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Source: Radiation Research, 178(1) : 99-100

Published By: Radiation Research Society

URL: https://doi.org/10.1667/RR3033.1

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RADIATION RESEARCH **178**, 99–100 (2012)
0033-7587/12 $15.00
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DOI: 10.1667/RR3033.1

Broadcasting in the Airways: The Fifth Anniversary of the Radiation Research Podcast[1]

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Shaffer, V. A., Boerma, M., Buonanno, M., Costes, S., Criswell, T., Gonon, G., Pandey, B. N., Pinto, M. and Rockwell, S. Broadcasting in the Airways: the Fifth Anniversary of the Radiation Research Podcast. *Radiat. Res*. 178, 99–100 (2012).

The Radiation Research Podcast was funded just over five years ago by a few Radiation Research Society members. To date, the volunteers running the podcast have produced and published online, open access, over 70 audio interviews. The program includes monthly interviews with authors of articles, award winners, and other recordings at conferences, such as round table discussions. We here present an overview of the podcast, from its creation to its fifth birthday, to explain how it is working, how the featured interviews are scheduled, and what future directions are taken. So, stay tuned! **© 2012 by Radiation Research Society**

Children should get bored every so often, they say, because a little bit of boredom can stimulate your creativity (*1, 2*). The *Radiation Research* Podcast (*3*) was born out of long hours spent in the darkness of a fluorescent microscope laboratory at the New Jersey Medical School in 2005. Two postdoctoral fellows, Massimo Pinto and Badri Pandey, and Ph.D. student, Manuela Buonanno, were sitting by their fluorescent microscopes, scoring radiation-induced micronuclei, trying to find strategies to let their minds escape from their tedious work. Listening to music in the background was a relief, but it was also nice listening to audiobooks, or science podcasts, which were real novelties at that time. During coffee breaks, we imagined listening to authors of manuscripts published in *Radiation Research* describe their work in their own words, for the benefit of other readers who, like us, were stuck in the often tedious aspects of scientific research, or perhaps, during their daily commute. Within a few months, we presented the idea of a podcast before the Governing Council of the Radiation Research Society, which was met with great enthusiasm. Soon after, the *Radiation Research* podcast was born. Recruitment of more volunteers took place in front of their posters at the 2006 annual meeting in Philadelphia, PA, where the very first interview was recorded (4). Thanks to two generous donations by John Moulder and Mary-Helen Barcellos-Hoff, we purchased basic digital recording equipment and audio-editing software, and began interviewing authors at annual meetings or over the phone through the internet. From 2007, interviews and news-minutes were packaged in monthly episodes. A band named ''Toubab'', and later fellow RRS member Alan Bigelow from Columbia University, together with his band ''Solar Punch'', recorded the jingles that identify our program.

After five years of activity, with eight volunteers now located over three continents, we have produced over 70 podcast episodes, including monthly interviews with authors of articles, award winners, and ''special'' interviews recorded at conferences, including round table discussions. Articles that we cover are selected by monthly votes of the podcast volunteers. On par with the mission of the Radiation Research Society, we try to cover all aspects of the radiation sciences by interviewing authors in all subjects. The topics covered, and the relative frequency at which each topic has been addressed, can be found on the ''Tag Cloud'' on our website. These topics range from basic methodological techniques, cell and whole-body radiation effects to the epidemiology associated with radiation exposure. Geographic location or native language of the prospected interviewed author poses no limits: we have interviewed authors from all over the world, and listeners of the program are by no means restricted to the U.S. With the notable exception of Antarctica, the webpage of the program receives visits from all continents. Our most

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common interview format, our monthly interview focusing on articles published in *Radiation Research*, includes both first and last authors, which allows the graduate students and postdoctoral fellows involved in the research the opportunity to discuss their project. These interviews clearly demonstrate the degree of knowledge and motivation of the current young investigators and experienced researchers that comprise our society.

We will be experimenting with new program formats in the upcoming months, including an approach that will allow for more public involvement in our program. Forums discussing specific topics via internet-based conferences will be initiated with world-renowned scientists invited to debate selected topics. Debates will be moderated by the podcast members and will be posted online for universal access. We are also open to any thoughts on how to improve this initiative; please send us an e-mail[1] and let us know about your ideas or topics you would like us to discuss.

As you go through your daily research routine, and when distraction is possible, please tune into the *Radiation Research* Podcast. You will hear first-hand accounts, from radiation scientists, about the details of their work. You may learn something new as these scientists share their insight about research topics that remain largely unexplored.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Radiation Research Society and the editorial office of *Radiation Research* for their continuous support of our initiatives. We appreciate the enthusiastic response and contributions of all of those whom we have interviewed over the years.

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Sylvain Costes interviewing Ray Sachs, at the 13th International Congress on Radiation Research in San Francisco, CA, July 2007. The interview is available on the Archives of the Radiation Research Podcast, http://bit.ly/JCRJLF.

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