


Scholarly Podcasting for Research Dissemination: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

The purpose of this scoping review is to understand ways in which podcasting is used to communicate research findings and mobilize knowledge to a public audience. We address the use of podcasting as a broad research dissemination tool, as opposed to podcasting as a tool in formal education contexts. We summarize findings of individual studies, then identify themes across those studies. We offer definitions of specialized terms, as well as affordances and constraints of scholarly podcasting. We found scholarly podcasting allows a way for researchers to share research knowledge with the public, mobilizing knowledge more readily to a broader audience. We draw parallels to and outline departures from traditional publishing. We offer directions for future research, noting that podcasting holds the potential to impact public understanding of research by moving beyond the traditional forms of knowledge dissemination to cultivate a more equitable future for research.

Keywords

scholarly podcasting, public scholarship, social scholarship, research dissemination, public knowledge

Introduction

At present, many funding agencies and research organizations are calling for research to be “translated” for a more public audience (e.g., Institute of Education Sciences, National Science Foundation, etc.). However, the work of researchers often does not reach the practitioner and public audience it aims to impact (Walter et al., 2007). Established systems of academic publication and presentation typically speak to a limited audience of other academics. Academic journals can be costly to access, complex to navigate, and often include specialized writing structures and jargon. Simultaneously, some social media spaces have created their own echo chambers (Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson, 2023) while making it possible for virtually anyone to access a worldwide public audience to share information. Social media platforms such as micro blogs including X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram offer ways to democratize the acquisition of knowledge, however they also offer ways to spread misinformation and disinformation to broad public audiences (Cook, 2023). These opposing scenarios of idea and knowledge dissemination represent distinct and complex challenges. We seek opportunities to leverage innovative ways to share and promote scientific research findings to public audiences, specifically

through scholarly podcasting. However, for academic and research communities to embrace public and social scholarship, we must know more about how this type of work can be understood, measured, and communicated (Greenhow et al., 2019; Greenhow & Gleason, 2014).

Since we launched our own scholarly podcast series in November 2020, we are finding that podcasting as a form of research dissemination meets our project goals and offers more to the general public than we initially anticipated. In particular, podcasting offers one way for research to reach a broader audience through more equitable, inclusive, and accessible practices. We see scholarly podcasting as one way to engage the public in solutions to the problem of how to translate research, disseminate knowledge to the public, and take action against misinformation and disinformation on social media and the internet. As with any platform for publication, affordances and constraints exist. Questions about how

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podcasting is currently being used for public and social scholarship led us to pursue a scoping review of the literature. As we work to understand the specific instance of scholarly podcasting, we aim to develop more generalizable understandings of social media for public knowledge dissemination.

The objective of this scoping review is to understand the ways in which podcasting is used to communicate research findings and to disseminate knowledge for a broader public audience. Our research questions are as follows: (1) How are common concepts of podcasting for public scholarship defined in the research literature? (2) What are the affordances and limitations of scholarly podcasting as a vehicle for social and public scholarship?

Origins of Podcasting

The first recognized podcast was released in the early 2000s and podcasting has only grown in popularity since then. The term *podcast* refers to a combination of the compressed audio file like an on-demand radio show. Journalist Ben Hammersley is credited with coining the term “podcasting” by combining the terms “iPod” and “broadcasting” (Hammersley, 2004, as cited in Singer, 2019). Podcasts are typically stored with a hosting company and distributed to a variety of platforms with the ability to push content to consumers through Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds (Singer, 2019). Listeners can find a podcast on most any topic of interest, subscribe to podcast series, and listen anytime with a personal device. Podcast syndication makes it easy for the producer to connect through a variety of podcasting platforms. Podcasts can reach any user worldwide with an internet-connected device within hours of release. According to 2024 DataReportal.com data, 5.52 billion people worldwide or 67.5% of the world’s population can access the Internet, indicating the potential pool of podcast listeners is deep and wide. As of October 2024, Listennotes.com indicates more than 3.4 million podcasts have been launched (Podcast database subscription, n.d.), making it a media for communication that is both persistent and pervasive.

Emergence of Scholarly Podcasting

Our initial investigation made it clear that the research on podcasting as a form of public scholarship is in its infancy, with work being done across disciplines, utilizing a variety of terms to describe how podcasts are leveraged to disseminate knowledge. Previous literature reviews on podcasting (e.g., Cho et al., 2017; Heilesen, 2010; Kay, 2012) found no studies that addressed the potential for scholarly podcasting as public scholarship. DeMarco (2022) surveys literature addressing the research

question, “How effective is the use of podcast technology for academic research dissemination, research communication, and promotion?” from the perspective of university research administration. DeMarco outlines several studies (see Brumley et al., 2017; Rogowsky et al., 2016) that focus on comprehension as it relates to podcast listening. Our questions extend beyond the *translation* of knowledge for public audiences to explore how scholarly podcasts may be used to *mobilize* knowledge. The distinction between these terms moves from understanding what is shared in podcasts to utilizing or applying the information. We determined a systematic review was warranted after reading previous literature reviews on podcasting (e.g., Cho et al., 2017; Heilesen, 2010; Kay, 2012) and found no reviews that addressed the potential for podcasting for knowledge mobilization beyond a classroom context.

As an example, Heilesen (2010) conducted a review of literature focused on podcasting for learning, specifically for students within higher education programs. Heilesen found podcasting produced an overall positive impact and improved the learning environment. However, these podcasts would only be available to students enrolled in the course.

While Heilesen’s (2010) literature review revealed studies on the uses of audio and video podcasting for teaching and learning, Kay (2012) focused on video podcasting specifically and their review generated over fifty peer-reviewed articles published between 2002 and 2011. From the reviewed studies, Kay identified four specific types of video podcasts used in teaching and learning (i.e., lecture-based, enhanced, supplementary, and worked examples), categorized as either practical or conceptual concepts. Additionally, he classified associated pedagogical strategies which included receptive viewing, practical problem solving, and student-created podcasts. Findings included student learning preferences and attitudes, affordances (e.g., flexible, asynchronous format), and concerns or barriers (e.g., connectivity).

In the field of Medical Education, Cho et al. (2017) reviewed eighty-four articles “describing audio format podcasts used in medical education” for student or medical personnel use and outcomes (reaction, learning, and behavioral). They categorized their results by prevalence and format (e.g., fields, target audience, audio or video, length), feasibility and cost, utilization measures (i.e., reported metrics and analytics of podcast use), and educational outcomes, which mapped onto Kirkpatrick’s Four Level Evaluation Module of educational processes (i.e., reaction, learning, behavior, and results). Also noted was the general learner acceptance and satisfaction with the podcasting format for acquiring content and information.

