we write about the things we build and the things we consume

written by Chris Jackson on 12 September 2012 in Atlas, radio

speaking tonight at the media society's #whatnextradio event

I am excited be joining the panel at The Media Society's #whatnextradio event tonight. @nico_macdonald and the team have put together a truly excellent line-up, including people with highly impressive expertise in making radio programmes and running radio stations.

I began my career in radio production, and have worked on corporate strategies for several large radio players around the world. These days I focus on building products and technology that can improve broadcast distribution.

20 years ago, when I started in the industry, the Internet was just beginning to come to public awareness. Since then countless, often breathless predictions have been made about the coming revolution. Yet we still consume radio in roughly the same way as when the medium was invented. It's hard to see a revolution coming anytime soon.

Yet technology has had a very positive effect at the margins, and an intelligent use of technology will help to keep the medium healthy. Ahead of tonight's discussion, here are three thoughts about how technology can help in the future.

1.
   In the emerging world of social media it is becoming clear that the most important aim is to engage with your audience. Fans and followers are easy to acquire, but a truly engaged audience is much more valuable. How can modern technology, and detailed data from social media platforms, be used to strengthen this connection still further?

2.
   While traditional linear listening will remain strong, are there other ways to navigate radio, too? We have recently been involved in adding a deep archive of BBC radio clips to the impressive Radioplayer platform, and have experimented with topic based navigation of the World Service archive, and other radio collections. Can we build ways to navigate by areas of interest, and how can these reach a mass market?

3.
   As costs become tighter, it is increasingly hard to break into the industry. I was one of a legion of young people who benefited from paid part-time jobs in the radio from a young age. Many of these opportunities have gone. Meanwhile, technology has advanced to the point where anyone with access to a PC can potentially produce high quality content. Yet technology is no substitute for the mentorship I received. How can the industry use consumer

technology and communication tools to bring on a new generation of production tallent?

I look forward to the discussion tonight. It would be great to hear your thoughts, either digitally in advance of the event, or in person this evening. Tickets are still available.