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THE STATE OF COLLEGE RADIO

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Abstract

This thesis presents the history and evolution of the purpose of college radio as a mechanism by which to evaluate its survivability and future in an increasingly digital world. The analysis exists in the form of a literature review of several scholarly articles, as well as pieces of pertaining legislation. WKPS-FM, the student-run college station at The Pennsylvania State University exemplifies the development of college radio, and serves as a guideline for the research. This thesis provides an extensive analysis of station survival, and the impact of webcasting. The ability to broadcast over the internet provides a station with the opportunity to expand its broadcast range on an exponential scale, and plays a significant role in the future of the industry. College stations can evaluate their future and survivability based on this analysis, in the context of college radio history, as well as their own histories. The radio documentary is the most appropriate form of communication for this research, due to its ability to create a long-term impact on its listener, which coincides with the characteristics of college radio. A brief analysis the radio documentary as an art form provides insight for techniques used in producing an effective radio documentary. The radio documentary communicates the research present in this thesis, in addition to interviews with staff members at WKPS, as well as other college stations, individuals from the Alumni Interest Group for WKPS, representatives from Collegiate Broadcasters, Inc. and Intercollegiate Broadcasting System (IBS), recording artists, and various individuals from the sources used in this research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

College radio is devotion manifested in the will to succeed. College radio is driven by the students who volunteer to host shows and play their own music, and exists as the medium through which students embrace individuality and creativity. By broadcasting diverse opinions and minority views, college radio fuels the democratic forum. For the many purposes college radio serves for the student body, alumni, and community, we face losing it to decreased funding and participation, in addition to competition from commercial media. This thesis investigates the history and evolution of the purpose of college radio as a mechanism by which to evaluate its survivability and future in an increasingly digital world. Immersed in a world of online competitors, as well as terrestrial commercial stations, it seems as though college radio must adapt or perish. Establishing an online presence through webcasting, managing a station website, and providing downloadable content may be the adaptation methods the college radio industry will require to survive.

The growth of the internet has resulted in a significant increase in the amount of time people spend online. Online content has expanded to include more than just HTML code since its inception. The ability to stream television shows, movies, and music has led to a change in the habits of how and why people consume media. The internet is, fundamentally, a network, and allows users to contribute and download content instantaneously and frequently, in addition to simply acquiring information. Therefore, the nature of the internet as a channel by which to receive and send information reveals tremendous potential to previously terrestrial broadcast industries. The ability to broadcast over the internet, known in the industry as *webcasting*, provides a station with the opportunity to expand its broadcast range on an exponential scale. Webcasting has specifically affected the college radio industry, and will impact its future.

College radio stations establish a long-term impact upon and connection with students, alumni, and the community. The industry shares this mission with a specific form of communication used to execute a message and establish a long-term impact upon its audience: the radio documentary. Thus, an evaluation of the radio documentary art form as a mechanism of mass communication is included in this review, along with techniques to produce a successful radio documentary. This research from this thesis will then be conveyed in a radio documentary. Interviews with prominent staff members at The Lion 90.7fm and other college stations,

musicians, professors, as well as representatives from the College Broadcasters Inc. and the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System will complement this research in the radio documentary.

Chapter 2: Early development

College radio stations have served an important purpose in the development of radio broadcasting as an industry, along with the establishment of traditions within that industry. University of Arkansas, Tulane University, and Wittenberg College pioneered experimental broadcast transmissions in the 1890s (Rinks, 2002). Students at these institutes of higher education experimented with wireless communication that launched interest in radio at colleges and universities across the country, and provided the foundation for what would become the radio broadcasting industry as a whole. The ability to exchange technical information between a network of colleges and universities exists as the earliest function of college radio (Cox, 2004). Station management, public service, and music developed as primary objectives by the 1960s. The evolution of radio exhibits the lengths the industry has come, from an experimental operation using Morse code to broadcasting using a laptop and a transmitter. Therefore, the history of college radio does well to explain its development, as well as justifies its purpose as the medium evolved throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty first.

The first college radio stations broadcasted exclusively from the AM frequency band until the 1940s. Radio struggled with interference for most of its history, which justified the need for a better quality broadcast band that emerged in the 1930s. Broadcasting from the AM band in the early 1900s forced early college stations into a small broadcast range that was susceptible to noise. AM could not faithfully reproduce the original signal, especially in inclement weather. Interference and broadcast issues with the AM band seriously jeopardized the progress college radio in its early development. The government attempted to resolve the interference problem with regulation.

