[Theme music]

Hannah 00:05 Hello, and welcome back to another episode of Sharing things. I'm Hannah, your host for season six, and I'm excited to share the next uplifting conversation from members of our University community, exploring the little things in life that connect us. This episode features Jon, archaeologist and Chancellor's Fellow in Global Challenges at the University, and Ichwan, third-year Sustainable Agriculture student.

Hannah 00:33 Just so we can get to know each other a little bit better. I'll come to you first Ichwan. I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about your first experience of Edinburgh since that is what connects all of us here today.

Ichwan 00:45 Since I've been to-- since I've been living in London for a year, I think when I compare London to Edinburgh, I find that Edinburgh is a lot more peaceful. And it's a smaller city. Much more contained than London. Yeah, I think it has better architecture too.

Hannah 01:05 Yeah? Do you remember-- I imagine, did you fly into Edinburgh?

Ichwan 01:10 I rode the train.

Hannah 01:11 You got the train up? Do you remember coming out of the train station and what you saw first? And like.

Ichwan 01:17 I think I only remember arriving in my accommodation walking around. And the roads are definitely-- they look smaller.

Hannah 01:28 Yeah, smaller roads, better architecture, more peaceful. And, Jon, what about you, I'm not entirely sure where you're from, but…

Jon 01:39 The west coast of Scotland.

Hannah 01:40 From the west coast.

Jon 01:41 So West Coast, East Coast, there's a big divide there. And I originally came to Edinburgh as a student, as an undergraduate student, in 1989. Let me make that clear. And I was supposed to go to the University of Glasgow, because I lived on the West Coast, I was only about 40 minutes away. And then I realised that it would take my parents longer to get to Edinburgh and they would have to phone before the came. Whereas in Glasgow they could turn up unannounced. So I thought Edinburgh will be a better option. That was the thinking that went behind it. And it was one of the best decisions I've ever made. Because I love this city. It's a beautiful city. Did my undergraduate here and then I went to Oxford for my PhD. And I've been working in England for about 20 years, desperate to come back. And then I got a job back in Edinburgh about two years ago. So I'm delighted to be back here. I think it's one of the best cities you can get for the reasons that Ichwan just said it's-- it's-- it's peaceful, and it's beautiful. But it's also a city. It's got all the stuff you need in a city, but it doesn't have the stress, I think.

Hannah 02:38 Are those all things that you appreciated about Edinburgh right from the beginning? Did you know Edinburgh very well before you came to study here?

Jon 02:46 No, not really. Because I mean, you know, a teenager growing up on the west coast, my horizons were pretty limited. And Edinburgh seemed bohemian and exotic to me. And I discovered pubs quite early on and enjoyed that quite a lot. And Edinburgh is particularly good at that. And it's just the culture. The music scene was good then, I don't know about it now because I'm probably too old. But yeah, I just had a great time. And I enjoyed the people I've met. I've always enjoyed the city, even though people on the west coast are much friendlier and easier to get on with, you can kind of break through that barrier with east coast people occasionally, normally it takes a few drinks.

Hannah 03:24 Yeah, I'm from—I’m from near Glasgow as well and I often get the scene of when I'm home people like to-- like to make comments, cause trouble, complain about the fact that I left.

Jon 03:36 I think it's always quite funny. The thing that always stood out to me about Glasgow and Edinburgh was the years and years and years ago, there was like the City of Culture. And Glasgow got the City of Culture. And Glasgow had the statement 'Glasgow is miles better' a wee smiley face. And that was the sticker and the Edinburgh unofficial reaction was 'Edinburgh slightly superior'. And that was it. Which is so sort of, you know, it's awful but it kind of sums Edinburgh but it sums up the arrogance in some ways in this competition between the two. I love Glasgow as well. I mean, Glasgow is a great place to go, I have to say.

Hannah 04:11 Yeah, they're both wonderful in their own ways.

[Theme music]

Hannah 04:18 I'm going to ask you Ichwan, if you could share your object with us and why you brought it with you today.

