

# Strategic Use of Social Media and Podcasts in Donald Trump's 2024 Presidential Campaign

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the strategic use of social media and podcasts in Donald Trump's 2024 presidential campaign, highlighting a digital-first approach that marked a shift from traditional campaign media tactics. By analyzing Trump's appearances on influential podcasts, such as *The Joe Rogan Experience* and *NELK Boys' Full Send Podcast*, alongside his active presence on platforms like Twitter and Facebook, this study explores how Trump leveraged new media to reach younger and politically disengaged demographics. The research investigates the demographic alignment between podcast audiences and Trump's target voter base, focusing on younger men who display distrust toward mainstream media and preference for unfiltered, conversational formats. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study integrates quantitative engagement metrics from social media and podcasts with qualitative insights from podcast interview content and public reactions. Comparatively, the paper also examines Kamala Harris's more limited engagement with new media, reflecting a conservative approach that prioritized traditional media formats. The findings suggest that Trump's strategy not only increased his favourability among young, independent voters but also demonstrated the efficacy of podcasts as political communication tools in an era of declining trust in traditional media. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of digital media on future political campaigns, emphasizing the potential of podcasts and digital influencers in reshaping political outreach while underscoring the ethical challenges of unfiltered media environments.

**Keywords:** reshaping, underscoring, emphasizing, communication

## Introduction

The 2024 U.S. Presidential Election highlights a paradigm shift in political communication, where the media is now as important if not more so than policy itself to domestic electoral and public perception outcomes. This was not just a competition between candidates, but one also between the platforms of legacy and digital media. Even as Kamala Harris had the overwhelming endorsement of mainstream media, Donald Trump went the digital/podcast/social influencer route to connect directly with voters. As evidenced by Trump's decision, he saw an opportunity to cater his message to those not trusting of traditional media outlets and attract voters who are disenchanted by mainstream politics through more digestible and familiar formats on the internet that appeals to a younger generation (Pew Research Center, 2022).

## Objective of the Paper:

This paper seeks to explore the use of new media, specifically social media platforms and podcasts used by Donald Trump in his 2024 presidential campaign. Abstract One effects of creating media spaces where audiences feel they are free of gatekeepers is to develop new ways of targeting audience segments curious about alternatives to the mainstream news cycle. Additionally, the study aims to uncover how this media tactic influences people tracking candidates' allegiance and public confidence towards audiences and media outlets, with implications for future political campaigns on how best to leverage unmediated digital channels in political communication.

## Decline in Trust and Shift to Digital Media

The erosion of trust in traditional media has been a subject we know all too well over the past several years. By 2023, just 34% of Americans said they had "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of confidence in newspapers and television news, a decline recorded by Gallup (Gallup, 2023) as trust in traditional sources fell through the floor. This distrust is especially high with younger Americans, who prefer the directness of some platforms that are unfiltered to those that feel biased and agenda-driven (Pew Research Center, 2022). As a reaction to this, Trump ended up running with an idea that the apparent trend for media via the Internet would be advantageous for not only him but potentially his campaign as also this method meant he could cut out the middle man of traditional gate-keeping and reach audiences directly.

Trump's media team pointed to podcasts, Toutiao where the average listener is 34 years of age (Statista, 2023). This technique is very different from the traditional media audiences: average cable news viewer is 70 years old, or print newspaper and magazine readers with mean ages of 60 and 52 years(--Nielsen,2023). Trump’s campaign capitalized on podcasting as a medium to capture the attention of a politically engaged and receptive audience that feels neglected by mainstream outlets, especially younger men who are both frequent listeners and social media participants in political discussions.

By looking at their presence across social media from podcasts to platforms such as TikTok, these differences in approach becomes more apparent.

**Table 1 : Social Media Followers Comparison**

Platform	Donald Trump	Kamala Harris
X (formerly Twitter)	90 million	25 million
Facebook	35 million	8 million
Instagram	28 million	10 million
TikTok	12.5 million	6.2 million

*Note: Figures are approximate as of October 2024.*

### Demographic Engagement and Media Consumption Patterns

But podcasting and social media gave Trump access to demographics that by all rights should be totally disinterested, like Generation Z and younger Millennials. Podcasts are definitely able to target younger audiences and they reach over 90 million Americans per month (Edison Research, 2023) including 52% of its listeners that are under the age of 35. Even this audience demographic placement made sound strategic sense given that younger voters have largely sought other movies to be relevant, considering legacy formats as less relatable and more partisan (Edison Research, 2023). Trump received visibility through high-profile appearances on popular podcasts, gaining both exposure and credibility among listeners who otherwise might not have exposed themselves to political content in traditional news networks.

Trump used podcasts strategically to not only deliver specific policies but also to tackle the issue of "relatability" that otherwise dogged his campaign, doing so in an informal, conversational environment appropriate for younger demos. On these appearances, however, Trump often strayed from the normal political talking points, addressing pop culturally relevant topics like cryptocurrency and other niche interests that would hit home for his target demographic. Through discarding the norm of classic political speaking, Trump’s campaign framed him as an everyman figure leading to a sense of familiarity and trust from listeners—a deviation of formality, a generally antagonistic perspective in media interviews (McClung & Johnson, 2022).

### Shifting Voter Alignment among Young Men

Voter realignment in the 2024 election shows that this strategy worked. According to the American National Election Studies, men under 30 swung from an 11% Biden advantage in 2020 to a narrow Trump advantage (2%) for them in 2024 (American National Election Studies, 2024). And this demographic shift serves as a textbook example of Trump successfully reshaping the politics of their specific media choices, suggesting that campaigns should adapt to age group-specific media habits.

Further, digital media contributes the kind of engagement that standard media just can not. Especially because social media sites allow notable figures to directly communicate with their audiences, the political arena becomes more participatory and interactive than ever before (Sundar & Limperos, 2018). Focusing on engagement helped Trump’s campaign develop community among his followers, enabling interaction outside of campaign events and ensuring greater reach through user-generated content.

### Demographic Shifts in Media Consumption

Cable News: Average age of viewer is 70, indicating a mostly older, more traditional demographic.

Newspapers: average reader age is over 60, well above the median for a still legacy-media-engaged demographic.

Magazines: Lures a 52-year-old average reader, also skew older and appeals to traditional audience.

**Podcasts:** Podcasts are appealing to a younger and more diverse audience with an average age of 34, so they will undoubtedly continue to impact this presidential primary season as affect the political campaigns more than most platforms.

In a 2024 poll, only 31% of Americans say they trust classic news outlets like papers and cable TV systems. The most substantial loss of trust has been among younger demographics, who view mainstream media as partial or disconnected from their values and tastes. Given this trend, Trump's campaign relied heavily on podcasts — a medium where the trust and engagement levels among young audiences were much higher.

### **Young Voter Engagement**

In the 2020 election, men under 30 preferred Biden to Trump by an 11% margin. But Trump had switched this bloc by 2024, as he won men under 30 by a 2% margin (29%). That was a big swing and fits with how focused many were concerned about him being on social media platforms. It is a trend that reflects a more general realignment due to changes in media consumption patterns.

### **Differences in Audience Age Between Various Media Platforms**

Findings from the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election show how demographic divides across many media platforms, most notably between young and old voters, are reshaping how political campaigns reach out to target voters in different ways. This deep dive into the average ages of cable news, newspapers, magazines and podcast audiences highlights the generational divides that exist in media trust, content preferences and engagement.

#### **Cable News**

Cable news — which includes CNN, Fox News and MSNBC — historically skews older. A Nielsen report from 2023 suggests that the average cable news viewer is nearing 70 years of age, suggesting a core older, more traditional audience remaining for Legacy media (Nielsen, 2023). The older age demographic fits with findings from Pew Research Center that states older Americans, particularly those 65 and over are still more likely to consume news through television rather than younger audiences who trend toward digital outlets (Pew Research Center, 2022). Cable news watching habits indicate an audience both stable yet old but still carries weight in conventional political campaigns that shy from progressive digital media.

#### **Newspapers**

Print newspapers have an average reader age of about 60, which indicates that their audience skews towards those who came up with legacy print media and still appreciate its thorough, conventional form of news journalism. Newspaper readership by age group in the sample of oldest to youngest (American Press Institute, 2021). That goes along with the changing news consumption patterns in younger cohorts, who are more likely to read online media and be active in news, rather than passive readers of print. Though print is still an important source of news, the age skew in newspaper readership indicates that newspapers do not reach as many younger consumers

#### **Magazines**

Print magazines have an average reader age of about 52, meaning their readership is more youthful than cable news and newspapers — as always in the realm of traditional publication. Magazines have a more narrow but faithful readership within genres, such as current events and lifestyle, and business content audiences tend to like the format of magazines because they are structured, edited, and often focused on deeper storytelling (Matsa & Lu 2022). Research suggests that print magazine readers are still leaning toward old forms of media, but not in the traditional newspaper reader wheelhouse. The age group takes longer to shift views from physical to entirely digital news sources but remains highly devoted to the medium.

