gym (39% more likely), so they do remain actively engaged with podcasts despite many consumers' new WFH lifestyles. Comparatively, light podcast listeners are almost 10% more likely to listen at home, which explains the uptick in this group's engagement over the past year.

Regardless of listener type, podcast consumers enjoy variety, which means that brands shouldn't plan their podcast advertising opportunities in a vacuum. Specifically, only one-quarter (25.5%) of U.S. podcast listeners tune into just one episode in a given week. Almost 40% tune in to four or more episodes each week. So while it's not necessary (or possible) to advertise in all 1.7+ million podcasts, brands should be considering a variety as they plan their reach goals.

VARIETY MATTERS: 75% LISTEN TO MORE THAN ONE PODCAST

NUMBER OF PODCAST EPISODES LISTENED TO IN THE AVERAGE WEEK



Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Listener Buying Power, November 2020 (Weekly Podcast Listeners)

UNDERSTANDING PODCAST AWARENESS AND LISTENER ACTION

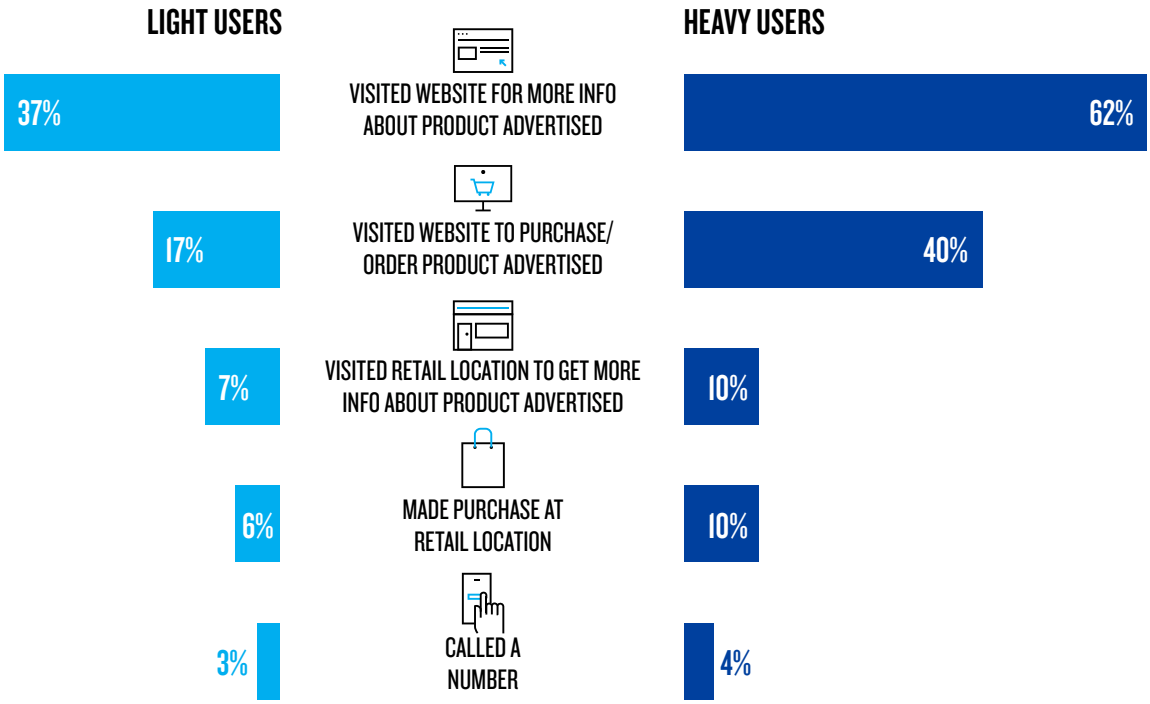
With so many podcasts available to consumers, discovery plays a critical role in how consumers become podcast listeners and which titles and genres they gravitate to. Heavy podcasters are steeped in the podcast scene, so they are less reliant on outside sources for discovering new content than light listeners. As a result, they often gravitate to new podcasts because they learned about them from other podcasts, both through advertisements and guest appearances on podcasts they already listen to. Other discovery avenues include recommendations, social media and popular online video platforms. Comparatively, light podcast listeners are very active in podcast discovery, with online video, social media and recommendations being the most influential sources.