Ichwan 04:24 I was listening to past episodes and I think a lot of the previous guests has family heirloom or like cultural artefacts that they connected with and I was thinking of something cultural. But I realised that I am not emotionally attached to any object in particular. The object that I decided to bring to the table today is just my phone. This phone is like my portal to a lot of immaterial objects that I find value in, such as news stories, or music, entertainment, communication messages with friends and family, and I consume a lot of media, audiobooks. I find that these intangible items are more precious than any physical object that I have laying in my flat, yeah.

Hannah 05:25 Yeah, I really liked that. That idea that the intangible feels-- you feel more attached to those things than anything that you can hold. But at least you have this physical item that gives you access to all of this the knowledge and the entertainment and everything that comes with it. Do you ever-- do you ever switch off from your phone?

Ichwan 05:45 I never switch on-- switch off my phone, although I don't have notifications on. So the only way that an important person can reach me like a family member, is if they call me. Even though without the notifications, I still unconsciously gravitate towards my phone. And yeah, that is something that I am constantly learning to be conscious about.

Hannah 06:17 But yeah, Jon, I was wondering, do you have a similar relationship with your phone? Do you-- when do you-- are you using it to access information, to learn, to get entertainment? Is it important to you in all these similar ways that it is for Ichwan? And two, do you ever switch it off?

Jon 06:36 Yes, I do switch off, it's switched off at the moment, just in case it goes off [laugh]. But I don't think I'm particularly attached to phones in the way that maybe my children are, or I see people wandering through the streets that sort of walk out into the road, nearly get run over, that sort of thing, you know, because I can remember-- oh god, I sound so old in all of this. I remember before mobile phones, and I kind of miss those days somewhat, because it was kind of nice, because you only got you know, things only happened if you happened to be standing near a phone somewhere. And you were there whenever-- no, it's amazing anything happened in the world at all, to be honest, given that you couldn't just phone people up, you're so used to it now. And if you watch any sort of TV programmes, you know, from the 70s and 80s. And so sort of detective programmes, it's based around things where you got, well, couldn't you just phone him, why it should-- because that would be obvious. Whereas we don't have that now. And we're so used to being in contact like that. I think it hasn't taken over my life in the way that it does for a lot of people, I don't mean that in a bad way. I don't mean that, you know, it's obviously great, and you can access loads of things, and I've become more and more reliant on it. But equally, I'm, you know, I can leave the house without it and forget it, you know, and it doesn't really bother me until I get back again.

Hannah 07:43 Interesting. I panic when I leave my phone.

Jon 07:47 [laugh] This was-- the students on excavations as well, because I am-- I'm an archaeologist, so working with and just watching them, if they don't have their phone. If you tell them to turn it off for the day, they'd just absolute panic, what will I miss and tell you what you'll miss - nothing. Everything that's really-- exactly-- everything's-- I wonder whether it leads to anxiety as well, constantly having this information and constantly having this news and constantly having all this stuff. To be honest, you don't need it all. If something's really important, they'll get in touch with you. I'm not-- I'm not a fan of the download sort of approach. I like to own things, and to have them and to look at them. And particularly, you know, downloading music and that kind of thing is-- is I like to have the album cover and I like to look at it. I like to know that have to listen to all songs and that can't skip them and all that kind of stuff.

Hannah 08:34 Okay, so maybe this is a good segue into your objects. Relevant.

