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the crime

There's no denying the enduring popularity of true crime content. This insatiable audience interest can be traced back to the broader popularity of true crime storytelling across various media formats, including books, television, and film. However, podcasts provided a unique platform for the genre to flourish due to the increased accessibility from Smartphones and the complex narratives, intricate investigations, and multiple perspectives, being well-suited for the long-form format of podcasts.

The true crime podcast boom gained significant momentum with the release of "Serial" (which began in 2014 as a spinoff of the public radio show "This American Life.) and "Case File" (an Australian crime podcast that first aired in January 2016) being some of the earliest mainstream podcast shows.
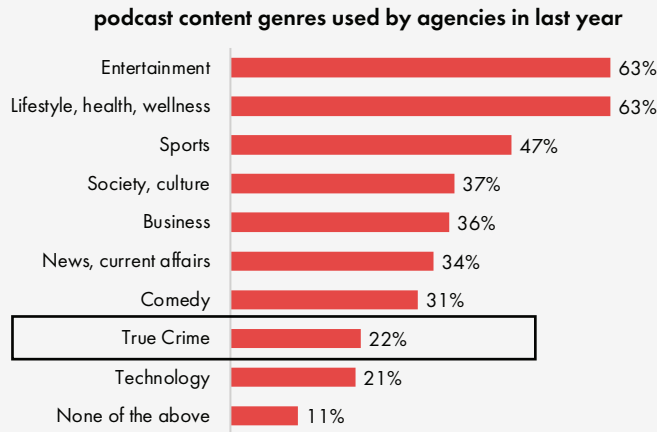
Despite this podcast genre offering significant reach and interest of audiences, some brands aren't leveraging the opportunity for advertising in true crime audio. With any emerging content category, advertisers can be hesitant to associate themselves with it. This happened in the very early days of crime and horror content on radio, TV, and film. Fast forward a few decades and crime shows like Law & Order became coveted and sold-out shows for advertisers, with brands understanding the huge and loyal audiences these programs draw.

While brands with direct fit products to crime (such as home security products) have jumped on the advertising opportunity, brands without a direct product fit have been slower to benefit from the contextual mindset of true crime and impact the behaviour of highly engaged and captivated audiences.

Agencies and brands are using a variety of podcast environments for advertising with entertainment and lifestyle the most popular. The IAB Australia Online Advertising Expenditure Report reported podcast advertising expenditure at $99.1 million for 2023, up 21.7% on 2022.

Despite its huge popularity and following with listeners, The IAB Australia Audio State of the Nation Wave 8 report found only 22% of agencies invested in True Crime content over 2023, compared to 63% who had invested in Entertainment podcasts.

Representatives of the IAB Australia Audio Council have prepared this report to explore the full opportunity of true crime content as a safe and effective advertising environment and provide evidence and insights to help marketers understand the opportunities available and recommended strategies for advertisers to make the most of any investment.

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podcast content genres used by agencies in last year

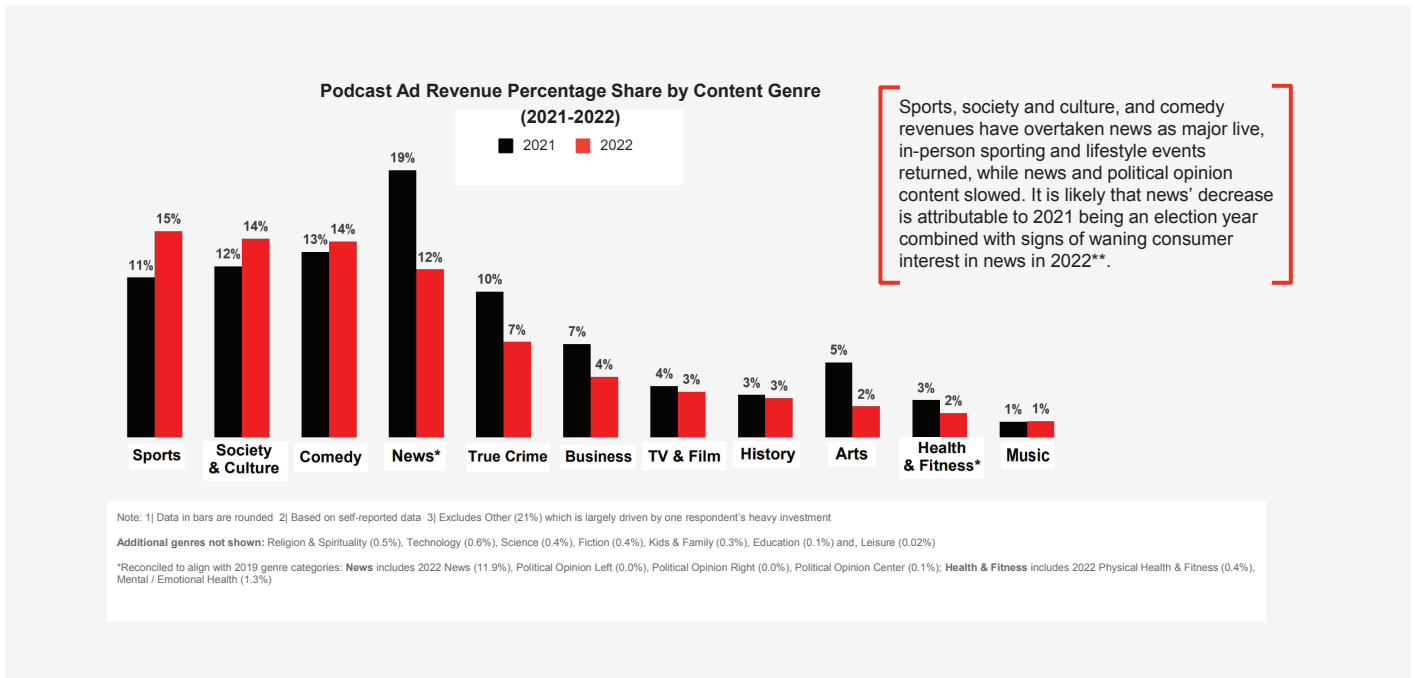| Genre	Percentage
Entertainment	63%
Lifestyle, health, wellness	63%
Sports	47%
Society, culture	37%
Business	36%
News, current affairs	34%
Comedy	31%
True Crime	22%
Technology	21%
None of the above	11%

Source; IAB Australia Audio Advertising State of the Nation Report Wave 8 2024, Q- Which of the following podcast content genres have you invested in over the last 12 months? Please select all that apply. Base media agencies n=185

US Podcast Ad Revenue demonstrates the opportunity in true crime

Despite economic headwinds, podcast ad revenues in the US posted significant growth in 2022, up 26% year-over-year to $1.8B. Podcasting continues to be one of the fastest growing digital channels in the US growing two times faster than digital advertising overall (+11%). Revenues are projected to more than double between 2022-2025 to ~$4 billion.
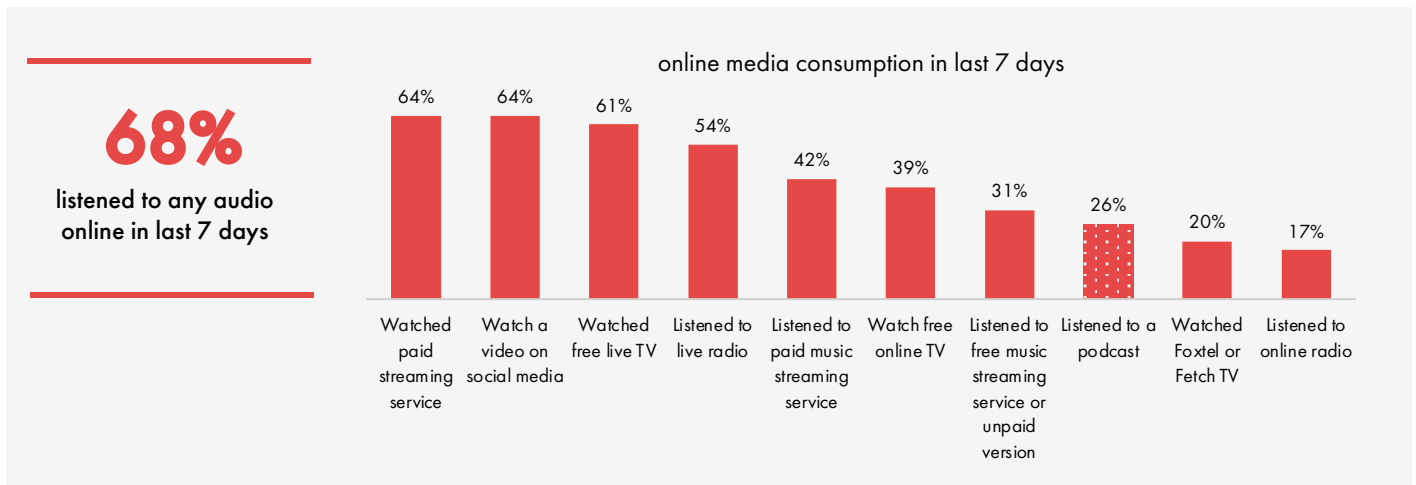
The True Crime genre generates 7% of podcast advertising revenue in the US market.

