

# Giving voice to community: Embodied scholarship, generative discussion, and other affordances of scholarly podcasting

AMBER SEWELL

**Abstract:** Scholarly publishing often focuses on the end product—a journal article, a monograph—with little homage paid to those who, formally and informally, helped shape the artifact. As open movements gain momentum and support, and the peer review process faces scrutiny, there is an opportunity to reevaluate the purpose of scholarly publishing and its artifacts, the ways in which our current publishing models shape our perspective of knowledge production as a largely individual endeavor. Scholarly podcasting can be one way in which we re-envision what publishing looks—and sounds—like. This article explores the affordances of podcasting as a medium in terms of its utility to allow scholars to audibly embody their work and facilitate gathering and community, bringing their personhood and identities into the expression of their research, as well as the four genres of podcasting that take greatest advantage of these affordances. Open peer review podcasting, a facet of scholarly podcasting, can bring to the forefront the ways in which a community of scholars ultimately shapes a final product, refocusing the purpose of peer review on supportive critique that yields a more meaningful and robust final artifact rather than the box-ticking or gatekeeping purposes it sometimes serves in the current publishing landscape. It also makes visible—and audible—the very real network of individuals that makes a solo authored artifact possible. By undergoing open peer review via podcast, distilling the conversation, and making visible the changes made to the article based on that conversation, this article both explores the theoretical possibilities of scholarly podcasting while modeling the process.

**Keywords:** scholarly podcasting, open peer review, embodied scholarship

As someone who never thought they would end up in higher education, I did not pay too much attention to scholarly publishing until I was ready to write my first article about creating a choose-your-own-adventure game for a virtual student orientation to the academic

library where I worked as a non-tenure-track librarian. I had conducted my project almost wholly independently, and it made sense to write the article solo as well. Anxious about my first scholarly piece written for publication (less because of the perceived pressures of scholarly rigor and more because I am eternally the student wanting the instructor to say I did an impressive job), I did not ask any of my peers to read it over before I submitted it to a journal. It was not peer reviewed, so the journal editors and I exchanged a few versions of the document before it was published, making this first experience a fairly isolated event. This process became my foundation for understanding how scholarly publishing worked; it was conducted primarily individually with brief conversations with the editors before publication, mostly to resolve issues with clarification and grammar. It was not a negative experience—I enjoyed receiving feedback from others—but I could not say that the contribution or thoughts of others greatly impacted the article.

It would be a few years, once I was a practicing academic librarian teaching first- and second-year students about scholarly publishing as a field, that I came to understand the problems inherent with the traditional model. The few times I asked someone to look over an article before I submitted it to a journal vastly improved the initial draft, and as I started learning more about writing in community, open peer review, and other forms of knowledge production and dissemination that differed from my first (or second) experience, I came to see not only the value in approaching my work as not wholly singular but also how even those traditional experiences weren't as independent as I thought. The invisible labor of peer review and journal editing isn't reflected in the final article, in which a single author's name is listed. Nor will readers ever know about how I and others enrich our work by informally calling on our community, within and outside academia, to contribute knowledge and experience to shape an article; how we brainstorm together, share articles and podcasts and opinion pieces to contribute to a project we know our peers are working on; and how we create our own informal communities that are sometimes thanked in a small acknowledgment section at the end of a journal article but often aren't visible to those outside our circles.

As a listener of podcasts for over two decades, I never stopped to think about the types of podcasts that appealed to me. As a nerd, I listened to nerdy podcasts, from history to sciences to literature studies. I like to learn about new things, and podcasting was just another medium to engage in that learning. I cannot recall when exactly I started to think of podcasts as scholarly; was it an episode of *This Podcast Will Kill You* where the hosts talked about doing their podcast in relation to their doctoral work? Was it an article in *Inside Higher Ed* that made the connection? It could just as easily have been when *Secret Feminist Agenda* introduced their peer review process, or when an episode of *99% Invisible* was assigned in an instructional design course, the first time I remember a podcast being part of course materials. Whether the idea percolated slowly or hit me as a sudden shift in how I understood scholarship, this totally different

form of knowledge dissemination appealed to me both as someone disinterested in performing scholarly professionalism and as an academic librarian, where many of the affordances of scholarly podcasting align with our professional values (Sewell 2023). I became an enthusiastic advocate for this form of knowledge production and dissemination that allows us to honor the communities that contribute to disembodied lines on our CVs, that circumvents journal subscriptions, and that produces content that even a casual listener can engage with.

This article explores how many affordances of podcasting allow for knowledge production and dissemination models that better highlight the collaborative nature of creating scholarly outputs. In particular, it explores how four genres of scholarly podcasting—conversation, interview, debate, and crafted audio—demonstrate how podcasting as a medium affords scholars to more easily engage in embodied scholarship and open peer review. In addition, this article not only examines but also demonstrates the impact of open peer review via podcast; as further explained in the methodology section, this article underwent an open peer review process via podcast, which is essential to the shape and content of the text itself. Through these explorations I aim to demonstrate the potential of scholarly podcasting not as a replacement for traditional scholarly writing altogether, but as an additional valuable form of conveying scholarly information and generating conversation and community.

## Methodology

To illustrate the potential of one of the opportunities provided by scholarly podcasting, this article will both explore the theoretical possibilities of scholarly podcasting and model the impact of undergoing open peer review via podcast. The first phase was to write an initial draft exploring the affordances, models, and challenges of scholarly podcasting. The editor of this special issue connected me to two reviewers, who received the draft article. One reviewer was unable to participate in the open peer review process. The remaining reviewer, Hannah McGregor, engaged with the article separately, but rather than exchange critiques and suggestions asynchronously via written text, she joined guest host Lori Beckstead and myself on an episode of *The LibParlor Podcast*, an open peer review podcast for information professionals. The peer review took place via moderated discussion on the podcast episode, modeling the affordances of open peer review podcasting laid out in this article. The episode is available for listeners who are interested in how this conversational peer review was conducted; the draft discussed is linked in the episode show notes and transcript (Sewell and Beckstead 2024).

