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The radio of tomorrow: Innovative concepts of web radio

Programming, Active audience and Funding models

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Abstract

The main topic of this research is exploring web radio as relatively new media phenomenon. The aim is to present how web radio has positioned itself in vibrant and fast changing world of media as platform for expressing cultural values which are often neglected by traditional and corporate mainstream media which have become more profit oriented entertainment businesses. This paper explores innovations introduced by web radio in terms of programming, audience and funding models in the age of the participatory culture in online media. These three aspects work together and interact among each other determining the aesthetics and identity of one radio station.

Web radio stations can come up in different shapes and sizes and to show the variety of web radio formats I will present and analyse five case studies which all vary in style but are united by the same, higher goal – to offer an alternative to traditional media – alternative in terms of programme that they offer and management model – by promoting non-commercial cultural values and building virtual communities of loyal listeners. Furthermore, the important focus of this research lies in approaching the selected case studies from the perspective of cultural production and exploring their contribution to it in internet environment. The findings on contribution to digital cultural production of such radio stations can be structured in following functions: production of the new, original digital content, its exhibition in digital environment and creating communities around the common interests. Finally, all of the above listed functions support the idea that internet radio stations act as small, cultural operations in internet surrounding.

The idea for this research developed from rethinking the challenges of managing one web radio station in times of constant innovation in technology and new forms of digital cultural production, diverse media environment driven by competition and commercialization but also in times of crisis. Such radio stations act as small, digital cultural outlets managed by group of enthusiasts or, not even rarely, by very enthusiastic individuals and they operate in Internet environment which is yet to be discovered and which is constantly developing.

This study was set out to explore web radio in the light of innovativeness in the fields of audience, programming and funding models. The aim has been to show what are the roles and functions of web radio as a new medium in (and also outside of) the Internet environment and the ways how it contributes to digital cultural production. In addition to this, the aim was also to identify trends, issues and potentials of web radio as an innovative platform for artistic and cultural expression.

Research is divided in three major segments – programme content management, audience behaviour and funding models where following issues are questioned and examined: the specificities of web radio programming with particular focus on cultural and arts content; authentic characteristics of Internet radio audience and how they engage with Internet radio program content; how Internet radio stations are funded and financially supported, do they promote new, more flexible, innovative ways of financing which can be applied to cultural and arts production and practice.

The climate of the new media environment boosts radio, pushes him toward and gives him new features and functions. Therefore, the aim of this research has been to identify potentials of web radio that can further shape its future in direction different from its original purpose. Since web radio showed much potential as a very unique artistic/cultural initiative in virtual space, it can in a way be considered as virtual cultural center or institution, depending on management model. This is just a hint regarding the future of web radio as an online platform for cultural and artistic expression in the age of Web 2.0 communications and digital cultural production and can be subject to further research.

Key words: *web radio, participation, second media age, web 2.0, culture 3.0, innovation, active audience, funding models, sustainability, cultural production*

Résumé

Le sujet principal de cette étude est d'explorer la webradio comme phénomène relativement nouveau des médias. L'objectif consiste à présenter comment la webradio se positionne dans le monde dynamique et en évolution rapide des médias comme plate-forme pour exprimer les valeurs culturelles souvent négligées par les grands médias traditionnels et corporatifs qui sont devenues des entreprises de divertissement orientées vers le profit. Ce papier examine les innovations introduites par la webradio en termes de modèles de programmation, public et modèles de financement à l'âge de la culture participative dans les médias en ligne. Ces trois aspects fonctionnent ensemble et interagissent les uns avec les autres en déterminant l'esthétique et l'identité d'une station de radio.

Les stations de radio en ligne existent dans les différentes formes et tailles. Afin de montrer la variété de formats de webradio, je vais vous présenter et analyser cinq études de cas qui varient en style, mais qui partagent le même objectif plus élevé - d'offrir une alternative aux médias traditionnels - alternative en termes de programme qu'ils offrent et de modèle de gestion - par la promotion des valeurs culturelles non commerciales et la construction de communautés virtuelles des auditeurs fidèles. En outre, le point important de cette recherche réside dans l'approche des études de cas du point de vue de la production culturelle et l'exploration de leur contribution à l'environnement web. Les conclusions sur la contribution à la production culturelle numérique de ces stations de radio peuvent être structurées dans les fonctions suivantes: production du nouveau contenu numérique original, son exposition dans l'environnement numérique et la création des communautés autour d'intérêts communs. Enfin, toutes les fonctions énumérées ci-dessus soutiennent l'idée que les stations de radio en ligne agissent comme de petites opérations culturelles dans l'environnement web.

L'idée de cette recherche s'est développée à partir des réflexions sur les défis de la gestion d'une station de radio en ligne à l'âge de l'innovation constante de la technologie et de nouvelles formes de production numérique culturelle, le milieu diversifié des médias entraînée par la concurrence et la commercialisation, mais aussi en temps de crise. Ces stations de radio agissent comme de petits points de vente numériques culturels gérés par un groupe de passionnés, ou souvent par des personnes très enthousiastes et ils opèrent dans un environnement web qui est encore à découvrir et qui est en constante évolution.

Objectifs de la recherche

- Montrer que les stations de radio en ligne contribuent à la production culturelle dans le domaine de la radio et des arts du son
- Montrer que les stations de radio en ligne représentent un milieu médiatique stimulant et encourageant qui est bon pour exprimer les valeurs et la production de différents groupes de sous-culture et les communautés qui sont marginalisés par les médias traditionnels
- Basé sur des études de cas sélectionnées le but est de montrer que la radio sur Internet et les nouvelles plates-formes introduit et développe de nouvelles formes de production culturelle, encourage la consommation de la culture et développe de nouveaux besoins culturels d'audience
- Montrer que les idées derrière le lancement de la station de radio en ligne peuvent être très variées, de l'activisme politique jusqu'à des intérêts purement commerciaux, chaque représentant le nouveau fonctionnement viable des médias qui enrichit notre milieu médiatique
- Présenter les innovations introduites par la Webradio en termes de programmation de contenu, comportement du public et modèles de financement
- Identifier et montrer les spécificités, les avantages et les potentialités des stations de radio en ligne dans la pratique

Les questions de recherche

Trois questions importantes ont été posées concernant la gestion de contenu de programme, le comportement du public et les modèles de financement:

RQ 1: Quelles sont les spécificités de la programmation de la radio en ligne avec un accent sur le contenu culturel et artistique?

RQ 2: Quelles sont les caractéristiques authentiques d'audience de la radio en ligne et de quelle façon elle s'engage avec le contenu du programme de radio en ligne?

RQ 3: Comment les stations de radio en ligne sont-elles financées et soutenues financièrement, est-ce qu'elles favorisent de nouvelles façons plus flexibles et innovantes de financement qui peuvent être appliquées à la production culturelle et artistique et à la pratique?

Hypothèses de recherche

Hypothèse générale:

- La webradio est une plateforme multimédia qui promeut des formes plus innovantes de la production culturelle numérique, établit et encourage de nouveaux besoins culturels, crée de l'espace pour la culture et l'art en proposant des formats de programmes novateurs qui varient dans le style et le contenu et affirme les valeurs marginalisées ou négligées par les médias traditionnels.

Hypothèses spécifiques:

- Webradio favorise la production culturelle numérique en offrant un vaste espace pour la conception et la promotion de formes de contenus innovants en mettant l'accent sur l'art et la culture.
- Webradio réalise et affirme les concepts de diffusion ciblée et mobilise l'audience en créant des communautés des auditeurs en ligne réunis autour d'intérêts et des valeurs communs
- Webradio établit et promeut de nouvelles modèles de financement de bas en haut, plus flexibles et plus diversifiés.
- Stations de radio en ligne agissent comme de petites opérations / institutions culturelles dans l'environnement numérique.

Méthodologie de la recherche

La recherche méthodologique pour les fins de ce document a été réalisée sur plusieurs niveaux et elle comprend les phases suivantes:

1. **Recherche initiale** - réflexion sur l'idée de départ pour la recherche et la définition de l'étendue du problème.
2. **Recherche documentaire approfondie** - menée afin de recueillir toutes les informations pertinentes pour la poursuite de l'exploration du sujet. Ressources Web traitant des nouveaux médias, le public et la collecte de fonds seront également d'une grande importance pour la partie méthodologique / théorique de cette recherche.
3. **Recherches qualitatives et quantitatives** - recherches d'audience des médias fournies par IPSOS, Rajar, Arbitron, Synovate et du Conseil des Arts d'Angleterre sont également utilisées comme sources pertinentes pour ce papier.
4. **Entretiens semi-structurés** - avec les fondateurs ou les responsables de la plupart des stations de radio en ligne proposées afin d'obtenir l'aperçu de la façon dont elles fonctionnent.
5. **Questionnaire** - afin d'obtenir une meilleure compréhension des pratiques et des défis de d'études des cas sélectionnées, un questionnaire approfondie est conçu pour les réalisateurs et les producteurs des stations de radio en ligne.
6. **Analyse de contenu et des méthodes comparatives** – utilisés pour analyser des études de cas afin d'identifier les spécificités et les concepts innovants de chacun d'eux (chapitre 6 et 7).
7. **Discussion** avec des experts du domaine des nouveaux médias et des études de radio sur les questions identifiées lors de la recherche (chapitre 8).

Le cadre théorique

Le cadre théorique de cette recherche peut être divisé en deux groupes. D'une part, cette recherche repose en grande partie sur la théorie des médias et les concepts les plus récents qu'elle traite. Ces concepts sont la participation, le Web 2.0, la convergence des médias, l'interaction, le public actif et les autres qui ont créé des conditions préalables et contribué à

la création de la webradio telle qu'elle est aujourd'hui et la merveilleuse diversité de l'offre de stations. D'autre part, le cadre théorique de cette recherche est basé dans la théorie culturelle et la gestion culturelle, ainsi que dans des études radio. Chacune d'entre elles se croisent et contribuent à l'interdisciplinarité de cette recherche.

Des études de cas

La Voix de l'Ouest est un petit projet de la webradio commandé par la ville d'Utrecht au sein du programme L'art dans l'espace public. Orientée vers la communauté cette webradio suit les changements urbains et socio-culturels dans le quartier négligé de la ville, Utrecht Ouest et à la fois souligne l'importance de la connexion et l'engagement des résidents locaux dans la vie quotidienne de cette municipalité.

Basée à San Francisco **Soma FM** est l'un des pionniers de la webradio où, sous l'égide d'une radio, les auditeurs peuvent capter plus de 25 chaînes uniques, chacune diffusant de la musique alternative et underground choisie par un DJ récompensé et les directeurs musicaux.

Resonance FM est la première station d'art radiophonique au monde qui s'intéresse aux tendances contemporaines de la musique, le son et l'art radiophonique. Située à Londres cette radio représente un laboratoire d'expérimentation qui offre l'alternative radicale à la radiodiffusion traditionnelle.

Radio Centraal est une station de radio locale, non-conventionnelle, à but non commercial, dont le siège est à Antwerp. Elle a débuté en 1980 en tant que station de radio pirate et au fil du temps elle a évolué dans un nom respecté et influent dans le paysage médiatique belge, sans changer son caractère original indépendant. Depuis ses débuts Radio Centraal fonctionne entièrement sur une base volontaire.

NOFM est une petite webradio d'entreprise indépendante basée à Belgrade. Elle est gérée par un groupe de personnes qui sont actives dans les domaines de l'art progressif et alternatif, la science, la culture urbaine, le militantisme et le journalisme libre. Elles ont initié ce projet comme une réaction à l'état de la scène médiatique de la Serbie afin de créer plus d'espace pour la culture.

Discussion

Durant les premières étapes de cette étude plusieurs questions ont été soulevées. Elles sont ensuite remises en question et analysées dans les entretiens avec des professionnels dans ce domaine. Ces questions sont les suivantes:

Question 1: Développement des technologies de l'Internet en tant que cause et impulsion à un nouveau milieu varié des médias

Question 2: Avantages et des inconvénients de la webradio par rapport aux médias traditionnels

Question 3: Position et la reconnaissance de la webradio dans le paysage médiatique plus large- état actuel et les perspectives d'avenir

Question 4: Comment et dans quelle mesure la radio en ligne favorise et encourage le changement, l'innovation et l'expérimentation dans la programmation de contenu axé sur l'art et la culture?

Question 5: Rôle de la webradio en répondant aux besoins socio-culturels des sous cultures non-traditionnelles d'auditeurs

Question 6: Rôle de la webradio en tant que médiateur dans la création de communautés virtuelles d'auditeurs basées sur leurs besoins et affinités culturels

Question 7: Nouveaux modèles de financement des stations de radio en ligne dont l'impératif n'est pas le profit, mais les valeurs

Le climat de l'environnement des nouveaux médias fait avancer la radio et lui donne de nouvelles caractéristiques et fonctions. Par conséquent, l'objectif de cette recherche a été d'identifier les potentiels de la radio web qui peuvent encore façonner son avenir dans une direction différente de son but initial. La radio web a montré beaucoup de potentiel comme une initiative artistique / culturel unique en son genre dans l'espace virtuel et elle peut être considéré d'une certaine manière comme centre ou institution culturelle virtuelle, selon le modèle de gestion. C'est juste une possibilité quant à l'avenir de la radio web comme une plate-forme en ligne pour l'expression culturelle et artistique à l'ère du Web 2.0

communication et de la production culturelle numérique et cela peut être l'objet d'autres recherches.

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It all began because there was nothing good to listen to on the radio...¹

1. Introduction

The main topic of this research is exploring web radio as relatively new media phenomenon. The aim is to present how web radio has positioned itself in vibrant and fast changing world of media as platform for expressing cultural values which are often neglected by traditional and corporate mainstream media which have become more profit oriented entertainment businesses. This paper explores innovations introduced by web radio in terms of programming, audience and funding models in the age of the participatory culture in online media. These three aspects work together and interact among each other determining the aesthetics and identity of one radio station.

The rapid changes and progress of Internet technologies have contributed to the multidimensionality of the Internet and in such environment web radio represents very important space for experiment and innovation. This feature of web radio as a tool and, at the same time, a platform for experimentation has become favorable for expressing subcultures and their values.

The global reach of the Internet brings a wonderful diversity of stations and music and it hosts much more stations than it can be found on terrestrial dial. Web radio stations can come up in different shapes and sizes and to show the variety of web radio formats I will present and analyze five case studies which all vary in style but are united by the same, higher goal – to offer an alternative to traditional media – alternative in terms of programme that they offer and management model – by promoting non-commercial cultural values and building virtual communities of loyal listeners. The important focus of this research lies in approaching the selected case studies from the perspective of cultural production and exploring their contribution to it in internet environment. The findings on contribution to digital cultural production of such radio stations can be structured in following functions: production of the new, original digital content, its exhibition in digital environment and creating communities

¹ Rusty Hodge, SomaFM's founder

around the common interests. Finally, all above listed functions support the idea that internet radio stations act as small, cultural operations in internet surrounding.