The Radio Act of 1912 exists as the first piece of legislation that impacted the growth of college radio. The Act created a licensing system that gave the Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, the authority to grant licenses for transmitters for amateur radio broadcasting, as well as for ships to communicate with other ships and with the mainland as a result of the Titanic tragedy. Among the higher education institutions that received these licenses were Ohio State University, Villanova, St. Joseph's College, and The Pennsylvania State University. According to Slotten (2006), "The Department of Commerce issued special experimental licenses to at least 20 major public universities in 16 states and at least 15 private colleges and universities." By 1914, a few universities began broadcasting the earliest weather reports. The station at the

University of North Dakota exists as one of these pioneer stations that broadcasted weather forecasts to farmers. The University of Wisconsin in Madison used 9XM as its call sign, and used Morse code to broadcast weather reports (Rinks, 2002). Students at 9XM “assisted with radio experiments by the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army Signal Corps” (Slotten, 2006), and the station was renamed WHA in 1922. By obtaining a government issued license to broadcast, these early college stations established a responsibility to the community.

These pioneer stations serve as examples of trends in early college broadcasting in the first two decades of the 1900s. Their initial success was stunted, however, with the onset of World War I in the spring of 1917. President Wilson issued a ban on civilian transmissions and required all wireless radio stations to turn their equipment over to the Navy for use during the war. 9XM, along with 8XU at Cornell and 8XE at Penn State were closed to train Navy personnel who then operated the stations. These training sessions did, however, provide the structure for the first broadcasting courses that emerged toward the end of the 1920s (Rinks, 2002). 1919 marked the end of the war, as well as a period of uncertainty in the realm of authority over radio. Control of the experimental college stations was returned to the Secretary of Commerce, after some disagreement between the Postal Air Mail Service and the Navy over which organization should have control over experimental radio. As the Secretary of Commerce, Hoover possessed the authority to issue radio licenses and call letters, but applicants were not required to meet any sort of standards to qualify for a license. By 1921, 21 stations acquired licenses to broadcast, reflecting the slow growth of radio when Hoover’s designated a certain frequency for broadcasting that effectively limited the number of stations that could broadcast in a given area. Institutions of higher education received 60 licenses in 1922, which marks the turning point in the development of college radio. The Minnesota State University and the Wisconsin State University both received “the first official licenses issued to educational institutions” (Rinks, 2002). Despite the somewhat uncertain start, college radio survived World War I, and the new licensing system contributed to the increasing number of stations on the airwaves.

Chapter 3: Challenging Times

A number of issues surfaced and ultimately threatened the educational radio industry. In 1923, the American Society of Composers, Artists, and Performers (ASCAP) required radio stations to pay music performance fees in order to play songs licensed by ASCAP. ASCAP charged fees that Rinks (2002) asserts was “more than 10% of the annual budget of the average educational station” at the time. The Fourth National Radio Conference in 1925 posed a significant threat to college radio by limiting the number of stations on the air in an effort to decrease broadcast interference. Instead of expanding the AM broadcast band, educational stations were forced to share time with commercial stations, or had to surrender their ability to broadcast at night. Among the stations affected by this decision was KUOA at the University of Arkansas, which was one of the first experimental stations of the 1890s. The station was eventually sold to a commercial broadcaster in 1933. The progression and fate of KUOA demonstrates the impact of the Fourth National Radio Conference decision on the college radio industry in the 1920s. Perhaps counter intuitively, however, 124 college stations could broadcast by 1925. Curiously enough, these licenses belonged to the Electrical Engineering and Physics departments, in most cases. (Rinks, 2002). College radio stations continued to battle budget and interference issues amidst the competition from commercial broadcasting.

While the 1920s marks the Golden Age of radio, the mid 1920s certainly exists as a time of crisis for college radio broadcasting. License allocation to colleges and universities was steadily declining, as the number of stations forced to shut down increased. The Department of Commerce issued a number of mandates that affected the initial purpose and success of college stations. Frequency changes and power reductions caused interference and weakened broadcast range. The University of Colorado’s station, KFAJ, was effectively drowned out by the commercial station in Denver when the government reduced the signal from 1000 watts to 100 watts. Some stations even let their once-coveted licenses expire (Rinks, 2002). Despite the number of stations that went off the air, the AM band was crowded with college and commercial frequencies. By 1926, 732 stations held broadcast licenses from the Department of Commerce, but most stations could not be heard due to the extensive interference. The need for regulation to organize frequency allocation was imminent.

