Radio and Facebook : the relationship between broadcast and social media software in the U.S., Germany, and Singapore

Klapczynski, Julia; Wood, Elliott; Freeman, Bradley Carl

2012

Freeman, B. C., Klapczynski, J., & Wood, E. (2012). Radio and Facebook : the relationship between broadcast and social media software in the U.S., Germany, and Singapore. First Monday, 17(4), 1-13

<https://hdl.handle.net/10356/100494>

<https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v17i4.3768>

© 2012 First Monday. This paper was published in First Monday and is made available as an electronic reprint (preprint) with permission of First Monday. The paper can be found at the following official DOI: [<http://dx.doi.org/10.5210/fm.v17i4.3768>]. One print or electronic copy may be made for personal use only. Systematic or multiple reproduction, distribution to multiple locations via electronic or other means, duplication of any material in this paper for a fee or for commercial purposes, or modification of the content of the paper is prohibited and is subject to penalties under law.

Downloaded on 26 Apr 2023 19:35:51 SGT

First Monday, Volume 17, Number 4 - 2 April 2012

Radio and Facebook: The relationship between broadcast and social media software in the U.S., Germany, and Singapore

**by Bradley C. Freeman,
Julia Klapczynski, and
Elliott Wood**

Abstract

Since its inception, the Internet has been eyed with both hope and caution by traditional media outlets. For many years, radio looked to the Internet (Web 1.0) to extend their brand and increase awareness for their stations. Enter Facebook (Web 2.0), with its interactive ability to add friends and build an online community. How are radio stations using social media at this early point in the relationship? The results and the strategy to best build the radio/Facebook relationship are not uniform and the jury is still out on exactly how social media can benefit a station's bottom line.

Contents

[Introduction](#)
[Literature review](#)
[Method](#)
[Findings](#)
[Discussion and conclusions](#)

Introduction

Describing the relationship between radio and its traditional media siblings is a lot more straightforward than explaining the relationship between radio and new media. Wireless, and then radio, grew up alongside film, magazines, and newspapers. By 1950, visual wireless, or television, came on the scene posing a threat to radio's existence. While there were moments when relations between these media were strained (e.g., the Biltmore Agreement with newspapers or when television took programs — for more on these areas see for example, Barnouw, 1968; McChesney, 1993), radio adapted to peacefully coexist in the expanding media environment. Over time, radio maintained its relevance and thrived by focusing on rock music, going portable, improving its fidelity, encouraging creative personalities, and also by fine-tuning its formats to reach specific target audiences.

In just over the last 15 years, several developments have occurred that are challenging radio once again. In 1996, the U.S. Telecommunications Act passed allowing for the consolidation of stations. At the same time the Internet was diffusing thanks largely to its World Wide Web interface. The creation of the MP3 audio format, along with portable players, occurred and music sharing quickly evolved, allowing individuals to become their own music directors (Sterne, 2006). A few short years later, satellite radio arrived on the scene. While radio was grappling with the changes, its two newer media siblings began to move quickly from crawling to walking in the case of satellite radio (adding car manufacturers, channels and subscribers), and running in the case of the Web (streaming and podcasts). Finally, as radio began to accept and awkwardly adapt to the new realities in the post-consolidation and digital music era, the Internet experienced another growth spurt in the form of Web 2.0. In addition, the satellite

radio companies merged, and mobile operating systems with music and radio apps began proliferating on consumer hand phones and tablets.

The radio industry's reactions to the latest developments with its younger siblings have been multifarious. From some vantage points we see rivalries (when radio initiates actions against the perceived threats) and from others radio as the mature older sibling (where radio sees potentials to collaborate). While enough time has elapsed to allow valid elucidations on the relationship between radio and Web 1.0, the arrival of Web-based social software services is still relatively recent and represents an area needing greater attention. How are radio stations utilizing this new social software? Are some applications a threat, or does radio see them more as a tool and collaborator in reaching and maintaining relations with listeners? What is the proper way to create and manage a Facebook page? These are only some of the questions that are popping up in water cooler conversations at radio stations the world over. As radio practitioners and researchers, our study seeks to join the discussion by exploring radio's relationship with Web 2.0's newer social software platforms, specifically the current behemoth in this arena — Facebook.

Along with the widespread adoption of the Internet, users are now shifting from being passive media recipients to active content creators on the Web. This development has culminated in the rise of the Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005) and newer interactive online services which are usually referred to as social software or social media. We prefer the term social software (Pleil and Zerfass, 2007) because the controversially and not conclusively discussed definition of a medium is problematic and does not appear to describe these social applications appropriately. One popular and important form of social software are social network sites, allowing users to establish and articulate social connections online, while maintaining a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, and to view and traverse their own or other's lists of connections (boyd and Ellison, 2008). Thus, social network sites have set up an appropriate infrastructure for users to interact with one another, independent of time and location and at a significantly extended reach. Unlike radio's long-held broadcast model of point-to-mass, the Internet allows not only one-to-one or one-to-many communication to take place, but also many-to-many and many-to-one communication (Pleil and Zerfass, 2007). By lowering the barriers to communicating online with user-friendly and intuitive features, social network sites enable its members to easily access and share content and information such as music, videos or photographs, as well as news or opinions (Kinsella, *et al.*, 2011).

Originally constructed as a network to connect fellow Harvard students and alumni, market leader Facebook (FB) has become the most popular social network site in the world. It has grown rapidly attracting millions of users, surpassing other social sites (Dumon, 2008). It can be assumed that Facebook's popularity also comes from the embedded entertainment features that the platform offers to its users, in addition to its social interaction features (Yang and Lai, 2011). Thus, the consequences for communication, relationships, and opinion formation are huge.