The Voice of the West is small web radio project commissioned by City of Utrecht within *Art in public space* programme. This community-oriented web radio follows urban and socio-cultural changes in neglected part of the city, Utrecht West stressing the importance of connecting and engaging local residents in everyday of this municipality.

San Francisco based *Soma FM* is one of the web radio pioneers where, under the umbrella of one radio, listeners can tune in more than 25 unique channels, each broadcasting alternative and underground music hand-picked by award winning DJ's and music directors.

Resonance FM is world's first radio art station which deals with contemporary tendencies in music, sound and radio art. Situated in London this radio represents a laboratory for experimentation providing a radical alternative to mainstream broadcasting.

Radio Centraal is Antwerp's local independent non-commercial, non-conventional radio station which started in 1980 as pirate radio station and over time evolved to established and influential name in Belgian media landscape, not changing its original independent character. Radio Centraal works completely on voluntary basis since its beginning.

NOFM is a small Belgrade based independent web radio venture. It is run by a self-organized group of people who are active in the spheres of progressive and alternative art, science, urban culture, activism and free journalism who initiated this project as a reaction to the state of Serbian media scene in order to create more space for culture.

Independent media are field subject to constant change and experiment since they don't have to obey to strict rules of media regulations and therefore they represent fertile ground for innovation. All proposed case studies experiment with programming, relationship towards audience and funding models not sticking to old patterns and avoiding becoming labeled as commercial.

The diversity of web radio formats and their content is a direct consequence of the interaction between socio-cultural needs and changes in new media environment due to rapid technological progress. This resulted with creating a unique, fickle medium which proved to be subject to innovation. The innovation in technology contributed largely to innovation in new practices of digital cultural production and internet radio can be considered as one of these.

The idea for this research developed from rethinking the challenges of managing one web radio station in times of constant innovation in technology, diverse media environment driven by competition and commercialization but also in times of crisis. Such radio stations act as small operations managed by group of enthusiasts or, not even rarely, by very enthusiastic individuals and they operate in Internet environment which is yet to be discovered and which is constantly developing.

This paper is organized as follows: in the first, introductory chapter I will present main research aims and questions. I will also explain methodology designed for the purposes of this research and define main tools and criteria for collecting and processing the data. The following chapters deal with basic theoretical concepts which form the theoretical backbone of this research (Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5). After this section I will introduce the research part of this paper which empirically deals with the subject of this paper. It consists of two parts: (1) *presentation and comparative analysis of selected case studies* (Chapter 6) and (2) *discussion* in which the most important issues raised during this research will be tackled in form of a discussion with people of different profiles involved with web radio such as media theoreticians, artists, DJ's, founders and general managers of proposed cases studies (Chapter 7). In conclusion I will present the summary of results of this research and new issues that have been raised that can be a subject of some further researches.

1.1 Aim of the research

The aim of this paper is to show how web radio enriches new media landscape and because of its non-standardized format allows experimentation in programming and thanks to the progress in technology and prevailing Internet use reaches loyal listeners worldwide and introduces new, diverse levels of audience participation. In addition to this, this research aims

to show how specific web radio stations contribute to digital cultural production based on the thorough analysis of selected case studies which represent unique radio interventions in online surrounding.

More specifically, aims of this research can be structured in the following points:

- To show that web radio stations contribute to cultural production in the field of radio and sound related arts
- To show that web radio stations are stimulating and supportive media surrounding favorable for expressing values and production of different subculture groups and communities which are marginalized by mainstream media
- Based on selected case studies aim is to show that radio on Internet and new platforms introduces and develops new forms of cultural production, encourages consumption of culture and develops new cultural needs of audience
- To show that the ideas behind launching Internet radio station can be wide ranging, from political activism to purely commercial, each presenting new and viable media operation that enriches our media environment
- To present innovations introduced by web radio in terms of content programming, audience behavior and funding models
- To identify and show specificities, advantages and potentials of web radio stations in practice

1.2 Research questions

Three major questions have been raised regarding program content management, audience behavior and funding models:

RQ 1: What are the specificities of web radio programming with particular focus on cultural and arts content?

In this research, the first question I will try to answer is how the web radio content is being designed. Preliminary research of content production shows that web radio content producers use concept of narrowcasting – designing content oriented toward specific, narrow audience

as a reaction to predictable, homogenized, from one-to-many concept and programming strategy of traditional mainstream media. Web radio can be perceived both as the cause and the consequence of the media content proliferation, promoting niche programming and new forms of program content, new communication and presentation style.

I will examine current trends in programme policies and programming strategies. Furthermore, I will discuss new radio formats in the light of radio content as an artwork. The important sub-question here is also the role of programme directors/producers as curators. These preliminary findings will be further questioned and analyzed both theoretically and through case studies.

RQ 2: What are the authentic characteristics of Internet radio audience and how they engage with Internet radio program content?

Web radio is developing, educating and nourishing new breed of audience whose number is in constant growth. By answering this question I will try to portray this type of audience which is both active and interactive due to advantages which are offered by Web 2.0 concept. This, so called, *digi-life generation*² has the use of Internet technologies in its second nature. At the same time audience is discerning and demanding and it knows exactly what they want to hear but it is also hungry for new and innovative contents and music. Audience challenges editors and producers of web radio program to constantly meet their needs and be up-to-date.

Audience is not anymore regarded as monolithic body. In the second media age (Poster) audience is carefully targeted and fragmented and according to that web radio introduces concept of niche programming. Web radio introduces as well the concepts of interactivity and active audience where audience becomes the curator of the content.

RQ 3: How Internet radio stations are funded and financially supported, does it promote new, more flexible, innovative ways of financing which can be applied to cultural and arts production and practice?

² Gallie, G. & Robson, J., *The Digi-life Generation*. Presentation at the Radio Festival, 2005

Internet radio promotes new forms of funding, establishing more diverse, flexible, interactive environment for different needs of advertisers and also engaging more actively in providing alternative, non-commercial support for its actions.

This research will try to answer following questions: What are the new models of financing the web radio stations whose imperative is not to be profitable? Do they live from donations, subscriptions, big commercial sponsors, monthly staff contribution or are they listener-supported? How this financial management model determines and affects their character? Are they projects, organizations or companies?

Through the analysis of the selected case studies I will show how those radio stations establish innovative models of financing that can be applied to traditional cultural institutions.

1.3 Research hypotheses

General hypothesis:

- **Web radio is a multimedia platform which promotes more innovative forms of digital cultural production, establishes and encourages new cultural needs, creates space for culture and art by offering innovative programme formats that vary in style and content and affirms values marginalized or neglected by mainstream media.**

Specific hypotheses:

- **Web radio promotes digital cultural production by offering huge space for design and promotion of innovative content forms with focus on art and culture.**
- **Web radio implements and affirms concepts of narrowcasting and mobilizes audience by creating online listeners communities gathered around shared interests and common values.**
- **Web radio establishes and promotes new, more flexible and more diverse, bottom-up funding models.**

- **Web radio stations act as small cultural operations/institutions in digital environment.**

1.4 Relevance of the research

The importance of this research lies not only in the identification of innovative concepts of web radio regarding programming, audience and funding models in the age of participation and on-line media but also in exploring the ideas behind their forming in the period dominated by Internet and on-line media. It is very important to stress the nature of radio as a medium subject to change and to glimpse at its future.

Since web radio is relatively new media phenomenon, not much has been researched about this new media form. That was one of the obstacles in the research. This obstacle has been overcome and complemented through the research of relevant case studies.

The significance of this research lies mostly in the results delivered by the comparative analysis of the examined case studies (Chapter 7). Furthermore, this research has identified several current issues and potentials of web radio which are further processed in Discussion (Chapter 8) with professionals from this field who are both theoreticians and practitioners. These issues can be the foundation for further investigations in the field of radio studies.

1.5 Literature overview

Web radio represents a rather new phenomenon and it is not yet sufficiently investigated. Therefore, this research relies on works of prominent media and cultural scholars who have developed theories about phenomena that have formed preconditions for the genesis of web radio. They describe media environment influenced by Internet which has developed and shaped new needs of modern media consumers.

The authors whose work is included in this research are divided in two groups:

1. Authors that examine theory of the new media and culture and authors who deal with radio studies. In the first group I rely on the work of Henry Jenkins, Marshal McLuhan, Mark Poster, Nicholas Negroponte and Pier Luigi Sacco.

2. From the field of radio studies I have consulted the work of Jo Tacchi, Kate Lacey and other relevant authors.

Apart from that, research also relies on Internet sources, strategic reports, Ofcom reports.

1.6 Research Methodology

Methodological research for the purposes of this paper was conducted on several levels and it comprises the following phases:

1. **Initial research** – reflecting on the initial idea for the research and defining the scope of the problem.
2. Thorough **desk research** – conducted in order to gather all relevant information for the further exploration of the topic. Web resources dealing with new media, audience and fundraising will also be of a great importance for the methodological/theoretical part of this research.
3. **Qualitative and quantitative researches** – researches of media audience provided by *IPSOS, RAJAR, Arbitron, Synovate* and *Arts Council England* and are also used as relevant sources for this paper.
4. **Semi-structured interviews** – with founders or head persons of most of the proposed web radio stations in order to get the insight in the way they operate.
5. **Questionnaire** - in order to gain deeper understanding of concrete practices and challenges of selected case studies, very thorough questionnaire is designed for web radio stations directors and producers.
6. **Content analysis and comparative methods** – used for analyzing case studies in order to identify the specificities and innovative concepts of each of them (Chapter 6 and 7).
7. **Discussion** with experts from the field of new media and radio studies about issues identified during the research (Chapter 8).

2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will present and analyse concepts which formed precondition for genesis of web radio with emphasis on participatory culture in online media and cultural production in digital age. I will also present brief history of web radio, reflect on definitions of web radio from several perspectives and define and explain radio forms that will often be referred to throughout the research.

2.1 The first and the second media age

Mark Poster, French theorist of media and information, introduces in his book *The Second Media Age* (1995) concepts of, what he calls, *first* and *second media age*. In her book *Sociology in the Age of the Internet* (2007) Allison Cavanagh summarizes historical distinction between the first and second media age.

According to her, in the first media age, or the age of broadcast media, communication was defined as one-to-many, where a small number of producers faced onto a large number of consumers and in which there were clearly defined roles of audience as against producers. Audience is addressed as *generalized subject* (Althusser), a category with attention more focused on central information source.

The second media age is defined by new media logic of individualization and interactivity and is oriented toward more lateral communication sources due to proliferation. Communication is many-to-many, thus having multiple producers and consumers. Also, difference between producers and consumers becomes blurred. The second media age is characterized by identity formation through thicker and richer forms of social interaction and it is democratizing and facilitating universal citizenship. The best example of the second media age in practice is the Internet.

The evolution in media has changed the way we communicate by changing the ways in which we transmit and receive information. This evolution has led us to what Fritz Machlup called the *information society* which can be explained as *post-industrial society in which information technology is transforming every aspect of cultural, political and social life*

which is based on the production and distribution of information³. The idea of global information society can be viewed in relation to McLuhan's predictions that communication media would transform the world into a *global village*⁴ which is today used to describe Internet and World Wide Web.

There are three concepts that distinguish the second media age from the first one should be defined more precisely. These are Web 2.0, media convergence and interactivity:

- **Web 2.0:** This concept is developed by Tim O'Reilly to describe new web environment and it refers to the second generation of the World Wide Web which focuses on the ability for people to collaborate and share information online. The advantage of Web 2.0 is that it allows interaction between users and content in comparison to websites where people are limited to the passive viewing of the content. According to O'Reilly concept of Web 2.0 considers the following: (1) using the Web as an applications platform; (2) democratizing the Web and (3) employing new methods to distribute information. He stresses that Web 2.0 is not new technological invention. It represents the result of cumulative changes in the way users and software developers utilize the web. Best examples to illustrate this are platforms for social networking (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn), Wikipedia – collaboratively edited free Internet encyclopedia, blogs, video and audio sharing and distribution sites (e.g. YouTube and SoundCloud), online interactive multiplayer games (e.g. World of Warcraft).
- **Media convergence:** This concept is developed by Henry Jenkins. Under the term media convergence he understands not only the technological shift but also the intersection of old and new media which encourage the consumer to seek out new information and in his words: *the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences*. So, what does convergence mean in the case of radio? Having in mind the ability of radio to constantly reinvent itself due to its easily adaptable nature radio has survived television and digital revolution. This, originally, audio medium has crossed

³ Source: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/information-society.html#ixzz2gyTlk1Mi>, accessed on August 19, 2013

⁴ McLuhan, M. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, 1964

over to multimedia platforms where people have ability to tailor the content to their personal taste.

- **Interactivity:** This term is often regarded as a key concept in new media and it can be defined as two way transfer of information between a user and the central point of a communication system such as computer. Interactivity distinguishes new, digital media, from analogue media. Kiouisis, gave the most comprehensive definition (as quoted in Ferne and Wall, p.8): *Interactivity can be defined as the degree to which a communication technology can create a mediated environment in which participants can communicate (one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many), both synchronously and asynchronously, and participate in reciprocal message exchanges. With regard to human users, it additionally refers to their ability to perceive the experience as a simulation of interpersonal communication and increase their awareness of telepresence.*

2.2 Participatory culture in online media

This concept is also investigated by Henry Jenkins. Under this neologism he wants to emphasize the opposite to *consumer culture* which means that the private persons (the public) do not act as consumers only, but also as contributors or producers. This concept is further developed in the context of Web 2.0 where Internet users have opportunity to create and submit content to the Internet so it may be distributed further and reached by wide audiences.

We are now witnessing the shift from consumer to *prosumer*, new participant in media dialogue and exchange which will further and more detailed be discussed in chapter about web radio audience.

2.3 Third culture and Culture 3.0

The notion of the third culture

The term *third culture* was first coined by science historian C. P. Snow. Snow originated the concept of duelling cultures in his book, *The Two Cultures*, but in an revised second edition

of the book published in 1964, he introduced the notion of a *third culture*. Third culture refers to age of science, dominated by technology. Third culture is culture that doesn't dismiss science and technology, but embraces it. Kevin Kelly, the executive director of magazine Wired, writes the following in the essay *The Third Culture*⁵:

This new third culture is an offspring of science. It's a pop culture based in technology, for technology. Call it nerd culture. For the last two decades, as technology supersaturated our cultural environment, the gravity of technology simply became too hard to ignore. For this current generation of Nintendo kids, their technology is their culture... The third culture creates new tools faster than new theories, because tools lead to novel discoveries quicker than theories do. The third culture has little respect for scientific credentials because while credentials may imply greater understanding, they don't imply greater innovation. While science and art generate truth and beauty, technology generates opportunities: new things to explain; new ways of expression; new media of communications. Technology now has its own culture, the third culture, the possibility culture, the culture of nerds - a culture that is starting to go global and mainstream simultaneously.

The cruxes of the third culture are technology and innovation which bring new possibilities and create preconditions for change in socio-cultural environment. Technology has its own culture now and changes the way we think about culture. We can compare it with the idea of *technological determinism* which can be explained as key mover in social and cultural change where technology drives development of social structures and cultural values⁶.