From a marketing perspective, both heavy and light podcast listeners are among the most desirable audiences across the entire media landscape. That's because of two key factors: Podcast audiences are very engaged with the content they listen to and podcast listeners have much higher household incomes than the general population. The growing base of 22 million light podcast listeners have a median annual household income of just over $80,000, while the 14 million heavy podcast listeners have a median income of $88,600.

As an engaged audience with high household incomes, podcast listeners frequently take action when they hear an advertisement on a podcast episode, particularly visiting a website to learn more about a product or service they heard about.

HOW PODCAST LISTENERS REACT TO ADS THEY HEAR

ACTIONS TAKEN AFTER HEARING PODCAST ADS



Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+, Sample Size = 37,597

There's little doubt that the podcast landscape will continue to grow and that audiences will continue gravitating toward the content that appeals to them. The No. 1 objection from brand advertisers, however, is that the growing expanse of podcasts makes it excessively complicated to know where to invest.

Unlike it does with traditional forms of media, traditional audience measurement does not provide brand advertisers with enough guidance for reliable podcast targeting. Advertising with a well-known title can certainly provide reach, but it doesn't guarantee resonance or that listeners will take action. The world is moving away from cookies, bots and anonymous impressions, and that elevates the importance of actual people. And when it comes to podcast advertising, there is no substitute for knowing what actual people are listening to, what they respond to and how to best engage them as a brand.

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 AMONG LIGHT & HEAVY LISTENERS

(BASED ON THE AUDIENCE COMPOSITION OF EACH GENRE)

LIGHT PODCAST LISTENERS	% OF TOTAL AUDIENCE TO GENRE
MUSIC	53%
ARTS	52%
HEALTH & FITNESS	51%
EDUCATION	51%
KIDS & FAMILY	50%

HEAVY PODCAST LISTENERS	% OF TOTAL AUDIENCE TO GENRE
HISTORY	37%
NEWS	36%
TRUE CRIME	36%
SOCIETY & CULTURE	35%
SCIENCE	34%

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

TOP PODCAST GENRES BY AGE GROUP

(BASED ON % OF ALL PODCAST USAGE, BY AGE, TO EACH GENRE)

	PERSONS 18+	
1	COMEDY	8%
2	NEWS	8%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	6%
4	BUSINESS	5%
5	EDUCATION	5%
6	TRUE CRIME	5%
7	MUSIC	5%
8	HEALTH & FITNESS	4%
9	SPORTS	4%
10	ARTS	4%

	PERSONS 18-34	
1	COMEDY	14%
2	NEWS	11%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	10%
4	TRUE CRIME	10%
5	BUSINESS	9%
6	EDUCATION	8%
7	MUSIC	7%
8	ARTS	7%
9	SCIENCE	7%
10	TV & FILM	7%

	PERSONS 18-49	
1	COMEDY	12%
2	NEWS	11%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	9%
4	TRUE CRIME	9%
5	BUSINESS	8%
6	EDUCATION	8%
7	MUSIC	7%
8	SPORTS	6%
9	SCIENCE	6%
10	HEALTH & FITNESS	6%

	PERSONS 25-54	
1	COMEDY	11%
2	NEWS	11%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	8%
4	TRUE CRIME	8%
5	BUSINESS	7%
6	EDUCATION	7%
7	MUSIC	6%
8	SPORTS	6%
9	SCIENCE	6%
10	HEALTH & FITNESS	6%

	MEN 25-54	
1	NEWS	13%
2	COMEDY	12%
3	SPORTS	10%
4	BUSINESS	10%
5	SOCIETY & CULTURE	8%
6	HISTORY	8%
7	SCIENCE	8%
8	TECHNOLOGY	7%
9	EDUCATION	7%
10	TRUE CRIME	7%

