

podcast user magazine



"I'm just a guy
with a blog."

Eric Rice

PLUS:

**Ewan's Fringe
Review Roulette
Sowerby & Luff
Urban Coffee**

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CONTENTS

4	EDITORIAL				
6	NEWS				
8	BEVERLY MICKINS CREATES A COMMUNITY WITH STORIES AND A SONG - Lance Anderson	REGULAR COLUMNS			
12	MARK: MY WORDS - ADD, OH REALLY? - Mark Hunter				
13	SOWERBY & LUFF: HOW TO KILL AN OCTOPUS WITH A CHAMPAGNE CORK - Georgina Sowerby & Brian Luff				
15	THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE WITH EWAN SPENCE - Judy & Paul Hutchinson				
19	LIFE'S JOURNAL - Colin Meeks				
21	INSIDE THE PODCASTERS' STUDIO: KEVIN CUMMINGS - Paul & Judy Hutchinson				
27	URBAN COFFEE - Mark Hunter				
31	I, PLATFORM - THE ERIC RICE INTERVIEW <i>"I'm Just A Guy With A Blog!"</i> - John Buckley aka Citizen Scoop	FEATURE			
40	REVIEW ROULETTE - Bernadette, Marilyn Madsen, Hilary Tyler, Phil Clark, Simon Toon	REVIEWS			
45	PHIDEAUX: 'DOOMSDAY AFTERNOON' - Grant Mason				
47	JUNK: 'THE LAST STAND OF THE CONSPIRACY COWBOY' - Gabor Kovacs				
48	THE BADS: 'EARTH FROM SPACE' - Gabor Kovacs				
49	YOUR PODCAST PROBABLY SUCKS - Patrick Melton	GUEST WRITERS			
51	YOUR PODCAST IS PROBABLY JUST FINE - Judith Hutchinson, M.D.				
52	NEXTIER BANK PODCASTING CASE STUDY - Mark Juliano				
54	REVEAL YOURSELF: AMESTORY - Marilyn Madsen & Grant Mason				
55	LETTERS TO PUM <i>Dear Podcast User Magazine</i>				
57	WEDGE 2.0 by DFRW				
60	MORE NEWS FROM PUM				

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

It's produced by volunteers for no profit and it thrives on community involvement. Just like your podcast. Welcome to Podcast User Magazine. The team at the magazine are either seasoned podcast producers or hardened podcast consumers, and because of that PUM remains the best place for productive producers and discerning listeners.

John Buckley has had a busy month shadowing the one and only Eric Rice as he stalks his way from Second Life to Twitter, read his feature on page 31, and Lance Anderson pulls out another great story this month all about his good friend Beverly Mickins, a person who truly understands the versatility and ubiquity of podcasting. She's travelled from New York to Los Angeles and this month Lance brings her to Podcast User Magazine. Check out her story on page 8.

Patrick's at it again, but we believe he probably means well deep, deep down in his little heart. Either way, he's calling you out about the quality of your podcast. He says it sucks. But fortunately he also shares his wisdom with you, so, along with Judy Hutchinson, M.D., you'll be well placed to produce your best episode yet. Podcasting buddies Dave and Seth talked to me about their long-running and well received show 'Urban Coffee' which is just about to launch into its second season.

Expo season is almost upon us. If you haven't heard about it look for their ad in this month's issue. And if you're going to the event, all three days of it (!), please look out for the PUM team. We have a booth and we'll be glad to shake your hand and give you a nice sticker for you to place in a prominent location when you return home. Yes, we believe in self promotion too.

Grant and his team bring you the cream of indie music once again; please don't let anyone tell you that there's no decent unsigned music out there. The music section starts on page 45 and there's a slew of content to keep your ear buds busy.

MARK HUNTER

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ABOUT PODCAST USER MAGAZINE

Each month, our dedicated contributors will review a range of hardware and software to guide you to the right buying choices. We will also review a wide variety of podcasts, bringing you diversity and entertainment from both mainstream and niche.

ADVICE AND HELP

help@podcastusermagazine.com

Podcast User Magazine staff have years of combined experience. If you have any problems or would like any information, just email us; we're here to help.

SUBMISSIONS

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We are always looking for great new talent. So if you have a topic that you would like to write about, we would be glad to hear from you.

COMMENTS

general.comments@podcastusermagazine.com

If you have a comment, criticism or even praise for what we do, please don't hesitate to let us know. We can't get better at what we do without you.

PODCAST USER MAGAZINE

invites and encourages submissions from all regarding podcasting. Any opinions on any subjects expressed by the co-founders or contributors in their podcasts are theirs alone and do not reflect the editorial opinion of the magazine.

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GOING UP

- Lifecasting

Justin.tv - they're all nuts. But who can look away even for a moment?

- Expo fund drives

Everyone wants to be there, so send in your donations now!

- Samson USB mics

They look like proper mics, they act like proper mics, but they're USB!



Image: Samson

GOING DOWN

- Audacity

Splurge for some thing slicker to record your podcast. Like Ubercaster for the Mac or Audition for the PC.

- Sucking less

Ok Podshow, so you suck, we've all managed to get over it.

- iPhone coverage

You know it, I know it; enough already.



Image: Podshow

Thermometer

MJH

NEWS

NEWS EDITOR: JOHN BUCKLEY

A Channel-4 led consortium has won a bid to broadcast 10 new digital radio stations. The 4 Digital Group (in which Channel 4 has a 55% stake) has been awarded a Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) national radio multiplex licence. Announcing the decision, the UK television regulator Ofcom stated that :

"The multiplex licence will allow the broadcast of a number of radio services as well as the delivery of other multimedia services such as text and data services."

The 10 new national stations are aiming for the contemporary and the youth markets. Ofcom announcing the deal said that it the new content created for these networks would include a "wide selection of podcasts provided by a range of diverse companies".

Amongst the content providers expected to be involved are the Financial Times, Sky News, Virgin Radio, publisher EMAP, Walt Disney and the Carphone Warehouse. The deal will also include several services specifically designed for mobile phones.

The New England Journal of Medicine published an article this month claiming that users wearing iPods and other portable electronic devices are at risk of injury during severe weather conditions such as thunderstorms and lightning strikes. This came after a 37-year-old man was admitted to a hospital in Vancouver, when he was struck by lightning whilst jogging in a thunderstorm and listening to music on his iPod.

Last year a Colorado man wearing an iPod was struck by lightning whilst mowing his lawn. However scientists insist that electronic devices don't attract lightning over and above any other object, but once the lightning contacts the metal contained in an electronic device it can lead to contact burns and increase the possibility of other external injuries.

Apple has moved to trademark it's podcasting symbol with the US Patent & Trademark Office. The trademark was published on July 26, under application number 77235043. Apple describes the mark as "consisting of a stylized person or antenna surrounded by concentric circles/broadcast waves." The company has used the symbol in a variety of products and services to represent podcasting.

This month has seen the arrival of an organization calling itself The Association for Downloadable Media.(ADM). The new body announced its hope that it can play a key role in helping the industry standardize methods for the packaging, delivery and tracking advertisements across podcasts and other downloadable media.

Comprising an interim board of representatives from Apple, BlogTalkRadio, Feedburner, LibSyn, Nielsen/NetRating and others. The ADM website stated that it hopes:

"To provide leadership in and organization of advertising and audience measurement standards, research, education and advocacy to all those involved in portable media (Podcasts/ATOM/RSS media enclosures) across the Internet, iPods, MP3 players, mobile devices, P2P and other upcoming platforms".

More info at:
<http://www.downloadablemedia.org/>

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www.NewMediaExpo.com

The 3rd Annual **Podcast & New Media Expo** is a "prosumer" and corporate event that brings together influential audio and video podcasters, digital media creators, and content developers to cover the complete range of creation techniques, business objectives and future trends.

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-  **Track 1:** Audio & Video Podcasting 101 - A to Z for Beginners - Get Up To Speed Fast
-  **Track 2:** Attracting & Growing Your Audience - Connecting To Your Audience & Guerilla Marketing
-  **Track 3:** The Business of Podcasting & New Media - Monetization & Business Podcasting
-  **Track 4:** Advanced Audio & Video Production - Advanced "How To" Techniques
-  **Track 5:** New Media for Educators & Musicians - specific sessions for each



Register today at:

www.NewMediaExpo.com

BEVERLY MICKINS CREATES A COMMUNITY WITH STORIES AND A SONG

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY LANCE ANDERSON



photo by Jerome Pennington

Beverly Mickins truly believes in community. Growing up in San Francisco during the sixties planted the seeds of a shared vision and experience. Her roots have always guided Beverly throughout her journey to New York as an actress, singer and stand up comic. So when she finally settled in Los Angeles, she created her own storytelling community that has grown for a dozen years. Now Beverly is ready to share Story Salon with the World.



photos courtesy Lance Anderson



photo courtesy Lance Anderson

"**PROGRESSIVE, LEFTIST AND** weird," that is how Beverly describes her beloved hometown, the city of San Francisco. "It felt like a great artist colony." Beverly's family was "black upwardly mobile" so they lived in a nice working class neighborhood and they were a "regular nuclear family, with the regular demons." Her father worked hard to keep moving forward and "was always the first black man to hold his positions in the city." Beverly's father instilled to his daughter, that there was "never a reason to cross a picket line" in a time of social revolution. "In San Francisco in the sixties there was always something happening" and Beverly was part of the larger community that was developing. Across the bay in Oakland, Beverly even helped with the "free breakfasts" put on by the Black

*Something
is going on.
I don't know
what it is,
but I want to be
part of it*

Panthers. Although her environment was progressive, she still encountered racism and a feeling of "not being enough."

During her childhood there were "not many role models for black girls" so when Cicely Tyson or Diahann Carroll were on Television, it was something of an event.

At Notre Dame School for Girls, Beverly met a lot of "wacky nuns" but she also took the stage for the first time in a production of 12 Angry Women. Based on the classic play 12 Angry

Men all the male roles were simply changed into women, so Beverly fondly notes that the high school play was "probably ahead of it's time." During the first performance as Juror #5 her "knees shook like a newborn calf" but she calmed herself and fell in love with theatre. Beverly enjoyed the "communal thing" of



photo courtesy Lance Anderson

creating a production. The whole process, starting with the first rehearsal in "jeans and a t-shirt," to the building of sets. After a couple of weeks "you see something emerging" and in that kind of environment a "community happens in a short period of time." After a couple of years in college, Beverly headed to New York to become a serious actress, with dreams of doing Classic Greek Tragedies. She lived the life of the struggling actress, first landing at the "Y" on West 63rd Street. Actors and students from Julliard were given a reduced rate so it was "a great gumbo of struggling artists." Beverly's main artistic influences are also a "great gumbo." From actors Brock Peters and Diana Sands to singers Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughan and Annie Lennox. "I've always loved singing... singing is so raw... you are really butt naked up there." Singing is an art form that has always enchanted Beverly, one she has "stopped and started for 25 years."

Beverly also found inspiration from comedian Carol Burnett in the way she would talk to the audience without "any artifice." The act of being oneself on stage and talking naturally had a deep impact. So Beverly tried comedy because she "wasn't getting a lot of acting" and she

wanted to find a venue to express herself. It was the "pre-comedy boom" in New York so she would find herself on the same bill with the likes of Jerry Seinfeld, Larry David and Richard Belzer. It was a tough career path. Beverly says those early days were "kinda sucky" and she hopes "there is no record" of those first performances. Once again, Beverly started and stopped doing comedy until she saw the "off-beat sexy" Elayne Boosler at The Bottom Line. The performance was so powerful, that Beverly decided "I'm going to stick with it." Eventually Beverly learned how to write and perform in her own voice, although she felt "hemmed in" by the format of comedy. By the time she moved out to Los Angeles in 1989, Beverly was already performing at alternative venues like poetry readings because her material was more storytelling based. Feeling frustrated, one day in 1996 she was "whining" to her friend Clifford Bell who suggested that she put on her own show and do comedic stories. It was like an epiphany. A week later, along with fellow comic Elaine Allison, Beverly walked into a small North Hollywood coffeehouse called The Kindness of Strangers. They walked out with the gig and a new show they called Anything but stand up. The first shows only had a few other performers, pulling mostly from other "disgruntled comics." Eventually the show found it's own voice and a community of storytellers was born.

Soon the goal of the show was to "embrace those with a story to tell in a



photo courtesy Joseph Dougherty

welcoming environment" regardless of whether or not they were a performer. Regular people felt free to take the stage and share the stories of their life. Every Wednesday night, with few rules other than telling a new story every week and not doing stand up, the show and the community grew as Beverly constantly encouraged others to "let their freak flag fly."

Over the years the show has moved to different venues and eventually changed it's name to Story Salon. The group has also produced their own CD The Mario Sessions, an annual StoryFest, a book The Story Salon: Big Book of Stories and of course their podcast Story Salon: ON THE AIR. Several other books, one person shows and podcasts have come directly out of Story Salon. This year on October 20, 2007 the group with host Story Salon Saturday, an event to encourage people around the world to tell their own stories.

With everything Beverly has done to promote the very human act of storytelling, she herself was feeling

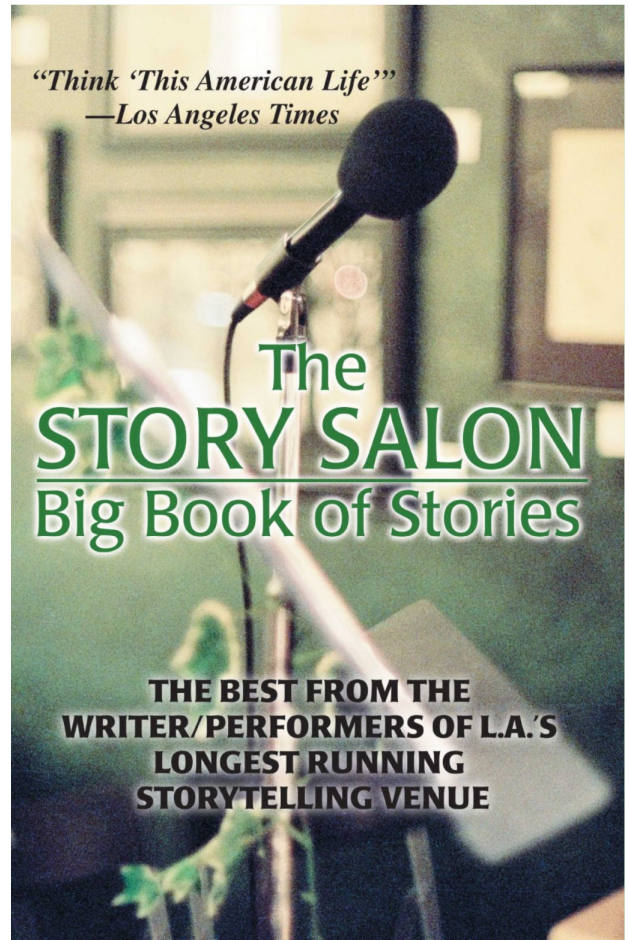


photo by Jerome Pennington

Story Salon
www.storysalon.com

images: Story Salon

creatively "stuck." For a dozen years she built a creative and supportive environment for others, but Beverly

says she "wasn't taking chances." Until she decided to take a risk and include singing into her storytelling to the delight of her audience. The supportive community she had created, allowed Beverly to finally take her own advice and let her "freak flag fly."

Beverly Mickins
<http://www.storysalon.com>

Lance Anderson
<http://vergeofthefringe.com>

[Click here to listen to the interview](#)

MARK : MY WORDS

- ADD, OH REALLY?

TEXT BY MARK HUNTER

image courtesy Mark Hunter

THIS IS SOMETHING that I find to be incredible. Among the podcasting/blogging global community there are dozens and dozens of people self-diagnosing themselves as suffering from Attention Deficit Disorder, or Adult Attention Deficit Disorder.

