

RTM Podcast Proof of Concept: Audio Amplification and Analytics Capabilities to Reach and Measure Audience

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Abstract

This paper aims to explain how amplification and analytics in podcast can be utilized to reach a new ocean of audiences. Audio is an incredibly efficient, economical and effective vehicle for reaching target audiences in a personal and engaging manner and is helping an increasing number of producers to grow their audience and generate new revenue streams every day. Traditional media including FM radio have been threatened by digital media. To make sure radio to continue to evolve to stay relevant, RTM has embraced podcasting as its new audio on demand (AOD) radio services. A proof of concept (POC) was conducted in October 2020 for a duration of six months using Triton Digital as podcast technology partner and Integriti Padu Sdn. Bhd. (IPSB) as system integrator to the system. RTM decided on the feasibility of the idea on podcast capability as ultimate audio offering focusing on new voices, new forms and new technologies. Future technology combining podcast amplification, analytics and Artificial Intelligence will be the key to unlock RTM's potential and

continue to thrive above and beyond and transform to be the most trusted source of information, news and entertainment for the audience marks the advancement of the broadcasting industry.

Keywords: analytics, podcast, digital media, broadcast

Introduction

Podcast is a portmanteau term from iPod and Broadcast. Podcasts are original audio recordings but can also be recorded on radio or television programs as short audio clips. It is usually an episodic series of digital audio files that users can download to a personal device for easy listening.

RTM has started its podcast technology POC with its four radio stations Nasional FM, Ai FM, Minnal FM and Radio Klasik, partnering with Triton Digital as podcast technology partner. RTM also collaborates with Integriti Padu Sdn. Bhd (IPSB) as system integrator to podcast system. Duration for the POC is six months starting from July 2020 to January 2021. The idea for POC is to gauge podcast digital capabilities to serve wider audience using 360 audio strategy by amplification features to new media using audiogram. Audiogram is a native piece of video content from live TV or radio content for sharing on radio station social media.



Picture 1: Artworks for the application and station

Amplification

Amplification can be defined as using audiogram from TV or radio content and distribute it automatically to social media platform such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to increase efficiency and seamless syndicate audiogram to every listener, every device, and every app.

According to Omny Studio Team, there are several ways to amplify a podcast channel (Omny Studio Team, 2021):

1. A Compelling Video Creative
 - It is important to have an attractive video creative with a short effective caption.
2. Host-read Promotional Campaign
 - By placing promotions of a show onto other shows, it allows for audience multiplication. This can also be referred to as a Dynamic-Ad-Insertion (DAI).
3. Develop Relationship with Application Developers
 - If a podcast host can develop a close working relationship with its app host, it is possible to be featured as one of the featured podcasts. An example of this scenario would be a specific podcast episode on Apple or Spotify.
4. Marketplace Noise
 - For maximum amplification, a method that can be applied is by creating noise on online news outlets or partner e-newsletters. it would be wise to leverage onto their customer base by providing content for their sites.
5. Use Your Own Channel
 - It is prudent to use your own podcast channels to get the appropriate attention.

According to Triton Digital's Omny Studios (Omny Studio Team, 2021) another method of amplification includes expanding your podcast's reach through social audio. Social audio will allow for the two-way communication between a podcast programme and its listeners. This is an extension of a podcast's interaction with its audience. This segment will allow a host to, for example, teach its audience ways to download programmes for later use.

Another excellent way of amplifying a podcast's visibility is through the application of keyword searches by search engines or more commonly known as Search Engine Optimisers (SEO). To develop a podcast's SEO, a channel developer will need to first transcribe the podcast into text before running Search Engine Management (SEM) tools such as SEMRush or Yoost to identify the relevant keywords. These keywords are then used by Google or Apple to optimise the visibility of the channel or specific episode.

With new era of content consumption RTM will benefit the most as #1 source of true reliable source of information and communication to the mass market. Podcasts enable listeners to not only listen at a glance but revisit the sessions as and when needed. One of the highly rated podcasts during the pilot was *Aku, Dia dan Lagu* from Radio Klasik with - a session where there is a backstory of a song that the audience submitted and narrated back full of emotions and drama and a *Learn your Mandarin* from AiFM that teach Mandarin on a Podcast. The potential is endless for RTM to grow and connect with new audiences.