Podcast Ad Revenue Percentage Share by Content Genre (2021-2022)

Legend: ■ 2021 ■ 2022

Genre	2021	2022
Sports	11%	15%
Society & Culture	12%	14%
Comedy	13%	14%
News*	19%	12%
True Crime	10%	7%
Business	7%	4%
TV & Film	4%	3%
History	3%	3%
Arts	5%	2%
Health & Fitness*	3%	2%
Music	1%	1%

Sports, society and culture, and comedy revenues have overtaken news as major live, in-person sporting and lifestyle events returned, while news and political opinion content slowed. It is likely that news' decrease is attributable to 2021 being an election year combined with signs of waning consumer interest in news in 2022**.

Note: 1| Data in bars are rounded 2| Based on self-reported data 3| Excludes Other (21%) which is largely driven by one respondent's heavy investment

Additional genres not shown: Religion & Spirituality (0.5%), Technology (0.6%), Science (0.4%), Fiction (0.4%), Kids & Family (0.3%), Education (0.1%) and, Leisure (0.02%)

*Reconciled to align with 2019 genre categories: **News** includes 2022 News (11.9%), Political Opinion Left (0.0%), Political Opinion Right (0.0%), Political Opinion Center (0.1%); **Health & Fitness** includes 2022 Physical Health & Fitness (0.4%), Mental / Emotional Health (1.3%)

Source; IAB's U.S. Podcast Advertising 2022 Revenue & 2023-2025 Growth Projections study May 2023
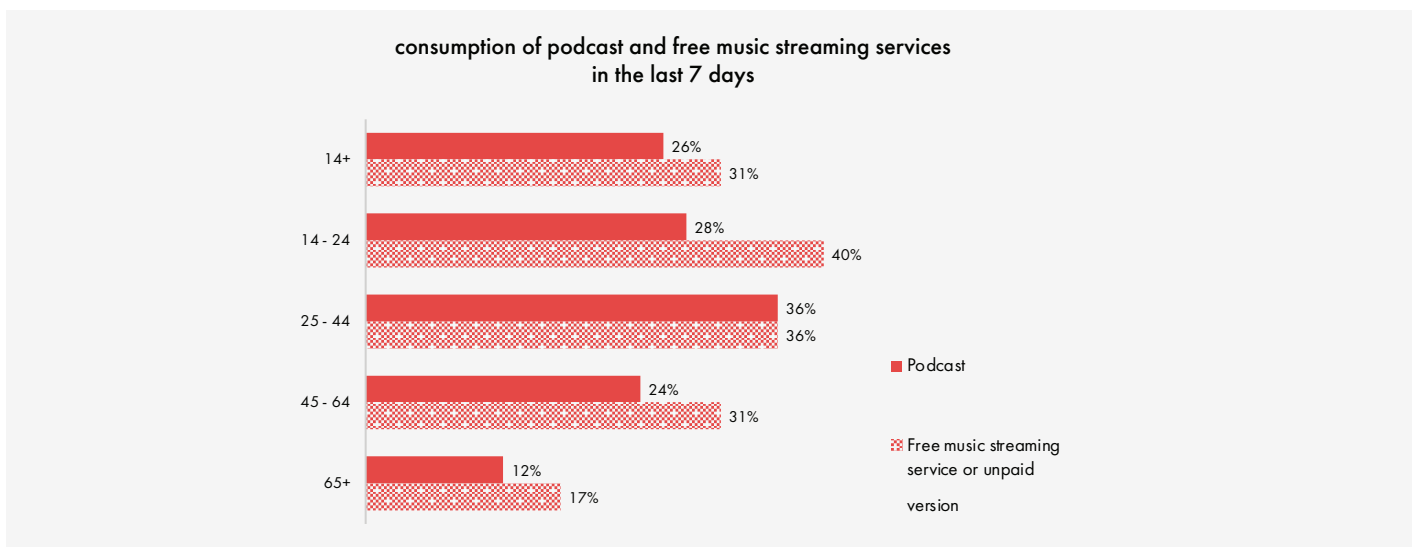
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Podcasts have experienced a significant surge in popularity over the past decade, becoming a prominent form of entertainment and education for many Australians. Each week on average 26% of Australians aged 14+ have listened to a podcast. This reach is equivalent to the consumption of many other forms of online video and audio content.

68%
listened to any audio online in last 7 days

online media consumption in last 7 days

Watched paid streaming service	64%
Watch a video on social media	64%
Watched free live TV	61%
Listened to live radio	54%
Listened to paid music streaming service	42%
Watch free online TV	39%
Listened to free music streaming service or unpaid version	31%
Listened to a podcast	26%
Watched Foxtel or Fetch TV	20%
Listened to online radio	17%

Source: Ipsos iris Establishment Survey, September 2023, N=12,885 P14+

Podcast listening is most popular amongst 25 to 44 year olds, with over a third (36%) of Australians in this age group having listened to a podcast in the last week. Amongst this age group, podcast reach is equivalent to the reach of free music streaming services.
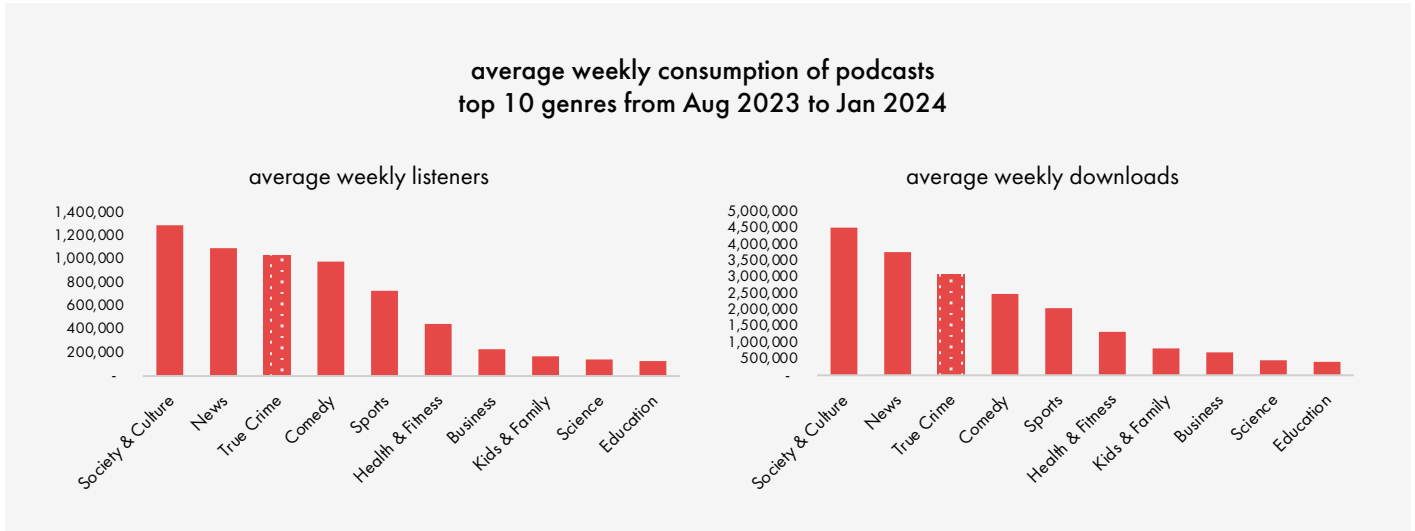
consumption of podcast and free music streaming services in the last 7 days

Age	Podcast	Free music streaming service or unpaid version
14+	26%	31%
14 - 24	28%	40%
25 - 44	36%	36%
45 - 64	24%	31%
65+	12%	17%

Source: Ipsos iris Establishment Survey, September 2023, N=12,885 P14+

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Key Consumption facts for True Crime podcasts

According to Triton Digital:
- 5 of the top 20 podcasts in Australia in January 2024 were in the true crime genre
- True Crime is the third largest podcast category in Australia
- Weekly Average of Listeners: 1,032,850
- Weekly Average of Downloads: 3,089,304
- Average Download per Listener: 3.0

