

How to Podcast in Archaeology

A Guide for Archaeologists Doing Public Outreach

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Outreach projects within archaeology are meant to “connect with and inspire the public,” but one problem for archaeologists doing public outreach is that we do not know who our audience is. Richardson and Almansa-Sánchez (2015:199–200) ask the question in their article about public archaeology, “Who are the ‘publics’ in public archaeology?” (2015:200). This is a critical and somewhat self-exploratory question that needs to be asked before you embark on any project, large or small, when the goal is to connect with and inspire nonarchaeologists (Angelo 2013; Matsuda 2004; Moshenska 2009; Pyburn 2009; Richardson and Almansa-Sánchez 2015:196). We believe that public

archaeology is nimble and versatile enough, practically and theoretically, to allow for flexibility when presenting archaeology and doing outreach. Numerous authors have developed different models when it comes to approaching your “audience” or “community” (Holtorf 2007; Merriman 2004). A recent survey by NEARCH tells us that the majority of the public in Europe has a positive view of archaeology and wishes to learn more (Kajda et al. 2018; Schadla-Hall 1999; van den Dries 2014). These are encouraging results, but we recognize that identifying audiences or communities when doing public archaeology challenges archaeologists worldwide (e.g., Endere 2007;

ABSTRACT

The problem for archaeologists doing public outreach could be that we do not know who our audience is. Marketing to just the public at large is an extremely broad approach filled with the pitfalls of not engaging enough of the public, so it might be necessary to first find out who within the general public would have the most interest in your discovery and then tailor your presentation to that audience. At the podcast *Cooking with Archaeologists* we are using digital media, social media marketing, and our experience from the business world to do just that. Podcasting has been a trial-and-error project filled with uncertainty and doubt, and for archaeologists engaged in public archaeology it might be a practical approach to reaching the public and a medium to build an engaged and interested audience. In this “how-to” article, we will reveal what we have learned from this exciting and somewhat demanding venture and suggest how podcasting is a democratizing venture that connects the public to archaeology and the archaeologist.

¿Puede que el problema para los arqueólogos que hacemos divulgación sea que no sabemos quién es nuestra audiencia? Dirigirse solo hacia el público en general es un criterio demasiado amplio que conlleva el riesgo de no captar la atención de una audiencia suficiente. Por eso, primero es necesario encontrar quiénes entre el público en general tienen mayor interés en los temas que se tratan, y luego adaptar la presentación a esa audiencia. En el podcast *Cooking with archaeologists* utilizamos medios digitales, el marketing en las redes sociales y nuestra experiencia en el mundo de los negocios para hacer precisamente eso. La elaboración del podcast ha sido un proyecto de ensayo y error, lleno de incertidumbres y dudas. Para los arqueólogos dedicados a la divulgación, este puede ser un enfoque práctico para llegar al público y un medio para construir una audiencia comprometida e interesada. En este artículo desvelamos lo que hemos aprendido en esta emocionante y a la vez exigente aventura, y sugerimos que hacer un podcast es una empresa democratizante que conecta al público con la arqueología y el arqueólogo.

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Eze-Uzomaka 2000; Saucedo-Segami 2011; Tantaleán and Aguilar 2012; Thiaw 2011). Therefore, it is in the best interest of all archaeologists engaged in public archaeology to study and learn from how nonarchaeologists, particularly entrepreneurs, get the public both interested and invested in their work. We are not advocating a neoliberalization of public archaeology, or archaeology for that matter, but we do want to borrow approaches used outside of archaeology to assist us in the democratization of archaeological information and its dissemination to the public.

Entrepreneurs know that they cannot capture everyone. Marketing to the “public at large” is an extremely broad approach, so it might be necessary to first define who within the general public might have the most interest in your discovery and then tailor your presentation to that audience. Aiming too widely carries the pitfalls of wasting time and money while neglecting, or not focusing fully on, “your real audience” by not engaging or inspiring them. Focusing on your “real” audience may be a bit like “preaching to the choir,” but your audience will advocate for you and publicize your accomplishments more readily and freely. The NEARCH survey concluded that in Europe the public wishes for more engagement with archaeology and archaeologists and they believe that archaeologists should disseminate their results more readily and openly (Kajda et al. 2018). We are not advocating turning public archaeology into a marketing scheme either; instead, we are suggesting that, as practicing archaeologists, increasing the public’s understanding of our work and the value we create and bring to society must be our mission (Kristiansen 2008).

