Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts - Papers | Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts

2016

How podcasting is changing the audio storytelling genre

Siobhan McHugh
University of Wollongong, smchugh@uow.edu.au

How podcasting is changing the audio storytelling genre

Abstract

This article explores the impact of the post-2014 podcast resurgence on nonfictional audio storytelling formats. The empirical study comprises themed commentary by five significant US, European and Australian editors who commission and produce audio documentaries and features for broadcast and/or podcast. The article provides insights into the changing role played by public broadcasters, the growth of independent podcast networks and the perceived differences between radio and podcasting as a mode of delivering and receiving audio content. Of particular significance is the belief of senior commissioning editors that podcasting is fomenting a new, more informal, genre of audio narrative feature centred on a strong relationship between host and listener, with content that is 'talkier' and less crafted. The US audio storytelling podcast sector is growing fast, and much of it has links to a public media ethos, but how to resource it without compromising its editorial independence remains unresolved.

How podcasting is changing the audio storytelling genre

Siobhán McHugh, University of Wollongong

Abstract

This article explores the impact of the post-2014 podcast resurgence on non-fictional
audio storytelling formats. The empirical study comprises themed commentary by
five significant US, European and Australian editors who commission and produce
audio documentaries and features for broadcast and/or podcast. The article provides
insights into the changing role played by public broadcasters, the growth of
independent podcast networks and the perceived differences between radio and
podcasting as a mode of delivering and receiving audio content. Of particular
significance is the belief of senior commissioning editors that podcasting is fomenting
a new, more informal, genre of audio narrative feature centred on a strong relationship
between host and listener, with content that is 'talkier' and less crafted. The US audio
storytelling podcast sector is growing fast, and much of it has links to a public media
ethos, but how to resource it without compromising its editorial independence
remains unresolved.

Keywords

podcasting

audio storytelling

Serial

Radiotopia

public broadcasting

This American Life

Introduction

As is well documented (Quirk 2015: 9–10; Berry 2015), the confluence of two events in October 2014 had a significant impact in media circles: the launch by Apple of a native podcast app that made it much easier to download a podcast direct to an iOS mobile device and the publication of a spin-off of American storytelling show *This American Life* (*TAL*) (1995-present), a serialized, podcast-first true-crime investigation called *Serial* (2014). *Serial* blended *TAL*'s fast-paced, host-led narrative techniques with the suspenseful episodic delivery of popular television formats such as *House of Cards* (2013-present) (Baschieri 2015), and this, combined with the coincidental advent of the Apple podcast app, extended its appeal to new audiences beyond the already sizeable *TAL* listenership (*TAL*, 2016). As listeners in the online community debated the unfolding mystery in forums such as Reddit, and media interest in what was dubbed 'the *Serial* effect' grew, *Serial* reached a million downloads per episode in a mere four weeks, and by October 2015 the show had been downloaded over 90 million times (Quirk 2015: 9). Media attention to podcasting post-*Serial* saw listicles of 'Best Podcasts' proliferate (Anon. 2015b, 2015a, 2015c). *The New Yorker* claimed that podcasting was 'humanising the news' (Larson 2015).

Larson (2015) further suggested that podcasting-as-audio-storytelling occupied a post-public radio space in the United States: 'Creators of podcasts, which are largely unregulated and independently funded, have been free to make up their own rules and to try new things in ways that public-radio journalists historically have not'. But as arts journalist Laura Jane Standley noted, few other commentators on the 'rise of podcasting' grappled with trying to define what sort of cultural artefact a 'podcast' actually is: 'The cumulative effect is a massive piling on of audio content without a governor. It's Lord of the Flies up in here, and no one has the conch' (2015). This article attempts to address that gap. Focusing on podcasts whose content can be termed non-fictional audio storytelling, it will ask, via a discussion with five key industry figures in Europe, Australia and the United States, whether and how podcasting is changing this genre.

The podcast ecology

In line with the Internet's 'long tail' effect (Anderson 2007), producers of podcasts cater to a 'market of multitudes' (Anderson 2007:5). Podcasters can range from hobbyists who deliver a rambling monologue on their favourite topic heard by a few dozen people, to investigative journalists or narrative storytellers who create well researched and carefully crafted programmes, which are often available as both podcasts and broadcasts and can have many thousands of downloads a month, or more. These latter formats, commonly called 'documentaries', 'features' or 'documentary features' as defined below, are the subject of this article.

Podcasting as a technology dates back to 2004 and key aspects of its short history have been addressed in the scholarly literature (Bottomley 2015; Madsen and Potts 2010; Menduni 2007). Bonini traces the development of podcasting over a decade 'as a cultural practice of producing and consuming digital sound content' (2015: 1) and points to the dearth of scholarly research on podcasting. Of fourteen papers he locates, some focus on podcasting's links to radio and public broadcasting (Madsen 2009; Murray 2009; Sellas 2012) and digital media potential (Berry 2006; Dubber 2013). McClung and Johnson examine the motivations of podcast producers (2010), while others investigate audience listening practice (Markman 2012; Markman and Sawyer 2014) and the economics of producing podcasts (Gallego Pérez 2012; Fernández Sande 2015). Since Bonini, both *JRAM* (2015) and *TRJ* (this issue) have devoted a special issue to podcasting. The former contains seven articles arising from a symposium which address aspects of podcasting from form and content to technology and uptake. The discussant, Kris Markman, notes that 'the freedom of podcasting is the freedom to release a product out into the wilds of the Internet, and watch what happens' (2015: 242). She reflects:

> […] what may make podcasting successful is not its status as a radio
> disruptor (as some of the early discourse predicted), but rather as a
> platform that has breathed new life into established, and in some cases
> largely forgotten tropes and forms. (Markman 2015: 241)

This article engages in an exploratory manner with Markham's suggestion that podcasting may be revitalizing established forms (the radio documentary and feature). As background, it should be noted that while academic research on podcasting may

thus far be limited, considerable data has been gathered by media research groups such as the Pew Research Center, Nieman Lab at Harvard University and the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University. Longitudinal research on podcast audiences has been undertaken by market research companies such as PodTrac and Edison Research, which recently noted a surge in monthly podcast listenership from 17 per cent to 21 per cent of Americans (Edison Research 2016). Technology-focused companies such as Clammr, Acast and Spreaker also accumulate podcast data and journalism outlets display keen interest, generally focusing on either podcasting's monetizing potential, or the latest hit show (Standley 2015). Finally, a flurry of podcast-curators has emerged, whereby self-appointed 'experts' and enthusiasts post online recommendations and commentary on the evolving podcast scene. Among the most notable are the *Hot Pod* newsletter founded by independent media consultant Nick Quah; *The Timbre*, an online podcast review publication; *Podster*, a new magazine about podcasting; and, inevitably, a podcast review of podcasts, *Sampler* (2015-present).

