

SAIT Podcast: Bonus Episode: The Cast Behind The Pod

[00:00:00] **ANNCR:** The best careers you never knew existed podcast sparked by SAIT and co hosted by Citi, the podcast that helps you navigate jobs, learn about new careers and industries.

[00:00:12] **Lora:** Hi, I'm Lora and I work in continuing education and professional studies at

[00:00:17] **Zach:** SAIT. Hi, I'm Zach and I'm the founder of Careers in Technology and

[00:00:21] **Terran:** Innovation.

[00:00:21] **Lora:** Thanks for joining our podcast. So today. We're lucky to have two guests in our topic for podcast producer, and I was wondering if Jenna and Taryn, you can

[00:00:33] **Jenna:** introduce yourself. Yeah, I'm Jenna. I am a podcast producer for this podcast, and I just graduated from SAIT's radio broadcasting program in June. I grew up in the town of Athabasca, which is really northern Alberta, and I've moved to Calgary when I was about 12, and I've lived here ever since, and I love it.

[00:00:56] **Terran:** Hi, my name is Taren Anthony Allen. I work primarily as a writer and producer, and I also work on this podcast. I'm originally from Seattle, but I've lived in Calgary most of my life. Out of all the podcasts that you've done,

[00:01:12] **Zach:** is this one your

[00:01:13] **Terran:** favorite? You have to say yes. Yes, and I'll I can tell you why I've got many opportunities to work on a lot of podcasts in like corporate settings as well as doing freelance work.

[00:01:24] **Terran:** And those have always been proposed by someone higher up. The idea was already completely done with the creative vision in mind with this I got a lot of inputs in kind of the direction and tone. So it feels more like something that's my baby versus something that was corporately made by committee.

[00:01:43] **Terran:** Sounds like a pretty good compliment to you, Lora.

[00:01:46] **Jenna:** More brains are better than one. I am uh, proud I had a podcast

[00:01:50] **Lora:** with you. You know, it's funny, because we were talking about, you know, the triggers that you don't really know exist. I've learned so much from the both of you around podcast producing,

[00:02:01] **Jenna:** it's very

[00:02:02] **Lora:** different from both of you,

[00:02:06] **Lora:** what attracted you to this role and why did you get into

[00:02:08] **Terran:** it? Just podcasting in general or this specific role? Podcasting in general. Is podcasting a job? Is it a career? It can be. Do you consider yourself your career a podcaster? I would most likely call myself an audio producer before a podcaster. For me, it was very much, I fell into it.

[00:02:30] **Terran:** I've always been into media related things. I did music for a little while. Was into film for a little bit, spent seven years doing stand up comedy, and then all of a sudden I wanted to focus on a different career path, just something that felt more stable, so I got into the SAIT radio program, very last minute application.

[00:02:53] **Terran:** Got in completely was sold on everything and then the non stop there realized I loved writing and editing audio and then never really looked back. I

[00:03:04] **Jenna:** grew up wanting to be a conservation officer, just completely different. And then. I had a friend when I was maybe in like grade 10 and he was telling me about how his brother took the radio program at SAIT and I was like, you know what?

[00:03:18] **Jenna:** That sounds super fun. Maybe I'll try something a little bit more fun than something more serious. And I had these dreams of being like a big radio announcer. I thought it would be awesome. And then I got into the program and kind of fell more in love with the production side of things. So that's the path that I went.

[00:03:39] **Jenna:** And then I was lucky enough to Learn this job before finishing school. What

[00:03:45] **Zach:** makes audio producing

[00:03:46] **Terran:** particularly fun? Just

[00:03:48] **Jenna:** the you can be so creative with it and it can go in like any different direction You could give one producer a voiceover and say okay edit this into a commercial you can do whatever you want and you could give that to two producers and They're going to do completely different things.

[00:04:07] **Jenna:** So just, you could be fully creative with it. And I really like that side of it. So

[00:04:12] **Terran:** what would

[00:04:12] **Zach:** you say are the key things that an audio producer

[00:04:16] **Terran:** does? Being an audio producer is, uh, one of those roles that you don't notice if it's good, but you notice if it's bad. So it's just. Cleaning up the audio, removing all those imperfections in the voice, things that you would pick up on maybe normal conversation or stuff.

