



Communicating via podcasts

How do I communicate with participants via podcast?

This podcast is for your research participants. It's also for you, to share your learning and experience with your participants, and other colleagues who've supported your research.

What are the benefits of creating a podcast?

- Quick and easy for you to produce.
- Cost efficient.
- Once it's been created, it's an asset that belongs to you.
- Personal way to communicate and promote your research with your participants.
- Verbal communication can be more accessible than written word.
- Easy for people to access and engage with in their own time.
- Participants can choose to listen to them at a time and place that suits them.
- Help maintain awareness of your research.
- Can help you reflect on your progress or gain insights you hadn't previously considered.

Who can be part of the creation of a podcast?

Anyone can create a podcast. From study sponsor or chief investigator, to research delivery staff, as long as it is appropriate for your research.

To make your podcast as relevant and audience-friendly as possible, use PPI and/or your steering group to make it engaging and conversational. If you decide to create your podcast later in your research process, you could include a participant in the conversation.

When should I create my podcast?

Establishing a communication plan before starting your research will help you identify when to create your podcast. If you'd like to produce a one-off podcast, create it before starting your recruitment and share when you feel it's appropriate.

Alternatively, you could produce a series of podcasts to share shorter themed updates with your participants. When creating these updates you can record and share when they're relevant to your research, for example, when you've done an interim analysis.



How to create a podcast

Step 1: choose a name and topic

Choosing your topic or a name for your podcast should be the first thing to think about, especially if you're planning a series of podcasts.

You need to hook your audience and make the podcast sound appealing. Participants will be more likely to come back to a podcast if the name is memorable, familiar and easily searchable.

Think of a short but self explanatory name, such as the name of the research study the podcast audience has been involved in so it's recognisable and trustworthy.

When choosing your topic you need to remember your target audience and what they would like to hear about. Ask some of your participants what they'd most like to hear about during the life-span of a research project they are taking part in. Refer to results from the [Parkinson's UK survey](#) to give you ideas.

If you or your colleagues are recording the podcast, select a topic that you're both comfortable with and knowledgeable about. This will help you come across as natural and authentic.

Step 2: decide the podcast format and length

To help you decide if your podcast will be a one-off session or a series, you need to determine how long it will be. A one-off podcast should be around 30 minutes. Any longer than this and you may lose audience interest or struggle to fill it with interesting material. If you're planning a series of podcasts, each session should be 5 to 10 minutes long. This provides a brief snapshot or update on a particular subject linked to your research.

We recommend formatting your podcast like an interview, where an interviewer asks a predetermined set of questions to the researcher, colleagues or an involvement member. This way there's more than one person talking.

Practice the questions and answers before recording the podcast. The content is then easy to control and engaging. For inspiration, we've listed some examples of good podcasts below.

Step 3: choose the right technology

Software is available to do audio podcasts. Some applications are free and some are paid, so it depends on how polished the podcast needs to be and if you have the budget for communications with participants. There are various apps you can download on your smartphone which should be accessible to most researchers and audiences, We recommend:

- [Podbean](#)
- [Quicktime](#)



- [Loopback](#)
- [Wavepad](#)
- [Adobe Audition](#)

Step 4: record your podcast

To record your podcast, plug in a USB microphone and open the audio recording software on your computer or smartphone. Ensure your microphone is plugged in, turned on and that your microphone is the default input device for your recording software. Finally, click the record button in your software of choice and begin talking.

If you use the software mentioned in step 3, edit your recording to take out pauses or mistakes. When recording an interview style podcast you can re-order the questions and answers to suit your needs post production.

Step 5: share your podcast

The easiest way to share your podcast with participants is to upload it to a study website. The two most common ways to share podcasts with audiences are through [Apple](#) and [Google](#).

Once you've uploaded your podcast, the link can be emailed to participants and added to your newsletters or short updates.

It's good practice to provide a transcript of your podcast for people who are hard of hearing or people who prefer to read updates.

Step 6: get creative

To make your podcast more appealing to listeners add cover art, like a book or album cover. This will be shown when the podcast is listed. We recommend using an image that will be familiar to the participants, such as a study logo, the study team, or a relevant evocative picture.

If you have a musical talent or know someone who does, you can introduce the podcast with music and announce the episode number, name and host person.

Examples of podcast series

[Podcast roundup - conversations on the reality of Parkinson's](#)

This podcast series by Parkinson's Life shows a great way of balancing a podcast to get the most out of the experience for both the speakers and the listeners.

[Retention Rates in Longer Clinical Studies](#)

This 16 minute podcast is part of a regular podcast programme by the Parkinson's Foundation. It's more appropriate for an American audience. The interview is asking about the research process itself so would be of interest to people who are thinking of taking part in research.



Examples of one-off podcasts

[In Conversation with MJFF Board Member Jeff Keefer — “Off” Time, New PD Drugs and Research](#)

This 10 minute podcast is a discussion between Jeff who has Parkinson's and Rachel Dolhun. The conversational style of this podcast balances sharing information from different perspectives, benefitting the listener.

[Movement disorder society podcast.](#)

In this 10 minute interview-style podcast, Dr. Marta San Luciano shares the main findings of her recently published article. She discusses the impact of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs use on the risk of developing PD in a large LRRK2 mutation carriers cohort. The target audience for this podcast is research professionals.

[Introducing Morgan Daniel, kick-starting a 12 month MSc Journey](#)

This 25 minute podcast is a two-person discussion about starting research. It's a one-off podcast, but part of a larger mixed subject podcast programme.