

Really Specific Stories: Baldur Bjarnason

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SPEAKERS

Martin Feld, Baldur Bjarnason

Martin Feld 00:21

Thank you so much for joining *Really Specific Stories*, Baldur; it's great to have you on the show.

Baldur Bjarnason 00:26

Thank you, it's fun to be here!

Martin Feld 00:28

Now I'm going to ask you the first question that I ask every participant, and that is: how did you first get into podcasts?

Baldur Bjarnason 00:35

Oh, boy. Now that... probably dates back to before they called it podcasts, if I'm to be honest. I... like, in the same way that I had a personal website that was updated regularly with essays before they called it a blog, and then I added an RSS feed to it with a Perl script, if I remember correctly, once the, like, the original RSS 9... 0.9, I think, was out. And I remember there, when er, sort of being a part of the discussion, seeing a discussion online where they talked about enclosures and RSS feeds. And then I, 'That looks neat!', like, 'So you could subscribe and get like audio files and stuff? That looks, that, that's clever!' But I sort of I didn't really get into it until, sort of... it was more of like, gee-whiz tech thing first; I didn't really start listening as a sort of putting time in as an avid listener until it really exploded in the early, like, early to mid-2000s.

Baldur Bjarnason 01:50

For background, I came into interactive media and web development from a media background, so I studied interactive media, at an art, media and design faculty. And before that I was involved like in media production, like, what, eh, freelance radio production and worked in a TV news studio before I got into interactive media as a, as a study. So, uh, I was always interested in the whole radio and audio, I actually come from a, I'm like a third-generation audio/radio guy, or fourth, my great grandfather was was one of the founders of the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service.

Martin Feld 02:34

Wow!

Baldur Bjarnason 02:35

So, it seemed like a natural fit once it, I first started. So, were... I switched a lot of my listening to it. Didn't, er, sort of um, get into recording podcasts until, uh, much later. But I was a heavy listener in the uh, in the early days before it dropped off. Once I finished my postgraduate studies, I don't know if you can relate to this, but there's a lot of when you're doing like postgraduate studies and retreats, there's a lot of time where you're like just hammering away at the computer and need to have something in the background to listen to. So, it was very useful for that. So whenever podcasting started, I guess that's probably the time I started.

Martin Feld 03:19

Can you give me some background about that family, not necessarily tradition, but that flowing narrative through your family? How did you grow up feeling about audio, or what was your understanding of the significance of things like radio and other audio media?

Baldur Bjarnason 03:37

It's... like it started, like I said, it started with my great grandfather, who was, uh, one of the... he ran the broadcasting service newsroom for, during World War Two and he was also one of the main announcers. And uh, there's a famous story in the family that where... because back in the day, radio broadcasts were only, like, they only broadcast during work days. It was like this 24-hour broadcasting wasn't, wasn't there. And one thing that people don't actually know is that the first involvement of the US military in World War II was taking over the occupation of Iceland in early 1941 from the British. The British invaded—the only neutral country in World War II to be invaded was invaded by the British in World War—uh, at the start of World War II because they wanted to prevent the Germans from invading, so they did a preemptive invading of, of a pacifist, neutral country, which is like very British Empire logic, but you know, what're you gonna do? But because they were like in the middle of World War Two, they couldn't actually afford to occupy Iceland, so they asked the Americans to do it! And that was the first involvement (America's first involvement) in World War Two, so we had a lot of American soldiers in Iceland, before Pearl Harbor.

Baldur Bjarnason 04:56

And when the news, like, the telegram came in at the newsroom, um, where my great grandfather was working, came in to announce like Pearl Harbor had been struck by the Japanese and the US was now part of a, uh, joined World War II, had declared war on the Axis powers. It was like, they've turned off the broadcasting, they, they were done for the day. So it's like he wanted to figure out, he had this big news, and he wanted to figure out how to get it to everybody. And he knew that the US soldiers were having a big ball, at Hotel Borg, which is literally something, like,

14 metres away from where the radio broadcast station was. So basically, what he did is just took the telegram, marched right into down the street and right into Hotel Borg, and he marched up on the stage, pushed the singer out of the way, and did his radio announcement of um, that they joined World War Two to the soldiers, right then and there, interrupting they're ball! So that's how quite a few US soldiers and Iceland found out that they were actually at war.

Baldur Bjarnason 06:02

And it's kind of, uh, you, you're raised with this sort of mythology, like my aunt ran the children's broadcasts for the broadcasting service for probably like 25/30 years. And my mother started work in radio at an early age and she, uh, she just retired, like, recently, and she was a, has been an investigative journalist for the broadcasting service for decades, eh, winning a few awards. And so literally, like, as a child, I would go regularly and have, um, eat at the canteen, at the broadcasting service. I'd be dragged in by mother's friends to do the whole children's vox pop, and my aunt, which, you know, like I said, she ran the children's section. I remember a few times, uh, Iceland being a small country, we got several times angry phone calls from government ministers who were, um, phoned my mother's home phone number (landline), because they were dissatisfied with some of the reportage she'd been doing, where she discovered some dodgy thing that they'd been doing. And they'd, you know, start shouting at the phone before they realised that they were speaking to a 12-year-old and not like my mother!

Baldur Bjarnason 07:20

So, it's been a constant presence in my life. And so, when I was first got into college, it was logical for me to start doing freelance radio, uh, journalism. And working in the studio, I worked as a vision mixer on the newsroom studio, where, you know, they do the live, live interviews, and you know, there's a guy at the button when the director says, 'And now cut to camera two, camera two, camera two!', and they go like, 'CLICK!', and they cut to camera two. And it's like, that's your job, that's literally just like, listen to the queue, and like, you know, doing the, and that, yeah, and then ask, 'Can you, yes, can you fade over over onto the wider camera?', want to get, it's like, it's a dramatic moment.

Baldur Bjarnason 08:04

And it was, it's kind of like an entire culture that... it's kind of coloured my attitudes towards web development as well. So even though I got into interactive media, and from there into web development, I can't get rid of the sense that hypertext and the Web is a media environment and that needs to have a, you know, it's kind of hard to explain what, how different that is from looking at it as a an app environment, where there's this trend toward minimalism where every app looks the same. And you can bet it has no design and it's just default widgets. And it's so boring, it's just so inane and it's so 'unmedia', it's so, um... so it's basically coloured my entire life. Um so, it's kind of makes me feel a bit sad that I've cut down on my, on listening to podcasts over the past two or three years, two or three years because it, you know, the promise is there, but it's just, I haven't

been I haven't been feel-, I stopped feeling it. Like, around the start of COVID, although I don't think COVID was to blame, just not feeling, not feeling the vibe anymore—yeah, if that makes sense.

