SuperPod

Co-creating user-driven, modular and exploratory podcast listening experiences

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Media Futures

Abstract

This project investigates how AI–user interaction design might support modular and exploratory podcast listening experiences, with particular focus on broadening exposure to diverse voices and viewpoints, while balancing automation with user agency.

Our prototype, *SuperPod*, lets users curate personalized podcast content by assembling segments across episodes and creators. SuperPod builds upon AI-narrated interludes that ensure coherence, explanation, and contextual flow.

Research questions

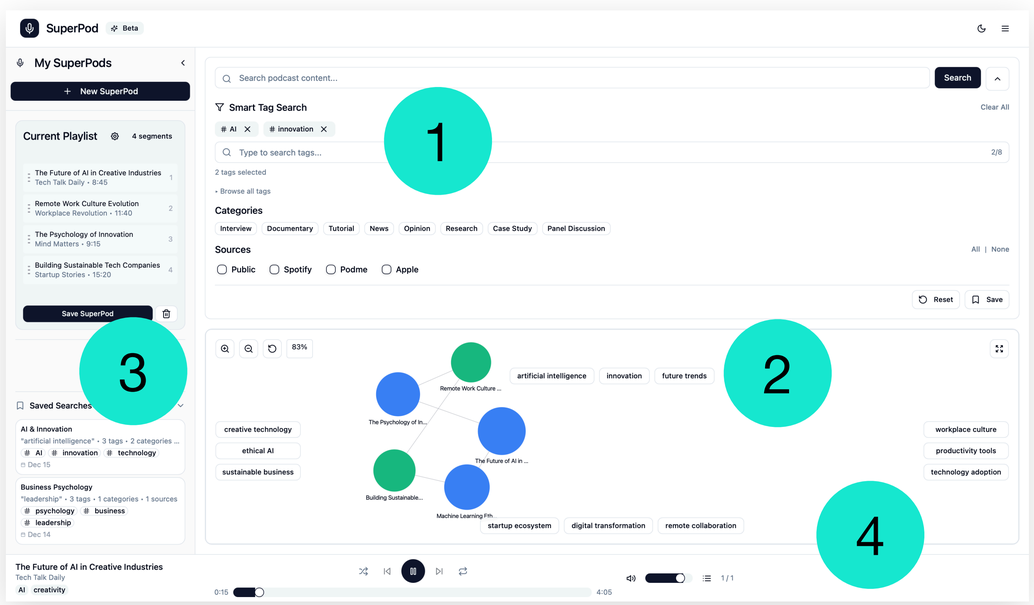
Our project is driven by the research question: *how might AI-driven interaction design support exploratory podcast listening that broadens exposure to diverse voices while preserving user agency and engagement?* That is:

RQ1. How can search, navigation, and transparency features be designed to foster user trust and a sense of agency in AI-mediated podcast exploration?

RQ2. What technical approaches to search, segmentation, and AI-generated narration can make modular podcast consumption coherent, usable, and scalable?

RQ3. To what extent will modular podcast listening promote broader and more engaging exploration, compared to traditional linear formats?

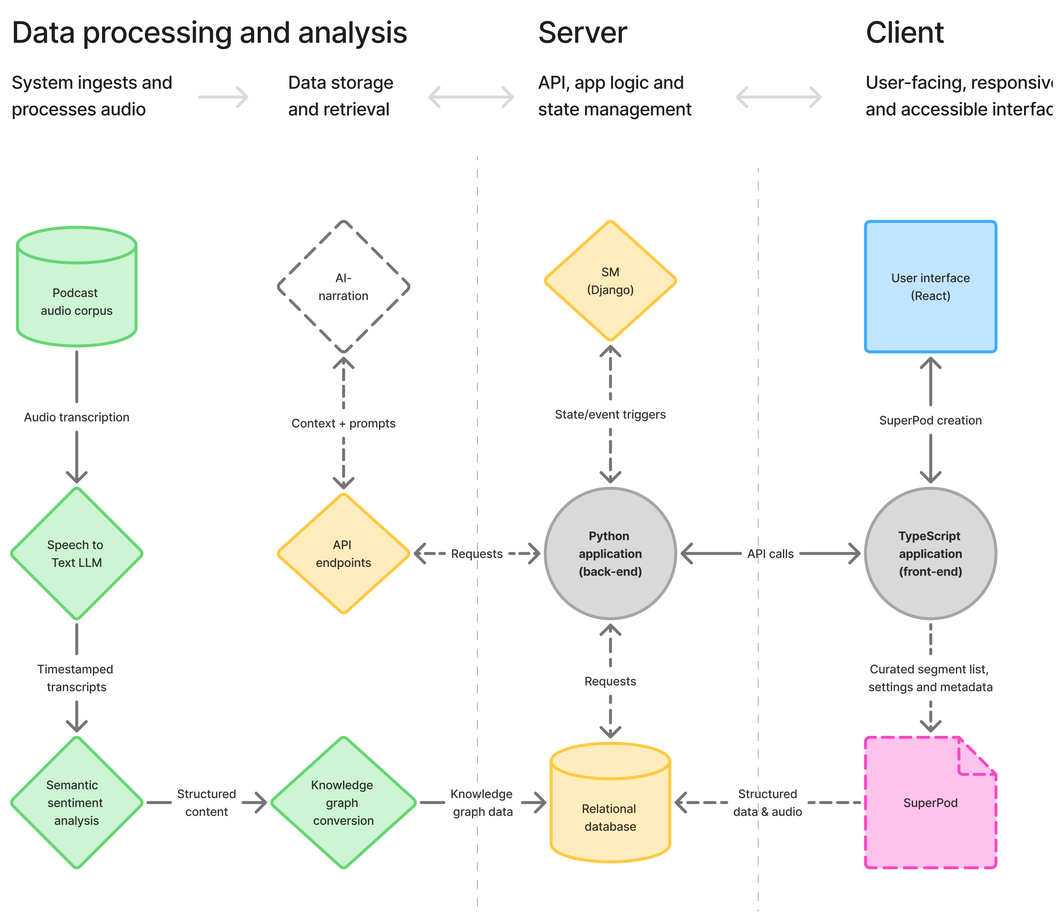
User experience



A user would first search for keywords, tags or themes (1), then browse and add segments in the graph visualisation of podcast segments search results (2), edit and save custom SuperPods (3) for later listening (4). Settings for optional AI-narration is set in (3).

System architecture

After transcription of podcast audio into timestamped and searchable knowledge graph data, our novel, modular and user-driven pipeline for curating podcast segments into custom «SuperPods» unfolds. Optional AI-generated narration adds context or further explanations of segments and themes to users. The application data pipeline is detailed below.



Application data pipeline: Pre-processing and analysis is done intermittently, allowing the server and client to exchange data via APIs or via relational database queries effectively. Hence, SuperPods are user-defined «recipies» for how segments are collated and narrated.

Preliminary results

The project's goals relate to a) user experience and agency, b) technical implementation and c) added value both for users, industry and society at large. This design balances automation with user agency, positioning listeners as co-curators of their media journeys towards expoloring podcast content with serendipity and ease.

Following three iterations, *SuperPod* was co-created, evaluated and tested in collaborative workshop sessions with key project stakeholders and a panel of users representatives.

The project will result in an open-source code repository, demonstrating the technical feasability and manifesting the design implications derived from user studies, prototype testing, and co-creation sessions. A paper is planned for publication in CHI2026.

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FUNDED BY

This research is funded by SFI MediaFutures partners and the Research Council of Norway (grant number 309339).

Forskningsrådet

Norwegian Centre for Research-based Innovation