Analytics

Analytics defines deep podcast performance and consumption analysis that is compliant with Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) guidelines. Content and audience

metrics are based on downloaded clip whether saved for later listening or listened while being downloaded. For this POC, analytics is provided from Triton's Omny Studio dashboard. It can track activity in real time or near real time to confirm the behaviors. Analytics measurements is through its hosting platform-agnostic Podcast Metrics (PCM) solution. In the podcast creative industry, there are several methods of measuring your audience numbers. The following are some of the more common methods as proposed by Triton Digital:

1. Downloads

- Downloads can be defined as *"a measure of unique file requests followed by file downloads, with invalid downloads omitted. It includes files downloaded for later use and files listened to as they download/stream"* (IAB Tech Lab, 2019). in other words, a download is essentially every single file that not only has been virtually downloaded but also streamed. This would mean for every user that tends to listen to a podcast episode online or as audio on demand, each would count as a unique file download. This method of analyzing the popularity of a podcast is one of the more frequently used and referred to metrics. It helps analyzers understand why a particular podcast is more popular compared to others. However, while a download is not necessarily listened to, it is an indication of the listener's intent to listen to the podcast (IAB Tech Lab, 2019).

2. Listeners

- *This metric refers to a "unique user who downloads one or multiple episodes of one or several podcasts"* (IAB Tech Lab, 2019). Based on the IAB Tech Lab report, this type of measurement metric is determined by the number of unique IP addresses or unique user identification or user agents (IAB Tech Lab, 2019). This metric is used on a per-episode, per-podcast, per-network, or per-publisher basis and the listener duplications will be removed across different

episodes and shows that each user is listening to (IAB Tech Lab, 2019).

3. Gross Downloads

- Gross download differs from downloads as it calculates the number of downloads that include repetitive downloads from the same user. In other words, it includes both unique and non-unique downloads as well as both downloads and downloads from web crawlers (IAB Tech Lab, 2019). This method of analysis is usually applied where the analyst intends to attain a grasp on the overall performance of a particular podcast station, for example.

4. Downloaded Hours

- Downloaded hours do not differ much from a normal, general download. Downloaded hours can be defined as *“the total time, in hours, of podcast audio content that was downloaded, with invalid downloads omitted. It includes files downloaded for later use and files listened to as they download/stream. Non-unique file requests (multiple requests from the same apparent listener) and invalid downloads are filtered out”* (IAB Tech Lab, 2019). This metric represents the maximum potential listening hours if all actual downloaded content was listened to.

Based on the IAB Tech Lab Podcast Measurement Independent Certification, amongst the four criteria of measuring its audience, the most relevant based on the report from 2019 are the number of downloads and the number of listeners (IAB Tech Lab, 2019).

During our Pilot Podcast we immediately were able to see the impact as soon as we turned on the podcast to the public RTM overachieving the initial target for the pilot by 138 times. Do bear in mind that the pilot was run only for 3 months and without

any promotion it is proven to be one of the services sought out by the audience.

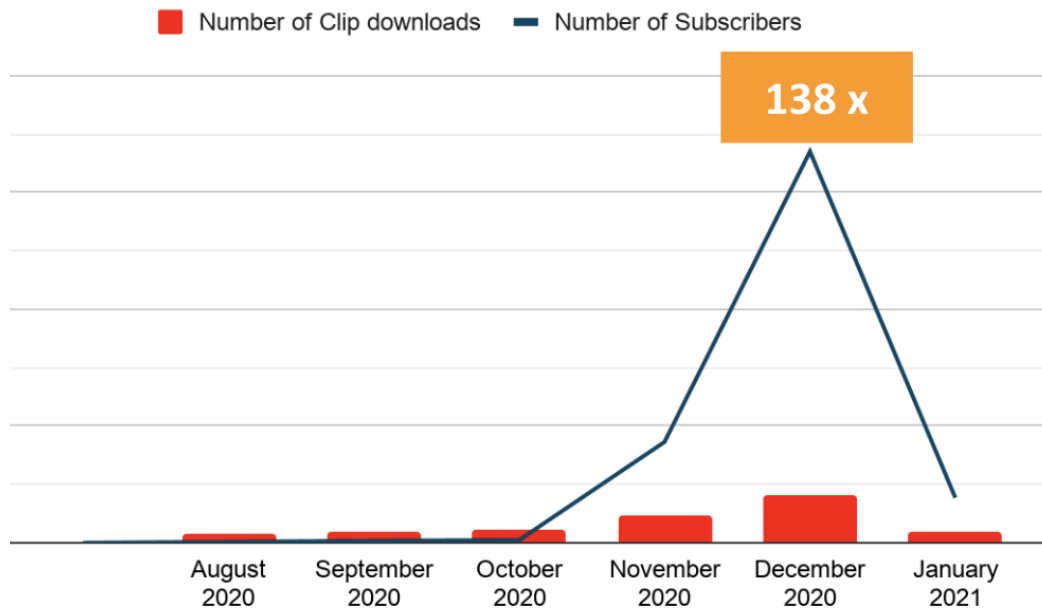


Figure 1: RTM Podcast pilot result from Omny Studio dashboard

Distribution

Distribution for podcast is define as to get audiogram files to your audience. Having a distribution plan for a podcast station is key to the success of any podcast. There are many new applications, directories and even many other, newer listening locations that it becomes crucial for a podcast host to ensure that episodes of a station can be and is accessible anywhere, at any time for everyone.

