Podcasts

A powerful way to tell stories

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ISC - The New Frontiers of Science Communication

Why are podcasts powerful?

- **Immersive**
  - No pictures - but relies on imagination
- **Intimate**
  - People listen alone
  - Often feels personal
- **Impactful**
  - Wide impact - podcasts are popular
  - People have long attention spans - allows for deep impact
  - Low barrier to entry - cheap/free tools & tech

Strategies for science podcasts

- **Piggy-back on other content - e.g. Ri Science Podcast**

  - Talks, lectures, webinars, panels…

  - + Doesn't require extra editorial input, very easy to produce

  - - Not everything will be suitable, limited in scope

- **Low-level production - e.g. The G Word (Genomics England)**

  - 1-1 interviews

    - + Can be engaging, thoughtful, allows for depth and nuance

    - + Easy to produce, low cost, low input

    - - Can be boring, too niche, not sonically engaging
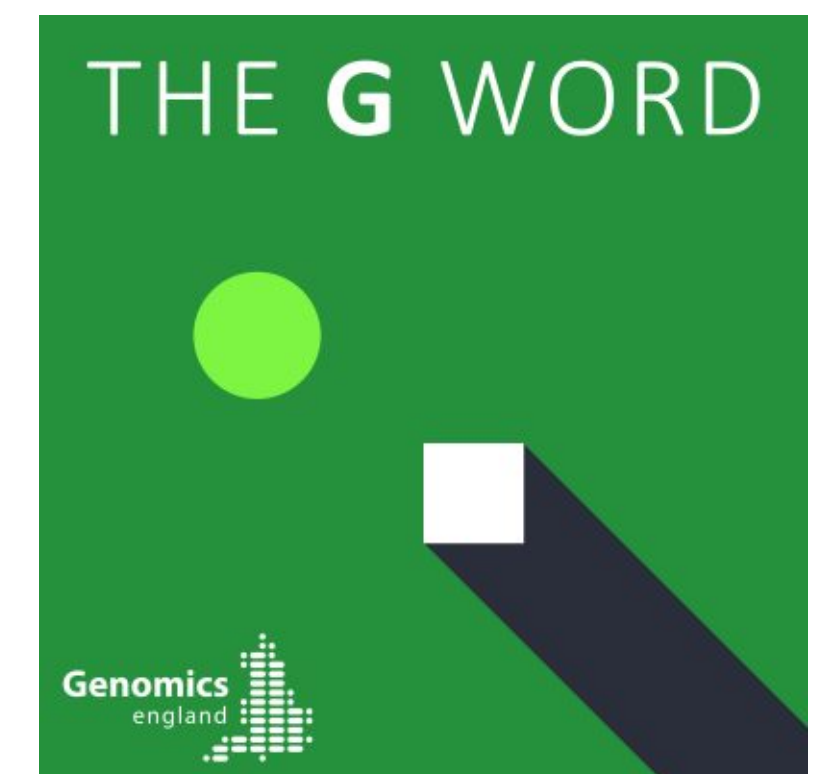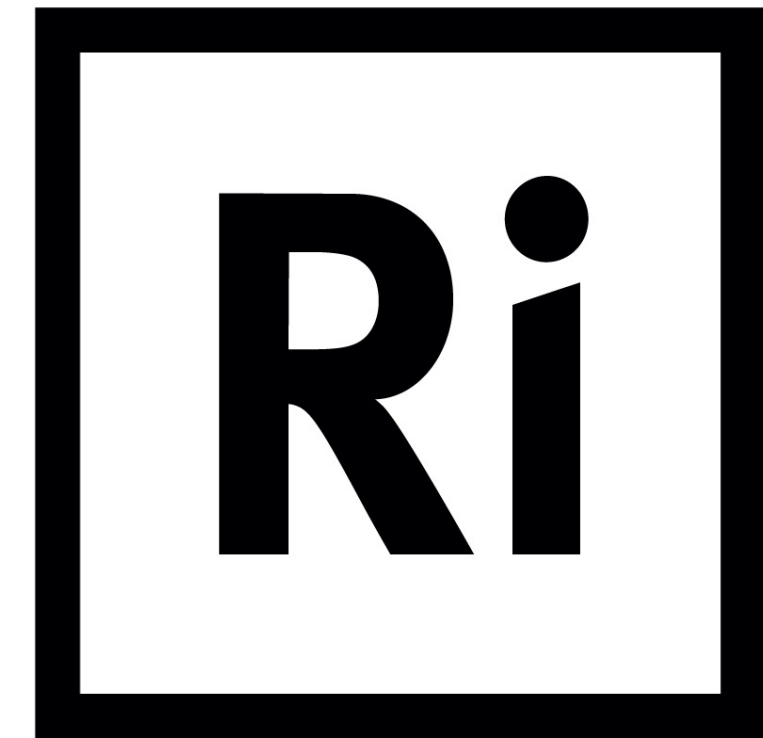
Strategies for science podcasts