Inspired by Emily Ford's format for her book *Stories of Open* (2021), the conversational peer review is distilled into text throughout this article in order to demonstrate the impact

of this form of peer review for the reading audience. The main text of the article is formatted consistently with the rest of the journal. Distillations of the conversation held in the open peer review podcast episode will begin at the left margin and printed in bolded **Josefin Sans** in green text. An accounting of the changes made to the main text based on the conversational peer review are printed in italicized *Nunito* in blue text. Readers also have the option to listen to an audio recording of these reflections; music in these recordings is “Weathervane” by Blue Dot Sessions. While interested readers should listen to the peer review to fully experience this type of scholarly engagement, I hope the format of this article effectively conveys its impact to readers. Below is an example of the described formatting.

This is an example of the original article text. Readers who wish to read this article without the reflections may choose to only read content with this formatting for a more traditional experience.

**Audio Track 1: Audio reflection of how the open peer review process impacted the methodology section of this article. To listen to the audio, visit the online journal at <https://journalofelectronicpublishing.org/>**

**During the peer review session, reviewer Hannah expressed confusion about the methodology. She was unable to locate the open access link for Emily Ford’s *Stories of Open* and thus was unable to see an example of how I intended to format these reflections. She also challenged me to think creatively about how the open peer review conversation is incorporated into this piece, particularly given this is a journal of electronic publishing. During this discussion, Lori also suggested making the original draft we were discussing available, both for listeners who were interested but also because it would more effectively showcase the evolution of the article as it undergoes this process.**

*I was disappointed Hannah wasn’t able to locate the initial example, because it is such an unusual format I felt the example would be really helpful in visualizing the final product. I was also intrigued by her suggestion, especially as I did not anticipate just how much our conversation would change the shape of this article. While I was able to incorporate some audio into this piece, I was not able to get as creative as she suggested. As for Lori’s suggestion, I don’t think I had thought of making the original draft available, but loved it as soon as she said it. I commented at some point in our conversation about how the heavy edits I predicted based on their feedback would make an excellent case for undergoing open peer review via podcasting, and how better to illustrate it than have a before and after?*

I chose to write this article as a traditionally structured paper for several reasons. I was unsure how much I could push the boundaries within the guidelines and technical capabilities of this journal, and I was somewhat overwhelmed by the possibilities of proposing and writing a non-traditionally structured article beyond what I had already seen modeled. Most important, however, I wanted to demonstrate that incorporating even just the open peer review podcast into your practice could leverage the affordances explored in this article while still resulting in the traditional outputs that many of us are required to publish as part of our jobs as tenure/tenure-track academics.

## Literature review

Scholarly publishing norms are well established. Monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles are the most widely valued research outputs in academia. These texts adhere to, as Yves Rees describes, “the kind of masculinist norms of the academy values . . . solitary, disembodied, serious, earnest, rational scholarship” that “valorises that as the only way to produce knowledge and be an intellectual” (quoted in Cook 2023b, 30). Laura L. Ellingson argues that “[t]he privilege of the mind over the body is deeply engrained in western cultures and hence within conventional research methodologies,” further stating that “[t]he performance of ‘disembodied researcher’ has been repeated for so long that it functions as a set of naturalized norms that privilege a masculinist rationality as the only legitimate form of knowledge” (2017, 6). Not only is the successful researcher disembodied and masculine, they are often solo authors, implying that their publications are the result of a single mind, irrespective of the editors, colleagues, and reviewers who also made the work possible. These norms are most commonly upheld by tenure and promotion standards, whose guidelines govern what work is deemed valuable enough for scholars to attain a permanent position at their institutions.

In some ways, open movements—sometimes called open science or open scholarship—are a response to traditional forms of knowledge production and dissemination. Open scholarship “is both a concept and a practice, and the assumptions about it vary depending on the context in which openness is discussed” (Martin 2022, 1). It means “making all practices, processes and products of the scientific world open and freely accessible” and includes open research materials such as “open access materials, open data, open code, open software, and any other resource evolving from a research process,” as well as open teaching materials or open educational resources (Weimer et al. 2023, 650). Open peer review, as part of this movement, seeks to improve the traditional peer review process by shortening the time between submission and publication, producing better quality reviews and articles, holding reviewers accountable for

conducting themselves professionally, increasing transparency in the process, and making invisible labor visible, among other benefits (Ford 2013). It can include open identities, open reports, open participation, open pre-review manuscripts, open final-version commenting, open interaction, and open platforms (Ross-Hellauer 2017).

Another venue for challenging norms in the knowledge production and dissemination typically undertaken in academia is public scholarship. Similar to open scholarship, public scholarship involves sharing research with audiences outside of traditionally academic settings, including social media, blog posts and opinion pieces, and podcasts. Public scholarship goes one step further than many forms of open scholarship (although given the numerous interpretations of “open” work, one could argue they are often the same) by tackling not only access—often defined in economic terms—as a barrier but also “hard-to-read texts, . . . images without alternative text descriptions that pose difficulties for people with visual impairments” and “access to the internet, which is not universal” (Ketchum 2022). Not only that, but public scholarship is created with different audiences in mind. Grounded in feminist theory, it can “[up]turn” the deeply oppressive norms around who does or who does not get to occupy spaces and produce the kinds of scholarly work that the academy values” (Ketchum 2022). Hannah McGregor (2017) explains that “[o]pen and public scholarship gives us an opportunity not to throw out these institutionalized norms, but to fundamentally reconsider the work they’re doing.” Works of public scholarship “such as books, blogs, podcasts, zines, websites, exhibitions, and articles hold little weight in a tenure file,” but rethinking peer review, possibly by implementing open peer review, “can make public scholarship more palatable to tenure and promotion committees” (Ketchum 2022). Some professional associations, such as the American Historical Association, have pushed to make their tenure and promotion guidelines more accepting of public scholarship (Quinn 2023), but often it is colleagues who compose a department or institution’s tenure and process committee that uphold “the conservatism around what constitutes the scholarly” (Cook 2023b, 39).

Within the work of public humanities, which Susan Smulyan describes “as collaborative and relational, political and personal, happening in public and producing new understandings” (2020, 1), these tensions examined in public scholarship are explored explicitly and often through the lens of community. It examines the relationships between professors, students, and various publics, and public humanities scholars “also think and write about the relationships between social justice and academic work and between praxis and scholarship” (1). Jim McGrath argues that “like the best public humanities practitioners, they [public digital humanities projects] prioritize polyvocality, models of shared authority, interests of audiences that extend into civic life, and the work of building a better world” (2020, 44). He points to ties with the Design Justice Network Principles, which include “center[ing] the voices of those who are directly impacted by the outcomes of the design process” and “that everyone is an expert based on their own lived experience”

(Design Justice Network 2018). McGrath also addresses some of the challenges inherent in doing public scholarship, that “[e]ven the idea of ‘a new kind of openness’ is quickly complicated by the forms of openness available on a heavily-privatized web, by the reactions of racist, misogynist, xenophobic, and transphobic trolls to particular voices, by the ways that algorithms reinforce and even reward an embrace of crude stereotypes and attention-seeking advocates for white nationalism and fascism” (2020, 44).

