

# Turned



**RADIO WORLD'S MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE**

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February 1998

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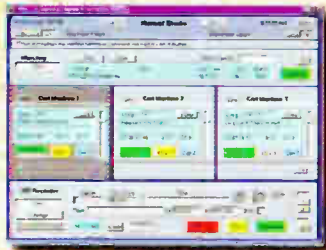
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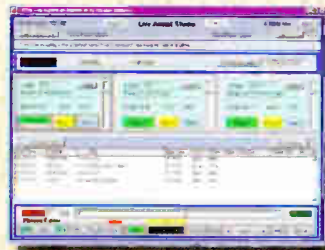
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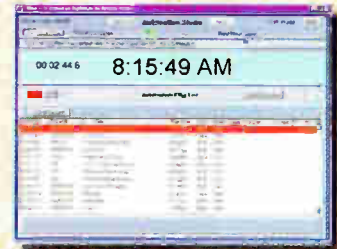
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# Time Spent Listening



Alan Haber

## Love, Radio Style

Photo by Alan R. Peterson



I feel blessed. Radio is something I truly love — being able to write about it and assemble a monthly journal devoted to it makes me feel very lucky.

I've done other things in my life to make a buck, but that's exactly the point: it's the difference between art and commerce, house and home. Are you simply making a buck or are you making a living? Are you living in a house or do you call it your home?

I'm going to go out on a limb here, even though I can't see the expression on your face or discern anything from your body language, and say that you're in lifelong career mode.

That's this month's reason why radio is so strong these days. We've got a community of managers in it for life because of the love of this glorious medium. Each of you live and breathe the airwaves, and you come together to celebrate your medium's achievements a couple of times a year — at the RAB Marketing Leadership Conference (covered in our January issue), at the NAB spring convention (look for pre-show coverage next month) and fall radio show and at the annual Country Radio Seminar, the 29<sup>th</sup> of which is taking place later this month in downtown Nashville.

This issue, we've got the lowdown on the hoedown that should attract nearly 2,300 people this year, including me for the very first time. I can't wait — I spent three years in country radio at the former WAFL(FM) in Milford, Del., as you know.

Now, I didn't attend any kind of broadcast school, unless, that is, you consider three years on my college radio station (the former WVHC(FM) at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y.) and a lifetime listening to and learning from the great DJs on WABC(AM) an education. But many people today are spending time in the hallowed halls with an eye on the future. Those halls are examined in Bob Rusk's story on education that kicks off this month's festivities on page 8.

Education is our main theme this month. In addition to Bob's story, you'll find a number of other learning-esque ditties, including a spotlight on the Miami Lakes Technical Education Center in Miami and a pair of stories from Professor Peter Hunn about a couple of unique approaches to the golden rule: one on distance learning, Internet-style, and another on a rather interesting Web site course for aspiring radio folks.

We've also got a report on the state of religious radio from *Washington Post* radio writer Marc Fisher (his *Post* column, "The Listener," is great reading). And *Dallas Morning News* radio and TV critic Al Brumley answers the musical question, "Where do listeners turn when Howard Stern leaves town?" in our Market Watch corner.

There's plenty more this month, including, as usual, our intrepid cyber-correspondent Kim Komando with a parcel of ISP ABCs and Frank Montero with at least a handful or two of account receivables.

In fact, there is plenty in this issue that both illuminates and celebrates the reasons why you and I love radio so much. So dig in. Love radio. And every morning, when you enter your station, remember that it is not a house — it is your home. ▼

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# GOOD MORNING!

*How did you learn the radio ropes? In a classroom? Listening to your favorite DJs as a kid? The next crop of broadcasters is doing all this and more to learn what it takes to make a career in the medium we call home.*

# CLASS IS NOW IN SESSION

*What are students learning today? And where are they learning? Does the Internet play a role in educating tomorrow's radio broadcasters? The answers follow in this special section.*

# MIND YOUR INSTRUCTOR, BOB RUSK!

## *Beyond the School of Hard Knocks: Reading, Writing and Arithmetic-AM-FM*

**A**sk broadcasters where they learned their craft and many will reply, "From the school of hard knocks." For some, the first knock came when they were kids and tapped on the door at the local small-town station. Invited in for a look, they would end up doing everything from taking out the trash to getting a bit of experience on the air.

Some of these kids, and many more after them, have been knocking on a

variety of doors — as many doors as it takes in some cases — to make a career in radio. For many aspiring broadcasters, schools such as Brown Institute in Minneapolis, Columbia College in Chicago and Benson High School in Portland, Ore., constitute the most valuable knocks of all.

Ask some of today's airwaves professionals how effective their educational experiences have been. Jim Schlichting, sales manager at WLCS(FM) and WFG-

AM-FM in Muskegon, Mich., says his school years were valuable.

"Back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I went to the Career Academy Broadcast School and the University of Illinois for my B.A. (in) speech and communications," he says.

"Both experiences gave me a solid base from which to work, thanks to the 'working professionals' who were instructing. I've spent more than a quarter century in radio and allied industries. I believe those five years of formal education have given me the ability to understand the dramatic evolution of the radio business (and) prepared (me) for the various jobs I've had."



SION.

1970, answering the request line. He wound up doing morning drive at what was then the most popular top-40 station in Portland.

### Motivation

But not every aspiring radio person has been as lucky as Murdock. Kevin Flink, director of the radio curriculum at Benson, acknowledges that “it’s tough to say a lot” of his students go to work in the business. “There are some,” he says. “It depends on a kid’s motivation.”

Flink sees the Benson program as an introduction to radio and encourages his students to continue their training in college before entering the job market. “Quite frankly,” he says, “that has become the biggest hang-up. So many (students) just don’t have the money to go to a four-year school.”

In addition to introducing students to radio, classes at this vocational school also “prepare students for communication in life,” says Flink. “No matter what job you get into, you’re going to need to communicate with people.”

And isn’t communication the name of the game in radio? As their platforms for communicating, Benson students practice their craft on two campus radio stations: KBPS(AM) and KBPS-FM, which cover the Portland market. The AM station was put on the air by students in 1923, making it one of the oldest radio stations in the United States.

Broadcasting on over-the-air signals (as opposed to the closed-circuit variety that is more common for high school stations) “teaches students that they have to be very responsible right off the bat,” Flink says. “In the Portland metropolitan area, potentially hundreds of thousands of people could be listening to everything they say.”

As evidence that the Benson High “communication for life” concept can help to train young people for careers outside of broadcasting if broadcasting does not turn out to be their forte, Flink points to former student Phil Knight. Knight made a name for himself as a

school sportscaster, but later became more famous as the founder and CEO of athletic shoemaker Nike.

### Show me the money

Not all aspiring radio broadcasters, in the end, decide to stay in the business. At some point, they may switch gears and career paths. Those who opt for a career outside of radio often cite money as the reason. It has never been a secret that many do not get rich in this business — even earning enough simply to make ends meet has long been a fact of life for some.

Vernon Stone, who began working in radio in the 1950s and is now journalism professor emeritus at the University of Missouri, lays it on the line. “Unless you go into management or get a good talent job in a larger market,” he says, “you’re never going to make much in radio.”

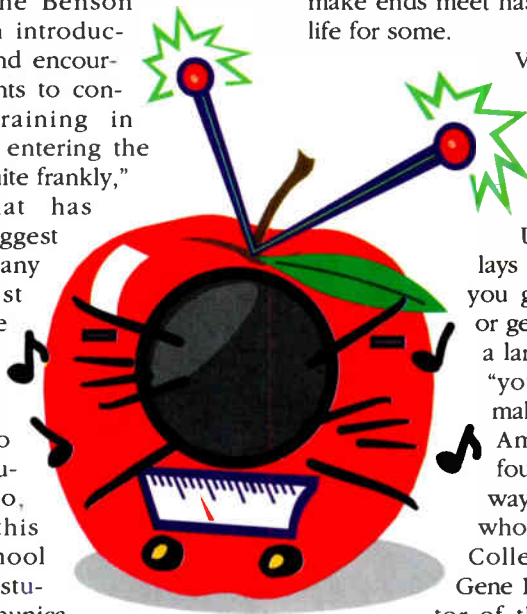
Among those who found that out the hard way were many students who attended Columbia College, according to Gene Davis, program director of the Nashville-based

Interstate Radio Network.

“When the network was Chicago-based, we used interns from Columbia,” he says. “That school consistently sent me students who were so ‘into it’ that I could teach them virtually any aspect of the business. (They) received actual hands-on experience ... in editing, production, dubbing and what not ... at one of Chicago’s finest radio facilities.”

But when it came to finding a paying job, the students “soon found out that the (radio) business is ‘the pits,’” he notes. “Almost all of those who went on to work in radio after graduation got smart and left the business before too long.”

Davis remembers one student who earned minimum wage working overnights for more than three years at a top-100 market station. “He got smart and began selling houses instead,” he remembers. “I would hate to be a college kid with an interest in radio. Unless you’re in sales or the morning guy, chances are slim of ever getting more than a paycheck — and a meager one at that — out of the business.”



Bruce Murdock, one of the most popular air personalities in the Pacific Northwest, feels similarly about Benson High in Portland. “The school gave me an invaluable start to my career,” says the longtime morning-drive personality at Sandusky-owned KLSY-FM in Seattle.

Murdock, who began working in commercial radio during his sophomore year at Benson, says the training he got at the school gave him the incentive to “knock on doors and shake hands” at Portland stations. “I was out there making sure everybody knew who I was and what I wanted to do,” he recalls.

The future radio professional went to work at KGW(AM) (now KEWS(AM)) in

Those words are echoed by Jay Rose, an Emmy and Clio Award-winning sound designer whose client list includes the A&E Network, CBS and IBM. "I went to Emerson College (in Boston) 30 years ago," he says. "At the time they required serious study of voice and articulation, phonetic transcription, rhetoric, oral interpretation and communication psychology — and I just wanted to play radio."

After Rose graduated, he made his home in the medium for a couple of years. He then moved to the worlds of film and high-end audio production for ad agencies; this work, he says, has been "much more creatively satisfying and financially rewarding" than radio.

Perhaps broadcasting schools should give students a better "real-world" picture of what they can expect to earn in radio. That is the opinion of Mark Bass, vice president and general manager of six Southern Star-owned stations in Tuscaloosa and Gadsden, Ala. "(Students) get out of college," he says, "and expect to make 'x' number of dollars and realize that most small- and medium-market entry-level positions are very low-paying. (They also realize) that it's difficult to break into higher-paying jobs."

This is true, if the national surveys of radio and television news directors that Stone has conducted since 1972 are any indication. And what is the upshot of all of this? Stone says that the University of Missouri is now putting less emphasis on radio.

"Radio used to be very strong here and emphasized well," he says. "KBIA(FM), the university station, used to have a stand-alone news department that all (radio) students worked in. It was really first rate. Now it's just an adjunct to the TV operation. When you see what the salaries are in small and medium markets, you see why students don't aspire (to) careers in radio."

Stone's latest survey, done in 1994, showed that the median annual salary for a radio news director was about \$20,000. News reporters were averaging about \$15,000 a year. Stone pointed out in his report, available on-line at <http://www.missouri.edu/~jourvs/grasal.html>, that "radio news salaries are in at least their third decade of erosion."