At the podcast *Cooking with Archaeologists* we use digital media, social media marketing, and our experience from the business world to do just that, and at the same time, we are building an audience. What we are engaged in is a “multifaceted interaction practice” with the aim of reaching out to our audience through the words and stories of our fellow archaeologists (Berry 2016:7; Cordeiro 2012; Jensen 2010; Moser et al. 2002). Our perspective is that we are democratizing archaeology, and most importantly, disseminating accurate information, through podcasting to our audience. This is a powerful tool and one that should not be dismissed by any archaeologist practicing public archaeology. In this article, we will present a “how-to” approach to beginning your podcast as an open-access medium to directly reach out and engage the public about archaeology and show how, in doing so, you will create your own unique audience.

PODCASTING AS AN “OPEN-ACCESS” AND “DEMOCRATIZING” MEDIUM TO REACH THE PUBLIC

What is a podcast? As digital audio files, podcasts are uploaded to the Internet for downloading or streaming (e.g., Berry 2014;

Bonini 2015; Bottomley 2015; Madsen and Potts 2010; Menduni 2007). Whether or not podcasting is radio is a debatable topic, but for many podcasters and listeners, podcasting is a separate entity with its own “collection of practices, cultures, institutions, and distribution systems” (Berry 2016:7; see Markman and Sawyer 2014; Murray 2009). What makes podcasting so unique and different from radio, even though it follows a similar format style, is the low cost of production and the limitless diversity of shows. Anyone with a laptop or a computer along with Internet access can develop and publish a unique show (Berry 2016; Chisholm 2015). This freedom also applies to the audience, who become more engaged and invested (Berry 2016:7; Markman 2012; Markman and Sawyer 2014). Some of the most popular podcasts, for example, *This American Life*, *Fresh Air*, and the *Joe Rogan Experience*, have millions of downloads a month (Podtrac 2017).

STEP 1: CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR PODCAST

Podcasting, like any creative process, involves a mixture of thoughtful contemplation, believing that your idea(s) and experiences are of value and should be shared, and a willingness on your part to expose yourself to critique. As scientists, we need to get uncomfortable. We need to advocate for our work and ourselves. Finding a niche, or creating a niche, is your first step. This is an essential step in the creation and development of your idea. Thus, it is in your best interest to do some research on the variety of shows already in production. We suggest starting with the Archaeological Podcast Network. The network’s Chris Webster and Tristan Boyle have been doing groundbreaking work with podcasting and public outreach for years (Boyle 2017). Also, the University of Oxford has its own podcast (see <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/keywords/archaeology>). Another avenue to explore is to go to Listen Notes. This is a search engine designed to find podcasts by topic, people, and places.

Differentiating your podcast is essential. There are plenty of topics, so you can begin within a niche and expand out from there to distinguish your podcast, or you can start a whole new niche. You will have to decide how to separate your idea from all the others (Figure 1). Ensuring originality is the most demanding process within podcasting.

STEP 2: VALUE STATEMENT FOR YOUR PODCAST

In the early developmental stage, the next task at hand would be to have a clear goal for your show based on a value statement. A value statement is a communicative device that lets the public know what your core beliefs and principles are. The value statement for our show is to educate the general public about archaeology through the words and food of our fellow archaeologists. This statement is purposeful, is defining, and has a practical component during times of indecision and uncertainty. It is a simple statement, and it is a process to formulate the right words; but it is well worth the trouble, which will save you time and a lot of headaches when it comes to making decisions.



FIGURE 1. *Cooking with Archaeologists* logo (property of *Cooking with Archaeologists*).

Somewhere in between deciding upon your show and developing your value statement, you will want to start outlining content for your podcast. A good suggestion is to design it around your value statement. The format of our show is to allow archaeologists of all stripes a platform to present their work. Although it is not explicit in our value statement, we believe that all archaeologists should have an opportunity to tell their story. Therefore, through podcasting, a lot of really good archaeologists who rarely publish, or not at all, are given a chance to discuss their work with an audience. In one way, we view it as a format that democratizes the dissemination of information by allowing any archaeologist to be a participant.

STEP 3: CREATING A WEBSITE AND DETERMINING THE WEB HOSTING, CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, DOMAIN NAME, AND MEDIA HOSTING FOR YOUR PODCAST

After your project has been finalized and the ideas about your content have been developed, your next step would be to start a website (Lewis 2012). We will talk more about content management systems later in this section because you will need this service to run your website. A website is your space on the internet where all of your content can be published and viewed by the world. For example, we use our website so that our audience can find our most recent and archived podcasts as well as our blog posts, which include a summary of the interviewee, photos, and a written food recipe (Figure 2). It is vital for a podcast to have a stand-alone website because outside of social media it is a place where you can interact with your audience. Your audience can leave comments on your page providing feedback and suggestions. To make all of this work, four things are required: a Web host provider, a content management system (CMS), a domain

name, and a media host. All four serve different functions and have different purposes.

A Web host is needed to run your website because it provides the server the access that is necessary for all sites to run on the Web. Numerous Web hosts are available on the Internet, for example, GoDaddy, HostGator Cloud, SiteGround, and iPage (Stevens 2018; Wilson 2018). We decided upon Bluehost because it is the best for blogging. All of the technical services you will need will come from your Web host. There is a small monthly fee for Web hosting, which varies from \$1.99 to \$6.95 per month (Stevens 2018).

A CMS is developed software that supports both the creation and modification of digital content, which is necessary to create and run your website if you do not have programming experience. You will need this software to produce and publish anything you wish to put on the Web. An example of a CMS is a web page; it is at this point, through your CMS, that you will acquire a domain name. In the tech world, this would be called a Web content management system for Web-based publishing. It allows you to publish text, graphics, and photographs, as well as audio and video content. As a user, you need little or no experience to navigate a CMS. The system is designed to provide a relatively straightforward approach to publishing and updating Web-based content. The most popular CMS service is WordPress (<https://wordpress.com/>), which accounts for about 30% of all websites on the Web (Mening 2017). However, there are numerous providers available with similar services (Content Management Software 2018). For our work we use WordPress. Using a CMS allows you to better organize your website with template formats, makes it easier for people to find you, provides better search engine optimization, and gives you access to third-party plug-ins and extensions. Overall costs vary; for example, WordPress currently offers a free plan as well as plans that cost up to \$24.00 a month.

A domain name is your website address on the Web. If you want people to find you, then a domain name is necessary. One misconception is that your domain name is tethered to your Web host or CMS. This is not the case. Thus it can be moved at any time. The cost of a domain name is low, ranging from \$2.00 to \$20.00 for a year, with an additional re-registration fee of a few dollars the following year or years (Dizon 2018).

A media host is required when you plan on broadcasting and storing a large number of podcasts. The storage space that your Web host offers is limited, whereas a media host provides an enormous capacity to store your podcasts. Podcast files are large audio files, typically MP3s, with the average hour-long show being 25 MB. The other benefit of a media host is that your media files are off-site and therefore will not impact the speed of your web page. Without a media host, a website's download speed and overall efficiency would be slow. For your audience, you want a seamless and worry-free experience. The numerous media hosts in the market know this and offer this to their customers. We use Libsyn as our media host (<http://cookingwitharchaeologists.libsyn.com>), but there are many others to choose from, for example, Podbean, Blubrry, and Buzzsprout (Podcast Insights 2017). With any hosting site, there is a monthly fee. The cost will vary depending on the type of service and contract you require. For example, on Libsyn costs range from \$5.00 to \$75.00 a month, with the main cost difference being



FIGURE 2. Photo collage of guests and their food (property of *Cooking with Archaeologists*).

the amount of storage space, but on the high end of the range you get other services such as advanced statistics.

STEP 4: SOFTWARE AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO START YOUR PODCAST

When starting out in podcasting, the best advice when it comes to your equipment needs is to begin small and at a low cost. You will need the following equipment to start: a microphone, accessories for the microphone, headphones, a recording device or recording software, and audio editing software. A standard laptop or desktop will be sufficient for all of your recording and editing needs. The real value comes from acquiring a good microphone for recording. These prices can vary from \$50.00 to \$300.00. Although there are other options (Micreviews 2018), if you are starting out, many people recommend the Audio-Technica ATR2100-USB Cardioid Dynamic USB/XLR Microphone (Ross 2018). This microphone is on the low end of the price range, but it is a reliable and competent microphone. In addition to a microphone, a pop filter is recommended (cost: approximately \$9.00). The function of a pop filter is to cancel or reduce the airflow between the user and the microphone. We strongly recommend a boom microphone stand or a tripod stand (cost: approximately \$12.00 to \$30.00). This device avoids picking up any unwanted noise and movement of the microphone, which can cause a background disturbance in your recording. Headphones will help you record and edit your podcast. Thus, they are an essential tool for creating good audio. Daniel Lewis (2013) lays out some of the things you should consider when buying headphones. As with your microphone, the cost will vary, but you should expect to pay between \$75.00 and \$100.00 for a good pair.

When it comes to recording, your choices will vary depending on the type of podcasts you are producing. If you are interviewing the public, or doing a monologue, out in the field, then you will want to invest in a recording device. It should be noted that we have no experience with mobile podcasting, thus the reader

should refer to Ross (2018) for all gear requirements. The highest-rated recorder is the Zoom H4n Pro, which costs around \$200.00 (Ross 2018). The benefit of recording devices is that they are compact, are portable, and provide good recording quality (Ross 2018). For in-studio recording, you will need only the equipment previously mentioned.

In-studio monologue and interview podcasts demand recording software. Again, there are many options on the market for users to choose from, but it boils down to your personal preference and budget. The recording software is the program that records your voice, allows you to edit what has been recorded, and then converts that into an MP3 file to be uploaded to your media host. Some of the more popular recording software includes Audacity, GarageBand, and Adobe Audition (PodcastMotor 2017; Ross 2018). If your interviewees are off-site, then you will need to rely upon an additional piece of software, specifically a calling software such as Skype. This software is easily accessed over the Web and is free, but the service may not be (ca. \$10.00 a month). With Skype, you can call computer to computer or directly to a mobile phone. If you do use calling software such as Skype, you will need call recording software. Some of the more popular, and typically free, are MP3 Skype Recorder, Evaer, and ECamm (Martindale 2018; TalkHelper 2017). We use Voicemeeter Banana, which is a donation-based, recording and mixing software with lots of success.

When it comes time to edit your recordings, again you will need software that can be found on the Web, most of it for free. Some of the software, such as Audacity and GarageBand, doubles as both recording and editing software. We use Audacity for all of our audio editing, but our recording is done via Voicemeeter Banana. Other options such as Adobe Audition and REAPER are also among the top choices by many podcasters (Griffin 2017).

STEP 5: MAKING FIRST CONTACT WITH YOUR PODCAST

Before you do your first podcast, you should decide whether your podcast will be an interview show or a monologue.



FIGURE 3. Cristina Belmonte and Colin Amundsen in Norway 2014 (property of Colin Amundsen).

Interview-based shows are easier because there is less preparation involved, but there is the added burden of finding and scheduling guests. We do an interview show, and much of our time is involved in finding guests. Initially we interviewed colleagues, which works well when you are starting out and getting your feet wet. But eventually you will need to start sending “cold e-mails” asking people you do not know to come on your show. The best advice we have to cut down on time devoted to searching for new guests is to ask each guest you have on the show to provide you with one or two potential interviewees. Another good tip, for an interview-based show, is to download free scheduling software. It seems impersonal, but it saves a lot of time from going back and forth through e-mail trying to set up an interview time. Also, have a “Guest Guidelines” document to send out to any would-be interviewee. This document should have all of the answers to the questions guests might have, such as the length of the interview, the questions to be asked, and so on. And finally, the main thing that makes for an excellent podcast is a good story, and it is your job as the interviewer to find that story.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENTING YOUR VALUE STATEMENT AND LAUNCHING YOUR PODCAST

When you have all of your “ducks in a row,” then it is time to launch your podcast. Our show’s creation came about while we worked together in 2014 for the University of Bergen on an isolated island off the coast of Norway (Figure 3). With little else to do besides walking around the island, playing football, and cooking, we thought that it would be fascinating, in a nontraditional way, to start a podcast about field archaeology and cook-

ing. You can hear our podcast announcement in this audio clip: [Announcing Cooking with Archaeologists](#). Following our specially crafted value statement, we believed that the educational platform we were creating would be a great venue to allow our colleagues to tell their stories and connect with the public.

