

Transcript: International Podcast Day

Speaker: John McLuckie, Alana MacLeod, and Audrey Decou

Host: Katie Masheter

Katie Masheter: 0:10

Hello, this podcast has been brought to you by the University of the Highlands and Islands careers employability centre. My name is Katie Masheter, and today I'm joined by my fellow future podcast hosts. We're also the curriculum development employee engagement team at the University of the Highlands and Islands. So, we've got Alana MacLeod who heads up supporting the business management and leisure subject network. Audrey Decou, who looks after it science technology and environment, and John McLuckie who supports engineering and the built environment. I look after the creative industries.

So, earlier in the summer we decided we'd give podcasting a go and design and deliver the Future Me podcast, and it's been quite a learning curve. So, given that it's international podcast day, we wanted to share some of those learnings with you, give you a bit of an overview of how you plan content for podcasts, how you record audio, and how you then package it and edit it to create a professional podcast – and how do you post it out and promote the podcast online to the audience that you're trying to target.

The reason we wanted to start podcasting, is because it's a simple and effective method of getting messages across to 1000s of people, and podcasting has never been so popular. We realised a lot of our students at the University of the Highlands and Islands tune into podcasts, and we thought it'd be a new way of sharing a creative career stories with them from across the region to help them think about their futures, we use the strap line *'look up, look forward, be in the know'* because that's what we encourage students to do whenever they engage with the careers and employability centre. So please tune in! One thing we find from the beginning was that we really didn't know what we were doing, and so we sat down and had a kind of idea generation session and quickly realised we had an expert among us! John is in fact an Oban FM DJ, so I'm going to pass on to John because it's only right – he's guided us through this entire process, and he knows all the techie stuff that you kinda have to get to grips with from the beginning. So passing on to John...<https://soundcloud.com/user-781544817/international-podcast-day-special>

John McLuckie: 2:07

No pressure at all then! Thanks Katie. Yes, so I've put together a number of podcasts over the past few years, from interviews I've done on the radio show, mostly around marine science topics, and to promote local bands. And there's some fantastic software available that makes the job of editing interviews into podcasts really straightforward. I think it's interesting, podcasts have been around for 50 years or so, but they've only become really popular more recently. About an eighth of the population now listen to podcasts every week, with that number growing, so definitely a good time for the UHI careers and employability centre to get involved.

The way that we've created the Future Me podcast series is we've recorded interviews with industry contacts, colleagues from within UHI, and other people with interesting career stories to tell, from across the Highlands and Islands and beyond. The interviews were recorded using Microsoft Teams, WebEx teams and Skype for Business, depending on who we've interviewed internally and

externally, and I think series one features recordings made using each of these different video conferencing platforms. The audio content from these recorded interviews has then been imported into a bit of software called audacity, which is a free open source audio editing package. When you import an audio file into audacity you're presented with a graphic, which represents the waveform of the recording, and allows you to edit down to even just milliseconds, really. You can also insert or replace audio content, if anything needs to be added to rerecord it. And we've been really lucky to have had music written specifically for the podcast project by Peter noble of North Highland College UHI. We added this music in as part of the editing process within audacity as well. When editing is completed, the final audio track is then exported in mp3 format, which is the file format for each podcast episode. The CDEEOs did a training session together, where we looked at audacity and how to carry out audio file editing, including how to chop out sections of audio, and how to amplify and quieten other sections. I think we all really enjoyed the session, and I think you could hear how professional your efforts are at editing by listening to the different podcast episodes. So yeah, it's been a really interesting and quite quick journey actually from just having a chat initially about doing a podcast series, right through to having it available on the careers pages of the UHI website. It's also available on SoundCloud, and hot off the press, on Spotify. We've got 15 episodes on there, and we've just started recording series 2 now, which is really cool.

Katie Masheter 4:45

I think it's safe to say it's been quite a learning curve for the rest of us and we've tested John's patients along the way! But a real team effort, and it shows how simple creating a podcast really can be. It doesn't cost a lot of money, apart from the time that you put in.

I guess one learning curve along the way was that a recording alone might only take 45 minutes but the reality is, editing of that, depending on your sound quality and who you've spoken to, can take up to a day, so it's something that maybe we didn't always account for from the outset, something that we quickly learned. So, we came up with the name, the Future Me podcast, based on the fact that our careers employability centre have a platform called Future Me where all the activity goes on to support student career development so it made sense to have it in line with that. And, we quickly realised that there were a lot of people that would want to talk to students and share their experience. And I guess I could pass on to Alana, just to talk about how we engage with those guest speakers, brought them on board, and what we used behind the scenes to make sure that we had everything in order before we recorded with them.

Alana MacLeod 5:55

Yes, so I guess in finding guest speakers, we work with so many interesting businesses, not just in the Highlands and Islands but across Scotland, and we have so many interesting students, alumni, and staff that we could call upon, So, actually it was pretty easy. It was quite nice. It was just a case of reaching out to those folk and saying look, can we steal half an hour with you to get some insights about your journey and how you got to where you are today and that kind of thing. So, I think, as well as that, I don't know about you guys...but for me...it was really helpful to get some insight from our colleagues in the careers and employability centre in terms of their key messages. So basically, they gave us a list and chatted to us about what they say to students and the messages that they want to get across to students about resilience, soft skills development, extracurricular activities. So I don't know about you guys as well, but the people that I interviewed were pretty perfect, so I kind

of knew that their messages would ring true with our own, which again makes it sounds too easy but from that perspective it was pretty good.

So from there, when we knew who we were going to be interviewing, we set about generating some show notes, so in short, us putting down our thoughts about how the interview would flow,

using a pretty simple template – I can't remember which one of us pulled that together, it wasn't me – but it was really good, and it just led us to jot down our notes and our thoughts about the format. It made sure that we knew what we were asking people, they knew what we were asking because we could share it with them before the interview and they knew what to expect...and it also made sure that we had a bit of a consistent structure across all of the episodes. So regardless of who was interviewing, and who was being interviewed, the structure of the interview was quite similar. So, we chatted amongst ourselves a bit as well which was really helpful, about the show notes and what we were going to ask people, just to get a bit of feedback from each other about what we were proposing. I think that was really helpful having ideas bounce back and forth. It's always good as part of this team, and it works really well. So, all in all, it was a pretty good, relaxed process I think. You guys will certainly agree, I mean it's been really good fun and we've learn a lot, and it was a really good opportunity just to have a good blether with some really interesting people.

Katie Masheter 7:59

It's amazing how much you can flesh out in a 45 minute call, and also I think we all felt, that by having a video conference call, we can't meet face to face in the current time as it would have been built to sit over a coffee and record it, but the second best to that was speaking to them on a video conference call, and being able to see their reactions to the questions and kind of nod as they answered things. It meant that the flow of the conversations worked a lot more naturally, in a way, and Audrey you were involved not just in the recording but also as a guest speaker on an interview with John. What are your thoughts on the whole experience?

Audrey Decou 8:36

I found the experience really good, so for me, podcast is a new thing – I've never done any podcast before. I've never interviewed, or been interviewed. And so, the whole experience was great to be actually on both sides of the table. I don't know which one was more nerve wracking in a way, interviews, or being interviewed, not really sure! But anyway, both of them were really good and I really enjoyed the experience. As I said, I've never done it before, and it was great to do that with our team (the CDEEO team) because I had to learn from scratch to use those softwares that I have never heard about before, and it's actually really easy to do. And once you are in and you play with the software, it's amazing how quick you pick it up, actually, and it's really interesting and it's a good change on the everyday work to do something different! And that was really good and that also emphasises, at least to me, the teamwork...that we are really strong team and it really transpires through that podcast series, because I don't think there was one single podcast when there's only one single person worked on it. We all worked on multiple podcasts, helped each other, and thank you John – a lot – for your guidance and expertise. For the final project, and I found that was great, actually, because you're not working on your own.

Katie Masheter 10:00

Like a new form of personal development in a way! Peer to peer, and it's really just the spark from our team, wanting to give something new go, which is really refreshing. We had this concept, the podcast and some recordings that we'd done, and speaker profiles and the transcripts to make sure that they were accessible for those that may not be able to tune in could read the podcast episode. And so, we then took it to our web team, who I know will end up tuning into this at some point and we owe them a big thanks, because Duncan and team at the University took our requests and ran with it and have created a platform that can post our podcasts. It looks professional, sits within the current website, and hopefully anyone who tunes in might then go on to explore what else the careers and employability website has to offer. And we were really keen that even though we were amateurs working on this behind the scenes, well most of us were, that we wanted it to have a professional look. And although we knew our first series is only the beginning and there's a lot that we could work on for series 2, we wanted to make sure it had a consistent look and feel, and brand image that was consistent with the careers and employability centre and I think any podcast that successful has that. Something that's recognisable and something that you might go back to that you connected with in the past. So we use the future me podcast title and the design team at the UHI helped us create brilliant set of assets that we could use on social media and also what we came to know as the podcast artwork. All new terms for podcast amateurs, but something that we feel we're quite proud to share. And the promotion side of things, I guess it's just drawing in all the experts on that front that can really help you get it out there. So we've actively looked for places that we can share it on social media, on the website, in student newsletters, with our contacts that engaged in the podcast series, and beyond. So, there's lots of ways, I guess, if you're thinking about being a podcast of your own that you can get out to the right target audience. It just took some time into thinking about what that plan looks like. So, I think that gives you a whistle-stop tour of what the Future Me podcast experience in creating it was all about. And we're really open to any feedback you might have tuning into the series, be it good or bad, so please don't hesitate to get in touch. Does anyone else have anything to add?

John McLuckie 12:26

I was just gonna add in a wee bit about the GDPR side of things, because obviously we have to be compliant with legislation etc. Sorry to be the boring one and add this in! The speaker release form that Katie put together and run past the UHI legal team was quite a key document in the process. And we've also gone through the lawful basis for processing and completed all that side of it, so the podcast is fully GDPR compliant.

Katie Masheter 12:49

That's all from us today. Thanks so much for tuning in. It's been great to introduce the team behind the scenes of the Future Me podcast and share some of our learnings along the way. Be sure to tune in to Future Me podcast series two which is set to launch in semester two, which is the start of 2021, and by all means get in touch and let us know if you launch your own podcast, we'd love to hear how you get on. Speak soon! Thanks!

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