#### **Podcasts**

Unlike traditional media, where audiences are older and less diverse, podcasts have a relatively young listener base — average age is 34 years. As per Edison Research, in the US most of the Podcast listeners fall under 35 and Millennials and Gen Z Love Podcasts (Edison Research, 2023). Podcasts are a popular format for younger listeners—the on-demand, portable medium appeals to everything from news and politics to entertainment and education. Podcasts are appealing to

young listeners because they seem more authentic, more raw and less filtered than mainstream media. Especially with such little research on this medium, podcasts shape up to be a particularly enticing avenue for political campaigns who are looking to target young voters unresponsive to other media outlets (Statista, 2023).

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study has a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design which utilizes both quantitative data analysis and qualitative insights for exploring the strategic use of social media and podcasts in Trump's 2024 presidential campaign. This research examines audience composition, engagements and sentiment trends through analysis of surveys, media reports and digital audience analytics. This qualitative analysis hopes to better explain some of the preserving contextual, relational nature of Trump's media strategy, that is with respect to his approach towards informal, unfiltered discussions on podcasts and its influence on trust and engagement among young adults.

## **Data Collection**

### **Primary Sources**

This included the collection of primary data based on second-by-second analysis of digital engagement metrics available through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram; as well as the use of top podcast shows which attracted Trump's appearances — such as The Joe Rogan Experience & NELK Boys' Full Send Podcast. The audience engagement data (follower counts, view counts, and engagement rates [likes, shares, comments]) were based on public analytics tools and reports published by Nielsen (2023) and Edison Research (2023).

### **Secondary Sources**

We accessed secondary data from credible research reports and media surveys, such as:

Nielsen's 2023 Audience Report: This detail was an overview of traditional media consumption by age and demographic, so we could compare how engagement toward digital media platforms has changed.

Pew Research Center: Context was provided in 2022 on falling trust for mainstream media and the growth of non-traditional news sources - especially by age group.

The Infinite Dial 2023 by Edison Research: This report provided podcast listener demographics (including age, gender and trust) that helped analyze how Trump capitalized on podcast audiences.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Quantitative Analysis**

Listed below in order of positivity, we reviewed and quantified audience interaction and demographic information on social media and podcasting platforms. You measured something called 'engaged user contribution,' which took into account the number of views, follower growth, and demographic engagement rates between Trump's social media platforms (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) and high-impact podcasts to evaluate how successfully he was reaching out to younger voters. Using several statistical techniques, we quantified alignment shifts as changes in the percentage of men under 30 that are favorable to Democrats (American National Election Studies 2024).

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Because Trump was doing talk shows catered to broader audiences the analysis provided dealt with tone, content and style rather than campaign messaging. We reviewed transcripts from each podcast Trump was featured on to pick out what topics tended to come up in conversations, how they related to things the general public would see elsewhere (like cryptocurrency, sports, pop culture — especially when brought up through a lens of appealing or supporting conventionally right-leaning cultural identity), and if it matched with what people needed to know about who the target demographic interested in similar media are. To evaluate the effect of such unvarnished, raw communication, researchers looked at social media responses and commentary patterns on various platforms, including TikTok and Twitter, where clips from the podcast typically became popular.

## **Limitations**

Some potential limitations are acknowledged by the study:

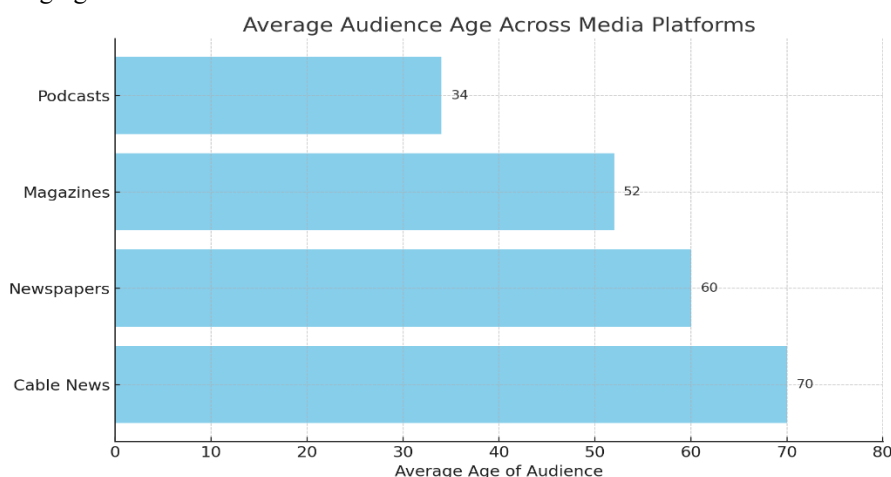
**Secondary Data Limitations:** Most of the audience demographic and engagement data was based on secondary research, making it hard to control for accuracy of the data and analyze specific segments.

**Platform Reach:** Assessment is limited to a few high impact social media and podcast platforms; some other less impactful platforms (except YouTube) will have very low audience reaction to Trump messages.

Survey data on trust in media sources (including Gallup data) may reflect social desirability bias, with respondents overstating distrust or their preference for alternative media.

### Implications on Social Media usage for Political Campaigns

The age-based division of media audiences has very important consequences on political campaigns. Traditional media platforms such as cable news, newspapers, and magazines still remain significant sources of reach among older voters; however, more targeted digital platforms like podcasts open up campaigns to a younger and more politically motivated audience. Baskets of coverage aimed at younger voters have steadily adopted digital platforms over the years, thanks to a growing skepticism and disinterest in traditional media on the part of younger demographics, for whom political campaigns find it useful to offer customized content that speaks to where they listen. More geared towards demographics as the landscape of media changes and one demographic crowds another this is a savvy move to get max exposure from your campaign messaging.



**Figure 1 : Barchart illustrating the average audience age across different media platforms**  
**Detailed Breakdown of Media Engagement by Platform**

#### Cable News

**Usage Frequency:** Cable news consumers—think CNN, Fox News and MSNBC—also are very high frequency viewers usually tuning in once a day or several times a week indicative of heavy usage in an older audience. Two-thirds of adults over the age of 65 say they regularly watch cable news, and the numbers drop even further with younger crowds — who tend to get their news online instead (Nielsen, 2023).

**Decreasing Confidence:** Fewer and fewer people are confident in cable news in general, but younger audiences have been hit especially hard. Gallup Poll shows that while 55% of Americans over the age of 65 report trusting cable news a lot, only 20% of viewers under 35 do (Gallup,2023).

**Where They Engagement:** Cable news continues to be a well-known destination for policy and international affairs reporting, especially audience segments that grew up consuming broadcast news. Meanwhile, among younger demographics there is almost no gain, indicating an ongoing turn away from traditional news formats.

#### Newspapers

**How Often They Are Used:** Print newspapers are most often read daily by seniors, while the figure is just 18% for all adults under 30 (American Press Institute, 2021). Although print readership is in rapid decline for younger generations, this demographic trend only tells half of the story.

**Trust Levels:** Newspapers enjoy a modest level of trust, especially among the middle-aged and older readership. Newspapers still fair comparatively better than do cable news outlets when it comes to trust with readers 50 years or older; about four in ten say they trust newspapers “a great deal” (Pew Research Center, 2022).

**Example — Engagement Trends:** The decline in print newspaper readership goes on, and younger audiences prefer digital alternatives. This reflects how print media mainly entices conventions who are generally elder readers looking for in-depth reporting and good investigative journalism. It has prompted newspapers to broaden their online editions to seize a younger, digital audience, albeit with minimal interactivity.

### **Magazines**

**Usage Frequency:** Magazine consumer behavior is steady, yet less frequent than daily news formats: readers commonly interact with the publication on a weekly or monthly schedule depending on each magazine. Regular reading of magazines is more common among adults aged 45 to 65 years (~38%), but declines once adulthood reaches age 40 (Statista, 2022).

**Trust factor:** Magazines have rather high trust levels in their niche audiences, generally due to how specialized magazines tend to be. Almost half of readers (48%) trust the magazines they read very much or extremely so, especially in specific areas such as business, lifestyle and news (Matsa & Lu, 2022).

