

Discovery Podcast Deliverables

The podcast deliverables guide includes all necessary deliverables needed when creating a podcast. You'll also find best practices to keep in mind when creating trailers, promos, and episodes.

Table of Contents

PODCAST DELIVERABLES

Podcast Deliverables3

BEST PRACTICES

Podcast Trailer & Promo Best Practices.....5

Podcast Episode Assets.....8

Podcast Audio Specs and File Naming Conventions.....11

Show Notes Template.....13

Ad Breaks / Dynamic Ad Insertion (DAI).....14

Podcast Explicit Language & Content Warnings Best Practices.....16

Podcast Credits Language Guidelines..... 18

DELIVERY PROCESS

Podcast Final Episode Delivery Process20

Podcast Deliverables

Episode Assets

Podcast Audio Specs and File Naming Conventions, Updated Nov 2021, (page 13)

- 8x 30 min fully mixed podcast episodes [.mp3]
 - Each episode will have 4 versions: RC1, RC2, FC, LC
 - Audio stems

Trailer and Promos

Podcast Trailer and Promo Best Practices (page 5) ; please also refer to Audio Specs.

- **1x Trailer**, 1:30-2:00 minutes [.mp3]
- **3x Podcast promo**, :60 seconds
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.”
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Apple Podcasts”
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Spotify”
- **3x Podcast promo**, :30 seconds
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.”
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Apple Podcasts”
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Spotify”
- **1x discovery+ promo**, :15 seconds [.mp3]
Copy for discovery+ promo will be provided by CPT

Paper Deliverables:

Podcast Explicit Language & Content Warnings Best Practices (page 16)

Podcast Credits Language Guidelines (page 18)

Best Practices and Guidelines for episode assets (page 8)

- **Pre-Production Documents:** All pre-production documents (prep, outlines, scripts, etc.) should be submitted to network point of contact ahead of episode recordings.
- **Scripts AND transcripts for all final episodes including the following requirements:**

TIMECODES - Not required.

FORMAT

Word Doc.

SPEAKER(S)

It is best to identify the speaker by full name the first time they appear. You can then identify them as a single name thereafter (i.e. FIRST NAME instead of FIRST + LAST).

SOUNDS/SFX/MUSIC

The transcript should include a description of any music, sound effect or other background noise that is relevant to what's happening in the podcast.

Unintentional or accidental background noise doesn't need to be included, but audible noises that contribute to the meaning of the episode should be included in the transcript.

- **Series Description:** A brief description of the program/episodes/series used for internal and external promotion of the program.
 - 1x long description: 100 words or more
 - 1x short description: 250 characters

 - **Episode Titles:** Ensure first 40 characters are impactful to avoid truncation of critical information in some mobile views. Full title can include up to 255 characters to incorporate multiple guests, cases, or other relevant info that can be picked up in user searches.

 - **Episode Descriptions for each episode:**
 - 1x long description: 100 words
 - 1x short description: 1 sentence
-

Podcast Trailer & Promo Best Practices

For a podcast launch or launch of a new season, the Central Podcast Team needs the following elements to promote the podcast.

Assets to deliver

Please send scripts to Central Podcast Team for review prior to recording.

- **1x Trailer**, 1:30-2:00 minutes
 - **3x Podcast promo**, :60 seconds
 - “Listen to [Series Title] wherever you get your podcasts.”
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Apple Podcasts”
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Spotify”
 - **3x Podcast promo**, :30 seconds
 - “Listen to [Series Title] wherever you get your podcasts.”
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Apple Podcasts”
 - “Listen to [Series Title] on Spotify”
 - **1x discovery+ promo**, :15 seconds
 - Copy will be provided by the CPT
-

Requirements

Requirements for Trailer and :60 and :30 Promos:

- Trailers follow the same production guidelines as series episodes.
- State the series title at the top **and** tail of the trailer.
- Include host name in the trailer/host should self-identify at top or tail
- Include the word “podcast” at the top or tail of the trailer.
- Trailer and promos should include a music bed.
- **Do not include a launch date in the audio**, or time markers of any kind (i.e. No “coming soon,” “next week.”), as these promos should be evergreen.
- Include the following CTA at the end of the trailer and promos:
 - “Listen to [Series Title] wherever you get your podcasts.”

