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PRACTICE ARTICLE

Podcasting as Open Access: A Review and Discussion of Potential Impact on Scholarly Communication and Promotion

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Academic podcasts are an informal way for faculty members to share their research expertise with an expanded and international audience. In this article, we argue that podcasts are a form of informal scholarly communication and that libraries can contribute to the successful dissemination of this informal scholarly communication.

Description of Service: At the University of South Florida, episodes of faculty-created academic podcasts are posted to the institutional repository, allowing the dissemination of these podcasts permanently via open access. The open-access nature of these materials makes them freely available to faculty, students, and other scholars; additionally, it helps to improve metrics capturing while demonstrating international impact. In comparing the measures afforded to record statistics, as well as other geographic and various platforms used, the authors leaned on internal resources and concepts from the literature to examine existing measures and reporting related to podcasting efforts.

Next Steps: Through the study of both existing services at the University of South Florida and other universities, as well as the literature, what remains is to increasingly document and standardize methods of measuring the impact of academic podcasts and related types of open-access content.

Keywords: academic podcasting, open access, impact, altmetrics, scholarly communication, tenure and promotion

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INTRODUCTION

An academic's career advancement is contingent on disseminating knowledge and measuring their research impact. Libraries have worked with researchers to increase the reach of their work by providing ways to store information. As this process has been evolving, faculty in several diverse fields have been looking at mathematical correlations and measurable relationships regarding research impact and visibility. This paper presents a close examination of literature specifically concerned with the ways podcasting is used to measure and disseminate the work of researchers, and how libraries can contribute to this impact work. Throughout this exploration, the authors' review and discussion of the benefits of open access (OA) publishing may have to scholarly communication options more generally. Examples of research findings related to podcasts at the University of South Florida are woven throughout in order to provide real-world insight into the current and potential benefits of podcasting as OA scholarship to scholars and listeners. Overall, this work seeks to highlight the extant literature in the emerging field of academic podcasting, expanding the inquiry to explore new tools and established real-world practices, in service of demonstrating the benefits of library-supported OA publishing on higher education faculty's impact and visibility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic podcasting

Podcasting has been defined as “audio content available on the Internet that can be automatically delivered to your computer or portable media player” (Geoghegan & Klass, 2008, p. 5). Media of this type have benefited from expanded access to the technology and production tools necessary to create both education and entertainment content that is easily and openly available. The advent of notifications (which alert a user when a new episode is available) and multiple dissemination platforms has furthered the ease of marketing these materials. Podcasts differ from formal scholarly communication because they are typically not peer-reviewed in the traditional sense; additionally, they are noted as more digestible for audiences and a potential solution to “time-consuming information foraging activities such as searching, updating and downloading academic content” (Racham & Zhang, 2006, p. 314). Academic podcasts can be seen as a type of grey literature or informal scholarly communication; in some ways, they are comparable to blogs and social media as they similarly allow scholars to share their ideas with a broader audience in a non-peer-reviewed manner. As Cox et al. (2023) explain, academic podcasting allows for informal knowledge sharing more so than traditional outlets. They further assert that academic podcasting has a lower barrier of entry and offers a platform for more diverse hosts and guests—including those who may be younger in their careers and lack notoriety in their fields of study.

By being available immediately upon publication to a streaming or podcasting service, academic podcasts are put into the community at a far faster rate than the longer publication cycle that accompanies more traditional peer-reviewed works. This shortened publication schedule is beneficial for scholars discussing breaking news or bleeding-edge topics, similar to newspaper articles and blog posts. This quickness of dissemination can make podcasts especially impactful in an age where news is available at the fingertips of users, politicians set out new policies using X (formerly Twitter), and access to entire databases of music and podcasts can be accessed easily on mobile devices. Due to these factors, amongst others, podcasts may also serve as a supplement to other forms of information, such as newspapers, magazines, and radio programs (Picardi & Regina, 2008).

