PEW / INTERNET
PEW INTERNET & AMERICAN LIFE PROJECT

PEW INTERNET PROJECT DATA MEMO

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RE: **Podcast Downloading**
DATE: **November 2006**

12% of internet users have downloaded a podcast

Some 12% of internet users say they have downloaded a podcast so they can listen to it or view it at a later time. This finding compares to the 7% of internet users who reported podcast downloading in our February-April 2006 survey. However, few internet users are downloading podcasts with great frequency; in both surveys, just 1% report downloading a podcast on a typical day.

Men are more likely than women to report podcast downloading; 15% of online men say they have downloaded a podcast, compared with just 8% of online women. And those who have used the internet for six or more years are twice as likely as those who have been online three years or less to have downloaded a podcast (13% vs. 6%).

These results come from a nationally-representative telephone survey by the Pew Internet & American Life Project from August 1 – August 31 of 2,928 adults. The portion of the survey that covered podcast downloading was administered to 972 internet users. The margin of error on the internet sample is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The range of content available to those interested in podcasts has exploded over the past two years. In 2005, the *New Oxford American Dictionary* declared "podcast" the word of the year, with the accompanying definition of a podcast as, "a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player." Yet, while early podcasters typically distributed syndicated audio files and radio shows, podcasters now routinely deliver many kinds of digital multimedia content, including video, images and text.

The array of individuals and mainstream media institutions that now provide podcasts has also expanded dramatically. For example, in November of 2004, Podcast Alley, a podcast directory website, listed fewer than 1,000 podcasts for download. Today Podcast Alley catalogs more than 26,000 different podcasts, totaling more than 1 million episodes.[1] In

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[1] Historical data accessed on November 20, 2006 via the Internet Archive Wayback Machine: http://web.archive.org/web/20041111235835/podcastalley.com/list_all_podcasts.php. Current site statistics accessed on November 20, 2006 via the Podcast Alley website : http://www.podcastalley.com

addition to homegrown podcasts that cover topics ranging from music and fashion to religion and politics, mainstream media institutions such as NPR, the BBC and Comedy Central now regularly provide podcasted material as an alternative way to distribute their content.

The Audience for Podcast Downloads		
Demographic groups	**Percentage who have downloaded a podcast**	
(as groups of internet users)	**February-April 2006**	**August 2006**
Total internet users	7%	12%
Men	9%	15%
Women	5%	8%
Age 18-29	10%	14%
Age 30-49	8%	12%
Age 50-64	5%	12%
Age 65+	4%	4%
High school graduate	6%	9%
Some college	6%	13%
College graduate or more	9%	13%
Live in households earning less than $30,000	8%	12%
$30,000-$49,999	8%	14%
$50,000-$74,999	7%	12%
$75,000 or more	7%	13%
3 years or less of online experience	5%	6%
4-5 years of online experience	7%	7%
6+ years of online experience	8%	13%
Dial-up connection at home	6%	10%
Broadband connection at home	9%	14%

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project February-April survey of 4,001 adults (2,822 were internet users); August 2006 survey of 2,928 adults (1,990 were internet users and 972 were asked the podcast downloading question). Margin of error is ±2% the total sample and ±2% for internet users in the Feb.-Apr. 2006 survey. Margin of error is ±2% for the total sample and ±3.5% for the 972 internet users in the August 2006 survey.

iPod and MP3 Player Ownership

While an iPod or MP3 player is not necessary to listen to or view podcasts, the proliferation of mobile media gadgets has helped fuel the demand for digital content that can be both time-shifted and place-shifted for listening and viewing on-the-go. According to our February-April 2006 survey, 20% of American adults and 26% of internet users report ownership of an iPod or MP3 player. Young adults, those with broadband access and parents are considerably more likely to have an iPod or MP3 player.

Background

In both the August 2006 and February-April 2006 survey, we asked a new podcast downloading question of *all internet users*, rather than only asking the question of those who owned iPods or MP3 players (as we did in a previous report released in April 2005). This new method allows us to capture users who might download podcasts to their computer, but do not necessarily have a portable player. Since our 2005 report, podcast listening and viewing have become more accessible to the average user – in part, because newer versions of the popular iTunes Music Store incorporate an easy way for a casual user to sample, download and subscribe to free podcast content.[2] Other popular podcast directories include Podcast Alley and Podcast.net.

Another change instituted with this new wording is the inclusion of a reference to podcast downloads that one can listen to or *view*, which allows us to capture the larger universe of those who have experience downloading a podcast of any kind.

About the Pew Internet & American Life Project

The Pew Internet Project is a non-partisan, non-profit research center that examines the social impact of the internet. It is part of the Pew Research Center and is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

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[2] iTunes 4.9 was released by Apple in June 2005 and was the first version of the software to provide a large directory of free podcasts for users to listen to, view or subscribe to through the iTunes Store.

August 2006 Daily Tracking Survey

Revised Final Topline   10/05/06

Data for August 1 – 31, 2006

Princeton Survey Research Associates International
for the Pew Internet & American Life Project

Sample: *n* = 2,928 adults 18 and older
Interviewing dates: 8.1.06 – 8.31.06
Margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points for results based on the full sample [n=2,928]
Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for results based on internet users [n=1,990]

WEB1 Please tell me if you ever use the internet to do any of the following things. Do you ever use the internet to…/Did you happen to do this **yesterday**, or not?[3]

Based on Form A internet users [N=972]

	TOTAL HAVE EVER DONE THIS	---------- DID YESTERDAY	HAVE NOT DONE THIS	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
Download a podcast so you can listen to it or view it at a later time				
Current	12	1	88	1
Feb-April 2006	7	1	92	1

Methodology

The primary data reported in this memo come from a survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International between August 1, 2006 and August 31, 2006. For results based adult internet users (n=972), the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The sample for the surveys is a random digit sample of telephone numbers selected from telephone exchanges in the continental United States. The random digit aspect of the sample is used to avoid "listing" bias and provides representation of both listed and unlisted numbers (including not-yet-listed numbers). The design of the sample achieves this representation by random generation of the last two digits of telephone numbers selected on the basis of their area code, telephone exchange, and bank number. The response rate for the August 2006 survey was 28%.

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[3] Prior to January 2005, question wording was "Please tell me if you ever do any of the following when you go online. Do you ever…?/Did you happen to do this yesterday, or not?"