

The 2016 podcast push in South Africa

By [Warren Harding](#)

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Podcasts are not new and there has been much talk about them over the last 10 years. The turning point for podcasts came in 2006, when iTunes added podcasts to its menu, which led to the influx of new podcasts and millions of new listeners.



Podcasts have been a major source of entertainment, education, insights and inspiration across a range of topics.

Looking at podcasts, on a global level, [Serial](#) broke all kinds of iTunes records with the podcast being the fastest to reach five million streamed and downloaded episodes and took less than three months to hit the 40 million downloads mark. Locally, Gareth Cliff and [Cliff Central](#) really upped the streaming and podcast game with monthly podcast downloads of over 500,000 across the various Cliff Central shows.

Overall podcast listening stats in South Africa are almost non-existent, although I can confirm there will be some official podcast and audio streaming measurement from 2016. In the US, an estimated 46 million Americans over the age of 12 now listen to podcasts on a monthly basis. That's 17% of the 12+ US population, showing consistent annual growth.

So what do we know about podcast listeners?

- **They're young & tech savvy:** Podcast listeners tend to favour the internet over any other form of media, meaning it's the perfect fit to leverage other digital marketing.
- **They're affluent & educated:** Weekly podcast listeners tend to be more educated and have higher incomes. In other words, podcast listeners have money to spend on the products and services you are offering.
- **They're social media users:** Podcast listeners are more likely to check social media sites multiple times a day, a

perfect audience for social media marketing efforts. Overall, podcast listeners are serious about podcast listening and they are looking for exceptional content to consume.

Podcasts will only get bigger in 2016 and beyond

- 1. Accessibility:** We have conquered desktop listening. We have conquered smartphones. (In 2014, 2.6 billion or 63% of all podcasts were requested from mobile devices). We are now in the final steps in simplifying the podcast experience with built-in car players. Apple and Google are busy signing deals with car manufacturers to get their systems, [Apple CarPlay](#) and [Android Auto](#), integrated into new models rolling out of plants. It's a game-changing move that will make podcasts that much more accessible.
- 2. Low barriers to entry for new content producers:** Just like blogging platforms and YouTube have allowed millions of people to become content publishers, podcasting has similarly low barriers to entry. All you need is an idea, laptop, microphone and audio editing software and you can record and publish a podcast that can be distributed to listeners across the globe. Podcasts are also free for listeners.
- 3. On demand:** We have seen it with Netflix and now ShowMax, we want to watch TV shows, when we want to watch them and also watch eight episodes in a row. Podcasts allow you to listen to whatever you want, in whatever sequence you want, and whenever you want. Podcasts are mobile and can go wherever you go.
- 4. Multi-tasking:** The beauty of podcasts is that you can consume content while you go about living your life. You can listen while you drive to work, jog, wash dishes, gym or perform a multitude of tasks that you can't do while reading a blog post or watching a video.
- 5. Opportunity:** With cheaper data, more access to Wi-Fi and once podcasts are easily accessible in cars, podcast competition will become more intense. The top 100 iTunes podcast real estate will all be big corporates throwing marketing money to make sure their podcast is heard. Getting your podcast in this top 100 list will be almost impossible. In the next few years, everyone will have a podcast, so start yours today; start building your audience now, start creating content immediately.

ABOUT WARREN HARDING

Warren Harding is a public speaker, event Emcee and the presenter of BizTakeouts, the marketing and media show on 2oceansvibe radio. Each week Harding chats to the industry leaders and newsmakers from the African and South African marketing, media, digital and advertising industries. He is also the Business Development Director at John Brown South African, a branch of the world leading content marketing agency, John Brown Media.

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