

Listening to podcasts found to widen the knowledge gap between classes

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A new study by Prof. Yair Galily and Prof. Tal Samuel-Azran of Reichman University's School of Communications found that one of the consequences of the advent of podcasts is the widening of social gaps.

The study examined whether the consumption of podcasts, which is associated mainly with the elite class, also extends to non-elitist genres, such as sports podcasts. The researchers found that listening to sports podcasts only accentuates the elitist nature of podcast consumers.

Despite podcasts' ability to bring free quality content to the masses, podcast consumption is primarily associated with the elite class, thereby widening knowledge gaps and digital divides. To check whether the same holds true for podcasts that are not elitist, the researchers turned to various sports podcasts, which appeal to a wider audience.

The researchers conducted a survey among the listeners of the three most popular sports podcasts in Israel, examining the listeners' demographics, consumption patterns, and the uses and gratifications that motivate them to listen to the podcast.

The researchers found that the majority of sports podcast listeners are secular, millennial men with above-average incomes, highlighting the elitist nature of sports podcast consumers. The researchers also discovered that information-rich groups were more likely to tune in to acquire information, whereas other groups used the podcasts more for entertainment and escapist purposes.

Prof. Yair Galily, founder and head of the Sport, Media and Society Research Lab at Reichman University, says, "The conclusions of our study reinforce the notion that the podcast platform mainly attracts those who are already rich in information, thereby increasing knowledge and digital divides."

The research findings support the hypothesis that the podcast platform is associated with elitist listening even in non-elitist genres, thus further widening the already wide knowledge gap and digital divides promoted by the emergence of the podcast platform.

The study is published in the journal *Online Information Review*.

More information: Yair Galily et al, It's the platform, stupid (-; the elitist nature of sport podcast listeners, *Online Information Review* (2022). [DOI: 10.1108/OIR-12-2021-0684](https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-12-2021-0684)

Provided by Reichman University

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