Google Prodcast Season Four Episode Zero "Bumpisode"

[JAVI BELTRAN, "TELEBOT"]

STEVE MCGHEE: Hi, everyone. Welcome to season four of The Prodcast, Google's podcast about site reliability engineering and production software. I'm your host, Steve McGhee. This season, our theme is Friends and Trends. It's all about what's coming up in the SRE space, from new technology to modernizing processes. And of course, the most important part is the friends we made along the way. So happy listening, and remember, hope is not a strategy.

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STEVE MCGHEE: Can someone please explain to me why this is called a *"Bumpisode"*? What does the word *bump* mean?

JORDAN GREENBERG: So I don't know if you ever watched Cartoon Network, or Adult Swim, or something like that. Basically, between TV shows, or commercials, or whatever, the network would put this little tiny interstitial thing that was like, hey, it's us from the network. We're going to talk about something. And maybe it's not going to have a lot of content, but we're going to do it. Back to your regularly scheduled programming. And that was called a bump.

STEVE MCGHEE: I like it.

JORDAN GREENBERG: And there's different versions of that for commercials and things. But this is called bump because we are between two seasons of the Prodcast, Google's SRE production podcast, with your host Steve, our new host Matt, and our producer Salim.

SALIM VIRJI: Hello.

JORDAN GREENBERG: And my name is Jordan. So I effectively just did all of our work for us. You're welcome.

STEVE MCGHEE: I feel like we're starting. Did we just start?

JORDAN GREENBERG: We did, absolutely.

STEVE MCGHEE: Amazing.

JORDAN GREENBERG: So this is just like, between seasons, we wanted to give our viewers an introduction to someone new, lay out our plans for what's coming, without spoilers, as much as possible, and wish them a great day.

STEVE MCGHEE: All right, so that's a bump. Cool. I like it.

JORDAN GREENBERG: That's a bump.

STEVE MCGHEE: Well, given that, who's this new face we see on our now video screen, our video podcast? Are people going to watch this on video iPods? Is that how this works? I don't know how that works.

JORDAN GREENBERG: I think so, yeah.

STEVE MCGHEE: Yeah, OK.

MATT SIEGLER: I'm Matt Siegler, I'm your new co-host. I'm currently in ML Infra SRE. I'm really excited to be a part of this season.

STEVE MCGHEE: ML, and Infra, and SRE, those are all words. What do those words mean, Matt? Tell us more words.

MATT SIEGLER: Machine learning, that's the thing you do to get the AI. You teach the machines how to learn.

JORDAN GREENBERG: Oh.

MATT SIEGLER: And the infrastructure, that's all that machinery to get the machines to be the learning. And SRE, you guys, you know what SRE is.

STEVE MCGHEE: We know about that one, yeah.

JORDAN GREENBERG: I hope so, after three seasons.

STEVE MCGHEE: At this point, come on.

JORDAN GREENBERG: A fourth one is coming.

STEVE MCGHEE: There's always new listeners though, you guys. There's new listeners. So we gotta

redefine ourselves each time.

SALIM VIRJI: Yeah, I'm glad we worked through that. Do we tell the new listeners what they missed in the most recent season?

MATT SIEGLER: Oh, yeah.

STEVE MCGHEE: Oh, yeah.

MATT SIEGLER: Can we recap that?

SALIM VIRJI: Because it was chock full of good stuff.

STEVE MCGHEE: There was some stuff, man.

SALIM VIRJI: We heard about public DNS and why it's always DNS.

STEVE MCGHEE: That was good.

JORDAN GREENBERG: Oh yeah, we did.

STEVE MCGHEE: So, Matt, you heard some of it. I don't know if you heard all the episodes, but I know you heard some of them. And what's the vibe? What did you get out of it?

MATT SIEGLER: The take I got out of season 3 is that we're really looking outside of Google for excellence in representation of SRE in organizations of all sizes, which is something I'm really looking to extend in season four.

