

## Federica Bressan Researcher & Science communicator

4 articles

Reactivate

content that helps people make the most out of your material (I wrote about this in the article "Beyond audio: What your podcasts needs to 'speak' to a diverse audience – and a call for action for a book project"). That means that podcasts are much more work than audio, but that is where your podcast can do wonders for you whether you do it as a

science. Each episode was published on the podcast website and the usual places where you find your podcasts: iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, Vanilla, and so on. The website featured a page, dedicated to each episode, with the guest's bio

Since episode #1, I have been releasing one-hour long interviews with experts in the fields of technology, art, and

Fig. 1 – Historian of science Brigitte Van Tiggelen (left) recording a podcast interview with Federica Bressan (right) in

The podcast is the interview, and a podcast is meant to be listened to. Who needs a wall of text to read? Why read a

Almost a year into my first podcast, Technoculture, I realised I was sitting on a goldmine.

## you will not be in my audience. I don't cater to people who want to read articles. And then again, who reads

Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, on Feb. 18th 2019.

Podcasts are a goldmine of content

But a year into the making of the podcast, which means about thirty episodes in, I realized that I had learned a lot from the interviews: I remembered things that the guests said, and often felt like referencing them in my new episodes – or in casual conversations. I remembered who said what, but I couldn't remember exactly how and where. I started digging into my old episodes to find out that information.

Here is an audio snippet with the automatic transcription of my second interview with Brigitte Van Tiggelen, Belgian historian of science and co-author of the book "Women in Their Element. Selected Women's Contributions to the Periodic System". This fragment is part of episode #30, entitled "The hero myth and the rhetoric of science". Listen to the audio (the link should automatically take you to min. 28:16):

"and if you look at all the heroes of science it's really telling that either a family member or a close I would say

almost a spiritual family member like a student or a postdoc we would say that has this admiration for the

man creates all the basis for the heroic stories in the case McVie it's very clear she wrote the biography of her

a kind of freezing in this Heric role by people who we don't always look at but who are really instrumental in

husband and her daughter the one who was not doing chemistry wrote the biography of her mother so there is

her husband and her daughter (the one who was not doing chemistry) wrote the biography of her mother. So there is a kind of freezing in this heroic role by people who we don't always look at but who are really instrumental in this heroization process." The cleaning is done manually. A one-hour interview consists of about 8000 words. The time to clean it up takes up about two hours if you do it carefully. I did it carefully. It actually took a bit more than two hours, because while cleaning up the text, I was saving some highlights in a separate section of the website, with the exact spot where they appear in the audio. Another example from the same interview:

At min. 29:26 - Researchers need to communicate their ideas to a community, to peers, to the world. If you have a

great idea in the middle of the forest, and nobody knows about it, the quality of that idea is irrelevant.

creates all the basis for the heroic stories. In the case of Marie Curie it's very clear, she wrote the biography of

At min. 38:03 - Brigitte wishes that scientists would receive a better training in history of science, and that they would not think that "because they make it, they know it." According to her, scientists are not given "the right literature." By training, they are not used to being critical of themselves, of their methods, and of institutionalized science.

I made the whole transcripts available on the podcast website: on each episode's page, you can find the text at the

bottom of the page, and you can also download it in pdf format. Formatted with LaTeX, of course! See an example.

Once you have the whole text cleaned up, you realize that there's so much you can do. Statistics bonanza! How often

I recommend you play around with the **Voyant Tool**: it's a powerful tool and you can easily create wordclouds. With this link, you can tweak the parameters of the wordcloud from Brigitte's episode in Fig. 2.

understand

talking

A call to action When you are actively in charge of the entire production process of a successful podcast, transcribing (read: cleaning up) entire episodes can be a daunting task. I have transcribed several episodes and enjoyed doing it. It's a much deeper way to engage with the content, the audio, and the voice of the speaker. However, I have also relied on external help to accelerate the speed of my transcriptions, as I'm now 43 episodes in and only about half the episodes have been fully transcribed. I have set my mind to put together a book with a revised selection of interviews. That's why I'm reaching out to you to ask if you could help with one episode or even with a part of it (for example, separating questions and answers). This project is very important to me, and I will not get there without some help. People who have helped me so far are credited on the website and will be credited in the book. All I ask is for a couple of hours of your time, and you will be part of this multimedia project which is the bestest craziest idea I have ever had. The book project, just like my podcast, is not monetized and *I don't make nor offer* money to participate.

diverse audience — and a call for action for a book project". Before you decide to work on a transcription, please

reach out to me: I have important information for you, and I will also confirm that no one else has picked that episode

Me, what I do, what I offer: http://federicabressan.com Like Technoculture on Facebook: <a href="http://facebook.com/technoculturepodcast">http://facebook.com/technoculturepodcast</a> Follow me on Twitter: http://twitter.com/donnadifiume

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Podcasting beyond audio: The importance of transcripts Published on July 18, 2021 Edit article ✓ View stats Podcasts brought the power of the spoken word to a whole new level. However, the written word should not be left behind. Dr. Federica Bressan, science communicator and Fulbright alumna, tells us about the value of transcripts and calls for contributions to a book project. Podcasts are much more than audio. To deliver a good podcast, you need to think of it as a 'package' with a visual impact: additional information on the guests and on the content, references, and possibly additional insight on the researcher or just for yourself.

and some comments on the episode topic or the experience of making that episode. No transcript. I wondered: why a transcript? podcast? I am targeting podcast enthusiasts, not readers. I am not an author. If you don't want to listen to my podcast,

I transcribed highlights and quotes by hand. And by doing that, I realized how great those passages were. So, one day, I started going through a full transcript. That is: you never start from a blank page, play the audio, and write down word by word. There are automatic transcription tools out there, that will not yield a perfectly clean transcript, but a raw text that you can work on, by *cleaning it up* (and that often means adding missing punctuation).

Reading a podcast

transcripts?

this hair ization process" The clean transcription: "And if you look at all the heroes of science, it's really telling that either a family member or a close - I would say almost - a spiritual family member, like a student or a postdoc that has this admiration for the man,

Cleaning up the text can be done in several different ways: by staying literally faithful to the spoken word, or by improving the readability of the text. When someone speaks, they will leave sentences hanging, repeat themselves, repeat words... It is up to you to decide what you mean by 'transcript' (as such, I believe it should be faithful to what was spoken, almost like in court) and how much you want to 'embellish' it depending on your next goal with this material. Another thing I have done while parsing the transcripts is to make a 'list of contents' that would not necessarily include direct quotes, but would summarize a concept that was presented at that point in time. An example from Brigitte's interview:

does a word appear? Do recurring words represent the episode topic well? (Time for some self-criticism here: how transcripts can teach you to improve your podcasting skills.) What about processing several transcripts together? Which guests mentioned this or that keyword? Are there common threads? There normally are. By processing transcripts, you can be your own 'natural intelligence' algorithm and bring them to the surface. Then, the sky is the limit.

Fig. 2 – Wordcloud for Brigitte's episode used as example in this article.

The list of available episodes was published in the article "Beyond audio: What your podcasts needs to 'speak' to a

in the meantime.

Get in touch at podcast@federicabressan.com

Podcast: http://technoculture-podcast.com YouTube channel: <a href="http://youtube.com/c/wyfiwyg/">http://youtube.com/c/wyfiwyg/</a>

Published by Published • 21m Podcasts brought the power of the spoken word to a whole new level. However, the written word should not be left behind.

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Science communication in (a time

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