

UNITED STATES



More than meets the ear: U.S. podcast ads report 2026

How podcast advertising drives attention,
trust and action.

/Research Reality



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Foreword



Podcast advertising has long faced an attribution problem. Listeners may skip ads, tune them out, or avoid them altogether, making it difficult for marketers to know who is truly engaging. Even when campaigns appear to lift brand awareness, connecting that awareness to lower-funnel outcomes such as search, consideration, and sales remains a persistent challenge.

This report explores the true impact of podcast advertising. It examines how podcast ads shape audience perceptions, whether they inspire consumer action, and how their effectiveness compares with other forms of digital media.

In addition, we examine the growing role of video podcasts, how audiences engage differently across audio and video formats, and how performance varies by genre. These differences point to clear opportunities for targeting and planning.

Together, the findings from YouGov Surveys offer a more complete view of podcast advertising today, helping marketers understand not just whether ads are heard, but how and where they work best.”

Dare Schenck

Vice President, YouGov America

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Key takeaways

Podcast ads are widely skipped but less annoying than other formats

Only 8% of listeners say they usually pay attention to podcast ads, while half typically skip them. However, podcast ads are less likely to be seen as annoying than formats like display or video platform ads, suggesting that control over skipping may reduce irritation.

Podcasts face a trust gap with traditional media but outperform digital channels

Podcast ads trail TV and radio on trust, but levels of distrust are lower than for social media and display advertising. This positions podcasts as a relatively credible option within the digital ecosystem.

Video podcasts equal audio in popularity without reducing ad effectiveness

More consumers now prefer video podcasts to audio-only formats, but there is significant overlap between audio-only and video audiences, and both formats deliver similar conversion outcomes. This indicates that the shift to video is expanding how audiences engage, rather than weakening performance.

The power of the YouGov panel

The insights in this report are fueled by YouGov's consumer research panel, which has over 34 million registered members from 55+ markets.

Every day, our members share their realities with us – enabling true insights into behaviors and attitudes from people of all ages, backgrounds and beliefs.

Inclusion is essential for our members, our clients, and our mission. We invest millions each year to ensure we can create truly nationally representative online samples and access hard-to-reach groups.

This dedication to reflecting reality means we're cited as the most accurate online pollster regularly.

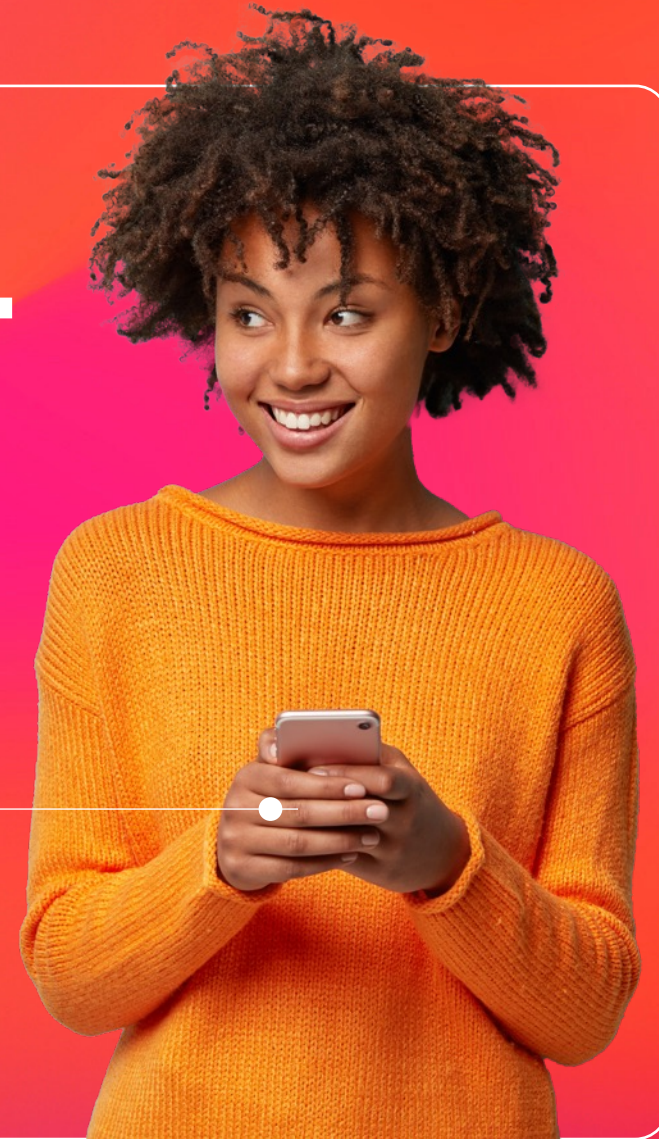
[Run a survey](#)

34m+

registered
panel members

55+

markets



Podcast advertising: **Easy to skip, hard to hate**

Podcast ads may be widely avoided, but they don't irritate consumers as much as other forms of advertising.

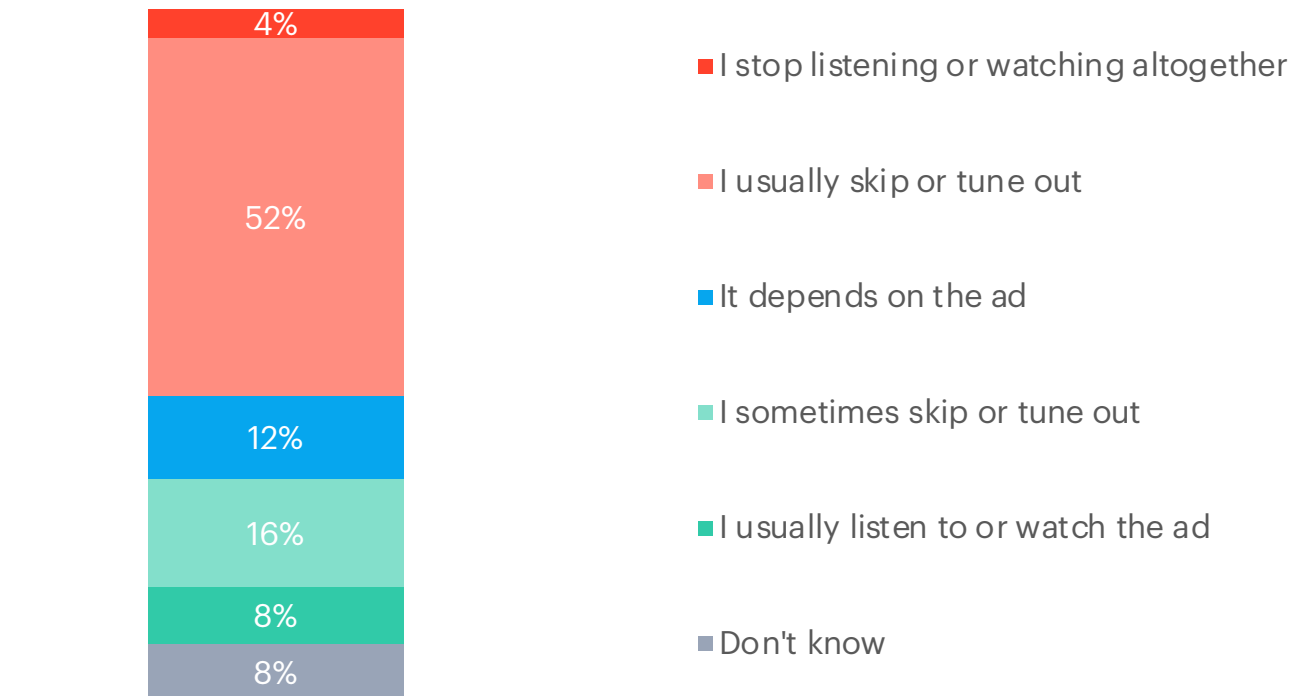


Most listeners skip podcast ads

Only 8% of podcast consumers say they usually pay attention to ads. Half (52%) usually skip them and another 16% do so “sometimes.”

Run your own research

What best describes your response when an ad comes on during a podcast? (% of podcast consumers)