Studies of podcasting as a learning tool in higher education come to similar positive conclusions (Fernandez

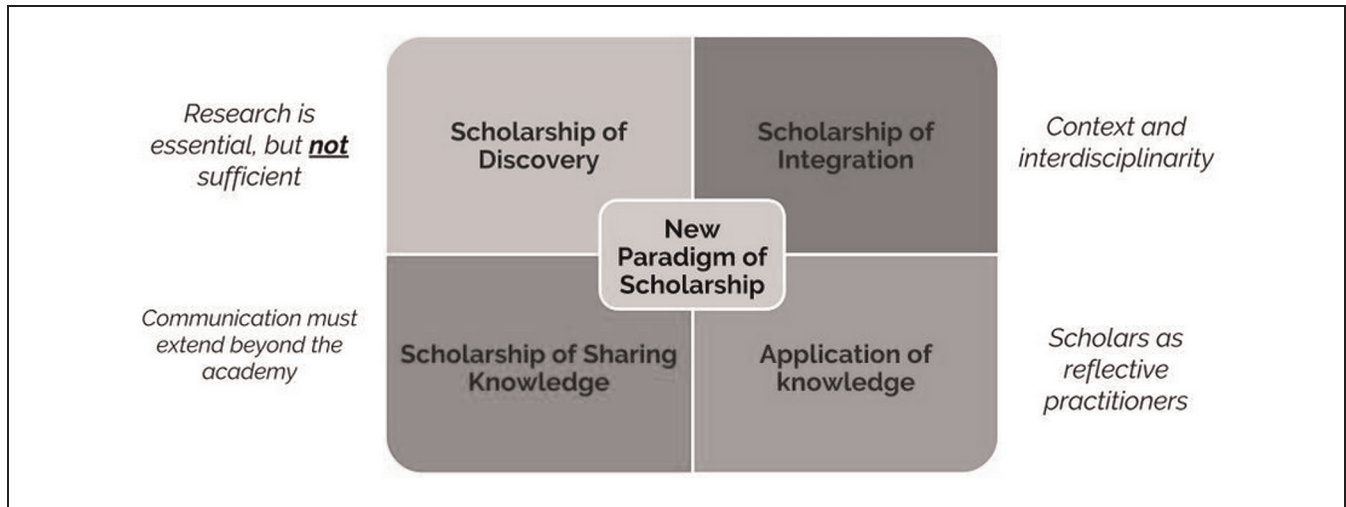


Figure 1. Boyer's model for engaged scholarship from Troia and Haugen (2018). Reproduced through CC BY 4.0.

et al., 2009; Lonn & Teasley, 2009; McGarr, 2009) but the research arriving at these conclusions was conducted by and through higher education classrooms, formalized learning settings with their own aims, affordances, and constraints. Previous reviews of podcasting focused on educational impact and practice *within* institutions of higher education. Our review explores an alternate set of aims in podcasting: to make knowledge more public, *beyond* those enrolled in higher education courses. In our preliminary searching, we found most studies about podcasts occurred within the K-16 classroom context and were specifically designed to support teaching and learning. Outside of the classroom context, we found that studies originated in multiple fields, utilizing various terminology, various methods, and various ways of reporting findings. Our preliminary investigation indicated that a scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) was most appropriate to respond to the questions we have about scholarly podcasting as public scholarship.

Engaged, Public, and Social Scholarship as Theoretical Frame

To inform our starting point for our conceptualization of this review, we used Boyer's (1996) expanded definition and model of engaged scholarship. Boyer's model provides a framework for understanding the facets of scholarly engagement with the public. Our review explores a complementary set of aims in podcasting: to make knowledge more public, not just available to those enrolled in higher education courses. Boyer's (1996) model (see Figure 1) provides another way for scholars and experts to engage with the public. Boyer imagined four interrelated dimensions of scholarship for public good: discovery or pursuit of new knowledge, integration or

interdisciplinary connections, application of knowledge and "doing good" with that knowledge, and teaching or the communal act of sharing that knowledge. Boyer's ideas preceded the invention of many digital platforms, yet conceptually they embrace a reimagined, balanced view of faculty engagement and scholarship online.

While Boyer uses the term *engaged scholarship*, other scholars use a variety of terms to name particular ways in which scholars may engage with a public audience. Singer (2019) addresses similar concepts through different nuanced language. *Public scholarship* is the broad umbrella term for translating and communicating research for a non-academic audience, to advocate for or initiate change (Monk et al., 2021). Singer (2019) addresses podcasting specifically as a form of what he terms *social scholarship* to engage in and expand the scholarship of discovery, integration, teaching, and application (Greenhow & Gleason, 2014). Social scholarship is a contemporary view within public scholarship whereby social media tools and digital platforms are the medium for the creation, distribution, and engagement of academic work. Greenhow and Gleason (2014) describe it as finding a way to "leverage social media affordances... and potential values... to evolve the ways in which scholarship is accomplished in academia" (p. 394). Essentially, scholars and disciplinary experts are finding new ways of sharing research and knowledge and exchanging ideas, honoring Boyer's intent of research reaching a wide audience and "doing good."

Methods

We conducted a scoping review (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) of empirical literature related to the emergence of public scholarship through podcasting. A scoping

review, as opposed to a systematic literature review, aims to map the key concepts underpinning a research area, particularly for ideas that have not been reviewed comprehensively before (after Mays et al., 2001). Scholarly podcasting is a fairly new concept for exploration in research. As our search encompassed all disciplines (e.g., medicine, social sciences, humanities, etc.), identifying a common understanding of notions around podcasting for public scholarship and compiling the language used to indicate these ideas became a driver for our search. As podcasters and scholars, understanding the affordances and limitations of scholarly podcasting became a key component of our conversations. Below, we detail the ways in which we approached our search for literature and how we analyzed what we found in response to our research questions and beyond.