Peoples and Tilley (2011) argue that there are three types of podcasts: institutional podcasts, episodic podcasts, and audiobooks. They identify institutional podcasts as “part of the grey literature (informal or otherwise unpublished scholarly works) produced by an institution and its faculty, such as course recordings (known as course-casts), supplemental instruction podcasts produced by faculty, audio tours, etc.” (p. 44). In contrast, they define episodic podcasts as those produced outside the institution which are distributed episodically on podcasting platforms to an international audience. The podcasts forming the focus of this article are a combination of institutional and episodic. They are institutional in that they are produced within institutions; however, they are for broader communities than just the institution itself. The creators and producers of the podcasts examined in this article are all faculty members who aim to connect with the community at large—either scholars in their field or a broader audience. Additionally, these academic podcasts are episodic, distributed in the form of multiple episodes released over various scheduled time frames via podcasting platforms such as Apple, Google, Spotify, etc.

A majority of academic scholarship is provided by pay-to-view academic journals and wrapped in dense language, which can create barriers between the research and those seeking to acquire their knowledge. A major benefit of academic podcasting is that the format is conversational in style and thus can make complex topics more understandable. The conversational tone can be particularly beneficial to those with different learning styles. Scholars recognize academic podcasting as a powerful tool to disseminate academic materials (Ractham & Zhang, 2006), and reach or for reaching distance learning students (Ralph & Olsen, 2007). Gunderson and Cumming (2023) undertook a study exploring the use of podcasting in higher education, focusing in particular on the application of these efforts within the principles of Universal Design for Learning. Their findings indicated that while there is still limited evidence of direct impact on learning, many did find podcasting offered an innovative way to engage with content that is freely available. As a further example of the potential range of podcast utilization, at the University of South Florida, podcasts from one of the institutional project teams are

utilized by subject area professionals as syllabus content, which is another measure of success and benefit of these efforts.

The world of scholarly communication is constantly evolving, but it seems clear that podcasting offers a tool with the scalable potential for further benefit and dissemination of university research efforts. Bolinches and Alonso-López (2021) noted that podcasting may also be utilized to increase the visibility of academic research and help to disseminate to a wider audience through the creation and sharing of podcast content on social networks. Cook (2023) has also posited that podcasting has many advantages in aiding a more open and accessible form of sharing academic knowledge. Libraries can be involved with podcasting, as evidenced by Curtin University Library, and their podcasts can be used to work with both students and faculty (Ractham & Zhang, 2006; Ralph & Olsen, 2007) Library involvement can be advantageous in these efforts as libraries frequently have the available tools, physical space, and staff expertise necessary for podcast facilitation (Nelson, 2020).

Many scholars believe they should take advantage of new technologies to share their important research in a more approachable manner than what they publish in academic journals, but they remain wary of how informal publishing efforts will be viewed professionally. As an example, Shehata et al. (2015) conducted a study of 40 researchers from 4 universities in England and Wales to determine the attitudes of scholars regarding newly available technologies for informal publishing. The study looked at the change in the scholars' publishing activities, factors affecting their decisions on scholarly communication methods, and the use of informal publishing (Shehata et al., 2015). They found that researchers' attitudes toward using informal platforms were changing towards more acceptance than in the past; however, some participants in their study believed that informal scholarly communication may detract from formal publishing efforts, which they noted as the only type of publishing considered for promotion and tenure at their institutions. They worried that informal channels of publishing would not be given the same respect or treated with the same seriousness as more established channels. Additionally, they expressed concern that while informal publishing channels were more accessible to broader audiences, the measurability of their impact was still lacking.

Another strain in the literature surrounding academic podcasts is the exploration of the various reasons different audiences consume podcast OA content. This topic is embraced by the authors of this article and while not a major focus of this specific work, a recent study regarding the numbers and types of listeners was recently performed at the University of South Florida. The publication produced was supported by a grant received by University of South Florida researchers (including the authors) to create recommendations to the university on how podcasting benefits and impacts the institution and its communication. Using data and summaries from existing the University of South Florida OA podcasts from a variety of subjects, the

work focused on three primary targets: identifying metrics, providing ways to promote the value of podcasting to institutions, and creating tools to help others embarking upon or deepening existing similar endeavors (Persohn, et al., 2024). The primary author of this work is further investigating the creation of new metrics based on those they found in the current literature.

The study found some standardized measures that may have broader applicability, and that there are various aspects of impact that are not as widely valued but have the potential to be better communicated to colleagues and administrators—such as downloads and geographic coverage of listeners (Persohn, et al., 2024). Studies like this are part of the current wave of scholarship on different ways podcast content may offer benefits to the listener and the podcaster, as well as any guests or contributors. Additional study and creation of formal listener indexes, as well as the continuous evaluation of the motivation of the various types of audiences, demonstrate promise for future expansion.

