

# Podcasting as an extension tool

Phoebe Gordon, Ph.D.

Orchard Systems Advisor, Madera and Merced Counties

University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources



## What strengths does podcasting have?

- Style can range from formal, newslake broadcast to an informal hangout session with friends
- Can have one host to several hosts
  - Style of podcasting may change depending on the number of hosts
- Easy to produce (no, really!)
- Requires few resources

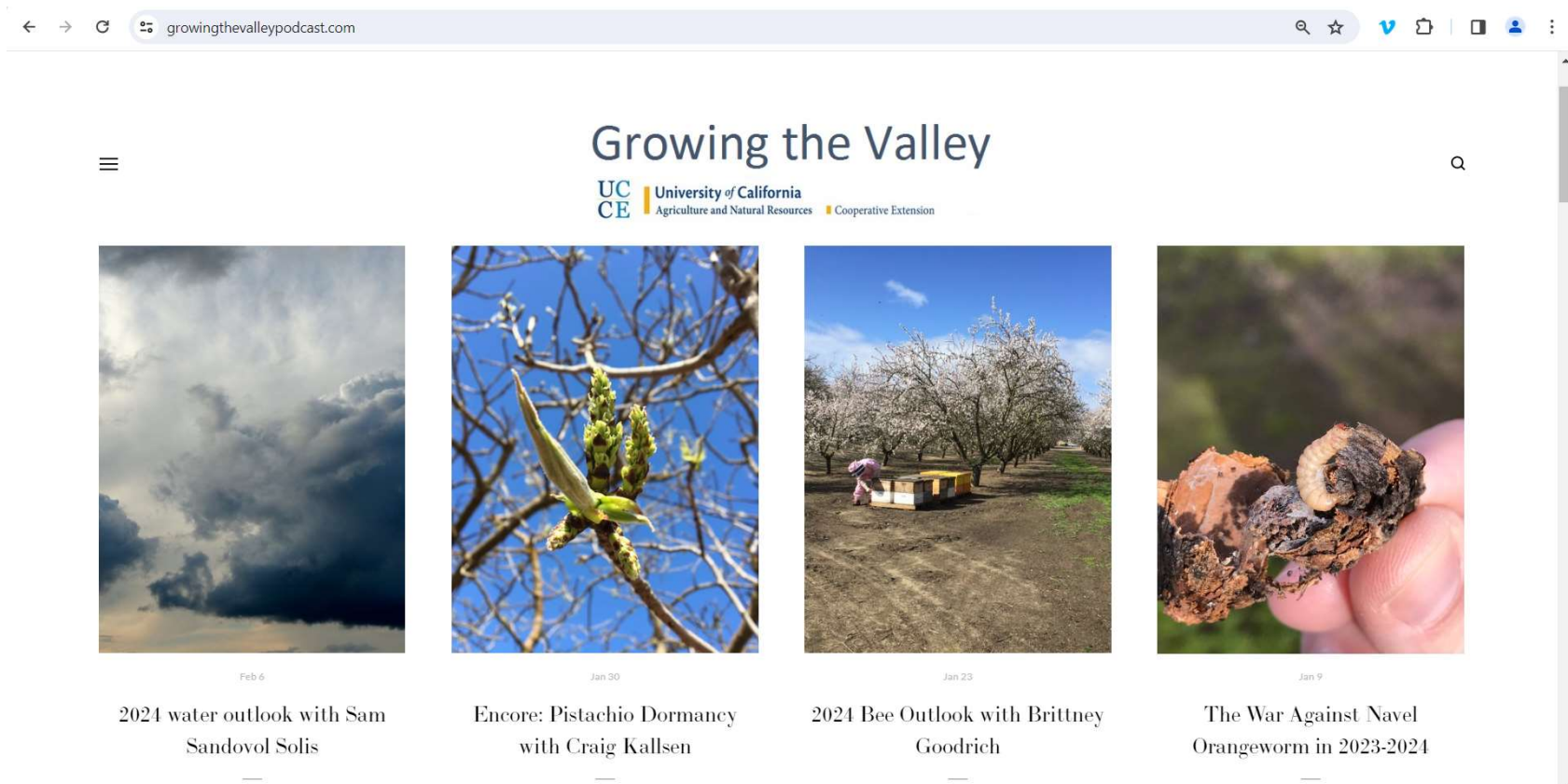
# What weaknesses does podcasting have?