Media, both mass and personal (Lüders, 2008), are some of the most powerful forces in people's lives, offering a perpetual stream of information about worldwide occurrences, peers, celebrities and so on (Servaes and Malikhao, 2010). The general trend of media convergence sees traditional boundaries dissolving. Two common examples are online livestreams of radio shows as well as mobile devices being able to access the Internet. Surveys in the U.S. and Europe show that high school students — sometimes also called digital natives (Palfrey and Gasser, 2010), millennials (Howe and Strauss, 2000), or net genners (Tapscott, 2009) — don't own physical radio receivers, rather they listen to their favorite programs online via streaming or podcasts (Berry, 2006; Freeman, 2011; Schuurman, *et al.*, 2011). From the perspective of radio companies, this observation together with the pictured prominence of Facebook, are fundamental developments to consider. The utilization of the Internet in content creation is no longer merely a novelty (*i.e.*, to display DJ photos, programming times, and advertisers phone numbers); increasingly, it is becoming a necessary precondition for radio stations to survive and remain relevant. Radio shapes and is shaped by social life, with now Web 2.0 serving as a multiplying factor.

Even though the Internet requires resources to be allocated and human resources in particular may be costly (Wee, 2011), it offers significant advantages for radio stations: Firstly, it is usually free of charge. Secondly, the Internet allows multimedia content, encouraging richer user experiences and thirdly, it can be accessed without any geographical bonds. On the other hand, the informational advantage of air personalities shrinks since a huge load of information is omnipresent online and can be easily searched.

Since acquiring and retaining a large-scale listenership is crucial to commercial station businesses, especially because it depends on revenues from advertising, they have started to discover the opportunities that social network sites offer in terms of community building. This

paper aims to examine the ways in which radio stations present themselves on Facebook. Special focus will be put on the range of content covered and the senders and recipients of the communication taking place. Consequently, we can draw conclusions on the relationship between the traditional radio station service and the radio station's social software presence via Facebook.

Literature review

The growing popularity of social software is without question, yet due to its relative newness, there are only a handful of studies exploring the usage of social software tools by the radio industry. Much of the available literature deals with radio's use and interactions with Web 1.0; and a greater amount of the latest literature deals with businesses and social software — many dealing with the marketing and promotional aspects of the new media (e.g., Pitt and Berthon, 2010; Rosen, 2002). And of course, there is a growing body of literature investigating the social software itself (e.g., Kim, *et al.*, 2011), and its developing relationships with other fields of interest, especially psychology or sociology (e.g., Steinfeld, *et al.*, 2008). For example, it has been shown that young people spend approximately 30 minutes or more on Facebook daily, being part of their routine and preferring a one-to-many communication style (Pempek, *et al.*, 2009; Nielsen Company, 2009). In addition Park, *et al.* (2009) employed a uses and gratifications approach to uncover four primary needs of Facebook users: "socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information" [1].

Studies investigating the so-called social media (Web 2.0) and radio are only now emerging. Ferguson and Greer (2011) conducted a content analysis of more than 100 U.S. radio station's activities on Twitter. They found that the average number of daily tweets did not correlate with the number of followers. Also, the stations' average quarter hour share and the number of followers showed only a weak correlation. On top of that, the probability for promotional content in the analyzed tweets was much higher for music stations than for news/talk stations.

Given the decade or so since the Web's increased growth, the relationship between radio and Web 1.0 has seen a greater amount of research. Lind and Medoff (1999) already concluded during the rise of the Web with its manifold possibilities, that radio stations were underutilizing it. Similarly, Greer and Phipps (2003) pointed out that trying to keep up with technology is one main reason why radio stations showed up on the Internet — even though their activities were not recognized as being based on any sort of comprehensive strategic approach. Using a content analysis approach to analyze radio stations' Web sites, Lind and Medoff (1999) reasoned that only between 25–40 percent of all U.S. radio stations maintained operational Web sites. Thus, the majority of radio stations didn't quickly enter cyberspace in any comprehensive way. As a result of further interviews, a significant number of industry professionals believed that Web sites were benefiting their radio stations in different ways: It not only provided more bidirectional communication between the station and the audience, but, it also was improving awareness, loyalty, and the station's reputation and brand image. Much fewer interviewees agreed on the statement that websites led to an increase in the audience size or in the coverage area, or that they yielded higher commercial or sales benefits. By contrast, the limited radio station engagement on the World Wide Web was caused by a lack of time, of knowledge, and of commitment by management or station personnel. Altogether, radio stations were advised to keep their content up to date, and interactive, as well as simple and easy to navigate, following an overarching vision (Lind and Medoff, 1999). This is in line with Potter (2002) who stated that only a few stations strived for effective audience communication and fruitful relationships by providing interactive content (e.g., guest books, chat rooms, comment function) on their Web site. For Facebook pages, all of these recommendations are important to take into consideration, especially due to its increased interactive nature. Lin and Jeffres (2001) revealed that radio stations Web sites mainly featured promotional content and community service information in their attempt to attract and retain audience members. In addition, program streaming was then growing to become an important element of radio station Web sites (Evans and Smethers, 2001).

