A Periodical Phenomenon:
A Look at Podcasting's Effect on Newspaper Audience, Advertising and Atmosphere

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Abstract:

This study examines the recent phenomenon known as podcasting and how it has affected America's newspaper industry, particularly in the areas of audience, advertising and the atmosphere of the newspaper, news Web site and newsroom itself. It analyzes podcasting from the perspective of news Web site editors at newspapers that are currently recording and producing podcasts. This study uses interviews from 10 such editors at medium and large newspapers across the country. Results demonstrate what newspapers have learned – or are trying to learn – about this new audience, their attempt to move from content generation to revenue strategy, and how their reporters are coping with a new form of storytelling not taught in journalism school.

In 2001, former MTV personality and Internet entrepreneur Adam Curry walked away from the blogging convention "BloggerCon" with an idea – an idea that the next step in the Internet evolution was portability, a cross between a Walkman and a laptop – the ability to *listen* to the Web. Over the next three years, Curry would go on to develop iPodder, a piece of software that allows users to subscribe and automatically download pre-recorded audio blogs from the Web by using Really Simple Syndication, or RSS, technology. The idea was that subscribers would be able to receive audio programs in MP3 format without having to remember to download them – and then be able to listen to the content anywhere and anytime. In August 2004, Curry released the first of these audio blogs in the form of his own show, *The Daily Source Code.* And with that, "podcasting" was born (Newitz, 2005).

Just over a year later, podcasting, a term that comes from a combination of Apple's popular MP3 player, the iPod, and broadcasting, has experienced one of the fastest growths in the history of Internet technologies. According to an article by Phillips Research, *Refocusing Multimedia Research on Short Clips*, "The rate of adoption is striking. … More than 1,700 podcast feeds appeared within the first six months after the invention of podcasting. This is approximately six times the rate of adoption seen in the Web's early days" (Dimitrova, 2005). The number of shows available for download has now increased to more than 6,000 (Rumford, 2005). In addition, the software allowing users to subscribe to podcasts has expanded past Curry's iPodder to allow more download options for consumers. Apple iTunes, which currently has over 38 million users, began incorporating podcasts in the latest version of its software, and now includes 3,000 shows in its online music store (Gilbert, 2005, ¶ 3). The shows have begun to migrate past

independent, homemade shows, such as Curry's *The Daily Source Code*, and have become adopted by mainstream media. *ABC News*, *NBC News*, *ESPN Disney*, and *National Public Radio* introduced podcast programming in 2005 (Gilbert, 2005, ¶ 3). More than a dozen newspapers and magazines in the country have also added podcasts to their Web sites, including the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Philadelphia Daily News*, and *Forbes* (Kesmodel, 2005).

Though podcasting is still in its infancy, many publications feel that they missed the blog bandwagon and are not willing to risk making the same mistake with podcasts. As a result, the newspaper and magazine podcasts have no set models and can range from readings of the day's headlines to shows rivaling those found on radio. Nor do most publications have an advertising model to actually make money from podcasts. Editors and reporters creating the shows find themselves tacking the duties on top of daily newsroom rituals – without the benefit of added pay. Nevertheless, the podcasting trend is growing, and with reports by The Diffusion Group, Forrester Research and Pew suggesting that podcast listeners could reach the millions in years to come, it can be expected that news publications will continue to adopt and add podcasts to their Web sites. As with any new trend, or phenomenon, in the media industry, the ultimate goal for newspapers and magazines is to gain more readers through podcasting. But with the newness of podcasting, little is known about how to successfully do this, leaving most publications to simply learn on their own through trial and error.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to learn how podcasting is affecting newspapers that have adopted the trend, including influences on the audience, atmosphere and advertising. Little has been done to compare the publications' shows and

to learn what works and what doesn't. Questions abound about podcast audience

demographics, whether or not podcasts are increasing a publication's audience, how

podcasting is affecting employees and newsrooms, promotion of podcasts, as well as

revenue models involving podcasting.

The following research questions were explored in this study:

RQ1: What is podcasting's effect on a newspaper's audience?

RQ2: What is podcasting's effect on a newspaper's atmosphere, including its

newsroom, newspaper and Web site?