The Dill-White Bill, known famously as the Radio Act of 1927, established the Federal Radio Commission as the first independent authoritative agency for broadcasting. The agency

would organize license allocation, establish power limits, and determine hours of operation for *all* stations. However, the FRC's license assignment practices in 1931 reflected Hoover's favoritism of commercial radio stations. Noncommercial stations were assigned less desirable frequencies, and some were forced to share their frequencies with commercial broadcasters. New government technical standards set forth by the FRC did not give noncommercial stations enough time to purchase new equipment, especially on their insufficient budgets. The Senate voted on the Fess Bill in 1931, which would have legally required the Federal Radio Commission to "reserve 15% of all radio frequencies in the United States for educational stations" (Rinks, 2002). The opportunities outlined in the bill would have provided educational stations with the chance to reclaim their stations and develop within the broadcasting industry. Considering the favoritism toward commercial radio, first instigated by Hoover and solidified by the Federal Radio Commission, the idea of reserved frequencies for noncommercial stations existed as a stark threat to the development of commercial broadcasting. Therefore, the Fess Bill was never passed.

Chapter 4: The Great Depression and the beginning of FM

In the midst of harsh technical standards and stifled by legislation, college radio faced a different sort of complication with the onset of the Great Depression. Nine college stations went off the air in 1930. Some stations, like WWL at Loyola University, went commercial, or KFJM at the University of North Dakota that leased its broadcast time to a commercial station. Unable to afford necessary expenses, the station at Bucknell University “sold its frequency and equipment to a commercial operator in 1931 after failing to sell enough advertising” (Rinks, 2002). In an effort to put an end to excess spending during the Depression, the governor of Florida cut off the funding to WRUF at the University of Florida. The Great Depression effectively traumatized the college radio industry, and reform was absolutely necessary.

Franklin D. Roosevelt’s election to office in 1932 marked a turning point for the Communications industry. His campaign called for a commission that would consolidate telephone and radio regulation under one authority. This vision influenced the Communications Act of 1934 that established the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The regulations set forth in the 1934 act would facilitate an efficient telecommunications network in the public interest. By including procedural rules and methods by which to enforce them, the FCC could effectively regulate wired broadcasting. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 expanded upon the 1934 act to include college and university radio by outlining regulations regarding FCC compliance, and categorized college and university stations as “telecommunications service” providers (“Summary of federal laws,” 2010). However, educational stations didn’t benefit from this consolidation until the FCC approved commercial stations for broadcast on the new frequency modulation (FM) band in 1941, and reserved the lower FM frequencies for college-based stations. WDFM at Penn State University was assigned to 91.5fm, and began broadcasting on December 6, 1953 (“History: Origins”). While FM operations officially launched in 1940-1941, Edwin Armstrong received patents for the technology and made the first FM transmissions as early as the 1930s. While some college stations still operate from traditional AM frequencies, other college stations continue to broadcast using the innovative FM band that Armstrong tested in the 1930s.

Invigorated by the opportunities presented by the FM band and the FCC’s reservation of the lower frequencies for college stations, college radio had the potential to flourish in the 1940s. Frequency modulation encoded information based on wavelength, compared to amplitude for

AM, and resulted in significantly improved noise control. FM operates in the megahertz frequency range, which exposed a greater broadcast range (Rossing, Moore, & Wheeler, 2002). According to Avery & Pepper (1979), the number of noncommercial educational FM licenses increased tremendously from 38 in 1947 to more than 1100 college, university, and school-owned radio stations in 1997. Despite the tremendous potential surrounding college radio in the 1940s, favoritism of commercial operations dating back to Hoover and the agenda of the Federal Radio Commission was reinforced when big businesses dominated radio after the Great Depression. Eager to engage in the industry's growing financial success, big businesses perceived radio as the avenue to their financial recovery. As a result, many of the pioneer noncommercial stations were eventually forced off the air by commercial competitors. By 1941, however, only 30 of the original 200 AM stations licensed to colleges and universities since 1922 were still on the air (Rinks, 2002). Despite the apparent potential for the industry with the approval and reservation of the FM frequencies, college radio continued to struggle as the commercial stations prospered.