Academic podcasting and impact

Academic podcasting arose, like many other innovations, through a combination of increasing ease of use and cost, as well as outside factors, such as the rise in virtual and remote learning. Scholars recognize that it is not enough to just put the content out; there must be planning as to the mode, method, and style of delivery. The literature bears out the major importance of these facets through the numerous works on the reasons for listening to and using podcast content specifically. Tobin and Guadagno (2022) emphasize that “across a broad global sample, people who have listened to a podcast have higher informational needs, lower belonging needs, and lower neuroticism than those who have not” (p. 12). This supports the idea that those in the academic universe, or any kind of learning community, have a statistically higher likelihood of finding benefit in subject-based OA podcasting in their learning environment.

The use of podcasting in a learning environment may be demonstrated in various ways, such as having students engage with a podcast as an assignment, to promote the use and consideration of the format for learning, sharing, and other academic/social projects. Carson et al. (2021) demonstrated one such aspect of this use by discussing and outlining student podcasting creations and efforts in the classroom setting. Their research focused particular attention on student agency in a variety of carefully defined steps and effectively described how this type of activity engaged the participants to see themselves in the current role of student, while also considering their own possible future role of teacher. If academic podcasts are made more accessible and freely available, this may further inspire instructors to use them within existing

projects and examples, thus planting the seed of using podcasting as an academic mode of delivery.

While a great deal of podcasting content is freely available, the impact, and scoring of that effort, are still far from standardized. The value and impact of OA podcasting efforts vary by type and field. OA podcasting has been described by some as a form of social scholarship. Singer (2019), for example, asserts that as a form of social scholarship, the available interaction afforded by OA podcasting can lead to the improvement of overall ideas or products. Focusing on accurate and efficient transcription, Singer stresses the importance of the use of technology tools and collaboration with technology experts to increase the impact and effectiveness of podcasting in academia. Podcasting's iterative research and publishing process, existing without pay or geographic borders, shows potential for efficiency in information sharing and academic communication.

Other literature has discussed the use of podcasting for combined internal/external communication endeavors. One such example is Embry Riddle University's 2020-initiated podcasting project, which sought to share resources and record the history of their libraries as they evolved. This resultant material was then shared publicly and received an appreciable number of downloads (Pickus, 2022). This case demonstrates ways that podcasts can be measures of public history, in an anthropological sense. Slotten envisioned "podcasting as public archaeology" and stressed the importance of the (larger) audience offered by podcasting, which is inherently enhanced by those that are free and OA (2022, p. 135). They posit that audiences can help further record and standardize the history and experiences of the time (Slotten, 2022). Embry-Riddle's plan has been mirrored and expanded upon by several other academic entities, including the University of South Florida Communications and Marketing group. (Results of these efforts are still emerging and will be noted in future efforts and publications.)

Academic podcasting is an opportunity for presentation in two forms of the word; first, the recordings are general and openly available presentations by hosts and guests for listeners to consume, and second, they can be used as miniature academic presentations of a scholar's work. Such is the case for numerous scholarly podcasts, including some at the authors' institution. With this in mind, a need for peer feedback emerges in order to continue the improvement of said product. Emerging literature by Sewell (2023) has suggested formal peer review that could provide recorded, if not quantifiable, benefits to authors, participants, and listeners of academic podcasts. A formal peer-review process would offer the opportunity to collect feedback for any participating authors and to help libraries and podcasters "make invisible labor visible" (p. 799) and make scholarship more personal and relatable. Additionally, partnerships between creators, other scholars, and librarians would allow for better promotion of the work, and open the possibility for discovery of new measures of potential scholarly impact.

Sewell posits: “Open peer review podcasts might serve as a scholarly output themselves, as has been demonstrated by the Amplify Podcast Network, the journal *Kairos*, and scientific journals that publish a variety of research outputs other than typical articles” (p. 808). This is further evidence of ways that academic podcasts may more clearly demonstrate academic importance. Reviews of this article’s authors’ podcasts imply this opportunity is available and research implies this may help podcasting find a more defined spot in the arena of bibliometric rankings.

