

Introduction to Analytics

The basics

Why track metrics?

- Understand your audience demographics
- Identify top content
- Identify if reach is growing or shrinking
- Planning for future content

How do I access metrics?

Automated podcast data are generally available in three places:

1. via hosting platforms

The podcast host you've chosen will provide a number of metrics. They also collect **aggregated data** from across a number of distribution platforms. Check to see what is included in your hosting plan!

2. via distribution platforms

Podcast distributors provide **disaggregated data** specific to their own platform.

3. via analytics platforms

There are number of third-party service providers who now focus on podcasting data and analytics:

- 🔗 Free: [Podbean](#)
- 🔗 [Chartable](#)
- 🔗 [Rephonic](#)
- 🔗 Free: [Podtrac](#)
- 🔗 [Simplecast](#)

Benchmarking

Benchmarks are target metrics used to compare your performance in relation to past episodes, as well as other similar podcasts. Benchmarking can help you set your own bar and judge the success of your podcast.

- 🔗 [Podcasting Benchmarks for Beginning Creators](#) (Simplecast)
- 🔗 [How to measure your podcast performance](#) (Kajabi)

You can use Chartable to explore the ratings of top podcasts by country, topic and distribution platform (since ratings are unique to each platform):

- 🔗 Canada - Top podcasts: [Itunes](#) | [Spotify](#)
- 🔗 [Chartable Top 200](#)

Understanding Podcast Distribution (Syndication)

Podcast syndication is the process of giving **podcast distributors** the right to broadcast your content to listeners.

This is distinct from **podcast hosts**, which are the service providers that give creators a place to upload and store their content. Podcast distributors then access and disseminate this content to listeners.

Hosting platforms

Podcast hosts connect podcasts on their servers with distributors through an integration process: this can be automated through the hosting platform, but, depending on host and/or platform, may need to be done manually by submitting RSS feeds to individual distributors.

There are a number of free hosting platforms, however for many there is an associated cost.



🔗 [All podcasting hosting companies](#) (Podcastpage)

Distribution platforms

Regardless of which host you use, your podcast can be accessible across multiple **distribution platforms**, often in the form of **podcasting apps** or known as **podcasting directories**.

- 🔗 [Apple Podcasts](#)
- 🔗 [Spotify](#)
- 🔗 [Google Podcasts](#)
- 🔗 [Amazon Music](#)
- 🔗 [The complete podcast directory list for 2022](#) (Resonate)



Key Metrics

Downloads

A **download** means a listener hit the download button and downloaded an entire episode **OR** a listener pressed play on an episode within a web browser or podcast app (also known as a **listen**).

What does this tell you?

- How large your audience is

What does it NOT tell you?

- Whether people listen all the way through
- If they enjoyed the episode

Considerations

- Users may download an episode to multiple devices
- Users may listen to downloaded episodes multiple times (but only counts as one hit)
- Users may never listen to an episode they have downloaded

Stats to consider

- Downloads/listens per episode
- Aggregate downloads
- Average downloads (per episode, per month, per year) - can tell you if your audience is growing
- Downloads by time/day
- Download sources

[How to interpret your podcast download numbers](#) (Podcast.co)

Top episodes

Top episodes are those that have the most number of downloads or listens.

What does this tell you?

- Which episodes are gaining the most traction with your listeners
- When planning new episodes and content, what type of content might resonate most with your listeners

What does it NOT tell you?

- If listeners actually liked the content of the episode - highly controversial episodes may have high download numbers but not be well liked
- If listeners have subscribed or shared the episode or podcast
- If the episode is listened through to the end

Considerations

- Did you **cross-promote** the episode or does a guest have a large following themselves?
- Users who listened to an episode multiple times might be counted as individual listens.
- The length of the episode (e.g., shorter lengths are more likely to be among the top episode)

[More on podcast lengths](#) (The Podcast Hosts)

Play-through rate

The **play-through rate** tells you how long your listeners stay tuned to an episode.

What does this tell you?

- If listeners are staying engaged through an episode

What does it NOT tell you?