Chapter 5: The Start of Contemporary College Radio

The obstacles that plagued the first 50 years of college radio shaped the industry into its contemporary image. The individuals dedicated to the survival of their college stations realized the potential of the medium as a means of communication first with nearby listeners and ships at sea, and eventually within the university and anyone within a significant broadcast range. The ability of the industry to survive ASCAP licensing fees, interference in the frequency spectrum, the Great Depression, legislation, budgetary constraints, and the overall favoritism of commercial radio sculpted what college radio would stand for, and what it would become.

College radio as an alternative to commercial pop-based stations traces its roots to the 1960s. While most college students involved in radio broadcasting in the early years of its history performed amateur weather broadcasts, and eventually participated in broadcasting courses, college radio evolved into the volunteer, student-run operation that it is today as early as the 1960s. Teenagers and college students were infatuated with the music counterculture in the 1960s, which effectively transformed college radio programming. DJs strived to present obscure music to a young audience who craved programming that was distinct from that of ordinary AM pop stations (Merrill, 2008). Many stations also offered National Public Radio (NPR) programming. According to Cox (2004), "From the 1960s into the 1980s, the FM stations licensed to colleges and universities in the US continued to provide leadership for the nation's public radio movement." When WDFM at Penn State adopted new call letters, WPSU, in 1985, faculty involvement increased substantially, which affected programming. WPSU began to syndicate NPR shows and became a member of Penn State Public Broadcasting. By 1992, WPSU became an NPR affiliate. NPR programming, however informative, led to decreased student programming, and the downfall of student involvement at WPSU ("History: Origins").

It is imperative for programming at a college station to stay true to the original vision set forth in the 1960s. Students at Penn State University envisioned a radio station separate from the WPSU NPR affiliate station that would appeal to the alternative culture and personify the original mission of WDFM in the 1950s. The university provided funding to operate a new station under the call letters WKPS at 90.7fm, which went on the air on October 31, 1995 as a student club. Since its inception, WKPS adheres to a similar mission as the student volunteers at WDFM first by serving the community, then by providing an educational, as well as an extracurricular, experience for students and by broadcasting edgy programming distinctive from

commercial stations. Student officers Andy Nagypal and Michael D. Walsh renamed the station “The Lion” in 2000-2001 to symbolize the character of the university and solidify the image of WKPS (“History: Origins”).

Students shape the character of their college radio station by broadcasting music by the bands they listen to. “College rock” describes this genre of experimental bands that appeal to the college audience. The term is a bit dated, but corresponds to the period of the 1980s that cultivated music that flew under the commercial radar. Douglas Wolk (2005) writes for *Slate Magazine*, and explains that in the 1980s and 1990s, “College radio was an incubator for bands aiming for success in the commercial format...college radio play was perceived as a necessary proving ground on the way to the big time.” U2, the Clash, Elvis Costello, the Smashing Pumpkins, among others, began their careers scrambling for air time on college stations in hopes of becoming commercially successful. In the context of the present music scene, these bands embody the alternative rock genre, and established the standard for college radio music. Independent (indie) rock bands seem to represent typical programming on current college stations, and have since the 1980s.

Nirvana turned the tables for the college radio industry with the 1991 release of *Nevermind*, featuring “Smells Like Teen Spirit.” Record labels recognized the overwhelming potential of the album and the single, and sought to sign bands with a similar sound to market to teenagers and college students. College radio provided the outlet record labels needed for significant exposure to a precise audience. Nirvana cast the mold for early 90s alternative rock that would define the college radio industry. “Smells Like Teen Spirit” catalyzed a movement within the industry that set the bar higher for evaluating underground rock bands by college, as well as commercial, radio. According to *CMJ New Music Report* in 2005, “only six of the top 20 albums on college radio [were] on major labels” (Wolk, 2005). The industry’s emphasis on independent and underground artists defined programming in the 1990s, and still applies to current programming trends.

Contemporary college radio stands to fill the void created by strictly formatted commercial radio. Newton (2004) says that college radio, “serves multiple purposes, a fact also reflected in the unique programming and structure of many stations.” WDFM at Penn State exemplifies the emphasis placed on providing the community with edgy programming, consistent with the trends of the 60s and encompassing the later music trends of the 1990s, while

simultaneously using the medium as an educational tool to train students interested in broadcasting. With education as a primary focus, college radio offers training for many academic disciplines, such as sports broadcasting, broadcast journalism, or telecommunications. Student DJs develop their skills in a non-commercial environment in order to “provide an entertainment and information service to the community, students, and alumni” (Newton, 2004). Because college stations are not confined to a certain format, students experience the freedom to experiment with genres of music that do not coincide with the mainstream. Underground, independent, and even unsigned bands have a chance to excel on a college station in a way that is starkly dissimilar from commercial radio. Because record labels are not paying for air time, artists essentially receive free publicity. By broadcasting on public airwaves within a campus as well as a community, college radio stations possess the responsibility of reporting local news, weather, school district, and school sports updates. College radio provides a platform for student voices and perspectives that is less concerned with profit, “as with being different from the mainstream” (Lackman, 2003), which solidifies its purpose within the university and community. Current trends in legislation, however, have posed considerable threats to the advancement of the industry.