Jon 08:38 Yes. Yeah, so I can be extremely old again. Oh god. It is-- and some of you might need to-- this might need to be explained to you. This is called a CD, okay? And what you do is you can listen to music on this, but you have to have a machine that you put it in. And then you can listen to that music. And you can only listen to what's on the CD, which is about 700 megabytes worth of information, which isn't very much. Now. Again, like Ichwan, I struggled to think of an object. Because again, I don't think I'm particularly attached to objects. Which is weird. Because I'm an archaeologist, you would expect to be interested in objects. But I'm not, I'm more impressed and interested in what - it's going to sound really pompous - but what-- what things mean, rather than what they are. So I really struggled. There was only a couple of days ago when I got an email saying what's your object going to be? And I thought, oh god, I don't know. I thought the only thing I still spend money on is CDs, because I'm still into CDs, and I still like to buy and physically have the CD. And my kids think it's insane. Why do you bother, you know, when you can download everything instantly? And I don't know. I think it's just because-- and this is one I picked deliberately because it's from 1987. When I first started getting CDs when I was about 14. It's not even an album I particularly like it's just it's dated 1987. And that was the change from vinyl to CD. And that seemed like a massive change at the time. And it seemed so exciting. And it was digital and all this kind of stuff. And now in 2021, vinyl's overtaking CD again, so this is becoming obsolete. And it's-- and it's interesting how much of a role it's played in my life. And now it's kind of, it's becoming obsolete, maybe a bit like myself. But I still really care about it and want to have it and one of the things I love about Edinburgh was going to CD shops and looking at CDs, and now they're all closing, or are being replaced by vinyl, you know, because everybody buys vinyl now. And for me, vinyl is inferior to CD, because this was brought in to improve it, you know? So, so, so yeah, it's kind of a bit of a metaphor just for how things change and what they are, it could have been a cassette tape, you know, it could have been a floppy disk. It's another thing that's, that was really important. That's now maybe not something we use. And it makes you think about material things, and I still spend too much money on them. I realised probably not that meaningful. And again, I go back to the archaeology thing, because people always ask me ‘What's the most exciting thing you've ever found?’ They always think about objects and that kind of thing. And I never have an answer. I never-- never have a good answer. Because it's normally about finding landscapes or settlements or finding out something. Whereas people think archaeology is more about finding treasure. And it's, it's really not.

Hannah 11:11 Yeah, yeah. I really like that there seems quite clear contrast between both your objects, and that one of my questions was going to be whether you do still listen to the CDs, or if it's a nostalgic thing, but seems to be both for you, right?

Jon 11:26 Yeah, I like to listen to the CD, I like to look at it. I like the whole idea of doing it and thinking about it. And okay, it's not-- you can't skip tracks, but not so much when you're downloading and the whole idea of being in a shop, not that there's many of them left, where you can just look at things like being in a library and you find other stuff. And I don't think you get that so much if you search things online, it's just like searching a database. It's cold and sterile. And it's a bit boring. And it's too easy. You know, you can find anything, just like I want to hear that song. Oh, there it is. Two minutes later, you're bored. Next one, next one, next one. You used to have to find music and discover it, maybe that's the archaeologist in me again, it's discovering the stuff and excavating it out and then thinking you're the only person that knows about it and telling other people about it. And it was exciting, you know, and I think we've lost that connection with abundance. I think that's what happens when something's abundant, it loses its value, it loses its sort of cachet in some ways. Great things about this, you can get any music, you can listen to anything. And as I said, a lot of people have really diverse music tastes now. But the sad thing is, I think we've lost that kind of deep connection with it, in some ways.

Hannah 12:31 Ichwan, were you-- were you kind of have that final generation as I was to have CDs in your childhood?

Ichwan 12:38 What-- what we call K-pop. It's, first of all, there is the geographical distance between me in the UK and the artists in the-- in East Asia. And I think my phone allows me to access their work that is inaccessible in Western countries. And I think, although I enjoy listening to Korean music, it is extremely expensive to buy their albums and have them shipped here. I think that just shows how the internet has, like you said, being always connected. Having that abundance allows myself to access stuff that I like and not be bound by distance, or it's all very convenient, like you say.

Jon 12:41 It's interesting, it connects you to your culture, which is-- which in a way, if you were here, in the early 90s and 80s, you wouldn't be able to do that. You wouldn't have been able to go to the CD shop and find K-pop but then the Korean music wouldn't have been available, but now you can listen to it. So I suppose that is a better thing, he begrudgingly said.

[Theme music]

Hannah 13:57 Yeah, so having this access to-- yeah information from all over the world has that allowed you to develop who you are, your interests, your passions, your hobbies? Has that led you to like what you now study, for example?