Most disturbing to college students or anyone hoping to pursue a career in radio news is Stone's finding that the lowest salaries "were essentially minimum wage — roughly \$8,840 per year." On the high side of the income scale, the survey found that a major market radio news director was earning about \$32,000

a year compared to nearly \$100,000 for a major market TV news director. Major market radio news anchors were averaging \$30,500 annually, while major market TV news anchors cracked the six-figure mark at \$113,500 a year.

Yet, despite the prospects for low salaries, people do continue to aspire to make a career out of radio. Many future broadcasters seem confident that, despite the odds, they can make it to the top — or at least as close to the top as possible.

### Astrological sign

Rob Scorpio is one who has made it through the school of hard knocks. He gives much of the credit to the Columbia School of Broadcasting in suburban Washington, D.C.

Scorpio graduated from the local George Mason University with a degree in speech communications and then went on to Columbia. "(The school)



gave me things I couldn't get in college — the chance to record, to do commercials and get the feel of a radio station," he says. "The best part of it was they were able to place me in a job. They have tip sheets and a bulletin board full of job (openings)."

Within the pages of the school's January 1998 catalog is a promise to assist graduates in their search for a position in the broadcasting industry for a period of five years after completion of the school program. Graduates are given the phone number of the school's 24-hour job hotline, which is updated as job leads become available.

After graduation, and in only three years, Scorpio went from his first job at WINX(AM) in Rockville, Md., to WPGC-FM in Washington. For the past seven years he has been at top-rated Clear Channel-owned KBXX(FM) in San Antonio, Texas, where he is program director and morning-drive personality.

As evidence that Columbia School of Broadcasting graduates go to work in radio, the school publishes a hall of fame

list that contains hundreds of names of former students who have found jobs. Columbia graduates have been hired in major markets such as Los Angeles and San Diego, and in small markets like Cartersville, Ga., and Franklin, Pa.

Past the successes of students who go on to make a life in radio, how do station managers look at the school experience? "I don't have a firm feel for what they do," admits Lou Murray, vice president and general manager of KEAN-AM-FM and KROW(FM) in Abilene, Texas. "I'm sure that some of my air staff (have) gone through broadcast schools, (but) I don't know. I've never asked."

Nevertheless, Murray says he doesn't judge his personnel "based on whether or not they've gone through a school. I guess that the schools serve a purpose for someone who wants to learn the rules of the road and break into the business."

Mark Steinmetz has a high opinion of the school experience. One of two group presidents at ABC Radio and a graduate of Brown Institute in Minneapolis, he has hired "a number of people" who attended Brown. "We've had an internship program with Brown for a number of years in which we work with their more promising students in a commercial radio environment," he says.

Steinmetz, who is based in Minneapolis and oversees the ABC stations there and in Chicago, Atlanta and San Francisco, says that when Brown students "finish school, we try to find them jobs. We have relationships with a number of out-of-state radio stations."

The ABC executive has hired some Brown graduates after they have paid their dues in smaller markets. He says that "15 or 20" employees at ABC-owned KQRS-FM in Minneapolis are now working in the programming, sales and management departments. All told, he estimates that "about 40 percent" of the work force at the four ABC stations in Minneapolis — KQRS, KEGE-FM, KXXP(FM) and KDIZ(AM) — went through Brown.

Steinmetz is a strong believer in the "important role" schools play in training people for careers in radio, particularly as the business becomes increasingly competitive and more stations vie for listeners and advertisers. "You won't be left in the dark if you get a well-rounded education," he says. "It will help you understand the big picture of how radio works today." ▼

*Bob Rusk is a regular contributor to Tuned In.*



# If you haven't already taken these out for a test drive, here's your chance.

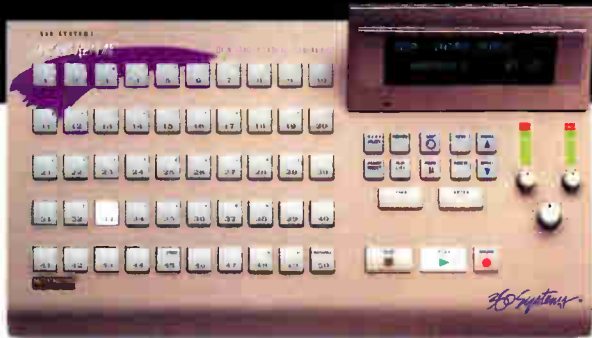
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*Some future radio broadcasters may opt to navigate their career paths from outside of the classroom. Enter the Internet and the concept of distance learning.*

## When Distance Counts: Learning on the Internet Your instructor: Peter Hunn

**S**tuck somewhere in Albany traffic, there's a frazzled mall employee wondering what her life would be like if she were on the radio. More than one of her customers has mentioned her "pleasant voice" and she has always been interested in news. But with two kids, two jobs, a crummy car and more than 40 birthdays behind her, jumping from retail salesclerk to news broadcaster seems pretty far-fetched.

About an hour from the state capital, there is a radio station manager hoping his Help Wanted ad will attract someone whom will be thrilled to do local news. More than one listener survey has stressed the value of covering hometown happenings. But with his modest budget and most new communications-degree graduates primarily interested in television, the chances of finding a dependable, eager individual capable of writing catchy radio news copy seems like a long shot.

And that's the closest these parallel lives might have come to each other had it not been for a borrowed computer, \$19.95 World Wide Web access and a new style of college course offerings offered by the State University of New York (SUNY). By October of last year, our mall salesclerk was happily devoting late nights to learning about newsgathering, writing strong

present-tense leads, crafting interesting interviews, putting life into local obits and finding an entry-level radio news position ... all from her home over the Internet.

The SUNY System is the collective identity of the various two- and four-year public colleges and universities in New York situated from Long Island to Buffalo. The SUNY mission is to provide educational opportunities for all qualified Empire State residents. Typically, that has meant updating and enlarging existing campuses and establishing "satellite" lecture halls to accommodate the growing number of non-traditional or part-time students.

The expense required to equip and staff these locales necessitated finding a way to offer educational reach that isn't real estate-intensive. The SUNY Web-based Learning Network was begun in 1996 to cost-effectively bring classroom and instructor/student interaction to even the most remote spots of New York.

And, of course, a person in, say, Singapore, can participate in such a program just as easily as a guy in an Adirondack cabin.

America's first "distance learning" courses go back more than a hundred years and were limited by delivery patterns of the postal system. During the early 1920s, radio earned points with educators wanting to reach people far from campus. Post World War II television added a visual element to the academic process, but like radio was "synchronous," requiring students to be present at a specific time.

Many people considered these "correspondence courses" to be second rate compared to the traditional classroom setting because vital interaction between instructor and student was obviously missing. Now there's the Internet. E-mail immediacy solves most of the great challenges that distance learning presents. Additionally, the 'net offers the chance to gain new skills directly to people who otherwise might not have the time, geographic convenience or needed transportation to attend standard college classes.

The ubiquity of the Web gives broadcast educators a reach never before universally practical. I have just completed hosting the premier semester of Broadcast Newswriting on the SUNY Learning Network (the course was also given in a traditional



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This bold proclamation can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.broadcastschool.com>, the site that trumpets the availability of Broadcast School in a Box, a 90-minute

videotape that teaches the art of becoming a DJ and sportscaster. The price? Only \$34.95.

No, believe it or not, that's not a misprint. The tape "wreaks of scam," says producer Marc Elliot, jokingly. But this is serious business.

Elliot, marketing director at American Radio System stations WEAT-FM and WIRK-FM in West Palm Beach, Fla., notes that he has sold "hundreds" of tapes in the year he has been in business. But he insists that he is making a legitimate offer intended as an "affordable alternative for beginning broadcasters to learn the basics of the industry."

Elliot says that a lot of his orders "come from small cities that have no access to a broadcast school. The tape

will give anyone that watches it the necessary tools to get a beginning job or internship at a radio station."

In the highly competitive radio business, though, is it likely that people will find work after watching this mail order video? We may never know — Elliot doesn't ask questions after the purchase. "I don't want to follow up on anybody," he says. "I don't want to bother anybody. To me, it's like buying something at Kmart. If I buy something there, I don't want Kmart to call and ask if I liked it."

If people don't find radio work after purchasing his tape, Elliot expects that they will just chalk it up to experience. For \$34.95, he says, "it's not that big a deal."

- Bob Rusk

classroom setting). There were 15 students enrolled in the on-line version, some of whom, several hundred miles from campus, I never saw face to face.

These students read a textbook, looked over my computer screen "lectures," participated (via customized Lotus Notes software) in news scenario discussions and wrote lots of copy. As soon as they clicked their "send" icons, their stories were sent to my hard drive. More than once, these stories were written after midnight and critiqued on my laptop the next morning while I waited for my 13-year-old at the orthodontist.

For honesty's sake, I should note my skepticism when I was asked to develop a newswriting course for the Internet. Trying to communicate on some sort of a schedule with people I would never meet seemed dangerously far-fetched. After all, in a traditional class, those who at least show up for a specifically timed session tend to pick up information by osmosis.

How would a full roster of students who log on to Web-based classes when they feel like it have the discipline to get assignments done? Truth is, a few didn't, but then that's the way wheat is separated from chaff in industry. This provided me with an appropriate forum to relate sagas of broadcasters I had known who couldn't seem to get things done on time and usually ended up getting fired.

Most of the students got the message and settled down to a regular schedule, good days or bad, at the newswriting keyboard, just as in real life. All in all, it turned out better than I expected with one of the hardest working students clearly ready to be entrusted with a local station's morning newscasts.



Might Internet-delivered, university sanctioned distance learning be a trend in broadcast education? SUNY is realizing healthy consumer interest in its program that features more than 150 courses on dozens of subjects (<http://www.sln.suny.edu/sln>). Other institutions of higher learning are engaged in or plan similar ventures that place college instruction within easy reach of anyone with a

computer. At present, SUNY offers some of the only broadcast-related classes in this format. Web-based education is poised to be embraced fast enough to make this article be as archaic in less than five years as an article on 16-inch transcription turntables would be today.

It is my belief that this brand of education will become very popular with students not looking to do a two- to four-year on-campus program. There is also great potential for a radio group owner to put together a programming, writing, understanding ratings, etc., Internet-delivered class for his diverse staff.

As a former small-market station owner, I can think of certain employees who would have been much more productive and developed a better attitude had they been given the opportunity to take a broadcast-related course on-line. Who is to say the next Paul Harvey or Robin Quivers isn't right now looking for a way to get out of the mall and into your studio? ▼

*Peter Hunn serves as assistant professor in the SUNY Oswego Department of Communication Studies.*



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*Teaching is a big deal to veteran Chicago broadcaster Al Parker. The competition for jobs is tough out there, he says.*

Very little seems to stay the same in radio these days, but one thing has stayed the same for the past 50 years in Chicago: veteran broadcaster Al Parker has been training students for careers in the business at Columbia College, a four-year liberal arts institution that has no connection to the similarly named Columbia School of Broadcasting.

Having worked at WIND(AM), WJJD(AM) and WLS-TV, Parker's powerful voice is quite familiar to Chicago listeners. In his half-century at Columbia, he says the emphasis has been on the professional broadcasters who have served as instructors.

