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PodBharti – Hindi podcasting

The Indian podcasting scene is very vibrant and dynamic – [Kamla Bhatt](#), [Indicast](#), [PodTech](#) all are doing a fantastic job at popularizing podcasts in India. And then there's [PodBharti](#) – India's first Hindi podcasting channel. PodBharti is the brainchild of two passionate individuals – Debashish Chakrabarty (a popular [Hindi blogger](#) and who's also behind the [IndiBloggies](#)) and Shashi Singh (<http://www.lokmanch.com/>) and has been live for about 2 months now.

I listened to a couple of episodes and indeed, they have a very unique and distinctive style to their podcasts. The podcasts kind of take you back in time, making you reminiscent of how some of the AIR – Vividh Bharati radio shows sounded. They cover a variety of current issues that affect the Indian society. The content is pretty insightful and has a touch of serious journalism to it. Although some parts of the Hindi were a bit overwhelming for me (Hindi isn't my first language), I really enjoyed listening to the podcasts.

Debashish and Shashi have been doing a great job at evangelizing online Hindi content and PodBharti is a great extension of their efforts.

Localization of content will be a key enabler of Internet adoption in India. And PodBharti is a great step in that direction.

Here's an interview with Debashish on what PodBharti is all about:

1) What is your goal with PodBharti? Do you intend to address any particular topic as part of Podbharti – say societal issues / political issues etc?

Podbharti is indeed a corollary to our blogging efforts, both Shashi (<http://shashisingh.in/>) and I (<http://nullpointer.debashish.com/about/about-the-author>) have been blogging for quite some time. With Podbharti both of us actually found a common passion, I had a dream to do radio, having done radio talks on AIR's Yuvavaani to even getting selected by Radio Mirchi for their first FM radio station at Indore where I could not eventually. Shashi too breathes around the audiovisual medium. He has been involved with websites such as LittiChokha <http://www.littichokha.com> and Lokmanch <http://www.lokmanch.com> and his exposure to media and the journalistic background has strengthened our programming.

So you can call Podbharti as a common passion for both of us. I have been publishing a Hindi webzine Nirantar <http://www.nirantar.org> with fellow Hindi bloggers, which was a way to do formal writing on concrete issues that concerns India. Podbharti may be considered an audio extension to the theme of Nirantar. We intend to cater to Hindi audience in India and abroad who spend time on the net or listen to online audio, providing a comprehensive coverage of News & Views about Indian language blogging, Tools & Technology, Current Affairs and the Entertainment Industry.

2) Why did you choose podcasting as a medium?

It's a medium that have lot of scope for creativity. Both of us had this passion for this medium (see the answer above). Podcasting has the distinct advantage of its semblance to radio; it lets listeners weave their mental picture while listening. And its almost unobtrusive, listen to it while commuting, working in your PC or even eating thanks to the ubiquity of portable devices.

3) Did you have any prior podcasting experience?

For me Pl refer answer 1) above.

Shashi has tried his hand in podcasting back in Nov 2005 itself albeit in bhojpuri, he was also quoted in a CNBC report then (details at <http://www.akshargram.com/2005/11/24/511/>).

4) I heard the ank 4 and gotta say that you guys have a unique and very interesting style for the podcast. How do you guys go about preparing for the podcast ? How long does it take to come up with one episode ?

Thanks 😊 Believe me, podcasting takes hell lot of time. It is a bit more for us because the format of Podbharti is like a mini-zine, reason we call it a Hindi Podzine. So getting an episode ready could take 12 to 20 hours. We don't take single podcasts rather our episodes cover several stories which more than often cover an interesting mix of topics.

5) Its been more than a month since you guys launched – how has the response been? Do you see reaching a greater audience because of the language? What kind of other feedback are you getting from the audience?

It's a response we never anticipated, more than 3600 downloads since we launched the first episode in May 2007. We are grateful to listeners who liked our effort. Some likened the experience to listening to 70's style radio, of the Vividh Bharti era. We have got encouraging comments and suggestions even from listeners who can't write or read in the language. A poll at our site suggest that people liked our focus on socio-economic issues, podcasts like the one on Mothers day where we did a story on the future of kids born to prostitutes and the one analyzing the long-term implications of the stone-pelting incident at Ranchi at the Reliance Fresh store, have been appreciated. And the listeners want that we continue with our programming including though provoking issues, music and interviews.

6) Any plans to monetize the effort?

We are in talks with few parties on formalizing the monetization plans, we don't really want to hurry on this stuff, you might notice that we don't even sport Google advt. Apart from the website we are keen on spot placements in the episodes that are context sensitive. We would like to improve our recording quality and increase outdoor recording and as such we certainly need money to afford such gadgets. We are actually keen on long term positions with companies from the audio space and there are ambitious plans on content sharing and syndication. However, all such efforts would take lower priority than our commitment to programming. We will continue to bring podcasts that make us aware about our society, its triumphs and tribulations and build a positive wave that could inspire listeners to think about and do something for their nation. We will never dilute this commitment for any commercial consideration.

Go, listen to one of their episodes. You'll thoroughly enjoy it – well worth your time.

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2 comments



1. *G Vishwanath*

[August 8, 2007 at 12:50 pm](#)

Pranav,

Glad to see that Podbharti has attracted your attention too.

I stumbled on to Podbharti quite by accident and was instantly hooked. These are two very committed and talented youngsters and I wish them all the best. I have listened with pleasure and attention to all their podcasts so far.

I have also been in touch with them by email over the past week or so and they have rekindled in me my love for Hindi which had taken a back seat over the years due to pre-occupation with my career, and my obsession with with the largely English dominated world of computers, Internet and blogosphere .

I am thrilled to see the initiative Debashish and Shashi and several others are taking to promote blogging and podcasting among the non-English speaking netizens. There is a huge untapped storehouse of talent among our regional language speaking citizens and so far the expensive print medium has been the only avenue open to them. Getting a toe-hold to this medium is not easy. The internet was off-bounds for several years to our talented regional language users while average English speakers and writers have freely enjoyed this medium.

Now that e mailing and blogging in our regional languages is possible, any attempts by anyone to popularise emailing and blogging and podcasting in our regional languages must be supported and lauded.

Debashish and Shashi have just motivated me to re-learn Baraha and write in Hindi. I thought I am an old dog and can't be taught any new tricks at my age. I had wondered how comments could be posted in Hindi and how emailing could be done in Hindi. I have now learned to do so thanks to some tips from them in response to a private mail addressed to them.

I am pleasantly surprised at my recent success in writing to them in my imperfect Hindi and receiving a very warm and encouraging response from them.

I look forward to their podcasts and am definitely going comment on their Hindi podcasts using Hindi (which incidentally is not my native language).

All strength to their elbows.

Regards

G Vishwanath

JP Nagar, Bangalore



2. *pranav*

[August 8, 2007 at 2:26 pm](#)

Hi Vishwanath,

I agree...Their passion shows in the podcasts and the topics they cover..

thanks for sharing your exp....I agree..typing / reading in Hindi isnt easy for me too 😊

-p



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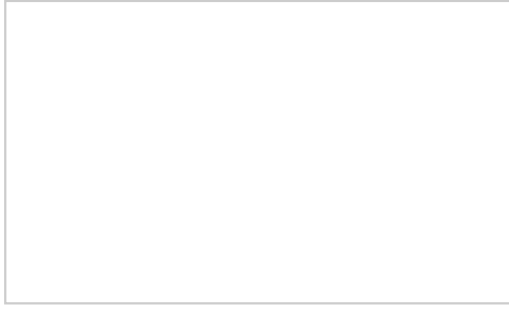
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