Scholarly podcasting is part of what Mack Hagood calls “audio academia,” which he describes as “a diverse collection of initiatives aimed at producing and communicating scholarship through electronic audio in the form of podcasts, audiobooks, online lectures, and other genres” (2021, 181). Situated in that framework, scholarly podcasts are “the communication of scholarly knowledge through the digital medium of podcasting,” which “can be a radical, open, and subversive way of creating publicly accessible and community engaged scholarship” (Copeland and McGregor 2021, v). They can “bring a re-orientation, sense of exploration, and renewed community building to the research experience” (Copeland 2022a) as well as reinforce “the connection between the university and society at large,” making research “accessible to a far greater audience than written materials could ever reach” (Adams et al. 2021). Ian M. Cook goes even further in exploring the potential of scholarly podcasts, claiming “that for many scholars podcasting is an insurgency against academic structures that curb creativity, inhibit personal and collective transformations, and promote self-interest over generosity,” instead creating “the conditions for scholars to be immersed in their curiosity” (2023b, 1). Dario Llinares, Neil Fox, and Richard Berry situate podcasting as part of the open movement “that challenges the structures of traditional academic publishing” (2018, 3).

While low barriers to creation and publication make podcasts a more accessible platform than traditional scholarly publishing, they are not inherently a more equitable space. One danger of performing public scholarship is that openness itself is not equitable; having a scholar’s identity tied so visibly (or audibly) to their work does introduce risk (Hyde 2020), and it is often unclear who is responsible for reducing that risk, if it can be mitigated at all.

Just as many concepts within the open movement do not have a single agreed-upon definition, defining scholarly podcasts proves difficult. Lori Beckstead, Ian M. Cook, and Hannah McGregor use the terms *academic podcast* and *scholarly podcast* interchangeably and define scholarly podcasts as “podcasts that create new knowledge; whose content is accountable to a community of peers, whether they be scholar or others; where it is possible for knowledge to be interrogated, cited and, in some disciplines, reproduced; and, crucially, where podcast series are able to respond to comments, critiques or suggestions either before publication or afterwards as part of a series or through additional material” (2024, 3–4). This definition appeals to me because it centers the content of the podcast, rather than the identity of the creator, in determining its scholarly quality. This makes space for various forms of expertise or authority not

always valued in academic spaces, a factor that is key to my excitement about scholarly podcasts as a form of knowledge dissemination.

This definition also excludes podcasts common within scholarly environments. By focusing on podcasts that create new knowledge, it eliminates those that are often created by scholarly journals and university presses that serve more as marketing for traditional scholarship, such as the *Nature Podcast*, which creator Chris Smith, host of podcast *The Naked Scientist*, credits as the first scholarly journal podcast (Cook 2023b, 41). This distinction, like many within podcast research, can get fuzzy. *New Books Network*, for instance, features interviews with authors of scholarly texts; due to the discursive nature of interviews, does new knowledge emerge? Or as a review of sorts, is its main focus marketing? An overthinker can easily get lost in the nuances; for the purposes of this article, if the main function is to market a traditionally packaged scholarly text, I exclude it from this definition of scholarly podcasting.

Academic podcasts have been used for teaching, public scholarship, and to facilitate conversations between scholars; others are created for non-scholarly purposes, made by academics, journalists, and others about topics of interest that are scholarly in nature but not necessarily intended for a scholarly audience. This takes advantage of the niche nature of podcasting as a form of media; listeners enjoy taking deep dives into hyperspecific topics (Wrather 2016), and scholarly podcasting has demonstrated “audiences’ desire for intellectual content with many listeners wanting deep dives into topics and themes” (Cook 2023a).

**Audio Track 2: Audio reflection of how the open peer review process impacted the literature review section of this article. To listen to the audio, visit the online journal at <https://journalofelectronicpublishing.org/>**

**Hannah really pushed back on my initial draft, which did not include a definition of scholarly podcasting. She and Lori explained how they faced a similar struggle to write their book (with Ian Cook) *Podcast or Perish*; Hannah commented that people who study podcasts tend to just go on vibes (which resonated with me on several levels). She and Lori both emphasized how beginning the article by defining scholarly podcasts would really shape the rest of the article, as the definition would be essential for discussing podcasting as a medium, its affordances, and publishing platforms. While offering their own definition, Lori also encouraged me to create my own.**

*I went through an entire evolution of thought with this piece. During the peer review, with Hannah’s prompting, I initially aligned scholarly podcasts with institutions, despite my own hesitancy because I also believe scholarly podcasting*



is a way to incorporate voices and ways of knowing traditionally not valued in academia. In trying to parse my instincts, I initially sought to differentiate between academic podcasting and scholarly podcasting; academic felt more aligned with institutions, whereas scholarly could have a broader implication. Eventually, though, as I came to edit this piece after our podcast, I realized that (a) the definitions of academics and scholars are essentially interchangeable, and (b) the definition provided in *Podcast or Perish* already makes space for my value for different authority types. In our conversation, my answers to Hannah's prodding led me to "scholarly podcasts are created by scholars," which then meant I had to define scholars. Reflecting on it, however, it is not that scholarly podcasts need to be created by scholars, it's just that I as someone with apparently little respect for formal definitions and perceived authority was using scholars in an incorrect way, trying to force it to accommodate my feelings about knowledge valued by institutions. This is something we see often in librarianship, trying to justify our presence in spaces that don't acknowledge our expertise. I often scoff at this instinct, but here I've caught myself taking part in it, trying to validate others' experiences within the confines of academia when I can just say that people who aren't scholars know important things.

### Affordances of scholarly podcasting

The affordances of scholarly podcasting have been detailed in various publications with much greater breadth than will fit into this article. In this section, I will highlight the affordances I believe are most relevant to their potential to give voice to the communities of people who create knowledge, from the researchers themselves to the editors, reviewers, and even research participants.