**average weekly consumption of podcasts
top 10 genres from Aug 2023 to Jan 2024**

average weekly listeners

average weekly downloads

Source: Triton Digital

Top 20 podcasts January 2024

Australian Podcast Ranker

Top Podcasts | January 2024

Rank	Change	Podcast	Publisher	Sales representation	Monthly listeners	Monthly downloads	New episodes
1	+3	Shameless	Shameless Media	Shameless Media	516,106	1,023,763	7
2	-1	Casefile True Crime	Audioboom	ARN / iHeart	479,799	1,545,851	0
3	+3	Conversations	Australian Broadcasting Corporation	-	455,637	3,410,712	18
4	-2	Mamamia Out Loud	Mamamia	Mamamia	387,308	1,011,978	19
5	-2	Hamish & Andy	LiSTNR (SCA)	LiSTNR (SCA)	364,578	948,457	0
6	+12	The Kyle & Jackie O Show	ARN / iHeart	ARN / iHeart	352,189	1,104,877	71
7	+1	Stuff You Should Know	ARN / iHeart	ARN / iHeart	331,898	1,493,348	19
8	+1	Australian True Crime	Bravecasting	Acast	330,758	998,196	10
9	-4	The Imperfects	ARN / iHeart	ARN / iHeart	325,634	610,705	1
10	+3	Crime Junkie	audiochuck / SiriusXM Podcast Network	LiSTNR (SCA)	317,067	790,682	8
11	-4	Life Uncut	ARN / iHeart	ARN / iHeart	296,707	837,568	12
12	-2	No Filter	Mamamia	Mamamia	290,437	667,408	9
13	+1	SmartLess	Wondery	LiSTNR (SCA)	288,006	594,095	6
14	-2	7am	Schwartz Media	Schwartz Media / LiSTNR (SCA)	282,581	794,550	24
15	+5	On Purpose with Jay Shetty	ARN / iHeart	ARN / iHeart	266,774	754,378	10
16	-1	True Crime Conversations	Mamamia	Mamamia	258,656	619,567	6
17	+18	Darling, Shine!	LiSTNR (SCA)	LiSTNR (SCA)	248,875	430,601	6
18	-2	It's A Lot with Abbie Chatfield	LiSTNR (SCA)	LiSTNR (SCA)	234,712	494,029	9
19	+4	Squiz Today	Squiz Media	Squiz Media	219,558	620,726	24
20	+1	Morbid	Wondery	LiSTNR (SCA)	217,427	571,358	10

Source; Triton Australian Podcast Ranker January 2024

Top 10 True Crime Podcasts January 2024

Rank ↑		Podcast	Sales representation	Monthly listeners	Monthly downloads
2	-1 ↓	**Casefile True Crime** Audioboom	ARN / iHeart	479,799	1,545,851
8	+1 ↑	**Australian True Crime** Bravecasting	Acast	330,758	998,196
10	+3 ↑	**Crime Junkie** audiochuck / SiriusXM Podcast Network	LiSTNR (SCA)	317,067	790,682
16	-1 ↓	**True Crime Conversations** Mamamia	Mamamia	258,656	619,567
20	+1 ↑	**Morbid** Wondery	LiSTNR (SCA)	217,427	571,358
26	-4 ↓	**I Catch Killers with Gary Jubelin** News Corp Australia	News Corp / NOVA Entertainment	190,851	563,234
33	-6 ↓	**Dateline NBC** NBCUniversal News Group	LiSTNR (SCA)	161,864	495,357
35	+2 ↑	**RedHanded** Wondery	LiSTNR (SCA)	144,510	365,202
37	-1 ↓	**Life and Crimes with Andrew Rule** News Corp Australia	News Corp / NOVA Entertainment	125,461	328,968
54	+1 ↑	**Last Podcast On The Left** SiriusXM Podcast Network	LiSTNR (SCA)	96,422	236,916

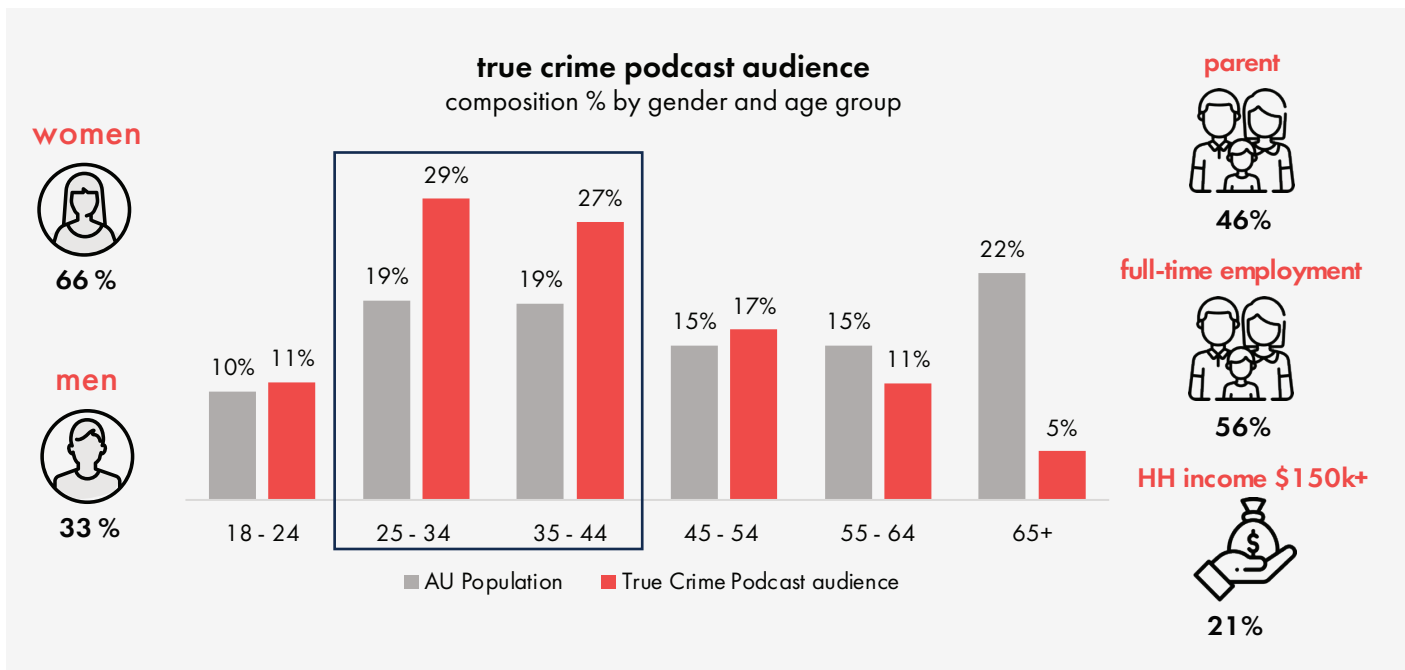*Source; Triton Australian Podcast Ranker January 2024*

Who are these mystery seekers?

True crime podcast enthusiasts are highly engaged and loyal listeners and represent a diverse audience across various demographics, including age, gender, and socioeconomic status. True crime podcast listeners spend and intend to spend in a range of consumer categories. They provide an ideal audience for advertisers across a wide range of brands, products and services.

The following profiling of True Crime podcast listeners has been provided by Triton Digital from their Podcast Metrics Demos+, Survey 2, 2023.

Nearly half of the true crime podcast listeners are women 25-54.

Overall true crime podcast listeners are more likely to be younger than the overall population. Two-thirds of true crime podcast listeners are aged between 18 and 44 (compared to 48% of the Australian population).
Nearly 7 in 10 true crime podcast listeners are women (66%) and nearly half are women aged 25-54 (33%).
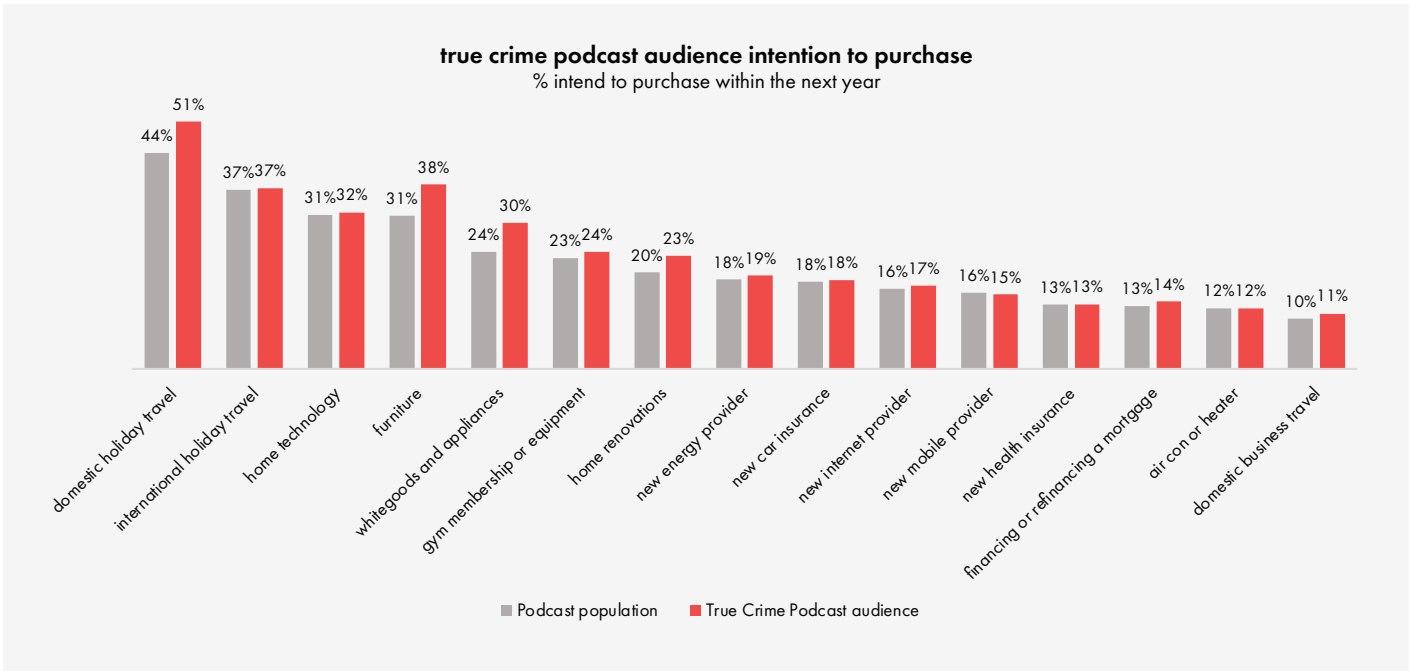
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true crime podcast audience
composition % by gender and age group