For social software and how it is used by businesses or organizations in general, the literature is tremendously vast. Great potential of social software seems to lie in online word of mouth (Rosen, 2002), or electronic word of mouth (eWOM), which is considered to be significantly more credible and authentic than traditional marketing methods (Fogg [2008] also refers to mass interpersonal persuasion). Contrary to off-line WOM, the Internet can reach a far greater audience in much lesser time that is why word of mouth marketing (often also called viral marketing) has become a popular area of research (e.g., Oetting and Jacob, 2007). Muniz and

Schau (2011) noted: "Companies that utilize Facebook pages, as well as consumer-created Facebook fan sites, are embedded in a specific governing architecture. [...] Within this architecture, the consumer has clear participation guidelines; to express negative sentiments is much more difficult" [2] since there are no 'dislike' buttons. Basically, marketers are able to encourage the creation of value by consumers within Facebook and online social networks in general. Another advice is to continuously monitor what is going on and to conduct market research to be able to better serve customer's needs (Muniz and Schau, 2011). Altogether, it seems that social software offers a vast new playground for radio stations and businesses in general to establish and maintain relationships, to brush up their image, and finally to stay competitive in the marketplace. However, following an overarching strategy (as suggested in Waters, *et al.*, 2009), as well as providing opportunities to interact and to reduce the hurdles of participation by ensuring usability are crucial preconditions in order to be successful in deploying social software.

As a general approach, we can classify social software according to its mode of usage. Firstly, content can be created, edited or commented (authoring). Secondly users can share existing information or content such as audio and video (sharing). Thirdly, user-driven scoring and filtering features are offered. These modes of usage are interrelated. Apparently, this also applies to Facebook, which however, has unique characteristics, features and uses (boyd and Ellison, 2008). Due to the friend function, networking is an inherent part of all social network sites. Facebook in particular offers authoring mainly via its functions to comment, to send private messages and to publish microblogs as status updates to friends. Sharing refers to the possibility to upload or link photographs, videos or other content. Collaborative structures can for instance be found within Facebook's user groups, an example for scoring and filtering is the Facebook-proprietary 'Like' button. Not only may everyone join and set up a profile page, but also everyone can create a page for a business, organization, product or even a radio station. Similarly to profiles, these pages come with general information, a picture as well as a "wall" and the option to share microblogs, videos, pictures or links; By pushing the 'Like' button, the displayed counter for people liking the page will be increased and automatically added to the station's newsfeed. These unique functions and features of Facebook create the framework to analyze how radio stations are using it, addressing the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways do radio stations present themselves on Facebook?

RQ2: What is the range of content being communicated on Facebook radio station profiles?

RQ3: What is the relationship between the traditional radio station service and the Facebook radio station profile?

RQ4: Who communicates on Facebook radio station pages? What content drives user engagement?

Method

To examine the relationship between radio and Facebook, a qualitative content analysis was conducted of three dozen radio stations in the United States, Germany, and Singapore [3]. The initial stages of the study involved the important decision of which radio stations to include in the study — why were these stations being selected? In addition another important aspect was determining how Facebook pages should be properly analyzed — how are they structured and what was important to look for in the pages? With regard to the first question, the selection of stations, there is no official listing of radio stations on Facebook. Thus, we decided simply to select a convenience sample of 30 stations in the top 20 U.S. markets in the United States, 10 stations in Germany, and all 17 stations in Singapore. The general thought was to find established stations in major markets and that cover different target groups in the U.S., while for Germany a small mix of public versus private stations was selected. The study does not seek to compare the stations directly, but rather to see if there were overall active social media strategies in place for the stations that might be able to be discerned. This study does

not seek to suggest that these stations are by any means representative of the entire the radio field (and their corresponding Facebook use); it is simply an attempt to look at what some radio stations are doing with the new medium; and, to enter into a discussion on how researchers may move forward with such investigations. It is hoped that this paper will be of use to researchers, students, and radio station personnel, as well as the general public as they attempt to understand the nature of Facebook in particular, and social media more generally as it relates to the more traditional medium of radio. Finally, the time period for observations was scheduled for several weeks in May, June, and July of 2011. These months are generally acknowledged as the months with the greatest number of new Facebook accounts being created. These are also extremely active months for many radio stations in the Northern Hemisphere as summer is in full swing.

Although literature on Facebook is growing exponentially, content analyses of the service are just starting to advance. Much of what is being written about Web 2.0 and social media is being published first directly online (e.g., McCorkindale, 2010; Sarachan and Reinson, 2011). What is apparent is that the Facebook site in particular represents a challenge for content analysis researchers on several fronts, for example the structure of the site is rather dynamic and usually has changes occurring every few months (e.g., the "Timeline" feature was recently introduced). Even though site features may change, there are some basic areas that, of course, stand out as obvious to examine, and the first would be the profile photos found on the radio stations' main Facebook pages. The second area of investigation was that of "authoring" — which included any text-based content. For this category, we were interested in determining who was generating the content found on the Facebook pages (when obvious or applicable): the station itself, a personality at the station, or a user/listener. We were also interested in the activity summary — specifically what was being written, commented on, and why. Thirdly, we were interested to examine the "sharing" function of this social networking site. This category mainly included the radio station's use of photos and links to potentially both promote the station's activities and attempt to engage with netizen users. Reviews of the posts on Facebook came 24 hours after each post had been made. This allowed for a suitable number of comments and 'likes' to have accumulated for each unique post. Finally, the category of "scoring" was important in determining a number associated with not only the overall site (friends or fans), but also as to the various content — and this was measured by tabulating the number of 'likes' that something received.

Findings

The radio station Facebook profiles/pages that we examined in three countries were similar in that they obviously had to conform to the basic Facebook layout. The differences came in terms of the specific content and items that were utilized to shape the appearance of the profiles, to generate engagement, and disseminate general information. Even over just a few weeks, the sheer amount of data posted and observed for even a few stations is voluminous. This presented a challenge to code, find acceptable agreement levels, and then report in any concise and systemic manner. Thus, in this section, we present category highlights from the various stations that were observed and show the ways that the stations present themselves in overall accordance with our first research question.