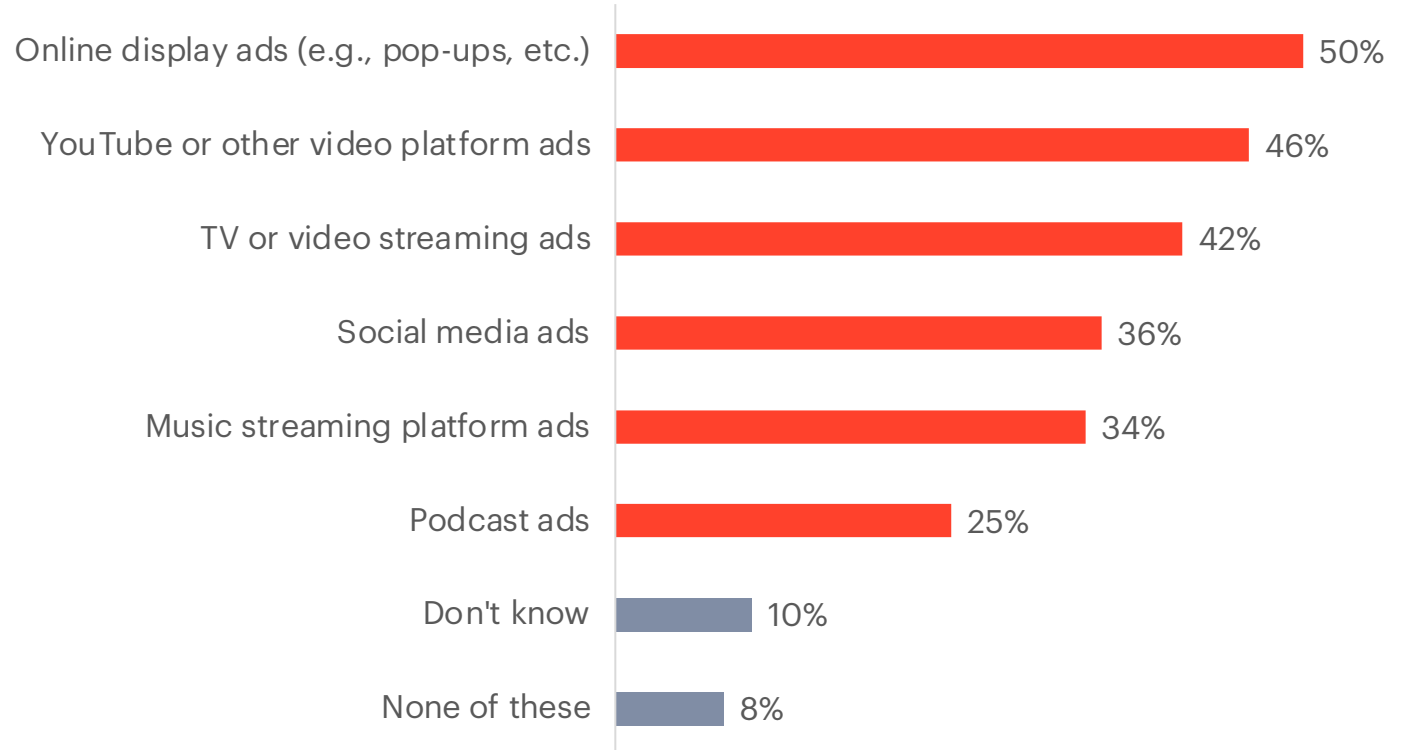
Podcast ads are the least annoying

Half of respondents say display ads (50%) and video platform ads (46%) are most annoying.

Only a quarter (25%) said the same of podcast ads, less than any other type of ad we asked about.

This suggests that podcast ads are less obtrusive than other forms of online advertising.

Which of the following ad formats do you find most annoying or disruptive? (% of media consumers)



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Media consumers n> 1,300.

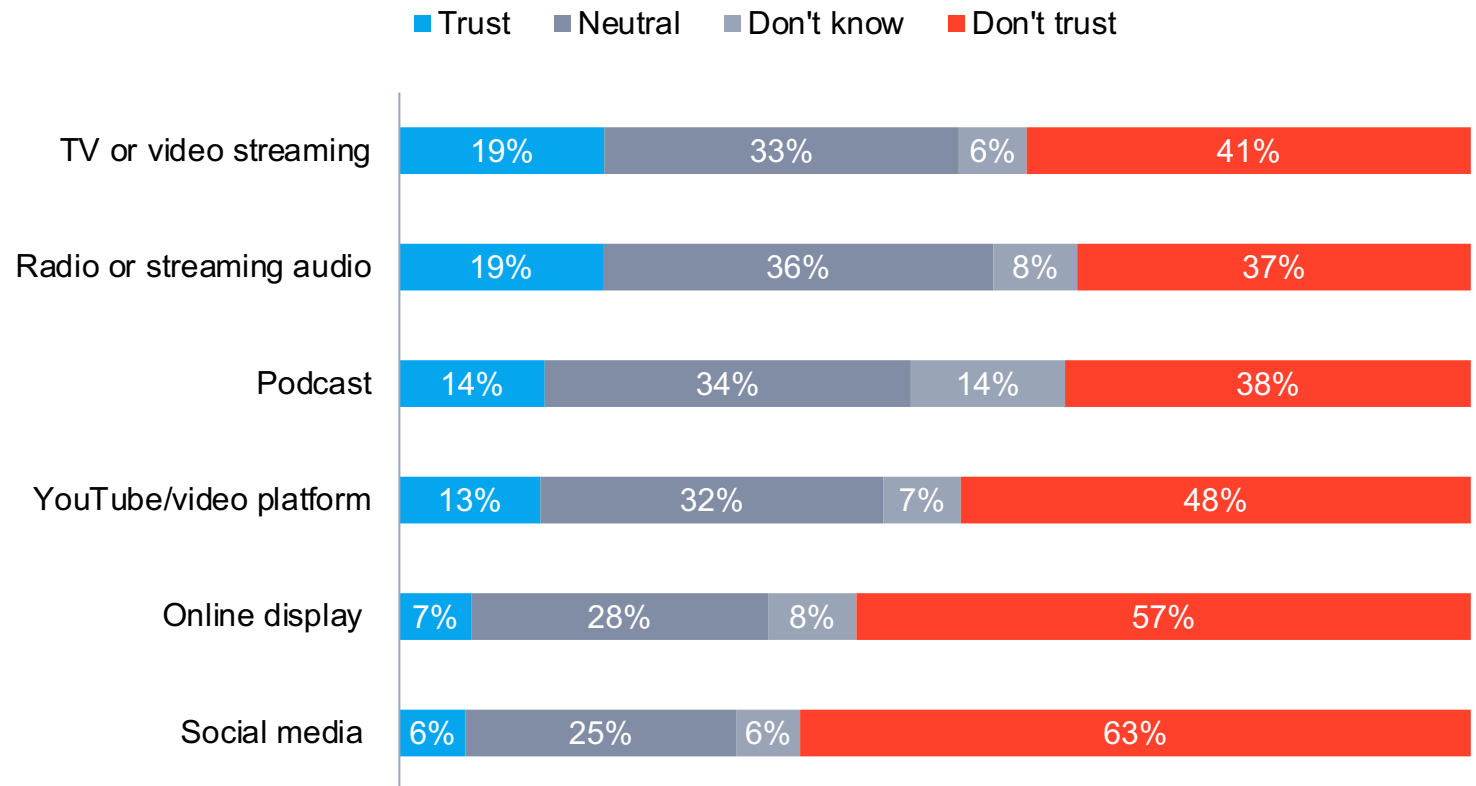
Media consumers are Americans who listen to audio podcasts, watch podcasts videos, stream music or listen to radio.

Podcasts are one of the least distrusted ad media

Only 14% of podcast consumers trust advertising on podcasts. That puts it behind TV (19%) and radio (19%), ahead of YouTube (13%), and well ahead of display ads (7%) and social media ads (6%).

However, podcast ads show relatively low levels of *distrust* at only 38%. By comparison, 48% distrust video platform ads.

How much do you trust advertising in the following formats to be honest and reliable? (% of media consumers)



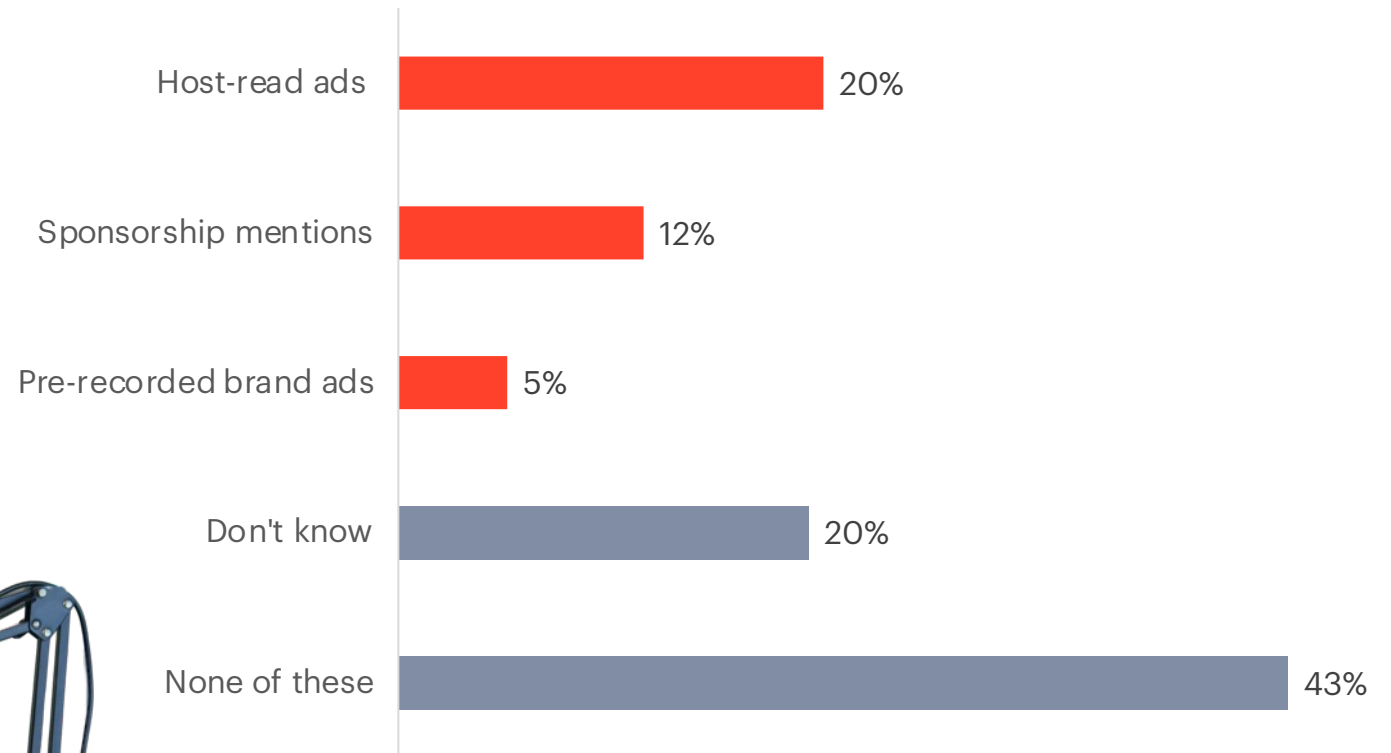
YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Media consumers n> 1,300. “Trust” = “Trust somewhat” + “Trust a lot”, “Don't trust” = “Trust very little” + “Don't trust at all”. Media consumers are Americans who listen to audio podcasts, watch podcast videos, stream music or listen to radio.