Search Strategy

As we began our search in Spring 2021, we consulted our institutional librarian and fellow podcaster to help us refine our search terms and strategies. After determining how “public scholarship” was referred to differently across disciplines, we decided on a list of specific terms to use in a search string with “podcast” and generated initial searches through our institution’s library. Our original search strings included *podcast** AND other identified terms from conceptual or opinion articles including “public scholarship,” “social scholarship,” and “engaged scholarship.” We later added “public impact,” “research application,” “research dissemination,” and “knowledge mobilization” as we began our screening and review process. The following databases were systematically searched for peer-reviewed literature: Academic Search Premier, APA PsychInfo, Education Source, Scopus, JSTOR, Web of Science, and ERIC. We also utilized the Advanced Search feature in Google Scholar, applying our key terms and used the “cited by” feature in Google Scholar to see who was citing relevant literature. We concluded our search in Fall of 2024.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To be included in the review, the use of podcasting for dissemination needed to be the primary focus of the research and the podcast(s) must be publicly and freely available for the dissemination of knowledge (opposed to the podcast content available through a paid platform or contained only within an academic course). We included any empirical work, published in peer-reviewed journals or reports, that included our identified search terms and inclusion criteria. We excluded podcasts explicitly produced for classroom contexts or confined to course content. Podcasts of this nature are limited in scope and

further limited in availability (i.e., not typically freely available to the public). However, we did not exclude studies of podcasts because they happened to be a part of course content; the distinction exists in the intention of the podcast dissemination. Also excluded from our review were articles absent of empirical work or any empirical literature, as well as conceptual papers and pedagogical reports. We did not limit publication dates in our searches because podcasting is a recent phenomenon in the past 20 years.

Our searches yielded a total of 2,609 results (across databases with applied search term combinations). We found our search results produced hits that were irrelevant because they did not primarily focus on podcasting. For example, some articles contained the word “podcast” in a list of technologies but podcasts were not central to the research.

The process used for the study selection is detailed in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) in Figure 2. We utilized the PRISMA methods and its reporting structures to improve the transparency of this scoping review. After the removal of duplicates and irrelevant items such as from our 2,609 total results, we accessed and screened the remaining 136 full texts of papers to determine their eligibility for inclusion in this review. We also hand-searched, or manually reviewed references of the final included studies for relevant articles we might have missed in our systematic search or those that may not have been identified through automated searches. Based on our inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of eight papers were accepted for inclusion.

Delimitations. While we did not limit our search by publication year, during our screening and sorting of articles, we found that publication year became an important factor indicating relevance to our research questions. Because podcasting technology, dissemination, and access has changed rapidly since the term “podcasting” was first coined in 2004, we found that studies generally fell into two broad temporal categories: first decade of the 2000s and the late 2010s and beyond. Upon closer examination, the articles from the 2000s generally contained information about podcasting as a teaching and learning tool in formalized classroom settings, often produced by or for students, or for purposes of entertainment. These articles sometimes provided logistical information around creating a podcast (Gay et al., 2007) and as readers in 2023, we viewed authors’ advice as cutting edge in its time but naturally tech-related information ages quickly. Close review of these articles from the first decade of the 2000s revealed that study specifics did not relate directly to our current research questions, particularly because of the use and

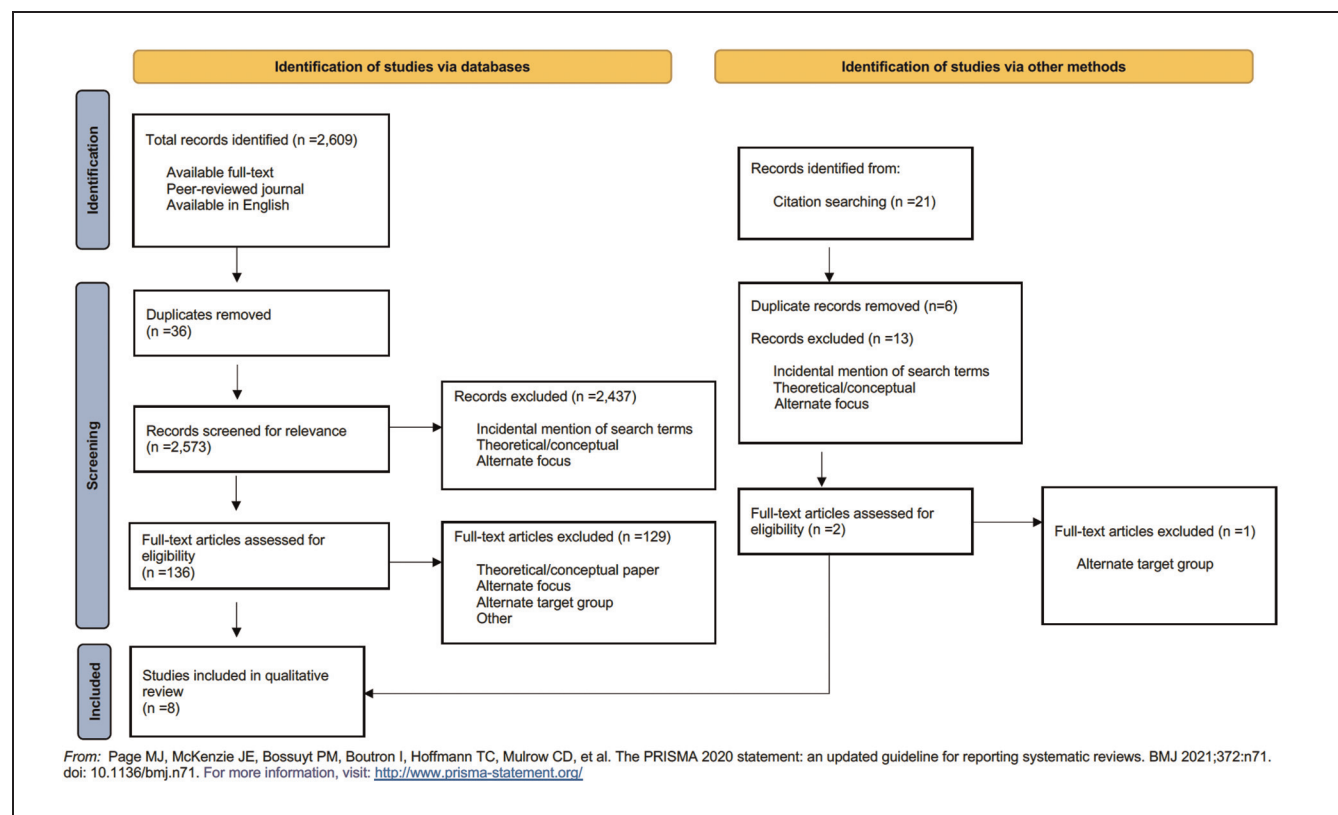


Figure 2. PRISMA chart indicating our systematic review process and outcomes.

function of podcasting as a teaching and learning tool. The articles from the later 2010s described podcasting for general audiences, as “edutainment” or “infotainment,” often inclusive of listeners outside of formalized education settings and as a way to share research findings. So, while date was not a factor in our search, it became a factor in our selection process because of the rapid changes in the field of podcasting technology. While early articles were ultimately excluded from our review because they studied podcasts strictly as a pedagogical tool, these pioneering studies became a foundation for our discussions of affordances and limitations of podcasting.

