

Renaldo Schwarp's new journey at Jacaranda, his book and next film project

By [Juanita Pienaar](#)

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Radio presenter and digital media boffin, Jacaranda's Renaldo Schwarp is shaking things up by expanding his professional portfolio. After wrapping up his last show this past weekend at Jacaranda FM, he now shifts focus to his role as the digital lead at the station. All while writing a book and getting a film project off the ground.



Radio presenter and digital media boffin, Jacaranda's Renaldo Schwarp.

We caught up with Schwarp who tells us more about the change and how he's been focusing on all these upcoming projects.

■ Tell us more about your decision to wrap up your weekend shows at Jacaranda FM. What's next for you?

If this year has taught me anything, it's that the world evolves, priorities change and so we as people need to do the same. So after being offered to continue to host my show, I decided that after two and a half years in the same seat, it's time to close this specific chapter.

I'm grateful that since I started my commercial and corporate career in 2014, I get to wear multiple professional hats: digital strategist, columnist, TV producer and host, podcaster, multimedia journalist and more recently writer. The latter and my role as digital lead at Jacaranda FM will be top priority.

Jacaranda FM has shown significant growth in our online users in the last two years. In 2019 we dominated the South African radio digital space as the most visited website for a South African radio station. Six months into 2020, we still hold this top spot for a music format radio station. Taking my growing portfolio as digital lead, as well as my writing and upcoming TV commitments into consideration, wrapping up my Jacaranda FM radio shows just made the most sense.



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■ How do you feel about this new move?

I've been working on air since 2011. The thing about hosting shows for nine years straight (across different stations) is that it becomes part of who you are and how you engage with what is happening in the world.

Since starting 'Weekends with Renaldo Schwarp' in February 2018, it has grown from strength to strength, not just based on audience numbers but from a commercial perspective as well. To say it was a blast would be a massive understatement! The Jacaranda FM audience has a tendency to grow on one quite quickly, so it will be a while before I get used to spending my weekends without them.



■ What excites you most about the station and where it's going?

We truly have an amazing audience, extremely engaged and always ready to help. We see it every time we set out to help those in need with our Good Morning Angels initiatives. It's rewarding to serve an audience like that. I might be biased, but we really are a kick-ass team. Great leadership and some really skilled individuals making sure the station evolves as we navigate the current pandemic and life post-Covid.

What do you love most about your career?

“It's evolution... In my line of work, there is no time to get complacent, bored or set in your ways. Over the years I've created a few awesome things for a variety of platforms and being able to share stories on radio, television and online is extremely fulfilling.

“I turned my passion into a paycheque.”

It's a lot of hard work, but so much fun! ”

Any career highlights you're particularly proud of?

The notion of creating work that is truly meaningful and representative has become quite important for me. I started to consciously make this shift just before I produced *Skeef: Die Dokumentêr* in 2018 and the results have been amazing.

1. *Skeef: Die Dokumentêr* debuted at the 2019 kykNET Silwerskermfees, it also screened in the USA at the Cinema Diverse: Palm Springs LGBTI+ Film Festival, and more recently as part of the US Toyota Woordfees 2020 film festival in Stellenbosch.
2. In April 2020 I conceptualised, produced and hosted Netwerk24's first podcast for their youth platform, Die Student. *Werkfiks* was an interactive Afrikaans podcast series that set out to equip young people with practical advice to help them get ready for their first year of work.



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Tell us a bit about the book you're writing and how this came about?

At the start of 2020, the opportunity to write a book presented itself to me. Without giving too much away, the book is roughly based on my documentary, *Skeef*. It's one of the projects that I'm most excited about, mainly because it is a new challenge. Writing a book is no mean feat, but the process has been lovely so far; a lot of late nights, copious amounts of coffee and zoom interviews. I'm excited to see the book on the shelves by mid-2021.

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[Al wat nou kort is 'n glas wyn](#) 🍷🍷

A post shared by [Renaldo Schwarp](#) (@renaldoschwarp) on Jul 1, 2020 at 8:13am PDT

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What are you most looking forward to/enjoying so far?

I'm truly enjoying seeing how the pandemic has forced brands to lean into digital and how we as media professionals had to relook our approach to serving our audiences.

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Consumers are more open to digital offerings during the pandemic, this places an increased value on digital experiences. As a digital native, I have always had a reverence for periods of change – if managed correctly, it leads to innovation and growth. But to innovate and grow, change is required in culture, in strategy and in the way of working.

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What's at the top of your to-do list (at work)?

We are living in such uncertain times: job losses, business closures and millions of children are bearing the brunt of an unprecedented pause in their education. Issues that all affect our audiences. Top of the to-do list for me and my team is realigning our digital content strategies to reflect the (new) needs of our audience, and relooking events and virtual experiences.

What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?

They Called Me Queer, a book curated by Kim Windvogel and Kelly-Eve Koopman. It's a fascinating compilation of essays and poems that highlight the experiences of LGBTIQ+ South Africans. Netflix's recently released documentary, *Disclosure* is also extremely insightful and a must-watch.

Tell us something about yourself not generally known?

I believe in working hard, but I believe in indulging even harder. It's how I maintain a balance.

Connect with Schwarp on [LinkedIn](#) and/or follow him on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

ABOUT JUANITA PIENAAR

Juanita is the editor of the marketing & media portal on the Bizcommunity website. She is also a contributing writer.

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