[00:04:31] **Terran:** Mouth clicks, little popping P's into a microphone just to make everything sound as human and as clear as possible. There's also the creative aspects of it when TV, film, radio, where you get to add your little flare. To it, and whether that's adding music, adding additional sound effects. Would you consider it a creative process?

[00:04:53] **Terran:** The way that I think about it is, I think we have a technical skill that is really bolstered by being creative. There is like a method to the madness for how you edit something. I can look at the audio levels and where things are and know how to produce it without listening, but that's all well and good and you can do the basics, but the most important thing to be like a successful in audio editing and creative endeavors, and I often when I talk about this, I talk about creative writing since they're so interlocked.

[00:05:25] **Terran:** is being able to write good audio content and then also be able to produce that. So

[00:05:31] **Jenna:** you've talked a little bit about, and

[00:05:32] **Lora:** I can

[00:05:33] **Jenna:** appreciate the editing or audio producing,

[00:05:36] **Lora:** cause I mean, my team tells me all the time, you guys make me sound good, um, by what you've done. And then you talked a little

[00:05:41] **Jenna:** bit about writing, um, but I know

[00:05:44] **Lora:** you both have had a huge influence on this podcast.

[00:05:47] **Lora:** And I'm curious about your

[00:05:48] **Jenna:** thoughts on what other

[00:05:50] **Lora:** skills that you see essential to this role, because I think there is. There was even a perspective that was matching what we're doing to the audience need and, you know, extended beyond, you know, some of those

[00:06:01] **Jenna:** technical skills. I think one of the things you need is you need to be a good listener and not only of the audio that you're producing, but what other people around you are saying, because The way that we kind of do it is, after recording, I'll produce the first draft and send it out to everyone for some feedback.

[00:06:22] **Jenna:** So, you need to be able to take constructive criticism well, and then, I think another big one, and I think this applies to almost any job, is you just need to be personable, because... Pre interviews with guests, we want them to feel as comfortable as possible. So I feel like those are two pretty big ones.

[00:06:41] **Terran:** I think it's one of those things where we're probably going to talk a lot about the SAIT radio program and television broadcast news, where that program teaches a lot of additional skills to go along with the editing and the technical skills.

[00:06:53] **Terran:** So things that I find beneficial every day is this stuff they taught us about writing and marketing. The voiceover work, we often do audience questions or listener questions, and these are things that we think the listeners would ask, and we need to overdub those, and Jenna and myself have overdubbed those on multiple occasions.

[00:07:15] **Terran:** Being a convincing VO person really helped. It's all just like little skills and managerial skills, things that we've covered on the podcast. Project management is probably. As podcast producers, we're dipping our toes into that as well. So, Taryn and Jenna, you're both

[00:07:30] **Zach:** supporting this podcast, producing this podcast, but you're playing distinct roles.

[00:07:34] **Zach:** Can you talk a little bit more about the different roles that you both have been in and how you work together?

[00:07:40] **Jenna:** My main role, I guess, would have to do with all of the actual audio editing and when we're doing an in person podcast, then I'll be in the booth watching the levels, pressing record, and all of that, and then once I'm done with that, I send it over to Taryn for some feedback, and then I fix all of that stuff until we have the final episode, and recently I have also been editing the

[00:08:08] **Terran:** transcripts.

[00:08:08] **Terran:** I give Jenna very harsh criticism, destroy all of her work all the time. And then... My role is closest to a project manager type role where I'm overseeing a lot of what's going on the audio and production side of things. So, overseeing, making sure our schedules are good, making sure production value, quality control, making sure everyone's where they need to be when mics are working, making sure we have mics where they need to be.

[00:08:34] **Jenna:** Well, and I think, Taryn, you also play an important,

[00:08:36] **Lora:** uh, you make an important connection to marketing as well. So, ensuring that The episodes are released, we have marketing assets associated with them, we have correct permissions from the guests. Well, you know, there's a lot of pieces that kind of wrap around getting it out and getting into the market that, that, uh, you know, kind of falls into that role of producer as well, which we really appreciate.