Synthesis Process

During our synthesis process, our research team used a shared method to identify and record discipline or field, focus, summary, methodology, and findings in our included articles. We took both an interpretive view as well as a critical stance toward these studies. With empirical research conducted across a variety of fields, we see our work as both an opportunity to identify consensus across studies and fields as well as an opportunity to

identify gaps, needs, and new directions in the work so far. We followed a systematic iterative process to analyze the final selection, identifying initial themes and sub-themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Our approach began with independent reviews of the selected articles. We recorded information in a spreadsheet arranged by the article’s field and focus, a brief summary, the study methods, major findings, unique terminology, how podcasting is used to disseminate knowledge, specific practices of podcasting, and any additional notes related to the study. From the information in this spreadsheet, we could quickly identify where we had consistency in our perceptions and understandings of a study, as well as where we needed to hold further conversation, revisit an article, and/or develop a stronger sense of agreement around the elements we examined. We then looked across the studies to first note the variety of fields represented in this kind of work and the variety of approaches academics have taken to study scholarly podcasting. Next, we noted similarities in the findings of these studies, stated limitations, and a common call for additional research in this field. Making note of dissimilarities in studies that arrive at similar conclusions further affirmed the need for a review of literature in this developing field.

Results

Eight studies were included in our scoping review. In this section, we utilize a table to outline these eight studies by summarizing characteristics of each study, detailing the findings of each study, as well as individual study limitations. Then, we discuss thematic findings across the studies.

Summary of Individual Studies

Our review of studies confirmed our initial suspicions that the field of scholarly podcasting is young, particularly when searching for research about scholarly podcasting. Unified ways to describe, utilize, or study this type of social media research dissemination have not yet been established. The eight studies included in our review were published between 2016 and 2022. At the time of this review, no studies meeting our criteria had yet been published in 2023. Table 1 details the characteristics and results of each of these studies.

In addition to the details outlined in Table 1, we also noted that studies tended to follow the traditions of publication in their fields. For example, the three studies in this review from the medical field (Dong et al., 2021; Nwosu et al., 2017; Thoma et al., 2018) utilized quantitative methods and produced a relatively short reports of findings (generally conveyed in 6 or 7 journal pages), characteristic of the field based on our article screening. Studies produced by social scientists tended to include qualitative data (Diebold et al., 2021; Fronek et al., 2016; Lim & Swenson, 2021; Naff, 2020; Singer, 2019) and produce lengthier reports. Most of the studies in this review are exploratory in nature.

Several studies outline principles of podcasting and describe their own podcast processes before addressing their research studies. Singer (2019) provides a brief history of podcasting. Nwosu et al. (2017) address the steps in developing their own podcast. We believe the variety in these studies also speaks to a strength of the podcasting format, highlighting the flexible ways in which podcasting can work for scholars and the public.

Findings of Individual Studies

As mentioned previously, across the studies included in our review, a variety of questions, methods, and data sources were utilized in the research we reviewed. Despite the variation across studies, many found similar affordances of podcasting for public scholarship. In this section, we summarize the unique and most prominently stated findings in each of the studies in our

review. For a more complete list of findings from each study, see Table 1.

Because studies in our review originate in a variety of fields, the specific contexts, aims, and outcomes of these podcast studies offer a variety of examples of how podcasting may be utilized in research dissemination. For instance, Diebold et al. (2021) found that their podcast helped to operationalize the principles of their field of trauma informed care through personal narratives. Dong et al.'s (2021) study specifically examined the geographic reach of their podcast and found the podcast was an effective way to connect a broad group of emergency room physicians. Fronek et al. (2016) found that their social work podcast had a positive impact on professional learning, offered topics relevant to an audience of professional learners, and offered complimentary learning for students listening to the show within the context of a course. They also found that their podcast had a global reach, beyond the target geographic area for which the show was produced. Nwosu et al. (2017) noted that their podcast facilitated communication among professionals in their field of palliative care, promoted research dissemination, and reached an audience across a wide geographical space. Lim and Swenson (2021) found that the agriculture and horticulture podcasts they evaluated in their study offered fundamental knowledge in their field, and effectively communicated with a variety of audiences across a variety of spaces. Naff (2020) noted their education podcast increased accessibility to research findings across their target audience while simultaneously expanding their audience for the work. They found their podcast strengthened their professional community. Singer (2019) also noted a wide geographic reach for his social work podcast. Through a multitude of data sources including quantitative data around podcast metrics, survey respondent demographics, podcast listener habits, and respondent satisfaction, respondents to Singer's (2019) survey enjoyed learning about research through his podcast and found the content valuable. Thoma et al. (2018) found that podcasting can help create an awareness of emergency medicine research knowledge as a first step to the translation of research to practice and the public.

Thematic Findings of Our Review of the Literature

While early work in the field of podcasting focused on podcasts as tools for teaching and learning in a classroom setting, scholars have begun to imagine uses of podcasts for the dissemination of knowledge to the public. Our search of the literature revealed responses to our research questions as well as additional considerations and directions for further research. We respond to our

Table 1. Summary of Individual Studies

Author, article title, and journal	Podcast name	Stated aim of the podcast	Stated research questions, objectives, or aims of study	Study methods and data sources	Reported findings	Stated limitations	Stated directions for future research	Implications
Diebold et al. (2021)	Trauma Talks	1. "...to present a variety of personal audio narratives that explore how trauma-informed care intersects with individual experiences of healing and connection" (p. 1) 2. "...to disseminate individual, organizational, and systemic interactions using a trauma-informed lens, with the specific goal to create a space to explore the deeper meaning of these exchanges" (p.5)	No RQs explicitly stated: Study conducted to determine if the podcast conveyed the Trauma Informed Care (TIC) values of safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment.	Qualitative Conceptual Content Analysis ●Podcast Episodes	Podcast operationalized the principles of the field (detailed findings related to TIC further described within article).	None explicitly stated	none stated	"Podcasts are a promising way to instruct, educate, and inspire social workers, both in their training and once they've entered the field." (p. 16)
"Trauma Talks: Exploring Personal Narratives of Trauma-Informed Care through Podcasting" <i>Journal of Technology in Human Services</i>								
Dong et al. (2021)	MacEmerg	1. "...connecting individuals in a locally practiced relevant way" (p. 2)	No RQs explicitly stated: Study conducted to determine the proportion of listeners in the local university-affiliated region.	Descriptive Statistics	A large proportion of listeners were from the university-affiliated towns with a percentage beyond their affiliated region.	●Data limited to the number of listeners and geographic area	"...we plan on collecting quantitative data to better ascertain its effect on our stated goals" (p. 1)	●"...our podcast hopefully serves as a way to communicate among our geographically distanced academic community, while also providing a means to share our practice and discussions with the rest of the world." (p. 6) ●"...our reach has been unexpected broader than we have anticipated, which may indicate an unmet need for faculty development podcasts." (p. 6)
"MacEmerg Podcast: A novel initiative to connect a distributed community of practice" <i>AEM Education and Training (Academic Emergency Medicine)</i>				●Podcast Analytics (via SoundCloud)				

