

Podcast listener diversity nearly matches the US population

Article

The news: Podcast listenership is increasingly diverse and reflective of the overall US population, but while advertisers celebrated the medium's diverse audience at the **Interactive Advertising Bureau's** podcasting upfronts, they suggest there's still room to improve.

By the numbers: The racial breakdown of monthly podcast listeners is almost identical to the spread of the US population, according to new Edison Research data.

- The majority of US podcast listeners (59%) are white, followed by Hispanic (16%) and African-American (16%), Asian (3%), and “others” (6%). Those numbers are almost identical to the US population demographics.
- The increasingly diverse audience for podcasts helps advertisers reach an even broader spread of consumers as [podcast ad spending continues to grow](#). We expect podcast ad spending to surpass **\$2 billion** in 2023 and **\$5 billion** by 2026.

The challenge: Advertisers contributing to that spending are [eager for higher inventory](#), but the limited number of hosts from diverse backgrounds and podcasts catering to specific audiences means brands looking to access untapped markets are often left without many options.

- At the IAB event, **Omnicom Media Group**’s chief diversity and inclusion officer Sara Porritt cited the lack of Asian-American hosts as an issue limiting brands’ reach. “There aren’t that many voices that are elevated to that level and it’s up to the industry to help make that happen,” she said.

The big takeaway: Platforms are spending aggressively to expand into podcasting—**YouTube** is [offering six-figure grants](#) to podcasters that bring their content to the website, for example—and should make diversity, equity, and inclusion a part of their efforts to attract as broad a selection of voices and advertisers as possible.

Demographic Profile of US Heavy* Podcast Listeners, Nov 2021

% of total

Gender

Male 57%

Female 43%

Age

18-24 15%

25-34 27%

35-44 24%

45-54 20%

55+ 14%

Race/ethnicity

White 72%

Hispanic and Latino 13%

Black 10%

Asian 3%

Other 2%

Note: *listen to podcasts for at least 5 hours per week

Source: Edison Research, "Super Listeners 2021," Feb 16, 2022

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