Unlike the diagnosis you'd expect to receive from a medical practitioner, this self-diagnosis amounts to little more than the following;

Can't read all of your RSS feeds without being distracted by checking out your Flickr groups? Yep, you have ADD

Can't finishing writing that blog post about your latest productivity breakthrough without being distracted by watching an episode of Lost? ADD, I'm afraid

Struggle to focus on that awesome geek-fest session at your local coffee shop (I've no idea what a geek-fest session is, but I'm sure it exists) without having to punch in a Twitter update via your mobile phone? Sorry, but you must have ADD

Finding it hard to document your artistic thoughts into your little black notebook without being sidetracked by reading through the latest posts at the "Out of work Web 1.0 developer" forum? Sure sign of ADD

Like Moleskine notebooks, Apple computers, Dave Allen books, chunky-framed reading glasses, Twitter accounts

and smart mobile phones, ADD has become something that you need to have.

I wonder if this self-diagnosis is a result of peer pressure or the bite-sized information bubble we live in on the 'net. Is it more a case of having lots and lots of

little pieces of information to consume each day (RSS feed subject lines, Tweets, Facebook status, Pownce updates) that causes our brains, through time, to struggle with meatier pieces of information or tasks? And if much of our day is spent producing small pieces of information, does that effect the quantity we can, in turn, consume? Or is it more to

do with the apparent trendiness?

My diagnosis, me being as qualified to make such as anyone else, is that most of us are simply consuming too much caffeine while imbibing our bite-sized information. Although, when all's said and done, I'm guessing that those who actually do suffer from ADD must be irked at its sudden trendiness. It really is something you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy, let alone on yourself.

Mark Hunter
<http://www.tartanstories.com>



photo courtesy Paul Hutchinson



THE WORLD OF SOWERBY & LUFF

TEXT BY SOWERBY & LUFF



photo courtesy Sowerby & Luff

HOW TO KILL AN OCTOPUS WITH A CHAMPAGNE CORK

GEORGINA AND BRIAN were two of the first British podcasters to build a truly cult following around the world with their *Comedy 365* series *The Big Squeeze*. Their latest podcast, *The Sowerby & Luff Show*, is hosted by Libsyn and syndicated via Feedburner. In this, their third column for Podcast User Magazine, the dynamic duo wonder what first inspired them to start podcasting...

On 28th November 2005 comedian Ricky Gervais appeared on *News At Ten*, and said he was going to start doing something called a 'podcast'. Everyone got terribly excited, but no-one quite knew what Ricky was talking about. A few days later, a freelance journalist from the *Ham and High* telephoned Georgina at our flat in Crouch End. He said he'd heard our podcast *The Big Squeeze* on



iTunes, and asked if we'd got the idea from Ricky Gervais. What we should have said was "sod off", but instead, we politely explained that we had been podcasting since July 2005, and that it was Mr Gervais who had probably got the idea from us. Or, at the very least, podcasters like us. The journalist laughed, but we didn't. We answered his inane, podcast-related questions and then quietly put the phone down.

This unscheduled conversation with Her Majesty's Press would never have taken place, had I not walked into PC World, eight short months earlier, and bought a brand new, all-singing, all-dancing computer.

"What do we need a new computer for?" Georgina had screamed, knowing my fondness for buying merchandise because of the bright, attractive packaging. "For multi-media stuff" I mumbled. "We only use it for emails" Georgina retorted. "*You* may only use it for emails" I snapped, "But *I* need to stay at the very cutting edge of technology".

Georgina picked at a freshly peeled tin of sardines and continued to sneer at me as I wrestled with monitor cables, printer software, and a webcam which flatly refused to come out of its vacuum-sealed packaging. Nine hours, and three quarters of a bottle of Famous Grouse later, I was finally online. Georgina was in bed by then.

"Have you heard of this thing called You Tube?" I yelled out from the living room a couple of hours later. "It's fantastic! People can upload video to the internet. It's like having your own TV station!" "Step away from the computer" Georgina shouted. "For God's sake, Brian, it's two-thirty in the morning!"

image iTunes



But I was hooked. My tired, dodderly old laptop and 56 kbs dial-up connection were now forever consigned to the bin, and I had arrived, hyperventilating with excitement, on the brink of what was soon to become known as the explosion of 'User-Generated Content'.

Now anyone, anywhere, could record any old crap, and upload it to the internet, to be consumed by a huge worldwide audience.

I finally crawled into bed at about four in the morning, waking Georgina up with one of my usual farts, before sliding under the duvet like an overfed walrus. I tossed and turned, and sweated, which is unusual for me, because I normally sleep like a baby.

"What is it?" Georgina mumbled into her pillow.

I turned over and faced her in the darkness. "This is going to sound strange" I said. "But I've had a premonition".

"What?"

"I think I may have been put on this Earth, in order to upload crap to the internet!"

Georgina was momentarily intrigued.

"What kind of crap?" she asked.

"Oh, I don't know... "How to kill an octopus with a champagne cork. That sort of thing?"

"Good night" said Georgina, and she went back to sleep.

About a year later, Georgina and I recorded a podcast called 'How to Kill an Octopus with a Champagne Cork', and for all we know Ricky Gervais downloaded it onto his iPod.

The world was never going to be the same again...

<http://sowerbyandluff.com>

<http://comedy365.co.uk>



image YouTube

THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE

WITH EWAN SPENCE

TEXT BY JUDY & PAUL HUTCHINSON



photo courtesy Piers Cawley

AS THE EDINBURGH Festival Fringe gets underway, podcaster Ewan Spence will be sharing it with the world. We asked him to tell us what it's all about.

TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE.

EWAN: The Edinburgh Festival Fringe started the best part of fifty or sixty years ago, to be opposite the Edinburgh Festival, with a couple of students who came up from Oxford. At that point you had to audition to be in the Edinburgh International Festival. They went up because they hadn't auditioned, they didn't have a show, and they decided to get just a room or a stage themselves, put on a show all on their own and call it The Fringe. And then the next year there were more shows, and more shows, and more shows. You now have the situation where the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is bigger than all the other festivals that happen at the same time, and is quite literally the largest arts festival on the planet.

WHERE IN EDINBURGH DOES THE FRINGE TAKE PLACE?

EWAN: In Edinburgh, full stop. There are two hundred and fifty stages around Edinburgh this year. Some of them are in dedicated venues. Some of them are in

places like The Traverse Theatre, the Festival Theatre. Some of them are in venues dedicated to comedy, for example The Stand Comedy Club. The student unions become comedy bars and so on, but also pubs put up stages. Somebody's performing Macbeth in a tree. I believe last year we had Hamlet on a bouncy



photo courtesy www.incredible.org.uk

castle. There's a delightful two-person show going on this year that's in a room in a boarding house. I think they are allowed to have a capacity of five in the audience per performance, and the two performers. It's going to be a very cosy room. So, literally, it's wherever

performers can perform, performers perform.

AND WHEN IS THE FRINGE TAKING PLACE?

EWAN: The Fringe starts on the third of August and finishes on the twenty-seventh. So it's pretty much all of August.

AND WHOM WOULD YOU SAY THE FRINGE IS FOR?

EWAN: It literally is for everybody. There's comedy, there's music, there's arts, there's

dancers, there's interpretive movements, and there's learn how to do flamenco dancing for five-to-eight year olds this year. It really does appeal to a huge range of people.

WHAT DOES IT COST TO ATTEND THE FRINGE?

EWAN: It depends on the shows. There are a number of shows that are free ticketed. But generally this year we are looking at a price of about eight pounds a ticket, I would say. Obviously there are some that are lower and there are some that are higher.



photo courtesy Jungleboy

AND HOW DOES ONE GET TICKETS FOR THE EVENTS?

EWAN: You turn up on the door. Or you can book on line at edfringe.com. Or you can go along to any of the ticket booths that are in Edinburgh throughout the day. There's a great big stand up on top of the train station, with an electronic ticket booth. You just tell it what show you want and it prints out the ticket.

WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO COVER THE FRINGE?

EWAN: The first one was back in 2005. I'd just moved back to Edinburgh from London. The Fringe was there, and I went, "Yeah, let's do it!" It got me out the house as well. There was also the fact that it hadn't been done before. And, part of it was the challenge. I think the big part was, can one man take an event as large as that, cover it, report it, present it, be entertaining about it, to make people want to listen to a show about it?



photo courtesy www.theedinburghblog.co.uk

AND WHY DO YOU CONTINUE TO COVER IT?

EWAN: I think I am good at it. I had the first show that got a nomination for British Academy Awards in Best Creative Media, so I was doing something right. Last year, in about March, I started to get a load of emails from people going..."Are you doing it again?" And when emails from places like Alaska, Hawaii, Australia are saying, "I want to be at The Fringe, I can't be, I need you to go for me", there's certainly an audience demand. Performers are coming back year

after year, so we are building up relationships. And there's a huge amount of undiscovered talent. You're seeing performers normally doing one discipline doing another one, because it's The Fringe, and you want to see if they can. It seems wrong not to document it, just to show how wonderful, exciting, vibrant, wacky, crazy it can be.

WHAT IS YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE FOR THE PODCAST?

EWAN: There are two goals. If you are at The Fringe, it's like having a backstage pass. And if you're not at the Fringe it's going to make you jealous as anything. And if I can get those two goals out, I know I've got a good show.

WHAT SORT OF PERFORMANCES DOES YOUR PODCAST COVER?

EWAN: If you come up to Edinburgh and

you perform, you're in The Fringe. If you want to pay to get in the programme, you're in the programme. There literally are no limits. There are shows that can move you to the core. There are shows that will have you laughing your socks off. And there's just everything between those two contrasts. Last year, to take two or three examples, there was a show about the Black

Watch, one of the Scottish Army units, and they did it in a car park. It was about this troop going out to Iraq. You could walk out of there, and down to the grass market and there's somebody doing a stand up show that they've never done before. They've only been doing stand up for three or four weeks, and they're rocking the place. Then you go up and find some of the luminaries of the UK comedy scene, like Arthur Smith, who will just take you on a pub crawl around Edinburgh and all the places where he's done things with other comedy acts. And you would finish with a nighttime performance of Chekhov. How would you not want to get that into a show and tell people...look at some of the stuff you can do here!

DO YOU INCLUDE INTERVIEWS WITH PERFORMERS?

EWAN: Yes. The show itself is easily described as being like the Tonight Show, but it's on audio only, and it's not in the evening, and it's with me and not Johnny Carson. There's the daily news, what's going on, which shows are hot or not. We get some of the performers in. We get backstage people, directors, promoters, venue managers, and the Fringe directors themselves.



photo courtesy www.theedinburghblog.co.uk

DO YOU EVER INCLUDE ANY ACTUAL PERFORMANCES AS PART OF YOUR SHOW?

EWAN: I don't go in and record the shows. For a lot of these artists and performers, this is their bread and butter, so we get them into the studio. One of the interviews we're going to have quite early in the Edinburgh Fringe

Show this year, 2007, is Improvera, which is improvised opera. When they're getting the microphones put in front of them, they're giving me something. We'll do a performance there. In the sense of going out and getting bootlegs, no. In the sense of having them there and showing the listeners what they can do, yes.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY COVERING THE EVENT?

EWAN: World peace.

GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.

EWAN: Everybody stops and everybody listens, then nobody's going to fight. And if they can do that every day, then we have world peace.. It's almost like we've got this little treasure here in Edinburgh. And, yes, people can come up to Edinburgh and see it, but to actually put that on display for the entire world, I find incredible. I find



photo courtesy Liz Smith

it incredible you can take the Internet and simply leverage all the culture that we have here, that normally would stay in Edinburgh. It's just getting blasted out all around the world. The BBC may be doing something on the radio or stuff on the

television, and there may be written reviews on web sites, but nothing actually gets in, does that daily variety talk and chat show and says to everybody "This is Edinburgh, come and smile." I like that slogan I'm going to keep it.

DO YOU EVER GET A CHANCE TO JUST ATTEND A SHOW?

EWAN: I tend to see maybe three or four shows a day. I come out and do a review on it, and everybody comes out with an opinion. So it's very hard to see just a show. I go to a show, and part of me has the producer's head, thinking, "Would they be good? What would I ask them?" Part of me has the reviewer's head

thinking, "Why did they do that?" Part of me thinks, "This is absolutely fantastic!

Who would ever have thought of doing Tolstoy in a submarine?" Going out, looking around, and realising that I'm sitting next to Harry Shearer, which happened to me last

year, watching Stephen K. Amos. The show finished and he was gone, which was a shame. The performers are so close to the audience, when the show's finished everybody goes out the same door, and everybody goes to the same bar. There's no such thing as going and watching and just going home again. I don't think anybody does that or could do it. Or if they are, they're just not experiencing it fully.

photo courtesy Gary Henderson



photo courtesy www.theedinburghblog.co.uk

WHEN WILL YOU BE PODCASTING AND WHEN WILL YOU BE PUTTING OUT YOUR SHOWS?

EWAN: Shows go out daily every morning, Monday through Saturday throughout the entire Fringe. We will have some Sunday special shows as well, which will be slightly different.

AND WHERE CAN PEOPLE FIND YOUR PODCAST?

EWAN: On the interwebby-thing, at edinburghfringe.thepodcastnetwork.com. They'll also be able to find us at thestage.co.uk, who we continue to co-

produce the show with. And I will also be partnering up this year with broadwaybaby.com, and they'll also be able to find it there.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

EWAN: It does look like I'll be doing one of the shows from Finland. I have to go visit Helsinki for a weekend. So I suspect one of the Sunday shows will be coming live to you from the streets of the Finland capital. If you can get Macbeth up a tree, I don't see why I can't do an Edinburgh Fringe show from Helsinki.

Ewan Spence

<http://edinburghfringe.thepodcastnetwork.com/>
Judy & Paul Hutchinson

<http://www.TotalPodCastrophe.com>

[Click here to hear the interview](#)



LIFE'S JOURNAL

TEXT BY COLIN MEEKS

LIFE IS HECTIC at the best of times. Before you know it, the days have turned to months and the months to years. It's easy to forget all the things that happen in that time. I first started my own blog in February of 2004 - not a pioneer blogger by any means, but I knew I wanted to record my thoughts and nearly two and a half years later, it's turned into quite a body of writing. I'm pretty grounded and not deluded to think my writing is Booker Prize material, but it's a personal look into my life, in my own words, and if I were to pop my clogs tomorrow, it would at least provide a small insight into what made me tick.

Fast forward to today, and the podcasting revolution is in full swing. Suddenly anyone with a microphone and computer can say whatever they want, on whatever subject they desire, and somewhere, someone wants to listen; that's the theory, anyway. To many, podcasting became an extension of their blogging. Many others, like myself, saw podcasting as a way to try something they otherwise wouldn't have dreamt of. I've never been the best of public speakers. In fact I still suffer from terrible shyness to this day. Put me in a room full of people I don't know and I'm the one trying to blend into the wallpaper. I do have to admit, however, I did always fancy myself as a DJ, like the BBC DJs Steve Wright and Jonathon Ross, inane ramblings with a smattering of music.

Like everything, the more you do it, the better you get. I've got 66 shows behind me, each around 35 minutes long; that's over 36 hours. When I listen to the first show, I cringe like you wouldn't believe. Unlike some podcasters, however, I don't want to remove the early podcasts and bury them in the vault. I love the fact that people can see my podcast develop. I still "um" and "err", but something I realised fairly early on was that I say these things in everyday conversation. I'd spent many

hours trying to eliminate these vocal annoyances but realised it's better to let some things work themselves out. "Ums" and "errs" are just your brain's way of filling in while it collects itself and forms the next part of your conversation. The more you podcast, the more at ease you'll get behind the microphone, which in turn means those nasty little annoyances will eventually fade from your patter; well, most of them, anyway. I think it's unrealistic to eliminate them all. You just want to get to something you consider the natural you.