JORDAN GREENBERG: We might have originated the terminology. But there are a million different places that have adopted the same mechanisms to fit mostly different sizes of use cases and still provide the same type of support and service that would be happening at Google, at other places.

So everybody can rest easily, knowing that their video games, their shopping portals, their internets are all working, and they have someone there who is able to say, yes, it's down, but I will fix it. And that's what I feel like is an OK summary of last season.

STEVE MCGHEE: Yeah. And then I think the other thing that was different about last season is that we focused on software engineering itself, like the actual building of new stuff and not just manning the conn or whatever it is that you do in traditional views of ops, like eyeball the dashboards or something.

And I personally pushed for that a lot because I thought that was a really important distinguisher, not for people who are already doing the job because they already know that that's what's going on, but for folks who are adjacent to SRE or new to SRE to really hammer down, like this is an important part of the role.

And turns out, it's actually the most important part of the role. It's not just a cool thing. It's what you should be doing most of your time with as a team, at least in my opinion. And I think we barely scratched the surface, so there's a lot more to be said there.

Before we get into the next season and stuff, we also have a new face again. Salim, I don't think you introduced yourself. What's going on, man? Like, we're just skipping over you. Who are you even?

SALIM VIRJI: That's all good. My voice is not one that you're likely to hear on this particular podcast. And I am Salim. I'm a site reliability engineer working on mostly external education for reliability engineering. And I live in New York. I think that's the colorful thing about me.

STEVE MCGHEE: Excellent. And we also have Florian. Let's hear you, Florian. What's going on, man?

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: Hey, folks.

STEVE MCGHEE: Hey. Florian, can you tell the guests who the heck you are?

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: Sure, I can. I'm Florian, I'm an SRE in Cloud. And I used to be on a team that was called Customer Reliability Engineering, where we were working with customers and helped them build reliable services on top of our platform. I have since moved on to a team that is working on improving mitigation for GCP customer incidents. So that's still fairly nascent.

But yeah, other than that, I've always been involved in SRE outreach-ey kind of things, like giving talks. And I joined the Prodcast on the previous season. But as I'm based in Zurich, I wasn't able to do that much hosting because of time zones. Time zones are hard, as we all know.

STEVE MCGHEE: They are hard. Time is hard. Yeah. Florian, I remember it specifically, you definitely performed an SRE-type capacity in one episode because I believe there was an incident where my internet didn't work, and you filled in a lot. And I think, actually, Jordan, you did that too. My internet's not great, apparently, it turns out.

JORDAN GREENBERG: Not 5-9 internet for Steve.

STEVE MCGHEE: No pressure, Matt, but I might just disappear sometimes, and that's fine. But both of you performed admirably. So thank you very much.

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: Maybe you should do some SRE-ing on your internet, Steve.

STEVE MCGHEE: You'd think I would do that, but I don't know. It's tough.

JORDAN GREENBERG: That sounds like work. He's off the clock at 5:00.

STEVE MCGHEE: Seriously. I live in the country, and my Wi-Fi connects to other Wi-Fi over a parabolic dish or something. And when that one's out, I'm just like, I got nothing. It's outside my control.

SALIM VIRJI: You have truly wireless internet.

STEVE MCGHEE: I'm wireless on my wireless. Yes, we must go deeper. Well, let's get into what's going on next season. So first of all, some of you out there in the world can see us with your eyeballs because we have pixels now. So we're doing videos this season. Last season, we did shorts, little short videos, like little, I don't know, blurbs. Or I don't know what you call the blurb form of video. But they were on YouTube, and they were kind of like a marketing attempt to be like, does this help?

And I don't know. It kind of worked. We'll see. It was an experiment. It didn't have a huge effect. But we're going to keep going. We're going to have a new experiment because this is what we do. We try things. We see what works. We measure the data and all this stuff. We have little dashboards that tell us when things are working or not. Hopefully, the line goes up or whatever. So that's one little thing. What else is new this season?

JORDAN GREENBERG: It's sort of like monitoring a dashboard for SRE-ness. Is it working? When did it stop working?

STEVE MCGHEE: Yeah, data not facts.

