

The Deal with Animals: Using a Podcast Platform to Communicate Anthrozoological Research and Topics

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The Deal with Animals-Podcast www.thedealwithanimals.com

Overview: Even humans who do not live with or work directly with animals are touched by Anthrozoological issues, although many have never heard of the anthrozoology.

If a member of the general public is interested in these topics, they often don't have access to research in the way that those in academia do. They will likely get their information through social and other media platforms, many of which do not provide analysis of the research/story/or other information. Alternatively, researchers and others in academia can benefit from the stories of practitioners and professionals working with the public.

I am using a podcast platform to introduce and engage audiences to topics related to the connection between humans and other animals. The podcast is interview based and each series has a theme. Each interview covers a topic within that theme. Interviewees or 'guests' are researchers, academics, philosophers, authors, practitioners, professionals and/or enthusiasts.

The podcast allows for researchers to engage wider audiences than would typically be reached through journal publication alone. It gives them the opportunity to explain their work, in their own words rather than through a journalist's filter. While practitioners, professionals and enthusiasts have the opportunity to share their experiences in an ethnographic form.

The popular podcast medium is an inclusive way of sharing Anthrozoological research and topics. My goal is to document the use of the podcast platform in this way and create a PhD proposal which would allow others to follow my methods and perhaps choose to create other science-based podcasts to share research or reach out to those in the field. Currently the most downloaded/popular episodes include subjects such as: Burnout/Compassion Fatigue in the animal welfare profession, how to promote your own Humane Garden, Eco-volunteering, Salmon conservation efforts and the history of Ornithomancy.

Methods: Guest interviews are a mix of ethnographic and topical questions related to their field or area of interest. Conversations can be very focused and last thirty minutes or if there is a range of topics an interview can extend to ninety minutes with an average interview length of about fifty minutes.



I record episodes (audio only) using Zencastr software and then transfer the postproduction recording to a podcasting platform where I can edit then schedule for automatic release to about a dozen other podcasting networks.

I currently release an episode every two weeks (Monday, early morning). In September I plan to begin releasing episodes weekly.

Use of ABS Outreach Grant funds: I would like to thank Animal Behavior Society for recognizing the merit of the work I am doing in communicating Anthrozoological topics to the public. The series I have already completed are Health and Wellness, Conservation, Equity and Social Justice in Animal Advocacy, and Wildlife Encounters.

Currently the podcast has a library of 24 episodes. With the funds granted to the project, new episodes starting at episode 16 (S3) include updates to audio quality, editing capability, and theme music! This elevates the podcast to a more professional sound and quality listening experience for the audience. Some of the upgrades included sound dampening acoustic foam, professional microphone and headphones, and an improved electrical/backup system.

Impact: Since the upgrades facilitated by the ABS Outreach Grant (a period of about 2 months) the podcast has seen a 29% increase in monthly downloads and a 24% increase in estimated audience. It is important to note that the only significant change listeners have heard over those weeks has been the addition of professional theme music. This is because the episodes are typically recorded 2 months in advance of release. Therefore, the new sound upgrades will be featured in episodes starting April 11th. Other reasons for the growth over the last two months are likely from two other categories of circumstances. The first is simply the accumulative effect of word of mouth, social media promotion, and the hosts energy and passion for the subject. The other circumstance is related to the invitation from a past guest for the host to participate in a conference related to animals in tourism as a workshop/networking host during a conference session. This invitation and subsequent promotion of the podcast may also have contributed significantly to the increase in downloads and audience.

As the podcast continues, I predict that invitations like the one for the conference will help boost growth and outreach, as well as interest by potential guests to participate and share their work.

I am looking forward to continuing to produce curated and thought-provoking episodes in upcoming series: Children and Other Non-human Animals, Animals in the Media, Animals in Religion, Animal Acoustics and Communication, Conversations about Dogs, Animals and the Law, and The Animal Welfare World.

I am very pleased to bring you, The Deal with Animals-Podcast

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