I never really considered the Indie Launchpad podcast to be a journal of my life, that is until I started receiving emails from listeners thanking me not only for the music I play but also for sharing a little slice of my life, or what I otherwise considered to be ramblings. It's hard to record a podcast without revealing a little something about yourself, be it your general trials and tribulations, or brief comments here and there on how your week has gone. It was only when I started to receive those emails that I started to realise just how much about myself I'd put into all the podcasts I'd done. Only once I'd considered that, did I realise that my kids would now have something quite special to treasure after I'm gone. This has

also made me think about trying to get some audio of my family and friends. I can remember vividly my Nan telling me story after story, however the specifics of these stories is now lost forever. She passed away in 1990, I think it was. I really wish I'd have had today's technology then, to be able to document her stories and have something to remember her by and indeed to pass on to my children. Yes, I could have used regular tapes, but I wasn't thinking along those lines back then. Even back then I can remember having tons of tapes strewn about in drawers, it was never the best of technologies, and don't get me onto the subject of mangled tapes.

So where was I? Ah yes, my legacy. Now that does sound pretentious, doesn't it? But still, it is something that will, I hope, be around long after I'm gone. However, provisions do need to be made. Many podcasters use Podshow or the Libsyn service to protect themselves from possible large bandwidth costs. If you do this, make sure this is not the sole copy of your show. Indeed, you should ensure that you back up each show in its entirety. For each Indie Launchpad show, the project folder is probably around 150 MB. This includes the final MP3 of the show, all of the uncompressed wave files for my bumpers and sweepers and the uncompressed recordings of my witterings. It is important to keep the uncompressed recordings of your show, because if you later want to reuse elements of it to create bumpers and sweepers, you'll end up with much better quality, rather than re-compressing an already compressed file. Backing up to CD or DVD is great, but with anything you back up, you should always make a provision to have some kind of off-site backup; that is, having copies of your backups at another location, even if it's at your parents' or Granny's house.

Colin Meeks
<http://www.newmedialaunchpad.com>



King of the Boys
 Storytelling by
 Lance Anderson

<http://vergeofthefringe.com>

Performance poetry
 from around the
 world
 brought to you by
 Simon Toon



The Slam Idol
 podcast

The Poetry Slam
 on your
 MP3 player

<http://www.slamidolpodcast.com>



A weekly show
 bringing you three
 excellent podsafes
 tracks, hosted by
 Grant Mason from
 Leith, Edinburgh

<http://www.threefromleith.com/>

Don't just see the
 media, be the media!
 Host John Buckley



<http://citizenscoop.co.uk>

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<http://www.skinnywhiteboy.kastpod.org/>

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 there is a place
 where dreams live...



<http://www.sowerbyandluff.com/>



INSIDE THE PODCASTERS' STUDIO KEVIN CUMMINGS

In an effort to better know our colleagues, we are taking a look 'Inside the Podcasters' Studio'. We want to know what makes podcasters do what they do, what motivates them, and where they see their podcast going in the future.



TEXT BY PAUL AND JUDY HUTCHINSON

photo courtesy Kevin Cummings



Kevin is the host of Short Cummings Audio, a weekly podcast of humorous audio essays consisting of quick-witted wordplay and wry observations on life. The show began in mid June of 2006.

Let us begin with a brief self-introduction...

KEVIN: I'm a forty-two year old husband and father of two teenage sons. I've lived in northern Utah for most of the past thirty years, but that's just to make up for all the moving I did as a child. My father served in the U.S. Air Force and we moved about once a year until I was a junior in high school. In that time I lived all over the western U.S. and spent four memorable years in the U.K.

By trade, I'm an administrator at a technical college. I started there eighteen years ago as a computer instructor and I'm still very much a geek at heart.

image courtesy Kevin Cummings

WHEN, AND HOW, DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT PODCASTING?

KEVIN: Ironically, it was in the traditional media. One of the local talk radio stations (www.ksl.com) had started to release its shows as podcasts. One of those was a weekly movie review show. The format was a panel discussion with a movie critic, a video store manager and a talk show host. I'd always found the show engaging, but it aired on Fridays while I was at work. For a while, I actually used a piece of timed recording software to capture their audio stream (sort of DIY podcasting), but that was tedious. Eventually I gave up.

When I heard they were making the episodes available for download, I was interested again. I had no real understanding of how to use an RSS feed, but knowing that show was out there was enough to motivate me to investigate further.

WHAT WAS THE FIRST PODCAST YOU SUBSCRIBED TO, AND WHY?

KEVIN: The very first was the KSL Movie



Show. That got me to wondering about other podcasts, though, so I started searching. Somehow I ran across The Catholic Insider and that really caught my attention.

Religion is a big deal in northern Utah – people are pretty open about what they believe and you can't live here long

without being asked about your faith. You can sometimes feel a little isolated if you're not Mormon, so it was nice to be able to connect with other Catholics through Fr. Roderick's show.

After that I was hooked. I got my first mp3 player and started using Juice to download shows. The more I listened, the more I wanted to listen. Early on I found the audio drama-style podcasts and fell in love with the work of the folks at Decoder Ring Theatre. I've always been a fan of audio drama – I can remember lying in bed as a kid listening to CBS Radio Mystery Theatre and when I found Old Time Radio on the Internet, I collected as much as I could. Decoder Ring Theatre is a perfect re-creation of the golden age of radio.

As of July 7th 2007 Kevin had released 56 Short Cummings Audio podcasts.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A PODCAST?

KEVIN: I want to be entertained, but I also want to feel like some thought went into the show. When I listen, I'm choosing to give some of my time to the podcaster and I want to feel like they respect that investment. The content of the show should be well thought-out and delivered with a little professionalism. I really like a show if it challenges me to think in some way...if it gives me new information, or some tidbit of news that I'd missed, or stays with me after the episode is over.

I also like a show with at least a semi-regular production schedule. I don't want to connect with a show and then have it fade or come and go irregularly.

WHAT PUTS YOU OFF A PODCAST?

KEVIN: Anything that seems poorly conceived, pointless, or too egocentric.

It's a personal medium, of course, so a lot of us talk about ourselves. That's okay if you make it interesting and relevant. I need more than just somebody narrating his day if I'm going to care. Is there a point to the story or is it just a way to fill the time?

I'm also not keen on passionless podcasting. I want to listen to someone who is really excited about their topic, someone who cares.

I can tolerate poor quality audio, but I won't tolerate poor quality content. There are too many really good podcasts, so I don't feel compelled to listen to the bad ones.

image courtesy Kevin Cummings



WHAT DROVE YOU, PERSONALLY, TO BECOME A PODCASTER YOURSELF?

KEVIN: A complete misunderstanding of the field. Really.

I took some lessons in voice acting from Scott Shurian (www.voscott.com) and thought I'd like to take a stab at getting involved in the business. My work schedule wasn't really compatible with building a career in voice acting, so I thought I could strike out on my own. Podcasting seemed to be a good place to start. I figured I

could set-up a website, put out a podcast as a sort of calling card, and then offer to record short snippets for podcasters at low prices.

I did enough research to find out that there were a few people doing that.

What I didn't realize is that a lot of podcasters are doing voice work for each other for free. The only way to charge is if you are really, really good, and I'm not.

By the time I realized this, I'd already written the essays for my first ten or so podcasts and I'd recorded the first three. It seemed a shame to go that far and not start releasing the episodes so I took the leap and set-up a Libsyn account.

"I want to listen to someone who is really excited about their topic, someone who cares"

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU, CURRENTLY, TO CONTINUE PODCASTING?

KEVIN: I'm finding the discipline of it to be good for me as a writer. Back in the late 80s I had a weekly humor column in a local paper. The weekly

deadlines kept me on track and writing. When I'm not working under a deadline, I don't write as consistently. The podcast provides the same motivation.

Every week I write a new 1,000 word essay. I carry a notebook everywhere I go and when a good idea occurs, I write it down as completely as possible. Once I get to a computer, I use Google documents as a permanent storage place for my "idea file". Every weekend I sit down and pick one of the topics and start writing. If I'm feeling really creative or have some extra time, I might write an extra column just to keep ahead.

I also record a new episode every weekend. Then I post it to Libsyn with a release date about three weeks in the future. That way every episode is released on a fixed schedule.

Then I watch the numbers – which is another motivator. I'm a Libsyn stats junkie and I have a Google Analytics account. I check both every day to see how my shows and my website are doing.

The big motivator, though, is the people that I've met. The crowd over at the PodcastPickle forums is awesome. Too many to name, really. It's a great place for help, information, inspiration, or just a chance to connect with other podcasters.

HOW HAVE PODCASTS CHANGED YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD, AND CONSUMPTION OF, TRADITIONAL MEDIA?

KEVIN: I listen to a lot less radio now that I did before and I find myself planning my driving route around the shows I've downloaded. (Hmmm....one Daily Breakfast, the new Eclectic Review, a new Grammar Girl, and KidsWifeWorkLife ... The freeway is usually bumper-to-bumper at this hour of the morning ... that'll give me the time to get through all of this.)

Well, maybe it's not quite like that, but I

do try not to leave the house unless I have enough podcasts to keep me entertained on the road.

If I can't control it, I'm not that interested

I rarely listen to the radio anymore. Even the shows that I used to listen to on NPR are podcasts now and so I can control when I hear them, which sums up my attitude toward "old" media. If I can't control it,

I'm not that interested. I've even started to wait for TV series to come out on DVD because I can watch them on my schedule. It's not exactly podcasting, but it gives me that same level of control.

HOW HAVE PODCASTS CHANGED YOUR LIFE IN A MORE GENERAL SENSE?

KEVIN: I joke that I have less free time. It takes between four and six hours to script, polish, record and produce each six-minute episode. Some people paint or fish or golf, I podcast.

On a more serious note, I'm probably less up-to-date on the news than I used to be. The newspaper and Google news are now my primary sources for that kind of information. On the other hand, podcasts are so wonderfully idiosyncratic that I'm getting more interesting stories. In

particular I enjoy the stories that crop up on the Eclectic Review – odd and off-beat science stories that I would likely miss otherwise.

WHAT, IN RELATION TO PODCASTING, GIVES YOU THE MOST HOPE?

KEVIN: The range of individual expression. You know how they say "there's somebody for everybody"? I think the same thing is true of podcasting. There's a show for everybody. You just have to find the show or shows that appeal to you.

There's a show for everybody. You just have to find the show or shows that appeal to you

The real beauty of it is that most of the best shows are things that wouldn't be produced by traditional media. Mignon Fogarty's Grammar Girl is a perfect example. Who'd have guessed that a short show about the rules of grammar would make it onto the front page of iTunes and eventually get the host a guest spot on Oprah?

So long as you have good people like that putting out good content (and there are dozens of other examples I could have chosen), podcasting will attract a bigger audience.

WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE FOR YOU, AND YOUR PODCAST?

KEVIN: The first anniversary of my show was this past June. In all that time, I've written an essay a week. At 1,000 words each, that's enough content for a decent-sized book. If I can attract a large enough audience, I'd like to shop the book around to publishers.

In the traditional print market, it's pretty tough to break in as an essayist. Short Cummings Audio is my "new media" approach to cracking the market. If that doesn't happen, I've still got the experience of podcasting and the benefits of writing on a schedule.

At the same time, Print-on-Demand is getting more and more popular. The quality of production is very good and the notion of self-publishing is slowly gaining acceptance. If I can't attract a "traditional" publisher, I'd certainly consider working with a POD press like Lulu.com. After all, I started this as a new media venture. Why not go whole hog? It all depends on how well I connect with an audience.

Kevin Cummings - Short Cummings Audio
<http://www.shortcummingaudio.com/>

Judy and Paul Hutchinson - Total PodCastrophe
<http://www.TotalPodCastrophe.com>

photo courtesy Kevin Cummings



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URBAN COFFEE

TEXT BY MARK HUNTER



photo courtesy Urban Coffee

PODCAST ALLEY'S TOP 10 has, virtually since podcasting began, been the place to be seen. And while it may have been eclipsed by iTunes in terms of the top place people look to find podcasts, it still has a certain cache among us old school podcasters.

That's where I first noticed Urban Coffee. In a rush to find some new content to fill my mp3 player, I poked around the Top 10 chart but wasn't keen on the Harry Potter-centric 'casts and was already subscribed to New York and Tampa Bays' most outrageous. Urban Coffee, at that time sitting at number 9, caught my eye. I'm not sure why. Maybe it was the coffee that drew my attention. Who knows? But over a year later I remain subscribed, and for me that's often the litmus test of any podcast; the length of time it remains on your subscription list.

Deciding to abuse my position as Executive Editor of PUM, I contacted the hosts, Dave and Seth, like any other fan boy, and asked them for an interview. Happy to oblige, they sat down with me and over a coffee (white, no sugar, non-Urban) we talked about their successful podcast.

BEGINNINGS

"It's just becoming more and more corporate," Dave opines on iTunes podcast page, "There's no rhyme or reason for anything making it onto the front page." Dave's in his 20s, recently married, lives and works in Dallas as, owning a video production company. He uses the 30 weeks or so a year spent on the road surfing the 'net in hotel rooms when not working. That's where he comes up with ideas for Urban Coffee.

He continues, "that's why Podcast Alley became important. I believe it's still where most people go to pick up new podcasts. There's more competition there too. It used to be you only needed about 30 votes to make it to the top ten. Now you're constantly pushing your listeners to vote. It makes them do a bit of work on your behalf." He smiles, "I remember where I was when I learned we'd broken into the top ten. I was in London waiting

for a flight to Italy. It had a big impact on our listener numbers; we gained about 500 listeners in the first few days being in the top ten."

Of the two, Dave fits your classic podcaster profile. Seth explains, "I met Dave in the summer of 2000 when I moved to Dallas. The first thing I noticed about Dave was his ability to work over a PC like an instructor at a massage therapy school. If my memory serves me right the party we were at when we met had a TV in the living room with an animated BBQ grill that had smoke billowing out of it. It simply said "Get Your Grill On 2000". Over a few beers he explained how he made it work and that summer he shot my first music video, we played way too many video games and drank like fish." And friends they became.

While Seth may not have the computer and video geek credentials that Dave has, he does have a day job suited to podcasting. "I work as a Recording Engineer in a studio in Dallas. I record everything from local artists to major label acts. I also work weekends as a live sound engineer."

DIGGNATION

When podcasting became known to Dave it was natural that he and Seth start their own show as both have audio production experience and the ubiquitous something to say. Dave had heard the word podcast, but gave it no thought until one day he was Googling Kevin Rose to find out if he was still doing Tech TV. Instead, he found out about Rose's podcast DiggNation. "I started listening to the podcast and it wasn't long after that Apple added podcasts to iTunes. I was hooked."

Seth's exposure to podcasting came via Dave. "I walked into his apartment one afternoon and was bombarded with an assortment of words I had no clue as their meaning. 'Podcast', 'RSS', 'Forums'. I wasn't computer savvy back then, I didn't even own one - where I come from cows

HOW THEY DO IT AND WITH WHAT

Urban Coffee is recored using **Sennheiser 421** mics for the hosts and **SM58s** for guests. Each host has a **17" Macbook Pro** that they use while recording so that they can bring up links and video clips. Dave's laptop has a **digital cart system** for sound effects and **Skype** calls. Everything then goes through a **firewire mixer** and fed digitally into another Mac. Each channel is recorded seperately in **Logic Pro** and **Nicecast** is used to stream the audio live onto the 'net. After recording the show is mixed down, a little bit of panning used on each host.

outnumber people. But Dave let me hear a podcast on his computer and I thought, 'Ok, that sounds cool! So, now what?'



