Companionship, Information and Vibes: How podcast listeners engage with podcasts in their daily lives

Caroline Gomez
Human Centered Design & Engineering
The University of Washington
Seattle, WA, USA
carcham@uw.edu

Xuny Haley
Human Centered Design & Engineering
The University of Washington
Seattle, WA, USA
xunyh@uw.edu

Nisha Jain
Human Centered Design & Engineering
The University of Washington
Seattle, WA, USA
njain4@uw.edu

Hailee Kenney
Human Centered Design & Engineering
The University of Washington
Seattle, WA, USA
hkenney@uw.edu

Haasini Sai P
Human Centered Design & Engineering
The University of Washington
Seattle, WA, USA
haasini@uw.edu

ABSTRACT

Podcasts are on-demand audio files that users can subscribe to via podcast apps or listen to on their computer. The content range of podcasts is far reaching and includes news broadcasts about current events, suspenseful true crime stories, exclusive celebrity interviews, and more. Podcasts are portable and easily accessible, so listeners are able to nimbly consume content. However, despite a growing number of yearly podcast listeners, creators struggle to reach a significant audience. There is an opportunity to understand how podcast listeners' routines affect their listening habits in order to inform content creators how they might design content that meet these needs. Our study sought to examine how podcasts serve listeners' needs, how listeners fit podcasts into their schedules, and what factors prevent listeners from tuning in. After running a seven day diary study with five different avid podcast listeners, we found that participants turn to podcasts while completing other tasks throughout their day. Podcasts as entertainment seem to be uniquely suited to accompany other tasks. Listeners turned to podcasts to meet a variety of personal needs and goals, and listeners selected episodes not just for the content, but for the emotional feelings they provide. Finally, podcast listenership is at the mercy of listeners' daily routines as listeners turn to podcasts based on the flow of their day.

KEYWORDS

podcasts, diary study, daily routine, listening habits

1 INTRODUCTION

Podcasts are digital audio files that users can download or stream via the internet. Beyond those confines, there are few limitations regarding podcast content, length, or what format podcasts take. Podcasts are a relatively new form of media and first gained wide listenership following the first season of Serial in 2014 [3]. Dominant forms of podcasts offer a way to stay up on current events, listen to suspenseful true crime stories, hear celebrity interviews, and more. Due to the portable nature of podcasts and their ability to be consumed through smartphones, listeners can nimbly consume podcast content as the medium is easily incorporated into users' daily lives. According to Edison Research, the most popular podcasts as of November 2021 were *The Joe Rogan Experience*, *The Daily*, *Crime Junkie* and *This American Life* [9].

Podcast listenership has exploded in recent years, even as other forms of audio consumption, such as broadcast radio, have declined [7]. In 2021, 80 million Americans were weekly podcast listeners, which increased by 17% from the year before [8]. Meanwhile, the number of podcasts has also risen dramatically. The popular audio streaming behemoth Spotify currently hosts nearly four million podcasts, up from around 500,000 in 2019 [10]. Despite a growing and eager podcast audience and a plentiful supply of podcasts, podcast creators frequently struggle to create podcasts that reach a significant audience [6].

We believe if podcast creators had a deeper understanding of podcast listeners' routines and how podcasts currently fit within them, we could discover opportunities for podcast creators to design podcasts to better suit podcast listeners' needs.

In this study, we sought to examine the following questions: How do podcasts serve podcast listeners' needs and why? How can podcast creators design podcasts to better suit their listeners rather than making editorial decisions based on assumptions? How do podcasts fit within users' schedules? What limitations exist that prevent podcast listeners from consuming podcast content they enjoy?

