Evaluating Podcast Compositions: Assessing Credibility, Challenges, and Innovation

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Abstract

With digital technology becoming a common feature in the classroom and research, podcasts become a valuable reference for both. Whether used as primary source material, illustrating faculty development, or functioning as a multimedia resource in the classroom, assessment tools are needed to evaluate podcasts. Current evaluation tools tend to focus on the production; therefore, an analytical framework focusing the quality of information presented via podcasts for use in research or as a teaching tool in the classroom is warranted. The guideline discussed in this

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project is based on five factors, each of which has a number of indicators to help gauge its quality and worth. The proposed rubric is a helpful tool that aids in the building of digital ethos for potential audiences outside the academy enabling action based learning and or community impact.

The online use of multimodal formats to present information to ever-expanding audiences increases daily as new platforms emerge bolstered by popularity and utility. Moreover, the Internet's content is becoming an integral part in reshaping the classroom and influencing how research generally is conducted. A variety of information outlets such as blogs, browsers, news aggregators, websites, databases, and feeds enable scholars and students alike to find data, statistics, texts, and interviews pertaining to one's research agenda or pedagogical objective. Access to such a wide variety of sources begs the question—how do scholars and students evaluate an online outlet's credibility? Dochterman and Stamp (2010) note that, "The introduction of the Internet has caused concern for educators who must evaluate this new source for academic writing" (p. 38). Examining the ever-changing roles, features, and functions of digital technologies and their impact on the academy is an ongoing endeavor. To that end, examining media integration including the increasing salience of audio, visual and textual elements warrants exploration (McKee, 2006).

Understanding digital ethos is an essential part of evaluating the sources of online information and can be defined briefly as creating online credibility. Several scholars have developed strategies to evaluate the online credi-

bility of computer-mediated communication technologies and the data presented (Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Johnson & Kaye, 2002; Liu, 2004). This project focuses on a way to assess the digital ethos of computer-mediated podcast compositions by advancing an analytical framework that is based on five factors, each of which has a number of indicators: 1) expertise and credentials; 2) accuracy of information; 3) quality of the information; 4) production quality; and 5) the currency of the information presented.

While current frameworks for evaluation tend to place their focus heavily on production values, the model proposed in this project identifies production quality as only one factor within an advanced model of evaluation. The factors and their associated indicators expand to meet the evolving needs and applications of conducting research in digital media content with specific utility for critiquing podcast compositions for use in research or as a teaching tool. The assessment tool assists the listener/consumer/ researcher/educator to establish accuracy and source credibility while also revealing problematic perspectives or hidden biases within the podcast as a composition.

Advancing an assessment tool for podcast compositions significantly expands academic contexts with a direct impact on participation with and deliverables within the academy. For example, invitations for (co)authorship with community members and the scope and impact of research reports through application and intervention are greatly enhanced. In this context, respondents are key informants and may become collaborators as their voices are given a mediated platform. Additionally, the evaluation tool expands the materials that researchers may use as supporting evidence for the arguments they build in and through

rhetorical and critical/cultural research projects.

As a final point, the assessment tool functions as guidelines to transform an academic text or project into a podcast for a wider audience. The assessment tool helps an author build digital ethos for potential audiences outside the academy enabling action based learning and or community impact. Administrators, department chairs, and tenure and promotion committees need assessment tools for determining the quality of scholarly output by members of the academy. The framework discussed in this project fulfills that gap by providing a guided format to offer peer-reviewed, formative critiques to scholars developing alternative deliverables—podcast compositions.

Emergence of Podcasts as Compositions

Bell Labs created the earliest digital sound transmissions in the 1930s (Fine, 2008). The transformation of digital sound from these early transmissions to today is characterized by the ease that individuals now possess to release content via the Internet. Key factors have played a role in the growth including the affordability of recording devices and open-source audio editing software (Selfe, 2009). Issues surrounding accessibility led to the growth of multiple access points to receive digital information and contributed to the ease to produce, share, and release content. However, this affordability is not to suggest that a "digital divide" no longer exists; the digital divide debate continues to address people's access to Internet resources especially in educational contexts (Hilbert, 2011; Wei, 2012; Wood & Howley, 2012).