The 'now what?' was Dave suggesting they start their own podcast. Seth's small town background aside, he was in from the start. "I mean, who wouldn't want to act out their fantasy of being a radio personality? At first it was fun to talk about news and people, but after a while we added structure to the show, running regular segments like 'Bitch Of The Week', 'Seth's Music Cafe', 'Dave's Links' and 'Tech Talk'." The production of the podcast has always been high, as you'd expect from their day jobs, but for Seth it was less about the chance to flex his audio producing muscles and more about getting the opportunity to hang out with his best friend and talk about whatever is on their minds. "It's like sitting with your friends in Starbucks talking about the world. We brewed a pot of coffee for the first episode and that's where we ended up getting the name," Dave adds.

OFFENSIVE

The topics the pair cover often wander into areas that are liable to be offensive, namely politics and religion. Factor in strong, personal opinions and it can be a mine field. Many podcasters use the

freeness of the medium as a springboard for being deliberately caustic. However, Dave and Seth are cautious, but in different ways and for different reasons. Neither subscribe to the 'say what you want, how you want' ethos of some of the other Podcast Alley Top 10 residents.

"Few friends and co-workers know about Urban Coffee," Dave says, "I like to keep the show PG-13 so that people can listen at work, but I'm always concerned that if someone I know listens they may be offended by something we say. We pretty much tell it like it is, and sometimes that requires us to be a bit edgy. I'd rather offend people I don't know and not have to hang out with them afterwards."

Seth is often a little more forthright on the show, often giving Dave cause to edit out unintentional curses. But he too has kept his involvement fairly quiet, explaining that his employment may be at risk due to his



photo courtesy Urban Coffee

THE LISTENERS & OLD MEDIA

Their frankness, friendliness and naturalness has gained them listeners, listeners who, according to Seth, go above and beyond for them. "They've done

everything for us," he explains, "they've created chatrooms, donated to help us get to the Expo in California, they send us links to interesting stuff on the 'net and personally one of the biggest rewards is hearing how they're affected by the music I play on 'Seth's Music Cafe'." Music's a big part of his life, sharing it is an obsession. He tells me about one listener in the UK whose young son was learning the words to a song by Muse who'd been featured on the Music Cafe. "Things like that always make me feel great!"

During the times when Urban Coffee is recorded live the listeners get involved by posting relevant links and looking up facts for the guys while they stream the show over the 'net. "You can't stop once you start a live show and it's great to get listener feedback while you're discussing a topic. If I forget the smallest piece of information there's always someone there to help you remember," Dave explains. His favourite listener, though, is a missionary living Uganda who listens via satellite internet in a small house in the middle of the wilderness.

I ask the guys about old media and whether they've received any attention on the press, on TV etc. "We were mentioned on the UK's Channel 4. They played a clip of Seth and I talking about Senator Ted Steven's twisted view of the 'net (the infamous 'it's a series of tubes' speech)," Dave replies, "I've also done some ego

SEVEN URBAN COFFEE HIGHLIGHTS

1. While discussing how bad generic punk rock was, we decided to make our own and it turned out great.
2. We prank called a Nigerian Email Scammer multiple times while he was sleeping
3. We made our own Sonic Commercial (Americans will get that one)
4. We had a poll in our forums about the most inappropriate things to buy at the same time when grocery shopping. We packed a hidden camera and went shopping for them.
5. "The Hamburgler" – A guest with one of the most outrageous stories we've ever heard.
6. We did a live anniversary special and promised to do a shot for every person who called in. Way too many people called in.
7. Seth talked to a crazy guy from the side of the road that said we were damned to hell.

surfing on Google and been pleasantly surprised at how often we're mentioned on other websites."

The show is progressing, changing, improving, upgrading, all the while keeping the essentials in place; great hosts, the likeability factor and the familiarity. But Dave is keen to keep things moving forward. "Now we've added video. You have a chat room, audio stream, and a view of the two of us drinking coffee all on the same web page. Pretty soon we'll be switching between a live view of us and our computer screens so you can see exactly what we're talking about when we're on the web. I know that vidcasts are a lot more work, but it looks like that's the wave of the future. IPTV killed the podcast star."

August sees the pair launch Season 2 of Urban Coffee, complete with new segments, a new website and a new freshness. "We needed to take a couple of months out to get some of our affairs in order, stuff we'd been neglecting," continues Dave. The break was out of the blue, but, he says, very needed. He assures me that he and Seth are feeling much refreshed and are very excited about the return of Urban Coffee.

From a personal standpoint, so am I. I've missed hanging out with Dave and Seth every week, listening to their opinions and not always agreeing with them. Picking up new music tips from Seth while looking forward to checking out Dave's video links when I get home from work. Their's is a podcast that has something for most people, presented by two likeable, ordinary guys, the sort of guys you'd enjoy spending time with over coffee.

And Podcast Alley? Well, here's to them making it back into the top 10 again. They deserve to be there.

Dave Koss & Seth Falkner
<http://www.urbancoffee.net/>

Mark Hunter
<http://www.tartanstories.com>



photo courtesy Urban Coffee

THREE TIPS

FOR PRODUCERS

- 1. Be yourself.** People have a sick obsession with the human condition. Listeners can tell when you're being fake.
- 2. Create a little controversy** from time to time and save it for the show. I had to laugh after reading that Keith and the Girl save their conversations for the show because that's the same thing we do. We try not to talk about our week before we start recording.
- 3. Listen to similar shows** and decide what you like and don't like about them. Base your show on all the things you like about those other shows. It will make yours better.

FOR LISTENERS

- 1. Participate!** Send emails, leave voicemails, join the forums. It's great to hear from listeners. We love to know you're out there.
- 2. Help promote your favorite show.** Tell people about it, vote for it on Podcast Alley, and if they have promotional material... use it.
- 3. Donate.** It sounds cheesy but it's true. We buy equipment, spend our free time, and work for very little money. Send your favorite podcaster a few bucks every now and then so he or she can buy a few beers and relax. It's much appreciated.



I, Platform

The Eric Rice Interview

"I'm Just A Guy With A Blog!"



BY JOHN BUCKLEY AKA CITIZEN SCOOP



THE FIRST TIME I heard Eric Rice was back in November 2004. He was podcasting on vacation from a steam engine at Disneyworld Florida, via mobile phone. I had no idea who he was, but something about his snarky delivery, coupled with his humor and an obvious enjoyment of using technology struck a chord with me. I quickly discovered that he'd founded a little startup company called 'Audioblog', (now Hipcast), and that they'd come up with just about the easiest way to get a podcast or a videoblog uploaded onto a website. They also provided a cool little customisable flash-based player -- I signed up right away.



SINCE THAT TIME I've kept an eye and ear out for the whirlwind of activities that always seem to surround Eric. Blogging, podcasting, videoblogging, building in Second Life, starting a (virtual) record label, or populating social networks with his observations on all things blogospheric. Eric Rice is one busy guy.

Name: Eric Rice
Alias: Spin Martin
Age: 35
Location: San Francisco/Silicon Valley, CA
Occupation: Producer/Writer
Website: <http://ericrice.com>
Favorite Food: Fake Banana Flavored
 anything

Favorite Drink: We'll pretend it's winter. Chai Egg Nog Latte

Favorite Movie: Big Trouble in Little China

Favorite Books: Snowcrash, Microserfs, Silicon Snake Oil, Way of the Peaceful Warrior

Favorite Music: Hip-hop, Industrial, Various electronic genres

Favorite TV Show: The Shield and Entourage

LATER ON, I bumped pixels with his avatar in the virtual world of Second Life.

I WAS LOOKING around his Slackstreet sim, wondering how the hell he'd managed to build all this stuff, when he came bowling up a virtual pier to greet me, wearing a funky black leather biker jacket with no collar -- looking, (for an avatar), remarkably similar to his real-life self. I remember being both impressed that he was almost recognizable and surprised that he'd turned up to say hello personally. We exchanged a few pleasantries and I asked him where he'd bought the jacket, he gave me an address for an avatar clothing shop, flipped me a friendship card and shot off to do a photo session, using Second Life as his canvas.

RECENTLY I SAT down for a few conversations on many platforms to get his take on where we've been, where we are and where on earth we might be heading. Welcome to the 'one-man empire' that is Mr Eric Rice!

Read on...

photos & images courtesy Eric Rice

WHO IS ERIC RICE?

Eric, you've been called "a one man buzzword" and "one of the world's leading experts in consumer-generated media" So, where are you interacting most right now and why?

I'm caught up within the current trend of status and presence-based social networks. Twitter, Pownce, Facebook-- as well as a couple of live video streaming sites. The dirty little secret about me is that IRC is probably the highest on the list of all.

So what's the biggest misconception people have about you?

There are a couple. People either don't know what I do OR they think I'm really busy and doing a lot of projects. The truth is that most of these individual projects are all related or require the exact same efforts. The bad part about this is the misconception that I'm too busy to talk to, or that a project or idea isn't good enough to even bother me with. I love working on awesome stuff with other people! It's that whole bizarre notion of 'celebrity' in the new media space.

Who is Spin Martin, and how is he different to Eric Rice?



'Spin Martin' was the name I picked for myself when I came back to Second Life in late 2005. In SL, everyone is given a list of surnames to choose from, and the first name is open (if available, that is). I liked 'Spin' since it represented so much: from spiders spinning a web - a natural piece of beauty - to Spin Art, to music spinning, to PR spin. I had my first professional corporate webmaster job in 1995 and sure, 'spin a web' certainly came into play.

Spin was never intentionally supposed to be different from me, it was just my name in SL. And SL was actually kind of lonely. I kept to myself and explored and built. As my real-life self became more known to Second Lifers, 'Spin' was a name people referred to me-- like many SLers do, especially after meeting in real life at the second SL conference. After that, I had used 'Spin' on Twitter, because I wanted to see if writing in 140 character chunks would be a good fiction-writing experiment. That only lasted for 25 friends, though, before I started using Twitter normally. Amusingly, because you have to specify someone's name on Twitter with the @ symbol, anyone I knew was inadvertently forced to 'address' me as Spin. And so, now it's a nickname.



What's the one piece of technology you can't live without and why?

*A phone. No, make that a phone *that works*. I'm dropping VOIP and going back to a normal telephone line at home. I have my cell phone, which doesn't work at home because I'm in the country. All this fantastic technology that has and certainly will continue to change things is the most irritating thing to deal with when actual life experiences come into play-- never having a headset handy, wanting to grab the phone and leave the room-- even just spending time NOT TYPING. Just. Please. Call. Me. Instead.*



Out of all the media you're involved with, what do you most enjoy?

Gaming actually, but only because I have faith that the walled garden of the video game industry will start to crumble because of all the virtual worlds like Second Life, Kaneva, and others that emerge. Gaming is a place where a ton of things happen at once... and if you can use Photoshop, or are good with audio, or video and the overall concept of moving images and sound, and finally, multi-user social interaction--- all of those things are present in gaming. It's the ultimate mashup and one of the last media frontiers that's closed. That's why Second Life really matters-- because what's going on there is what we've been through THREE TIMES already. Once with blogging, once with podcasting, once with vlogging. It's an absolute rush to be able to make media in any form: text, audio, video, photos, 3D, social... and I enjoy that immensely.



Read on...

I, Platform continues...

What's the best and the worst thing about the blogosphere?

An old colleague told me that the best thing about the blogosphere is that people never stop talking, as well as the worst thing about the blogosphere that people never stop talking. I have to say, I'm starting to agree. It's just SO much at times. I have to remind myself though, that when I say 'blogosphere', I'm really talking about 'the blogger blogosphere'. I'm caught in the echo chamber too, and part of the problem. There's a good portion of the world that could give a shit about whether or not Pownce has an open API or not. I need to read that blogosphere more.

So what's your take on Web 2.0?

It certainly represented something valuable at one time, yet I think the culture around it overshadowed it to the point of mockery. Take out a vowel and have no business model on beta software that will turn otherwise smart people into panhandling fools falling over for link love from the so-called A-list. Whatever happened to building companies first, building rock-solid software? Instead, we build 'features' and call it software. I'm so glad automakers and real estate and the restaurant industry do not operate with these principles.

How old does New Media have to be before it's no longer new?

We will get there faster, the longer that we keep looking at each other because we are building the walled garden made up of ourselves. There are technology walled gardens and there are social walled gardens. We saw it with the whole iPhone vs Nokia debate; everybody is loyal to a certain way of thinking, a brand, or a school of thought, and the more we keep things this rigid format, the more that we start creating our walled garden, of a social class. I've slowly started to see these walls come down between traditional RSS-based video podcasters and You-Tubers. The fact that they have two different names should tell you that these are two social gardens. The fact is they are starting to mix, and the mix is becoming extremely fascinating. Those are the people that are going to win - the hybrids.

Whose blog do you read regularly and why?

It changes from time to time, but lately, I'm all about Techmeme and Ars Technica. There's a good cross-section of topics that I pay attention to, and sites like Techmeme let me read the posts of people who are interested in the same things I am - it's way different than subscribing to people. I'm discovering that I spend less time reading the blogs of friends and people and more time on topics. There are exceptions though, I read TechCrunch for the comments and Valleywag for the trainwreck.

Can you fake it in the bogosphere and get away with it?

Oh totally, because people are like there and you know them. I always use Amanda Congdon as an example to illustrate this theory. When the whole Amanda/Rocketboom thing went down, at the core - say, Yahoo group for videobloggers - the conversation was normal, civil, disagreeing, but for the most part, all fine and dandy. As this bit of news made its way out into the blogosphere, the tone started to change. It became 'who?' or 'why should I care?' and THEN by the time it made USA Today's blog, it was at the level of 'what the **** who cares, nice tits'. Like a rock in a pond and that's kinda the reality of the public space.

twitter

It's a human problem, too. I ask about if people know basic skills, got a so-so response. I make up a Facebook game, people go nuts. 03:47 PM July 24, 2007 from web

The datacenter that went down is part of my point re: Web 2.0 disaster prep. These techs only do so much. Things fail. 03:46 PM July 24, 2007 from web

Good thing that when an actual disaster strikes & maybe knock out data centers, we can rely on Twitter and such to communicate, right? 03:46 PM July 24, 2007 from web

Watching a movie on the ipod, er phone, er whatever, in bed. 1hr 40m 02:02 AM July 23, 2007 from web

The only official thing I have to say about the iphone is that 80% of its usage is snazzy ipod & browser, and NOT phone 07:41 AM July 22, 2007 from web

"Of all the facebooks, in all the towns, in all the world, she walks into mine." 07:03 AM July 22, 2007 from web

Even pre-podcasting, doing a show was met with 'what station?' and surprise, it still is... same with doing an advanced vlog thing in public 03:10 PM July 21, 2007 from web

I've always known that terms like 'web 2.0' 'user-gen...' 'new media' are worthless, because people DO, and don't TALK about them... 03:09 PM July 21, 2007 from web

don't want to see Geeks holding iPhones, I want to see iPhones holding art: <http://tinyurl.com/2v4d44> 01:02 AM July 18, 2007 from web

don't know how many people talk about how the social media space is at times for some. A million contacts, yet, can you feel alone? 11:12 PM July 17, 2007 from web

I, Platform continues...

So who do you see that you're talking to in what you do, is it many audiences and niches?

Well, it's hard, I wish it was half and half: half the 'us' people and half the 'rest of the world' people. But it's not. I'm a victim of the echo chamber like we all are. Funny story to prove this point. I asked my twitter network who was into pimping cars; not to the retarded extremes, but who can really appreciate a good sound system or muffler or maybe this or that upgrade. I think like four people responded.

The blogosphere is not on the same plane of reality as the white guys who argue about the standards and APIs on a telephone. But you can't get that through the thick skull of the crazy-uncle blogosphere. It's the F-to-Z listers who matter; A through E listers... not so sure.

That's why I saw that the biggest problem facing podcasters is podcasters themselves. I'd be willing to bet that for everyone who is all "oooooh, iPhone" and has one, there are 40 people who ask, "uh, can I get the free phone?" It's like the new beauty. Americans are obese, beauty is sold to us, and we want it, this new beauty, even if we are broke and in debt.