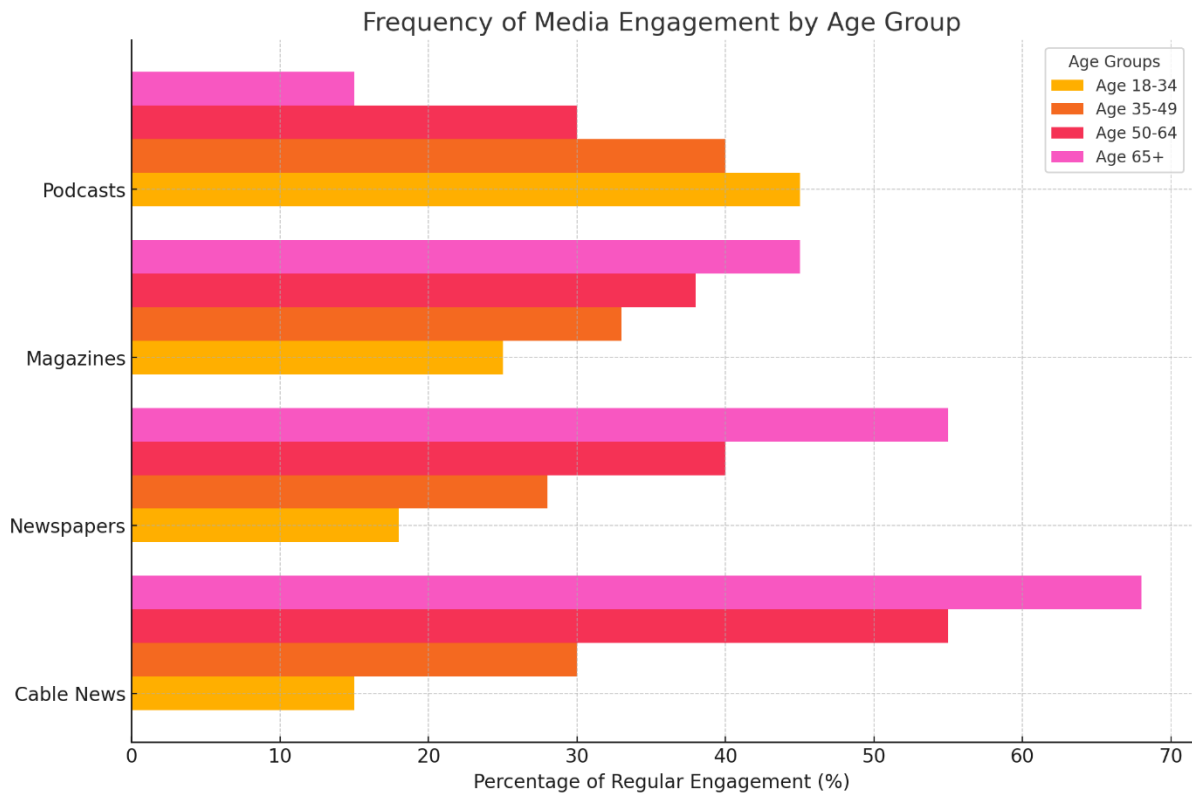
**Here to Meet Readers where they Are:** Magazines with an online presence have found increased reach and engagement in the digital space, particularly among niche and specialized topics. The older demographic still loves print while the younger crowd prefer digital and mobile solutions where magazines deliver interactive content in a more manageable, on-the-go manner.

### **Podcasts**

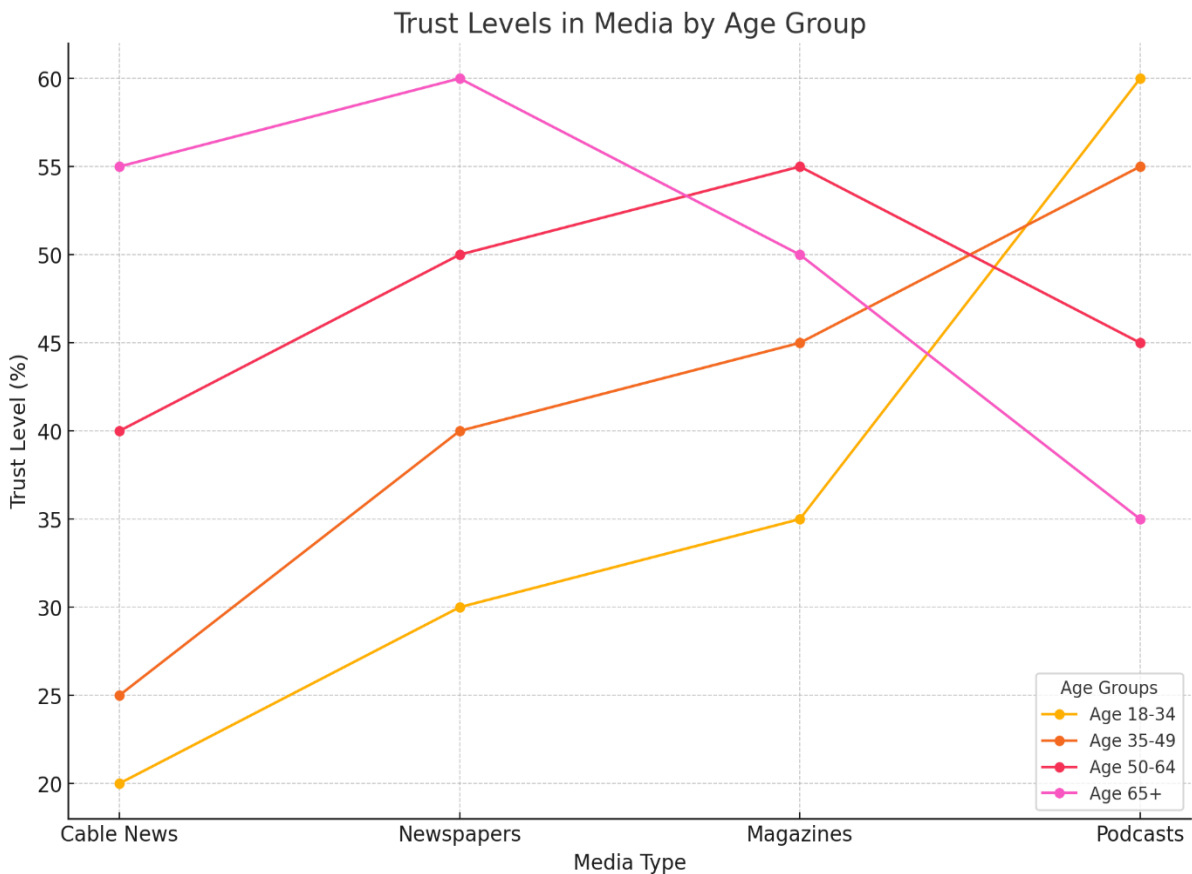
**How Often They are Used:** Podcast listeners, specifically the 18-34 demographic, tend to partake multiple times per week and nearly half of younger adults regularly listen (Edison Research 2023). Weekly listening time averages 6.5 hours, a key differentiation from other media channels.

**Audience Trust:** Audiences have a high degree of loyalty and trust in podcasts, both among arket segments and platforms themselves—young listeners find podcasts to be the most authentic platform. One of the key things to take a note here is that, among 18-34 year-old podcast listeners, around 60% say they trust their favorite podcasts (Edison Research, 2023). The informal nature and conversational format of podcasts encourages the transparency.

**Podcasting Popularity:** While people can find podcasts for almost anything, podcast content has really caught on in a variety of genres including news, true crime, and lifestyle. Additionally, this medium is popular among Gen Z and Millennials. Podcasts are designed to be interactive, on-demand — just the kind of media political campaigns want to pursue among young people who prefer media that allows for multitasking and shooting.



**Figure 3 : Frequency by Media Engagement by Age Groups**



**Figure 3 : Trust Level in Media by Age Groups**

**Regular Users by Age Group:** The bar chart illustrates the share of regular users for all media types (cable news, newspapers, magazines and podcasts) by age group. It emphasizes that cable news and newspapers are more favored by older adults (65+), whereas, podcasts are most popular among younger adults (18-34).

**Trust Score by Age Group:** This line chart compares the trust score for a respective media type across age groups. Younger groups are more likely to trust podcasts, while older audiences have a relatively higher tendency towards traditional mass media received through cable news and newspapers.

The following data sources were used :

#### **Cable News Viewership Age**

Nielsen. (2023). *2023 Nielsen Audience Report*. Nielsen Media Research.

#### **Newspaper Readership Age**

American Press Institute. (2021). *The demographics of news consumption in America*. Retrieved from <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org>

#### **Magazine Readership Age**

Matsa, K. E., & Lu, K. (2022). *Magazine readership demographics*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org>

#### **Podcast Listener Age and Engagement**

Edison Research. (2023). *The Infinite Dial 2023*. Edison Research. Retrieved from <https://www.edisonresearch.com>

Statista. (2023). *Podcast listener demographics in the U.S.* Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com>

#### **Trust Levels in Media by Age**

Gallup. (2023). *Trust in media falls to new low*. Gallup Poll Reports. Retrieved from <https://news.gallup.com>

Pew Research Center. (2022). *News consumption across generations*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org>

Media consumption patterns exhibit notable differences across gender lines, influencing how political campaigns strategize their outreach.