women

66 %

men

33 %

Age group	AU Population	True Crime Podcast audience
18 - 24	10%	11%
25 - 34	19%	29%
35 - 44	19%	27%
45 - 54	15%	17%
55 - 64	15%	11%
65+	22%	5%

■ AU Population ■ True Crime Podcast audience

parent

46%

full-time employment

56%

HH income $150k+

21%

Source: Triton Digital Podcast Metrics Demos+, Survey 2, 2023

True crime podcast listeners spend in a range of consumer categories.

For example, nearly 9 in 10 true crime podcast listeners are primary grocery buyers (87%) and true crime podcast listeners are 14% more likely than the general population of podcast listeners to have purchased online in the last month.

true crime podcast listeners consumer behaviour
composition % and index (compared to Australian podcast population)

**primary
grocery buyer**
87%
(110)

**purchased online
past month**
64%
(114)

**have a home
mortgage**
35%
(105)

**have vehicle
insurance**
73%
(115)

**video streaming
paid subscription**
84%
(113)

**restaurant take out
in past week**
60%
(104)

**clothing and fashion in
past month**
56%
(105)

**music
paid subscription**
63%
(112)

Source: Triton Digital Podcast Metrics Demos+, Survey 2, 2023

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true crime podcast audience intention to purchase
% intend to purchase within the next year

Legend: ■ Podcast population ■ True Crime Podcast audience

Category	Podcast population	True Crime Podcast audience
domestic holiday travel	44%	51%
international holiday travel	37%	37%
home technology	31%	32%
furniture	31%	38%
whitegoods and appliances	24%	30%
gym membership or equipment	23%	24%
home renovations	20%	23%
new energy provider	18%	19%
new car insurance	18%	18%
new internet provider	16%	17%
new mobile provider	16%	15%
new health insurance	13%	13%
financing or refinancing a mortgage	13%	14%
air con or heater	12%	12%
domestic business travel	10%	11%

Source: Triton Digital Podcast Metrics Demos+, Survey 2, 2023

True crime podcast listeners consume a range of other media providing complementary opportunities for advertisers
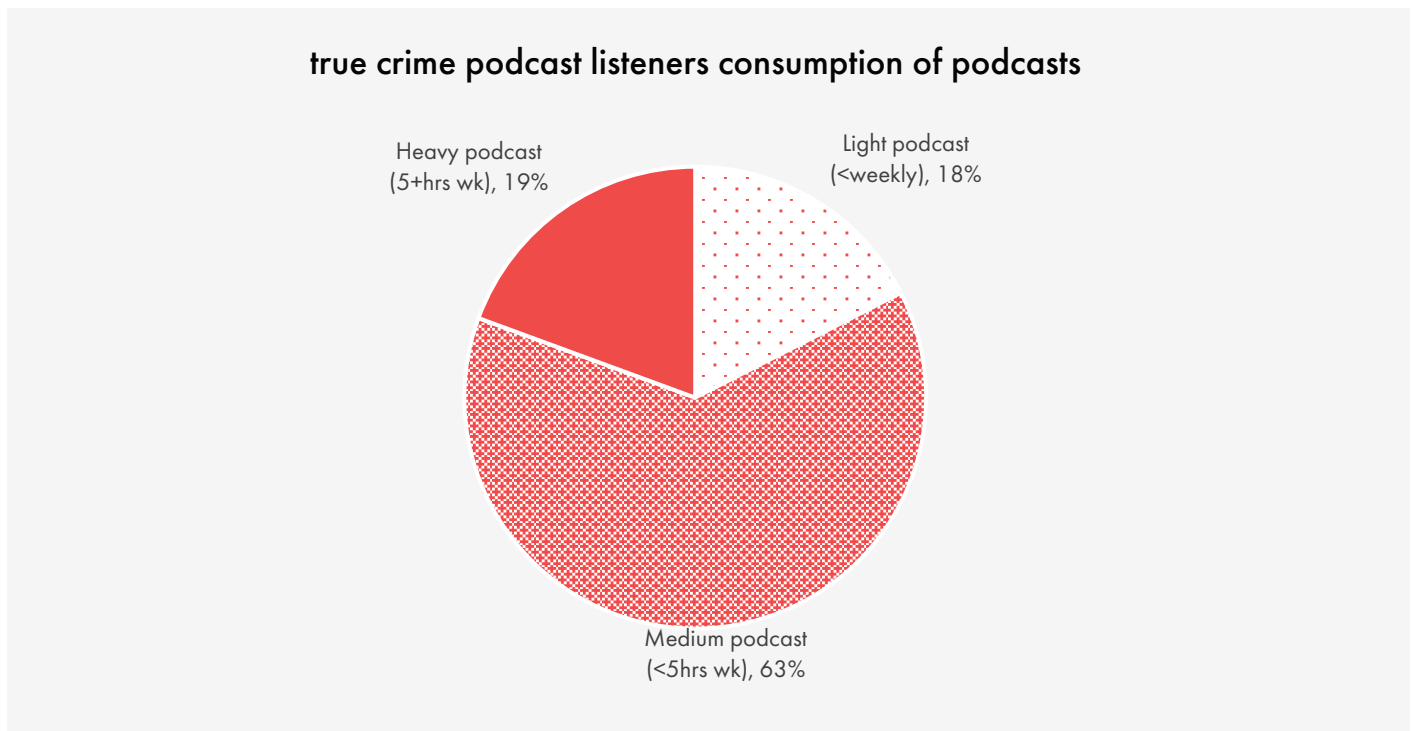
Reaching highly engaged audiences at unique moments makes digital audio key to complementing other media channels. Agencies commonly buy digital audio advertising in combination with other media and including with broadcast radio. Enhancing other media is a key driver of increased investment in podcast advertising. True Crime podcast listeners regularly consume a range of other media options, providing complementary opportunities for advertisers.
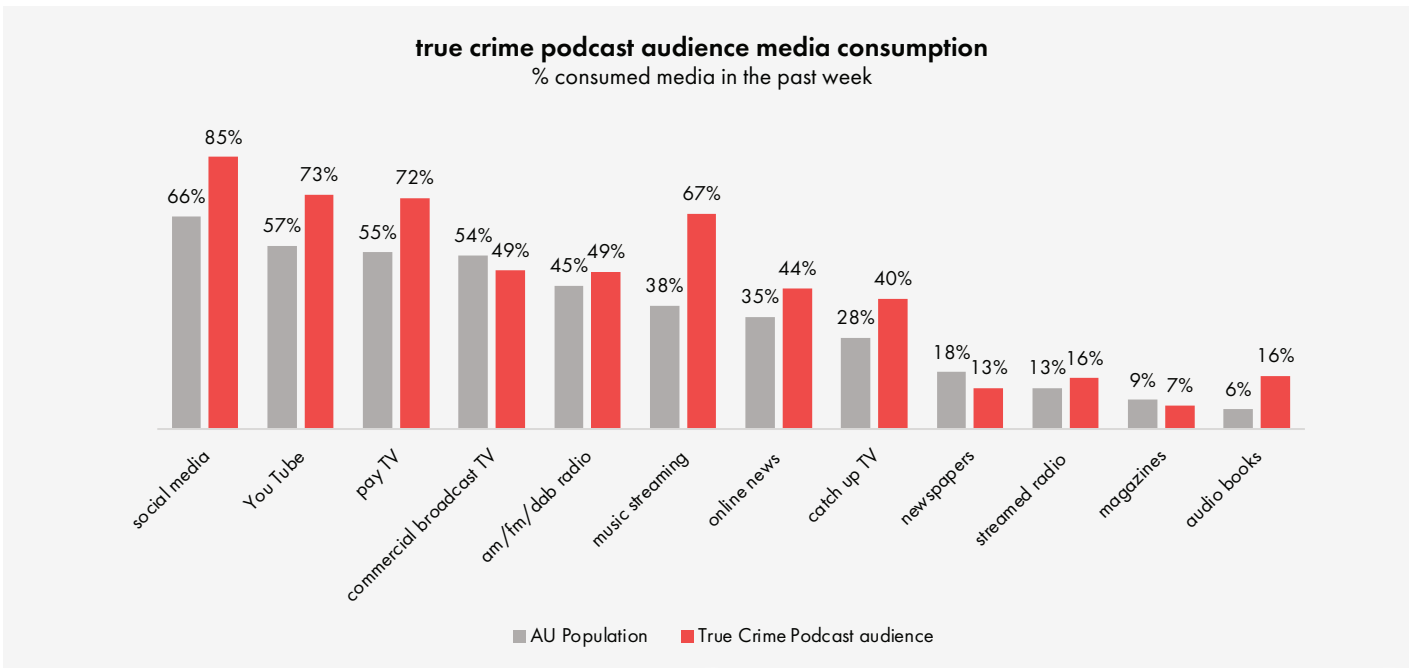
true crime podcast audience media consumption
% consumed media in the past week

