




# What is a podcast in 2025? And who decides anyway? (and does it matter?)

Dr Richard Berry  
University of Sunderland

Knowledge in Your Ears. Podcasts between research, education and information International days of studies and listening:  
Università Roma Tre, Aprile 10-11, 2025



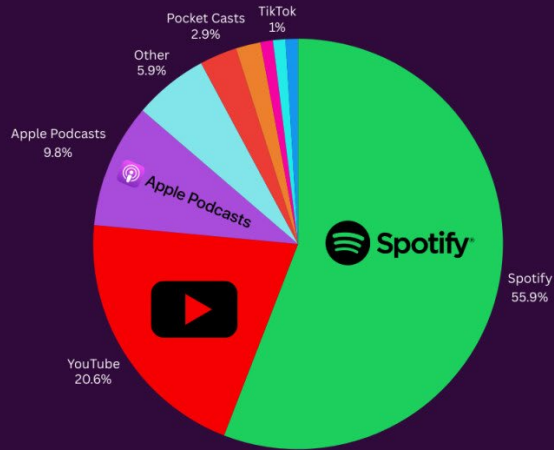
Podcasting... is a complex hybrid cultural form constantly reproduced by an evolving network of different, and dynamic, clusters of human ...and non- human actors

Bonini, 2022, page 26

## The Actors

- Spotify
- Apple
- Google
- Amazon
- Meta
- TikTok
- Legacy Media
- Production Studios
- Celebrities and Influencers
- Podcasters
- The audience
- Podcasting 2.0

## GEN Z PODCAST APP USAGE



### 56% use Spotify

Spotify remains the most-used podcast app for Gen Z. A majority of them (88%) listen to audio only, while 12% prefer a mix of audio and video consumption.

### 21% use YouTube

Unlike Spotify users, YouTube users are much more likely to consume video: 52% indicated they watched video podcasts all or some of the time.

### 10% use Apple Podcasts

Amongst Gen Z respondents, Apple Podcasts users tend to be slightly older than Spotify and YouTube users.

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- In short, the story of podcasting's third decade will center on the development of two divergent versions of podcasting existing side by side. On the one hand, the scrappy, upstart version of podcasting...
- [which] will co-exist with the professionalized, platform-dominated medium...
- Sullivan, 2024, p.223-244

## Service used most often to listen to podcasts

% OF U.S. WEEKLY PODCAST LISTENERS 13+ USE EACH SERVICE MOST OFTEN FOR PODCASTS



YouTube  
33%



Spotify  
26%



Apple Podcasts  
14%



Source: Edison Podcast Metrics Q4 2024

Thanks to the creativity and commitments of countless individual podcasters and their audiences, there are still a diversity and range of practices that constitute what we call "podcasting." ... there are multiple futures for the format.