Brief history of audio storytelling formats

Serial would consolidate what Bonini calls 'the "second age" of podcasting': the boom in independent narrative formats informed by the editorial values and production expertise of public service media, and produced increasingly by breakaway former US public radio producers, funded through a mixture of sponsorship, listener donations and crowdfunding (Bonini 2015: 25–26). It is this niche area of podcasting – the crafted or narrative audio storytelling genre – with which this article is concerned. The genre has its origins long before the advent of

podcasting. Indeed the first 'radio features' emerged at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in the 1920s and 1930s. These were imaginative audio works that blended 'actuality' (ambient sound, recorded outside the studio) with narrated information usually delivered by actors, so that as Madsen points out (2013: 127), they 'often sounded more like radio drama than what we today consider "documentary" […] It was rare to hear unrehearsed or spontaneous voices or more than illustrative actuality before the early 1960s[…]'. In the United States, CBS's *Columbia Workshop*, begun in 1936, launched Norman Corwin's long career as a leading exponent of radio works that 'combined elements of documentary realism with poetry, drama, soaring music and hortatory address to great effect and widespread popularity' (Hilmes 2013: 52). Even in this era, there was cross-pollination. Corwin's 1944 docudrama, or folk cantata, *The Lonesome Train* (CBS, 1944), about the transportation of Abraham Lincoln's corpse to his hometown, was heard as a Decca recording by BBC producer Charles Parker. It strongly influenced the seminal BBC Radio Ballads he designed in conjunction with singer-songwriter and activist Ewan MacColl and musical virtuoso Peggy Seeger (Crook 2014). In Australia, sound-rich radio features had been broadcast on the Australian Broadcasting Commission since the late 1940s, when writer Colin Simpson included natural sounds like a buffalo hunt and a mass flight of geese in a 1949 series *Australian Walkabout* (MacGregor 2011). But, just as with the 'golden age of podcasting' (Berry 2015), technology would have a huge impact on the evolution of the radio feature and documentary form. Portable magnetic tape recorders became widely available in the 1960s, replacing bulky disc recorders and unreliable wire recorders; audio makers such as the German producer Peter (Leo) Braun grasped the revolutionary opportunities they offered.

My God, what a feeling of liberation! We no longer wrote about a subject,

we recorded the subject itself. We were acoustic cameras, shooting our

sound material in the wild, then combining it into productions. We called

these documentary works 'acoustic films'. ([1999] 2004: 4)

Braun's 'acoustic films' would become a recognizable genre of highly crafted long-

form audio works, still practised today, particularly in Scandinavia, Germany, France,

Belgium, the Netherlands and Poland, but also in Australia, Canada and the United

Kingdom (Klimczak 2014). Such works, which will be denoted here the 'European'

feature, combine well-honed narrative structure or dramaturgy, storytelling through

sound 'scenes' and melded sounds; overall, they show a strong authorial

choreography of content or individual producer style comparable to that associated

with a film director. Madsen (2013: 130) describes this kind of audio feature as

'indicating authored long format documentary styled programs made specifically for

the audio medium'. These works are showcased at annual gatherings such as the

International Features Conference founded by Braun in 1975, the Prix Europa and the

Prix Italia, and are the subject of critical analysis in the journal *RadioDoc Review*

(*RDR*) (McHugh 2014). Meanwhile in Britain and Australia, from the 1970s a parallel

spectrum of long-form 'reality radio' programmes emerged, ranging from social

history documentaries (Arrow 2015) and investigative journalism to impressionistic

treatments of a topic, made to high multi-tracked audio production standards. Hendy

describes the range of this 'built' radio documentary format:

It is sometimes made by journalists, who regard it as a form of extended

current-affairs reportage. Yet it is also practised by producers who have

more aesthetic concerns, who might stress the creative dimensions of the

form, who will look for reality in less informational ways and through the

expressive or dramatic dimensions of a programme. (2009: 220)

The term 'radio documentary' evokes a less fluid, more factual format in the United

States, where from 1970, National Public Radio (NPR) inherited the genre (Hilmes

2013: 53). Its more turgid, educational associations via the early years of US public

radio led audio producer and author John Biewen to describe the form as 'sonic

brussels sprouts' (Biewen and Dilworth 2010: 3). To complicate nomenclature

further, British producers such as Alan Hall and Seán Street describe a hybrid they

call the 'documentary feature'. For Hall, this is a sound-rich work based on 'an "art"

that exists in linear time, occupying a territory that lies somewhere between the

concert hall and the cinema' (2010: 101). Street suggests that the 'documentary

feature' is distinguished by the personal mediation by the producer of content, a

quality that in one sense links back to the authored 'European' feature:

On one level the term documentary implies something born out of a

formal news-based journalism rather than an impressionistic sound world

which plays with facts rather than documenting them. A documentary

feature 'documents' the feature-maker's journey in coming to terms with

what he or she is trying to do or say. So it is not a document of the reality

– the subject – necessarily, it is a document of the maker as they try to

find their way through it. (2014: 5)

