

# Creating Social Media Content for Widening Participation: Ethnicity, Diversity, and Inclusion

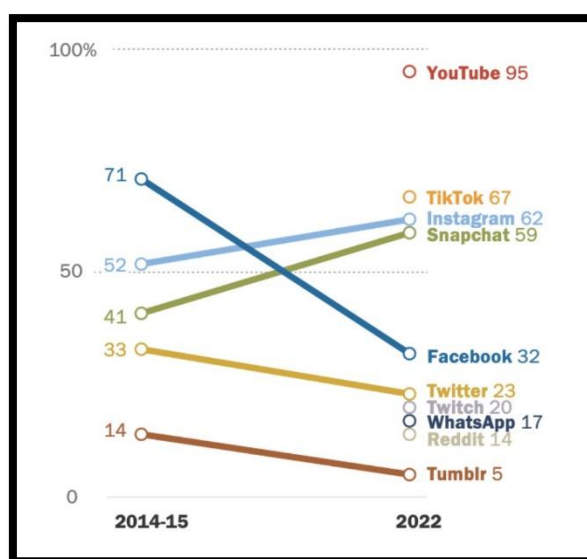
## 1. Overview

For several years, we had wanted to increase, by an order of magnitude, the social media materials we routinely produced at Trinity Hall relating to various WP initiatives, and especially those with an EDI-related emphasis. The few materials that we have managed to produce (e.g., YouTube videos) had received thousands of views online, and this gave us confidence that there was a demand for professionally produced videos that gave insights into what it is like to study at the University:

- **Welcome to Trinity Hall:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5p2\\_rRiC5PI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5p2_rRiC5PI) [5.2K views]
- **Let's Start the Conversation:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUf4bID31rw> [3.1K views]

During the July Open Days, we normally have around 5K visitors passing through the College. Therefore, we believed that social media materials would be an effective way of extending our reach, by *supplementing*, rather than *replacing*, the many online and in-person events we routinely organise.

It is well known that potential applicants aged between 14-17 are most likely to use the platforms YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and SnapChat:

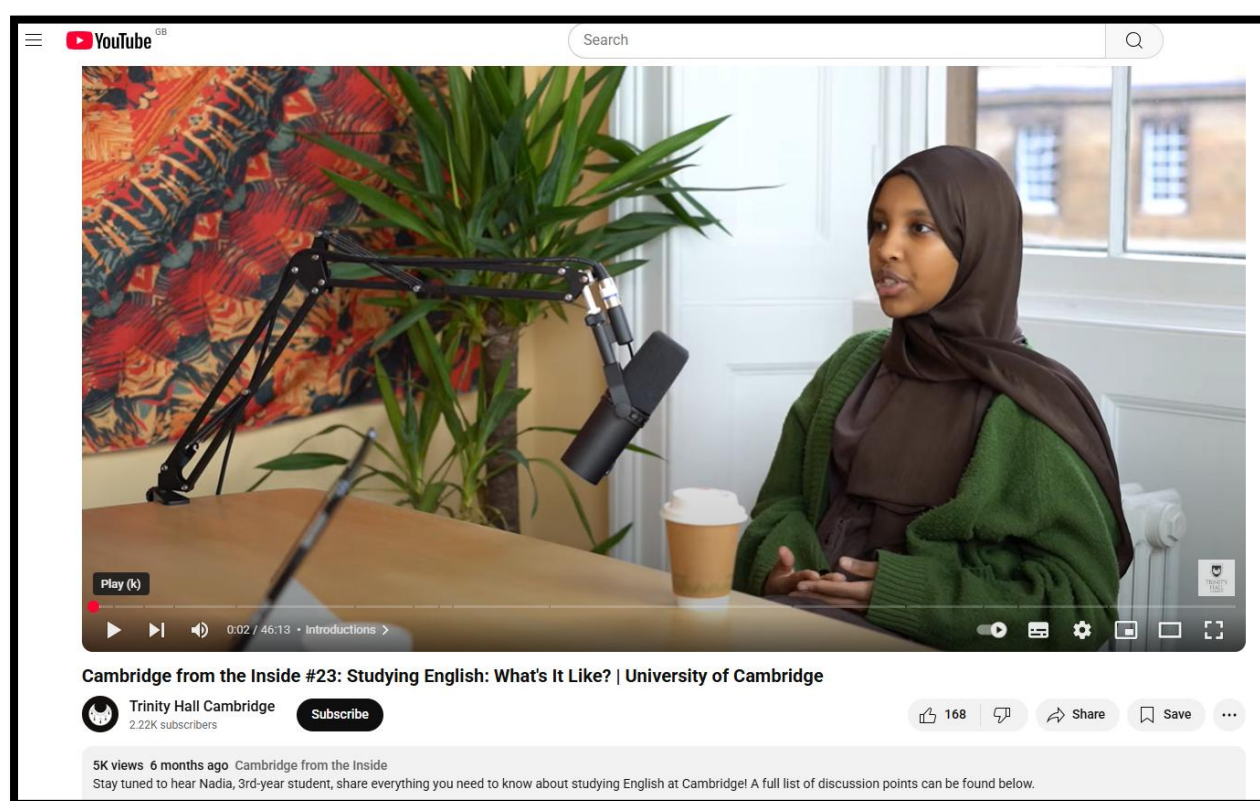


**Figure 1: % of teenagers who use specific social media platforms, 2014-2022**

These platforms can be subdivided into those where the content is largely ephemeral (i.e., it is soon displaced by more recent posts and often hard to retrieve using platform-specific search engines) and those where the content is largely permanent (i.e., it remains in the same location where it can be viewed multiple times). The social media strategy we wanted to adopt would involve creating Admissions-related materials for permanent platforms (especially, YouTube). While some of the social media platforms that specialise in ephemeral content might obtain more views, we thought that longer-format videos were likely to be more genuinely useful for potential applicants who were unfamiliar with Cambridge (e.g., first-generation applicants).

Accordingly, the podcast series *Cambridge from the Inside* was launched in September 2024, and it is available in both video and audio formats ([Trinity Hall Cambridge - YouTube](#)). The content consists of Admissions advice, interviews with Cambridge-based academics, as well as conversations with current students about life at Cambridge, and one of the purposes is to debunk common myths about the university for potential applicants, especially those from underrepresented and/or disadvantaged backgrounds. The podcast project was developed by the Trinity Hall Admissions team and partially funded by the Isaac Newton Trust Widening Participation and Induction Fund (24.4xxiii TH49 WPIF MAY 2024: £27,572).

During the summer of 2024 a dedicated podcast studio was created in a room on Central Site in Trinity Hall, and the necessary equipment (e.g., mics, lights, mixing desk) was purchased. The studio is where all the podcast episodes have been recorded so far. Each one is a filmed conversation between the Access and Outreach Communications Officer and an interviewee. So far, the interviewers have included current students, the Director of Admissions, wellbeing specialists, and Fellows of the College. Episodes last from around 30 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on the topics covered. The full-length podcasts are posted on the Trinity Hall YouTube channel as well as all the major podcast platforms such as Spotify and Apple Podcasts.



**Image 1: Screenshot from podcast episode #23: ‘Studying English: What’s It Like?’**

Shorter clips are created from the full-length episodes and uploaded separately to YouTube. These clips not only serve as effective advertisements for the full episodes but also act as valuable standalone resources for prospective students since they deliver valuable information in more digestible segments. The longest short video is 30 minutes, with most ranging between 5 and 15 minutes.

The high-level numbers in Tables 1 and 2 give an indication of how the podcast series has started to attract viewers / listeners, and further information about the topics covered can be found in the Appendix.

<b>Platforms</b>	<b>Total Views</b>	<b>Total Watch Time (hours)</b>	<b>Subscribers/Followers</b>
<b>YouTube channel Statistics since 20/09/24</b>	101,532	9,247	+1,395 (255.9% increase)
<b>Spotify Podcast Statistics</b>	1,895	431	+149 Followers
<b>All Podcast Platforms (not including YouTube)</b>	2,304	-	-

**Table 1: Podcast views, watch time, and subscribers / followers for different platforms**

<b>Specific YouTube video categories</b>	<b>Total Views</b>	<b>Total Watch Time (hours)</b>
<b>Cambridge Interviews Videos</b>	23,407	1,858.6
<b>Admissions Videos</b> (not including interviews related videos)	20,015	2,112.2
<b>Specific Degrees Videos</b> (not including interviews related videos)	19,786	2,542.6
<b>Life at Cambridge Videos</b>	5,699	447.7

**Table 2: YouTube views and watch time for different podcast topic subtypes**

Since the podcast series has only been running for 11 months, we are encouraged by these initial numbers, and they certainly suggest that (as we believed) there is a demand for longer-form social media content of this kind. We will not know for a couple of months yet whether the series will have a quantifiable impact on the application patterns we observe, either for the College or for the University as a whole. For instance, even if only 1-5% of the people who watched at least one of the videos chose to apply, then that would mean an increase of up to 5000 applications.