RQ3: What is podcasting's effect on a newspaper's advertising?

As mentioned before, there have been various research studies done that focus on

the current and future use of podcasting. These studies have concluded that podcasting

will grow rapidly in the years to come. One of these studies conducted by The Diffusion

Group, called "Podcasting as an Extension of Portable Digital Media – Fact, Fiction, and

Opportunity," reported that the use of "audio files or 'podcasts' is expected to grow from

less than 15% of portable digital music player owners in 2004 to 75% by 2010" (The

Diffusion Group, 2005, ¶ 1). The Diffusion Group's report estimated that there were

almost 1 million regular podcasting users in 2004 (Gonsalves, 2005, ¶ 1). This figure is

expected to climb to approximately 4.5 million by the end of this year, and near 60

million by 2010 (Gonsalves, 2005, ¶ 1-2). In addition, the "Future of Digital Audio"

study, conducted by Forrester Research, predicted that 20.1 million households in the

United States will listen to satellite radio while 12.3 million U.S. households will use

MP3 players to listen to audio podcasts by 2010 (Forrester Research, 2005, ¶ 1). The

study also predicted that 62% of American households will have broadband Internet

access by the end of the decade, which is expected to fuel the growth of podcasting

(Forrester Research, 2005, ¶ 8). Furthermore, a Pew Internet and American Life Project

survey found that 29% of the 22 million people who own iPods or MP3 players have

downloaded podcasts, representing approximately 6 million people (Pew Internet and

American Life Project, 2005, ¶ 1). While the numbers may differ across the various

studies, all of the research shows that podcast usage has grown steadily over the past year

and is expected to expand rapidly over the next decade.

     The continued growth of podcasting has led to an increased use of the podcast by

various news organizations. According to *Newspapers & Technology*, a newspaper trade

journal:

> News Web sites are creating podcast files of their audio and/or music programs
>
> and making them available to the early-adopting "iPodders" … podcasting
>
> presents plausible present and future revenue streams for news publishers: radio-
>
> style "interstitial" audio ads, banner and text ads inserted around the page where
>
> podcasts are downloaded (Moller & Stone, 2005, ¶ 21, 26).

A number of highly regarded news Web sites, including *The Washington Post*,

Newsweek, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Guardian* and *BBC News* in the

United Kingdom, have all incorporated podcasting into their sites (Dube, 2005, ¶ 2). In a

Wall Street Journal Online article on podcasting, newspaper industry consultant Pete

Conti said that, "podcasting gives newspapers a chance to reach younger audiences, such

as people in their thirties who regularly tote iPods but were raised with television as their

main news source" and "opens up a huge opportunity to offer a lot of their local content"

(Kesmodel, 2005, ¶ 9). Additionally, there are signs that podcasting is becoming a firmer

part of news Web sites because of an increased interest by corporations to advertise during podcasts. According to the newspaper trade journal *Editor and Publisher*, *DenverPost.com* recently came to an agreement with the electronics retailer Best Buy to allow its advertisements to be played during the Web site's podcasts. The article states that, "*DenverPost.com* is likely one of the first newspaper sites to land a five-figure sponsorship deal ($30,000) for its podcasts" (DeForre, 2005, ¶ 7). If such trends continue, then podcasting is likely to become an integral part of news Web sites for years to come.

METHOD

The primary method used in our phenomenological study on podcasting was the in-depth interview. In total, there were 10 interviews, each with a newspaper employee who was involved in the production of his or her newspaper's podcasts. Individual interviews lasted, on average, between 45 minutes and an hour, and were conducted via telephone.

Interview subjects were determined through purposive sampling due to the fact that they needed to meet specific requirements for the study. To obtain the greatest data from these subjects, and to make the study a successful one, the subjects had to be familiar with podcasting and have hands-on experience with the medium. Therefore, the interviewees were employees at the newspapers during the time the interviews were conducted. Most importantly, the subjects had to be directly involved in the creation of the podcast, if not solely responsible for it. By meeting these criteria, the interviewees were not only similar in their involvement in podcasting, but were also able to answer

essential interview questions detailing their podcast's content and the technology behind it, as well as its effect on the newspaper.