Martin Feld 09:27

No, no, it makes sense. And you know, habits changed when that pandemic came in. Lots of things changed globally...

Baldur Bjarnason 09:33

Mmm...

Martin Feld 09:33

...and media habits or what you decide to consume or produce would certainly go along with that. I'm very interested in that turning point or that shift that you said in your career (in your life) going from working in radio or broadcasting to shifting to software development, and undoubtedly, that would tie in, in some way, to your technological interest and maybe even flowing through to tech podcasts as a community and an environment. Can you tell me what brought you from that background and that career in broadcasting to one in software development?

Baldur Bjarnason 10:08

Oh HyperCard, originally! I was a HyperCard kid. Uh, there's probably the last generation where my dad brought the old Mac SE from work with HyperCard on it. And Macs at that time, basically had no games except maybe, you know, Solitaire and Tetris—you know, if you were lucky—but it had HyperCard and you could make things with HyperCard. And you can put together stacks and clicky thingies and it was awesome! And so, when we got the Internet later on, or literally, I got the Internet, I literally got, got a summer job to buy the modem for the computer in our house, uh, or our apartment. I was the only one who was actually interested. So the first thing I did, obviously was like, found myself a WYSIWYG website maker, and I made my first website and that was probably like mid-90s and was dissatisfied with the WYSIWYG thing because it wasn't HyperCard. I was like, 'This is rubbish, I might as well do this myself', so went and learned how to code. And it kind of became a, initially it was just a hobby, like it was supposed to be, like this sideline thing that I just did for fun.

Baldur Bjarnason 11:25

But then, once I finished my undergraduate degree, which was in comparative literature, because strangely enough... I recently for, for doing comparative literature for an undergraduate degree was, I had done like hard sciences in junior college, and I felt that left me with an imbalanced education. So I fel-..., sorely felt the need to add some humanities to my education. So even though it made no financial sense, I did a undergraduate degree in comparative literature,

alongside freelancing. And then I decided too that the best way forward was to join the two, that to study like interacting media, so study the Web as a media artefact, as a media production artefact that included audio and, and interactivity and animation. Back in those days, you still had, like, I think most of those courses have disappeared by now, like, most of those degrees, they're all, like, comp SCI or design. But that was, there was literally a, um, a degree you could go to the media faculty, and you were studying alongside filmmaking students and radio broadcast students. And studying at UWE, their Bower Ashton campus, literally, like, their audio production degrees were directly fed into, like, BBC Radio. So there, it was still, like in the middle of this media environment, but with interactive media and we were like doing this cutting-edge thing, it was the 2000s. It was like, five minutes later, we had the dot-com crash, crashing down around us. But for like, five seconds there, uh, I was in the coolest degree ever. But even after it all went down, we're still like the cutting-edge weirdos running around alongside the, alongside the, like the TV broadcast people and the radio broadcast people.

Baldur Bjarnason 13:27

And the thing is: I realised very early on that this crap isn't like HyperCard, there's... none of the WYSIWYG tools are any good. Uh, there was Flash, which was amazing but closed off. Now, Flash doesn't get credit anymore for it's, the authoring environment. It was, it had an amazing authoring environment that was so accessible to people who didn't have coding experience, but if you want to do work outside the Flash sandbox, you had to learn to code, so I just taught myself to code, so that I could do the interactive media projects that I was hoping to do. And quickly I became the coder for everybody else on the course because nobody else bothered to learn how to code. It's like, it's like, I ended up being being the unofficial coder for everybody else. Uh, and then at the end of it, I applied and looked at what jobs were available and turns out that the only best-paying jobs were involved in web development, so I applied to be a web, uh, for a web development job here in Iceland and got it.

Baldur Bjarnason 14:35

And that's basically how I got pulled over into, into the web development world. Although I have always had, like, one foot in media production, in that I, I decided to, like, for what (some random) reason, I fixated early on ebooks. I like trying to make interactive, dynamic ebooks—even like focus my PhD on it. And I finished my PhD in 2006, so the Kindle didn't come out until like a year later, the iPhone didn't come out until 2008. So, uh, you know, I, when I was doing my PhD, it was like: I'm studying this barren wasteland of nothingness, there is nothing here; and I'm like this lone voice in the wilderness talking about how, 'This thing could be cool!' And then I, like, finished my PhD and turned around, abandoned ebooks, and then five minutes later it's like, 'Oh my God, here's Amazon resurrecting ebooks as a concept!', and then the iPhone, and it's ebooks again. And it's that iPad, and it's ebooks, again! It's like, 'Fuck's sake...' Sorry, I'm allowed to swear?

Martin Feld 15:42

Of course, it's up to you.

Baldur Bjarnason 15:43

Yeah, but it's, um, coincidentally the, the ebooks, where is kind of how I sort of where I ended up doing most of my, like podcast appearances in that, the ebook thing was a bubble, wasn't obvious at the time but in hindsight, it was a massive bubble that was created by tech companies funnelling a truckload of money into something that wasn't going to be sustainable in the long run. Having a degree in, that specialises in something that centred on the bubble is a great way to get podcasting invites, I'll tell you. So I spoke on a few podcasts and did a lot of conference talks in those early years, from 2008 until probably 2014. That was when it was kind of obvious that ebooks were not going to take over the world. That's kind of the duration for tech bubbles: it's like, five to six years from sort of—see this with the crypto—like, from the, from the moment when you can tell this is a bubble until it's obviously, obviously falling apart. It's something like five to six years. So in about five to six years time, we're gonna see the same thing happened with the AI nonsense.

Baldur Bjarnason 17:00

It's a pop culture, the tech, tech industry, and that's kind of where my, why I ended up getting a little bit disaffected by tech podcasts specifically. It became... it was kind of coincidental (and not) that it happened around the time that COVID started, but there was a period at the start of COVID, where obviously, everybody was in lockdown. I was working in Montreal, and Montreal went into lockdown. And um, you had a lot of time to listen to podcasts and stuff. And I started just to notice that this is just a pop culture, there is no structured debate here, there is no understanding of... they don't even see themselves that they are participating in, in a pop culture. And it, all of a sudden, there was this moment where it felt like, I was the only, like, I was the fish in the ocean that saw the water for the first time, and was trying to tell everybody else about this thing called water. And everybody was like, 'What, what are you talking about? It's just life!'

