

THE RADIO WAVE
"Keeping Radio People in Touch"

13TH. October 2002

Issue #10

Ian MacRae, Editor, ian@allaboutradio.net

By subscription only! Welcome to the tenth issue of
THE RADIO WAVE
You are receiving this because you requested a subscription.
Unsubscribe instructions are at the end of this newsletter.

IN THIS ISSUE

- => Sponsorship Notice
- => Welcome
- => Aircheck.
- => Phoney Digital Radio
- => In Other News
- => Feature Article: The I.Q.Test for Radio
- => Top Radio Prep Sites
- => Coming Up
- => A Final Note
- => Subscribe/Unsubscribe information

SPONSORSHIP NOTICE (SHAMELESS PERSONAL PLUG)

"The Beginners' Guide To Becoming A Radio Star"...
is a far reaching e-book for radio beginners or people who
want to make radio their career. All the information you'll
discover here is "the basics" of radio. Stuff that applies
anywhere in the world where professional commercial radio
is established.

www.allaboutradio.net

G'DAY.

Welcome to issue 10 of the Radio Wave newsletter. We have a
whole lot of new subscribers from this issue so a very special
welcome to you guys.

In case you're wondering the newsletter is aimed at people
who'd like to be in radio, newbies who've just started and
full-time professionals.

Any comments you have about anything you read here please
let me have them.

Anything you need help or advice with...ask. If I can't
provide the answer I'll find someone who can.

If you'd like to contribute an article...you're welcome.

You can reach me at ian@allaboutradio.net

PHONY DIGITAL RADIO

An interesting story appeared recently in The NEW YORK TIMES which reported that MOTOROLA is readying a new chipset to create AM/FM analog receivers that take analog broadcasts, convert them to digital, and clean the signals up from multipath and interference problems.

The first radios with the technology will be car radios to be available late next year. BLAUPUNKT has announced similar technology, "Digiciever."

Reacting to this, a company called Ibiqurity, who are in the business of producing genuine digital receivers, sent out the following release. (edited)

>Some of you may have seen the story Monday in the New York Times "As Digital Radio Stumbles, New Products Fill the Gap".

There was a similar story in the Wall Street Journal and in several of the radio industry dailies. We have received some inquiries from broadcasters and investors about the articles, and thought it appropriate to try to put this article in perspective for you.

Chipsets that improve analog performance do not offer the value upgrade in quality or the wireless data services offered by digital solutions, like iBiquity's HD Radio technology.

The Motorola chips referred to in the article were actually unveiled earlier this month at the NAB Radio Show in Seattle, where they did not generate much interest.

We were therefore not surprised to see these stories, but were somewhat bemused at the amount of coverage they have received, since the chipsets do not represent much of an upgrade from the current state of analog radio technology.

Simply stated, these chips digitally process analog signals in receivers. This approach and technology are not new - these types of "digital radios" have been on the market for several years from various manufacturers.

Although the chips mentioned in the article use digital technology to process the received analog signal, these chips, cannot enhance the actual broadcast from the station - it is still analog.

While digital processing of an analog signal does yield important benefits, analog has inherent limitations that can only be addressed at the source using digital broadcast technology.

Once a broadcast is transmitted digitally, audio quality is greatly enhanced, reception is crystal clear and new offerings such as the "Tivo for Radio" applications and other wireless data services can be provided. These benefits can be realized only through digital transmission.

Our belief is that Motorola has announced this somewhat old news story with so much fanfare because they see a potential loss of business now that digital Radio technology is a reality.

We'd also note that this effort - trying to improve analog in the face of a digital transition - appears to have been taken right from Motorola's cell phone business plan.

As the analog market leader, they tried to extend the life of analog cell phones as the entire industry was transitioning to digital. The results of that strategy were devastating, as Motorola lost major market share to other cell phone providers who embraced digital technology.

After many years in development and test, and with support from our valued partners, digital broadcasting in the U.S. is on the cusp of endorsement by the FCC.

Every medium in the U.S. has made the transition to digital as consumers are demanding the latest in technical advancements. HD Radio technology represents a true upgrade from analog to digital in signal quality and wireless data capabilities.