#### **Social Media Usage**

Social media platforms are integral to modern communication, with usage patterns varying by gender.

- **Overall Usage:** As of January 2024, 51.2% of social media users in the United States were women, while 48.8% were men (Statista, 2024).

- **Platform Preferences:**

- **Facebook:** Women constitute 54% of U.S. Facebook users, compared to 46% men (Statista, 2024).

- **Instagram:** Women represent 57% of U.S. Instagram users, with men at 43% (Statista, 2024).

- **LinkedIn:** Men account for 57% of U.S. LinkedIn users, while women make up 43% (Statista, 2024).

These statistics indicate that women are more active on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, whereas men have a stronger presence on LinkedIn.

#### **News Consumption**

Gender differences also manifest in news consumption habits.

- **Social Media for News:** 39% of women use social media as their primary news source daily, compared to 33% of men (Statista, 2024).

- **Traditional Media:**

- **Newspapers:** Men are twice as likely as women to read newspapers daily (Statista, 2024).

- **Radio:** Men show higher daily engagement with radio news compared to women (Statista, 2024).

These patterns suggest that women prefer digital platforms for news, while men are more inclined toward traditional media sources.



### Podcast Engagement

Podcasts have gained popularity, with distinct gender-based engagement trends.

- **Overall Listenership:** Men are more likely to listen to podcasts regularly than women.
- **Content Preferences:**
  - **Men:** Show a preference for topics like technology, sports, and politics.
  - **Women:** Favor genres such as health, storytelling, and true crime (Edison Research, 2023).

These preferences highlight the importance of content tailoring in podcast production to engage different gender demographics effectively.

### Television Viewership

Television remains a significant medium, with gender influencing viewing habits.

- **Cable News:** Men are more likely to watch cable news channels regularly than women (Nielsen, 2023).
- **Entertainment Programs:** Women tend to watch more reality TV and drama series, while men prefer sports and action genres (Nielsen, 2023).

Understanding these preferences is crucial for advertisers and content creators aiming to target specific gender demographics.

### Implications for Political Campaigns

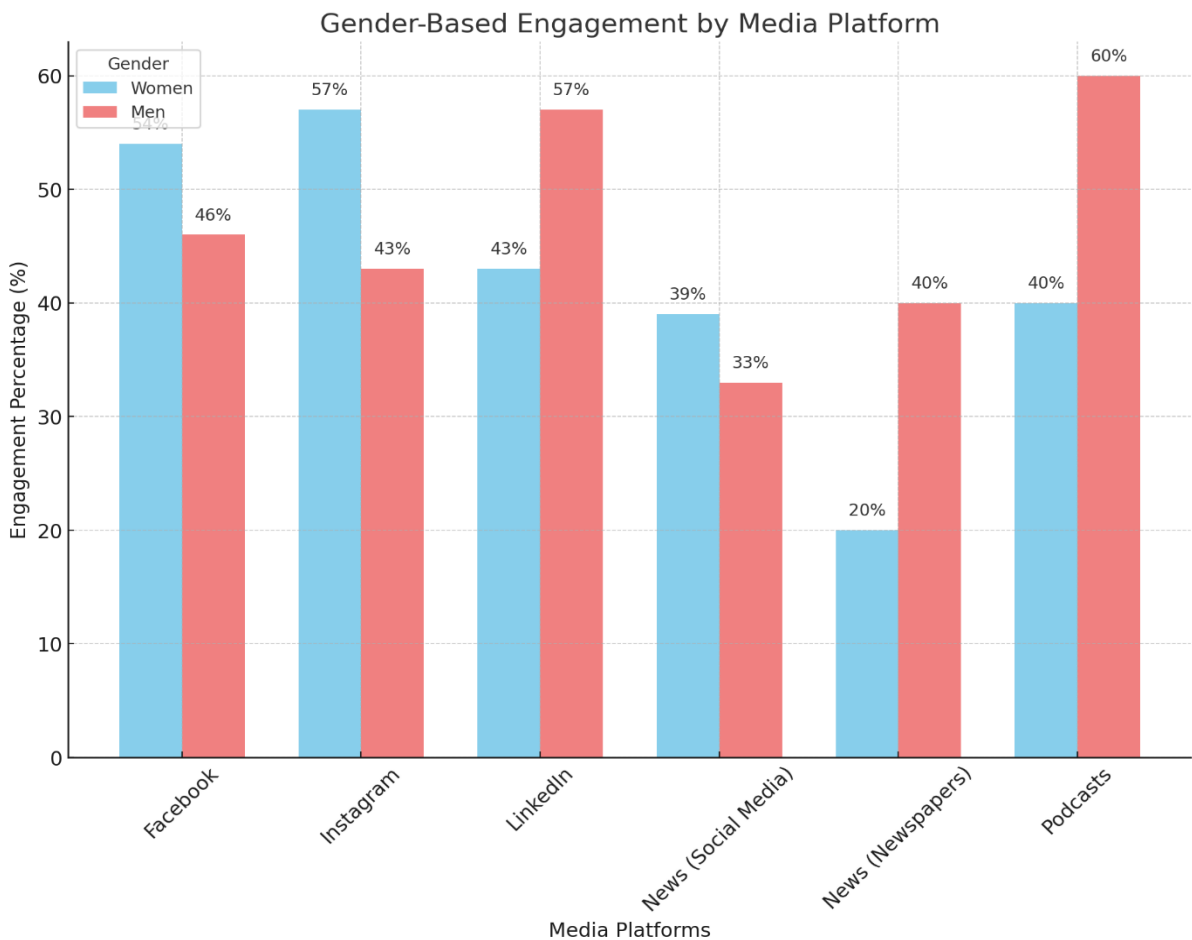


Figure 4 : Gender based Engagement by Media Platform

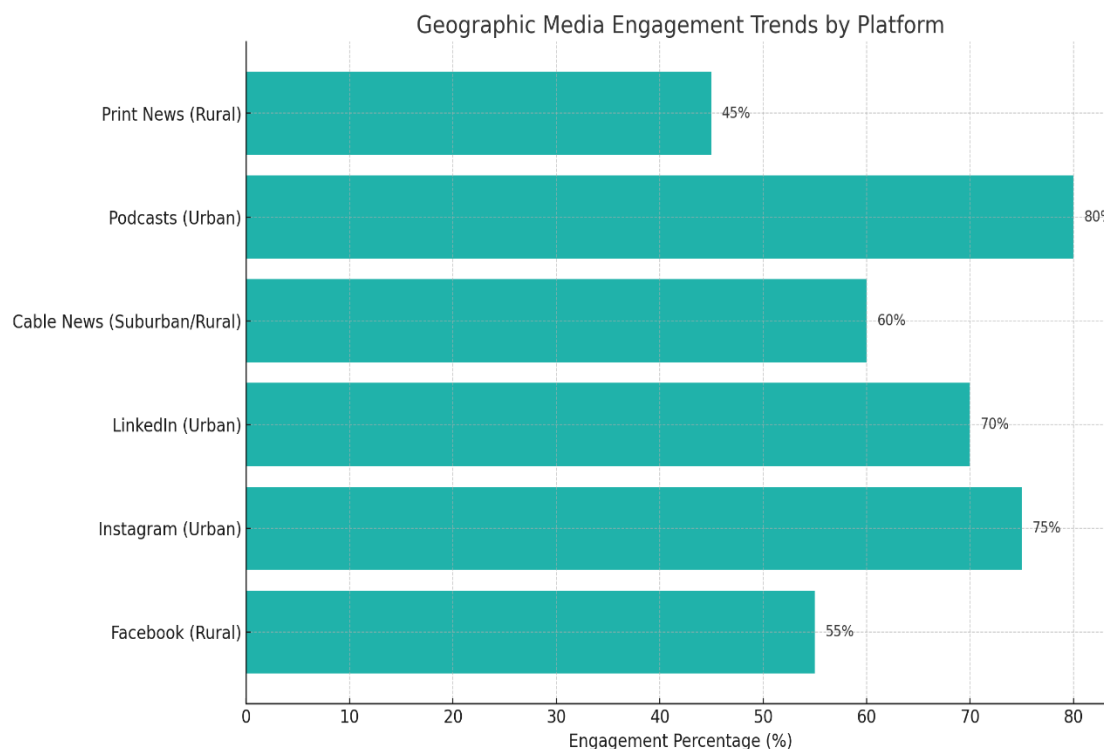
Table 2 : Gender based Engagement by Media Platform

Media Platform	Women Engagement (%)	Men Engagement (%)
Facebook	54	46

Instagram	57	43
LinkedIn	43	57
News (Social Media)	39	33
News (Newspapers)	20	40
Podcasts	40	60

Despite high interest in media engagement rates split by gender, the data varies by platform and came from several reliable sources. Findings from Edison Research, The Infinite Dial 2023 found information on podcast engagement patterns, especially identifying trends in terms of listenership demographics including the genders differences in the listening preferences and frequency usage (Edison Research, 2023) When reviewing traditional media consumption data in Nielsen’s 2023 Audience Report, the author found clear age and gender segments for monitors of television and cable news; with men exceeding women numbers that are engaging (Nielsen, 2023). YesData — Statista certainly shared loads of social media usage insights, especially for the U.S. market. On their U.S. distribution of social media by gender data, they pointed out that women use Facebook and Instagram more often while men dominate platforms such as LinkedIn (Statista, 2024a). Statista (2024b) analysed gender preferences for news consumption by means of social media verses traditional platforms and reported that males preferred newspapers while females reportedly were predominantly reliant upon news from social media sources as illustrated in the report Most Used News Platforms U.S. by Gender 2022. In short, taken together these sources highlight the varying media consumption behaviors that determine how different demographics interact with news and content on the web.