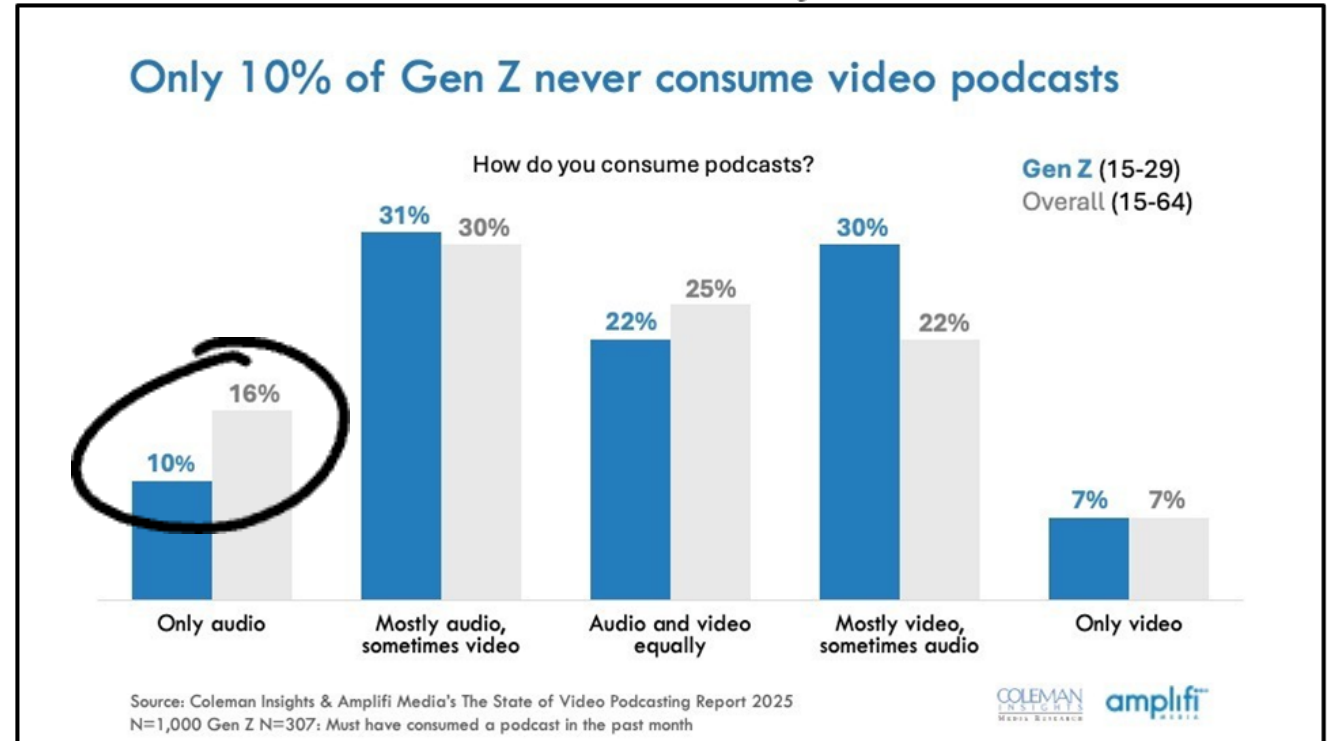
**Morris, 2024, P.83**

# The 'duality of podcasting' in 2025

“It’s becoming all about video”:

Daniel Ek, Spotify CEO

- The result is **the lines between a podcast and a visual show are blurring**. More creators are recognizing the potential of a dual-format of audio for traditional podcast listeners and video for YouTube users who, of course, expect a visual component.
- Goldstein, 2024



