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Speaking with: Serial's Julie Snyder about making groundbreaking podcasts

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By now almost everyone has heard – or heard of – This American Life’s blockbuster podcast series Serial. The first series, originally published in 2014, covered the incarceration and possible wrongful conviction of Adnan Syed for the murder of schoolgirl Hae Min Lee in Baltimore. In June this year Syed was granted a new trial for the murder, based at least partially on the renewed scrutiny of the case by the Serial team.

So what does it take to make a podcast that has had over 243 million downloads over two series? What decisions have to be made about pacing, music, how to represent the real-life characters involved and the impact it will have on its subjects’ lives? And in a Trump-led post-truth world, what role can podcasting play to inform public conversations?

The University of Wollongong’s Dr Siobhan McHugh (who was recently a consulting producer on Fairfax’s successful Phoebe’s Fall podcast) talks to Julie Snyder, Serial’s Executive Producer and
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co-creator, about the process of making a serialised audio documentary and its impact on its listeners, creators and subjects.