Interview subjects came from a variety of newspapers, ranging in size from medium to large, located throughout the United States. The reasoning behind this was that podcasts are not currently widespread enough to limit interviews to subjects from small, medium or large newspapers. In addition, part of the goal of the research was to learn what kind of effect the newspaper's size may have on the podcast's listeners and advertisers. With that said, our interview subjects came from the following newspapers: *Los Angeles Times, Philadelphia Daily News, Roanoke Times, Denver Post, Naples Daily News, San Diego Union-Tribune, Bakersfield Californian, Greensboro News & Record, San Francisco Chronicle* and *Lawrence Journal-World*. Interviews were arranged through e-mails sent to the newspapers. In the cases where the individual responsible for the podcast was known, the e-mail was sent to him or her; if not, an e-mail was sent to the person or section closest associated with the podcast, requesting to be directed to a specific individual. If e-mailing the desired subject was not effective, phone calls were made in the attempt to schedule the interview.

All interviews were conducted via telephone. Although telephone interviewing may lack a human element that can only be observed through an in-person interview, such as facial expressions and body language, this study would have been impossible to conduct otherwise. Interviewees were located throughout the country, making in-person interviewing impractical to conduct given the timeframe and financial limitations of the study. In addition, when considering the hectic and often unset schedules of newspaper employees, telephone interviews were the easiest for them to balance their lives around.

Telephone interviews also allowed the subjects to be interviewed at the setting of their choice, resulting in a natural – and convenient – setting for the interviewee.

Most interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, with two ending after approximately 30 minutes. Subjects were asked a series of questions detailing podcasting's effect on the newspaper's audience, the newspaper itself, as well as its effect on the newspaper's advertising income. Such questions included: what is podcasting's effect on the newspaper Web site's traffic, what kind of demographics make up the podcast's audience, how is the content of the podcast appealing to specific demographics, what kind of feedback has the newspaper received about its podcasting, what has the newsroom's reaction been to podcasting, and how is podcasting affecting the work schedule of employees at the newspaper. Additional questions included: is advertising integrated into the podcast, what are the future plans for advertising within the podcasts, is the print edition involved in cross-promotion of the podcast, how are advertisers chosen for the podcast, to what extent do advertisers understand podcasting, what is the feedback from businesses when asked if they would like to purchase advertising time during the podcast, and how are advertising rates determined.

Half of the telephone interviews were recorded using a telephone recording controller and software, allowing for the conversations to be saved directly as MP3 audio files locally to our computer, while the rest were recorded using an audio cassette recorder. The purpose of this was to have properly archived audio material to reference during transcribing, as well as to allow the interviewer the ability to make notes about the interviewee on more than what he or she was simply saying. We took notice of the subject's voice, particularly during instances when he or she seemed confident,

optimistic, unsure, confused, or pessimistic. When analyzing the interviews, it was

important to not only study what interviewees said, but "how" they said it. By making

note of such reactions, we wanted to successfully represent the attitudes of those creating

podcasts.

The telephone interviews were also recorded so that we would be able to include

audio excerpts of the recorded interviews along with our findings. However, this

depended on whether or not we were granted permission by the interviewee to use his or

her name and/or voice in our results. Following every interview, each participant was

asked if he or she wanted to remain anonymous in regards to his or her identity. All 10

subjects granted us permission to use their identity in our final report; all interviewees

were informed prior to the interview that the study may be published in a

communications journal or presented at a conference.

Data in the study were analyzed using a condensation approach. Once the

transcription process was complete and the interviews were successfully converted to

text, we implemented the use of Microsoft Excel to help identify meaning units and

emerging themes. We created a spreadsheet that was divided into three categories based

on our research questions: audience, atmosphere and advertising. We then narrowed

those categories into subcategories based on our interview questions. At that point, we

began filling in the spreadsheet, summarizing the participants' answers within the

subcategories. Once finished, we were able to have an overwhelming view of the data

that allowed us to group units together into common themes that related to our research

questions.