- “Listen to [Series Title] on Apple Podcasts”
- “Listen to [Series Title] on Spotify”

Requirements for :15 discovery+ promos:

- Copy provided by Central Podcast Team
- Includes specific vanity URL to the corresponding series
 - Ex: “Want even more true crime? Stream more hours of true crime on discovery+ than an any other platform. Go to discoveryplus.com/betrayal to start your free trial.”

Trailer Best Practices

A podcast trailer is an elevator pitch designed to quickly grab a listener’s attention and convince them to listen to the show. Trailers are typically released in advance of a show’s premiere or new season, and are evergreen to the podcast feed. The trailer should feature the series’ most exciting content, sound bites, and quotes.

Specs

- 1:30-2:00 minutes
- Trailers follow the same production guidelines as series episodes.
- Include the word “**podcast**” and the name of the podcast at the **top and tail of the trailer**.
- CTA at the end of the trailer should be “Listen to [Podcast Name] wherever you get your podcasts.”
- No ad-breaks
- Listen to [an example on Spotify here](#).

Elements

The trailer for each show should incorporate the following:

- **Introduce the show name.** Introduce the show and hosts to let people know what and who they’re listening to. Provide a brief explanation of what the show is about. Make the trailer about the listener and what *they* will get out of listening.
- **Share highlights.** Find moments from the show that reflect what the listening experience is like. If the show features guest interviews, then include clips from the show of engaging, memorable quotes. If the show is narrative/scripted, lead with details that help establish your narrative.

- **Make the listener want more.** Near the end of the highlights, build some tension or curiosity by introducing the problem in a story, providing a sudden twist, or leaving them with an unanswered question by a guest.
- **Incorporate parallel audio elements.** If the podcast uses the same opening theme in every episode, then include it in the trailer. If one of the podcast's strengths is the dynamic between multiple hosts, then make sure that's included in the trailer.
- **Do not include a launch date in the trailer audio**, as it will be evergreen, and new listeners will continue to find and listen to the trailer after launch.

Definitions

Trailer: A podcast trailer is an elevator pitch designed to quickly grab a listener's attention and convince them to listen to the show. Trailers are typically released in advance of a show's premiere or new season, and are evergreen to the podcast feed. The trailer should feature the series' most exciting content, sound bites, and quotes.

:60 Promo: A promo is an audio ad promoting our podcast to a new audience. It can appear on an external podcast network as a pre-, mid- or postroll ad, or as a house ad on our own podcast network.

:30 Promo: A promo is an audio ad promoting our podcast to a new audience. It can appear on an external podcast network as a pre-, mid- or postroll ad, or as a house ad on our own podcast network.

Discovery+ promo: A :15 second audio ad promoting discovery+ that includes a code for a free 7-day trial. Each discovery+ promo is specific to the show.

Podcast Episode Assets

Best Practices and Guidelines for Delivery

The following components need to be delivered together in order to publish an episode.

For more information on how and where to upload final assets for each episode, including the master audio file and accompanying show notes, please see our Episode Delivery Process (page 8) guide.

Audio file

MP3 format 128 kbps is preferred. If possible, please include metadata in the ID3 tags of the file itself (i.e. episode title, description, episode number when applicable) so that it auto-populates when uploaded to a podcast host. There is an option to edit ID3 tags within most audio editing programs as well as iTunes and Windows Media Player.

Episode title

Please indicate the episode's title *as it will appear when published* in the show notes document.

Episode titles should be clear, concise, and compelling. Keep titles short, as those that exceed 60 characters may get truncated on certain listening platforms. In the episode title, do not include the show title, episode numbers, or any HTML/formatting (i.e. bold/italics, bullets, etc).