Host-read ads are the most trusted format

One in five podcast consumers say that host-read ads are the most honest. Pre-recorded brand ads do less well at 5%.



Which, if any, of the following types of podcast ad do you find most trustworthy? (% of podcast consumers)



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers n> 800.
Podcast consumers are Americans who listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos.

The conversion power of podcast ads

Podcast ads drive action even without full engagement.

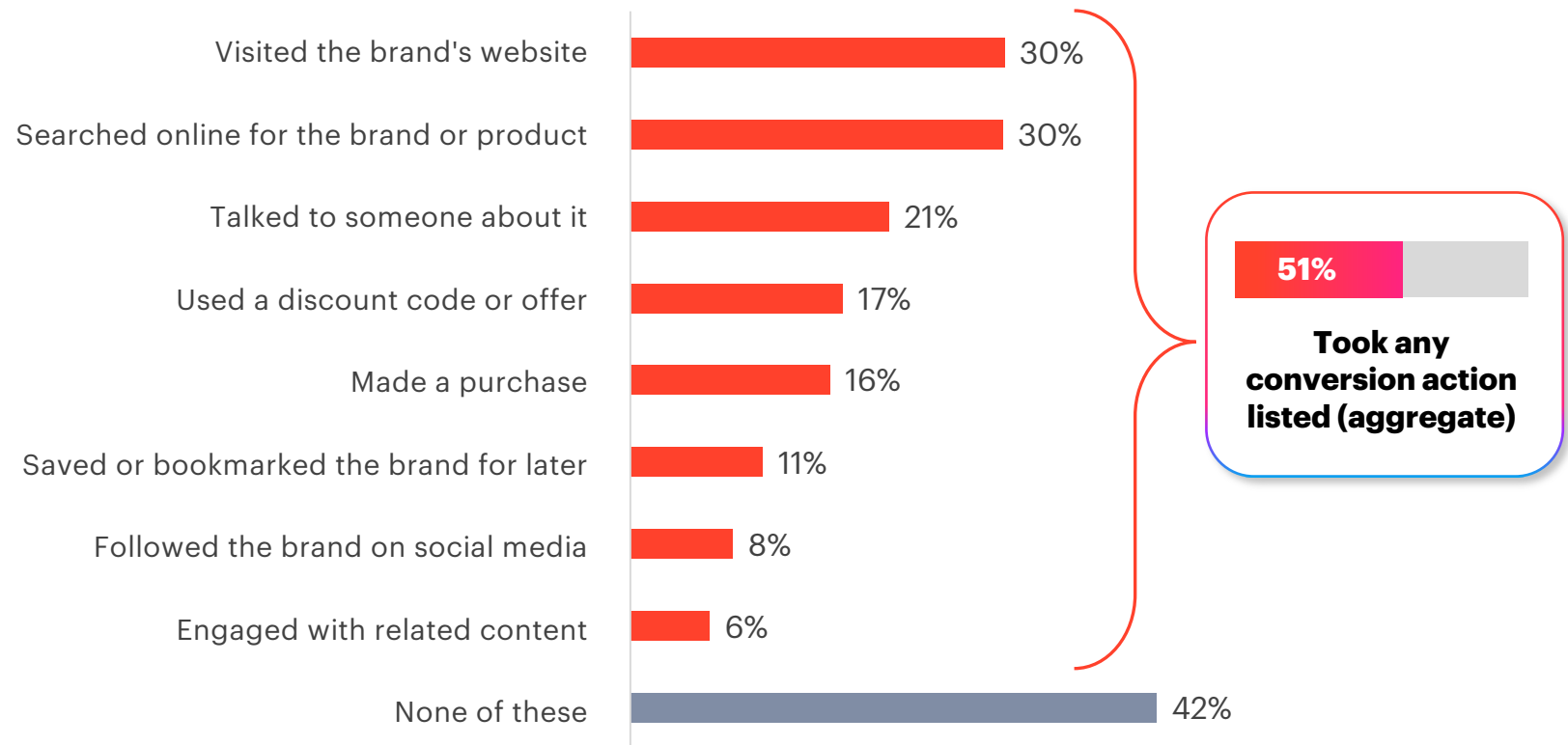


Half of media consumers (51%) respond to ads

Half of respondents (51%) who sometimes consume radio, podcasts or streaming audio have responded positively to the ads.

The most popular actions are visiting a brand's website (30%) and searching for a brand online (30%), but 16% have also made a purchase.

Which, if any, of the following actions have you ever taken after hearing or seeing an ad on a podcast, radio, or streaming audio? Please select all that apply.
(% of media consumers)



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Media consumers n> 1,300.

"Took any conversion action" means respondents selected any of the options. "Don't know" option not shown.

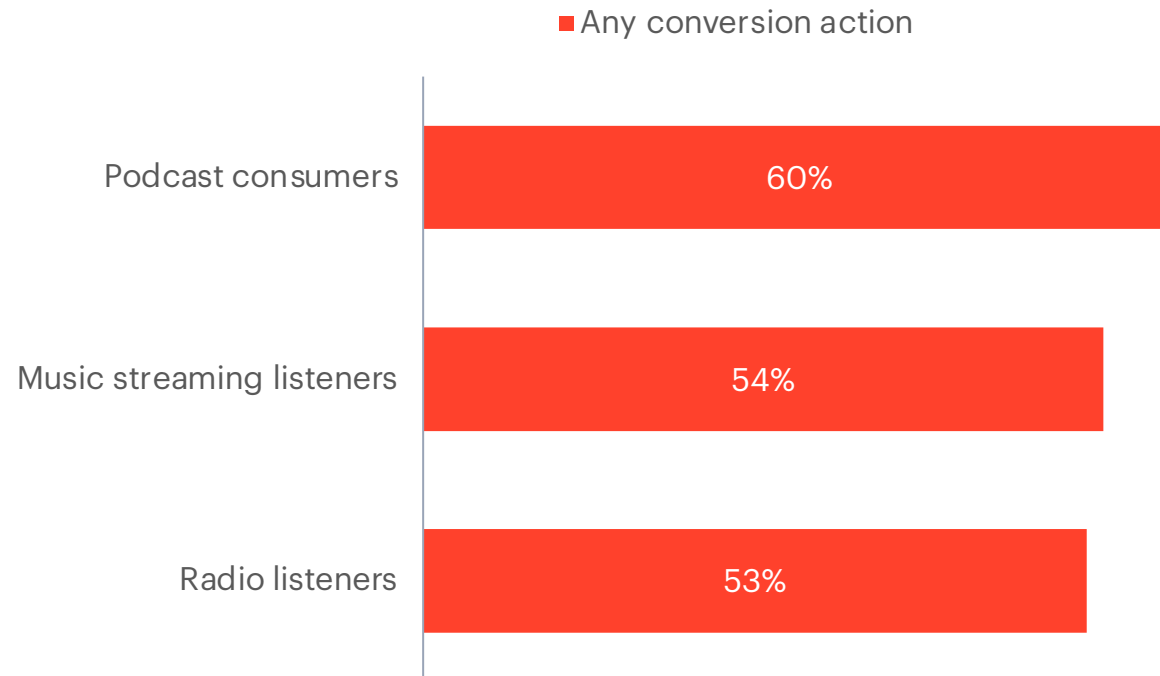
Media consumers are Americans who listen to audio podcasts, watch podcast videos, stream music or listen to radio.

Podcast consumers are more likely to convert than users of other audio media

Our data shows that 60% of podcast consumers have taken some conversion action after hearing an ad.

This is higher than among radio listeners (53%) and users of music streaming services (54%).

Which, if any, of the following actions have you ever taken after hearing or seeing an ad on a podcast, radio, or streaming audio? Please select all that apply.
(% of media consumers)



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers n> 800, music streaming listeners n> 1,000, radio listeners n> 900. Media consumers are Americans who listen to audio podcasts, watch podcasts videos, stream music or listen to radio.

