

LIFE

FEATURES & TRAVEL

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INTERNET

Spreading the news and views

Podcasts offer another medium for telling people about Las Vegas

By Michael Lyle
Las Vegas Review-Journal

Just a few years ago, professional podcaster Scott Whitney dressed up as a podcast for Halloween — a pea pod wearing a cast. Nobody got what he was.

“People didn’t know what the hell I was talking about when I told them about podcasting,” Whitney says.

In simplest terms, podcasts are audio programs

RECREATIONAL DESTINATIONS



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“People didn’t know what the hell I was talking about when I told them about podcasting,” Whitney says.

In simplest terms, podcasts are audio programs that are downloaded from the Internet to a listening device, such as an iPod.

Less than a decade after Whitney started “Living in Las Vegas,” podcasts have become more popular. From news agencies and corporations to everyday people, the medium is used for talks, interviews and some good old-fashioned storytelling. For instance, a popular podcast is “Serial,” which debuted in 2014 featuring journalist Sarah Koenig exploring a 15-year-old murder in a 12-episode series.

Las Vegas has a few podcasts dedicated to talking about the city.

Whitney created his series in 2006 after collecting various stories about the struggles people had buying homes in the Las Vegas real estate market.

“With so many people moving here at that time, someone had to talk about the housing market and give insight to locals and people moving here,” he says.

Unlike many others who are doing podcasting on the side or as a hobby, Whitney turned his interest into a full-time job, eventually making money off his craft.

“And the most important thing is I’m having fun doing it,” he says.

The subjects he talks about on the show, as well as the people he has interviewed, have varied.

In 2009, he decided to live-stream the weekly program, giving people more options on how they



Along with amazing views, the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Rim remains open year-round.

10 National

By John Przybys | Las Vegas

You probably know the 10 National Conservation Areas in the Great Basin.

What you probably don't know is that these reational destinations, parks, preservation areas and refuges are located within the state.

Another thing you might not know is that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Forest Service's creation of a particularly important area.

(Two other popular destinations in the state are managed by other agencies: Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and Charleston, in the Snake Range National Conservation Area, by the U.S. Forest Service.)

The NPS estimates that the 10 destinations cover almost 10 million

PODCAST

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can listen or view it.

"You can stream it on the Roku, YouTube, Vegas Video, iTunes, Comcast," he says. "Any way you want to listen to it."

Whitney just hit a milestone with his 245th episode. His series has grown and been heard in all 50 states and 150 countries, he says.

And the positive response from the show keeps coming.

"I was at (the San Gennaro Feast) and someone came up to me because he recognized me from the show," he says.

Whitney isn't the only podcaster in town.

Filling Inspire Theatre downtown most Thursday nights, the "Downtown Podcast" invites people to join in the live program.

The aim of the podcast is to be a blend of a late-night show and a TED Talk.

Dylan Jorgensen started the podcast three years ago out of his Ogden apartment. The idea was to develop a show that not only talks about events going on downtown, but also shows some of its inhabitants, whether it is a bartender or someone who runs a nonprofit.

"It's so people can see downtown as more than just a place you visit," he says. "We wanted to humanize it."

As the podcast grew, it moved from Jorgensen's apartment to The Beat Coffeehouse, the Scullery and now Inspire.

While the program includes talks with local people and discussions of upcoming events in the area, it also has pulled in some major interviews such as Sarah Jessica Parker and Flavor Flav.

The show has grown with a volunteer staff of 16.

Each week, the group sits down to discuss the next few weeks of events. The staff is pretty open to go with the flow and embrace new ideas on conducting the podcast.

"We are more focused on being a team and making sure the needs of the team are met," Jorgensen adds.

As the "Downtown Podcast"



ABOVE: Sarah Jessica Parker talks during a "Downtown Podcast" show, which is presented Thursdays at Inspire Theatre. SPECIAL TO THE LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

RIGHT: Scott Whitney is seen during a taping of his podcast "Living in Las Vegas."



continues to grow, he says other national podcasts will inspire the type of content they develop.

"I think we will get more experimental," he says.

He adds "Downtown Podcast" might try its hand at doing something long form to pay homage to "Serial."

Some of the more popular Las Vegas podcasts aren't even based in the city.

"Five Hundy by Midnight" and "Vegas Fanboy" are dedicated to talking about Las Vegas — entertainment, hotels, night life, news and restaurants — from the Midwest.

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in Las Vegas," says Tim Dressen, who runs "Five Hundy."

Dressen has been running his podcast for 11 years.

"It started as a hobby," he says. "While I don't consider it a job, I do make money from advertising."

Though not from Las Vegas, he is enamored with the city.

"I come there five or six times a year for five- or six-night stays each time," he says.

He uses his show to tell tourists about what they should do or expect. He also gives tips for returning tourists who don't want to do the same things over again.

Each week, he combs through local news articles and checks other blogs — as well as listens to other local podcasts — to learn about the latest trends.

Then, he imparts his knowledge to his fan base, which is growing.

"It's definitely a word of mouth thing," he says. "Other podcasts mentioned me. A lot of cross promotion. There isn't any rivalry in the community."

Similar to "Five Hundy," Adam Bauer created "Vegas Fanboy" as a way to talk about Las Vegas from a tourist's perspective; like Dressen, he visits the city several times a year.

He designed his podcast after some of his favorites such as NPR's "Planet Money" or "Freakonomics," making sure content fits into the time it takes someone to drive to work.

"I listen to them on my way to work, and I'm done (with an episode) by the time I get there," he says.

He listens to other Las Vegas ones, too, hoping to get insight and to be supportive of fellow podcasters.

Bauer thinks "Serial" has helped raise awareness.

"I think it helps podcasts gain more traction," he says.

Recently, "Serial" launched its second season.

While many of the local podcasters will listen, they are eager to see if the second season will inspire listeners to look for podcasts that are happening in their city.

— Contact reporter Michael Lyle at mlyle@reviewjournal.com or 702-387-5201. Follow @mjlyle on Twitter.

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