Negroponte states the following: *The digital age... will result in its ultimate triumph* and we can see that this is becoming true with the emerging *Culture 3.0* model identified by professor Pierre Luigi Sacco but also in Kelly's essay.

From Culture 1.0 to Culture 3.0

Sacco in his study *Culture 3.0: A new perspective for the EU 2014-2020 structural funds programming* introduces and develops the term *Culture 3.0*, new paradigm for cultural and

⁵ Source: <http://edge.org/conversation/the-third-kelly>, accessed on: September 15, 2013

⁶ Source: <http://www.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/pubs/96BRmetascience.html>, accessed on: September 16, 2013

creative production. He examines the term *culture* through time and identifies three models of culture according to the narrative of *the relationship between cultural activity and the generation of economic (and social) value added* (Sacco, 2011):

- ***Culture 1.0*** – this model was dominant in pre-industrial economy and it is marked by very limited audience, no structured cultural market and concept of patronage. Patronage choices determined by the patron's tastes and interests, mainly for spiritual cultivation and social promotion. Technological conditions for cheap reproducibility and circulation were non-existing yet. Culture does not generate value added, but only absorbs value produced.
- ***Culture 2.0*** – with industrial (economic) revolution and emergence of technological innovation (the turn of the XX century) that creates possibility of cultural mass markets we are entering the second phase. The technological possibility of cultural mass markets becomes reality with introduction of modern printing, photography and cinema, recorded music and radio broadcasting which had caused audience expansion. Culture becomes distinct sector in the economy and activity that produces economic value and even generates profit but compared to big manufacturing sectors, culture represents a branch of wider entertainment industry, a relatively small niche at the macroeconomic scale.
- ***Culture 3.0: Communities of practice and open platforms*** – culture today – the dawning of Culture 3.0 was marked by digital revolution and the invention of Internet. It is driven by two concurrent streams: digital content production and digital connectivity. Content can be distributed almost without mediators to highly segmented and profiled audiences by means of increasingly specialized social media (user generated content). Distinction between producers and users is blurred – cultural access and production of new contents are two phases of the same process. In this phase audience are turned practitioners. And culture is no longer an aspect of free time use but is embedded in the daily life. Culture can be massively produced and distributed also outside market channels. Economic and social value is produced not only through priced content, but also through generic participation.

Furthermore, Sacco stresses the importance of active cultural participation which is the cornerstone of the Culture 3.0 phase:

By active cultural participation, we mean a situation in which individuals do not limit themselves to absorb passively the cultural stimuli, but are motivated to put their skills at work: Thus, not simply hearing music, but playing; not simply reading texts, but writing, and so on. By doing so, individuals challenge themselves to expand their capacity of expression, to re-negotiate their expectations and beliefs, to reshape their own social identity.

All the aforementioned concepts share a common feature and that is innovation which will be further discussed in the chapter 2.4 *Radio and innovation*.

Negroponete states the following: *The digital age... will result in its ultimate triumph* and we can see that this is becoming true with the emerging Culture 3.0 model identified by Sacco.

2.4 Radio and innovation

In this chapter I will present innovation in new media with particular implications to radio. Even though radio has great innovation potential, this will be a difficult task since innovation isn't always obvious.

According to Porter's dictionary term innovation can be defined as *introducing something new or different that resulted from a study or experiment*. Radio developed as an experiment and as Hartley and Notley state:

...the experimentation developed the medium, very much in the same way that computer geeks and pioneers have developed new platforms, search engines and other software to advance the reach and potential of the internet. In other words, both radio and the internet were 'pro-am' or user-led inventions.

As a result of technological revolution radio is constantly subject to innovation. According to Hartley and Notely:

...the medium is still developing technically, socially and physically. Mass audiences are yet to be lured by accessibility, comfort-ability and simplicity; they haven't found a *use* for the internet and may not until it becomes a 'two-knob technology'. The ultimate possibilities and capabilities for audio online may only be realized when the medium develops adequately to address all of these issues and becomes more inclusive.

2.5 Defining web radio

The first issue that I have encountered during my research was defining web radio. In order to show the complexity of the defining web radio I will here cross reference several definitions given from different angles.

As we have previously seen, web radio is still under-theorized media format. Web radio appears in so many forms and each of them has its own definition. The most comprehensive definition of what web radio implies was given by radio biographer/historian Alex Cospser:

*The term internet radio has grown to mean several things. It can be as radio-like as a program streamed live on the internet or it can be an archive site with on-demand music files. It can simply be a terrestrial radio station's broadcast to a bigger market, or an internet-only operator starting from scratch. It can also be a music store that allows listeners to sample music before they buy it.*⁷

There are plenty different approaches to defining internet radio. So if we look at it from technological point of view we can say that web radio is *an audio broadcasting service that is transmitted through the internet*⁸. One more definition of web radio which also stresses technological point of view:

Web radio describes a technical achievement which allows audio to be digitized and split into small pieces for transmission across the internet. The ultimate effect is to

⁷ Source: <http://www.tangentsunset.com/internetradio.htm>, accessed on September 28, 2013

⁸ Definition of web radio: http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/I/Internet_radio.html, accessed on 16 July, 2013

*create the illusion of "radio". The audio is "streamed" through the Internet from a server in one location and reassembled on the listener's end by a software player on a computer or Internet Radio receiver. Internet Radio is not really radio by the traditional definition but an incredible simulation.*⁹

Some theoreticians question if web radio is radio at all? Is radio defined by its antenna and frequency? Again, we need to have in mind the ability of radio to adapt, so each era can have its own definition of radio and if analyze them we can see how only technology changes and the core idea of radio remains the same. Every technological progress leaves a trace on radio by advancing it.

According to Jo Tacchi (2005) radio is *different in different contexts and at different times and it is what it is at a given time, in a given context of use and meaningfulness* (Tacchi, 2000:292). Hartley and Notley share the same idea that *any historical definition of radio needs to encompass what it is for – in other words, simply describing how it is done will never explain what it meant.*¹⁰

Dang Thi thu Huong from the Centre for Broadcasting History Research at Bournemouth University, UK. She suggests this definition:

*Web radio is a hybrid of radio and the Internet, featuring professional output including live radio programmes online and/or archived radio programmes online, accompanied and supported by some text and/or images, and interactive communication via the World Wide Web.*¹¹

As Hartley and Notly suggest:

[...]radio has come to be defined by its programming and social uses, rather than by its physical or technical properties. Internet radio combines the technical possibilities of the web (e.g. accessing content from anywhere in the world at any time, combining

⁹ Definition of web radio: <http://radio.about.com/library/bldef-145.htm>, accessed on 16 July, 2013

¹⁰ http://www.academia.edu/2532082/User-led_content_and_self-creating_communities_history_repeating_itself_Understanding_internet_radio_in_the_context_of_the_development_of_radio

¹¹ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_radio, accessed on: September 14, 2013

audio with video and text, allowing for interactivity), with broadcasting formats that use ‘announcers’ and DJ’s to introduce and discuss both produced and live events and content... Any historical definition of radio needs to encompass what it is for. In other words, simply describing how it is done will never explain what it meant, either for those who sought profit or power by it or those who used it.

All of the above stress some characteristics of web radio. The definition of web radio which will include its full potential has to be combination of aforementioned definitions. First of all, web radio is a **hybrid** technology, mixed-medium which comprises internet and radio characteristics. For more precise definition we should consider other characteristics such as its purpose, ownership model and content which it delivers, as Tacchi suggests.

We also have to clarify several other terms which mistakenly can bring confusion:

Webcasting – this term is composed from the words *web* and *broadcasting* meaning technology of broadcasting audio and/or video through internet¹²

Podcast – digital audio file made available for download on the internet through an RSS 2.0 feed. *Podcasting* offers a variety of content for listeners to consume how they want, when they want and where they want¹³

2.6 Brief history of web radio

In this section I will try to cover the short history of web radio stressing its most important milestones. This year is the 21th anniversary of radio’s first ever live Internet stream and its history is yet to be written.

Web radio was pioneered by technologist Carl Malamud in 1993 when he launched *Internet Talk Radio*¹⁴, first computer-radio talk show, each week interviewing a computer expert. Same year later, following pivotal happening in the history of web radio was live streaming

¹² Source: <http://www.soundonsound.com/sos/apr00/articles/netnotes.htm>, accessed on: September 3, 2013

¹³ Source: <http://www.howtopodcasttutorial.com/what-is-a-podcast.htm>, accessed on: September 3, 2013

¹⁴ All podcasts are available on: <http://museum.media.org/radio/>, accessed on: June 24, 2013

of Californian garage band *Severe Tire Damage's*¹⁵ concert. This band entered the history as first ever band that had its concert webcasted. In the following year, USA college radio *WXYC*¹⁶ became the first traditional radio station to start broadcasting on the Internet¹⁷. In 1996, Edward Lyman created *sonicwave.com*, the first USA 24/7 web only radio station.

With the launch of RealAudio format as free download, number of web radio stations notably increased. Streaming websites such as *Pandora* and *Last.fm* have improved the overall Internet listening experience with numerous additional features such as personalization of content, interactivity, discovering and sharing new music.

Onwards with development of Internet technology the quality of streaming and bandwidth became significantly better. Development of technology meant bright future for web radio, but the trouble appeared when in 1998 Congress passed on the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act*, which meant that performance royalties had to be paid for satellite radio and Internet radio in addition to publishing royalties. Traditional radio broadcasters only have to pay publishing royalties. The war between web radio and legislators had begun. Not many web radio stations have found a way to meet these expenses due to small audiences. Numerous campaigns against newly introduced law had been launched. The one that delivered most success was *Save Net Radio*. In 2008, truce between record labels and webcasters was finally in sight. In January 2009, the USA Copyright Royalty Board announced that *it will apply royalties to streaming net services based on revenue*¹⁸.

Over time, web radio is evolving and constantly reinventing itself. It adopts new forms and adapts to Internet technology developments and audience needs.

2.7 Types of radio

In this section I will present types of radio stations that I will often refer to in this research.

According to how it is owned and operated, radio can be divided on:

¹⁵ Source: <http://www.std.org/>, accessed on, June 24, 2013

¹⁶ Official website: <http://www.wxyc.org/>

¹⁷ Source: <http://4pt5.com/the-history-of-online-radio-part-1/>, accessed September 17, 2013

¹⁸ Charlotta Buxton, *Geeks and the Rolling Stones, History of Internet Radio, part 1*, date published: August 9, 2013, available online at: <http://4pt5.com/the-history-of-online-radio-part-1/>

- **Public** – owned by state
- **Private** – stations set up by an individual or group of investors who want to make a profit from broadcasting
- **Community** – owned and controlled by communities, serving community interests, they can be local or regional and they are non-profit business models. The IBA Act defines a community radio station as follows: (a) it is fully controlled by a non-profit body and is run for non-profit purposes; (b) it serves a particular community; (c) it encourages community participation in selecting, making and running programs; (d) It is funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, advertising or membership fees, or by a combination of these methods.¹⁹
- **Independent** – indicates a radio station that is run in a manner different from usual for the country it broadcasts in
- **Pirate** – illegal or unregulated transmission, mostly for political and entertainment purposes, used in this research to describe the initial form of *Radio Centraal* (Case study 3) before it established itself as influential freeform radio

As Tacchi suggests, radio should be defined according to *what is it for*. The following is classification according to programming policy radio pursues:

Freeform radio

In this research I will mostly deal with freeform radios. Often it will be referred to *WFMU*, USA's longest running free format radio station and Belgian *Radio Centraal* which will be covered in detail as one of the case studies.

The following definition of freeform radio is by *Brian Turner*, music director of New Jersey's *WFMU* radio:

Freeform is an esthetic where we don't subscribe to genre specific programming. It is a revival of 1960's esthetic of what FM radio initially was – a pallet for all kinds of

¹⁹ Source: <http://developingradiopartners.org/downloads/Lo%20Res%20Guidebook.pdf>, accessed on August 16, 2013

*expression where DJs wouldn't be afraid to play half hour of Albert Ayler's blurring free jazz and then go into some kind of acoustic folk... It preserves the radicalized idea of 1960's radio before its commercialization in seventies when music industry became an actual thing. It is simply using radio as audio art tool instead of playing songs just to promote something as commercial radio nowadays does.*²⁰

Free-form radio had its heyday in the late Sixties and early Seventies. *Its implied individualist ethic and its minimal rules resonated with the massive youth counterculture of the time.*²¹ According to this definition, freeform programming approach is suitable for expressing non-commercial values. It reflects spontaneity and humor and the only restriction it has to obey to is no foul language. Commercial radio can also foster freeform programming policy, which is in that case disrupted with commercials. Truly freeform radio will explicitly represent no commercial interests.

Art radio²²

Art radio uses radio for the purposes of promoting and presenting art and experimenting with radio and sound related arts. The aim is to showcase sound art, soundscapes, audio performances and experimental radio types of art works. Extreme forms of art radio are: ***Radio Astronomy***²³ - art and science project which broadcasts sounds from outer space; ***Rádío Web MACBA***²⁴ - web radio project of Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona which serves as an online educational and exhibition space for sound related arts; ***Silence radio***²⁵ which uses the interplay of silence and sound to provoke an art audience.

In this research I will focus on following art radios: UK's *Resonance Fm* (Case study 4) and *Artsync*, second channel of Belgrade based *NoFm* (Case study 5) radio.

²⁰ From the interview with Brian Turner originally aired on Radio New Zealand *National Music* on 7 September, 2013: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/radionz/programmes/nat-music/audio/2568485/wfmu-brian-turner>, accessed on 19 September, 2013

²¹ Source: <http://wfmu.org/freeform.html>, accessed on: September 27, 2013

²² Source: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-radio-art.htm>, accessed on: September 29, 2013

²³ Official website: <http://www.radio-astronomy.net/>, accessed on: September 29, 2013

²⁴ Official website: <http://rwm.macba.cat/en/home/>, accessed on: September 29, 2013

²⁵ Official website: <http://www.silenceradio.org/>, accessed on: September 29, 2013

Commercial radio

Commercial radio offers news, talk and music but since its main aim is generating income, programming is dominated by advertisements, paid programmes and commercial, mainstream music.

Music radio

Main broadcast content of this radio format is music and I will elaborate this format on the example of SomaFM (Case study 2).

Experimental radio

Such stations use radio waves for the purposes of experimentation in the radio art or for purposes of the development of science or technique.²⁶

Eclectic radio

Compared to freeform radio, eclectic radio describes radio programming encompassing diverse music genres and involves prescribed playlists. Unlike freeform radio, eclectic stations can be commercial.²⁷

It is also important to stress that radio can appear in one clear format but it can also be a combination of the abovementioned formats. For example, *The Voice of the West* (Case study 1) is public, local community radio.

3. Programming

This chapter deals with the most interesting concepts regarding programming for web radio stations whose focus is completely on arts and cultural content. Furthermore, I will discuss radio content as art work which is the most important capital of these stations. I will also present several radio stations that are completely devoted to producing original art pieces in the spheres of radio and sound art.

²⁶ Source: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/47/5.5>, accessed on: September 13, 2014

²⁷ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freeform_radio_format#Freeform_radio_vs._eclectic_radio, accessed on: September 13, 2014

3.1 Concept of narrowcasting

Opposite to *broadcasting* which considers distribution of content to dispersed audience, term *narrowcasting* is used to *denote pronounced interest in addressing and catering for niche audiences* (Creeber and Martin, 2009)²⁸. This means that program is being segmented in order to appeal to special interest group. The criteria for segmentation can be wide ranging. Some are values, preferences, demographic traits, subscription. According to Flera (2003), narrowcasting is based on *postmodern idea that mass audience does not exist*.

According to Kozamernik and Mullane (2005) web radio is *best suited to niche content, such as education, specialist music, and programmes aimed at ethnic minorities, which may be of interest to a relatively small number of people. Often it is considered too extravagant to use scarce spectrum for such programmes*.

When it comes to narrowcasting for radio, it considers genre programming. In the case study analysis and also in discussion we will see on concrete examples how web radio appears to be favorable for niche programming. Programme strategies of the selected case studies are based on concept of narrowcasting and each of these stations is using it in specific way in order to achieve programme objectives.

3.2 Programming philosophies

Since the main mission of the selected stations is cultural production and distribution of such content my focus here will be to present how such stations design their programme, what strategies do they use and what criteria do they apply when it comes to selecting and curating the content. All selected stations have non-commercial purposes and they use talk and music as main elements of programme. Programme scheme of these stations is not repetitive. The most favorable strategy is *freeform*²⁹ strategy that provides plenty of space for experimenting with content and in the framework of this programme esthetics the most creativity and

²⁸ Digital Cultures

²⁹ Freeform programming esthetics is analysed on the examples of Radio Centraal and No.FM (Case study 3 and 4)

innovativeness is being manifested. Also *musicologist*³⁰ programming philosophy showed as the most convenient one for those stations whose focus is music and genre programming.

All stations respond to their aims by selecting and designing quality content. Thus, quality content is both, aim and means of these non-commercial stations and to achieve this, the role of producer merges with the role of curator. Content curation as *the process of collecting, organizing, contextualizing and displaying information relevant to a particular topic or area of interest and to a specific audience* is the main idea behind quality programming and is done by producers, Dj's, artists and with today's technology also by listeners themselves.

3.3 Radio content as artwork

Over time radio forms have been subject to change. Original role of radio was to transmit concerts. Nowadays radio does not neglect its initial role. Meanwhile it has enriched the offer of radio formats that are considered as artistic forms and therefore radio contributes to cultural production. Through combination of different radio formats, thanks to technological developments and experimental radio practices which resulted with emergence of new radio forms. Thus, technology did not only change the way of transmitting, but it also brought the change in content and formats.

Formats such as radio drama, sound and radio art, radio documentary, soundscapes, sound poetry and performance, experimental narratives and experiments with electronic and other music genres made streaming space for artistic and creative expression which entirely takes place on the Internet.

Champions in innovative art radio forms and cultural programming are:

- **Kunstradio**³¹ (Austria) – this station has been online since 1995 and is known for being a national and international program for the artistic and theoretical exploration of art and telecommunications. The manifesto of this station is *radio as the site, content and context of art*³². It presents an "on air" gallery for live and recorded

³⁰ Musicologist programme philosophy is covered in detail on the example of Soma.fm (Case study 2)

³¹ Official website: <http://kunstradio.at/>

³² Source: <http://somedwhere.org/NAR/stations/kunstradio/main.html>, accessed on: September 16, 2014

projects and is a producer and publisher of many publications and original artworks related to radio and sound arts.

- ***Rádío web MACBA*** (Spain) – as mentioned in previous chapter, this web radio works as podcast whose online activities are complementary to the activities of the Museum of contemporary art in Barcelona. RWM is conceived as nonprofit radiophonic project that explores the possibilities of the internet and radio as spaces of synthesis and exhibition and it is dedicated to popular education. It is comprised of several programme lines which are all carefully curated.
- ***The Voice of West*** (The Netherlands) – is podcast commissioned by municipality Utrecht West and presents one very unique radio format where every piece of programme is conceived and designed as an artwork. This radio is discussed in more detail as Case study 1.

4. Web radio audience

In this chapter I will show how new listening patterns are shaped due to significant changes in development of media which has caused migration in increasing number to the internet where listeners expect to find a new environment for radio genres. More and more listeners are turning to new models of listening due to moving from the traditional radio environment to web 2.0 platform. Since listeners now use completely different medium and interface (cell phones and computers) to listen to radio, they are given much more options to interact with radio station and other listeners as well.

Driven by technological change, audience engagement is constantly evolving. Digital technology enhances the experience and enjoyment when it comes to listening and it also fosters many conveniences for the user (discovering, sharing, on-demand listening, personalizing the content as well as creating). In order to understand the specific relation of web radio and its audience and the way they communicate following concepts have to be explained:

Active audience theory – According to this theory media audience does not just receive information passively but are actively involved. Frank Biocca³³ discussed five characteristics of the active audience. The first is selectivity. Active audiences are considered to be selective in the media they choose to use. The second characteristic is utilitarianism. Active audiences are said to use media to meet particular needs and goals. The third is intentionality, which implies the purposeful use of media content. The fourth characteristic is involvement, or effort. Here audiences are actively attending, thinking about, and using the media. The last characteristic is impervious to influence, or not very easily persuaded by the media alone.

Uses and gratifications theory³⁴ – This theory is based on active audience theory and according to it users actively seek out media that meet their needs for new knowledge, social interaction and diversion. Uses and gratification theory is an approach to understanding *why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs*. It assumes that media users are not passive and have an active role in interpreting and integrating media to their lives.

Prosumers culture - This term *prosumer* is not a new one; it has been around since 1980. Thanks to the features of new media it has taken on a new importance. The notion is coined and introduced by futurologist Alvin Toffler in his book *The Third Wave* (1980) and it refers to media participants who are simultaneously producers, editors and consumers of specific media content, meaning that consumers are given control over the consumed content. The most active prosumers can be found on social media being a tool with features and functions that enables them to blog, tweet, post and share information with a broad audience. Therefore, audience level of involvement in the content can be classified as follows:

- audience as passive recipient – spectator
- audience as producer – prosumer
- audience as critic
- audience as curator

After listing the most important concepts for understanding the new media audience, I will now focus more on the ways that web radio engages audience and what roles does audience have related to it.

³³ Franc A. Biocca, *Opposing Conceptions of the Audience: The Active and Passive Hemispheres of Mass Communication Theory*

³⁴ Media Now, 2010 Update: Understanding Media, Culture, and Technology, Enhanced

When it comes to engaging audience *radio's social interaction remains important; it has just moved to the web*³⁵. Mobilisatory role of radio is reflected in the ability of radio to gather audience around same tastes and affinities and create their communities. This usually exceeds engagement in virtual environment by organizing events in physical space where people can interact with each other in a manner different from virtual engagement and to increase the community feeling.

5. Funding models

5.1 Sustainability issue

According to the definition of radio sustainability by Simering and Fairbairn³⁶, sustainability is *the ability of a radio station to maintain a good quality developmental broadcasting service over a period of time*. From this definition we see how the concept of sustainability tends to be narrowly used to mean *financial* sustainability. Thus, narrowly defined, financial sustainability refers to *the organization's ongoing income-generating potential*³⁷. In the non-for-profit business models, such as community radio stations, this means *capacity to generate sufficient revenue to maintain and sustain efficient functioning or operation*³⁸, meaning that the main objective is to be financially self-sufficient and not necessarily to make profit.

We have already seen that radio is technology with low operating costs and the most cost-effective medium, but still it is struggling to survive. Having this in mind, this chapter will approach the question of sustainability in order to present the existing funding models, identify alternative funding possibilities, present the example of one good fundraising practice and reflect on the relation *funding – programming* on the examples of several stations. Furthermore, in the analysis of case studies we will see how some of the selected

³⁵ Radio's Future: Listeners and Content <http://www.rab.com/public/reports/HarkerRadioShowFinal-Presentation.pdf>

³⁶ Simering, B. and Fairbairn J. *Guidebook on Sustainability*, Developing Radio Partners, available online at: <http://developingradiopartners.org/downloads/Lo%20Res%20Guidebook.pdf>

³⁷ Fairbairn J. (2009) *Community media sustainability guide*, available online at: http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADO691.pdf

³⁸ Tavsiho, M. (2009) *Sustainability challenges facing community radio: A comparative study of three stations in Limpopo province*, MA thesis, available online at: <http://ul.netd.ac.za/bitstream/10386/231/1/MATRIL%20T%20Moswede.pdf>

stations approached financial sustainability in a variety of innovative ways. Moreover, sustainability and funding possibilities will be also tackled in Discussion (Chapter 8, Issue 7).

5.2 Overview of existing funding models

Existing funding models for generating resources for sustainability are:

1. **National funding** – state-subsidized model
2. **Institutional** – e.g. money coming from institutions such as Arts Council England (UK), The National Endowments for Arts (UK), local/regional authorities (cities or municipalities). Yet these are government-funded bodies but are in charge of funds distribution. They also include **lottery** fund for supporting arts.
3. **International/local donor agencies**
4. **Philanthropy** – humanities and foundations (private or individual)
5. **Social funds** – for programs with social agenda (race, gender, sexual orientation)
6. **Corporate underwriting** – sponsorships and promotions (commercial model)
7. **Political parties**
8. **Program sponsorships** – covering the costs of programming on particular topics
9. **Partnerships**
10. **Advertising** and **pricing** – sale of airtime
11. **Merchandizing** and **retail** – most of the stations have online stores where they retail customized items with their logo which generate extra revenue
12. **Renting facilities/equipment**
13. **Brand extension** – marketing strategy where usually non-radio brands extend over to radio stations or vice versa. Most common one is when publishing house (usually music magazine) launches radio station, e.g. *Emap* launching *Kerrang! 105.2 FM* or *Monocle* magazine launching *Monocle 24 Radio*). Newly launched product is called *spin-off*³⁹.

Most external funding and support, no matter where it comes from, brings with it agendas or interests. These are sometimes transparent, sometimes hidden. In a way it can shape the

³⁹ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spin-off_product, accessed on: September 29, 2013

identity of the station as in the example of *Monocle 24*⁴⁰. Values represented by this radio are recognized by Rolex, BlackBerry and other luxury brands. Therefore the program is mostly shaped to target high-end audience, delivering long and short form features on global affairs, luxury business, culture and design.

Sale of airtime, which is a commercial idea, is seen as the most sustainable way of generating income, but when it comes to not-for-profit businesses, listeners are the best source.

Listener/staff supported sources:

1. **Subscriptions** – e.g. *Last.fm*⁴¹
2. **On-demand content distribution**
3. **Staff contribution fees and memberships** – e.g. *Radio Centraal* (Case Study 3)
4. **Listeners donations** – mostly through online paying systems (e.g. *PayPal*)
5. **Crowdfunding platforms** – e.g. *Kickstarter*, *CrowdCube*, *SellaBend*...

Speaking about financing radio through crowdfunding platforms, Liz Berg explained in the interview how crowdfunding on Kickstarter and other platforms is actually originating from the core idea of financing public radio:

Speaking of Kickstarter, many radio stations and radio producers have used it to successfully raise money for programs, projects, etc. It's ironic, because Kickstarter's model is basically an application of the public radio fundraising model! Regardless, we've learned a lot from Kickstarter's success, and we are still learning whether or not a producer can be successful with multiple Kickstarter campaigns.

Since its beginning radio established idea of flexible funding sources by engaging audience in fundraising. Over time, this idea evolved into the concept of crowdfunding and moved from aether to Internet setting the new course in fundraising opportunities and stressing the

⁴⁰ Monocle 24, official website: <http://monocle.com/radio/>

⁴¹ This established online music platform is solely funded by subscription money. With monthly subscription of \$3, users get feature of personalized radio station, playing music similar to user's taste according to complex algorithm recommendation system. This option is restricted to users from USA, UK and Germany⁴¹. Subscribed users from other countries get ad-free browsing, access to VIP zone and other conveniences. Source: <http://www.last.fm/announcements/radio2013>, accessed on: August 26, 2013

importance of the crowd. Crowdfunding through Internet has proved to be good model of financing cultural production, as well as key and supplementary source.

5.2 Alternative funding possibilities

In order to ensure complementary income, one station has to be very inventive when developing methods for generating extra revenue. In order to explore one good practice in relation to sustainability I will illustrate the funding strategy of WFMU, independent freeform radio station from New Jersey, USA. They effectively apply strategy of diversification of financial resources. Being independent of political and government control, WFMU relies much upon audience.

Fundraising activities/sources of WFMU are as follows:

- Listeners contribution
- WFMU's Record Fair – large annual benefit event
- Grants (Rockefeller foundation)
- WFMU Marathon – two-week on-air fundraiser happening every year, accompanied with thank-you gifts for contributors
- Silent campaign - mail/online-only campaign that lasts for the month of October
- Benefit events over the year
- car donation program foundations and government grants (as long as they do not contain conditions that determine programming content or restrict station's independence)
- Radiovision Festival
- Merchandizing (variety of items with WFMU's logo available in online shop)

Unlike many public radio stations in the USA, WFMU does not accept any underwriting or sponsorship. Liz Berg, sales and marketing manager of WFMU, explained in the interview:

The reason for this is that we do not ever want to become beholden to commercial or outside interests, and we don't want a relationship with a sponsor to affect our programming. Because most of our budget comes from our listeners, we have a

special relationship with them and do our best to be responsive to their needs and responsible with their money.

WFMU has strict rules when it comes to on-air pledge drive. They host two-week on-air fundraising marathon each year because they want to keep their on-air fundraising to a minimum. In addition to this, each October they have a mail/online-only campaign. Berg explained that the reason for this is that most public radio stations in the USA have 3-5 on-air pledge drives each year that listeners hate.

When asked to define WFMU's financing model, Berg Stated:

I wouldn't say that WFMU's model is typical, but it is very grassroots and we've been extremely successful, especially with our online fundraising. Over 60% of our listener contributions come from online pledges. The reason for our success with online fundraising is that we've built special tools that allow listeners to show support for their favourite programs, such as widgets.

A few other alternative fundraising possibilities that WFMU applies include **benefit events** and **Radiovision festival**. Both activities usually involve a large initial outlay of money, but can also be financially rewarding. Furthermore there is **car donation program**, partnership program with a company called the *Center for Car Donations*, which passes off proceeds from vehicles donated on WFMU's behalf.

The main idea of achieving sustainable funding is reflected through diversity of funding base. The core idea of diversification of funds is that if any one source dries up or is threatened, there always exists other funding possibility that station can rely on. Funding is not a single activity but the whole range of activities which are based on the same principle. The crucial thing when it comes to ensuring financial viability is not allow that one source of funding to become too important. So being innovative and inventive in approach to sustainable fundraising strategy is pivotal.

