THE WIND DOWN: A PARTIALLY WRITTEN EXPLANATION OF AN AUDIO

EXPERIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

Podcasting started in 2008 with the introduction of it on the iPod for Apple. Since

then it has grown to an industry full of almost 1 million different podcasts circulating on

different streaming platforms. Podcasting has become a fast-growing industry that has

allowed many different people to allow their voices to be heard across the world.

Through a hands-on approach, I dove into the world of podcasting to see what it was that

people were searching for by posting these audio-only bits of entertainment. I am

producing several episodes of a variety-style podcast with a co-host. These episodes

combined with the experiences I have had while creating them have made for an

interesting investigation into this business. Podcasting allows for the host to have real

conversations with or without people and gives the audience an experience that normally

only sitting and talking with someone could give you.

I. Research and Production

My thesis journey began with a thought about my peers around me and their peaking interest in a particular piece of entertainment, podcasts. Before coming to college I had never listened to or really heard of any podcasts that had audiences large enough to be relevant. However, through my experience I began to see that there were a multitude of popular podcasts. All of them ranging from broad topics to the most niche. I still sat in amazement of what it was that made these pieces of audio only experiences worth sitting and listening to for an episodes length. As it came time to picking my thesis topic within HON 4390A I pondered following my major and doing something theatrical or allowing myself to really explore this new form of entertainment that I had began to enjoy myself. Thankfully I made the correct decision and began my research into what made people enjoy podcasts and what made them so popular. The research began with a daunting number around 900,000 podcasts were already in circulation. This number was steadily growing as the surge of COVID 19 was hitting the United States. This pandemic gave people the time to be at home and the opportunity to create something like a podcast. The research also revealed to me the keen since of audience and hosts that podcasts have created. Though the host never interacts with the audience directly it is important that they maintain the relationship that they have, keeping on schedule, maintaining bits, and keeping the flow consistent to keep those audience members coming back. This relationship seems to be a big reason why people continue to come back. Not only does the audience feel something with the host but they also can do it anywhere. Podcasts are the ultimate travel tool. It doesn't matter where you are or what you are doing as long as you have a device with podcasts on it you can enjoy them. Things like doing the laundry,

dishes, homework, and working retail all became a bit more interesting because you could bring a podcast with you and basically have a conversation with someone who wasn't in the same room as you. All of this research was crucial in developing what would become my full thesis, producing my own podcast. Though the number of podcasts continues to grow to this day I became increasingly interested in how a podcast host does it all. With the research in mind and some help from my fellow peers and advisors I began the pre-production phase. I started with the idea of having several different podcasts episodes under an umbrella podcast. These episodes would explore the different genres of podcasting and show just how broad and niche podcasts can become. I researched and spent several hours listening to podcasts and categorizing them and finding out what would be the best routes for my personal episodes to go. After narrowing down my five different categories and making mock up scripts or episode guides I submitted my final portfolio in HON 4390A proud of the work I had done and ready to make these five different genre episodes.

   Coming into the new semester and looking back on the work I had already done, something didn't feel right. Though I was excited to get to explore all kinds of podcasts I didn't like that my podcast wouldn't have its own voice, but rather many different voices that didn't really seem to sing the same tune. As I began talks with my advisor Jordan Morille he informed me of a new type of genre I should look into, the variety show. What this genre would allow me to do is not only explore the different types of podcasts through different "bits" each episode but it allowed my podcast to now finally have its own voice. With this new idea in my head I went to work creating episode guides for five different episodes with a sprinkling of each of the previous works within them. It was

exciting to get to talk them over and edit them with Morille. With the completion of these guides there was only one thing left to do for this all to be a success. I had to find a co-host and get into the actual production of the episodes. I thought for a while about who I wanted to co-host with me, asking several friends and colleagues if they are interested. After a thorough search it came to me quite clear. My partner and I had long discussed the idea of a podcast and this seemed like the perfect opportunity to allow her and I to try something like this together. Thankfully it worked out well and the first episode recording went well. We sat next to each other on our apartment couch and recording the audio for episode one. The flow felt nice and we just sat and had a conversation which seemed to work best for the type of podcast we were going with. All seemed well, until we got into the editing booth. No massive issues were found but because we were sitting right next to each other a lot of echo could be heard in both audio tracks from each other talking close to the others microphone. I edited the episode as well as I could and uploaded it to YouTube sending the link to Morille for comments. The episode unfortunately could not be fixed entirely but is uploaded and sounds fairly decent for the issues that we encountered. Though it seemed a setback, the audio issues came as a blessing in disguise that allowed us to reevaluate how we recorded the podcast so we didn't have these issues again. For the second episode we set up in different areas of the house and had a Zoom call with each other. This fixed the audio issues and the second episode sounds much better than the first.

Through this experience I have learned a variety of things about not only podcasting but how to keep things consistent and continue to try and grow an audience. Though only two episodes are released, my partner and I plan to continue this podcast

into our future endeavors. Hopefully we can do multiple seasons and even catch up on old episodes. We have already been getting questions about what happened to the shrimp tails in episode one. Who knows, one day *The Wind Down* could have its place in the podcast hall of fame, we just have to keep talking to find out.