# USA / UK Spotify Top 10 – 26/3/25

Home

Videos

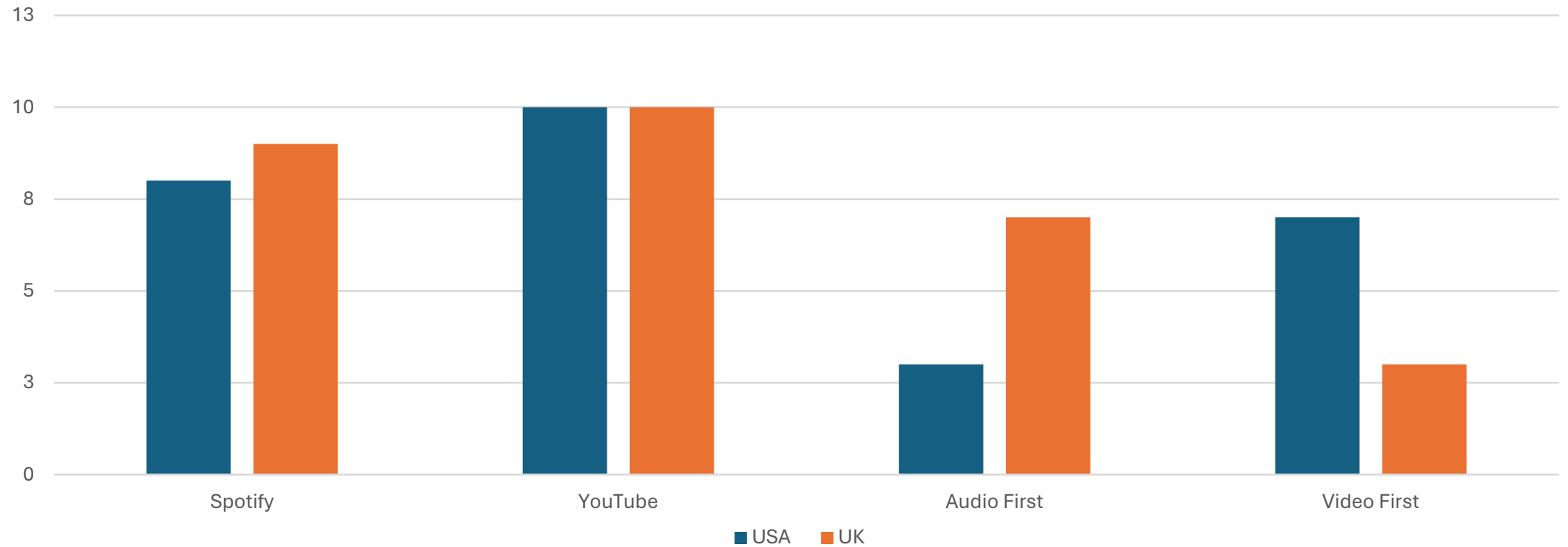
Shorts

Live

**Podcasts**

Playlists

Posts





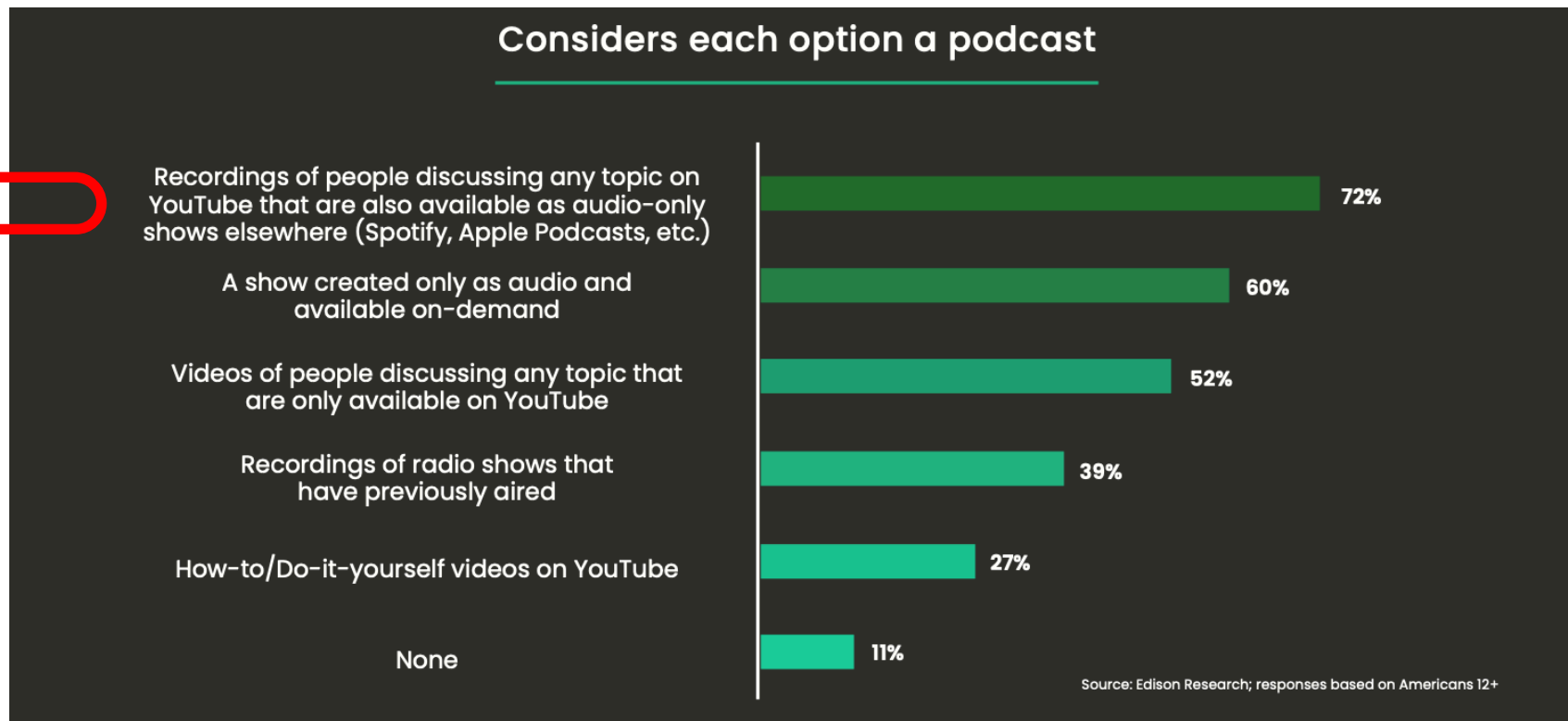


- EVERY top 10 show is on YouTube. More use video than don't.
- Only 6 of the top Spotify shows are top 10 on Apple (as audio)
- Some content blurs the boundaries between modes of production and distribution
- In all cases the microphone is visible
- A visual 'look' is emerging
- There are differences between audio first and video first openings (video can feel lazier)
- Dominated by conversational podcasts
- 7 of the UK shows between #11 and #20 were available as video
- Fits into pattern of visualized radio and multiplatform content

# The cultural concept of podcasting



We choose what a podcast is, and what a podcast will be. Our preferences, our colloquialisms and our culture give the word 'podcasting' its meaning.  
Rime et al, 2022, p.1273



- ...the podcast, a daughter of the internet and later of the mobile phone, finds us in a very different state. Cynical to technologies such as broadcasting and telephony, we live with the internet every day, it is omnipresent in all that we do. Perhaps podcasting was born demystified.