Both access and affordability to create podcasts has increased through free wi-fi and software programs such

as Audacity®; however, issues within the context of the digital divide remain especially digital literacy. Historically, as new technologies emerge and are adopted there are those who become proficient with its use and those who are not. Early research found that age is not a factor in understanding or using emergent digital technologies (Brock & Thomsen, 1992). More recent research pointed out that digital natives are not digital experts (Hargittai, 2010; Jones, Ramanaue, Cross, & Healing, 2010). A key finding explaining one's level of knowledge and proficiency with digital technologies suggests the interest level of the person and not a generational factor impacts how a technology is taken up, adopted, and used (Bond, Holland, &Wells, 2008; Lea, Goodfellow, & Jones, 2008; Lei, 2009; Levinsen, 2007). As noted previously, age is not a major factor; however, end user motivation is when determining how to use a new technology (Levinsen, 2007). In kind, the adoption or rejection of podcasts as a pedagogical or research source or tool is impacted by end users' motivations and aversions—a personal and cultural decision over digital limitations.

Collaboration between the New Media Consortium and EDUCAUSE's Learning Initiative annually produce *The Horizon Report* addressing how technological changes impact higher education systems. The reports highlight the impact of accessibility, innovation, and implementation of Internet technologies into curriculum design, delivery methods, and faculty development. Podcasting was noted as a salient communication technology with utility to enhance self-paced learning, expand creative scholarly endeavors, and challenge the classroom's spatial and time constraints with mobility. (*The Horizon Report*, 2007).

Traditional higher education perspectives toward research impact the ways podcasts are perceived and produced—a bias toward written works and questions regarding rigor arise when podcasts are presented in portfolios as faculty members move toward tenure. For assessment purposes, new ways to determine the quality and strength of podcasts as creative research endeavors are needed. Podcasts challenge higher education's existing paradigm favoring written works and herald a return to oral traditions. In this regard, podcasts offer opportunities for academic participation (*The Horizon Report*, 2007) while challenging the status quo (Foucault, 1990).

The technological convergence of new technologies and information delivery formats requires a discussion of the importance of oral traditions in the academy. Isocrates argued that oratory is a key element in forming any society (Jaksa & Prichard, 1988). Likewise, Ong (1967) notes the community building aspect of the spoken word as does Dance & Larson (1972 & 1976) through their discussion of the linking function of speech communication. Moreover, McKee (2007) points out that "we live immersed in sounds" further emphasizing the importance of sound in our society (p. 335). Sound, as an event, becomes an actualization once it reaches an audience (Altman, 1992). The audience gets to hear a performance of what is being said—there are elements missing if it is merely being read (Sheridan, 1968). Likewise, a podcast embodies aspects of the spoken word to help provide nonverbal cues, "often when listening to people speak (whether in person or via electronic technologies), we explicitly attend to the words that are stated, but we also implicitly adhere to how those words are said" (McKee, 2006, p. 340). Being able to attend

to the podcast's audio performance can help create a better understanding and interpersonal connection from the listener's point of view.

Another benefit that digital audio files possess is that that they are portable (Hammersley, 2004; *The Horizon Report*, 2007). Listeners of podcasts are unfettered from a specific time or place allowing freedom to access audio files at the audience's convenience no matter where they are. There are a variety of ways to listen podcasts whether it is through a smartphone, tablet, or computer. Getting information and data in this audio format provides a medium that generates different messages and worldviews shaped by in part by how the content is consumed (Strate, 2005). In this way, McLuhan's (1964) famous theoretical probe, "the medium is the message" (p. 5) aptly applies to podcasts. They differ from a written text; however, they are "texts" warranting different understandings of modality and literacy. In this regard, podcasts, as a new media platform for audio, may provide a wealth of information for researchers, but how do individuals evaluate these multimodal compositions? The proposed framework provides guidelines to evaluate the quality and credibility of a podcast that can be applied to either research or classroom use.

Presently, a variety of formats and ways to retrieve audio files exist; therefore, it is necessary to find a way to describe this umbrella of technology. For purposes of clarity, the term podcast composition is used as an all-encompassing term referring to audio file formats that can be accessed through the Internet regardless of the audio codec, container format, and access point. Literature focusing on evaluating podcast compositions generically identi-

fies them as new media or presents tutorials and instructions on how to create them (Austria, 2007). Moreover, scholarship on basic information literacy calls for expansion to podcast compositions.

For example, podcast compositions, unlike written work, require a listening process to acquire the information presented (Austria, 2007); therefore, while the standards for evaluating the credibility of a journal or book have some crossover into podcast compositions, standards of judgment must change as with any transformation of format. Expanding assessments to address the features and functions of podcast compositions is warranted.