Seen through an American lens, this placing of the producer at the heart of the programme to personalize the narrative is easily recognized. As is well known, *TAL* began in 1995 when founder Ira Glass sought a way to create a more vernacular, narrative-driven, tightly mixed and host-led form of journalism than the rigid parameters of NPR in the United States then permitted (Hilmes 2013: 53). *TAL* and its public radio kindred spirit *Radiolab* (2002-present) have influenced a whole new generation of audio storytellers, both in and outside the United States (Lindgren 2014; Lindgren and McHugh 2013). The onset of transnational listening via podcasting and the Internet, and organizations such as the Third Coast International Audio Festival (TCIAF) in Chicago, founded in 2000 to celebrate 'sound-rich audio stories from around the world' (2016), have done much to cross-promote diverse production styles. But there are still recognizable cultural differences. *TAL*'s 'movies for radio' descriptor (*TAL*, 2016) sounds like Braun's 'acoustic films', but the densely narrated *TAL* style is nothing like the often slowly paced unfolding dramaturgy of a 'European' feature, in which there might be minimal narration, a collage of audio *vérité* scenes and diegetic use of music. To explore this range of approaches to long-form audio storytelling, Biewen invited acclaimed producers from the United States, Europe and Australia to reflect on their creative practice for an anthology, *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound* (J. Biewen and A. Dilworth, 2010). As he notes: 'All fit within the big stretchy tent that is radio documentary. By which I mean they use sound to tell true stories *artfully*' (Biewen and Dilworth 2010: 5, original emphasis). But when the golden age of podcasting meets the big stretchy tent that is radio documentary, what are the creative outcomes? That is a theme explored with Biewen and four other industry figures, below.

Methodology: Industry discussion

Five figures in the contemporary podcasting/ public broadcasting/audio storytelling landscape, from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Australia, were invited to comment on a range of topics as headlined, related to the impact of podcasting on the audio storytelling genre. They were selected because each plays a significant role in the podcast/broadcast ecology, as described below. All serve on the editorial board of the online journal, *RadioDoc Review* (2016), which is developing in-depth critical analysis of the audio feature and storytelling formats discussed in this article, and of which the author is founding editor. The term 'podcast' was used to refer to podcasts of the audio storytelling genre, interpreted as covering a spectrum from the 'American' style epitomized by *TAL* to the 'European' feature. The respondents are:

(1) John Biewen, Director of Audio, Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, freelance producer for *TAL* and for the BBC World Service, and co-editor of *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound* (2010), a critically acclaimed anthology of essays on audio feature making. In 2015, Biewen launched a podcast, *Scene On Radio* (*SOR*), billed as 'capturing the sounds of life happening and telling stories that explore human experience and American society'.

(2) Alan Hall, founder in 1999 of Falling Tree Productions, a UK-based production company. It describes itself as 'one of the world's leading radio production companies crafting award winning radio features, documentaries, audio tours and podcasts'

(Falling Tree Productions 2016). Hall is a former BBC producer and winner of numerous awards for crafted audio features, notably the Prix Italia.

(3) Leslie Rosin, Commissioning Editor, Radio Features, WestDeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), a regional public broadcasting service based in Cologne, Germany, part of the large federal ARD network. WDR produces around 50 'European' features per annum, of 30–60 minutes.

(4) Julie Shapiro, co-founder of the landmark Third Coast International Audio Festival (TCIAF) in Chicago in 2000. In 2014, Shapiro became Executive Producer (EP) of the newly formed Creative Audio Unit at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)'s RN, the Australian national broadcaster. In November 2015 she was appointed head of the prominent US podcaster network Radiotopia, founded February 2014. It describes itself as 'a curated network of extraordinary, story-driven shows' (Radiotopia 2016). Two years on, it has ten million downloads a month of its thirteen shows.

 (5) Claudia Taranto, co-executive producer of an Australian national four-day-a-week, 30-minute documentary/feature programme *Earshot* (2016), podcast and accompanying website, and a weekly 30-minute short features programme *PocketDocs* (2016). Taranto is also a multi-award-winning producer of crafted audio features.

Topic: Is podcasting 'just' time-shifted radio, or is a distinct genre emerging?

In broad terms, all five industry figures felt that podcasting was a different creature from radio, but unpicking how this manifests is not straightforward:

> I think the idea of podcasting is interpreted often as more casual, less rigorous [than radio]; in terms of craft, it's talkier. But on the other hand it can be braver and more playful and more experimental. So I think there is a liability to this concept that podcasting is different and there also is a real reward […] podcasting doesn't have to be different but I think makers do feel a little bit more liberty with the form, thinking of themselves as podcasters versus radio producers. (Shapiro 2016)

As a point of interest, Shapiro's reference to 'talkier' can also allude to a popular podcast format she calls a 'chumcast', in which two or more hosts riff off each other, chatting in a casual or rambunctious manner around a theme, making the listener feel included in a private no-holds-barred conversation. Examples are legion, from US outlet Slate's *Political Gabfest* (2005-present) in which three journalists discuss the week's events as though off-duty in a bar, to Buzzfeed's *Another Round* (2015-present), where hosts Heben Nigatu and Tracy Clayton 'cover everything from race, gender and pop culture to squirrels, mangoes, and bad jokes, all in one boozy podcast'. In Australia, two prominent female television journalists, Leigh Sales and Annabel Crabb, host the podcast *Chat 10 Looks 3* (2014-present), distinguished by its perversely poor audio quality and the chemistry between the women, who blend lighthearted banter on culture, food and friendship with insider references to the national political

landscape that is their workplace. Some shows, such as US network Gimlet

Media's *Reply All* (2016), are a hybrid form; hosts PJ Vogt and Alex Goldman

talk each other in and out of short crafted storytelling segments, sometimes with

the segment producer present. A particularly interesting aspect is the chumcast's

potential as an outlet for minority voices – see for example, Florini (2015) on

how black podcasters in the United States are challenging the 'whiteness' of

podcasting. With comedians also colonizing the 'chumcast', and given the

cheap production costs compared to labour-intensive crafted storytelling, this

format looks set to expand.

While the chumcast is in one sense just another manifestation of the audio

medium's oft-noted capacity for intimacy, Hall (2016) believes the podcast

format is inherently different from radio: 'as an opt-in medium, it has created a

new relationship/contract with the listener'. He notes the ambiguity of the very

term 'podcast': 'Essentially "podcast" describes a means of dissemination, but

that Means encourages new, still evolving Ends – different approaches to an

established genre […]a magazine not a novel, an LP not a concert performance'

(Hall 2016).

