

## SO YOU WANNA START A PODCAST

Podcasting is becoming an increasingly popular medium. And now in this time of isolation even moreso. Podcasting doesn't need to require other people in close proximity or much equipment. But before you jump in your closet (yes that is kind of where everyone is recording right now) and hit record on your zoom (if you are gonna do a podcast that is probably what you'll be using). Let's talk about how to get started.

### THINK ABOUT

**What kind of podcasts do you listen to and like?** (Interview? Scripted? Investigative? Research based?) Think about why you like them and what elements you appreciate (music, sound design, sound quality, length).

**What do you wanna make and why?** Is there something that exists that is similar to what you are doing? What makes what you want to do different?

**The shape of the thing. Is it one season or many?** How many episodes do you want to do per season? If it is one season podcast what is the narrative arc of the thing? Can you sketch it out?

**Is this a solo podcast or do you want or have a partner in mind?** How do you see that dynamic playing out and what is the work balance?

**All the other stuff.** How much time do you want to put into it things like episode resources, blogs, and additional web content. It doesn't have to be a lot, some podcasts just have really great instagram accounts but additional content can help drive listeners to your pod.

**Who is this for?** Who is your intended audience? What is the age range? (This becomes important when you consider tone and strong language.)

### CREATING THE STORY OR WORLD

**Scripting** If you are using a script (like we do for Secret Life of Canada) think about the essential elements and facts you want to convey. Note them and note how you want to say them. Script it but when you record be ready to let the script go to give a more natural delivery.

**Sounds** If you are doing something investigative or dramatic think about background sounds. What sounds can you get to illustrate your story? A car door closing, footsteps, phone rings. The quality of the sound can help to tell the story. Sometimes hearing the set up can be a nice way to get to feel like you are inside the podcast.

## TIPS AND TRICKS

**Equipment** Most podcasts use a H4N4 or Zoom mic. They are standard for a lot of podcasts. Inexpensive and rentable from many places they are pretty easy to use and get used to. Getting a half decent mic from is also advisable but it doesn't have to be anything fancy. A SM58 is also rentable and pretty standard.

**Getting the Tape** In my opinion more tape isn't always better. Someone has to go through that and it can make your life hard getting through it all. Identify what tape you want but also be ready to shift what you think the story needs. Get your discoveries on tape. I love when we hear moments of discovery in podcasts. Those moments are so so good.

**Interviews** There are any number of ways to tape interviews. Skype, apps, whatsapp, and google. In the past I have used Tape a Call which was fine but the quality can be tricky. Double ending is a great way to get good quality tape. This is when you talk to someone over say google and then have them record themselves with their smartphone in a voice record app. They then send you the file over email and you can splice that audio in. And always have people introduce themselves that way you won't mistake their name, how it is said or any other identifiers that are important to them.

**Values** What is important to you? Think about what kinds of values you want to embed into your work. Kindness? Bravery? Respect? Keep track of that and it will keep you on track.

**Mean People** The internet is a big open space. People can be jerks. Be ready for that and remember what your values are. Let the jerks be jerks and move through it. As my mentor Yvette says, "If you made everyone happy you probably wouldn't be doing it right."

## PITCHING

My only advice for pitching is this. Get a few episodes under your belt and have an idea of where you are going. People wanna know what it is and how it sounds.

## ACTIVITY

Come up with an idea for a podcast and answer the following questions.

- What is the concept?
- Is it solo? Or multiple hosts?
- Why do you wanna make it and why is podcasting the right medium?
- Who is the audience?
- How many episodes do you think it is?
- What makes it unique or interesting?
- What would the cover art look like?
- How often would you want to release it?