[00:08:59] **Zach:** So

[00:09:00] **Terran:** podcast producing on

[00:09:04] **Zach:** this episode, which is very

[00:09:06] **Terran:** meta

[00:09:07] **Zach:** as we're on the podcast, but Taryn, you use the more like a broader word,

[00:09:11] **Terran:** audio

[00:09:12] **Zach:** producer. So as an audio producer, obviously podcasting is an area that. that you can work in. What are some other

[00:09:20] **Terran:** things as an audio producer areas that you'd work? The traditional routes for what we both went to school for would be radio.

[00:09:29] **Terran:** All those ads on the radio station need to be edited and voiced by the producer or people in that's at the station aspects of working in film. I know people who started out on the same path as us. Now they do tick tock marketing. And just anything that really involves audio, there's a market for it.

[00:09:49] **Terran:** Despite it being one of those kind of, like how I said, you don't notice unless it's bad. Everything needs to hit a certain threshold in these industries, film, movie, for it to be marketable and for people not to notice.

[00:10:06] **Jenna:** I know I've had a

[00:10:07] **Lora:** ton of misconceptions about what podcasts. production included. Can

[00:10:12] **Jenna:** you just share a little bit around what are some

[00:10:14] **Lora:** of the common misconceptions around what you do, what podcast producers do and what audio producers

[00:10:21] **Jenna:** do?

[00:10:22] **Jenna:** I feel like one of the biggest misconceptions is that you kind of just sit down, record a podcast and post it. But in reality, like. Producers have listened to that multiple times, at least three times, and then they cut stuff out.

[00:10:38] **Lora:** They make changes with everything, so it's not just a

[00:10:40] **Jenna:** one step process.

[00:10:42] **Jenna:** There's tons of planning that's also involved, like coordinating with guests,

[00:10:47] **Lora:** if you're having guests, and even just between the

[00:10:49] **Jenna:** hosts, and then one of the other big things is like little things like you can't drink milk or have any dairy before recording an episode because Then you'll be creating a lot of mouth noise, or you can't say things directly into the microphone a

[00:11:09] **Jenna:** popping noise. So, it's just, there's tons of little things like that that you don't really think about when you're just an average person listening to podcasts.

[00:11:16] **Terran:** One big thing is when people are starting podcasts, radio and podcasts have a lot of overlap. One of those things that are overlap is how loud things should be.

[00:11:24] **Terran:** And, uh, when you're driving in your car, you rarely ever strain to hear something on the radio unless, unless you turn it all the way down. I think for me, that's on purpose category. When people are editing podcasts for the first time, they don't really know where their threshold should be for audio. If you're listening to who's starting a podcast, so designed to be listened on trains in the car, all these different places where you're out in public and you really need to make sure on the audio the people need to hear what you're saying.

[00:11:51] **Terran:** And a lot of these podcasts I hear, even like famous YouTubers I watch. with millions of subscribers. Can't seem to get it right.

[00:12:00] **Lora:** It's just gonna say, so if someone wanted to learn or didn't know it, like how would they learn aside from taking a program like we have? Are there opportunities for someone to learn?

[00:12:12] **Lora:** More organically, or do you really need to kind of put a skull to the

[00:12:16] **Terran:** ice? Knowing that my old professors will be listening to this, I would, you do not need to, with any line of work and the little technical skills, it really helps to have that first hand information. There's so many little things when you start a new job.

[00:12:32] **Terran:** It's like you would have never known unless you were in the building. But there are so many resources online. I'm subscribed to about five newsletters that give new information on like tech and things that are coming out and how AI is impacting the industry. It's more possible than ever to start.

[00:12:48] **Terran:** Speaking of AI, are you scared of AI? Will AI take your jobs?

[00:12:54] **Jenna:** I feel like for podcast production specifically, it could be kind of scary just because I feel like they're already making programs that can automatically EQ and compress voices super easily, so that could be a little bit scary, but maybe when it comes to, like, audio editing and radio, when you're doing, like, complex imaging and commercials, then...

[00:13:20] **Jenna:** I don't know how well AI will be able to do that, but

[00:13:24] **Terran:** yeah, this might be a longer answer. Jenny, you've probably heard my rants about this before. I think there are two aspects of doing audio production. It's the technical aspects as well as the creative aspects. The technical aspects, like I said, there's a method to it.