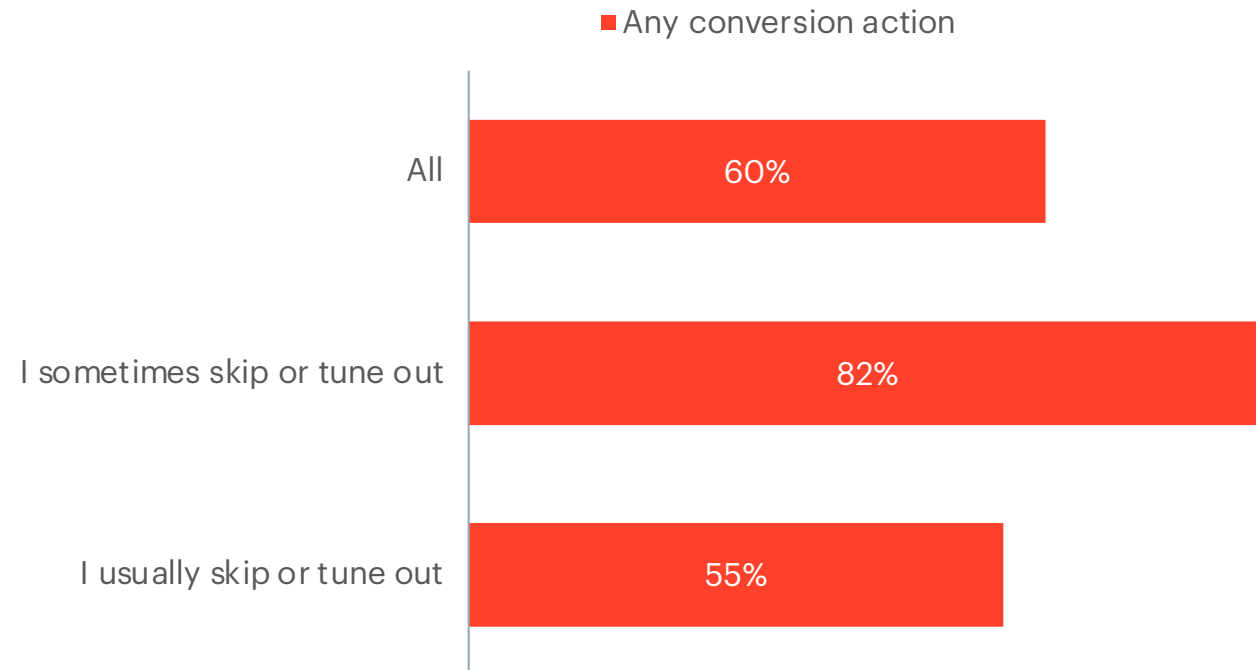
Even ad-skippers convert

More than half (55%) of podcast consumers who usually skip ads have taken some kind of conversion action, including 14% who've made a purchase.

For those who sometimes skip ads, 82% have converted, with 34% making a purchase.

This suggests that skipping ads does not mean an audience is unreachable.

Which, if any, of the following actions have you ever taken after hearing or seeing an ad on a podcast, radio, or streaming audio? Please select all that apply. (% of podcast consumers)



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers: All n> 800, "I sometimes skip or tune out" n> 100, "I usually skip or tune out" n> 400. Podcast consumers are Americans who listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos.

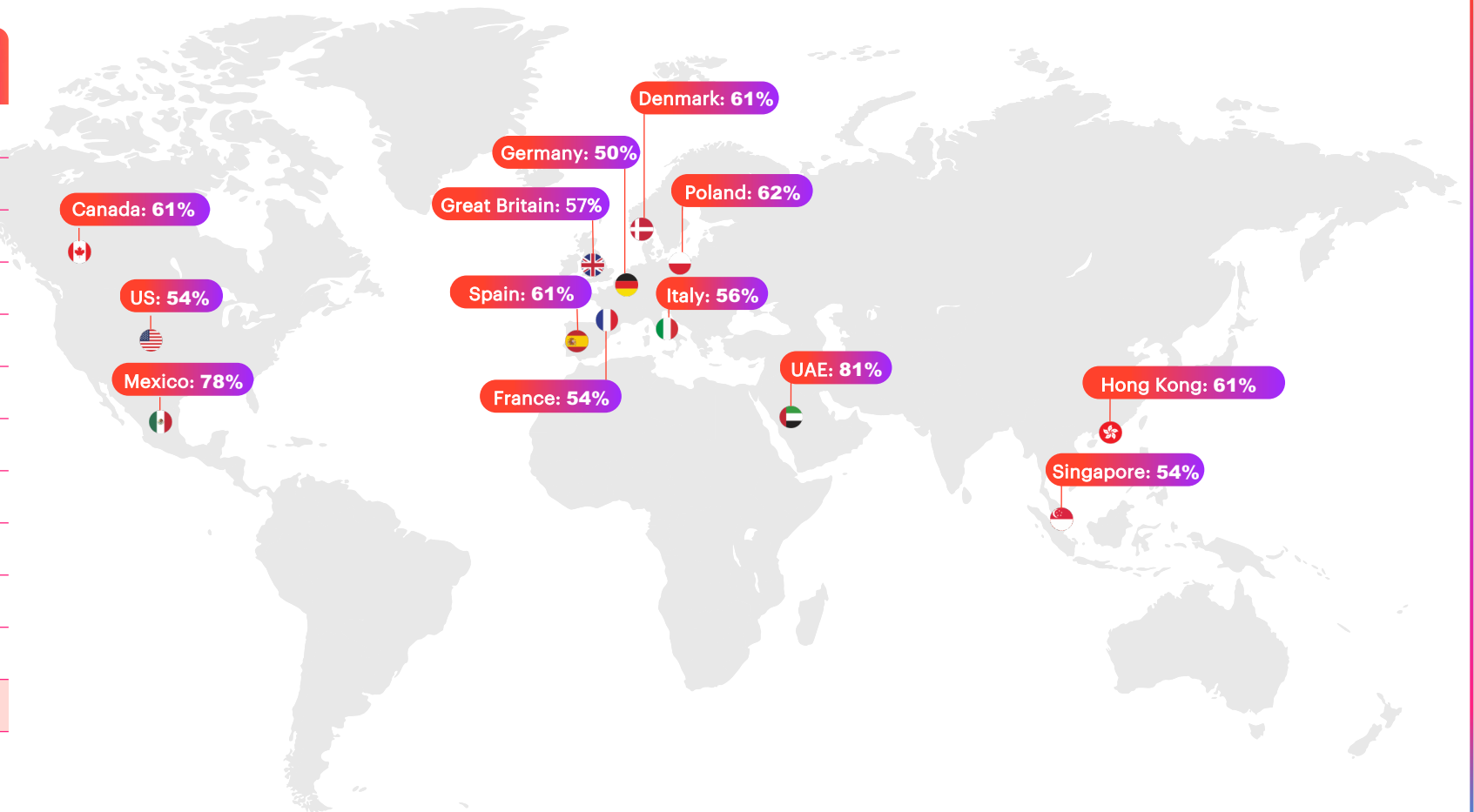
Podcast consumption trends 2026

More than half of Americans consume podcasts, and they're commuting, eating, and doing household chores while they do it.



More than half of Americans (54%) listen to or watch podcasts

Country	% Podcast consumers (listen or watch podcast)
UAE	81%
Mexico	78%
Poland	62%
Canada	61%
Denmark	61%
Hong Kong	61%
Spain	61%
Great Britain	57%
Italy	56%
France	54%
Singapore	54%
U.S.	54%
Germany	50%

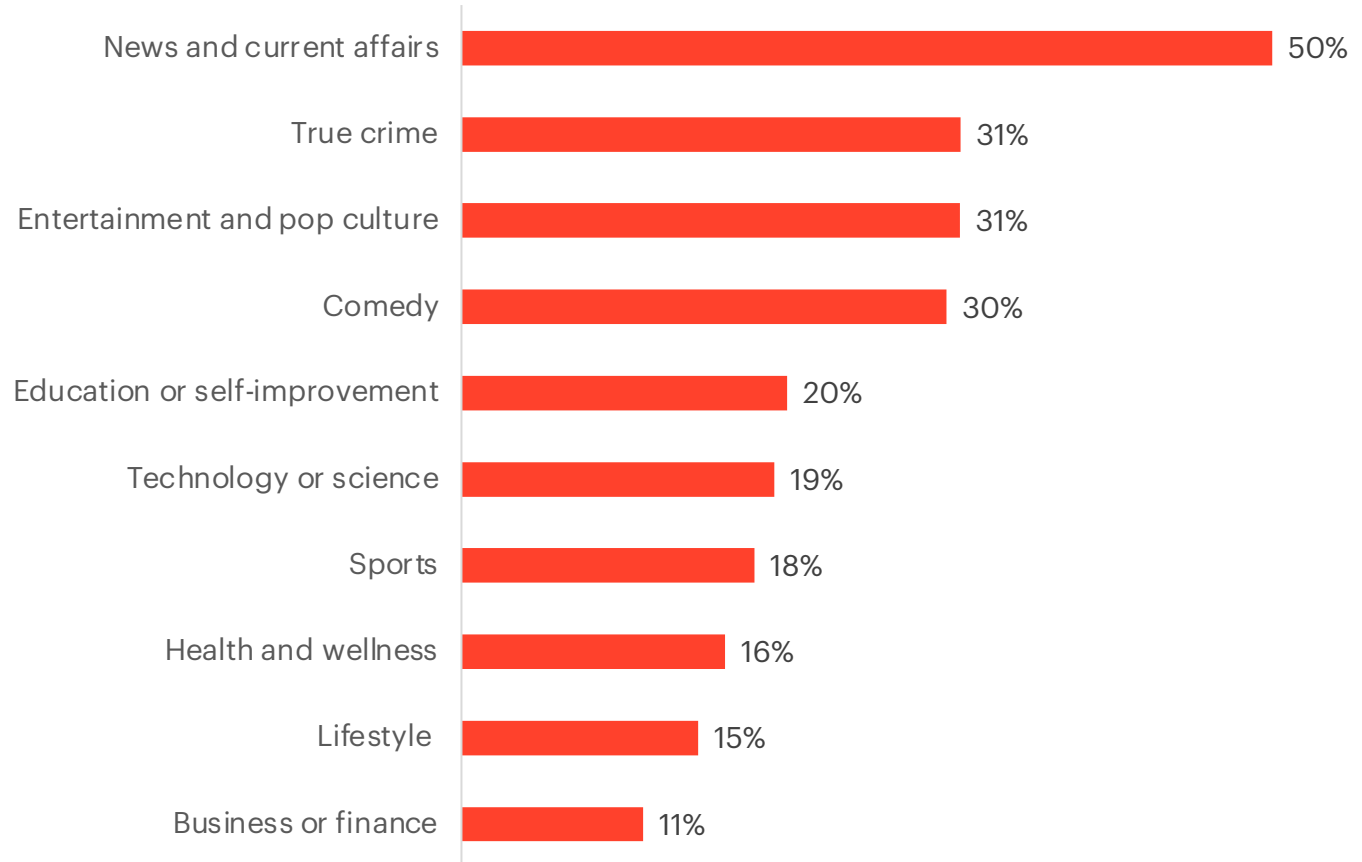


YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. U.S. n> 1,450, Hong Kong n> 450, Great Britain n> 2,000, rest of the markets n> 950 each.
Question: On average, how long do you spend listening to or watching the following types of audio or podcast content?
Podcast consumers are respondents who either listen to audio podcasts or watch podcast videos