While most stations have "Fan" pages, there are some stations that are running on "Friend" pages; the difference being that one must be personally accepted as a friend — rather than getting the automatic acceptance from "Liking" — to be connected. Friend pages have limits of 5,000 friends, yet there are no limits to the 'Likes' one can receive on a Fan page. Most radio stations have migrated over to the Fan pages — which are identical in appearance to Friend pages. KBCO in Denver, Colorado, for example, operates both and has an active Friend page with over 3,900 friends, and a Fan page with over 12,900 Likes.

The initial item that is of notice and which establishes a first impression would clearly be the profile photo located in the upper left-hand corner of the Facebook Web page. Immediately below the picture in the left column of the page are menu items that the user can click on in order to be directed to other pages connected to the station profile. Typically these include, 'Wall,' 'Info,' 'Friend Activity,' 'Photos,' and 'Discussion.' These menu links are customizable and stations can add or remove them to create a more unique experience. Some stations have customized their menu links to include, 'Listen Live,' 'Click to Win,' 'Blogs,' and other unique items.

Profile photos are typically just the station's branded logo image and associated graphic — this was observed in all three countries, with only rare exceptions (*i.e.*, in the case where the station was stunting or if the station neglected to post a photo at all or was posting some other generic photo). Some stations use the profile picture to reveal more, as in the case of Country 108 KMLE (Arizona); the station image and Camel logo are shown with a picture of the Tim and Willy morning show. WDVE in Pittsburgh includes their brand graphic and a downward pointing arrow that draws attention to a "Listen Live" option on the menu links below the profile photo. Amp Radio 98.7 in Detroit uses their profile picture to promote "\$100 in Free Gas," tagging their photo with "Like us for Gas."

Competing San Francisco radio stations 997 Now and Wild 94.9 use their profile pictures with downward pointing arrows to draw attention to the menu links option on their Facebook pages. During the observation period, 997 Now changed their profile picture to singer Katy Perry with a call to action for viewers to 'Like' the station on FB which would then allow them to enter station contests. The wall posts became secondary to the Facebook menu link options, and particularly the unique 'Katy Perry Tix' option FB users could click on. Wild 94.9 also uses the downward arrow in their profile picture to draw attention to the Facebook menu focusing on "the Wild Hits" menu link option. This link asked users for a 'Like' and those doing so were added to a database and included in online music research.

In Singapore the owner's logo was displayed on some of the group-owned stations (*e.g.*, Mediacorp), while others featured their own station logos in the profile photo space (*e.g.*, Radio 91.3 FM). Other stations, such as Warna 94.2FM featured a group photo of station personnel and listeners (from a promotional event). In Germany, for profile pictures in general, most of the stations observed chose a sort of poster as their profile picture, showing people, a slogan or their mascot next to the logo (*e.g.*, MDR, Hitradio RTL, Hit-Radio Antenne 1).

Authoring

While users first see the profile photo, their eyes would likely immediately flow to other content (if present), including thumbnails of photos, and the posts on the profile's wall, which leads into the second category of observation "Authoring" and this addresses the second research question regarding the range of content communicated.

As touched upon earlier, each Facebook page has customizable menu links below the profile picture that allow users to view the "Wall" as well as "Info" and any other option that the station chooses to include. Other options include but are not limited to Events, Links, Questions, Discussion, Listen Live, Photos, and Friend Activity. To the left of the profile picture is the station name as the main banner and below it is where the Facebook category for the page is listed as a subheading, such as "Radio Station | Los Angeles, California." Many radio stations are indeed listed as a "radio station", but not always. Some were found to be listed as "local businesses" (*e.g.*, Capital 95.8, Singapore), while others were listed as "public figures" (*e.g.*, Warna 94.2FM, Singapore), a category that was also used by some air personalities (*e.g.*, Jean Danker of Class 95 FM, Singapore). WDVE in Pittsburgh is listed as a "company" as is Jia 88.3 FM in Singapore. Many of the Singapore stations had multiple Facebook pages for personalities and shows (while in Germany the titles and categories for the extra pages followed no clear pattern). In addition, there are also netizen created Facebook pages for the radio stations.

Certainly clues exist for the savvy user to identify the official sites and in larger cities the real station becomes obvious by doing a quick search. Searching for the Facebook page of Tamil-language station Oli 96.8FM Singapore, returned three or four pages that all had the station name in the title. A search for 'Z100' in the U.S. yields over 17 pages identifying themselves as Z100. The search yields the 'Likes' for each station and while most have only a small amount, one has over 181,000 'Likes' and makes it the obvious choice for the New York station. Interestingly there are other authentic Z100 named stations that appear in the search; 'Z100 Portland,' with 19,000+ 'Likes'; Z100 WBIZ-FM in Eau Claire, Michigan comes up without any indication of its location. WBIZ-FM (as Z100) has 17,600+ 'Likes' in Eau Claire with a population of 65,800. Assuming that the local population are those that are "Liking" the station, that would mean an amazing 27 percent of the Eau Claire population 'Like' that station.

In Germany, private radio stations seem to utilize Facebook pages to a far greater extent than public radio stations. Stations such as MDR and NDR Kultur have set up manicured profiles with general information, pictures, a perpetual stream of posts and links to livestreams and podcasts, while other radio stations only link to their Wikipedia article, have empty walls and just a simple logo in place of their profile picture (for instance, the public WDR and NDR as well as the private Hitradio FFH).