The use of the in-depth interview for this study was effective because it provided a way for the researchers to get a varying array of opinions and thoughts on a new technology from numerous professionals scattered about the country. The point of the study was to learn how the new publishing medium of podcasting, which is growing at rapid speeds without the convenience of standards or tradition, is being used at newspapers, while focusing particularly on its effect on audience, atmosphere, and advertising. To answer our questions, there was no better method than to directly ask the people at the forefront of podcasting. It also allowed for the use of the telephone, which was conventional for both interviewer and interviewee, as well as essential given the time period, lack of financing and distance associated with this study. Expansion of this study could include focus group or quantitative methodologies to explore audience and advertising demographics; at present, however, we feel interviews are the best way to obtain fundamental data for podcasting research.

Role of the Researcher

The researchers in this study are currently graduate students in the New Media program at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. Prior to attending graduate school, we each earned undergraduate degrees in journalism. Past experiences, when combined, include work at college newspapers, college news Web sites, Web design and development, as well instruction in New Media. On the subject of podcasting, we have been both listeners and creators. Because of our work in the past, in addition to our current studies, we brought to this study a great interest in how newspapers and journalists of today use technology to discover new storytelling techniques. We also have an understanding of podcasting, its underlying technology and

how it is being used by both amateurs and professionals. We believe that our combined

skills assisted us in the interviews so that we could participate on an equal level as that of

the interview subject, creating a professional conversational atmosphere, rather than an

amateurish one.

RESULTS

This section of the study will describe and explain the data collected during the

series of interviews with the news Web site editors. The section is organized according to

how the themes arose from the interviews in relation to our three research questions

dealing with audience, atmosphere and advertising. Each newspaper produced at least

three or more podcasts, with the exception of the *Naples Daily News*, which produced

two. In addition, each newspaper began its podcasts in 2005.

Audience Effects

Though several themes were drawn from the audience portion of the interviews, a

dominant theme cast its shadow and influence over the rest. The majority of newspapers,

simply put, knew little about their podcast listeners. Most of the Web sites had been

unable to draw hard, valid conclusions from information they had gathered, both

statistically and anecdotally, about their audience.

Roughly half even had the capability to track the number of podcasts that had

been downloaded from their sites. The *San Francisco Chronicle, Philadelphia Daily

News, Lawrence Journal-World, Roanoke Times* and *Denver Post* were able to track the

number of podcasts downloaded. From those, the *Chronicle* and *Daily News* received the

most downloads at over 1,000 per week, with the *Journal-World* and *Post* averaging over 1,000 per month.

Only three newspapers, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Naples Daily News* and *Greensboro News & Record*, received anecdotal feedback from their audience primarily through a combination of e-mail and word-of-mouth. All three stated that the feedback was positive, and that listeners were happy the newspapers were embracing a new technology. Herb Everett, News-Technology Analyst for the *News & Record*, said:

> When [the audience] started listening they thought it would be amateurish, but when we get the production right, they're surprised it sounds as good as it does. A couple of folks have said … they like the fact we're giving them some stuff they're not reading in the newspaper. They like the fact … we're trying to introduce ourselves in a different way. Rather than just showing up at an event and saying, "Oh, I'm with the *News and Record*," we're actually more available this way and they get a chance to see a different side of us.

Due to the lack of hard evidence the newspapers had been able to gather from a combination of the statistical and anecdotal feedback, other questions concerning effects on the audience could only be answered by educated guesses.

A vast majority of newspapers did not feel that their podcasts had aided in building their Web site's audience. Only the *Roanoke Times* and *Denver Post* felt that their sites' traffic had increased due to the overall growth of podcasting. Both papers felt this growth had caused potential audiences to search for podcasts through traditional Web search engines and Apple iTunes, which in turn, had led them to their sites. The *Denver*

Post, in particular, estimated that its audience had also increased because of national news coverage it had received due to its podcast sponsorship from Best Buy.

Most of the newspapers did not consider themselves to target specific audiences. Instead, most used a combination of individual podcasts to target a wide array of listeners. On average, the newspapers' podcasts consisted of a standard news show, an entertainment show, a sports show, and a behind-the-scenes show where editors and reporters discussed the inner workings of stories that ran on the Web site or in the paper. Several of the editors, such as those at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Diego Union Tribune* and *Bakersfield Californian*, said that although content was not specifically generated for 18 to 35-year-olds, they felt that they did somewhat target young adults because of the technology itself, which is generally associated with younger people. Jennifer Baldwin of the *Bakersfield Californian* even stated that she felt her staff sometimes inadvertently targeted younger audiences because they themselves are young.