	WOMEN 25-54	
1	COMEDY	9%
2	TRUE CRIME	9%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	8%
4	NEWS	8%
5	EDUCATION	7%
6	HEALTH & FITNESS	7%
7	ARTS	6%
8	KIDS & FAMILY	6%
9	MUSIC	6%
10	BUSINESS	5%

	PERSONS 55+	
1	NEWS	4%
2	COMEDY	3%
3	ARTS	3%
4	EDUCATION	3%
5	SOCIETY & CULTURE	3%
6	HEALTH & FITNESS	2%
7	HISTORY	2%
8	MUSIC	2%
9	BUSINESS	2%
10	SPORTS	2%

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

TOP PODCAST GENRES BY LISTENING LOCATION

(BASED ON % OF ALL PODCAST USAGE, BY LOCATION, TO EACH GENRE)

AT HOME		
1	NEWS	43%
2	COMEDY	41%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	31%
4	EDUCATION	29%
5	MUSIC	28%
6	BUSINESS	27%
7	ARTS	26%
8	TRUE CRIME	25%
9	HEALTH & FITNESS	24%
10	TV & FILM	24%

IN TRANSIT		
1	COMEDY	44%
2	NEWS	41%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	35%
4	TRUE CRIME	33%
5	BUSINESS	31%
6	EDUCATION	31%
7	MUSIC	25%
8	SCIENCE	24%
9	SPORTS	24%
10	HISTORY	23%

AT WORK		
1	COMEDY	47%
2	NEWS	43%
3	TRUE CRIME	37%
4	SOCIETY & CULTURE	32%
5	BUSINESS	27%
6	SPORTS	27%
7	EDUCATION	26%
8	HISTORY	25%
9	HEALTH & FITNESS	23%
10	MUSIC	23%

OTHER		
1	SOCIETY & CULTURE	45%
2	NEWS	42%
3	BUSINESS	39%
4	COMEDY	38%
5	EDUCATION	32%
6	HEALTH & FITNESS	30%
7	ARTS	25%
8	SPORTS	24%
9	TRUE CRIME	22%
10	HISTORY	21%

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

TOP PODCAST GENRES BY TIME OF DAY

(BASED ON % OF ALL PODCAST USAGE, BY DAYPART, TO EACH GENRE)

WEEKDAYS 6A-10A		
1	NEWS	45%
2	COMEDY	40%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	34%
4	BUSINESS	33%
5	TRUE CRIME	31%
6	EDUCATION	29%
7	SPORTS	25%
8	HISTORY	24%
9	MUSIC	24%
10	SCIENCE	23%

WEEKDAYS 10A-12P		
1	COMEDY	44%
2	NEWS	43%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	37%
4	TRUE CRIME	32%
5	EDUCATION	29%
6	BUSINESS	27%
7	ARTS	25%
8	MUSIC	25%
9	TV & FILM	24%
10	HEALTH & FITNESS	23%

WEEKDAYS 12P-3P		
1	COMEDY	46%
2	NEWS	43%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	37%
4	TRUE CRIME	31%
5	EDUCATION	28%
6	BUSINESS	27%
7	MUSIC	27%
8	ARTS	25%
9	SPORTS	24%
10	TV & FILM	23%

WEEKDAYS 3P-7P		
1	NEWS	44%
2	COMEDY	43%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	36%
4	TRUE CRIME	30%
5	BUSINESS	28%
6	EDUCATION	27%
7	HISTORY	26%
8	SCIENCE	25%
9	SPORTS	24%
10	TV & FILM	24%

WEEKENDS 6A-7P		
1	NEWS	48%
2	COMEDY	41%
3	SOCIETY & CULTURE	38%
4	BUSINESS	30%
5	EDUCATION	30%
6	TRUE CRIME	28%
7	HISTORY	24%
8	SPORTS	24%
9	ARTS	24%
10	TV & FILM	23%