Scholarly communication and metrics

Scholarly communication takes many forms. Formal scholarly communication generally consists of publishing peer-reviewed articles (Shehata et al., 2015). There are also informal means of scholarly communication, such as conferences, blogs, and social networks (Shehata et al., 2015). More researchers are turning to other and newer means of scholarly communication to present their ideas, especially on cutting-edge topics (Shehata et al., 2015). Informal scholarly communication is also noted for allowing more discussion between researchers and intended audiences (Shehata et al., 2015).

Grey literature is a common method of informal scholarly communication. It is not peer-reviewed, so it is not considered formal; however, grey literature holds an important place in the realm of scholarly communications. Typically, grey literature is presented in the form of conference presentations and proceedings, which are the first steps to sharing research in the cycle of scholarly communication. Preprints can also be considered grey literature. Sometimes preprints are posted on institutional repositories and subject matter repositories, such as the Social Science Research Network. These preprints may also be referred to as author-submitted manuscripts (articles submitted to a journal that have not undergone peer review), not to be confused with author-accepted manuscripts (which have undergone the peer review process). Many publishers allow authors to post preprints on repositories as a form of green OA. Academic podcasts work to share information on a broader, more informal level, such as a public OA conference presentation. Hosts and interviewees on episodic podcasts discuss research findings and methodology during these episodes to share ideas with others, similar to an exchange that may occur at a conference, and the episodes are not peer reviewed.

For promotion and tenure purposes, formal scholarly communication is working towards ways to mirror the elements of other types of conventional and quantifiable publishing impact measures. Formal scholarly communications are peer-reviewed, which is traditionally intended to serve as a “safeguard to ensure overall quality, with evaluators deferring to experts and peers within a scholar’s domain to provide an appraisal for quality and an estimate of

impact” (Husain et al., 2020, p. 884). Digital scholarship, on the other hand, does not exhibit the same forms of traditional impact measures offered by peer-reviewed articles. Because of this lack of traditional impact measurement, there are questions and concerns by scholars regarding digital scholarship’s value and benefit to the authors when initiating promotion and tenure processes (Lynch, 1993). Husain, et al. (2020) argue that it is possible to establish metrics for digital scholarship to count towards promotion and tenure. They suggest that to demonstrate impact, one can show pageviews, likes, shares, geographic reach, followers, and altmetrics. To denote role, creators of digital scholarship can show authorship, curation, editing, reviewing, or podcast guest spots. For example, a recent article by an academic podcaster outlines their use of survey and review feedback as a starting point for more formal anecdotal measures, while also obtaining digital object identifiers (DOIs) for episodes to present the curated content in a conventional academic and discoverable manner (Persohn & Branson, 2024).

As mentioned above, altmetrics are a means that can be used to measure digital scholarship and formal scholarly communication. Altmetrics are alternative metrics to traditional journal impact factors and citation counts. They frequently include qualitative data in addition to quantitative citation counts. Some examples of altmetrics are Wikipedia citations, policy citations, research blog mentions, media coverage, bookmarks on reference managers, and social media mentions. Altmetrics are marketed as a record of attention, a measure of dissemination, and an indicator of influence and impact. This generally includes usage, citations, in academic works, captures, mentions, and social media references on subject or academically relevant sites. Other measures include abstract views, collaborator counts, downloads, link click counts, splay counts, and views. Captures can be evidenced by bookmarks, exports, favorites, and more. Mentions can be in a variety of formats, including blogs, news sources, and other reviews and platforms. Finally, social media altmetrics take into consideration markers such as Facebook counts, likes, and posts. These captures can change quickly to reflect changes in access and availability within the information landscape.

As hinted in the above paragraphs, there is no current direct way to map podcast metrics to bibliometric importance, but there is little doubt that podcasts and other informal communication impact scholarly communication, new users, and, therefore, the increased possibility of discovery (Fox et al., 2021). In the case of one podcast at the University of South Florida, the creators marketed the inclusion of the content in a variety of digital locations (e.g. institutional repository, major podcast platforms, and increased SEO) as a benefit to the discovery of the scholar, as well as their other works, which are often more easily citable and measurable. It is also proposed by Fox et al. that OA podcasts and social media are also affecting journals by their more frequent inclusion of media and other summary components in these more traditional sources (2021).