Ichwan 14:12 My phone, it's not that I am attached to the phone itself, but I think I used the term portal. And I think I picked the phone because as a person, it's interesting knowing that you're an archaeologist and I was thinking of the word like cultural artefact and I realised that I am not loyal to any culture. Although I'm Indonesian-Chinese, my ethnicity, although my family, my upbringing, my childhood influences my taste my values. I think that they're just like a foundation for me to pick and choose aspects from different cultures that I like. Coming to the UK, I don't-- when people ask me whether-- how my experience is, I don't think I experienced a culture shock. Because back in Indonesia with all these devices like an iPad or a tablet, I was able to access Western culture, even back-- growing up in Indonesia, I was in an international school. And we talked in English. And I think I've been thinking in English for a very long time, the internet does influence what I am passionate about now, since in the University of Edinburgh, I study agricultural science and food security. I think what I study, it's all very, very important now, with climate change, and extreme weather events in general.

Hannah 16:03 That idea of like needing global solutions and global conversations to take place to be able to tackle such like massive issues, and like having access to information from every part of the world is going to be like really relevant and important to, like, studying this and then taking it forward into the future, I would imagine. Yeah, yeah.

Jon 16:27 I wonder if we're valuing the phone a bit too much here, though. I mean, it's this idea that there wasn't sort of global contact before the phone that came along. And you know, that you're finding out stuff to study with and to learn. I mean, obviously, there was the internet before that, and you would go in, it would be more formalised, and you would do it at a computer. I'm wondering how many people are having that global experience with their phones, when you look at them on the bus, and they're sitting staring at them, and how many of them are just following algorithms and Facebook and being told things that, you know, are being controlled from elsewhere. And maybe-- maybe people are becoming less open minded as a result of phones. I'm just being devil's advocate here, to be honest with you. But this idea of, you know, these very different views of society and people stuck in their own silos has come about from the algorithms of Facebook and the kind of things that you're interested in, the phone tracks what your interests are, and gives you back the interests that you have, and doesn't allow you to be perhaps see things you wouldn't expect. So-- so-- so I mean, obviously, it's great to be in global contact, and yes, you can do it through your phone, but-- but--but I wonder if--if-- if, you know, even if we didn't do that, we'd still have that global contact, we'd still have globalisation. We were having globalisation earlier than that, it's not necessarily a good thing as well. But that's another discussion, particularly with the agricultural systems around the world, as you'll be able to tell me, but the idea that you know, your phone is, is great, but I do wonder if we're led to much by phones now. And when I'm on a train, you know, I look around and you see people just staring at the phone, and they're watching TV on their phone. Very few people are reading books now. And if you kind of bring a book out, people almost look at it, like, what's he doing? It feels like you know, something like a-- like a media, which is obsolete like the CD almost.

Hannah 18:04 Yeah, it started to dominate the way that people...

Jon 18:06 Consume information and think about it. And you know, and it's how important it is to you. And I can see that. But I just wonder if it also constrains us somewhat.

[Theme music]

Hannah 18:20 So how do you learn? And how do you access information?

Jon 18:23 Reading books, and it's kind of practical stuff for me, I've never been, you know, I use-- I do digital survey, and I do photogrammetry, and do all this kind of stuff. So we use technology. But I still if I want to do something like I play the guitar, and I do things that are kind of things that you do. Whereas I notice my kids - I kind of keep going back to my kids - but they're-- everything's to do with screens and playing games and doing this, you know, why bother playing the guitar when you can play a game that's as if you're playing the guitar, it's like, well, it's because it's not actually doing that. So I suppose I'm a bit more analogue in that way that I approach my learning and do things.

Ichwan 18:57 I think I do read a lot of books. But now I'm completely a-- an e-book person.

Hannah 19:05 I have shelves and shelves of books that I just lug around with me every time I move flat. So I-- it's not the most convenient, and it takes up the most space in the car. But I do have a massive collection of like physical books still, and I can't seem to let go of that. So...