[00:13:38] **Terran:** Could an AI replicate it? Like effects like compression and EQ are on every piece of audio. 100% I think AI could impress and do things better than I can. There's also new applications with AI that improve the range of a microphone so you don't even need to have a big fancy microphone. If you want to get started, and these tools are very useful, saves a bunch of time for a lot of people.

[00:14:00] **Terran:** Some of the edit, it's not there yet, but I could definitely see people like big companies cutting corners to get AI to save costs, get things to the next level. And as far as the creative aspect of things, AI is really bad at writing jokes right now. And I think that's a good sign that it can write jokes and those jokes are solid, but they're not groundbreaking.

[00:14:23] **Terran:** They don't really get tone and the way that I usually work kind of patching together ideas taking from other places. So, whether or not, I think the technical aspects for sure, the creative and like the voices that we hear, I don't think they could be replaced, and that's kind of what's going on with the writer strikes in the US right now.

[00:14:42] **Terran:** Issues of like, where does, where is the line between AI and writers?

[00:14:48] **Lora:** There's always two sides of it. It's what could be automated, and the people side. Can't really be automated, so that connection, that authentic conversation, drawing people's stories out, I mean, those are a little bit harder to do. Yeah, it'll be interesting to see how the industry evolves.

[00:15:07] **Lora:** So if you, if someone was wanting to get started, what advice would you give them to get started in something like podcast producing, or if

[00:15:16] **Jenna:** they wanted to start a podcast, what advice would you give? Well, obviously I'm going to recommend that maybe you go to a program like the radio broadcasting program, or even there's tons of like.

[00:15:28] **Jenna:** online training that you can actually take to be a podcast producer, but if you want to kind of just figure it out by yourself, I'd recommend watch YouTube videos because there's so many different tutorials on how to learn just the basics like compression, EQ, reverb, things like that, but there's also videos on how to dive in a little bit deeper and learn some more stuff.

[00:15:51] **Jenna:** So I'd say it's really not that hard to get into and then the other thing I'd recommend is really make sure that you're planning and doing your research because I feel like that's one of the most important

[00:16:03] **Terran:** things as well. Number one step, you hire me and then we're good.

[00:16:07] **Jenna:** Me

[00:16:07] **Terran:** too. Tell me a little bit more, because I'm not as familiar as the rest of you, about the SAIT audio producer program.

[00:16:14] **Terran:** How long is it? What did you

[00:16:16] **Zach:** learn?

[00:16:17] **Terran:** What did you like about it? So it

[00:16:18] **Jenna:** wasn't just an audio producer program. It was the radio, television, and broadcast news program. It's two years, Taryn and I both majored in radio. You kind of deal with announcing, sales, production, writing, social media, so a little bit of everything there and for production specifically.

[00:16:40] **Jenna:** You do your own podcast in the second year, so you get a little experience there. My favorite part would be the radio commercials and radio imaging, I think those are pretty fun to produce, and yeah.

[00:16:52] **Terran:** The program is, um, supposed to be, like, very hands on. Essentially, on the second semester, you run the SAIT radio station.

[00:17:00] **Terran:** And then some weeks, some people are writing that week. The other people are producing the content on the station and it switches out every week of who's on there. So you have to be really on top of things you get in the first semester. You learn about those different little aspects like the taking those additional courses that most other programs have.

[00:17:19] **Terran:** The program prides itself on giving you real world experience. I think we're one of the only programs that actually have real clients on the station. We don't charge anything to appear on the station, and it's just for experience for the students. So, it's just real world experience dealing with clients, which is always hit or miss.

[00:17:38] **Terran:** And from that

[00:17:38] **Zach:** program, what's been the job market like? What type of roles are people landing? Is it

[00:17:44] **Terran:** robust? I know

[00:17:45] **Zach:** Jenna is currently going through her own process, but can you talk more about the opportunities that are

[00:17:50] **Terran:** available and what the job market's like? I can jump in. So for myself, I got, I got very lucky.

[00:17:55] **Terran:** I got a very good gig out of school working for Rogers Media. I worked there for four years. One of the things that we're told out of the program is be prepared to move. I had to move to Winnipeg for this opportunity. So it really depends. I think right when most

students are graduating, there's this kind of big radio shift where positions are being You know, Trade it around, higher ups are either retiring, producers are moving on to bigger things.

