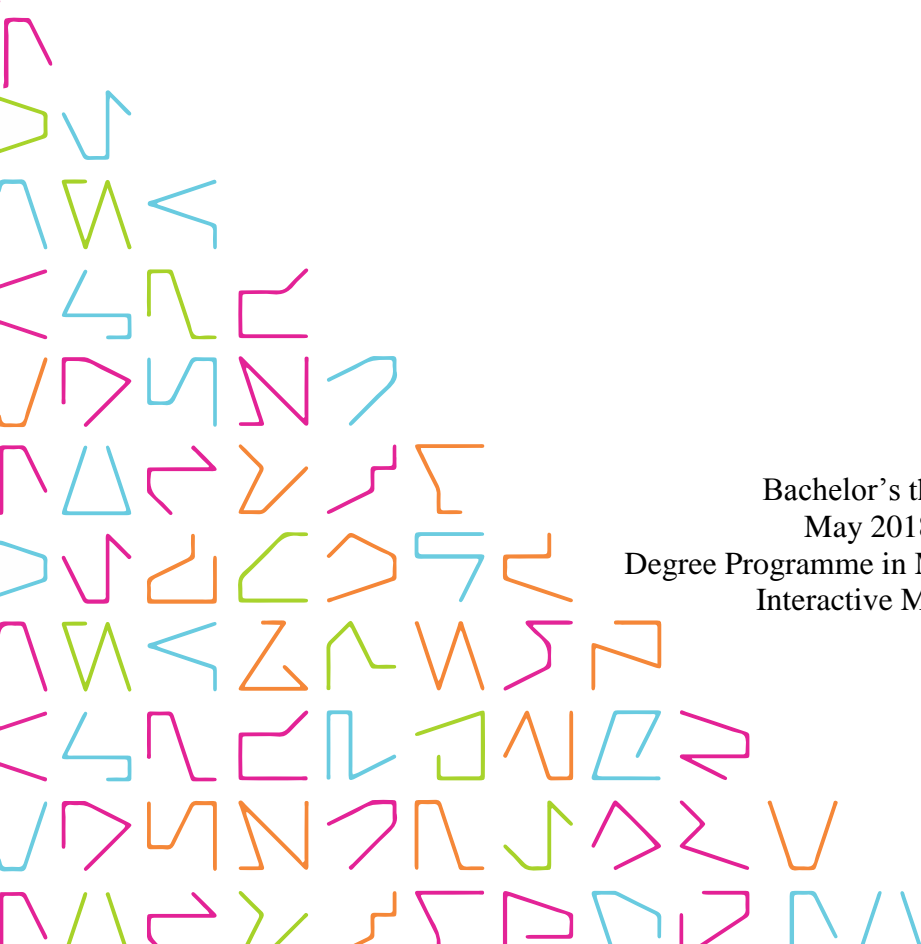


# INCREASING BRAND AWARENESS WITH PODCASTING

Case: The YesFinland Podcast

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Bachelor's thesis  
May 2018  
Degree Programme in Media and Arts  
Interactive Media

## ABSTRACT

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Digitalization has changed the way of producing and consuming creative content, giving more opportunities to the consumer to access content they desire at any time and for the producer to create the personal content they want and find an audience for it online.

The purpose of this Bachelor's thesis was to study how podcasts are used to increase brand awareness and the process of producing and publishing a podcast in the current digital environment.

The theoretical framework of the study focused on content marketing and podcasting. The focus was on the changes in consumer behavior in using digital devices and the reasons why content marketing has become an important part of marketing strategies. The podcasting part of the study focused on the characteristics of podcasts, the way they are consumed and the increased viability of the format as a marketing tool in Finland.

The case study was conducted as a podcast production and publishing project for a comedy production company based in Tampere, called YesFinland.

The theoretical study found that consumers are drawn to meaningful content from topics that are of interest to them. Podcasts are usually consumed during other tasks such as housework or commuting. Consumers expect the podcast format to offer both humorous entertainment and new information. Podcast content is expected to be available effortlessly.

Content Marketing has become an important marketing tool for brands. Customers want to feel inclusive and use brands to enhance their self-image. Digital marketing field is competitive.

Case study found that podcast is a useful form of content marketing despite the workload it takes to start one. Podcast is an effective way of providing value, involving audience and spreading the story of a brand.

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Key words: podcast, content marketing, audio content, media production

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

SEO	Search Engine Optimization
RSS	Really Simple Syndication; type of web feed which allows users to access updates to online content in a standardized, computer-readable format.
Content Marketing	A marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience.
Streaming content	Streaming content is an audio or video file on the Internet that is partially downloaded and then played as the remainder of the file is being downloaded.
Smart Device	A smart device is an electronic device, generally connected to other devices or networks. Notable types of smart devices are smartphones, phablets and tablets, smartwatches, smart bands and smart key chains.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the last few years podcasting has become a huge trend globally and has reached mainstream popularity in Finland. (Edison Research 2017; Tilastokeskus 2017.) While the first introduction to the world of podcasting arrived in Finland during 2005 as a form of an online radio show called FcLate-Netradio it never quite succeeded after the initial interest and it became more of a niche form of online media. (Sulopuisto 2016.) Lately, due to the increase in mobile device availability and usage, the demand for podcast content in Finland has had a new uprising and more opportunities for both producers to make content and monetize it and listeners to find content to fit their needs have appeared, with the introduction also in the mainstream media outlets with platforms like Supla. (Sulopuisto 2016; Tilastokeskus 2017.)

In the United States, podcasting is currently bigger than ever and research suggest that the trend is going upwards. Besides the increase in smart devices in our everyday lives another thing that has accelerated the success of podcasting is the affordability of the production tools and platforms increasing more opportunities to produce content. For listeners, podcasts are a convenient form of entertainment since they provide a chance to learn something new or be entertained while doing something else. The availability of smart devices makes it possible to listen to the content anywhere and anytime. (Sulopuisto 2016; Edison Research 2017.)

### 1.1 Background of the study

This thesis was done as a case-study for a Tampere based company called YesFinland. Their mission is to bring people together through laughter by producing comedy shows throughout Finland, with the focus being on improv theater and teaching. They also teach comedy and improv classes and give communications training using applied improvisation. YesFinland is the main producer of the Finland International Improv Festival, an annual celebration of Improv in Tampere. (YesFinland 2018; Finland International Improv Festival 2018.) The chosen topic for the practical part of this thesis was, how to utilize podcasting as a content marketing tool to bring out more local & global visibility to the YesFinland brand. The research was narrowed down to explore content marketing of businesses and whether podcasting is a good tool for that and what kind of aspects of podcasting can be beneficial for a company's content marketing.

## **1.2 Research questions and objectives**

This thesis aims to give an overall image and insights over how podcast can be used as a form of content marketing to increase the visibility of a brand. Furthermore, it aims to present the elements and stages of producing a podcast and using it as a marketing tool in a concise and clear way. The main research questions of this thesis are:

- What are the common consumer habits of a podcast consumer in the United States and in Finland?
- What is content marketing and when should a company use it as a tool to increase visibility for their brand?
- How a podcast is created and how it can be served to increase the current customer base?

## **1.3 Limitations**

Podcasting, podcast culture and content market research are all broad topics and that is why this study had to be narrowed down to the topics mentioned previously. Other areas such as deeper technical analysis of audio producing and editing of podcasts and media consumption habits of millennials were secluded off from this study due to the broadness of the topics. For more detailed information about the social media consumption habits of millennials, Pew Research Center surveyed U.S citizens about their social media usage in 2018 and it offers an extensive view on the subject. (Pew Research Center, 2018.) For technical learning about podcasting, online learning sites like Udemy and Lynda offer courses on audio editing and recording. (Lynda 2018; Udemy 2018)

## **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The Introduction part of this study explains how podcasting has become a growing phenomenon and the reasons for its current popularity in Finland and the world. The background, objectives and limitations are also introduced in the first part of the study. The second chapter analyzes and discusses the history of podcasting and analyzes the typical podcast consumer in the United States and Finland.

In chapter three, content marketing and new media terms are explained, the chapter also includes the discussion when businesses should use content marketing and how podcasts can be used as a part of content marketing.

Chapter four contains the practical part of the study which is an overview of a full podcast production for a comedy event production company called YesFinland. The production process, methods of marketing and the measurements and the discussions of the outcome including all key findings of the case study project are presented here. Discussion and conclusions are in chapter five. References and appendices are listed at the end.

## **2 PODCASTING**

Podcasting started in the United States in the beginning of 2000's as an idea to publish successful blogs in audio form and reach new audiences by doing so. This idea was introduced at Bloggercon, the first conference for web bloggers, organized in 2003 by Dave Winer. It was mainly niche content targeted for small audiences but after 2004 many major US-based news and entertainment businesses started using podcasting to present their products and content to the ever-increasing online audiences. After the initial boom of interest, podcasting as content marketing faded due to the lack of sufficient publishing platforms and ways to reach audiences. (Bloggercon 2004; iPodder.)

The term Podcasting, originally coined in 2004 by MTV video jockey Adam Curry and software developer Dave Winer derives from technology company Apple's mp3 player called iPod and the word broadcasting and it's a term for publishing audio content online or on different, mainly online, publishing platforms. (iPodder) Later, the term Podcast has been determined to be shortened from the words "portable on demand", referring to nature of the content being available essentially everywhere and at any time (iPodder; Mervaala 2012.)

The main feature of podcasts is the capability to stream or to download the content wherever and whenever, the idea that the listener is completely in charge of what they prefer to listen and when, is one of the key components of why podcasting became so popular. These days different smart devices make it capable to stream podcasts anywhere and therefore downloading is mainly an option when listeners want to consume the content offline. Another feature that defines podcasting is that commonly a podcast episode is part of a series or a show and that it is possible to subscribe to these shows to receive the episodes whenever new ones are published. (Mervaala 2012)

### **2.1 Podcasting in the United States**

The following sub-section analyses the typical podcast consumer in the United States and their podcast consuming habits based on an annual research conducted by Edison Research center. The United States have by far the largest supply of different podcast content, but gather also large amounts of listeners outside of USA due to the language acces-

sibility. Due to this high supply and demand of podcasts, there has also been annual studies considering podcast users in the United States. The Podcast Consumer, is Edison Research's study conducted with partnership with Triton digital and it has information about podcast consumers since 2013.

Josh Morgan (2015), applied sociologist and podcaster, found in his study based on the iTunes US podcast directory data that podcasting continues to rise and the audience for podcasts keeps increasing. However, most of the podcasts don't have a bigger life-span than about six months before becoming inactive. He also found that 2014 was the year when the hype around podcast in the United States was bigger than ever before. The hype was due to the releasing of worldwide appraisal and attention gathered, "Serial" and "StartUp" -Podcast series. These series were narrative in nature. Serial was the true-crime drama hosted by "This American Life" producer Sarah Koenig and StartUp was show about what it's really like to start a business. (Serial 2018; StartUp 2018.)