Baldur Bjarnason 18:07

It's like, and probably around the same time I was reading, uh, Ursula Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*, and she kind of hammered that point home in as well: that all of this talk about, like, the the, the latest tech, the latest phones, the latest machines, the latest processors, the latest platforms and features and all of this, it's all just pop culture and stuff. It's like listening to music nerds talk about, like, this year's post-punk pop neosurrealism, and it's like, it's all just, it's, it's just a newest iteration of pop music. And it's like, I love pop music! I'm a huge fan of pop music! But the difference between pop music and tech is that pop music knows what it is. They know that their job is to come up with the new, with the fancy, with the interesting, with the different. But tech is a pop culture that doesn't realise that their job is to be interesting, be engaging, be novel, and they keep doing the same spin on the same fucking thing! And it's the same white dudes who

are all talking about, and I just, it just, it lost me. It's just lo-..., there was a moment there when I was listening to I think, *Accident Tech Podcast* or I think it might have been, or might have been might even have been something where Jason Snell, or, and it was just like, I've heard you say this 1000 times before! It's like, like, I could probably guess your next sentence just, you know, off the top of my head!

Baldur Bjarnason 19:49

And I, kind of like, uh, turned off and it was, felt kind of sad because it was like being a part of this community, keeping up with uh, these, like, characters and these people that, like you felt, you felt that you were a part of something, but it kind of felt unbearable to continue to listen to it after that. It was a, it was a really, quite a lot of perspective changes over the past three years, for understandable reasons there's like, uh, I mean, at that point, I also decided to move back home to Iceland, largely because I just couldn't justify, uh, all the flying I was doing. Uh, so I haven't flown now, gone on an aeroplane for three years. And it's sort of, like, made specific changes to my life to, like, minimise my footprint. And it just felt like, um, I don't know... it's, it was like seeing things for the first time. There's a concept in comparative literature or lit-, like, literary theory called 'defamiliarisation'. Viktor Shklovsky, Bertolt Brecht... and Bertolt Brecht does this lot in his in his drama and his plays, where the idea is to take the normal and defamiliarise it, so that you see it for what it is for the first time and you, you see the radical and the normal, like, and the, the thing that should be unbearable, uh, but you've learned to bear on made unbearable again. And it felt like the pandemic kind of defamiliarised my entire existence and it, we had to reconsider everything.

Baldur Bjarnason 21:28

Weirdly enough, I started listening more to YouTube videos. And the strange thing is, they're better scripted. Uh, like the tech podcasts are generally unscripted. They're just basically, you know, middle-aged white dudes, maybe with a token minority thrown in here and there and they're talking about their interests. And it's like the average length of it is like an hour. Or like, I think *ATP*, you look at the *Accidental Tech Podcast*, the average length there is like two hours. It's like, 'Oh my God, what are you doing? Two hours?!' Like, I, kind of like, sort of after the fact surprised that I managed to get through a single one, let alone be a regular listener. It's kind of amazing! But it's entirely unscripted. But if you go look at like, um, like the YouTube video that was quite long, it was an hour-and-a-half, called *Line Goes Up*—went the r-, did the rounds a while back on crypto and, and NFTs. And even though it uses visuals a lot, you could actually listen to the entire thing and get the, get the, a decent sense of it. And that's because it's actually scripted. It's edited, it's worked it's thought through and, and the same thing with there was a, um, a video call on, I think, *Defunctland*? That, they talk about defunct, like, park attractions. And they did a video on the on like Disney, Disneyworld's ticketing system. And it's like, this is like entirely around the technological design and implementation of, of a ticketing system, which is an incredibly nerdy topic.

Baldur Bjarnason 23:06

But it turns out, if you really want to go deep into—like, the same thing with the crypto video, that's a nerdy topic, it should be, uh, this is what tech should be about. It's like diving deep into specific technologies and how they're implemented and why. And these YouTube videos did that! But they did that by doing the research by editing, you know, pre-recording, editing, polishing their work and putting together a cohesive argument. And I just, it's incredibly rare, I've found, to see a podcast do that. And there were sort of, I can't actually remember... there was one I think, I can't remember the series, there was a series on like, the early days of the iPhone App Store, and uh, I think they—can't remember who did it—but they did interviews and it was edited, it was structured, it was really good, and they never did it again because it's didn't get the same listens as the, 'Blahdy blah, let's listen to some random tech guys' poker game', you know, genre, which they usually do—was a bit depressing.

Baldur Bjarnason 24:17

But I don't know, what, uh, sort of might have had something to do with the uh, the uh business model as in YouTube get ads and YouTube creators get a cut of the, of their advertising revenue, so if you're, unless you're demonetised the and then, you know, the more popular you get, the more money you're likely to get. But with a podcast, you basically need sponsorships and there's kind of like a baseline of of revenue that they're gonna get based on subscription. And you're not going to improve your your business model by increasing your costs. It's like you, it's, I think, I mean, that's my theory, I don't know. I don't actually do podcasts, like, I've done two goes at trying to do a podcast, both of the times with a friend of mine called Tom Abba, who is an academic in interactive media. We did one, which was kind of like a special series, uh, of podcast called *This is not the future of the book*, uh, which was basically us talking about interactive ebooks. And it was kind of spinning off from a project that we did, so it was always supposed to be temporary.

Baldur Bjarnason 25:28

Uh, so we did a few of those, but that was kind of like, a one-off, then we did try to make another podcast, uh, and we recorded actually a ton of episodes—I think we recorded something like nine or 10 episodes—but I stopped releasing them after the third episode, I just wasn't feeling it. There was a lot of work involved in doing it properly. It felt like we weren't saying anything that needed to be said. So I wasn't really motivated doing the work that needed to be doing it. So I just stopped, I mean literally, I think, somewhere in the hard drive I have something like six unedited episodes (probably more even) that never got released because just, we didn't weren't feeling it. We weren't feeling that we were seeing anything worthwhile. I mean, it was fun, a lot of fun to record. I mean, you know it's uh, you're blagging with your friends, you're talking about stuff! Like, I imagine all of those tech podcasts, roundtable-style tech podcasts, I'm sure they all enjoy it immensely. But like, what a bunch were like listening over the episodes and going over it and they were like, 'Argh... what are we doing here, man? It's like there's something missing'. So it's, I mean,

at some point, I might, sort of if I, you know, take a mental break, I might edit together a few and dump them on the RSS feed.

Baldur Bjarnason 26:48

One thing I've been doing, um, over the past couple of years is I've been writing ebooks, uh, tech-oriented ebooks that, where I dig into, like, specific topics and explain them! So it's like, I did one called *Out of the Software Crisis*, that's basically on open-source software development and how to address them. And uh, it's a systems-thinking approach, so it's a deep-dive analytical and stuff. Uh, I did one on AI, on the business risks of AI; you don't need to buy it because the short version is there's a lot of them, and you shouldn't use it. It's like, if you're, if you have a business and you're planning on integrating AI into your business, don't. Like, just don't, it's too... it's not worth it. Wait for it, wait a couple of years, it's it's not ready yet. Uh so, there I saved you 25, 35 bucks!

Baldur Bjarnason 27:36

The difference, there's a difference in sentiment with, um, the podcasts versus the ebooks, in that, I felt like with ebooks, I was seeing something that nobody else is saying. Um, I was making a point and doing a kind of analysis that you aren't seeing anywhere else, and I'm not sure I could do that in a podcast form without 10 times more work than it would take me if I was doing it when, er, like writing. I write really fast; I'm a good editor; I've got people who will volunteer edit it, edit my text. I don't have people who will want to volunteer to edit my audio recordings, because that's a lot of work! It's, it's like so, so much work! So like the amount of work involved in in making the same point and the same kind of analysis in podcast form is too much, and I don't think you would get that much audience anyway, because it's deeply analytical and I don't think that fits the form that well. So it's, and I know that my mum would be disappointed by that because she's spent her entire life doing deep investigative journalism in radio form. But she's also an incredibly like, succinct and to-the-point to writer where she is, it's kind of amazing, though, the way that she, anyway, there's a reason why she won awards! Uh, so bragging about my mother, that's uh, but anyway!

Baldur Bjarnason 29:08

But on the other hand, she was using, she had to, had the resources of the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service to fall back on, where they had like the technical staff, you know, experienced editors, experienced uh, and when she got into got into TV, because that's where you had to do, you can't just do one thing any more. Everybody has to be able to do, like, you can't just be a radio reporter; you have to be a radio reporter; you have to be able to write on the Web, you have to be able to do TV. Um, so that's easier to do when you've got massive re-, the massive resources of a government-funded broadcasting service, but for an individual like me, like a freelancer, um, I have to pick where I can get my message the best across, and um, at the moment that's that's text and and websites.

Baldur Bjarnason 30:00

And it's kind of remarkable how much cheaper it is than it is doing the podcast site. And it's kind of, uh, it actually kind of amazes me how, given like, sort of, even though I'm not getting rich off my ebooks, but they sell decently, like, for specialised niche topics. Um, so I'm kind of surprised that there isn't more of it going around. I have one thought was might be a question. I wonder a lot of the like online courses I'm seeing are basically, they're screencasts for the most part, but a lot of them could work almost as effectively as podcasts. Now I'm wondering if that isn't, kind of hasn't ended up being the business model with the deep-dive audio content that I've been looking for. I don't know. But it's interesting times to be sure, uh, nothing normal in today's normal, yeah. Odd world...

Martin Feld 31:03

Well, I have to say you raised so many really interesting points in what you just said. I mean, you addressed some of the diversity issues of podcasting, that tension between scripted narrative journalism or narrative formats in podcasting versus the conversational, unscripted round table, there's also the pop-culture element, you went through so many things there. And I also appreciated your characterisation or that contrast between the work that's involved in audio versus maybe text...

Baldur Bjarnason 31:37

Mmm...

Martin Feld 31:37

...and maybe also the fan work and the fun that goes into that the positives and the negatives. Something that it reminded me of—also reaching back to your mention of the Mac and HyperCard and history and maybe the things that informed your initial interest in podcasting—one of the case studies for this very project that I'm doing is a series called *20 Macs for 2020*, which was produced by one of the podcasters you mentioned, Jason Snell. Now, reaching into your interactive media background and your skills, that show is interesting in the sense that it was a podcast, but also a video series and a series of textual blog posts. Given your background and your skills in interactive media, what do you make of this kind of triple format for a show like that? Is there potential or interest in that sort of thing for you? What do you make of the kind of fleshed-out environment that goes beyond just the audio?

Baldur Bjarnason 32:38

Those are the only podcasts I engage with today, are the ones that are multi-format. It's um, I'm much more likely to listen to podcasts if I know it has a transcript, so that if I want to catch up on an episode, I don't have to listen to it, uh, I can just read through the transcript. But, so being able to alternate between formats is immediately going to make me at least more likely to listen to it. And based on what I see, like, when I speak to people around me and on on social media, I think

that applies to a lot more people, that, this sort of being able to pick and choose which version, like, whether it's text or audio or even like whether you want to, you know, go on on YouTube and watch the podcast as a screencast, where you actually see people's faces, I think that people are actually, that is more likely to be the future than not.

Baldur Bjarnason 33:34

I don't do much, go much for prediction. Uh, I think that's a mug's game, because like, it's just... uh, I just wrote a wrote an article where I was like comparing the statistical illusion of AI intelligence to the psychics' con. And the one of the fundamentals of the psychics' con is the, like, unverifiable predictions and predictions are just never a good idea. It's just it's, by the time the, you know, it's verified, it's, it's um... so I'm not going to make predictions, but I think that in the here and now, this is this is going to, like multi-format podcasts are much more likely to reach a broader audience. And I think with that comes a broader revenue stream. And it's like, as you can tell, I come from the side of media that where people like to get paid. I'm not like, er, the sort of I don't come from like, my perspective isn't isn't in the on the con-, consumers' side.

Baldur Bjarnason 34:41

No matter, even like when I watch like TV, or um, you know, or a movie, it's like, at the back of my head, there's this thought, *Oh my God, that shot is expensive!* It becomes part of your worldview that you can't get to get rid of, which is fine. It's same thing with comparative literature, is like, you have to learn how to read for enjoyment, relearn it after, uh, after, after you graduate. Um, but yeah, I think with the multi-format podcast, like, it solved some of the issues that I talked about earlier. First one is, being, accessibility. Now it's easier to get into it, even if you don't have don't have time to listen. Um, having it on YouTube means that you can catch into, potentially get a cut of the YouTube ad-revenue pie, which is one other thing that's under-, under-appreciated at the moment by a lot of people is that YouTube is the only social media platform with revenue sharing, that like proper, decent-cut revenue sharing for people who post, uh post on it. Twitter doesn't do that, Facebook doesn't do that.

