

THE RADIO WAVE
"Keeping Radio People in Touch"

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Issue #33

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THE RADIO WAVE
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SPONSORSHIP NOTICE (SHAMELESS PERSONAL PLUG)

Radio schools are not all the same. As you investigate each school, it will become quite obvious that each school offers different levels of training in radio broadcasting.

Unfortunately, some radio schools, amount to nothing more than social gatherings with little or no time devoted to the student's true needs and expectations, often using outdated or poorly functioning equipment.

Meantime other schools which may be affiliated with a university, are excellent, utilising today's equipment, but beyond the reach of most students because of their limited annual intake, geographic location or high entry fees.

An interesting exercise is on the home page of our radio school site where you can "rate a radio school"

www.radioschool.biz

G'DAY

Here's what's been happening in the wonderful and bewildering world of radio since we last connected in October.

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

Enjoy.

WE HAVE MAIL

G'Day Ian

As usual, an interesting and thought provoking newsletter.
Some thoughts on issues you raised in "The Radio Wave"

1) Ad Breaks

I'm surprised that this has even become an issue. The fact that it has shows how isolated Radio has become from it's audience.

Working in a radio station, if you watch during an ad break, you will see how peoples eyes start to glaze over about half way through the third ad and by the end of the fourth their attention is totally elsewhere (unless they are a sales rep. listening for one of their new clients).

And these people are professionals who are being paid to listen !! Don't they notice they're own reactions to long ad breaks ? Or, if they do, why can't they relate that feeling back to their audience??

(Ok, we really do know why, [insert your favourite PD/Bean counter joke here])

Think about how many times you have driven the car on a short trip with the radio on your favourite "music" station and heard nothing but ads, promos etc from the time you left home till you reached the shops? It happens way too often !!

[begin old-timer grumbling routine]

Radio has to re-awaken to the fact that it is part of the entertainment industry, not just any industry. That the listeners are not a product to be packaged like chips and sold to the advertisers.

The listeners are an *audience*, who, aware of commercial reality, are prepared to listen to a few ads in order to pay for their entertainment.

If the station gets greedy and charges to high a price for the entertainment they provide (ie plays to many ads), then the audience will vote with the "seek" button or turn on the mp3 player.

2) Ratings

Does the Arbitron PPM and it's cousins count TSL or "Exposure" to a station? e.g. If a person wearing a PPM walks past a shop that has Station X playing on the radio. Does the PPM count the 10 seconds or so it takes to walk past the shop as points for Station X or does it measure in larger blocks ?

There is a big difference between being "exposed" to a station and "listening" to it.

Best Regards
Eric Brodrick

COMMENT: As far as the PPM is concerned, Arbitron tell me that the device stores a code every 30 seconds so, in your example, it's possible that the PPM would detect the audio.

However you should note that the radio industry in whichever market has to tell Arbitron how much exposure they want to credit Time Spent Listening (TSL) which is the same as in the current ratings diary system. In Australia the number of people who listened for at least 8 minutes in any particular 15 minutes is shown.

In the US if there is FIVE minutes of listening to the same station in a clock quarter hour, they credit 15 minutes of listening.

So the PPM is set to use the definition that the industry wants.

Bob Stuart in the seaside paradise of Noosa, Australia, emails The Radio Wave:

Speaking of People Meters, as soon as they're adopted, radio stations will be falling over themselves offering free spots to supermarkets to entice them to play the station through their PAs. Maybe that way, the stations could get rid of announcers altogether and just rely on their (PPM's) to win big figures in the survey. (Sarcasm).

Best wishes,

Bob.

COMMENT: Good point actually. Although I suppose the percentage of people entering a particular store and who are taking part in a survey and thus carrying a PPM would be fairly small.

Hi Ian,

I was very interested in your article about increased cancer rates among people living near radio transmitting antennas.

In the past I worked in several environments where I was located directly beneath the transmitting antenna, once at a Television station and another time when I worked on board Radio Caroline South.

You probably remember the situation at Caroline, the huge transmitting antenna was situated on the foredeck just a few feet from our broadcasting studio.

