

# Podcasts (2017 Edition)

André Burgaud

2017-09-18

I published a list of my favorite technical podcasts in 2015. This list has evolved over the past two years and it is time for me to provide an update.

## Python

In my 2015 list of technical podcasts, I was desperate not to find more Python shows to listen to. A couple of months after expressing my dismay, not one, but two great Python podcasts, *Talk Python To Me* and *Podcast.\_\_init\_\_*, started broadcasting. Those were later on followed by *Test & Code* and more recently *Python Bytes*.

- **Talk Python To Me:** If you would listen to only one Python podcast, I would suggest subscribing to Michael Kennedy's podcast. This is a high quality podcast, with interviews from high profile guests in the Python community. If you check out this podcast, you may also want to look at the excellent *Python Courses* that Michael has prepared.
- **Podcast.\_\_init\_\_:** Tobias Macey and Chris Patti started this podcast almost at the same time as *Talk Python To Me*. The style of the two podcasts differs, but a pattern common to those two shows, is the community friendly tone of the conversations. Rather than going on a podcast war, the creators of the two Python podcasts interviewed each other and published the episodes: e.g. *Crossing The Streams* and *Moving to MongoDB*. Well done gentlemen! It was sad to see Chris Patti move away from the podcast due to professional constraints, but Tobias is still going strong and staying the course.
- **Python Bytes:** Michael Kennedy doubled down with Brian Okken on this weekly news podcast about Python. I never miss an episode.
- **Test & Code:** As a soloist, Brian Okken dedicates this podcast to testing in general, and Python testing in particular. He recently finished writing *Python Testing with pytest* which I highly recommend to anyone wanting to master *pytest*.

## Functional Programming

It took a long time between the introduction of Lambda Calculus by Alonzo Church in the 1930's and functional ideas becoming recognized in the software development ecosystem. This translated into functional languages becoming popular (Haskell, OCaml, Scala, Clojure, Elixir, Erlang) or functional concepts slowly permeating the mainstream languages like C++, Java, C#, Python, Ruby and others. The following podcasts are reflecting this evolution.

- **The Haskell Cast:** This Haskell podcast does not release episodes frequently, but each of them is a real treat, even when it makes my head pound :smile:
- **Elixir Fountain:** Johnny Winn's podcast is dedicated to Elixir] but touches on Erlang and its ecosystem like *OTP* (Open Telecom Platform) and the *BEAM* (Erlang Virtual Machine). In some sense, it compensates for the - hopefully temporary - disappearance of *Mostly Erlang*.
- **Functional Geekery:** Proctor, the host of **Functional Geekery**, is on a mission to share functional programming with everyone. Anything functional is game; not only will you listen to experts in Haskell, Erlang, Elixir, Lisp, OCaml, F#, Idris... but you may hear from brilliant language designers like Anthony Cipriano who created *AntLang*.

- **Elm Town:** The rise of the Elm language, as a real language for the web UI, brings hope for the future of web front end development. I highly recommend this podcast to all Elm fans out there, or anyone wondering if we are forever condemned to only code frontend Web UI with JavaScript.
- **Scalawags:** After 10 years broadcasting about the Java ecosystem via the The Java Posse, Dick Wall shifted his energy to Scala. Part of his dedication to Scala includes the Scalawags podcast. No episodes have been released in this year so far, but 2016's episodes are still relevant despite the rapid evolution of Scala. If the pirate style of Dick Wall is not your cup of tea, check his highly rated Scala Classes on Udemy.

## Java Platform

Although Java, as a programming language, is arguably losing some steam from its past decade of popularity among developers always on the lookout for something exciting and new, the Java platform is as popular as ever. The following podcasts expose the rich aspects of the platform, not limited to the language.

- **Groovy Podcast:** In this podcast, you can listen to the latest news of the Groovy world delivered by Ken Kousen and his co-pilot Baruch Sadogursky. If, like me, you enjoy Ken Kousen's pleasant style, you will appreciate this podcast. You may also meet Ken on the NFJS trail, in online O'Reilly classes, or indirectly by reading his books. The show notes are available on GitHub.
- **Talking Kotlin:** Kotlin the language created by JetBrains has seen a surge of popularity in the recent years. During the Google I/O 2017 conferences, the announcement that Kotlin was an official Android language gave an additional boost to this welcome choice targeting the JVM (Java Virtual Machine). The host of this podcast is Hadi Hariri from JetBrains. I would highly recommend it if you want to keep up with the latest evolution of Kotlin, or if you simply want to hear why Kotlin could be a good choice for your development on the JVM (Java Virtual Machine).
- **Les Cast Codeurs Podcast:** This French podcast has been successful at pursuing the format that the JavaPosse popularized in the 2000's. If you are involved in any type of *Java* technology and understand French (and French humor), tune your podcatcher to **Les Cast Codeurs Podcast** and listen to Emmanuel Bernard, his talented crew, and guests.