Funding is considered as a way of building a community. Engaging audience in crowdfunding through series of fundraising events also presents a crucial practice in

generating income. This exceeds their online engagement and enhances the relationship between radio station and listeners and is often rewarded by gifts.

The future of sustainable funding models for web radio is in active audience engagement and extensive use of Internet technology. Combination of these two can deliver miracles. The core idea of successful sustainability can be summed up in the following statement of South African media professor John van Zyl (as quoted in Fairbairn, 2009):

Innovative program production can go straight to the station's bottom line — every time a new audience is created there are new opportunities for funding and sponsorship.

6. Case Studies

The goal of this chapter is to present and analyze five web radio stations in order to show how their diversity and how the ideas behind launching them can be wide ranging. Each station presents new and viable media operation that enriches our media environment, but at the same time they are connected with shared idea not to *be* nor to *become* commercial and strive towards fulfilling the needs of listeners whose interests fall outside the mainstream media by offering something completely different and sometimes even radical compared to profit oriented entertainment media businesses. These stations achieve this goal by focusing their programme strategies toward the fields of arts and culture and production or commission of original content with an artistic value. Furthermore, the feeling of belonging to community and audience engagement is one of their common traits. The major driving force of selected radio stations are enthusiasm, shared taste and values and that is exactly what inspired me to approach them for the purposes of writing this paper.

Four case studies are international projects and one is produced in Serbia. It is also important to mention that three stations are web only stations and other two broadcast their program on analogue way but they also use Internet technology to supplement it and stream online. Due to restricted broadcasting range, webcasting showed as an excellent opportunity for these two radio stations (Resonance FM from London and Radio Centraal from Antwerp) to be heard and available online and thereby approach and gather audience and recognition on global level.

The idea of case study analysis is generating important insights of how initiatives and operations such as web radio work and sustain in general media environment. Also, the aim is discovering similarities and identifying the patterns in operating of selected case studies. Summarized analysis is presented in Chapter 7.

Information about case studies is collected mainly from interviews conducted with persons directly involved with selected web radio stations. Secondary sources for the purposes of case study analysis are: their official websites, research papers, books and other material available on Internet sources.

Criteria for choosing case studies were the following⁴²:

- programming philosophies with focus on arts and culture
- fostering innovative radio formats suitable for expressing values of subcultures and sound and radio related art
- alternative to mainstream media (some case studies, for example Radio Centraal, Soma FM and NoFm, are radical alternative to mainstream media if we consider the type of the organization together with content that they deliver while other two, Resonance FM and The Voice of the West are alternative because of the content that they promote, though they depend on state/institutional grants)
- absence of commercial motives and rejection of advertising revenue
- democratization of communication
- horizontal organizational structure
- encouraging participation and voluntary engagement
- allowing the needs and goals to be articulated by the audience/consumers themselves
- small-scale and oriented towards serving the specific communities and respecting their diversity

⁴² Adapted from *Understanding Alternative Media* (2007); some of the examples are added by author.

6.1 The Voice of the West (*De Stem van West*)

Introduction

The Voice of the West is a very specific web radio project. It differs from all other case studies because the idea didn't stem from a private or group initiative. The project is commissioned by Department for Cultural Affairs of the City of Utrecht which has long tradition of fostering the art in public space initiatives and this is maybe the first ever initiative of city commissioning web radio as an art form with the idea of capturing the developments of one specific municipality and at the certain moment of time. Wineke van Muiswinkel, artistic coordinator of the project, explains in the interview:

Instead of a bronze statue on the street, our medium is web radio and we opted for going online because we strongly believe and advocate that Internet space is also a form of public space. One of the ideas was to trace the change and urban development of city parts that are reinventing themselves at the moment of making the radio and to try to capture how that affects the community in some kind of time capsule. We thought long about choosing the most suitable format for doing this. A medium capable of interpreting and conveying this must surely itself be digital in nature and be part of the technology networks. But at the same time it must be embedded in the social life and, in an almost old-fashioned way, be able to infiltrate, report, document and tell stories. And web radio proved to be the best option because of its ephemeral character.

We could define The Voice of the West as a *site specific* radio, defined by the area to which it serves and that is the municipality Utrecht West⁴³. This part of the city is neglected, designated area which is physically cut off from the rest of the town with a highway and two canals and consists of several neighborhoods in which demographic landscape is highly diverse. Web radio was a good way not only to bridge the physical isolation of this area and connect it to the other parts of the city but also to help Utrecht West generate the sense of community.

⁴³ Municipality of Utrecht West: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utrecht-West_\(wijk\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utrecht-West_(wijk)), accessed on august 7, 2013

Radio is launched in January 2013 and entire project will continue for two years. The Voice of the West was in *getting started* phase when I approached it for the purposes of this research.

This radio has no live streaming. It is designed as a podcast where all programs can be listened on-demand because the core idea was that all programs should be available anywhere at any time. Seen from the broader media perspective, The Voice of the West makes use of the same medium, but offers a different format, art instead of news, commercial music or stories.

Programming and music policy

The Voce of the West fosters the idea of freeform programming policy, meaning that authors are given the freedom to decide and use the format which he/she thinks that will suit best to the content and they are at the same time producers. Program makers are trying to develop new narrative formats that would have an artistic value and at the same time appealing to listeners from community Utrecht West. Van Muiswinkel explained in the interview:

It's kind of a laboratory, because we don't know exactly what is going on. We are still trying to discover it since with web radio we have no prescribed formats or other limitations.

When it comes to music policy The Voice of the West tried to find an alternative because it is a small, experimental project so they don't have deal with music industry. DJ's who are taking part in the project are playing their own original music. Music used in shows is commissioned, made by students of music conservatory.

The archive of programs is very heterogeneous since program makers are coming from different backgrounds – literature, sound art, journalism, design and fine arts, DJ-ing, film, music. In the diverse, kaleidoscopic range of programs one can find radio documentaries, audio portraits, archived audio material, sound walks, concerts, interviews, sound art, live events, collages as well as experimental formats. All programs represent as *documents in*

*progress and a living oral historiography from various perspectives, in which macro developments filter through into micro stories and vice versa*⁴⁴.

The Voice of the West associate Tom Lois came up with the system for making radio commercials for free where no advertising agency is involved as mediator in order to connect with the audience and introduce the project to the community. *Commercials* are in form of jingles, sung by local grocer, hair dresser or pharmacist. As long as they are presented as jingles they are not considered for advertisement. Author has chosen this spontaneous approach to connect himself with the local community.

The most innovation introduced by The Voice of the West is the combination of different profiles of program makers who create their own work with intention to connect themselves to the area. They were all invited because in their previous work they showed that they were capable of doing that since the core idea of the project is stimulating involvement on local level through animation of residents.

Relationship with listeners

Target group of The Voice of the West is local community, meaning people of all ages living in the municipality Utrecht West but reaching audience has been an obstacle. Wineke van Muiswinkel said in the interview:

It is not like you make programs for underground music fans and you know exactly who your targeted audience is. The community is very diverse and you have to get to know it better in order to know how to introduce the project to people and so far that worked only through direct contact with them.

Compared to commercial radio stations which apply strict and narrow targeting according to demographic characteristics of listeners, this web radio station chooses belonging to community on local level as one of the most important and determining criterion, transcending the demographic divide.

⁴⁴ Source: Jorinde Seijdel, *De Stem van West, A tactical and cultural means to reinforce public accessibility and collectivity and a record of everyday life*, 2013 (not yet published when quoted in this paper)

Radio team is present on events in Utrecht West in order to engage with audience. For example with Radio Bike⁴⁵, a mobile radio installation with headphones through which people can listen to programs of The Voice of the West. This proved to work very well with local people because it is easily recognizable and wakes the interest immediately.

Funding model

All programs are produced with public money coming from state funds since project is commissioned by City of Utrecht. After the project expires City Archive will take it over. Program archive will be free, with no rights attached to it and the public will own it. All contributors agreed on *donating* their programs because they are already paid for making it by public money.

Running costs of the project are very small (website design, domain and maintenance). The rest of the money goes to project coordinators, program editors and contributors who are all freelancers working on contractual basis.

Future perspectives

The Voice of the West was conceived to present a living archive one particular place in the certain period of time. All programs are treated as piece of art and they will be archived not just as programs but as an entire service. They will be preserved in interactive way, not just frozen in time. Archiving digital environment in interactive way will be a pilot project for Utrecht City Archive and they are working on preparing and developing the website and search tools in the way they can be used later. This way project will have an afterlife because people will be able to experience it in the future. This is quite an opportunity not only for programs but also for the project in its entirety to be conserved in this way because it is project that captures time and city environment in the year 2013/2014.

⁴⁵ Radio Bike on the streets of Utrecht: <http://cargocollective.com/tomloois/De-Stem-van-West>, accessed on September 23, 2013

6.2 SomaFM

Introduction

SomaFM is one of the web only radio pioneers⁴⁶ whose start is marked as one of the most significant milestones in the history of web radio. Based in a converted warehouse in downtown San Francisco, SomaFM has been broadcasting for 13 years now⁴⁷. The station was launched during the Internet boom in the USA. Rusty Hodge, the founder and general manager of SomaFM, explains in the interview how the idea developed:

I could say that it all began because there was nothing good to listen to on the radio! In the 90's, I had been working with radio stations. I was really disappointed with the state of radio in San Francisco. Lots of corporate owned radio stations, all playing over-researched "safe" music made for a very boring listening experience. There was so much good music, but it was very hard to find. I started testing a few channels in 1999 as a hobby, and officially launched SomaFM in February 2000. But Before SomaFM was officially launched, I was playing music at the Burning Man festival in Nevada's Black Rock Desert. The tunes proved popular and that is how the first station Drone Zone was born. It was followed by Groove Salad and Secret Agent. Over time we would add more channels, and now we have over 20 unique channels available.

When questioning the position of SomaFM in broader media landscape, Hodge states that SomaFM is *a long tail, an outlier, an alternative to big, commercial media*. The station came up from underground but managed to establish sizable and loyal fan base over the years by offering unique niche music radio program.

⁴⁶Source: Tony Myers, *Internet radio pioneer SomaFM still leading the way*: <http://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2012/apr/04/Internet-radio-somafm-leading-way>, accessed 17 July, 2013

⁴⁷ When *Digital Millennium Copyright Act* came into force in 2002, Hodge was forced to take the station off for six months and was the leading voice in *Save Net Radio* campaign.

Programming and music policy

SomaFM is 24/7 web-only music radio with no commercial breaks or talk programs. It is an eclectic network of 27 channels⁴⁸ each of them with a meticulously designed identity. Programming policy of SomaFM overlaps with its mission: *to search out and expose great new music to people who otherwise may never encounter it* by means of genre programming. It promotes neglected music genres and thus plays a certain role in preserving them.

Music is hand-picked by the award winning DJ's, music connoisseurs and Rusty Hodge himself. Playlists are carefully curated and compiled, handcrafted affairs where you can hear everything from underground electronica, chill out, ambient groove, indie rock, underground 80s, deep-house, avant-garde jazz and lounge classics. Also, SomaFM's DJ's are constantly discovering new music, especially unsigned artists who they try to promote in their playlists.

Rusty Hodge explained the criteria for selecting music in the interview and emphasized the most fundamental difference between SomaFM and commercial radio stations:

We play the stuff no one else plays. We play what we think is great music and then we group those songs into channels of related music or themes. We look for music and formats that aren't available on commercial radio, or formats that are not being done well on commercial or satellite radio.

Compared to commercial radio stations where programming drastically shifts hour after hour and is interrupted by commercial blocks, SomaFM fosters the idea of radio with multiple channels with fairly consistent programming on each channel which is completely commercial-free. Opposed to drive time SomaFM has *sitting-at-your-desk time*, as Hodge puts it.

SomaFM opted for *musicologist* programming philosophy which is, according to Ahlqvist:

[...]based on musical expertise and a subjective 'ear' for quality music and artists. According to this programming philosophy, decisions about what records to incorporate into the station's music programming are made according to judgments based on the programmer's musical expertise and personal tastes.

⁴⁸ The number of channels fluctuates, from time to time seasonal channels are added (e.g. *Christmas Lounge*, *Xmas in Frisco* and *Christmas Rocks*) and also channels that are designed as follow-up program for some event, usually a festival (e.g. *Black Rock FM* and *South by Soma*). At the moment of writing this thesis, total number of channels was 27. Source: <http://soma.fm/listen/>, accessed on September 26, 2013

The goal of this music programming policy is prioritizing musical quality, educating and enlightening their listeners by exposing them to music that DJ's think has *integrity; music that they feel passionate about; music they think is good* (Ahlkvist).

Relationship with listeners

Soma FM has built a loyal fan base over the years. It attracted listeners by being a superior grassroots organization, driven by politics of community, spreading by word of mouth and on mailing lists.

In the article *Mission control: how Internet radio station SomaFM keeps it real*, author Tony Myers tried to describe the profiles of SomaFM listeners comprising two extremes: *young geeks zoned in on their desktops – and also the ravers out partying in the desert*.

In the interview Hodge said:

The community we serve is a virtual one of people with similar musical tastes. Our audience spans demographic groups and political values, although I would say that most of our listeners have a small subversive spark to them, but I can't quantify that. I believe its shared lifestyle and cultural values that connect them, but I can't claim that since we don't do research or audience testing.

However, relationship with the audience is the strongest when it comes to financially supporting the station.

Funding model

SomaFM is entirely funded by its listeners and relies completely on their donations or monthly subscriptions. Another way of staying in business is raising money by selling official merchandise (mugs, t-shirts, CD's). The goal is to raise 30 000 \$ per month and fundraising statistics are kept open for public and updated on the website minute by minute.

Due to high overheads (office costs, bandwidth and servers in particular) and high cost of music royalties, station often struggles and is forced to encourage listeners donations more actively.

Hodge explained the stations credo regarding its fundraising system, stating that SomaFM is not driven by what makes money:

We have always and will continue to operate on a sustainable financial model with no outside investors or venture capitalists to answer to, allowing us to be truly independent Internet radio. Making a great radio station that you can count on is more important to us than making money, not the other way around like most other radio stations. We continue to grow fairly consistently. But we can't get caught up in the whole growth thing. We need to stay true to the music.

Future perspectives

Hodge sees future in mobile devices. The goal for SomaFM is *to be totally tuneinable in everybody's car*⁴⁹. SomaFM already has a desktop and iPhone application, which he is busy upgrading, making it more social media friendly and readying it for 4G networks.

The aim is to reach the number of 30 permanent channels with unique music and eventually to extend by building a public-access studio where DJ's and artists could come to perform live.

6.3 Radio Centraal

Introduction

Radio Centraal is independent, non-commercial, non-conventional, free Belgian radio station based in the old city centre of Antwerp. It began broadcasting on 31 October 1980 as one of the first pirate radio stations which started as a direct action around the country in protest against the broadcasting monopoly of the national state networks. It always was and still remains an independent radio project and nowadays represents an established name with tradition in Antwerp underground scene and one of the city symbols as well.