Baldur Bjarnason 35:50

It's one other reason why you tend to get, like, the average YouTube video, it has much higher production values than your average Facebook post or Facebook video, or Twitter post or Twitter video. And there's a reason for that: it's revenue sharing. It's like revenue sharing, revenue sharing, revenue sharing. It's like, and all of these new Twitter competitors, like Threads, or Bluesky or Mastodon (all of that). It's like, none of them, none of them have any thoughts about like revenue sharing, or, you know, how do we actually give people the financial space to invest in production for this platform? Doesn't matter, they're just here there to, you know, harvest your presence and eyeballs, and it doesn't really matter if you enjoy it. So YouTube is an anomaly in this regard.

Baldur Bjarnason 36:34

And I don't know how long it's gonna last because, you know, tech being what it is, they fired a bunch of people, and they're, they're coasting on their systems reliability engineering that was in place last year. And I don't know how long it's gonna last until it starts breaking, but it's gonna start start breaking. It's just, you don't lay off 20 per cent of your workforce, without negative consequences for the reliability, reliability on your platform. It's a testament to the qualifications of the people you just fired, that it will take months, if not years for it to, uh for it to appear, but it's gonna go to shit at some point, it's like happened faster with Twitter, because they fired, he fired 75 per cent, the rest of the 20 per cent, it's gonna hit. So, I don't know what's going to happen with YouTube. But you need that diversification of revenue if you're going to improve your production values. So, if you can make sure that your show is on YouTube as well, put it on YouTube, put it on on podc-, uh on the, on RSS, because that's how you're going to build up your audience, like, so that you're not beholden to the, uh, YouTube's algorithm, because that's where the YouTubers fall down; they get screwed by every single algorithm change and, like, all of a sudden, they're, they're broke.

Baldur Bjarnason 37:52

So, you need the RSS baseline of the podcast to build your audience. You need the text transcripts and the website for for accessibility to bring people in, you know, and you need your Patreon sponsorship or whatever, so that you've got your true fans to fund it, fund these things, and that's how you make something that's worthwhile, well-produced and well-funded. But that's also a lot of work and it's hard to bootstrap it from zero. It's like you, you have to start off with something, whether it's a website and then add a podcast, or you add or you start off with a podcast, then add website, then you add to YouTube, and then you need to figure out some production system that doesn't cost you too much money to make all of this work. And that's actually one of the few places where AI could actually help, as in transcripts, like you can get high-quality transcripts for less with things like Whisper—not perfect, you still need to edit it and fix the errors, but it's cheaper than it was even like a year ago. Descript, for example. It's an AI-based tool that's started off just for podcasting, but I think they saw the same thing I'm talking about, that everybody who needs to be in this needs to be multi-format, so they added video and screen-casting to their mix.

Baldur Bjarnason 39:12

So, like I said, the RSS part is a vital part of it. It's like with the, with Substack. People call it a Substack, but they're just blogs, uh, they have an RSS feed, and the email goes over a bog standard, a bog standard email list. It's exactly the same format, like, I had on... I sent him a blog to do the same thing back in 2008. So it's like, I don't care if you call it a Substack or whatever, or newsletter, it's a blog. That's a fun thing. And I don't think a lot of people don't know that but every Substack has an RSS feed, so you don't actually have to subscribe to the email. You can just

literally just paste that URL into your feed reader and voila! You can keep up with all of the public posts without having to give them your email.

Baldur Bjarnason 39:59

And that's also amazing for audience building! And I mean, if you're if you're into this, like, I think I'm one of the few people who's got like, still has RSS feed analytics on his website. It's like, I think I've got something like 2000 subscribers in RSS, like, they count, they're counting active subscribers. So there's other reports that you get from, it's like, it's an old system in RSS where the various aggregators, they actually report (as a part of the request) the number of active subscribers on their service to that RSS feed. So, anybody can actually build an off-the-shelf, RSS feed analytics sort of widget without much investment. So, and there's a bunch that still offer it as a paid service. So it's like, I've got twice the number of of subscribers on my RSS feed than I do on my mailing list. So, RSS rules, man, it's like the demo-, the biggest democratising force on the Web today! It's the thing that that drives things back and forth, and it's like, even too, in social media, where everybody's been talking about, 'Oh my God! What I'm gonna do now that Twitter's dead, and how am I gonna get traffic to my post?!' It's like, half the time, if I don't announce my posts on on, on like Twitter or some social media, and I do a search for the, for the blog post later on, somebody who has subscribed to my blog, or to my on the RSS feed for the blog will have posted the, posted the link for me there. It's like, it's a baseline. It's like, it's the foundation that it builds on, because it's the one you, you can build a business on other people's social media networks, where they control the graph, where they control the algorithm will control the updates.

Baldur Bjarnason 41:51

That's kind of the reason why, for all its faults, podcast is going to survive. How are you going to kill it? It's like, even though I might have lost interest to some podcasts, it's nobody going to be able to shut it down. Literally the only thing you need to do to host a podcast is a website, and I think if I remember correctly, even even like Apple Podcasts app lets you paste in a URL; you don't actually have to go through their service, you can just paste in the URL to the feed, and they'll fetch it. So it's amazing! And it's like, I don't think a lot of people realise just how amazing it is. But what's more important, because like I said, I come from the production side of this thing, and I'm always looking at the costs and revenue and, and side of this, it's the, like the foundation of the of running an online business is you need your RSS feed for your updates, you need a mailing list for the people who really don't want to miss your, your update. Everything else is extra. It's like the core of your business is going to come from the people who have actively subscribed to you specifically and are bypassing whatever social media gate gatekeepers there are.

Baldur Bjarnason 43:04

I do-, I don't get the online businesses who don't even have an RSS feed, because they're literally leaving money on the table, and that's kind of... I'm sorry to sound so mercenary about it, but it's

like, I've been doing this for, doing web dev for 25 years, something like and I was involved in, worked in publishing for years. And it's like, you can't get good stuff without the money, like you, unless people get paid to make the good stuff, you don't get the good stuff. So, you have to have a revenue stream there somewhere, you have to have a sustainable business model. And like, throwing stuff on Twitter, that's not a sustainable business model. Throwing stuff on Spotify, that's, that's not a sustainable business model. You need that direct communication, and why people voluntarily give that up to join the trendy social media site *du jour* is beyond me. But what are you going to do?! Keep on trucking, do your own thing, ignore the crowd, I guess.

Martin Feld 44:05

What I've really enjoyed about listening to you so far is that you've given very clear ideas of your own shifts in identity, and career and the very multifaceted way that you think about all these media interacting together.