Legend: ■ AU Population ■ True Crime Podcast audience

Media	AU Population	True Crime Podcast audience
social media	66%	85%
You Tube	57%	73%
pay TV	55%	72%
commercial broadcast TV	54%	49%
am/fm/dab radio	45%	49%
music streaming	38%	67%
online news	35%	44%
catch up TV	28%	40%
newspapers	18%	13%
streamed radio	13%	16%
magazines	9%	7%
audio books	6%	16%

Source: Triton Digital Podcast Metrics Demos+, Survey 2, 2023

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True crime podcast listeners regularly listen to podcasts generally

82% of true crime podcast listeners are at least weekly consumers of podcasts generally, this presents an opportunity to complement and extend podcast campaigns to also include true crime.

true crime podcast listeners consumption of podcasts

Heavy podcast (5+hrs wk), 19%

Light podcast (<weekly), 18%

Medium podcast (<5hrs wk), 63%

Source: Triton Digital Podcast Metrics Demos+, Survey 2, 2023

the evidence

IAB Australia partnered with Neuro-Insight, the world's preeminent neuromarketing and neuro-analytics company to assess the effectiveness, suitability and opportunities available for advertising in true crime podcasts

The methodology

Neuro-Insight's patented neuromarketing technology (Steady State Topography) can measure the electrical response in the brain while study participants engage with stimulus material, in this case for our study, while they listened to podcast content.

This window into the brain gives an indication of the speed of processing of different parts of the brain and provides the unique ability to directly measure memory (both conscious and subconscious), which is what the brain uses to inform decision-making. Consumer decisions are based on one thing and one thing only — long-term memory. This is not to be confused with recall, but rather what is encoded and enduring and often below conscious perception.

In addition to memory, the methodology also allowed us to measure other areas of the brain for a holistic under-standing of the subconscious response such as engagement.

For more information on Neuro-Insight technology available here.

"This global-first investigation using neuroscience has revealed some very powerful, granular insights into how podcast content connects with listeners. True Crime content has proven to be gripping and very much a lean-in genre where engagement and long-term memory encoding in content flows directly to advertising content. We now have a deep understanding of the fabric of True Crime audience immersion, listening motivations & most interestingly how advertisers can take advantage of specific environment factors to amplify messaging and branding".

- Peter Pynta Principal Consultant at Neuro-Insight

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The metrics

Memory encoding: Long-term memory encoding is the most important measure, as it has been shown to correlate with behaviour change & decision-making. Long term memory encoding is made up of measuring two hemispheres of the brain that play an important role in guiding future behaviour:
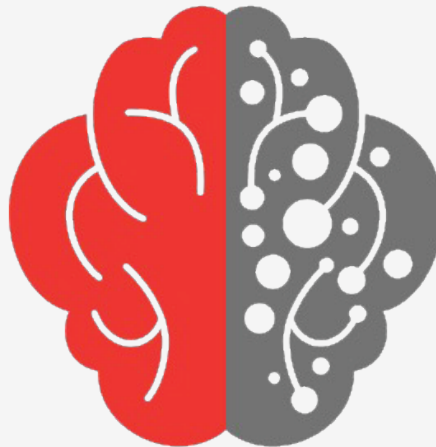
Memory encoding expanded
Left vs. right hemishpheres and long term memory

left brain
bias for *detailed*
processing
campaign memorability

Verbal/Episodic Encoding
The Facts
The details
Creative elements
New information

right brain
bias for *global* processing
narrative connection

Emotional/Holistic Encoding
The Big Picture
Music/Jingles
Landscape
Reconsolidate information

Engagement/personal relevance: Engagement is an indicator of how involved people are and is generally triggered by material that is of personal relevance measured from activity on the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

Neuro-Insight's reporting details second-by-second analysis of specific neuro-metric performance and levels of these metrics will vary second-to-second throughout the time a respondent consumes testing material. Comparison to Neuro-Insight's benchmarks help us determine which moments of the advertising in the tested podcast content drive effective long term memory encoding.

The benchmarks indicated for these measures are a comparison with Neuro-Insights database of results collected across 17 years of testing across all media (digital and all other forms of media). Below benchmark results are not indicating unsuccessful impact, rather they highlight where impact levels exceed the average for all other media.

- Activity above 0.70 is in optimal effectiveness zone
- Activity between 0.30 and 0.70 is average media impact
- Below 0.30 is ineffective

Our study objective

Over recent years media organisations have invested significant resources into developing well researched and professionally produced podcast series for the true crime genre. These programs have resonated with the public attracting large, loyal and engaged audiences however at times it can be difficult to convince marketers and advertisers that this is an environment suitable for their brand.
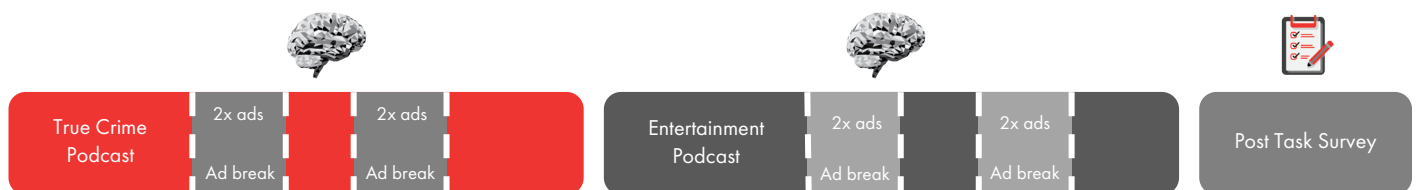
Representatives of the IAB Australia Audio Council sought to challenge this mindset by providing evidence and insights to help marketers understand the opportunities available in true crime podcast advertising and provide strategies for advertisers to make the most of any investment.

Our study design

56 podcast listeners were recruited to participate in this neuro study by allowing us to track their brain activity while listening to podcast content and advertising. This sample size met requirements to ensure results reliably reflect the broader population.

An audio test reel was created that included podcast program content – 10 minutes of typical True Crime podcast content and, for comparison, 10 minutes of typical Entertainment podcast content. The content contained two standard ad breaks with a range of selected advertising. The content order and position of ads were randomised across the sample.

After each participant had listened to the content and had their brain activity recorded, they also completed a short survey.

| True Crime Podcast | 2x ads / Ad break | | 2x ads / Ad break | | | Entertainment Podcast | 2x ads / Ad break | | 2x ads / Ad break | | | Post Task Survey |

The podcast content

True Crime podcast content: the content used for testing was the first 10 minutes of an existing, locally produced true crime podcast. The content begins to set up a story of a missing person and subsequent police investigation, coroner's inquest and murder charge. The content also includes themes of the impact on family members, drug use and mental health issues. The content includes a caution typical in true crime content that it is of a graphic and violent nature that is not suitable for children.

Entertainment podcast content: the content used for testing was the first 10 minutes of an existing, locally produced breakfast radio type entertainment podcast. The host duo provides lots of banter and laughs as they chat about their dating experiences and ideas and tips for dating activities.