In order to explore these questions, we performed a diary study. We wanted to see how podcasts fit (or in some cases did not fit) into people's everyday lives and routines. Additionally, we wanted to understand participants' listening habits and the specifics of when they listen to podcasts and why. While some of this information could be collected through other methods, such as surveys and interviews, we sought to avoid recall bias and maximize the potential for granularity and specific examples. When running a diary study, researchers are able to collect information in a natural manner and better understand people's day-to-day experiences. Furthemore, a diary study allowed us to collect data and examine trends over a

longer period of time. Our team wanted to collect several days of information to identify patterns in participants' listening habits. As people's routines can change from day-to-day or be disrupted, we want to know how these everyday changes affect listening. We were not looking for extremely detailed information about interaction with a specific technology like that collected from an ethnographic study. We wanted fresh, brief reflections that captured the essence of participants' listening patterns.

2 BACKGROUND

Podcasts have been around for more than a decade, and they cover topics ranging from news to self-help to life experiences. According to a telephone study, most podcast listeners listen at home (51%), while commuting (25%), and at work (14%) [4]. Analyzing podcast listenership over seven years shows dramatic increases among young and multicultural listeners [2]. According to the same study, 26% of audio time spent by 13-34 year-olds is spent listening to spoken-word audio, up 116% since 2014 [2]. However, most listeners cite the ability to multitask as one of the main reasons for tuning in to spoken-word audio; young and multicultural audiences are more likely to cite other reasons, such as connection, education, new perspectives, and self-improvement. Due to lockdowns and the loss of daily commutes, listening patterns were considerably altered during the Coronavirus crisis[1]. Podcasts have rebounded from an initial dip, with daily news podcasts faring better than most other genres. While there has been substantial research on podcasts, no studies explore the detailed listening practices of frequent podcast users, users' listeners' needs, suggestions for podcast creators, and fitting podcasts into users' schedules. In this study we try to address these points, we reveal the ways in which podcast and podcast creators and users can be supported.

3 METHODS

3.1 Research Sample

This exploratory study was designed to gather broad and rich information about a diverse range of podcast listeners and observe their behaviors, preferences and their goals. In choosing our participants, we took into these factors into account to get an appropriate range:

- **Listening habits** - We selected people based on their podcast listening habits - currently regular listeners or interested in getting into (or back into) podcasts.
- **Commitment** - We selected people who were willing to commit to listening to a podcast at a minimum once a week over the course of the study.
- **Communication** - We needed participants who spoke English for the sake of communication throughout the study. However, participants could listen to podcasts in any language.
- **Technology** - We selected participants who did not have any technical challenges as they listened to podcasts. Although there are a diverse number of technologies for podcast listening (platforms, devices, etc), we did not wish to explore the specifics of all these technologies.
- **Age** - We selected participants at least 18 years old from Generation Z and Millennial Generation. This means individuals born roughly between 1981 - 2004.

- **Diversity** - We also focused on diversifying gender and racial diversity among our participants

To keep uniformity in entry submission times, we picked participants who are currently residing in the United States.

3.2 Recruitment Procedures

Given the condensed nature of the class and our study, our team utilized social media and our own personal networks to recruit participants for our study. We developed a screener survey, and interested participants were screened on the basis of the factors mentioned earlier.

We recruited **five avid podcast listeners** from a larger pool of surveyees. We chose participants that listened to podcasts more than three times per week. We also recruited participants who listened to podcasts several times a week or were willing to listen to podcasts for the duration of the study. This number of participants gave us enough data to draw meaningful conclusions, without creating an overwhelming amount of data for our limited time frame. These participants were referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5.

3.3 Methodology & Data Collection

3.3.1 Pre-Study Interview. All participants provided written informed consent. We conducted a 30-minutes pre-study interview with the selected five participants and explained the setup of the diary study to them.