Baldur Bjarnason 44:22

Mmm...

Martin Feld 44:23

One element of your identity that I'd really like to explore is the Mac. And the reason that I bring that up is because earlier in this discussion, you brought up that memory of using HyperCard or family bringing home a Macintosh, and very central to this Apple tech podcasting community—whose content you say you've moved away from somewhat—that usage of the Mac or Apple products, this pop culture thing, that seems like it was some sort of connection or or interest. Can you tell me about your connection with technology and the Mac as a tool or a brand, how you've changed or how you think about that?

Baldur Bjarnason 45:07

Yeah, I mean, I was always a Mac person. Like, back in the 90s, we were all Mac people. I think I had, what was it? The Performa 7000, no, 5000-something, it was probably the worst Mac ever made! But you know, it was a Mac, and that made it immediately lighter and easier to use than the Windows machine, and I still stand by that even though the old system OS was unreliable as Hell, kept crashing—uh, still nicer to use and in many ways, still nicer to to use than the, um, like Mac OS, uh, Mac OS X that took over from it. Basically, for a long time, being a Mac user was a big part of my computer identity, and one of the, one of the things about about the media environment is that it's like, same as with design, it's very Mac-oriented. The computer labs at the the Art Media Design faculty I went to was, were Macs exclusively and, you know, not a single Windows machine. Uh no, there was one Windows machine that was in the audio studio that controlled... what was the...? They had audio boards, that was Windows only; I can't remember, they got bought later on, and then merged and renamed... Pro Tools! Pretty sure that that machine was the only one that was Windows-based at the university where I studied first.

Baldur Bjarnason 46:32

So I've always been, it's been a part of my identity. But I think always, from a reason perspective, in that the Apple Human Interface Guidelines are actually a solid document, it's actually a solid design document. And, sort of my ambivalence about Apple tends to increase, have increased proportionally with their decline in user interface design, which has been steady. And it's kind of, that's one of the reasons why those podcasts turn me off: is that they don't see that the modern macOS has a much, much worse user interface than it did 10 years ago. It's a massive decline! It's, it's just, I can't... these, like all of these guys in this podcast, they've been using Macs for probably 20 years and they keep talking about improvements and new features, and they can't see the fact that it is, like, just the new System Preferences (System Settings), like where they normalised it so it looks a bit like it does on the iPhone. It's awful! It's, it's an awful, awful idea! Disk Utility is awful, degra-, uh, it's degraded over the over the, the Apple software has been in constant decline for the past 10 years, and it's been really frustrating to, like, why aren't they angry? Like they should be angry about this! Like, if they were actually like, looking at this from an actual user perspective, they should be just really constantly angry about how they're being screwed over by, basically, the features of these platforms constantly being harder and harder to use! And it's just, I don't get it. I don't get why, why nobody, it's like it feels, being like, being gaslit it's like, 'Oh my God! This is, this is such an amazing new feature and it enables these things!' It's like, but it's made everything else harder!

Baldur Bjarnason 48:31

And it applies to other, like, Apple devices, like the iPad is like: I use my iPad for, like, 90 per cent of my my online reading. It's a great reading tool! And there's the like, I bought literally the first-generation iPad, and I've been buying it regularly as it improved, and then during one odd damn OS upgrade, all of a sudden, they changed one of the gestures that I regularly use, like, there's a like scroll forward/scroll back gesture that you do when you're, when you're browsing, and all of a sudden, half the, half the fucking time, when I scroll back, it launches a fucking screenshot tool! And it's like, 'For fuck's sake, I've had this muscle memory gesture thing down for a literal fucking decade! And you fucking change it on me, so that now I have to fucking every fucking time I have to scroll on the fucking Internet, I pop up a fucking screenshot! I'm not fucking taking your screenshot of Twitter for the ten-thousandth time!'

Baldur Bjarnason 49:32

And it's like what do...? Did they not test this with anybody? What's fucking going...? So as you can tell, this is a huge source of frustration for me, and it, because it happens every day. Like literally, every single morning I run into this and I have to try and retrain a muscle, muscle-memory gesture, a gesture that I've had trained for a decade and now they changed... and it's not the only one! They do this with trackpad gestures on, on the mouse said and with, they move things that were, had been the same place for a decade and they, and it's just... why they aren't just... I'm so, so angry about this, I get speechless—as you can tell, that's not, that doesn't happen often! It's

rare that I get speechless. But why this isn't like a running theme through every single Mac media podcast, Mac tech podcast, for the past, like four or five years, why are they talking about, like, handover between the iPhone and the Mac when none of the basic features are working? It's like, what are they doing on these Macs that they are running into these issues? Uh, I just don't get it! I just don't get why they aren't running into the same day-to-day increasing frustrations, um, that are with these devices that I do!

Baldur Bjarnason 50:52

And, this feels like such a betrayal because the app was always better. It was like the user interface. The computers were crap, their computers were slow, they were unreliable. Like, my Mac Performa literally had a loose wire where the screen turned yellow half the time. Like, the production quality was awful but the user interface was always amazing! It was always great! And even the Mac OS X was, it was the best Unix there was, like, in terms of usability. Now we've reached a point where, like a Linux desktop system, that's with the user interface put together by bloody volunteers, by nerds, who you know, refuse to even read through a single human interface guideline, they have a nicer and easier-to-use desktop user interface than the Mac! And it's like, that just should not happen. That's not, that's like world-reality-breaking change that the GNOMEs should not be easier to use than a new macOS desktop system. And why we let them get away with it, it just boggles the mind, I don't get it. It's just, that's another reason why, it's like, I keep listening to it listening to them talk about these features, and it's like, but the software is awful! It's unreliable. It's like, when they changed Safari, and it's like, all of a sudden, you had relearn all the tab thingies, and then they brought that back and you had to relearn it again. And, and now it's like, then they change something with the tab loading, so that now when you're navigating, switching between tabs, and it starts reloading, and then it shifts all of a sudden, then when it finishes reloading to... but uh, what was going on? I wasn't there.