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

PODCAST GENRES RANKED ON MEDIAN AGE OF AUDIENCE

1	TRUE CRIME	35
2	COMEDY	35
3	LEISURE	36
4	FICTION	36
5	SOCIETY & CULTURE	36
6	KIDS & FAMILY	36
7	ALL PODCAST CONSUMERS	38
8	TV & FILM	37
9	SCIENCE	37
10	BUSINESS	37
11	EDUCATION	37
12	TECHNOLOGY	38
13	ARTS	38
14	MUSIC	38
15	GOVERNMENT	39
16	SPORTS	39
17	HEALTH & FITNESS	39
18	HISTORY	39
19	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	39
20	NEWS	40

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

PODCAST GENRES RANKED ON MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF AUDIENCE

1	KIDS & FAMILY	$60,981
2	MUSIC	$64,740
3	FICTION	$67,416
4	ARTS	$70,995
5	COMEDY	$73,831
6	LEISURE	$74,586
7	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	$76,558
8	TV & FILM	$77,364
9	EDUCATION	$82,341
10	HEALTH & FITNESS	$82,530
11	ALL PODCAST CONSUMERS	$82,641
12	TRUE CRIME	$83,245
13	GOVERNMENT	$84,686
14	SCIENCE	$89,066
15	HISTORY	$91,645
16	BUSINESS	$91,699
17	SOCIETY & CULTURE	$92,127
18	NEWS	$92,366
19	SPORTS	$94,251
20	TECHNOLOGY	$95,852

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

PODCAST GENRES GENDER BREAKDOWN

(AUDIENCE COMPOSITION, SORTED ON WOMEN)

		MEN	WOMEN
1	KIDS & FAMILY	23%	77%
2	HEALTH & FITNESS	37%	63%
3	ARTS	39%	61%
4	TRUE CRIME	41%	60%
5	RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY	42%	58%
6	EDUCATION	47%	54%
7	SOCIETY & CULTURE	47%	53%
8	FICTION	50%	50%
9	TV & FILM	52%	48%
10	MUSIC	53%	48%
11	COMEDY	54%	46%
12	ALL PODCAST CONSUMERS	55%	45%
13	LEISURE	56%	44%
14	NEWS	62%	38%
15	BUSINESS	63%	37%
16	GOVERNMENT	64%	36%
17	SCIENCE	64%	36%
18	HISTORY	68%	32%
19	TECHNOLOGY	80%	20%
20	SPORTS	81%	20%

Source: Nielsen Scarborough Podcast Buying Power, November 2020 (Listeners Only) Adults 18+

13 PODCAST NETWORKS & OVER 160 OF THE LARGEST PODCAST PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IN NIELSEN'S PODCAST BUYING POWER SERVICE

Audioboom
Barstool Sports
cabana
Cadence13
Conde Nast
ESPN
iHeartRadio

Midroll
NPR
PodcastOne
Public Media Marketing
Univision
Westwood One

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

The next wave of the Podcast Buying Power survey goes into the field in mid-March, 2021 with data releasing to subscribers on May 10th. If you're interested in including your show or network in the service, the deadline to submit new entries is March 1st.

ABOUT NIELSEN

Nielsen Holdings plc (NYSE: NLSN) is a global measurement and data analytics company that provides the most complete and trusted view available of consumers and markets worldwide. Nielsen is divided into two business units. Nielsen Global Media provides media and advertising industries with unbiased and reliable metrics that create a shared understanding of the industry required for markets to function. NielsenIQ (formerly known as Nielsen Global Connect) provides consumer packaged goods manufacturers and retailers with accurate, actionable information and insights and a complete picture of the complex and changing marketplace that companies need to innovate and grow.

Our approach marries proprietary Nielsen data with other data sources to help clients around the world understand what's happening now, what's happening next, and how to best act on this knowledge.

An S&P 500 company, Nielsen has operations in nearly 100 countries, covering more than 90% of the world's population. For more information, visit www.nielsen.com.

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