The greatest affordance that I believe scholarly podcasts can take advantage of is generative discussion. An aspect of scholarship that my early isolated experiences did not reflect, "most scholarship is created discursively even if the discursiveness is often hidden in scholarly writing (e.g., the conversations with colleagues, peers or students that helped develop an idea might appear in a footnote if at all)" (Beckstead, Cook, and McGregor 2024). Whether it is chatting with a colleague in what I call the soup stage of research, where the essential ideas are present but things haven't fully coalesced into a recognizable output yet, or asking someone for feedback on a draft before you submit something for publication or a conference, these conversations are essential for fostering new ideas, identifying gaps or new areas of thought, and asking clarifying questions. Shows like *Secret Feminist Agenda*, where guests and host Hannah McGregor explore expressions of feminism in everyday life, or *Teacher of the Ear*, where host Chris Friend

and guests discuss critical digital pedagogy, are examples of scholarly podcasts that demonstrate how bringing together participants with different areas of expertise and experiences can result in new perspectives and knowledge through dialogue. By asking questions, sharing ideas, and making connections that never would have surfaced in a different form of communication, podcasts create an environment where scholarly knowledge can be built and shaped. Typical expressions of scholarly knowledge such as journal articles, books, or conference presentations rarely acknowledge these interactions with peers, colleagues, and other individuals that are essential to knowledge creation—some scholarly publishers, such as *In the Library With the Lead Pipe*, regularly include author acknowledgments, but even these glimpses into the scholarly conversation do not fully convey how vital discourse is to the creation of new knowledge.

Podcasting, and its affordance of generating discussion, can also make visible the invisible labor of peer review. There are many critiques of the traditional closed peer review; open peer review, part of the open movement that encompasses open access journals and open educational resources, has emerged as one strategy to address these critiques. Conducting open peer review via podcast further addresses some of these critiques; not only are identities known to all parties, but conversational peer review via podcast affords participants the essential opportunity to ask clarifying questions and work together to co-create knowledge in the moment. *Open Peer Review Podcast*, produced by Lori Beckstead along with research assistants Valentina Passos Gastaldo and Anna Ashitey, demonstrates how a conversational open peer review podcast improves on the traditional peer review process by turning peer review into a discourse. It is a process I found so valuable that I began my own podcast for information professionals, *The LibParlor Podcast*, with the goal to create a space for open peer review via podcast. Not all open peer review podcasts utilize the affordance of generative discussion in the same way, however. For volume 27.1 of *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* (2022), authors Hannah McGregor and Stacey Cope-land submitted a three-part podcast as their webtext; the editorial team at *Kairos* decided to review the podcast series via podcast, as well, which is published as the appendix to the piece. In this open peer review podcast, the reviewers met without the authors to discuss their thoughts on the piece. While not fully taking advantage of this affordance by including the authors, the conversation between reviewers and editor still highlights the richness of discussion and critique made possible by conducting the review via podcast.

A second affordance of podcasting as a medium that gives voice to community is embodied scholarship. The typical writing found in scholarly text reflects the western, masculine norms that have shaped academia and makes little to no space for knowledge created outside institutions of higher education. Any “writing that is playful, personal, narrative, emotive or non-linear” is discouraged (Jackson et al. 2018) through editorial guidelines, an opaque peer review process that requires the self to be removed from the work, and the opinions of peers that serve on tenure and promotion committees.

Podcasting, as Lynn M. Harter explains, “stretches the tendencies and capabilities of academics toward multi-sensorial forms of inquiry and . . . connects academics with broader publics” (2019, 126). Yves Rees, an Australian historian and podcaster, said that podcasting is about “being fun and about it being collaborative and about it being embodied. . . . And I’ve come to really think about that mode of knowledge production as a feminist intervention” (quoted in Cook 2023b, 30).

Podcasting facilitates embodied scholarship in a number of ways. At the most basic level, podcasting gives scholarship a literal voice. Dumitrița Holdiș explains that simply the act of speaking about your work out loud “allows you to be more honest about the fact that you’re a person behind those results” (quoted in Cook 2023b, 17). Parts of your identity are revealed in the audio medium that are intentionally absent from most written scholarship, where “naturalized norms in the academy privilege prose in which bodies appear irrelevant to the production of knowledge” (Harter 2019, 126). This human element facilitates a space where connections are more easily made between the researcher and the listener where “[t]his embodied experience of podcasting on the part of the producer *and* the listener is entangled in a politics of voice, of what voices are heard and who holds the power in how their stories and experiences are shared through sound” (McGregor and Copeland 2022). This political piece is something often remarked upon, calling up the potential of podcasts to be a radical, feminist space to challenge these existing norms around knowledge production. Creating scholarly podcasts gives voice not just to the researcher who would be the singular author of the monograph or journal article; producers of these podcasts can invite fellow researchers, research participants, and reviewers to share the space. They can model an ethics of care, demonstrating how research can be collaborative and supportive, participatory and inclusive. For instance, researchers studying particular communities can invite their research participants to participate in the creation of the podcast, and the communities they are part of will have access to that research once published. *Articles of Interest* is one example of how someone outside of academia, creator and host Avery Trufelman, conducts research by interviewing experts and featuring their voice on the podcast. *He Kōrero* is an example of a podcast where scholars and other community leaders share their academic expertise directly with their communities, engaging in public scholarship by getting information to those who could most directly benefit from it.

Hannah McGregor and Stacey Copeland’s 2022 *Kairos* piece demonstrates the affordance of embodied scholarship in a different way. Rather than read aloud the works they were citing, they invited the authors of those works to record themselves reading the selection of their work that McGregor and Copeland were referencing. This act of subverting the normally solo act of citation reframes the idea of what scholarly discourse looks like in a research output. It actively engages scholars whose work they were referencing into this scholarship as conversation, at the same time affording them the

chance to embody their scholarship in a way they may not have previously. By simply making the request, McGregor and Copeland may have introduced a new way of thinking about their own work, and the nature of scholarship in general, to these authors and, as a result, to the listeners who engaged with the final piece.