Another theme that emerged from the dominating *lack of knowledge* shadow was the audience's *own lack of knowledge*. Eight of the 10 newspapers believed their audience did not understand podcasting, or more explicitly, had little clue as to what a podcast even was. Due to this overwhelming belief, all 10 newspapers, including the *Philadelphia* and *Naples Daily News* (both of which believed their audience members understood podcasting), provided users with additional information or links explaining podcasting and how to listen to their podcasts. Two primary reasons for this lack of understanding were:

1:      Audience members believe they must have an iPod to listen to a podcast.

> 2:   Audience members do not understand the terminology associated with
>
> podcasting.

The *Bakersfield Californian* tackled both of these issues on its Web site. In addition to

specifically stating that audiences do not need iPods to listen to the podcasts in its

explainer section, the staff decided to refrain from using the word "podcast" on its site.

Jennifer Baldwin, Assistant Multimedia Editor for the newspaper, said:

> One kind of discussion we had when we were launching the podcasts … the
>
> debate was do people know what a podcast is? If we put the word "podcast" as a
>
> link on the homepage, will people click on it? So we decided to go with "audio
>
> news" as our link because that's the more clear term.

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Atmosphere Effects

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Two themes that emerged from examining podcasting's effect on the atmosphere

of the newsroom, newspaper and Web site, centered on using other media to promote

podcasts and reacting to employees' eagerness to participate in the podcasts.

A majority of the papers used a combination of newspaper and Web site to aid in

the promotion of their podcasts. Seven, including the *San Francisco Chronicle*,

Philadelphia and *Naples Daily News*, *Roanoke Times, Denver Post, Bakersfield*

Californian and *News & Ledger*, incorporated cross-promotion between their print and

online products by displaying house ads in the newspaper to help gain podcast

listenership on their Web site. In addition to having individual podcast sections on their

sites, nine of the papers, with the exception of the *Bakersfield Californian*, ran additional

promotional elements for the podcasts on their homepages at least once per week. On the

other hand, only five of the papers, the *Naples Daily News*, *Lawrence Journal-World*,

San Diego Union Tribune, *Denver Post* and *Bakersfield Californian*, incorporated an

individual link into their navigation bar to their podcast section.

One of the most encouraging themes to emerge from the entire study dealt with

newsroom reaction to podcasting. Nine of the newspapers, with the exception of the

Lawrence Journal-World, which felt its staff was too busy with daily work, said that

many of their reporters had reacted to podcasting with great enthusiasm and were very

supportive of the new technology. For example, Seth Gitner, Multimedia Editor for the

Roanoke Times, said:

> Newspaper reporters are awesome because they are passionate about what they
>
> do. And this is gonna help push more people to those stories, they're seeing the
>
> light and they're gonna jump on board and do it. Nobody's really been like, "No,
>
> I'm not doing it. I can't, I don't really have a voice for this."

Even though the newspapers admitted that there was a learning curve for podcasting,

such as learning to write a script and speaking with a more radio-friendly voice, the

technology was easier and more natural for the reporters to grasp than other media, such

as video. Joe Russin, Assistant Multimedia Editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, offered this

reflection:

> We've been trying to figure out for a while how to do video here. … The video is
>
> a much harder transition for reporters … if they were good at it they would be in
>
> television. It's a bigger jump to go from being a newspaper reporter and
>
> participating in a video piece to being a newspaper reporter and participating in
>
> audio … because one thing most newspaper reporters do well is talk about what
>
> they're interested in. My sense is that ultimately, it does become a valuable

alternative medium that's congenial to the work habits of the people who work

here.