### **3. The Budget**

The main costs associated with setting up and running the podcast series are detailed in Table 3:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Total cost GBP</b>
1 fixed-term (12 months) full-time position	This Access and Outreach Communications Officer; responsible for recording and editing the social media materials	£30,000
3 Shure SM7b microphones	Mics for the podcast.	£379 each
3 SONY A7III Cameras	Industry standard podcast cams	£1,849 each
3 Camera lens	Necessary for quality video	£159 each
3 microphones tripods	Essential equipment	£17.99 each
3 camera stands	Essential equipment	£36.99 each
Laptop	Needs at least 32GB of RAM	£1,749.00
3 XLR Cables	Connect mics to mixer.	£8.00 each
Rode Rodecaster Pro II Mixer	Sync multiple audio into one audio file	£599.00
iPhone 15 Pro	For footage and other content	£999.00
2 Bose 700 Noise cancelling headphones	To monitor audio quality	£249.00 each
2 sets of lighting kit	Lights to ensure good lighting for camera footage.	£136 each
3 SD Card – 256 GB	Memory card for the Cameras	£34.99
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>£41,820.91</b>

**Table 3: Breakdown of podcast costs; the £27, 572 from the INT covered the purchase of the equipment and part of the fixed-term full-time salary**

## Appendix

<b>Full-Length Podcasts categories</b>	<b>Total videos</b>
Admissions Advice (not including interviews)	14
Interviews Advice	4
Life at Cambridge	7
Subject Specific	20
Miscellaneous	2

**Table 3: Full-Length Podcast Video Count**

<b>Shorter videos categories</b>	<b>Total videos</b>
Admissions Advice (not including interviews)	9
Interviews Advice	6
Life at Cambridge	7
Subject Specific	4
Miscellaneous	1

**Table 4: Shorter Video Count**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total videos</b>
<b>Full-Length Podcasts</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Shorter videos (extracted from Full-Length Podcasts)</b>	<b>27</b>
Admissions Advice (not including interviews)	23
Interviews Advice	10
Life at Cambridge	14
Subject Specific	24
Miscellaneous	3

**Table 5: Total Video count**

### **Recorded Podcasts & Video Content**

#### **Full-Length Podcasts**

##### **Admissions:**

- Admissions Frequently Asked Questions Part 1
- Admissions Frequently Asked Questions Part 2
- Admissions Frequently Asked Questions Part 3
- Assessing your Application
- Winter Pool & Admissions

- Personal Statements Explained
- Written Work Explained
- Choosing a College?
- The New Personal Statement
- What are Open Days?
- Personal Statements Update
- Summer Pools & Admissions
- Post-A Level Applications

#### **Interviews Advice:**

- Interviews: Top Tips
- Science Interviews Explained
- My History and Politics Interview
- History Interviews Explained

#### **Life at Cambridge**

- How are students taught at Cambridge
- First Term Experiences
- Wellbeing and Academic Performance
- Being Queer at Cambridge
- Wellbeing & Learning Project at Cambridge
- Poetry Societies at Cambridge
- Finishing First Year

#### **Subject Specific Advice (“What’s It Like?” are podcasts interviewing students rather than academics)**

- Studying Medicine: What’s It Like?
- Studying Architecture: What’s It Like?
- Studying Economics: What’s It Like?
- Studying Geography: What’s It Like?
- Studying English: What’s It Like?
- Studying History of Art: What’s It Like?
- Studying Linguistics: What’s It Like?
- Studying Philosophy at Cambridge
- Studying Mathematics at Cambridge
- Law Admissions Advice
- Studying French & Italian: What's It Like?
- Studying Biology at Cambridge
- Studying History & Spanish: What's It Like?
- Studying Land Economy at Cambridge
- Studying History at Cambridge
- Studying Music: What's it like?

- Studying Chemistry at Cambridge
- Studying Physics at Cambridge
- Studying Theology & Philosophy at Cambridge
- Studying Geography at Cambridge

#### **Miscellaneous:**

- Introductions (first podcast)
- You'll Fit In Programme Explained

#### **Shorter Videos (Extracted from Full-Length Podcasts)**

(All Short videos have the link to the full podcast in the caption)

#### **Admissions:**

- What to write in the My Cambridge Application?
- Grades and Reapplications
- Imposter Syndrome & Admissions
- Is there an ideal student for Cambridge?
- Who will assess your application
- Admissions Process Explained
- STEP Advice: Maths Admissions Test
- 3 or 4 A Levels?
- Super-curricular activities
- Which is better, Oxford or Cambridge?

#### **Interviews Advice:**

- What makes a good interview?
- Law Interviews Explained
- Philosophy Interviews Explained
- Medicine Interviews Top Tips
- What not to do in an interview
- Common Science Interview Mistakes

#### **Life at Cambridge**

- Fitting in at Cambridge
- Can you work Part-Time while studying at Cambridge?
- What are Cambridge Supervisions?
- Who Belongs at Cambridge
- Exam Revision Tips
- Flow State & Studying

- Financial Support at Cambridge

### **Subject Specific Advice**

- Studying Pre-clinical Medicine: What's It Like?
- String Theory Explained
- Analytic & Continental Philosophy
- Natural Sciences Course Explained

### **Miscellaneous:**

What is the difference between Trinity Hall and Trinity College?