Generating engagement

The "wall" is a standout feature of Facebook as it contains "posts" from the station and users. In examining numerous "wall posts," there are three areas that qualify the majority of the posts: 1) designed to generate engagement; 2) promoting station benchmarks and listening; and, 3) promoting radio personalities.

The posts on radio stations walls designed to generate engagement were observed to be topical and covered a wide range of subject matter. On the whole, the posts seem to be rooted heavily in the pop culture of the moment such as this WHTZ Z-100 post: *"Who bought Lady Gaga's 'Born This Way' today?"* — within 24 hours this post generated 328 'Likes' and 151 comments. Similar pop-culture content was found to dominate the posts from KODA, Sunny 99.1, Houston: *"Is anyone planning on watching Oprah's last show today?"* This post yielded eight Likes and 13 comments. On Singapore radio 91.3 FM's Facebook page, DJ Charmaine posted: *"GOOD SATURDAY MORNING !! ♥ Taking your shout outs right here :) Do you know of events happening this week you wanna share too? SPILL HERE :p HAVE AN AWESOME WEEKEND :)"*. The number of "Likes" and comments on the 91.3 FM page rarely exceeded more than a dozen. One post *"Will Justin Bieber still be as famous 10 years down the road?"* received 20 likes and 19 comments within a 24-hour period.

Promoting benchmark listening

Driving users to the broadcast product seems to be a major objective of most of radio's Facebook efforts in all three countries. This finding speaks to research question number 3 — the relationship of traditional radio services and the Facebook profile.

Specific special events that reoccur on-air at specific set times are called benchmarks. These benchmarks are unique specialty features that attempt to build return visits (habitual tune-ins) to the station. Benchmarks are features such as, "The all-request lunch," or "the 8:20 phone-prank," or "the 5:00 funny." Most benchmarks were branded with a specific time that they broadcast as part of their name, and at times mentioning the day it broadcasts if it was not a daily feature. An example from the WMMS page: *"Tonight on @SixxSense w/@NikkiSixx: the story behind Motley's mashup with Cee Lo Green & why Nikki needs conditioner";* and, *"Supermodel Heidi Klum will be on The Bob and Tom Show later this hour"* from the WFBQ Facebook page. Appointments were observed commonly to be written from a third-person point of view: *"Lady Gaga checks in with JJ-is-Stupid at 4:20 tomorrow afternoon"* from the WHTZ page. Radio stations are also using Facebook to front sell songs: *"What are your thoughts on the new Red Hot Chili Peppers song? If you haven't heard it, turn on DC101, it'll be on next."* Other posts were created to drive listeners to a podcast or a feature on the station's Web site: from KIIS-FM in Los Angeles: *"Ryan's Roses: Is It Okay To Snoop In Your Spouse's Facebook? [http://bit.ly/neTfmm]."*

Promoting personalities

Promotion of radio personalities are tied into the station benchmarks and appointment posts and further detail the range of content (RQ2), and the relationship of Facebook with the traditional services (RQ3). These posts show who is communicating on the station Facebook pages and this addresses research question 4. We observed in the U.S. that station generated posts come about a third of the time from a named personality while the rest of the time the posts were written by an unknown third person author representing the station. In Singapore and Germany, the number of posts from specific personalities was lower as compared to the U.S.; Singapore and German personalities tended to post more on their personal or program pages rather than on the main station Facebook page.

Personalities were also observed to use Facebook posts similar to a talkset between songs. For example, from KOST, Los Angeles, *"Tuesday's are made for Two! So how can we make it a more romantic night for the two of you? Call me with your request or Fb me here ... Tea for two and two for tea ... it's me for you and you for me hehehehe ... Call me, you know you want to ... 1 800 929-KOST KS"*. Some of the personality posts were observed to be cryptic in appearance, such as these from the WFBQ Facebook page: *"Magic Man,"* and *"ROCK!"* and *"Nobody rocks Pink Floyd like Q95"*. It can be surmised that those Facebook users who are listening to the broadcast while simultaneously logged onto Facebook experience a value-added relationship between the post and the song that is being played. It should be noted that personality posts are less formal and written in a conversational style. Some Singapore station personalities also have public figure pages in addition to their personal profile page: Maddy Barber, Cheryl Miles, and Marcus Chin. Class 95's Jean Danker also posts on her show's Facebook page (*"Cartunes with Jean and Bobby"*). In general, these DJs were not posting as often on the main station Facebook page.

Sharing

Next we investigated the "Sharing" function of the pages, which revolved mainly around video and photos — as well as links to other items and is tied to research question 2 and the range of content that is communicated. The method of "Sharing" comes in the forms of posts that are often designed to create station Web site traffic, interaction through station blogs, sharing videos and photos sharing, and contests.

Posts and links

Topics were largely observed to be based on current events that would directly relate to the target audience of the station. In the U.S. and Singapore the stories were often linked to station Web pages. In the U.S. the posting approach that WMMS was observed using seemed typical in that they balanced local news with pop-culture entertainment stories almost 1 to 1. WMMS posts were almost always observed as driving Facebook users to a Web site and Web content rather than cross-promote the broadcast product, in contrast to what was typical of other stations in the study. In Germany, few Facebook pages provided the option to check-in to the Web site of the radio station (Hit-Radio Antenne 1 and MDR). For BigFM, to view the radio station Web site, the user was forced to invite friends in order to be able to see the content.

