

Will New Measurement Standards Drive Podcast Advertising?

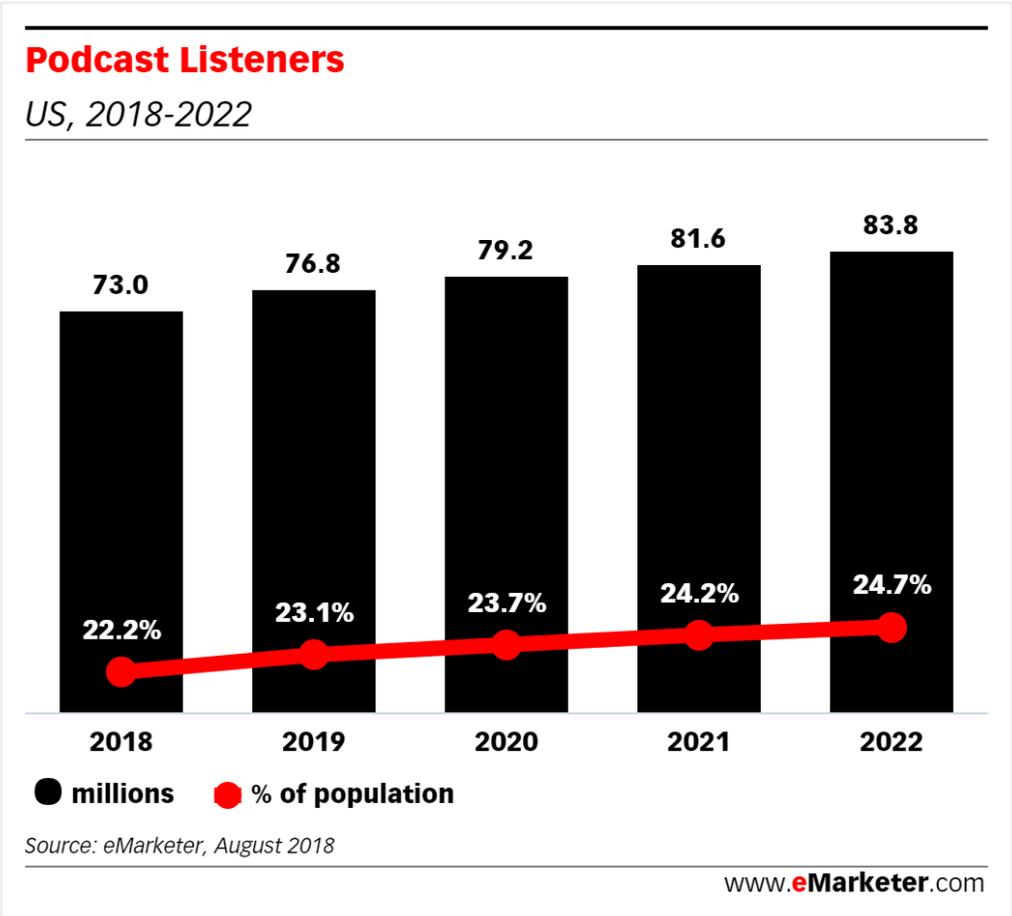
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- Podcasting ad revenues in the US are projected to grow 110%, to \$659 million, by 2020, according to the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).
- Despite this growth, fragmented and rudimentary measurements **prevent more brands from buying in** to podcasts.
- But that may change thanks to recently introduced ad measurement standards.

While the podcast ad market is **taking off**, a lack of robust analytics has made it nearly impossible to measure ad performance. That is changing.

In December 2018, the IAB introduced a [podcast measurement certification program](#). That same month, NPR **released its open source Remote Audio Data system**, which helps podcast publishers determine whether or not users are listening to the ads embedded in their podcasts.



Tutuwa Ahwoi, ad operations manager at NPR’s sponsorship sales division **National Public Media**, spoke with eMarketer about how improved ad measurement could benefit publishers.

Why do podcasts have significant ad measurement issues?

Podcasting is a relatively new medium, so attribution or measurement is still in its infancy. Because it's so new, not many systems have been created to serve podcast ads.

What tradeoffs do publishers face when determining what ad types to use?

So you have the tension between dynamic vs. embedded ads, and publishers have to decide which to use, as both have challenges.

When an ad is embedded, you can't take it out, and that limits your revenue potential. When it's dynamic, it's hard to tell, for example, who listened in the first place. You know that an ad was downloaded, but

you don't know if it was necessarily listened to. That tension is related to inadequate infrastructure around podcasting, and it's tied into the challenges of measurement.

Is measurement improving?

I think it's beginning to improve. Apple **released its analytics**, which is still in beta, and that's a step in the right direction. It's useful for confirming some informal assumptions that we've made.

The IAB released **their guidelines** around measurement. The guidelines focused on server-side data, meaning that every time an audio player requests a podcast from the server, it's logged, and then the metrics and downloads are generated. That's really useful, but you can only ultimately tell whether a podcast was listened to from the client side.

What do you hope happens in the future?

Hopefully, the IAB guidelines become more universally adopted. And the goal will be to reconcile client- and server-side data and provide a unified contextual insight into who is listening and what they're listening to.

Why do these ad standards matter?

There are millions of podcasts out there. And of course, most advertisers are dealing with a few large publishers, but it helps when a buyer and seller are able to speak the same language. It's very useful to be able to say that when we report on 100,000 downloads, that means the same thing for publisher A and publisher B.

It's only going to improve with refined guidelines. But it is important to convey the same information across publishers and advertisers.