

Podcasts: Who listens? Why and where?

Nic Newman Senior Research Associate,
Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford University

9th September 2020

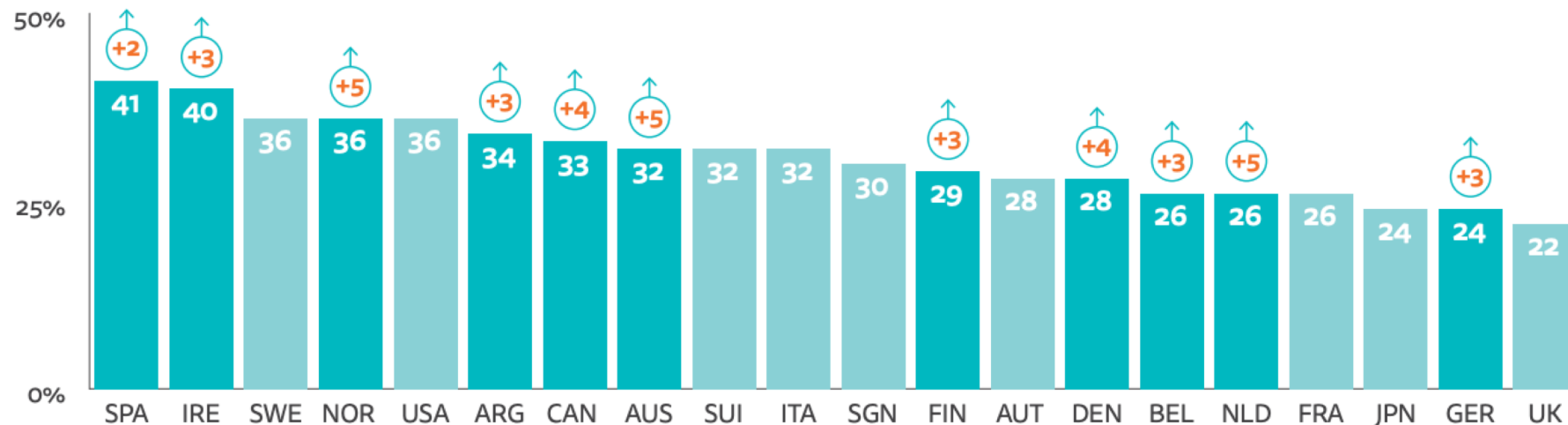
@risj_oxford



It is not easy to get accurate data about podcast consumption

A third use podcasts regularly across 20 countries, news now a key part of the mix

PROPORTION THAT USED A PODCAST IN THE LAST MONTH – SELECTED COUNTRIES



31%
access a podcast
monthly, up from
29% in 2019

Q11F. A podcast is an episodic series of digital audio files, which you can download, subscribe, or listen to. Which of the following types of podcast have you listened to in the last month? Please select all that apply. Total sample in each market = 2000. Note: We excluded markets with more urban samples as well as those where we are not confident that podcasts is a term sufficiently well understood to produce reliable data.

Who listens to podcast?

1. CONVENIENCE

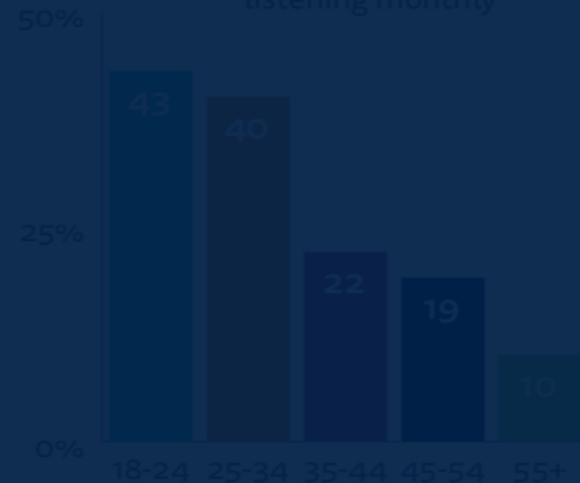
Podcasts most popular with younger generations and with more highly educated

“Literally, ease. You have it. You’re not actively searching something or reading a screen. You’re letting it wash over you”



Podcast

listeners by age
Proportion of each age group
listening monthly



2. DIGITAL NATIVES WANT TO BE IN CONTROL

“It is not a schedule telling you. You can choose what you want when you want it”



Radio news

listeners by age
Proportion of each age group
listening monthly



3. MORE DIVERSE, LESS STUFFY

“You have a diverse range of news ideas and thoughts from vastly different people; not your traditional people who look and act a certain way”.

listen to. Which of the following types of podcast have you listened to in the last month?
3. Which, if any of the following have you used in the last week as a source of news?
Base: 18-24/25-34/35-44/45-54/55+ = 201/282/343/349/836

Where do people listen to podcasts?