A critique I often receive when talking about podcasts and scholarship is that many people do not see podcasting as an inherently feminist, inclusive space. As with almost any other media, it is very easy to cultivate a media bubble that reflects your own values and interests; of the 31 podcasts I subscribe to at the time of writing, only two are hosted only by straight, cis white men (*99% Invisible*, which regularly features guest hosts who are not straight, cis white men, and *The Friendship Onion*, hosted by actors Billy Boyd and Dominic Monaghan). The rest are created and hosted by an array of individuals representing a full spectrum of positionalities and marginalized identities. So while I conceptually understand that those who do not regularly consume podcasts themselves may perceive the medium as just as normative as scholarly publishing, my own experience as an avid podcast listener demonstrates that within the medium potential exists that the gatekeeping of the scholarly publishing industry and academia do not allow. Raechel Tiffe and Melody Hoffmann (2017) explore the impact of podcasts hosted by women, particularly those with “uniquely marginalized vocal styles”; Copeland (2022b) blends several disciplines in her examination of radio, podcast practices, and queer theory; and Briana Nicole Barner “looks at how Blackness is negotiated and performed within a group of podcasts primarily hosted by Black and queer women” (2021, xi) to examine how podcasting can center the voices and experiences of Black and queer women. While not a holistic representation of the literature on this point, these works demonstrate that podcasting, while not inherently inclusive, provides an opportunity for those of marginalized identities to carve space for themselves.

Audience engagement is another affordance of scholarly podcasting. Conceptualizing the audience of a piece of scholarship not as another expert in the field, but as anyone who has an interest in the topic and willingness to engage, has several different effects. One, it challenges the idea of who is a peer, just as scholarly podcasting challenges the concept of a scholar. If scholarly podcasts do not need to be created by a scholar, cannot the conceptualization of the peer be similarly expanded to multiple forms of expertise and knowing? By more widely disseminating information and inviting audience engagement via comment, question and answer episodes, and other forms, podcasting can demonstrate the co-construction of knowledge. Audience engagement also challenges knowledge creators to communicate information in a manner that is accessible to general audiences, making podcasts a form of public scholarship. They invite listeners to become part of a community of knowledge. Podcasts have been studied as sites of public pedagogy (Shetty 2022), and just as many instructors aim to make

their lessons accessible by reducing jargon and not assuming previous knowledge, podcasts encourage the same practices (Sewell 2023).

The low barrier for creation or participation is another important affordance of scholarly podcasts. Most forms of public collaboration between scholars are conference panels or presentations or webinars often organized by a hosting organization. These involve calls for participation, which in turn means identifying and inviting collaborators, co-creating a proposal, competing with others for limited time slots, and producing a product that often requires a good amount of time and effort before the event itself. This structure also often means those outside of higher education are excluded or do not feel welcome in these academic collaborative environments. Podcasts, however, at the most basic only require an agreement to have a conversation, a way to have that conversation either in person or virtually, and a means of recording audio. Scholarly podcasts can be an important third space for co-creating and sharing knowledge and stand outside of traditional organizations that may exclude certain participants from scholarly conversations.

**Audio Track 3: Audio reflection of how I realized low barrier for creation or participation is an important affordance. To listen to the audio, visit the online journal at <https://journalofelectronicpublishing.org/>**

*This is an affordance I had originally not thought of and only came to mind after the review as I was rewriting an outline for the article. I found myself getting overwhelmed by all the new potential directions this article could take, but by focusing on the special issue theme of community, this affordance emerged.*

The final affordance that in particular highlights scholarly podcasting's ability to give voice to a community of researchers is the flexibility of expression. Traditional scholarly communication has a set of norms that allows for little variation, whereas podcasts come in many different genres and formats. The difficulties of studying podcast genres is a documented challenge in the field (Funk and Speakman 2022; Sherrill 2022), but even casual podcast listeners are aware of the variety of delivery formats. Whereas most scholarly artifacts are the disembodied written word, podcasts can take the forms of interviews, conversations, lectures, fictional and non-fictional narratives, and more. This affordance means that scholarly podcasts can convey knowledge in whatever form best suits the information, and the allowance for creativity invites those for whom traditional scholarly writing is not a strength to contribute their knowledge.

These four affordances facilitate gathering in a number of ways. Generative discussion encourages podcast creators to invite others into the knowledge production

process in a more visible way. This affordance allows scholars to not only model the informal generative conversations we often have before creating a research output but also feature the voice of those often seen only as research subjects. Though there are not many examples of podcasts utilizing this affordance in that way, I think it will be interesting to see how scholars, particularly in the public humanities, lean into this ability as scholarly podcasts grow in popularity. Open peer review podcasts can also use this affordance of generative discussion to make the invisible, unpaid labor of review audible, which could increase the appreciation for this work. It can demonstrate the value of working interdisciplinarily, an affordance I have benefited from myself each time I've engaged in open peer review via podcast.

The second affordance of embodied scholarship, giving literal voice to our work, is perhaps least explored in terms of facilitating gathering, though I am excited by the potential of this affordance. It would likely not have occurred to me to do as McGregor and Copeland did for their *Kairos* article and reach out to authors to record the chosen cited works, rather than read them themselves, but I am intrigued by the way this choice modeled that scholarship is a conversation. Most of the people I have cited in this article will likely not know that I have done so, and it's even more unlikely that they will read it through and see how I've put their work into conversation with other work from different fields. What McGregor and Copeland did by reaching out and requesting an audio file not only let those authors know their work was still being used, but in their solicitation, they likely gave at least a brief explanation of why they were making this request. Though not bringing everyone together to have the conversation explored in their article, there is potential for scholarly podcasting to build new communities as creators find new and innovative ways to leverage audio to express knowledge in creative ways.

The last two affordances, those of audience engagement and low barriers to creation and participation, are most useful for bringing people together. By actively encouraging audience engagement, podcasts can build community among their listeners, who then generate their own knowledge. Podcasts can give people with common interests a starting point to have their own discussions; I know I personally have shared podcast episodes with coworkers and then chatted about them and their implications for our work over a coffee or lunch. And as discussed with *This Podcast Will Kill You*, the fact that anyone with a recording device can be an active participant in a podcast increases the voices that can contribute to a conversation. My own scholarly podcast serves as a very convenient way to make a connection with someone I otherwise would have no reason to talk to and invite them to talk with me about open peer review, games, and more.