Let's talk a little bit about social networks. I notice a lot of people have literally hundreds of people in their network. Do you think there is a point to mass friending? Does it work and does it help?

Well, there's the MySpace collection, which is point-blank anyone. Then there's the pseudo-awareness crowd like bloggers adding all bloggers. Jason Calacanis and such have been moving closer to the MySpace model. I like to think I can get my head around 500 people only, but I can't! It's not like adding the world, where you gotta wonder if there isn't some trophyism going on. It's not just the numbers but the 'who' you're adding. It always cracks me up, the notion of celebrity in the blogosphere. The bummer about that is that it makes it so easy to unconsciously fall into stardom-talking-at-dom. How can you seriously have a conversation with 3000 people!? I mean, really? You have no choice but to 'address the masses'. I'm at a tipping point now where I just can't keep track of people I've met, and that REALLY bugs me.

What's the solution? Is there one?

It depends what you want. Some people don't want that kind of or level of exposure, and some do, some have to be comfy with it; but in the social scene, we kinda do it to ourselves. I have to dig out a quote someone wrote about me ages ago. "Comfortable with his own ego and ready to be famous" - something like that. That was kind of telling because I had to look at myself and go, "hey, am I?"

The secret of all this is that most of our true, true social net doesn't happen on these social sites. I can't even get my best friends to use RSS, and telephones RULE! I just hope that some day, if I ever become stupid famous, I don't turn into a dick, like you hear about certain stars. I hope I can stay normal if that ever happens to me.

twitter

holy crap i just clicked on a banner ad on PURPOSE 02:59 AM
July 15,2007 from web

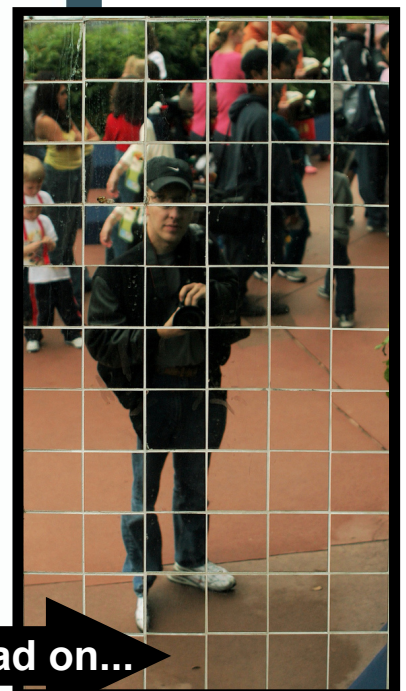
ok getting ready to be interviewed zomg citizen paparazzi! 07:05 PM July14, 2007 from web

Off to bed! Which is some futuristic euphemism for my bio-systems' scheduled maintenance and nightly updates & backups. NO CARRIER 01:51 AM July 14, 2007 from web

There are no 'celebrities' in this space-just lots of smart people in 'industry'. Whip out your wikipedia entry at Home Depot, see who cares 01:30 AM July 14, 2007 from web

Heh just said to my wife "How do you make money in podcasting? Do a podcast on who Britney Spears is screwing. You'll make money, easy." 01:27 AM
July 14, 2007 from web

and that ladies and gentlemen, is part of the doorway to oz. Once you get out of the comfort zone of your social net, that's what you find 11:04 PM July 12, 2007 from web



Read on...

I, Platform continues...



rezzing.tv

cscoop: What is 'Livecasting' and what are you up to over at Rezzing.tv/live?

ericrice: Rezzing originally was to be a show about gaming culture and lifestyle over at Podtech. I started thinking about it and about that space, and it's an extremely difficult space to exist in, because it's through this magical 'door to Oz', as I like to call it, which is that world outside of your comfort zone.

The world outside the echo-chamber is a very vicious, mean and nasty place. I wanted to do something that turns the floodgates on, really do something that is the 'everything'. It's art, it's education, it's every media - I don't want to be locked into a specific medium.

I have a laptop that has high-speed wireless built in, so it's really simple. It takes me back to 1995 or 1996, when we used to do live webcams from various nightclubs in San Jose, California. We'd take a snapshot and upload it to the web every 60 seconds. We had radio modems called 'ricochets', so we'd do things like go to a club, put a little pizza-box Mac on the stage or a Powerbook 280c and then broadcast that. Now, it's like 10 years later and look where we are! It's easy to do, and there's a little bit of video in that. So, it just seemed to be the thing to do.

I'm extremely cautious about it though, because while people are interested in looking at someone driving to the store, you can only milk that for so long before it isn't interesting. So I've taken a break from livecasting until I can think of something that has a little more to it. I wouldn't want to be 24/7. I don't want to beat that dead horse!

cscoop: Do you think this real-time broadcasting of a person's life affects the way they think about what they are doing with their life? Does it change the way they interact with other people, because they are aware of creating content rather than living?

ericrice: I think that's valid, and it's something I've noticed with blogging. I've been behind that keyboard for a lot of years, and once you start becoming aware that people are listening, I think you change a little bit. Especially when you might realize WHO might be reading, or who you KNOW is reading! You sit up a little straighter when you're on camera, make sure you're not working that finger up the nose! (Laughter) You're kind of like, "how's my teeth, or is my hair okay?" You just are conscious about that! So I think it's very scalable across mediums. I think it's the same basic pattern. I've had that happen in Second Life, where people are giving tours of my land and I'm like "alright, let me make sure I clean up my mess here a little bit!". (Laughter) I mean that's just a manners issue, that's just a good manners, I think that's a natural human response.



ericrice
cscoop

LIVE FREE OR BLOG HARD 11:40
AM July 11, 2007 from web



cscoop: How do you think this whole movement into a real-time broadcast paradigm is affecting podcasting?

ericrice
cscoop

ericrice: With video-blogging, which is kind of a cousin to podcasting, we had this mantra of 'What you want, when you want it, where you want it!' - being able to throw it on your iPod and go. Then YouTube comes into the picture and the public said "we're just going to upload to this place, because we're sitting on our butts behind our computer anyway, we're not all jet-setters!" So people just did that, and that surge in popularity of YouTube left us all wondering, "Is that really not the most important thing we should be worrying about? Maybe it's okay to lock it in there and sit in front of the computer?" Plenty of people will disagree with that, but it doesn't change what just happened in history.

In the future, all the data & information in the world is harvested in order to create a single AI with the aggregate personality of Earth. 08:54 PM July 09, 2007 from web

With audio podcasting, the idea of 'appointment-based viewing' was now thrown out. A television network would give you the appointment: tune in Fridays at eight, and if you missed it, you missed it. So the on-demand nature of podcasting made it like a cable channel, or a satellite television, where you can get any show you want because it's available on demand. Now we're moving into a world where, I hope, we're going to start seeing some time-shifting tools, like Tivo is for real-time media, where I can pause something that's happening right now.

I think it's going to vary on the type of content-creator (for lack of a better term) and what's going to feel more comfortable. Some people like confrontation. They want to say something rude and offensive and then take calls! [laughs] And then the boxing gloves come on! That's a much different energy. How do you get angry, when you're reading an angry letter, or angry when someone is angry at you live, right now? I think it does something for the art. It can be very difficult to get behind the microphone and some people will probably augment what they are doing; some might switch completely.

We've always had a certain social acceptance of certain real-time events, whether it's news driven or something like New Years Eve, when we're all tied into the same moment in time. Is it going to become overwhelming? You think subscribing to a lot of podcasts is difficult? Imagine if there's 47 million live shows all going on at once. What are you going to watch!?! So then it becomes a much different race for eyeballs and time spent.

cscoop: What's wrong with podcasting, and what's the current health of the podcast patient?

ericrice: I've long been a believer that at some point a community dies and it becomes a society, in which there are many different opinions and many different schools of thought on how to do things, with everyone spinning off into their own schools of thought. Terminology changes, to where someone will say, "the videoblogging community" and the subtext is that the person who said that was actually referring to the Yahoo group 'Videoblogging Community'.





I brought this up with Chris Brogan, (PodCamp co-founder) who's a good friend of mine. When we first met I was taking issue with the fact that his Podcamp said 'listener'. There's a very fine line where I separate a podcaster who listens to other podcasts and somebody who just wants to consume. We are so entrenched in the 'making media' that we reject and almost belittle the fact there are people who are not in the mood to do anything except consume. You can grow your food, prepare your food, or you can just say screw it and order out for a pizza! That's the thing, the different scales of how much involvement people want.

Most people in this world are going to be consumers. That will shift a little bit, but I still think it's going to be overwhelmingly consumer-driven. It's like when we say the word 'blogosphere' or 'tech-bloggers' or 'blogger bloggerspheres' - not completely unrelated - and of course we get very protective of our turf. So I see a lot of this with all of the 'spheres', and I certainly see it in podcasting.

I've been extremely concerned about Podcamps and podcasters who fly around to all these Podcamps. I was really surprised when people said "are you coming Podcamp NYC?" I said, "no, why would I do that?" I'm on the West Coast. If I wanted to go to a couple of Podcamps, there are Podcamps over here. So Podcamps become like Expos and people are flying all over the place. I'm asking, "Isn't the idea of a Podcamp to have something local?"

That's where the notion of PodcampXL originated. So if you live in a place that people would consider 'po-dunk' then have a Podcamp. Bring a non-podcaster, maybe somebody who will listen and no A-listers; no big names are allowed to import themselves.

cscoop: How do we get more people involved in creating media?

ericrice: I think we are all in time going to create media in our own ways. I believe that there are four basic audience types: Those that are passive, those that are passive but a little more active, those that are participatory and those that are active-participatory. I use my father-in-law as an example of this. On Flickr he is extremely passive. He just looks at a photo that I post and that's the end of it. He does not take photos, he does not upload them, he does not tag them or add them to sets, which would be the behavior of somebody who is actively participatory. But where he is active-participatory is on Craig's List, because in the San Francisco Bay area he's a Conservative Republican, and there's nothing more fun for a Conservative Republican in the San Francisco Bay area than throwing firebombs into the middle of a Craig's List discussion. He tracks them, he just goes to town, he's so engaged. So here you've got one person who has two different behaviors. Is he going to make media, or is he going to consume it?

There is no one size fits all. I think we will eventually get there, but what have we done to introduce somebody brand new to this? A brand new person is not going to show up on the Yahoo list; they're not going to show up on Podcast Island; they're not going to suddenly walk into a web 2.0 summit. You've got to get out there and explain it to them and change the definition for every person you talk to. I sold podcasting to one guy because I said, "How would you like to kick corporate radio in the nuts!?" That was the most poetic and beautiful definition of podcasting that I ever gave, but I didn't say podcasting and I didn't say RSS. But that's not the same definition that I gave my mother-in-law, who I asked, "Do you know how democratic podcasting is?" She replied, "Oh, really?" But I had to hold her hand; you can't just send your mother-in-law to a top-ten list. While I love people like Dawn and Drew or Keith and the Girl, they're at the top ten of an indicator of what's most popular, but not for your mother-in-law. So you've got to hold people's hands. Invite her to a Podcamp, don't invite the same twelve people that are at every single damn event. That's how we can do it. I think we can do it, because it is so important. Those barriers are being lowered. That's all very important, and we just have to work harder,.

ericrice
cscoop

Moral of the story: The blogosphere moves faster than you. It's a mob and you have to move FAST. 07:04 AM July 06, 2007 from web





ericrice
cscoop

cscoop: Why can't we buy podcasts on iTunes, Eric?

ericrice: This is one of the hardest things I've ever had to talk about. I feel like I have to focus people's attention on the actual issue at hand because, we get very distracted by our own personal ideologies. When people are in that little economic place called iTunes music store, they are previewing and purchasing individual units, or collections, or a series, an episode, a season, whatever you want to call it. That exists for every single media type, the iTunes University stuff notwithstanding.

Everything in the iTunes music store is for sale except podcasts. The architecture of what we do is exactly the same as a television show, or an album, or a song. It's an individual unit, it's a collection of units. Why has that switch not been flipped? So you have to rally support, to make a lot of noise about it. But the first thing that comes up is "I wouldn't pay for for a podcast!" [laughs] Well, that's not the issue! The issue is that there are tremendous numbers of people who are spending money in there.

I would love to see a top-ten list based on sales numbers. That's when you see that people are committed. Of course it's free, and I believe in that hybrid market of 'freemium', where some stuff is free, some stuff is pay. You can give something away for free, you can charge for it also; it's all good. I believe in that model, I believe it works, it's been proven to work and yet we are just not even given the ability to try it.

If you wouldn't pay for a podcast, then fine, don't buy a podcast. If there were a price tag on a podcast and somebody paid you a dollar for it, would you say no and hand them their money back? I don't know; maybe you would. The thing is, we don't have a choice, and a lot of what we believe in, the foundation of blogging, podcasting, videoblogging, Second Life is all the same thing, this lower barrier to entry. We all can do it - don't you tell me what I can and cannot do - and Apple is indirectly telling us, "well, no!"



cscoop: What's the future of podcasting?

ericrice: I would say that there's not a future in podcasting, but I only say that because I believe in brand. You're presenting information, you're having conversations with people and you happen to be using a medium. When Ewan Spence did a show live and it was also a podcast what do you call that? I don't know, I was just listening to this rock show. If you start adopting all these other forms of delivery, what does that make you? You want to label yourself and typecast yourself and being "oh you're just a podcaster?" I need something more than that.

Nobody says, "did you listen to the CNN.com homepage audio thing?" It was on CNN, we don't know if we're talking about the TV, the web page, the podcast, it's just there. So, the future's really in the brand, because we are going to change up media and we're going to use it in ways we probably haven't figured out yet.

Everything in the iTunes music store is for sale... except what? OH YEAH, podcasts.
<http://www.ericrice.com/blo...> 02:43
AM July 03, 2007 from web

ericrice has logged out
cscoop has logged out

The interview podcast with Eric Rice is at
<http://citizenscoop.co.uk>

REVIEW ROULETTE

WELL, IT'S A year ago we first started the Review Roulette here at Podcast User Magazine. The idea was to find a new way to come up with unusual, interesting podcast reviews, not the ordinary sycophantic reviews you'll find all over the most popular podcast directories. So, we thought we'd end up with some interesting reviews of some off-the-wall podcasts, but who was to know we would end up enjoying so many of the podcasts chosen for us by the random hand of fate? This month we have a typical mixed bag of 4 podcasts...

ANIMAL TALK, NATURALLY

<http://www.animaltalknaturally.com>

Holistic health is one of those alternative philosophies that is increasingly gaining popularity as part of mainstream patient care. "Animal Talk, Naturally" (ATN) extends that philosophy to the animal world, focusing mainly on domestic pets like dogs and cats. The hosts for this self-described 'online radio show', are animal natural health care pioneers, Kim Bloomer and Jeannie Thomason.

Kim Bloomer is a natural pet care educator, professional lecturer and writer on natural pet health, co-authoring the book "Whole Health for Happy Dogs." Jeannie Thomason is a Natural Rearing Dog Expert, and a former licensed veterinarian technician, now continuing to study animal nutrition and holistic animal husbandry.

As you subscribe to the podcast and look back over their many episodes - they're now well into the second year of broadcasting - you'll see that each weekly episode clocks in at about 50-60 mins with a main topic. In addition, it is very common for additional short 5-10 minute bonus episodes to be issued containing 'after show' conversations that provide added value to the main topic. Another feature of their show is that you can join them online, for the live recording of their

REVIEWED BY PHIL CLARK

image: Animal Talk, Naturally



show, each Wednesday at 230pm Eastern (<http://animaltalknaturally.ivocalize.net/?p=0>) Sound quality and production values are generally good, with the

information and topic of the day being the focus of the show. They don't waste time getting down to business, and the content is jam-packed into the allotted time.