Consumption is split evenly between home and out of home - for younger people it is more likely to be on the move



IN BED

'On my tablet last thing at night or first thing in the morning on waking'



TAKING A BREAK

'Home while having my coffee in the morning'
'In my lunchbreak'



OUT AND ABOUT

'Walking the dog'
'On a walk with my son asleep in the buggy'



CHORES

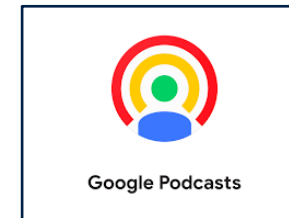
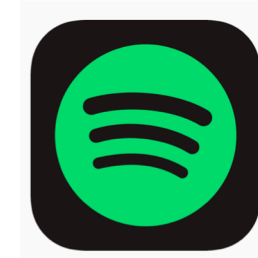
'When I'm doing the laundry'
'When I'm cooking'

Smartphone is the key driver

Key gateway to media – now **audio enabled**



APP DRIVEN WORLD
Winner takes most dynamics



Even bigger focus in Africa (82% South Africa, 83% Kenya use for any purpose)

Next gen tech disruption

Improved quality, wider availability, reduced friction



BETTER HEADPHONES



VOICE ACTIVATED DEVICES

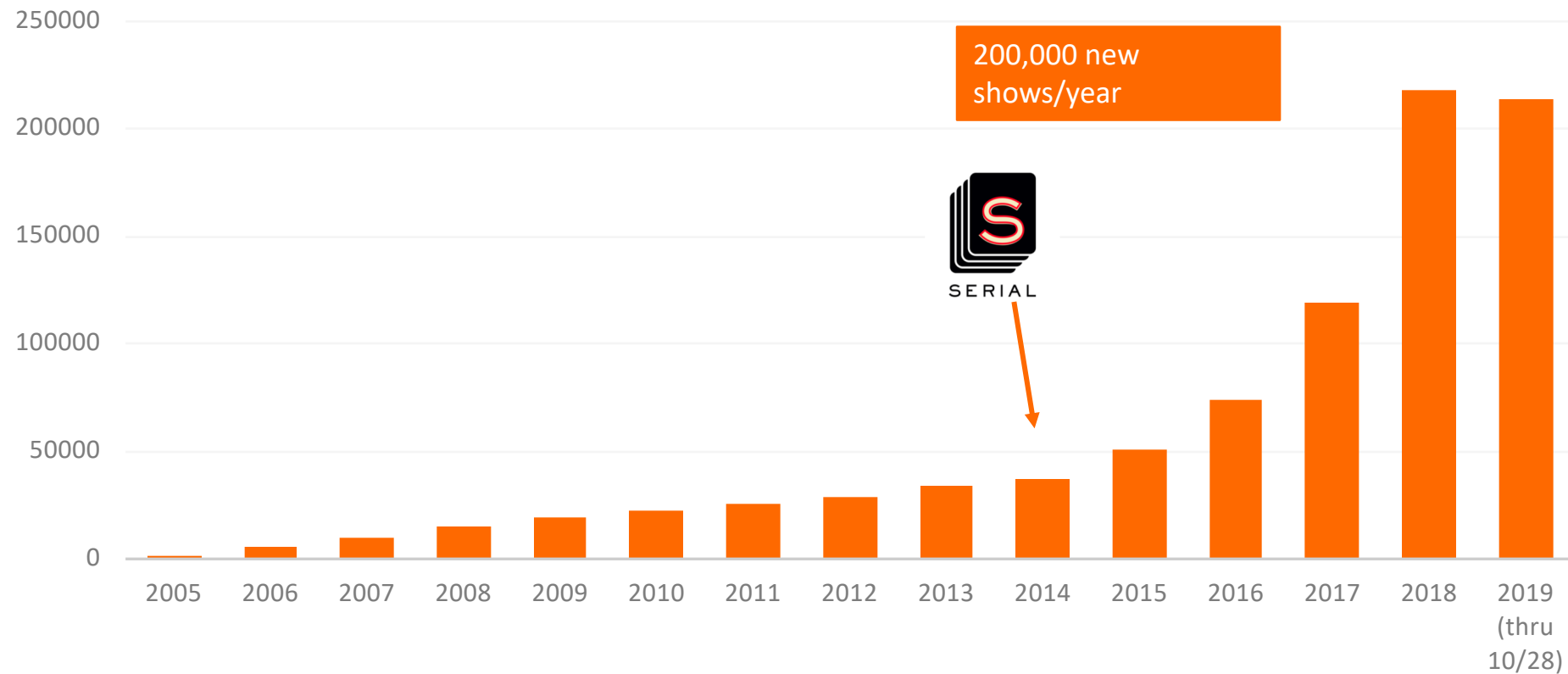


AUDIO ON DEMAND IN CAR

Anyone can be a producer now ...

Spotify and Apple both have directories of more than **1m shows**

GROWTH IN NUMBER OF NEW SHOWS IN APPLE DIRECTORY EACH YEAR



SOURCE: CHARTABLE

Economics now attracting higher quality producers



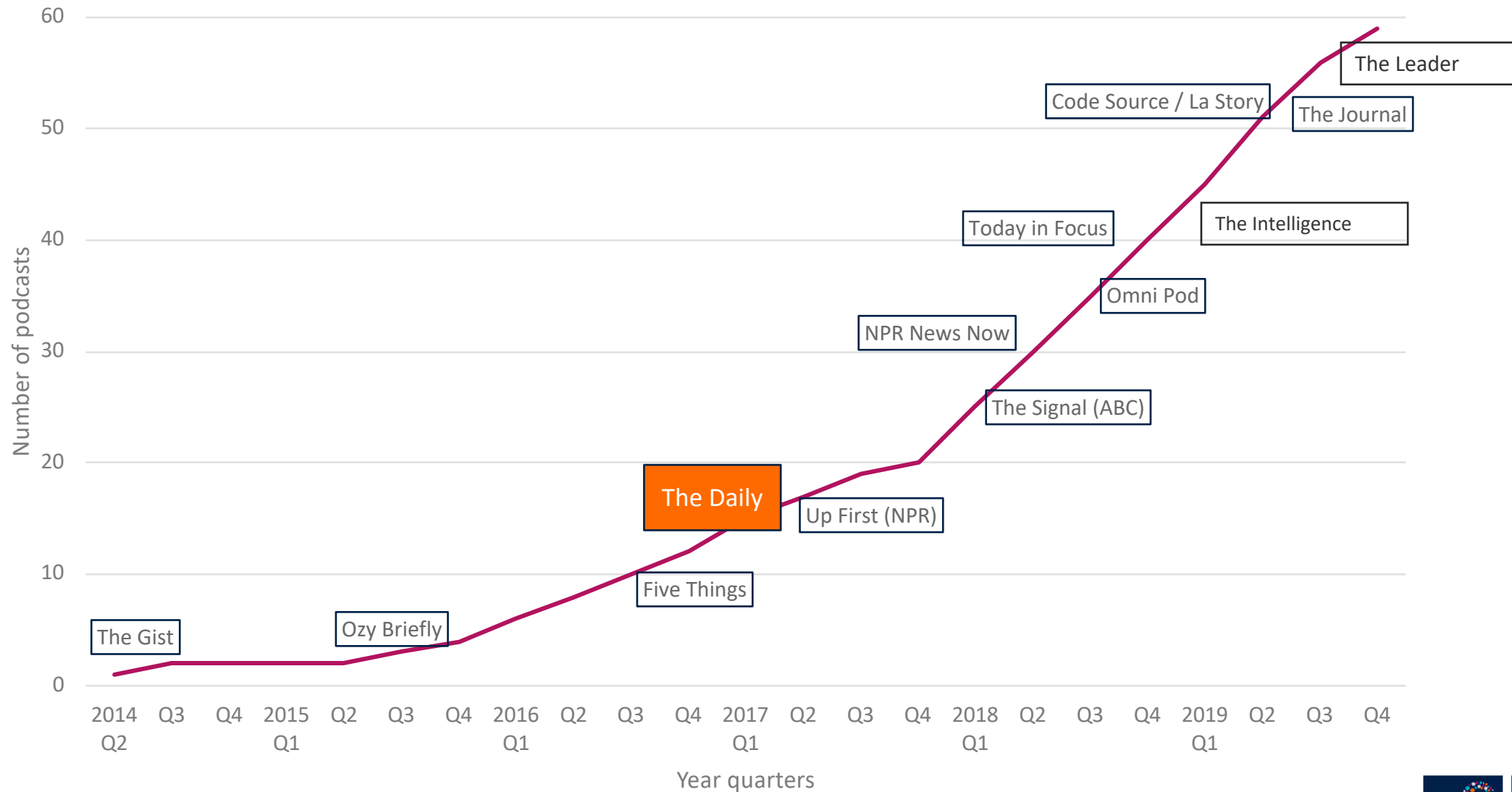
The Daily from New York Times attracts **3m listeners a day** for a 25 minute news briefing