News and current affairs are the most popular podcast genres in America

News and current affairs podcasts are consumed by 50% of podcast listeners/watchers. True crime is the second most popular genre, with 31% listening to or watching these podcasts.

Which types of podcasts do you listen to and/or watch most often? Select all that apply. (% of podcast consumers)



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers n> 800. Top 10 options, “Other” option not shown. Podcast consumers are Americans who either listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos.

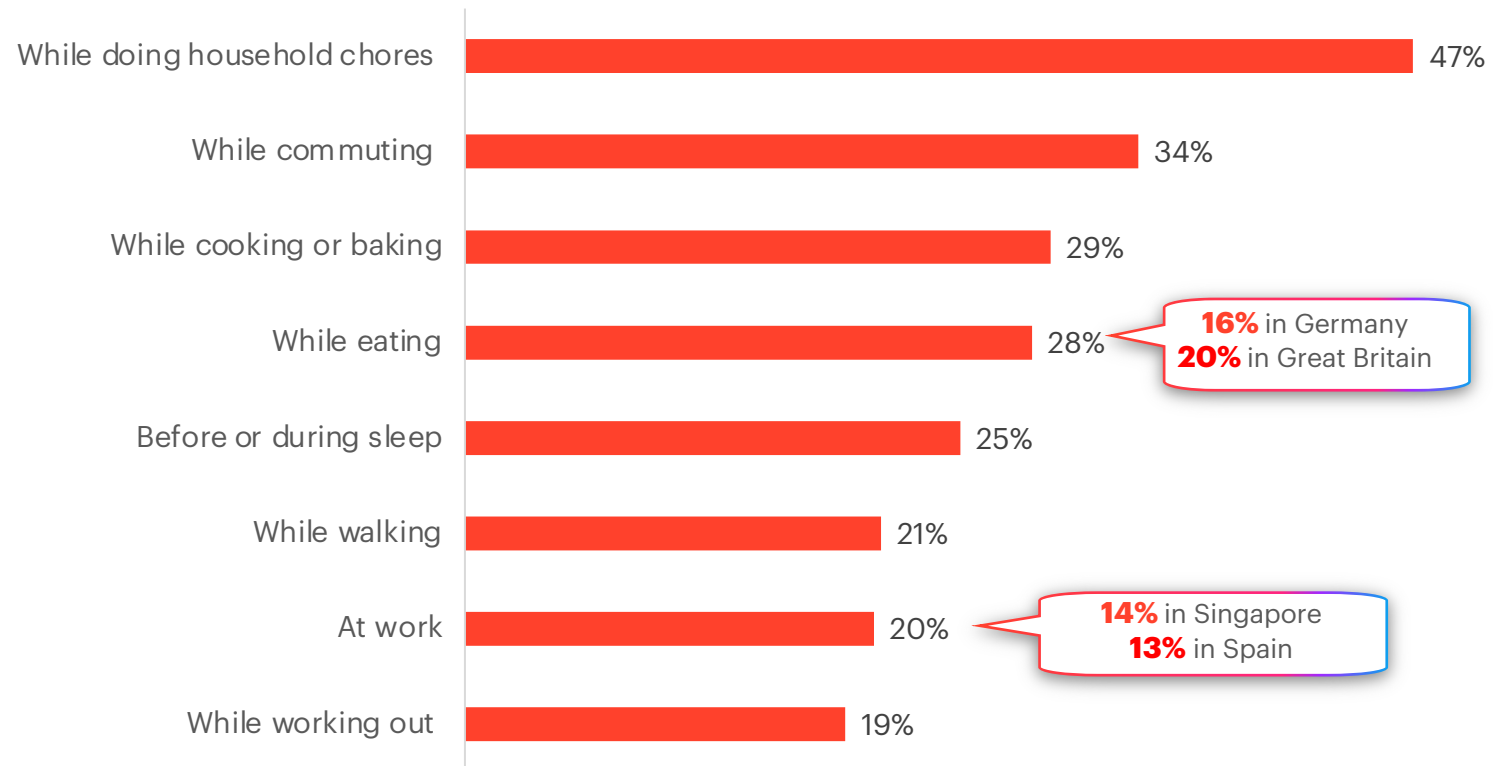
What else are people doing when they listen to pods?

Nearly half (47%) of those who consume podcasts do so while taking care of household chores and a third (34%) while commuting.

Cooking, eating, and bedtime are also common contexts for podcast consumption.

However, there is significant variation among different groups of listeners.

In which, if any, of the following situations do you listen to podcasts? (% of podcast consumers)



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers in: US n> 800, Germany n> 500, Great Britain n> 1,100, Singapore n> 500, Spain n> 600. Top 8 options, "Other" option not shown.

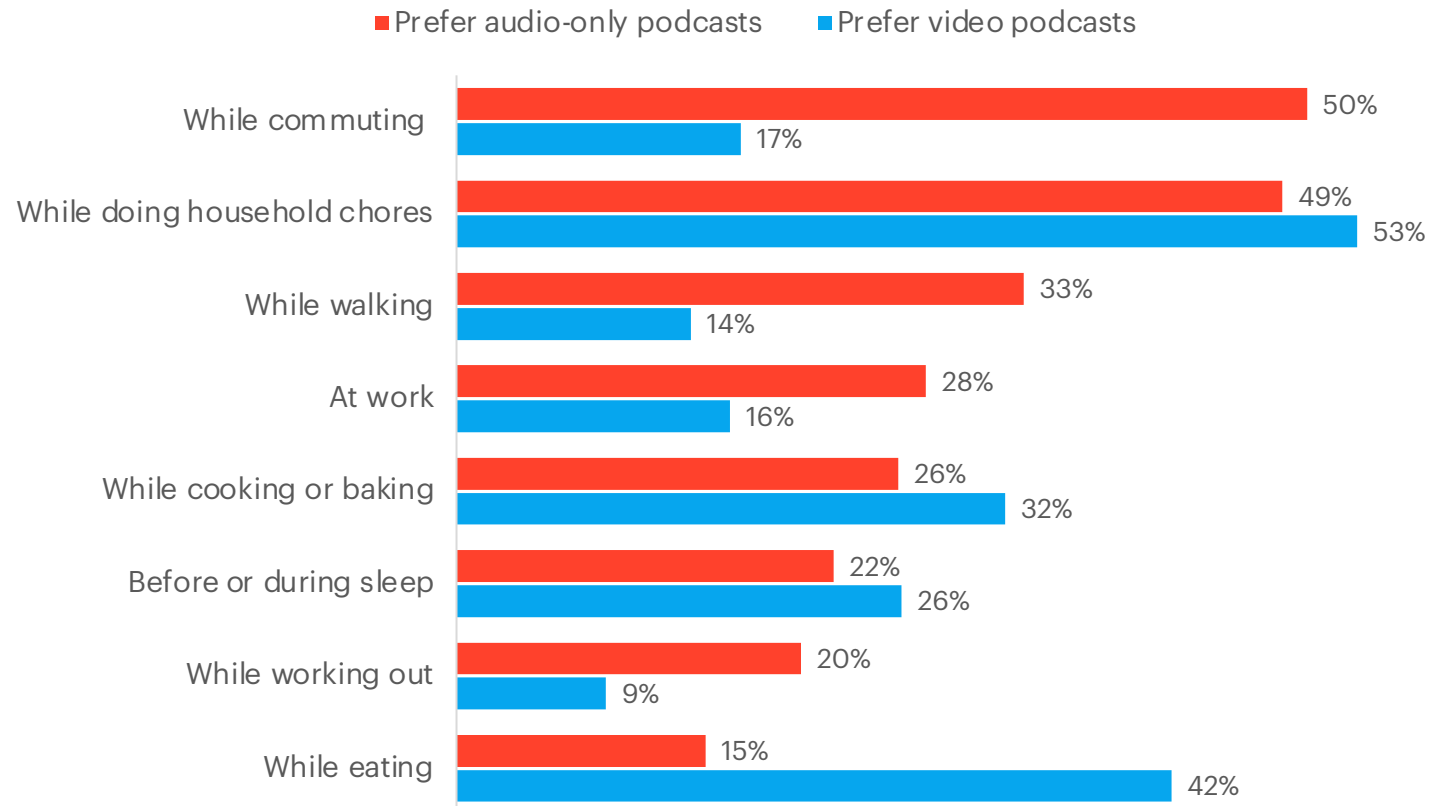
Podcast consumers are respondents who either listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos. U.S. consumers shown in chart bars, other countries in bubbles.

