

The Media Audit

NEWS RELEASE

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Research Shows Web Radio Can Succeed; 23 Stations Attract Respectable Numbers

Houston - (April 4, 2001) Twenty three radio web sites are succeeding in attracting significant local market audiences, according to The Media Audit, a syndicated survey of both online and traditional media in more than 80 U.S. markets and accredited by the Media Rating Council.

According to the survey data, 23 radio web sites in the U.S. are attracting at least 2% of all adults in their immediate market. If the web site audiences were figured as a percent of just those adults with Internet access the percentages would double in most markets.

"We think 2% is very respectable at this stage of Internet market development," says Bob Jordan, co-Chairman of the 30-year-old research firm that produces The Media Audit. To put the radio web site numbers in perspective, Jordan says, "it helps to compare them to TV broadcast web sites. Half of the 345 TV broadcast web sites covered in our recent surveys attracted less than 4% of their market. Even the web sites of the dominant daily newspaper in most markets attracted less than 10% of that market's adults. The radio market is much more fragmented than that of TV broadcasters or newspapers. In most markets there are at least 15 to 20 radio stations competing for listeners. This splintering of radio audiences adversely affects an individual radio station's opportunity to reach a large Internet audience. However, group owners can aggregate their local stations web site audiences and significantly improve their ability to compete with television station and newspaper web sites."

All the data cited was obtained from approximately 120,000 phone interviews conducted during the past 12 months. The 80+ markets covered in the survey are home to more than 3100 radio stations. Of the 3100, only about 170 attracted at least 1% of their immediate market. "The message here, we believe," says Jordan, "is not that very few radio web sites are succeeding, but that radio can succeed on the web."

According to The Media Audit data, the 23 most successful radio web sites in the 80+ markets covered are: WNNX-FM, Atlanta, 4.5%; KMJX-FM, Little Rock, 4.3%; WEGR-FM, Memphis, 4.1%; WIVK-FM, Knoxville, 3.5%; KFMB-FM, San Diego, 3.3%; WTKS-FM, Orlando, 2.9% (WTKS also has a 2.3% in Melbourne, and a 2.1% in Daytona Beach); KQRC-FM, Kansas City, 2.8%; KQRS-FM, Minneapolis-St. Paul, 2.6%; WDCG-FM, Raleigh-Durham, 2.6%; KRFX-FM, Denver, 2.4%; WGRF-FM, Buffalo, 2.3%; WRIF-FM, Detroit, 2.3%; WJJO-FM, Madison, 2.3%; WKLS-FM, Atlanta, 2.2%; WEBN-FM, Cincinnati, 2.2%; WNOR-FM, Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News, 2.2%; WWDC-FM, Washington, 2.2%; WTOP-FM/AM, Washington, 2.2%; WFLZ-FM, Tampa, 2.2%; WBHJ-FM, Birmingham, 2.0%; WFYV-FM, Jacksonville, 2.0%; WJRR-FM, Melbourne (FL), 2.0%; and, WVKF-FM, Toledo, 2.0%. The 2% cut off is arbitrary and has no significance beyond the context in which it is used in this article. There are approximately a dozen stations with 1.9% and/or 1.8%.

The 23 stations represent 11 different formats, according to Mstreet classification data. Ten of the stations have Album Rock formats, four have Classic Rock formats, one, WIVK-FM, is Country format, and WTOP-FM is News format. None of the stations had any of the following formats: Adult Contemporary, Adult Alternative, Adult

Standards, Black Gospel, Ethnic, Easy Listening, Classical, Jazz or Oldies.

"The only meaning we would attempt to glean from the format data," says Jordan, "is that radio formats that generally attract younger audiences were more successful on the web than formats that generally attract older audiences." The size of a market also seemed to have no impact on the success of a station's web site. The adult populations of the markets of the 23 stations range from approximately 300,000 to more than 3 million.

Radio, newspapers and TV broadcasters are all still experimenting with business models, marketing and advertising sales strategies, and technology, says Jordan, "It's impossible to develop a firm business plan for the Internet market because it is in such an early stage of development. If this were a basketball game, it would certainly be the first quarter."

The Media Audit provides both quantitative and qualitative data for media web sites as well as for traditional media. In addition to comprehensive audience profiles, TMA provides trend data on market penetration and market share.

Traditional media - print, broadcast and outdoor - have used The Media Audit data in sales, marketing and management for 30 years. In 1998, the surveys started providing data on local media web sites. The surveys now contain more than 400 fields of information in addition to quantitative measurements of local media web sites.

The Media Audit has more than 1700 clients that include radio and television stations, cable television networks, cable television operators, daily newspapers, alternative weekly newspapers, city and regional magazines, shopper publications, outdoor billboard companies, and direct mail houses. The client base also includes more than 500 advertising agencies, media buying services, and advertisers. The Media Audit is a product of International Demographics, Inc., a 30-year-old Houston firm that is engaged exclusively in syndicated, multimedia surveys conducted at the local market level.

Note: If you would like to periodically receive market survey data from The Media Audit, please contact Bob Jordan by email (bjordan@themediiaudit.com) and leave your name, title, company affiliation and your mailing and/or email address.

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