Advertising Effects

The overwhelming theme involved with advertising in podcasts was that the

concept is so new, even though most newspapers are sure they'll eventually integrate

advertising into podcasting, at present they're simply unsure of the best ways to

implement it. Most of the newspapers were unable to supply a large amount of

information regarding advertising due to the fact that all participants were from the

editorial side of each paper, rather than the advertising side. As one participant put it, "an

invisible wall" separates the two divisions at most newspapers nationwide. In addition,

with less than a year's podcasting experience under their digital belt, many newspapers

had spent most of their time focusing on content rather than advertising. Of course,

worthwhile content is essential to attracting listeners, who in turn, attract advertisers. As

Marcus Chan, Technology Editor for the *San Francisco Chronicle* said:

> You know, what it comes down to obviously, at the end of the day it's all about
>
> your content. It's not about technology or the medium. It's really about whether
>
> or not the content is riveting or engaging enough that they're gonna want to
>
> download it or not.

In total, five of the 10 newspapers were incorporating advertising and selling ads

for their podcasts. These papers included the *Philadelphia* and *Naples Daily News, San*

Diego Union Tribune, Denver Post and *Greensboro News & Record*. Out of the

remaining five papers, only the *Lawrence Journal-World* had no plans to pursue

advertising in the immediate future.

Another theme that came out of discussing advertising strategies with the newspapers was a fear synonymous with their attitudes toward audiences: Many of the newspapers felt that advertisers, like audience members, would not be familiar with podcasting, potentially closing the door before a sales pitch could even be made. To combat this, most editors felt that they should target local or smaller advertisers, niche advertisers whose products relate directly to the podcasts' content, or tech-related advertisers whose customers may in fact be familiar with podcasting. Joe Russin of the *Los Angeles Times*, which specializes in local college and professional sports podcasts, added:

> I suppose the sales staff would look at people who buy sports on the Web. Those are the people who have already said we're interested in Internet or alternative distribution in certain areas, so obviously those are your first targets.

Evidence that such ideas may have the potential to be successful lies in the newspapers that are currently selling ads. *Naples* and *Philadelphia Daily News* were able to sell advertising to Partners Bank and Bundy Computers, respectively, combining both local and tech strategies. The *Denver Post* made national headlines when it sold podcast advertising to Best Buy; though a large corporation, it still fell under the tech strategy. The *Greensboro News & Record* sold ads to a local record shop, and in turn, used those ads to highlight the fact that the store sold equipment that could be used to create podcasts.

Editors also had mixed feelings as to what type of ad should be incorporated into their podcasts. The decision boiled down to two types of radio-style ads: the spot ad, which is a separate audio track played at some point in the show, and the spoken-word

ad, which consists of the podcast host mentioning the advertiser during the show. The

spot ad is the more commercial of the two, but takes more time and engineering to

implement. As a result, editors were asking themselves which is the most influential

method that will affect consumers, and where in the podcast should the ad be played. Of

the five newspapers selling ads, three were using spot ads and two were using the spoken-

word method. The *Philadelphia Daily News* implemented the latter; during each show,

the host said, "This podcast is sponsored by Bundy Computers." The *Naples Daily News*,

on the other hand, went with the former. It opted to run a 10 to 15-second spot ad for

Partners Bank at the beginning, with a 30-second spot at the end of the podcast. The

Denver Post also ran ads at the beginning and end for Best Buy, but chose to use the

spoken-word method. Even the newspapers not selling ads had thoughts on the two

advertising methodologies. Joe Russin of the *Los Angeles Times* said:

> Well, "mentions" aren't going to get you a lot of money. If you say "This
>
> [University of Southern California] football podcast is brought to you buy Lexus,"
>
> I don't think it's gonna get you a lot. When public television and radio run real
>
> commercials, advertisers have learned you don't have to settle for a "brought to
>
> you by" mention anymore. You can get more for your money.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The first question we asked in this study was how podcasting affects a

newspaper's audience. Unfortunately, due to a lack of feedback stemming from

technological constraints, most newspapers knew little about their listeners other than the

feedback they received from random e-mails or conversations. Even newspapers capable

of tracking downloaded podcasts knew little about their audience demographically other than a potential number of listeners. As a result, other data concerning the audience resulted in educated guesses from the participants, revealing that most papers had little faith that their audience numbers had increased or that their audience was even familiar with podcasting. Due to the worry caused by the latter, the newspapers had adopted the trend of actually explaining what podcasts are and how they can be listened to. Despite the present lack of data, most newspapers were currently in the process of upgrading to new technologies that would provide better feedback about their podcasting audience.

