

Holiday Special

Derick: [00:00:50] Happy holidays to everybody out there. Welcome to today's 2020 end-of-year episode. We wanted to do an episode that's a break from the usual and offer the audience a chance to meet some of the people behind the mic, behind the scenes, and hear some common questions that we have and the answers to them, and also hear what's next for the, uh, for our podcast.

Meet the production team and their discoveries

Brandon: [00:01:10] So this should be a shorter episode than usual. I think this will be fun and start this out by meeting the full production team, we wanted to do this in a useful-to-everyone way, and just have everyone share a recent discovery that they've come across, whether it's a streaming content, podcast, book, movie, anything like that. So why don't you start us off, Lisa? What do you do for this podcast? What discoveries do you have to share?

Lisa: Yeah. Hi guys. Uh, it's funny to be on this side of the microphone for this episode, because I'm usually the one on mute during the recordings for all of these. So I'm Lisa Garvey. I run marketing at Forward Networks. I've been at the company for a little over two years now. And, uh, for the podcast I sometimes produce, I sometimes round-up our lucky guests. I work with Aditya and Charlie, the creative team, on kind of everything we do to promote and get the word out. For my item to share, I just read the new Michael J. Fox book called "No time like the future" over the holiday break or the last couple, I guess the holiday breaks still going on, but over the last couple of days, and I was hoping that somebody would give it to me and sure enough, it was under the tree and, uh, I thoroughly enjoyed it. I found it really relatable and it was great. I think it'd be really easy to find for anybody who's looking for it because he's on apparently every radio talk show and broadcast medium promoting it right now. I really liked it.

Brandon: Sounds good. All right. And Charlie, you want to introduce yourself?

Charlie: Hi, I'm Charlie Elliott. This may be the first and last time you hear my voice on this podcast. I maintain the Seeking Truth in Networking.com website and, occasionally put some stuff out on social media and I produce the fake commercials at the end of every episode,

Brandon: Wait, those are fake?

Charlie: Fake. That's a luxury we enjoy by having a sponsor, like Forward Networks. We then get to just have fun with our commercials.

Brandon: Nice. Do you have anything to share with our audience?

Charlie: You know, that prompt I had to open up my books. I'm now reading Action Park: Fast Times, Wild Rides, and the Untold Story of America's Most Dangerous Amusement Park.

Brandon: This park is notorious.

Charlie: Yes. Yes it is. And I am not from the East Coast, but apparently in the tri-state area has some sort of personal story about injuring themselves or being mortified in public at Action Park in New Jersey.

Lisa: Oh, I want to read that.

Charlie: It's pretty good. It's pretty good.

Lisa: Does it make you want to go on rides or not want to go on rides?

Charlie: It makes me glad that I survived my childhood in the eighties, because it's written from the son of the proprietors, point of view. So he's got the inside scoop.

Brandon: It does seem like the most exciting park you can go to, even though you don't know if you're coming back the same.

Charlie: Exactly. You're probably going to be bleeding.

Derick: I believe they made a documentary about that.

Brandon: All right, Aditya. Say hello.

Adi: Hello, my name is Aditya and I do the audio production stuff behind the scenes. So I'm also one of the people that's on mute, during the recordings of all of our podcast episodes and I help our wonderful guests set up their, uh, audio equipment and make sure that they sound as. Nice as they possibly can from an audio quality perspective.

And, my job at Forward Networks broadly is working on videos. So if you've ever been on the Forward Networks YouTube channel, all the videos that you do see on there, I have made the visual elements, and I also do some graphic design stuff - I help make PDFs look nice. The podcast is now the newest medium that I'm getting to play with. so there's a lot of learning, that's happened so far and I'm sure will continue to happen.

And I guess an interesting thing that I've discovered-recently is called crab canon, and I just opened up the Wikipedia article so I can specifically articulate what it is. And a crab canon is an arrangement of two musical lines that are complementary and backwards similar to a palindrome. So it's basically a musical composition that's written to be played forward and then back. And you can probably go on YouTube and listen to various crab canons, the most famous of which is by Bach, I think.

Brandon: Makes me think of a famous piece by Missy Elliott about reversing it. Got a chuckle. I'll take it.

Lisa: Bach and Missy Elliott; all good - one draws inspiration from the other.

Brandon: All right, Derick, do you have anything to share with our guests?

Derick: The last complete book I read was called the Waning Sword and it's, um, it's about. The sword in Beowulf that he uses to slay Grendel's mother, um, that he finds, he slays her with it. And then the sword melts and they just leave with the hilt and he brings it back.