I worked at Radio Caroline for just over a year and during that time we were constantly surrounded by powerful RF waves so one would imagine that there would be a significant, negative health impact upon us.

I had another, similar, experience working at a TV station in Canada where the transmitter was located inside the operations control room adjacent to the offices and studios, the antenna was located about 20 feet away from the building.

In total I probably spent about 3 years living with a whole bunch of RF as my working companion.

How am I today? Well I've lost most of my hair, my memory isn't what it used to be, I ache when I get out of bed in the morning and I don't move around as quickly as I once did but I'm now past 60 years of age so I accept these maladies as part of the aging process but, other than that, I am in pretty good health and, touch wood, cancer free.

Obviously it is difficult to know definitively if RF waves contribute to causing cancer, it is quite possible, but my personal experience does not reflect that theory.

All the best Ian,
Steve Young

COMMENT: Something that we weren't aware of at the time but something I heard many years later...it seems that there were numerous rust patches in the hull of the Mi Amigo (the ship that housed Radio Caroline) below the waterline that were caused by the interaction of the sea water and RF (radiated frequency) waves from the powerful transmitter.

Anyway we appear to have survived, Steve. Well, so far so good! At least I've still got my hair. As for my memory...er...what were we discussing...??

Mail is always welcome here at The Radio Wave. Send it to:

ian@allaboutradio.net

Tim Stackpool notes that the previous issue stated: "Welcome to the thirty-second issue of The Radio Wave" and points out that the newsletter was, in fact, more than 30 secs.

My reply was: "Not if you're into speed reading!"

End of comedy segment.

JOHN PEEL, OBE 1939 - 2004

It was sad to hear of the death of BBC broadcasting legend JOHN PEEL.

Our paths crossed only briefly when we both were working on the UK "pirate" stations in the 60's. He was on Radio London and I was on Radio Caroline.

Even in those early days he used his position to champion new musical talent. A reputation which continued to grow when he came ashore and joined the BBC's then new Radio One.

He had an amazing ability to spot new music, bands and trends.

In the 60s he pioneered revolutionary acts like The Velvet Underground and I recall hearing Jimmi Hendrix for the first time on his Radio London program.

In the early 70s he was the first to play T Rex and David Bowie.

In the mid 70s he became enamoured with Punk and played bands like The Undertones and The Sex Pistols at a time when other stations regarded them as "unlistenable."

He promoted reggae and hip-hop – which introduced both to a mainstream audience.

John suffered from diabetes and had been on holiday in the Peruvian city of Cuzco with wife Sheila when he was taken ill.

His contribution to the development of popular music over four decades is immeasurable.

Now...is there anyone who will take up his banner? And, if there is, will they be allowed?

THAT'S A LONG SHIFT

It's on again. Another attempt at a world record for hosting the longest radio show in the world.

This time it's an internet station. (Is that allowable?)

ROY SANDBROOK of the U.K.'s Streaming Radio...

Weblink: www.streamingradio.co.uk ...

will attempt to stay on the air

for a full six days in a bid to break the UK's current record of 33 hours held by Nick Lawrence on BBC Three Counties Radio in 2001.

He will also be trying to beat Swiss radio DJ Christoph Stockli's record from 2002 which lasted an incredible 105 hours!

Roy will start the attempt at 8am UK time on Thursday 18th November 2004 and try to reach Wednesday 24th November 2004.

For the attempt to be accepted the rules include having two witnesses in the studio at all times and the whole show has to be videoed as evidence and sent back to the Guinness Book of Records for checking.

During the marathon he'll be helping to raise money for several charities and money can be donated through the website.

Rather him than me. And I speak from experience.

NEUTRAL NEWS

After almost seventy years of broadcasting around the world SWISS RADIO INTERNATIONAL has broadcast its last programs on shortwave and satellite.

Now it'll be available in nine languages on the internet.

Swiss Radio became famous as a neutral broadcaster during World War Two and the Cold War.

Personally I became very familiar with their newscasts when working on UK pirate radio as we used to monitor (in other

words "steal")some of their content and re-write it for our own news!