"The textbook has been secondary," Parker, 71, says. While technical changes have occurred in radio over the years, he says that "good teaching in the area(s) of sales, management and talent remains basically the same."

The chair of the radio department at Columbia says that

the school's "management classes have to have a different focus now because radio has become a cash cow. For that reason, students have to have a sense of how important numbers are to stations. In that sense, we've become sophisticated."

Parker, who counts "Wheel of Fortune" host Pat Sajak and CNN sports anchor Nick Charles among his former students, says many people come to Columbia "to see if they have a flair for broadcasting."

Between 30 and 40 percent of Columbia graduates wind up finding work in radio. That placement rate has remained consistent through the years, according to Parker, who says that it is not unusual for graduates to start their careers at small stations in major markets such as Chicago, New York and Los Angeles.

"There are still a lot of smaller operations that are not unionized and are not affiliated with AFTRA," he says. "Of the 40-plus stations in Chicago, only about 15 are heavy hitters. The others still depend to a great extent on (people) with limited experience. A lot of (graduates) begin for very little money, learn their craft and work up from there." ▼

—Bob Rusk



**Al Parker**

*Where does a future broadcaster go when money is not in abundance? Some students, unable to afford attendance at a broadcast school, may opt for a learning experience for which cost is not a factor. Take Gary Connolly's Online School of Radio Broadcasting, for example.*

Arguably, half of today's broadcasters can close their eyes, think back 30 or 40 years and feel how very much they ached to get into the radio business.

For some of us, a handed-down five-tube table radio, a three-inch reel tape recorder and maybe a 100-milliwatt Radio Shack AM transmitter kit was as close as we could get to being a pro. Unless we

gathered enough courage to call a local DJ for announcing tips or a quick station tour, there was little access to entry-level radio career information.

What we wouldn't have done for the free opportunity air personality wannabes now have at Gary Connolly's Online School of Radio Broadcasting (<http://www.telusplanet.net/public/bytemee/frame.htm>).

Connolly has been involved in the broadcast field since the early 1980s, when he took radio- and television-related classes at a Phoenix area community college. Presently, he's working on a creative writing/mass communication graduate degree through Greenwich University in Hilo, Hawaii and doing voice-overs for a living.

The on-line school, which he developed as part public service and part dissertation project (the material is also available in audio book form), is presented cost-free with just the right mix of encouragement and sophistication to be useful to anyone interested in firing up an on-air light.

Veteran personalities with the wisdom to review and/or renew can also benefit from one or all of the on-line school's mini-courses.

These courses cover announcing and voice-overs, humor, writing commercials, developing characters, adding dialects and finding a first broadcasting position.

Connolly says he created the school so that people who were considering going into radio wouldn't have to lay out a lot of money just to learn the basics or simply decide whether or not broadcasting was their appropriate career choice.

*No matter the opportunities offered by broadcast schools, in the end it is the tenacity, dedication and sheer stick-to-itiveness of students that will get them what they work so hard for: a career in radio. There must be something in the water at the Miami Lakes Technical Education Center in Miami, Fla. — the placement rate there is an astounding 92 percent.*

### School Spotlight:

*Miami Lakes Technical Education Center, Miami, Fla.*

**M**iami Lakes Technical Education Center, part of the Miami-Dade County, Fla., public school system, has been offering adult vocational training for more than 20 years. The center's radio broadcasting program, the only non-college, post-secondary, state-accredited radio broadcast training program in the Sunshine State, has been offered for nearly 25 years.

The yearlong program, in which 20 to 22 students are enrolled at any given time (the current age range is between 19 and 45), employs an intensive hands-on approach to training. Students learn by working in five production studios, four air studios, two news studios and other areas.

The program is divided into three trimesters. Although it

does not have a 100 percent graduation or placement rate, the numbers aren't bad. Quite the opposite, in fact. Of those students graduating, 92 percent find jobs in the broadcast industry or continue their education.

What makes the program work? Honesty in the recruitment process, in part. Students must interview prior to program enrollment. They are given the cold, hard facts: radio is a business, the pay is low, the hours can be terrible and there are few jobs available, especially for those new to the industry.

Two aspects of the program are instrumental to its success. The first is that it operates as if the students were in an actual radio facility instead of a training facility. The second is that students produce two hours of radio on a full-power FM radio station in the No. 11 U.S. radio market — NPR affiliate WLRN-FM.

In the end, we desire to help students land a job at a radio station. However, right from the start, we lay it on the line. We can point students in the right direction, make sure their airchecks and resumes are creditable and credible, prepare them for the hoped-for interview and help them find openings at stations, but we don't get them the job.

In the real world their abilities, demo tape and resume will hopefully take care of that. If they have been on-air, created commercials, presented news and asked a lot of questions, they should be good applicants and a credit to any station that hires them. ▼

— John Lovell

*MLTEC General Manager/Instructor*



For more information, phone (305) 557-1100, extension 238, or visit the MLTEC Web site at <http://www.webcom.com/radioweb/>

RealAudio 3.0 is employed to give "students" samples of announcing/delivery techniques promoted on the site. E-mail capability allows for "student/headmaster" interaction.

The school is an especially valuable opportunity for someone wanting to sample what is needed to prosper in today's broadcast career marketplace.

Of course, anything this good and this free doesn't take long to generate positive feedback — Connolly says he has received kudos from college professors (your author included) and small- to large-market programmers hoping for a greater supply of talented communicators.

The on-line school's first success story comes from a person who, after mouse-clicking through the course, followed the directions for making an audition tape and landed a board shift on a small Canadian station

How do our industry's seasoned DJs feel about Connolly's free-of-charge on-line broadcasting school? A message left on the site by a syndicated comedy duo shouted, "We hate you Gary! You've made it too easy for someone to become a competitor of ours." ▼

— Peter Hunn

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# CRS-29

February 25-28, 1998

Not a super secret government project. Not a breakfast cereal preservative. *It's country radio's premier trade event, and it's fortified with essential country vitamins!*

## **Is Downtown Nashville Ready for the Country Music Seminar?**

**You bet.** After 16 years at the Opryland Hotel, the premier trade event for country music radio professionals, presented by Country Radio Broadcasters, is putting on a fresh coat of paint.

Later this month, the Country Radio Seminar is going downtown... to a revitalized downtown Nashville, that is. The Nashville Convention Center is the home for CRS-29 (sessions, exhibits and "the big music venue" are all on the same floor, "all literally within a dozen ... maybe 20 steps of each other," says CRB Executive Director Paul Allen).

CRS-29 is a celebration of the excitement that is country music, the number one radio format in the U.S., according to the fall 1997 Simmons Study of Media and Markets.

Ideas. Relationships. Country music radio *power*.



Photo by Wendy MacKaild



**"It's a great place to learn about country radio ... (and) probably radio in general," says CRB president Ed Salamon.**

**S**alamon is looking forward to CRS-29. "This year," he says, "we're really taking advantage of the renaissance of downtown Nashville." To wit: attendees have more choices as far as accommodations and dining are concerned.



**Deana Carter strums at CRS-28**

CRS is the place to be for today's country radio professionals. Salamon appreciates the support. "In today's radio business climate, it's hard for radio professionals to find time away from work," he says. "We want to make sure that when they come to the Country Radio Seminar that they feel that this is time that is extremely well spent."

A lot of people, he says, "can only attend one convention a year and they make it the Country Radio Seminar. Not only do we at the Country Radio Broadcasters take that as a compliment, but we consider it something to live up to every year." The idea is "to create a show and a value (about which) people say, 'Well, if we're going to one, this is the one we want to go to.'"

Westwood One's president of programming remembers his first CRS back in 1973: There were about 200 attendees, he says, "and there was a sense of fraternity."

"What's really marvelous," he suggests, "is that we've been able to maintain so much of that sense of fraternity and focus ... I think that a lot of that is due to the passion that those of us (who) work in country radio have for the format." Today's CRS attendees "are still fired and passionate about country radio and making it as good as it can be."

In fact, says Salamon, "I think those of use (who) are involved (with) the Country Radio Broadcasters on its volunteer board and volunteer agenda committee are people who feel that (they have) received considerable rewards from country radio and use this as an opportunity to give it back." ▼



**Ed Salamon**

**"My, CRS, how you've grown!"**

CRS-1 drew a grand total of 47 attendees in 1970. Last year, CRS-28 drew nearly 2,300 attendees from 47 states (including all of the top 50 U.S. radio markets) and such foreign countries as Germany, Great Britain and Spain.



**Paul Allen**

**"I would hope that they would leave, certainly, with an energized confidence in the format."**

**C**RB Executive Director Paul Allen hopes that CRS-29 attendees will leave "with ways to add value" to their companies, whether they work at record companies, radio stations or radio networks. "Then I really will have done my job," he says.

Allen, who is beginning his third year as CRB president, spent 20 years in Tennessee politics before he came to country music. While in a political frame of mind, he managed political campaigns and marketed political candidates, among other things. But he was in radio before that as a DJ, programmer and station owner.

Allen has country radio in his blood. And, as would be expected, he has keen insight into the CRS mission. The "Country Radio Seminar began as a way to teach country radio how to be more successful with country music as a format," he says. ■

**#1 With a Bullet!**

According to the fall 1997 Simmons Study of Media and Markets, country is the number one radio format in the U.S. (43,339,000 adults 18+ weekly come), besting second place format News/Talk/Business News. (Sources: Simmons/Interop)

Photos: courtesy of CRB

"It was designed as an educational forum primarily for country radio focusing perhaps on programming but also having a bit to do with management and sales, too." This is how CRS began in the early 1970s, Allen points out. Things have changed over the years, relating both to country radio and radio as a whole. This year, the annual get-together will focus on a variety of issues, including the effects of consolidation.

Somewhere in the neighborhood of half of CRS attendees are from radio: programmers, music directors, general managers and sales managers. The rest come from the record industry: heads of national promotion, CEOs and regional promotion people. All attendees come to immerse themselves in the magic that is country radio.



**Mark Chesnutt made music at CRS-28**

"One in four radio stations is country, nationally," Allen points out. "The format and the music (have) got hugely broad appeal." Country, he says, will be "a dominant format for a long time to come."

Why? Perhaps because the country format, as Allen says, is "pretty true to itself." But that doesn't mean it doesn't go through variations. "It'll go through a cycle where it's more pop oriented, then it will go oriented some other way. Even through the cycles, still the music is true to itself, and it's clear what country is."

Among country fans, says Allen, "there's a real sense ... that the artists are real, they're approachable. People can relate to them because country acts allow themselves to be related to, as opposed to other formats where acts do unusual things to stand out ... There's a closeness there that you just don't find with other forms of music."

And this year, this closeness will be in the spotlight in downtown Nashville. The move to downtown was a way of taking "a fresh look" at "a 29 year old" convention, according to Allen. The overall CRS-29 experience will include the Nashville Convention Center, in which all sessions will be taking place, and five hotels located close together, including the connected-to-the-convention-center Renaissance (live, after hours radio broadcasts will be taking place here. Allen says there is "a real strict policy that doesn't permit conflicts with our published agenda."). The other hotels: ClubHouse Inn, Crowne Plaza, Days Inn and DoubleTree, all located within a few blocks of the convention center.

