

The nversation Project

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How We Got To What We Are Today

The Conversation Project began its life as a survey website at the height of the 'Facebook survey' era. Instead of asking questions about which Disney Princess you mainly were aligned with, the Project asked for your opinions on the headline news stories and current events of the day.

A pivot to create an initial daily video series was not successful, mainly to the technology at the time being difficult to navigate. From that effort came a daily podcast of news stories, with the story selection purely based on the rank of daily engagement from headlines posted on social media sites for the Project.

The next successful transition was a reformatted podcast modeled off a typical radio station countdown of their greatest hits. 'The Weekly Wrap-Up with J Cleveland Payne' recapped the top 10 news stories as determined by the overall engagement for the past week from its social media postings. The podcast also incorporated an interview element with weekly guests from across a broad spectrum of podcast genres. The guest got a chance to talk about their projects and some of the news stories of the week selected by them as they played 'The Unfair Brackets Game' to eliminate stories from contention.

The daily newsletter 'Eight Things To Talk About' came next, which helped write and produce the weekly podcast and brought back the everyday element of engagement for the Project. Then, a new daily podcast for 'Eight Things' using AI voice technology to 'read' the script was also born.

The birth of 'Things You Might Not Have Heard' came from a massive failure when circumstances led to the end of production for 'The Weekly Wrap-Up' and the 'Eight Things' newsletter and podcast. After a few months of having no real direction for the Project, a challenge to get over my fear of video and to be pity with my newscasts led to a plan that launched the journey to the current live stream format. And thanks to having the blessing of failed ventures leaving various unused physical and digital assets led to the rapid adoption of what you see today.

So here we are with a rebrand, a renewed focus, and most importantly, a renewed love for interaction with 'the best conversationalist' to have the best conversations on all possible topics.

Where will the journey take us next? I hope you stick around with the rest of us #newsnerds to the end of the line, wherever that is.

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