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Author, article title, and journal	Podcast name	Stated aim of the podcast	Stated research questions, objectives, or aims of study	Study methods and data sources	Reported findings	Stated limitations	Stated directions for future research	Implications
Fronek et al. (2016) "A report on the use of open access podcasting in the promotion of social work" <i>Australian Social Work</i>	Podsecs	1. "...promote the profession of social work and contribute to the field's identity" (p. 105) 2. "...make connections between theory, research, and practice" (p. 105) 3. "...introduce students to real-life practice issues" (p. 105) 4. "...provide practitioners with opportunities for ongoing professional development" (p. 105)	No RQs explicitly stated: Study conducted to explore the usefulness, benefits, and barriers of the Podsecs podcast series.	Descriptive Statistics Qualitative Content Analysis •Social Media Statistics •Targeted Listener Survey •General Listener Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Global reach beyond geographic location •Listeners described positive attitude toward initiative •Podcasts used as a complement to coursework •Practitioners used podcasts in professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Difficult to draw generalized conclusions from evidence •Does not measure impact 	There is a need for "robust and longitudinal research that measures impact" (p. 113)	"...[the podcasts] provides complementary learning in a format new to the profession of social work that could be used creatively in student coursework and for professional development. The relationship between theory, practice, and research is important in social work, yet it is sometimes difficult for students to make those connections;" (p. 112) •Podcasts can be used "...to provide vital information in a timely manner" and as conveniently as possible for their audiences of all learning styles. (p. 18)
Lim and Swenson (2021) "Talking Plants: Examining the Role of Podcasts in Communicating Plant Pathology Knowledge" <i>Journal of Applied Communications</i>	Selection of Agricultural Podcasts	N/A This study is not focused on a single podcast and therefore an aim was not identified	Research questions: 1. Identify characteristics of podcasts discussing plant pathology topics (length, release schedule, host affiliation, show genre, and production style). 2. Determine how the content of podcasts align with fundamental units of plant pathology knowledge. 3. Using the YARK (Visual, Aural, Read/Write, Kinesthetic) model as a guide, investigate if plant pathology podcasts use multiple instructional strategies and information delivery modes. (p. 4)	Qualitative Content Analysis Podcast Episodes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Describes characteristics of subject specific podcast (such as show length and release schedule, host and guest affiliation, production style, and show genre) •Alignment of plant pathology content across podcasts (e.g., plant pathology techniques; biology of plant diseases; influence of the environment; importance of fungi) •Multimodal information delivery that included the use of show notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Limited pool of podcasts and episodes analyzed •Focus on content available rather than listener experience or feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Analyze a large pool of episodes (p. 17) •Examine wants and needs of audiences (p. 17) •Analyze what audiences are learning from podcasts (p. 17) •Additional research on how to introduce and "gain acceptance" for new methods of learning (p. 17-18) •Determine if audiences actually listen to episodes (or just download them) (p. 18) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Podcasts "... can help alleviate problems related to funding shortages, accommodate multiple learning styles and needs, and address limitations associated with meeting in person at a specific time and location." (p. 18)

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Author, article title, and journal	Podcast name	Stated aim of the podcast	Stated research questions, objectives, or aims of study	Study methods and data sources	Reported findings	Stated limitations	Stated directions for future research	Implications
Naiff (2020)	Research to practice partnership Podcast (not named)	1. "...to conduct and disseminate community-engaged research" (p. 2)	Research Questions: (Research-Practice Partnership) stakeholders to engage with its research?	Qualitative Case Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased accessibility as a dissemination method 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No experimental or quasi-experimental design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...to explore the degree to which stakeholders view alternate dissemination methods (like podcasting) as informing their work" (p. 16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "It appears research in this field primarily focuses on how podcasts can help to promote student learning. Results of this study suggest stakeholders who listen to the podcast learned something valuable about topics relevant to their work" (p. 17)
"Podcasting as a Dissemination Method for a Researcher-Practitioner Partnership"		2. "...build community and social networks between [stakeholders]" (p. 2)	1. Does the podcast help RPP (Research-Practice Partnership) stakeholders to engage with its research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder Survey Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcasts strengthened networks and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low survey response rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...to explore how alternate methods of accessing research mitigates some of the challenges in applying research to decision-making by practitioners" (p. 16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...podcasts specifically promote research access and readership" (p. 17)
<i>International Journal of Educational Policy and Leadership</i>		3. "...to contribute to the local, state, and national policy and scholarly dialog on education" (p. 2)	2. Does the podcast strengthen relationships and networks within the RPP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcast Analytics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcasts expanded geographical audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those that responded to survey may have a more favorable view of the podcast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...to explore how much more likely stakeholders are to "use" research when it is communicated by members for their own profession" (p. 16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The RPP profiled in this article was established decades ago but experienced considerably recent growth over the first three years of its podcast" (p. 17)
			3. Does the podcast support the expansion of the audience within and beyond the RPP to engage with its research? (p. 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Report Downloads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audience perceptions of podcasts generally positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data interpretation bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "consider metrics other than the article readership to assess the degree to which listening to a podcast promotes interacting with and understanding research" (p. 17) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcasts as a "...dissemination approach offers great promise for advancing the research of RPPs to relevant audiences and, subsequently, increasing their impact" (p. 18)
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...to work toward isolating the unique impact of podcasting on learning and research use" (p. 17) 		