And, um, to Roth Gar, who, who then reads the runes off the hilt and tells them that it's, it has a mysterious past with the giants that preceded them. And, uh, this whole book is written by this genius person that figured out which sword and legendary sword in dramatic mythology, this sword actually is based on visual clues that the author of Beowulf left behind.

So anyways - for me, it was a fascinating book. It's like 200 pages of this dude rationalizing how he knows which sword in dramatic mythology it is.

Lisa: Oh, I read that book too.

Derick: I'm not going to spoil it because I know everyone's intensely interested.

Brandon: I can't think of any other podcasts where you'd get that answer for a pick.

Lisa: Yeah, I'm totally kidding. I did not read that book.

Derick: What about you?

Brandon: I'll share one. I do get to see some Netflix occasionally, and there's a podcast that made the jump from well, podcast to, uh, to video recently called Song Exploder.

Now what's it like to produce a song? I have no idea. I know a lot of people are involved, but I didn't know really what that would look like behind the scenes. So this show, Song Exploder, covers that process in different ways, whether it's an artist like Alicia Keys, interacting with another artist to bring something to life.

Or most recently I watched the one with Trent Reznor talking all about the sound design and how a lot of the choices were fully intentional and actually brought to mind some of the stuff that our recent guest Tom Hollingsworth talked about when delivering a presentation - there's a lot of intentionality to the choices that when they point it out and you go, Oh yeah, I remember feeling that way when this kind of distorted piano came on. And I found that really fascinating recently.

Your Questions...

Derick: [00:07:47] Okay.

Brandon: All right. So we wanted to spend some of this episode answering questions that you probably have, questions that we've been asked, questions that might give a little bit of insight into both the production process, as well as why we're doing this. We'll try to keep it as entertaining as possible.

What's the Genesis for this?

Brandon: So Lisa, start us out - what was the genesis, or put another way? Why another podcast?

Lisa: Well, I think when, when I first thought about this, I didn't think of it in terms of another podcast. I thought, Hey, there aren't that many podcasts in the networking world. And what if we, you know, we have all these brilliant people at Forward. I think it was an opportunity to get some voices out and get some stories out in what can be - and nobody shoot me for saying this, but, um, kind of a dry topic. And I wanted to, to take some interesting people and some interesting hosts and guests and to bring life to a topic that is perceived as a little nerdy.

Derick: Dry?

Lisa: A little, just a little, I don't know.

Derick: Elaborate? Which topic? Which topic are we like? What, what is the topic and your own that's dry and nerdy in your words?

Lisa: What you do. No I think, I mean, there's a, there's a great audience for, you know, kind of the, the interesting stories behind networking. I worked at Netscape in the early days, right. I've watched this industry morph and change, and I love it, and I'm passionate about the early days of Silicon Valley, and, uh, I think getting to tell some of those stories has been amazing, but through the lens of the Seeking Truth In Networking, I think is a really interesting way to do it.

Walking Through the Process: Prep Work

Brandon: [00:09:32] Okay. Uh, well maybe you can walk us through a little bit of the process. So how do we go from an episode in someone's head - a concept - to shipped reality? What are the key elements there?

Lisa: Yeah, sure. So, uh, well Aditya does most of the magic behind the scenes, so he can talk about that part of the production process. But I think in general, we get together, we talk about who might be an interesting guest and we've actually gotten in the habit of asking each guest that we have on the show who else they would like to hear from, which has led to some interesting, additional guests, like we asked, I think, um, we asked Bill Rouse who our audience has not heard from yet, but we said, Bill, who would you like to hear from? And he said, I think you should talk to Bob Metcalfe. And then we talked to Bob Metcalfe and he said, I would like to hear Marc Andreessen's story, you know? And so we've had some of these that sort of beget the next, the next version of the, of the podcast. But I think just kind of putting our heads together and thinking about who are the people that have stories that we'd like to hear? Who are the people who have made a difference who are influential...

Brandon: So thanks Lisa - so we've got an idea for an episode. It's a story that would be compelling. It's in the field of networking in some loose way. What's the next step?

Lisa: Well, and we usually have a kind of a preview call between half hour and an hour kind of uncovering who they are, depending on how well we know them. And kind of outlining some of the topics that we'd like to talk about and what we think would make good material for the listeners who are taking the time to tune into this.