Video/Photo share

The power of Facebook brings images to a radio listener by supporting links to station sites and other video and photoshare sites. In Singapore, YES 93.3FM was observed to have a large number of wall photos, with many identified as coming from corporate events, publicity for Chinese films, concerts and interviews. Many of the photos were posted moments after having been taken, clearly increasing public participation. An example comes from a 15 July post where 38 people commented on a photograph taken of "sunshine boy" within three minutes of posting, and within 24 hours there were 217 'Likes' for this photograph. Photos of popular personalities gained the most comments for this station, while most of the shared links came from Youtube.com. Facebook helps the community consolidate their favorite YouTube viewings and makes it easier for them to share the preferred links with other friends.

Photo and video sharing doesn't necessarily have to fit the station format. For example, DC101 doesn't play rap music or music by Justin Timberlake although a topic during a week day post mentioned both: "Justin Timberlake and Jimmy Fallon bust out History of Rap Pt 2 ... video here, highly enjoyable if you enjoy shenanigans."

Contests

Radio station contests are designed to attract listeners and keep them listening. Radio has always embraced new ways for listeners to participate in contests. "Fax-in-to-win" and "text-to-win" contests have been used to supplement or replace the "call-in-to-win" method. Facebook adds a new dimension in these efforts. Contests on Facebook facilitate 'Likes' and connect more people to the Facebook newsfeed. An example from WHTZ: "*Last chance to enter our Facebook contest to win tickets to see Rihanna at the IZOD Center on July 21st plus get meet & greet passes – the contest ends at 12 noon ET today*". Another example from WKTU in New York involves two steps: "*We've got your chance to win a 4-pack of tickets to see Chelsea Handler when she performs at the PNC Bank Arts Center on Aug. 12th! Click the Win link on the left under our profile pic to enter to win our Facebook-only contest.*" Step 2 for those that do click on the option under the menu then find these directions, "*Like 103.5 KTU, then fill out the entry form for a chance to win a four-pack of tickets to catch Chelsea Handler's performance at the PNC Bank Arts Center on August 12.*" In Singapore Class 95 was observed to use Facebook to "spot" cars that displayed the station's window decal and announce the prize won.

Scoring

One key objective for stations it seems is to get Facebook users to 'Like' the station which immediately connects them to the station newsfeeds. The newsfeeds serve as solicited advertisements from the station reminding users to tune-in, surf their site, and view items on their Facebook page. Those that visit pages can 'Like' specific topics, posts, pictures, or comments by clicking on the 'Like' button located by each post. In general, clicking a button to indicate a response is a cognitively simpler action than commenting and this could be one of the reasons why the 'Like' responses tend to outnumber the comments for any given post.

In Singapore, 987 FM had 116,667 'Likes', clearly the most popular Facebook radio station page based on this statistic. The closest competitor is mando-pop station YES 93.3 with 59,544 'Likes' as of July 2011. Of all of the radio station pages in Singapore, 938 Live (mainly an information station) would seem to be the least popular Facebook page with only 282 people who pressed its 'Like' button. There is, however, no established basis to presuppose

that a station's ratings would necessarily be correlated to its Facebook content and popularity, though many would likely make that connection.

In Germany, BigFM had 125,324 'Likes' the most of the observed set; not surprising given their large broadcast reach. Other sites were SWR3 (82,593 likes) and ENERGY Sachsen (28,806 likes). For BigFM, at least two different Facebook pages were found: One called "Big_FM" (with a space between the letters) and one called "BigFM" (official site). However, Big_FM (with the space) still had 12,240 likes. Overall, in Germany, the number of 'Likes' for posts seemed to be moderate and often in the single digits. Posts that might be considered especially funny, astonishing, or locally related content received the most 'Likes' and comments.

Discussion and conclusions

The results of this study suggest that there is no playbook or specific "radio/Facebook strategy" as yet — stations are very much "doing their own thing" and seemingly inventing their own game plan on the basis of trial and error. However, we do know from the literature, again mainly from business and marketing, that there are discernable trends and best practices developing in the online social networking world. For better or for worse, many stations are following a familiar pattern of recycling RSS feeds from other sources. This is a cost-saving tactic — and it does have the advantage of refreshing content, which would otherwise grow stale; though the current literature tells us that genuine updating is crucial for attention and relevancy. Comments that drive 'Likes' and have the most user engagement vary from station to station and topic to topic. We tended to see generic comments and questions, those designed to get a conversation started (*i.e.*, "Is anyone planning on watching Oprah's last show today?") for the most part not generating any meaningful feedback. Further research could help determine what kinds of posts would yield the best return in user engagement according to time, weekday, topic, and subset by demo. In terms of the specific content to be found on the sites, we tended to observe relevant artists getting the most 'Likes' and comments on the radio station's Facebook pages.

Some comments generate backlash from netizens as was the case with a WMMS wall post about Ryan Dunn, star of the television show Jackass. The newsfeed story about Ryan's death yielded the first increase in user comments greater than 10 for any topic, with 88 negative comments posted within 24 hours. Clearly, the users of Facebook were following, reading, and were aware of what was being posted on the station's wall despite fewer observed 'Likes' and comments for all the other topics. Their mobilization became apparent when this post generated some type of a compelling need to comment. As there is no 'dislike' button, there is no way to know if more Facebook users would have reacted more deeply to the station's comment with a thumbs-down.

This study represents a small sampling of radio stations on Facebook. It is not a representative study of anything more than the exact population we examined. We have attempted to provide a snapshot in time of how some radio stations are using the social software and how netizens are interacting with the stations using the service. Some stations are finding the interactive capabilities between on-air listening and Facebook posting as a fresh option to connect with listeners and worthy of the extra effort required. In the United States, the following stations stood out as fully utilizing the Facebook environment using many approaches: KIIS-FM, Los Angeles; WHTZ-FM, New York; and, WFBQ-FM, Indianapolis. A few stations were not taking advantage of Facebook capabilities, but we are cautious to qualify them since their actions (or lack of) might in fact be their strategy. In Singapore, three stations stood out for best use of the FB platform: 91.3 (Hot AC), 987 (CHR), and YES 93.3FM. In Germany, a few were taking advantage of Facebook features (*e.g.*, MDR), while others were not (*e.g.*, NDR). As a general comment, the Germany stations observed were not as active on FB as those stations observed in the U.S. and Singapore.