Enhancing analog will not offer the same range of benefits available from a digital transmission.>

So basically this means if a radio station is not transmitting using fully digital equipment (even including digital microphones) and the listeners are not using total digital receivers then it's phony digital radio we're talking about.

If you're interested in finding out more check out:

<http://www.ibiquity.com/navframe.html?01content.html>

LATE NEWS: (as reported by All Access Music Group this past week)

As expected, the FCC has unanimously approved iBIQUITY's in-band on-channel digital radio system for use by terrestrial radio stations. Stations may immediately begin broadcasting digital signals, although radios to receive them are not yet commercially available.

The NAB's EDDIE FRITTS issued an immediate statement following the Commission's 4-0 vote: "We salute the FCC for today's decision and congratulate BOB STRUBLE and the team at iBIQUITY for helping shepherd regulatory approval through the Commission. NAB was pleased to play a supporting role.

"With today's FCC action, local radio stations are poised to deliver one of the most sweeping advancements in broadcasting in nearly a century.

Community-focused programming has always made radio an

indispensable part of the American fabric. We believe
broadcasters will embrace this new technology because
it will provide local listeners with unmatched audio quality
and a host of new, innovative digitally-based services."

IN OTHER NEWS

(Talking of the NAB)
In the U.S. the NAB (National Association of Broadcasters)
is spending \$250,000 with an outside public relations company.
The new expenditure is an attempt to counteract critics of
the industry as well as the threat of XM and SIRIUS
satellite radio.

Looks like they're taking the threat seriously!

Only one way to counter satellite radio and that's not by
throwing money at the problem. Terrestrial have to be
local and personality driven to build and keep audience
loyalty.

That's what I think. Do you agree?

Comments welcome. ian@allaboutradio.net

Meantime maybe some money will need to be spent to counteract
some critics of the Australian commercial broadcasting
industry. What's more some of these critics are from WITHIN
the industry. Take, for example, this posting on the
aus.radio.broadcast newsgroup...

<Commercial radio has absolutely no ethics.

With recent postings about the MIX FM (Sunshine Coast)
Secret Sound and the question of ethics ... I wonder if
Austereo should be letting its listeners to 2DayFM know
that they are up against listeners in other cities to
win their secret sound?

I have asked no less than a dozen people who aren't radio
types ...just plain punters, if they knew that this comp
was not just for listeners in Sydney. They had no idea, and
all said they felt cheated or duped by this!

Just imagine if they knew that half what they hear these
days on radio is pre recorded! Take for example the recent
shambles on MIX 106.5 Sydney - with the broadcasting of an
entire week of pre-recorded breakfast programming.

The station received a right spank in the Sydney newspapers
which rightly called it a 'scam'. Management of the
station whimpered out with a pathetic "we want to always keeps
the best talent on air" or some bullshit.

This is another pathetic and blatant excuse for 'our bottom
line just won't allow us to employ a half decent jock to
play the highlights of our lowly ranked , poorly marketed
breakfast programme'.

Shame ... Jason and Sammy are indeed great talents and lovely people to boot, but they must just be dying there. No direction and terrible money - it's no wonder the show pulls less than 4.5%. This station still automates over 80% of its weekend daytime programming with just live news and traffic inserts.

Let's not get started on the WS FM traffic helicopter ... it just plainly DOES NOT EXIST. Here's another radio station scamming it's listeners. How they can continue to get away with this is just criminal, and is taking the theatre of the mind thing way too far.

Radio station management can't possibly think that listeners are that stupid.>

If you're aware of any other examples of unethical conduct in radio ANYWHERE please let me know and I'll pass it on in the next edition of The Radio Wave.

This is not with the intention of undermining radio. Quite the opposite. Let's try to put a stop to it before it starts to harm our industry.

Email me your stories. ian@allaboutradio.net

FEATURE ARTICLE: THE IQ TEST FOR RADIO

The recent success of the IQ Test on TV got me to thinking what questions we'd ask of radio people in order to reveal their true high IQ scores?

When it comes to loyalty -- and regular usage of your station, we know from experience that this grows as you exceed your listener's expectations in your music, personality content, station imagery and promotions.

If you're a news/talk station, among a number of elements, loyal listening comes from the perishable topics and issues you pursue from hour to hour, day to day. One person at a time, one quarter hour at a time loyalty starts to grow.