ERECTION PROBLEMS

A surreal sight greeted passers-by at the transmission tower of news radio KKOB in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The mast appeared to be under attack by Smokey Bear and the there were three people climbing down the structure who hadn't initially climbed up!

Turns out it was a Smokey Bear hot-air balloon taking part in the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta that had tangled with the 213 meter tower. The 69-year-old pilot and his two passengers, ages 10 and 14, had to climb down the interior ladder.

The station shut down the 50Kw transmitter as rescuers met the three shaken survivors about 30 meters above the ground and brought them down.

The same weekend another U.S. radio tower experienced trouble. Country Music WMSK in Morganfield, Kentucky was knocked down by a utility company boom truck that had been left on a hill.

Apparently the brake that had been set failed and the vehicle rolled down the hill breaking some of the mast's support cables and down she came!

Station Program Director Don Sheridan said ruefully: "It's just spread all over the field out there."

THE FIVE SECONDS THEORY

There's a hypothesis that if you drop food onto the floor you can still eat it as long as you pick it up within five seconds. I guess the thinking is that this is not long enough for germs to jump on (?)

Is this an urban legend or fact? The afternoon show's GENE & JULIE on WLTM Atlanta put it to the test.

With a doctor from the local school of Medicine watching on they dropped three items on the clean kitchen floor. (A clean kitchen in a radio station??)

A Baby Ruth candy bar ("Bursting with peanuts, rich caramel and chewy nougat"), a slice of pizza and a baby's pacifier.

Result? The candy bar was safe, the pacifier was OK as long as it was washed off before going back into the infantile mouth but pizza attracts bacteria like a magnet and should be trashed immediately.

Once again radio comes to the fore when important public issues need to be resolved.

NEW MUSIC

What the hell is Reggaeton?

Well, if the Sirius Satellite Network (U.S.A.) are to be believed it's the fastest growing music genre on a global scale.

On the basis of which they've launched a new Reggaeton show on their WAX 42 channel every Sunday night.

So what is it? It's a combination of reggae with Latin sounds.

Hmm. Just might work you know.

NOT VERY SIRIUS

Also on Sirius...white rapper EMINEM has launched his new "Slim Shady" format SHADE 45.

But as a lead-up stunt a few days before the official launch he played a rotation of soft AC songs such as Kenny Roger's "Lady", Barbra Streisand & Barry Gibb's "Guilty" and some Barry Manilow.

This was all tied together with sweepers parodying a Light 'n Easy station's sweepers with some wild hip-hop VO's added to the mix.

NEW DIGITAL RADIO WEBSITE

In the UK the DRDB (Digital Radio Development Bureau) has launched a newly designed consumer website. The DAB market has certainly grown since the site first launched in December 2002. There is now more than triple the product available in stores. Retailers have grown from 600 to 6,000.

Over the next four years, the DRDB forecasts some 12 million DAB digital radios will be sold in the UK, making the market worth nearly half a billion pounds by the end of 2008.

Weblink: www.digitalradionow.com

END OF THE ROAD FOR THE INTERNET

The U.S. Government is going to shut down the Internet in order to fix once and for all the problems of illegal downloading of music and easily accessible porn.

Well that's the story the Reality Radio Morning Show on WILD 96.3 Fort Wayne convinced many of its listeners was correct after presenters GOOSE and VAN read the "official" fax on the air. Business, city government officials, TV stations and three Internet Service Providers called in panic.

By 5 pm GOOSE and VAN had government officials back-tracking on the planned shutdown because of the potential tremendous loss of revenue.

They linked President BUSH's email to the station's Web site and started OPERATION PURE NET, an honour system letting the President know that you wouldn't illegally download music or

porn. The Web site logged over a 1000 hits.

No response was received from the President. I guess he had more important things on his mind at the time!

(If you want to see the REAL end of the internet go to <http://www.shibumi.org//eoti.htm> It's worthwhile!)

A FINAL NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The plan is to grow the list of people taking this e-letter, and encourage interactivity from our readers.

To do this I need your help.

If there is anyone you know either in or outside the radio industry who would like to receive THE RADIO WAVE please simply ask to be subscribed by sending a blank e-mail to:

radiowave@allaboutradio.net

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