Libraries and scholarly communication

Lynch states, “As an institution, the modern research library is both a product and an integral part of the current system of scholarly communication” (p. 5) and that even in 1993, pre-podcast technology advancements within libraries were deemed to be within the realm of scholarly communication (1993). Park and Shim further explain:

[Scholarly communication activities] involve participating in an academic community, sharing ideas, receiving feedback from colleagues, obtaining intellectual recognition, and publishing. With the emergence of digital channels, informal communication has become a more public scholarly record, leading to the blurring of the informal and the formal (2011, p. 78)

Park and Shim go on to point out that libraries play an important role in archiving formal scholarly communication. Academic libraries contribute through their library publishing services, which include providing digital repositories, digitization services, copyright consulting, and other editing services to name a few (Park & Shim, 2011).

Institutional repositories

Institutional repositories (IRs) serve as a platform to disseminate faculty publications and enhance the availability of OA research and content. OA literature is freely available on the internet, allowing users to access full-text articles (Budapest Open Access Initiative, n.d.). At one time, authors had apprehension about publishing OA, but the movement has grown over the years in many academic disciplines (Chan, 2004). There are two recognized ways for authors to participate in OA publishing of scholarly material: publish in OA journals (gold OA) or self-archive preprints (green OA) (Chan, 2004). Newer forms of OA have been recognized, such as hybrid OA, bronze OA, and grey OA (Dickson, 2024). OA publishing has been shown to have a correlation with increased citations, referred to in multiple sources as “the open access citation advantage” (Boczar & Schmidt, 2022, p. 1; Eysenbach, 2006, p. 0692).

IRs can be used for more than simply faculty publications. They can be used for student publications, university documents, community resources, and special digital collections. They serve to highlight born-digital material to a worldwide audience. (Bankier & Perciali, 2008; Symulevich & Boczar, 2023; Robertson & Borchert, 2014; Symulevich & Hamilton, 2022). The authors’ university IR, as with most academic repositories, is able to provide detailed data on downloads, including by number, location, geographic location, and in some cases, by the university of the online user. As Price and Murtagh note, institutional repositories “have an

opportunity to demonstrate value; rather than replicate commercial journals, they can publish scholarly communications in new ways or even focus on publishing original grey literature that will not be published elsewhere (in journals) (2020). At London College, the library started using the IR to store grey literature (Price and Murtagh, 2020). For certain types of grey literature, DOIs were assigned, thus ensuring permanent access to one URL in addition to using a permalink. This is a benefit that institutional repositories can offer to attract faculty members to publish grey literature. (Price and Murtagh, 2020).

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

Podcasting at the University of South Florida

At the University of South Florida, the BePress Digital Commons platform is used for our institutional repository. Although the University of South Florida IR was initially intended to host faculty publications, we have increased our content to include student works, community outreach projects, special digital collections, and conference/event schedules. We have included 2 faculty academic podcasts in the content we collect for the institutional repository. *Calling: Earth* (<https://callingearth.libsyn.com/>) and *Faculty on Tap* (https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/faculty_on_tap/) are both podcasts hosted by University of South Florida faculty members. Both are interview-style academic podcasts.

The *Calling: Earth* podcast demonstrates a beneficial foray into academic and research services by way of OA social media content. The concept was initiated by two library faculty members in 2019 to simultaneously learn more about the faculty and graduate student research and publishing activities, as well as to assist these groups in sharing their stories and their science. An additional goal was to further expand the libraries' relationship with the academic program, including co-teaching courses and embedded library activities in classroom and research activities. After obtaining project approval from the library administration, the podcast creators established a partnership and contacts from the relevant academic area at the institution. No formal funding or agreement was established, but the knowledge of these activities proved helpful in interview recruitment.

In the early days, a request was made for some minimal library funding for external marketing and promotion of the material. The amount was in the low three-figure range and this was accomplished by purchasing targeted Facebook advertisements for those users designating academic and scientific interests. The *Calling: Earth* team was not able to directly correlate this investment to the eventual rise in listeners, though it did help in the increases in listeners that will be discussed in future paragraphs and the topic is worthy of replication for those hoping to go beyond word of mouth and serendipitous discovery by interested communities.

