

MARK ASQUITH of Captivate

talks about L-8 for the ambitious
new podcaster



Mark Asquith is one of the UK's leading lights in podcasting. He's recently returned from what was to be a nine-week tour of the USA where he was speaking at the big podcasting conferences, including Podcast Movement Evolutions and Podfest, that his company, Rebel Base Media, was sponsoring. With the tour cut short due to the global quarantine lockdown, Mark is now taking some time to update his Podcast Success Academy to include the new Zoom Livetrak L-8.

Mark is CEO and co-founder of Sheffield-based Rebel Base Media, the team behind one of the world's leading podcast hosting, analytics and marketing platforms, Captivate.fm. He hosts his own podcast shows: Podcast Accelerator airs three times a week and is all about podcasting. He also podcasts about Star Wars and other topics close to his heart. He's been doing this since 2013.

The trip to the US was an opportunity to road test the Zoom L-8 and put it through its paces. Mark explains, "We love the Zoom H6. I've got a Zoom H4 that I've had since, you know, God knows when... and as the Zoom L-8 was going to be mobile, the fact that I could do everything that I do with my standard studio-based product, but it was a bit smaller, it was lighter and I could stick it in a bag: It was a complete no brainer."



Whilst in America, Mark had the chance to use the Zoom L-8 to record his Podcast Accelerator shows. Able to carry it around in his suitcase, he says he, "...recorded at conferences with it and recorded his show from varying locations with it." Highlighting just how simple yet comprehensive the product is, he says, "I loaded up the sound bed with my music and we were just recording it live on the day with very little editing. The portability of it is fantastic."

From his positive experience with the Zoom L-8, Mark says, "I would recommend it. Even though we still use other products, we use the Zoom L-8 now as much as anything else."

Mark is keen to tell his listeners about the capabilities and suitability of the Zoom L-8. "I am telling people, listening in our communities... we are letting all of our podcasters know about this. You can truly make a podcast studio anywhere that you are. And when I say podcast studio, what I mean is the ability to have the six inputs, to have the USB input, to have the live calls fed in, to have the sound beds in, like it can be a full production studio."

And Mark's recommendation carries some weight. Captivate attracts hundreds of new podcasters every week. In the courses, Mark advises podcasters to think about the format of their shows, or the use case, before purchasing recording equipment: "I'm just re-designing the course now to include the Zoom L-8."

Mark explains "For podcasters wanting to go out and interview people we've tweaked the prime recommendations to include the L-8, alongside the Zoom H6 that's already in place.

Mark adds that the advantage of the Zoom L-8 is that you can "...stick it on your desk and use it every single day. But then when you need to go and get that big interview, unplug it and it's your rig... you will understand how to work it exactly."

The feature set of the Zoom L-8 closely contours the shape of popular podcast formats. A fact that genui-



nely surprises Mark, as he states, “I actually really like that!” He expands, “Six inputs is quite uncommon. But when you are doing live events, you’ll often want a panel of people and that’s normally four, plus the host is five and most products don’t accommodate that. That’s really well thought out.”

“Two of those six inputs, however, are lines in,” says Mark and explains that the line-in ability, in conjunction with the sound beds and the battery pack on the back, “...is genius!” He adds, “I know that sounds weird but a lot of people that do review podcasts will often want to line-in. I could put anything in there. I could add a guitar...”

“From a podcast perspective,” Mark continues, “without a shadow of a doubt, the two things that are vital, and that really stood out to me, are the sound beds: It gives you flexibility to load up all your sound beds;

and the ability for the entire thing to be battery powered... and without having to worry about linking a power pack to it: you just put the batteries in like you would with a Zoom H6. So those two things really stood out for me.”

However, the Zoom L-8’s comprehensive feature set, Mark suggests, could be viewed as a negative and perceived as “a bit too complex for certain types of podcast”. Though he quickly interjects, “I like it. I found it all right... and for the more advanced podcaster - and I know a few guys that use it that are a bit more advanced - they like it and I would have no problem with this either.”

The current global situation, with people finding themselves inside due to quarantine conditions, is having interesting repercussions on podcasting. From Mark’s position he sees that “...the growth of it





is absolutely accelerating during the lockdown. People are producing shows and people are consuming shows." The interesting outcome of this, he notes, is that "...very many creators will be realising what gear they don't need."

Mark explains, "We're seeing big radio presenters producing out of their bedroom using, you know, whether it's a Zoom or whatever... that's key! That's where the market gets interesting." He adds, "With radio people producing in their bedroom using podcast equipment, podcasters are going to realise and say, 'wait a minute, to create this quality of podcasts, I only need these two pieces of equipment.' That's a big thing!"

In conclusion, Mark says, "I think overall for podcasting, I think we're going to see a lot of people start to understand what creating a high-quality podcast is really like." He maintains that it's for these new podcasters that the Zoom L-8 will "work really, really well", because "...it's the new podcasters that are willing to have a bit of a look at the tech."

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