Jon 19:21 It's academic display behaviour as well. It's very important to have lots of books when you're in a room. I mean, the problem with this room is there's not lots of books behind me, so I feel very uncomfortable [laugh]. In my office, I have loads and loads of books on the walls. So when students come in, they're impressed by the range of books that I've got. I've not read them, obviously. I mean, they're just there for display. But that's important, I think and I think you know, it's hard to display your-- your-- your well-readness [laugh]. It's not the right-- that's the really bad way to say it obviously, but-- on a phone, you know, I suppose you could look at your history, but you can't display it in your house. You can't show off. Yeah, maybe I should have brought a book, I could bring lots of obsolete things. That's what I should have brought.

Hannah 20:00 Do you feel like the nostalgia? Does that make you more like, attached and that like are more determined to keep using them?

Jon 20:09 To finding your identity through your inability to adapt to new things. Yes, that's again, another thing that happens. Yes, I think is the answer to that, I fear change. No, no, it doesn't at all, I'm kind of just being a bit devil's advocate about it. And I can see the advantages, obviously, you know, I mean, if you took my phone off me now, and you told me to go back to reading books, and just using CDs, I'd be horrified. So I'm not nostalgic in that sense. But I think anyone when they look back on their past, and things that are important to them, and when it changes so quickly, we're now in a culture where things change so quickly, there isn't that sort of continuity of—of-- you know, formats and what you do and so on, I mean, you know, our-- our parents would have had vinyl and vinyl and vinyl, that would have been it, you know, they would have had these massive changes. Mind you, I suppose they would have had a TV coming in, and all that kind of thing. But we're now at a point in the society where, you know, technology is increasing very, very quickly and changing our culture in ways we don't yet understand. And I think looking at that as an archaeologist and standing back from it. It's really interesting. So we don't really know how phones are really going to affect the way that people interact with each other. You know, we do know now, with access to lots and lots of information. And you know, in digital content, and particularly social media, that people are more anxious, there's more social anxiety, there's more worry about doing things, there's less face to face contact, we don't know what the long term context of that will be culturally. So you know, I'm not saying it's a good or a bad thing. But it's these things are happening. And it's interesting to see how that affects humanity.

[Theme music]

Hannah 21:37 Hypothetical question, if you were an archaeologist working, say, 500 years from now. And you're looking back at this point in history, are there potentially any questions you would ask Ichwan as the sort of holder of the phone?

Jon 21:57 [laugh] Well, I can guarantee that whatever questions I'll be asking, there'll be the wrong ones. Because I think most of what we think about the past, and what we think about the future is going to be wrong. Ultimately. This is really a great way to sell archeology [laugh]. Yes, so I think, you know, it's very difficult to know what's going to be important in the future, because it's decided by contemporary society generally. And my interest in archaeology is-- is using information from the past to inform the present. So including things like food security and agricultural practices, is this idea that we have, you know, how long have homo sapiens sapiens have been on the planet? How long have we been around? About 200,000 years, it's a very long time, you know, so people talk about, you know, history going back, maybe 2000 years, that's another 180,000 years of things that happened, different social organisations, different ways of doing things, different beliefs, different, you know, societies, and some really good solutions to problems were developed in that period. And then I think there's now realisation that progress isn't just about things getting better and better. That's actually some things in the past were done better. And reintroducing information, not losing that information. And using that knowledge to inform present solutions is really important. So-- so for me, again, it goes back to an idea of what archaeology is, for me, it's not about predicting things, or it's more about finding out what we can about just human behaviour, and past action, and how that can kind of inform future and current action. So...

Ichwan 23:29 I'm the type of person that instead of thinking about the past, I rather think of activities that I have to do in the future, and stops I have to take, I think.

Jon 23:40 I worry about that, in some ways, not so much that, you know, you're not thinking about your own past, but the past in general, and the role that that can play, I mean, remember, there's that-- there's a kind of a tendency to sometimes just say that the past isn't important and thinking about it's old men with beards, and libraries, looking at pots. And some of it is that, but you know, that we don't really need it like it's exotic. It's not something that we actually need to have. But without thousands years worth of knowledge and building up what we're doing as a species without that information without continuing on, then we're kind of rootless in the context. I think that's it, there is a bit of a problem with identities now. And this is now going back to globalisation and how we define ourselves, your idea of you know, your phone, linking you to Korean culture, but then equally you wanting not to look back, but be wider in the world. I'm assuming, I assume, stop me if I'm saying something wrong. But I would still think you would think that Korean heritage is important.