Radio is always exploring ways to add value while keeping costs down. As long as Facebook interaction is inexpensive it is likely to remain a part of stations' game plans. While we might surmise that Facebook pages do add interactive community value to station operations on some level, stations are still seeking ways to monetize the experience and determine the return on any investments. The issue of whether Facebook is increasing ratings, or the bottom line, in any appreciable way is a topic future studies might investigate, as is the relationship between listener numbers and station 'Likes'. We agree with the sentiment that radio stations should "manage their entry into the social media space before they start to measure it." [4]

This seems to be the case as radio companies are rushing into social media platforms, without being well-prepared to take strategic advantage from their participation. Radio has a distinct advantage though by being able to leverage their social media presence via their on-air activities. This is of course an important factor in Clear Channel's "iHeartRadio" campaign that aims to compete with social music services such as Pandora (<http://www.pandora.com/>). Many companies are utilizing their radio air time to drive listeners to their social media sites.

While the evolution of the radio-Facebook marriage continues to evolve, radio continues to look for creative and rewarding ways to connect to their listeners through this new service. Yet, there does not seem to be any set pattern as to what or when to post items on each station. Further, there does not seem to be message congruency throughout the day or in how the postings are presented. This point is unique in that most radio stations' broadcasts are homogenous at any hour of the day; the music is consistent to the style. Apparently, there are no similar rules yet for Facebook postings which cover any topic, any time, and come at varying rates. The rulebook is still being written. **FM**

About the authors

Bradley C. Freeman is an Assistant Professor in the Broadcast & Cinema Studies Department at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

E-mail: Bcfreeman [at] ntu [dot] edu [dot] sg

Julia Klapczynski works at an international law firm being responsible for employer branding with focus on social media and events. She holds a Master's degree of communications, psychology and business. During her studies at University of Leipzig (Germany), and Hong Kong Baptist University, she served many internships in the area of communications in multinational companies and at Nanyang Technological University.

Elliott Wood is Vice President/Director of Consumer Engagement Strategies for Strategic Radio Solutions.

Notes

¹ Park, *et al.*, 2009, p. 729.

² Muniz and Schau, 2011, p. 213.

³ While we examined over three dozen radio station Facebook pages, only a few were ultimately mentioned in the text due to word count restraints. Found in the text are items from the Facebook pages of WDVE, KMLE, WHTZ, KODA, KBCO, 997NOW, Wild 94.9, Radio 91.3, Wana FM, Class 95, WBIZ, MDR, NDR, Hitradio FFH, WMMS, WFBQ, DC101, KIIS, KOST, OLI FM, Hit-Radio Antenna 1, YES 93.3FM, WKTU, BigFM, SWR3, ENERGY, Amp Radio 98.7, 93.8Live, and 98.7FM.

⁴ Nair, 2011, p. 48.

References

E. Barnouw, 1968. *The golden web: A history of broadcasting in the United States 1933-1953*. New York: Oxford University Press.

R. Berry, 2006. "Will the iPod kill the radio star? Profiling podcasting as radio," *Convergence*, volume 12, number 2, pp. 143-162.

d. boyd and N. Ellison, 2008. "Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, volume 13, number 3, pp. 210-230, at <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>, accessed 20 March 2012.