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Author, article title, and journal	Podcast name	Stated aim of the podcast	Stated research questions, objectives, or aims of study	Study methods and data sources	Reported findings	Stated limitations	Stated directions for future research	Implications
Nwosu et al. (2017) "Use of podcast technology to facilitate education, communication and dissemination in palliative care: the development of the AmiPal podcast" <i>BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care (British Medical Journal)</i>	<i>AmiPal</i>	1. "... to facilitate communication about palliative care with researchers, policymakers, and the public" (p. 212)	Aims: 1. Describe the development of a palliative care podcast according to international recommendations for podcast quality. 2. To analyze the listenership of the podcast over a 14-month period. (p. 212)	Descriptive Statistics Facilitates communication among professionals	Wide geographical reach Podcast Analytics (via SoundCloud)	•RSS feed delay may have impacted results •Limited feedback received	•"... to evaluate learning outcomes from podcasts" (p. 216) • To determine whether podcasts can facilitate learning for professionals and lay people (p. 216)	•"It is possible to develop a palliative care podcast that has a global reach" (p. 216) •Audio recording equipment is low cost
Singer (2019) "Podcasting as Social Scholarship: A Tool to Increase the Public Impact of Scholarship and Research" <i>Journal of the Society for Social Work & Research</i>	<i>Social Work Podcast</i>	1. "... to most effectively disseminate research and best practices to social work students and practitioners" (p. 571)	Objective: Study conducted to identify and describe patterns of podcast use among a sample of podcast consumers in order to better understand the demographics, subscriber behaviors, and preferences among consumers who had engaged with the <i>Social Work Podcast</i> . (p. 577)	Mixed-Methods Survey •Listenership Survey Feedback (via Podtrac audience survey for podcasts)	Wide geographical reach Demographics varied Listening habits Respondent satisfaction generally positive	•Listenership largely unknown	•"... focus on information development, quality metrics and impact analysis of educational podcasts" (p. 216)	•Audio hosting sites and editing software are freely available •"Individuals and organizations planning on developing on their own podcasts can use quality indicators and social media to enhance dissemination" (p. 216) For podcasting to realize its potential, podcasters need to understand how and why podcasting works, and for whom and under what circumstances
Thoma et al. (2018) "The impact of social media promotion with infographics and podcasts on research dissemination and readership" <i>Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine</i>	<i>SGEM Podcast</i>	1. To promote original research published in the <i>Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine</i> (p. 300)	Objective: Study conducted to promote CJEM journal articles through podcasts and infographics while tracking dissemination and readership (p. 300)	Descriptive Statistics	Podcasting can help to create an awareness of research as a first step in knowledge translation	*Selection bias *Results may not be generalizable	•"... need for experimental study design to better determine what works for research dissemination, readership, and translation of research findings (p.304) •"... to test the hypothesis that active learning is more beneficial than passive learning and how more interactive strategies in podcasting could be beneficial (p. 304)	The effect of social media promotion "... is difficult to target at a specific clinician group, which implies that it will be more effective for national or international initiatives than local implementation" (p. 304)

first research question by outlining and detailing terms and their definitions from the literature. In response to our second research question, we report affordances and limitations of podcasting for public scholarship. Our discussions related to our research questions caused us to think deeply about the distinctions between *podcasting* (an action) and *podcasts* (a product). In the sections that follow, we use the term *podcasts* to describe an audio file product of public scholarship efforts and *podcasting* as the process by which ideas can be shared with the public through this technology. We share examples from podcasts, then draw on the literature to contextualize those examples.

Definition of Terms. Without a common language utilized across disciplines to describe podcasting for public scholarship, it is difficult to get a firm grasp on the field. We were working with multiple terms with multiple definitions that shifted as we came across new information. While we originally conceptualized our search around *public scholarship*, through keyword searches of databases and a review of the literature, we found additional keyword terms to consider. Singer (2019) was at the forefront of all our search results; he refers to this type of *public scholarship* as *social scholarship* or using social media to expand scholarship to the general public.

Each field holds a nuanced, yet complimentary view of what public scholarship is, what it is not, and how the tenets of public scholarship are enacted. Other scholars used terms such as *knowledge dissemination* to make research more accessible to and practical for stakeholders (Fronek et al., 2016; Naff, 2020; Thoma et al., 2018), *knowledge translation* to make information readily available to a public clientele (Nwosu et al., 2017; Thoma et al., 2018), and *information sharing* or *knowledge sharing* to emphasize the work being done to make research more accessible and available as practical information (Dong et al., 2021; Lim & Swenson, 2021). While Diebold et al. (2021) describe podcasting as a means of dissemination, they reference Singer's work and use the term *social scholarship* once at the end of their paper. An additional term similar to Singer's term that we came across during our search is *digital scholarship*, however this term was not used in any of the studies included in our review.

Based on our reading of the studies in this review, we recommend that keyword terms be established and utilized across fields to point to this type of podcasting for public knowledge and research dissemination. Specific to the work of podcasters, we found the terms *academic podcasts* and *scholarly podcasts* were used interchangeably. We suggest that podcasts created by and through institutions of higher education for the purposes of sharing information and research knowledge with the public

come to be known as *scholarly podcasts*, as an umbrella term. This suggestion is also informed by the recent book by Cook (2023) titled *Scholarly Podcasting: Why, What, How?* that we believe serves as a foundational text in this field. We further suggest that the category of *social scholarship* (which includes scholarly podcasts) be termed consistently across fields when referencing research and knowledge dissemination in social media spaces. At present, without consistent language, scholars in disciplinary fields may continue to pursue these types of public scholarship opportunities and research surrounding them in siloed conversations.

Geographical and Temporal Affordances. When considering space and time, podcasting and podcasts offer affordances for both researchers and public audiences interested in research knowledge. Nwosu et al. (2017) found that their podcast helped to facilitate discussion about their profession of palliative care with a global audience. Similarly, Dong et al. (2021) also report that their podcast was effective for knowledge dissemination to stakeholders in their field of emergency medicine, beyond the regional stakeholder audience they targeted. Lim and Swenson (2021) highlight affordances of space as it relates to time in the ways podcasts are used for communication between agriculture extension agencies and their audiences, effectively removing geographical and scheduling barriers for extension agents and those they support. The digital podcasting medium allows an economical way for researchers to share discoveries across geographically diverse areas in a timely manner. Each study we reviewed noted that podcasts reach beyond the immediate community or organization producing the podcast. Even when studies we reviewed aimed at communicating research with a targeted audience, they found their messages were accessed by listeners outside of the target population (Dong et al., 2021; Naff, 2020). Along these lines, the podcasts connected different experts across geographic spaces, creating a virtual community of practice (Diebold et al., 2021; Dong et al., 2021; Naff, 2020; Thoma et al., 2018). Other reports mentioned how podcasts connected lay people or novices with disciplinary experts to learn more about a specific topic (Lim & Swenson, 2021; Naff, 2020; Nwosu et al., 2017). These studies suggest that podcasting can move the dissemination of research knowledge into public view in far-reaching ways.