- If listeners enjoyed the episode
- If they subscribed or shared
- If they were paying attention

Considerations

The availability and types of data vary by podcast platform:

Apple

- Average listening time
- Engaged Listeners: Total number of people who listened to at least 20 minutes or 40% of an episode.
- Additional info available for paid Apple podcast members

Spotify

- Start: listener pressed play
- Stream: listener listened for more than 60 seconds
- Listen-through rates available by episode

Google

- Plays: listened for over 5 secs
- Minutes: total minutes listened to

Subscribers (Followers)

Subscribers are the number of unique users who have chosen to receive updates whenever your podcast publishes a new episode. These users may or may not receive push notifications when a new episode is published. Some podcasters argue that subscribers are not the best way of measuring podcast success. The usefulness of the statistic will vary depending on the type of podcast you have.

[Measuring podcast subscribers](#) (BuzzSprout)

What does this tell you? The number of people who are automatically receiving new episodes of your podcast via their distribution platform.

What does it NOT tell you? If subscribers are actually listening to your show! It is not a completely accurate reflection of your number of regular listeners.

Considerations

Data is not available everywhere, and numbers are separated by platform (disaggregated).

Listeners who access your show regularly via your website, people who subscribe directly to your RSS (and not through a distribution platform) or listeners who regularly tune in but have not clicked "subscribe" (e.g., they listen when they see you post about a new episode on social media) will not be shown in your subscriber counts. More and more people also listen to podcasts without subscribing.

Additionally, don't discount the number of followers you have on social media, or the number of website visits you get each month. Considering these in your analysis will help give you a more holistic understanding of your regular listeners.

Other Metrics

Ratings & Reviews

Ratings are scores (usually out of five).

Reviews are written commentary, posted by users on a distribution platform in response to your show.

What does this tell you?

If the users of a specific platform like your podcast and would recommend it to other listeners.

May include feedback like favourite guest or reasons for liking or not liking the show.

Positive reviews are great for repurposing into website or social media content, such as testimonials.

What does it NOT tell you?

If those writing the reviews actually listened to or subscribed to your podcast.

If the ratings vary across distribution platforms.

Why a reviewer left a poor rating.

Considerations

They can be a signal to potential listeners and recommendation algorithms.

They are not available on all platforms, and the ratings/reviews on one platform don't appear on other platforms.

Ratings can be important if you are looking to monetize your show.

Webpage views

The number of unique visits your podcast's webpage has received (usually measured by day, month, year, and all time). Particularly relevant to podcasters who host an embedded player on their website.

The number of people who are visiting the webpage in question. Depending on the data available, it may also tell you information like the average length of a visitor's stay on your page, or the referral sites.

One important metric here is **bounce rate**: the number of users who visited the page but then immediately left the page (e.g., by clicking back).

If the visitor listened to any episodes (unless advanced analytics are used).

If the visitor liked your podcast or shared it with others.

For bounce rates: why the visitor left the page so quickly.

If your podcast webpage is hosted on a larger website (as is the case with [Wonks and War Rooms](#)), filter or narrow your data to visits for your podcast's landing page specifically.

Also consider looking at the analytics for each episode's webpage or blog entry, if applicable.

Audience demographics

The characteristics of users who listen to your podcast. These traditionally refer to characteristics like age, sex, gender, location, and psychographics. With podcasts, additional demographic information includes apps, platforms and devices used.

Some more "personal" details about your user base.

Data on which devices listeners use can help you tailor your website to their particular operating systems and screen sizes, while data on which apps listeners use can help identify platforms with the most relevant analytics.

Data on user location can help you understand where users are coming from, which may be useful in preparing new episode topics and guests.

If the listeners liked your show, how long they listened to the episode, etc.

If the real-life identity of a listener actually matches their demographic profile data.

Users may access your content using multiple devices and apps.

The geographic location of users who run VPNs may not be accurate.

Some users may not realize this type of data is being tracked.

Take caution when making assumptions about your audience based on things like their age, location or gender.

Micro content engagements

Micro content refers to images, audio clips, and other excerpts used to promote an episode.

If your followers are engaging with you outside of just listening to the show, and if they are interested in sharing your message with their followers or building a community with other listeners.

Depending on the engagement type, users may not actually have listened to the episode you are posting about (e.g., liking or commenting on a Twitter post without having listened to the show versus a reply in which a user discusses their opinions on an episode).

Note the difference between likes and comments - both have value!

Comments require more effort from the listener.

Posting social content about new or upcoming episodes can help expand your reach.

Consider tagging guests in your social content. This can help promote the episode to the guest's followers.