Episode titles should match the voice and style of the show. For example, titles can include humor and wordplay or a short quote from the show. If there is a notable guest on the episode, it's recommended to include the guest's name in the title. Consistency across your titles is key to setting listener expectations and maintaining a cohesive show brand.

Episode title examples:

- Curiosity Daily (Science): [What to Do When You Make the Wrong Decision \(w/ Annie Duke\)](#)

Episode description

Show notes are an in-depth summary of each podcast episode. Show notes often include additional resources that are relevant to the audio, such as websites, articles, guest bios, social media links, production credits, and more.

To optimize for mobile podcast apps, put the most important information within the first 120 characters of a show's episode summary. Descriptions are cut off in episode previews on certain podcast apps — including Spotify — after 120 characters. Tactics for front-loading episode descriptions with information:

- **Focus on explaining the episode's value.** Answer the questions, “Why should someone listen to my show? What does my show offer that is unique and different?”
 - To do this, make the episode description listener-focused; for example, instead of saying “[Host] talks with [guest] about barbecue season and grilling,” try “Learn about 3 super cool cooking hacks you can use for your next BBQ.”
 - Focus less on the prominence of guests and more about the takeaways for listeners, unless the guest is a mega-star (e.g. Guy Fieri, Bill Nye, etc.)
- **Avoid repetition.** There's no need to repeat the show's title, author, the word “podcast,” or self-referential phrases such as “on today's episode” anywhere in your episode description.
- **Include any content warnings** about sensitive topics including suicide, self harm, sexual assault, etc. For more information on how to write a content warning, please refer to our full guide (*page 18*).

Show notes can include HTML/formatting (italics, bolding, bullets, etc), but the formatting may not function properly on different listening platforms. To avoid any issues, it's best to avoid special formatting and use full URLs instead of hyperlinking words or phrases. For example, use

<https://www.discovery.com/space/journey-to-the-iss--nasa-s-spacex-crew-1-mission-pictures> instead of [Journey to the ISS: NASA's SpaceX Crew-1 Mission](#).

If linking to social media pages of guests or Discovery brands, include the full URL instead of the user's handle in the CTA. For example, use “Follow Discovery on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/discovery>” instead of “Follow Discovery on Twitter at @Discovery.”

Explicit / Clean Rating

Explicit: Y/N



Individual podcast episodes can be marked with an “explicit” rating that is displayed in Apple Podcasts. If your episode is uncensored or contains adult themes/language, please indicate that it should be marked “explicit.”

For more information on what qualifies as explicit, see our full guide on Explicit Language & Content Warnings (*page 18*).

Ad markers

Ad Marker: 00:00:00

Regardless of whether or not we currently monetize your podcast, the podcast team will insert midroll ad markers into your show. Ad markers allow for the ability to retroactively monetize a show with ads. If you do not currently run ads on your show, ad markers will **not** incorporate any audible breaks or pauses in your show.

When delivering a podcast episode, include the timestamp(s) of at least one midroll ad insertion point. Please refer to our full guide on Dynamic Ad Insertion (*page 16*) for more information.

Podcast Audio Specs and File Naming Conventions

File Types / Encoding for Master Audio Files

Please review the following specifications for the final master audio files that will be published via all major podcast distributors including Apple, Spotify, Deezer and Amazon Music.

- **Stereo MP3 at 128 Kbps CBR (Constant Bit Rate):** Spotify does not support AAC, so please use MP3.
- **48 kHz/24 bit Stereo:** 48 kHz is preferred
- **-16 LUFS for stereo files** Loudness has a +/- 1 dB tolerance
- Broadcast radio and television uses -24 LUFS in the US, -23 LUFS in the rest of the world. That means that when working with clips from linear programming, volume must be increased to reach -16 LUFS.
- Audio bitrates affect audio quality but also increase file size. We recommend keeping the overall file size below 100 MB to keep streaming sites happy.
- We recommend using Constant Bit Rate (CBR) over Variable Bit Rate.

Audio File Formats for Audio Stems

Please deliver each audio element as a separate WAV file. Guests should be recorded on separate tracks whenever possible.