Audio podcast fans more likely to listen on the go

Not surprisingly, those who prefer audio podcasts are more likely to consume them while commuting (50% vs. 17%) or walking (33% vs. 14%).

Those who prefer video podcasts are much more likely to enjoy them while eating (42% vs. 15%) or before or during sleep (26% vs. 22%).

In which, if any, of the following situations do you listen to podcasts? (% of podcast consumers by audio/video preference)



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers: prefer audio-only podcasts n> 200, prefer video podcasts n> 250. Top 8 options by "Prefer audio-only podcasts", "Other" option not shown. Podcast consumers are Americans who either listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos.

The rise of video podcasts

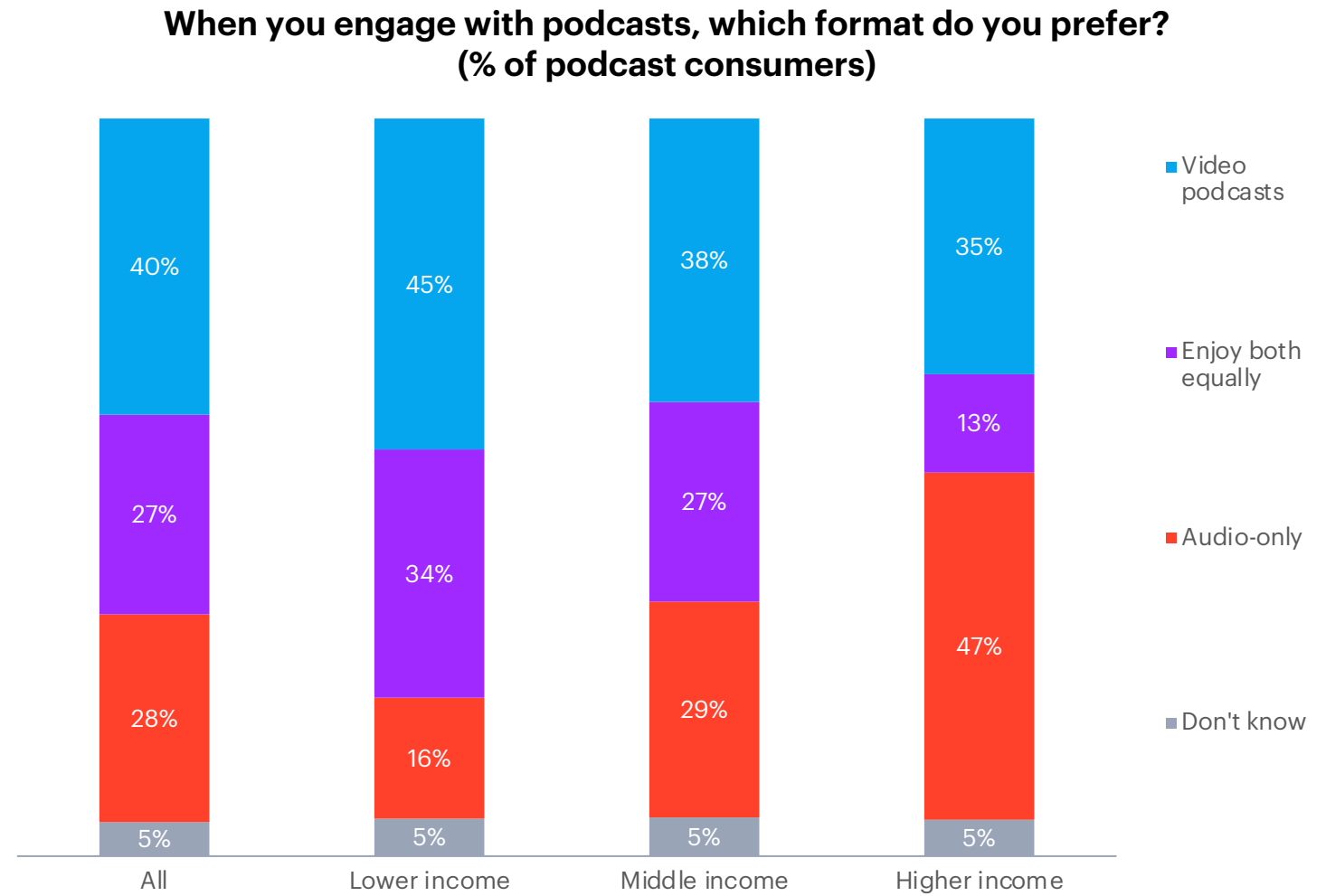
While more consumers prefer video format for podcasts, the two formats are consumed at roughly the same rates.



More Americans prefer video podcasts than audio-only, except for the wealthy

Two in five consumers (40%) say they prefer video podcast formats compared to 28% for audio only and 27% who enjoy both equally.

Those with higher incomes (more than 200% of the national median) are much more likely to prefer audio-only formats.



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers: All n> 800, lower income (<75% median) n> 250, middle income (75%-200% median) n> 300, higher income (>200% media) n> 100.

Podcast consumers are Americans who either listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos.

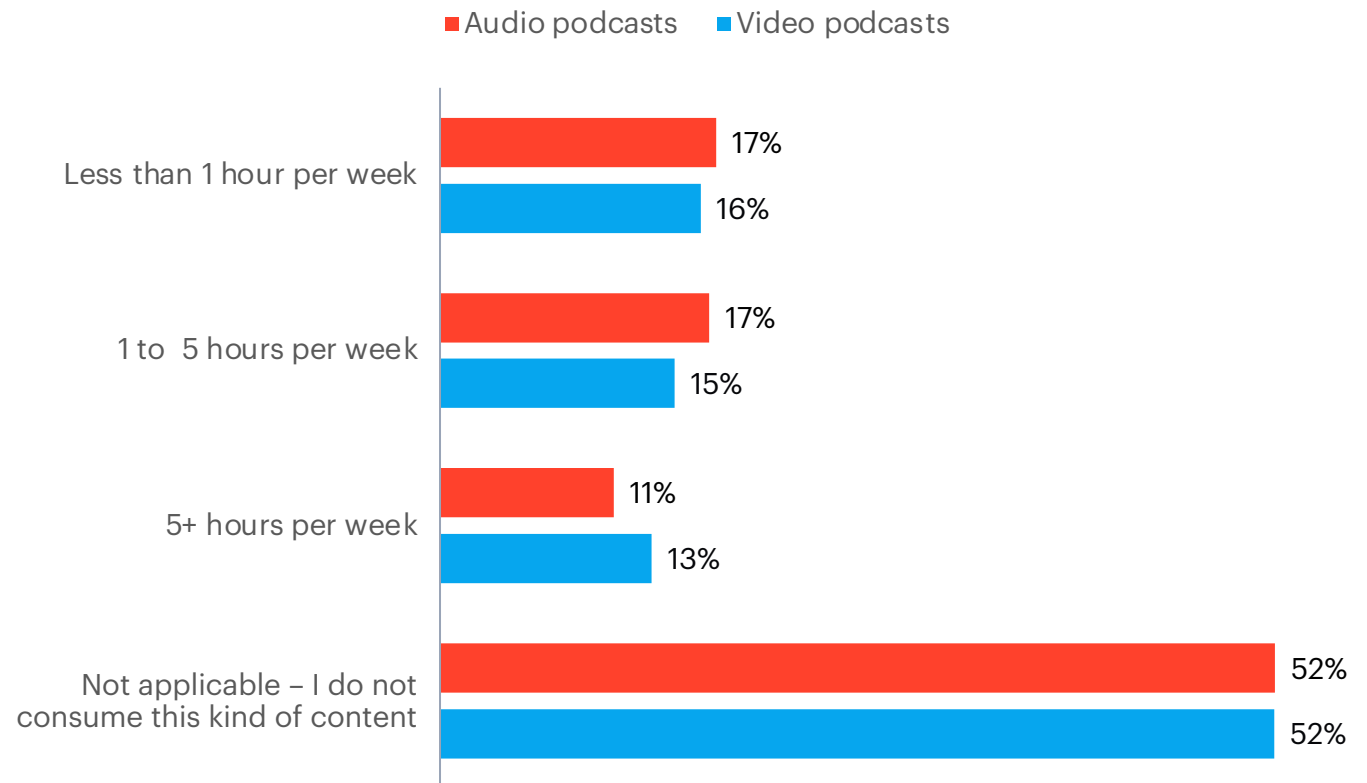
Americans consume audio and video podcasts in roughly equal amounts

Audio and video podcasts command roughly the same size audience at each consumption level.

For example, 13% of Americans watch five or more hours of video podcasts per week while 11% listen to the same amount of audio-only podcast content.