The advertising

The following advertising was included in the test reel for each podcast genre:

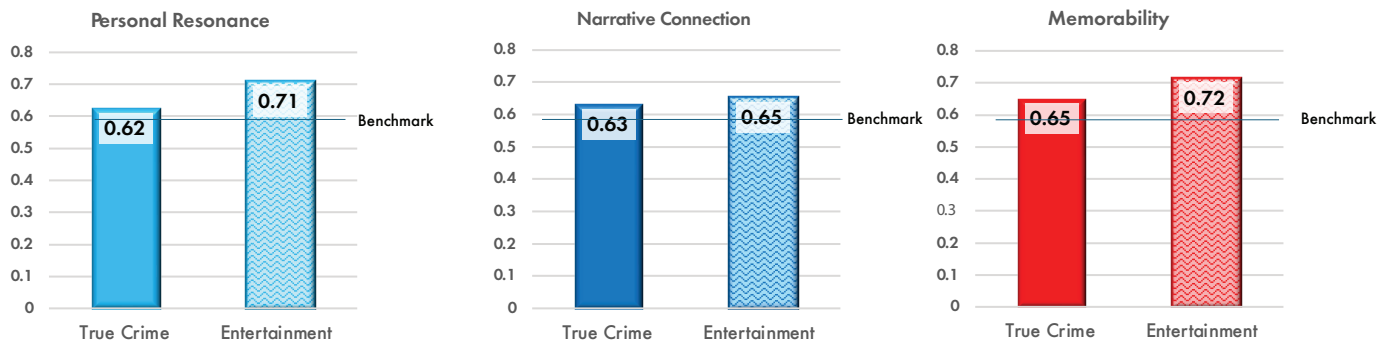| True Crime Podcast	Entertainment podcast
1 **host read ad** for a true crime TV series	1 **host read** ad for a travel related product
1 **pre-recorded ad for an entertainment product** (audio books available on a subscription service)	1 **pre-recorded ad for an entertainment product** (TV series for a video subscription service)
1 **pre-recorded ad for a product linked to true crime** (home safety product)	1 **pre-recorded ad for a product linked to true crime** (home insurance product)
1 **pre-recorded ad for the same brand and product in both genres** (savings bank account)	1 **pre-recorded ad for the same brand and product in both genres** (savings bank account)

Key results

1. True Crime podcasts deliver advertisers engagement and memorability at levels known to be effective in influencing decisions and changing behaviour.

2. Advertisers can expect the same level of engagement and memorability with their True Crime podcast campaigns as they do for Entertainment podcast campaigns.

3. There's an opportunity for advertisers to leverage the environmental attributes to extract greater value through the true crime podcast content

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1. True Crime podcasts deliver advertisers engagement and memorability at levels known to be effective in influencing decisions and changing behaviour.

Both True Crime and Entertainment podcasts tested delivered higher than benchmark listener engagement where listeners effectively encoded details and broader narrative components in memory which has been shown to correlate with behaviour change and decision-making. Both environments provide advertisers suitable opportunities for leveraging engaging and memorable content.

Primary Metrics

True Crime & Entertainment podcast content perform above benchmark levels
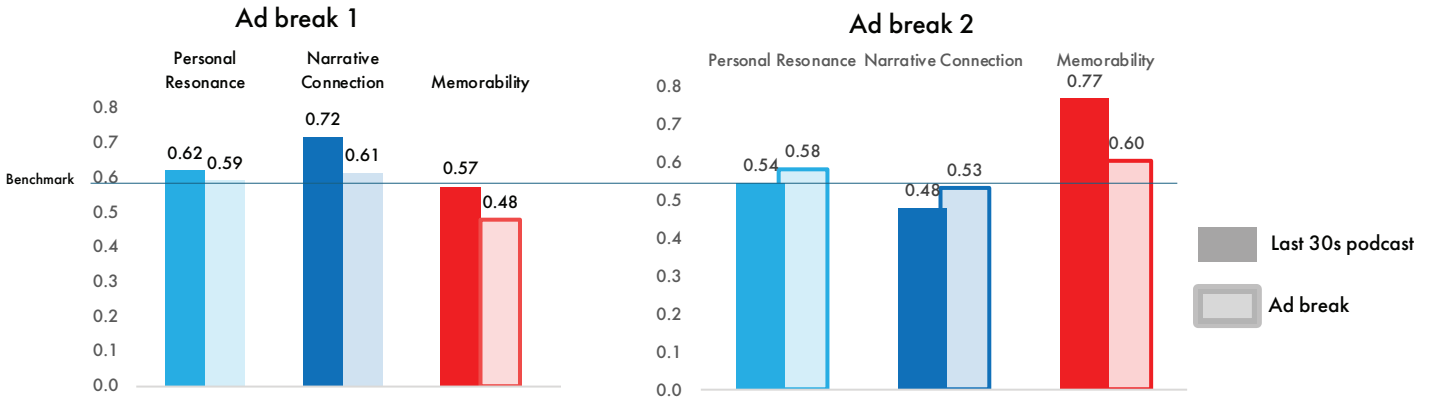

Levels of engagement and memory in both the True Crime and Entertainment podcast were maintained and transferred to the advertising placed within the test content.

Neuro metrics will vary second to second throughout the time a respondent consumes any testing material. In the chart below we have compared the prior 30 seconds of podcast content with the advertising in the two ad breaks. The strong engagement and narrative connection to the story that listeners have with True Crime content immediately before the first ad break is effectively sustained throughout the advertising. The strong memory encoding of detailed information that listeners have with True Crime podcast content immediately before the second ad break is effectively sustained throughout the advertising content.

So there is a reliable flow of engagement and memory from the content to the advertising. True Crime podcast listeners have a transference of neuro-state that is consistently seen from neuro testing all other media content and advertising. This does not mean that podcast listeners do not understand the separation between content and advertising. In our True Crime podcast testing, even when clearer sonic indicators or an 'intro' and 'outro' to the ad is provided by the podcast host, the transference of neuro-state still occurs.

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Engagement and memory are sustained throughout True Crime & Entertainment podcast ad breaks

Ad break 1

	Personal Resonance	Narrative Connection	Memorability
Last 30s podcast	0.62	0.72	0.57
Ad break	0.59	0.61	0.48

Benchmark: 0.6

Ad break 2

	Personal Resonance	Narrative Connection	Memorability
Last 30s podcast	0.54	0.48	0.77
Ad break	0.58	0.53	0.60

Legend:
- Last 30s podcast
- Ad break

2. Advertisers can expect the same level of engagement and memorability with their True Crime podcast campaigns as they do for Entertainment podcast campaigns.

Across all pre-recorded ads tested, engagement or personal relevance was 10.3% higher for the ads within the True Crime podcast, while memorability or encoding detail was 5.2% higher for the ads within the Entertainment podcast. Levels of broader narrative connection were on par for ads within True Crime and Entertainment.

Host read ads were exceptionally effective for memorability in the Entertainment podcast tested, performing above benchmark levels across all key neuro metrics. Access to talent and known personalities is a key attraction for advertisers using host read ads and the particular personalities reading within the Entertainment podcast have contributed to this strong result.

This is not to say advertisers shouldn't leverage host read ads in True Crime, the particular host read ad tested performed above benchmark for personal relevance/engagement, but these results could be improved with particular consideration of the talent and personality. There are plenty of examples of known personalities within the True Crime genre that have the similar high profile of Entertainment podcast hosts (think I Catch Killers host Gary Jubelin).