Higher Educational Barriers, Attitudes, and Challenges Regarding Podcast Compositions

The acceptance of podcasts as compositions or any multimodal composing is overlooked by favoritism toward the written word regardless of the medium or mode in which it is presented (*The Horizon Report*, 2007; Murray, 2009). This perspective sustains attitudinal and philosophical barriers toward podcast compositions as an acceptable format to collect data and information. Moreover, Olson (2008) and Selfe (2009) argue that academic attitudes toward multimodal composing reflect an organizational system exercising norms, values, priorities, and control. As the literature suggests, a "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1990) has become manifest sustained by exclusionary disciplinary actions in the academy regarding podcast compositions' legitimacy about the participation in knowledge creation, the modalities in which the distribution of that knowledge may take place, and evidentiary support of podcast compositions' weight in faculty development portfo-

lios. Fortunately, Giddens' (1984) structuration theory offers both means and opportunity for change agents to impact organizational structure through creativity occasioned within the constraints of disciplinary rules. As a reaction contesting possible attitudinal barriers against podcast compositions within the academy, this essay builds upon the notion that "the present system [the academy] has the capability to solve the ills" (Ziegelmueller & Kay, 1997, p. 174).

However, changes in attitude and biases often do not change overnight. Kuhn (1970) traces the historical impacts of scientific discovery as revolutionary paradigm shifts breaking traditional notions believed as sacred truth. Additionally, Foucault (1990) identifies that normative standards are changeable and evolve over time. In fact, Giddens (1984) uses the term "longue duree" to illustrate how systematic structures are manifest in daily life but also are reversible through time (p. 35). As such, the shift from orality to reliance on the written word prioritized linear thought and argumentation as a paradigm for academic practice and philosophical prose (Ong, 1967; Ong, 1982). Contemporarily, the negative attitudes sustained toward multimodal compositions occur due the "the profession's continuing bias toward print and ongoing investment in specialization, understandable as historically and culturally informed methods of ensuring our own status and continuity" (Selfe, 2009, p. 641).

Arguments supporting a rationale to include podcast compositions in the academy are advanced not to diminish traditional outlets of information such as books or journals, but rather to suggest that multimodal compositions can be useful when conducting research. Multimodal

compositions offer alternative ways to present information through podcasts or other visually enhanced components aiding the audience to retain data. By emphasizing written published texts, the academy overlooks rich sources of information while stressing only visual learning styles reached through limited physical distribution (Selfe, 2009).

Traditional classroom lectures can now be transformed easily into audio compositions with existing software platforms used for course enhancement and as primary information delivery when a class is "flipped"—where lectures are available online and class time is devoted to application (EDUCAUSE, 2012). Capturing traditionally oral features of higher educational practices is a growing trend with archiving lecture materials for student consumption (www.perfectnotes.com), providing student and coursework feedback and other assessment opportunities for faculty, administrators, and certifying organizations (www.desire2learn.com), and hosting research meetings (www.wimba.com) to name a few. These technological innovations and their diffusion into higher education place scholarly activity on a path where the academy must address paradigm shifts regarding how audio compositions impact teaching, research and assessing colleagues' professional development. The need for an evaluation method for podcast compositions is in line with technological trends and shifts in higher educational policies. Regardless of how a podcast is be used, whether for research or incorporated into a class, being able to assess and justify its value is needed.

How to evaluate online podcast as compositions

As illustrated earlier, there are a limited amount of resources that provide information on how to evaluate a podcast composition's credibility. Much of these resources tend to focus on production values and use in the classroom (Dangler, 2008; Dupagne, Millette, & Grinfeder, 2009; Geoghegan & Klass, 2007; Lee, McLoughlin, & Chan, 2008). While discussions on production values and usage are helpful, the literature does not address ethos. Current podcast evaluations mainly focus on style and delivery; however, guidelines are needed to evaluate the quality of information and author's online credibility.

As the cost of producing high quality podcasts continues to decline and more user-friendly and accessible tools become available, podcasts are now widely available and distributed. Potential producers will be competing for audiences. Therefore, a more comprehensive rubric is needed in order to evaluate and identify credible sources of information. The goals of a rubric are to create a tool that helps gauge and define the expectations for a task or assignment (Stevens & Levi, 2005). The primary focus for this rubric is to identify a pragmatic way to evaluate a podcast and judge its ethos by considering how to assess validity and reliability in a practical manner. Thus, factors and indicators were created to judge credibility and usability when designing research or classroom activity. The factors and indicators for the rubric were developed to provide a swift and effective tool for assessing a podcast by modeling multimedia design assessments and factors that gauge use of technology (Roblyer & Wiencke, 2003).