Roose (2014) argues that the revival of the podcast format was due to the increased accessibility of the format and that the podcasts were simply produced more professionally. They had full scale production with professional staff, budget and marketing behind them. The series gathered over million total listens and downloads and are still popular in the year 2018 amongst podcast consumers. As of May 2018, Serial is still 6<sup>th</sup> most popular podcast on the United States iTunes Podcast Chart. Due to the nature of podcasts being downloadable for devices, it's often hard to measure the total amount of listens an episode has received since it includes both the people downloading the episodes and the ones streaming them in different podcast platforms (Serial 2018; StartUp 2018; Roose 2014.)

The US based research was chosen for this thesis because the The YesFinland brand has a global audience because of its annual international events produced by the company. Furthermore, the case study podcast is produced and marketed in English. The US podcast consumer analytics is the closest relevant research that could match the listening habits of a global English speaking audience.

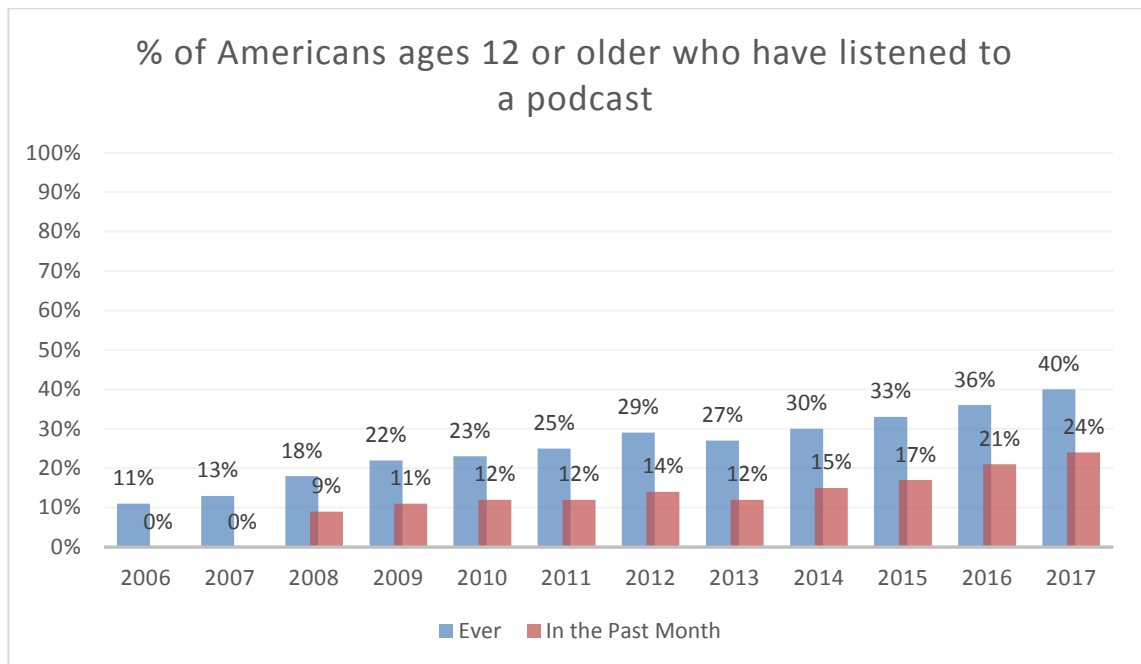


FIGURE 1. % of Americans ages 12 or older who have listened to a podcast (Edison Research 2017)

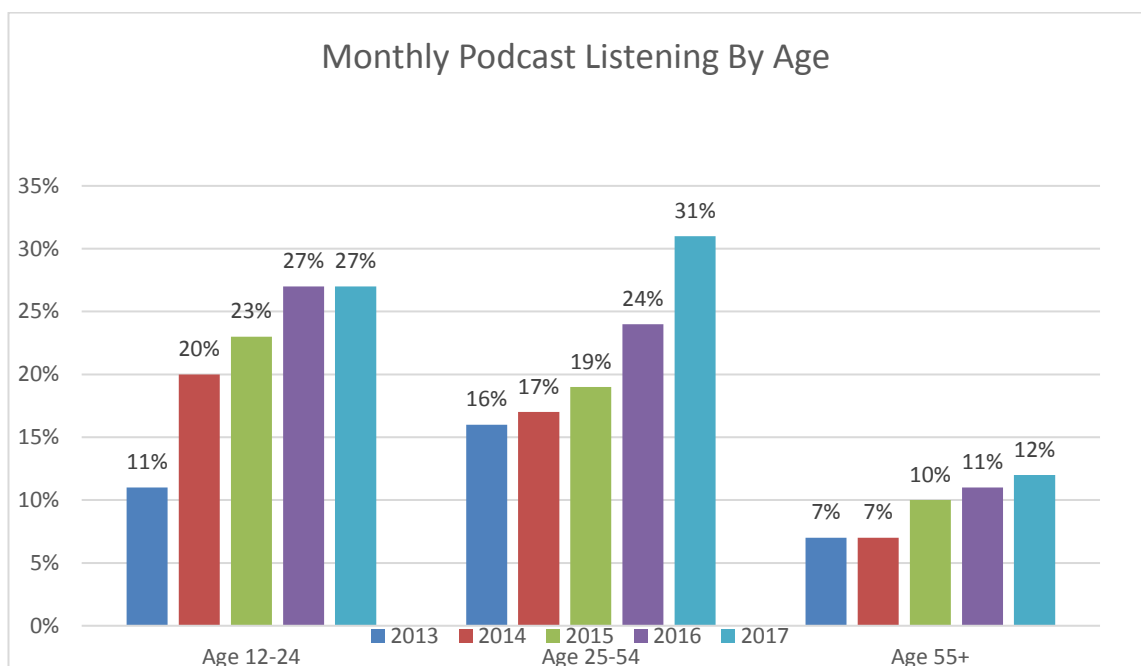


FIGURE 2. % listening to a podcast in last month by age group. (Edison Research 2017)

Since 2006 the percentage of podcast listeners has gone up from 11% to 40% as of 2017 (Figure 1). Although 2014 was a new mainstream beginning for podcasting, the study found that even though podcast consuming has increased steadily since 2006 from 11% to 40% no sudden upwards movements have happened after 2014. In 2014 the number was at 30% and as of 2017 the number is at 40%. Monthly listeners have grown from 9%

in 2009 to 24% in 2017. The biggest increase in monthly podcast listening has happened in the age group of 12-14-year old's where in 2017 27% of them listened to podcasts monthly. That number has almost tripled in the last 4 years. In the same time 25-54-year olds has increased from 16% to 31%. In the age group of over 55-year old the increase has been slower, increasing from 7% as of 2013 to 12% in 2017 (Edison Research 2017; Roose 2014; Figure 1; Figure 2.)

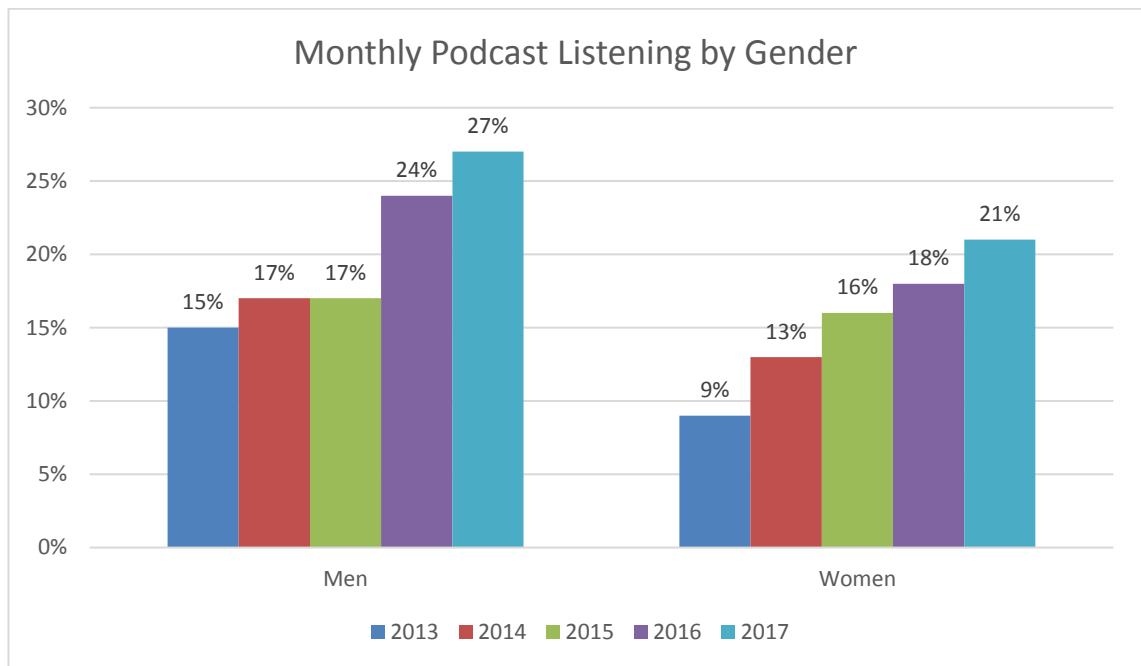


FIGURE 3. % of monthly podcast listening by gender of Americans ages 12 or older. (Edison Research 2017)

Out of all podcast listeners in the United States the portion of men was 56% and women 44% in 2017. In the last five years monthly listening has increased steadily in both genders. (Edison Research 2017; Figure 3.)

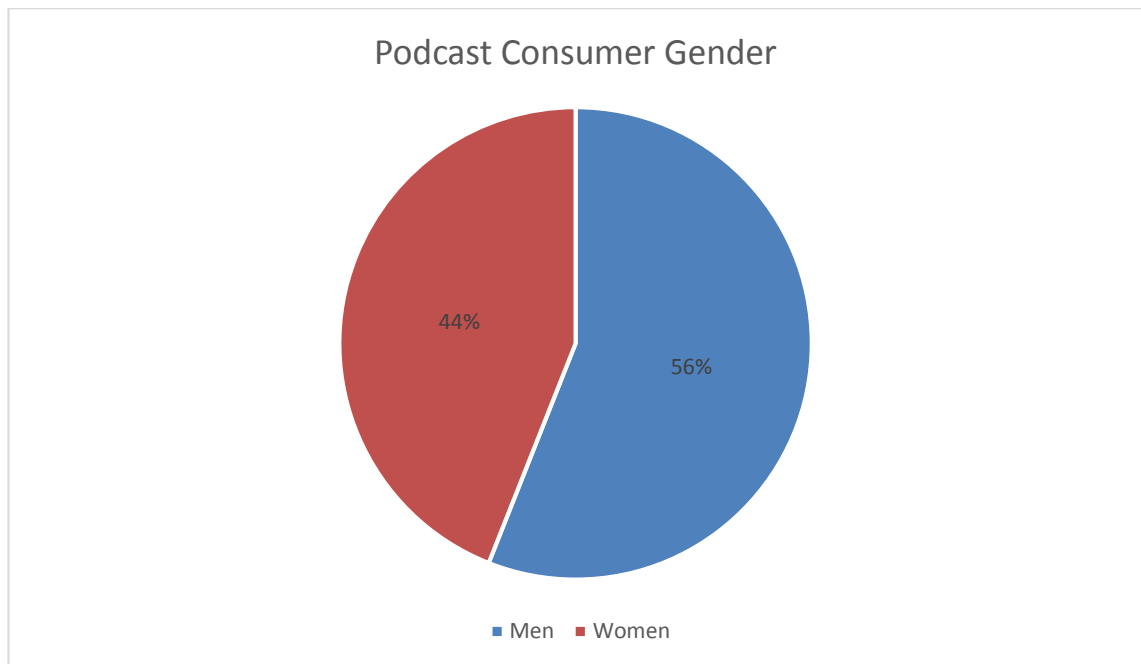


FIGURE 4. % of each gender of Americans ages 12 or older who consume podcasts (Edison Research 2017)