P. Dumon, 2008. "Facebook groter dan MySpace," *De Morgen* (24 June), p. 25

- C. Evans and J. Smethers, 2001. "Streaming into the future: A Delphi study of broadcasters' attitudes toward cyber radio stations," *Journal of Radio Studies*, volume 8, number 1, pp. 5–28.
- D. Ferguson and C. Greer, 2011. "Local radio and microblogging: How radio stations in the U.S. are using Twitter," *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, volume 18, number 1, pp. 33–46.
- B. Freeman, 2011. "Internet killed the radio star? Music listening habits and perceptions of campus radio in Singapore," paper presented at the *Radio Conference: A Transnational Forum* (Auckland, New Zealand); see <http://radioconference2011.com/>, accessed 20 March 2012.
- B. Fogg, 2008. "Mass interpersonal persuasion: An early view of a new phenomenon," In: H. Oinas-Kukkonen, P. Hasle, M. Harjuma, K. Segerståhl, and P. Øhrstrøm (editors). *Persuasive technology: Third International Conference, Persuasive 2008: Proceedings. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, number 5033. Berlin; Springer, pp. 23–34.
- C. Greer and T. Phipps, 2003. "Noncommercial religious radio stations and the Web," *Journal of Radio Studies*, volume 10, number 1, pp. 17–32.
- N. Howe and W. Strauss, 2000. *Millennials rising: The next great generation*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Y. Kim, D. Sohn, and S. Choi, 2011. "Cultural difference in motivations for using social network sites: A comparative study of American and Korean college students," *Computers in Human Behavior*, volume 27, number 1, pp. 365–372.
- S. Kinsella, A. Passant, and J. Breslin, 2011. "Topic classification in social media using metadata from hyperlinked objects," In: P. Clough, C. Foley, C. Gurrin, G. Jones, W. Kraaij, H. Lee, and V. Murdock (editors). *Advances in information retrieval: 33rd European Conference on IR Research, ECIR 2011, Dublin, Ireland, April 18–21, 2011: Proceedings. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, number 6611. Berlin: Springer, pp. 201–206.
- C. Lin and L. Jeffres, 2001. "Comparing distinctions and similarities across websites of newspapers, radio stations, and television stations," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, volume 78, number 3, pp. 555–574.
- R. Lind and N. Medoff, 1999. "Radio stations and the World Wide Web," *Journal of Radio Studies*, volume 6, number 2, pp. 203–221.
- M. Lüders, 2008. "Conceptualising personal media," *New Media & Society*, volume 10, number 5, pp. 683–702.
- R. McChesney, 1993. *Telecommunications, mass media, and democracy: The battle for the control of U.S. broadcasting, 1928–1935*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- T. McCorkindale, 2010. "Can you see the writing on my wall? A content analysis of the Fortune 50's Facebook social networking sites," *Public Relations Journal*, volume 4, number 3, at http://www.prsa.org/Intelligence/PRJournal/Summer_10, accessed 20 March 2012.
- A. Muniz, Jr. and H. Schau, 2011. "How to inspire value-laden collaborative consumer-generated content," *Business Horizons*, volume 54, number 3, pp. 209–217.
- M. Nair, 2011. "Understanding and measuring the value of social media," *Journal of Corporate Accounting & Finance*, volume 22, number 3, pp. 45–51.
- Nielsen Company, 2009. "Time spent on Facebook up 700%, but MySpace.com still tops for video," *nielsenwire* (2 June), at http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/time-spent-on-facebook-up-700-but-myspace-still-tops-for-video/, accessed 20 March 2012.
- T. O'Reilly, 2005. "What is Web 2.0: Design patterns and business models for the next generation of software" (30 September), at <http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-2.0.html>, accessed 20 March 2012.
- M. Oetting and F. Jacob, 2007. "Empowered involvement and word of mouth: An agenda for academic enquiry," *European School of Management ESCP–EAP Working Paper*, number 28, at <http://www.empoweredinvolvement.com/download/>, accessed 20 March 2012.
- J. Palfrey and U. Gasser, 2010. *Born digital: Understanding the first generation of digital natives*. New York: Basic Books.
- N. Park, K. Kee, and S. Valenzuela, 2009. "Being immersed in social networking environment: Facebook groups, uses and gratifications, and social outcomes," *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, volume 12, number 6, pp. 729–733.

- T. Pempek, Y. Yermolayeva, and S. Calvert, 2009. "College students' social network experiences on Facebook," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, volume 30, number 3, pp. 227–238.
- L. Pitt and P. Berthon, 2010. "Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the Web: Marketing meets Web 2.0, social media and creative consumers," *Business Horizons*, volume 54, number 3, pp. 181–183.
- T. Pleil and A. Zerfass, 2007. "Internet und social software in der unternehmenskommunikation," In: M. Piwinger and A. Zerfaß (editors). *Handbuch unternehmenskommunikation* Wiesbaden: Gabler, pp. 511–532.
- R. Potter, 2002. "Give the people what they want: A content analysis of FM radio station home pages," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, volume 46, number 3, pp. 369–384.
- E. Rosen, 2002. *The anatomy of buzz: How to create word-of-mouth marketing*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.
- J. Sarachan and K. Reinson, 2011. "Public issues, private concerns: Social media and course management systems in higher education," In: C. Wankel (editor). *Educating Educators with Social Media. Cutting-edge Technologies in Higher Education*, volume 1. Bingley, U.K.: Emerald, pp. 227–244.
- D. Schuurman, C. Courtois, and L. De Marez, 2011. "New media adoption and usage among Flemish youngsters," *Telematics and Informatics*, volume 28, number 1, pp. 77–85.
- J. Servaes and P. Malikhao, 2010. "Advocacy strategies for health communication," *Public Relations Review*, volume 36, number 1, pp. 42–49.
- C. Steinfield, N. Ellison, and C. Lampe, 2008. "Social capital, self-esteem, and use of online social network sites: A longitudinal analysis," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, volume 29, number 6, pp. 434–445.
- J. Sterne, 2006. "The mp3 as cultural artifact," *New Media & Society*, volume 8, number 5, pp. 825–842.
- D. Tapscott, 2009. *Grown up digital: How the net generation is changing your world*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- R. Waters, E. Burnett, A. Lamm, and J. Lucas, 2009. "Engaging stakeholders through social networking: How nonprofit organizations are using Facebook," *Public Relations Review*, volume 35, number 2, pp. 102–106.
- W. Wee, 2011. "Understanding the real cost of social media" (22 May), at <http://www.techinasia.com/real-cost-of-social-media/>, accessed 20 March 2012.
- H. Yang and C. Lai, 2011. "Effects of perceived values on continuance usage of Facebook," In G. Shen and X. Huang (editors). *Advanced Research on Electronic Commerce, Web Application, and Communication. Communications in Computer and Information Science*, volume 143. Berlin: Springer, pp. 254–260.

Editorial history

Received 19 September 2011; accepted 16 March 2012.

"Radio and Facebook: The relationship between broadcast and social media software in the U.S., Germany, and Singapore" by Bradley C. Freeman, Julia Klapczynski, and Elliott Wood is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/).

Radio and Facebook: The relationship between broadcast and social media software in the U.S., Germany, and Singapore
by Bradley C. Freeman, Julia Klapczynski, and Elliott Wood
First Monday, Volume 17, Number 4 - 2 April 2012

<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/rt/prINTERfriendly/3768/3194>
doi:10.5210/fm.v17i4.3768