3.3.2 Diary Study (seven days; two parts).

- **Google Form** - The study occurred over a period of seven days where participants were asked to fill out a structured google form in order to expand on the description of each podcast they listened to. If a participant did not listen to a podcast that particular day, they were asked to fill out a separate section of the form at the end of the day describing the reasons that inhibited them from listening to any podcasts that particular day. Participants were asked neutral questions about their feelings, the value podcasts provided them on that day, as well as distraction and focus levels while listening to podcasts.
- **Voice Memos** Each participant was asked to log their daily podcast listening routine and other activities surrounding their listening habits via voice memos. The voice memos were audio files of an unspecified length recorded on their smartphones and then emailed to their study proctor. We asked for a minimum of three memos over the course of the study, but did not specify which days participants had to submit the memos. Participants were instructed to respond to the following prompt: "While you were listening to your podcast tell us about the range of emotions you felt. This could be related to the episode, or it could be feelings toward something that occurred at the same time while you were listening to the episode." We asked participants to record the voice memos as a supplementary piece in addition to the google form.

3.3.3 Post-Study Interviews. After the completion of the diary study, we selected two participants for brief 20 minute post-study

Table 1: The most commonly occurring codes.

Code	Number of Occurences
Content Related Codes	**111**
#Content_type: lorem ipsum	26
#Emotions: lorem ipsum	25
#Liking_for_content	23
#Liking_for_host	21
#Relatability_with_content	10
#Liking_for_guest	10
Routine Related Codes	**102**
#Listening_while_eating	10
#Liking_for_guest	17
#Listening_with_household_task	15
#Listened_to_more_than_one_episode	13
#Listening_while_walking	11
#Regular_listener	9
#Distracted_listener	5
Motivation/Value Related Codes	**50**
#Personal_enrichment	14
#Enjoyed_for: lorem ipsum	11
#Motivation: lorem ipsum	11
#Comfort_listening	5
#Recommended_by_a_friend	3

interviews to get more information about some of the responses they provided on the survey or voice memos during the diary study.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Coding. Data collected through diary study forms was placed into google sheets for easy analysis. Data collected from voice memos were transcribed and coded in Airtable. The entire team reviewed the data from both forms and discussed the potential codes in data. Because of the condensed course structure, we followed the priori coding method to accelerate the initial coding procedure. We came up with codes "Liking_for_host," "Relatability_with_content," and "Listened_in_freetime_at_work" etc. Using these basic codes generated, each member in the team took the responsibility of coding two of the participants' data. Two team members coded each participant, which helped us get different perspectives and ensure we were not missing any codes.

3.4.2 Quantitative Coding. The team created a frequency sheet for each code after assigning codes for all the collected data. The most commonly occurring codes can be seen in Table 1. The team also did quantitative coding from the Likert scale shared with participants by calculating the averages of "Minutes per day of podcast listening," "Number of podcasts per day," "Average Focus Level," and "Average distraction Level." These metrics can be seen in Table 2. This frequency and quantitative coding, along with quotes from the data, helped us create emergent themes.

3.4.3 Affinity Mapping. Once codes were assigned to participants' data, we combined some of the codes and pulled quotes from the data to form themes. The team revisited the research question and ensured that the data and themes we identified were directly relevant to these questions. From this, we performed qualitative coding and located quotes from the users that supported our themes.

4 FINDINGS

Throughout our research, we identified several patterns around the listenership of participants:

- 4 out of 5 participants listened to podcasts with Spotify. One participant used Pocket Casts.
- 4 out of 5 participants exclusively used their phone to listen to podcasts. One participant used their computer in addition to their phone.
- The highest average amount of listening time over seven days was 169.2 minutes per day, while the lowest was 27.5 minutes per day.
- Every participant performed some other task for the vast majority of the time they spent listening to podcasts.
- All participants noted that the host(s) of the podcast affected their enjoyment - both positively and negatively.
- Most participants committed to a few series, and listened to episodes based on whichever ones from those series ended up in their queue as curated by their platform.
- All participants had multiple distinct motivations for listening to particular podcast episodes throughout the course of the study.
- All participants derived some sort of value from listening to podcasts.

For the most part, participants gained value from their podcast listening over the course of the diary study. We have broken down the different ways podcasts enhanced participants' days into six categories. However, we did observe that podcasts did not always provide the intended value, generally due to a mismatch between content and participant expectations.