Ichwan 24:37 Just to clarify, I think it's just my past. I'm not interested in I'm totally interested in the past of people of other people. But with heritage. Yeah, it is important. We study a lot of traditional practices that are, quote unquote, more sustainable, but I think with heritage itself, I'd like to bring it beyond human heritage. I think, like you said, humans have been here for 200,000 years. And there is a lot to learn from non human species, like animals. I think I've been thinking about this, since I've been reading a book called 'An immense world'. It's about animal sensors, and how different animal species access information as in us humans, we-- we only have a limited sight, we only see in the visible spectrum. And I think that is one example of how I think we can learn a lot from non human species from other animals. I think one of the most direct examples, I think, is in design, where you take the design of like a shark, to streamline a car, and how the designers used to shape Japanese trains. Yeah, that sort thing.

Hannah 26:14 Very cool. I like that. So interesting, this idea of like, heritage being important, but not just human heritage, like we have all sorts of worldly heritage that we can be pulling from and learning from beyond.

Jon 26:29 I think that happens as bio-cultural heritage, which is the kind of buzzword at the moment, which is linking nature and culture together. And talking about, you know, obviously, you were saying before, about the way that we understand and perceive things and see things. And it's purely from a human point of view. But of course, we are animals. And there's realisation that we are animals, and we're not apart from animals and much of western society and lots of religions are of this idea that we're apart from it. And even things like sustainable agriculture, thinking about sustainable development, the idea that that's so anthropomorphic, that’s so focused on humans, and we can solve the world we can do this, and we will do this, we will make this more sustainable, you know, the world will still be here, when we are not here that kind of, you know, the Gaia Hypothesis idea, this idea that, that we're part of a wider system, that there's a real arrogance and our part sometimes in the way that we act in a landscape. And I think going back to agriculture, I can come back to agriculture now. But I don't know why. You were saying about, you know, traditional methods. I mean pre industrial methods of agriculture tended to be more sustainable and tended to be, we have entered into a phase that's not sustainable. Because we're practising massed forms of agriculture we focus on, you know, mono crops, monocultures. And this is where archaeology has been seen to have a value to current and future practice is in terms of identifying more resilient types of species, identifying the range of different species before we domesticated everything. I mean, the chicken is a good example, if you think of a reliance on chickens, and chickens throughout the world, or I think something that 99% are genetically similar to the point that if-- if there was a disease they'll all be wiped out. And there'll be a massive, you know, massive hunger and starvation throughout the world. But there are some original different species of-- of chicken still being kept, which have been bred out of the system. And it's time to reintroduce that diversity, I keep going back to diversity, but that diversity back into the system, so it's more resilient. And I think that's, you know, these things are kind of a bit obvious in a way, but 10-20 years ago, they weren't talked about in these terms. A good example is-- I work in marine archaeology so I do-- it's more about a sustainable ocean and the way that we work with coastal communities. One of the things you can do is you can identify fish species that were more resilient, even if they've been, you know, fished away. And you can reintroduce species, you can start to reintroduce things. And you can start to reintroduce practices, catching those fish, which were more sustainable than mass ways of doing it. And I think that's beginning to come into sustainable development solutions more widely, and a recognition that it's not all about just scientific solutions that it's also about, cultural and bringing people into and so on. What-- the one example that was makes me think about this is-- there was a-- in Mozambique we do a project in East Africa, but in Mozambique generally, the British government put some aid money into developing these platforms to capture octopi I think it was, and it was about 5 million pounds of aid money. And the newspapers in the UK got really upset about this. Because what happened was the people didn't actually use the platforms, they were built scientifically, you could pick -- catch your octopi better with these platforms, but then they weren't used. So it was a waste of money. But no one had asked the communities if they'd wanted them, or if they fitted their cultural milieu or if they fitted the way that the act and the way that the act but you know that-- there was-- it was a symbolic and significant thing to do fishing as a cultural practice and relating that culture to the way that the science works. I think now is accepted but that's quite a new thing. And it's beginning to happen in agricultural sciences beginning to happen in food security. We're beginning to look at archaeological, you know, food ways we call them or the way the societies have supported themselves in the past. And it's not gonna answer every question, but it's more data to put to the solutions. And I think that's-- that's-- that's what's interesting about it.