## JavaScript

I cannot hide that I am not a big fan of JavaScript. But, as of today, JavaScript is undeniably the major player as a programming language for the web. The amount of creativity surrounding the usage of this language is amazing to witness. Browser vendors have been competing so hard that the performance of the JavaScript VM's (Virtual Machines) running in browsers has reached unprecedented levels. As a result, liking it or not, JavaScript cannot be ignored. The two following podcasts are excellent for relaying news about JavaScript and its phenomenal ecosystem.

- **JS Party:** As a recent production of The Changelog family, this show is great for beginners, seasoned front-end developers and JavaScript "hipsters" alike.
- **JavaScript Jabber:** Yet another DevChat.TV cast that delivers. This show has been broadcasting for a longer time than **JS Party**, closing on 300 shows versus **JS Party**'s 20. Due to the ever evolving JavaScript world, the team discusses a plethora of topics.

## Other Programming Languages

- **CppCast:** C++ was one of the first languages I cut my teeth on, long ago. When I recently started to listen to **CppCast**, I realized how much this language had evolved. Listening to this excellent podcast hosted by C++ experts, Rob Irvin and Jason Turner, is a real treat. *Modern C++*, or even Postmodern C++, feel so far away from the Microsoft Visual C++ 1.5 I started with.
- **Go Time:** Carlisia Pinto, Erik St. Martin, Brian Ketelsen, and their outstanding guests, always make my day. **Go Time**, as with any of The Changelog podcasts, is a high quality product. Although the topics revolve around the Go language, there is a lot variety between episodes. It is everything but

boring. From Web Development with Buffalo, to Drawing Gophers, or listening to one of the gurus of the Go Compiler, there is something for everyone. Try to listen to the show live: it is a lot of fun.

## Security

- **Security Now:** Despite loosing his mustache for a couple of weeks in August 2017, Steve Gibson did not lose his dynamism. Steve starts the show with the most recent security news - unfortunately, there is plethora of those every week - and then, ends with a detailed story (result of his research, personal coding or security experiences). He provides professional recommendations to prevent, anticipate, and if needed, mitigate software security problems. His conversation with Leo Laporte is engaging, fun and sometimes provocative. This is a weekly podcast, and like any of the TWiT shows, the audio and video are high quality.
- **Silver Bullet Security:** This monthly podcast with Gary McCraw features interviews with security experts from all horizons, academic, business, technology and government.

## Cloud

The giant computer that is the *Cloud* has become an inherent part for almost every modern software implementation. Leaders in this realm are competing to attract customers. Cloud computing provides access to exceptional hardware and software, which before was only reserved to a few well established companies capable of building large data centers and hiring staff of experts.

Expert insiders are spreading cloud knowledge respectively for the Microsoft, Google cloud computing platform, and AWS (Amazon Web Services):

- **Microsoft Azure:** Over the past few years, Microsoft has been showing a strategy very different than in prior decades. This drastic change has been observed in the open source world with Microsoft ranked as the organization with the most open source contributors in 2016 for example. In the area of cloud computing, this podcast is a testament to Microsoft's ability to compete and sometimes surpass the few other top contenders. The podcast team, composed of Microsoft and cloud experts, approaches Azure topics in a concise manner, while the guests bring relevant Azure platform insights.
- **Google Cloud Platform:** Francesc Campoy Flores and his co-host Mark Mandel have a weekly show with focus on cloud technologies. Aware of Francesc's great talks on the Go language, and his prolific contributions to the Go community (check out his YouTube channel just for fun), I started to listen to this show. The episodes have the ideal duration, 30 to 45 minutes, and exhibit nice audio quality. With two hosts from the Developer Advocate for the Google Cloud Platform team, and Google insider expert guests, the topics are very relevant.
- **Amazon Web Services (AWS):** AWS is also in the podcast game with this podcast and a yearly podcast including audio recordings from the AWS re:Invent conference sessions. The episodes of the AWS re:Invent 2016 conference are available to stream as podcasts, and are also on YouTube where the video format is more engaging than the audio one, with synchronized slides and demos.

## Software Development

The following podcasts are classics that I listen to regularly:

- **The Web Platform:** This weekly show covers all aspects of web development: web components, JavaScript, upcoming web technologies (WebAssembly, Progressive Web Apps, GraphQL, ...); basically all the technologies and problems typical web developers are, or will be exposed to.
- **Hanselminutes:** I have been a fan of Scott Hanselman's show for years. This weekly 30 minute podcast features a large range of guests and topics. Technology is most often present, but Scott knows how to bring the human factor to the forefront. He and his guests also brilliantly highlight that the technical field is not only composed of supposedly *rockstar* white dude programmers.
- **FLOSS Weekly:** This podcast features classic and modern open source software. Each episode is dedicated to a particular open source product (e.g. FreeNAS, LibreOffice, Kubernetes, Redis, Hiawatha Webserver, ...). Guests are the leaders or are heavily involved in those projects. The host, Randal

Schwartz, renown Perl expert, is surrounded by co-hosts like Aaron Newcomb or open source expert Simon Phipps.