Our content changes weekly depending on who we are speaking with that week. One show might be about frontier forts from the colonial period in the United States, and then the next week the show will be about rock art from the Black Desert in Jordan. But the basis of the show stays consistent by focusing on archaeology and food.

By presenting archaeologists from around the globe, we do not intend to create a census of archaeologists and archaeological discoveries but, rather, to enter into a conversation with the archaeologists. The discussions about them and their job become the focus of the interview; we show the research but also the human behind the work; and the food connects both worlds, which is a powerful device that opens the door for the general public to have a different view of archaeologists and archaeology.

STEP 7: KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

There are ways for you to know and potentially understand the audience that you have created with your public outreach effort. The analytics used by media hosts allow you to see where in the world your podcast is being downloaded but not by whom. For that type of information, you need to facilitate the power of social media, especially Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook Insights provides the analytics to know your followers and their online behavior. The data you have access to reveal fine-grained demographic information such as location,

language, gender, and age of your followers. Insights also uncovers their interests for you through an analysis of the topics your followers interact with on your page.

To analyze your followers' activity on Twitter, we suggest using Twitter analytics and Bitly. The analytics within Twitter allow you to see your overall growth with the public and the interests of your followers, as well as demographic information such as gender, location, and language. Bitly offers two services. One service is to shorten your URL links, and the other service is marketing. The latter service, specifically the "stats" within Bitly, show which of your followers have been sharing your posts. This information would be of interest to you to determine the level of success of your outreach. Another piece of software that is useful is Agorapulse, which assists you with the overall management of your social media accounts, such as private messages and scheduled publishing, and analysis of your interaction with your followers. For more detailed information Agorapulse Barometer can compare the metrics of your page with those of other pages by categorizing and analyzing the following fields: followers, engagement, negative feedback, viral range, organic range, and click-through rate. The advantage of this service is that it allows you to see what you are doing well and what needs work.

Social media offer high-resolution data that allow you to understand how well your public outreach effort is working and with which individuals within your audience it is resonating the most effectively. As your audience grows and becomes more diverse, this type of information will help in the creation of engaging and relevant content. This ground-truthing approach also reveals how aligned your value statement is with the data.

CONCLUSION

Connecting with the public and inspiring them should be part of the archaeological endeavor. The flexibility of public archaeology together with the global reach of podcasting conjures up the perfect relationship to educate the public and instill a connectedness that they could have with archaeology and, yes, with (some) archaeologists.

At the outset of this "how-to" article, we presented our perspective about podcasting as a means to do public outreach but also a possible device to democratize public access to archaeological information. Increasing public outreach and access, coupled with interacting and listening, is a step toward creating and getting to know your audience. Engaging the public directly as a professional archaeologist is what they desire, and podcasting is one way to fulfill this need.

Our podcast is just one of several on the Internet with a focus on archaeology. They are all unique, and all offer a different angle from which to talk about archaeology. The digital audio path into public archaeology can afford this diversity because the "public at large" is diverse. Not every layperson is going to enjoy our or your show, but given the wide spectrum of shows already available, it is possible that the podcast you create will intrigue some enough for them to listen and keep listening. For those of us

dedicated to public archaeology, we need to present a variety of ways and implement different methods to interact with the public. You may not get the public at large, but you will get your own audience—the audience you created through your hard work and devotion to archaeology as a field of science that must be shared with the world.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are not publicly available as they are owned by Facebook as part of our page: <https://www.facebook.com/Cookingwitharchaeologists-1469130013363131/>. They are available from the corresponding author on request.

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