Allen is ready for the move to downtown. "There'll be some things that we're going to learn about this year," he says. "It's the first time we've (held CRS downtown), and there may be some things that we'll have to address to provide more services or more of this or less of that. At this point, I think we have it adequately covered, but if we don't, we'll learn from it." ▼

**"The overall aim is to provide an educational experience for people in the country radio and entertainment business."**

**G**ary Krantz, CRS agenda chairman and vice president and general manager of MJI Broadcasting, puts it succinctly: The primary focus at CRS-29 is on radio. The convention's sessions "are planned to benefit programmers, program directors, sales managers, general managers and air talent with the latest cutting-edge ideas and tools to compete effectively

**And the winner is...**

Radio Humanitarian Awards are given to a country artist and country stations in small, medium and large markets, in recognition of community service. Last year, singer Joe Diffie copped the artist award for his work in Nashville (this year, the artist winner will be announced on Thursday, February 26).

to create ratings and revenue in their markets."

Krantz points out that "it's important to remember" that CRS is "not just about country radio. It's about radio in general." Many of the sessions and panels, he says, "focus on competing effectively from a radio standpoint and secondarily from a country radio standpoint."

CRS is "probably the most extensively planned meeting that I know of," says Krantz. A lot of work goes into putting together the extensive slate of convention sessions. ▀

**Two Out of Three Ain't Bad!**

Two of every three country radio listeners are part of the 25-54 demo (Fall 1997 Simmons Study of Media and Markets, adults 18+ weekly cume). (Sources: Simmons/Interop)



**Patty Loveless wowed 'em at CRS-28**



**Gary Krantz**

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The agenda committee, which is comprised of a wide variety of job orientations within the radio and record industries, is put together by the agenda chairperson; the committee meets in June prior to the following CRS.

A three-day planning session commences at that time, during which "the committee basically does an assessment of where the (country) format is (and) tries to identify the key objectives and issues that need to be addressed." At the end of the session, "there's a pretty good idea of what (sessions) are going to be scheduled for the seminar."

Ideas are important to Krantz, no matter the source. It is important that all ideas get heard, he says, "whether they've come from the agenda committee or the board or not. If anybody from anywhere has an idea for a panel, we make sure that gets discussed" at the planning session.



**A panel at CRS-28**

At press time, around 30 sessions in six tracks — management, programming, sales, marketing, record industry and general interest — were scheduled (check on-site in Nashville to confirm all sessions taking place).

Krantz says he is "extremely excited" about

the move to downtown Nashville. "I think it's the most aggressive agenda that we've ever had," he offers.

CRS is a one-of-a-kind experience. "By definition," he says, "the seminar is the single largest single-format convention there is, period. Nothing even comes close. And it's probably the only convention that occurs in the geographical heart of where most of the music gets played."

In downtown Nashville, CRS-29 attendees will be in the thick of the action. ▼



**Todd Cassetty**

## The Selling Guy

**T**odd Cassetty, CRB manager of marketing and promotion, handles all of the sales aspects of CRS, including sponsorships, promotions and the exhibit hall. "Everything that needs to be sold," says Cassetty.

The nearly 39,000 square foot exhibit hall is doing double duty at CRS-29 — it is also the location for the Saturday continental breakfast and morning sessions. At press time, 37 individual exhibitors were confirmed; Cassetty says he expects the final tally for this year to be around last year's (66 exhibitors represented by 97 booth spaces).

Cassetty is a CRS fan. "Country music by its very nature is ... more of a close knit family environment. Everybody (who) attends CRS — it seems like they've known each other, they've been knowing each other, they've been around the block together, and so it's a lot more intimate, a lot more fun. That translates into the hall. A lot of the exhibitors that we have every year have been coming for 10 or 12 years and it's just part of their annual life."

At CRS, attendees get the personal touch in the exhibit hall. "There's a lot more opportunity for exhibitors to provide personal attention," says Cassetty. Indeed, he adds that "Those people getting around to the different booths have more of a chance to talk and spend some time and get to know more about the products. That's the perk right there — aisles and aisles and aisles of booths to see. It's more personal attention."

At the end of any CRS day, when attendees' feet are aching and backs are breaking, a trip to the doctor may just be able to cure their ills. A trip to the doctor? Well, a trip to the chiropractor booth, maybe, located in the exhibit hall. "We've got a chiropractor who wants to have a booth at CRS," alerts Cassetty. "He wants to give spinal exams and that kind of thing to people coming through there."

Because the various CRS-29 components are located close together, however, tired feet may not be much of an issue. But have you ever had your bones relaxed at a trade convention? "It think it's kind of maybe symbolic of the pace," says Cassetty.

"It's just a little more laid back. You maybe get a back rub while you're there." ▼

## Don't Miss: The Eagle Research Project Findings

A study, research for which was conducted at country stations in the nation's top 50 markets that have more than one competitive country station, was commissioned by the CRB Board of Directors and undertaken by Eagle Research. It will be delivered twice during CRS-29 — on Thursday, February 26 during the afternoon "Sales University" program, and again during a morning session on Saturday, February 28.

The study, says CRS Agenda Chairman Gary Krantz, "was commissioned specifically to benefit sales managers and account executives at radio stations (with information) about the perception of country at the agency level and the client level."



**The CRS-28 exhibit hall**

## Check Your Watches! CRS-29 Exhibit Hall Hours

Thursday, February 26: 10:30 a.m. — 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. — 6 p.m.

Friday, February 27: 10:30 a.m. — 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. — 6 p.m.

Saturday, February 28: 8 a.m. — 12 p.m.

The CRS exhibit hall is closed for lunch for the first time, so no excuses about not eating! "I did some research with all of my exhibitors from last year," says CRS Manager of Marketing and Promotion Todd Cassetty. His findings? "They'd like to attend the luncheons and have a little break in the middle of the day."

## A Gallery of CRS-29 Events

### Don't Forget: The CRS Artist Taping Sessions Wednesday, February 25

Country music's biggest names will be recording custom liners for attendee radio stations from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, February 26. Bring your tape recorders: this is an "immensely popular" CRS event, according to CRB Executive Director Paul Allen. "Last year, we had nearly 700 radio stations" in the room in which the taping session was held, he says.



Garth Brooks at a CRS artist taping session

### Put On a Happy Face! The 1998 New Faces of Country Music Your Host: Comedian Jeff Foxworthy Saturday, February 28

CRB Executive Director Paul Allen calls this the "biggest event at the Country Radio Seminar." Following up on last year's show, which included

current superstar LeAnn Rimes and "some huge acts that, by the time they got to the New Faces show, about half of them had top 10 records," according to Allen, is this year's extravaganza with 10 new artists, including The Lynns, Sons of the Desert, Matt King, Lila McCann and Big House.

### Don't Miss: WCRC Live! Saturday, February 28

Songwriters take the spotlight in this Saturday, February 28 session, talking about their songs in what CRB calls "an intimate acoustic setting." ASCAP award-winner Mark D. Sanders is one of this year's participants.

### Session-go-round

Herewith, your guide to some of the hot sessions at CRS-29 (check onsite for dates, times and locations):

**Work and Family.** This session "is meant to recognize and understand that with the increased pressures on the executives at radio stations, it's important now to balance work and family," says CRS Agenda Chairman Gary Krantz. "It's a huge business issue right now."

**Town Meeting.** This session functions as "an open session where most of the major issues facing the (country) format will be discussed," says Krantz.

**The Artist Perspective/All Access.** Come to this session to hear radio and record company executives "discuss the accessibility of country artists," says Krantz.

**Music Row Field Trip.** How is country music made in Music City? This see-it-up-close-and-personal opportunity will show and tell all. "One of the things that we've done in the past," says Krantz, "(is) a session on how to produce a record where we've almost recreated a recording



### An informative CRS-28 session

studio within a panel at the Opryland Hotel. This year ... people will actually be going into downtown Nashville, visiting several spots within Music Row."

"Actually getting to where the music is made is something that a lot of programmers, a lot of managers and sales people just have never done," Allen points out.

**The Negotiation Connection.** "Whatever business you're in, everybody who has a family has got to have negotiating skills," says Allen.

"What we are trying to do," he says, "is make sure that we offer the things that our attendees are going to need in the workplace."

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David Ruleman  
Vice President and GM  
Salem Communications Corp.  
WAVA(FM), Washington, D.C.  
WITH(AM), Baltimore, Md.



Compiled by Bob Rusk

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The agenda committee, which is comprised of a wide variety of job orientations within the radio and record industries, is put together by the agenda chairperson; the committee meets in June prior to the following CRS.

A three-day planning session commences at that time, during which "the committee basically does an assessment of where the (country) format is (and) tries to identify the key objectives and issues that need to be addressed." At the end of the session, "there's a pretty good idea of what (sessions) are going to be scheduled for the seminar."

Ideas are important to Krantz, no matter the source. It is important that all ideas get heard, he says, "whether they've come from the agenda committee or the board or not. If anybody from anywhere has an idea for a panel, we make sure that gets discussed" at the planning session.



**A panel at CRS-28**

At press time, around 30 sessions in six tracks — management, programming, sales, marketing, record industry and general interest — were scheduled (check on-site in Nashville to confirm all sessions taking place).

Krantz says he is "extremely excited" about the move to downtown Nashville. "I think it's the most aggressive agenda that we've ever had," he offers.

CRS is a one-of-a-kind experience. "By definition," he says, "the seminar is the single largest single-format convention there is, period. Nothing even comes close. And it's probably the only convention that occurs in the geographical heart of where most of the music gets played."

In downtown Nashville, CRS-29 attendees will be in the thick of the action. ▼

## **Don't Miss: The Eagle Research Project Findings**

A study, research for which was conducted at country stations in the nation's top 50 markets that have more than one competitive country station, was commissioned by the CRB Board of Directors and undertaken by Eagle Research. It will be delivered twice during CRS-29 — on Thursday, February 26 during the afternoon "Sales University" program, and again during a morning session on Saturday, February 28.

The study, says CRS Agenda Chairman Gary Krantz, "was commissioned specifically to benefit sales managers and account executives at radio stations (with information) about the perception of country at the agency level and the client level."

## **The Selling Guy**



**Todd Cassetty**

**T**odd Cassetty, CRB manager of marketing and promotion, handles all of the sales aspects of CRS, including sponsorships, promotions and the exhibit hall. "Everything that needs to be sold," says Cassetty.

The nearly 39,000 square foot exhibit hall is doing double duty at CRS-29 — it is also the location for the Saturday continental breakfast and morning sessions. At press time, 37 individual exhibitors were confirmed; Cassetty says he expects the final tally for this year to be around last year's (66 exhibitors represented by 97 booth spaces).

Cassetty is a CRS fan. "Country music by its very nature is ... more of a close knit family environment. Everybody (who) attends CRS — it seems like they've known each other, they've been knowing each other, they've been around the block together, and so it's a lot more intimate, a lot more fun. That translates into the hall. A lot of the exhibitors that we have every year have been coming for 10 or 12 years and it's just part of their annual life."

At CRS, attendees get the personal touch in the exhibit hall. "There's a lot more opportunity for exhibitors to provide personal attention," says Cassetty. Indeed, he adds that "Those people getting around to the different booths have more of a chance to talk and spend some time and get to know more about the products. That's the perk right there — aisles and aisles and aisles of booths to see. It's more personal attention."