**Audio Track 4: Audio reflection of how the peer review process impacted the affordances section of this article. To listen to the audio, visit the online journal at <https://journalofelectronicpublishing.org/>**

Hannah and Lori had a lot of really valuable feedback for this section. First, Hannah asked what makes something an affordance versus a model—open peer review podcasting was listed as both an affordance and a model in the first draft, and why? I answered that I hadn't really thought that deeply about separating out the affordances from the models, which I knew was a problem as soon as I admitted it out loud. Hannah encouraged me to better articulate all of the affordances, because some were mentioned later in the draft that weren't included in the affordances section, and I didn't draw strong connections between the affordances and the four models of scholarly podcasting I had listed in the draft (which, readers will notice, is no longer even a section, but they were: within existing scholarly journals, scholarly podcasting networks, independent publishing, and open peer review). Hannah pointed out that all of these terms are complex—Is open peer review an affordance, or a model, or something else entirely (this one, it's the last one)? But it's important to clarify things for myself so I can convey to the readers what I mean. Lori pointed out again the importance of defining scholarly podcasts, because that would shape the affordances I talk about. She encouraged backing out, then determining the scope—What do I actually want to say? Then set my parameters and situate it in existing research.

*As soon as Hannah asked about the affordances, I knew that I hadn't given it enough thought in the first draft. I could immediately think of several examples where I had not thought deeply enough about the affordances; generative discussion is an affordance of podcasting that enables open peer review; open peer review isn't an affordance itself. This is what happens when you don't outline, or use only the barest of outlines. Her and Lori's encouragement to back out and clarify exactly what I want to say about scholarly podcasting and community was really helpful as I grappled with the content of the article. What did I think was most important to convey?*

**Audio Track 5: Audio reflection of how the open peer review process impacted the affordances section of this article. To listen to the audio, visit the online journal at <https://journalofelectronicpublishing.org/>**

Another point Hannah made during this section was that the terms I was using—models and modalities—didn't have the theoretical specificity for the conversation I was trying to have. She encouraged me to look

into medium, form, genre, and publishing platforms instead. She also encouraged me to include examples; so much of podcasting is niche and edge-cases, so including examples is important. Also, situating open peer review podcasting is hard! We all agreed it is not really a model, since you can use open peer review podcasts in a variety of scenarios; Hannah suggested mentioning it in the literature review, affordances, and in each model to illustrate how it can be used.

*This is a great example of one of the challenges of how I engage in scholarship; I'm a librarian, and I don't work with communication studies departments, so my engagement with media studies literature has been sporadic, as I dip in and out of podcasting and refocus on my other research areas of information literacy, game-based learning, and fandom studies. I was intimidated by trying to learn the foundational terms of another discipline independently, and my way around it was to use the words that made the most sense to me—those vibes Hannah mentioned earlier. But I took some time and used a lot of whiteboard space to clarify the different terms as much as possible, which really did help me clarify what I want to say in this piece. I was less interested in the models I initially proposed, which in reality were publishing platforms, and more interested in genre (which turned out to be a whole other headache trying to clarify). Readers will notice that although we discussed the models quite a bit in our conversation, they've really been de-centered in this iteration of the piece.*

## Podcast genres

To illustrate how scholarly podcasts can implement the affordances explored in the previous section, I want to highlight the four podcast genres I believe have the most potential to demonstrate the collaborative nature of scholarly knowledge creation. As with many facets of podcast scholarship, defining genres is a difficult practice, and there is no agreed-upon method at present. Ali Priyakorn (2023) conducted an exploration of podcast genres and formats within the context of Thai podcast content distribution; while they explored different approaches to defining podcast genres, they ultimately chose to create genres by podcast content rather than format (e.g., society and culture, business and management, educational, lifestyle and leisure). This approach, while it has its place, is unhelpful for this analysis for a number of reasons. First, while they are the genres used by podcatchers such as Apple Podcasts, they are self-selected, which has led to mislabeling as podcast producers and creators choose tags based on attracting



the most listeners rather than accurately conveying the content of their show (Berg 2021). Second, they do not set up a discussion in such a way that affordances are easily explored.

Christopher Drew's (2017) genre analysis of educational podcasts chose to create genres based on format rather than content. His three categories—the Quick Burst, the Narrative, and the Chat Show—are better suited for exploring the affordances of podcasting, which he demonstrates by describing the defining characteristics of these genres (described as moves) in addition to their pedagogical affordances. He acknowledges, though, that there are other genres that might be identified, including student-produced podcasts. But it is with Berg's (2021) categorization of podcast genres that I felt most satisfied. Berg broke down podcasts into medium content, which is transferable between media, and medium grammar, which Joshua Meyrowitz describes as "the ways in which the production variables of each medium . . . interact with content elements" (1998, 99). Berg identified the following medium grammars for podcasts: conversations, interviews, monologue, magazine, debate, reportage, narration, and crafted audio (2021, 118). Within these medium grammars, which I will be using as genres, conversations, interviews, debates, and crafted audio hold the most potential for giving voice to the communities that make scholarship possible.

### *Conversations and interviews*

Berg (2021) lists conversations and interviews as separate medium grammars but does not define them, and as genres, the difference between the two is vague. Involving at least two participants, both conversations and interviews involve some loose structure, be it an agreed-upon topic or a set of questions. To propose distinctions between the two genres, an interview involves a host or moderator who asks the questions, whether scripted or unscripted; one or more guests or participants answer the questions. The host or moderator can, of course, provide their own answers and insights to prompts but throughout maintains the role of moderator. In a conversation there is no moderator role; all participants are positioned to ask questions and share their perspectives. As with so much of podcast research, this gets fuzzy, as conversation may spring from the answers given by podcast guests during an interview. So for the purposes of this article, I will discuss them as parts of the same genre.

Both examples of open peer review previously discussed in this article fall under the interview genre. In each case there was a moderator who asked questions of the participants, spurring discussion among all involved. This is a clear example of the affordance of generative discussion, where participants together co-created knowledge based on their own experiences and expertise; the podcast episode is what brought together these

individuals, creating space for this unique type of scholarly conversation. *LibVoices*, co-hosted by Jamia Williams and Jamillah R. Gabriel, is another example; this podcast creates space for librarians of color to come together to share about their work and again blurs the lines between interview and conversation. *Pedagodzilla*, which explores pedagogic theory, practice, and research through a pop culture lens, is another example of a scholarly conversational podcast; some episodes are interviews, whereas others are conversations between the two hosts Mike Collins and Mark Childs.