Guests on just the past few shows have been frequent visitor, Dr. John Symes, an expert in Naturopathy, animal health video producers, and authors of animal related books.

Kim and Jeannie are personable hosts, ask excellent questions, and through their obvious knowledge and passion for the topic, present highly informative podcasts.

Not being a dog or cat owner (I did have ferrets once), I wouldn't subscribe to the show and listen regularly. If I had one criticism, maybe they try to pack TOO much into one show.

ATN is what web content is all about - a specific niche topic, informative, knowledgeable and regularly produced.

For people who want to understand a little more about how to care naturally for their pets, and understand how the modern lifestyle can affect their health,

this show is recommended. After all, it's commonplace for us to prefer organic produce to get better flavor and health, so why not give the same consideration to your pet? They're a member of the family as well!



Content 3.5 out of 5
Production 3.38 out of 5

Jam-packed with well-researched information for pet owners and animal lovers. My one gripe is that it's a bit too US-centric for me with the hosts making zero effort to remember there's a big wide world out here. Simple things like not assuming all listeners are aware of the same news stories and explaining acronyms they use would make it more useful for me.

- BERNADETTE

PRO MONEY TALK

<http://www.promoneytalk.com/>

REVIEWED BY HILARY TYLER

One of the most commonly overlooked areas in life is that of financial matters. Usually, this is due to the fact that many feel it is complicated, boring or simply hopeless and maybe even downright depressing! However, the single largest mistake one can make is to do nothing. So start simple...tune in to the Pro Money Talk podcast and just listen. On the other hand, if you happen to be one of the proactive minority who has your financial plans in order, there is something here for you too.

Pro Money Talk is a podcast that focuses on financial topics covering investing, taxes, estate planning, as well as educational and retirement saving. It is aimed at a broad audience that includes anyone interested in their financial health and well-being. Recent episodes feature interviews with financial experts, book authors, a finance celebrity (if there is such a thing), as well as success stories from ordinary individuals.

Each show covers one financial topic in-depth, often with a guest. One features an interview with Steve Forbes, a former US presidential candidate and editor-in-chief of Forbes business magazine on The Flat Tax. Impressive! Though maybe the most

image: pro money talk



powerful show is one titled "Success Stories 1: Helga Hayse". If you are a female, listen to this one. If you are a husband who loves his wife, listen to this one. If you don't think you can listen to finance geeks talking about money matters, listen to

this one. If you only listen to one, listen to this one. Helga's story is a powerful reminder that we must pay attention to our financial health, especially if you are not the one who manages your own money.

The Pro Money Talk website contains host bios, show description and a prominent first-timers link, which leads to instructions on how to subscribe. There is also a link to download past shows, which offers a search by date and also, more usefully, by category. The first show was produced in June 2005. Audio help was acquired in May 2006 and so the sound quality is very good in shows since. New shows are intended to be delivered monthly, though they have been more sporadic lately due to the birth of a child for one host, Jason Papier.

Hosts Jason Papier and Peter Johnson are partners with PWJohnson Wealth Management, an independent, fee-only

wealth and financial planning firm in Sunnyvale, California. They are both intelligent and informative guides, and though they probably do this podcast as a service to their clients, it is free advice for anyone who seeks it. There is no advertising and they do not profit from the show. Pro Money Talk is a superb educational podcast recommended for anyone hoping to improve their financial future.



Content 3.83 out of 5
Production 3.5 out of 5

Only an occasional episode is relevant (or even comprehensible) to anyone living outside the US but for Americans ready to put some effort into their financial planning this is a podcast full of practical information.

-BERNADETTE

There is lots of excellent information on numerous financial topics to be found on this podcast. I enjoyed the in-depth interviews with the expert guests. This one will be staying in my subscription list!

-MARILYN MADSEN

INFECTED BY MARTIN SARGENT

<http://revision3.com/infected>

Each episode of this podcast features Martin Sargent, formerly of TechTV and currently of half a dozen video podcasts, and his trusty sidekick Gator, offering their insight into the theme of the week. As well as the banter between the two hosts there are comedy sketches, interviews with people vaguely relevant to the theme and random other funniness. Recent episodes have focused on a wide variety of themes including 1985, books, poop and the search for Bigfoot.

Parts of this show made me laugh 'til I hurt while other segments failed to raise even the hint of a smile. Skits which involved a guest having to decide if a phrase was the title of a black feminist book or black-themed porno, the story of Wayne the First Computer Geek and promos for a new Miami Vice style show called Hot Shot and the Kid were damned funny but the show devolved into self-indulgence a little too often to maintain my interest. Maybe it's a girl thing but poop talk and references to masturbation,

REVIEWED BY BERNADETTE

image: revision3



while occasionally funny, have limited scope for providing belly laughs.

The show is available in audio and video format although I'm not sure why as the majority of content requires the visual element for the humour and excellent production values to be appreciated. I listened to the audio version of a couple of shows and was completely underwhelmed. As the video versions of those same episodes were far more engaging I'm curious as to why they bother providing the dual formats. However, Revision3 (the parent company responsible for the show) are to be congratulated for providing enough download and torrent formats to suit every potential consumer.

For someone who claims to be the Internet the show's web presence is fairly limited. There are forums for show fans at Revision3's website but, at least at the time of writing this review, Sargent's own website, Sargeworld, is unavailable and there's not much activity on the show's MySpace page.

The show is not work-safe and unless you're a particularly liberal parent you'll probably want to save this one for adult time.

In podcast fanatic terms this show scores: will watch again, maybe not religiously to every episode.



Content 2.83 out of 5
Production 4.33 out of 5

This podcast has good production quality but the content totally leaves me cold. With the "F-word" used as an adjective five times in the initial few minutes of the first episode to which I listened, I decided to try another episode which was about the same. This one is definitely not my cup of tea but may be entertaining to others.

-MARILYN MADSEN

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG: PAST AND PRESENT

<http://www.history.org>

Well, the roulette wheel served up another behind the scenes podcast for this reviewer. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation produces this podcast. The foundation operates the world's largest living history museum in Williamsburg, Virginia – the restored 18th century capital of Britain's largest, wealthiest and most populous outpost in the New World.

Each week former TV correspondent, Lloyd Dobyns interviews one of the many interpreters, historians and curators that make this museum come to life. From saddle and harness makers to tailors and wig shop workers, the subject matter runs the full gamut of historical professions. Other episodes are mini history lessons, the most recent being about the Marquis de Lafayette. Each podcast averages fifteen minutes in length which fly by quickly with Mr. Dobyn's affable and down home interviewing style. With a set opening tag followed by the interview the shows are consistent in format and solid audio quality. This podcast is available in standard MP3 format and also in an enhanced format in which images are posted to one's computer to supplement

REVIEWED BY MARILYN MADSEN

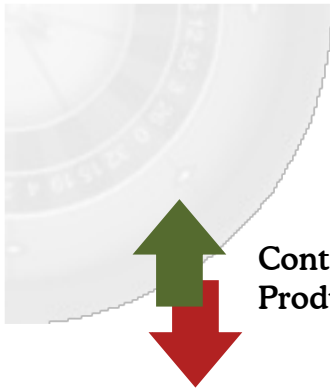
image: www.history.org



the subject being discussed. Hopefully video podcasts are in the near future for the foundation as the enhanced format was found to be static and not very enjoyable since one was left staring at the same picture for quite some time whilst the audio progressed.

The website for Colonial Williamsburg is quite extensive. The home page has a prominent link to the podcast page. Once at the page, a good job is done of explaining what a podcast is and how to download. The RSS feed is easy to find and the archives are navigated with ease. Having been in production since May of 2005 there are numerous episodes to peruse for those who are history buffs. One perk was the ability to sort the episodes in the archive by date and category.

Most of my listening was done at work with a co-worker also present. After hearing three episodes her comment was: "I want to go to Williamsburg!" Indeed that is what this informative and well-produced podcast makes one want to do.....



Content 3.0 out of 5
Production 3.17 out of 5

The behind the scenes interviews with those who work at the Colonial Williamsburg living history museum are surprisingly engaging and very informative. However both the podcast and the associated website seem to assume that everyone has a certain level of prior knowledge of US history. Links to relevant sources for those of us without that knowledge would be much appreciated.

-BERNADETTE

This month's podcasts were randomly chosen from:

PodcastAlley.com
(<http://podcastalley.com/>)
and
PodcastPickle.com
(<http://podcastpickle.com/>)

The ratings given are the average of the scores given by our team of reviewers. They were reviewed by:

Bernadette - <http://podcastfanatic.com>
Hilary Tyler - <http://tpn.thepodcastnetwork.com>
Marilyn Madsen - madsenm@earthlink.net
Phil Clark - <http://www.thebritandyankee.com>

Note: Janet Parkinson is on vacation this month. Global Voices will return in the September issue of Podcast User Magazine.

electrical language

Podsafe indie music presented by Gabor Kovacs

<http://www.electricallanguage.co.uk/podcast.html>

12:00 The Flashing 12 Podcast

A husband and wife team sharing stories and experiences with technology

The Richard and Judy of Podcasting
www.theflashing12.com
flashing12@gmail.com

<http://www.theflashing12.com>

Your backstage pass to the Fringe with Ewan Spence

the podcast network
The Edinburgh Fringe Show
Podcasts from Fringe 2007
STAGE

<http://edinburghfringe.thepodcastnetwork.com/>

Showcasing some of the best in independent music

Indie Launchpad

Showcasing the best in independent music

<http://podcast.indieauntpad.com>

<http://podcast.indieauntpad.com/>

Quick and painless medical information.

Medical Minute

<http://www.medicalminutepodcast.com/>

Total PodCastrophe
British - American humour and more pangolins than you can shake a stick at!

<http://www.totalpodcastrophe.com/>

ALBUM REVIEW

DOOMSDAY AFTERNOON

BY PHIDEAUX

TEXT BY GRANT MASON

THE MOMENT HAS arrived at last, after a lifetime of waiting. For Phideaux Xavier and his band Phideaux, their new CD - *Doomsday Afternoon* - is out in the open and featuring an orchestra to supplement their modern art-rock sound. The use of real strings and horns is something that Phideaux has always dreamed of since hearing the bands of his youth using them, and at last he has his chance.

The album is the second part of a planned trilogy that began in 2006 with *The Great Leap*, and it's a concept album full of bombastic fury and quiet anguish as Phideaux rails against the horrors and the environmental disasters of the modern world in his self-titled 'eco-disaster play', as well as taking a shot at the all-powerful authority that's asserting its ever-tightening grip on our daily lives and manipulating our thoughts and behaviours. Cheery stuff indeed, but you only need to part the curtains and stare out beyond the CCTV cameras watching our every move to see that the world is heading towards hell in a handcart and Phideaux's lyrics are a reflection of this and a prediction of where we'll end up. Unless we open our eyes, it is indeed a *Doomsday Afternoon* made real.

Musically, the album is a powerful reminder of two facts -

1. prog isn't dead
2. independent artists can produce albums of such stunning quality that their commercial counterparts should be hanging their heads in shame and hanging up their instruments forever

It's 10 songs and 66 minutes 59 seconds (they couldn't quite work out a way to get 66 minutes and 60 seconds down - geddit?) of raw emotional power and



image courtesy Invocal

contains more classic prog synth sounds than Rick Wakeman could find up one of his wizard's sleeves; ARP String Ensembles, minimoogs, Mellotrons, Moog Voyagers and a variety of organs to name but a few. There's even a cameo appearance on keys by IQ's Martin Orford during 'Formaldehyde', as he's long been admired by Phideaux for his work. Not only that, but fans of the late 70s British progsters UK will adore Matthew Parmenter's soaring violin solos which weave in and out of tracks, occasionally duelling in the solo stakes with the lead guitar parts, echoing the classic fiddling of Eddy Jobson at his peak (and I'm using the Scottish sense of fiddling here to mean playing 'the fiddle', so no sniggering up the back there).

The album is a concept piece, best listened to in one complete sitting. Multi-layered and complex in its arrangement, there's no way to do it any kind of justice without listening to it yourself. Take a trip along to Phideaux's MySpace page at www.myspace.com/phideaux, where - at the time of writing - you can sample an edit of Microdeath Softstar and Formaldehyde. Microdeath opens with an insistent beat, topped with lush strings and horns leading to a male/female vocal duet interspersed with the aforementioned violin and prog keyboard presets. The track itself was described to me by Phideaux as the album's "final

freakout- the one where we throw every musical theme into the air and slice them up like Edward Scissorhands". You can almost feel the energy radiated by the musicians as they created this masterpiece - it crackles outwards from your speakers, grabbing you by the scruff of the neck and shaking you until you appreciate the craftsmanship that they brought to it. It may surprise listeners that it was, in fact, two years in the making; the original shell of the album was recorded at the same time as The Great Leap. Phideaux insists that the time was "what it took to ripen, like that flower that only opens up once every ten years..." It is, in effect, a fine wine album. It should be appreciated and revered; sampled lovingly and sluiced around the mouth whilst you appreciate its depths and flavours. With every glass, you find another new note in its bouquet to savour, and it continues to improve with age.

Yet you don't have to shell out thousands for the experience. For less than the price of the majority of mainstream labels' CDs, you too can treat yourself to an album that will live with you forever. It's a modern masterpiece of the genre, complete with incredible and sinister artwork from band member Molly Ruttan which continues the dark imagery theme that began in the first album of the trilogy. I guarantee you that it's quite probably the best few quid you'll ever spend.

In the beginning Phideaux worried that "either [he was] deluded and it sucks, or right and it's great, but either way I just hope people will give it a chance." There are no delusions here. He WAS right. Now it's your chance to confirm his hopes.

Phideaux

<http://www.bloodfish.com>

<http://www.myspace.com/phideaux>

Grant Mason

<http://www.threefromleith.com>




A fun, smart look at our world, pop culture and news from Marv

<http://mrmniceguy.org/>

The Dan Klass Show: Examinations of life from a stay-at-home dad/shut-in.



<http://www.thebitterestpill.com/>



Doug Rapson's Fortuitous Finds from the Worldwide Web

<http://www.geekacres.info/>

Jake's humorous look at life in Salt Lake City, UT



<http://notrightpodcast.com/>



A daily three-minute fake news broadcast from comedian Steve Tatham

<http://www.theointment.com/>

JM Soul Connoisseur focuses on the mid tempo side of Soul, showcasing all the hot independent soul talents



<http://www.jmsoul.com/>

ALBUM REVIEWS

JUNK AND THE BADS

REVIEWS OF TWO OLD FAVOURITE PODSAFE ALBUMS

TEXT BY GABOR KOVACS

AS A MUSIC podcaster, I find that I spend a lot of time listening to new music as I try to find material for the podcast. I will listen to an album several times over a period of a few weeks, and then it gets put to one side and forgotten. And that is a shame. So I have deliberately spent a few days listening again to a couple of albums that I played a lot last summer. I am pleased to say that they still sound very good.

THE LAST STAND OF THE CONSPIRACY COWBOY - JUNK

John Smith, aka Junk, is another example of the many artists who choose to go it alone when it comes to recording and promoting their work. The Last Stand Of The Conspiracy Cowboy was released in June 2006. I had been waiting for the album since Autumn 2005, having been sent some preview tracks.

The Last Stand of the Conspiracy Cowboy shows that John is an accomplished guitarist and songwriter. The album starts with one of those songs that you feel may be a personal manifesto. The Idiot's Chant begins with a strong drum beat and keyboard sounds that are highly reminiscent of Japan or Peter Gabriel. The beat drives that song forward as it develops into strong guitars and vocals. The song is reprised at the end of the album.