The second research question analyzed atmosphere changes within the newspaper's newsroom, in the newspaper itself and on the Web site. The majority of newsrooms had responded proactively to the implementation of the podcasts, and most saw more and more reporters wanting to try the new technology. Their reaction seemed to parallel the amateur interest that originally kick-started the podcast craze, and when compared to those trends, the response was not surprising (Dimitrova, 2005). The newspaper and Web site had become methods of promotion of the podcasts for most papers through the use of house ads and through the strategy of cross-promotion. But as with the constraints of audience tracking, little was known as to how big of a role such promotion was playing. Only a handful of newspapers were actually highlighting the podcasts on both the homepage and the navigation bar, and the feeling was that the podcasts themselves were simply too hard to find on their parent medium – the newspaper's own Web site.

The third and final research question looked at advertising and how newspapers were integrating ads into their podcasts. Only half of the papers were selling ads for their

podcasts; however, all but one had plans to begin the process. Newspapers selling ads had

successfully targeted a combination of local, niche, and tech businesses, which seemed to

be a strategy ready to be adopted by the other papers. The battle between the spot ad and

the spoken-word ad also caused mixed feelings for newspapers. The two styles were

roughly split down the middle between the papers currently selling ads.

The greatest weakness, and at times, the greatest strength, of this study was its

premature nature. As mentioned before, podcasting has only been around for little more

than a year. During that time, newspapers have tried to jump on its bandwagon in a hurry,

but in doing so, have been able to focus on little more than the content and the creation of

podcasts. The acts of learning about users and making money took a backseat to

producing podcasts. Hence the reason we received a large amount of guesses, particularly

answers that were being pondered for the first time and generally began with the virginal

phrase, "That's a good question. … Let me think." In essence, the study appeared to

actually make many of the editors reflect on what they have done with podcasting in the

past year, and to begin constructing future strategies for the medium. Another weakness

dealt primarily with the advertising questions and the participants who were being asked

the questions. Although most participants were able to provide adequate feedback dealing

with the first two research questions, the third concerning advertising resulted in various

stops, starts, stumbles, and dramatic pauses of confusion. This was because the

participants chosen were part of the editorial departments at the newspapers rather than

the advertising departments, and as a result, the participants were not very knowledgeable

of advertising as a whole at their respective newspapers. However, at this stage of the

newspaper podcast evolutionary timeline, such participants were in fact the best

candidates for the in-depth interviews. They were best suited to answer the wide-array of questions we had to ask to meet the needs of our study and research questions. Advertising personnel would have been unable to answer a majority of the questions asked, and due to the minimal number of newspapers currently implementing advertising into their podcasts, there would have not been a large enough number of sales staff familiar with the medium to even quantify a study.

Future research, which could take place as soon as six to 12 months from now, would provide even more data considering the rapid growth and expansion of the medium. The in-depth methodology could be repeated with the same participants, and due to the ongoing upgrades in reader-tracking technology and advertising implementation that many participants mentioned, the data would be able to become more saturated than it is at present. In addition, it would be helpful if pre-interview questionnaires could be sent to all participants requesting that they have on hand listener statistics and advertising figures, if applicable. Such information, as learned in this study, may or may not be accessible to the participant at the time of the interview and he or she may have to consult a third-party to obtain such data. In addition, data gathered from this and future qualitative studies on podcasting could be used to create quantitative surveys for the newspapers' podcast audience. This could possibly be a key way to begin understanding audience member demographical information.

In conclusion, podcasting's current effects, as well as its ongoing effects, on newspapers in the areas of audience, atmosphere and advertising have been illustrated through the discussions with the in-depth interview participants. Though some of those effects, particularly in the areas of audience and advertising, may be a bit premature at

the moment because of the lack of hard data and inexperience that accompany podcasting, the important concept is that a new storytelling technology *is* enthusiastically being accepted and explored. Though Web editors may not have the best grasp on podcasting at present, the vital fact is that they are trying it – for the sake of the audience. With future technological improvements and better information analysis, researchers and producers will be able to understand how to best interpret this new data, and in turn, they will be able to learn how to best serve their audience.

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