

# How to make a great podcast that makes money: a lesson from news brands

How can you make a fantastic, popular podcast that engages audiences? How can you generate revenue from podcasting?

A good starting place is the example set by established news brands. In many ways, podcasting is a natural extension of news brands' ability to tell great stories.

Australia's news brands have produced dozens of award-winning, critically acclaimed podcasts, from *Maddie* (Nine) and *Who the Hell is Hamish?* (*The Australian*) to *Claremont* (*The West Australian*) and *Full Story* (The Guardian).

The common link: great audio content delivered by leaders in professionally-generated news content.

## Top Audio Podcasts

Episodes Audio Podcasts



1. Maddie  
9podcasts



2. Who the Hell is Hamish?  
The Australian



3. CLAREMONT: The Claremont Serial...  
The West Australian



4. The Joe Rogan Experience  
Joe Rogan



5. Dirty John  
L.A. Times | Wonderly



6. David Tennant Does a Podcast...  
Somethin' Else & No ...



7. Unravel True Crime  
ABC Radio



8. The Dropout  
ABC News

The podcast produced by Australia's news brands aren't just popular with the judges. *The Teacher's Pet* has been downloaded over 42.7 million times, topping podcast charts around the world and engaging a massive audience in the true crime epic.

What makes a successful podcast?

1. High-quality journalism and writing
2. Consistently high levels of production, such as sound quality, editing and music

3. A focus on compelling themes and topics that capture the audience's attention

[Interactive Advertising Bureau \(IAB\)](#) Australia says that audio content represents a real opportunity for brands to increase their recognition and reputation.

“Increasing brand awareness is the key objective for broadcast, streaming and podcast advertising. 77% of media buyers had used streaming digital audio advertising.”

What's more, the success of podcasts such as *The Teacher's Pet* have raised the international profile of Australian journalism. *The Australia* estimates that around 65 per cent of the podcast's audience is from overseas.

## **The rise of audio**

According to the [Smart Audio Report](#) from NPR & Edison Research, news and current affairs ranks second only to music as a category of audio in terms of user demand. The audience is there for publishers willing to move into the audio space, and with it come new ways of presenting content.

An [INMA report on audio opportunities for news media](#) showed that publishers “are experimenting, determining what the underlying technology can do for them, what audiences want — and what advertisers might pay for.”

*“News media companies are in a prime position to benefit from the audio trend because they have so much content.”*

INMA predicts that audio will be an important territory as news media publishers aim to reach out to younger audiences, who are increasingly opting for podcasts over radio content. This ties into the contemporary expectations of on-demand content: news media consumers don't want to be restrained by a listening or viewing schedule: they want to access news when and where they choose.

Another reason for the increased popularity of podcasts, says researcher [Richard Brooks](#) of Coventry University, is the disappearance of audio drama content from radio. Podcasts have taken up the mantle:

“The roots of the reinvention go back to the early 1980s. Adaptations like the BBC’s Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, Lord of the Rings and NPR/BBC’s Star Wars changed how radio drama was viewed. They gave rise to a later audio movie style and inspired a new generation of independents,” writes Brooks.

## **Podcasts and advertising, revenue growth**

[Reuters](#) reports the “unprecedented growth” of the format, as well as “significant room for growth.”

*“Podcasts can form a central pillar of your content strategy, and help capture the full attention of your listeners.”*

What’s more, investment into podcasting technology seems only to be growing, with [Spotify](#) releasing new tools for podcast advertisers in 2020. Apple and Microsoft aren’t far behind, with an ever-growing list of tools available for podcast producers to create, share and optimise voice content.

### Podcasting for brands

IAB’s 2019 [Audio Advertising State of the Nation Report](#) found that 87 per cent of agencies used streaming audio advertising in 2018, with brand advertisers increasingly embracing podcast advertising:

“The media buying community is continuing to increase their investment in streaming audio ad opportunities, as well as starting to embrace the commercial opportunities that podcasting is bringing to the market.”

An [INMA report](#) is similarly positive, highlighting audio projects as assets that will lead to future revenue streams.

Stay tuned for further developments in the audio era.

**[Related: How will the growth of voice and audio impact the news media industry?](#)**