Author Torrence was later added as host in the second season, but the concept and focus remained the same; find out from each interviewee who they are (in any way they wish to answer), what they do, and how they ended up at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. This model allowed faculty and student interviewees to expound on the science to an audience of, based on statistics, people of various secondary educational levels and backgrounds with an academic interest in the fields of geoscience and marine science on which the faculty focus. Preparatory efforts did not require much in the way of technology investment, but they did require amounts of staff time and administrative support that are worthy of consideration. If considering a similar type of library podcast, there are numerous resources and knowledge sets that will expedite the process.

As stated, departmental consent and partnerships and internal support from library leadership are key initial steps. Once this hurdle had been cleared the next steps included developing a structure for content storage and hosting. The commercial platform selected was LibSyn, as it was economically feasible, relatively easy to use, and allowed for easy dissemination of episodes to popular podcasting platforms including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Play, and more. This also eased the burden of gathering statistics, as many of these facets, including levels of downloads from each source, were readily and easily available. The LibSyn platform also allowed for show and episodic branding, which did require some collaboration with the libraries' communications and marketing team. They provided several potential logos and images and once one was selected, another small investment was made in physical marketing materials including several posters, stickers, and magnets to provide to interview participants and to listeners at subject-related and university events.

In terms of technology, free and existing software was utilized for recording and editing, with the exception of a portable MP3 recording device used for early interviews. In the first season, the podcast host often traveled to the participants' office, or other desired locations, for the recording. A photograph was included with each interview of the host and guest, along with the alternative of providing a photo or image of their choosing that best represented their work and research. This generated a mix of visual images for the online presence and flexibility for interviewee preferences. The platform easily accommodated this, too, and helped in the efficient production of new episodes. With the onset of the pandemic and social distancing, the authors' university expanded the use of and training regarding Microsoft Teams, making it possible to use it to easily record while in various locations. This accommodated safety requirements during this challenging time and while it did utilize video for a visual connection with each interview subject, it was relatively easy to remove the video and convert the download from the Teams MP4 format to the desired MP3. Editing was accomplished using Garage Band, which was already available on the various Mac computers utilized by library faculty and staff.

To date, there have been 53 episodes and over 12,000 downloads. The podcast itself has been on a virtual hiatus, but there are nascent plans that will be further developed to expand the base of potential clients and listeners. This will be accomplished by the expansion of internal partnerships and new employee knowledge. In 2023, *Calling: Earth* was one of several University of South Florida podcasts that participated in a grant on the topic of academic podcasting. As part of this internal grant, much of the effort regarding *Calling: Earth* has been on studying past activities and benefits, especially those to our interview participants on the platform and sustainability of *Calling: Earth*. Upcoming areas of effort include new content, partners from the academic area on which the podcast is focused, as well as marketing and assessment of the platforms on which the podcast is most frequently visited.

In practical terms, there is considerable time and labor required to create, publish, and maintain the recordings. In the case of *Calling: Earth*, it involved two individuals, one of whom handled the majority of the interview content and one managing the technical and editing side of the project. A standard list of questions was created, and preparatory time was required for the host to include additional inquiries and to familiarize themselves with the research and other works of the interviewee. The technical and production role was no less time consuming and included management of the platform, creating waivers to document participants' consent, and the final publishing and editing of each podcast session's content. This further involved locating music and the maintenance of the platform's website. In the case of *Calling: Earth*, a local band of university-connected faculty offered their original music, which was used with host audio overlays to create a standard intro and outro that was added to each episode. Once published on the commercial platform, episodes were also added to the libraries' institutional repository for further archiving and dissemination, as well as documentation for participants for annual reports and other applications.

Locating interview targets was straightforward, given the specific academic area of the podcast topic. This did, however, limit the number of targets after the first year of *Calling: Earth* once a majority of interested persons from the specific subject area had been contacted and/or had participated. In year two, a decision was jointly made to expand the potential interview targets by seeking graduate students from the area of focus for future episodes. This proved to be quite successful and provided several benefits, including an updated range of topics and new opportunities to speak with and market to the faculty to seek suggestions for student participants. It drastically increased the target population for guests and informally marketed the podcast to a new group of potential listeners from the graduate student populace. Additionally, these student interviewees were provided something readily available online to market themselves and add to their growing student resumes.