Chapter 6: Recent Legislation

While regulation is necessary to achieve an organized and successful broadcast industry, historically significant pieces of legislation have resurfaced in recent bills that stand to affect contemporary college radio. Reminiscent of the struggle in the 1920s with ASCAP's requirement for radio stations to pay music performance fees, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 required reports and royalty payment based on listenership that applied to terrestrial, as well as online broadcasting. The conditions set forth in the Act effectively drove college stations off the air and offline (Lackman, 2003). Internet broadcasting exists as the stark difference between the ASCAP requirements of the 1920s, however the financial setback caused by these performance fees remains consistent with the challenges they presented in the 20s. Most college stations are confined to underwriting as a means of financial gain based on the terms of their FCC license, and are therefore prohibited from commercial advertising. Webcasting fees combined with the cost of required reports often exceeded station budgets, causing them to shut down. "If the expense of record keeping exceeds the costs of the royalty, we will need to examine our ability to provide this service to the public," said Sandra Wasson from the University of California-Berkeley station, KALX. With student tuition already a significant figure, finding funding to pay for these additional requirements essentially caused a chilling effect, in that by 2003, "over 30 stations stopped webcasting in response to the new regulations" (Lackman, 2003). With more stations dropping out, the preservation of diverse, democratic voices set forth by the FCC in the 1940s was seriously jeopardized. Following suit, with regulation diminishing the number of stations that have the ability to reach a large audience through webcasting, fewer artists will have the opportunity to have their music showcased. College radio stations cannot achieve their mission to educate students interested in broadcasting if they are forced off the air, and off the Internet. The Performance Rights Act, introduced to Congress in June 2009, reiterated the justifications set forth in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 that required radio stations to pay royalty fees that would amount to \$500-\$1000 per year ("Performance Rights Act"), a figure that could potentially destroy college stations. Berated by legislation in favor of the recording industry, college radio desperately needed protection.

In the late 1930s, the FCC recognized the necessity of local, college-based, and non-commercial stations to provide a "forum for minority views" (Lackman, 2003) in order to facilitate a democratic society. Certain members of Congress sought to preserve the original

necessity of these stations in the midst of legislation that placed it in jeopardy. The Local Radio Freedom Act was resolved in the House of Representatives, with the Senate concurring, in February 2009, to counter the provisions of the Performance Rights Act. Because local radio stations broadcast music, interviews, and concert information, as well as introduce new artists, they have co-existed with and promoted the recording industry. Therefore, the Local Radio Freedom Act would preserve that relationship by suggesting that, "Congress should not impose any new performance fee, tax, royalty, or other charge relating to the public performance of sound recordings on a local radio station" ("The Library of Congress," 2009). Similar to the fate of the Fess Bill in 1931, the Local Radio Freedom Act would have protected local radio stations, however it was never passed. The Act would have prevented Congress from establishing excessive royalty requirements, like those set forth in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 ("Supporting the local," 2007). In addition to this bill, the Local Community Radio Act was also introduced to the Senate in February 2009 and upon its approval, more frequencies would be made available for college radio stations. Congress would "require the FCC to modify the rules authorizing the operation of low-power FM radio stations" ("Supporting the local," 2007). The House of Representatives passed the bill in December 2009, but no progress has been made since then. The initiative set forth by members of Congress represents the possibility of legislation to preserve college radio and its purpose within the broadcasting industry so that it may continue to serve the community and its university.

Chapter 7: The Future of College Radio

College stations have taken advantage of the abilities of the Internet to broaden their broadcast ranges by creating a website, and by webcasting. The overall decrease in the use of terrestrial forms of media, such as over the air radio and newspapers, justifies the importance of a web presence for college radio stations (McLung, 2001). A website not only provides listeners inside and outside the traditional broadcast range with the ability to listen online, but also presents the opportunity to interact with the broadcast by downloading content, entering for a chance to win promotional giveaways, and to make donations. In a study of college radio survivability, Stephen Merrill (2008) suggests that, “The survival of college radio lies with the ability to adapt to the changing world of technology.”

Webcasting has emerged as a significant contribution to college radio survival. With the use of the Internet as a global business model, college stations can exponentially widen their broadcast range. In a study by McLung, Mims, and Hong (2003), most college station managers support webcasting, and they “regard streaming as a valuable technology for extending station presence.” By extending the broadcast range and therefore allowing the station to reach a worldwide audience, station managers feel that webcasting can be used to further the educational experience for students. Most station managers surveyed for the study reported that webcasting could also increase funding and profit, promotes a positive, innovative image of the station. Stephen Merrill (2008) asserts that college station managers play an important role in the survival of college radio by keeping the station up to date in order to attract creative student volunteers. WKPS at Penn State reports that they also use webcasting to connect with alumni and to broadcast Penn State football games. By simultaneously broadcasting over the air as well as over the Internet, college stations can make the listening experience interactive.

College radio websites exist as alternative media that complements the over the air and online broadcasts. Steven McLung (2001) studied how college radio audiences use the accompanying website, and for what purpose. He determined that the listening audience demographic differs from those who view the website, and concluded that the listening audience was much younger than the website users. Older visitors, which may include alumni, use the website for its social integration function in order to strengthen ties with the university. Younger visitors were interested in downloading music and information, as well as surfing. Audio streaming and maintaining a relationship with the university scored among the highest in

percentage regarding the reasons why people visit college radio websites. Therefore, college stations should heed this advice by localizing news and updates as well as by posting downloadable content.

Recent issues impacting college radio may affect station survival, despite the best efforts presented by webcasting and station websites. R. Wilfred Tremblay (2003) conducted a Delphi study on the future of college radio, and noticed five trends in the research. By evaluating the future of the industry over time from five years to 15 years into the future, station advisors predicted a decrease in funding and participation over time, and an increase in niche programming, Internet distribution, automation, and competition from commercial stations. The decrease in funding over time might justify the decrease in participation, especially if the station cannot afford to update equipment. According to J. Wayne Rinks (2002), "The survival of a threatened station may depend on the success of college broadcasters in convincing administrators that the station is integral to the overall mission of the university." If a station's staff does not invest time and appropriate funding in promoting the station and its benefits to the university as a training facility as well as an extracurricular activity, administrators may not support a budget increase, or may cut funding altogether. The increase in niche programming may surface as a response to the grueling competition from commercial stations. With Internet distribution and automation software on the rise, advisors report that college radio stations over time, "will be superfluous as Internet distribution of music directly to consumers eliminates the need for a middle man" (Tremblay, 2003). In theory, however, this prediction should not apply to college radio alone, but to commercial radio as well.

While recent legislation pertaining to webcasting has been introduced in Congress, according to a study by Mclung, Mims, and Hong (2003), station managers have not observed a chilling effect on webcasting at their stations as a result. Copyright law has unearthed many issues for the radio industry since the early 1900s with ASCAP and its royalty fees, in addition to the efforts of the RIAA, an organization of independent record labels. With the protection of artists and their music at the focus of their legal endeavors, ASCAP and RIAA continue to raise controversy. The Copyright Act of 1976, together with the Digital Performance Right in Sound Recordings Act of 1995, and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, attempted to categorize webcasting as copyrighted material. Therefore, college radio stations would have to pay royalty fees for webcasted content. In 2002, the Internet Radio Fairness Act, and the Small

Webcaster Amendments Act were introduced as compromises between radio stations and record companies. Both bills were never passed, but existed to negotiate the terms of royalty payments for webcasting. It was not until the Small Webcaster Settlement Act was presented and passed that the process regarding royalty fees was modified. In the study by Mclung, Mims, and Hong (2003), most station managers said they would continue to stream in the midst of legal issues surrounding the topic. With a positive outlook, these station managers and others like them can apply the findings of this study, in addition to Tremblay's (2003) results, to prepare their stations for operation in the digital age.