Podcasts provide the public with a flexible listening and learning experience. Studies found that podcasts can be released more frequently than traditional research publications, allowing immediate access and engagement with the research in a timely manner (Lim & Swenson, 2021; Naff, 2020). However Naff makes a point to mention that although economical and efficient for the user,

there is a certain amount of time involved in planning and producing a final product that ultimately equates to a cost. Naff (2020) offers quantification of those costs, as the researcher for their podcast “spends approximately half a workday per week (10% effort) on podcast planning, communication, production, and dissemination” (p. 6).

The potential broad reach of podcasts ultimately has a reciprocal benefit whereby information can have a wider impact and podcast producers and experts receive feedback, questions, and suggestions to help improve public research products or services. Podcasts are typically available to the public free of charge, though there is some indication that model is changing with the advent of paid podcast subscriptions through many platforms. Through digital technologies like RSS feeds and podcast subscriber networks such as Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Google Podcasts, iHeartRadio, Stitcher, and Spotify, researchers can connect with a global public audience with relative ease, conserving time (and therefore money) for scholarly podcasters while simultaneously providing access to research knowledge for listeners that is also relatively easy to access on demand regardless of geographic space.

Broadening Learning Communities. Podcasting is shown to strengthen communication of research throughout a profession (Dong et al., 2021; Fronek et al., 2016; Naff, 2020; Nwosu et al., 2017). Fronek et al. (2016) found their podcast was effective in promoting professional identity among social workers, supported connections between theory, research, and practice, and offered ongoing professional learning for practitioners. Building or strengthening learning communities or mention of learning communities are stated outcomes of podcasts across several studies we reviewed (Diebold et al., 2021; Dong et al., 2021; Naff, 2020; Nwosu et al., 2017; Thoma et al., 2018). Podcasts can be used to build connectivity of groups, “unifying messages and sharing information within an educational community” (Dong et al., 2021, p. 6). Community participation and learning sometimes took place on associated websites or on social media platforms outside of podcasting (Dong et al., 2021; Singer, 2019) and through formalized feedback channels such as listener surveys, email, and other social media platforms (Fronek et al., 2016; Naff, 2020; Nwosu et al., 2017; Singer, 2019).

Across these studies, podcasts are seen as a way to invite listeners to act by accessing additional research, applying research in the field, talking with others, or to reflect on previous practices and consider new practices. Beyond practitioners in their fields, several studies found that podcasts were a useful tool for helping prepare students who are entering their respective fields by

introducing students to real issues faced in social work (Fronek et al., 2016), promoting “best practices” to students in social work (Singer, 2019), and connecting emergency room physicians and trainees (Dong et al., 2021). Naff (2020) found that their podcast supported research dissemination to education decision makers in their Research Practice Partnership (RPP). He credits the RPP podcast for helping to promote the engagement of stakeholders and to increase partnership stakeholder conference attendance by over 37% in the first year of the podcast and an additional 31% in the second year of the podcast (p. 14).

Across these studies, findings suggest podcasts can be effective tools for building learning communities across a wide range of professional fields and between professionals and researchers.

Public Knowledge Dissemination and Research Awareness. In the studies we reviewed, podcasts were found to bring an awareness of specialized topics to the public as an entry point into research conversations around specific fields and subject areas (Lim & Swenson, 2021; Singer, 2019; Thoma et al., 2018). Lim and Swenson’s (2021) study results indicate podcasts can help to increase awareness of research in specialized fields to possibly expand knowledge by inviting outside perspectives. Singer (2019) suggests, making knowledge public invites broad engagement with research ideas, opportunities for critical feedback, resulting in reconsidering or refining information or products for the public. Thoma et al. (2018) utilized podcasts in their study to promote open access research articles. They found that their podcast promotions increased abstract views and Altmetric scores of promoted articles, indicating an increased public awareness of the research. They connect the opportunity for awareness to knowledge translation: “...Awareness is an important first step in knowledge translation because clinicians unaware of practice-changing literature cannot change their practice” (p. 304). Some researchers seeking an opportunity for “translating research results into teachable and practical information” (Lim & Swenson, 2021, p. 1) have turned to podcasting. However, Naff (2020) reminds us that “podcasts are limited in their ability to communicate findings with as much depth as research reports” (p. 12). Thoma et al. (2018) offer a cautionary tale. There is a risk of knowledge inflation based on interaction with a podcast. Awareness of research is only a first step in understanding issues and ideas, and podcast listeners might overgeneralize the knowledge shared through podcasting.

Fundamentally, podcasting is an efficient, unifying, accessible, and multimodal means of communicating with an interested community (Dong et al., 2021; Lim & Swenson, 2021; Naff, 2020). The conversational nature

of podcasting “helps to reduce the potential for overusing research jargon” (Naff, 2020, p. 7), making content more accessible to a public audience. Rather, conversations offer a storied experience that translates specialized research language and communication structures into a narrative, making it conceptually different from traditional academic publishing. When specialized terminology of research is explained in conversation and the formal structures and sequences necessary in the linearity of writing are removed through the oral mode of communication in podcasts, complex concepts become more accessible. As one example, Diebold et al. found their podcast was useful for promoting social good by manifesting the principles of trauma-informed care for a public audience. Studies also indicate that podcasts allow an audience to access research throughout the duration of a study as “take-aways” from the research become evident (Naff, 2020, p. 6).

Podcasts have the capacity to convey a humanized experience of research (Diebold et al., 2021) as listeners have the voices of podcasters “in their heads” through the highly individualized experience of listening in their own personal spaces, often using headphones (Singer, 2019). This type of audio experience and narrative format promote connections to and engagement with research ideas in a different way than traditional publication can. The translation of ideas and the relatedness of ideas expressed through a podcast enhances learning for an audience in multiple ways including: increased opportunities for critical thinking, skill-building, and synthesis; promotion of deep learning and knowledge retention; bolstering of self-efficacy; and increased engagement with content (Diebold et al., 2021). Research suggests podcasts can effectively and efficiently communicate information in ways that account for varying learning abilities and styles (Lim & Swenson, 2021). This type of accessibility is ideal for diverse audiences (Dong et al., 2021; Fronek et al., 2016; Singer, 2019). Podcasting holds promise to maximize the potential of research usage by stakeholders by attending to how information is communicated (Naff, 2020, p. 16). Scholarly podcasts present an opportunity to share the nature of research as always in progress, always generating new questions to pursue.