[00:18:20] **Terran:** So, there's always opportunities in afterschool. It's just depending on what you want. An audio producer, as Jenna is also experiencing, is one of those ones that is a very specialized thing and people like to stay in for a long time. It's really hard to get your foot into the door, but when you do, you've got the experience, you've got a lot under your belt, and it makes it a lot easier.

[00:18:41] **Terran:** And as long as you're networking, doing good work, you should be better. Right now, the industry is looking a little bit fuzzy. If you would have asked me two months ago, Before massive layoffs at big media companies and closing of podcast production studios, might have had a better opinion, but right now we're just in the weird AI era, seeing how things are impacting the industry.

[00:19:03] **Terran:** At least that's how I feel.

[00:19:05] **Jenna:** Yeah, I think I'd agree. So what do you

[00:19:08] **Lora:** think, you know, what's your prediction for the future around radio, broadcast, media, um, but we're also seeing a ton of opportunity in other areas. So I'm curious

[00:19:18] **Jenna:** about those perspectives. From what I've heard recently, I think maybe Taryn would definitely know more than me about this, but What I've noticed is, I think around, like, maybe after COVID, for radio production, companies have been downsizing and producers have been doing, instead of maybe one or two stations, now they're doing six or seven stations, and they're doing the same thing with writers as well, so, less people, but The people are doing way more things, so, I don't know, I hope that maybe they'll start hiring again soon, but right now it looks like they're just, they keep on downsizing a bit, but there are also more opportunities coming up with production, like for podcasts.

[00:20:00] **Jenna:** I've been seeing quite a few job postings for gaming companies for audio for video games, creating that audio and editing that, so. Maybe that's something else to look into.

[00:20:13] **Terran:** Yeah, I definitely agree with that. I think radio has traditionally been like a dinosaur of an industry sometimes. And this traditional route for people in our career path is to go down the route of radio, get the experience, bigger companies always have podcasts going and you get opportunities to work on those.

[00:20:34] **Terran:** And that's how I did it. And then was able to get some freelance work and really bolster out my portfolio. I think the industry just needs to adapt a little bit more. These places are content creation stations. Like every radio station has someone on air doing original content every day. And you'd think, why doesn't every one of these people have a podcast?

[00:20:57] **Terran:** Good question. I also asked that question a lot. And I think it's just because there's not enough people around to help support that. And whether that is because of just how much money the companies are making, or there isn't a desire for that type of content, it's just they, these companies need to try new things, whether that's going to doing those podcasts, doing more marketing on TikTok, doing more, more different content, because as of right now, like Jenna mentioned, these writer rooms and production places are very small, like giant, these markets that are making a lot of money.

[00:21:32] **Terran:** are held out by about three writers to two producers, if that. So, it's very scary, but on the other hand of things, there are definitely opportunities online more than ever. I've been approached way more than I ever have been about helping on these types of projects.

And there's new, and I think there have been people who've been seeing gaps in the kind of the demand for these things and have created platforms where you can apply to be a video editor for a YouTube channel or an audio editor for a YouTube channel.

[00:22:06] **Terran:** I think we're very much on the cusp of something changing, whether that's these bigger companies understanding the value of creative and content, or just the internet adapting faster than these companies can and giving people like us a more stable kind of career path. If you could give one piece

[00:22:26] **Zach:** of wisdom or advice to someone that's listening today, what would you say they should do as a first step?

[00:22:31] **Jenna:** Really, podcasts,

[00:22:38] **Jenna:** Watch YouTube videos. There's so many out there. And, yeah, if you don't feel like going to a program or any other type of schooling for this, then YouTube will be your best friend. There's tons of stuff on there. There's tons of free softwares that you can use, like Audacity. If you want maybe a little bit of an upgrade, I use Audition and I really like it.

[00:23:01] **Jenna:** There's also Pro Tools. Lots of people use that in radio specifically. And... If you maybe want to start your own podcast from the bottom and be a host as well, maybe... A podcast that you really like. I'd listen to it. I'd listen to see how it's edited and then you can kind of try and make yourself sound like that, obviously without fully copying someone, but just listen to your podcast that you normally listen to more in depth.

