

The Power and Pleasure of Podcasting

Thursday, January 31, 2019, at 7 p.m. and
Friday, February 1, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Wallis Annenberg Hall
University of Southern California

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- This two-day event features an evening of performances followed by a reception (Thursday) and a day of workshops (Friday).
- Workshops will cover the podcasting landscape, basics of podcast production, and the business of podcasting.
- Participants include podcasters Chenjarai Kumanyika (*Uncivil*), Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva (The Kitchen Sisters), Melinna Bobadilla and Brenda Gonzalez (*Tamarindo*), Taz Ahmed and Zahra Noorbakhsh (*#GoodMuslimBadMuslim*), Kerri Hoffman (PRX), George Lavender (Wondery), and Arielle Nissenblatt (EarBuds Podcast Collective).

WHAT IS A PODCAST?

The first known use of the term “podcast” was by the futurist media maker Ben Hammersley, in a 2004 article in the *Guardian*. He was trying to find a word for the new medium of amateur radio that was being made on MP3 players like the iPod. “But what to call it? Audioblogging? Podcasting? GuerillaMedia?” he wrote. Well, we know which term stuck.

Although the term originally referred to Apple’s iPod, the medium has proved more enduring than the iPod itself, and today audio and video podcasts are available on many different devices. Podcasting has exploded in recent years; Apple reports there are now more than 550,000 podcasts, with 1,000 being added almost every day.

So what makes a podcast a podcast? It’s digital audio (or video) on demand. Unlike terrestrial radio, a podcast can be produced by anyone with a computer and an Internet connection. Podcasters

can make their productions as short or long as they want, since they don’t need to fit into a broadcast time slot, and they can serve audiences of any size, big or small. The on-demand nature of podcasting means the medium can be especially dynamic for episodic content. It’s a form especially well suited to niche interests, audiences of all types and sizes, and the spirit of independent media.

Podcasting represents a site of rapid experimentation and innovation, which is reimagining the nature of radio as a medium. At the most basic level, podcasting shifts the scales on which radio operates, as it is no longer grounded in the geographically local but also not restricted to national borders, allowing new constructions of the radio audience (regional, global, subcultural) and its relationship to content producers. The rise of podcasts has put new emphasis onto the spoken voice, providing a platform for interviews and conversations, for short-form and long-form journalism and documentary, and for the return of radio drama and comedy as vibrant genre traditions. And the podcast is encouraging a different kind of intimacy between content creators and their followers, which reflects the fact that podcasts are most often heard through earbuds. Because of the ease with which content can be produced and shared, podcasts have become an especially inclusive medium, allowing us to hear from people who have long been marginalized by broadcast media.

The democratization and explosion of podcast content has brought opportunities, but also challenges, as competition for funding and audiences increases. As quickly as podcasts are released, others are mothballed. Podcast networks and production companies are proliferating, better metric and analytics systems are being developed, and advertising is becoming more prominent. The next chapter in this exciting and evolving movement has yet to be written.

INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Independent media refers to any media production (radio, magazines or newspapers, TV, etc.) that is free from corporate and government interests. It often exists to amplify voices and cover topics that are marginalized in mainstream, or corporate, media. Because independent media typically lacks the big funding of corporate media, it often thrives in lower-cost mediums. Zines (small-circulation, self-published magazines, often made by hand and/or on a photocopier) are a classic example of independent media.

ABOUT THE PODCASTS

Podcasts can be on any topic, in any style. Here's a glimpse at the podcasts that will be featured in this event:

#GOODMUSLIMBADMUSLIM

#GoodMuslimBadMuslim is a monthly podcast featuring Tanzila “Taz” Ahmed and Zahra Noorbakhsh. They write: “As Muslim American women, we are walking this fine line between what it means to be good and bad. So really, what does it mean to be a good Muslim, when we as American women are getting mixed messages from all different angles? We’ve decided to say — fuck it. We’ll define what it means to be a good American Muslim ourselves and through our *#GoodMuslimBadMuslim* podcast. And poke fun at both sides of this margin. We’ll create our own narrative how we see fit, and with lots of satire and laughs.”

THE KITCHEN SISTERS PRESENT

The Kitchen Sisters are Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva. They produce the NPR series *Hidden Kitchens*, *Lost and Found Sound*, *The Sonic Memorial Project*, and *The Keepers*. Their podcast, *The Kitchen Sisters Present*, explores lost recordings and shards of sound along with new tales of remarkable people from around the world — in their words, “stories from the b-side of history.”

TAMARINDO

Tamarindo features Latinx voices at the intersection of politics and pop culture. It is hosted by Brenda Gonzalez and Melinna Bobadilla, two self-described *#educatedpeleonas* who dish out comedic and critical interventions. The show focuses on race, gender, representation, and politics with refreshing and hilarious commentary.