Weekly listeners listen generally about 5 different podcasts and most of the time with a smart device. The de-facto device for consuming podcasts has changed in the last five years. In the year 2013 most consumers listened to them with a computer but increasing every year the smart devices have become the main device for listening podcasts. In 2017 only 31% of the consumers listened to podcasts with a computer, it is a surprising number considering the listening habits has changed more location depended way with smartphone. (Figure 4)

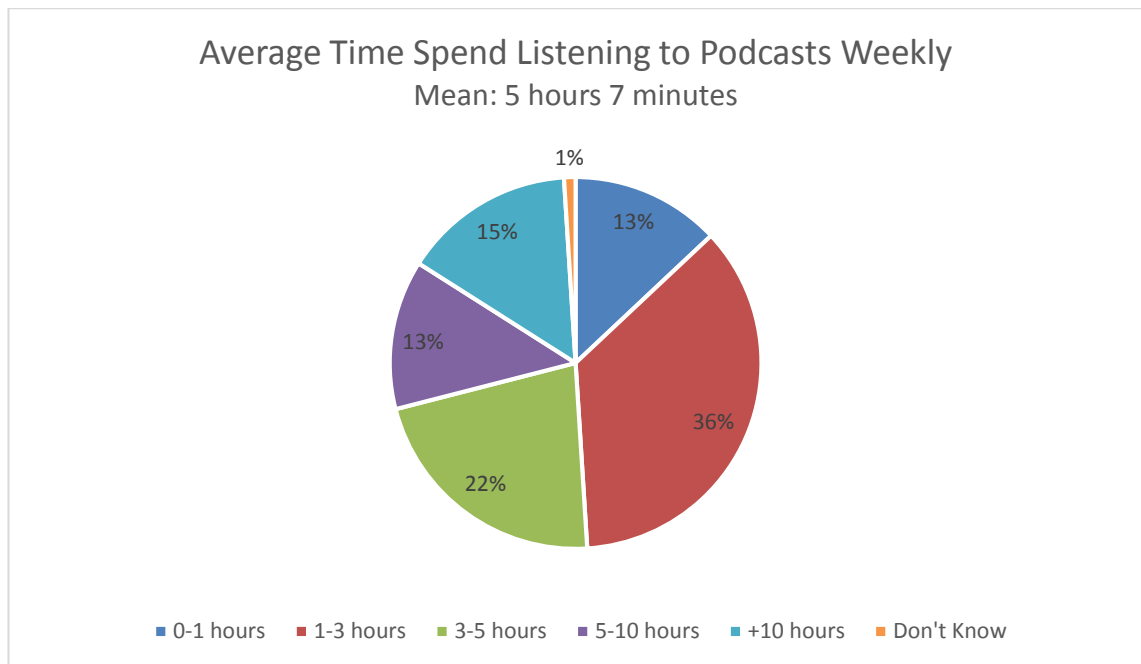


FIGURE 5. % of weekly podcast listening of Americans ages 12 or older (Edison Research 2017)

Consumer listening podcasts weekly uses generally 5 hours and 7 minutes to listen to podcasts. The number of weekly listeners has increased from 7% to 15% in the last five years. (Figure 5; Edison Research 2017.)

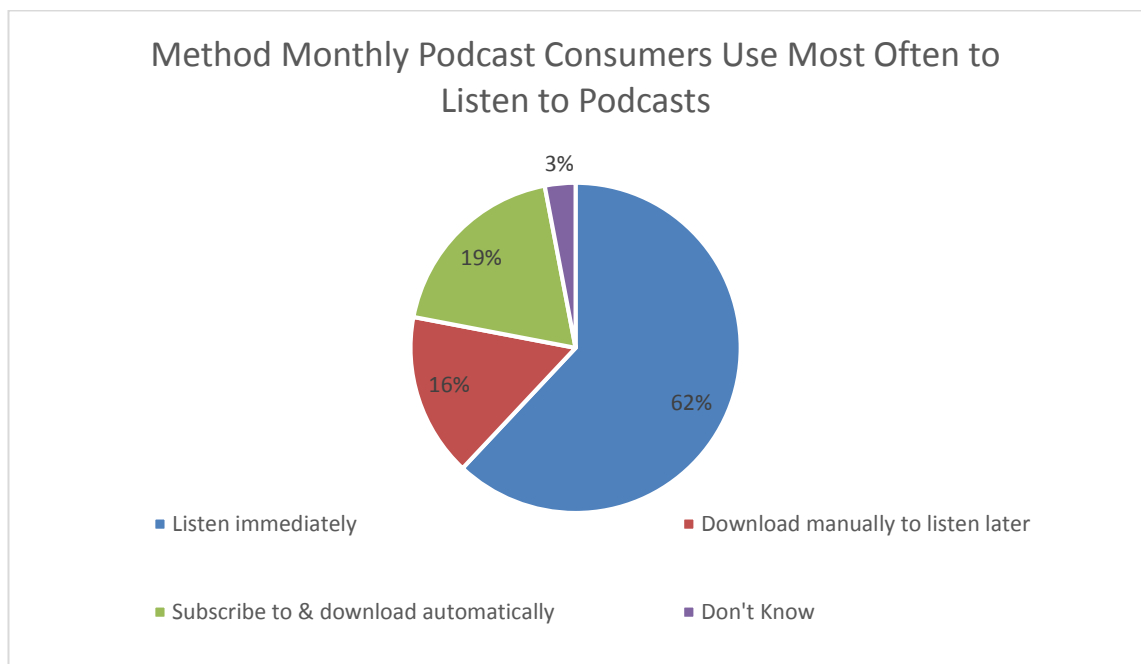


FIGURE 6. Most common listening method (Edison Research 2017).

62% of podcast consumers listened to the content immediately using streaming applications. The rest preferred to download the episodes to the devices manually and listen later or they were subscribed to a podcast and automatically downloaded new episodes once they were released. (Edison Research 2017)

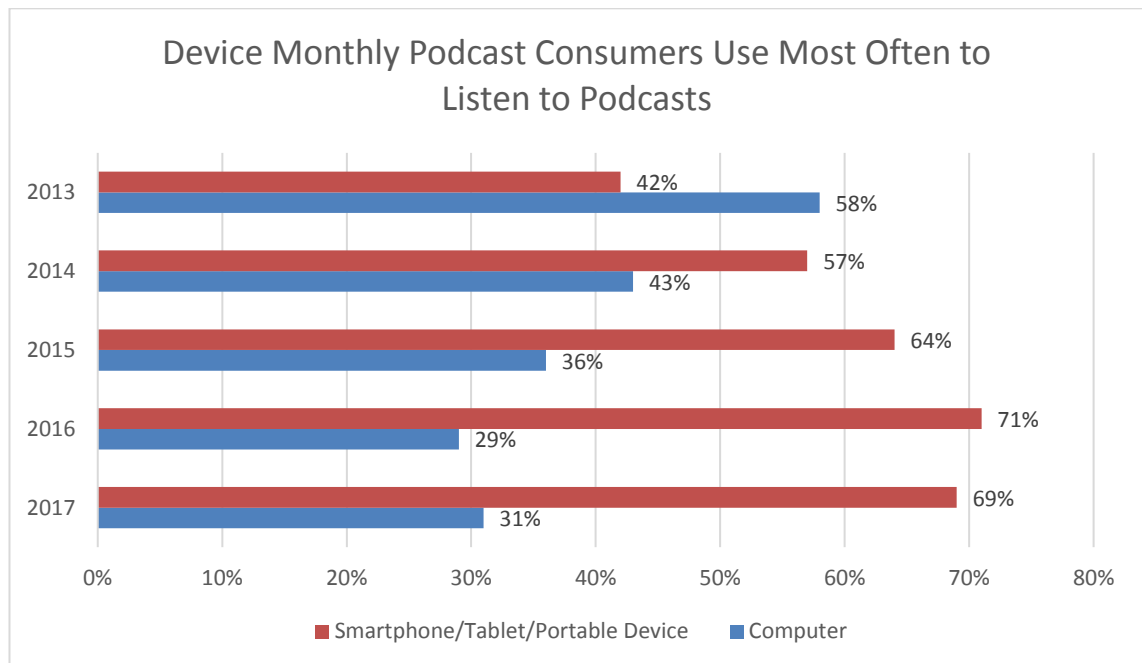


FIGURE 7. Social media usage of Podcast consumers (Edison Research 2017).

Smartphones have replaced computers majorly in podcast listening since 2014. In the year 2017 only 31% of consumers listened mainly using a computer. What is surprising that based on these numbers is that even at home people prefer to use their phone to listen to podcasts. (Figure 7) Podcasts were mostly listened at home with 51% and 22% of the consumers listened mainly in a car. And a surprising number of 14% mentioned that they listen mainly at work. (Edison Research 2017)

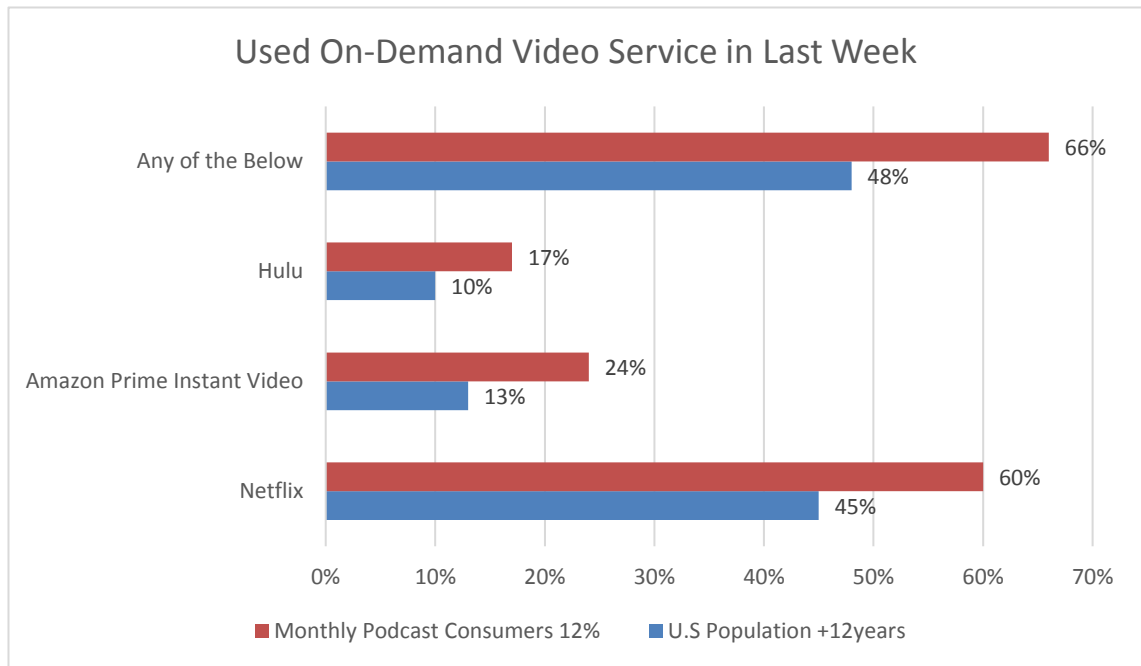


FIGURE 8. Used On-Demand Video Service in Last Week (Edison Research 2017)

The Podcast consumer in the United States is different from the rest of the population. Podcast listeners are more active in using online on-demand services with 66% using one or more and only 45% of the general US population use these services. Podcast-consumers are more active social media users than the average citizen, especially in Twitter usage where the amount is almost double. The study also found that podcast-consumers are more active in following more companies and brands on social media. All in all, podcast-consumers are seen as more tech-savvy individuals than the average consumer. (Edison Research 2017)

All the previously mentioned research data is based on the consumer living in the United States, there is no targeted research for Podcasting in Finland as of 2017, but it is presumable that the research results about listening habits, devices used for listening and times are comparable to the consumer habits in Finland. This assumption is due to the nature of podcasts not being tied to location or culture of a specific country. In addition, Finland and USA are both highly industrialized and wealthy western countries that share the same level of quality of living. (Kim 2016.) Furthermore, based on EF English Proficiency Index Finland ranks #6 on countries by English skills, this supports the argument that Finns can easily consume US based media content. (EF 2018.)