Conversational and interview podcasts also, of course, take advantage of the other affordances explored in this article. The more informal nature of these genres leans into the affordance of embodied scholarship. In *The Critical and the Curious*, hosted by professors Charisse L'Pree and Robert Thompson, the hosts discuss how the podcast grew from their personal interests and positionalities, and while there is clearly organization and planning that goes into their discussions of *Fast & Furious* or Keanu Reeves, there is still the element of generative discussion as they make space to build ideas off of each other. In *Marginally Fannish*, which was created as a PhD project exploring the pedagogical implications of podcasts, host Parinita Shetty utilizes the affordances of both audience engagement and reduced barriers to participation to invite scholars and non-scholars alike on her podcast to apply an intersectional lens to some of their favorite media and fandoms. This show demonstrates how podcasts can uplift forms of authority not traditionally valued in scholarly research, where the amount of time you have invested in a television show paired with your personal intersecting identities and experiences positions Parinita's guests as experts on the show, making it an excellent example of public scholarship.

Conversational and interview scholarly podcasts, as some of the most accessible genres of podcasts to create, are published in many places. *LibVoices* is an example of an independently published scholarly podcast, where the creative team manages the entire production, editing, and publication processes themselves. Independently published podcasts are perhaps the most popular, in part because there are so few formal opportunities for publishing, and also in part due to the amorphous nature of scholarly podcasting. Some podcast creators do not consider their show scholarly, whereas other scholarly podcasts are created by people outside academia, including journalists and former academics (Cook 2023b). Publishing podcasts independently gives scholars the most ability to fully embrace the affordances of podcasting as scholarship. Whether intentionally creating a show as an act of public scholarship or deciding that recording conversations with friends about topics of interest and relevance to academia is a fun way to spend time together, publishing outside of a journal or network allows scholars to create their own guidelines. This also means that often podcast creators are lacking the support that editorial staff and podcasting networks can provide. They may not perform scholarly rigor in a way that is recognized by their colleagues, and it may take a while to build an audience.

These podcasts may also be parts of podcast networks. *This Podcast Will Kill You*, originally published independently in 2017, joined the Exactly Right Podcast Network in 2018 (McDonnell-Parry 2018); *Witch, Please* also began as an independently published podcast, later joining Not Sorry Productions before beginning their own Witch, Please Productions. Amplify Podcast Network is a scholarly podcasting network that works in conjunction with Wilfrid Laurier University Press, with both a peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed podcast stream; *Secret Feminist Agenda*, the first peer-reviewed podcast, is part of their peer-reviewed Resonate Stream. These networks perform various functions: some provide a place for podcasters to publish their work (e.g., Amplify Podcast Network and New Books Network), while others serve as sites to facilitate discussion and sharing of resources about scholarly podcasting (e.g., Humanities Podcast Network and H-Podcast). Those that publish podcasts have their own scope and policies, just as journals do. Publishing scholarly podcasts through these networks has a number of advantages: networks have an established audience, they often handle distribution and archiving of episodes, and many provide resources to assist podcast hosts.

**Audio Track 6: Audio reflection of how the open peer review process impacted the podcast genre and missing models section of this article. To listen to the audio, visit the online journal at <https://journalofelectronicpublishing.org/>**

We did not spend too much time in our discussion talking about the models of scholarly podcasting I had proposed. Hannah offered two really helpful distinctions: that *Nature Podcast*, which I had included as a type of scholarly podcast associated with a scholarly journal, does not fit their definition of scholarly podcasting—again, the importance of me defining scholarly podcasts up front! And second, she pointed out that my model “within existing scholarly journals” excluded scholarly presses, like what Wilfrid Laurier University Press is doing, as well as the University of Michigan (which has many, many podcasts). This is an important part of the podcasting landscape, and a distinction should be made in this traditional scholarly publishing landscape between journals that will let you publish a podcast as the actual scholarly artifact itself versus those that are primarily PR focused.

This is the section of the paper that underwent the largest transformation based on our peer review conversation. I realized I was more interested in the discussion of genre than publishing platform and thus shifted the focus of this section and only incorporated a smaller discussion of where podcasts of each genre might be published. While this shifts the way affordances are

*addressed, I also feel like this is more satisfying to dig into. The different genres and their implications for conveying scholarship are what inspire me, not where they end up being published.*

### *Debates*

Debates are another podcast genre I believe has the potential to highlight the multiple voices that participate in scholarly conversation, although I was hesitant to include it. Debates, which Berg defines as “several hosts and/or guests—more than two—involved in a discussion in which opposing arguments are put forward” (2021, 119), are certainly positioned to take advantages of affordances such as generative discussion, public scholarship, embodied scholarship, audience engagement, and reduced barriers to participation. Berg found, however, that only 0.7% of Danish podcasts are debates, observing that “independent podcasting is thus seldom an online space for discussing conflicting opinions” (119). I can imagine a number of reasons why debate podcasts are not a popular genre: much of traditional media relies on debate and contentious viewpoints to generate interest, so news outlets and traditional radio already provide this type of content; podcasts are niche by nature, and so are more likely to attract listeners and guests with similar perspectives due to the great amount of choice available; podcast hosts choose to create shows about things they are passionate about, and the amount of labor (often unpaid) that goes into their creation and production dissuades them from actively seeking opposing perspectives. So while debates may provide an interesting genre for scholarly podcasts to explore—they would certainly generate conversation and provide lots of content for audiences to engage with—they would also require a large amount of emotional and logistical labor for all involved to ensure that the space created was one where the spirit of scholarly debate was not overtaken by passionate and sometimes upsetting or confrontational energy.

### *Crafted audio*

The last podcast genre with potential to leverage the affordances of scholarly podcasting to demonstrate the effect of community and collaboration on the creation of scholarly knowledge is crafted audio. Berg includes live-on-tape podcasts, non-fictional storytelling, and fictional storytelling in this category, which uses audio editing, dramaturgy, and other audio elements (2021, 117) to deliver a more immersive experience than a monologue, for example, which might have similar content but does not take full advantage of the affordances of podcasting to incorporate other sonic elements such

as sounds or music. This genre also overlaps with others. *This Podcast Will Kill You*, for instance, first came to my mind as an example of a conversational scholarly podcast. Hosts Erin Welsh and Erin Allmann Updyke choose a different disease to research each episode; they divide their content into the biology of the pathogen and the history of the disease and then conclude with its current state. Although their tone is conversational and they ask each other questions as they present their assigned sections, there are a few elements that prompted me to categorize this as crafted audio instead of as conversation or interview. Each episode begins with a firsthand account; initially these were written accounts from history read aloud by one of the hosts. As their listenership grew, however, the podcast utilized the audience engagement affordance to bring some listeners into the show. Listeners began sending in their own firsthand accounts, which both positioned them as authorities on the disease under discussion and added an audio element that leverages the affordance of reduced barriers to participation. An interesting example of generative discussion takes place over the course of this show, too, as Welsh and Allmann Updyke link scholarship from one episode to another, asking questions about related diseases or traits and positing about potential links between diseases. This element of making connections between episodes is not only a great demonstration of public scholarship, as Welsh and Allmann Updyke show the interconnected nature of scholarly knowledge, but also takes advantage of the flexibility of genre found in podcasting to incorporate a storytelling element into their show. Crafted audio as a genre is best positioned to shape scholarly knowledge for public consumption, using audio elements such as music and other sounds to create a narrative out of research.