Key neuro metrics for ad types within True Crime and Entertainment Podcasts

Pre-recorded ads
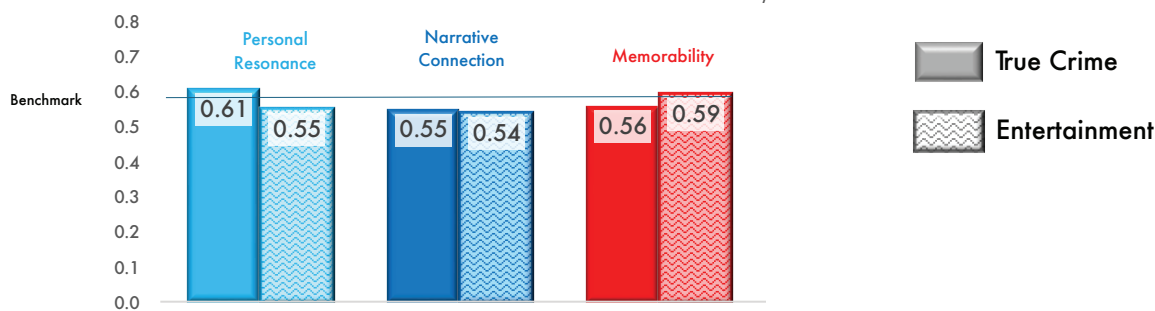
Host read ads
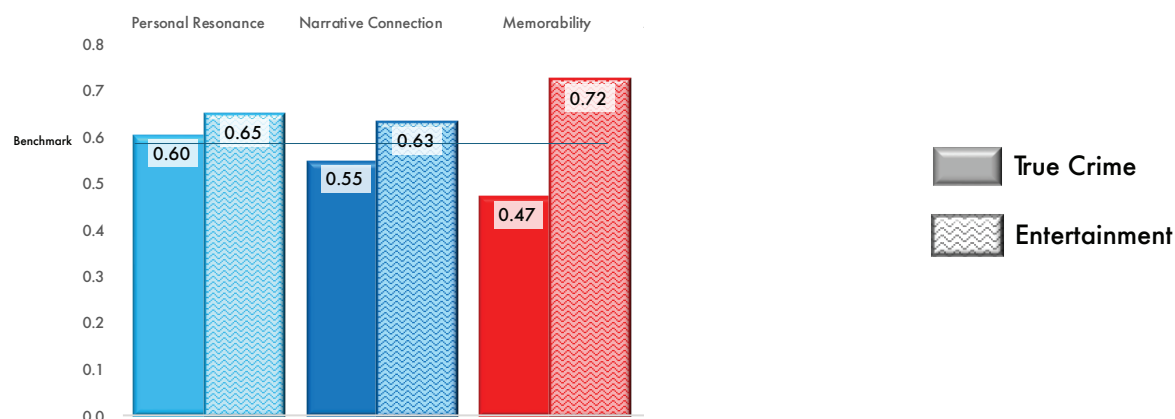
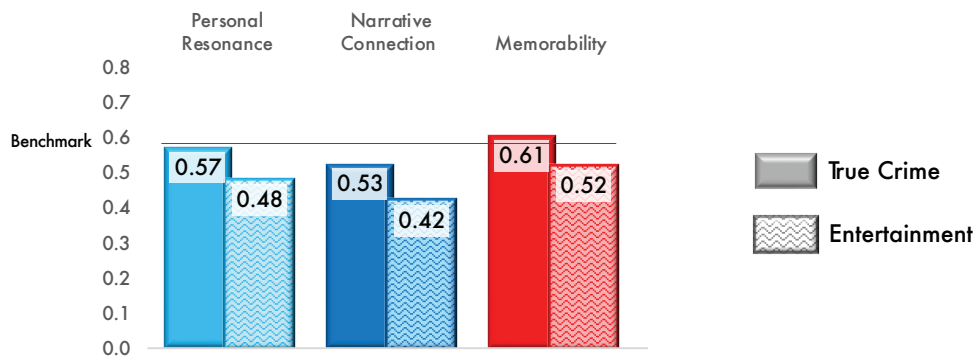## Advertising for products with direct links to content genres

The research tested an ad for a product that had direct links to True Crime (security product) and similarly an ad for an entertainment product within the Entertainment podcast.

The ad for the security product placed in True Crime outperformed the ad for an entertainment product placed in the Entertainment podcast. Of all ads tested, the pairing of the security product with the True Crime podcast was also the most recalled ad by listeners in the post test survey.

Thematic links used in both these ads placed in the True Crime and Entertainment podcasts drove high levels of memorability and narrative connection for listeners. The security product ad in the True Crime podcast contained several thematic links - "all this crime in todays podcast", "there's an awful lot of crime going on", "best protection". Listeners were positively receptive to these links and leaned into these crime references. These thematic links reinforced memorability and the story arc for listeners.

Using words and terms related to true crime in advertising creative placed in true crime can provide a short-cut to effective levels of engagement and memorability.

Advertising for products with links to content genres

	Personal Resonance	Narrative Connection	Memorability
True Crime	0.57	0.53	0.61
Entertainment	0.48	0.42	0.52

Benchmark 0.6

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3. There's an opportunity for advertisers to leverage the environmental attributes to extract greater value through the true crime podcast content

Our research also tested advertising for products that had no direct link with the content genre it was placed in. These ads for products with no link to True Crime content (e.g. ads for banks, audio books etc) performed above benchmark and above Entertainment for personal relevance and within the media average range (0.30 and 0.70) for narrative connection and memorability.

Advertising for products with no link to content genre
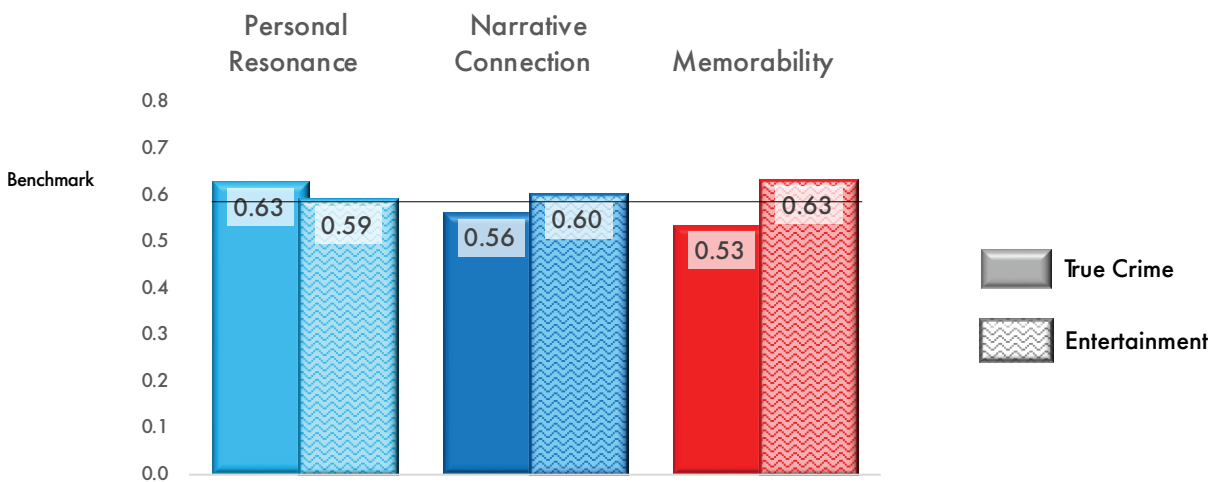
The research found, there's an opportunity for advertisers to use the environmental attributes of true crime podcasts and link these to their advertising creative to extract greater value from the environment. These environmental attributes can be words related to the topic of content but are also more broadly the mood, mindset and motivations gripping true crime listeners. Leveraging the environmental attributes (mood, mindset and motivations of listeners) with references in ad creative for any product can drive greater memorability.

Using mood, mindset or motivations of listeners to extract greater value from advertising in true crime content

It is worth advertisers understanding the True Crime listeners mindset when creating advertising for this genre. As we have shown, the neuro-state generated by True Crime content washes through to advertising, so if an ad creative can match the mood, themes and motivations of true crime listeners there's an opportunity to optimise ad impact further. This transfer of neuro-state from content to advertising happens across all types of media content and advertising, this study also proves the case for podcasts.

Our survey found that participants listen to True Crime and Entertainment for different reasons. The underlying motivations for listening to true crime are not about the gory details and violent themes but they are about understanding human behaviour, empathising with other peoples stories, satisfying curiosity and learning. We recommend advertisers use these key themes in their creative to match the context of true crime content for optimal impact.

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true crime

HUMAN-BEHAVIOUR
UNDERSTAND
HAPPEN PEOPLE REAL-LIFE
WHY INTEREST
INTERESTING
EDUCATION STORIES LIVES
TRUE ME LEARN
CRIME HOW DIFFERENT
ESCAPISM
FASCINATING INTERESTED

entertainment

RELAXATION
DE-STRESS
CULTURAL ZONE-OUT
INTEREST FUN KNOW
ENTERTAINMENT
TOPICS LEARN
PASS-TIME ESCAPISM
OPINIONS
ESCAPE WORLD
LOVE LIFE RELAX UP-TO-DATE
FEEL
INTERESTING
LIGHT-HEARTED

- Focus on understanding & educating
- Interest in human behaviour
- Difference in experience
- The 'Why' & the 'How'
- Active role of listener through stroytelling

- Focus on escapism & mood
- Stress relief
- To distract ("zone-out" or "pass time")
- Cultural world news
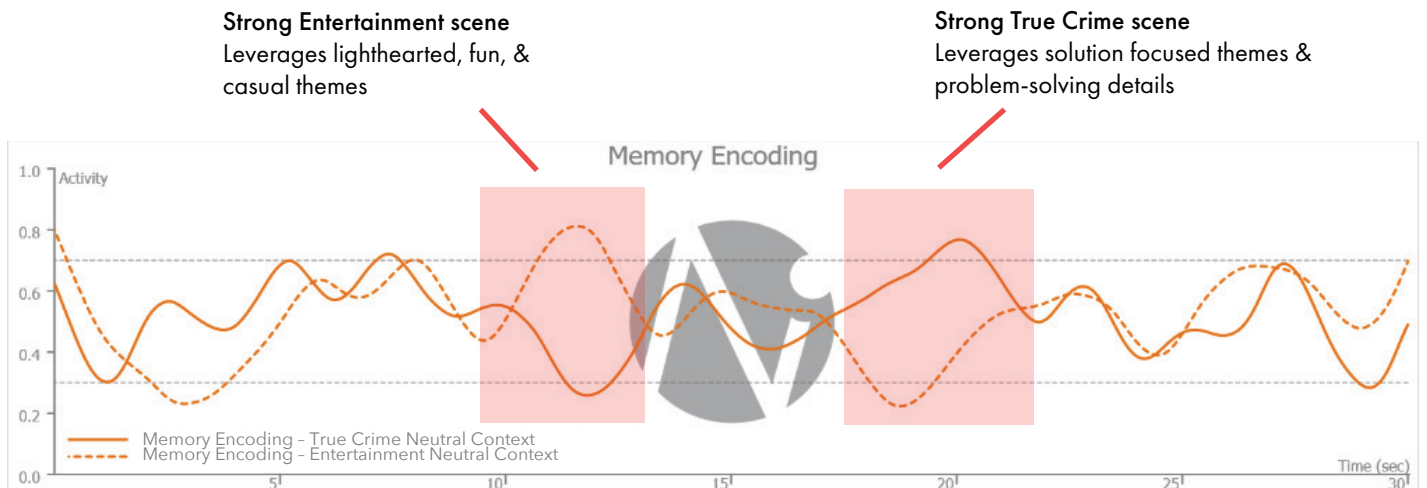- Role of listener is less active