## 2.2 Observations

Based on previous data of the US podcast consumer, there are a few key factors to consider for The YesFinland Podcast.

The main device for consuming podcasts has changed in the last five years. Smart devices have replaced the computer so podcast producers need to focus on providing a good listening experience on mobile. (Figure 7) Podcasts hosted only on their dedicated webpage is not be the best option for mobile since most consumers use a separate audio application on their devices like iTunes or other pocket-cast apps. Most smart devices can use iTunes or an Android equivalent to listen to podcasts. It's important for the producer to get to know these apps and promote them to the audience so they know where to find the episodes.

62% of podcast consumers listened to the content immediately using streaming applications. Only 19% subscribe to podcasts to automatically get them to their devices. (Figure 6) These numbers mean that subscribers are not such an important statistic to look at when rating the success of the podcast. This also puts the focus on advertising the episodes more for the potential listeners and trying to get them to subscribe is a by-product of that.

Consumers generally listen to podcasts about 5 hours per week. (Figure 5) If one episode of a podcast lasts about an hour there aren't many episodes people can on average consume per week. Getting people to listen to your podcast can be hard when competing against a wide variety of different podcasts available. The running time of each episode is important to consider when trying to keep the audience listening to your episodes.

### 2.3 Podcasting in Finland

In Finland, Podcasts have been produced mainly by radio & television stations only. (Mervaala 2012). Finland's national public-broadcasting company, YLE, started their own podcast-experiment back in 2005 by making radio shows available online as podcast-versions. Their first actual podcast production was when they made podcast-services available in Yle-Areena online streaming platform in 2007. After this all the major Finnish radio channels have been increasing the online availability of their radio programs steadily. (YleAreena 2016)

In 2015 Nelonen Media published a new audio streaming service called Supla, where you can listen to radio programs in real time or listen to them as episodes released afterwards. There are also several exclusive series produced and released only in Supla. A year after its release Supla-app had been downloaded more than 200,000 times and monthly users were estimated to be around 140,000. (Sanoma Media 2016; Google App Store 2018)

Podcasts in Finland are mainly published on the platforms of these previously mentioned bigger platforms like Yle-Areena and Supla. They are shared in social media outlets of the companies associated and often in the public publishing platforms like iTunes, YouTube or Soundcloud. There are plenty of options for smart device apps to use to listen to podcasts and they differ based on your device and the operating system it is running. Users want free content and the most important features are the usability and the podcast catalogue an app can offer. (Jakso 2017; Tom's Guide 2018.)

Finland doesn't have a wide variety of locally produced audio content in English. Spirit FM is the only English language music radio station in Finland. (SpritFM 2018) Yle News broadcasts in English daily on Yle Radio 1 and episodes can be listened on Yle-Areena. In addition to Yle News, they produce a podcast called The All Points North, that talk about local topics happening in Finland, All Points North is produced by Yle News. (Yle Areena 2018)

Besides the traditional radio channels in the last few years more commercial businesses and other entities have started to produce their own podcast content. For example, mobile phone service provider DNA publishes work and business-related podcast about digitalization (DNA 2018). F-Secure, Finnish cyber security and privacy company published a

podcast called Kyberykset that is a podcast about cyber security (F-Secure 2018). SK Radio is a podcast for Suomen Kuvalehti Magazine and is an singular case in the podcast field of Finland because it's a pay-to-listen podcast only for the subscribers for the magazine. (Suomen Kuvalehti 2018)

In addition to professionally produced podcasts by commercial businesses and radio broadcasters, since the beginning of podcasting there has always been several indie-podcasts produced by individuals, small companies, associations or even government agencies. For example, The Finnish Defense Forces started to publish their own military defense related podcast called Radio Kipinä back in 2016. (Puolustusvoimat 2018; (Mervaala 2012.)) All the previously mentioned examples prove that podcasts can be produced and published by anyone and about any topic preferred and that the catalogues of different topics are endless.

The success of the Podcast format is slowly becoming mainstream in Finland, there is an increasing amount of new content available both in Finnish and in other languages. The small audience puts off a lot of indie-producers from making long term projects in Finnish language and it's hard to find sponsors or funding to a format that doesn't have a wide audience. The Finnish podcast listeners are a smaller more active audience who actively look for new content online both in Finnish and English language. The biggest issue for the lack of growth is the technology that less tech-savvy individuals might find hard to use and just the lack of knowledge about the podcasting world and culture. (Mervaala 2012.)

### 2.3.1 Podcasting statistic in Finland

The Finnish Statistics organization, Tilastokeskus doesn't specifically research podcast consumption in Finland, but they have been researching the usage of mobile devices and usage of the Internet since 2012. The consensus of the research has been that the easy accessibility of mobile devices has increased the usage of Internet applications and Internet usage in general steadily since 2012. (Tilastokeskus 2017)

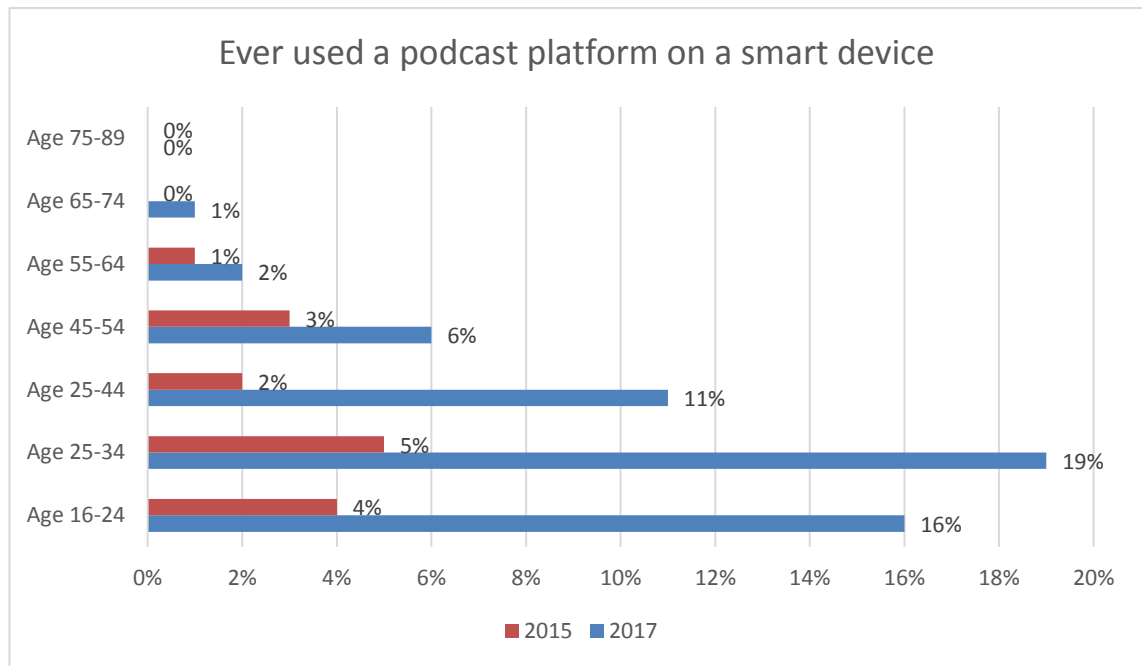


FIGURE 9. Ever used a podcast platform on a smart device (Tilastokeskus 2015; Tilastokeskus 2017.)

In the year 2015 out of the age group 16-24 only 4% had used a podcast platform with their mobile smart device and in the year 2017 that number had gone up to 16%. The same trend of a significant increase happened with all the age groups up to the age group 45-54. (Figure 9) Age has the biggest effect on podcasts listening with a smart device. The biggest age group listening to podcasts were the one of 24-34 with 19%, 3% higher than the lower age group. The older the groups got the listenership practically dropped to 1%. (Figure 9)

The study also found that even if age affected the listenership, level of education didn't make a significant difference. There was a slight difference on listenership whether you lived in a city or in the countryside. 12% of the people living in the city said they listen to podcasts when the same number was 7% in the countryside areas. Men and women

listened to podcast equally men being just slightly higher with 10% and women with 7%. (Tilastokeskus 2017)

## **2.4 Observations**

Podcast is a respected format of new media and is slowly gathering a wider audience as the technology gets more accessible and the new generations get more tech-oriented. The current user appreciates the format since it gives the user a chance to find the content that fits perfectly with their interests. To find the content and ways to access it requires still a bit of technical knowledge and effort and that is why the mainstream audience hasn't quite found the format yet. What is common with the United States and Finland with podcasts is that smart devices have taken the main role in podcast consumption. (YleAreena 2016; Tilastokeskus 2017)

Based on the fact that companies are starting their own podcasts and that the government owned radio channels are bringing more content on-demand online it can be proved that the interest and knowledge of the format is increasing in Finland. It can be assumed that most of the people listen to traditional radio shows later on the online services and actual podcast programs are still in a smaller segment in the Finnish market.

With the availability of smart devices, it is easy for anyone to discover thousands of podcast shows in just a matter of a couple of taps on their devices and that makes podcasts a powerful marketing tool.

### 3 CONTENT MARKETING & NEW MEDIA

The Content Marketing Institute offers the following definition: Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action (Pulizzi, 2011).

New Media is a term for content that is created and distributed through online platforms such as social media outlets like Facebook or Twitter, websites, chat forums and blogs and they can consist of anything from text, videos, audio, pictures and so on. These new media forms are accessible globally and they are fast and efficient ways to share information and entertainment. (Cinque 2012.)

Unlike traditional media outlets like television, newspapers or radio, new media content allows users to choose what information and content they consume and when. Giving users less restrictions means that the user can have greater control over the content and even the production of it. Interactivity between the producer of the content and the consumer is the greatest aspect of the modern new media production. (Cinque 2012.)