An examination of podcast downloads from all platforms combined demonstrated monthly increases in monthly downloads for 10 of the 12 months from year one (February 2019 to January 2020) to year two (February 2020 to January 2021). The overall annual increase from year one to year two was 31%. It may simply be a general increase in the number of downloads and listeners as the podcast further matured, as this has not been formally assessed. A small budget was provided, however, in year two for marketing via social media platforms such as *Facebook* and the creators targeted subject-specific blogs and other social media platforms to further promote the show. Year three annual download total was very close to that of year two, but the marketing efforts and availability of high-impact faculty interviewees had declined.

When considering the creation and management of this type of podcast, the time required is a primary concern. It's also important to decide if the podcast will be on a strict schedule for the release of new episodes, as well as the length and frequency. In the case of *Calling: Earth*, it was decided, and communicated to potential interviewees, that the general length would be 30 to 45 minutes. This was not strictly enforced, but it did require the subtle coordination of the host and “producer” to operate the flow of the session. Initially, the schedule for the podcast was two interviews each month in the four months of the spring and fall semesters, with episodes released on Friday mornings roughly every 2 weeks. With Summer episodes recorded, this resulted in 15 to 16 interviews each year. Later, the number of episodes was moved to only one per month and then the show went on a break following some staffing changes and new areas of effort for the librarian host at the end of year three in 2022. The libraries also briefly involved a paid intern in the team in 2022/2023, but this proved a bit difficult to replicate as the intern arrived with solid podcasting and editing skills, but their appointment ended within months due to matriculation and new opportunities to advance their career and studies.

As suggested, editing and production time is an extremely important consideration, as are the recording and software tools selected and utilized. It is largely dependent on the skills and experience of the producer(s), but the platform utilized, LibSyn, is relatively straightforward and may be set to schedule podcasts for release. In the case of *Calling: Earth*, early episodes were often done in person, or on campus, using a portable MP3 recorder. As mentioned in a preceding paragraph, during the time of COVID-19, interviews for the show were largely completed using Teams and then converted to MP3 audio recordings. More advanced software and hosting platforms are worth considering depending on the level and scope of the podcast and its audience. Screenshots, or photographs and images provided by the guest, were utilized as icons for the website and for use on the various commercial podcast services. One new element that the team hopes to apply in the future iteration of this endeavor is the availability of transcription from Teams. This feature was not available for the initial episodes recorded from 2019 to 2023, but the addition of this automated feature provides the potential for cost-effective transcriptions and increased accessibility. This was a known limitation going

in, as there were no funds and inadequate staff time available for manual transcription of each episode. This was always and is of concern for the library team and one that may now be more easily rectified in additional interviews.

The existing podcast episodes remain available on the site and popular podcast platforms, and they continue to gain downloads and new listeners despite the lack of new content. The hiatus will cease as soon as a new schedule and scope of interviewee targets are formalized. This is something requiring a great deal of time and thought, including support from supervisors and academic managers, when implementing this type of continuing effort. It is wise to consider and/or plan for a set number of episodes to create a standalone and non-continuing collection of OA podcasting content.

Faculty on Tap aims to have discussions with faculty members about their teaching and scholarship. It is hosted by Author Symulevich, the then Scholarly Communications Librarian at the University of South Florida, and Dr. Timothy Henkel, the Director of the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at the University of South Florida. Symulevich and Henkel interview faculty members while enjoying a beverage from one of the University of South Florida Brewing Arts Program breweries in St. Petersburg, Florida. *Faculty on Tap* ran into issues of continuation. Like *Calling: Earth*, staffing changes happened, and the other hosts had changes in work priorities. It was difficult to keep the podcast going. Longevity is something for podcast producers to consider and plan out before starting the podcast.

These two podcasts are hosted on the institutional repository, Digital Commons @ University of South Florida, for a variety of reasons. Foremost, it is for faculty members to host their podcasts on this platform. Second, while podcasts can be ephemeral, housing them on the IR allows freely accessible, perpetual OA. Third, it has RSS feed capability for individuals and for other podcast platforms. The RSS feed capability to push out episodes to other streaming platforms is not seamless. However, Symulevich works with Henkel to hand code the XML for various platforms that have their own markup language. Fourth, it is scraped by Google Scholar and is included in both search results and Google Scholar Author Profiles. Finally, Digital Commons @ University of South Florida offers a variety of metrics for items contained in the institutional repository, such as downloads, plays, geographic information, etc. IRs are a great resource for podcast hosting because of these many features. Digital Commons @ University of South Florida also offers PlumX altmetrics for *Calling: Earth* and *Faculty on Tap*, showing metrics such as downloads and abstract views.