Like Hall, Taranto is intrigued by the listener-podcaster contract:

> The fact that a podcaster can and will turn you off or flick to another
>
> podcast or fast forward within your podcast at any moment is challenging.
>
> With radio, people are more likely to stick with something because there
>
> is more effort involved in leaning over and changing the station and also

there is usually nothing else on offer that the person wants to listen to

right at that moment. Because of this change I feel every minute of a story

now counts and must be engaging […] The counter argument to this is

that because people have gone to an effort to choose the podcast, they are

more likely to stick with it because they know and trust the brand and

have invested a little more in it. (2016b)

Taranto (2016a) notes that only 10 per cent of the listens to her RN feature

programmes are via podcast. Her team is experimenting to see if they can make the

broadcast version more podcast-friendly:

For radio you are talking into the space of a room or a car – you need to

fill that space with your voice. For a podcast you are talking into an ear

canal – it's a smaller space so you must be more familiar and relaxed.

Biewen's experience as a veteran of mainstream broadcasting and a pioneer of

podcasting via his *SOR* show supports the idea that an audio work produced as a

podcast operates under a different paradigm from a broadcast piece. He attributes this

to a mixture of podcasting being unregulated, opt-in and unmediated.

A podcast does feel like a different animal, though in fairly subtle ways.

The lack of bleeping, yes. […] Another difference is the intimacy that

comes with knowing your listeners have deliberately chosen your show;

they've pressed click on the episode as opposed to having it show up

unbidden on their radio. That can mean less need for introductory and

contextual chatter. (I started with an 'audio logo' for *Scene On Radio*, one
designed in part to introduce the podcast and its mission, but shortened it
for episode 5 and abandoned it after 6). […] I'm a longtime
reporter/producer type, which means I've always had to shape the tone
and sound of my work to fit other people's radio shows, and suddenly I'm
the host. I can write as casually (or not) as I want to; I can adopt a first-
person storytelling posture at times or make unattributed assertions, and
so on. (Biewen 2016)

Experimental storytelling forms have emerged to suit the podcast space, such as
Canadian producer Kaitlin Prest's "Movies In Your Head" (*Radio Smut, 2014)* which
'started out as a traditional documentary' but turned into a fictional representation of
falling in love, which won the inaugural 2015 Prix Italia Golden Award for New
Radio Formats (Prest 2015, Prix Italia 2016). Prest hosts *The Heart* (2015-present)
podcast at Radiotopia. But podcasting may also be constraining creativity, as makers
conform to popular formulas. Hall, for instance, is disappointed with the proliferation
of *TAL*-soundalikes in the podcasting world. (Gimlet Media's *StartUp* (2015-present)
and Radiotopia's *Criminal* (2014-present), for example, have a familiar talk-heavy
TAL-like feel.) Hall sees sound as being about much more than talk: 'a portal to
another world' in fact (2010: 98). He believes that 'sound – pure sound – is as potent
a substance as any carefully weighed word or well-chosen musical figuration.
Possibly even more potent. It should be used with care: No sound is innocent' (Hall
2010: 98). Hall does not believe that his creative preference, the 'European' feature, is
being served well by podcasting:

For a long time I'd assumed close earbud listening would mean people

would listen to speech content musically rather than informationally (this

is the psychologists' distinction between everyday and musical listening,

one driven by necessity, the other by desire) i.e. I'd thought highly

textured mixes and sophisticated narratives would thrive. Thus far, all the

evidence suggests I was wrong. Podcast listeners seem to want a

relationship with a presenter/host/story-teller rather than to immerse

themselves in a sea of story/sound/visceral experience. The hand-holding

host-driven linear narrative of *This American Life* dominates […] partly

because that's the most readily available model but also because of this

prosaic/everyday vs. poetic/musical binary. (Hall 2016)

Taranto (2016b) is ambivalent about the cult of the presenter referred to by Hall, and

its impact on Australian audio producers:

Over the last 10 years we have definitely moved closer to the American

style, telling more personal stories and using engaging writing from the

storyteller to tell that story. There is a simplicity and intimacy in that style

which makes it easy to listen to; it's a kind of hand-holding of the listener

and to be honest on a weekend when I'm wanting to be entertained and

not challenged I often prefer this style – *TAL* are masters of it. At its best

it can be moving and entertaining, involving a relaxed, familiar way of

talking to the audience. At its worst it's bossy, manipulative of the

interviewees and indulgent.

Topic: How is podcasting changing what is produced and who is producing it

As EP of Boston-based Radiotopia, Julie Shapiro is at the epicentre of emerging independent audio storytellers. She believes the last two years have seen the evolution of the hobbyist into the professional podcaster.

> Everything is in hyper-speed evolution […] I hear about new podcasts every week if not every day. I get pitched every day if not multiple times a day […] it's like a frenzy out there […] But you know there's also a kind of glut […] and being like The Next Big Thing – very quickly it's the Next Next Big Thing that's grabbing a moment of attention and at the top of everyone's lists. There's a lot of unoriginal work that's celebrated because it's brand new […] We're really keeping an ear out for original fresh content. And I feel like that's kind of the hallmark of what Radiotopia has always been about – content that makes its mark in its own way – it's provocative or challenging or generally in a positive way impactful. Deeply personal work – there isn't a ton of that out there. (Shapiro 2016)

Biewen's podcast series tend to be shorter duration (seventeen to 32mins), whereas the 'European' feature often runs to a full 60 minutes. Taranto (2016b) wonders if

podcasting signifies the decline of what she calls the 'lean-in listening' of the European style:

> It is generally more challenging to listen to – you have to work harder to put the pieces of the story together and you are often not rewarded for your hard work until the very end of the program, when the entire narrative and intentions of the program maker are revealed. […] As the American style of audio storytelling has proliferated, people are less prepared to lean-in for their listening.

Leslie Rosin of WDR unapologetically commissions audio works that demand attentive listening: '"The long breath", as we say, the time to explain a complex topic which has effects in different fields, is not as consumable as a hosted show [a podcast]' (2016). Given the time and effort dedicated to making such features, it is hardly surprising that WDR does not consider it audio-as-background, but a fully 'authored' creative work, some of which achieve critical acclaim in prestigious forums such as the Prix Europa and Prix Italia. Rosin explains the lengthy production process:

> An author [producer] works for about a year on a piece (from the idea until the broadcast). First an author has to send a synopsis to our department [to be approved] […]After that he/she starts researching and writing a script. Some authors need more guidance then others. After that we work together on the script. Some might have to do more recordings, more research etcetera. When the script is finished, the author has to edit

the sound files. All material goes to a director, who produces the final piece, usually taking five days [in studio] to produce a one-hour piece. (2016)

The WDR feature production process is worlds away from a typical podcasting schedule. The latter of course varies hugely according to podcast type, but to maintain audience, a storytelling podcast will usually 'drop' online on a weekly or fortnightly basis, sometimes prepared and presented by a solo producer. As with many new podcast series, Biewen gathered material in advance for several episodes prior to launching. He is sanguine about the pressure to keep up content, believing that if necessary, a podcast can absorb a less highly produced 'feel'.