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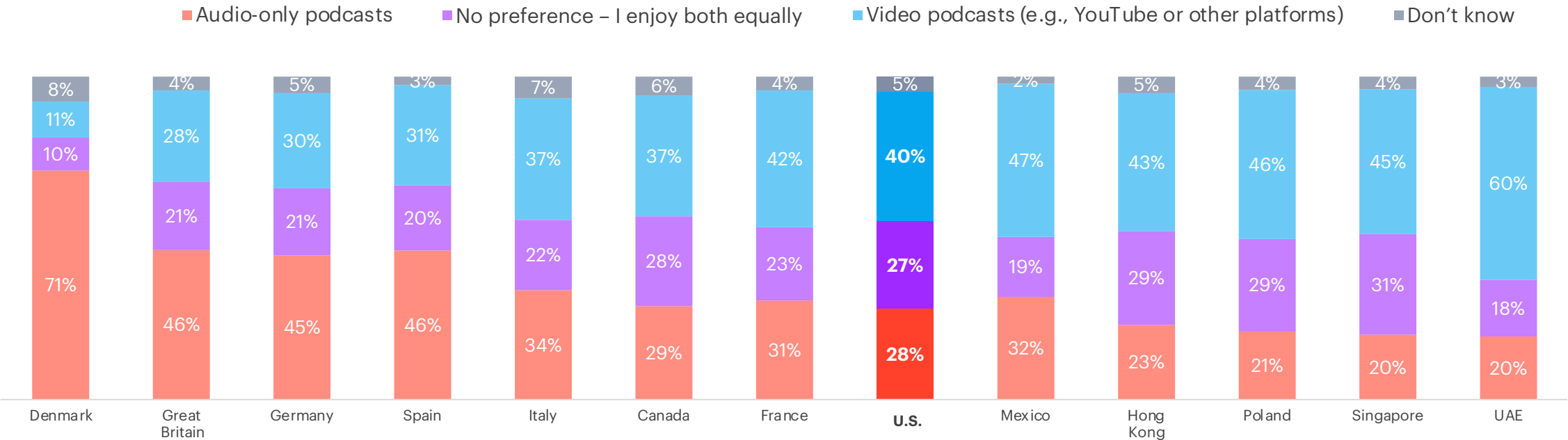
On average, how long do you spend listening to or watching the following types of audio or podcast content? (% of gen pop)



Countries from most audio-favoring to most video-favoring

The U.S. sits near the middle of the spectrum from most audio-favoring to most video-favoring countries. European markets such as Denmark, Great Britain, and Germany skew in favor of audio-only formats. Others, such as Singapore and the UAE lean towards video.

When you engage with podcasts, which format do you prefer? (% of podcast consumers)



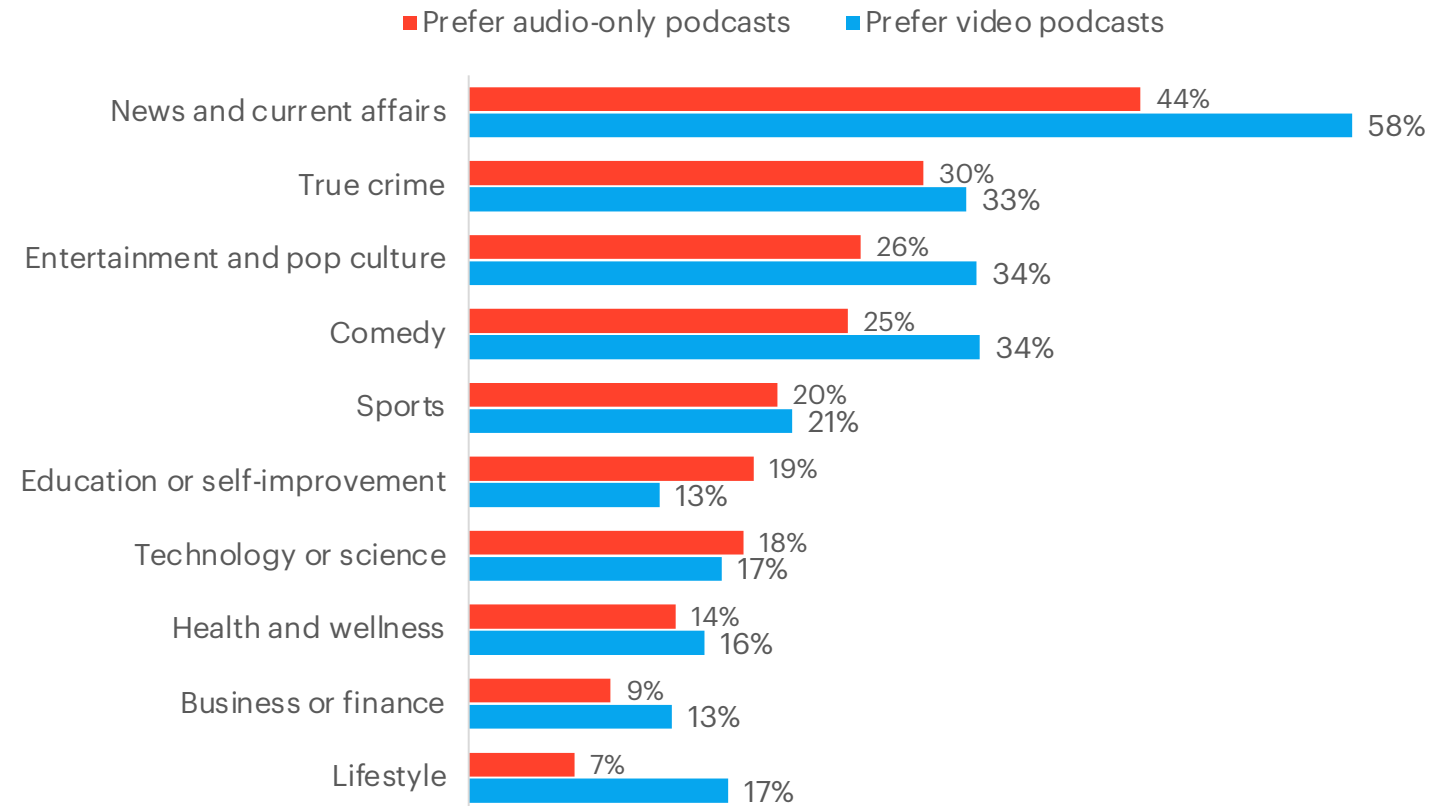
YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers in: U.S. n> 800, Hong Kong n> 300, Great Britain n> 1,100, rest of the markets n> 500 each.
Question: When you engage with podcasts, which format do you prefer? "Podcast consumers" are those who either listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos.

Americans who prefer video podcasts are more likely to watch news podcasts

Most genres are more popular among those who prefer video podcasts, suggesting a broader array of interests.

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Which types of podcasts do you listen to and/or watch most often? Select all that apply. (% of podcast consumers)

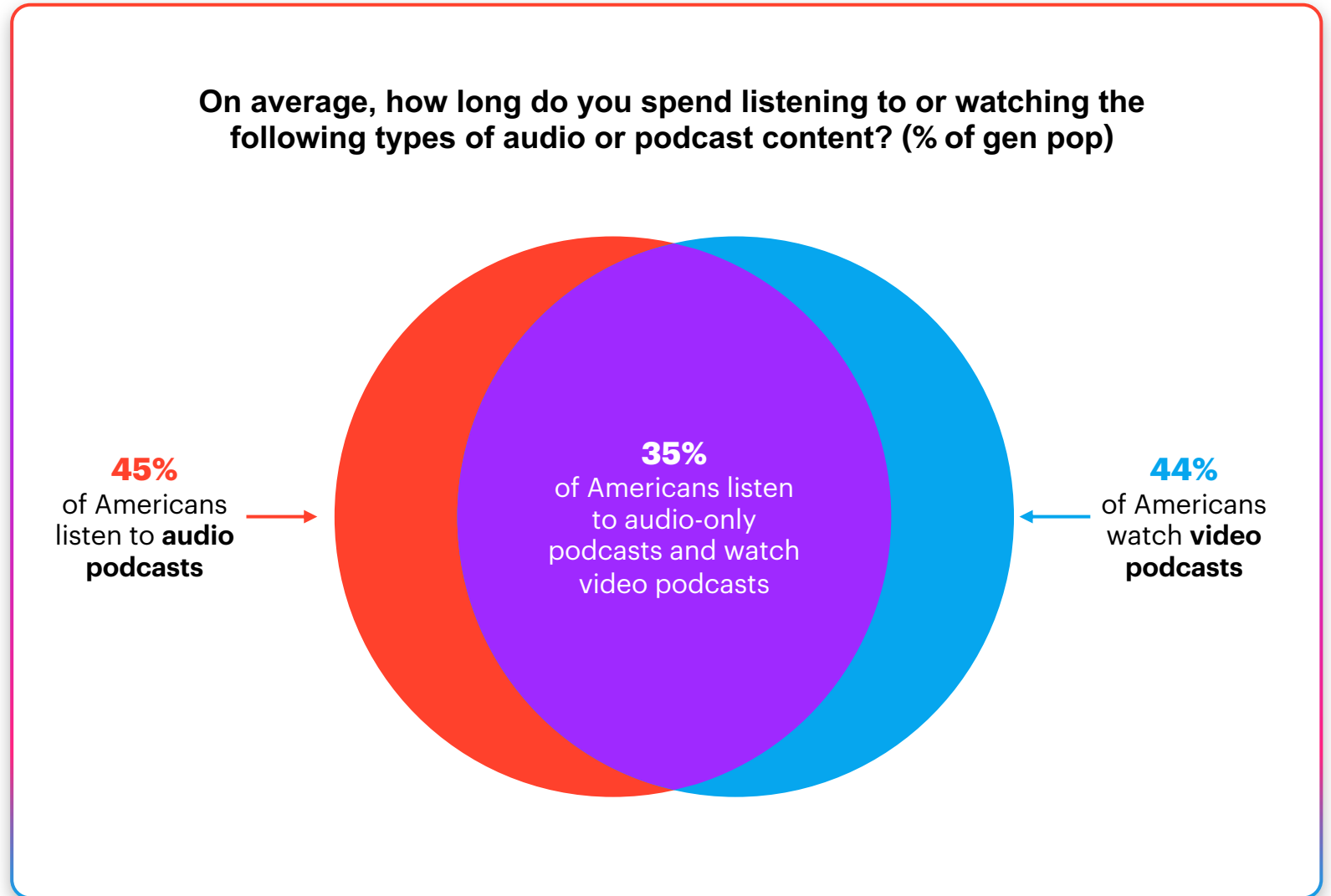


YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. Podcast consumers: prefer audio-only podcasts n> 200, prefer video podcasts n> 250. Top 10 options by “Prefer audio-only podcasts”, “Other” option not shown. Podcast consumers are Americans who either listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos.