Ichwan 30:20 Yeah, I think you pointed out the diversity of traditional practices and us having to recognise it. And I think I do see that trend. Now, we're-- we're more interested in being more local and having a, for example, having a farmer-- farming system that is isolated, that is self sufficient, and like an urban garden, something that requires less transportation, and emits less carbon dioxide, less carbon emissions. And I do see that trend of wanting to be more local now. But I was talking about this to a person and he was saying that there are a lot of advantages of being global. For example, with chicken genetics, you mentioned chickens, or having a company that specifically invests in chicken genetics, that is more efficient than allowing farmers in different countries to grow their own chickens, like you said, like traditional breeds and stuff like that, I think I was-- I'm just pointing out that sometimes having a global entity or a global institution, I just think that a lot of governments, especially in developing countries, they just don't have the access to technology or the resources, to-- to do their own research and to drive change. I think private institutions still have a place in this world. And yeah, this goes back to technology transfer. And I also want to point out that a lot of research and development is very risky. And it requires-- it's like a token investment. You pour money into a-- for example, a genetics project, and most likely it will fail, but only these institutions-- institutions or corporations that are able to make those investments and fail. Yeah.

Hannah 32:33 Yeah. I think this has been a really interesting conversation about the different ways that we both access and produce knowledge, and how that is applied to like, in our own lives. And globally, thinking about the future. I feel like I've-- it's been really interesting to hear both of you have like very contrasting perspectives on these on these topics. It's been yeah, really wonderful to talk to you guys today.

Hannah 33:05 We have one last question that we asked everyone at the end of the podcast, and that is if you could sum up what your object means to you in one word, what would that-- what would that be?

Jon 33:24 That's really good. Yes. Okay. One word for my CDs, my CD collection. I'm just trying to think what that word would be. What would it be? Suppose I would say? Rich?

Hannah 33:35 Yeah.

Jon 33:36 So diverse, exotic. Lots of things going on, when we were talking about before. So a mix of different things. Rich.

Hannah 33:44 I like it. Good word.

Jon 33:45 I was also thinking for some reason 'glory'. And I don't know where that came from. I just love this idea of glory. But nostalgia. No, no, no, because I do listen to new music. I'm not that bad [laugh].

Hannah 33:57 Cool, cool. What about you, Ichwan?

Ichwan 33:59 I would use the word 'unconstrained'. I think like I said, it's a portal. And it's limitless. And it is a medium, and the scale and the breadth of the internet and the phone and all these devices. It's neutral. I think it's up to us, humans, the users to constrain ourselves and to set boundaries. So I don't think the phone is a negative thing. It's a neutral thing. And it's the users, who are I think-- should be responsible and should reflect on how they use these-- the objects

Hannah 34:49 Yeah, thank you. Cool. I like it. Good words.

Jon 34:52 Changed my mind. It's not rich anymore because his is limitless. Mine is limited, mine is constrained. Mine is limited and I think that's a good thing. Know your limits and perform within them. Don't aim too high. That's my advice to people out there.

[Theme music]

Hannah 35:18 Thank you for listening to Sharing things. Remember to subscribe to make sure you never miss an episode. And check out our website to learn more about the guests and even take a look at their objects. See you next time.

[Theme music]

Kate 35:45 I hope you've enjoyed meeting members of our University of Edinburgh community. To connect with more join Platform One, our online meeting place for students, alumni and staff of the university. To find out more search Platform One Edinburgh.

[Theme music]

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