> I launched *Scene On Radio [SOR]* with a six-part series, 'Contested', that I'd worked on for about a year ahead of the launch. I have a backlog of student work and my own CDS work that can be repurposed for *Scene On Radio*, and this allows me to keep the podcast going while I chip away at new episodes for the future. It will be interesting to see if my own work gets less time and less polish going forward because of the pressure /temptation to get it out on that bi-weekly podcast. That would not necessarily be a horrible outcome. I won't mind if some *SOR* episodes are less well-rounded and polished, are truly slices of life or scenes that are vivid to listen to but are not necessarily tied to a larger 'issue' or placed in a traditional documentary context.

Topic: Does podcasting offer a new model for the relationship between listener and audio show host? And how are editorial values affected by monetizing this?

As SOR reporter, Biewen is a low-key presence. This defies the current 'host-led' podcast form which seeks to build strong audience recognition around the podcast presenter, be it Roman Mars from Radiotopia's *99% Invisible* (2010-present), Alex Blumberg from Gimlet Media's *StartUp*, or the originator of it all, Ira Glass from *TAL*. Shapiro (2016) believes the host–listener relationship in podcasting is one to watch:

> It's very personal in a way that hosts are really forming relationships in new ways with their listeners. It is also a very case-by-case basis. Because a lot of the podcasters who I talk with really hope to be featured on radio shows and that often feels like a gateway to legitimacy – having that leg up. […] While at the same time the truth of the matter is that audiences Beyond Public Radio are vast and that's what's very exciting to me. We're not operating in the same public media bubble that we always had been. I mean a lot of what we do is still geared towards those audiences and I certainly value them tremendously but the really exciting thing is that the field can grow. Literally grow, in ways that it can't on just the broadcast radio.

Radiotopia pioneered new funding models for a podcasting network through kickstarter crowdfunding campaigns (Bonini 2015: 25) and in 2015 it attracted a significant endowment of $1 million from the Knight Foundation. It also relies on a

now familiar set of podcast sponsors, from mattress-makers to mail services. Its most recent funding round offered high-donating listeners a chance to have input into shaping Radiotopia's future – and to Shapiro's surprise, 100 donors took up the opportunity. The editorial and creative implications of having listener-shaped content and host-read advertising are still unclear. Given that PRX, the company that co-founded Radiotopia with Roman Mars, is 'through and through a company dedicated to the values of public media', Shapiro (2016) admits it is a thorny issue.

> There's a larger conversation going on about how all of the money is affecting core public radio values. And what happens when a lot of people go explore these new more creative, freer ways of making work. […] There are principles that podcasters came to the network with. There's also a sense that, like, you do what you're comfortable doing so you can continue to do your art.

But is it art, or journalism? That is another grey area in contemporary podcast audio storytelling. If the latter, the legacy of public radio weighs heavily. Jay Allison, a revered figure who has been at the heart of US public radio for four decades, has expressed strong misgivings about podcasting's blurring of lines between content and paid copy: 'It messes with their [podcasters'] identities. Public radio has incubated human-scale sensibilities that are honest and real and even good-hearted. Advertisers are trading on this' (Allison 2015). Allison's remarks came in response to a furore that erupted after Ira Glass, the other guru of American public radio, stated that 'Public radio is ready for capitalism' (Adage 2015). One post-public radio podcast network, Gimlet Media, has embraced advertising with gusto, creating lucrative

customized slots performed by hosts (Quirk 2015:38). Shapiro (2016) says the issue is ongoing at Radiotopia:

> We think a lot about what we're for, who we're for, how are we different, what makes us feel proud and special about what we're doing. It comes down a lot to Roman [Mars]'s kind of punk rock ethos really when he teamed up with PRX to bring Radiotopia into being – supporting the independent makers that are out there […] to express themselves and make their best work […] It's why they're with us. It's the independence – we don't own the work.

> Our podcasters have been experimenting with having these personal relationships to the sponsors and sponsors' products. Sometimes there's more creative approaches where they get very playful. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. There's been some internal backlash where people go 'forget it – I just want to read it straight' […] so it's really clear, 'hey, this is just talk about paying the bills' […] I do feel that people [listeners] understand, it's free material and it doesn't grow on trees. […] No one loves it. Listeners don't love hearing it. Podcasters don't love talking about companies before they start, but I think there's a real sense that like this is the reality. And this is how we make it work and it's actually working great.

Topic: How will podcast-first content compete with public broadcasters' programming?

The impetus of needing to raise revenue sets the US podcasting world apart from regions with older, robust public service broadcasters, such as Europe, Canada and Australia. Although many public broadcasting organizations face funding cuts, they are still well established on the media landscape. This makes podcasting more of a niche activity in the United Kingdom, according to Hall:

> Stand-out US shows like *Radiolab*, *99% [Invisible], Love+Radio*, *Mystery Show* (whether radio-originated or podcasts) are good despite – rather than because of – the climate for public radio in America. They've been passion-projects propelled forward on the most part by individuals, not funding structures or inspired commissioners. Whereas in the UK and much of Europe, broadcasting quality is high and still reasonably well funded – so, why would we need to invent a hobby like podcasting?! (2016)

Hall believes that the advertising content prominent on many US podcasts would not be acceptable to British listeners who are accustomed to quality, free programming, a view shared by radio critic Kate Chisholm (2016) of *The Spectator*, who described how ads diminished her interest in the popular podcast *Radiolab* (2002-present) and made her stop listening to others. As Hall concludes:

Until there's a funding model to compete with public radio

commissioning, UK podcasting will remain the preserve of the amateur

enthusiast, the self-supporting celebrity and the BBC's radio shows. For

any new network or platform to succeed professionally long-term, it'll

have to address not content issues (durations, topics, voices) but revenue

collection.

