



Video and the podcast star

...or

*‘we hardly need
to use our ears?’*

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Question and Method

- What does the increased availability of video productions that are presented as podcasts tell us about the current status of podcasting?
- Initial small-scale analysis of top-rated (and curated) podcasts on Spotify (UK) to explore the use of video across distribution platforms and/or social media

Is a podcast just a cultural form?



...and does it matter?





Podcasts as Hybrid Audio Experiences

- Podcasts are an audio (first) medium embedded within the social, technical, and cultural; including live events, social media, and video
- *“Today a podcast is not an audio-based object any-more, but also a screen-based one. More and more it integrates visual components: a logo, an illustration, a video on YouTube, an account on Instagram and can take the form of a meme on the internet. When we use the word podcast today, we mean it differently than we did in 2004”*
- (Bonini, 2022, P.19)



Podcasts as a screen media

Artwork and text (by humans or AI)

Screens as visual interface or point of interaction

Video as a means of securing attention or platform access

But... does this only work for certain genres? Does it reduce access? Does it increase spectacle and reduce intimacy?



The Daily



Podcasts can
look like
this....



5:43 / 28:39 • Intro >





But now
look more
like this



Typologies and Platforms

- Podcast as fully hybrid visual production on one or more platform
- Audio podcast with on-camera social media content or YouTube Short
- Audio podcast with visualised social media
- Where:
 - YouTube is an independent distribution space
 - Social Media amplifies the key moments
 - Spotify is a marketplace for attention



Louis Theroux  @louistheroux · 49s 

A little taste of my podcast conversation with Ben Elton, the stand-up comedy legend and Blackadder writer... We also discussed Benny Hill, Jerry Sadowitz, Shakespeare and much more. Listen to the whole thing on Spotify.



Spotify UK & Ireland



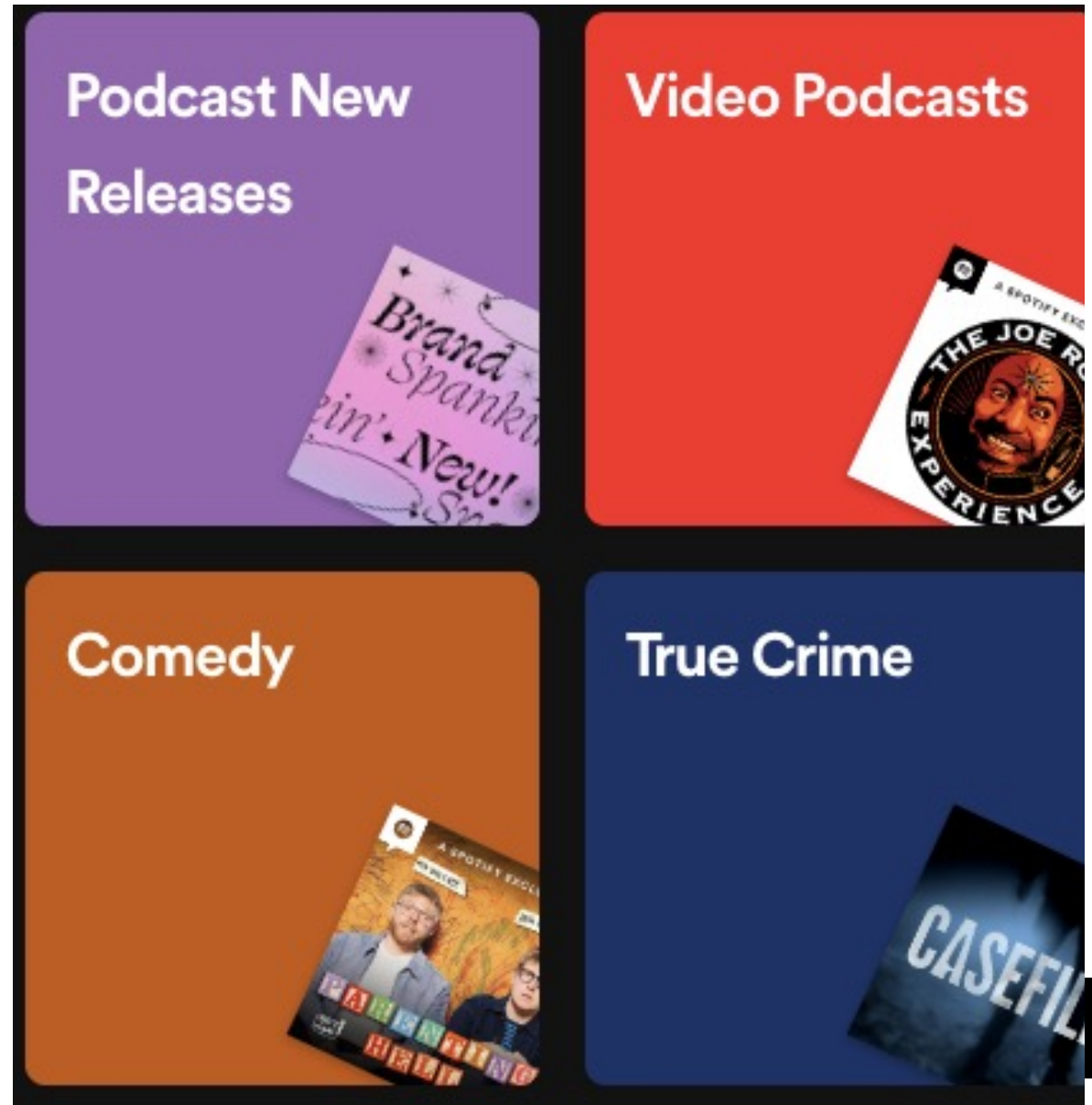
–Over 100,000 video podcasts on the platform

–Led by US, Brazil, UK & Germany

– (Spotify, 2023)

“The importance of network effects means that platforms must deploy a range of tactics to ensure that more and more users come on board”

– (Srnicek, 2017, p.46)





the
reason
exercise

doesn't
work

ENTS



As the Windrush Generation and their
descendants settled into life in the UK, the music they loved
was conspicuous by its absence from British radio stations.



The Definition Of A Podcast Is Changing

How would you define a podcast?



Audio or video

75%



Audio only

22%



Video only

3%



Questions

A medium in our culture can never operate in isolation, because it must enter into relationships with other media

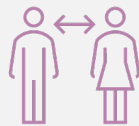
Bolter & Grusin, 2001, p.98



Podcasts as a cultural form transcending medium specificities... but only for specific genres.



Podcasting as hybrid form not by blending radio and other media but by being a platform-agnostic form of media



Is this driven by what audiences want or by how platforms and visual media command and drive attention? Is this social construction? Or industrial?



Is this about how audiences perceive things? Are they blind to the infrastructure? Are podcasts a form of social interaction?





<https://richardberry.eu/we-only-need-to-use-our-ears/>+