Brandon: Yeah, so we, we want to come prepared. So Derek and I will both read up on the person. We might read papers they've written, we go beyond the Wikipedia article - we at least follow a lot of the links. We try to come into the episode, knowing the questions we want to ask. That way they're not surprised by any of the questions. They know what they've already given a bit of thought to what they're going to say. So there really isn't a script for all this. It's more that it prompt a good discussion.

The Recording

Brandon: [00:11:26] So then, day of, we all arrive. We've all got our recording gear, ready to go. What happens?

Derick: Wait, that's not true. You gotta, we gotta back up a second. Okay. That is, that's an enormous lie. Um, our recording gear is not ready to go and at least half these episodes that we've done. Um, I would, I just want to say for a technical community, With engineering chops, we are still into, I mean, it's like a cliché, but it's so true it's, it's maddening that we are beset with audio issues. It seems like every other episode using the same browsers and the same tools and the same gear. Right. It's incredible how that happens. We need to do a startup just to fix this problem once and for all. And of course, I'm sure that's been said a million times.

Brandon: Well, you bring up a good point about the importance of redundancy in this situation. So, you mentioned it too. We've certainly had examples where the recording, the primary just didn't work for whatever reason, no fault of our own. So we try to have at least two backups. Uh, at least two recordings at all times. And in fact, I'm realizing now we probably should have a zoom recording as well as our local recordings, as well as our Zencaster primary recording to get single track.

Derick: And, um, you know, We three, two, one. And we, uh, and we sort of go at it. We start off, actually, we need our guests to open up a little bit, and this is something we learned. But one of the better decisions we made, - instead of going straight into the meat of the matter. We ask them some fun questions and we try to get them to relax and open up a little bit. And then, uh, so we ask them stuff, like, what is the last book you read? Brandon's favorite question is what is the last thing you changed your mind on? And once we're sort of in a free-flowing mood, we, we, uh, three, two, one, and we go at it.

Brandon: Typically what, one hour to two hours - depends on how much time you can get on someone's calendar. And you also want to leave a bit of extra time, not just for the inevitable setup, but also kind of a debrief cool-down after. But I think there are some radio hosts or podcast hosts that are able to go straight in and without any kind of edits after, get exactly what they want out of it. But I feel like we don't know where the stories are going to go. And it's more interesting if we can ask a few exploratory questions, see what kind of response we get, see where the discussion flows.

Derick: That's my favorite way to do the episode - if it's too scripted then it doesn't, it's off. Right. And sometimes, when you're having this conversation, it's a planned question, right?

And there's some bullets that our guests might've put in the Gdoc, but then they off-the-cuff the answer and they say things we weren't expecting, and it would be criminal not to go down that path and to explore it a little when it's a very interesting answer.

Sometimes it works and sometimes we end up cutting out 15 minutes of audio.

Brandon: Yeah. It's like when we go into an episode, we have a sense of what the story is. We have a sense of what it's going to be, but we haven't spent an hour and a half talking with that guest about exactly what that story really is. And exactly what the details are that are going to matter. It's almost like you're doing it live where you just don't know exactly what the story is going to be - all the key elements of it - but because you find them live, it ends up being more interesting. You get an opportunity to take more tangents.

Process: Post-recording

Brandon: [00:14:39] Hopefully we have audio tracks that are clean from every guest at that point, then it goes to production. How does that work Aditya?

Adi: So Basically what we do is we use a software called Descript and we import all the individual tracks for the presenters and the guests onto Descript and that program will convert the audio files into a transcript. And it's actually very, very good. I think overall, considering that it's something that's happening through AI and machine learning, I suppose.

And the editing of the podcast is usually done by, someone in our team, The editing will happen through the transcript. So it's almost like you're editing a word doc and the changes are being made on the audio files, and several hours get put into that. And that's probably, I think the most important editing procedure of the entire podcast editing process. And once that's done, I take the audio files and I will put the intro and the outro and make any sort of audio enhancements since our guests sometimes don't have optimal audio equipment.

And, we listen to the episodes and there's obviously some last minute changes that always need to be made. One thing that's really interesting about this is just the amount of detail and sort of care that's put into just making sure the content is interesting and cohesive and understandable for, our listeners and yeah, that, that aspect of it is something I did not think coming into this would be as important. And, it turns out to be the most important, so yeah.

Brandon: And I think it's worth diving into a little bit about what kinds of edits we're doing, and in fact, I often find the first time I'm seeing this linked transcript to audio files, which Descript provides. I'm looking at a transcript. It's pretty good. Maybe it has a few errors.