JORDAN GREENBERG: And I'll just go into it. Does it make sense for SRE to continue existing in a world where a machine can view and tell us when things are wrong? Because the topic--

STEVE MCGHEE: I feel like you're going somewhere with this.

JORDAN GREENBERG: --not to spoil it, but the topic might be AI and SRE. I think we're going to be talking about that this season.

STEVE MCGHEE: And there may be some opinions, possibly some takes. And the topic is going to be-- I think it's going to be a little bit broader than that. But I think you're right. I think that that's going to be a majority of the time, just because, reasons. But it's going to be about different trends and also different friends. We're going to have more of the former.

We're going to talk to people who don't necessarily work at Google, or maybe work in different roles inside or outside of Google, with SREs. And then we're going to talk about the trends that we, and they, and everyone are seeing in the SRE space. I think it looks pretty exciting. Anything that anyone's looking out for in particular that looks exciting, that-- I mean, you don't want to spoil too much, I guess.

JORDAN GREENBERG: I don't want to spoil too much. I know we're going to have some new guests. I know that we're going to have some repeat guests. I know that there's going to be jokes. I know that there's going to be--

STEVE MCGHEE: My internet's going to go out at one point. It's going to be great.

JORDAN GREENBERG: Yeah, Steve's internet is going to go out at one point. Maybe prepare a bingo card for yourself, see how far you get.

MATT SIEGLER: Ooh, I think we've got a lot of uncertainty to manage in the future. And I think that's--

STEVE MCGHEE: Are we the right people for that?

MATT SIEGLER: I think there's a lot of uncertainty-- that's a lot of opportunity and ambiguity, and that's actually good for us.

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: Oh, and we all thrive in ambiguity, as we all know.

STEVE MCGHEE: That's right.

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: A lot of thriving to do.

STEVE MCGHEE: One other thing, we do have a feedback form. And we'll put this in the tail end of every episode or something like that. But if people are interested in giving feedback, we're going to, maybe we can put the QR code on the video screen. Can we? Is there a secret, magical? Everyone points in a direction, and it will be near one of our fingers.

JORDAN GREENBERG: Someone will be right.

STEVE MCGHEE: Yeah, so it'll be GOO dot GLE slash Prodcast dash feedback, goo.gle/prodcast-feedback. And yeah, maybe we'll have cool QR code people that can help us with things like that. The idea with the feedback, though, is to hear from listeners about what's working, what isn't. If you want to be a guest, if you want to suggest a guest, we're going to keep going. A lot of this season is planned already, but there will be more after that, so don't worry. What did I miss? I mean, I feel like we--

JORDAN GREENBERG: I think that's it.

STEVE MCGHEE: This is kind of a quick one. It's a "bumpisode". It's short.

JORDAN GREENBERG: No, we're done. I feel like we're done. We got it all.

STEVE MCGHEE: Matt, is there anything else that you want to tell? I feel like I want to treat you as a guest real quick. So, Matt, where do you live in the world? I think you live in a place.

MATT SIEGLER: I live in a place. I'm in the United States. I'm in Pittsburgh, in the great state of Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

STEVE MCGHEE: It's a commonwealth, OK. Can you tell me your favorite thing about Pittsburgh and your less favorite thing about Pittsburgh?

MATT SIEGLER: My favorite thing about Pittsburgh is that people love to talk about what used to be there all the time.

STEVE MCGHEE: That's a good one.

MATT SIEGLER: That's a common thing in the Northeast because it's constantly being turned over.

JORDAN GREENBERG: That's true.

STEVE MCGHEE: It's near the old donut shop.

MATT SIEGLER: Yeah, the corner where the Cocos used to be, next to where the Dairy Queen was, a very common way to give directions.

STEVE MCGHEE: We have one of those.

MATT SIEGLER: And my least favorite thing is the severity of the climate. But that's also a Northern-Eastern thing that many of us are used to up here.

STEVE MCGHEE: And then what is one thing you would change about your current job? What's a thing that you-- or maybe you are changing it. Maybe it's something that you're in the-- and you can't say be a host of a podcast, because that's obvious. You got to pick something else.

