

## Episode 3.25 Keep Podcasting Weird

April 12, 2019

Hannah (Host): [00:00](#) [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*, and I'm coming to you with a, let's say, a different kind of energy than usual today. For the first time ever, I am recording a minisode while reclined entirely on my couch. Don't worry, [laughs] I'm not particularly sick or injured and just extremely tired. It's the end of the semester. I have been traveling a ton for the past couple of months, I've got a bunch more travel coming up. But I'm finished teaching for the moment and I'm not going anywhere for a couple of weeks and I feel like my entire body has just said, "oh, are we staying still for a second? Sounds great. Please lie down." I'm filled with a powerful desire to lie down all the time. So I'm leaning into it. Let's say this case, the "it" is my couch. and by "leaning" I mean reclining upon. So this might be a shortish minisode or who knows, maybe this extremely chill couch reclining energy will turn it into an unusually long minisode. But chill energy aside, I do actually have a secret feminist agenda for this week . So let's hear it. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans].

Hannah (Host): [01:39](#) So starting with last week's conversation with Jimanekia, I said I was going to spend the next cluster of episodes thinking a little bit, sort of, specifically about this project and the work that *Secret Feminist Agenda* has been doing so that I can draw this phase of the podcast to a close. "Phase," I said, not the podcast, just this phase. So in this episode, I actually want to think out loud about podcasting itself as a medium. I'm inspired by a couple of things here. In part I'm inspired by the fact that I've been giving a number of workshops about podcasting over the past few weeks that's been a big part of the work travel that I've been doing. And I'm actually just starting to think about what it might look like to turn those workshops and talks I've been giving about podcasting into some sort of book, like a guide book about podcasting in the university, and why I think it's great and why I think more people should get into it, and how you might get started. So my brain is sort of oriented around those practical concerns of podcasting right now. And I've been particularly thinking about podcasting as a, as a digital publishing medium, as something that is sometimes compared to platforms like YouTube or Twitter, but that I actually think functions differently in really important ways. And some of the thinking that I've been doing or, around podcasting and why it interests me really came into focus today during a meeting that I had with the other members of the programming committee

for the Vancouver Podcast Festival. We're starting to amp up for the 2019 festival, which, you know, P.S. is happening in November, November 7th to 10th, 2019. Save the dates. And we were talking specifically about how we imagine the festival him, and what we want to prioritize, and how we collectively think about podcasting as a medium. And one of the committee members, my, my friend Joe, shout out to Joe, pointed out that with recent events like the sale of Gimlet to Spotify, there's a way that podcasting as a medium has been drawn into the venture capitalism tech startup world. There's a, there's a long sort of link between podcasting and the tech world, but, but specifically Gimlet getting successfully sold to Spotify suggests that there's a way to monetize podcasting by creating some sort of podcasting tech startup through a ton of venture capital and then successfully selling it to a bigger corporation. I think we're going to see that kind of sense that there is money in them, there hills. The "hills" in this case being podcasting and we're going to see lots of people who are, who are interested in monetizing it, getting on board and, and in some ways that could be a good thing, more money. Getting pumped into the medium means more opportunities, but it also signals the possibility of a loss. And what we risk losing is the really DIY pleasures of podcasting as a medium, and specifically the way that it hasn't been absorbed into, sort of, corporate digital media yet.

Hannah (Host):

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Podcasting is a medium. It's not a platform, it's not a company. Podcasting is not comparable to something like YouTube or Facebook. There are certainly companies associated with it, but as a whole it isn't totally encompassed by the, the logics of these, these kinds of big corporations. And unlike a lot of the rest of the Internet in 2019, podcasting still functions according to the logics of the open web, which is to say that people select the podcasts they want to listen to and subscribe to them. Podcasts aren't so much driven into your life by a series of algorithms that drive you further and further towards different kinds of content for the sake of some corporation trying to monetize your attention. And that's a good thing. I'll, I'll link some articles in the show notes about the dangers of platforms like YouTube, which are specifically interested in monetizing your attention, and that have these autoplay algorithms that are designed to keep you on the platform as long as possible. And we've seen lots of news recently about the ways that YouTube is linked to really dangerous forms of political radicalization. We know similar things are true about Facebook and the way that again, the sort of corporate algorithms drive particular kinds of information into your feeds for reasons that have to do with the desire of these corporations to monetize