So step one is what is the content you've got in front of you? What did we even cover at all? Step two, I feel like is figuring out what the main chunks are. And then three is figure out which chunks are the most worthwhile to include. So there's kind of like a phase, the hatchet phase, almost like in technical writing. What are the section headings you need? And then there's more of a scalpel phase where you're, you're going in and you're making the finer cuts to make sure every concept comes across the right way to make sure there aren't two sections that feel like they're jammed together and the listener doesn't get a, an audio cue

of a gap to them, okay, this is something that's about to change, or just in some cases where there's some blip in the audio or there's some issue and you want to work around that and make sure it's understandable.

It can take a surprising amount of time though. because if you're editing on the sentence and word level, you're starting with content that's already more than an hour. To listen and pause with pretty much anything. That's going to get you to two or three hours, and then to do that two or three times to get it really good, especially with some of our guests that can convey really deep thoughts, and you want to really pull that essence out, it can take hours.

But, I think that time is worth it because you get a better result. This isn't just show up and hit the record button. This is, try to extract the best story out of the guest, the one that's the most unique from them.

All right. We had a few other questions, for Aditya, how long does it take to get an episode out?

Adi: Uh, it takes as long as you want it to take. I listen to podcasts on YouTube, and they're broadcast live. And then the live recording just remains on the YouTube channel and that's exactly what they end up uploading on iTunes -but because I suppose our podcast is a lot more technical, it's something you kind of have to mold a little bit to make it comprehensible for the listeners.

I think the shortest one is Tom Hollingsworth and that was under two weeks. So that's, that's the shortest one. So that gives you a sense of how long it actually takes. This episode will probably end up being the shortest one.

Derick: That's what I did on my first podcast. We did it live and then just posted it, like no editing. Um, so it's true. I did podcasts in the past, but you know, never like this. This has been crazy for me. This is, uh, a huge learning experience. I feel like we could write a book coming out of this, or at least, uh, you know, one of them free ebook guides.

Brandon: Whatever it is, it would have an animal on the front.

Charlie: I was going to say, what is our O'Reilly animal? We're going to have to think on that.

Derick: Clownfish.

Brandon: It's better than a blob fish.

Derick: Oh, I think it's already taken. I think clownfish is already taken.

Charlie: By whom?

Derick: Don't know. Let...

Charlie: Whom do we have to fight?

Brandon: I think it'd be cool if we had an invertebrate on the cover.

Charlie: Yeah. Exoskeletons are misrepresented in podcast media. It's time we change this culture.

Brandon: Maybe one of those under-sea tube worms that feeds on methane, that's just so out there that you didn't think was possible, just cause it's cool.

Derick: Oh, it's not taken

Charlie: Okay. I see. Okay. So...

The Original Concept and how it's evolved rapidly

Charlie: [00:19:20] What was the original concept behind Seeking Truth in Networking?

Brandon: It's pretty simple. One of us is a network operator, one of us is a software developer; authentic conversations to entertain and inform in the world of computer networking.

That was what we had written down. And that actually hasn't changed too much, but what's really changed is that we evolved from this very much I built this concept which was going to be more about networking companies and technology and people who've been really influential there to a slightly different direction, which is broader, is stories from people who've changed the world through networking, not just the world of networking, but people have changed the world through networking. In fact, uh, the Episode Zero three minute. Uh, I think it does a good job of capturing that. And since recording that Episode Zero, I think it's evolved even further.

I think we've realized how dependent we all are on connectivity and how much it affects our daily lives. And increasingly for us, it's about connectivity and not about networking. And I think there's a difference. Networking is often about technology. Whereas connectivity is about what you do with it.

It's what are you connecting to? Who's connecting. How are they connecting? How is that changing? So now it's compelling stories related to the connectivity that connects us all.

Derick: Some of the consequences of what some of our guests have done and the positive impact that they've had, to me, ended up being far more interesting than sometimes the tech itself.

I kept saying we don't want our show to be, uh, the wax museum of networking. Even though I sort of, a little bit want to, every single time I'm sitting there and I'm talking to someone, like Bill, but, uh, you know, Bill Krause or Bob Metcalf, you want to ask all these, why did you only pick eight bits for this thing? If you, if you hold it in, like I do, you can, you can get a much more interesting conversation for everyone else, uh, out of this person's time. And, and that was one of the things I'm glad we pivoted on was the, um, the, the, the impact of networking rather than necessarily the how.

Why do this podcast?