Station's credo is *Brains and Rhythm!* and it is based on the ideology and values of punk subculture and has anti-establishment, anti-consumerist views and fosters *do-it-yourself*

⁴⁹Source: Tony Myers, *Mission control: how Internet radio station SomaFM keeps it real*: <http://smartmoviemaking.com/mission-control-how-Internet-radio-station-somafm-keeps-it-real/>, accessed on July 16, 2013

ethics. Since its beginning radio Centraal is led by self-organized group of volunteers and they never gave up their principles for personal gain such as money.

On local media scene radio Centraal is recognized as progressive and innovative freeform radio, an (radical) alternative to mainstream profit driven media. It is very active in cultural life of Antwerp. Over the years they organised and supported many inner city cultural activities, parties and art radio projects.

Apart from radio Centraal, staff is in charge of *TV Centraal*⁵⁰, web-only television which is still in the pilot phase but with an ambition to grow into something bigger and Radio Centraal Editorial Board⁵¹ (*Redactie Radio Centraal*), blog dedicated to critical and free journalism with topics related to political and media activism which fosters the right to free expression, debate and discussion. In this thesis I will deal only with staff activities related to radio.

The station maintains an extensive online presence which includes live audio streaming, audio archives and podcasts. Due to the webcasting possibilities, number of listeners significantly grew and radio Centraal gained international devoted fan base.

Programming and music policy

At a first glance everything on this radio seems a bit chaotic but it reflects the charm of freeform programming aesthetics. Radio Centraal aims at pushing the boundaries when it comes to programming. Therefore it fosters experimental program and niche music, in other words *everything that can't be heard elsewhere* and in loose, not strictly predetermined formats like on commercial radios. As a result, many programs are specialized in one specific music genre in which DJ's display the broadest possible range of preferences and tastes, from avant-garde jazz, punk and noise to sometimes even unlistenable sound frequencies. Poetry, film, satire, minorities, culture and current affairs have significant place in the programming. Program scheme is not repetitive.

The station offers a starting platform for aspiring, ambitious and creative radio broadcasters, who are given space to experiment in sound, editorial, music, reportage and language. Iez

⁵⁰ *TV Centraal* official website: <http://tv.radiocentraal.be/>

⁵¹ *Radactie Radio Centraal* official website: <http://redactie.radiocentraal.be/Home/>

Thiry, member of editorial board of Radio Centraal explains how they encourage participation in program making and what the criteria for acceptance are:

At our weekly meetings, everybody is free to come and propose the idea for a new radio show. Proposals are only accepted if they are not mainstream (anything that could be on a regular radio station, is not for us), religious, or politically to the right. Accepted proposals get three trial shows, where they also get a basic introduction into the technical side of the matter. The trial shows are always on Wednesday from 6 to 7 pm. This hour is called De Zandbak (The Sand Box). Everybody is invited to listen and comment on the new proposal. After these three sessions, it is decided whether the show can get its own moment. This can be weekly, two-weekly, monthly ... and one hour or more, depending on the ambitions of the applicant and the available time slots. Shows are banned when the content deteriorates and/or when the people hosting it often don't show up and/or if they fail to pay their monthly solidarity fee.

Relationship with listeners

During the interview Thiry tried to illustrate what kind of relationship does radio Centraal has with its listeners:

There is a core group of people who are fans of the radio as a whole, but generally, as most programs are highly specialized, they have their own specific followers. Some are very popular and generate interaction while others are hardly listened to and/or not interactive at all. It is not the ambition of Radio Centraal to have as many listeners as possible. A show is not valued more if it generates a lot of attention.

We saw that Radio Centraal makes highly specialized programmes which address non-mainstream subcultures of listeners. Radio Centraal therefore has very significant role when it comes to answering to the needs of this profile of listeners. Thiry explains further:

In the early years of our radio station, some subcultures were not represented at all in the media and didn't find a platform to express their values. This is slightly better now. Besides, now there are many opportunities for interaction and looking up information on the Internet. Still, radio shows have two additional advantages. First of all, in the radio show about the stuff you personally like, you will hear general

information / announcements of concerts / interviews ... brought by a highly specialized person, without actively having to look for it, and that maybe you wouldn't find, or that maybe even isn't available on-line. It's nice to sit back and 'be served'. Secondly, since our radio is not dedicated to one specific subculture, it offers people the possibility to discover other subcultures and broaden their sphere of interest.

Funding model

Radio Centraal managed to develop successful funding strategy that enables them to be and remain financially independent. Thanks to monthly staff contributions Radio Centraal can stay independent from local government, underwriting or commercial sponsors and this funding model also reflects *do-it-yourself* character of the station. In the interview Iez Thiry explained how radio Centraal maintains its financial sustainability and what are, beside staff contributions, other sources of income:

As we explicitly do not want any outside influence affecting the content of our programming, we try to be as independent as possible. Right now, we're in the luxury situation of being able to function without any outside funding. We have two main sources of income. First of all, every collaborator (there are about 150 of us) pays a monthly fee of € 5, regardless of the number of the hours he/she is broadcasting. So it's not a fee per hour, but a solidarity fee. Then there's the pub on the ground floor. Radio Centraal used to rent this pub plus the first floor, where the studio is. The pub was managed by the radio and it was very popular for several years. At a certain point the very wise decision was made to invest the income in the purchase of the two floors used by the radio. After the pub had to close, due to complaints by neighbours, the radio rented the pub out. This gives us a very nice monthly income.

Future perspectives

As previously mentioned radio Centraal plans to develop *TV Centraal*, web only television pilot project. This task is financially very demanding and requires additional staff so it will take some time for this idea to realize into something strong. Furthermore, due to radio's active online presence, staff is considering the internationalization of program.

6.4 Resonance FM

Introduction

Resonance FM is London based eccentric community radio station broadcasting since 1998. It is overseen by *London Musicians Collective*⁵², cultural charity devoted to the promotion of contemporary, improvised and experimental music. Resonance FM describes itself as *the world's first radio art station*⁵³ offering the radical alternative to mainstream media by using the medium of radio to creatively fuse art and music. It has established itself as *an arts centre of the airwaves* and *the UK's only arts-based radio station*⁵⁴. Ed Baxter, one of the founders and station's general manager, states in the interview for Time Out magazine:

*We wanted to provide an alternative to the universal formula of mainstream broadcasting... a laboratory for wild experimentation that's available to the widest possible range of practitioners, no matter who they are. Our policy is hospitality, inviting differing perspectives that really reflect the complexity of London as the crossroads of ideology, opinion and society.*⁵⁵

Resonance fosters an approach which integrates artistic practice, distribution and audience engagement and in this way is redefining understanding of the creative uses of radio and digital platforms. Stations mission statement speaks to that:

Imagine a radio station like no other. A radio station that makes public those artworks that have no place in traditional broadcasting. A radio station that is an archive of the new, the undiscovered, the forgotten, the impossible. That is an invisible gallery, a virtual arts centre whose location is at once local, global and timeless. And that is itself a work of art. Imagine a radio station that responds rapidly to new initiatives, has time to draw breath and reflect. A laboratory for experimentation, that by virtue of its uniqueness brings into being a new audience of listeners and creators. All this and more, Resonance FM aims to make London's airwaves available to the widest possible range of practitioners of contemporary art.

⁵² London Musicians Collective, official website: <http://www.l-m-c.org.uk/>

⁵³ Resonance Fm's mission statement, source: <http://resonancefm.com/faq#about>, accessed on August 3, 2013

⁵⁴ *Annual Assessment for Arts Council England 2009/10*: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/83960634/Full-Assessment>, accessed on September 20, 2013

⁵⁵ Celia Topping, *Resonance FM: the voice of London*: <http://www.timeout.com/london/music/resonance-fm-the-voice-of-london>, accessed on: August 1, 2013

Resonance cherishes collaboration with wide range of galleries, cultural organizations, music venues, national and niche festivals, cutting edge magazines and actively organizes and takes part in educational programs. Arguably, Resonance FM is not about consumption at all; instead, it is all about participation, development and mobilization (Atton, 2004).

Programming and music policy

When it comes to programming, Resonance FM is very radical and challenging and fosters freeform radio programming esthetics and hybridity in approach. It couples radical formats with radical content (Atton, 2004). In their book *Alternative Journalism*, Atton and Hamilton (2008) summarized the programming and music policy:

...[it is]challenging in terms of content, experiments with form and the use of non-professional program makers and presenters... its general remit is to present music and sonic art operating from the creative fringes. It presents contemporary, serious music, free improvised music, electronic music, sound poetry, avant rock, and a wide range of sonic art projects that exist even beyond these specialist genres. The ambit of its output is largely defined by terms such as experimental or avant-garde.

Program scheme of Resonance FM is non-predictable and at the first glance even chaotic. That is because it disrupts the idea of using scheduling to establish patterns and rhythms (Atton, 2004). It is uninterrupted by adverts, traffic and weather reports, news bulletins or playlists with top 40 charts.

Relationship with listeners⁵⁶

Resonance offers high levels of audience engagement. They actively encourage audience participation by using Internet (forums, mailing lists, giwayays and open calls). It facilitates audiences to become active creators and curator of broadcast content. Resonance is also active in organizing music events. In 2003 they have conducted audience research, both online and on one fundraising event. It reveals that a young audience listens to Resonance Fm

⁵⁶ Information about Resonance Fm's funding model, relationship with listeners and future perspectives represents compilation of data gathered from their official website and other online available reports to their donors, Arts Council England and Ofcom since no one from their staff didn't respond to the invitation for an interview. Documents can be accessed on the following address: <http://resonancefm.com/faq/research>

more often whose circle of friends also listens often and who spread news of the station by word of mouth.

Funding model

Being a non-profit broadcaster, funding strategy of Resonance Fm is based on combining several fundraising models. They actively apply *diversification*⁵⁷ policy by constantly branching out and searching for new fundraising opportunities. Resonance FM's fundraising strategy includes:

- listeners' donations and gift aids
- government grants (Arts Council England)
- foundation grants (Moose Foundation, European Cultural Foundation, Glubenkian Foundation, Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation)
- sponsorships (Aquila Capital, Markson Pianos, independent magazine Wire, Artists Project Earth)
- grants from lottery funds (Big lottery fund – Awards for all)
- merchandizing (Resonance FM shop)
- occasional fundraising events (small or large scale)

Future perspectives

Resonance aims to secure funds in order to increase production and commission radio and sound art related works. Furthermore, the goal is to strengthen the permanent staff by appointing marketing manager. Robust audience analysis on annual level is also one of the future goals.

⁵⁷ Definition of diversification: <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/diversification.asp>, accessed on September 26, 2013

6.5 NoFm Radio

Introduction

NoFm is Belgrade based independent community radio broadcasting since January 2012. It is the successor of *New Radio Belgrade*, the first web only radio in Serbia. New Radio Belgrade was a private initiative and after it ceased to exist in 2011, the *Association of Media Artists Auropolis*⁵⁸ took the project over and radio continued to live under different name and newly defined identity.

In the interview, station's general manager Vladimir Radinović explained how the radio was conceptualized and how the idea developed.

The idea was to create a free medium in virtual environment which will represent the space for alternative urban culture dedicated to generations that grew up in the age of Internet. We didn't want to resemble terrestrial radio and to be its digital version but rather to position ourselves as niche radio station, aiming at specific audience.

This radio station nourishes strong educational character and represents a tool and platform for everyone who is interested in experimenting with radio.

The core staff of NoFm radio consists of 6 people but it has more than 30 associates. All of them are involved with the radio on voluntary basis.

Programming and music policy

When it comes to programming, NoFm has very clear policy. It has two channels, *NoFm1* and *NoFm2/Artsync*, each dealing with different approach and formats. The only rule in programming is *no hate speech*.

NoFm1 combines music and talk. Since the aim was to appeal to younger urban generations music policy of NoFm1 covers hip-hop, funk and soul and new variations of these genres.

⁵⁸ Official website: <http://auropolis.org/>, consulted on September 16, 2013

Speech-based output includes discussion and debate program around subjects such as urban city development, arts and culture, science and feminism.

NoFm 2/Artsync programming policy is rather innovative and radical. It is dedicated to progressive tendencies in sound art and classic music, improvisational and experimental music, field recordings, history of electro-acoustic and electronic music, conceptual and applied performing arts. This channel was designed to be an educational platform for students of music and it is curated and managed by Manja Ristić, professional violin player and multimedia artist.

Relationship with audience

In the interview Vladimir Radinović pointed out the importance of social networks as platforms where listeners can interact more than ever. NoFm uses Facebook and Twitter to connect with the listeners and to encourage them to participate in the activities of the radio. NoFm is also present in cultural activities in Serbia and abroad. It maintains relationship with audience also by organizing events such as parties, festivals and attending events as follow up program. In the interview Radinović explained:

Great thing about web radio is that it can happen as some side activity, for example web radio can be a follow-up program for some events. We use this possibility to go out to public. NoFm is often present on events in Belgrade and Serbia so this way we covered Ritual Fest and Share conference. We also streamed live from Balkan Snapshots film festival in Amsterdam.

NoFm radio fosters a strong initiative when it comes to cultural production. They hosted a *Festival of engaged culture, radio and sound arts* which announced the launching of *NoFm2/Artsync* channel⁵⁹. So far, this festival is one of a kind in Serbia.

Funding model

Financing of NoFm comes through projects, donations and staff contribution. Even though listeners have shown the will to donate money, this funding option is inhibited due to

⁵⁹ Source:
http://www.b92.net/kultura/vesti.php?nav_category=1087&yyyy=2013&mm=02&dd=20&nav_id=688575,
accessed on September 21, 2013

problems of electronic payment systems, which are not regulated in Serbia. NoFm team organizes also benefit parties where you can donate money and by CD's from NoFm production.

NoFm operates on minimal running costs since provider donated the stream.

The major driving force of this radio is enthusiasm and will of staff involved. Ristić emphasizes the following: *as long as there are young people willing to educate themselves and to become media literate, this project will find way to develop and survive.*⁶⁰

Future perspectives

When it comes to plans for future NoFm has ambition to enhance the number of staff and ensure new space and funding. The aim is to digitalize the whole project by implementing new radio programming software. Also, NoFm plans to increase production with an emphasis on experimental radio forms.