Streaming services like Spotify offer podcasts a number of benefits that the institutional repository cannot. Having a librarian with knowledge of how private streaming services work, including the types of analytics offered and the metadata needed, is another service that

libraries could potentially contribute to the scholarly conversation. On Spotify, there are analytics such as the standard stream counts, which IRs offer, but it goes further to provide subscriber information regarding the audience, such as gender and age. (Spotify analytics platform for *Faculty on Tap*, contact Symulevich for information).

Podcasts can now add videos on Spotify as a way to promote their episodes and get new listeners. Another dynamic feature is the ability to host comments and polls on their podcast landing pages. Institutional repositories do not offer many of these features, however, their perpetual access for free to online users without subscriptions and user logins with personally identifying data is a large draw. As explained previously, metrics are available regarding streams and there are ways to set up third-party commenting features to gather audience feedback on IR landing pages. But again, perhaps this is room for libraries to expand services and learn private streaming services. However, this does go against the OA goals of many libraries.

One concept being explored is adding transcripts to all podcast episodes so that they will also be scraped by Google Scholar, thus making the podcast episodes keyword searchable. This increased accessibility may lead to citations in scholarly peer-reviewed articles, a theory worthy of testing with an internal grant team made up of many academic podcast hosts at the University of South Florida. We aim to uncover if podcasts can be captured by typical promotion and tenure metrics. Another interesting concept being explored is assigning DOIs to podcast episodes which may help with citation captures as well due to various citation styles. Other types of grey literature have been assigned DOIs, and perhaps this would attract faculty members to upload podcast episodes to IRs. (Price and Murtagh, 2020).

This is another way that libraries can work with podcasts and podcast creators to archive podcasts for permanent and stable access, rather than ephemeral access on Spotify or Apple Music. Mary Kidd at the New York Public Library received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to start the Preserve This Podcast project (Vancour & Kidd, 2021). The group of librarians did outreach programs and an online toolkit to teach podcasters about archiving podcasts (Vancour & Kidd, 2021). One of the more mature podcasts at the University of South Florida has undertaken this endeavor by using grant funds to transcribe content, offering more opportunities for effective archiving and searchability.

NEXT STEPS

As the literature demonstrates, podcasting is gaining popularity in academia, but there is still plenty to be garnered on the quantification and qualification of their use and OA qualities. Notably, there is not yet a consensus on a defined measure of podcast impact within the academic community, especially in terms of promotion and tenure progression. The pure

numbers, including downloads from major platforms and the repository, help tell part of the story, as does the ability to freely integrate these into teaching and classroom assignments. However, these measurables still fall into the evolving and nebulous realm of altmetrics and certainly deserve more attention from those with a statistical background. In future efforts, the authors hope to look at the continued use of podcasting at the University of South Florida and the use of podcasts at the university level for internal and external marketing.

The review of the literature and the knowledge gained by podcasters' experiences at the University of South Florida demonstrate the potential value of this form of OA effort, but more needs to be studied and measured. The podcasts at the authors' university succeeded by enhancing the measurability of participant benefits through marketing the success of accessible data on listeners and downloads. Podcast creators at the University of South Florida Libraries are now considering the possibility of contacting participants to examine their use of this material for academic advancement and the inclusion of podcasting in research and teaching in promotion and tenure applications. This offers the potential to demonstrate a clearer link to these OA activities in the traditional scholarship process. While no definitive standard measure yet exists for outlining the impact on academic processes, there is evidence of their development in the literature. It may not yet be possible to define a specific metric, but it is the authors' hope that their efforts in this arena may assist in the further standardization of academic impact.

While not necessarily the authors' initial focus, this topic presents an opportunity for additional examination of the use of podcasting in secondary education. The application of these learning objects as teaching materials that are OA and outside the traditional textbook environment has, by anecdotal measure, increased. Podcasts offer a cost-effective and continuously updated platform for educators to create, locate, and share information in traditional and flipped classroom environments. This also has the potential to enhance interest and acquisition of knowledge for aural learners and increase their interest in the course, or subject area. The authors hope to consider these aspects further in new iterations of their podcasting efforts and forthcoming research and reviews of the literature.

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