Podcast Evaluation Rubric: Solutions and Recommendations

The credibility of a podcast rests with more than gauging style and delivery. Often such concerns are subjective for the listener. Expanding the evaluation of podcast compositions, while also recognizing production quality as one criterion of many, a more comprehensive assessment of determining the credibility of podcast compositions is possible. Such detailed criterion helps ascertain ethos and viability for use in research and in the classroom. With an advanced model of evaluation, the academy may meet the emerging demands of evolving applications of research in media content and the distribution of knowledge. Assessing a podcast composition's digital ethos would include the following factors: 1) expertise and credentials, 2) accuracy of the information, 3) quality of the information provided, 4) understanding the production quality, and 5) the currency of the information presented. Each indicator also is comprised of several indicators (see Table 1) used in order to judge a podcast's digital creditability. The assessment tool aids in establishing accuracy, source credibility, and identifying problematic perspectives or biases within podcast compositions while combining traditional and contemporary concerns when considering a source's ethos.

Table 1

Podcast Evaluation Rubric

Expertise and Credentials

1. Who is the author of the online aural composition?
2. What are qualifications and credentials of the audio composition?
3. Can the audio composition producer contacted?
4. If there are guests on the audio composition what are their credentials?
5. Who produced the audio composition?

Accuracy

1. Can the claims be verified?
2. Are there show notes to provide links to issues discussed on the audio composition?
3. Is there comprehensive information provided?
4. Are the facts presented clearly and can they be understood?

Quality of Information

1. How relevant is the audio composition to your task?
2. Is the audio composition's objective clear?
3. If the audio composition has sponsors is content affected by the sponsorship?
4. Does it have good reasoning?

Production Quality

1. Overall quality of the audio composition.
2. Editing of the audio composition.
3. Environmental noise on the audio composition.
4. Audio enhancements on the audio composition.

Currency

1. Are dates provided?
2. Is there only one opinion present?
3. What is the motive of the audio composition?
4. Audio composition accessibility?

Expertise and Credentials

The first criterion focuses on the expertise, credentials, or persona of the author of a podcast composition. A key feature that assists in establishing ethos entails clear identification of the author through name or persona. Identify whether the author is established in his/her field. Anonymous sources and ambiguous attributions are suspect. Other indicators to assess the ethos of the podcast composition are to determine who is the producer of the content, what are his/her qualifications, and whether contact can be made for further commentary. These questions extend equally to guests. Knowing guests' background and expertise may help determine if information or data is valid. When considering the credibility of the content on podcast compositions, the listener needs to know where the podcast was generated. For example, a composition produced by commercial sources requires further examination for potential biases and conflicts of interest. Another important step is to examine previous podcast compositions created by the same authors or producers to help evaluate the accuracy of the information and the consistency in which it is presented.

Accuracy

Secondly, being able to authenticate the information that is presented in a podcast composition helps establish credibility. In order to evaluate the claims and supporting evidence that is presented to the audience, the author of the composition should provide links to the issues and ideas discussed so that the listener may check for accuracy. Unlike traditional sources of information, podcast compositions often do not feature a traditional reference

section. Moreover, Sawyer (1977) notes that audiences miss portions of the spoken word and have difficulty with recall; therefore, repetition is recommend to build ethos. Not only is it important to provide the resources of a composition, but also consideration of how the material is presented is needed to ensure that information is clear and understandable to the listener. Much like a public speech, highlighting clear points that are fully supported, well organized, concise, and appropriate to the target audience is ideal.

Quality of Information

If the podcast presents accurate information, then a reviewer should judge the quality of what is being offered to the audience. Listeners need to consider whether the information is pertinent to their research lines and projects. Determine how the podcast composition is adding value to research objectives or educational outcomes. Such focus will aid design processes and issues. Additionally, designing research projects include an element of reflexivity. Aiding in a listener's reflexive process, consider if the podcast composition is sponsored and does that sponsorship affect or alter how the information or data is presented? Motives for the podcast composition's creation and the depth to which issues and ideas are expressed may be revealed through such exploration.