- **WAV files**
- **Dialogue stems** should be **mono** and all other stems should be **stereo**
- **48 kHz/24 bit Stereo**

File Naming Conventions for Google Drive

File naming conventions for audio: We will create and share your project folders when your project is ready to start delivering. Please name your file using the below conventions.

Folder Hierarchy

Network Podcast>Show Title>Season>Final Episodes>Episode #1 (or Title/Guest Name)

Audio Bitrates

Audio bitrates affect audio quality but also increase file size. We recommend keeping the overall file size below 100 MB to keep streaming sites happy.

- 320 kbps – Virtually indistinguishable from original CDs
- **128 kbps – Typical for musical MP3s and quality podcasts**
- 64 kbps – Common bitrate for speech podcasts
- 48 kbps – Reasonably common for longer speech podcasts
- 32 kbps – Poor, usually used to reduce download times

LUFS (Loudness)

“Loudness Units Full Scale” measures average loudness over the length of the track.

0 dB is the loudest. -16 LUFS is actually quieter than 0 LUFS. Different distributors recommend different LUFS levels, but we optimize for Apple Podcasts:

- Spotify -16 LUFS
- Apple Podcasts -16 LUFS

Quality Control

- **Plosives:** Use a pop filter to eliminate the burst of air heard on p’s & b’s.
- **Mouth Clicks:** It’s easier to prevent noisy mouth-clicks than to deal with them in post Mic placement, the speaker projecting and being well-hydrated can help prevent mouth-clicks.
- **Noise reduction:** may be necessary in situations where the guest was recorded in a noisy area or didn’t have access to a quality microphone.
- **Music bed/intro/outro balance:** dialogue should be clear and unencumbered by music.
- **Stereo/Mono:** export in stereo with music in stereo and the dialogue in the center.
- **Channels:** use separate tracks for guest/host and make sure they’re balanced.
- **In/Out:** Be sure to trim remaining silence at the end of the final audio master.

*We recommend using professional noise reduction software such as [iZotope’s RX](#).

Show Notes Example

Title:

1. **Expressing Your Authentic Self: David Bromstad on Pride & Interior Design**
2. David Bromstad on Pride & Representation
3. Conversations on Pride with David Bromstad
4. Pride & Authenticity with Interior Designer David Bromstad
5. David Bromstad on Pride, Visibility & That Pink Tracksuit

Description: Interior designer David Bromstad shares how he celebrates Pride and expresses his authentic self in design, both on- and off-camera. Marianne sits down for a candid conversation with interior designer and host of My Lottery Dream Home, David Bromstad. David talks about his journey from a midwestern boy with dreams of being a Disney animator to his first time competing on Design Star. He reveals the pivotal moment a fellow competitor gave him the courage to be his true, honest self—and how he continues to carry that attitude today. He shares some hard moments and his advice to anyone struggling to find their voice. David talks about the stories behind his many tattoos, his love for the city of Orlando, and what his ideal world looks like.

Please note that there is a brief mention of suicidal ideation from 25:11 to 25:24. Listener discretion is advised.

LGBTQ Resources: <https://www.glaad.org/resourcelist>

Suicide Prevention Hotline: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Rating: Explicit

Midroll Ad Stamp: 11:29

Ad Breaks /Dynamic Ad Insertion (DAI)

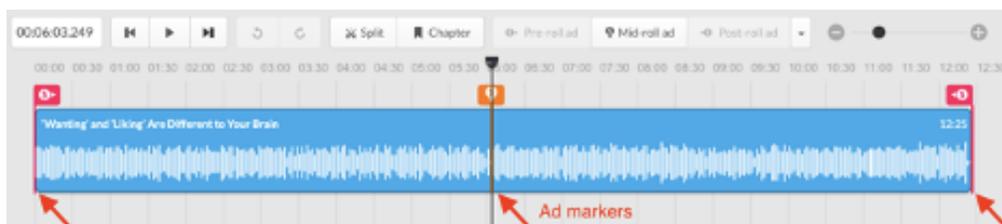
All Discovery podcasts utilize DAI tools for our monetization. A dynamic ad is an advertisement that is not part of a podcast's audio file, but can instead be inserted, moved around, and deleted over time. If you've ever listened to a podcast in the summertime that you know was recorded around Halloween and heard ads for Memorial Day sales, you're most likely hearing a dynamically inserted ad.