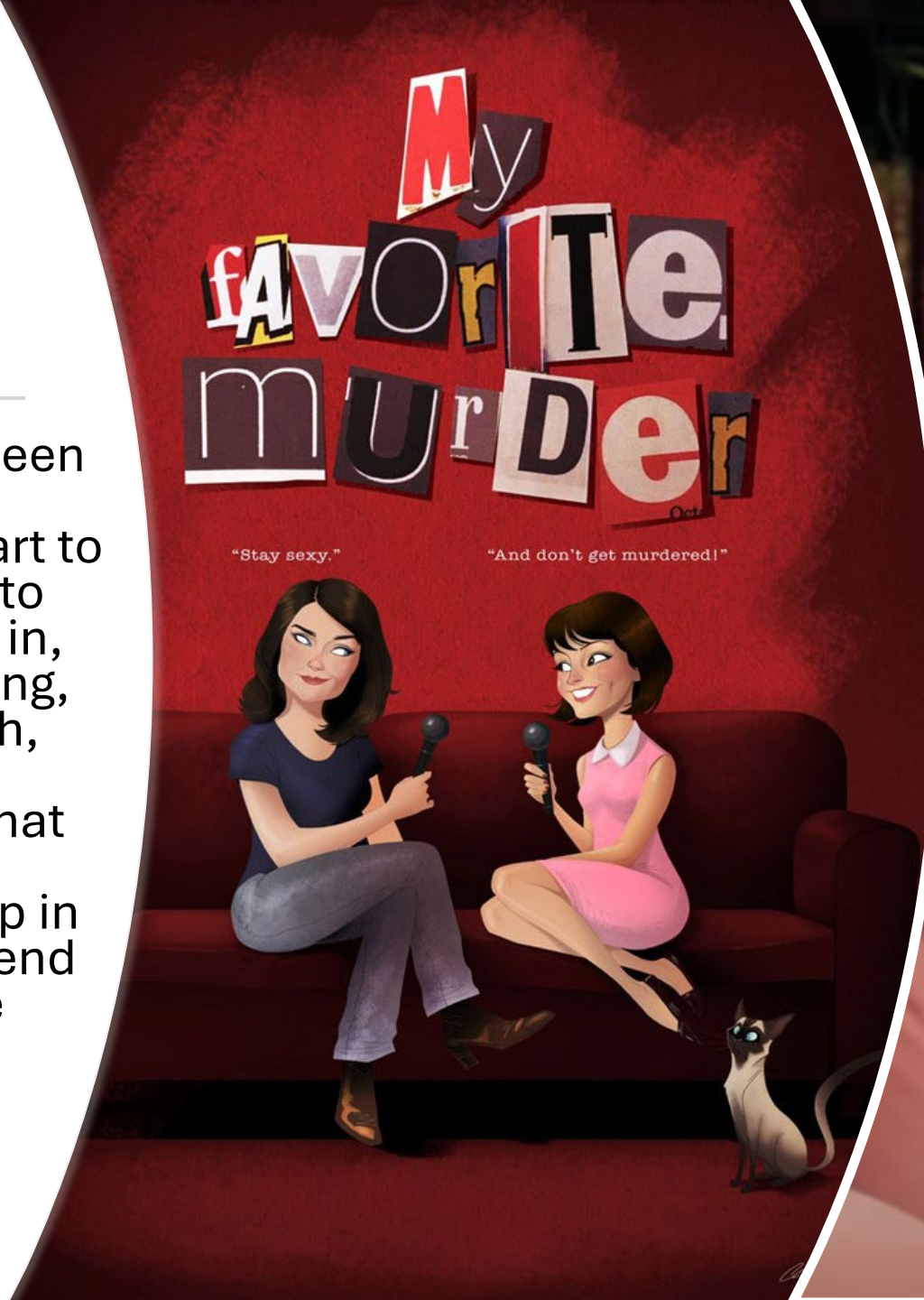
Karathanasopolou, 2024, p.239



# Podcasting as a cultural form

- Podcasts have always been a deeply personal experience, thanks in part to how most people listen to them: with headphones in, while commuting, cooking, or cleaning. Now, though, the most successful podcasts are the ones that cultivate communities. There's clout and kinship in being a Murderino, a Friend of the Pod, or part of the Daddy Gang