How advertising for a savings bank account used the motivation of true crime listeners for strong memory encoding of key ad message

Our neuro testing research also compared the results for exactly the same ad for a savings bank account placed in both the True Crime podcast and the Entertainment podcast. This same ad tested in both genres was more personally relevant in the true crime content and on par with entertainment on the other measures.

The second-by-second measure of memory encoding for the savings account ad in the True Crime compared to Entertainment is shown in the chart below. It shows the branding moments strongly encoded in memory and likely to impact future behaviour are different moments for True Crime compared to Entertainment. The ad has cleverly set up a problem where banks are not playing along with customers needs and then presents the solution to switch brands to the advertised brand. Listeners have strongly encoded the solution to the problem in the ad when placed in True Crime podcast content.

The advertiser has successfully tapped into the True Crime motivation of problem-solving. The second by second measure of memory encoding for the savings account ad in the True Crime podcast side by side with the Entertainment podcast shows points where memory encoding differs for exactly the same ad and it is at these points in the ad the creator has optimised the environmental attributes of each content genre.

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The power of environmental attributes: True Crime vs Entertainment

Strong Entertainment scene
Leverages lighthearted, fun, & casual themes

Strong True Crime scene
Leverages solution focused themes & problem-solving details

Memory Encoding

Memory Encoding – True Crime Neutral Context
Memory Encoding – Entertainment Neutral Context

But is it really safe for my brand?

Each individual advertiser needs to assess what types of content themes are appropriate for their brand and make informed decisions by:

- familiarising themselves with the specific true crime content they're considering for advertising, listening to the content, understanding the themes and tone
- analysing audience demographics, interests, and behaviour to ensure compatibility
- evaluating the production quality, credibility, and integrity of the true crime content and associate with high-quality productions with well-researched storytelling

Our research has shown that the neuro-state generated by True Crime is about curiosity, learning, problem-solving, understanding human behaviour and it is this neuro-state that is transferred to the advertising placed in True Crime content. Ad creative that matches the mood, mindset and motivations of true crime listeners can reinforce brand memorability to change behaviour and impact consumer decision-making.

Previous IAB research shows positive attributes of news environments were transferred to advertising even when placed in 'hard' news articles

Previous IAB neuroscience research with Neuro-Insight into the impact of context on consumers' responses to advertising with Australian news websites during the COVID-19 news cycle found that positive attributes of news environments were transferred to advertising even for advertising placed on 'hard' news articles. Credible news media environments demonstrate strong attributes and can do some of the heavy lifting for advertising messaging by supplying ready-made attributes in the minds of consumers.

In news media, three specific attributes benefit brands:
- 'Timely' is the leading attribute in a hard news environment.
- 'Connected' and 'trustworthy' are dominant attributes when it comes to related or secondary news content that is less confronting.

By using ad creative that taps into the context 'you can stack and shorten the odds in your favour' . When your advertising benefits from these media environments, it also has the impact of weakening and suppressing your competitor's same attribute.
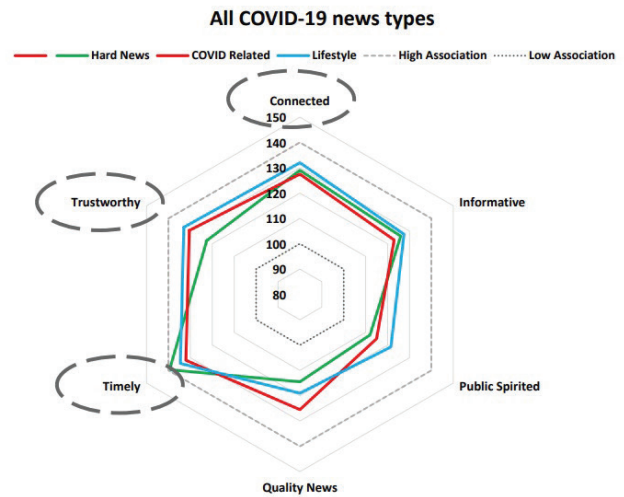
In the same way advertisers in True Crime podcasts can tap into the key contexts of the genre and leverage the ready-made attributes in the minds of listeners.

See more about this study: The Role of Context: News Environments and Their Influence On Advertising

Neuro-insight data shows that shifts of 15 to 20 points (approx. 15%), from just 1 exposure, can result in significant changes to brand association with a particular attribute.

When you factor in competitive suppression this can increase even further.

Advertising in credible news media and environments can increase brand associations with three attributes – 'timely', 'trustworthy', and 'connected'.

All COVID-19 news types

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Creative Recommendations for ads within True Crime podcasts

As with all podcasts, listeners are deeply involved in true crime stories, visualising the scenes and imagining the characters. The opportunity for advertisers is to leverage this high engagement, whilst creating enough distance from the specific subject matter.

- **Tone**

As with all podcasts advertising, matching the tone of the show is critical. In a true crime context, the tone is measured and understated. The voice within your ad should adopt a relaxed, thoughtful, and conversational level of projection and pace. An overtly upbeat, fast and salesy tone of voice will be grating.

- **Concept**

Again, the subject matter of your ad should be sympathetic to the environment. This doesn't mean it should have a crime theme, but your script should be intelligent and intriguing, focussing on the facts and avoiding bombastic statements. But don't be boring. Listeners are more likely to remember your ad if it entertains as well as informs.

- **Creating Distance from Show Themes**

The most effective way to separate your ad from the show's subject matter is to create new images for the listener to visualise. Sound effects, characters and descriptive language will help the listener conjure mental pictures that are relevant to your product or service. The audience is already engaged, so involve them and invite them to become the co-author of your message.

- **Host Read Scripts**

The most effective messages leverage an authentic connection to the host and/or the show's theme. This can be a challenge in the context of a true crime podcast which is why pre-recorded messages are often preferred. But if a host read approach is adopted, pre-roll placement is recommended.

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the verdict

Over 1 million Australians lean in to true crime podcasting each week.
Growth in podcast consumption coupled with the gripping nature of true crime stories have driven true crime podcasts to become the third most popular podcast category in Australia with over 1 million Australians listening each week.

The profile of true crime podcast listeners provide an ideal audience for advertisers across a wide range of brands, products and services.
True crime podcast enthusiasts represent a diverse audience across various demographics and socio-economics but there is a particularly strong opportunity for advertisers targeting women aged 25-44. True crime podcast listeners spend and intend to spend in a range of consumer categories and provide an ideal audience for advertisers across a wide range of brands, products and services.

True Crime podcasts deliver advertisers engagement and memorability at levels known to be effective in influencing decisions and changing behaviour.
True crime content generates an environment where listeners effectively encode details and broader narrative components in memory and this neuro-state is reliably maintained and transferred to the advertising placed in true crime podcasts at levels effective in influencing consumer decisions.

Advertisers can expect the same level of engagement and memorability with their True Crime podcast campaigns as they do for Entertainment podcast campaigns.
Both environments provide advertisers suitable (but different) opportunities for leveraging engaging and memorable content.

Understanding environmental attributes provide a safe and effective way for brands to engage with true crime podcasts.
Environmental attributes extend way beyond topic themes of content into the areas of mood, mindset and motivations of listeners. Neuro research has consistently proven that the environmental attributes of content are reliably transferred to advertising placed in content and this has again been proven with podcasts. The underlying motivations for listening to true crime are not about the gory details and violent topics but they are about understanding human behaviour, empathising with other peoples stories, problem-solving, satisfying curiosity and learning. Advertisers who use these themes in their creative have a safe way to link their advertising to true crime content for optimal impact.

As with all advertising, creative is the greatest driver of effectiveness.
Advertisers who can leverage the environmental attributes about understanding human behaviour, empathising with other peoples stories, problem-solving, satisfying curiosity and learning by matching these motivations to messages in their advertising can reinforce brand memorability to impact consumer behaviour.

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