Discussion

Boyer’s (1996) influential framework is commonly cited in the theoretical and research articles we read for this review. Boyer (1996) called on the academy to “become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems” (p. 15) and he states in no uncertain terms that “the university has an obligation to broaden the scope of scholarship” (p. 21). However, in the two and a half

decades since the publication of Boyer’s work, structures of academia have inhibited progress toward this lofty but worthwhile goal. Boyer’s address of the “scholarship of engagement” predates the advent of podcasting, so there is no specific mention of podcasts. Rather, Boyer’s work offers a compelling theoretical frame through which we can view public-facing scholarly endeavors. It is through this lens that he proposes his view of scholarship by way of four “essential, interlocking functions” of the *scholarship of discovery*, *scholarship of integration*, *scholarship of sharing knowledge*, and *application of knowledge*. Throughout our review of our corpus of articles, we noted the variety of ways in which researchers tapped into and highlighted the power of podcasting to serve these four functions of engaged scholarship. Our review indicates podcasting theoretically supports the underpinnings of engaged public scholarship work.

Our review of this literature also leads us to consider how we may answer Boyer’s call for the scholarship of sharing knowledge within contemporary institutional demands on scholars. With emphasis on publishing in print-based journals with high impact factors and low acceptance rates, we recognize that it may be helpful to draw parallels between traditional academic publishing and non-traditional academic publishing like social scholarship. As an example, Hannah McGregor, a researcher at Simon Fraser University, and Siobhan McMenemy, at Wilfrid Laurier University Press (WLU Press), are working together to examine podcast quality, to vet and produce a particular type of scholarly podcast. They developed a peer review process through a podcast hosted by McGregor and they continue to refine that process with new podcasts produced by WLU Press through their Amplify Podcast Network (About, n.d.). New academic podcasts selected for publication through WLU Press will be produced and promoted through their publishing house in an effort to support legitimacy and identify quality in this kind of work. When McGregor was first approached with the idea of developing a peer review process specifically for podcasts, they were hesitant, citing that podcasting is a fast and fun way to communicate research. Why would scholars want to impose academic structures on social scholarship platforms? We also note structural challenges with applying a traditional peer review process to social scholarship. In particular, lengthening the time to publication, which limits the immediacy of knowledge reaching the public and potentially perpetuates the silencing of diverse voices and perspectives inherent to the structures of academic publishing. Ultimately, we view The Amplify Podcast Network similarly to a university press, but for the multimodal application of podcasts.

While more than 1 billion people on Earth speak English (Eberhard et al., 2023), we acknowledge that the

majority of the world's population may find no greater utility in an English language podcast than an English language article or book. However, with the affordances of artificial intelligence (AI), it is becoming increasingly easier to translate texts like podcasts in a multitude of languages. As one example, the podcast platform Spotify recently announced their pilot of an automatic translation feature which will translate English language podcasts into Spanish, German, and French (Spotify, 2023). Spotify is currently testing this application of AI with some of the most popular podcasts on their streaming platform. We believe AI technologies could hold great promise for making scholarly podcasts even more accessible to global public audiences. While additional limitations such as limited or no internet connectivity and access to an internet-connected device still pose limitations of scholarly podcasting for research dissemination, we believe scholarly podcasting can move the academic community closer to Boyer's goals of knowledge democratization.

Limitations of This Review

Across all articles in our review, the studies that met criteria for inclusion were conducted in the last 6 years, which speaks to the fact that this is a very young field. We, collectively, are at the beginning stages of understanding the scope of podcasting as a form of social scholarship. In our review process, we limited our search to only articles that mentioned or described podcasting as a public form of knowledge dissemination (i.e., beyond what is contained within the learning management systems of higher education institutions) and podcasts that were publicly accessible. We approach this review with a narrow scope because we aim to develop an understanding of social scholarship in a specific context, to connect to more general understandings of public scholarship. We focused on podcasting because it is the vehicle for social scholarship with which we are most familiar. However, we acknowledge that there are other forms of digital media platforms that could accomplish similar goals of disseminating research. Additionally, while we used methods of database searching, snowballing, and hand searching to identify studies for inclusion in this review, there is a possibility we did not identify all viable synonymous terms. Further, we opened our search to any field but may not have identified all databases through our institution or within unique, field-specific journals. Our review focused on publications written in English, excluding the scholarly work reported in other languages. Finally, we recognize we may have a personal and professional bias toward the affordances of podcasts as social scholarship because of our experience and

background with producing and researching our own scholarly podcast.

Future Research Directions

Our thematic analysis of the literature sheds light on additional topics for consideration related to podcasting for public scholarship. Based on our review of the literature, there are efforts to understand podcasting and podcasts as social scholarship in specialized fields. Our goal in this scoping review is to connect studies published in disciplinary journals and work to pave a path forward for this promising platform for research dissemination. Singer (2019) notes that there are limitations to scholarly podcasting, particularly the lack of standards for the field for listeners and producers. Additionally, there is no standard for evaluation of this type of work at academic institutions (Paterson et al., 2015). Nwosu et al. (2017) call for future work in this area to focus on content development, quality metrics, and impact analyses of podcasting for public scholarship. Beyond the metrics that online data aggregators can capture, we believe it is important to understand qualitatively how scholarly podcasting may impact the thinking and actions of practitioners in the field and the public. Our review of scholarship in this area and our own experiences as scholarly podcasters affirms Nwosu et al.'s (2017) conclusions. We recognize that for podcasting and other forms of social scholarship to serve researchers and the public, we need to better understand, measure, and communicate the influence and quality factors of this type of work. We also believe alternate ways of thinking about factors of quality are needed for social scholarship. Gathering these data is one of the next steps in our research.

Conclusions

Podcasting for public scholarship offers ways to build systems of communicating research findings to a broad public audience. Our review of studies about podcasting for public scholarship invites additional conversation about what this means for future research possibilities, as well as open dialog about scholars' responsibilities and public-facing scholarship at both individual and institutional levels. We believe this use of new literacies and technology can be utilized to break down barriers of access to knowledge, thereby supporting democratization of research knowledge acquisition. Knowledge becomes more accessible through a podcast because of the conversational nature and storytelling format of the platform, in bite-sized pieces of information. Additionally, podcasts are generally available to listeners at no cost. While this model is changing for some podcasts and platforms,

we encourage other scholars and institutions to make scholarly podcasts free to listeners to support public knowledge acquisition. With the wide availability of the internet, increasing access to internet-connected devices, and the availability of AI tools to translate texts to other languages, podcasts can support access to knowledge sought by individuals and communities.

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Data Availability Statement

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

Note

1. In this article, we refer to those who engage with podcasts as “listeners.” Singer (2019) refers to those who engage with podcasts as “consumers.” We acknowledge that not all consumers of podcasts are listening, as some will access and read a podcast transcript. However, we also acknowledge that “consumers” may not entirely address the experience of engaging with a podcast in an audio format. We discuss ideas around the aural experience of engaging with podcasts and the nature of oral language.

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