But does that mean that feature producers elsewhere are largely ceding the potential

that podcasting might hold as a new creative genre to the United States? Not

necessarily. In Germany, home-produced podcasts of the audio feature type are

overwhelmingly repeat downloads of broadcast content, with access restricted to

between a week and a year. Rosin believes that 'complex choreographed audio

storytelling will survive, but I am not so sure about the working conditions for that'.

There is no thriving freelance German podcast storytelling scene such as in the United

States and Rosin observes that those locally produced works that go podcast-first,

being under-resourced, tend to be poorer quality. 'I do miss sometimes a corrective, a

guiding hand for the pieces. Our complex production system with an author, an editor,

a director and sometimes even a composer is – not always but mostly – also a

guarantee for quality' (Rosin 2016).

Besides funding models, Hall (2016) believes there are cultural barriers in the United

Kingdom to the growth of highly produced audio storytelling podcasts:

Serious news-gathering, reporting and analysis is the principal purpose of

the licence-funded BBC; entertainment (drama, comedy, quizzes) follows,

with the authored documentary or crafted feature as an awkward relative
of the news doc – an after-thought, despite it being the best genre for
providing the third leg of Lord Reith's initial mission: to educate,
entertain and inform […] In the US the lines around broadcast journalism
are much more blurred. Most people there work on 'stories' and think of
themselves as journalists, it seems to me, whereas here there's a sense in
some [BBC] Broadcasting House circles that *Serial* is an entertainment
series or story-telling, rather than proper, robust BBC-quality journalism.

John Biewen is an unusual player in the podcast ecology. Stylistically his productions
are a hybrid of US–European modes, in that they include 'sonic storytelling' via
ambient sound and scenes as well as narration. His position at Duke University
supports his audio production to an extent, giving him more financial freedom than a
self-supporting freelancer. It is interesting therefore to examine on what grounds he
has recently switched from producing for well-known outlets such as *TAL* to
making the *SOR* podcast. After only a few months, he says the editorial and
creative benefits of the latter are clear to him:

My decision to start a podcast indicates that the scales had tipped for me,
that liberation from broadcast gatekeepers and formats outweighed the
advantages they bring. The only downside in the shift – and it is a big one,
at least in these early, start-up stages – is the loss of audience numbers.
My podcast episodes are reaching listeners in the low thousands now
compared to perhaps several million on the biggest broadcast outlets. On
the other hand, the freedom to produce work in the tone and at the length

that I choose is priceless. There are very few radio shows that still welcome long(er) form, documentary-style work, and the opportunities to get pieces on those shows (*TAL, UnFictional*) are few and far between. A podcast feels like a means to share what my organization [Center for Documentary Studies] does in audio, including work made by our students, in a vastly more direct and effective way. I would rather have a few thousand people hear a piece that I'm really proud of, that has room to breathe and unfold, than to have millions hear a three-minute piece cut down to a nub for *All Things Considered* [NPR current affairs show]. (Biewen 2016)

In Australia, while the ABC strongly espouses serious, 'straight' reportage of the BBC variety, its national radio channel, RN, has also had a distinguished tradition of nurturing innovative long-form audio features that feed the public imagination. Community radio stations offer alternative support to freelance producers and a new generation of younger producers, while still largely hobbyist, is hovering in the wings. Taranto (2016b) believes that audio storytelling podcasts hold great promise as emerging cultural artefacts.

It is inevitable that increasingly people will listen to more podcasts and less radio – this time-shifting has happened almost overnight in television and audio is bound to follow. […] People are clearly making time in their lives to listen to audio and so hopefully they will be prepared to be challenged in that time they've set aside, rather than being spoon-fed a consistent but predictable style of storytelling.

Conclusion

Based on the insights of five senior industry figures, this article has identified that 'podcasting' has come to mean much more than just a delivery mode for audio content. The term 'podcasting' functionally describes both the production and consumption of podcast content, which can be of infinite variety. In the podcast niche of audio storytelling, there is consensus that the American narrative style, described variously as 'hand-held', 'spoon-fed' and 'host-driven', is exerting a strong influence globally and undermining the popularity of the older 'European' or poetic style of crafted audio feature. Low-cost 'chumcasts' are a growing format, with potential to cater to minority groups. Regions with strong public broadcasting sectors lag in producing podcast-first formats. The US audio storytelling podcast sector is growing fast, and much of it has links to a public media ethos, but how to resource it without compromising its editorial independence remains unresolved.

References

Acast (2016), 'The Future of Podcasts', https://www.acast.com. Accessed 1 March 2016.

Adage (2015), 'Ira Glass: "Public Radio Is Ready for Capitalism"', 30 April, http://adage.com/article/special-report-tv-upfront/ira-glass-public-radio-ready-capitalism/298332/. Accessed 6 February 2015.

Allison, Jay (2015), 'Advertising, podcasting and public radio', http://transom.org/2015/advertising-podcasting-and-public-radio/. Accessed 5 February 2015.

Anderson, Chris. (2007), *The Long Tail: How Endless Choice is Creating Unlimited Demand*, London: Random House.

Anon. (2015a), 'The 50 best podcast episodes of 2015', *The Atlantic*, 22 December, http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/12/the-50-best-podcast-episodes-of-2015/421572/. Accessed 2 February 2016.

____ (2015b), 'The 25 Best Podcast Episodes by David Haglund and Rebecca Onion', *Slate*, 14 December, Everhttp://www.slate.com/articles/arts/ten_years_in_your_ears/2014/12/best_podcast_episodes_ever_the_25_best. Accessed 2 February 2016.

_____ (2015c), 'The 10 best podcasts and 10 best podcast episodes of 2015 by Nick Quah', *Vulture*, 11 December, http://www.vulture.com/2015/12/10-best-podcasts-2015.html. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Another Round (Heben Nigatu and Tracy Clayton; 2015, USA; Buzzfeed, www.buzzfeed.com/anotherround about. Accessed 3 March 2016).

Arrow, M. (2015), 'Invisible histories? History features on Australian radio', *Australian Historical Studies*, 46:3, pp. 440–53.