At the end of any CRS day, when attendees' feet are aching and backs are breaking, a trip to the doctor may just be able to cure their ills. A trip to the doctor? Well, a trip to the chiropractor booth, maybe, located in the exhibit hall. "We've got a chiropractor who wants to have a booth at CRS," alerts Cassetty. "He wants to give spinal exams and that kind of thing to people coming through there."

Because the various CRS-29 components are located close together, however, tired feet may not be much of an issue. But have you ever had your bones relaxed at a trade convention? "It think it's kind of maybe symbolic of the pace," says Cassetty.

"It's just a little more laid back. You maybe get a back rub while you're there." ▼



**The CRS-28 exhibit hall**

## **Check Your Watches! CRS-29 Exhibit Hall Hours**

**Thursday, February 26: 10:30 a.m. — 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. — 6 p.m.**

**Friday, February 27: 10:30 a.m. — 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. — 6 p.m.**

**Saturday, February 28: 8 a.m. — 12 p.m.**

**The CRS exhibit hall is closed for lunch for the first time, so no excuses about not eating! "I did some research with all of my exhibitors from last year," says CRS Manager of Marketing and Promotion Todd Cassetty. His findings? "They'd like to attend the luncheons and have a little break in the middle of the day."**



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The screenshot shows the 'Automation Studio' software interface. At the top, it displays the date 'Wednesday 10/1/97', the time '8:15:49 AM', and the user 'Mike -- is signed on Diglink IV by Arrakis Systems'. Below this is a menu bar with 'Sign On', 'Automation Studio', and 'Menu'. A status bar shows 'This Hour: Open' and 'Next Hour: Open'. The main display area features a large digital clock showing '00:02:44.6' and '8:15:49 AM'. Below the clock is an 'Automation Play List' section with a 'Change List' button and a 'Random Load' button. The play list is a table with columns for Start Time, Cart #, Title, Run Time, Intro, Extro, Type, VO Cart, Timed, M1, and M2. The table contains several rows of music tracks, with the first row highlighted in red.

Start Time	Cart #	Title	Run Time	Intro	Extro	Type	VO Cart	Timed	M1	M2
00:02:44.6	MU50006	Who Do You Think You Are	03:15:32	04.0	04.0					
08:18:34.0	MU511504	I'm Not Lisa	03:19:22	04.0	04.0					
08:21:51.2	BED-26	Disco Returns Music Bed	00:26:30	02.0	01.0					
08:22:16.5	MU508102	Jessie's Girl	03:13:00	04.0	04.0					
08:25:25.5	VO85	Roxette Music Promo	00:02:68	03.9	01.5					
08:25:27.1	101	WBZ-TV (The Uninformed)	00:44.74	01.0	01.0					
08:26:10.8	102	Clothesline Flat Sweater	00:54:30	01.0	01.0					
08:27:04.1	103-1	Nick @ Nile(Bob Newhart)	01:02:00	01.0	01.0					
08:28:05.1	MU500108	When We Get Married	02:25:32	04.0	04.0					
08:30:26.4	MU500109	Alley Oop	02:40:52	04.0	04.0					
08:33:02.9	MU500110	Angel Baby	03:14:64	04.0	04.0					
08:36:13.5	MU500111	Denise	01:59:44	04.0	04.0					

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# Do 20 Million Listeners a Week Spell Success for Religious Radio?

Marc Fisher has the answers

**K**LTY(FM) in Dallas is right down there in the mud with the big boys in town, scrambling for every ratings point, filling the air with the latest in promotions, attractive contests, tight and heavily researched music lists and good, experienced talent.

But KLTy is a religious broadcaster, pumping out Contemporary Christian music with a primary goal not of maximizing profits, but of winning souls.

In the burgeoning business of religious radio, the relative success of KLTy is often cited as an example of what could be. But whereas KLTy can boast of a slam-bang Web site and respectable, midrange Arbitron numbers, the vast majority of the nation's 1,700 religious outlets remain small stations with low-power, microscopic ratings and struggling finances.

Contemporary Christian music recordings have grown substantially as a portion of overall national record sales, but the Contemporary Christian format has had a much tougher time of it on the air. Christian radio, despite its numbers, remains a place most advertisers simply ignore.

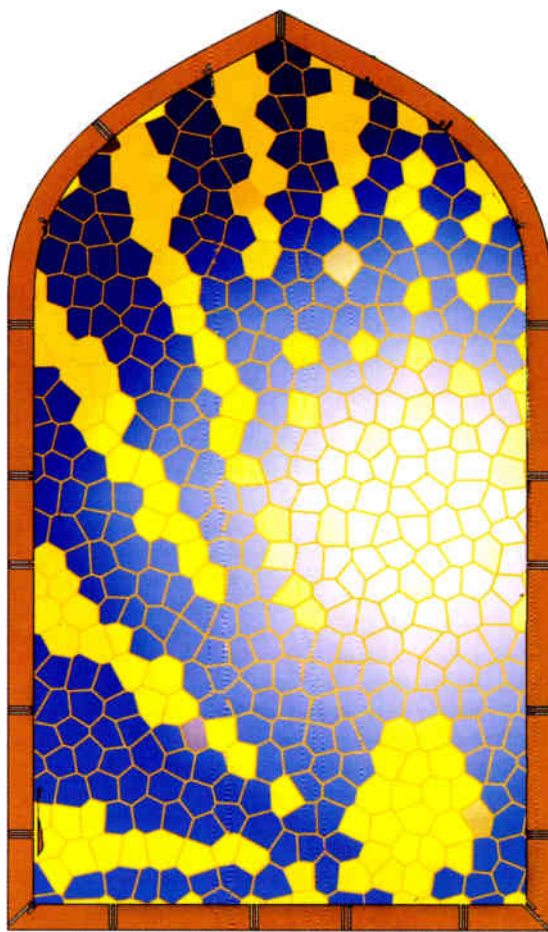
## Tough going

"It has been tough for Christian formats to convince the national ad agencies that they are a viable place for them to buy spots," says E. Brandt Gustavson, president of the industry group National Religious Broadcasters (NRB).

This is true even though, for example, religious radio boasts an attractive-to-advertisers 60 percent female audience, according to a Simmons report.

In part, ad agency reluctance stems from advertisers' sense that the religious audience is less educated and affluent than its secular counterpart. Religious broadcasters have not studied their audience demographics to nearly the same extent as secular broadcasters have, but existing studies indicate the audience for Christian radio is similar to the audience for secular radio — a fact that religious broadcasters say they are laboring to communicate to skeptical advertisers.

The reluctance also comes, in part, from the limits Christian broadcasters set themselves. For example, at Salem Communications, the nation's largest religious radio company,



no spots are accepted for tobacco products, R-rated movies, risqué books, alcoholic beverages, lotteries or gambling businesses.

Despite all of this, or more to the point because of all of this, about 20 million people a week listen to religious radio, according to the NRB.



**E. Brandt Gustavson**

"People say to us, 'Oh, you're preaching to the converted,'" Gustavson says with a chuckle. "And let's face it, there are plenty of people who would never listen. But it's not just Baptists or Pentecostals or people who would say they are born again. There are a tremendous number of God-fearing people in the United States and for one reason or another, they want spiritual feeding during the week."

But in an era of big-ticket consolidation, religious radio remains a business of modest financial proportions. Even as the number of religious stations has doubled in the past 15 years, the financial model that rules in religious broadcasting still relies heavily on selling time to local churches and national preachers.

At most religious stations, about half the income stream pours in from the big nationally syndicated programs like "Focus on the Family," "Insight for Living" and "In Touch." The rest of the money usually

comes from local ministries and a limited number of spots. Without a steady, strong supply of spots, music programming becomes hard to justify, says Gustavson. But advocates of

Contemporary Christian music radio say that's shortsighted.

"A large number of stations still see music as filler for the unsold talk time," says John Styll, president of CCM Communications, publisher of Contemporary Christian Music magazine and producer of a contemporary Christian music countdown show that airs on 200 stations. "That's what's holding Christian radio back. They have 10 percent of the stations and they get 2 percent of the audience.

"Unfortunately, the KLTU experience is being replicated in frustratingly few markets. The Christian music industry is in a perpetual state of frustration with Christian radio. It just doesn't have the power to move music the way it needs to."

That point was driven home last year when Bob Carlisle's "Butterfly Kisses" became a huge hit at AC and top-40 radio, fully a year after it had climbed the Christian charts. That first wave of success created a 75,000-unit bump in record sales, but when the song hit secular radio, the numbers went through the roof — the record sold 2 million units in one month, proving that religious radio remains a niche format.

Religious broadcasting is also largely a Protestant affair. While there are Catholic, Jewish and Muslim programs tucked into early morning and weekend time slots on secular stations around the nation, broadcasters say they know of no full-time religious outlets devoted entirely to other faiths.



John Styll

### Information source

To be sure, religious broadcasting has definite political impact, mostly through conservative talk shows like "Janet Parshall's America," Marlin Maddoux's "Point of View" and "The Oliver North Show," which is owned by Salem but airs primarily on secular stations.

Indeed, the fastest-growing Christian format, now heard on 11 percent of religious stations, is news/talk, which is often hard to distinguish from the conservative talk heard on many secular stations.

"It's going to continue to grow," says Maddoux, whose show airs on 360 stations. "We are becoming the information source for Christians looking for alternative media. But Christian radio is and will always be different from regular radio because Christian radio depends on ministries to buy time."

And in an era where radio stations are selling for hundreds of millions of dollars, an institution in which a half-hour of airtime still sells for \$50, \$150 or at best \$500 simply cannot compete in the ever-tightening market for outlets.

"The new economics in radio is pricing FM stations and now even many AM stations out of the market for Christian broadcasters," says Maddoux, who is also president of USA Radio Network, which provides newscasts and other programming — both religious and secular —

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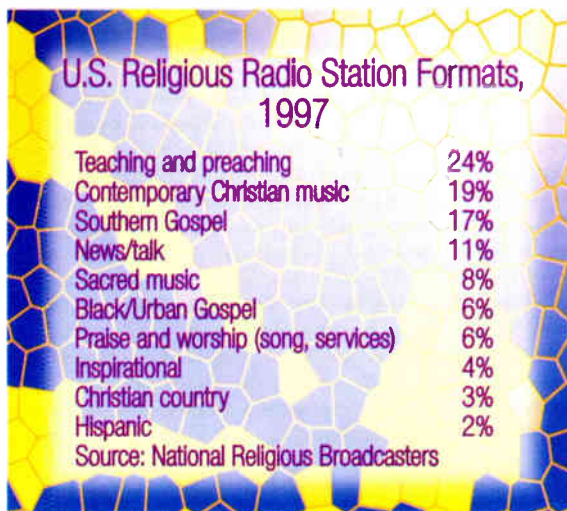
to 1,300 affiliate stations.

In fact, suggests Styll, some Christian station owners may be tempted to sell to secular broadcasters. "Some nice Christian who has a station he bought for \$200,000 now gets a chance to sell it for \$20 million," he says. "Not everyone can resist that."

Among Christian radio companies only Salem, with 45 stations reaching an estimated audience of 5.5 million people, has the stature to play against the big boys. In 1992, Salem spent \$20 million to buy former top-40 station WAVA(FM) in Washington. But that's not even in the ballpark these days, so Salem and other religious broadcasters are turning their attention to the non-commercial end of the FM dial, home to about half the nation's religious stations.