Ad positioning

There are 3 places where ads can be positioned in a podcast:

- **Pre-roll ads** play at the very beginning of an episode, before any of the actual episode begins.
- **Mid-roll ads** are placed around the middle of the show, after the listener has finished listening to 40-70% of the show's content. Mid-roll ads should never be placed before the first full segment of a podcast (the first segment *after* the intro in the first 30-60 seconds of the show).
 - When placing a mid-roll marker between segments, **do not** pad it within more than 2.5 total seconds of silence ("dead air"). This will help maintain the pacing of a podcast episode in the event that an ad will not be dynamically inserted due to low inventory.
- **Post-roll ads** are placed at the very end of an episode, after the podcast has concluded.

Example of ad placements:



Segmentation

Audiences must receive value from listening to Discovery-quality content *before* they are served with an advertisement. This means that the first mid-roll ad should appear **after the show's intro and first full segment**. For more information about segmentation, reach out to podcasts@discovery.com.

When recording a dynamic ad, it should sound “natural” — meaning, the average listener may not even notice that the ad was recorded at a different time than the rest of the episode. To do this:

- Use the same recording and editing style that you use for a typical episode of the podcast you’re working on.
 - For example, if two hosts banter back and forth in every episode, then they should share the responsibility of reading ad copy.
 - Host delivery style and energy level should match that of a typical episode.
 - Match production conventions. Make sure all loudness levels and dynamics match those of a typical episode.
 - If you don’t play music anywhere other than during the intro/outro of the show, then don’t add music to the ad break.
-

Podcast Explicit Language Best Practices

Explicit Language and Content Warnings

Discovery recommends that there should be no bleeping of curse words/swearing in a podcast episode. Podcasts are not governed by the Federal Communications Commission, but if the content contains sensitive material, Discovery recommends including an explicit tag. The central podcast team will include this tag at distribution like below:

TUESDAY

Ep.2: Investigating Murder **E** ←

Examples of Sensitive Material

- Egregious swearing
- Content such as racism, cultural sensitivities, murder, rape, sexual explicitness, suicide or self harm, or graphic acts of violence.
- No EAS (Emergency Alert System) tones are allowed in any part of the show, usage from either from news clips, in sound design, or as a bed, etc.
- If the episode includes any type of casual **hate speech, slurs, or insensitivities**, please flag to the Central Podcast Team.

AUDIO

From a production standpoint, you may also include a recorded tag at the **top** of each episode. No musicbed, dry only.

Examples:

- "This episode may contain explicit language. Listener discretion is advised."
- "This episode may contain explicit language and themes such as [racism, murder, sexually explicit acts, and rape]. Listener discretion is advised."
- "This episode contains mentions of [sexual assault, self harm, explicit domestic violence, etc]. If you or anyone you know is struggling with [suicidal thoughts, or violence, etc], help is available at [insert resource]."

- “Content warning at minute mark 25:11 to 25:24, there is a brief mention of [suicidal ideation.]”
-

SHOW NOTES

Please include whether an episode is explicit or not in the show notes document with the bullet: “**Explicit: yes / no**”.



Podcast Credits Best Practices

Discovery will honor podcast/audio journalism standards and recognize the production teams' involvement in each podcast.

The following language for credits is required.

Seasonal or Limited Series

For seasonal or limited series, only a finale episode will contain full production credits in narration.

COPY FOR ALL EPISODES PRIOR TO FINAL EPISODE

"[PODCAST TITLE] is produced by [PRODUCTION COMPANY] for [NETWORK or DISCOVERY PLUS]."

*** LIST EITHER THE NETWORK OR DISCOVERY PLUS, NOT BOTH.**

"You can follow our show wherever you get your podcasts and we'd love it if you could take a second to leave us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts."