Production Quality

Production quality of a podcast composition would be analogous to grammar and punctuation in print materials. Poor production values can make something difficult to listen to just as it is difficult to read a paper that lacks

style guidelines and is unformatted. Overall, consider what makes the podcast composition listenable? Has the author edited the podcast into multiple segments with smooth transitions between them? Are the microphone levels set so they eliminate distortion and environmental noise? Did the author enhance the podcast composition in any fashion? As a listener, determine whether the production qualities are seen as a distraction and take away from compositions content?

Currency

Another consideration to gauge a podcast composition's credibility involves the relevancy and current value it offers to the listener as they design research or pedagogical objectives. To help judge whether the podcast composition maintains currency and is relevant, determine the composition's date of publication. Time can be a relevant factor when researching current issues, ideas, and opinions. Also, determine whether the podcast composition is the best source of information or if there are others available that provide superior data and information. One feature of podcast compositions as a communication medium is that they provide a platform enabling more than one voice to be heard on any subject. Questions of currency seek to answer authenticity for the voices heard on the compositions. What does the composition add to the public sphere on a given topic? Does the composition justify its purpose to the audience with good reasons? In other words, does the podcast answer the "so what" questions clearly to the listener? Why was the podcast created and who is the audience for the composition? Does the podcast help advance research on the topic?

Case Study
Overview of the Study

This intrinsic case study (Stake, 1995) specifically applies the podcast assessment tool to illustrate how the assessment tool functions. *The Why Factor* podcast episode titled "Skyscrapers" was selected for the study. The podcasts describes itself as the podcast that "searches for the extraordinary and hidden histories behind everyday objects and actions to inform us about the way we live in the 21st Century" (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/ p00xtky9). The show was chosen, because it is accessible through both iTunes or BBC world services. BBC also ranks as being unbiased and credible for news and information sources according to Erdos & Morgan surveys (https://www.erdosmorgan.com/pr/pr_20150113-1.html).

Application of the Assessment Tool
Expertise and Credentials

The expertise and credentials factors and indicators are addressed by visiting the webpage for *The Why Factor* (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00xtky9). The webpage clearly identifies Mike Williams as the host of the show and the podcast as a production of the BBC World Service. Additionally, the podcast clearly states at the beginning and at the end of the episode that it is a BBC production and the host of the show introduces himself to the listener. The host further states the podcast is part of the BBC World Service. As mentioned earlier, the BBC is considered to be a reliable source addressing the qualifications and credentials factors bolstering the news and information that the podcast provides. On the homepage of *The Why Factor* links are provided to invite listeners to follow

the BBC World Service on Facebook and Twitter. Also, an email address is made available to contact the podcast directly at whyfactor@bbc.com. Guests featured on the show are clearly introduced and their credentials are given to the listener. For example, the guests on the skyscrapers episode included architect Renzo Piano, Daniel Safarik from the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, and Blair Kamin, architecture critic for the *Chicago Tribune*. Each guest's credential was clearly identified for the listener and added relevance to why these experts would appear on a podcast about skyscrapers.

Accuracy

Fact checking the information that the podcast presented, as well as the qualifications of the guests on the show, can be done quickly with an Internet or library search. For example, determining if Renzo Piano did design the tallest building in London, identifying the tallest skyscraper in the United States, finding the first skyscraper in the United States, and uncovering reasons that skyscrapers were built can be supported independently. While no show notes or links are provided by the podcast, the podcast presented some reasons that skyscrapers exist, where the tallest skyscrapers are being built today, what are some cultural impacts occasioned by skyscrapers, and what are the limits of how high a skyscraper can be. The podcast provides three different professional perspectives on skyscrapers during an 18-minute podcast. A short history of skyscrapers is provided along with the reasoning and ideas on why they are built. These tenants, while not exhaustive, are formatted in a digestible manner as each guest discusses skyscrapers. The thesis for the podcast

"why do we construct skyscrapers" (BBC World Services, 2015) is clearly stated by the host. Topics within the podcast comprised of: the reasoning and importance of a skyscrapers height; the birthplace of the skyscraper; where the tallest skyscrapers are currently being built and why; how they shape the skyline, and technological and engineering limitations of skyscrapers. The guests' responses to the host's questions are logical and are presented with clear and understandable language.

Quality of Information

The assessment tool is germane to the task of evaluating the podcast's informational quality. The producers of the podcast make it clear that the skyscrapers are the topic through the title of the episode. Additionally, the description of the podcast is provided in iTunes and is clearly stated by the host of the show in the introduction of the episode. The BBC does not accept sponsorship or advertisement from commercial entities for any of its on-air shows or events (Editorial guidelines, 2012). The podcast and its guests clearly examine and explain why skyscrapers are built, the history behind them, and their structural limitations.