Internet has had a significant impact on advertising and it has been cutting of the profits of traditional media, which has relied on the mass audiences following their content. Significant number of consumers have moved online for their consuming needs, online stores such as Amazon and iTunes are dominating the physical and online content markets. Online auctioning has become widely available through eBay. Likewise, most of the entertainment consumption has moved to the internet with faster internet speeds being provided globally. (Harrington, Weiser 2008; Hobbs 2012.)

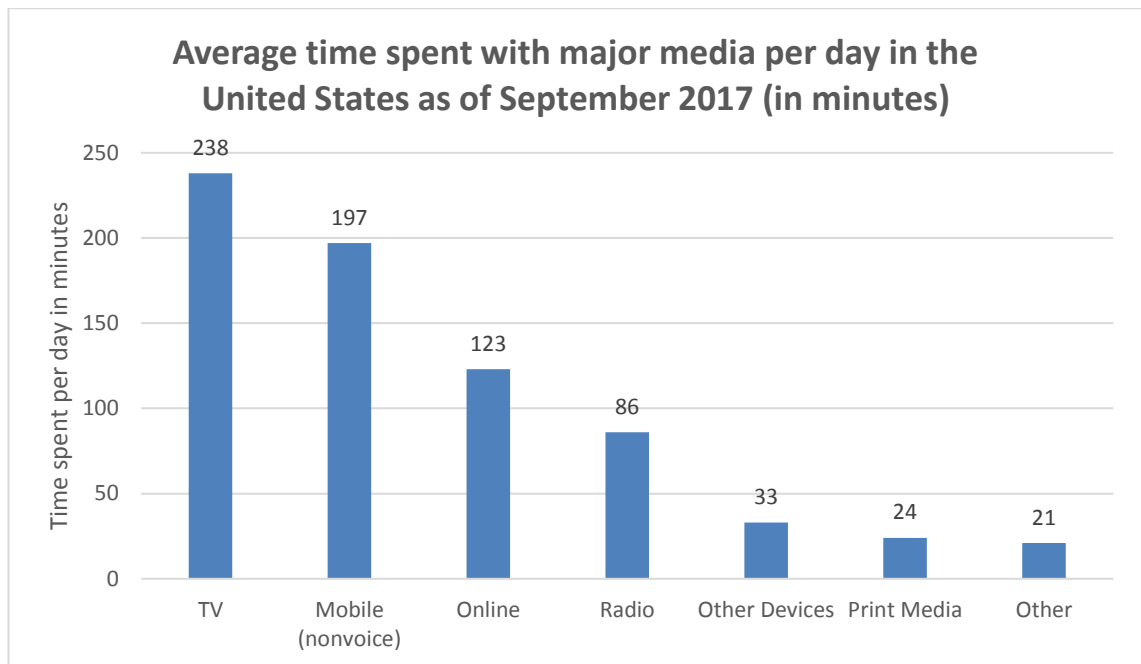


FIGURE 10. Average time spent with major media per day in the United States as of September 2017 in minutes. (Statista 2017)

With the rise of online advertising market, a lot of fields have become saturated and brands are fighting over the attention of the customers online. In order to motivate people to purchase your product or service, or to consider your organization superior to any competitors, companies have had the need to rethink their business models. This is where content marketing comes in, to attract customers brands need to start creating meaningful and often free content that provides value for your potential customers.

Value is subjective, but us humans love to belong to a group or a social circle and we use brands and products to showcase our personal identities and distinguishing us from the everyman. So, value can be something as simple as making the customers entertained, making them feel important and part of a group, a fandom and referring them with a group name and making them feel exclusive. Other values can be education and knowledge based. Value can also be helping customers with their problems like Duolingo, free language education app with premium paid education plans. (Gotter 2017)

Producing content often helps to form a deeper relationship with customers as they engage and spend time with your content. This can lead them to look more deeply into your brand, clicking a link to your webpage, filling a form, commenting and interacting in your social media outlets and in the end hopefully purchasing your products or services.

Many purchase decisions we take in life are driven by content. Therefore, it makes sense to study which options are on the table and which work the best. (Gotter 2017)

### **3.1 Why businesses use content marketing?**

Content marketing online is powerful in two key ways. First, the audience can be segmented very precisely, even down to factors like current location and recent brand interactions, which means that messages can (and must) be personalized and tailored specially for them. Second, the digital sphere is almost completely measurable. Every minute and every click by a customer can be accounted for. In digital you can see exactly how various campaigns are performing, which channels bring the most benefit, and where your efforts are best focused.

However, it is necessary to discuss further about the benefits, as well as drawbacks, of content marketing. Dan Scalco (2017), the founder and director of growth at Digitalux, a digital marketing and SEO agency says there are four reasons business should use content marketing:

1. Everyone else is doing it. If you don't create content, no one will find you. Internet is flooding with content and if all the competitors are running their content online it is hard to be found by search engines and your business can't be found by the customer either.
2. Quality content gets shared: In this world of social networks, the share ability of content defines the success. If the company is already implementing SEO tactics or other content production content marketing only complements the existing marketing.
3. There is very little risk involved: Scalco says that most of the traditional marketing can be expensive upfront without any guarantee of results. Content marketing only costs the creation of the content since most of it is hosted on already existing platforms like company website and social media outlets.
4. Drive content to your website. Content marketing can help increasing the visits on the brands website. Traffic coming through the content is usually more higher quality since it comes through people who already know about your brand.

Ultimately, the aim of any type of marketing is to keep and grow a customer base and stimulate sales in the future. Digital communication tools contribute towards connecting and building long-term relationships with customers. (Scalco 2017)

Jayson DeMers (2016), contributor at Forbes argues that even though content marketing is the new trend of markets it can still have downsides especially with people who are unfamiliar with the strategies put into it. He explains a couple of potential downfalls that could happen with content marketing.

1. The high learning curve. You need to understand what content marketing is and what are the best practices for creating content. It is not easy to start a blog or a video series without any knowledge. In addition, measuring different content as it is happening is important in order to find the right methods for your brand.

2. Building momentum and return of investment. Creating the content can be time consuming and getting people to see it might take even longer. It is a heavy effort to get people interested out of nothing and comparing to traditional advertising, results can take lot longer.

3. Hard measurability. Though there are many ways to track clicks and views, it might be hard to calculate what does it need to increase the reach of the campaign. Numbers might also be distorted by the same customers going through all of your content. There are too many variables with traffic sources that it might be hard to calculate the return of investment concretely.

### **3.2 Podcasting in content marketing**

The main reasons of choosing podcasts as a form of content marketing to be used in are offering interesting content that improves brand awareness of the podcast and its associated company, engage the audience with a meaningful content and having a platform to share your brands story and voice in the online media area.

In addition to the general research results there are couple of key reasons why podcasts seem to be interesting to people in 2018.

Firstly, accessibility. Much of western population have smart devices that they are using daily. It is increasingly easier to consume podcasts with these devices whether you are commuting, shopping, working out, practically anywhere where you can use your phone.

The spark of the trend. It's also beneficial that the "new wave" of podcasts had a catalyzing action: the breakout popularity of the podcast Serial, which has reached more than 230 million downloads across both series. This, in turn, sparked the rise of new podcasts, which attracted more listeners. More listeners inspired even more content producers, and the cycle continues; more content leads to more listeners, and more listeners lead to more content.

The main qualities of using podcasts in content marketing are offering interesting content that improves brand awareness of the podcast there are couple of main components that go into making podcasts a successful medium to use to further promote your brand.

### **3.3 The four Ps of podcasts in content marketing**

The four Ps marketing strategy was popularized in the 1950s by Neil Borden. The four Ps are categories used to refer to different aspects of marketing of goods and services. The four P's of marketing help can be used to structure the components that make up a brand's offering and products. (Investopedia 2018.)

#### **3.3.1 Products (and services)**

The podcast in its core it's not exactly a product or a service, it's a piece of content that is providing value, entertainment, education etc. Generally, podcasts are always offered free of charge and the monetization comes through advertising and donations. If the podcast provides enough value with its content to the user it can be converted to brand loyalty and help sell the brand's products and services. Users fall in love with products and services when their experience is tailored to their needs, making them feel as part of a community and further enhancing their idea of their personal identity. (DeMers 2017)

Podcast can be used intertwined with other mediums of a brand. Although the main content is the actual podcast show, it's content can be repurposed by embedding parts of it to a blog post, publishing parts of it in video format and cross referencing and promoting

brands other content, products and services within the episodes. Podcasts should be thought as a part of a whole ecosystem of brand marketing that supports and blends to each other. (DeMers 2017)

Podcasts aren't a one-time creation; once you've recorded them, they'll be available from your channel, indefinitely. In that way, they have a similar shelf life to evergreen content—so long as you're choosing topics with an intent to last. Online, the experience the user has in discovering and purchasing can be considered part of the product the brand provides, or be the product itself. The Internet as a distribution medium also makes it possible for products, such as software and music, to be sold digitally. (DeMers 2017)

### **3.3.2 Price**

Podcasting is cost-effective way to produce content, especially compared to video or graphic design elements. To put out studio quality content you will need to invest more money, but to get started you can get a USB microphone and software starting from 60€ (Hanks, M. 2012. 64-68.) That is enough to start recording and to edit your work; beyond that, all you'll invest into each podcast episode is the time it takes to plan, record, edit and publish. If you go with an improvised, conversational style, that requires relatively little preparation and just takes the effort of recording, editing and publishing. (Hanks, M. 2012. 64-68.)

### 3.3.3 Placement (or distribution) & Promotion

What is the best aspect of podcast recording being that the equipment and gear can always be upgraded and replaced with better quality products to produce a better recording. The difficult part is choosing the right online channels to publish and promote the podcast once it's ready. (Hanks, M. 2012. 80-84.)

Product distribution and markets no longer must be dictated by location. By simply making their products visible online (for example, on a website or Facebook page), brands can reach a global market. The key is to reach and engage customers on the channels they are using. Therefore, choosing your digital tactics is vital. You want to engage customers on the places they are online.

Understanding the channels through which you share content is as important as the crafting of that content itself. Reaching people effectively will only be achieved if the medium supports the message and vice versa. Social media, email marketing, mobile marketing, and video marketing are just some disciplines that will form part of your content creation arsenal.

(Hanks, M. 2012. 80-84.)

More listeners inspire more producers and the cycle repeats and growing the field organically. The technology keeps developing and it's easier to gather more data about how effectively you are reaching those you need to. (DeMers 2016)

### 3.4 Observations

Based on the research about content marketing, there are a few key factors to consider for The YesFinland Podcast.

One of the great challenges in using podcasts in content marketing is providing content that is truly interesting and engaging to the right people with the right mix of subject matter and branding. The field keeps changing rapidly and it is highly competitive so being relevant to the audience can get challenging.

In the context of ongoing podcast content production, it can also be a challenge to maintain levels of quality over time, which is why the product needs to be evaluated actively and the producers needs to listen the audience's opinions and feedback.

DeMers (2016) points out that it is important to consider that the goal is not to create as much content as possible, rather it is to focus on relevance and content that matches strategic outcomes. This will keep audiences engaged and loyal to the brand. Furthermore, a positive side of podcasts are that they are always going to be available and providing value once they are released online.