Last year, Salem set up a nonprofit company that bid \$13 million to buy the license of Washington jazz station WDCU(FM), owned by the financially-troubled University of the District of Columbia. Salem's bid easily topped all others, but the company eventually had to bail out of the deal under intense pressure from news coverage and threatened legal action by National Public Radio and other public broadcasting organizations.

The station eventually was sold to



C-SPAN for \$10 million, but public radio officials expect that religious radio companies will continue efforts to snap up non-commercial stations. And given the precarious financial status of many colleges and local governments that own stations, there may be fertile ground for such takeovers.

"Salem created a shell nonprofit corporation to acquire the license," says Kim Hodgson, NPR chairman and general manager at WAMU(FM) in Washington. "It may be perfectly legal, but it's a shame." (Salem executives did not return repeated phone calls.)

### Future for growth

Gustavson says non-commercial stations are the future for growth of Christian radio, but he doesn't expect the nation's non-commercial stations to fall over easily. "The pressure on the colleges to keep the public radio format is strong, so religious broadcasters won't make major inroads," he says. "Our expansion will continue, but not as quickly as it has."

The finances of religious non-commercial stations are almost identical to those of their commercial counterparts — only the terminology differs.

Spots are called underwriting announcements, and instead of buying time as they would on a commercial station, ministries provide programs and then make a donation to the station.

The bottom line in religious radio is that many station owners are happy with profits that would get a secular broadcaster fired.

"All my time is sold out and I have a waiting list of churches that want to get on the air," says Bishop George Copeland, president of WDIH(FM), a black gospel station in Salisbury, Md. Copeland, who runs the Black National Religious Broadcasters organization, says religious radio remains as segregated as Sunday morning in America.

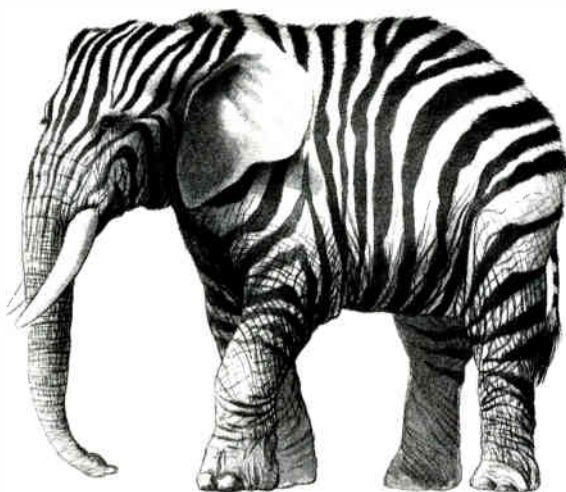
In some cities, there are now so many religious stations that each can specialize and offer different formats to differing tastes. Cincinnati has eight religious stations, for example; Washington has 10.

"I don't know how they can all make it," Gustavson wonders. "But people want an anchor for their lives. We live in a tough time." ▼

Marc Fisher writes the Washington Post radio column, "The Listener."



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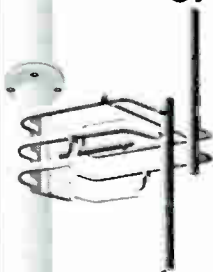
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# Kickin' It Up in Dallas-Ft. Worth



**Changes, changes and more changes abound.**

**But where is the King of All Media? Al Brumley explains**

It was the biggest radio news in Dallas-Fort Worth since Gordon McLendon retired and started collecting coins: Howard Stern was off the air.

The infamous morning man was dropped in July 1997, seven months after Nationwide Communications bought his Dallas outlet, KEGL(FM). Nationwide said Stern was too hard to sell; Stern said Nationwide didn't want to deal with his show and the controversy it can generate.

Stern's firing resulted in the formation of the S.O.S. (Save Our Stern) club, several unsuccessful rallies to bring him back, plenty of crowing from those who hate him and thousands of frustrated fans. And still the question hangs over Dallas like a Goodyear blimp at Texas Stadium that has gotten stuck in that famous, pointless hole in the roof: When is Howard coming back? The frustrating answer has been that no one knows. Or, anyone who does know isn't talking.

So thousands of people have been forced to look elsewhere for their radio entertainment. Many complain bitterly that there is nothing to listen to anymore but others have come to realize that Dallas-Fort Worth is a rich, diverse radio market. Even in the wake of the Telecom Act, Dallas-Fort Worth is the home of some of the most colorful characters and stations.

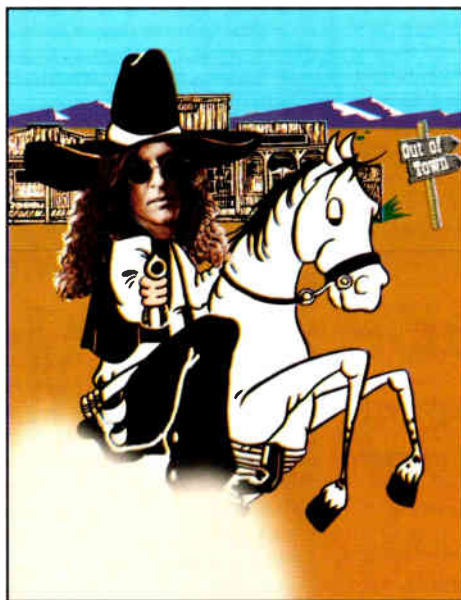
## Above average

Dallas-Fort Worth has been one of the most turbulent markets in the country, says Peter Handy, managing director of Star Media, brokerage and financial specialists for the media and communications industry.

"It has been above average in terms of change, be it ownership change or operational change," he says. "It's a great radio market — high growth, good operators and profitability runs deep here."

Ownership has been greatly affected by change. In 1992, 19 owners had a stake in the market; that number has dwindled to 11. The largest owner is CBS, the only group in the market to have collected a full share of stations allowed under FCC guidelines.

It has been exciting, confusing and, at times, maddening as local general managers come and go, program directors are replaced and formats are tweaked or shattered. For listeners,



the shake-ups caused by the Telecom Act have so far meant two major on-air changes: Stern's dismissal and the firing of Bo Roberts and Jim White from rock station KTXQ(FM).

For 15 years, Roberts and White were the longest-running local rock 'n roll morning team in town. Replacements Lex and Terry from Jacksonville, Fla., withstood gale-force attacks from fans of the old team, but their chances of catching contemporary hits station KHKS(FM) morning man Kidd Kraddick seem about as good as the Dallas Mavericks' chances of making the playoffs.

KTXQ program director Andy

Lockridge has been in the market 16 years and says the movement over the past two is unprecedented. "I used to say that there were more changes here than any I was aware of in the country," he says. "And that was when it seemed like every six months something major would happen. Seems like now, something happens every month — something major."

Tyler Cox, operations manager at news/talk station WBAP(AM): "The first one who says things are at the point where they're going to be for a while is the first one who's going to be embarrassed by seeing his words in print when the next change comes," he says. "It seems like we're in a stable climate right now, but that could change by 5 o'clock this afternoon."

Not that any of this unpredictability is hurting business — quite the opposite, in fact. BIA Research was predicting that Dallas-Fort Worth would be a \$230 million market at the end of 1997. The local financial status makes sense given that Dallas-Fort Worth is the number-seven market in the country, the fifth-largest market in revenue, according to BIA, and "the number-six market in the country in population," according to KVIL-FM Program Director Bill Curtis.

## Unconventional

Among the local population are two brothers who reach out to the public in decidedly unconventional ways. Tony and Marcos Rodriguez, the sons of the late Marcos Rodriguez Sr., a Cuban refugee who made a fortune in the 1970s and 1980s by realizing that Hispanics in the Dallas-Fort Worth area might actually like to listen to Hispanic music, could fill a magazine or two with their exploits.

In August 1996, Tony decided to take a frequency he had acquired — and had no idea what to do with — and create KTCY(FM), better known

as the 24-hour, commercial-free all-Beatles station FAB 105, which he ran from a computer in his huge home in Las Colinas.

The station played Beatles originals, music from the band members' solo careers and some wild 'n' wacky covers ("Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" by William Shatner, for instance). After six months of financial drain, however, Tony sold the station to his brother Marcos, who turned it into a contemporary gospel outlet.

Tony described the all-Beatles station as his "artistic statement to the world." Not surprisingly, he has little patience with conventional radio programming. "In general, radio sucks in my opinion," he said once in an interview with *The Dallas Morning News*. "It sucks in terms of being creative. I'm saying that there's more than one way to do it. Radio owners are like art brokers who never bother to look at the painting. It should be respected, in my opinion, a little more than it is."

Brother Marcos, meanwhile, had been busy trying to figure out what to do with KDMM(AM), a big-band station he bought in October 1996 from Infinity Broadcasting, which had stormed the market and was dumping stations to meet FCC guidelines.

Marcos' solution: Turn KDMM into an all-traffic station and toss in some CNN news now and then. Eight months later, Marcos turned KDMM into the Dallas area's first multi-ethnic station with Indian, Vietnamese and Chinese programming. The station's first major hire was morning man Sayed Talib.

The Dallas-Fort Worth market is full of unusual characters — and unusual stations. Take KEOM(FM), for example. Fans of 1970s pop are tuning in to the outlet, which is owned by the Mesquite Independent School District and manned throughout the day by students. The nonprofit station plays everything from the Partridge Family to Blue Swede.

Administrators say the thinking

behind the format is to expose students to the real world of radio — to get them accustomed to the idea that, if they want to be disc jockeys, chances are they'll have to play music they don't like somewhere along the way. It's a way of weeding out the students with serious radio aspirations from those who just want to screw around and miss algebra.

### "The Conservative Freight Train"

Dallas-Fort Worth's talk-radio practitioners are always good for a quote or two. And recently, the volatile Dallas-Fort Worth talk scene has undergone enough changes to be worth, well, talking about.

At the top of the list is David Gold, for nearly 12 years "The Conservative Freight Train" on KLIF(AM). Gold left after a disastrous Spring '97 book that found the station in 24th place 12-plus. The Summer 1997 numbers weren't much better — the station landed in 22nd place.

New program director Tommy Kramer angled the troubled station to a talk/entertainment format in September 1997 and either fired Gold or gave him the choice to stay or go, depending on whose camp has your ear.

But anyone who heard Gold in his virulent prime knew he couldn't work in a talk-lite milieu. After all, this is the man who, in July 1987, said that 18 undocumented aliens who died in a railroad boxcar "got what they deserved." "I have no sympathy for people trying to get into the country illegally," he said.

A 1994 conversion from Judaism to Christianity softened his approach a little, but he could still knock a caller in the gut. His "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" hour on Thursdays was generally the aural equivalent of Hulk Hogan vs. a bunch of kindergartners.

Gold was not the only casualty in the newly minted Kramer regime. The program director went on to dump G. Gordon Liddy, whom he described as a "bald-headed, Nazi jailbird" and began airing all five hours of Art Bell.

Meanwhile, on Dec. 15 1997, Gold debuted on Christian talker KWRD-FM. So far, it's been a much different David Gold. After weeks of insisting that religion wouldn't dominate his show, he is now tackling topics such as, "If a Christian were to win the lottery, should the church accept any of that money?"

