



PODCAST **guide**



forus

making A PODCAST

DIY podcast

Much like the Youtube boom in the early 2000's, podcasts are having their moment. Today they represent a creative way for activists and movements to generate awareness and reach new ears. At Forus we have developed with - and learned from - several activists and organisations storytelling techniques on how to create an engaged podcast series (and why!). In this guide you will find tips on the technical side of things but also on ethical storytelling and participative approaches to podcasting. Whose voice are you bringing forward, why and how?

how to use this guide

This guide is a synergic document that grows with new inputs deriving from new and old collaborations. It is divided into 3 parts - the first one focuses on podcast approaches, the second one on practices applied to podcasting, and the third one on the softwares and hardwares that can be used to make podcasting accessible and "DIY".



**I SEE PODCASTING
AS A REALLY**

**RICH MEDIUM FOR ACTIVISTS,
AND I THINK THEY
USE IT THAT WAY
BECAUSE, TO ME,**

PODCASTING IS STILL A DEEPLY DIY PLATFORM.

- Amelia Hruby, creator and host of
the podcast Fifty Feminist States.

approaches HOW?



1

Podcasting harnessing the power of the voice.

When COVID hit and some of us turned to teleworking certain type of technologies opened up new opportunities for storytelling. The digital realm creates barriers for many, but also opens up new forms of collaborations and can make the world of words more interconnected. All of a sudden with Zoom for instance, people started to record their own conversations and organising webinars online making these spaces of discussion in certain cases much more accessible - or rather audible. Distance became obsolete. Movements for change and justice come alive in the mouths of activists, and with streets still largely off-limits, podcasts - like "pirate radios"- can create a new dimension to share ideas and tactics.

2

Podcasts for personal and collective change.

We have come across beautiful examples of storytelling in the forms of podcasts. Our friend Spoon Jackson for instance, features in the Uncuffed a show made by people behind bars in California prisons. They share intimate stories of our struggles and triumphs, and of the heartache and forgiveness taking place within prison walls. Uncuffed is vulnerable and personal. Forus created a multilingual DIY podcast using Zoom to activists and civil society organisations from all over the globe - from Nepal to Morocco and Denmark. The series explores themes ranging from climate justice to protecting the lives of frontline activists and gender dynamics. Like every storytelling practice, what matters is the approach, the process, and the connections that one weaves in the different stages - from discussing the topics, to contacting speakers, developing a script, to conducting the interviews, recording, editing and sharing it.

3

How to start?

A collective brainstorming. Share ideas and debate. What topics do you want to approach? Who will be the host? Is it going to be a podcast in the form of interviews? Do you want to have 2 hosts in conversation with each other? Who does the recording, who edits? Some useful initiatives:

- Do you have a potential audience you could send a short survey to before starting to produce the different episodes? This can help to select topics in a more "democratic" and participative way.
- Prepare a list of podcasts you like and detail what you like about them (the tone? the interview format etc.)

4

Podcasts as beginnings

Podcasts can be seen as a tool to start larger, more in-depth collective conversations. Access to extra information about specific episodes are often hard to find, because they are not collected in one space. One could:

- Create an Instagram page providing extra content.
- Create a micro-website to share knowledge and add extra resources.
- Organise a webinar or Q&A session with speakers for each episode to keep the conversation going.

podcast STRUCTURE

JINGLE

Start your podcast episode with a tune. Your tune can be connected to the theme of your podcast - for instance if you are developing a podcast on climate justice, you could use nature sounds or protest sounds in your jingle.

PRE-INTRO

Your intro will tell new listeners **who you are**, but most importantly, it will tell your listeners why your podcast is intended for them. Your intro should include:

- Presentation of the host/hosts
- Presentation of the movement or organisation you represent
- Presentation of your concept - what is your podcast about? Why this specific topic?

This section can be the same or with just slightly alterations for each episode.

In case your episode includes sensitive content, make sure to add a disclaimer before the intro such as: "Please note that this episode contains depictions of violence that some people may find disturbing." It can also be helpful to let people know what portion of the episode to skip if needed. For example, "If you want to avoid this content, skip the second half of the episode ." OR "This podcast is created for adult audiences only. Our show notes contain content warnings and other helpful info. As an extra heads-up, this episode involves discussion of depression and self-harm, we do our best to hold these topics with intention and sincerity, and we hope you'll join us whenever you feel ready and able."

INTRO

In this section you can **introduce the theme of the episode** and your interviewees. You can include information such as:

- Why you decided to tackle a certain topic and why now?
- Provide as much contextual details as possible, remember this is not a visual medium so use storytelling to make the listeners "see"
- What listeners can expect from the episode
- Introduction of first speaker - who they are, why they have been chosen to participate and any other interesting info
- Depending on your podcast format here you can "freestyle", ask questions, start discussions and get into the groove.

podcast STRUCTURE

OUTRO



In your outro, you should direct your listeners to a specific **call to action**. This includes:

- A wrap-up of the episode - main themes discussed, what came out of it
- Where people can find additional info - a website, an instagram page, a report etc.
- The theme of the next episode or a little teaser
- A discussion question for the potential audience (e.g. what do you think of online activism? Share your ideas on the comments section below).

EXTRA CONTENT



- You could also include **special segments**, like rapid fire questions, or a quiz that you play with your guests from time to time.
- Before episode 1 goes live, you might want to **record a trailer** as well. Trailers are a great tool to launch your podcast but they're also an essential logistical step to be approved on Apple Podcasts and other podcast directories.
- Your podcast trailer can be divided into several episodes - it can be short and can include a short introduction to you and your co-hosts, what your listeners can expect, and a few short clips from the first episodes of your podcast. Finally, make sure you include a call to action or redirect listeners towards other resources if necessary.
- **Create a website or instagram page specifically for your podcast** or add a section on your already-existing website - this can become a platform to share extra content, engage your new audience, add extras and show the behind the scenes of your podcast production. Make sure you include pictures, articles, blog posts, visuals and any extra content.
- With the extras from your interviews you can **write blog posts**, media articles or turn them into social media content
- You can **transcribe your episodes** for people struggling with disabilities to make your podcast more accessible
- Transcribing your episode also allows you to **translate the content** or to redirect listeners to specific section of the episode in the description field
- Use a **micro-website or social media** to promote the work of your speakers if they mention it during the episode or if relevant to your discussion topic - for instance a report, an article or a short documentary.

podcast FORMATS



1

The interview podcast format

An interview style show features a host (or more) who interview new guests in each episode who bring their expertise and experience. After a brief guest introduction, the host takes over asking questions to guide the conversation around the episode's topic working to unpack their stories and lessons. Since each guest is different, in case you have multiple interviewees, it's best to stick to a central theme to keep your podcast episode cohesive.

PROS

- Your guests do most of the talking. You have to steer the conversation.
- It sounds like a legitimate conversation and you can use the extra content for episode promotion, blog posts etc.
- Opens your show to a new audience and insights through your guests.
- Your show gains access to a variety of viewpoints and opinions, which stimulates discussion and adds value for your listener.

CONS

- Finding a new guest for each episode takes a lot of work.
- If you interview someone over Skype or Zoom, you're at the mercy of your connection.
- In some sense, you rely on your guests' ability to entertain and deliver information. Your episode will suffer if they're difficult, inarticulate, or boring, (unless you can compensate).

2

The solo and the conversational podcast formats

This podcast format is fairly common. It's used by people who have a specific kind of expertise they want to share. There isn't much fanfare or setup. You simply talk into a microphone with your script. The conversational format involves two people having a straightforward conversation who generally have great chemistry together. In many cases, each host will play a specific role in the conversation. One might report the news snippet while the other provides commentary.

PROS

- Everything happens on your own schedule and at your own pace. Your audience comes to know you intimately.

CONS

- You don't have anyone to bounce ideas off (unless you have a team behind the scenes) or help you promote.



There are no rules, you can make a "cocktail" out of these different podcast formats.

podcast FORMATS



IDEAS

3

Documentary podcast format

Documentary or non-fictional stories are podcast episodes that include "live-action" and audio reportages. You might dive into a rural village and interview the inhabitants include ambient sounds - or it can be about doing a vox pop during a conference. You can tackle one theme or "story" per episode or span your story across an entire series.

PROS

- This podcast format is highly immersive and "emotional"
- You can splice in other audio elements, like news broadcasts or environmental sounds to enhance the experience
- You find your speakers mostly "on the ground" and can interview them with equipment such as a zoom mic or lavalier
- It's more "natural" and it can be well combined with other formats to create a deeper experience.

CONS

- It's hard to stick to a consistent publishing schedule because some episodes take longer than others to produce
- This is a rewarding yet laborious and time consuming format, especially when it comes to research.

"Welcome to [podcast name], where we discuss [podcast topic or tagline]. I'm [host name], and with me is [co-host name]. Today, we'll be talking about [episode topic] with our special guest, [guest name]. Let's get started!"

"Our guest today is [guest name]. They are a [insert role, title, experience] with a passion for _____. They're going to share with us [episode topic]. Hi, [guest first name]! Thanks so much for joining us!"

"Want to ask a question on a future episode of [podcast name]? Send us a message or DM us on instagram! [Outro music]."

[Over outro music]: "This podcast was created by [name]. It was produced and recorded by [name], researched by [name], and edited by [name]. [Podcast name] is a product of [studio name]."

Extra resources

- [Forus ComsForUs working_group_presentation_on_videomaking_and_podcasts.](#)
- [EngageMedia resources on recording a video podcast](#)

podcast

ANALYSIS



En Périphérie

EN PÉRIPHÉRIE (FR)

- Good use of voice-over on multilanguage interviews
- A single "impartial" host who provides in depth analysis complementing the interviews.



FEMMES ET FRONTIÈRES (FR)

- One theme at a time. Use of personal and intimate stories of women with the use of interview snippets.



EUTOPIA (FR)

- Documentary style
- The host travels to various locations to interview inspiring communities - a sort of audio reportage full of verbal descriptions that accompany listeners throughout the podcast series.

podcast

ANALYSIS



WE BELONG (EN)

- Interesting use of social media to complement the episodes
- The podcast is just the "first step" to advocate for the rights of women and migrants across Europe.



EUROPARAMA (EN)

- Use of storytelling, semi-fictional approach.
- Heavily scripted promotion that sounds almost like an audio drama.
- Innovative concept and great teaser.



A SPACE FOR US (MULTILINGUAL)

- Podcast with episodes in different languages.
- Each episode has a different host chosen because of it's life experiences
- Recorded online with no budget.
- Several of the interviews used for media articles and social media posts.

scripts

TIPS



1

Keep it conversational but clear

The biggest challenge of writing a podcast script is keeping it conversational and not a flat, monotone delivery. A lot of podcasters find it useful to speak their script (like a rehearsal for their recording) with a **speech-to-text tool that you can find online** open to dictate their words. This creates a natural pattern and puts your words on a page so you can read them during your recording.

2

Describe the scene

Podcasting is an audio medium, which means our audience doesn't have any visual cues. Even if it's just a short and simple introduction, providing context and visual aids helps your listeners get a clearer picture.

- If you refer to something, like an image, person, or video, make sure to describe it well so your listeners can picture it in their mind.
- This doesn't mean you need to give a detailed description of everything you say, but you'll want to be aware of any concepts, images, or topics that need extra description for your listeners who are effectively blind.
- Encourage your interviewees or guests to do the same. You can do this by asking specific questions like "what did the protest look like? or where are you now and what's going on around you?"

3

Prepare your interviews and content

Detailing a list of questions and main talking points will stimulate conversation while also making the process participative.

- Interviewees might have less podcast experience than you, so they're not as comfortable thinking on their feet. Providing a list of questions and comments before you record the episode allows them to prepare the thoughts and anecdotes they want to share during the recording.
- Don't be afraid of asking too many questions - you might end up with too much material, but this can be refurbished and used for extra content.
- Put yourself in the shoes of the listener and ask as many basic and complex questions as necessary to record engaging conversations.

4

Podcasts and their relevance

Instead of launching right into the main content take your time explaining why your listeners should want to listen to your episode. What is the problem that needs a solution? This can generate interest in your topic, before you give a brief overview of what to expect in the episode.

- Apply the episode's topic to your audience: How can your show's content improve the life of your audience, or help them solve a collective problem? Try breaking your audience up into three categories: Group A, Group B, and Group C. How does your message apply to each group? Tailor the content so it applies to everyone in your audience.

technical PART



1

Recording online

Whether you host an interview show or have an online co-host, you need to know how to record a podcast remotely. Below a list of softwares you can use for this purpose and some tips.

- [Zencastr](#) - this is the software we use the most at Forus. It's very accessible and allows one to record each speaker in the call individually. It also records videos in HD which you can then reuse as extra content. There are both a paid version and a free one (which works super well)
- Zoom - a lot of people these days are using Zoom to produce podcasts. It has less of a technological barrier as many people are used to it. Think of proposing to webinar speakers for instance to be recorded and then reuse this content for a podcast episode!
- [OBS for video podcasts](#)
- [Podcast!](#) - another interesting software which allows one to record professional quality audio for your solo podcasts, voiceovers and more.

[Extra tips in the video here.](#)

3

Post-production

- Use softwares such as Premiere Pro and Audition to edit and master your sound or rely on the online recording programs which often have post-production possibilities
- Add music! You can find royalty free music on [Youtube Audio Library](#), the [Internet Archive](#), [Free Music Archive](#), [Epidemic Sound](#) (30-day free trial)

2

Recording live

If you are at a protest, a conference or want to record your interview live, make sure you:

- Find a quiet spot
- Use a recorder on your phone - there are plenty of free apps. [You can find a list of apps here.](#)
- A phone is the most accessible format these days and can allow you and your team members to record episodes individually without having to share equipment necessarily. You can also record your host script from your smartphone.
- If you have budget and access to equipment, you can use a Zoom mic or a lavalier to record your episode and interviews.

4

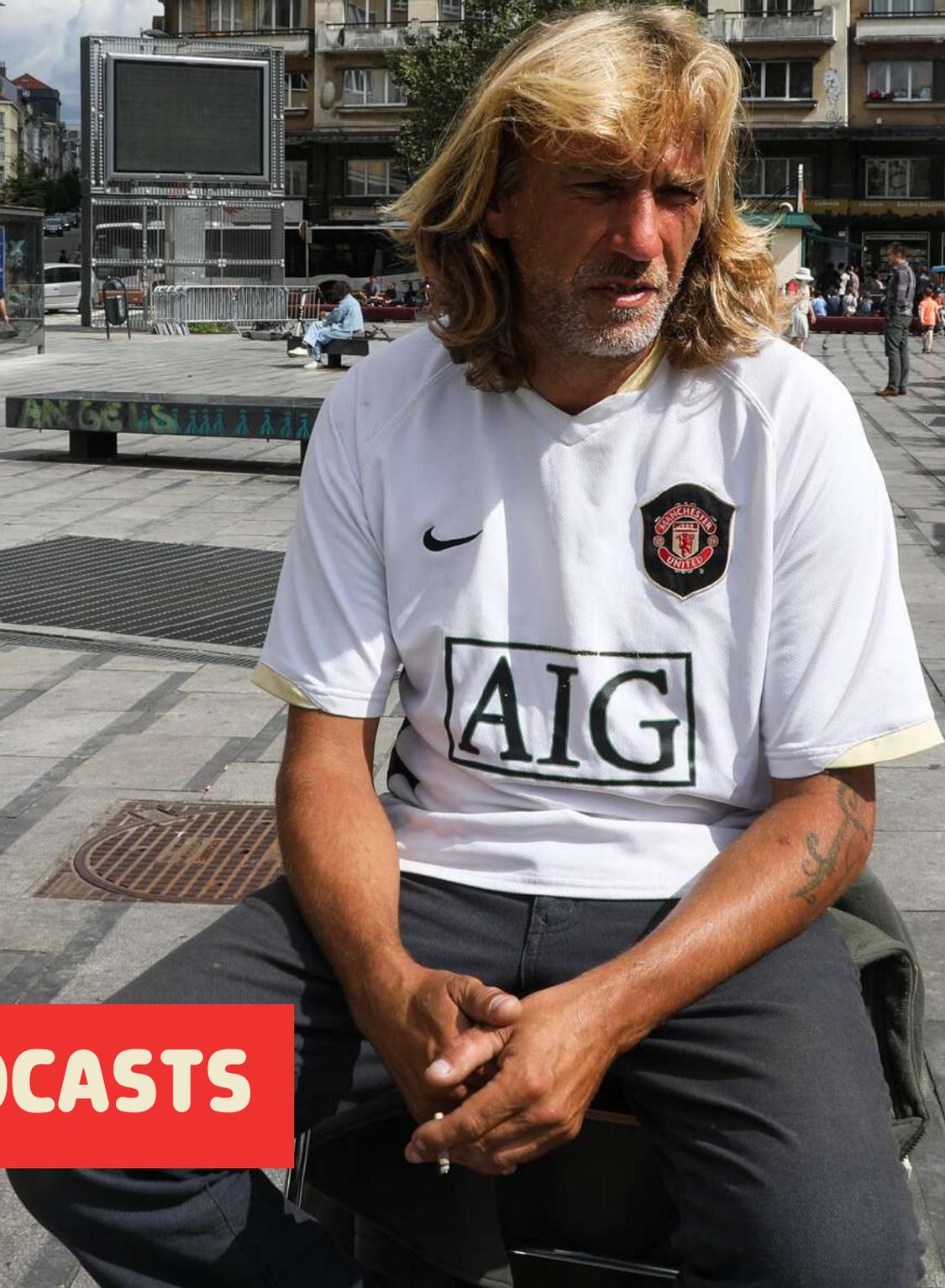
Promotion

Once you have produced your episodes start thinking about how you are going to get it out there.

- Create a weekly newsletter to send the episodes and extra content out
- Create a micro-website or instagram page
- Send a micro-survey to your contacts to make the process more participative and help you decide which themes are the most interesting to them
- Create a visual identity and brand for your podcast - this can include the elements that characterise your production. For instance if it's a podcast about activism, your visual identity should reflect that - with bold color, pictures of protest for instance etc.



forus CONNECT
SUPPORT
INFLUENCE



PODCASTS