Audio team of 30 people

Profitable from ads with added benefits of attracting people to subscription model

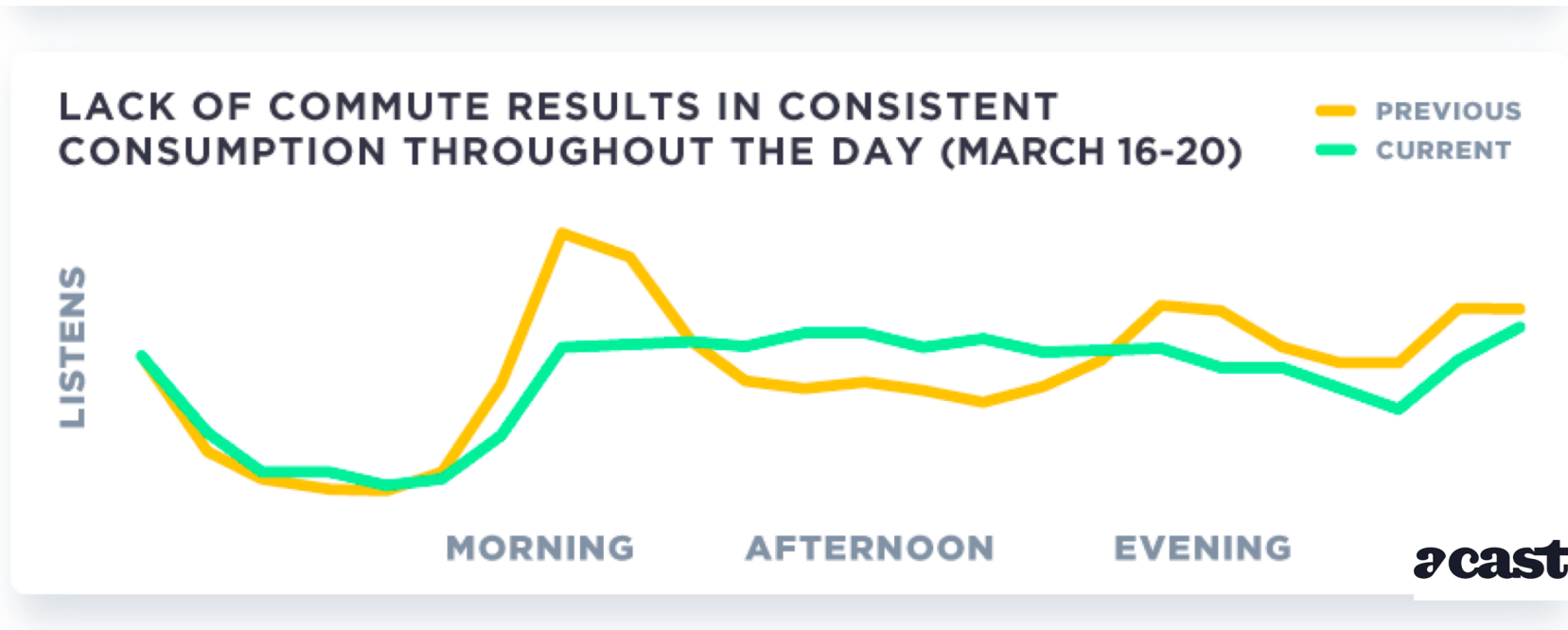
Looking for younger audiences

The evolution of daily news podcasts 2014-19



The impact of Covid-19

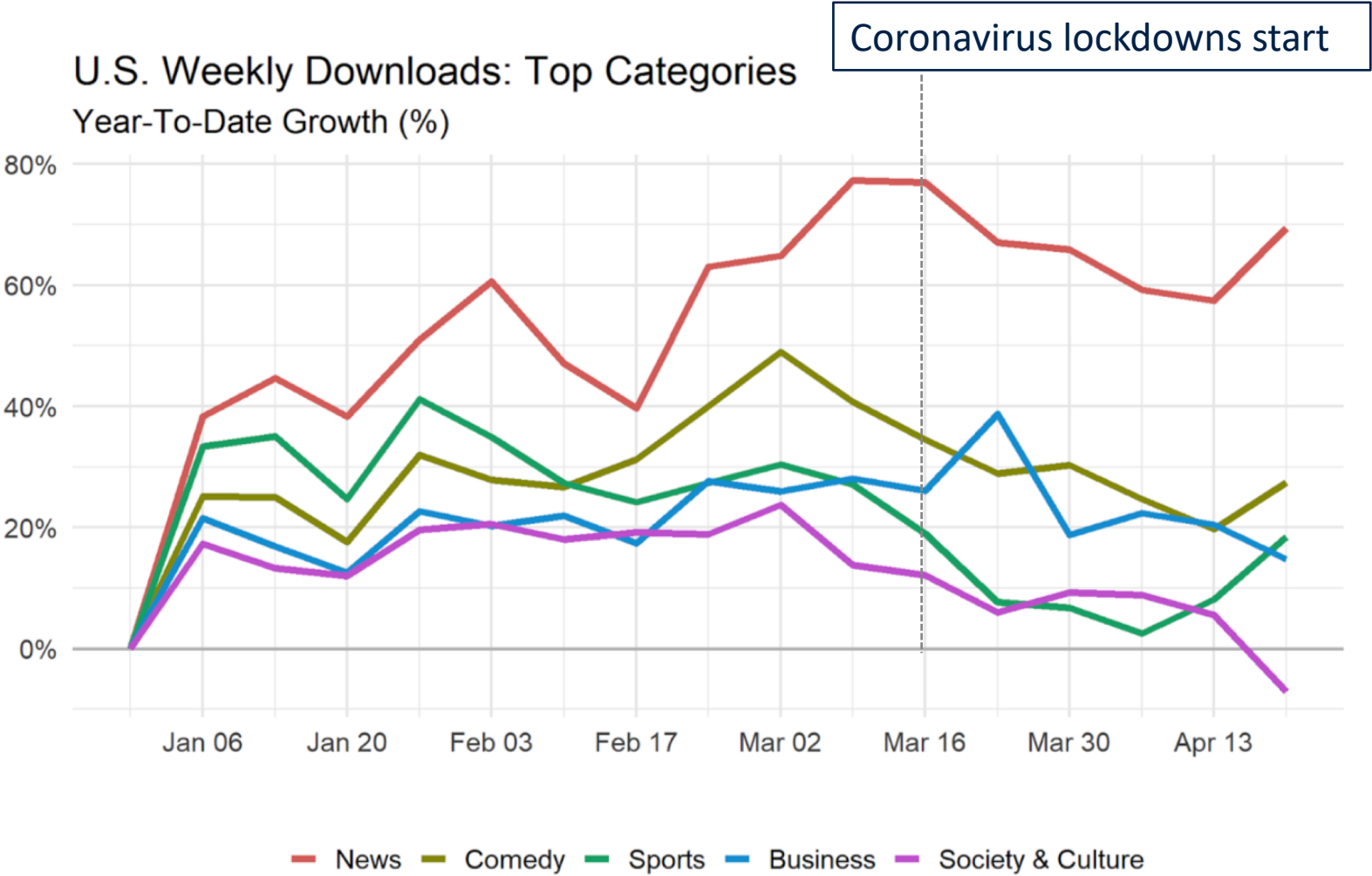
Coronavirus has changed listening habits



“Pod creators are adapting their content to what listeners really need right now - shared stories, distraction and information.

Josephine Forssjö, Content Manager at Acast

US podcasts: News grown most, sport down



Podcasts provide convenient audio briefing



50% say podcasts give deeper understanding of issues than other types of media



Takeaways

Takeaways

- Podcasts are a rare point of growth in a difficult media landscape
- Audiences are highly desirable to advertisers (younger, better educated)
- Podcasts are valued for convenience, intimacy, and choice
- Coronavirus unlikely to slow rate of growth though there may be less money in the short term for investment and some weakness in advertising
- But underlying trends are clear with more people accessing audio via smartphones and more tech disruption on the way (AI speakers, cars etc)

Reuters Institute
Digital News Report 2020



DIGITAL NEWS PROJECT
DECEMBER 2019

News Podcasts and the
Opportunities for Publishers

Nic Newman and Nathan Gallo



COMING SOON
(OCTOBER)

DAILY NEWS
PODCASTS AND THE
IMPLICATIONS OF
CORONAVIRUS

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/>