Elsewhere, CBS-owned KOOO(AM) has taken the carpet-bomb approach by

## Dallas-Fort Worth Radio Market Overview

Station	Freq.	Format	1996 Est. Rev. in \$ Mil.	Owner	Arbitron 12+ Summer '97
KHKS(FM)	106.1	CHR	12.4	Chancellor Media	7.3
KKDA-FM	104.5	Urban	7.7	Service Broadcasting	6.8
KSCS(FM)	96.3	Country	16.0	ABC Radio	5.7
KVIL-FM	103.7	AC	30.0	CBS	5.2
KDMX(FM)	102.9	Mix AC	7.0	Nationwide Comm.	4.4
WBAP(AM)	820	News/Talk/Sports	16.0	ABC Radio	4.1
KRLD(AM)	1080	News/Talk	11.7	CBS	4.0
KLUV(FM)	98.7	Oldies	11.5	CBS	3.9
KYNG(FM)	105.3	Country	13.5	CBS	3.8
KPLX(FM)	99.5	Country	9.4	Susquehanna Radio	3.4
KEGL(FM)	97.1	AOR	8.3	Nationwide Comm.	3.3
KZPS(FM)	92.5	Classic Rock	5.6	Chancellor Media	3.1
KLTY(FM)	94.1	CC	4.0	Metroplex Broadcasting	3.0
KDGE(FM)	94.5	Alternative	6.85	Chancellor Media	3.0
KOAI(FM)	107.5	Smooth Jazz	9.5	CBS	2.9
KRBV(FM)	100.3	R&B Oldies	7.0	CBS	2.7
WRR(FM)	101.1	Classical	2.5	City of Dallas	2.7
KBFB(FM)	97.9	Soft Rock	4.5	Capstar	2.4
KTXQ(FM)	102.1	AOR	8.0	Capstar	2.3
KTCK(AM)	1310	Sports	3.0	Susquehanna Radio	2.1

Stations are ranked in order of Arbitron Summer '97 12+ ratings. Copyright 1998 The Arbitron Company. May not be quoted or reproduced without the prior written permission of Arbitron. Other information provided by BIA Research through its MasterAccess Radio Analyzer Database software.



putting Don Imus on in the morning and Tom Leykis on in the evening, sandwiching between them a host of other shows, including Dr. Laura, that run only in hourlong snippets through the day.

KOOO would have to improve dramatically to reach blip status, but operations manager Michael Spears, who also runs powerhouse news/talk station KRLD(AM) and is a protégé of McLendon, is still tinkering with the format. Few doubt that, given time, he'll come up with a winning mix.

### Subtle shift

Still, news/talk retains a powerful share of the Dallas-Fort Worth audience, with both WBAP(AM) and KRLD pulling in top-10 numbers during morning drive and overall 12-plus. WBAP and KRLD are joined by a mix of stations that on the surface looks normal for Dallas — three country stations in the top-10 12-plus, for example — but actually represents a subtle shift in listening habits over the past decade.

In 1990, the only question when the ratings were released was whether the number-one morning man 12-plus would be Ron Chapman at powerhouse AC station KVIL or Terry Dorsey at country leader KSCS(FM).

These days, the question is whether either will be in the top five, and neither has been number one for months. Dorsey remains the most

popular country jock but can't rise above third 12-plus among all formats. Chapman actually found himself out of the top five a year ago — an unheard of place for him. He has since bounced back into the top five.

Country retains the largest share of the market, but the format doesn't have the buzz it had 10 years ago and its market share reflects that.

"We're fortunate that in Dallas-Fort Worth, country's always going to be the strongest format," says Scott Savage, vice president and general manager of KYNG(FM). "Still is today." But he acknowledges that the format's total share has fallen from roughly 18 percent to 13 or 14 percent over the past few years, and he places the blame for that on Nashville's shoulders.

In Nashville, he says, "they're looking at the kind of airplay radio's giving new music, and they're turning out music that's very similar all the time — new country music that becomes homogenized, and no one's taking chances."

Taking up a good chunk of country's slack in this market is contemporary hits station KHKS(FM), which rang the bell at number one in every major demographic in the summer Arbitrons. The station's star is Kraddick, who knocked Stern off his throne in summer 1996 and, after a few skirmishes with Skip Murphy on urban KKDA-FM, is now the uncon-

tested morning leader.

"I think that Kidd Kraddick is doing an incredible job reaching the masses," says KVIL program director Curtis. "And by that I mean he's very entertaining, very appealing for the large mass demographics in the population. He's reaching adults between 20 and 40, and that's the big bulge in the population."

On the heels of his comments about the competition, though, Curtis is quick to note that his morning man Chapman is far from being counted out. "I think Ron is doing a great job reaching people over 40," he says. "And that doesn't mean not reaching people under 40. Clearly we are. But it's almost like it's split in two — Kidd Kraddick wins the bottom half and we win the upper half, and the bottom half has more bodies right now in population percentages."

KVIL is a cash machine, consistently ranking number one in its target female and adult audiences and setting local billing records. KVIL was named both adult contemporary station of the year and legendary station of the year in September 1997 at the National Association of Broadcasters Radio Show in New Orleans.

If only Howard Stern had been in Dallas to join in the celebration. ▼

*Al Brumley is a radio and television critic for The Dallas Morning News.*

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### Dallas-Fort Worth Financial Snapshot

Market Rank: 7  
Revenue Rank: 5  
Number of FMs: 27  
Number of AMs: 23

Revenue 1993: \$168 mil.  
Revenue 1994: \$187 mil.  
Revenue 1995: \$203.9 mil.  
Revenue 1996: \$219.6 mil.  
Revenue 1997: \$230.5 mil. est.

Revenue Growth  
'90-'95: 7.7%  
'96-'00: 6.0%

Local Revenue: 80%  
National Revenue: 20%

1995 Population: 4,432,000  
Per Capita Income: \$17,318  
Median Income: \$37,463  
Avg. Household Income: \$46,755

Source:







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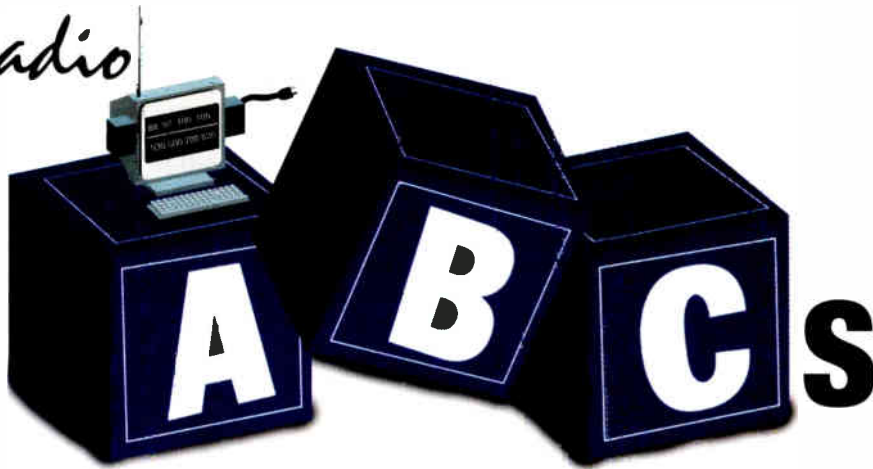
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 ARS - San Jose, CA

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 General Manager  
 KSYN FM - Joplin, MO



# ISP



Kim Komando

**I**t has been my experience that virtually all Internet service providers have at least one thing in common: They will assure you without qualification that they have exactly what you need to get your radio station on the Internet. I suppose that is true to some extent — they can all connect you to the 'net. But can they all do a good job of it?

What should you look out for? Beware of any company that wants to lock you into a long-term contract. Month to month is your best bet because if things go south, you will want to be able to switch to another ISP as quickly and easily as possible.

Keep an eye on your domain name registration. Your domain name is the *yourstation.com* part of your URL, and you should be able to take it with you no matter how many times you switch ISPs.

There are three things to watch out for in this area. First, it only costs \$100 to register a domain name with InterNIC, the organization that handles domain name registration in the United States. The entire process, which involves sending an e-mail to InterNIC, can probably be completed in about 10 minutes. If your ISP is going to handle this for you, it is not unreasonable for a fee to be collected. Be careful — I have heard of ISPs charging hundreds of dollars for this service. I would question a charge of more than \$150, including the InterNIC registration.

I have heard of ISPs that charge high monthly fees to “service” your domain name. This means nothing more than getting everything set up correctly so that when a person enters your station URL into his Web browsing software he sees your Web site, even though it may reside on your ISP computer system. This may sound like a complicated operation, but it's not. Once your site is set up, your ISP normally doesn't have to do anything else.

While I'm on the subject of domain names, let's talk about ownership. If

you are paying for a domain name, make sure that InterNIC has you recorded as the official owner. Some less-than-honest ISPs might offer to register your domain name for you, but then register it in *their* name. If you decide later to switch ISPs, you may discover that you're not entitled to take your domain name with you.

Before you go out shopping for an ISP, you have to figure exactly how involved you want your station to be with the Internet. I see three possible levels of participation for any radio station. Of course, you can have a Web site that offers only basic information or one that offers basic information and pre-recorded soundbites from your programming. You can allow visitors to purchase your station clothing and knickknacks and even sponsor goods.

You can also offer, as you know, live, continuous Webcasts of your station signal. If you're going to go this route, remember that there needs to be a high-speed dedicated phone line connecting your station with your ISP. A dedicated line is expensive to install and, depending on the type of line you use (ISDN, T1, etc.), it could cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars per month. Because you pay for a dedicated line according to the distance from one end of the connection to the other, you may want to give special consideration to ISPs that are geographically close to you.

## Higher demands

Webcasting places higher-than-usual demands on an ISP. Chances are that your audio will be delivered to listeners in the RealAudio format. This means that your ISP needs a fully operational RealAudio server in place. I would shy away from any ISP that wants to make you its RealAudio guinea pig.

Remember that there is a potential for your station to attract a large number of listeners to your Webcasts, making

bandwidth — the amount of data an ISP can actually pump out over its lines — more critical.

Does this mean that you should go with the ISP that claims to have the most T3 lines in town? Not necessarily. Your concern shouldn't be with overall bandwidth, but available bandwidth. If your ISP is very popular, those multiple T3 lines may already be quite full, thereby limiting the availability of bandwidth for your Webcasts.

You may want to consider hooking up with an ISP that uses a technique called multicasting over one that uses unicasting. In a unicasting environment, each listener has to connect to a RealAudio server to tap in to a Webcast, which puts more of a load on the server and can degrade performance. With multicasting, listeners can pick up a Webcast from the ISP router (the device that serves as the bridge between the server and the phone lines), thereby decreasing the load on the server.

Even if you're extremely technologically savvy, you may ask all the right questions and still not be sure that you've been given straight answers. My advice is to break the project down into two components: the Web site and Internet access.