Baldur Bjarnason 52:35

Um, and it's just yeah, so I'm frustrated with the current Mac community, because they just don't seem to see that we've kind of switched from having not the best hardware, but really nice user interfaces, and now we switched to having the best hardware, but worse user interfaces. So there's like, I mean, I love the new ARM Macs, they're amazing, they're great, they're incredibly fast, but just spend a couple of years improving the user interface, just polish it a bit! And it's just, it's obviously not working. And it's just feels weird that nobody's talking about it, or like, the people who are talking about it get too angry so quickly, that they're not good guests on podcasts! It's like, um, there's a software developer and entrepreneur called Amy Hoy, and she's, like, has a long background in UX design, and you know, you see some of her rants on social media. And it's like, get her talking about some of the decline, in some of the some of the decline in user interfaces in many major platforms over the past few years, and you'll just, like see, like 100 tweets, like, BOOM! in a thread. It's like, people get so angry. Um, it's people in the, like, UX,

like user experience, user interface design field get so angry about this, because it feels like sort of a betrayal.

Baldur Bjarnason 53:59

It's like, the Mac was the haven; it was like, it was the place, um, where you knew that user experience would be prioritised, and now it's just... they're just like Windows. They're just, they've got exactly the same philosophy about user interface design as Windows. It's just, how can we, you know, shove more features into this because we need that for the next release? You know, it's what it is. It's a letdown, but, you know, I learnt that it's a mistake to support tech companies like they're a sports team or something. It's, and that's kind of the attitude I had for Apple for a long time; it was like my team. And, you know, mega corporations aren't on anybody's team; they're just on their own team. So it's... keeping a distance, uh, like an emotional distance to them is healthy, which I'm obviously failing at because otherwise I wouldn't be so angry.

Martin Feld 54:53

So this is feeding into that process of defamiliarisation that you mentioned before.

Baldur Bjarnason 54:58

Yeah, yeah. I, I also did this, like, deliberate experiment, uh, where I, for a while there, I was running—sounds mad when I describe it—but I was alternating, uh equal time, between macOS, Windows, and desktop Linux as a part of work, um even did a stint on ChromeOS, um, sort of to get a sense of how they compared. It sounds like hyperbole, but they're all awful. They're all like, it's obviously no thought put whatsoever into actual productivity. Like, back in the old days, like 20 years ago, they used to, actually to do productivity studies where they measured how quickly you you could do specific tasks in a computer. And you know, whether you needed help, and they don't do any of that anymore. They don't, none of these platforms do that. You can tell, you can tell, because there's regressions in every release. And like, Windows is prettier now than it used to, but it's still shit. Um desktop Linux has improved, but you still have the driver issue where you blink, and something goes wrong and you're down to how to solve it with a command line because there's some major gap in functionality there that nobody's gotten around to fixing. ChromeOS is just garbage. It's like, I don't understand how they managed to take something as simple as, 'This is an operating system that just has a web browser and nothing else', and turn it into garbage, but they did! I don't know how they did it, but it's unusable, it's, it's flaky. I've managed to crash... I know I'm a bug magnet, I've got this sort of personality that pushes the boundaries of what computers can do. It's like, I will do things like try to like see what happens if this browser has 200 open tabs in it and you know, nothing good, I can tell you that! It's uh, it'll, it'll be fine for a while but then like, turns out browsers have memory leaks. Uh, ChromeOS is awful. I don't like why they punish school children by us, forcing them to use ChromeOS is beyond me.

Baldur Bjarnason 57:00

It's just an atrocious operating system and then they keep changing it as well. It's like, you learn how to use it one day, and then they move everything around the next because, you know... do you know who jwz is? One of the early employees on Netscape, made his money in the .com, boom—he coined the term 'cascade of attention-deficient teenagers'. It's the development, er, software development model for all modern software, as in, it's a bunch of people who lose interest in what they're doing and do something new every new season. So there's always change and there's no reliability, there's no consistency, um, it's just, you get used to something and then there's another cascade of attention-deficient teenagers that get interested and everything changes. And it's like modern software's just like that, and it's, it's a struggle to find some stability in there. And that's kind of another reason why it gets so frustrating to hear people talk in such fond words about this feature cascade, in that I need stability for my work, man! I need the underlying platform for my work to not change, like, don't move! It's like, you're the foundation, you're not supposed to move. It's like, foundations that shift and move are not good foundations, they're bad foundations.

Baldur Bjarnason 57:02

Operating systems should be stable, they should not change, they should be... but we don't have that today, um, we have the other thing, which is that everybody needs to have a new feature this, this season, because apparently that sells computers. So, it's frustrating. At least sort of the desktop Linux thing, even though they have like, so many problems with with desktop Linux; it's like nice veneer of interesting design for a lot of them, but like, huge gaps where like, 'Yeah, no, this major thing, nobody got around to writing that; you have to hand-code that in Perl'. And it's like, 'Yeah, I'm not gonna do that'. So I don't have the time to do that sort of nonsense. I don't know, it's, it's just a frustrating time I find to be in software, because it does feel like there's been a sea-change over the past four or five years; it didn't used to be this unstable, especially like the Mac. I think that might have been just like they were disinterested in it. That's why they didn't want change gear all the time, so maybe the stagnation would have been a better a better option. I don't know.

Baldur Bjarnason 59:24

Same thing with Windows, it's like, it's constantly changing now. They're they're moving it and moving things in every release, and that's because they finally like updating it. Maybe we would have all just been better off if they just sat on Windows 7 for several years and not done anything. Of course, we would have gotten a tonne of security bugs. So it would have been a improvement, but it would have been a bit of different kinds of disaster, I think. I'm hoping that there's going to be a return to, uh, different kinds of software development now that they laid all of those people off. But, like I said, they need to play through the systemic decline first, because, I don't know, you know, anybody who tells you that you can actually lay off 20 per cent off of the workforce of a software company and not have seriously bad things happen, they're lying to you. It's just

impossible. It's just a question of time, so if you see, like reliability errors, or like, I'll bet the first, like, you're gonna see a lot more moderation failures for, um, the public-facing sides of, of these companies.

Baldur Bjarnason 1:00:30

But yeah, anyway, I'm hoping that after everything goes a little bit to pot, uh, we'll have an era where people focus on stability and improving things, but we're not there yet. Probably we'll have to get over the AI nonsense first, which is frustrating, because there's just so much making-shit-up going on there. So many, so many lies, I mean, not lies, they are lies, but people think they're saying they think they're telling the truth. So I don't know what I want to call that... delusions? Yeah, let's call it delusions. Like, they literally think that they're on the verge of of, like, creating HAL, in a good way, which is like, a nonsense proposition, right, right at the start. Anyway, I've been rambling, thinking out loud, I think is the term.