- **The Changelog:** Like **FLOSS**, **The Changelog** is dedicated to open source technologies. But, Adam Stacoviak and Jerod Santo first center their stories on the people and communities, rather than the technologies. To illustrate this observation, you may compare a topic that has been addressed by both **FLOSS** and **The Changelog**, with the same guests. For example, check the *FLOSS* episode Kubernetes and *The Changelog*'s one The backstory of Kubernetes. This will give you a taste of what may appear to be a slight difference, but ends up being a rather profound distinction. In the end, the audience is getting the best of both worlds by listening those two excellent podcasts.
- **Software Engineering Radio:** This show presents a more professional aspect of engineering, and less of a *hacker* touch. The podcast website states: *The goal is to be a lasting educational resource, not a newscast.* Along those lines, I would recommend taking a listen to SE-Radio Episode 298: Moshe Vardi on P versus NP.
- **.NET Rocks!:** Carl Franklin started to air this show in 2002, before being joined by Richard Campbell in 2005. The duo has been very prolific; as of this writing, 1476 episodes have been published. This podcast has been mostly a .NET feast, but has expanded into a larger scope, covering Azure, JavaScript, tools like Visual Studio, web front-end and back-end technologies. So despite the title, and the emphasis on .NET and Microsoft, many episodes would appeal to engineers not primarily involved in Microsoft or Windows technologies. Here are some episodes that illustrate this point: TypeScript and Beyond with Anders Hejlsberg, GraphQL with Steve Faulkner, and Comparing SPA Frameworks with Brian Noyes.

## DevOps

Today, DevOps has become part of the jargon of most software development teams. The desire to adopt *DevOps* has resulted in many different changes depending on the organization, and interpretation of *DevOps*. For example it may have resulted in:

- The creation of a team named “DevOps” (There’s No Such Thing as a “Devops Team”)
- Changing the title of system administrators to “DevOps Engineer”
- Developers starting to be acquainted with operation intricacies
- Operation engineers getting their hands on code and tools otherwise “reserved” to developers
- The words “CI”, “CD”, “CI-CD” and “pipeline” being used in a lot of sentences
- Discussion and possibly adoption of new tools, like Linux containers
- Other mix-and-match adjustments in teams, titles and vocabulary...

I personally like the following definition that I’m using from Nathen Harvey:

DevOps is a cultural and professional movement, focused on how we build and operate high velocity organizations, born from the experiences of its practitioners.

To better understand what the movement represents, I decided to subscribe to the following podcasts:

- **DevOps Cafe:** hosted by John Willis
- **DevOps Radio:** hosted by André Pino
- **Arrested DevOps:** hosted by Bridget Kromhout, Matt Stratton and Trevor Hess
- **The Food Fight Show:** hosted by Nathen Havey, Bryan Berry, Matt Ray and John E. Vincent (Lusis)

All the hosts mentioned above are involved, and influential in the *DevOps* community. In addition, they interview many other leaders of the *DevOps* crowd, including: Shanon Lietz, Gene Kim, Jez Humble, Patrick Debois, Andrew Shafer.

## Math

- **Breaking Math:** This math podcast is simply brilliant. The hosts are smart individuals able to discuss complex math topics, and make them understandable by people like me. Each show is well

prepared and scripted in a fashion that flows from one topic to another, and from one host or guest to another. I really like the format and highly recommend the show.

- **New Books in Mathematics:** Here is a chance to hear directly from authors of math books. This podcast is a great way to gain awareness about mathematical concepts, and possibly, pursue further exploration of such concepts by reading the books discussed during the shows.

## Science

- **Planetary Radio:** Distracted by too many new podcasts, I have not been listening to as many **Planetary Radio** shows as I was used to. This still remains one of my favorites, and I recommend it to anyone curious about the wonders of the stunning Universe we are part of.

## Podcasts that did not make the cut

I subscribed to a bunch of new podcasts since 2015, but I stopped listening to a few:

- **Mostly Erlang:** Unfortunately, Zach Kessin has not published an episode since July 2015. I remain subscribed and I'm still hoping to witness the resurrection of this podcast. If not, I would welcome any other Erlang expert to evangelize Erlang, OTP (Open Telecom Platform) and the BEAM (Erlang Virtual Machine), all more prevalent than ever despite being born more than 30 years ago.
- **The Java Posse:** this excellent podcast dedicated to the Java Platform was officially retired in 2015.
- **Inspired by Math!:** no episodes since July 2014.
- **from podcast import python:** no episodes since March 2014.

## Last Word

Due to the significant number of podcast subscriptions that I added on to my 2015 list (from 12 in 2015 to 35 in 2017), I had to change my listening strategy. Preferring quality over quantity, I don't necessarily listen to each episode at a higher speed, but became more selective regarding the topics, skipping discussions that I have less interest in, that have audio quality issues, or that tend to be too lengthy.

Thank you to all dedicating countless hours of your free time to share your passions via podcasts. Commutes do not appear to be such a waste of time anymore, and chores like mowing the lawn in summer or shoveling the snow in winter, are now enjoyable :smile: