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Jan11

[Mike](#)

[Podcast length \(part 1\): Why 15:00 and not 15:17?](#)

Commenting on a [recent post](#), reader [Justin Thorp](#)—in expressing a preference for lengthier podcasts suitable for listening during his up to hour-long subway commutes—raised a good question about how a show’s length, or “runtime,” is determined.

But setting aside podcast duration preferences for the moment, some readers might wonder why each [RIT NEWSMINUTE](#) podcast is *exactly* one minute and why every [Studio 86](#) runs for *precisely* 15 minutes. For [RIT NEWSMINUTE](#), the answer is obvious: its length is its name (and vice versa). Plus, it’s intended to be predictable (you *always* know how long each episode runs). So, that’s one factor: consistency. But there are a couple additional reasons. . . .

A few weeks ago, I invited RIT’s student-run FM radio station, [WITR \(89.7\)](#), to air any RIT [University News-produced podcasts](#) that station managers want to broadcast. Understanding that radio stations often need exactly timed programming in order to fill precise time blocks—especially crucial in this day of computer automation—and that radio “spots” (whether paid commercials or PSAs—public service announcements) traditionally are either 30 or 60 seconds long, the minute-long [RIT NEWSMINUTE](#) is intended to easily fill part of a “[stop set](#)” or air as a stand-alone program.

Likewise, [Studio 86](#) can precisely fill a quarter-hour time block (or half-hour blocks by “piggybacking” consecutive episodes). So, that makes two reasons for timing exactness: consistency and the need for traditional broadcast-style program lengths. But there remains an additional reason for timing precision—and it may be the most important one of all:

Timing-wise, a mentality of “anything goes” would be *lazy* for me and inconsiderate of you, the listener. I’ll explain further [next time](#).

Have a great weekend!

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The Tiger Beat takes you behind the scenes with the members of [RIT University News](#)—the news and public relations division of [Rochester Institute of Technology](#). Get the “story behind the story” and an insider’s look at who we are and what we do to publicize RIT news.

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