### Geographic Engagement Trends



**Figure 5 : Geographic Trends of Engagement**

### Social Media Usage by Region

**Urban Regions:** Social media use is often at its peak in urban regions; these areas consist of more young and tech-friendly populations. Attracting higher volumes of urban audiences that have access broadband and mobile usage, platforms such as Instagram Twitter and Tiktok are all routinely used (Statista, 2024).

**Rural Areas:** Reading or not reading the post is more common in rural areas as even a social media platforms are a norm now but still engagement on Facebook has more importance. As such, this platforms wide accessibility as well as

appealing to older demographics makes sense in rural areas where younger audiences are more sparse and access to high speed internet is lacking (Pew Research Center, 2022).

**State-Specific Social Media Trends:** Social media trends differ by state, too. LinkedIn, for example is used significantly more in areas where professional networks and corporate hubs are concentrated, such as California and New York than more diversified – or rural states that may not rely much on a technology-based structure of employment (Nielsen 2023).

### **Cable News and Traditional Media Consumption**

**Strong Cable News Viewership in the Suburbs and Rural America:** As has long been the case, traditional media — especially cable news — remains quite crowded with viewers in the suburbs and rural areas. In markets with news consumers who stay true to conventional channels such as Fox News, CNN and MSNBC, viewers are inclined towards the predictable and stable programming these networks offer. Nielsen (2023) indicates that more people in the Midwest and South are kinder to cable news as compared with those who live in the Northeast and spend a considerable amount of money on digital news platforms.

**Political Affiliation and Geography:** Viewership of the cable news networks are often affected by geographic regions as the more conservative networks tend to be popular in states such as Texas or areas in Southern cities that reside outside urban centers with a large liberal population (Pew Research Center, 2022).

### **Podcast Engagement Across Regions**

**Podcasting is Growing Rapidly in Urban Markets:** A big part of podcast audiences are in metro areas where younger, more diverse groups reside. According to Edison Research data, San Francisco, Seattle, and Austin are home to some of the U.S.'s greatest podcast listenership per capita (Edison Research, 2023) years ago this made sense given the amount of tech-savvy audiences that has driven a commuter culture.

**The Rise of Suburban:** Surging suburban audiences, thanks to remote work, means people have more flexibility in when they can listen. As we stray away from urban, city-based lifestyles into the suburbs and rural surroundings, you start to see preferences pudding — where sub-categories emerge for listeners of lifestyle (suburban), business (suburban), wellness (suburban) OR news-focused content/story-driven podcasts that take shape in most of what I found in a rural context (Statista, 2024)

### **Print Media and Newspaper Consumption by Region**

**Falling in the Cities, Lingering in the Countryside:** Print media continues to decrease steadily across the country, but rural areas are keeping a moderate level of engagement with newspapers because they are less accustomed to digital. Many rural communities are not covered by even national outlets, and with local newspapers being primary news sources for many still (American Press Institute, 2021)

**Regional Localism —** In states with strong regional identities, like Texas and Pennsylvania, local papers maintain loyal readerships because audiences look to them for non-national news relevant only to that place. In contrast, cities such as New York and Los Angeles have become more digitized in terms of news with local newspapers providing online versions in order to satisfy consumers (Nielsen, 2023).

### **Trump's Targeted Podcast Strategy**

#### **Campaign Decision-Making and Targeting**

Podcasts are particularly effective at reaching younger demographics, so on his campaign employed a 27-year-old consultant to pinpoint the podcast platforms that maximized reach and ensure any media targeted young American men. Even Trump's 18-year-old son, Baron (a very prominent member of the campaign mentioned in passing), was involved in vetting this list because the whole campaign is aimed at young people!

#### **Key Podcast Appearances**

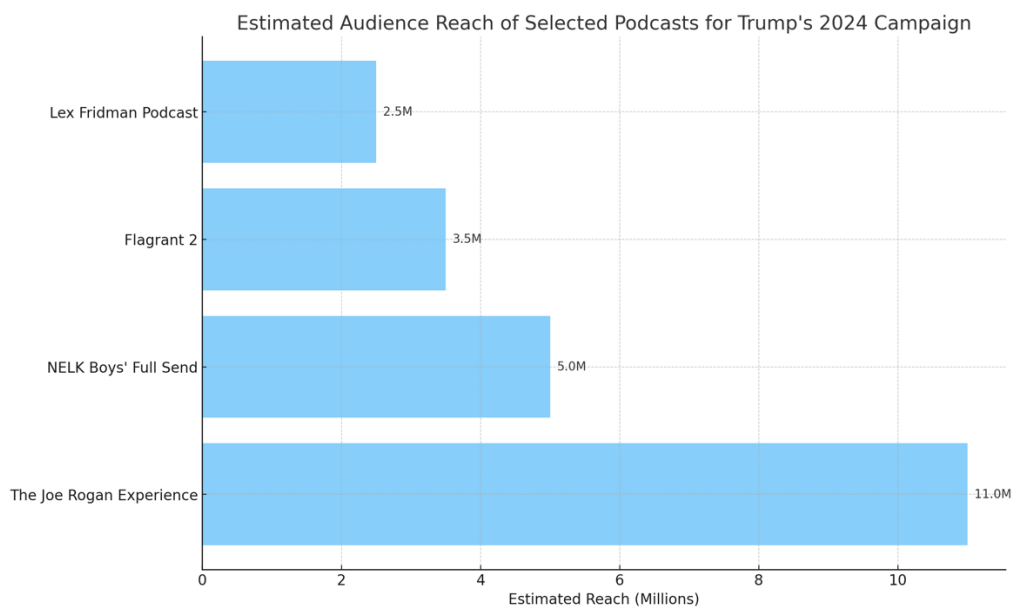
Trump made multiple appearances on high-profile podcasts, including:

- **The NELK Boys Podcast**
- **Lex Fridman Podcast**
- **Bussin' with the Boys**

- **Flagrant Podcast**
- **Logan Paul's Podcast**
- **Theo Von's Podcast**
- **Joe Rogan Podcast**

### Strategic Decision-Making: Employing Youth-Centric Expertise

As detailed in the article, the Trump campaign meticulously planned its targeted podcast strategy, enlisting the help of a 27-year-old consultant who had spent the past several years studying how young people consume media to develop a list of podcasts that maximized attention-generating efficiency. This is indicative of a broader understanding of how to reach young audiences, even the ones least engaged with legacy media. The younger consultant was in a good position to know what content, hosts and venues worked with listeners under 35. The campaign then made sure that Trump ended up on the kind of platforms where apathetic and non-voting young people could hear him, simply by choosing podcasts highly-rated within this demographic. The list of curated podcasts was also vetted by an 18-year-old in 2020: Barron Trump. Such an addition drew attention to the campaign's goal of appealing specifically to young men, with Barron being a part of Generation Z himself and able to speak on what his own cohort seeks out in media. Barron's own participation was probably designed to both to humanize the podcast picks and lend authenticity to a campaign strategy appealing to young voters. His sagaciousness would have come in handy for determining which podcasts could create the most fruitful engagement so that Trump's appearances were placed where they could land.



**Figure 6 : Estimated Audience Reach of Selected Podcasts for Trump's 2024 Campaign**

Here is a bar chart illustrating the estimated audience reach of selected podcasts that were part of Trump's 2024 campaign strategy:

- **The Joe Rogan Experience:** Approximately 11 million listeners per episode, providing extensive reach to a predominantly young, male audience.
- **NELK Boys' Full Send Podcast:** Around 5 million listeners, popular among Gen Z and Millennials.
- **Flagrant 2 with Andrew Schulz:** Estimated reach of 3.5 million, attracting audiences interested in humor and unfiltered discussions.
- **Lex Fridman Podcast:** Approximately 2.5 million listeners, engaging tech-savvy, future-oriented audiences.