On the other side, it's going to be challenging to track what the actual benefit of the podcast will be. There are ways to track listens and clicks but which of them will bring revenue to the company is harder to measure. YesFinland providing mainly event and teaching services makes it harder to make much monetary benefit from the brand awareness coming outside of the physical location of the company.

## 4 CASE STUDY: THE YESFINLAND PODCAST

### 4.1 Starting points, background & objectives

Case study for this thesis was done for a company called YesFinland, they are a comedy company based in Tampere, Finland. They mainly produce comedy shows around the city of Tampere, teach improv classes and communications trainings with the specialization of intercultural communications, presentation skills and team building. Their mission is to bring people together through laughter. Previously YesFinland was called The improv Academy back when it's main focus was on teaching improv classes, but since the founding of the company in early 2010's the company has expanded in additional work tasks and the name didn't fit the goals of the company.



PICTURE 1. YesFinland Brand Logo (YesFinland, 2018)

The idea for the YesFinland Podcast started from the owner and founder of YesFinland, Trent Pancy. He is an active listener of podcasts and wanted to launch a podcast with the re-branding of the company to further promote the new brand and the projects the company would be working on. As an international improv teacher and having many years of

experience in the comedy field internationally, Pancy has plenty of connections to interesting people in the comedy field coming from all the backgrounds and they would serve as a great source to promote the brand.

Bernadette Jiwa (2018.) from *The Story of Telling*, states that in order for a brand to be successful it needs to be more than its content and narrative. The brand needs a story that is beyond what's written in the copy on a website, the text in a brochure or the presentation used to pitch to investors or customers. A brand's story is often inspired by the presence of people who participate, create, connect, and develop the saga of growth and success. People trust other people. The core reason why your story should be personality-driven is so that it will provide someone real for customers to trust. With this idea of using personality driven stories to further add on the brand seen value we wanted to use a podcast to further tell the story of what the YesFinland's courses, shows and everything else are and how can they benefit and bring value to one's life.

The reason why this case study was chosen was to maximize learning by having a real life working project with a client and an audience to research and to produce the podcast for. Due to time constraints Pancy needed someone else to research about podcast publishing, producing and technicalities that go into everything related to it. Originally the podcast was supposed to launch simultaneously with the re-branding but the idea was scrapped due to the limited time between projects.

The objective for this case study was to research and develop easy and efficient working methods to producing and publishing a podcast with a shoestring budget. The idea was to experiment and explore different formats of podcasts to find a suitable fit for the new audience the project wanted to reach. This meant testing out recording in live events in a public place, private events and lastly in a sound studio setting. In addition, the case study wanted to lay down a groundwork for anyone else looking to start a podcast on their own by providing one angle and a story on how to work on a podcast and what kind of effort does it take to start one.

### **4.1.1 Content production & finding the format**

When we first started to sketch out the The YesFinland Podcast it was planned to be a live talk show with an audience that would be recorded and published as a podcast. The live show would be an interview with someone who is an improviser and it would include a short improv performance after the interview that would also be recorded. Pancy would book the people to be interviewed and he would be the host of the discussions. My tasks would be the other production aspects like setting up the recording equipment and editing and publishing the episodes. The reason why we wanted to have it as a live show was to utilize extra time after the weekly shows in Tampere. The aim for the podcast was to be more of a comedy podcast than just an interview about the comedy field.

### **4.2 Live Talk Show**

After we had generated the initial idea we wanted to put it to a test so we agreed with the owner of the O'Connell's Irish Bar in Tampere that after the weekly improv comedy show we could have some extra time to record an interview and do a short improv set with the interviewee. The bar owner Simon Foster set up his microphones on stage and used his MacBook computer to record to the audio from the interview. We had an interview with Boris Kashentsev and they had an improv set.

The recording, quality wise, was good with 7 microphones recording from all around the stage, it was more than needed to capture the conversation and the audience. Also, the extra microphones set on the stage could be used to record the improv part where the duo moved around on the stage. This kind of big microphone set up proved to be difficult and time consuming so we wanted to try other more minimal variations for recording too.



PICTURE 2. Zoom H6 Recorder on the left and the smaller H4n on the right. (Audiofan-zine, 2018)

Couple of weeks later from the first recording session we tried again but this time we wanted to try with a portable recorder and microphones so that if needed we could have a podcast recording kit ready to go whichever venue we would produce a performance. We were comparing portable recorders available in the market and the decision came down to couple of key factors: portability, number of microphone inputs and general durability and usability. In the end we decided between two devices, Zoom H4n and Zoom H6. Both are durable and portable but we chose the more expensive Zoom H6 since it has the capability to record 4 microphones simultaneously and still have an ambience microphone whereas the H4n could only record 2 microphones and an ambience microphone. The 4 microphone inputs would be helpful in the case of a recording with multiple guests so everyone can have their own microphone.

For the second test recording we used the H6 with two microphones to record an interview and once the improvisation part started the microphones were moved to the side of the stage to try to capture the best audio from the improvisers possible. That didn't end up in great quality of audio and clip microphones would be an extra hassle to set up after each interview.



PICTURE 3. Host Trent Pancy on the left interviewing Janne Lesonen at O'Connell's Irish Bar. (Photo by Author, 2018)

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> try, we interviewed some of the audience members about their feelings and ideas for the live show. Generally, the audience liked the idea, but found it a bit out of place to follow two people talking on stage when the idea of the conversation was to have more of a serious talk and not focus on entertaining the audience. In addition, the guest being interviewed on stage felt like they had to put on a performance and it was hard for them to be genuine in front of an audience. Furthermore, there was a slight concern of getting too intimate with the conversation in front of an audience since it couldn't be edited out in post-production in the case there would be something too personal or inconsiderate said during the recording. Timing of the recording sessions were also difficult to handle since they were right after the two-hour improv show and that would suck out the energy out from the host and the guest resulting into more broken conversations and lack of general focus to the topic.

Recording in a bar after the shows proved to be too difficult and we didn't feel that the conversations would be entertaining enough for the people staying to watch them or for them listening them afterwards so the idea of a live show was scrapped but we wanted to keep experimenting with an audience so we had an idea to host a private recording event.

### **4.2.1 Live show with an invite only audience**

After two tries to produce a live podcast at the O'Connell's Irish Bar we wanted to try out a different method of live recording by inviting a group of people to the YesFinland's office space to watch a live interview that included an improv performance.

The idea behind the private recording was to bring more people into free improv jam & practice afternoons that would happen before or after the recording session hosted at the YesFinland's training space, the iA studios. We used the previously mentioned Zoom H6 portable recorder with two microphones to record an interview at the training space with Lauri Salmi, a local improviser as the guest.

Afterwards we interviewed the audience about their experience of watching a live interview and then a short improv show. The general feedback was the same, it is weird to watch an interview that's not really directed to the audience and not trying to be particularly funny or entertaining in a live setting. The audience liked the live improv performance part a lot but they felt like it wasn't enough to keep coming back to see something like this every week. It was also hard to schedule together a guest, host and the producer to on a Saturday afternoon.



PICTURE 4. Host Trent Pancy Interviewing Lauri Salmi at YesFinland Office. (Photo by Author, 2018)

From the interviewees point of view, it had the same issues as the first live recordings, it felt too much of a performance compared to a genuine deep conversation with two individuals. After reviewing the feedback, we decide that the live shows wouldn't be worth the effort that goes into the making of them especially if the podcast would want to keep a steady publishing schedule. None of the live recordings made to the actual publishing of the podcast and they might be used as extra content later. The last format to try out would be to try to record privately in a studio setting.

### 4.3 Studio Recording

Since Trent Pancy works as a freelancer voiceover artist he had built a small sound studio in the office to use to record the voiceovers. We figured since the live recording were hard to produce and manage we could try to just record interviews at the office to try to get more authentic conversations with the guests without feeling the need to perform to an audience at the same time. By doing these we would be free of any time constraints of live shows and could schedule the recording sessions during daytime too and even have multiple recordings for one day. These studio sessions would be easier to schedule and

manage and live could be used as bonus sessions to produce occasionally. After learning how to set up the studio and the equipment there we invited some local friends to be the test subjects.

In the studio the recording felt natural and less pressurized to be entertaining. We recorded multiple episodes with different guests and even some during the same day. This helped us massively logistics wise and the audio quality was better since the sound studio is sound proofed. We liked the idea and decided to stick with the studio recording because of the easiness of the production.



PICTURE 5. (Left) Recording portably in Helsinki with Jamie MacDonald. (Right) Podcast guests, Kate Limani and Tuure Pitkänen in the studio. (Photo by Trent Pancy, 2018)

#### 4.4 Creating the Workflow

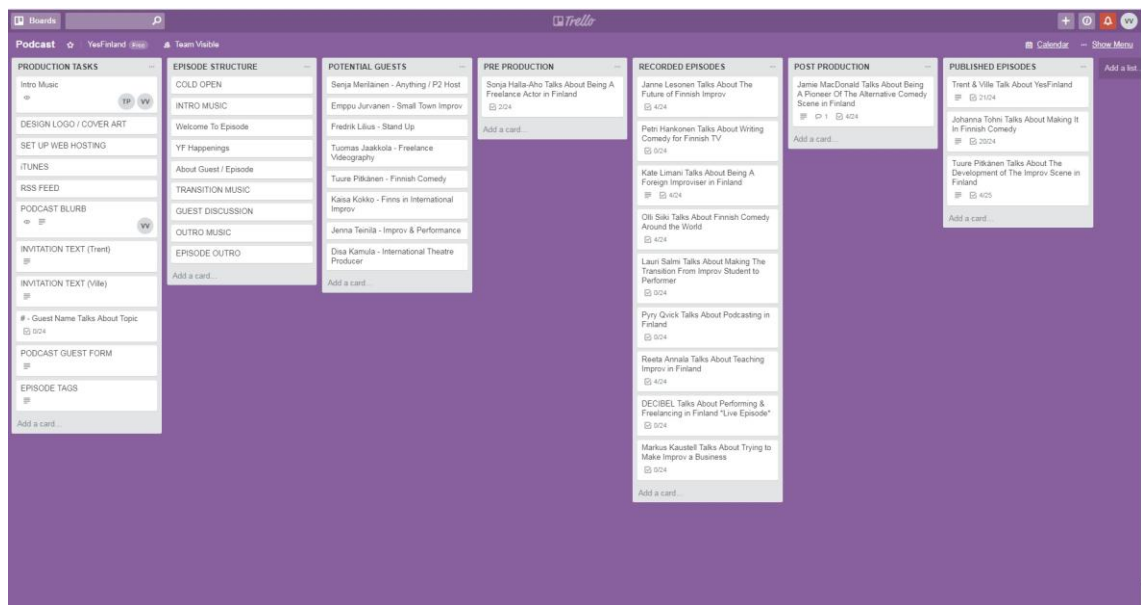
After we had settled with the podcast format it was time to start creating the workflow for when would invite guests. Since Pancy knows plenty of people already in the comedy field in Finland we decided to start with interviewing them since each individual would have a different story and outlook to the subject of comedy in Finland. When the podcast eventually reaches the point of starting to invite guests we don't know, we will make an e-mail template to use when contacting the guests.