There is a strong overlap between audio and video podcast consumers

A little less than half of Americans listen to podcasts (45%) and about the same proportion watch video podcasts (44%). However, 35% of Americans consume podcasts both ways, meaning that most podcast consumers can be reached on either format.

Only 9% of Americans can be reached by video podcast but not by audio podcast.

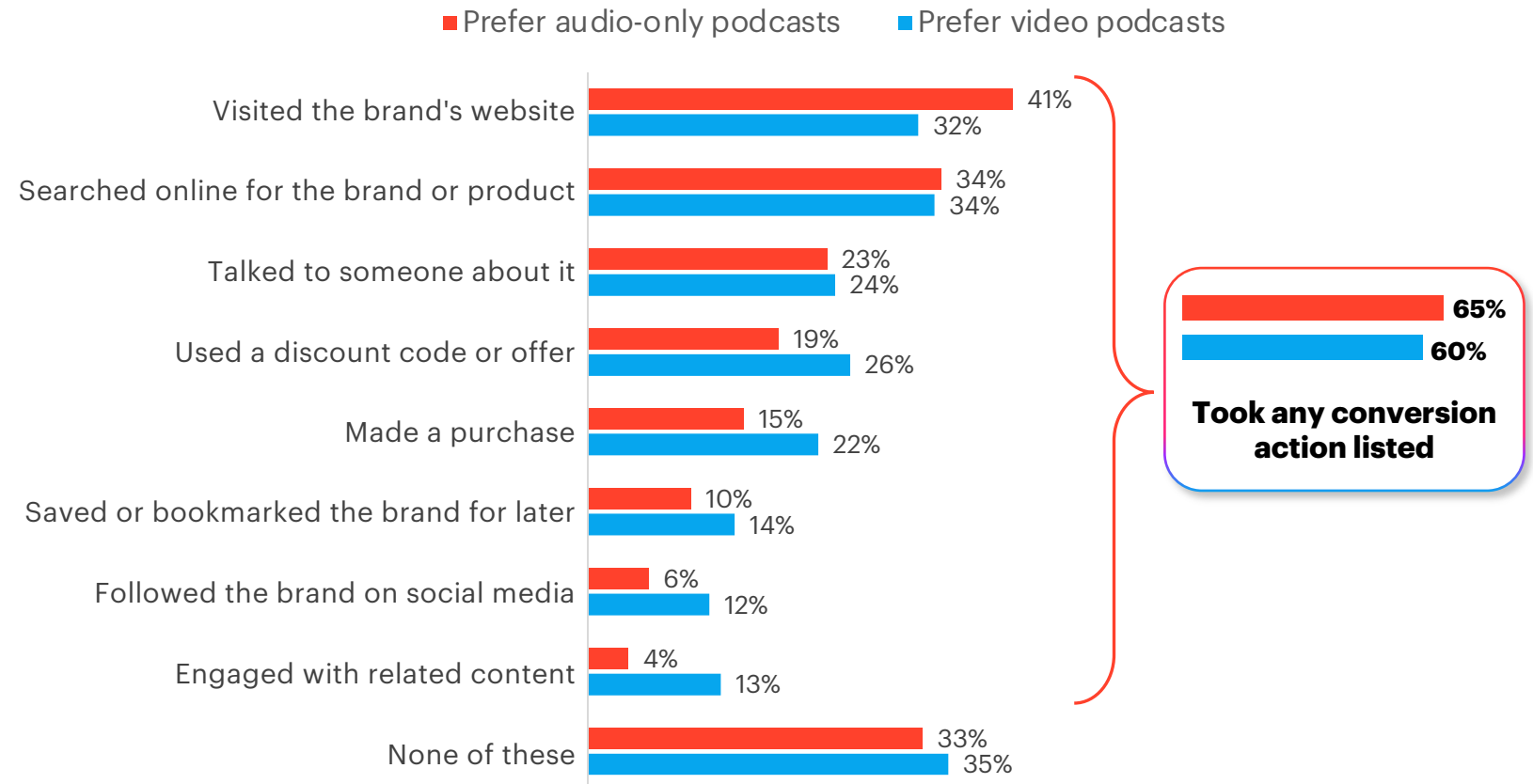


Video podcasts consumers convert at comparable rates to audio listeners

Three in five (60%) of those who prefer video podcasts have converted after an ad. This is comparable to the 65% of those who prefer audio only who've done the same.

Those who prefer video are more likely to follow a brand on social media or make a purchase. Audio fans are more likely to find a brand's website.

Which, if any, of the following actions have you ever taken after hearing or seeing an ad on a podcast, radio, or streaming audio? Please select all that apply.



YouGov Surveys, March 13, 2026 – April 1, 2026. "Don't know" option not shown. Podcast consumers: prefer audio-only podcasts n> 200, prefer video podcasts n> 250. Podcast consumers are Americans who either listen to audio podcasts or watch podcasts videos.

Activate audio audiences with YouGov

Define your audience and reach them with confidence.

Cut through the noise and activate the audiences that matter

Define your perfect audio listener, then reach them with confidence

Once you've defined your audience, the real work starts - reaching them when and where it matters.

With YouGov, your audiences are built from real people and real behaviors - whether they're podcast listeners, music fans, audiobook enthusiasts, high earners, or online video watchers.

We help you activate those segments across platforms like Meta, Amazon, Google, and more. That means your campaigns reach exactly the right audience.

Join 1,000+ brands using YouGov to close the gap between strategy and execution - and deliver campaigns with precision.

[Speak to our Activation team](#)



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Audience activation: Podcasts, audio, and more

Your perfect audio audience is already loaded and ready to activate with YouGov Activation.

Podcast listeners

This audience frequently listens to podcasts, and it is one of their favorite types of media to consume.



Music fans

Music and audio listeners love jamming out to their favorite songs and may be open to other forms of audio listening like podcasts.



Audiobook enthusiasts

Audiobook enthusiasts enjoy listening to books on the go and are likely open to other forms of audio listening like podcasts.



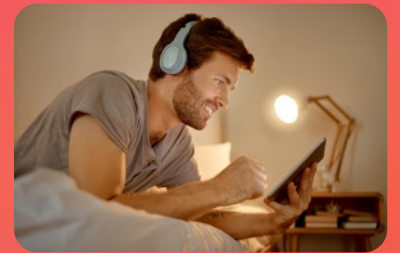
High earners

These top earners engage heavily with podcasts, particularly in audio-only formats.



Online video watchers

Online video consumers love watching the newest content online. As video podcasts continue to rise in popularity, they are an increasingly important group to target.



Don't see what you're looking for? Reach out to YouGov Activation to build your perfect audience today.

Methodology

The insights in this report have been sourced via YouGov Surveys: Serviced – providing rapid answers from the right audience.

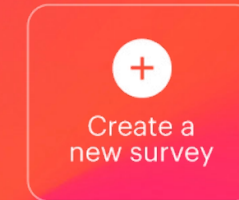
- All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The multi-region survey was conducted online from March 13, 2026 – April 1 2026.
- Canada n> 1000, Denmark n> 1000, France n> 1000, Germany n> 1000, Great Britain n> 2000, Hong Kong n> 450, Italy n> 1000, Mexico n> 1000, Poland n> 1000, Singapore n> 1000, Spain n> 1000, UAE n> 950, and U.S. n> 1450. Data for 6 markets is not shown in this report. The figures have been weighted to be representative of adults aged 18+ in each market's respective target population.
- Audiences are nationally representative in Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Singapore, Spain, the UAE, and the U.S. Audiences in Mexico are representative of the urban population and those in Hong Kong are representative of the online population.
- Segments are based on the question, "On average, how long do you spend listening to or watching the following types of audio or podcast content?" – Consumers of any type of media are Americans who listen or watch that media for any amount of time. Media consumers (n> 1,350), podcast consumers (audio or video) (n> 800), music streaming listeners (n> 1,000), radio listeners (n> 950).
- Prefer audio-only podcast (n> 200), are Americans who selected "Audio-only podcasts" to the question: "When you engage with podcasts, which format do you prefer?". Prefer video podcast (n> 250) selected "Video podcasts (e.g., YouTube or other platforms)".

Ready to get real answers to your questions?

Replace gut feel with confident decisions, powered by accurate, actionable data that fits your budget.

Trusted as the most quoted research company in the world, YouGov delivers insight you can act on. From self-serve research to expert-led custom studies, we uncover consumer behavior, trends, and sentiment - all grounded in reality.

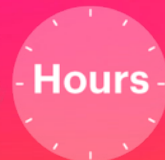
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Target market

- ☐ United States
- ☒ Other countries

Fast-turnaround surveys in



- 54
- has two cats
- lives with her husband
- donates to charity
- is in the cause



Thank you

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