

Why Blindboy shines bright in an era of media distrust

CASE STUDY | 20 Feb 2025

In an era of media distrust and overstimulation, Blindboy exemplifies how long-form storytelling and community-driven models can slow consumption and encourage meaningful engagement. Blending comedy, education and mental health discourse, his podcast offers clarity and connection in a chaotic world.

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EXPERTS

Audrey Galvin

HIGHLIGHTS

- 01 The Blindboy Podcast thrives by creating a mindful, slow-consumption alternative in an era overwhelmed by media sensationalism and mistrust
- 02 By fostering candid dialogue about mental health and self-care, the podcast has become an accessible weekly sanctuary for listeners seeking mental health support
- 03 The Blindboy Podcast exemplifies how transparency and community-driven platforms can foster trust and loyalty, reflecting a growing demand for independent, people-powered media

DATA

- Just 13% of the UK public report a 'great deal or quite a lot of confidence' in mainstream press
- 57% of UK marketers are planning to ramp up long-form content production in 2025
- 27.6% of Irish survey respondents listen to podcasts to 'learn about mental health' and 30.4% to 'learn about myself'

SCOPE

Why do so many Irish homes have horse skulls under the floorboards? What's the connection between Greek mythology and simulation theory? How is Baileys Irish Cream rooted in an 18th-century satanic sex cult? These are questions that Blindboy Boatclub's eponymous podcast has answered since its inception in 2017. Since then, the Limerick-based artist-cum-satirist has written, self-recorded and self-produced an episode for his devoted listeners every single Wednesday, in the process becoming a cultural phenomenon in his home country of Ireland and acquiring over 1.2 million monthly listeners worldwide. [1]

In an era of rapid social media trends where controversial and provocative content sees the most engagement and rogue personalities are rewarded with media attention, The Blindboy Podcast's slow, ASMR-like storytelling and refusal to bow to commercial pressures provide a refreshing relief. "What I would hate more than anything would be to have to meet criteria for getting listeners," he said in an interview with The Guardian. "Because what happens then is you're going for clicks and shock, and you're platforming individuals with toxic views just to get discussions going." [2] This unapologetic independence underpins Blindboy's weekly output. With a plastic bag over his head to obscure his true identity and a listener-funded model, Blindboy ensures the weekly instalments of his podcast remain unfettered by outside influence – allowing him the freedom to discuss everything, from his past struggles with mental health and [late autism diagnosis](#)

to the connection between [Google's quantum Willow chip and Irish mythology](#). In carefully crafting content for mindful consumption, he provides his listeners with a weekly hour or more of escape.

As mental health challenges suffer from overstretched healthcare systems, Blindboy's podcast has become a sanctuary for listeners, combining raw honesty, cultural critique and comedic storytelling, all set to an ambient piano score composed by the man himself. Anecdotally, medical professionals have even advised young Irish people on long mental health wait lists to [listen to the podcast as a means of self-care](#). With no corporate ties or ad-driven content, his listener-funded approach also allows him to tell the stories he wants to tell while building a dedicated community, offering insights into how authenticity and emotional resonance can build trust and loyalty in today's fractured cultural landscape.



Blindboy's ASMR-like storytelling provides listeners with respite amid a chaotic media landscape

FANE Productions (2025)

CONTEXT

MAKING SENSE OUT OF CHAOS

Blindboy's storytelling resonates because it satisfies a core desire for narratives that make sense of a chaotic world. With just 13% of the UK public reporting a 'great deal or quite a lot of confidence' in mainstream press and 81% expressing distrust in social media, many are turning towards the in-depth analysis and escapism offered by long-form podcasts. [3][4]Indeed, an estimated 17 million people over 18 in the UK spend an average of five hours and 27 minutes listening to a podcast weekly. [5]The Blindboy Podcast speaks to this highly engaged audience by treading the line between friendly conversation and essay, delivering thought-provoking and intelligent stories in his [signature satirical style](#). [6]"Podcasts offer an unrivalled sense of connection and community by creating a safe space to explore subjects that aren't talked about in traditional media," says Lorna Byrne, group business director at Acast. "It's an open forum for important conversations to be had and personal stories to be told with no filter or judgement." [7]

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT BEYOND TRADITIONAL AVENUES

As wait-lists for mental health services across the UK and Ireland deteriorate, many are seeking alternative sources of self-care. [8][9] Within this context, podcasts are increasingly becoming sanctuaries for mental health. “[Podcasts] can increase mental health literacy and contain diverse topics, perspectives, and professional expertise, meaning the listener isn’t hemmed into a particular mental health space they may not resonate with,” explains Dr Audrey Galvin, a journalism lecturer at the University of Limerick. [10] A 2023 study conducted among Irish podcast listeners found that 27.6% of respondents listen to podcasts to ‘learn about mental health’ and 30.4% to ‘learn about myself’. [11] Deeply aware of this, Blindboy has created an open and friendly atmosphere to discuss his own experiences with anxiety, agoraphobia and autism – even discussing his [late diagnosis with the last](#) upon the advice of his listeners, demonstrating how his raw honesty with fans has fostered an empathetic two-way dialogue.