Baschieri, F. (2015), '9 takeaways for podcasters from the GEN Summit podcasting panel', *Spreaker*, 25 June, http://blog.spreaker.com/2015/06/25/9-takeaways-for-podcasters-from-the-gen-summit-podcasting-panel-2/. Accessed 5 February 2015.

The BBC Radio Ballads (Charles Parker, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger; 1957–1964, UK; BBC Radio 2, 8×60 mins, http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/radioballads/original/index.shtml. Accessed 1 March 2016).

Berry, Richard. (2006), 'Will the ipod kill the radio star? Profiling podcasting as radio', *Convergence*, 12:2, pp. 143–62.

_____ (2015), 'A golden age of podcasting? Evaluating serial in the context of podcast histories', *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 22:2, pp. 170–78.

Biewen, John. (2016), personal communication, 9 January, Durham, North Carolina..

Biewen, John. and Dilworth, A. (eds) (2010), *Reality Radio: Telling true Stories in Sound*, Chapel Hill, Durham, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Bonini, Tiziano. (2015), 'The "Second Age" of podcasting: Reframing podcasting as a new digital mass medium', *Quaderns del CAC 41*, 18 July, pp. 21–30.

Bottomley, Andrew. J. (2015), 'Podcasting: A decade in the life of a "New" audio medium: Introduction', *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 22:2, pp. 164–69.

Braun, P. L. ([1999] 2004), 'The genesis of the International Feature Conference', catalogue essay, *The IFC Collection: International Feature Conference, 30 Years Of International Radio Documentaries* (CD collection and historical notes), EBU-UER (European Broadcasting Union), Geneva, 6-8 June 2004.

Chat 10 Looks 3 (2015-present) Annabel Crabb and Leigh Sales.Australia.

http://www.chat10looks3.com. Accessed 2 March 2016.

Chisholm, K. (2016), 'The best – and worst – podcasts', *The Spectator*, 2 January, http://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/01/the-best-and-worst-podcasts/. Accessed 4 March 2016.

Clammr (2016), 'Clammr – share the best audio in 24 seconds or less', https://www.clammr.com/. Accessed 1 March 2016.

Criminal (2014-present). Phoebe Judge, USA Radiotopia, http://thisiscriminal.com. Accessed 10 March 2016.

Crook, Tim. (2014), 'Norman Corwin's The Lonesome Train (Live Broadcast) CBS 1944: A critical reflection', *RadioDoc Review*, 1:1, http://ro.uow.edu.au/rdr/vol1/iss1/6/. Accessed 10 March 2016.

Dubber, Andrew. (2013), *Radio in the Digital Age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Earshot (2015-present), Kirsti Melville, Australia; Australian Broadcasting Corporation, http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/. Accessed 5 February 2015.

Edison Research (2016), 'Monthly podcast consumption surges to more than one in five Americans', Blog post, 7 March, edisonresearch.com/monthly-podcast-consumption-surges-to-more-than-one-in-five-americans/. Accessed 8 March 2016.

Australian Walkabout (18 Jan 1949), 'Expedition to Arnhem Land' (Colin Simpson [writer] and John Thompson [producer], Australia; Australian Broadcasting Commission.

Falling Tree Productions (2016), 'falling tree', http://www.fallingtree.co.uk. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Fernández Sande, M. (2015), 'Radio Ambulante: Narrative radio journalism in the age of crowdfunding', in T. Bonini and B. MonClús (eds), *Radio Audiences and Participation in the Age of Network Society*, London: Routledge, pp. 176–94.

Florini, Sarah. (2015), 'The podcast "Chitlin'Circuit": Black podcasters, alternative media, and audio enclaves', *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 22:2, pp. 209–19.

Gallego Pérez, J. I. (2012), 'Podcasting in Spain: A new business model or a reflection of traditional radio?', *The Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 10:1, pp. 23–34.

Hall, Alan. (2010), 'Cigarettes and dance steps', in J. Biewen and A. Dilworth (eds), *Reality Radio: Telling true Stories in Sound*, Chapel Hill, Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press; in association with the Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University, pp. 96–107.

____ (2016), personal correspondence, 4 January, London.

The Heart (2014-the present), Kaitlin Prest, USA; Radiotopia, http://www.theheartradio.org Accessed 1March 2016.

Hendy, David. (2009), '"Reality Radio": The documentary', in A. Crisell (ed.), *Radio: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge, pp. 220–38.

Hilmes, Michele (2013), 'The new materiality of radio: Sound on screens', in Jason Loviglio and Michele Hilmes (eds), *Radio's New Wave: Global Sound in the Digital Era*, New York, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 43–61.

Hot Pod (2016), 'Hot Pod – News and Analysis on Podcasts and On-Demand Audio', http://www.hotpod.xyz. Accessed 1 March 2016.

House of Cards, (2013-present), Beau Willimon; USA; Netflix.

Klimczak, K. (2014), 'The power of reality: How radio documents stimulate listeners' imagination and emotions?', *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 4:8, pp. 486–95.

Larson, S. (2015), '"Serial", podcasts and humanizing the news', *The New Yorker*, 20 February, http://www.newyorker.com/culture/sarah-larson/serial-podcasts-humanizing-news. Accessed 6 February 2015.

Lindgren, M. (2014), '"This Australian Life": The Americanisation of radio storytelling in Australia', *Australian Journalism Review*, 36:2, pp. 63–75.

Lindgren, Mia and McHugh, Siobhan, (2013), 'Not dead yet: Emerging trends in radio documentary forms in Australia and the US', *Australian Journalism Review*, 35:2, pp. 101–13.

MacGregor, T. (2011), 'Birds on the wire: Wild sound, informal speech and the emergence of the radio documentary', in M. Thomas and M. Neale (eds), *Exploring the Legacy of the 1948 Arnhem Land expedition*, Canberra: ANU e-press, http://press.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Exploring+the+Legacy+of+the+1948+Arnhem+Land+Expedition/4421/ch05.xhtml. Accessed 4 March 2016.

Madsen, Virginia (2009), 'Voices-cast: A report on the new audiosphere of podcasting with specific insights for public broadcasting', *ANZCA09 Conference*

Proceedings, 'Communication, Creativity and Global Citizenship', Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology, pp. 1191–210, http://apo.org.au/node/20498. Retrieved 7 April 2016.