7. Comparative analysis

7.1 Comparative table

	The voice of the West	Soma FM	Radio Centraal	Resonance FM	NoFm
Year founded	2012	2000	1980	1998	2012
Country/city	The Netherlands, Utrecht	USA, San Francisco	Belgium, Antwerp	UK, London	Serbia, Belgrade
Format	Community radio	24/7 music radio	Freeform radio	Community radio, Radio Art	Radio Art
Model	project	project	project	organization	project
Streaming	Web only	Web only	Fm + webcast	Fm + webcast	Web only

⁶⁰ Milan Lukić, *Novi zivot radija*: http://www.madmarx.rs/BF_Novi-zivot-radija_Sveze-iz-mreze.pdf, accessed on July 24, 2013 (author's translation)

Station tagline	<i>A kaleidoscopic jukebox of voices from Utrecht West</i>	<i>Listener-supported, commercial-free, underground/alternative radio</i>	<i>Brain and rhythm!</i>	<i>The world's first radio art station</i>	<i>The place is a palimpsest⁶¹</i>
Owner	City of Utrecht	Rusty Hodge	Independent	London Musicians' Collective	Association of Multimedia Artists <i>Auropolis</i>
Funding model	Institutional - City of Utrecht, Department of Cultural Affairs	Crowdsourcing, merchandizing, Entirely listener-supported by means of donations and subscriptions	Monthly staff contributions and renting fee	Diversification of funding sources	Self-sustainable
Management hierarchy	horizontal	one-man broadcasting institution	horizontal	vertical	horizontal
Advertising	jingles*	no	no	no	no
Profit	no	no	no	no	no
Listeners community	Population of municipality Utrecht West	Global virtual community of people with similar musical tastes	Local community due to language barrier	Global	Local community
Programming	Community radio	24/7 music radio, genre programming	Freeform radio – experimental narrative programs and niche music	Radical, experimental freeform aesthetics	NoFm1: niche music and talk (freeform) NoFm2/Art Sync: sound art, new tendencies in classical and experimental music
Staff	Freelance radio makers, artists, writers, DJ's	volunteers	volunteers	Permanent staff, volunteers	volunteers

⁶¹ From *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau, 1980

Issue	Reaching audience	High cost of music royalties, legal constraints	Restricted broadcasting range (3 km)	Broadcasting range limitation to Central London area and going digital	Sustainability, not enough staff, space
Goals	Maintaining website as a living archive	Going mobile, launch more channels, on-demand and podcast programs and building public-access radio studio	Developing TV Centraal	Enhancing permanent staff, conduct robust audience research and secure funds in order to increase production	Digitalization, NoFm production (experimental radio forms)

Table 1: The comparative table of five presented case studies

7.2 Summary of results

General summary

Thorough analysis of five selected case studies showed that these web radio stations have higher goals than transcend the role of radio as communication medium. They all present unique operations and according to their aims and missions they resemble and could be compared to independent cultural organizations, except that they use different means to address the audience.

Organization-wise they present flexible operations with horizontal organizational structure and no management hierarchy. They encourage voluntary engagement and run on enthusiasm of its members as a major driving force. They can also operate as self-organized groups as we have seen on the examples of NoFm and Radio Centraal.

All of these stations are community oriented initiatives. These communities can be *virtual* and on global level thanks to the Internet technology (e.g. SomaFM) and *local*, fulfilling the needs and interest of local community such as The Voice of the West. Some of these stations are well-established and recognized names within certain circles and represent symbols of

cities where they operate from (e.g. Radio Centraal in Antwerp and Resonance FM in London).

Being alternatives to mainstream, these radical, small scale operations are largely contributing to media diversity by answering to and moreover creating new needs of audience. They imply and illustrate that new forms of culture and technology always start on the edges.

Programming

In main focus of selected case studies is cultural production with interests beyond mainstream. This cultural production comprises sound and radio related arts, promotion of neglected music genres and developing new narrative radio forms.

When it comes to choosing the programming strategy, *freeform* style appears as the best option in most of the cases. This means that programme schedule is not repetitive and it allows experiment with formats, fosters humor and spontaneity in presentation style and it gives DJ's the opportunity to play music they find good. This allows for genre programming where genres neglected by mainstream media and *niche* music are covered, meaning that DJ's opt for *musicologist* programming esthetics which nourishes educational character by exposing listeners to new music.

Furthermore, this analysis showed that listeners' participation in creating new programmes is highly encouraged. Through open calls everyone is allowed to pitch an idea for a new show.

Relationship with audience

Relationship with audience has progressed a lot thanks to the developments in Internet technology. By means of Web 2.0 interactive features audience is encouraged to take part in programming. As Winke van Muiswinkel points out, interaction with listeners proved most effective through direct contact when it exceeds virtual space. Therefore engaging audiences through events such as festivals, concerts or educational seminars plays significant role in addressing audience outside of the Internet surrounding.

Creating new and responding to the current needs of niche audience that nourishes different cultural values from those served by mass media results in building listeners communities – local in case of The Voice of the West, global in case of Soma FM and Resonance FM and communities that represent counterculture gathered around common ideas and values such as listeners of Antwerp's Radio Centraal.

Funding models

Through the analysis we have illustrated several funding models. The Voice of the West represents state-supported operation while others illustrate more bottom-up approaches towards fundraising and apply flexible and alternative models.

Radio Centraal established a successful funding strategy where about 150 volunteers pay monthly membership fee which coincides with the idea of self-organization, independency and *do-it-yourself* ethics which they nurture from the beginning. Same idea is applied by NoFm since funding through online donation system unfortunately doesn't work in Serbia.

SomaFM relies solely on listeners' donations. Rusty Hodge, SomaFM's founder, wants to pursue crowdfunding model further in order to keep SomaFM truly non-commercial because of his disappointment with state of radio which made him run this station back in the year 2000.

Resonance Fm illustrates an example of diversification policy by combining several revenue sources which are ranging from institutional and state funds, donors and foundations support listeners' donations and fundraising events.

It is important to state that none of selected stations generates income. Some of them radically reject institutional support or corporate underwriting (Radio Centraal and SomaFM). Such interventions would severely undermine the ideologies and identities of these stations which strive towards promoting non-commercial values.

In interviews with head persons of these stations everyone stressed that they want to make program which won't be interrupted with commercials. They simply see sell of airtime as something that would jeopardized their established independent characters. Exception is The Voice of the West which came up with system *it is not a commercial as long as it is in form*

of a jingle which are made completely for free and the idea behind was to nurture the form of jingle and absolutely no profit.

Also, interviewees pointed out that merchandising and fundraising events showed potential to become good complementary sources of revenue.

8. Discussion

In the discussion that follows, my aim is to present issues identified during this research. This discussion with experts offers an insight into the subjects previously processed in the theoretical framework of this research. The idea was to intersect different perspectives of various experts in order to see how Internet influences and shapes radio and to illustrate how web radio is used as a tool for promoting cultural values that fall outside mainstream and therefore enhances cultural production.

Methodological tool used for this part of the research was semi-structured interview. The interviewees that took part in this discussion are theoreticians and practitioners in the field of new media, culture, arts and radio studies, all of them with relevant radio experience for this research. The list of participating interviewees is as follows:

- ***Rusty Hodge*** – software developer, founder and general manager of SomaFM. One of the leading voices in Save Net Radio campaign.
- ***Wineke van Muiswinkel*** – is artistic coordinator of The Voice of The West web radio project. She is multimedia artist and professor at Design Academy Eindhoven.
- ***Vladimir Radinović*** – MA in Digital culture and general manager of NoFm Radio. He is also active in the spheres of experimental electronic music, field recordings and sound maps.
- ***Magz Hall*** – senior lecturer of radio studies at Canterbury Christ Church University and PhD candidate in Radio Art at University of the Arts London. Her work and research are dealing with sound and radio events outside conventional

studio settings. Title of her PhD thesis is *Radio After Radio: Redefining Radio Art in the light of new media technology*.

- **Jonas Ohlsson** – is multidisciplinary artist and DJ with long term experience in experimental radio forms. Teaches at Gerrit Rietveld Academy.
- **Liz Berg** – sales and marketing manager at radio WFMU from New Jersey with extensive experience in fundraising for independent radio.
- **Iez Thiry** – is journalist, radio maker and media activist. Long term member of editorial board of Belgian Radio Centraal.
- **Micz Flor** – is cultural producer and media developer. One of the co-founders of Sourcefabric, open source organization providing software, support and consultation for independent media. Flor has an active interest in how radio can be used to network communities and has produced two documentaries on this topic: *Scattered Frequencies: Radio Networking in Nepal* and *Reaching Everyone* about an independent radio network in Indonesia.

8.1 Issue 1: Development of Internet technology as cause and stimulus for new, diverse media surrounding

Development of Internet and networking technologies acted as precondition for rise of new media forms where different kinds of movements have found their creative outlet and where new movements were born. Media environment started to evolve and flourish, offering diversity of content and possibility of two-way communication.

Vladimir Radinović: *Development of Internet technology and diverse media environment go with each other without a doubt. We are now experiencing an era of personalization of everything. It is only natural that in a world like this one can choose the information source from many different mediums. Also what I find quite important is the downfall of one national broadcasting service or news agency and the birth of many independent news houses. This allows people to have wider perspective on things.*

Radinović points out the opportunity that Internet users have to tailor the content and personalize it according to their personal taste with options such as browser bookmarks, *favorite* channels, RSS feeds and more. Apart from that he stresses the fact that media landscape is not uniformed anymore, simple technologies and predominant Internet use caused rise of new, small specialized media independent from market and external, corporate or political influences. Also, Internet and technology in general have stimulated the production which resulted in great diversity of media offer. We are now witnessing the exponential growth of new media due to online expansion.

Magz Hall: *Social media has allowed international interest groups to grow and exchange ideas, works and calls freely. It has been the key in gaining a wider understanding of radio art stations and interest groups across the globe and it increased communication between interest groups.*

Hall stresses the networking feature of Internet which is reflected through social media. The possibility to connect with artists and professionals from similar spheres is crucial when it comes to obtaining wider perspectives related to radio and sound arts. Thanks to the Internet, everything now operates on global rather than on national/local level.

8.2 Issue 2: Benefits and shortcomings of web radio compared to traditional media

Web radio, of course, has its good and bad sides. Due to its numerous features, web radio has positioned itself as a multidimensional streaming medium and a platform suitable for variety of experiments. Interviewees agreed that web radio has not yet reached the peak of its popularity and that it has not yet been explored to its full potentials.

Rusty Hodge: *Benefit of web radio is that it fosters an international/national audience rather than a local one. The problem is getting the attention from listeners because there are so many stations.*

Wineke van Muiswinkel: *In my opinion the benefit of web radio is its archival function, you can listen to it at any given time. It enables you to listen on demand and download podcasts. You can play it on all sorts of devices and in all sorts of places. Regarding programming for web radio – it does not impose any restriction for the*

length or format of programs. It allows you to experiment. Furthermore, you can be non-commercial station and still reach out to a large group of people for very little money. Shortcomings of web radio are that the medium itself is not yet very popular. It is quite unknown to the broader audience. There is so much information online that people are lost or simply not interested in discovering more features that Internet fosters. Also, you can lose the live aspect of radio, although it can be introduced in web radio as well.

Vladimir Radinović: *Biggest benefit would definitely be the fact that it is so simply to create web radio and anyone can do it. Secondly, the fact that you can listen to any radio from all over the world via Internet is a great step forward for the radio medium. The option of podcasting is the best thing that has happened to radio and represents a huge benefit and convenience. When it comes to shortcomings, in my experience I would say that the problem with web radio is the fact that Internet is still not available to anyone anywhere.*

Micz Flor: *In my opinion, the most interesting feature in recent years that happened to "audio services" was the podcast. The podcast is something radio can not do, but a feature that web radios are offering.*

According to the interviewees, summarized benefits and shortcomings of web radio are presented in the table below:

Benefits	Shortcomings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Podcasting - Archiving - On-demand listening - Diversity (specialized radio stations) - No geographical limitations, possibility of reaching radio from all over the world - Fostering global audience - Simple and cheap technology - Experimentation with formats and content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internet is not available anywhere anytime - Still new and unexplored medium - Not yet popular enough, not many people know about it - Lacks live aspect of radio - Diversity - proliferation of content, too much information online - Getting attention from listeners and keeping them interested - So many stations

Table 1: Benefits and shortcomings of web radio

If we summarize the benefits of web radio, we can see that the option of podcasting as one of the web radio features is much praised because it offers possibilities that traditional, linear radio doesn't have. Those are: archiving, on-demand listening, recording and downloading radio content which is convenience for the user. Radinović even advocates that podcast should be considered as a legitimate radio form. Furthermore, when it comes to programming for web radio, the option for experimenting with formats and contents is also one of the advantages. Being hosted on Internet, apart from audio stream and files, one can enrich the content with photos, video and text but also with interactive features such as forum, chats room, options of commenting and sharing which are all enabled by Web 2.0 technology. Listeners are interacting not only with the station but also with each other.

Talking about shortcomings of web radio, we can identify that the problem is reaching and positioning among audience. Because there are too many stations and other possibilities provided on Internet, it is very hard and challenging to keep the audience interested. This implies that web radio producers have to be very innovative and quick-witted when it comes to programming. Nevertheless, web radio proved to be very good when it comes to niche programming and programming for target audience. It successfully applies concept of narrowcasting and that is where different subcultures found their creative outlet.

Diversity showed up on both sides of the table. It is double-edged sword and can be considered as a trap. It has its good and bad sides as Hodge and Van Muiswinkel argue. On the one hand positive thing is that a person is given such a variety of content, and on the other hand proliferation of the content and amateurism in content and quality can represent a problem. Therefore web radio has to constantly reinvent itself with innovative approaches and content.

8.3 Issue 3: The position and recognition of web radio in broader media landscape - present state and future perspectives

Present state of web radio is labeled with the fact that it is still new and insufficiently discovered medium. Due to the lack of regulatory framework, the present situation appears a bit chaotic. When it comes to the position of web radio in regard to traditional media, web

radio is recognized as *alternative* to the mainstream, corporate media. The medium is still developing technically, socially and physically but for present media landscape web radio means democratization and liberation, as Ohlsson and Hall argue in the interview. Being new and not strictly molded, web radio can be seen as laboratory, as Van Muiswinkel states in the interview.

Rusty Hodge: *At the present moment web radio represents an alternative to big media. Soma Fm, for example, is a long tail, an outlier comparing to commercial media houses. I look back 10 years ago and where we are at right now and I'm very excited for the future. I see the future of web radio in mobile devices and in cars.*

Wineke van Muiswinkel: *Compared to commercial media with predictable programming, web radio today represents laboratory for experimenting since it is rather new phenomenon that is not yet explored. In future web radio will undoubtedly grow and attract more listeners. There will be a lot of private and alternative programming.*

Magz Hall: *In my opinion web radio has been a liberation for many. Internet is the key to the future of radio.*

Jonas Ohlsson: *The development of Internet radio, podcasts and so on, has democratized the playing field in music. It used to be that you had to live in New York or London if you wanted to hear the newest developments in experimental music. I assume that it will introduce more options and features in future since it is closely connected to the revolutionary developments of Internet over all.*

Vladimir Radinović: *The present state of web radio is a bit chaotic, there are some really great initiatives but I believe that we are still at the beginning. This medium offers many possibilities and I believe that we would need more time to understand them all and to start using the medium in its full potential.*

Van Muiswinkel and Radinović agree that web radio is still in the initial stage of its life and that we haven't yet recognized many of his potentials but it is just matter of time. Ohlsson adds to this that new options and characteristics are yet to be discovered and introduced which will enrich the benefits that web radio fosters.

Nevertheless, as Hall and Hodge predict, its future perspectives are closely related to Internet and ubiquitous infrastructure built out by mobile and cell phone technology. This will surely boost its use and growth. Wineke van Muiswinkel confirms this prediction adding that next to alternative, private, commercial and corporate web radio station will appear.