[00:23:31] **Jenna:** See if you can hear any edits and yeah, you really learn something new every day. I'm still

[00:23:37] **Terran:** learning. Yeah. I think messing around, trying it out is probably the best advice, if just you won't know until you try. I think there's always those awkward moments of recording your voice into a computer for the first time, trying out a software you're unfamiliar with.

[00:23:56] **Terran:** And wanting it to be good right away, getting used to that discomfort is probably the biggest thing and just there's so many resources like YouTube videos that can teach you how to speak into a microphone, YouTube videos that can give you the bare minimum of audio editing. And if not that, there are plenty of AI applications now that can boost your microphone quality, give you the baseline for how you should be editing your voice.

[00:24:21] **Terran:** Yeah, just try. The biggest thing about this industry is you don't go into it to make money, you go into it because you enjoy doing it. If you're not enjoying it...

[00:24:33] **Jenna:** So what

[00:24:33] **Lora:** about if you have an idea for content, do you just invite your friend to come over and say, Hey, let's do a podcast just to test out and try it out?

[00:24:45] **Jenna:** I mean, I feel like if you get to the point where you actually sit down and record something, that's already like really good because I feel like nowadays tons of people are like, Oh my gosh, I'm going to start my own podcast.

[00:24:58] **Jenna:** It's going to be so great. Yeah. This is what I'm going to call it. And then they kind of ask their friends, they figure out the name and then nothing really happens from there. So I feel like, yeah, why not just get a friend and sit down and record something? No harm in that. And yeah, it's actually decent progress.

[00:25:18] **Jenna:** Maybe we didn't ask, what's your favorite part? Yeah, it's a really fun job, I'd say. And it's nice that as a producer, if you aren't recording in studio, you don't have to really. If

you have all the equipment at home, you can do it all from home. Some people love that. Some people don't like that. Usually you aren't working with a super huge team, which is nice.

[00:25:40] **Jenna:** So you get to know everyone a little bit better. And yeah, I feel like we all work really well together, so that's one of my favorite things. I think I

[00:25:48] **Terran:** have to say working with people, working with this team now. But I think for me in general, whenever I'm working on a project, I just really enjoy making things.

[00:25:58] **Terran:** I know that's kind of a vague answer, but that's where I get my enjoyment out of it, just having a finished product. Even if no one sees it, I'm just happy to spend my time to create something out of ideas and just knowing the behind the scenes of everything, having so many little working pieces. It's a miracle anything gets made.

[00:26:19] **Terran:** So when you make something that people actually enjoy listening to or enjoy watching, it's very cool. Thanks for listening

[00:26:27] **Zach:** to our podcast producer episode. I really enjoyed the conversation with Taryn and Jenna.

[00:26:34] **Terran:** I think we're even more enlightened

[00:26:36] **Zach:** about what podcast producers do or audio producers do, although.

[00:26:41] **Terran:** It seems that they've done such a great

[00:26:43] **Zach:** job on this podcast that it was good to know all the great work that they're doing and how creative and technical the profession was, or is, sorry.

[00:26:53] **Lora:** Yeah, absolutely. And I think for me, I fell into that category of, oh, it's. It's just easy to launch a podcast. You just record it and put it into a platform somewhere.

[00:27:04] **Lora:** Having worked with this podcast and really understanding the level of attention and detail that goes into editing of it, the scripting of it, the marketing of it, and the list goes on and on. It gave me a new appreciation of all of the things that have to come together to do these episodes.

[00:27:20] **Zach:** Totally. Hope you enjoyed this podcast.

[00:27:23] **Zach:** Taryn and Jenna shared quite a few great resources, so make sure to check those below. And hope you enjoyed your listen.

[00:27:30] **ANNCR:** The best careers you never knew existed. Podcast sparked by state and city, funded by the government of Alberta. Have a career suggestion or wanna appear

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[00:27:59] **Terran:** With Lora Busis

[00:28:00] **ANNCR:** and Zach Novak. Produced by Taryn Anthony Allen and Jez Smith. Executive produced by Lora Busis. Voice over by me.

[00:28:11] **Terran:** Special thanks to SAIT Radio

[00:28:13] **ANNCR:** for their support and the use of their studios. And most of all,

[00:28:17] **Terran:** thank you for listening.