Here's an exercise for you to test your Radio IQ and how well you are doing in creating a beyond expectation experience for your listener each time he or she comes to your place on the dial.

This Radio IQ test assists you to find out how 'different' your product is. The good news is that it won't take very long for you to do. Just one quarter hour or less, if your station or daypart is truly 'differentiated' from the rest.

To commence the test, listen like a listener (not as easy as it may seem, so try and do it outside of the station, preferably in a location that's not at home because you can get easily side tracked). Ask yourself how long it takes to hear everything your station stands for.

If your music position is "today" or "classic," how long does a listener need to listen to hear a strong current song by a core artist, a recurrent that hits the core listener with

a strong emotive feeling, or a high testing gold song?

If you're a news / talk station, how long before a listener hears a topic or an issue that affects them personally in their every day life. Have you answered their question of "yes, but how does this issue you're covering affect me?"

How many minutes does a listener have to spend with you to hear Discretionary Time Information; stories that touch issues like the hip pocket nerve; their heartstring; what you may call relatable, topical content which connects with their expectations and values?

By the way, the same also applies in varying forms for music formats.

If improving at work listening .. Enhancing your 'fun' image .. improving phone interactivity ... being active and doing good things in the community .. talking about things listeners care about .. is your station's goal, how long does someone need to listen to hear you actually doing these things in a way that positively endears them to your station?

One thing is for sure as you take the radio IQ test, the quicker and more often you pay off for your target listener, the better the ratings will be through increased TSL and of course cume.

Why? Because you start to provide that elusive "day to day tune in factor". In other words, giving them a reason as to why they should keep coming back to your station day after day - that's what building loyalty is all about.

This doesn't mean how often you SAY what you stand for. It means how often you DO the things you promise in your positioning, both spoken and implied. This is what makes a station, a personality truly different and compelling .. or not.

The challenge is to take the Radio IQ test by listening in a random quarter hour to your station and those of your competition. Can you hear the full variety of the music mix you promise? How well do you live up to it?

Are your personalities living up to the values and lifestyle of the target audience, talking about 'real' things listeners care about, making them feel more secure (or are they just selling the radio station)?

Do you sound alive? Caring? Helpful? Likeable? Are your announcers moving away from being "pedestrian" by re-working the way they do liners from day to day.

Do the things that set your station apart from competitors tell stories, entertain, surprise and delight in every single quarter hour?

The 'instant' we all have to provide gratification has become shorter than ever now. How 'divisible' are you?

The final question is this and it's probably one that only

you and your listeners can answer..

if you took all the mentions of your station's call sign and positioning statements away, does what's left still clearly differentiate you from your competitors so that any listeners coming up and down the dial recognise you instantly the moment they tune in."

I'll leave you to tally up the answers for your Radio IQ score.

DAVID ROGERSON

*** David Rogerson is Managing Director of Strategic Media Solutions. A media and communications consulting company which provides program, marketing and research solutions to clients in the Asia Pacific rim. He is also the Asia Pacific consultant for Arbitron.

David can be reached via e-mail at: smspacific@aol.com

-----HOT TIP-----

Listen to your aircheck tapes a few days after they're recorded. That way you're slightly "removed" from them and tend to hear them more from the perspective of a listener.

-----HOT TIP-----

TOP RADIO PREP SITES

If you're working in an "oldies" music format this site is for you.

Ron Smith's Oldies Music brings you a daily calendar of births, deaths and events in rock and roll history. It's very much based on past American charting performers but most of them are known worldwide. You can find oldies news and there's a big list of links to web sites of artists from the 50's, 60's and 70's. Plus you can get to some really good song lyric sites.

<http://oldiesmusic.com/open.htm>

COMING UP NEXT ISSUE

Dunno yet!

A FINAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR.

Please help grow this letter so we can make our voice louder in the industry.

If there is anyone you know either in or outside the radio industry who would like to receive THE RADIO WAVE they should

simply ask to be subscribed by sending a blank e-mail to:

radiowave@allaboutradio.net

As you know it's free and you can unsubscribe at any time.

COPYRIGHT INFO.

Copyright 2002 Ian MacRae