MATT SIEGLER: This was, in fact, the thing I was changing about my job that felt like a fantastic, unlocked achievement. So that's going to be a hard second for me to come up with.

STEVE MCGHEE: This is what we do. We put people on the spot. This is a hard-hitting podcast about the reliability of complex systems.

JORDAN GREENBERG: And hopefully, you'll learn.

MATT SIEGLER: Oh, I'll tell you exactly. A great deal of my work involves internal users who use the infrastructure that I help manage and make their lives better through direct engagement-- more, period, full stop.

STEVE MCGHEE: I like it. I like it.

JORDAN GREENBERG: We love helping the engineers, love that.

STEVE MCGHEE: Cool. That's it, that's the whole interview.

JORDAN GREENBERG: That's the whole thing.

MATT SIEGLER: That's great.

STEVE MCGHEE: Flying colors, well done.

MATT SIEGLER: Five stars, we'll do it again.

JORDAN GREENBERG: So now you have to do that for other people.

MATT SIEGLER: Can it be that short?

JORDAN GREENBERG: In the upcoming season of the Google SRE Prodcast.

STEVE MCGHEE: Awesome, no pressure.

MATT SIEGLER: Thank you, Steve. Thank you, Jordan.

STEVE MCGHEE: All right, well, maybe we're done. I feel like that was a good bump.

MATT SIEGLER: Yeah, it's probably more than maybe if we squared that bump.

JORDAN GREENBERG: I think so.

STEVE MCGHEE: I mean, that's fine. There's no rules here. This is a podcast, man. We can do whatever we want. Well, thanks, everyone. Looking forward to the upcoming season. What are we on, four? Geez.

JORDAN GREENBERG: Four, yeah.

STEVE MCGHEE: It's crazy.

MATT SIEGLER: Oh, four.

JORDAN GREENBERG: If you can believe.

STEVE MCGHEE: Yeah. Thanks to Salim and Florian for showing up as well. And we also have a few other folks lurking in the background too, so thanks for Paul and Sunny. Thanks to MP who in the past kicked this back off again. Thanks to John and Adam who kicked it off initially, internal to Google.

Before, we didn't even have a podcatcher, you had to get an email with a link in it. Like, come on. But hundreds of people listened to it, it was very cool. And all the guests over the years have made this really, really real. So this has been great. Looking forward to continuing it.

JORDAN GREENBERG: Yes.

STEVE MCGHEE: All right.

JORDAN GREENBERG: All right.

STEVE MCGHEE: Excitement. Did I do excitement?

JORDAN GREENBERG: And I think so, we accomplished it all. We said, we introduced our next season of the Prodcast. We introduced our new hosts. And now the only thing left is to wish everybody a great day and to stay tuned for the next set of episodes.

SALIM VIRJI: Love it.

STEVE MCGHEE: Awesome.

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: Shall we go out with a fist bump?

MATT SIEGLER: Oh, yeah. Do you guys have a salute?

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: Oh, yeah.

[LAUGHTER]

MATT SIEGLER: Fist bump.

JORDAN GREENBERG: What, you do it there?

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: Only for the "bumpisode", of course.

STEVE MCGHEE: Oh, because it's a "bumpisode".

JORDAN GREENBERG: It's so corny, but I guess I'll do it, poor Steve. The microphone needs help. Boop.

FLORIAN RATHGEBER: Brace for lots of puns. punny puns.

JORDAN GREENBERG: Awesome.

STEVE MCGHEE: Corny.

SALIM VIRJI: Wow.

STEVE MCGHEE: Perfect. We did it.

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[JAVI BELTRAN, "TELEBOT"]

JORDAN GREENBERG: You've been listening to Prodcast, Google's podcast on site reliability engineering. Visit us on the web at SRE dot Google, where you can find papers, workshops, videos, and more about SRE.

This season's host is Steve McGhee, with contributions from Jordan Greenberg and Florian Rathgeber.