4.1 Podcasts as an enriching experience

A majority of participants sought out podcast content that they connected with on a personal level and served as an avenue for personal reflection. This kind of content caused participants to reflect on their own lives, the lives of others, and other nebulous topics that often led to a deeper understanding or new perspective. We have broken down this type of personal enrichment further into three categories.

4.1.1 Personal Relatability. Participants recounted listening to podcasts that contained stories or discussions that reminded them of or informed their own life and experiences. Participants seemed to enjoy this sense of connection and relatability, and in some cases cited it as their favorite part of a particular episode. Participants also listened to podcasts that helped them connect with an aspect of their personal identity, whether this was the city they live in, their country of origin, or the LGTBTQ+ community.

- *"I think maybe I felt slightly less alone because they were talking about universal issues with women with negotiations and salary, and I just thought, okay, oh, yeah, that's me. That's me, too. Like, okay, well, at least I'm not alone and didn't feel like there was something wrong with me."* P4 (voice memo)

Table 2: Listening metrics per participant.

Metric	Avg. for all	P1 Avg.	P2 Avg.	P3 Avg.	P4 Avg.	P5 Avg.
# of episodes per day	2.26	1.4	1.1	1.7	4.4	2.7
Avg. # minutes per day	87.95	38.6	47.1	55.8	197.5	100.7
Avg. Focus Level	3.92	3.6	3.4	4.5	3.8	4.2
Avg. Distraction Level	2.20	2.8	2.6	1.5	2.2	2.0
Avg. Enjoyment Level	4.03	2.8	4	4.5	4.5	4.4
Avg. Value	3.89	3.6	3.4	4.5	4.7	3.2

- *"It was just like it was super sensitive. And I could recount incidents from my past where I mean, I could apologize and it was basically just like... invited a lot of introspection on my part."* P3 (voice memo)
- *"The content is technically pulled from discussions about Harry Potter, but they are talking about really relatable topics that make me think more deeply about my own life."* P2 (daily diary form)
- *"Now that I'm kind of settling more in to being an out queer person… I just wanted more multidimensional queer media so I can see myself and explore what I'm interested in… and what can I relate to personally. Finding stories that I can relate to on a personal level [is important]"* P5 (interview)

4.1.2 Empathy. Podcasts are often a means for sharing stories both real and fictional. Listening to these sometimes allowed participants to reflect on and empathize with the stories that were being told, even if they didn't align with the listener's own experiences.

- *"And they discussed really good topics.... I mean, I could not personally imagine how hard it must have been for these mothers...So yeah, it was quite a quite a roller coaster, I guess, listening to that podcast."* P3 (voice memo)
- *"...it honestly made me a little emotional listening. The narrative had pulled me as a listener into this kind of existential despair along with the main characters between the last episode and the beginning of this one only to flip the coin and talk about the concept of humanity's desire to do good and be good."* P5 (daily diary form)

4.1.3 Personal Growth & Enrichment. While podcasts can be an avenue to learn new facts and skills, they can also serve as an opportunity to learn about life and oneself. Throughout the study we found several instances of participants experiencing a sense of growth in their views on life or their own awareness of the world and others. While difficult to categorize, these instances seemed personal and uniquely meaningful beyond the sense of just learning something new.

- *"The content, guest, the insightful questions that the host asked, the guest's responses were surprising at times in an eye-opening way… I struggle with boundaries myself, so I wanted to learn healthy ways to incorporate them into my own life."* P4 (daily diary form)
- *"And so I think I feel challenged listening to that show, like it's trying to change the way I think. And I like that."* P2 (daily diary form)

- *"...it was very difficult to listen to the podcast without getting teary eyed….it invited a lot of introspection on my part."* P3 (voice memo)
- *"I felt like these issues were really topical… that is something that helped me as a person, just processing [what's going on in the world right now]."* P5 (interview)

4.2 Podcasts as a tool for learning

Throughout the study we observed several instances of participants using podcasts as a tool for learning. This ranged from gaining new skills to gaining new knowledge on a topic that they found personally interesting. In addition to simply satisfying their curiosity on a particular topic, participants were motivated to apply skills and knowledge obtained from podcasts in their career and relationships.

- *"In terms of what I was feeling while listening to the podcast, it was primarily just a feeling of curiosity. I mean, that's why I started listening to this podcast. So I get to know a lot of interesting facts and new things about what's happening in India."* P1 (voice memo)
- *"[My favorite thing about the episode was that I] learned important skills about negotiating in real-world scenarios"* P4 (daily diary form)
- *"And I deliberately picked it because I like listening to podcasts that navigate the dialogue about race and discrimination and just discuss things that are really intricate and I particularly do not know a lot about these things and I want to learn… I felt like I learned a lot of things that I had no idea [about] before."* P3 (voice memo)
- *"And it's also very satisfying because they do such a good job of telling a story… you know that you're going to be taught something interesting by the end"* P2 (voice memo)

4.3 Podcasts as a means of comfort

While participants found podcasts intellectually stimulating, they also turned to them as a source for joy, comfort, and relaxation throughout their day. Over the course of the study participants sought out podcasts that felt familiar or reassuring, often as a break from a stressful or hectic day.

- *"It was comforting - I like this episode of The Office and it was nice to hear it discussed for an hour… I was feeling overwhelmed with work and wanted some 'fluff'."* P2 (daily diary form)

- *"I found it very soothing to kind of like [to] listen to the dialogues and try to absorb the ideas, especially while I was working on my piece."* P5 (voice memo)

4.4 Podcasts as companionship

Participants also enjoyed podcasts simply for the background noise and companionship they provide. Several participants cited enjoying the "company" of podcasts, and the sense that hearing people talking helped them feel less lonely or gave the sense that someone was in the room with them.

- *"It probably just gives me the sense that I'm not alone. They're playing in the background. There are other things happening, this is the start of the day and someone's talking. And it just kind of makes me feel good I guess."*- P3 (interview)
- *"If I am alone, it is nice to not have anything in your ears. I like the company of it, the background noise of it as well. That's why I keep it in my back pocket [rather than listening with AirPods]"* P2 (interview)

4.5 Podcasts as an aid for multitasking

A relatively unique fact about podcasts is that they can be consumed while performing another task, and in general we found that this was overwhelmingly the way that all participants listened to podcasts throughout the study. There were very few instances where a participant would simply sit idly and listen to the episode. Interestingly, we found that participants often chose to listen to a podcast while doing another task not simply because it was possible but also because it helped them do that task or made it more engaging.

All participants listened to podcasts while doing some sort of monotonous task such as cooking, cleaning, driving, shopping, getting ready in the morning, or performing tasks at work. As P2 noted in their survey, *"I was multitasking (driving, cooking, eating) but always doing something that didn't require me to read/write/process words other than the podcast."* The majority of participants listened to podcasts on their phone, which allowed them to bring the episode with them if their task required being on the go.

Podcasts were also assistive, making it easier for participants to perform tasks that were an essential part of their day. Multiple participants cited using podcasts to help them fall asleep at night. P5, who is an artist, primarily uses podcasts as a tool to help them focus on their artwork, using them to stay engaged with the task at hand and avoid other distractions: *"When I'm working on artwork sometimes I can get bored or distracted with other things… like if I start scrolling through Twitter or something like that. I use the podcast as a way to give me that additional stimulation. Whereas with another form of media [like a TV show] I would get distracted and stop working on the artwork."* P5 (interview)

4.6 Podcasts as a source for news

Another theme that was common across participants was using podcasts as a way to stay up on news and current events. Many participants had a particular daily news podcast that they started their day with, but staying up on current events took many forms, including one participant who specifically sought out information from their country of origin. Podcasts were valued as a source of news both because of the fact that they could be paired with morning routines and because of the way the content was delivered.

- *"My default typically is to listen to* The Daily *each weekday morning to catch up on relevant news/current events."* P4 (daily diary form)
- *"The podcast was in a conversational form. And the hosts made jokes quite often to explain some heavy financial news, making it simple to understand."* P1 (daily diary form)

4.7 Podcasts fail to add value when content does not meet listener expectations

While participants often derived value from podcasts, it was also common for them to be disappointed in a particular episode. This was especially common when it was an episode of a new podcast or an episode they hand-selected as opposed to one they listened to because it was next in their queue for a series they were already committed to. When participants selected a podcast that didn't contain the content they expected or didn't fill a particular need, they were left feeling let down by their listening experience.

- *"[I didn't like that] the podcast host narrated too many stories without actually ever focusing on the tips to prevent procrastination. The podcasts seemed very preachy and did not inspire any action. Also, from the podcast title, I expected it to be more concise and to the point."* P1 (daily diary form)
- *"Didn't like the host: not sure they really knew what they were talking about; also didn't like the length of the episode. It was only about nine minutes long so it didn't get that in-depth with the guest."* P4 (daily diary form)
- *"[My least favorite thing was] probably the slower pace of this episode, it did make it a little harder to focus."* P5 (daily diary form)

5 INSIGHTS

Our team developed five main insights from this study's research.

5.1 Podcasts are uniquely suited to accompany other tasks

They are highly portable, flexible in length and well-suited to multitasking and/or productivity. Participants were able to listen to podcasts while doing a wide range of activities including driving, cooking dinner and creating art. Because podcasts do not require a visual element and often do not require intense focus, they enable participants to engage with them over other forms of media while partaking in certain activities. For example, P1 mentioned that they chose to listen to a podcast over watching a tv show while eating lunch because they were *"busy and I did not want to watch something while eating as that makes me take a longer time to finish lunch."* However, P5 found that podcasts enabled their focus. They binged a narrative podcast while working on their art projects because *"listening to the podcast helps me to focus more when I'm working on art."* On a scale from 1-5, with 1 being completely unfocused and 5 being completely focused, participants had an average level of 3.9 focus throughout the study, which speaks to the tendency to multitask.

5.2 Podcast listeners engage with podcasts between major activities

Most participants listened to podcasts before or after the main activities of their day took place. For example, P3 listened to podcasts in the morning in bed before getting up and starting their day. P2 listened to podcasts in the car on the way to school, and P1 listened to podcasts in the shower. In an interview, P3 said they listen during *"those interstitial times between one work meeting and another."*

5.3 Podcast listenership is at the mercy of listeners' daily schedules

Participants listened to podcasts within the confines of their daily schedules. If participants became too busy, they did not listen to podcasts, as was the case with P1, P3 and P5. Because daily schedules are prone to change, interruption and inconsistency, participants were frequently not able to accurately predict their listening behavior for the next day. Listeners' predictions on their next day podcast routine ranged from 20% - 60% accurate. Participants also could not always predict what might happen that might derail their plans. P5, for example, was constantly interrupted on a day when they were trying to work on their art and listen to a podcast: *"My family kept interrupting me by trying to hold a conversation while I was listening/working so there was a bit of interruption. Pausing a lot made it hard for me to focus and understand entirely what was happening."*

5.4 Podcasts facilitate vibes

Podcasts are a tool that people utilize to enhance a desired mood or emotion. This "enhancement" is personal and varies from individual to individual, but each individual categorized podcasts to derive specific feelings or evoke an environment conducive to their desired activity. For example, P1 and P3 used podcasts not to listen to the storytelling, but to help them fall asleep. P2 listened to "Office Ladies" as a "comfort listen" because it's *"literally the least new information I could possibly ask for — it's very relaxing for me to listen to because it's pleasant and unsurprising and reminds me of a show I enjoy."*

5.5 Podcasts fulfill multiple needs for listeners

Each participant had various motivations to regularly listen to podcasts. Some of those motivations were content-specific, and others were emotion-specific. These needs were highly personal to the specific listener. For example, P1 listened to podcasts to stay up on current events in their home country, fall asleep and figure out ways to be better about procrastination. P4 listened to stay informed, because a friend recommended an episode to them and to learn about brand identity for their freelance business. There are opportunities for podcast creators to not just consider the target audience when creating podcasts, but to have a deeper understanding of the various goals podcast listeners have and how their podcast could help fulfill those goals.

