



Andrew Mangan
of Arsecast
Picture: Fergal Phillips

they interviewed the Reverend Jesse Jackson, who had known the boxing legend for over 50 years. They had hoped to speak to the politician on the Monday morning following Ali's death on the Friday. However, Jackson was not available to do an interview until that evening.

Horgan said they had the flexibility to delay the podcast and wait for the interview, which they would not have been able to do on the radio.

Making money

Second Captains is consistently Ireland's most listened to podcast across all categories in iTunes, but it is also one of the few podcasts that is making money.

While technically it is only three years old, the podcast had a huge advantage over most. After being on the radio for eight years, people already knew the presenters, so it had a ready-made audience built up, as well as income from the Irish Times, with which it has a partnering relationship.

"It is certainly challenging for specifically Irish based podcasts because the audience is so small in comparison to Britain and the States," Horgan said. "I feel a lot of podcasts just need time. The market is still relatively new in Ireland. It has entirely changed since 2013 when we started, there are so many more podcasts available now. It takes time for sponsors to understand the benefits of podcasts."

One podcast that had no trouble securing a sponsor was the Irish Times Women's Podcast, produced by Róisín Ingle and presented by Kathy Sheridan.

Ingle said that its sponsor, Rabodirect, signed up before the podcast was even made – a benefit of having immediate access to a large audience on the Irish Times website. However, Ingle said the sponsorship did not cover the cost of the podcast. "We are on an absolute shoestring," she said.

The Women's Podcast has access to the Irish Times' in-house studio, a sound engineer, and a researcher, Jennifer Ryan, who joined from Newstalk. Aside from that, the work of podcasts has largely been subsumed into the roles of people already working for the Irish Times.

As well as producing the Women's Podcast, Ingle also presents her own podcast, Róisín Meets, on top of her day job as daily features editor at the newspaper.

It is a lot of work, compared to what journalists were expected to do ten or even five years ago, Ingle said, particularly as the team are very focused on creating quality content. "We're constantly asking: 'Is this good enough?' We don't just throw things out to fill the space," she said.

Mangan's Arsecast show only started making money in the past year. As it has a wide audience across the world, it gets between 750,000 and one million downloads a month, often reaching number one in its category in iTunes.

Last year, Mangan signed up with Acast, a curated platform for podcasts which connects listeners,



Mark Horgan of Second Captains

Fergal Phillips

podcast creators, and advertisers. Acast now hosts the podcast and sells advertising and sponsorship through the podcast.

"To be able to outsource the revenue potential of the podcast to another company who are specialists in that works for me, and that's where I think it will work for most podcasters who have any kind of an audience," he said.

The money Mangan makes from podcasting is supplemented by other income, like advertising revenue from Arseblog.

"You wouldn't want to be reliant completely on podcast income. You've got to do other things," he said. "I don't know if anyone really is making a living out of podcasting in Ireland, apart from Second Captains."

Together with Adrian Carty, Mangan launched Castaway, a podcast network, in January 2015. However, he said they were still working on ways to make it financially viable.

Audiences are not willing to pay for podcasts, at least not yet, according to Mangan. "People want content and want it for free, but don't understand that it does not come for free for the people who make it," he said.

“People want content and want it for free, but don't understand it doesn't come for free for the people who make it



Alan Swan, a producer at RTE 2FM, also has a niche audience for his podcast The Outerview Tony Kinlan

"For the most part, podcasting will remain more of a hobby, or additional content on a bigger website, then it will become a professional thing on its own," he said.

Those who podcast on a smaller level have the option of making some money from affiliate deals, Mangan said. One of the main examples of this is Audible, a website that sells audiobooks. It pays podcasters when a listener they direct to the Audible site makes a purchase. However, it is unlikely that a podcaster is going to make their fortune with this income.

The love of it

A lot of people podcast for the love of it, Mangan said, rather than seeing it as a viable business opportunity or a way of making money.

Brian Cleere, who runs Donkey Votes, a current affairs podcast, agreed with this sentiment. "We're doing it to create something that someone will enjoy, that someone will laugh at. We're not doing it to make money. It's more of a full-time hobby," he said.

Donkey Votes is a bi-monthly podcast that gives its listeners a plain English summary of what is happening in Irish politics and economics. During the podcast, Cleere, who does not know much about current affairs, contrasts with his co-host, James, who has extensive knowledge of the topic. As he works in the world of Irish politics, James only goes by his first name on the podcast.

Cleere, whose day job is in marketing and communications, said he had wanted to do a podcast for a while, and completed a short-term radio course to learn how to do it correctly.

The show is recorded in Cleere's sitting-room or bedroom, anywhere with a lot of furniture to make the sound denser, he said.

While the pair are making the podcast for fun, they are not opposed to monetising it, he said, but it would have to be done in the right way. This could be either through an appropriate sponsor, or an affiliation with a publication.

As Donkey Votes mainly covers Irish politics, it has a small but niche market, with a few hundred listeners every month.

Cleere said the podcast was useful for Irish emigrants as it gave them a quick synopsis of what is happening at home. As a result, its audience included a considerable expat community, he said, with people tuning in from up to 20 different countries.

Alan Swan, a producer at RTE 2FM, also has a niche audience for his podcast The Outerview, which focuses on the art of media interviewing.