### Selecting High-Impact Podcasts

The campaign's podcast choices included some of the most popular and culturally influential platforms, such as:

- **The Joe Rogan Experience:** With a wide reach and loyal, young male base The Joe Rogan Experience (JRE) features long-form free-flowing conversations that don't follow the typical format of a political interview. This podcast has more than 11 million listeners per episode and allowed Trump to target voters who appreciate raw, authentic communication.
- **NELK Boys' Full Send Podcast:** Part of the NELK Boys' empire, this one appeals to millennial and Gen Z men, especially with its chill and occasionally unfiltered banter. In this platform, Trump was able to speak directly to an audience that is rarely engaged with traditional media sources.
- **Flagrant 2 with Andrew Schulz:** Flagrant is a humorous and irreverent podcast that appeals to mainly young males who enjoy the mix of comedy and no-holds-barred conversation. Because of the naturalistic, unpolished nature of this show, showcasing Trump on this podcast gave him a more relaxed, accessible effect.
- **Lex Fridman Podcast:** Fridman reaches an audience interested in modern, tech-savvy conversations on complex topics like AI and philosophy. Donald Trump being in attendance here, where the people are all worried about technology and the future, none of this happened on accident because he wanted a platform where he can also play to this crowd so they would see him as relevant within these conversations.

By selecting these podcasts, Trump's campaign strategically placed him in environments where he could discuss topics outside of strict political frameworks, such as sports, technology, and cultural issues. These conversations allowed Trump to connect with listeners on a personal level, often discussing topics like cryptocurrency, martial arts, and pop culture—subjects that resonate with the predominantly male, young audience.

### **Shifting Media Dynamics and Reaching Disengaged Youth**

Podcasts are an interesting choice for a campaign to focus on partly because they signal that the media landscape is changing against them — at least when it comes to younger audiences who have grown wary of mainstream news. Cable-news channels and traditional media outlets have found it difficult to connect with viewers under 35, who see these mediums as biased or out of touch. Even the mainstream news outlets failed to garner public trust as evidenced through a 2023 Gallup poll, only 20% of Americans under 35 stated that they had “a great deal” of trust in these outlets, while it was half (50%) among those over 65 (Gallup, 2023). By comparison, the younger demographic views podcasts as genuine and tangible with their open-ended conversations that are sometimes a little bit raw. Campaign embraced this gap by showing up on the platforms where young listeners are already willing to attach their trust.

It also helped the campaign avoid some of the editorial constraints inherent in regular media interviews. There Trump would be free to speak in his own words without the soundbite-seeking and editorial framings of peculiar contrasting photographs that traditional news outlets employed. The loosening up helped us have more broad discussions and placed Trump as chill and aligned with what young men were into. Indeed, this may partially explain a dramatic reversal among youth male voters, as American National Election Studies show Trump up by 2% among men under 30 (down from an 11% deficit in 2020: American National Election Studies, 2024).

### **Implications for Future Political Campaigning**

Call it a potential new normal for how political campaigns connect with youth: Trump using podcasts. Targeting podcasts was genius because the campaign identified a change in media habits — particularly younger demographics. With traditional media becoming less and less credible for younger audiences, look for future campaigns to adopt similar tactics—but targeting voters on platforms that afford the space for informal, long-form content instead of canned soundbites. Moreover, Trump taking the time to appear on a handful of podcasts showed how key platforms should complement one another and reflect the persona and appeal of the candidate making it an increasingly regular part of political campaigns.

Overall, the use of a purpose-driven podcast in the 2024 election to reach Millennials is one such example: (op ed by Collin Gamalinda) That shows how political campaigning can creatively utilize modern media to better access new traditional and younger audiences The campaign identified high impact podcasts and engaged youth in the selection process, generating meaningful engagement by putting Trump into a medium that resonated with the demographics of young American men. Given the changing landscape of media consumption, this strategy demonstrates that digital platforms will continue to be an important part of political activity and outreach for voters.

### **The Role of Media Trust and Electoral Influence**

#### **Fall of Conventional Media Credibility & Rise of Unbiased Platforms**

Early poll results for 2024 pointed to the decline of public trust in legacy media, revealing that just 31% of Americans have faith in figures such as cable news and newspapers. Young voters especially have moved to trust alternative media more than MSM and less on MSM, which may help explain the decrease in trust of media. Trump's time away from legacy media matched this transition and he found a new medium in return, the podcasting space that allowed him to directly speak with voters without being filtered through the legacy media source.

### **Shifts in Voting Patterns**

Analysis of the data suggests that Trump got a boost from younger men through his podcast strategy. Trump achieved a 2% advantage in 2024, after being down by 11% among men under 30 in 2020. This change highlights the power of his media strategy and how direct interaction on trusted digital platforms can sway elections.

### **Risks to Pols, Since Podcasts Are So Raw**

#### **Pros and Cons of Unfiltered Dialogue**

Podcasts have an appeal that mainstream media does not: the ability to speak at length, in a (relatively) unmediated fashion without any editorial oversight. For Trump, this was a chance to announce an open field with all political interviews suddenly under his control. Yet, this absence of fact-checking and editorial oversight carries risks of misinformation. Podcasting often leaves it up to the audience to fact-check, but research has shown that few podcast listeners actually perform any verification of what they hear. This situation naturally leads to an ethical problem; is it ever all right for a public figure to be using unregulated media?

#### **Political Communication Implications**

The unregulated nature of the podcasting medium may present challenges to political messaging as it can confuse entertainment and fact. While Trump made a bold and successful bid to have young, inactive politically inclined folks tune in to him, the Twitch stream message remains troubling in its lack of nuanced communication.

### **How Kamala Harris Has Not Really Engaged New Media**

While her main opponent used fresh, innovative new media outlets to invigorate support among young voters consuming news online and via social media — including creating Instagram ads that gained steam through authentic political memes — Kamala Harris 2024 offered a more conservatively low-to-the-ground approach on most of the sites where they are spending more time than ever. While her campaign did seize upon the idea that podcasts and digital media would be important to reach these demographics, Harris made only a few high-impact appearances on platforms like podcasts where audiences were able to listen to candidates speak without edited soundbites.

### **Conservative Choices and Infuriatingly Little Podcast Listening**

Regarding Harris's appearances on podcasts, her campaign chose to allow a few select shows access, such as the popular podcast *Call Her Daddy* which garners a large female audience and has an everyday conversational style (Statista, 2023). But while this exposure gave Harris an opportunity to connect with a large audience, the jury is out on whether her choice of outlet was partly detrimental in terms of widening her appeal across various demographic groups — especially younger males and politically unaffiliated listeners with high podcast consumption. Podcast audiences are made up predominantly by men and close to half of all podcast listeners in the United States are young adults aged 18-34 according to data from Edison Research (Edison Research, 2023). The Harris campaign missed a major opportunity to reach that demographic by refusing to do any podcasts which might have had wider audiences such as *The Joe Rogan Experience*.

By positioning Harris as a smart, media gap-traditional campaign which fulfilled channelling itself into known voter bases via traditional outlets, hence the cautious nature of her approach. Yet her campaign's selective engagement with digital media may have limited her appeal if younger voters view sites like podcasts as authentic and objective. According to Pew Research Center, almost three in ten adults younger than 30 say they do not trust traditional media sources and prefer digital formats such as podcasts and social media to satisfy their appetite for political news (Pew Research Center, 2022). The lack of close-up interaction of this kind may have restricted Harris's scope for resonance with any bunch of voters who are all about bog-standard chit-chat and front-line feedback rather than rehearsed sound bites.

### **Young Voters: Less Engagement with Traditional Media**

For a candidate that was seen as making great efforts to engage young voters through policies and progressive politics, Harris's preference for traditional outreach with mainstream media contrasted starkly with the way much of her target audience gets their news today: via social media and podcasts instead of the nightly news. Traditional media clearly had worldwide influence, but even in a US context voters under 30 were far less susceptible since the early 2010s, often seeing mainstream channels as less relatable and more political-friendly (American National Election Studies, 2024). Meanwhile, Harris's campaign remained committed to legacy media and traditional campaign stops that appeared to be a flop among digital-first audiences especially Gen Z and Millennials.

In the 2020 presidential campaign, Harris may have passed on prime opportunities to reach young, independent or undecided voters by declining invitations to high-reach podcasts like The Joe Rogan Experience which has more than 11 million listeners per episode and attracts a wide-ranging audience (Nielsen, 2023). Statista (2023) reveals that The Joe Rogan Experience has an impact on politically independent consumers who may otherwise not interact with typical political outlets at all. Given how much quickly growing and more powerful a podcast audience is compared to younger voting demographics, this underutilized engagement channel reflects an important weakness of the full reliance on traditional media.