In between come a number of songs that showcase Smith's ability. These include half a dozen mid-tempo songs, guitar-based and with a strong hook. These songs are all well-written, and show John Smith to be a strong vocalist and proficient guitarist. Stand out tracks include Nobody People, a song about the



image courtesy Junk

distance between media output and ordinary people's lives ("switched off my tv today, got reality, don't need any more"), and Wouldn't Get Out Of Bed (For Anyone But You). John can also write and perform songs with a harder edge. Take track 4, All Hail The Armageddon Kid. This is more of a rock song, and, unless I am

mistaken, gives us the performer's take on the morality of war, with particular venom directed at the Iraq war and the politicians who took us to war.

None of the playing or writing is cliched. Unlike much chart output, there is scarcely a weak song on the album, and so I can recommend The Last Stand Of The Conspiracy Cowboy as a strong album by a talented artist. The album can be purchased via scotloads.co.uk for £4.99; excellent value for 11 strong tracks. And the good news is that John Smith is now working with an unnamed "name" producer in New York, on a project that will probably include reworkings of some of the songs from The Last Stand Of The Conspiracy Cowboy.

EARTH FROM SPACE - THE BADS

ALSO IN JUNE 2006, I was introduced by a listener from New Zealand to the work of Auckland band The Bads. I played a couple of songs on the electrical language podcast, and then discovered I could only buy the album from New Zealand. NZ\$40 odd including postage seemed a lot, but I calmed down when I checked the exchange rate, it was reasonable value. Then came a fortnight's wait for the CD, but it was worth waiting for.

The Bads are Dianne Swann and Brett Adams. Dianne and Brett spent a number of years in the UK, where they achieved some success with a number of bands; Dianne also sang backing vocals on a Radiohead song or two and joined them on tour. After returning to New Zealand, they became the Bads. Their 2005 release *Earth From Space* is their first offering.



image courtesy The Bads

this album, the first song *Off The Rails* has darker chords lurking behind the melodies. The darker tone is often also provided by the way that Brett sings his harmonies to Dianne's lead vocal. The lyrics also strike a note that perhaps jars with the melody. For example, my favourite song *Bit By Bit* is a catchy pop song with a great hook. As far

The album contains 11 songs. The format is boy/girl melodic guitar based pop, and again Brett Adams is a talented guitar player. Some of the songs, such as *Feels Like Rain* and *Don't Go Losing*, remind me of late 1980's *Everything But The Girl*. Some of the songs have an almost country feel. But there is a troubled edge lurking behind the melodies and harmonies. It is this edge that makes this album different and not just another collection of catchy tunes. It gives greater depth to the songs.

For example, in a style that is typical of

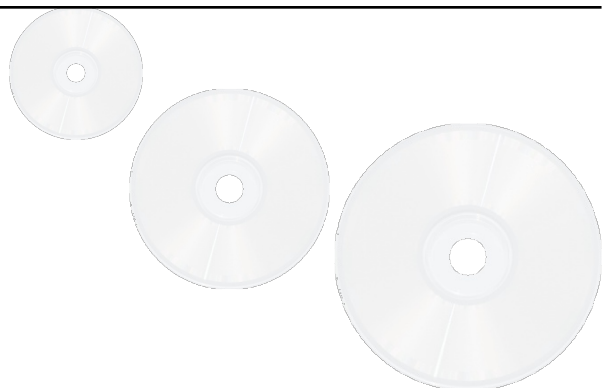
as I am concerned it's an obvious hit, but in it Dianne begins by singing "If I didn't love you, I'd be nicer to you, wouldn't let you see my dark side", and it carries on from there.

Brett Adams takes the lead vocals on two songs that are somewhat different in character, with a greater rock feel to them. *Trouble Rides A Fast Horse* reminds me of those Joe Walsh songs on Eagles albums in the way that the harder rock contrasts with the more melodic nature of the other songs. Again, a good set of songs and an album worth getting hold of.

Junk – The Last Stand Of The Conspiracy Cowboy
Band Website: <http://www.thejunk-yard.com>
Buy the music: <http://www.scotloads.co.uk>

The Bads – Earth From Space
Band Website: <http://www.thebads.com>
Buy the music: <http://www.amplifier.co.nz>

Gabor Kovacs – the electrical language podcast
<http://www.electricalanguage.co.uk/podcast.html>



YOUR PODCAST PROBABLY SUCKS

TEXT BY PATRICK MELTON



photo courtesy Patrick Melton

AS I'M WRITING this, there are over 33,000 podcasts listed on Podcast Alley. I'm using Podcast Alley as a reference point for the number of existing podcasts because other directories, particularly Podcast Pickle, make me want to punch someone in the face with their 'let's hug it out' sense of community. I think I heard someone say that there are nearly 100,000 podcasts total (how's that for citing references?), but I'll be fair and estimate the total number of podcasts at a conservative 50,000. That amounts to millions of hours of free 'entertainment'.

The problem is most of it sucks. Chances are, if you're reading this, and you have a show, it's horrible.

"But Patrick, you don't know me or my show. How can you possibly know it's horrible?"

I'm just using the law of averages. When it comes to podcasts, finding something you can tolerate is almost impossible. In a sea of awful-to-mediocre audio, chances are you're going to come up disappointed time after time.

Here's a fun experiment: Browse to any category in your favorite directory for podcasts, and go down to the number six-rated show. That show you just found – the sixth best rated show in its category – is virtually unlistenable. I'm willing to bet

money on it. It doesn't matter if it's an accomplished businessman recommending stocks, or a bored housewife telling you how to get your kids to sleep faster. The bottom line it's a dry and boring experience, usually with only one person and a cacophony of background noise and distractions.

I'm sick of hearing about how podcasting is for everyone, how it gives us all a voice.

"Hell – anyone with a computer and a microphone can have a show!"

No. They can't. There's a reason most people didn't have a voice before podcasting, and there's a reason you shouldn't now. Just because you CAN put out a recording about your latest mutton stew recipe doesn't mean you should.

I don't expect everyone to have some hugely successful show with tens of thousands of listeners. We can't all be me. I know that. It would be unfair of me to assume you could produce a show as well as I can or as popular. I'm one-of-a-kind, folks.

But there are some tips I can give you. If you're willing to listen, and not just write me off as some bag of hot air that gets off putting you and your silly excuse for a show down, I think you'll gain something from this. And if you don't, you can continue down the meaningless path you're currently on, and I will be none the wiser.

If you're still reading, you're either willing to learn or you just want some more talking points for the angry letter you're going to pen about me the minute I wrap this up. Regardless, I've just proven my first tip works:

SAY SOMETHING INTERESTING. It doesn't have to be earth-shattering. Just make it entertaining at the least. Talk about a book or movie. Talk about a hobby or experience. Talk about anything besides your 19 cats and excessively offensive body odor. It doesn't matter if people listen because they love you or hate you, as long as they listen. No one cares if you're a trucker and you podcast from stops along your trip. That's boring. Think what you want, but I'm telling you – it's boring. Drive your truck off an embankment and maybe I'll tune in. A recording of you watering your plants is boring. You fishing for something to talk about it boring. Your kids are boring. Unless you're a compelling person (and you aren't), you can't make the mundane entertaining. It's just mundane. So plan your show before you start, and talk about something interesting to your audience.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE. Your stupid friends and family are sheep. They aren't going to give you an honest opinion about your show. If you're not getting a wide

variety of feedback on your show, you have a boring show with little to no audience other than the seven people you IMed the link to this morning. They told me to tell you that they hate you and your stupid show, and if they thought you wouldn't commit suicide moments later, they'd block you from ever contacting them again. If you've been doing your show for any substantial amount of time and aren't constantly seeing listener growth (both in quantity and quality), then stop or retool your show. If the only people that listen are your family or your stupid friends and neighbors, then stop podcasting and pick up a phone. You don't need an RSS feed to talk to them.

BE CONSISTENT. I've seen shows release one show a week, one show a month, and one show a quarter. I've seen shows release three this week, four next month, and then nothing for three months. What the hell are you doing? Figure it out. No one has time for your flaky personality in real life, and we sure as hell aren't going to put up with it on the internet. The most successful shows are consistent in quality and scheduling. I even respect some of these silly Harry Potter podcasts (as much as I can respect adults who enjoy reading about pre-pubescent boys riding poles and casting spells) because they are constantly rated high and release shows that are very consistent. Do yourself a favor and commit to putting out a show regularly or quit. In fact, just do me a favor and quit – odds are your show really is worthless.

No doubt some of this is hard to swallow. If you're mad at me right now, it's because this hits a little close to home for you. I get it. Who am I to tell you what to do and how? You're an adult. You'll do what you want.

You're right. Your show is just fine how it is.

Patrick Melton
<http://www.nobodylikesonions.com>



YOUR PODCAST IS PROBABLY JUST FINE

TEXT BY JUDITH HUTCHINSON, M.D.

There are a lot of podcasts out there. A lot. If you are looking for something that entertains or informs you, you're probably going to have to do a lot of digging to find what you're looking for.

ARE YOU LOOKING for the same things I am? On some levels, yes. You want a podcast that speaks to you, and provides some kind of connection with the podcaster. You want a podcast that has reasonable quality and doesn't make you wince every time you hear a word that starts with the letter "P". You also want something that the traditional media isn't providing.

Podcasts appeal to niche audiences. It doesn't take much research to discover that there are a lot of niches out there. Shows about knitting are not likely to be embraced by bodybuilders, but knitters seem to like them. Those knitters are not likely to want to tune into the latest news about competitive bodybuilding. A show devoted to pangolins - scaly anteaters - isn't likely to garner any audience at all. That's how podcasting works. We take what we want and leave the rest behind.

If you're a podcaster, you're most likely producing your show as a hobby. Sure, there are a few folks making a living at podcasting, but not many of us. (I'm keeping my day job!) It's like golf. There are a few professional golfers who make their living hitting a little white ball into a hole. There are millions of people who spend their weekends doing the same thing. Does that fact that the amateur golfers will never be able to compete with Tiger Woods preclude them from enjoying the sport? Should we take away their clubs and ban them from golf courses because they can't play as well as the professionals? Of course not.

WHY ARE YOU PODCASTING? If you think it's the way to a life of fame and riches, then you are probably going to be disappointed. Do you think you have something of value to share? Even if only a handful of people agrees that you do, then your effort is worthwhile.

WHAT ARE YOU GETTING OUT OF IT? Does your show serve as a creative outlet for you? Does it let you vent your frustrations, or connect with like-minded individuals? Does it give you a sense of accomplishment? If it doesn't give you something, you won't be doing it for long. Whatever you get out of it is important to you, and that's what matters.

DO YOU ENJOY YOUR HOBBY? If so, then far be it from me, or anyone else, to tell you not to do it. I'm not going to walk onto my local golf course and start telling amateur golfers to go home. Likewise, I'm not going to tell any podcaster to stop creating content. I don't have to listen to anything that I don't like, and neither do you.

Podcasting is not a competition. There is room for everybody. Podcast what you want, when you want. If poor quality or inconsistent production schedules cost you listeners, then that's the price you pay. Some shows will be popular, and others won't, but that doesn't make them any less valuable.

Enough of this. ['This Week in Pangolins'](#) has just published another episode, and I can't get enough of those African scaly anteater hijinks.

Judith Hutchinson, M.D. <http://www.medicalminutepodcast.com>

NEXTIER BANK PODCASTING CASE STUDY

TEXT BY MARK JULIANO

image: NexTier

NEXTIER IS A regional bank with 15 community branches north of Pittsburgh, a private bank in Radnor, Pennsylvania, and a loan production office in Scottsdale, Arizona. The bank caters to both small-to-medium sized businesses as well as consumers. They have been in business for over 128 years, with deep roots in the community. With respect to podcasting, it has changed the way they do marketing.

“We think we’re different in our approach to a business owner and his business,” says Patty Perhacs, Jr. Vice President and Marketing Director with NexTier.

“Anyone who has been called on by a bank probably has a similar experience: The banker comes in, he sits down, introduces himself, and then starts talking about rates, and products, and services, and basically says to the business owner - What are you paying? We’ll see if we can beat your rates.”

“NexTier is different, and our approach is unique in that we are very consultative. We do research and spend time understanding what’s going on in their business today and the challenges they face. We work with our experts from our various business lines, to really put together a comprehensive solution for that particular business owner’s needs.”

Both NexTier and Patty can certainly be considered early pioneers of corporate podcasting. Specifically, Patty has been the podcasting champion within the bank, and early on she recognized the rapid growth of iPods, MP3 players, and iTunes, and saw the opportunity for podcasting as a new medium to convey its marketing messages and differentiate the bank. “As you know, it’s really tough out there. We at NexTier pride ourselves on our innovation. I was very excited to



image: NexTier

embrace this new medium throughout our enterprise.”

The bank’s consultative approach is evidenced in their use of podcasting, which began in January

2007. Currently, NexTier uses podcasting primarily as an educational tool and in turn uses the educational tool for marketing.

Before podcasting, NexTier held an in-person seminar-style Business Learning Series. The bank’s employees would come together with private business owners to discuss relevant topics. “Initially, we thought it would be great to have a recording of the event for all those people who couldn’t attend. We could push out an email of the podcast to customers and prospects.” Recording of events is typical as an initial usage of podcasting by companies, and it is recommended because of its relative simplicity.

Subsequently, NexTier began doing live podcasting (talkcasting) using services provided by TalkShoe (www.talkshoe.com). The bank holds a live podcast on the internet once a month, where online participants can talk and text-chat with bank experts. TalkShoe enables the podcast host to control the conversation via muting, see-who’s-talking indication, and request-to-talk

queuing. The online sessions are also broadcast live (streamed), and recorded as a podcast.

“Talkcasting is just great because it's live, and it can be interactive and what's even nicer, you have something to show for your time that you can share with other business owners and customers,” says Patty.

NexTier has also begun to build an online podcast and resource library, where visitors will be able to select different podcast topics off the shelf. “We're really excited about the library. Instead of having white papers, we'll have podcasts.”

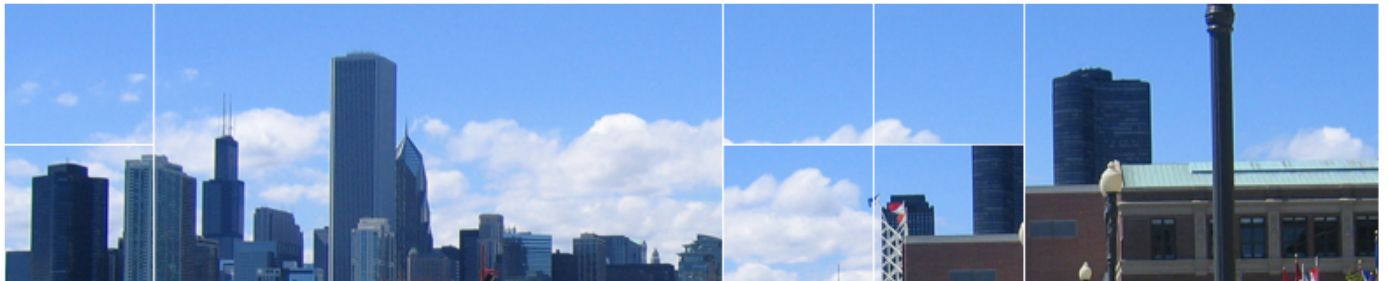


image: NexTier

So what has NexTier gained from their podcasting endeavors? “I'll tell you what. We've turned a lot of heads using podcasting,” comments Patty. “We impressed people, and they said, ‘Wow, look at this! They're a small community bank, and look at the types of things they're doing. Who is this NexTier and how can they help me?’”

“Podcasting and educating gives us a lot more credibility. I think it also helps us build our brand. I'm just finding that there are more and more ways to utilize it. There are early adopter customers out there. They're innovators. They're the kind of people that can appreciate what NexTier can do for them, so it's really a win-win for everybody.”

NexTier weaves podcasting into the fabric of their overall marketing strategy to send a consistent message. For example, they promote their podcasts and talkcasts through their traditional advertising, direct mail and personal selling, which

sends people to their website to hear what their experts have to say. Similarly, their podcasts point people back to their website.