The main audience for Swan's podcast is media students, journalists, and anyone interested in becoming a better interviewer. Guests have included Ryan Tubridy, Marty Whelan, and Claire Byrne. The self-funded podcast launched in November 2015, and he releases a new podcast every three to four weeks.

While Swan is not making money from the podcast, he does have plans to start a blog posting interview tips on the back of it, and his ultimate aim is to turn the podcasts into a book.

The benefits of podcast advertising

While many people out there are just creating podcasts for fun, they still have audiences that advertisers could tap into.

Many brands in Ireland are missing a trick by ignoring the benefits of advertising on podcasts, according to Mangan.

By working with podcasts, they can tap into the power of the presenter's relationship with their audience, which he described as "the voice of God". While audiences often change the station when ads come on the radio, they are less likely to skip ads during podcasts and they also tend to trust podcasters when they endorse a product or a service, he said. Advertisers can benefit from that loyalty, Mangan said.

"I don't think that advertisers in Ireland are really aware of what podcasts can do," he said. "Brands certainly haven't been keen to associate themselves with podcasts. There's really nobody looking to make a first move into the market."

Advertising agencies here tend to focus on the fact that podcasts have smaller audiences compared to radio shows, according to Mangan.

"The thing about podcasts is that they are very deliberate. You have to download it. You have to put it on. You don't hear a podcast by accident. You are loyal, and it is that loyalty that advertisers and sponsors are looking at using," he said.

Horgan from Second Captains agreed. "With podcasts, you have an audience that not only is dedicated and returns constantly. They have made a decision to listen to the podcast regularly and have a connection to what they listen to more so than radio. It's almost like you're speaking directly to that listener," he said.

"It's an appointment to listen. It's only natural that the message the advertiser needs to get across will have more clarity."

Where are the women?

Podcasting is a male-dominated medium in terms

of presenters and listeners. In a survey of more than 700 podcast listeners conducted by Castaway last year, 95 per cent were male. While many of these respondents came through the Arseblog, which is more skewed towards a male audience, it is still significant.

"One of the things we have tried to do is add women podcasters to the network," Mangan said. Castaway has two podcasts on its network hosted by women now, Emma Is The New Black, which is about fashion, and Fair Game, a fortnightly podcast with a firm focus on Irish sportswomen.

Before The Women's Podcast launched last September, audiences for the various Irish Times podcasts were up to 97 per cent male.

"We were missing out on 50 per cent of the audience. It doesn't make commercial sense. It doesn't make any sense," Róisín Ingle said.

"Podcasts can be quite blokey. That's not to denigrate men or anything, I just felt we were missing a trick. I thought there was an audience out there that we could tap into."

The Women's Podcast has doubled its audience since launching, and it is continuing to grow, she said.

Podcasting in journalism

Podcasting has been a great way to embrace the new reality of journalism, according to Ingle. She said that she thought in a much broader, multi-platform way since she started working in this field.

Now, when she looks at content, she sees how she can chop it into various pieces, some will work in a podcast, some will work online, some will work in print.

"The podcasts have really helped us to understand what our multi-platform content has to be now and how the whole thing can be symbiotic and has to feed into each other," she said.

Through podcasting, the Irish Times has the capacity to tell its stories in audio format as well as print, which gives it more opportunity to manage and own a story, she said.

For example, for the newspaper Ingle interviewed Claire Woods, a young woman who was considering having an abortion but decided against it. She also shared Woods' story on The Women's Podcast.

"It makes sense. The person came to us with the story and now she is going to tell it in audio form with us, giving a different slant to it," she said.

Offering coverage in print and audio can help to attract bigger names, Ingle said, adding that The Women's Podcast had been able to feature people like Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood and English writer Caitlin Moran.

The standards of the Irish Times guide the podcast, but they are very keen to ensure there is a bit of 'craic' in every show, she said.

"It is highly produced. I would feel, and the whole team would feel, terrible about letting a podcast out into the world with the Irish Times brand on it if it wasn't of a certain quality and didn't provoke a bit of thought," she said.

However, Ingle said the team were keen to ensure it was not a podcast that people would expect to hear from the Irish Times. Recent topics discussed have included sex and technology, the menopause, and chocolate.

"We're almost deliberate in our attempts to get the voices of people you wouldn't normally hear," she said. "The last thing we'd want is for someone to say: 'I know what's going to be on.'"

The podcast allows the Irish Times to take advantage of the skills of its journalists, many of whom have broadcasting experience and are sitting at desks just a few seconds away from the studio, she said.

"For younger voices, it is just wonderful to give people a start in broadcasting in their own newspaper, which is a safer place," she said.

Mangan said that it was wholly understandable that newspapers were now making their own podcasts.

"As newspapers move more and more into the digital sphere, they have to embrace all aspects of digital life," he said.

However, he does not support radio stations that repackaged their shows as podcasts.

"They're not actual podcasts. They are radio shows that went out already, and it is just a listen-back feature," he said.

Radio stations tended to dominate the podcast charts, Mangan said, and he added that he would like to see iTunes take the big media organisations out of the charts as it would give a boost to independent podcasters.

On the rise

Most involved in the industry seem sure that podcasting in Ireland is on the rise.

"It's a growing medium, and one that people are more and more interested in," Mangan said.

Horgan predicted that more and more connected technologies in smartphones, cars, and so on would make it easier for people to tune into the podcasts they want to listen to, no matter where they are.

If they are right, it is a matter of waiting to see if Irish advertisers will follow the audience sooner rather than later.