_____ (2013), '"Your ears are a portal to another world": The new radio documentary imagination and the digital domain', in J. Loviglio and M. Hilmes (eds), *Radio's New Wave: Global Sound in the Digital Era*, New York, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 126–44.

_____ and Potts, J. (2010), 'Voice-cast: The distribution of the voice via podcasting', in N. Neumark, R. Gibson and T. van Leeuwen (eds), *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media*, Cambridge, London: MIT Press, pp. 33–60.

Markman, Kris (2015), 'Considerations – reflections and future research. Everything old is new again: Podcasting as radio's revival', *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 22:2, pp. 240–43.

_____ and Sawyer, C. (2014), 'Why pod? Further explorations of the motivations for independent podcasting', *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 21:1, pp. 20–35.

_____. (2012), 'Doing radio, making friends, and having fun: Exploring the motivations of independent audio podcasters', *New Media & Society*, *14: 4*, pp. 547-565.

McClung, S. and Johnson, K. (2010), 'Examining the motives of podcast users', *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 17:1, pp. 82–95.

McHugh, S. (2014), 'RadioDoc review: Developing critical theory of the radio documentary and feature form', *Australian Journalism Review*, 36:2, pp. 23–35.

Menduni, E. (2007), 'Four steps in innovative radio broadcasting: From QuickTime to podcasting', *The Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 5:1, pp. 9–18.

Murray, Simone (2009), 'Servicing "self-scheduling consumers": Public broadcasters and audio podcasting', *Global media and Communication*, 5:2, pp. 197–219.

Nieman Lab (2016), 'Nieman Journalism Lab: Pushing to the Future of Journalism', www.niemanlab.org/. Accessed 1 March 2016.

Pew Research Center (2016), 'Numbers, Facts and Trends Shaping Your World', http://www.pewresearch.org. Accessed 1 March 2016.

PocketDocs (2015-present), Natalie Kestecher, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/pocketdocs/. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Podster (2016) http://www.shelfmediagroup.com/pages/podster.html. Accessed 8 March 2016.

Podtrac (2016), 'Premium Online Shows and Audiences', https://www.podtrac.com/. Accessed 1 March 2016.

Slate's Political Gabfest (2005-present), Emily Bazelon, John Dickerson and David Plotz; USA. http://www.slate.com/articles/podcasts/gabfest.html. Accessed 1 March 2016.

Prest, K. (2015), 'Kaitlin's Prix Italia acceptance video', https://www.facebook.com/theheartradio/posts/1298022853558879. Accessed 10 March 2016.

Prix Italia (2016), 'Prix Italia: Past Editions – Winners 1949-2010', http://www.prixitalia.rai.it/2010/pdf/WINNERS_1949-2010.pdf. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Quirk, V. (2015), 'Guide to podcasting', http://towcenter.org/research/guide-to-podcasting/. Accessed 2 February 2016.

RadioDoc Review (2016), 'RadioDoc Review', http://ro.uow.edu.au/rdr/. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Radiolab (2002-present) Jad Abumbrad and Robert Krulwich, USA; WNYC Studios, www.radiolab.org. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Reply All (2014-present) P. J. Vogt and Alex Goldman, USA; Gimlet Media, https://gimletmedia.com/show/reply-all/. Accessed 1 March .

Rosin, L. (2016), personal correspondence, 15 January, Cologne, Germany.

*Sampler (*2015-present), USA, Gimlet Media. https://gimletmedia.com. Accessed 1 February 2016.

Scene On Radio (2015-present) John Biewen, USA, Centre for Documentary Studies, Duke University, http://podcast.cdsporch.org. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Sellas, T. (2012), 'A two-dimensional approach to the study of podcasting in Spanish talk radio stations', *The Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, 10:1, pp. 7–22.

Serial (2014-present)Sarah Koenig, USA; Chicago Public Media, https://serialpodcast.org/. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Shapiro, J. (2016), personal correspondence, 4 February, Boston, Massachusetts.

Standley, L. J. (2015), 'Let's talk about podcasts', *The Timbre*, 19 October,

http://thetimbre.com/lets-talk-about-podcasts/. Accessed 2 February 2016.

StartUp (2015-present) Alex Blumberg, USA; Gimlet Media,

https://gimletmedia.com/show/startup/. Accessed 12 February 2016.

Street, S. (2014), 'Poetry, Texas: Review 1', *RadioDoc Review*, 1:1,

http://ro.uow.edu.au/rdr/vol1/iss1/4/. Accessed 4 March 2016.

Taranto, C.   (2016a), 'Impact of podcasting on audio producers' (survey),

SurveyMonkey, 25 January.

_____ (2016b), personal correspondence, 25–26 January, Sydney, Australia.

The Timbre (2016), 'The Timbre – Podcast Reviews and Discussion',

http://thetimbre.com. Accessed 1 March 2016.

Third Coast Audio International Festival (2016), 'Celebrating the Best Audio Stories

Produced Worldwide for Radio and the Internet', http://www.thirdcoastfestival.org.

Accessed 2 February 2016.

This American Life (1995-present)*,* "About Us." http://www.thisamericanlife.org/about. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Tow Center for Digital Journalism (2016), 'Tow Center for Digital Journalism', http://towcenter.org. Accessed 1 March 2016.

Westdeutschen Rundfunks (WDR) (2016), 'WDR Hörspielspeicher – Hörspiel – Radio-WDR', http://www1.wdr.de/radio/hoerspielundfeature/hoerspielundfeature124.html. Accessed 2 February 2016.

99% Invisible (2010-present) Roman Mars, USA; Radiotopia, http://99percentinvisible.org. Accessed 2 February 2016.

Contributor details

Dr Siobhán McHugh is Senior Lecturer in Journalism at the University of Wollongong. Her research examines critical analysis of audio storytelling and podcast genres and the affective power of voice, drawing on the fields of radio journalism and oral history scholarship. She also undertakes high-impact practice-based research such as radio documentary, a field in which she has won international awards. She is Founding Editor of the first journal of critical analysis of the audio documentary form, *RadioDoc Review (http://ro.uow.edu.au/rdr/).*

Contact:

School of Arts, English and the Media, University of Wollongong, New South Wales

2522, Australia.

E-mail: smchugh@uow.edu.au