Charlie: [00:21:26] Okay. So, why are you bothering to do this podcast?

Brandon: All right. Well, why do any podcast? For me, I think it's a unique way to reach people. It's a way to reach ears and okay, maybe that's not so interesting. There are a lot of ways to reach people's ears and you also get eyes as well sometimes. You get their attention if you do an in-person event. You get to show explosions, if you have a YouTube video, right? There's a lot of other ways to get content these days, why a podcast? I think for me, the short answer is it's a high nuance format. I can't think of too many other ways to reach this level of discourse, this depth of ideas with people who've made it happen and still have it accessible and entertaining and be able to do other stuff while that's happening.

So for me, if, if I'm making dinner and it doesn't require 100% of my brain, then I enjoy that I get to listen to someone else share something with me, share their story, learn something from that experience, versus just listening to the sounds of the kitchen.

Charlie: I made a note, more explosions.

Adi: Yes. I know the perfect website where I can get lots of explosion sounds. Explosion in five, four, three, two one. So that's where I'll put the explosion.

Brandon: I mean, the other answer to why is, uh, why, why should we do a podcast? It kind of leverages some unique attributes. So one is right as a company Forward is vendor-neutral. Right? We support everyone. We don't pick favorites. We side with everyone. I think that gives us unique access to people. We can pull in vendors who, and to have them talk about their technology and, not have to worry about the competitive dynamics messing up that or making it awkward in any way. We can have the best conversation possible. And I really, really appreciate that. We've also got a fantastic team helping out.

Charlie: Well, since I'm being nosy, what don't I know. What are some fun facts? What's going on that you guys haven't talked about? Or you don't tell us?

Brandon: This is a little-known fact - I have never met my co-host in person. I have no idea how big he is, how tall he is. I don't even know how long your beard really is. I know what I see on camera, but I don't know if it's, if it's true.

Derick: Oh, it's a true beard. This is a true beard.

Charlie: I was going to say, what if it was a prop this whole time that Derek, if you just ripped it off right now. Wow.

Derick: Nobody on this call will ever see me without a beard ever, ever again.

Charlie: You won't see me without makeup. So we're even

Derick: I had to shave twice a day when I was in the military at one point. So I had like five in the morning and then 12:30 in the afternoon because there was a no after afternoon shadow rule. I had a beard before beards were trendy and I'm telling you now I will have a beard after they're trendy as well. I'm never going to shave again.

Derick: Oh, look, my cat, my cat made it.

Charlie: Oh, I've been watching. Yeah.

Charlie: I mean, we were listening, but that cat really is what we're paying attention to.

Brandon: All I could see is this cat scratching and licking itself in the background. It's very cute.

Derick: That's my that's my baby floof girl. That's poly gray. Um, leave that in the podcast but ...

Favorite Moments (So Far)

Derick: [00:24:15] I want to ask, Aditya and Charlie, what are their favorite moments so far, this season? I'll start by saying my favorite moments are the fake ads that I've listened to. Every one of these fake ads, probably a hundred times, because they're that good? They're so good. And it's hard to pick one over the other, amazing job. They're funny. They're very on point. It feels like you, you know what networking is about, the way that comes across, you know exactly what you're talking about. It's, it's amazing. I love it.

Charlie: That's show business, baby.

Derick: And we got to do many more of those.

Brandon: And I got to give a shout out to a related website slash Instagram slash whatever called unnecessary inventions, that was part of the, part of the motivation for this. I just, I love the notion of something that doesn't need to exist. Probably shouldn't exist, but it does. And a lot of these were 3d printed mock-ups and even now they're becoming actual products you can buy in some cases for just hilarious stuff that shouldn't be out there. It's called unnecessary inventions. Maybe some of our stuff will make that transition too?

Charlie: Maybe so you can get a co-lab going. Yeah, I'm a, I'm a big fan of, there's a, a guy he makes fake things called obvious plants. I love Tim and Eric's, uh, fake commercials with Cinco and, um, adult swim has great fake commercials. They take it to the next level, like beyond anything. I'm sorry, guys. We're not going to get to that level, but, I love stuff like that.

I love it's an opportunity to be funny and give some social commentary. And, uh, I'm glad that's your favorite part because you guys worked really hard on making like the meat of it, uh, really engaging. And then I just come in and put my little marshmallow at the end.

Brandon: It makes you listen twice you go, wait, what did I just hear? And I love when it's like 15 seconds in and then you realize, Oh, Oh, I see. I get it.