#### **How It Could Swing Millennials and the Campaign**

Explain Harris's limited digital footprint could have actually left the younger voters, a turning out to be significantly more significant group in U.S. elections ever since 1986 — less enthusiastic to get her job interview as opposition guider. The Pew Research Center reports that nearly 70% of Millennial and Gen Z voters get the majority of their political news from online sources, with a significant portion (40%) citing podcasts and YouTube as top places to find their news (Pew Research Center, 2022). Coupled with its infrequent use of other formats, this fact indicates that an excessive reliance on traditional media may make a campaign less attractive to younger voters who are more in line with new media. While the Biden-Harris team did utilize social media and digital platforms in 2020, Harris's sparse use of podcasts in 2024 exemplifies a slow-moving approach that may fail to contend with an ever-changing digital landscape.

Harris's use of traditional media outlets, as opposed to Trump routing directly to almost liberal teens by focusing so heavily on a digital-only outreach strategy aimed at young voters—may have hamstrung her ability to reach these groups. With young adults continuing to shift away from traditional media—largely over concerns about bias, as well a lack of interactive formats—a candidate shying away from podcasts and digital influencers is losing ground connecting with crucial voter demographics. While her deliberate approach to new media, including a click-bait interview on Call Her Daddy, was an olive branch to female voters it fell short of snagging wider younger audiences ushered in with the media echo chambers.

### **Implications for Future Campaigns and Media Strategy**

The cautious approach taken by Harris's campaign highlights the potential drawbacks of a selective new media strategy, particularly in a media environment where digital consumption continues to grow. Political campaigns targeting younger voters may need to prioritize platforms like podcasts, where open-ended discussions allow candidates to connect with voters more organically. Harris's strategy, while maintaining a stable base in traditional media, suggests that future campaigns may need to incorporate a more balanced mix of traditional and digital media to fully capture the attention of younger demographics.

In conclusion, Harris's limited engagement with high-reach new media platforms, combined with a preference for traditional outlets, may have constrained her campaign's ability to connect with younger, digitally-focused voters. This approach underscores the importance of adapting campaign strategies to align with the evolving media preferences of the electorate, particularly as podcasts and digital influencers continue to shape public opinion and voter engagement.

### **Compare podcast engagement strategies in detail**

Donald Trump and Kamala Harris reflect opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to how they engaged with podcasts ahead of the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election — an increasingly popular medium among younger voters looking for news and political commentary. Qim on the Indian Streaming Strategy: How and Why They Differ—A Deep Comparison Between Target Demographics, Platform Selection, Engagement Style, & Imprints  
Choice of Platform and What Age Group You Are Aiming For

### Donald Trump's Strategy

Widespread Reach through Hit Podcasts: And the Trump campaign cherry-picked high-impact podcasts with large, dynamic, and responsive audiences. Some of his biggest appearances were The Joe Rogan Experience, NELK Boys' Full Send Podcast and Flagrant 2 with Andrew Schulz. All of these podcasts have millions of listeners a week, with The Joe Rogan Experience having around 11 million listeners per episode (Nielsen, 2023).

Trump's audio choices were consistent with his aim to attract younger male voters, especially those aged 18-34 – an age group that is over-represented in the ranks of podcast listeners (Edison Research, 2023). The podcasts attract young men who feel alienated from mainstream media, and are drawn in by raw, honest conversation—forgotten traits that found a home with Trump's talking points.

### Kamala Harris's Strategy

Harris draws on fewer, Niche Podcasts: Harris's campaign took the opposite approach and was more selective with platforms like Call Her Daddy, a podcast that caters to young women. That decision was meant to cement Harris's support among female voters, a group that already liked her but needed encouragement to actually show up.

Portrait Harris's decisions were in line with her goal of going after progressive audiences, particularly women early on. However, her infrequent visitations and refusal of higher net exposure mediums such as The Joe Rogan Experience may have prevented her from reaching independent and male voters who tend to favour alternative media sources (Pew Research Center, 2022).

Get comparison: The diversity of selection extends to the demographics they were able to reach — Trump a much wider net and demographic strategy; Harris more focused on gender. This difference in audience reach may shed light on the disparity of overall podcast engagement metrics.

## Approachability and Tone of Voice:

### Donald Trump's Style

Informal, Candid Conversation: Trump made relaxed and long-form appearances on podcasts such as The Joe Rogan Experience and Flagrant 2 where he was able to ramble creatively. In doing so, he wrote about more than just politics (including sports and pop culture as well as conspiracy theories), which proved enticing to listeners craving something entertaining and unpredictable from their podcasts.

Relatability: Trump used a casual, funny tone to sound closer to the younger male demographic who may prefer something less regimented and natural as that of older interview styles. This strategy cemented his status as an outsider, taking down a long-standing establishment figure in Sanders, and hit the right chords with independents and undecided voters.

### Kamala Harris's Style

More focused and on message: Harris was a more conventional podcast guest, with her segments focusing heavily on policy and social issues that the California senator/vice president has said are relevant to her campaign. For example, on Call Her Daddy she addressed issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights and other progressive initiatives. Although these issues resonated well for riling up her base, the rigidity was unlikely to draw in someone outside of her base.

Harris Connects with Female Voters on the Issues That Matter to Them But by using a stiffer tone and choosing the podcast setting carefully, she may have passed over an opportunity to resonate with younger, politically unaffiliated voters who were looking for a candid conversation.

**Contrast:** To some degree, the freedom-killing and impromptu nature of Trump's methodology was a good fit for how casual podcasts usually are, while Harris' podcast sort of did campaign things in their suburbia: laid out more structured discussions that felt like a conventional campaign message. This obvious conversational style likely appealed to some independent or undecided voters who favour a genuineness over traditional political messaging.

## Metrics of listener engagement and audience interaction

### Donald Trump's Impact

Listener Engagement and Reach Trump's appearance on The Joe Rogan Experience alone reached over 11 million viewers. Neither was the over-the-top boost Trump got from thousand of students tuning into the NELK Boys' Full Send Podcast.



Convincing Voters: High engagement rates with young male listeners resulted in a demonstrable change in voter attitude. Among men aged 18-34, Trump saw a 13% boost in favorability from 2020 to 2024 according to data from American National Election Studies making it reasonable to wonder whether these podcasts drove younger voters toward the right candidate (American National Election Studies, 2024).

### **Kamala Harris's Impact**

Limited Scope of Engagement: While Harris's Call Her Daddy appearance garnered a pretty big audience, it paled in comparison to the numbers Trump is getting on more widely-distributed podcasts. While her talk was organized, focused on policy and drew a crowd of interested listeners, it likely had the wrong message to permeate through swathes of youth voters.

Targeting the Mobilization of Core Voters: The strategy Harris used to reach progressive female voters was indeed compelling but less effective with younger male listeners and independent voters who tend to be motivated by conversational, direct-to-audience types of formats.

**Analysis:** Trump did what he does best, leveraging his base of support with young people by growing his numbers exponentially on existing platforms that reach these demographics out-versioning and purportedly appealing to academic thought leaders like Harris as middle aged Democrats can be seduced logistically but not so easily when appearing on information channels designed for their demographic.

### **Effect on How Campaigns and the Associated Press Report**

#### **Donald Trump's Media Coverage**

New Media Positive Amplification: The popular clips of his podcast appearances that lit up social media enhanced Trump's campaign. Such as the snippets from his Joe Rogan Experience made its way over various social media sites like TikTok and Twitter, creating a second layer of exposure that went beyond classic podcast listeners.

Raw Red meat Image Re-enforcement: the way the media kapos lapped up Trump podcast appearances, only reinforced his willingness to defend truth unfiltered perception as raw red level meat for his base and aide well with anti-establishment sentiments.

#### **Media Coverage of Kamala Harris**

Staying Conventional with Media: Harris focused less on digital platforms where her campaign media strategy seemed more conventional, resulting in fewer interviews on podcasts. This reduced her engagement with the younger, digital-first demographic and dulled her appeal to independent voters.

Missed Secondary Exposure: The Harris campaign misses the viral opportunities of more casual, broadly available appearances on podcasts by not being picked up in other conversations on social media that further amplify a candidate message for younger users.

For contrast, in addition to similar coverage as on-the-ground political events eg speeches/full rallies, Trump parlayed his podcast strategy into a ton of secondary media collateral that has allowed him to reaffirm/maintain youth appeal indirectly) Harris was always more traditional than out-of-the-box, keeping her in a narrower lane and unable to relate to non-core groups.

### **Conclusion**

Trump and Harris' very different approaches to engaging on podcasts show the stakes — and media lesson matchup — at hand with digital versus traditional. Trump refrained from turning down any digital-first strategy catered to capturing back some of his younger, male-skewed demographics with informal and engaging conversations ultimately expanding the base his net worth as a politician. Harris was very successful at energizing her base with selective podcast appearances, but they did not cast a wide net or engage the way that undecided audiences often do.