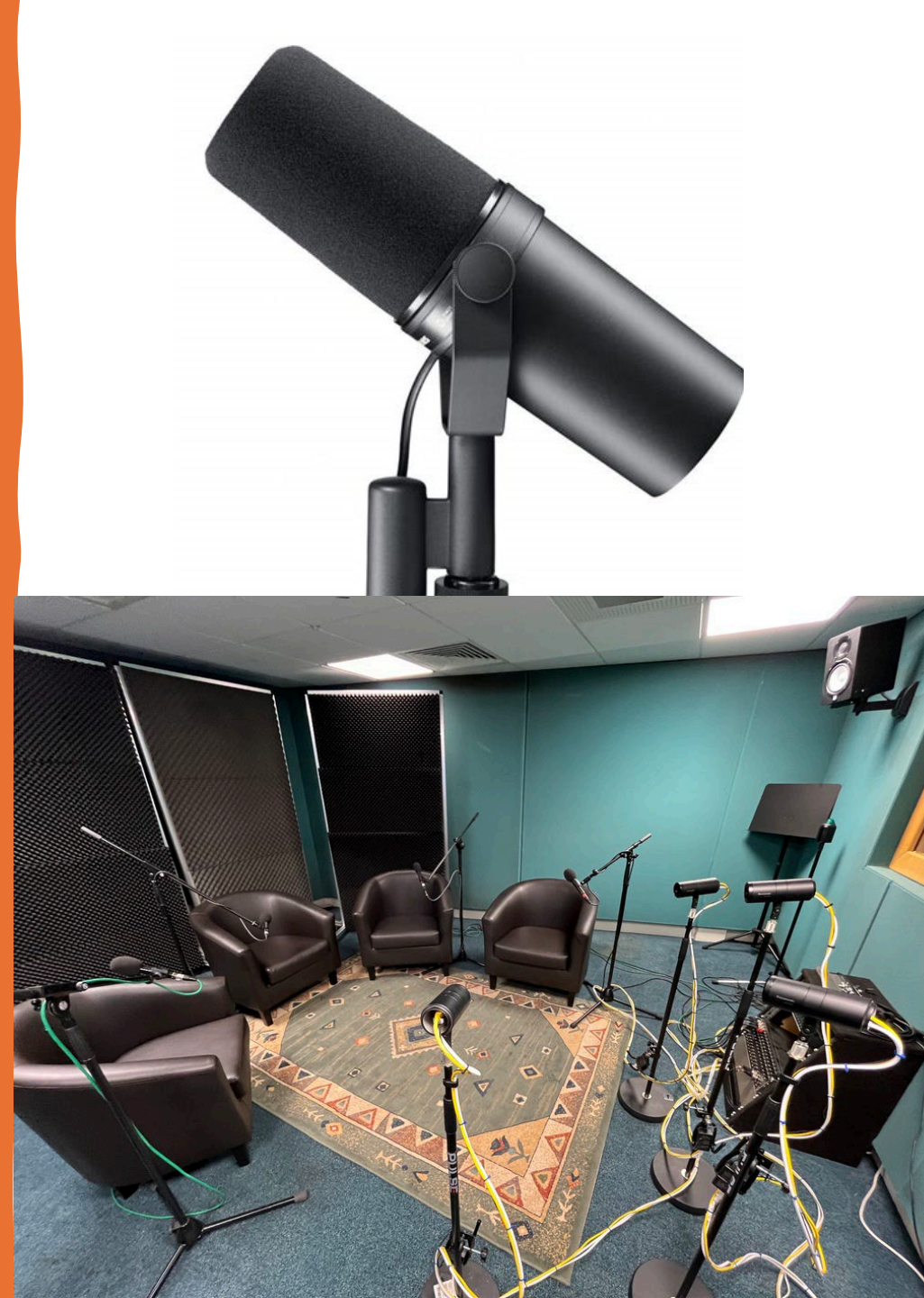
- Eakin, Wired: July 2023



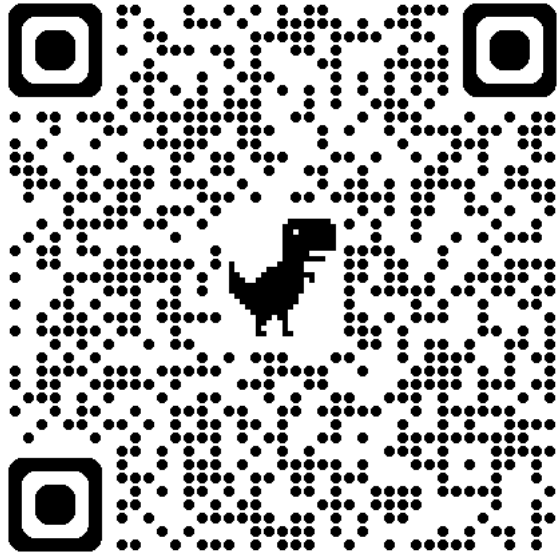
# Questions and problems

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- Does the audience care? Do students think less about silos?
- Whats counts as consumption?
- Is “podcasting” now a space in which different forms of content are competing?
- How can we code work? Do cameras change the content or the delivery? Or access?
- Are microphones visual signifiers to a form of mediated conversation?
- Are we now teaching visual media, or freeform multimodal experience?
- Are we building ‘content studios’ rather than radio studios?







# Scan for citations

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[\*https://richardberry.eu\*](https://richardberry.eu)

[\*https://podcaststudies.org\*](https://podcaststudies.org)



