

Audio's online revolution in Africa

By [Jocelyne Muhutu-Remy](#)

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For decades people have been able to carry their music around - first with the boombox, then the Walkman, the Discman, MP3 players and now their phones, but the same hasn't really been true for talk-format audio content in Africa.



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Audio dramas, panel discussions and interviews have, with a few exceptions, been a job for radio but podcasting on the continent is starting a storytelling revolution.

While radio is still a critical medium on the continent (even in South Africa, its most developed economy, 80% of the population tunes in to the radio at least once a week), podcasting is providing African creators with a new way to tell their stories.

From Johannesburg to Nairobi, Accra and Lagos, these creators are starting conversations about their lives and work while also tackling issues like gender norms and social challenges head-on.

Creating fertile ground for growth

Initially, podcasting in Africa lagged behind the rest of the world where podcasting really started to take off around 2010. By contrast, South Africa's first high-profile podcasting house, CliffCentral (incidentally founded by former radio host Gareth

Cliff), was only established in 2014.

But a drop in data costs and Africa's mobile-first population have created fertile ground for podcasting to grow. As a result, the number of people making and consuming podcasts on the continent is growing steadily.



Report released on podcasting in Africa

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In Kenya, for example, of the 40% of the population with internet access, 99.7% have a smartphone. In Nigeria, meanwhile, those same figures sit at 50% and 99.5% respectively. Even more critically, the cost of connectivity is falling across much of the continent. While mobile data remains expensive in many places, several African countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Libya, Morocco, and South Africa) reached the United Nations' '1 for 2' affordability target — 1GB of data for no more than 2% average monthly income in 2021.



Source: www.pexels.com

A growing number of submarine cables connecting the continent to the rest of the world means that both fixed and mobile connection rates will continue to fall.

The pandemic and the ubiquitous use of video-conferencing tools also meant that people became increasingly comfortable with this technology, allowing them to connect with and talk to people all around the world. At the same time, the tools of the trade for podcasters like specialised microphones and audio editing software have become more affordable and easier to use.



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At Spotify, we're committed to playing our part in this revolution by lowering the barriers for African creators, enabling them to launch a career in audio, regardless of their financial backing, professional background, or where they live. We're also committed to celebrating African creators by showcasing the sounds of Africa that are taking on the global stage.

Exceptional storytelling

Africa has a long history of oral storytelling and podcasting gives a global platform to these exceptional storytellers to share

their lives, thoughts and experiences with the world.

[I said what I said](#), for example, is hosted by entrepreneur Feyikemi Abudu and storyteller Jola Ayeye, and tells stories about the Lagos millennial experience in an honest, engrossing, and funny way. Also produced in Nigeria, [Tea With Tay](#) is hosted by Taymesan and covers societal issues and personal experiences with celebrities and other guests in a fun, light-hearted and entertaining way.

Kenya's [The Sandwich Podcast](#), meanwhile, is presented in a mix of English, Swahili, and Sheng, Kenya's local slang and is hosted by four creatives discussing their life experiences. In a similar vein is [After School Is After School with Sis G.U.](#) Produced in South Africa and hosted by Gugulethu Nyatsumba, she uses the show to speak more openly and honestly about the battles that she continues to face in her 20s.

[Mantalk.ke](#) provides more serious fare. Hosted by Eli Mwenda and Oscar Koome, the show tackles a range of issues including fatherhood, feminism, dating, and self-care in an engaging way. The podcast aims to highlight positive forms of masculinity rather than the more toxic forms that dominate media narratives.

True crime is one of the most wildly popular genres in podcasting, and [True Crime South Africa](#), hosted by Nicole Engelbrecht covers solved and unsolved true crime cases from South Africa.

Sharing the sound of Africa

African creators are doing amazing things in the audio space and the world. Their stories are helping others find their passions and their voices. They're teachers, friends and companions on people's daily commute. They're ambassadors for the continent, sharing the sounds of Africa. And, at Spotify, we are committed to helping them do just that.

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