The whole process for a recording session starts by booking times with the people, we have tried to get multiple sessions during one day since then we only need to set up and take down the studio once and it helps the production. Once the guest arrives for their

recording sessions we found that the easiest way to ease them in to a session is to start having an unofficial discussion with them while serving them water, coffee and getting them being cozy in the sound studio. While all this is happening it's easy to just start recording and start the episode when the conversation has already started and both the host and guest are comfortable discussing already.

The episodes have lasted about an hour each and after the recording we make sure that the recording had no technical errors with the microphones and proceed to make a backup of the files to Google Drive Cloud Service, essentially uploading them to an internet storage to access later from any computer. For the guests we tried to take a picture with them after each session behind the same background but that proved to be hard and most of the time it was not done so the idea was scrapped.

After a session the guest get a Google Form (appendix 1) sent to them where they fill out their information like personal bio, social media handles, promotions and plugs the guest wants to have included and we will use for the show notes of each episode. The shownotes will be written on our website for each episode. The form also includes a place for them to add their portrait photo.



PICTURE 6. Trello workboard for The YesFinland Podcast. (Image by author 2018)

Since recording an episode has multiple working steps we are using Trello to track the workflow. Trello is a web-based project management application to manage all this. It provides us with work task “cards” that can be assigned to people and moved between

different categories on the board. This works especially well when the episodes move between the production process from potential guest invitations to recorded episodes.

#### **4.5 Post-Production of Recordings**

As beginner podcasters with a small budget to produce the show, we opted to use a free audio editing program called Audacity. It is a free open source audio editor that works on a PC or a Mac. It is great software for basic podcast and audio editing, it can also be used to record live audio, cut, splice, and edit. (Audacity 2018) It isn't the most intuitive program and has a slight learning curve for beginners. The process may be able to be simplified with other apps.

Audio editing was kept simple due to the lack of knowledge of it. Since we used hobbyist level equipment and editing tools we wanted to focus on producing interesting content that is listenable and not to get too tangled with the audio quality of the recording.

Website named Buzzsprout has detailed tutorials on audio editing using Audacity. For the episodes we followed four simple steps. (Buzzprout 2014)

- **Amplify**

Our audio recordings were generally quite quiet so we used the amplify effect to make the audio files louder. (Buzzprout 2014) This makes the listening easier without having to turn on the speakers to full volume. After amplifying it was time to adjust the frequencies of the audio.

- **Equalization**

Spoken word podcasts typically sound better when the lower frequencies are boosted and the higher frequencies are reduced. (Buzzprout 2014) This will make your voice sound a little deeper, which is generally desirable. It is easy to go overboard with adjusting the settings so generally I made fine adjustments only.

- **Compressing**

The compressor helps to produce consistent audio levels throughout your recording. Regardless of how careful you are there will inevitably be times when you drift a little close to the mic, have a loud laugh or speak a little too softly. The

compressor within Audacity will smooth the levels to more equal state. (Buzzprout 2014)

- **Exporting**

iTunes and other podcast sites can take various file formats, but we used the suggested export settings: MP3, Constant, 256 kbps, Joint Stereo.

#### 4.6 Marketing and Branding

Since the focus of the podcast is to direct people to the YesFinland website and make them more aware of the brand, we wanted to utilize the web page as a platform where the podcast could be found in addition to the outlets like iTunes where the RSS feed would go. Episodes could be listened directly on our website or downloaded for offline listening. Each episode has its own page with detailed show notes and links for each discussion.



**PODCAST**

**THE YESFINLAND PODCAST**  
 The YesFinland Podcast explores the comedy industry in Finland and beyond.

Host [Trent Pancy](#) has conversations with comedians, improvisers, writers and anyone else who impacts the Finnish Entertainment scene, where they discuss what it takes to be a part of the budding world of Finnish comedy.

The best way to understand YesFinland Podcast is to listen to an episode.

Subscribe (and rate) on [iTunes](#), [Jakso.fi](#), or wherever you get your podcasts!

**Production Credits**  
 Host - Trent Pancy  
 Producer & Editor - Ville Välimäki  
 Intro Music - Samuel Teini

**LATEST EPISODE**  
 Tuure Pitkänen Talks About The Development of The Improv Scene in Finland

**AVAILABLE ON iTunes**  
 SUBSCRIBE

**MORE EPISODES**

1. Welcome to the YesFinland Po...  
 2. Trent and Ville Talk About YesFi...  
 3. Johanna Tohni Talks About Maki...  
 4. Tuure Pitkänen Talks About The...

PICTURE 7. Landing page of The YesFinland Podcast. (YesFinland 2018.)

Because of the budget constraints we wanted to keep it as much as a do-it-yourself production as we can. Intro music was created in collaboration with Samuel Teini, a musician

and improviser from Tampere. It went through multiple iterations to find an upbeat synth beat for the intro and more of a solo guitar lead outro music.

We created a logo for the podcast ourselves and each episode features an image of the interviewee(s) as the episode photo. For each episode we created a structure to follow to keep episodes consistent. Each episode would start with a separately recorded introduction clip before starting the interview. These clips would serve as a place to market current events and open more the background of the episode.

## Jamie MacDonald Talks About Being A Pioneer Of The Alternative Comedy Scene in Finland

Apr 2, 2018



**JAMIE MACDONALD**

This week's podcast guest is a comedian Jamie Macdonald, a half-Finnish, Scottish-Canadian, mostly socialist, kinky, gay, transgender guy whose stand-up comedy basically covers all of those topics as well as the occasional pun. He's active in Finland's alternative comedy scene, co-running Comedy Idiot in English, Feminist Comedy Night and Feminist Comedy Academy, the burlesque/drag/comedy show Punch Up!, and political comedy show You Can't Be Serious. His second solo show, Gender Euphoria, is touring throughout 2018.

In the episode Trent and Jamie talk about Jamie's career in the alternative

comedy scene in Finland and what goes into running multiple different productions in Helsinki such as Comedy Idiot and Feminist Comedy Night.

### Show Notes

[Jamie MacDonald on Facebook](#)

[Feminist Comedy Night](#)

[Comedy Idiot](#)

Contact Jamie at:

[jmac.macd@gmail.com](mailto:jmac.macd@gmail.com)

[YesFinland on Facebook](#)

[YesFinland on Instagram](#)

### Subscribe & Follow

iTunes / [Jakso.fi](#)

### Credits

Host - Trent Pancy

Guest - Jamie MacDonald

Producer & Editor - Ville Välimäki

Intro Music - Samuel Teini

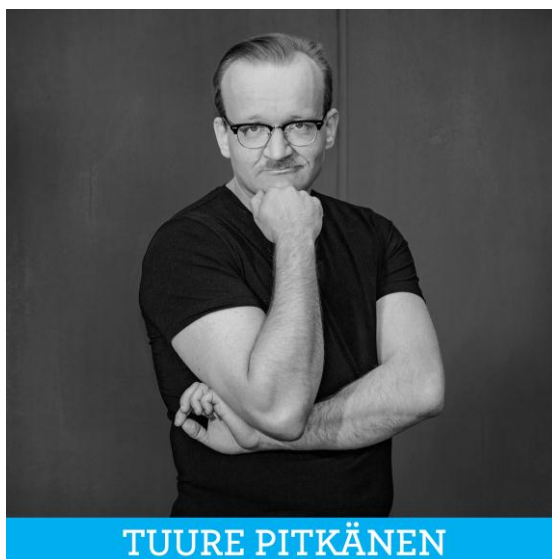
PICTURE 8. Show notes of an episode of The YesFinland Podcast. (YesFinland 2018.)

<b>EPISODE STRUCTURE</b>
COLD OPEN (clip from the discussion)
INTRO MUSIC
SPOKEN INTRO (incl. YesFinland shows, about guest/episode, plugs and mentions)
TRANSITION MUSIC
GUEST DISCUSSION
OUTRO MUSIC

TABLE 1. The YesFinland Podcast episode structure.



PICTURE 9. The logo of The Yes Finland Podcast. (YesFinland 2018)



PICTURE 10. The image used for an episode with the picture of the guest. (YesFinland 2018)



PICTURE 11. Screenshot of a Facebook post advertising an episode of the YesFinland Podcast. (Image by author 2018)

To market the episodes, we would post about each on our social media channels on Facebook and Instagram. We would encourage the guest to share the post on their own channels as well. These posts would include a short excerpt on the guest and the episode. We are considering using preview clips of the conversations to further attract audience's attention when they see the post on their social media feed.

## 4.7 Publishing Platforms

We wanted to keep the delivery of the content simple and decide to focus on having the main listening channels to be iTunes for their popularity and audience traffic and our website to cross-promote YesFinland's other products while listening the episodes on the website. We tried Google Play Podcasts as an Android alternative to iTunes but it is not available in Finland at the time of writing this thesis. Plenty of Android based podcast applications take their content directly from iTunes, so our podcast can be found in multiple different podcast applications when using Android operating systems.

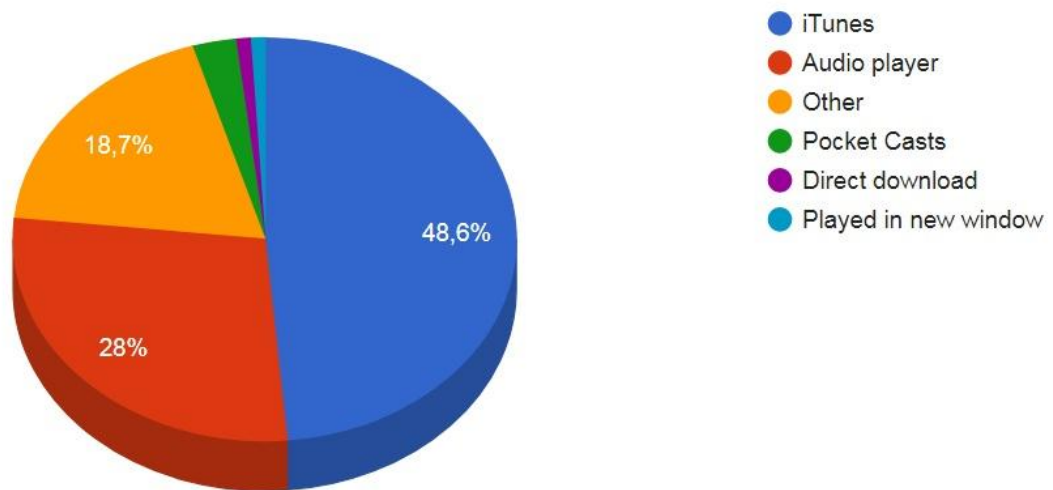


FIGURE 11. Listening Sources of The YesFinland Podcast

Based on the statistics provided by the hosting platform on our website, the main listening sources are iTunes with almost half of the listens. Second comes the audio player on our website and third other podcasting applications. (Figure 11)

## 4.8 Monetization

While the main target for The YesFinland Podcast is to be used as a marketable content to further bring the brands story and image to the knowledge of a more extensive audience, we are not excluding any ideas of other ways of monetization if it becomes a realistic opportunity. Generally, there are two ways to monetize a podcast.