PATRONAGE-FUNDED NEW MEDIA

Blindboy's refusal to capitulate to corporate advertising sets him apart in a media ecosystem dominated by monetisation. Instead, his podcast thrives on listener support via Patreon, allowing him pure artistic freedom and forging a bond of trust and loyalty with fans. "By developing a listener-funded model, that nexus of pressures from commercial sponsors is gone," says Dr Galvin. "Listeners see it as a transparent funding model – a bridge, if you like – that builds trust between the listener and the podcaster and fosters a deeper sense of community." She adds that such transparency ensures accountability to listeners, allowing them to directly influence the tone and focus of their favourite shows – a dynamic often lost in mainstream formats. [10] This participatory approach reflects a broader shift: as trust in legacy outlets dwindles, people are increasingly drawn to independent, people-powered media. Between 2019 and 2024, the number of active users on Patreon doubled to eight million, highlighting the ongoing expansion of platforms that facilitate more direct audience-creator connections. [12]



The podcast's listener-funded model enables Blindboy to tell the stories he wants to tell

The Blindboy Podcast (2025)

INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

ELEVATE PEOPLE'S VOICES IN LONG-FORM STORYTELLING

The demand for long-form storytelling represents a shift towards intentional, meaningful content – an opportunity for brands to transcend traditional advertising and create lasting connections. Blindboy draws listeners with narratives that meld abstract ideas with everyday life, offering moments of clarity and inspiration amid an overwhelmingly chaotic information landscape. With 57% of UK marketers planning to ramp up long-form content production in 2025, the challenge lies in crafting distinctive, deeply resonant brand stories that truly engage core audiences and stand out in a crowded field. [13] [Dr Martens](#) is a prime example; with roots in the Stonewall Riot and Dyke Marches, the cult British footwear brand has produced long-form video campaigns featuring LGBTQ+ trailblazers such as Lady Phyll, co-founder of UK Black Pride, and Lucia Blayke, founder of London Trans+ Pride – giving voice to outlier stories and creating spaces for unity.

BUILD AUDIENCE TRUST WITH CANDIDNESS AND VULNERABILITY

Blindboy's focus on self-care taps into a deeply unmet need for accessible mental health discourse. Research from the University of Cork found that, for those who engaged with mental health podcasts in 2024, hearing other people's lived experiences helped normalise struggles, offered practical coping mechanisms and facilitated parasocial relationships that contributed to listener enjoyment and personal development. [14] Dr Galvin believes that "hearing [the] voices of presenters and guests and their stories that we don't necessarily hear from in mainstream media" engenders a candidness that resonates. [10] By prioritising openness and encouraging dialogue, Blindboy creates a trusted space where listeners feel seen and supported – demonstrating how vulnerability and authenticity can transform content into community. Similarly, Niall 'Bressie' Breslin, a former professional Gaelic footballer and rugby player, fosters connections by providing actionable mindfulness support via his [Where Is My Mind?](#) podcast – encouraging listeners to manage stress by embracing the present and disconnecting from digital distractions.

BOLSTER FAN ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PALPABLE AUTHENTICITY

Blindboy's decision to stick with Patreon reflects a broader shift towards crowdfunded media, where audiences seek active participation and co-creation in the content they consume. These audiences trust media that feels relatable and accountable to their community – not scripted and carefully stage-managed by external interests. The dedicated fandom behind [Do!!You!!! Radio](#), with its listener-funded model, highly active live chatroom and chaotic day-to-day broadcasting, demonstrates the power of making audiences feel like integral stakeholders in the media they engage with. Elsewhere, independent news outlet [Novara Media](#) has risen to prominence in the UK with its 'people-powered' platform – a direct stand against mainstream news [that it says](#) "protects the rich and powerful, controls the narrative and more often than not ignores the facts."

SOURCES

1. Lit with Charles (December 2023)
2. The Guardian (January 2024)
3. Press Gazette (March 2023)
4. YouGov (May 2024)
5. Edison (June 2024)
6. University Times (November 2023)
7. Acast (October 2023)
8. BBC News (December 2024)
9. The Irish News (November 2024)
10. Interview with Dr Audrey Galvin conducted by the author

11. Mental Health & Prevention (June 2023)

13. Agility (October 2024)

12. Backlinko (November 2024)

14. Rural and Remote Health (January 2024)

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