

SMALL TOWN
BIG DREAMS

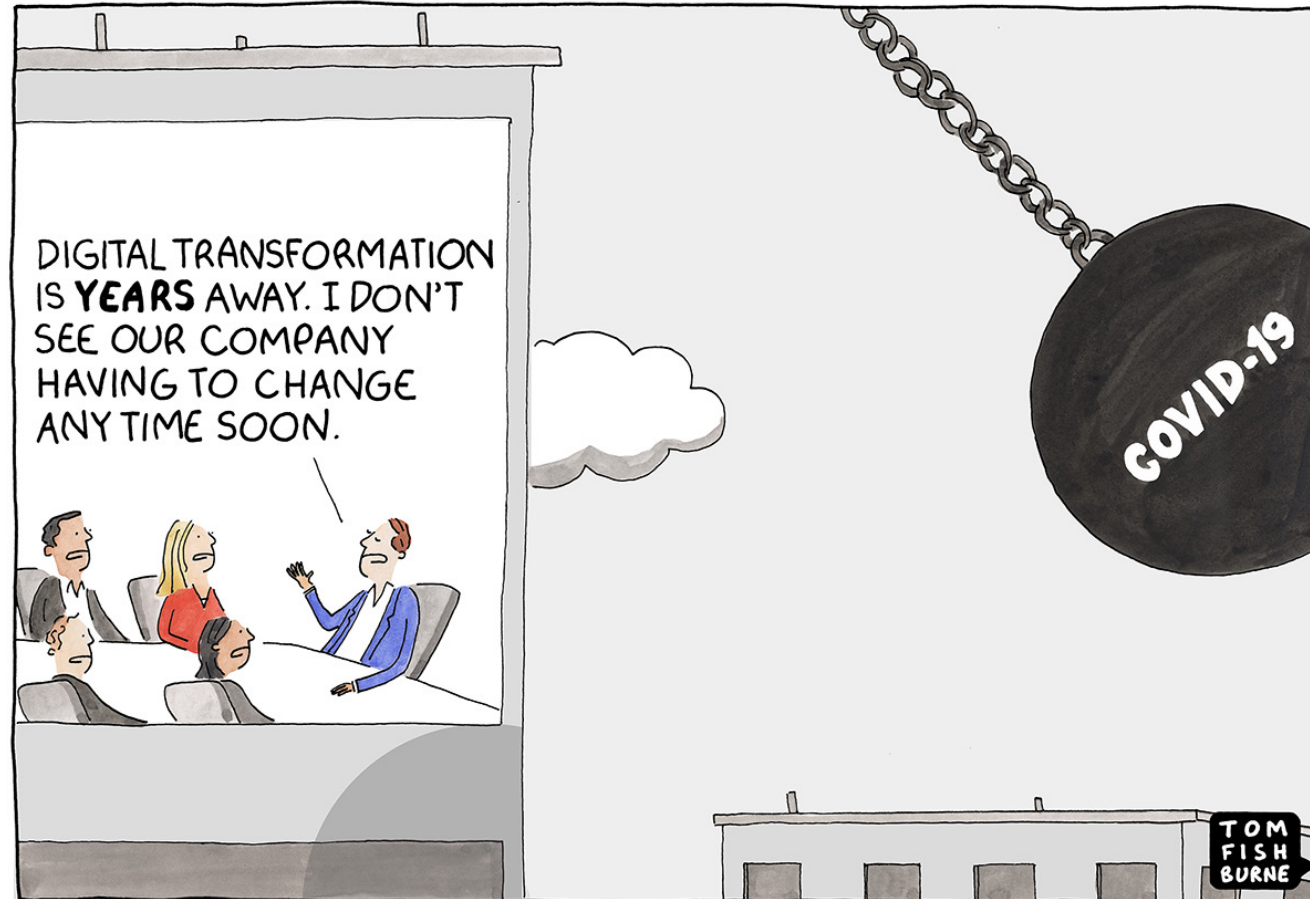
HOW TO MAKE AN AUDIO DOCUMENTARY

Graeme Watson & Karishma Kusrkar

BACKGROUND

- Small Town Big Dreams (2018 - Present)
- Interview podcast in association with Blick Studios
- Purpose to showcase and tell the real life, unvarnished stories of Northern Ireland's creative industry entrepreneurs and innovators
- Film producers, designers, musicians, comedians, visual artists, event producers, tech innovators, architects, magicians
- Evolved from a single podcast into a channel / producer of different shows for people interested in the creative industries
- January 2020...