8.4 Issue 4: How or to which extent does web radio foster and encourage change, innovation and experiment in content programming focused on art and culture?

New media technologies proved to be significant tool for experiment, innovation and creativity. Hartley and Notly explain: *Lessig believes that innovation on the net prospered because of the very nature of the Internet. Its open-ended architecture ensured that creativity and ideas could emerge and flow freely... We want to create a space for innovation – where things we can't imagine can happen, do happen; a space for experimentation.* Web radio embraced these possibilities which all of the interviewees approved.

Magz Hall: *The very fact you can set up a station and break all the rules is totally innovative without high costs to do so. It is a shame so many Internet stations are trying to parody main stream stations though - Basic FM⁶² here in the UK are the exception to that rule being highly creative allowing artists such as Vicki Bennet⁶³ to run radio Boredcast⁶⁴ for instance - a month of slow radio last year. The best examples are extreme radio stations. They confirm the idea that anything can be done and convention can be challenged.*

Hall explains and illustrates with an example of good experimental web radio practice the extent to which web radio introduces innovation. She states how great the importance is of

⁶² **Basic FM** stands for *Broadcast Art, Sound & Independent Culture*, official website: <http://www.basic.fm/>

⁶³ **Vicky Bennett** is influential British artist in the field of audio visual collage which is her main form of expression. She creates audio recordings, films and radio shows that communicate a humorous, dark and often surreal view on life. She is established radio figure and had performed radio sessions for John Peel and Mixing It. She also has an ongoing sound art radio show *DO or DIY* on WFMU. Official website: <http://peoplelikeus.org/>

⁶⁴ **Radio Boredcast** is a 744-hour web radio project, curated by Vicki Bennett with AV Festival 12: “*In response to our ambiguous relationship with time - do we have too much or not enough? - Radio Boredcast celebrates the detail, complexity and depth of experience lost through our obsession with speed.*” Official podcast: <http://wfm.org/playlists/ZZ>

having a tool which enables you to be extreme, break the rules and challenge traditional conventions.

Liz Berg: *This all depends upon the underlying culture of the radio station, but for WFMU, our willingness to experiment with new technologies has allowed us to innovate on the technology side. We have instant feedback from web listeners from WFMU's live comments and it allows our DJs to respond quickly to requests or questions. But the conversation is not only one-sided: sometimes listeners post links to information or videos relevant to a song being played or a topic being discussed, and some provide translations for songs that are not in English. This actually enhances the experience of the radio show. Before web radio, broadcast DJs might get one or two phone calls during their program, and maybe a letter every once in a while, but that was the only feedback. Now on the web, listeners give instant feedback, send e-mails, and participate in the programs on a deeper level, so the engagement now is much higher.*

Berg states the most of the innovation in programming comes from innovations introduced by technology pointing out interaction with audience and simultaneously its involvement with and participation in programming. WFMU applies freeform programming tactics which already gives a lot of freedom to experiment with radio forms. Iez Thiry confirms that, speaking from the point of view of someone who is also involved with freeform radio station:

Iez Thiry: *Web radio has to be open to new proposals. Since it doesn't have standardized format it is possible to experiment with content and music and that is where web radio has absolutely no limitations and allows change and innovation.*

Vladimir Radinović: *I think that this is not so much of change that came with the new technology but rather with the people brought up with it. New technology usually makes things easier which then allow people to spend their time doing other stuff, such as rethink the way their radio program is set up.*

Vladimir Radinović explains how it is important to comprise different perspectives and different voices in radio and that is what brings the most of innovation.

I would add here that even though web radio encourages innovation and experiment in programming to a large degree, it is vulnerable to policy and regulations so threat may appear from the angle of legal constraints.

8.5 Issue 5: The role of web radio in answering to socio-cultural needs of non-mainstream subcultures of listeners

As previously mentioned, web radio has proven its qualities when it comes to narrowcasting and specializing content towards the needs of specific audience. Kozamernik and Mullane (2004) explain that web radio:

[...] is best suited to niche content, such as education, specialist music, and programs aimed at ethnic minorities, which may be of interest to a relatively small number of people [...] For example, there may not be enough fans of gypsy music in a given part of the world to justify a local broadcast station, but if we add listeners around the world who are interested in this kind of entertainment, the potential audience will look a lot healthier.

Since public and commercial broadcasters are mostly playing top 40 charts and have predictable playlists with no or little space for presenting non-mainstream genres, web radio acts in this case as platform for expressing the values of these neglected genres. Web radio helped defining these genres and alongside genre communities because of its ability to react faster to the needs of audience.

Liz Berg: *In general, the Internet provides space for all types of groups to commiserate and share information. With non-mainstream subcultures of listeners, web radio is the place they can turn to and feel at home. Someone who listens to punk music but lives in an isolated area may not have access to a radio station that plays punk music, leading to feelings of alienation. On the web, that person has a plethora of web radio options to listen to punk music, including ways to meet others who are also interested in the same type of music.*

Iez Thiry: *Some subcultures are not at all represented in the media but that is slightly better now with the possibility to start a web radio. Thanks to that subcultures have got a platform for expression. There are plenty of web-only radio stations that nourish for example 90's noise or experimental electronic music.*

Vladimir Radinović: *The role is great, you are finally able to listen to a certain music genre the whole day and learn about new bands or performers. Also communities are created around radio web pages which allow musicians and fans to interact easier than ever before.*

Magz Hall: *Web radio is meeting the needs of many niche groups, however there are still costs involved and not all subcultures have easy access to the web, skills or money to take advantage of it.*

Jonas Ohlsson: *The beautiful developments in web radio have empowered the underground and the experimental music scenes enormously. Before it used to be that you had to be at one place at a certain time. Now you can listen to whatever you want on specialized web radio stations and whenever you want across the (connected to Internet) world.*

The interviewees agree around the idea of web radio as platform for expressing subcultures which are forgotten in the mainstream media. Generally speaking, Internet represents the emancipatory and democratic (Hartly and Notely, 2005) place where all these subcultures can manifest and web radio acts in this case as one of various Internet features where you can personalize what you want to consume according to your own taste. Web radio is liberation for many, but not all subcultures have access or knowledge for using it, as Hall states.

8. 6 Issue 6: The role of web radio as mediator in creating virtual communities of listeners based on their cultural needs and affinities

This issue is directly connected with the previous one since communities are created around same tastes in music, values and interests. One of the most interesting characteristic of web radio is self-created *imagined communities* which are manifesting through *citizenship*

expressed as voluntary affiliation with communities of choice (Hartley and Notely, 2005) which will further be processed under this issue.

Web radio with its inherently interactive features such as shoutboxes, forums, chat rooms, social networks accounts brings listeners closer to their favorite stations and other listeners as well (Kozamernik and Mullane, 2005). Web radio assumes the role of mediator between content that it outputs and listeners.

Andy Benett describes how Internet strengthens the community feeling, feeling of belonging somewhere:

[...] youth subcultures may be seen increasingly as cultures of “shared ideas” whose interactions take place not in physical spaces such as the street, club or festival field, but in the virtual spaces facilitated by the Internet. (2004: 163)

Generally speaking, the role of radio was to connect rings of people of shared interests, especially taste in music. Hartley and Notely explain how this involves radio:

Most young people listen to radio because of music and they tune in to a particular radio station because of the music it plays. In this way, audiences form ‘imagined communities’ around music. Today we are seeing these ‘imagined communities’ develop around music tastes away from broadcast radio, in what is often a far more egalitarian way. Networks and communities built around music are forming all over the Internet and they are often creating themselves rather than being created by organizations or entrepreneurs. As the Internet continues to evolve and offer new possibilities for sharing and distributing audio (as well as combining the audio repertoire with video and text), we need to consider the value of self-creating communities developing radio on the Internet.⁶⁵

One of the bright examples of community building is Last.fm, online music database based on recommendation system according to the users’ personal taste with personalized radio as subscription feature. It is entirely powered by its users. Last.fm uses interactive features to its full potentials (tagging, commenting, forums, shoutboxes, and recommendation systems).

Liz Berg and Vladimir Radinović stressed the importance of the mediating role of web radio.

⁶⁵ Hartley, John and Notley, Tanya. User-led Content and Self-creating Communities: History Repeating Itself? Understanding "Internet Radio" in the Context of the Development of Radio [online], 2005

Liz Berg: *For us at WFMU, the web has allowed us to expand our audience and community. With our website's listener comments, there are a lot of people who are logged in all day, having side conversations with other listeners, meeting new people, and sharing links. Because WFMU is a common interest, these communities develop under the auspices of our website. We host listener meet-ups a few times each year, and this month one is being organized in Berlin, Germany by a few listeners there who want to meet other WFMU fans in the same city.*

Vladimir Radinović: *The role of a radio is to be a place for community to build up by offering news about certain common topics in the community and forums where users can interact.*

Berg explained from her perspective at WFMU how important Internet is in building audience and how being loyal to them plays the crucial role. Both interviewees agreed that shared interests and tastes are what bring listeners together. Berg also stated that communities have tendency to exceed virtual space and meet and interacts in physical space.

8.7 Issue 7: New models of financing web radio stations whose imperative is not profit but cultural values

In the interview with Geert Lovink⁶⁶, Micz Flor states the following about financial sustainability of independent web radio: *...the motivation of such closely-knit communities never really went towards establishing business solutions and supplying sustainable business plans.* Independent media care more about values rather than profit. These values could be severely threatened if they would turn to businesses and apply commercial funding models such as sponsorships, advertizing models and underwriting. Independent web radio establishes more flexible funding models and uses Internet as tool for maintaining sustainability, mostly by engaging audience.

⁶⁶ Available online at: <http://geertlovink.org/interviews/interview-with-micz-flor/>, accessed on September 21, 2013

Liz Berg: *Independent radio can be sustainable as long as it keeps the audience engaged. WFMU has done well with this because we embraced the Internet early-on, and continue to pursue new platforms.*

Vladimir Radinović: *Financial sustainability is not something you could count on in this business, you finance it from your own pocket, try to get some funding by applying for various obscure projects or rely on the financial help from audience.*

From the experience of Liz Berg, the core activity when it comes to sustaining independent radio is constantly finding new ways which could generate revenue. And it is certainly not one source that will financially secure the radio, but rather more of them. The importance of branching out of revenue sources and applying diversification policy is the key to surviving of independent radio.

It is also of a high importance to think up of funding activities that will animate the listeners and at the same time actively include them to participate. For example, fundraising events seem to deliver decent money and at the same time they are strengthening the community feeling. Internet is here seen as key tool in approaching audience to take part in such activities. As Rusty Hodge states in SomaFM's manifesto: *if audience likes what they hear on the radio, they will also be willing to pay for it.*

But when audience is not big and international, as we can conclude from Vladimir's point of view, web radio survives with the help of grants and enthusiasm and donations of its founders.

State funds are also an option, but in that case radio content has to be recognized as piece of art like we saw in the examples of Resonance Fm and The Voice of the West.

9. Conclusion

This study was set out to explore web radio in the light of innovativeness in the fields of audience, programming and funding models. The aim has been to show what are the roles and functions of web radio as a new medium in (and also outside of) the Internet environment and the ways how it contributes to digital cultural production. In addition to this, the aim was

also to identify trends, issues and potentials of web radio as an innovative platform for artistic and cultural expression.

The research has been conducted on the sample of five primary case studies (Chapter 6) and several secondary case studies that proved to be representative and good practices of either audience engagement, programming philosophies or funding strategies but for one or another reason did not meet all of the pre-defined criteria for selection or have been discovered at some later phase of the research. However, those secondary case studies are equally important for this research and complementary to primary case studies because they illustrate very good examples and models of those concepts that this research is focused on. Summarized results of case study analysis are presented in Chapter 7.

Throughout the research several issues have been raised and in order to handle them right and review them from multiple perspectives I have interviewed competent people with diverse radio experiences. This approach to identified problems resulted with many valuable findings and each of these issues can be subject to further research.

The aim of this research has been to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: *What are the specificities of web radio programming with particular focus on cultural and arts content?*

Thorough research of programme offer of the selected case studies and interviews with their producers or key people on other functions showed that web radio allows experiment with radio formats and also opens huge space for the creation of original artworks in the field of sound and radio arts and therefore contributes to cultural production. Preliminary results that web radio producers opt for concept of narrowcasting and freeform and musicologist philosophies when it comes to programming have been confirmed.

RQ 2: *What are the authentic characteristics of Internet radio audience and how they engage with Internet radio program content?*

This research has identified that web radio audience is active compared to the audience of traditional media. Listeners are also *prosumers* that always seek for new content that will satisfy their needs. Web radio engages its audience on two on two fronts – virtual and physical. Virtually listeners can take part in creating, curating and interacting with the content

and other listeners. Listeners' engagement exceeds virtual space through organizing various events that contribute to increasing the community feeling. Listeners are usually gathered around same tastes and cultural values in communities.

RQ 3: *How Internet radio stations are funded and financially supported, do they promote new, more flexible, innovative ways of financing which can be applied to cultural and arts production and practice?*

Since all examined case studies are non-profitable independent organizations they do not generate income and the major sources of revenue rely on audience donations combined with other sources. In order to maintain sustainability they apply strategy of diversification of revenue sources but audience remains the core source of revenue. These stations find interesting ways to engage audience in fundraising – through internet, crowdfunding platforms, fundraising events or merchandizing and all these models can be applied to other types of cultural production which are not necessarily situated on the Internet.

The important aim of this research has been to show how web radio contributes to digital cultural production. Research has identified several features and functions of web radio and its activities on Internet as cultural agent. Some of them are:

- medium for fostering sound arts and other audio art formats
- promoter of artistic and cultural values
- online exhibition space (*Radio Web MACBA* as an example)
- new platforms for international artistic collaborations
- creating new cultural needs of audience
- changing and influencing the way people discover and listen to music
- engaging audience online and through activities in physical space
- web radio as curator of content

The climate of the new media environment boosts radio, pushes him toward and gives him new features and functions. Therefore, the aim of this research has been to identify potentials of web radio that can further shape its future in direction different from its original purpose. Since web radio showed much potential as a very unique artistic/cultural initiative in virtual space, it can in a way be considered as virtual cultural center or institution, depending on management model. This is just a hint regarding the future of web radio as an online platform

for cultural and artistic expression in the age of Web 2.0 communications and digital cultural production and can be subject to further research.

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Center for Gender Studies, 2011 – 2012

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The Sixth Belgrade high school, 2002 – 2006

Social sciences and Languages

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TkH [Walking Theory] – Center for Performing Arts Theory and Practice, January 2013 – present

Intern at the position of Producer Assistant

Respirator Youth Organization, September 2012 - present

Organization and PR

Free Zone Film Festival, November 2011 – November 2012

Info-desk assistant for main and follow-up program and Volunteers coordinator

Exit festival, campaign *A roof over your head is a human right*

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Festival Days of Sarajevo, May 2011

Film and theater program, PR and organization

Express 451, Documentary project of Belgian film art students, April 2010

Interpreter

Dutch and Flemish Literary and Cultural Events, 2009 – present

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Courses

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