COPY FOR FINALE EPISODE

"[PODCAST TITLE] is produced by [PRODUCTION COMPANY] for [NETWORK or DISCOVERY PLUS]."

*** LIST EITHER THE NETWORK OR DISCOVERY PLUS, NOT BOTH.**

NETWORK KEY ROLES

"[Network EP is TK, or another intimately involved network producer]."

***ONLY 2 ROLES ALLOWED - NO OVERSIGHT NAMES.**

EXTERNAL AUDIO-FIRST PRODUCTION COMPANY KEY ROLES

"[Hosted, written and produced by TK. Story Producers are TK. Producers are TK. Executive Producers are TK. Score is by TK, Sound Designer/Audio Engineer is TK.]"



***PRODUCTION COMPANY CAN CHOOSE WHO TO IDENTIFY AND ORGANIZE.**

“You can follow our show wherever you get your podcasts and we'd love it if you could take a second to leave us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts.”

Ongoing Series

For ongoing series, all episodes must contain the following production credits in narration.

COPY FOR ALL EPISODES

“[PODCAST TITLE] is produced by [PRODUCTION COMPANY] for [NETWORK or DISCOVERY PLUS].”

*** LIST EITHER THE NETWORK OR DISCOVERY PLUS, NOT BOTH.**

“You can follow our show wherever you get your podcasts and we'd love it if you could take a second to leave us a 5-star review on Apple Podcasts.”

Podcast Final Episode Delivery Process

All final episodes are published to our hosting platforms and RSS feeds by Discovery's Central Podcast team. In order to ensure that all episodes get uploaded and scheduled on time, please follow the guidelines for final episode delivery.

Deadlines

All final episode assets should be uploaded to Google Drive a week before the episode is set to publish. If an episode is late, please notify the podcast team.

Assets to Include For Delivery

Every final episode delivery must include the following assets, all uploaded to the relevant Final episode folder in the Google Drive (more below).

- **Master audio file** (.mp3) (*page 12*)
- **Show notes** in a Google doc (*page 13*)
 - Episode title
 - Episode description/show notes
 - Episode rating (Clean or Explicit)
 - Ad break timestamp

Where to Deliver Assets

Every podcast has a folder nested under a larger shared google drive. You will be shared on the folder to upload final audio and show notes to when your project is ready to start delivering.

Folder hierarchy: Network>Show Title>Season>**Final Episodes**

When you have been shared on the Final Episode folder, simply create a folder for each final episode, where you should upload the master audio and show notes document. .

How/Where to Deliver Assets

1. **Upload final audio and show notes to the "Final Episode" folder in G-Drive** (specific to your network/show). We will create and share your "Final Episode" folders when your project is ready to start delivering.



- Please upload audio and show notes in the following to Season #>Final Episodes>Episode #1 or Title/Guest Name)
 - If you need additional members of your team/production company to be added to the Google Drive folder, please email podcasts@discovery.com.
2. **Notify the Central Podcast Team that master audio file, show notes, and transcripts have been uploaded to folder.** Please add links to the files in the email.
 - To: podcasts@discovery.com
 - CC: Network/Discovery EP and relevant network social teams (comms, social etc). If you are not sure who to include, ask your Network/Discovery EP.
 3. **Email Subject Line:** “FOR DELIVERY: [Show name] - [Episode #] - [Episode name if relevant]”.
 4. **If there are no episodes in a given week,** please still send an email specifying that there will be no delivery that week.

Example Delivery Email

Email subject: “FOR DELIVERY: HGTV Obsessed - Ep.23 - David Bromstad”

“Hi all, sending over the final audio for DB’s Pride episode.

- **Release Date:** 6/10/21
- **HGTV Obsessed David Bromstad FINAL AUDIO: Linked**
- **Show Notes: Linked**
- **Transcript: Linked**
- **Mid-roll Timestamp:** 11:29
- **Rating: Explicit”**

FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Questions? Contact podcasts@discovery.com