Instead of looking for an ISP that can both develop and host your station site, find an independent Web development company that isn't tied to any single ISP. Assuming you find one with the proper credentials, you'll then have an expert in your corner to make sure your site is hosted by the most capable and appropriate ISP. ▼

*Copyright 1998, The Komando Corp. All rights reserved. Kim Komando is a talk radio host (her show is syndicated by WestStar TalkRadio Network to more than 170 stations), TV host, Los Angeles Times syndicated columnist and best-selling author. Her Web site can be found at <http://www.komando.com>*

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Sales	10,000
Equipment	11,000
Salaries	75,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>113,000</b>



**Frank Montero**

## ACCOUNTING FOR RECEIVABLES

Let's say you have just signed, sealed and delivered a fat little spot sales contract with an advertiser you have been pursuing for the past few months. You pat yourself on the back and the spots run as scheduled — no glitches. Now comes the fun part. You send out the bill and wait for payment.

Hopefully you won't have to wait too long to translate your account receivable into solid cash. Every sales manager can walk you through the trials and tribulations of this merry-go-round. Accounts receivable are the big question marks on a station balance sheet. They are the portions of billings that have been earned but not received.

Receivables, as they are called, can come in different forms. You can have cash receivables; you may also have trade receivables. Let's say you swap some commercial spots with the local T-shirt shop in exchange for 200 really cool-looking T-shirts printed with your station logo. Perhaps you're swapping spots with the local gourmet restaurant in exchange for dinner-for-two coupons that you can give away on the air. Until you get the shirts or until the restaurant honors those coupons, you have trade receivables.

This may sound relatively simple, but once you get past T-shirts and coupons and get into the position of buying or selling a station, juggling receivables can get tricky. Since the passage of the Telecommunications Act, there has been an explosion in the number of stations changing hands all across the country. With this rash of deals, potential buyers and sellers have had to work with station receivables that may exist when a station is sold. In some cases involving multistation deals, the amount of uncollected receivables can equal hundreds of thousands of dollars.

### Buying and collecting receivables

In some instances, the outstanding receivables may be sold outright to the new owner, but not always at full value. Receivables are usually sold at a discount. If receivables are not too old, there is a good chance that they can be collected. The probability of collection determines

the ultimate value of receivables. Depending upon their age, they may be bought for some fraction on the dollar.

Brooks Gracie, a tax attorney who works extensively counseling broadcast clients at my firm, Fisher Wayland, advises that there are tax considerations associated with the purchase of receivables.

"If a buyer purchases the accounts receivable of a radio station along with the assets of the station," Gracie says, "that portion of the station's purchase price that is allocated to the receivables will be taxed to the seller as ordinary income rather than capital gains."

In contrast, the buyer of the receivables will not pay any taxes at all on them if they are collected. In a stock transaction in which the stock of the company holding the station is sold, Gracie says that the tax treatment is just the opposite.

"In that case," he cautions, "since the company will remain responsible for paying income tax on the collected receivables, the tax cost is effectively assumed by the buyer of the company stock. In contrast, the seller will escape tax liability on those collected receivables, even if they were generated while the seller owned the company."

Buying trade receivables poses unique problems, because trades are not always transferable. Buyers frequently will change a station format, call letters and logo, which can diminish the value of many trade goods. I recall a deal in which my client, a religious broadcaster, was buying a station that had a rock 'n' roll format under the old owner. For some reason, the seller could not understand why my client would not be interested in his valuable stash of Megadeath concert tickets that he had received through a barter arrangement.

### Time brokerage agreements

Usually, the issue of how to transfer ownership or collection of accounts receivable comes up when a station is sold. These days, we are more frequently seeing arrangements in which a buyer will program a station under an LMA or a time brokerage agreement before the station is actually sold. In an LMA, the bro-

ker begins to program the station and sell commercial time to advertisers before actually buying the station. However, some arrangement is necessary for the collection of receivables that were generated before the LMA went into effect.

Payables may have to be dealt with. Payables are the opposite of receivables. When an LMA starts, or when a station is sold, the original owner may have commitments to air commercial spots after the effective date of the LMA or after the sale of the station. The new owner can honor these commitments, in which case he is entitled to a portion of the up-front payment, or he may decide against assuming them, in which case advertisers will have to be notified and their money refunded.

Complications set in if a station has prepaid barter arrangements. Let's say commercial spots are traded to a local printer for 5,000 bumper stickers emblazoned with the station logo. Once the bumper stickers are printed up and delivered, the advertiser expects to receive his spots. But if an LMA is entered into with a programmer who plans to change the station format and use a new logo, these bumper stickers are absolutely worthless.

Because the cost of the printed stickers cannot be refunded, there is a potential mess on the burner. In essence, the cost of the stickers may have to be swallowed, either by giving the printer a cash refund or by giving the programmer a credit on his monthly LMA payment if he runs the spots. It is a commonly faced problem and one to look out for.

With stations being sold at an ever-increasing pace in the past two years, owners and prospective buyers have had to make great efforts to ensure a smooth transition of the radio business as a going concern. You never want to scare away good advertisers and you don't want to let them down when a station changes hands.

Forethought is always a good first component of any offense. Collection of receivables and station performance of payables during the transition period is critical to maintaining good will. ▼

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# Famous

Last words



## LISTENING WITH THE "THIRD EAR"

BY DR. TONI GRANT

A well-trained psychologist is taught to listen not with two ears but with three. The "third ear" refers to that magical blend of heart and intuition that senses the meaning beneath the words that a patient speaks. Psychologists working in today's fast-paced radio marketplace have only a few minutes to connect with callers and engage the interests of their audience. Listening with the "third ear" can help.

As a radio psychologist, I know how important it is to have that third ear close at hand. For all radio psychologists and all talk personalities, for that matter, this means connecting with a listener's feelings — discerning whether he or she is mad, sad, glad or afraid. If a caller touches a host's heart, makes him laugh or gives him hope, he should say so on the air. Sharing feelings with a caller and the audience shows that the host is *really* listening.

Hosts should be sensitive to the intention behind a caller's words. Sometimes, even an inarticulate caller can inspire and move us emotionally. Hosts should listen closely and paraphrase what the caller is trying to say — paraphrasing clarifies fuzzy thinking and speech. This is an act of kindness and helps hosts connect to the audience.

Hosts should listen for "affect" or emotional voice tone and comment on it ("You sound angry," "You sound upset," or "You sound sexy," for example.) This reflection of feeling makes a caller feel *heard*. It takes very little time and gives listeners the sense that the host is really tuned in to the caller. (This is also a great technique to use at home with a husband, wife or children.)

Differentiating between the needs of callers and listeners is important, just as it is important to remember that the listener is more important than the caller. As a media psychologist, I am grateful for my callers and appreciate them. Nonetheless, a radio show is not a clinic. I am on the air to inspire, inform and entertain my listeners. The caller is a vehicle toward that end. It is critical for hosts to keep their callers focused and on track, because, in my opinion, the average listener cannot focus on more than two main points at one time — more than this is a tune-out.

Hosts should listen with compassion and humor. No matter our role behind the microphone — radio shrink, rock jock, newscaster or sports announcer — we are all broadcasters, part of a proud radio tradition. Through our words, we influence how people perceive the world and each other. We teach people not only how to listen, but how to respond.

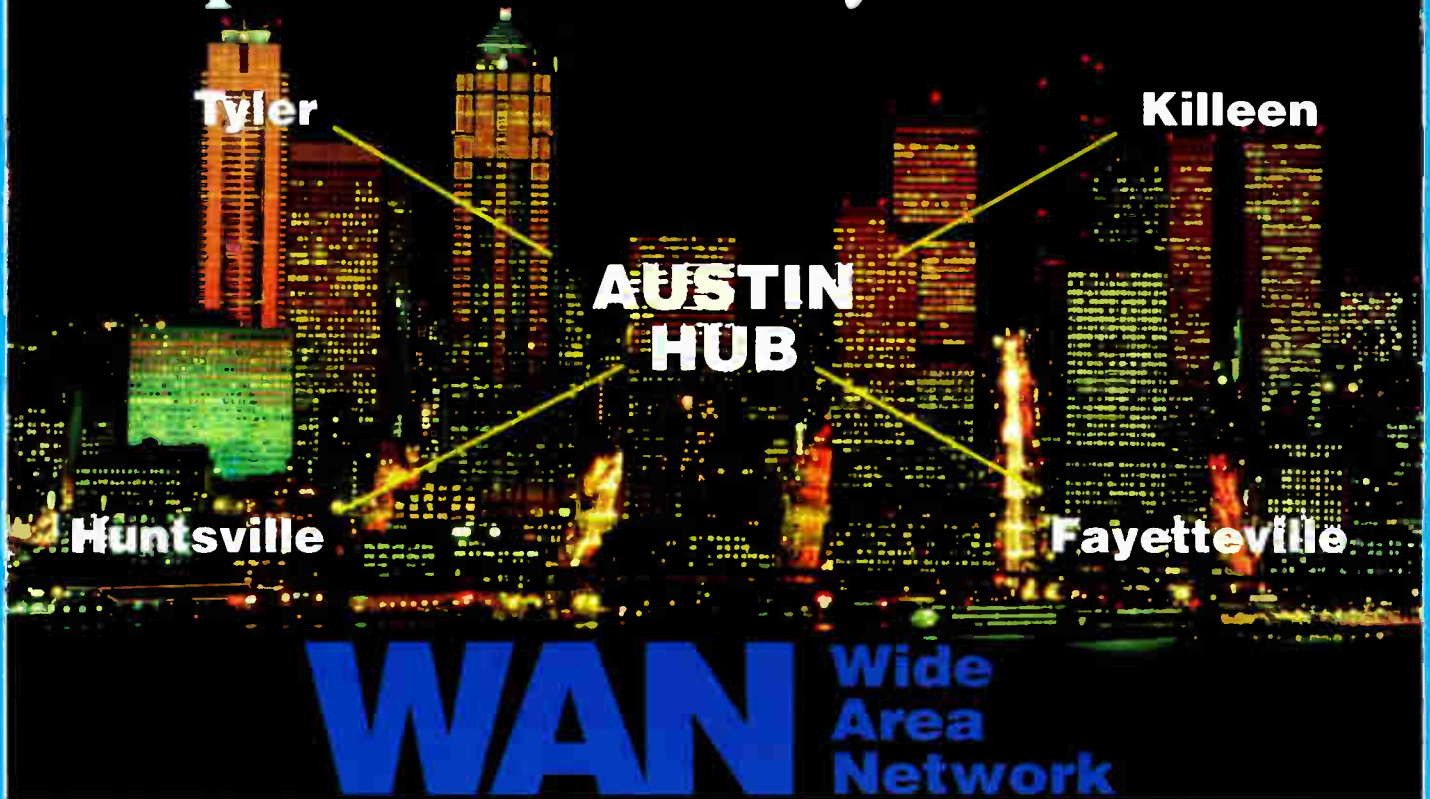
Calling people names only demonstrates a constricted vocabulary. All broadcasters should remember that the public is listening and many of them are, like their favorite radio hosts, utilizing that "third ear." They, too, are hearing that a caller may be limited in his or her thinking or morality, and they are waiting for the host's response. The grace, the class, the eloquence with which hosts state the obvious without succumbing to inarticulate name-calling is what defines the great broadcaster — and the great listener. ▼

*Dr. Toni Grant has listened to the problems of more than 60,000 people since she first sat in front of a radio microphone in 1975. Her show, syndicated by Radio Shows in Dallas, is heard in 85 markets.*





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