

# The resurrection of radio

Todd Miller's North York radio station gives a voice to the community by David Ort



Miller has spent a decade immersed in online radio

## REPORT CARD

### STUDENT:

Todd Miller

### GRADUATED:

Northview Heights Secondary School, 1985

### BEST SUBJECTS:

English and Drama

### WORST SUBJECT:

Math

### CURRENT JOB:

Chief Creative Officer, Radio That Doesn't Suck

“Radio resurrected baby!” is the tag line for Radio That Doesn't Suck, the music station that Todd Miller founded in 2008.

It is based in North York but reaches a global online audience.

“It’s really becoming an online world,” Miller explains.

He notes that the difference his programming makes is that “You’re not just watching a YouTube video in isolation; you’re listening to somebody who’s trying to connect a larger community through music or through positive reinforcement on ListenUp! Talk Radio.”

**“We unofficially call ourselves a music discovery service.”**

That is the sister station to Radio That Doesn't Suck that he founded to broadcast respectful talk shows that are free from the acrimony and canned anger that typifies most talk radio.

Miller, a Northview Heights Secondary School graduate, is the producer or co-host for many of the shows in the ListenUp! rotation and further explains, “Living, learning, growing, that’s really what we’re about.”

On Radio That Doesn't Suck, hosts are left to play the music they choose with an eye to deeper tracks, undiscovered artists and musical eras that are underplayed on traditional FM radio.

“We unofficially call ourselves a music discovery service,” Miller says and goes on to note the

similarity to Spotify or Pandora except with DJs to introduce the tracks and add a human touch to their selection.

Miller has been fixated on the idea of an on-air career since his time at Northview Heights in the early 1980s.

“That’s what really sparked it for me,” he says, “having that core group of people who were really interested in being creative.”

After high school, he had several day jobs, following his parents’ advice to favour a steady paycheque and benefits.

It wasn’t until 2004 that the technology made Internet radio viable, and he made it his full-time job three years later.

It’s clear that he sees Willowdale as an unusually good incubator for creative talent.

He still lives in the North York neighbourhood and is excited about the diversity it has gained over the past 30 years.

To him, the trade-off for so much progress and development is that “There was an innocence that is missing. Everyone has grown up and they’re going about their day.”

Miller values his connection to a place and the people who live there and is contemplating the idea of an online community station.

He sees it dividing its schedule between different neighbourhood groups that would each have an opportunity to discuss the issues pertinent to their listeners.

As radio and media in general move online and become more “on demand,” Miller thinks there is a place for programming that maintains the vital connection to our neighbours.