Martin Feld 1:01:19

No no, it's that kind of extended thought process or sharing your views or experiences, that's exactly what I'm after. And, I suppose as my last kind of formal question, I want to pick up on that word that you said towards the end there, which was 'hoping' or 'hope'; you were talking specifically about a future direction for software development. Taking that hope that you're expressing—and I'm not gonna ask you to predict anything, because I know what you said about predictions—what's your kind of hope for the media environment? Things like podcasting, you spoke about multi-format, RSS and so on, what's your hope for the direction of things like podcasts, and audio and other supplementary or surrounding media, given your experience in broadcasting and interactive media?

Baldur Bjarnason 1:02:08

Well, my hope is that more people will realise how important it is to have a website with an RSS feed and as a hub for whatever project you're having that you should not—never, like—refer to a Facebook page or on Apple Podcasts page as the the core hub for your project. And this applies to like pretty much everywhere, like, with open-source software, the GitHub repository is not the homepage for your software project, that's, you need a website. That's the hub and that technology still works, it's uh, you still kind of, you can do still amazing things with, like static markup, you know, whether it's HTML, or XML or RSS, you can still do incredibly powerful things just with loading markup on a website, whether it's dynamic, or static, or whatever. And that is an incredibly capable hub that you can build on, don't build on on Threads, or Bluesky or whatever. You have your core, your open core built on open protocols and open file formats, and you feed in all the closed stuff from there. Uh, that's worked amazingly well for a lot of people and a lot businesses for the past 20 years, and it's likely going to outlast, I mean, there's a decent chance that my personal website will have outlasted, uh, will outlast Twitter. You know, it was there before

Twitter and it has a good chance (by the looks of it), that it's going to outlast Twitter. And there's gonna, it's gonna outlast app platform *du jour*.

Baldur Bjarnason 1:03:56

A lot of people think that you need these massive web development frameworks to do anything interesting, but every project I do is run from a static, static sites—static markup, flat files, processed and built and pushed out onto the Web. There's no complex client-side stuff, no complex server-side stuff; it's just content in a markup file and uh, some, with some nice styles on top and uh, that works incredibly well! And it's worked in a way that is surprisingly, like has a surprising reach. Like, you could open... for example, uh, um, one of the Macs that I used for the longest time was the— what my dad calls the 'toilet-seat iBooks'. Uh, like the one I see you, in the background.

Martin Feld 1:04:47

G3?

Baldur Bjarnason 1:04:48

Yeah, I had one of those for longest time, wrote so much on it and worked, and um, I had a like, er, if I remember correctly, I had an early version of NetNewsWire, um, the the RSS feed reader, which got resurrected and is still, is still going on now with the same developer. And I've been maintaining my list of of RSS feeds ever since! It's literally, uh, like I've got in my current OPML file, is like, something like 1200 RSS feeds. Half of them are inactive, because I never removed uh, an RSS feed, even though like the blog, I was, like, I was following, so some of them are blogs I was following in like 2006. They stopped and the domain has lapsed and everything but it's still there. And if somebody, if they renew the blog, the domain and start posting again, I literally will start get, uh, updates. And now that has actually happened. There's been, like, I've had a blog, seen a couple of times, blogs get resurrected, like four or five years later. And uh, same thing applies with podcasts. This thing's durable, man; this lasts forever. And that's an amazing, amazing base to build on. And there's nothing else that can rival that.

Baldur Bjarnason 1:06:03

It's, it's, it doesn't matter if it sounds mundane. It's something that, in there, that there's an emotion there that drove them to it. And it's, it comes through in the text. Same thing, like uh, with podcasts that were inactive, and somebody comes back that I think, like for example, the uh, the Amy Hoy that I mentioned earlier, she had a *Stacking the Bricks* podcast that was inactive. And then there was a new episode and it was like, it was like, amazing! This is great to listen! It's like they felt the need to say something and talked about their coming back after illness and it was like, full of positive energy. And that's something that the closed platforms just can never match, they will never have that. It's not built into them; it's built into the open platform. And that's why it's, it's, it's always going to be my go-to. It's... so many great experiences there.

Baldur Bjarnason 1:06:03

It's like, if you leave a social media account untouched for, you know, eight years, if in the unlikely case that they don't just unilaterally turn you off and hand out your username to somebody else, odds are that something will go wrong when you, when it's resurrected, and you won't reach any of the same people that were listening or you were reaching at the start—if the platform is even still around in the first place. But with an RSS feed is like, still in my, you know, if I didn't unsubscribe and I've been maintaining, uh, using the same feed reader apps for four years, start posting again, I'll start reading again! Yeah, I haven't seen you for a while, welcome back! And it's, it's great, um, because, well, it's like, um, one of the things that people misunderstand, I think, about both blogs and podcasts is that, you don't have to do this, like on a cadence, like, every week or every month, or it's like my app that I'm using will let me know when you update. And like, I've got a bunch of things in my feed reader that are, you know, clearly blogs that are only updated when the writer has a undeniable, irresistible need to write about something, and those are always amazing! Those are always great! It's like somebody, there's something that caused the urge of somebody to come back after five years and write about something. It's always amazing to read.

Baldur Bjarnason 1:08:15

No, and you've made it very clear that devotion to RSS...

Baldur Bjarnason 1:08:31

Mmm...

Martin Feld 1:08:31

...and that stability or that ability for things to return serendipitously or unexpectedly. That's really, really interesting. Now, we've covered a lot, or you've shared a lot of your history and views, and I really appreciate that. Is there anything that I haven't prompted or asked you specifically that you would like to share before we finish recording?

Baldur Bjarnason 1:08:51

Nothing really that comes to mind, except um, just I like the, to reiterate the this is the, this is the plumbing of the Web. This is the, like, RSS and podcasts and blogs... people may think they're outmoded and abandoned and gone, but they're still there, and there's still thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people who, who follow—even blogs are still there. And podcasts, even though there, there's a talk about like a podcast downturn or like sponsorships going away, it's still going to be there in 10 years. Podcasts are still going to be, going to be here as long as there's a network. And you can't say that about any of the other crap that, um, that the tech industry is pushing out these days. That's the, I think that's, that's the note I would like to end on.

Martin Feld 1:09:46

That's perfect. And I don't think anyone's gonna misunderstand what you just said.

Baldur Bjarnason 1:09:50

Excellent.

Martin Feld 1:09:51

Very direct, very clear. Look, Baldur, this has been absolutely fantastic. I want to thank you for your generous time on *Really Specific Stories*. Thank you for agreeing to the interview and sharing your views with listeners.

Baldur Bjarnason 1:10:03

Been my pleasure!