AND THEN...



AND THEN...

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REWRITING THE NARRATIVE

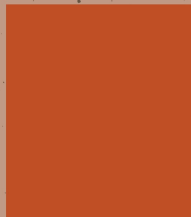
Rewriting the Narrative is an open call to the Northern Ireland creative industries challenging them to explore where and how changes have impacted the creative industries. More importantly the call is aimed at identifying how we can learn from the current situation, both positives and negatives, and use it to strengthen the industry once normality returns. The call focuses upon 5 core themes:



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THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

**A 4-PART AUDIO DOCUMENTARY SERIES
ON CREATIVES DURING CORONAVIRUS**



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HOW WE MADE AN AUDIO DOC

- May-September 2020 (5 months)
- Released throughout October 2020 via iTunes, Spotify etc.
- Team
 - Christine James - Executive Producer (Blick Studios)
 - Karishma Kusrkar & Graeme Watson - content producers
 - Dr Brian Dixon (Ulster University) - academic consultant
- 15 interviewees + voice note submissions
- 4 x 40-50 minute episodes

EPIISODES

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**THE GREAT
DISRUPTION**



**TOGETHER
APART**

**CONNECTION
LOST?**



**STAYING
SANE**



THE PROCESS

Start Date: May 2020

May 2020

- Investigate key issues and engage with creative sector
- Research podcast content
- Identify 15 creative businesses and individuals from different backgrounds and communities to participate in interviews
- Prepare scripts and questions for interviews
- **Project milestone** - identify participants and key issues

June - July 2020

- Remote interviews
- Podcast editing
- Create transcripts and show notes
- Create artwork & source imagery for promotion
- Launch and promote project
- **Project Milestones** - Project interviews and launch project and online event

July - August 2020

- Marketing and promotion for podcasts
- Release podcast episodes in one go (proposed - Thursday 30th August?)
- Promote podcast through partner organisations and linked networks
- Compile resources & key findings
- Film short interviews for Instagram TV
- **Project Milestones** - Online event and Podcast Release

August-September 2020

- **Launch and promote online event**
- Host online event - (proposed - Wednesday 5 September)
- Gather data and research information to create 'Creative Enterprise Toolkit'
- Promote toolkit through partner organisations and linked networks

ADVICE TO DIY PODCASTERS

- **Planning**

- What do you want to do?
- Why do you want to do it?
- Who do you want to interview?
 - Before you think of specific people, set your parameters - what kind of people, why? Then who?
 - Inviting people to be interviewed / liaising
- How do you want your podcast to sound? Find models
- How do you want to tell the story?

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

- **Interviewing & Recording**
 - How much should you prepare?
 - Where are you going to interview your interviewee?
 - How are you going to record them?
 - Interviewee communication
 - Aside from recording the conversation, do you want additional ambient audio?

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

- **Writing & Editing**
 - How do you whittle down a 30-60 minute interview to 7 minutes of audio?
 - Editing software
 - Writing and recording narrative links
 - 'Voice acting'

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

- **Music & Ambience**

- The problem of copyright
- How to solve?
 - Get a co-host in a band
 - YouTube audio library
 - Free Music Archive*
 - Paid audio libraries, eg. Epidemic Sound
 - For ambient noise – [Freesound.org](https://www.freesound.org)
 - Sounds from participants

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

- **Is a podcast an audio project or a multimedia project?**
 - Multimedia projects
 - Video trailers and images for social media
 - YouTube platform?
 - Graphic design
- **Marketing/Promoting**
 - How to promote in a saturated market?

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Audio documentaries can be labour intensive! But very satisfying
- They require you to pick up a lot of new skills in different areas very quickly
- You realise how important audio quality and sound design is to VIDEO CONTENT - so even if you move on from audio, I think it will make you a better video content producer
- Start small, give yourself assignments, make small documentary features to learn the tricks
- Totally DIY