6 CONCLUSION

Our team sought to explore how podcasts intertwine with the daily lives of listeners in order to discover how podcast creators might optimize their content to meet the needs of their listeners. Our research indicates that in order to reach the most listeners, podcast creators should host their content on Spotify as well as other platforms for listenership, as the majority of our participants used Spotify as their preferred platform. However, it is worth noting that after the study, P5 mentioned that they had moved away from Spotify to Apple Podcasts due to the controversy with The Joe Rogan Experience [5], so this determination is volatile.

Our results also demonstrate that listeners turn to podcasts to accompany them with other tasks and when they have gaps in their scheduled activities. Because listeners are frequently multitasking, they are not wholly focused on the episodes; as stated in the previous section, on a scale of 1 - 5, with one as not focused and 5 as very focused, our participants reported an average focus level of 3.9. This indicates that listeners do not expect podcasts to be a singular source of entertainment. From a content perspective, this suggests that complex topics requiring one's full concentration would not always mesh with listeners' desires. Episodes should be kept lighter to be absorbed with partial attention. Additionally, episodes should be developed with the consideration that listeners' will tune in when their day has unscheduled time. Unfortunately, our study did not collect specific episode length as a data point, and another study is needed to determine if podcast creators should make longer or shorter podcasts while anticipating that listeners will be somewhat distracted.

Most illuminatingly, the diary study revealed that listeners' content selection is not random. Whether listeners are aware or not, they are actively choosing podcasts that will augment a desired feeling or sensation in line with their goals. In some cases, people wanted to relax, and in others, people wanted to satisfy curiosity about a certain topic. Therefore, podcast creators should develop content that meets a specific, tangible need for a listener. It is not enough to have great production quality or a charismatic host - content must meet listeners at their base goals. While we were able to develop valuable insights, the study was affected by time constraints and the design implications have limitations. First - our study focused on five different "avid" podcast listeners and their preferences. Since our results are specific to veteran listeners, we cannot make design suggestions for podcast listeners who are new to the medium. Future research should focus on determining if our insights are applicable to new and infrequent podcast listeners. Secondly, our study did not have enough granularity or data to determine which types of podcasts are preferred for certain tasks or chores. For example - we identified that our participants enjoyed listening to podcasts while multitasking, however we were unable to make a determination about which genre of podcasts are typically utilized when multitasking. A separate study that focuses on multitasking and podcasts should be completed to provide pinpointed design recommendations. Finally, our study was held over seven days, which is a relatively short period of time. If the study was held over two or three weeks, our team would have data that compares podcast listening and the variance of weekly schedules as opposed to daily schedules. We would also likely have more information about what occurred in participants' lives to prevent them from listening to a podcast, and make better recommendations around factors that turn people away from listenership.

This study serves as a first-look at defining design requirements for podcast creators to appeal to podcast listeners. Additional studies stand to benefit from slight adjustments to our study methodology. Most significantly, audiobooks are delivered in a similar manner to podcasts, and one participant mentioned that they use audiobooks and podcasts for the same entertainment purposes. We recommend that additional research make room for audiobooks concurrently with any podcasts queries to fully explore user motivation behind engaging with digital audio files. Lastly, a major benefit of diary studies as a method is to avoid recall bias. Our team intended to conduct post-study interviews to follow up with participants about the diary study submissions, however, several days passed between participant listenership and the post-study interviews. To minimize recall bias and ensure quality data, the study proctors need to review the data as it comes in and follow up with the participants in real time to ask clarifying questions.

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