

Podcasting Has Become a Sticky Medium in Canada

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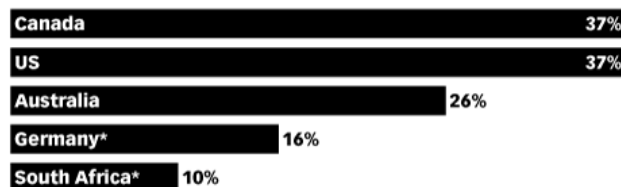
Paul Briggs

The growing podcast audience in Canada has brands taking notice. It's a fixture in consumer media consumption and a sticky medium. Listeners consume podcasts heavily compared with other forms of informational media, and they are loyal to the hosts of their favorite shows.

In podcast penetration and usage, Canada ranks at the top of selected countries surveyed by Edison Research and Triton Digital in the latest annual installment of "The Infinite Dial," which has been tracking podcast listeners in Canada since 2018. For podcast penetration, 37% of adults in Canada were monthly podcast listeners, the same as in the US.

Adults in Select Countries Who Listen to Podcasts, 2020

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+; in the past month; *major metro commercial
Source: Edison Research and Triton Digital, "The Infinite Dial 2020: Canada," June 4, 2020

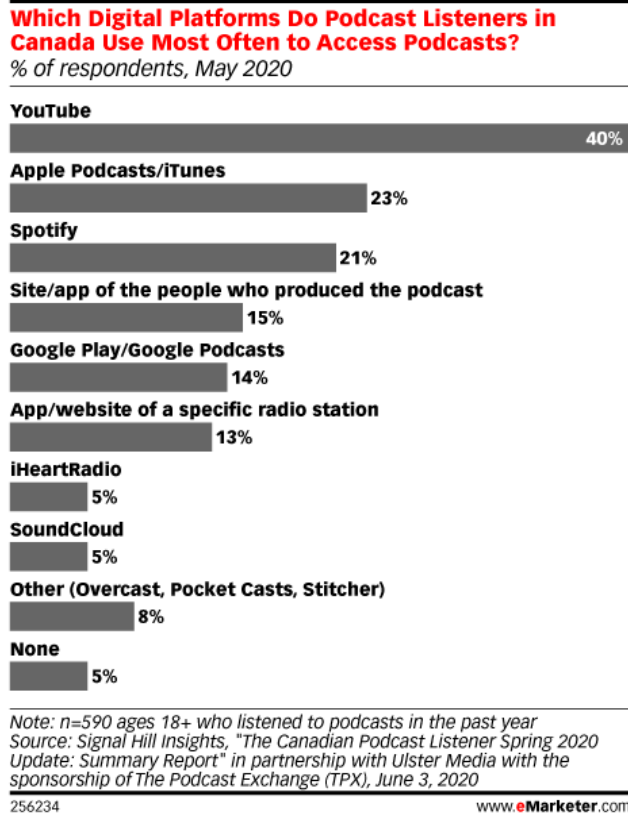
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In weekly listening, Canada ranked slightly ahead of the US—24% compared with 23%. Comparatively, in Germany and South Africa, listenership was much lower on a weekly basis, at 9% and 6%, respectively.

The podcast listener numbers follow a general trend in digital audio consumption in Canada, where 70% of respondents said they listened in the past month, compared with 67% in the US.

Canadian research firm Media Technology Monitor (MTM) placed monthly listenership at 26% of the adult population in fall 2019. What’s noteworthy in the MTM polling is a 5-percentage-point jump in listeners year over year (from 21% in fall 2018).



The pandemic’s impact on these numbers has not yet been quantified in the immediate aftermath. However, interviews we conducted with publishers fielded pretty consistent reporting of listener patterns—down slightly, but with a bounce back when the reopened economy brought back commuting and other daily habits that lead to greater

podcast consumption. Publishers pivoted quickly to produce content about the pandemic in podcasts, which helped stem the immediate drop-off seen in the US, as reported by Podtrac.

According to the Canada Media Fund, there was a clear shift to podcasts with a heavy pandemic focus. “Ça s’explique” at Radio-Canada and “Front Burner” at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) were two examples.

“Podcast consumption habits are constantly changing for Canadians, and especially so during the quarantine,” said Sarah Thompson, chief strategy officer at Mindshare. “The behaviors that affect podcasting like drive times and time on public transit dropped quite a bit. Home listenership increased. It’s important to understand which of these trends is going to remain as a habit fully formed.”

“We saw a slight dip during the first few weeks of the work-at-home restrictions, but they were made up for in the draw to news and health information podcasts,” said Arif Noorani, executive producer at CBC Podcasts, the largest podcast producer in Canada. “Since that time, we’ve seen a return to normal in our other genres because of the release of new seasons of highly anticipated shows. It’s resulted in a net gain compared with pre-pandemic times.”

To learn more about how the podcast advertising business in Canada is evolving, eMarketer PRO subscribers can read our recent report:

Report by Paul Briggs Jul 23, 2020

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