

Managing Director's report
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In 2015, an idea started bouncing around my head to start a community organization centered around the production of podcasts. I was fresh off the Gzowski internship at CBC and ready to put my newly acquired knowledge to practice.

I started dabbling in podcasting by putting my Trent Radio show online. I had been volunteering and programming at their broadcast facility for a few years. The practical, on-the-job experience that I was getting at Trent Radio plus the formal training I got at CBC Radio meant that I was making content that I was starting to feel really proud of.

I was making a radio show called Sounds Like Life, where I collected environmental sound recordings and live on the air I would mix them with music and I would reflect on what I was thinking when I collected the tape. It was an audio diary and it was starting to sound pretty good. So I thought, "Why not turn that into a podcast?"

What I found when I started down this path was that podcasting can be expensive, confusing, and a lonely endeavour.

You're working by yourself... trying to muddle through various webpages about how RSS feeds work, and finding that the options available through businesses like Libsyn or Soundcloud were convoluted and didn't let me do what I wanted to do.

So I put in the legwork and figured out exactly what it takes to podcast. And decided to do it myself.

I spoke to a couple people around Peterborough to see if something like PIP would be possible, or even just helpful for potential podcasters. I put up a poster in the Trent Radio kitchen to see if folks would come out to an evening to talk about the idea. It was a small group but it was validating for me to see that there were enough folks who were already podcasting or interested in podcasting to pursue this.

After that first meeting in December 2015, I sat on the idea for a few months, until summer 2016.

That July, Jeff and I ran PIP's first podcast skills workshop. It was a big moment for PIP as we got a pretty good group of interested people out. We went over what a podcast is, what works well in the medium, and how to achieve your goals. When they left at the end of the day, they said they'd learned a lot.

Later on in the summer, I rallied more of Jeff's help to get the website started. Jeff debugged and troubleshooted the website all summer until we had something we were reasonably sure could achieve our goals.

All we needed next was a podcaster. And through serendipity I was connected with Chanty Lemieux who does the Muses and Stuff podcast. Chanty became our first podcasting member and has devoted truly admirable levels of effort into her program ever since.

With Chanty all set up, I started to recruit more members. Choose Your Own Adventure joined up. I put up Sounds Like Life. Jeff produced Secret Admirer. And we were steadily growing from there. By the end of 2016 we had nine PIP members.

Coming into 2017, workshops were a big part of our operations. By far, our Podcasting 101 workshop has been the most popular and the biggest draw for participants. We cover a lot of ground in those workshops and try to give them hands-on experience that they can take with them.

Last year, we also tried intermediate and advanced skills workshops. Rob Hailman conducted an Audio Mixing and Mastering workshop in October. And Jeff and I ran a Home Studio workshop. These have proven to be hard to sell. Our Home Studio workshop only had one participant, and the Mixing and Mastering workshop had none. But we were able to try out live streaming on Facebook which generated some interest.

The Podcasting 101 workshop has proven to be far and away our most successful endeavour, and it's drawing attention from groups that would like us to teach their members how to podcast. We have some exciting partnerships coming up in 2018, with Trent University and A Way Home shelter, among others.

It's community partnerships that make PIP a distinctly Peterborough project. I think in a bigger city we'd be smaller and far harder to notice. But in a place like Peterborough we're able to connect with people from all walks of life and create a really interestingly heterogenous group of podcasters.

It also means we can make connections with other organizations that can help a smaller organization like us out.

We've been supported wholeheartedly by Trent Radio staff — John Muir and Mauricio especially. The connection between the two organizations should be fairly obvious... radio makes for good podcasts and vice versa. But they've gone out of their way to make connections between radio producers and podcasters.

Electric City Culture Council has also been fantastic patron of PIP. It started when a few of their staff attended a Podcasting 101 workshop, and since then they have hired PIP to record several events and podcast them, and they've started their own podcast: The Electric City Culturecast.

Su Ditta was also instrumental in giving me some advice which helped us secure a \$700 City of Peterborough Project grant in 2017. That project is launching in March of this year, and it will be a speaker series called PTBO Talks — which will be TED Talk-esque but focus on perspectives about Media, Art and Journalism.

The support for this group has been really touching, and it was really made clear in March 2017, when I put out a call for folks to help in the assembly of a “pre-board” for PIP. I wanted the group to become a not-for-profit and in order to do that we needed some folks to sign on as Directors. This “pre-board” set the stage for the mandate of the organization.

A few months later, I put out a call for applications to join PIP's board of directors. That's when Zara, Kemi, Mauricio, Rob, and Will came on board. They indicated which positions they wanted. Mauricio, President. Zara, Secretary. Will, Treasurer. And the rest willing to take on whatever else needed to get done. At the end of July we had our first board meeting.

Since then, it's been wonderful to have more people to have working on this with me. It's really validating and touching to know that there's at least six other people who believe in PIP and want to see it exist in the future.

Practically, the board has been involved in making sure PIP runs in tip-top shape. We're in the process of creating formal policies for our operations and we hope to have more to show you, the members, later this year.

I want to conclude by thanking you all for your support and your patience as members of PIP. I know we're not the most flashy and high-tech outfit, but I hope we're helpful.