- **Mid-level production - e.g. Diversity in Science (ISC)**

  - Multiple guests / stories / angles, use of music + sound

  - + More engaging, greater scope for narrative, more perspectives

  - - Requires more production work, greater editorial input

- **High-level production - e.g. CrowdScience (BBC World Service)**

  - In depth, exclusive access, locations, extensive use of sound

    - + Can be very engaging, immersive, can tell powerful stories

    - - Requires high budgets, a team of people, a successful platform
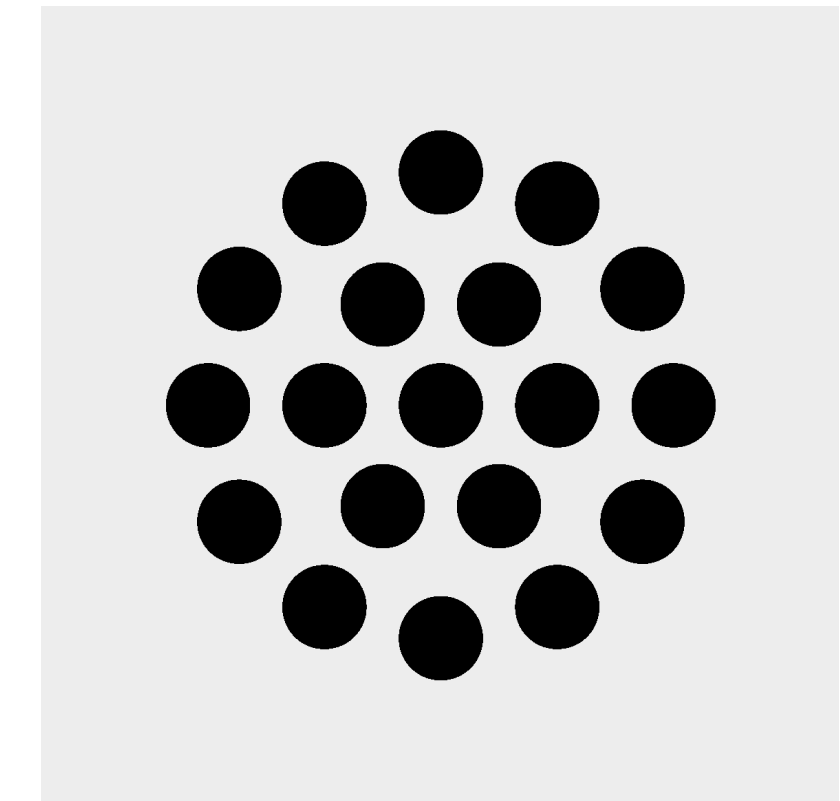
Practical tips

- **Pre-production**
  - Define and serve your audience
  - Find compelling stories / subjects / people
  - Why is this a podcast?
- **Recording**
  - Find a good host, even in-house
  - Capture good sound
    - Quiet spaces, duvets / pillows
    - USB mics, portable recorders, mobile devices

Tips for making a good podcast

- **Editing**

  - Be ruthless - cut what you don't need

  - Software - Audacity (free), REAPER (cheap), Adobe Audition (part of CC)

  - Use sound effectively - esp. music

- **Publishing**

  - Decide on a realistic release schedule, stick to it

  - Do you really need to build your own platform from scratch?

  - Collaborate with other organisations