This narrative element is what, for me, separates crafted audio from conversation or interview podcasts. *Material Girls* is another example of a podcast that could fall under the interview or conversation genre; hosts Marcelle Kosman and Hannah McGregor choose a pop culture phenomenon to analyze through a scholarly lens, sometimes joined by a guest, who is often also a scholar. But through the use of sound effects, music, and the frequent interweaving of theories and scholars in different contexts, Kosman and McGregor have utilized the affordances of podcasting in such a way that it creates a different listening experience than a simpler conversation or interview. Crafted audio, then, has a different relationship to the affordance of reduced barrier to creation and participation; the barrier to participation is still reduced, as guests are just as easily able to participate as on other genres of podcasts, but the barrier to creation is much higher. Crafted audio requires a greater knowledge of audio production, as well as skills in taking scholarly information and shaping it into something resembling a story. These are skills that take time to develop and are made easier by having access to resources such as intuitive editing software, which not all podcast creators have; alternatively, a producer can assist with these elements, which, again, require resources not necessary for a conversation or interview podcast.

*Articles of Interest* is perhaps my favorite scholarly podcast of this genre. In each episode, creator and host Avery Trufelman chooses a different item of clothing and creates a story around its history and how it's perceived today. She uses a variety of techniques—including interviews, reflections, events she engages with as part of her research (e.g., season 5, episode 1, “Nudity,” in which she records herself and a friend attending a nude comedy show), and archival research—and weaves them together in an aural tapestry that includes the voice of herself and friends and guests, diegetic noises, and music. It effectively demonstrates the affective effect of podcasting, turning what could have been expressed as a traditional research paper into a captivating and sometimes emotional story that engages scholars and non-scholars alike. This potential to give life to research through sound is what I find most exciting about scholarly podcasting.

These crafted audio scholarly podcasts tend to be published either through scholarly presses (see McGregor and Copeland 2022), independently, or through scholarly and non-scholarly podcast networks. For example, *This Podcast Will Kill You* first aired in 2017 as an independently published podcast but joined the Exactly Right Podcast Network in 2018 (McDonell-Parry 2018). As scholarly presses explore the potential of podcasts, I believe the higher production value and narrative elements of crafted audio podcasts make it a genre that will sooner gain value in traditional scholarly environments. This will also provide challenges: How will scholarly presses engage with affordances of podcasting such as audience engagement and embodied scholarship? Will there be guidelines offered by scholarly journals that put limits on the expression of embodiment through sound in order to maintain the standards of the press? Will these journals and presses provide their own producers to achieve the high-quality sound production, which would lessen labor on the podcast creator's behalf but limits their agency in telling the story of their research? These standards and guidelines, as they are created, will be an interesting area of research.

**Audio Track 7: Audio reflection of how the open peer review process impacted edits I made to the article. To listen to the audio, visit the online journal at <https://journalofelectronicpublishing.org/>**

**Hannah commented during our conversation about how useful this article may be for this emerging discipline, as it takes a step back and looks at scholarly podcasting more holistically. One of her written comments talked about how one of the forms of gathering this article is doing is “the valuable work of gathering together an emergent body of work and drawing connections between it.”**

*I do wonder in, if cutting much of the content about the different publishing platforms, the article has lost some of that usefulness. I still chose to focus on genre over publishing platforms, but did I have to choose? Am I self-editing when I do not need to? Or am I just focusing on what I find most interesting and leaving room for other scholars (or myself, later) to comment more upon the different publishing platforms? In reality, with competing priorities for my time and energy, I had to choose between the two. There's always the chance to write another paper later.*

## Conclusion

While traditional norms of scholarly publishing adhere to western, masculine traits of disembodiment, independence, and objectivity, open and public scholarship are movements that challenge these as the superior forms of knowledge production and dissemination. Scholarly podcasts are one format of open and public scholarship that take advantage of the affordances of the modality in ways that can demonstrate a more inclusive, feminist, care-based approach to scholarship that not only gives the researcher an embodied voice but also provides opportunity for the entire community that enables and supports knowledge production to be heard and valued as part of that process. Not only that, as public scholarship, scholarly podcasts open up the potential for others not involved in the production process to gather around these works of scholarship in a much more accessible way than a traditional scholarly article or monograph.

Research on podcasts is still an emerging field, and as such, many terms are lacking agreed-upon definitions, including scholarly podcasting and genres. Despite this, using the concept of medium grammars to shape genres, I explored how conversation, interview, debate, and crafted audio are four genres of podcasts best situated to utilize the affordances of generative discussion, embodied scholarship, audience engagement, reduced barriers to creation and participation, and flexibility of format to give voice to the community of individuals who make knowledge creation possible.

This article was an experiment in producing a written text reflecting on the possibilities of scholarly podcasting while also demonstrating the impact of using one of these open practices by undergoing open peer review via podcast. The reflections incorporated into this piece demonstrate how open peer review via podcast almost wholly reshaped the original draft of the article; the expertise of reviewer Hannah McGregor and host Lori Beckstead complemented my own interdisciplinary work as an information professional, strengthening this article by providing me with media-specific terms and concepts to help me bring the article into focus. The full peer review conversation, as well

as the original draft under discussion, are available for readers interested in exploring the entire process. It is my hope that by creating this article in this way, others are encouraged to engage in scholarly podcasting and rethink what we value in scholarship.

## Author Biography

**Amber Sewell**, she/hers, is an Assistant Professor and Teaching and Learning Librarian at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she works primarily with first- and second-year undergraduate students. Her research interests include games for instruction and outreach, information privilege, and fandom. Creator and host of *The LibParlor Podcast*, she is also interested in podcasting as a means of making scholarship more widely available.

<https://www.library.unlv.edu/about/staff/sewell-amber>

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