I. Introduction to podcasts
  A. Function
    1. What to call it
  B. Definition
  C. Genres
II. 2003/4-2014
  A. Cheap/bad production quality
    1. Curry.com and Open Source
  B. Podcast technology (audio blog casts, webcasting)
    1. Apple/iTunes
    2. RSS feeds
    3. iPhone and 3G downloading
  C. 2006-2009
    1. Big podcasts launched
  D. 2012-2014
    1. Apple podcast app
    2. Listening flatlined
III. 2014-2018
  A. "Serial Effect" (and others)
    1. Increase in awareness and listeners
    2. "Serial Effect" as media hype
  B. Funding
    1. Ad revenue and sponsorships
    2. Paywalls
    3. Supplemental sources
    4. Podcast networks
    5. Hybrid models
IV. 2019
  A. Current trends
    1. Growing listenership
    2. Peak podcast?
  B. Spotify and big podcasting
V. Key points

Day 1 Introduction

- First records of podcasts in 2003-2004
  - Concept of "internet radio" dating back to early days of internet in 1990s, but for this lecture starting at 2003/2004 because of RSS feed development and appearance of podcasts that mirror today's formats
- Concept of merging radio, on-demand listening, but without regulations to on-the-go devices (iPods then iPhones/smartphones)
- Going to track three main waves of podcast history and talk about changes in production, funding, and listeners

2003/4-2014

- Podcast Technology
  - Merging of radio and on-demand listening
    - Audio recorded → uploaded to website → available for playback at anytime or download (on to computer or through additional software can be moved to iPod)
    - Audible (recorded book company owned by Amazon) and other, smaller companies first "sold" this type of audio as free content on their websites, imagined possible future where consumers could pay for it
    - Podcast naming, 2004 *Guardian* article (word not in dictionary until 2006)
    - First podcasts were made with cheap microphones, barely edited, often 2+ hours long of people chatting (not very different from some podcasts today), not FCC regulated (obscene content not regulated, but iTunes does label podcasts "Explicit" just like music if they contain explicit content) - play example
    - Compared to current podcast set up that just looks more professional but includes more high tech microphones, takes up less space, fewer devices needed
  - Apple and iTunes
    - 2005 iTunes updated
      - Adds podcasts
      - Allows users to subscribe to podcasts within iTunes on their desktop then move files to iPod (through additional file conversion software)

- ■ This ability (using RSS feeds) removed the need for users to either visit websites or use work arounds to get audio from websites to their iPods
  - ● Adam Curry (media/radio personality) and Dave Winer (software develop and blogger) credited with first podcast to use RSS feeds
  - ● RSS feed launched in 1999
  - ● Developed by Netscape
  - ● Enables publishers to syndicated content automatically
- ■ 3G and iPhone (released June 2007)
  - ● By 2008 the availability of 3G downloading and iPhones made it possible to download straight from iTunes or continuous download by RSS feed on the go using cellular data (removed need for computer to iPod/iPhone transfer
    - ○ Podcasts recorded → uploaded (at the time) to iTunes→ brought to devices through RSS feeds
- ● 2006-2009
  - ○ Big names launched around same time of shift from audio on websites → iTunes/iPod → iPhone
  - ○ Ex: show logos/images
    - ■ Podcasts in 2005 in UK, Australia, Canada - used by those governments to provide weekly addresses
    - ■ 2005, George W. Bush's administration releases his weekly address in podcast form
    - ■ 2005, public radio stations turn to podcasting to "rebroadcast" radio shows, WNYC, WHYY (Phily), KCRW (LA)
    - ■ 2006, *This American Life*
    - ■ 2007, Ricky Gervais sets Guinness World Record for most downloaded podcast per episode (261,670 downloads)
    - ■ 2009, *WTF Podcast* with Marc Maron
  - ○ 2012-2014
    - ■ Show listener stats graphic
    - ■ Discuss percentage of Americans who heard of podcasts, downloaded, but overall listening rates flatlined
    - ■ Apple introduced stand alone podcast app in 2012
- ● End for day, tease introduction of *Serial*