Many college stations have survived in the digital climate dominated by webcasting, advanced technology, and Internet distribution. Station staff members must develop innovative problem solving strategies in order to use obstacles to the station's advantage. Station managers in Tremblay's (2003) study predicted a decrease in funding over time. Stephen Merrill (2008) asserts that the unpaid volunteer system might contribute to the success of many college stations. These student volunteers exhibit a level of dedication to the operation of each show, as well as the maintenance of equipment and the website. Student DJs often train new volunteers to advance to educational goal of college radio. Merrill (2008) suggests that, "the educational mission has been critical to the survival of college radio, from experimental beginnings to the modern institution it is today." Stations must strive to keep up with technological development, within the means of the allotted budget. Station managers must seize opportunities whenever they are presented to counter the budget constraint that may prevent updated equipment. Webcasting, downloadable content, and podcasts exist as solid, inexpensive advantages. Tremblay (2003) identified competition from commercial and satellite radio as an obstacle for college radio survival. In contrast, Merrill (2008) suggests that college radio listeners have the advantage, in that no additional hardware beyond a laptop with an Internet connection is necessary to receive the streaming signal. Satellite radio requires an extensive installation process, and some commercial stations are not yet streaming online. College radio should be able to sustain these issues as long as it adheres to its role as a stark alternative to commercial radio, with its mission rooted in education.

Chapter 8: Making Connections - The Radio Documentary art form

College radio maintains a strong relationship with alumni, students, and the community by establishing a long lasting impact rooted in localized content and edgy programming. Before the reliance on television and, later, the internet, was established, radio served as a means of entertainment, as well as education. Radio documentaries exist as early mass communications devices through which to reach a large audience and spread information (“Doing Radio,” n.d.). Producers have the opportunity to share important information with an audience using an art form that differs from the advantages of television. Radio documentaries require extensive planning and description, as the audience is unable to physically view the content. Relying on sound alone, radio documentary producers must study and perfect the art form in order to yield a successful product.

Research is an obvious component of the pre-production process. Research provides the foundation and introduction for new topics, and acts as an effective organizational tool to keep the audience moving with the pace of the documentary. While the producer does not have to be an expert on the material, the process would be more difficult in the absence of preliminary research. Exhibiting the research in the form of a literature review helps establish a solid background for the producer. It is imperative for the producer to incorporate research that is, “accurate, reliable, and current,” into the literature review due to the nature of the constantly changing telecommunications environment (“Doing Radio,” n.d.). Becoming as informed as possible on the subject of the documentary will prove useful in communicating and developing the message (Hesse, 1987).

An intricate composition of elements must be woven together to produce a meaningful, long lasting, and impactful radio documentary. The audience must be able to connect with the material. By conveying the importance of the concept and educating the audience, a lasting impression can be established and solidified. Therefore, determining the message and what the audience should learn or take away from the documentary is a key component of the pre-production process. A misguided and unfocused documentary would prove ineffective. The structure of the documentary should utilize the message as a backbone. The methodology by which to create the documentary should reflect the overall message and effectively illustrate the “theater of the mind,” because the audience must rely on the auditory signals they receive from

the story (Hesse, 1987). This unique characteristic to the radio documentary necessitates the need for a creative script.

The script serves as the vehicle by which to present the message to, and establish a relationship with, the audience. The subject matter must be of some considerable significance to the public. Adding a “local angle,” perhaps by including names of local businesses, schools, or town hot spots, allows the documentary to relate to those in the community. Harnessing suspense and surprise can effectively engage the audience, and heighten their interest in the subject matter. Unlike reading a story in a newspaper, the audience must comprehend the story the first time. Writing for the ear differs vastly from writing for print (“Radio Documentaries,” n.d.). Therefore, drafting the script in a conversational tone and utilizing the simple nature of short sentences can help with keeping the idea concise and easy to follow (Gilson, 2009). Transitions are the key to tying the ideas together to keep the story moving without losing the audience (Hesse, 1987). To complement the speaking track, Dave Gilson (2009) advises the incorporation of music and varied clip lengths when writing a script for a radio documentary.

By investing a level of interest, the audience will interact with and learn more from the material. As a producer, casting specific characters to interview and include in the documentary is key because the characters drive the story. Using the characters to describe and illustrate the concept instead of using a narrator can be an effective and artful approach. According to Jurgen Hesse (1987), the writer should, “Let the people you have interviewed speak instead...it’s far more valid to establish a mood than to describe ideas in numbing detail.” The idea must, therefore, be clear and understandable, as the audience is relying on the audio alone to grasp the story. Possible interviewees may surface from preliminary research, and should be contacted and scheduled for either in-person or phone interviews. The interview questions should be tailored specifically for the individual. Dave Gilson (2009) encourages producers to, “think about how your cuts will fit into your story structure.” The interviews will drive the story, but they should also advance the story in a certain way. Each interview must contribute its own unique characteristic to the documentary. A skilled producer and editor must craft the interviews into the script to develop the course of the story.