Production Quality

The audio quality of the podcast is excellent; the guests and host can be clearly heard with consistent sound levels throughout the episode. Transitions between each segment and guest are seamless. Environmental noise such as footsteps, people talking in the background, and music being played over a public address system can be heard in the segments with Renzo Piano, but the impact

on the overall quality is negligible. Editors of the podcast use music, short clips from news shows, and ambient noise to enhance the questions. Overall, *The Why Factor* produces a high quality sounding podcast.

Currency

On *The Why Factor* website and on iTunes the original air dates of the show are provided. The episode has multiple guests who currently are leading experts on the subject of skyscrapers. The purpose of the episode was to discuss skyscrapers and their role in society. The producers of the show clearly state the intention of this podcast in the title of the episode, in the description of the show, and with the host's introduction. The show can be downloaded from iTunes or through the BBC World Service.

Discussion and Conclusions

Visually, the rubric is a useful checklist to verify the podcast's integrity as a resource. The rubric can be applied as an in-depth analytic tool or a quick-glance assessment when evaluating an aural composition. An in-depth analysis identifies that the podcast qualifies as a credible source by examining guests, their backgrounds, the authors, and the sponsors of the show. Applying the podcast evaluation rubric to *The Why Factor* episode "Skyscrapers" demonstrates how the rubric works and illustrates that the podcast meets all of the standards of an online aural source that can be deemed credible for academic research or as a classroom teaching tool. Using the rubric in this regard enables it to function as a checklist of standards to verify expertise, accuracy, quality, production

value, and currency thereby validating the use of the podcast as primary source material. For example, *The Why Factor* podcast that was evaluated would be a worthwhile teaching tool in a visual rhetoric or aesthetics class to help explain skyscrapers' purpose in a city landscape. The podcast does this by providing guests with distinctive experiences and professional perspectives on skyscrapers.

The podcast evaluation rubric helps fill a gap by providing an evaluation tool that assesses online source credibility. Having an instrument to gauge a podcast's credibility provides a needed resource as technology continues to play an ever increasing role in the classroom and the emerging nontraditional ways that research is beginning to be conducted. The podcast assessment tool provides a way to evaluate the ethos of podcast compositions both for researchers wanting to implement information into research projects and classroom activities. As technological advances in knowledge distribution and trends in media consumption develop, podcast compositions are growing in attraction among universities and scholars. The ease at which an author may put forth ideas, information, and solutions for a community to use is appealing. However, just as with traditional print media, individuals need ways to critique and establish that information comes from a credible source. Future research studies are invited to test the podcast composition assessment tool and compare it to traditional print's standards of credibility. In this regard, projects that expand and refine insights into improving higher education teaching, academic research, and faculty development assessment are needed to address the ever-evolving technological trends and shifts in higher educational policies.

With improved Internet access, acquirable production tools spurring creativity, innovative applications and exemplars, and ease in usability, podcast compositions are a viable way to disseminate information to an audience—especially the classroom environment. Therefore, faculty and students alike are encouraged to find innovative ways to incorporate and report on successes and failures using credible podcast compositions to expand and unleash academic and creative potential. Additionally, with this assessment tool in place, researchers may examine the viability of podcast compositions not just for use in the classroom, but also in research projects and new innovative ways to share their work with the academic community.

Expanding the notion of how research is presented is an ongoing evolving process. Finding projects to translate into a new format may appear a daunting task. Studies in popular culture, language and social interaction, conversation and discourse analysis, and other types of qualitative projects that embody the voices of participants will translate nicely into podcast compositions. While such creative scholarship encourages a new form of participation and contribution to the academy, new viable outlets for podcast compositions are needed. For example, peer-reviewed journals in the academy are ubiquitous; however, an audio blogged-peer-reviewed journal featuring podcast compositions is not common. This is a call for such journals to become established. Academic conferences also need to establish competitive podcast composition awards similar to division top-paper awards. The assessment tool provided above may be useful in the peer-review process to ensure that these fledgling outlets are successful. By further establishing the rigor and credibility for podcast com-

positions, faculty may begin to use a vetted podcast as support for faculty development decisions. Having a tool to evaluate and help gauge the quality of information ensures peers may critically evaluate scholarly activity. In this way, the academy may provide proactive leadership by embracing newer and innovative communicative tools.

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