- Not an effective teaching method for all concepts
- Maintaining an audience can be a grind
  - Requires regular posting
- For the producers, it can take years before you get a significant audience
- Not for everyone
  - Only about 1/3 of the US regularly listens to podcasts
  - Only 2/3 has ever listened to podcasts









# Podcasting is a tool to elevate other extension personnel, too



The screenshot shows the website for 'Growing the Valley', a podcast from the University of California Cooperative Extension. The page features a header with the title 'Growing the Valley' and the UC CE logo. Below the header, there are four episode cards, each with a representative image, a date, and a title.

**UC CE | University of California**  
Agriculture and Natural Resources | Cooperative Extension

-   
Feb 6  
2024 water outlook with Sam Sandoval Solis
-   
Jan 30  
Encore: Pistachio Dormancy with Craig Kallsen
-   
Jan 23  
2024 Bee Outlook with Brittney Goodrich
-   
Jan 9  
The War Against Navel Orangeworm in 2023-2024

## Where does podcasting fit into my extension program?

---

- Maintain a podcast
- Hold grower meetings
- Articles in my newsletter as well as industry newsletters
- Invited talks at meetings
- Maintain a website for posting articles and meetings



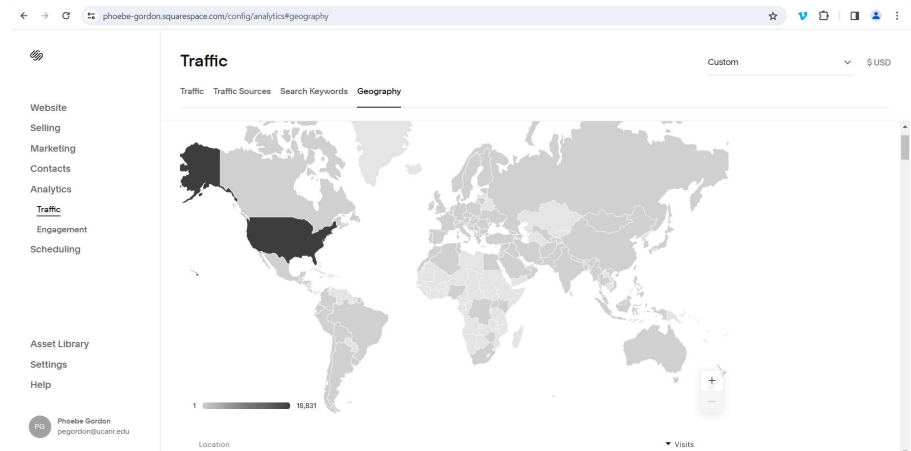
# What do you need to produce a podcast?

- A website to post episodes to, that has an audio RSS feed
  - RSS = Really Simple Syndication
  - Standardized way for people or apps to access website content
  - UCANR websites cannot do this
- Audio equipment for recording
- Editing software
- Bonus: recording area
  - Area that allows for sound waves to be absorbed
  - Closet, pillow fort, blanket, recording studio



# How do you evaluate a podcast's success?

- Word of mouth
- Website analytics
  - How many?
  - Where from?
- Podcast app analytics
- Professional services like Podtrak
- Survey? We tried this early on, very little success
- Use multiple types of analytics!



Websites will tell you:

How many visits, unique visits

Where those visitors are coming from (within the web, where in the US and world)

# How do you get financial support for your podcast?

- My cohost and I are lucky to be primarily funded by agricultural commodity boards that will happily support (cheap) educational efforts
- Many big granting agencies are now requiring extension... ask for funds if people want an “extension person” to help them be more competitive
- Very cheap to run a podcast - website services are only a few hundred \$ a year
- Decent mics for cheap