your presence, and that desire to monetize you and your attention and your data and your eyeballs, your metaphorical eyeballs, not your literal eyeballs, has nothing to do with any sense of political responsibility. No, I don't want to romanticize podcasts and say that they're all good. There's this absolute garbage. There's tons of garbage. And by "garbage" here, I mean, you know, hateful right-wing discourse, racism, misogyny, transphobia. I mean it's, it's a medium, it contains multitudes, but it hasn't been centralized yet. It hasn't been absorbed fully into corporate logics yet.

Hannah (Host):

[07:26](#)

And so there's still there remains, within podcasting, really exciting possibilities for people to do different kinds of things with them. For people to tell stories and highlight voices that are excluded from other platforms. For people to imagine different kinds of collective organizing or network organizing that looks differently from how traditional companies are run. For people to collaborate in innovative ways. It's still early days for podcasting. And sure, we can assume that inevitably podcast will go the same way as digital videos, which is that we will get really, really good at tracking how people are engaging with them, and monetizing people's attention, and eventually all of the interesting DIY ethos will get sucked out of them in favor of, sort of, corporate centralization and things looking more and more of the same, but I don't think that's inevitable. I think that there's possibilities to keep keep podcasting a little weird. And that has a lot to do with supporting the work that you want to see in the world. It has a lot to do with supporting the creators and the networks that you're interested in, sometimes in monetary ways. It has to do with getting involved in podcasting if you think it's an exciting medium, you know, picking up a microphone and and trying your hand at it. And understanding not just why they're neat and fun to listen to, but also how they're still kind of doing something a little bit different as a medium. How that, that potential still exists for them to function a little bit differently and maybe maybe caring about that potential, caring about how they function differently. And maybe thinking about if you care about podcasts, about what you could do to support that difference, you know, whether is supporting the network or or making a point of listening and subscribing to podcasts that aren't already massively popular, but are a little bit niche and a little bit weird. I mean heck, if you're listening to this, you are already actively supporting a podcast that's a little bit niche and a little bit weird, so congratulations. You're helping to, to keep this medium a little strange. I say a lot of the time that if you set out to make a podcast and your goal is to have fun and maybe entertain five people, that is a beautiful goal and it's really great that this is a

## Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

medium that is open and available to people to create and play in and that because it doesn't cost a huge amount of money to get involved, you're not taking a massive risk by trying your hand at it. And you don't have to make conservative or comfortable choices that will find large audiences. You can be really, really weird. You can be really, really niche and it's okay if only five people listen, because you're not necessarily losing something huge by not gathering massive audiences, and that's really great. I'm really beautiful and really exciting and I hope a value of creating weird DIY stuff that collectively will, we'll keep trying to hold onto. Okay. I remain reclined on my couch, but from this comfortable position, I am now going to segue to Kaarina. [Music: "I Will" by Mitski]

Kaarina: [11:18](#) Hello and welcome to Kaarina's Cozy Self Care Corner. Today we have guest host Cobweb, who's here to tell you some gentle purrs can really help you feel better. [Cat purrs] Thank you so much for that contribution, Cobweb. Have a good weekend. [Music: "I Will" by Mitski]

Hannah (Host): [13:09](#) As always, you can find show notes and the rest of the episodes of *Secret Feminist Agenda* on [secretfeministagenda.com](http://secretfeministagenda.com). You can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor, you can follow Kaarina @kaarinasaurus, and you can tweet about the podcast, you've seen the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. Don't forget to go on to Apple and rate or review the podcast. We've got two lovely new reviews this week. One from EPL2019, apparently in the USA, which suggests that that's not short for the Edmonton Public Library, but in my heart this is a library reviewing me. And then one from K.MCN43 also in The States. The podcast's theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album Chub Rub. You can download the entire album on [freemusicarchive.org](http://freemusicarchive.org) or follow them on Facebook. Kaarina's theme song is "I Will" by Mitski. *Secret Feminist Agenda* is recorded on the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh first nations where I'm grateful to live and work. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]