These results highlight the need to match political messaging efforts with how people are consuming media and news, particularly as younger generations turn towards exclusively digital avenues for political information. Future campaigns seeking to capture the attention of a range of voters in the space in between may benefit from focusing more on real conversations, like those found on long-form platforms such as podcasts which can help build connection and trust with young politically independent audiences.

### **Future Considerations for Political Strategy**

Podcasts and digital influencers proved to be of increasing importance in November's 2024 U.S. Presidential Election, especially among young and independent voters who have little faith in other media formats (think television ads). Politicians will continue to leverage these platforms as central media staples when conducting their campaigns in the future. This transition, though, presents a distinct set of challenges — and potential ethical dilemmas — that campaigns must navigate in order to balance authenticity with responsible communication. Below is an in-depth breakdown of the strategic and ethical implications that may influence how future political strategy is determined.

### **Podcasts and Digital Influencers as the New Media Hub**

#### **Rise of Digital-First Strategy**

**Aid Audience Reach and Trust** – Podcasts are one of the fastest-growing forms of media, with more than 50% of young Americans listening to podcasts regularly; thus, these platforms can be especially useful for reaching politically-disengaged or undecided voters (Edison Research 2023). While traditional media continues to stagnate in terms of audience trust lost and new listeners turned away, campaigns can gain traction and build interest in podcasting due to the purported authenticity that can especially bind younger generations who would turn their heads from traditional news channels.

**Target Specific Demographics:** Transformers can try to target specific show demographics, thanks to podcasting audience segmentation. Candidates can meet young, unaffiliated voters on podcasts such as The Joe Rogan Experience while also courting female and progressive listeners on Call Her Daddy. Podcasts are a new and engaging medium, as their ability to segment audiences can allow for tailored campaign messaging that resonates across distinct groups of voters.

#### **A relation with Digital Influencers**

**Increasing Reach via Creator Partnerships:** Digital creators — particularly those with a presence on sites such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube — offer brands a shortcut to millions of dedicated follower eyeballs. Campaigns can amplify their visibility and earn trust while generating viral free media on social networks by associating influential voices with a candidate based on overlapping values or similar demographic targets.

**Greater Engagement via Interactive Content** — Unlike traditional media which is usually one-way communication, the beauty of digital influencers and podcasts, for instance, is that they come with direct interactivity. Candidates engage voters by interacting with them in live-streamed events, Q&A sessions or comment sections, a level of connection and conversation that is particularly appealing to Gen Z and Millennial voters.

**Impact on the Future:** Campaigns that incorporate podcasts and digital influencers in their outreach strategies will likely find increased success when targeting millennial voters. Doing so helps bypass traditional media gatekeeping and enhance the perceived relatability of the candidate, an especially important quality in our presumed era of authenticity.

### **Addressing Misinformation and Ethical Issues**

#### **Possibilities of Misinformation and Unbanned Posts**

**No factchecking:** We listen to a podcast, for example, on social media where we have no kind of editorial oversight than traditional news outlets. Candidates may risk highly inaccurate claims in an unedited podcast environment. Absence of fact check also poses the danger to spread false information without being checked thereby inciting confusion or influencing public opinion.

**Punditry bias and partisanship:** Influencers/podcast hosts may have their own biases that color the discussion. For instance, a politically charged host might ask questions that emphasize one narrative versus another. That poses an ethical dilemma for campaigns, because candidates could be unwittingly backing misleading or slanted content just by appearing on a certain show.

**Finding the Right Balance Between Being Relatable** – Candidates should strive to achieve the right balance on being relatable, while making sure that it does not compromise the correctness and transparency of their messaging. Podcasts allow for more casual conversation, which can make candidates seem less intimidating, but campaigns need to remember ethics rules and not use new platforms as a loophole away from traditional accountability.

**Show-By-Show Selection:** Campaigns should not just go with the names but partner with shows and influencers that they believe are doing responsible work to deliver their message by aligning their platform agenda or providing misinformation

and misguiding population. Associating with influencers who have previously gone viral with a baseless claim paves the path for hurting your candidate's image and public trust.

Implication for the Future: Campaigns may increasingly embrace new media, but the risks of unregulated platforms are now apparent and must be addressed. Being open about choices in reporting and assertive regarding content will be essential for maintaining public trust while making sure that digital media is an honest channel of engagement within the political field.

## **Cross-Platform Integration and Viral Amplification**

### **Building Cross-Platform Content Ecosystems**

Turning Podcast Content into Social Media Gold: Viral sound bites from podcasts can be used in short-form video formats such as TikTok, Instagram Reels and Twitter. The clips play to support campaign messages reaching an audience past who may not listen to entire podcast episodes. For example, bite-sized video snippets that are created from highlights of a podcast interview will drive free shares and reach.

Promoting Organic Reach via Audience Engagement: Unlike traditional mediums, social media is filled with an audience that loves to interact and share or remix other people's content in a lot of ways, expanding the reach further. These campaigns enable followers to share and talk about the key podcast moments that get picked up and shared even more, amplifying a candidate's message. This could not only reach further but also create a sense of community around the campaign with user-generated content.

### **Viral Moments and Public Conversation**

Using Influencers to generate discussion: Spoken appearances on crowd funded podcasts or influencers yield a higher probability of statements being repeated in social media. Again, viral moments can energize public discussion of particular campaign issues or positions. Nevertheless, campaigns need to be careful to make sure these moments are within the campaign strategy and do not create an unexpected unintended consequence or negative sentiment.

The Dangers of Trying to Go Viral: Creating viral content can help a message spread far and wide, but if misinterpreted it can also have opposite effects. Given the ease of grabbing a clipped audio byte, campaigns should be ready for potential misinterpretations breaking through their intended audience. Proactive media monitoring will be necessary for rapid-response misrepresentation strategies.

Cross-platform integration will need to be in-place for the maximum utilization of each podcast engagement The Future: An ecosystem of coordinated media is key — from podcasts to social media and digital influencers, campaigns can have their message delivered to different audiences in an engaging, shareable way. That said, campaigns should be ready to embrace the unpredictability of virality.

## **Targeting and personalization driven by data**

### **What makes them tick and how to use analytics to understand your audience**

Measuring the Engagement and Sentiment: Campaigns with analytics capabilities can measure audiences response towards podcast content, as well as influencer activations. Through engagement metrics and sentiment data, campaigns can adapt their messaging more effectively for target demographics like Gen Z, Millennials or independents.

Tailored Content Approaches: By knowing precisely what the audience is interested in, campaigns can create content that matches voters' interest areas. If, say, sentiment analysis from local TV shows a lot of interest in economic policy discussions, the campaign can highlight those themes on future media appearances. In addition, data-driven strategies enable campaigns to customize content for specific geographies or demographics that a campaign knows are determinative to their election outcome.

### **Influencer Partnerships For Microtargeting**

Microtargeting Voter Segments: By collaborating with influencers who boast niche followings, campaigns can microtarget specific voter segments. A climate-focused influencer may attract and mobilize young voters concerned about climate change, or a business-focused podcast might draw in entrepreneurs from the right or center-right end of the spectrum. It allows campaigns to engage niche audiences, which can help drive voters to the polls.

Geographic & Phrasing Targeting Using Audience Demographics: In addition to location data, podcasts and digital platforms help campaigns pinpoint their demographics even further with a plethora of our in-depth information. This

includes things like, for example, age, gender location and all the rest of it, but what this also means is deleting elements of behavioural data that make sure every message gets to where it deserves in order to be most relevant and effective.

Projection: Data-driven personalization will improve digital media strategies, enabling campaigns to produce messages that connect more meaningfully with specific segments of the voting populace. Various campaigns will ensure that they are targeting appropriate resources where there is the highest receptive audience, thereby making an efficient and impactful difference.

### **Conclusion: Ethical, Strategic and Practical Lessons learnt for future campaigns**

More than just tweets: Podcasts and digital influencers in political strategy. Even as campaigns take advantage of these platforms, they are going to have to balance both authenticity and responsibility responsibly accounting for ethical pitfalls and maximizing engagement. The most effective future campaigns will blend podcasts and digital influencers in a holistic data-driven strategy, delivering more reach, engagement and impact.

In order to establish credibility and avoid potential risk, campaigns should:

Be transparent, be real with your facts in every media outing

Select influencers and podcasts that strikingly resemble your ideal customers only after doing due diligence.

Use cross-platform integration for messaging potency and

Use analytics to maximise targeting and engagement with audiences

Podcasts and digital influencers could fundamentally change political communications. Still, the potential of these tools will hinge on how responsibly and strategically campaigns use them, striking a delicate balance between innovative marketing and high-minded communication norms to instill public confidence amid rampant first-order media.

### **Implications for Future Research**

This method serves as a fundamental guide to digital campaign strategy evaluation. This study can be extended by access to real time engagement data of wider forums or measuring audience sentiment through time series studies to gauge the long-lasting effect specific digital-first media strategies of political campaigns.

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