Derick: Yeah, there's a kernel of truth, right?

Charlie: That's what makes it believable.

Derick: So what is your favorite moment then?

Charlie: This probably isn't, this isn't like with the intellectual side of my brain is telling me to say, but, you know, I've met Tom Hollingsworth in person - he's very warm and charming. So I was looking forward to his episode, but you never really know anything about him. He has a blog and he kind of gives some color about his background, but, you know, you can kind of pick his Oklahoma accent out when he talks.

And find that kind of. I don't want to call it a fish out of water because that's unfair, like the technology. That's what great about technology. It's accessible to anyone anywhere on the planet. Um, but that he kind of came from this like rural upbringing. I think you guys start talking about field dressing animals. Like I used that in a sentence later that week. I was like, I know about field dressing because I listened to the Tom So that was my, that was my favorite part.

Derick: Yeah, that was a great episode, Tom. is awesome, dude. I love Tom so I can understand why that would be a favorite moment. What about you, Aditya? what about you.

Adi: Yeah. It's my favorite part of this podcast so far, was where Bob Metcalfe talks about the creation of Metcalfe's law. And he's talking about how he basically had to sell more of his product. So he kind of came up with this concept that, Hey, the more you buy, the more useful it is, and it turned out to be true.

Brandon: "And they bought it!"

Adi: Yeah. The way he says it is really dramatic. And, there's a lot of weight to his voice, a lot of gravitas and, and just the story itself is very funny.

Derick: That is true. I love that. But you know what I love about that story is how often do you invent something where it is true? Then it's only useful if you buy a shitload of it, I'm going to sell this to you and you have to take my word for it. You buy a lot of it and then you're going to love it. Right That's - how often do you, how often do you invent something like that? And it's true. It's a true statement.

Brandon: My favorite moment of the season was, was definitely in that episode. Cause it was like, there is no one in the history of the world or at any point in time who will be more qualified to answer the story of what it was like the early days of Ethernet than Bob Metcalfe, and that was kind of a moment for me. I was like, wow. I don't have to do a podcast. I get to do a podcast. This is a pretty cool opportunity and I hope listeners caught that same moment.

Things We've Learned

Brandon: [00:28:25] So we wanted, uh, everyone on the production team to just share one item, one thing that they've learned, that's worth sharing. So let's start with you, Lisa.

Lisa: Yeah What have we learned in doing this podcast in a year that ended up being kind of hellish by all counts. I thought we were sort of ahead of the game.

I didn't realize how much editing and prep would go into every episode. and I'm glad that we've done everything the way we've done it. I'm glad we put the care and feeding and time and energy into the production of this, because I think it really shows, but considering that we had a team of people skilled in all aspects of what they normally do for their day jobs, but their day jobs do not normally involve producing a podcast, I'm delighted with, with how well we've come together as a team and kind of, I mean, Derek, you had, you had the podcast experience beforehand, but the rest of us didn't and, um, it's been challenging figuring out how to, how to do some of this stuff from, from the initial recordings and the editing to the promotion, but I think we've come out with something really cool, and I'm delighted with, uh, with the process. And I think now it's going to be easier. Knock on wood. I think in 2021, once we get the guest selection down, I think that the process of how this comes together will be smoother for all of us.

Brandon: I think we're fortunate to have had guests that make it so much easier. I mean, imagine if we didn't have guests like we've had, who can take a cue who can run with it, who can really make our jobs that much easier.

Lisa: I know, and we've talked to some experts who have had many podcasts under their belt who have been able to kind of give us some, some expert coaching and guidance. And so that's been really helpful as well.

Brandon: Aditya - you have anything to share?

Adi: Yeah. I think I've learned that technical difficulties are basically inevitable at this point. I think we've done enough episodes for me to figure out that I will never have control over our guests' internet connection, or if they forgot to plug in their computer before starting the recording and the battery dies halfway through, and that's just something I'll have to kind of accept and manage by trying to do as many backup recordings as possible. And I think we've spoken about that previously.

I listen to BBC radio quite a bit, and I hear this almost every day that there'll be talking to someone and suddenly they'll have connectivity issues there. It'll start with, you know, their voice starts to drop out and eventually they're just completely gone. And then the presenter will have to be like, Oh, we're so sorry. We lost their connection. And so I figured if the BBC can't get around it. I'm learning to just accept that there are just things beyond my control and we just have to do our best to prepare for stuff like that. Yeah.

Brandon: Charlie, what do you have to say?

Charlie: Hello. So here's what I've learned; amongst other things, you know, I've done some production in the past. I know how painful editing can be. And, I'm really happy that I am not

a part of that part of the team, so I've gained better understanding of the day-to-day life network, engineers and operators, the minor moments that they have.

And now I try to use those to my advantage in the commercials and I've known network engineers. I had network engineers as my roommates in college, so I know some things, but not enough to coherently create a 30-second commercial about it. So, we have some very gracious and wise engineers at Forward that who, um, field questions for me from time to time.

So these will make sense. I also learned that no matter many filters I put on my own voice, I do not have a voice for radio. I always wanted that Roz from Frazier tone. It's just not going to happen. So I go, I go to outside talent for that.

Derick: Wow. I gotta say I strongly disagree at that last point.

Charlie: We'll do a little A/B - you guys can hear me read the script, how I wrote. I wrote it in my head and then you'll hear how, - my voice talent does it. And the choice will be clear who wins.

Brandon: I think the personality comes through when you talk though, and that's what makes a good voice.

Charlie: Well, that's why I tried the voice filters thinking, Oh, well, I've got the tone, right. I just sound like me. And then I was cracking myself up. I was trying to change it and make it lower. I couldn't, my voice is just all over the place.

Brandon: Well, that's something I've learned from talking to other people on the production team. That the way I perceive my own voice is not how they perceive mine and vice versa.

Charlie: Yeah, and I think we've all confirmed: no one likes to hear the sound of their own voice. Am I right, team?

Adi: Do you know why your voice sounds different to you? When you're listening to yourself talk, you're hearing the echo through your skull, in your bones, rather than it coming out of your throat. Everybody else hears your voice as it comes out of your throat, but you're hearing a mix of both. So that's why it sounds different to you than it does when it's recorded.

Derick: Well, I can confirm that I must have a perfect audio chamber for a head, because. I think I sound amazing.

Adi: You do, that's why.

Brandon: I think you do have a voice for this. It's a comforting voice.

Derick: Brandon has a very smoky voice. I think ...

Brandon: I really thought that was the equipment. And then I upgraded the equipment, and it didn't go away. Okay. Uh, I think we've got a few more things here and then maybe we should wrap up.

Derick: So do your lessons, your insights.

Brandon: Yeah. So Derek you're talking, I think also about how important it is to listen and how challenging it can be. You're in the moment you're trying to drive a conversation, extract a story. You're listening to a guest, you're processing what they have to say. It's a lot. You have to be present in that moment and just listening.

It's what makes the podcast feel the most natural. And that's also something I've learned is so important to really focus on the guests, listen to what they're saying, and then try to guide the story from that. And I know the more you do it, the easier it is just like the whole podcast production process in general, the more you do it, the easier it becomes.

We miss all of the social cues that you'd have from actually being in a room with someone and seeing their body language and having that chance to get the trust from having met them in person that same day. So that was one takeaway.

A second one is learning to live within the format. This is a lesson we learned really early on. We had one episode recording that just lacked the excitement and it was fantastically successful from, a, conveying technical information, precisely and concisely - but that sounds like a technical paper. That's not our goal at all. Right. Our goal is to entertain. Our goal is to have stories come out and it completely failed in that direction. And so when all you've got is voice, you've got to have a compelling story. And it's almost like if you imagine a good campfire story, what are the elements that it has? Well, we want our podcast to have all those same elements.

Right. You can't depend on the visuals. You can't, all you can depend on are the sounds, the words, the pacing, all the little elements that pull you into a story and maintain your interest combined with pacing that works for the entire length of the episode. This is just, I, I see it as, this is an interesting challenge. This is not a challenge I've had, and it's completely different from technical writing, which is where I came from.

And then the third is, and I think this is a good way to start transitioning out. Great guests are key. We've been completely lucky to have access to amazing guests that have done interesting things. And not just that; they can talk about it. We've had guests like I'll call out Olivier, him a basic question and then he'll realize what it is you're trying to ask. And then he'll define the terms and the question that you didn't think to ask and then connect it both from a technical side, as well as what this means for people.

So guests like that are just great.

What's coming in 2021

Brandon: [00:35:58] And on that note, let's talk a little bit about where we're headed in 2021, we're what - 3 days away from 2021 from transitioning out of a phase where how, how would you phrase that? How excited are you to be entering 2021? How would you describe that moment? The clouds part, the heavens open, the light comes down upon us and what, what happens.

Charlie: I think it's like Jones 3, where he throws the sand out on the otherwise invisible bridge, and he's just going to go with a little bit of faith. Get to the other side. I think we can see some sand, but I'm still sweating.

Derick: I 100 percent share that sentiment. I know a lot of people are excited about 2021, but there's a meme that's going around and said 2020 is about to turn and start drinking alcohol. So, um, there's a, there's, there's a part of me. That's like, Oh, this meme could end up being true.

You know what I mean? They could end up being true. um, I'm hoping for the best, but, uh, yeah, we'll see what happens.

Brandon: Well in 2021, we're going to continue to bring worthwhile unique, rare stories from people who are excited to talk about them, as long as they have some tenuous connection to the world of networking, or maybe even we'll relax that one.

Uh, we don't want to spoil all the surprise, uh, but we can talk about a few people we've already sat down with recently whose stories we're going to be excited to share, soon. One of them I'm personally excited about - Ben Pfaff, creator of Open vSwitch - and how it came about, and some of the people interactions behind the scenes with the Linux kernel in that community.

Another one - we've got Guido Appenzeller talking about security from a highly informed network, as well as application, perspective.

And then who else do we have? Oh, one of our first recordings, Bill Krause. Bill is an amazing person who can off-the-cuff give. give, Uh, an hour long monologue about how to live your life, and it's one you want to listen to, and I mean that in a really good way. So we're going to have Bill on soon and we just didn't want to put him too close to, uh, to Bob Metcalfe and have too much Ethernet at one time we wanted to kind of mix things up. Any other episodes, you're excited by Derick?

Derick: Yes, we did an episode with Martin Casado and Mariel Triggs. Um, I'm very excited about that episode. I think that really struck the chord for what the show should be about. I think. And I'm very excited to, for that one to be coming out.

And one where we've decided to take our time to make sure that we do the topic justice. So, uh, please look forward to that because it is a cool episode.

Brandon: Yeah, that topic will be rural, tribal, wireless connectivity and access to spectrum.

Derick: With great stories with great stories, too.

Our Thanks-yous

Brandon: And to close out, we wanted to give our thanks to a bunch of people who have helped us get this far and given us motivation to even get started in the early days. I want to thank Ryan Burgess at Front-End Happy Hour. It's an amazing concept. It's like drunk history

for JavaScript, and they're are a hundred plus episodes in now. And. Able to do forums as well as dive into specific topics. It's not just for UI coders who are into JavaScript and do that on a daily basis. Check it out - Front End, Happy Hour.

Also want to give a shout out to Grant Miller, from Replicated. There's a site that he helped create called EnterpriseReady.io. And there's a corresponding podcast and it's stories from people who've created software for the enterprise, talking about how to make it deployable within that enterprise. So a lot of good stories there as well. And I wanted to also thank all of those guests who took it on faith that not only would the show exist, but it would make them look good. And I feel like every episode, that's something we've, we've put a lot of effort into to not just make our guests look good, but make the use of the audience's time worthwhile. And I want to thank also all those who've shared it - shared the show with someone they think would enjoy it, whether in-person via email, on social media, however you do it. So thanks again. Share it. If you haven't, if you think there's someone else who might like some of the stories you've come across, pick an episode, say one thing you liked and let them know. Lisa, was there anything else that you wanted to say?

Lisa: I just wanted to give a couple shout outs to, um, to Brandon Elliot, the other Brandon for doing the best voiceovers and Charlie for writing the best, most creative, clever ads. For anyone, if you're a new listener to this podcast, go back and listen to some of the other episodes, even if you fast forward all the way to the last minute or the last 30 seconds, because the ads are hilarious and Charlie's made websites to go with most of them. So it's super fun. And a shout out to, um, to some of the other people that have helped us with the early episodes and recording. Uh, Ted Garvey talked about Batch 58 and that was helpful and just us getting behind the mindset of How I Built This. And so talking to somebody who built a scone business, after high tech and now is back in high tech was kind of an interesting journey, even though I've heard all the stories, it was good to get them on record.

Derick: Yeah, that was fun. That was a fun episode. And I think we should, at some point really say, maybe it's just like a bonus, random thing that we do. Um, 'cause that was, uh, I, I liked that conversation mainly because I love food.

Lisa: Yeah, that was a fun one that has nothing to do with anything that we've been talking about, but it was fun.

Brandon: So I hope you enjoyed that moment of an open kimono for us. Uh, stay safe, have a happy new year and we'll be back next year with more stories and more episodes in 2021. See you then!