In the post production phase, the producer and editor must analyze the structure of the script to organize all of the recorded audio. The script should be followed when selecting clips from interviews and blending them with the narration, sound effects, and music underscoring.

The editor must keep the time limit of the piece in mind, especially if the piece will be submitted to a broadcast station, such as NPR, compared to an Internet radio site. The purpose of the radio documentary art form is to educate and raise awareness about a certain message and thereby establish a relationship with its audience, and its purpose should be recalled at the completion of the piece. Therefore, the documentary must be submitted to a broadcast facility as the final step of the production process, whether it is traditional terrestrial radio, satellite radio, or an Internet radio site, depending on the documentary's target audience ("Doing Radio," n.d.).

Documentaries may also be submitted to libraries and schools in the community. The medium cannot fulfill its intended message if it is not submitted and shared with an audience.

The radio documentary possesses a profound ability to tell a story and create a long-lasting impact on its audience. College radio shares this ability, along with the similar concentration on local content and the capability to serve the community. Relying on sound alone, college radio DJs and radio documentary producers must skillfully prepare their content and write for the ear. Incorporating transitions and provocative individuals into each broadcast and documentary can advance the content beyond simple narration. Keeping speaking segments short will effectively engage the audience and keep their attention. By communicating a message that concerns the audience, both mediums can fulfill their missions. The message must be supported by research, but must also apply to the target audience. The sweeping digital advances on the Internet have enabled the two mediums to reach a global community as well, through publication and webcasting.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Educational broadcasting has evolved tremendously since its experimental beginnings in the 1890s. The developing industry struggled with various regulatory mandates by the Department of Commerce and the Federal Radio Commission, as well as with harsh legislative and budgetary constraints that caused so many college stations to share their time with commercial groups or go off the air completely. The Great Depression, along with ASCAP's payment demands for playing licensed music, almost destroyed educational radio. The Federal Radio Commission's focus on extensive commercialization of the industry set the tone for the future.

The early history of noncommercial broadcasting provides significant relevance for the current state of college radio in a digital world, and for its future. The ramifications posed by legislation, regulation, and economic conditions apply to the current state of college radio. If contemporary college stations do not learn from the past, they could find themselves struggling to stay afloat in a sea of commercial competitors, or worse, at risk of repeating the struggles of their predecessors. The history of this industry determines the foundation for its future. The ability to endure legislative, budgetary, and technical constraints exemplifies the overwhelming perseverance of college radio.

College radio intends to serve students, alumni, and its community, which ultimately contributed to its survival amidst an environment plagued with commercial favoritism. The effort that it takes this student-run industry to survive, often with little to no professional leadership, overshadows the commercial radio industry's desire to make a profit. Making the transition from strictly terrestrial to digital and satellite has provided college radio with the opportunity to reach an audience that resides outside the traditional broadcast range through webcasting. The increasingly saturated digital world places considerable emphasis on online content, and college stations must adapt to include more than just a transmitter and terrestrial broadcasts. Webcasting paired with a website have become the essential tools for a station to survive decreased participation, budget cuts, decreased advisor presence, and the vast availability of downloadable digital content.

Radio documentaries share their mission with college radio, as they intend to educate and form a long lasting relationship with the audience. With roots in the 1940s when Edward R. Murrow created the first radio documentary unit at CBS, the radio documentary existed as a

casual, unrehearsed medium capable of mass communication (“Radio Documentaries,” n.d.). By focusing on genuine people speaking without a script in their own environment, the “man on the street” interview style took form. These traditions have been adapted for the digital age with digital voice recorders and digital editing software; however the core principles and techniques in producing an effective radio documentary have been maintained.

Contemporary college radio strengthens the original mission of the 1900s, focused on broadcasting alone, by providing the opportunity for students to expand their knowledge and gain experience in the broadcasting field. There are only ten AM stations that were originally licensed to facilities of higher education in the 1920s that are still operated by colleges or universities as noncommercial stations (Rinks, 2002). If college stations continue to disappear, a valuable outlet for education and diverse student voices will be lost. By dedicating their extracurricular time to a college station for no personal monetary profit, college DJs are the fire beneath the industry devoted to unique programming. While many stations operate on the most meager of means possible, college DJs can provide a forum to introduce new bands to each music scene. College radio has developed into a fierce competitor to commercial radio. As a relentless, burning flame in the broadcast industry that ignites the college counterculture, it must never be put out.

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