### **4.8.1 Sponsorships**

To attract sponsors a podcast needs to be a high enough quality and reach a big enough audience to make it worthwhile for the sponsor. Typically, the sponsorships are a type of affiliate marketing, it allows podcasters to make money by promoting and selling another company's products or services. Typically, the company will give you a special link or code to promote their product to your listeners. Whenever a listener purchases something using that affiliate link or code, the podcaster will earn a commission. Companies like Dollar Shave Club - selling shaving equipment, Audible – Amazon's audiobook platform and Quip – electric toothbrush are common sponsors on US based podcasts that use affiliate marketing tactics.

For The YesFinland Podcast the realistic sponsorships are local companies within Finland. Co-operating and leveraging the combined networks of audiences for additional visibility for both companies.

There are also possible negative aspects when having sponsors. Having too many sponsors on each episode might make the listeners steer away from content that is too full of advertisements. Sponsors might not be liked by the audience. Additionally, the income might not be reliable since you are not in charge on the revenue stream, at any point the company sponsoring can end the agreement and it might be hard to find a replacement.

### **4.8.2 Patreon**

Patreon is an online donation/membership platform that provides entrepreneurs tools to create subscription based content and receive money from their fans, the subscribers are commonly referred as "patrons". For creators who post regularly online, Patreon allows them to receive funding directly from their patrons on a recurring basis or per work they produce. Patreon can help give the creator get reliable income that lets them focus on creating more. (Patreon 2017) There are hundreds on podcast projects on Patreon and many of them publicly announce how much income they make each month on donations. The income for these projects can vary anywhere between tens of US dollars to tens of thousands of US dollars each month. (Patreon 2017)

For The YesFinland Podcast, we have considered starting a Patreon page once we have released around 15 episodes, this way we have enough content to start marketing the podcast and we have enough knowledge on the technical aspect of running the production and publishing tasks efficiently. Generally, we are not expecting to receive many Patreons to begin with but any income could be forwarded to further make the production better.

#### 4.9 Measuring success

The YesFinland Podcast has been out for about 2,5 months at the time of this writing. It hasn't been marketed elsewhere than YesFinland's own social media outlets. The first episode titled, "Welcome to The YesFinland Podcast!" was a short introduction episode of me and Trent Pancy explaining the concept of the podcast. We shortly followed them by three more interview style episodes to have a more to showcase to the audience. The episodes have reached, on average, between 30-50 listens during their lifetime, apart from the episode featuring stand-up comedian Jamie MacDonald. MacDonald has an existing following on his social media outlets and sharing the episode to his audience greatly increased our listenership for his episode.

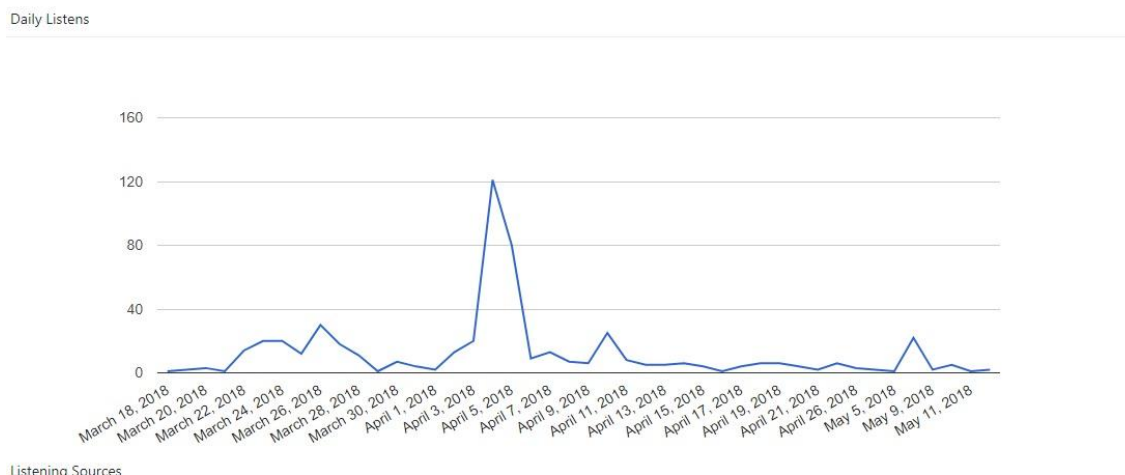
We are not expecting huge numbers on these episodes with less know guests. For the future, our greatest strength is to try to get influential guests from the comedy field of Finland and use their existing audiences to increase our brand visibility.

Publish Date	Episode Name	May	April	March	Lifetime
03-12-2018	<a href="#">Welcome to the YesFinland Podcast!</a>	2	9	20	31
03-24-2018	<a href="#">Tuure Pitkanen Talks About The Development of The Improv Scene in Finland</a>	3	19	56	78
03-22-2018	<a href="#">Trent and Ville Talk About YesFinland</a>	1	13	33	47
05-08-2018	<a href="#">Petri Hankonen Talks About Writing Comedy for Finnish TV</a>	24	0	0	24
03-23-2018	<a href="#">Johanna Tohni Talks About Making It In Finnish Comedy</a>	0	10	35	45
04-10-2018	<a href="#">Janne Lesonen Talks About The Future of Finnish Improv</a>	2	48	0	50
04-02-2018	<a href="#">Jamie MacDonald Talks About Being A Pioneer Of The Alternative Comedy Scene in Finland</a>	1	259	0	260

PICTURE 12. Screenshot of the number of listens for each episode of the YesFinland Podcast. (Image by author 2018)

Generally, the listens for each episode come directly after releasing and promoting a new episode. In Picture 12. you can see re-occurring spikes after each episode is published.

For the future we need to experiment whether more frequent publishing schedule will keep listeners more hooked on the episodes.



PICTURE 13. Screenshot of the listener spikes after episodes have been published for The YesFinland Podcast. (Image by author 2018)

The verbal feedback we have gathered from our peers and guests being involved in the episodes bring out a few key points to improve on in the future.

- **Runtime of an episode**

We have received mixed feedback on the length of the episode. Currently they are about 50 minutes per episode. This doesn't include the intro part which generally adds another 5 minutes. Firstly, some listeners would prefer shorter episodes for their convenience, especially if the topic is not interesting. Secondly, multiple people gave the feedback that the introductions should be shortened to about 1-2 minutes from the current 5 minutes. It is easy to ramble on too long and miss explaining the point of the episode.

- **Audio levels of an episode**

Audio editing and levels have varied between episodes and the change in the volume of different guests speaking has proved to be harder to work on post production. This is partially due to the recording setting being adjusted between episodes and partially trying to improve on audio editing during the post production.

- **Interview Style VS. Casual Conversation Style**

Some of our listeners felt that the conversations were too interview focused and that made the episodes feel less personal and less in-depth. This can be due to the topic of the conversation being more generic and the English language skills of the person being interviewed. It's also a matter of learning how to make the guest feel more relaxed during the conversation. Generally, we have noticed an improvement in the flow of the conversations as we have recorded episodes that are still in post-production during the time of the writing of this thesis and we feel that as we get more experience in preparing for the interviews it will reflect on the outcome of the episodes.

#### **4.10 Future of The YesFinland Podcast**

In its core the podcast project was a success. The YesFinland brand has a new outlet to promote their events, services and bring interesting guests to audiences from different backgrounds and fields of the Finnish comedy scene. The main strengths of the podcast are going to be its wide variety of guests that can tell their stories to the public about the realities of the Finnish comedy scene. It can bring opportunities for growth for the company by partnering up with local companies, gathering international visibility with foreign guests and bringing the podcast to events where YesFinland is participating.

The possible downfalls of the project are, the lack of resources to keep the podcast running efficiently, the podcast not gathering enough interest to be worth continuing in its current format, internal changes in the company that would not require the podcast as a marketing tool. The likely scenario is that the podcast will run a set number of seasons or episodes and is then put on hold and used as an additional branding tool when marketing the company.

There are no set targets for how long the podcast will run. Pre-plans were made that the podcast would run one season of about 20 episodes using the current interview style format and then continue as a podcast that would release episodes whenever they would be recorded with no production schedule. Another idea is to update the podcast for the 2<sup>nd</sup> season to be in a different format, this format could be anything to a casual talk show, news & current events show or anything else that a comedic twist could be added to.

There are few key factors that can determine the future of the podcast. If the podcast can reach a big enough audience there would be more incentive to continue regularly. An active listener base would add more eyes to the brand and the other events and services it provides. More eyes would possibly bring more revenue and possible sponsorships with companies and then it would be financially wise to keep the podcast production active.

With the acquired knowledge of the podcast production knowledge there is also an element of working as a producer and publisher for other podcast project for people who maybe lack the knowledge of running such a process alone.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of this thesis was to explore the ways why content marketing is such an important topic for businesses and how podcast could be used as a form of content marketing.

Creating proper content and optimizing the delivery methods will take time and effort. It might take weeks for customers to organically discover your content. If a company needs fast traffic to their sites, it should lean on advertising and paid ad-placements. Successful content marketing also requires an extremely strong knowledge about the company's customers. Creating content that is trendy is not going to lead far, but creating content that the customers find intriguing and resonating will bring more value overtime.

As advertising is blending with everything else digital online, content marketing provides a way to engage with customers and improve the brand image. Podcasting is one of these ways of blending valuable content and marketing in an effective way. Involving customers to an interactive content and providing them free entertainment. Obviously, the long-term goal of the podcast content marketing of course aims at generating sales but the focus is in increasing the customer lifetime value and educating them about the brand and the value it can create. This can create satisfied and loyal customers instead of single transactions.

The findings of this thesis can't be generalized for every company since every demographic is different and everyone values different topics. The aim of the YesFinland podcast was to generate an additional outlet to provide the story behind the company and what it does and demystifying the improv and improviser field of comedy.

Since the research is only focusing on the general idea of content marketing and podcast production there are lots of aspects that could and should be further researched, like technical understanding of audio editing and marketing habits of millennials.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1.

#### YesFinland Podcast Guest Form

#### **YesFinland Podcast Guests**

Thank you for being a part of the YesFinland Podcast!

Here's a short form to fill out with some basic information about you that we can use in the show notes of your episode, and to market the episodes in our marketing channels.

\*Mandatory Field

**Full Name \***

**Title**

Actor, Producer, Improviser etc.

**E-mail \***

We don't publish this.

**Bio \***

Add here your bio that will be used in the show notes and in the marketing of the YesFinland Podcast. Around 500 characters.

**Promotions / Plugs**

Do you have a website, Youtube channel, collection of cat photos or anything else that you want to be mentioned in the show notes? Add the links and a short description for each link here. Choose up to 3 links.

**Photo of Yourself**

Upload a photo of yourself to be used in the show notes and the marketing channels of the YesFinland Podcast.

**Facebook**

**Twitter**

**Instagram**

**Other(s)**

**Public Work E-mail**

**Additional Information**

## Appendix 2.

### The YesFinland Podcast - Episodes

Episodes can be found on the following outlets.

#### iTunes

<https://goo.gl/ZJLGHf>

#### YesFinland Website

<http://yesfinland.com/yesfinlandpodcast/>

#### Jakso.fi

<http://jakso.fi/podcastit?id=49fc37c2a4be080f48f9>