UNCIVIL

Uncivil is a history podcast that tells stories that have been left out of the official history of the Civil War. These are untold stories about resistance, covert operations, corruption, mutiny, counterfeiting, antebellum drones, and more. The podcast creators connect these forgotten struggles to the political battlefield we’re living on right now, believing that the story of the Civil War—the story of slavery, confederate monuments, and racism—is the story of America.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Why is it significant that a podcast can be made and distributed regardless of the size of its audience?
- How are podcasts changing the overall media landscape?
- What’s a podcast you wish existed? Have you thought about making it?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- EarBuds Podcast Collective
earbudspodcastcollective.org
- *#GoodMuslimBadMuslim*
goodmuslimbadmuslim.com
- *The Kitchen Sisters Present*
kitchensisters.org



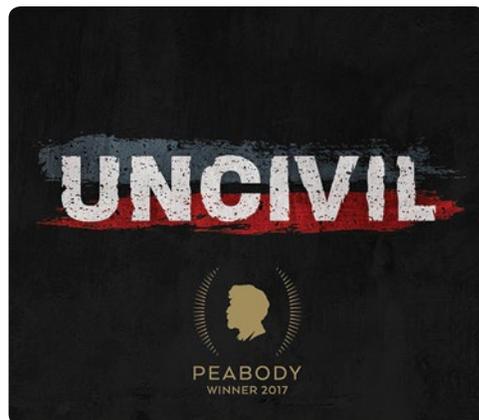
Taz Ahmed and Zahra Noorbakhsh, *#GoodMuslimBadMuslim*

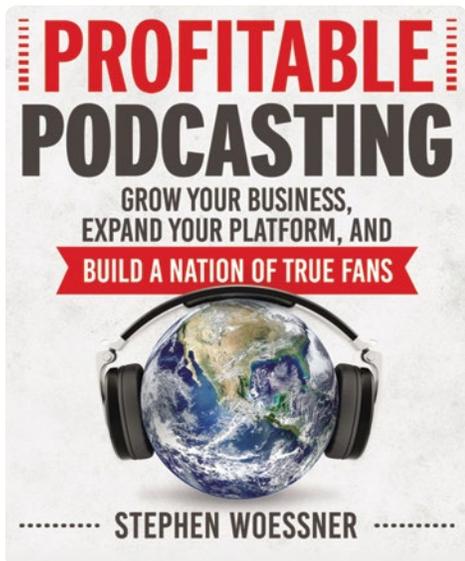


Nikki Silva and Davia Nelson, *The Kitchen Sisters*



Brenda Gonzalez and Melinna Bobadilla, *Tamarindo*





- PRX
prx.org
- Tamarindo
tamarindopodcast.com
- Uncivil
gimletmedia.com/uncivil
- Wondery
wondery.com

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

BREE RUSSELL of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. journal articles and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

BOOKS:

Biewen, John, and Alexa Dilworth. *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound*. Second edition, revised and expanded. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Fox, Neil, Dario Llinares, and Richard Berry. *Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

McCracken, Ellen. *The Serial Podcast and Storytelling in the Digital Age*. New York and London: Routledge, 2017.

Tee, Morris, Mignon Fogarty, and Chuck Tomasi. *Podcasting for Dummies*, 3rd edition. Hoboken, NJ: For Dummies, 2017.

Woessner, Stephen. *Profitable Podcasting: Grow Your Business, Expand Your Platform, and Build a Nation of True Fans*. New York: Amacom, 2018.

DATABASES:

Frary, M. "Power to the Podcast: Podcasting Is Bringing a Whole New Audience to Radio and Giving Investigative Journalism a Boost. Plus, Our Handy Guide to Making Your Own Podcasts." *Index on Censorship* 46, no. 3 (September 1, 2017): 24–27.

Heshmat, Yasamin, Lillian Yang, Carman Neustaedter, Christopher Batty, and Derek Reilly. "Quality 'Alone' Time through Conversations and Storytelling: Podcast Listening Behaviors and Routines" (November 30, 2017).

Lindgren, Mia. "Personal Narrative Journalism and Podcasting." *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media* 14.1 (2016): 23–41. Web.

McHugh, Siobhán. "How Podcasting Is Changing the Audio Storytelling Genre." *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media* 14, no. 1 (2016): 65–82.

JOURNALS:

Critical Studies in Media Communication

Television & New Media

DVDS:

Elwood, Graham, Chris Mancini, Keith Blomberg, Sarah Craig, Griffin Gmelich, and Comedy Film Nerds LLC. *Ear Buds: the Podcasting Documentary*. Burbank, CA: Comedy Dynamics, 2016. www.aspresolver.com/aspresolver.asp?MARC;3801518.