Asked about what advice she'd give other companies venturing into podcasting, Patty says that the company should have someone act in the role of ‘product champion’ when introducing a new technology like podcasting. “I tell you, I was a little apprehensive, although I was the one leading the charge and selling it throughout the company. I needed to get everyone on board, because ultimately, they'd be the ones doing the podcasts.”

Patty also says that while podcasting is a relatively new technology, in many ways, it's just like any other marketing vehicle. “You just have to think through what it is you have to say, and what's your message. How do you want to help your customers or prospects?” For NexTier and other corporate users, it comes down to asking the classic marketing questions: Who's your target audience? What are your company's benefits? What's your message? And so forth.

Finally, Patty says, “Go to our website, www.thebank.com, and listen to our recorded podcasts. And jump in on our live TalkShoe talkcasts. That's the easiest way to play with it.” All-in-all, it's clear that NexTier has had a good experience with podcasting and highly recommends that other companies start to explore the technology.

NexTier
<http://www.thebank.com>
 Mark Juliano
<http://www.talkshoe.com>

REVEAL YOURSELF

TEXT BY MARILYN MADSEN & GRANT MASON

EACH MONTH WE ask an artist to supply their answers to a scientifically selected set of questions (well, OK – we lied – they were selected by resident PUM boffins Grant Mason and Marilyn Madsen), in the hope that their responses cast a little more light on what makes them tick...

AMESTORY

WHO ARE YOU?

Mike Russell

WHAT DO YOU DO?

I play guitar and sing in Amestory

HOW LONG HAVE YOU DONE IT?

I began writing songs about 5 years ago

DO YOU HAVE A HIDDEN TALENT?

googling things

STEREO OR IPOD?

Stereo for sure. I can go without a song while I'm in the supermarket

WHAT RINGTONE IS ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE?

Vibrate!

FAVOURITE ARTIST?

Pink Floyd

FAVOURITE ALBUM?

Pet Sounds

FAVOURITE TRACK?

There Is a Light That Never Goes Out, by The Smiths.

BIGGEST INFLUENCE?

Pink Floyd

WHAT ALBUM DO YOU WISH YOU'D NEVER BOUGHT?

Mariah Carey's "Butterfly."



photo courtesy Amestory's MySpace

MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

My 83' Volvo station wagon

MOST DOG-EARED BOOK?

Mad Cowboy by Howard Lyman. I get made fun of for eating healthy. That's like making fun of someone for getting A's in school.

BRAND OF COFFEE?

The cheapest stuff

FOOD YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT?

Burritos!

FAVOURITE LABOUR-SAVING DEVICE?

I call it being single

WHAT MOTTO DO YOU LIVE BY?

The Golden Rule

WHO IS YOUR FICTIONAL HERO OR HEROINE?

Larry David.

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU WERE EVER GIVEN?

Think for yourself.

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS OR FAME AND FORTUNE?

Health and happiness

<http://www.myspace.com/amestory>

<http://www.amestory.com>

LETTERS TO PUM

- DEAR PODCAST USER MAGAZINE

In the commentary, Free Speech in Humor: America's New Slippery Slope (PUM # 18, July 2007, p.39-41), Patrick Melton uses the aspects of completely different situations to justify his conclusion that he has the right to offend me. This loose knit string of seemingly common sense arguments comes unraveled when one comes to realize the situations he is trying to bring together have nothing to do with one another.

His premise begins with a lament for the departure of Don Imus. As we all know, Mr. Imus was given his walking papers when he referred to a group of women athletes who were engaged in their attempt to gain the highest achievement in their sport, a bunch of whores, and yes, he was sure to toss a racial epithet into the mix. The brunt of Patrick's rant is to blame the offended and feels that weaving the names of the typical suspects who take advantage of these situations into his argument gives it an air of logic.

Patrick is just a bit younger than I, so I would like the opportunity to some day sit down with him and explain a little history. I remember segregation, I remember the assassination of Martin Luther King, I remember finding out that before the Civil Rights Act became law it would have been illegal for our family to sell our house to someone who was black. These were not good times for everyone, and many people who lived through the 60s worked hard to try to make this country free for everyone.

The 60s did not stop the hate and the jokes at the expense of these people, but over time we have grown and come to realize that these are not the things a civilized society tolerates. This is why racist comments are no longer an acceptable part of American life. If people appear to be 'overly sensitive' to racism, then this is the reason.

When we go back to Mr. Imus's remarks, we need to understand why he was dismissed. He no longer has his radio show because of the reaction to his racist comments. Listeners complained to the station and took the most effective course of action, which was to complain to the advertisers. Without customers for the advertisers, there are no advertisers for the show and no show for the listeners. That's free speech in action - take your voice to the location where it will find the most power.

However, it appears that Patrick's real problem is one he spends quite a bit of time complaining about - the fact that he expected GoDaddy to sponsor his show and they declined. By his words he appears to feel that the sponsorship was his right, and those rights were abused by the company's decision (apparently because they felt that his podcast was insensitive, due to a particular episode brought to their attention). Is this really a free speech issue? Of course not. Nobody is telling Patrick that he cannot say whatever he wishes on his podcast, but GoDaddy is exercising their right to decide who they will sponsor.

Continued...

LETTERS TO PUM

- DEAR PODCAST USER MAGAZINE

Continued...

As Patrick mentioned, perhaps this was just as well, since the incident resulted in his show gaining listeners. This is not an unknown situation; after all, Howard Stern recovered nicely after being fired from his job in Washington, DC. (I remember the incident - following an airliner crashing just after takeoff, he called the carrier while on air to ask if they would be scheduling regular flights from the Washington National Airport to the 14th Street Bridge, which the plane had hit.)

Patrick's misunderstanding of free speech issues absolutely confuses the issues. Don Imus was employed at the pleasure of his employer, and when his employer saw that he was more of a liability than an asset, then his employment ended. Mr. Imus can stand on a soap box on any street corner (or for that matter, on the stage of any comedy club that will let him - although I know of at least one comedy club that will not employ Michael Richards) and say the very things he said that got him fired. That is free speech. Patrick has the right to say anything he wishes on his podcast. That is also free speech. If this were not the case, then I would be willing to join hands with Patrick and fight for these liberties. However, this is not a free speech issue, and his 'concern' has no relevance to podcasters.

Cheers -

George L Smyth

First off, great issue! The formatting and images look great and the content is strong.

I especially concur with Mr. Spence's position of "working live" (PUM # 17, June 2007, pp. 23-24). When my show--Radio Chaos (<http://radiochaos.org/rcpc.xml>) first went live, we were doing multiple takes and tons of editing. It took 10 hours just to piece an hour-long show together. Responses to clips were entirely "canned" and this was dreadfully obvious.

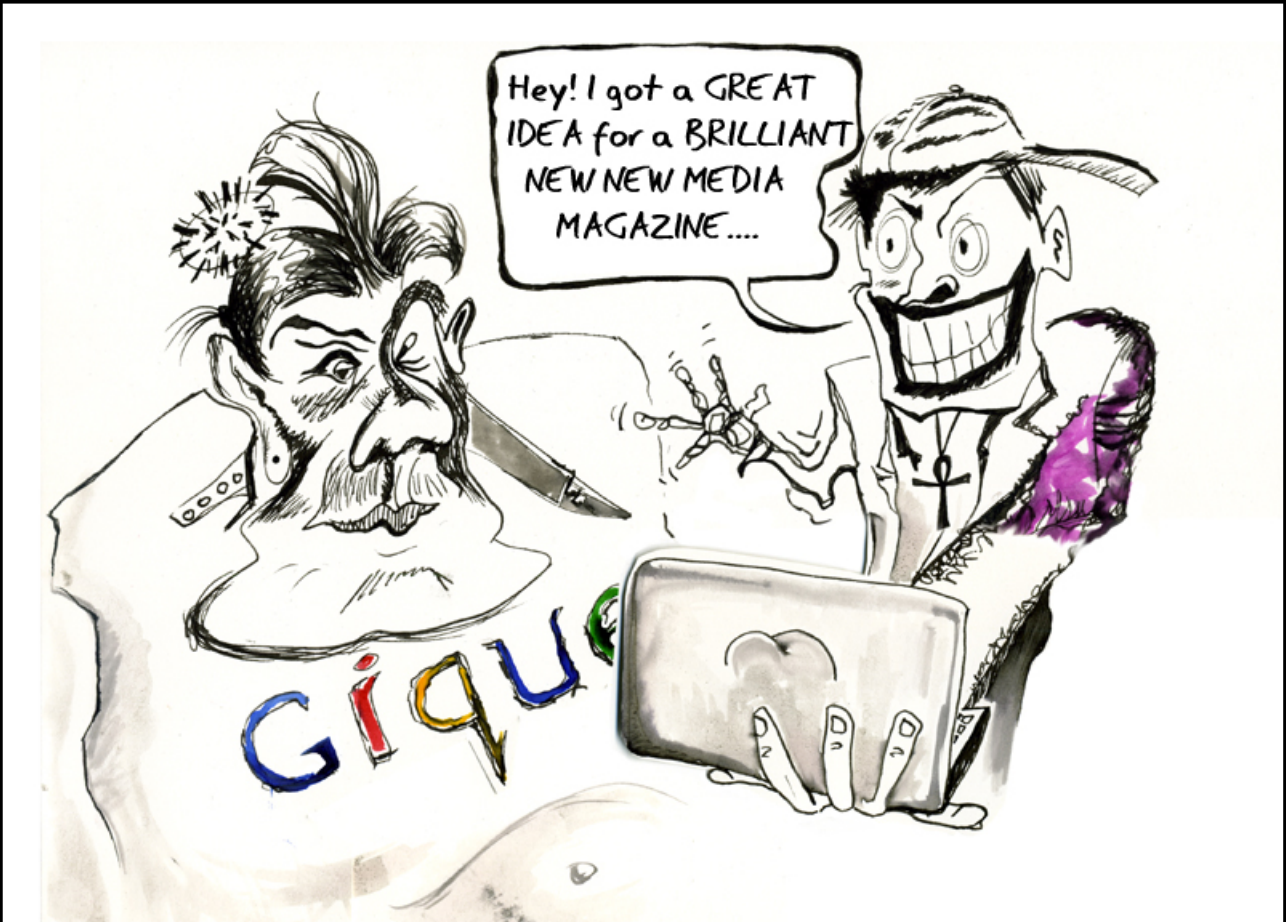
So I made the executive decision that for good or bad, once the record button was pressed, we worked just like the traditional radio guys--mistakes included.

As a result, we have become better podcasters--or, as my associate producer call us, "broadcasters." He is right, we may not be "mainstream" but we are "broadcasters." Ultimately, Ewan is dead on--the passion sells the show while the pressure of working live hones one's skills.

Great article!

NOLA Trey
Radio Chaos Podcast
<http://radiochaos.org>

WEDGE 2.0 BY DFRW <http://deanwhitbread.com>



Podcast User Magazine Issue 3 April 2006

- What is an mp3?
- The Lance Anderson Podcast Experiment
- The future of podcasting and radio broadcasting
- Which podcasts should be on your subscription list?

PLUS

- 10 steps to cheap podcasting
- Podcaster accessibility
- Hate iTunes? Try Juice!
- Podshow bashing
- In-depth product reviews

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www.podcastusermagazine.com

Podcast User Magazine Issue 4 May 2006

FACE YOUR AUDIENCE? GRANT MASON DID

Also this issue:

- 'Club soda or tonic?': which mixer?
- Richard Vobes: a podcaster abroad
- Pop Chicks
- Plus all the usual news and reviews

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- Earning - living through podcasting
- Sourcing Podsafe Music
- Podcast Reviews

Win! SE Electronics Reflexion Filter

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Get your voice heard!

- setting up your podcast studio part 2
- podcasting: the Australian way
- Garageband 3

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Is one ever really enough?

- Inside Roger Small's Studio
- Global Voices of India
- Is One Podcast Ever Enough?

No iPod? We show you how to get your podcasts

Issue 8 Sept 2006

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PUM is going to the Expo!

Also in this issue:

- Amber MacArthur
- Chuck Tomasi
- LA Podcasters
- Skinny White Boy
- and Ask Auntie PUM

Oct 2006 Issue 9

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Podcast User Magazine Issue 10 Nov 2006

Come together: Why it's good to meet

Reports from

- The Expo
- PodCamp
- Preview of PodcastCon UK

You should be here

Issue 10 Nov 2006

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Podcast User Magazine Issue 11 December 2006

What is it? Defining Podcasting

Also:

- Friends in Tech, Dr Floyd,
- Quirky Podcasts, Reviews and much more!

Issue 11 December 2006

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Podcast User Magazine

What podcasting needs to become in 2007

PLUS

- Podcasting in Japan
- Four Eyed Monsters
- Talkshoe
- Zune Gloom
- ID3 tags

January 2007 Issue 12

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Podcast User Magazine Issue 13 Feb 2007

Dan Klass

Inside the Bitterest Pill

Plus:

- Why Making Money Is Essential!
- Podcasting in Scandinavia
- Recording Skype/Googletalk
- Political podcasting

Issue 13 Feb 2007

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- Chicago Bites!
- & Podcasting in Germany

Plus podcast & hardware reviews

This month:

- Naked Vobes
- Podcamp
- Squeezing the most from Juice
- Flash Players

The Hollywood Podcast

A guy. A scooter. A dream.

Issue 14 March 2007

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podcast user magazine Issue 15 April 2007

Quittin' the day job...

It's Keith and the Girl!

This month:

- Hayden Black of Goodnight Burbank
- Scott Williams of The Nightnurse Show
- OCP: One Click Players
- Orange County Podcasters

PLUS

Shownotes & RSS - should we ditch them?

Issue 15 April 2007

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"Don't mention the John Cleese Podcast!"

plus:

- Hola! Janet takes us to Spain
- Cuddle up with Cush
- Audacity Masterclass
- "It's not radio!"
- Mugglecast
- Vobes is Out of Sync

New Columnists: Julien Smith & Ewan Spence

Issue 16 May 2007

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With Elsie Estobar

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Issue 18 July 2007

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Brief Description
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MORE NEWS FROM PUM

NEWS EDITOR: JOHN BUCKLEY

The BBC has released a beta version of its iPlayer software, which allows UK TV licence payers using Windows to "catch-up" on BBC television shows from the previous week, for free. Unfortunately, the application only works on Windows XP. This has led to a flood of complaints from disgruntled Vista, Linux and Mac users and an e-petition with 12,000 signatures being delivered to 10 Downing Street.

A BBC spokesman stated that a Mcc compatible version is due this autumn. In the meantime XP users may sign up at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayerbeta/> to receive an invitation to join the beta program.

Social networking application Facebook has added support for audio and video posts in the Facebook wall this month. The application entitled DivShare app allows videos, MP3s, images and any other file to be attached to a friends wall with a few simple clicks. Visit <http://apps.facebook.com/divshare> for more details.

network channels that established niche audiences to consumer brands.

Sadly, the notable entry of Unsigned UK band Koopa into the Top 40 Singles Chart in June, managed to escape largely unnoticed from last months edition of PUM. The song succeed partly thanks to a promotional campaign utilising the coordinated efforts of UK Podcasters.

Martin Devaughn - better known to many readers of this magazine as 'Green Dragon' and the man who introduced Koopa to to podcasting was quoted as saying: "I think this is a big achievement, charting not just in iTunes, but in a country's national chart. It's directly led to the band supporting INXS this Thursday 21st June at the Hammersmith Apollo in London."

The band quoted on their website said: "A massive thank-you to everyone who bought our latest single 'The One off Song For Summer'. As some of you may be aware, it charted at number 21 in the Official UK Top 40 and Number 15 in the Official UK Download Chart"

More info from: <http://koopatheband.com/>

NEXT MONTH IN PUM

We gear up for the New Media Expo, and we bring you more from your favourite writers. And more!



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