Below are some of the methods that would allow users to access podcasts:

1. Ensure that the podcast is compatible with a pod-catcher
 - o A pod-catcher is an application that can be used to subscribe to podcasts. How it works is that the podcatcher automatically downloads podcasts as they are posted

to a site. Pod-catchers can also transfer downloaded podcast files to a portable media player (Knowledge Base, 2018). Therefore, to ensure that a podcast succeeds, it is best that the file be compatible with podcatchers that are in the market. Examples of available pod-catchers are such as Player FM, Podcast Guru and the once popular Winamp player, just to name a few. As the demand for podcasts can be from any platform it is important to ensure RTM's Podcast content availability in every platform out there.

2. Podcast Official Website

- Another important feature and aspect of podcast management is owning a website to represent a particular channel. This website should include the transcripts from a podcast episode to increase visibility by using Search Engine Optimization (SEO) keywords. It is also prudent to ensure that there is a sense of organisation on the website to allow for easier navigation throughout the site (Omny Studio Team, Omny Studio Blog, 2021). For example, in the case of RTM, its podcast can be found on its official website at <https://podcast.rtm.gov.my/> where listeners can access several of the channels available on air. Here however, listeners can listen to their favourite programmes on demand at anytime, anywhere.

3. Mobile Application

- Most of everyone owns one, or even more than one, mobile device. It is important that a podcast be accessible via a mobile application. Like RTM, most of its radio stations are available on its mobile application called RTMKlik which can be found on the app store as well as the google play store.

4. Smart Speaker

- A smart speaker is an internet-enabled speaker that is controlled by spoken commands and is capable of streaming audio content, relaying information, and communicating with other devices. An example of a smart speaker may be Amazon's Alexa or Google Home or even Apple's Siri. Smart speakers should be able to access podcasts which is important as most homes now have at least one smart speaker. Making sure that a podcast is compatible with these types of speakers would allow for maximum distribution and reach.

5. Streaming Service

- Streaming service is an online provider of entertainment that delivers the content via an Internet connection to audience devices.
- RTMKlik is also a streaming service that allows listeners to access live streams of RTM's popular radio channels online instead of on air. Users can now switch on their mobile devices or even their laptops and computers and listen in to live streams of their favourite programmes regardless of where they are.

Untapped Capability

The future of podcasts that should be explored in Malaysia is the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in podcast transcriptions.

Based on research conducted by Omny Studios (Omny Studio Team, Omny Studio Blog, 2021), several companies have discovered the importance of transcriptions in audio podcasts. According to the blog post, the following major podcast listening platforms have all experimented with or are actively pursuing transcript search:

1. In 2019, Apple announced that they will allow listeners to discover shows based on
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audio transcripts, topics, and people.

2. Google Podcasts vowed to help to make audio a 'first class citizen' with their introduction of transcript search.
3. In 2021, Spotify announced that they eventually want to "enable transcripts across all podcasts on Spotify.
4. In 2021, Facebook announced the launch of their podcast functionality including the ability to share a short highlight clip of an episode. The resulting clip will also include a transcript.

Kesimpulan

The application of AI in transcription, or more commonly known as automated transcription, relies on automatic-speech-recognition (ASR) machines which are based on the modern application of artificial intelligence. These machines are utilized in both live and recorded and even the post-production settings. This machine will transcribe both audio or video into text if there are things to transcribe or dialogue involved (Chazen, 2020).

The ability to upload massive amounts of information into an AI-powered machine to produce transcripts will truly be the way towards the future in podcasts. AI-powered solutions will set a channel provider apart from others. Since we are only human, of course it would take more time for us to internalize difficult terminology and materials or experience more difficulties in identifying speakers and the jumble of words. However, humans are still a critical part of the process and utilizing them to edit the information produced by AI is always the recommended strategy.

Conclusion

Future technology combining Podcast amplification, analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) mentioned above will be the key to unlock RTM's potential and continue to thrive above and beyond just a broadcaster and transform to be a source of information, entertainment, learning and news for the audience marks the advancement of the broadcasting industry since its inception in 1946.

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