Day 2

2014-2018

- "The *Serial* Effect" - play highlights of series
  - Late 2014, *This American Life* spin-off series *Serial* launches
  - Limited "series" podcast chronicles the murder trial, retrial, and investigation of 1999 murder of Hae Min Lee
  - Credited with "launching" a "podcast fever" across US
    - Reality, many other podcasts became popular throughout 2014-2015
    - Overall podcast listening only rose 3%
    - Much of the hype was from traditional broadcast media because *Serial* spoke to an actual trial/issues w/in criminal justice system
    - 2014, podcast app came standard on all iPhones
    - Show media coverage
  - Since 2014, podcast listening has steadily grown and number of available podcasts increased
    - Other podcasts grew, had big names on (WTF/Obama 2015), other NPR podcasts
    - Show stats/charts
- Funding
  - Ad revenue and sponsorships
    - Returning to original radio funding model, hosts read ad copy during show breaks and offer a code for listeners to use with company
    - Some companies (LinkedIn) have their own podcasts which serve as a commercial for their products
    - Product placement
      - Big in food podcasts Ex. Sporkful integrating stories with a product
    - Entire episode sponsorships
      - Seattle tourism board example of sponsoring Sporkful
    - Not FCC regulated, get to ignore native ad regulations
  - Paywalls (Patreon)
    - And other services (Kickstarter) are paywalls that podcasters put their shows behind
    - Monthly subscription beginning at $1, most $5/month
    - Can offer additional merchandise or other incentives with higher subscriptions (reading name of Patreons ex)

- ○ Supplemental sources
  - ■ Live recordings, tours across regional area or US
  - ■ Merchandise
  - ■ Visual podcast (posting film of podcast on YouTube for additional ad revenue)
- ○ Podcast Networks
  - ■ Company owns/financially supports/provided recording space for multiple podcasts
  - ■ Offers advertisers the opportunity to advertise with multiple podcasts (more audience members) rather than single podcast
  - ■ Some networks allow podcasts to be open to everyone but additional content, back episodes, or episodes w/o commercials behind paywalls
  - ■ Positives with networks
    - ● Better show quality
    - ● Financial backing for creators
    - ● Increased marketing and potential for ad revenue
  - ■ Concerns with networks
    - ● Economic gap created for listeners
    - ● Fragmenting audience with network exclusive listening apps
    - ● Consumers upset with paywall-only networks (Luminary)
  - ■ Show company logos
    - ● Audible
    - ● Howl
    - ● Stitcher and Stitcher Premium
    - ● Gimlet Media
    - ● Headgum
    - ● Earwolf
    - ● Feral Audio
    - ● PRX
    - ● Luminary
- ○ Hybrid methods
  - ■ Many podcasts pull from multiple funding methods
  - ■ Ex. podcast that is on a network, offers free new episodes, additional content behind network paywall and old episodes only on network app
- ○ Advertising growth and statistics

2019 and future

- ● Current trends 2004-today

- ○ Listener numbers
- ○ Number of podcasts available
- ○ Average lifespan of a podcast
- ○ Current genre breakdown and growth
- ○ News outlets launching podcasts
  - ■ NPR *Up First*
  - ■ NYT *The Daily*
  - ■ Wall Street Journal
  - ■ Financial Times
- ○ Other industries helping podcast growth - show graphic
- Spotify
  - ○ 2018 paid $340M for network/studio Gimlet
  - ○ 2019 paid $100M for Parcast, true crime studio
  - ○ Announced additional $400-$500M spent in 2019 on podcast acquisitions
- Peak podcast?
  - ○ Oversaturation - more podcasts than listeners
  - ○ "Everyone has a podcast"
  - ○ Celebrity podcasts
  - ○ Ex. Too many bachelor podcasts?

Takeaways

- Importance of iTunes and RSS feed in podcast early development
- "Serial Effect"
- Funding models (ad revenue, Patreon/paywalls, other sources, podcast networks)
- Peak podcast/oversaturation

Discussion Questions

1. How do podcasts reflect the relationship between technology developments, cultural events, and the popularity of a medium?
2. Compare and contrast podcasting technology and funding models to other media technologies we've discussed. What are the similarities and differences?
3. How do you think the shifts in funding models will affect podcast development and listenership?