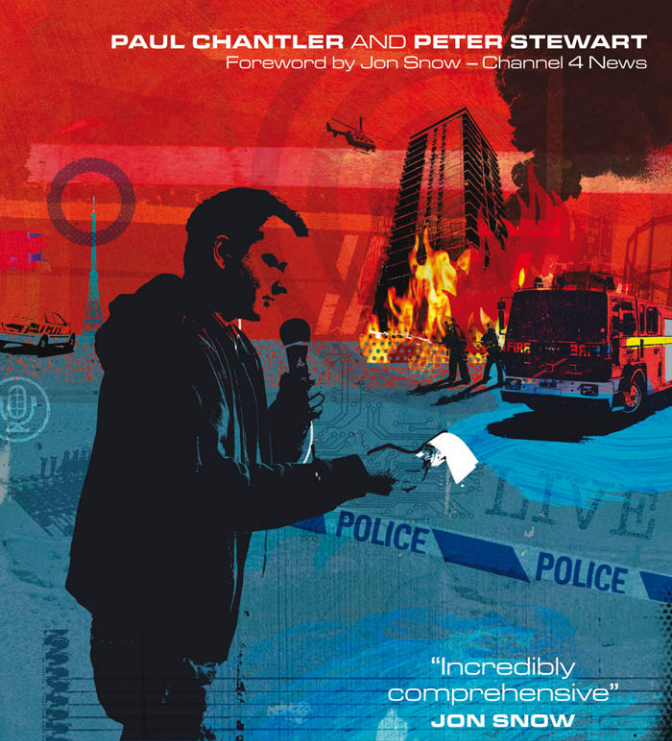


PAUL CHANTLER AND PETER STEWART

Foreword by Jon Snow – Channel 4 News



"Incredibly
comprehensive"

JON SNOW

ESSENTIAL RADIO JOURNALISM

HOW TO PRODUCE AND PRESENT RADIO NEWS

PAUL CHANTLER AND
PETER STEWART

ESSENTIAL
RADIO
JOURNALISM



A & C BLACK • LONDON

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Foreword

Despite all the elements of the technological revolution, to my mind radio remains the most stimulating and exciting medium of all. Music and the spoken word have the capacity to create and transmit images, ideas, and information that no other medium can rival. The internet generally, and podcasting in particular, together with digital transmission, have taken the medium to new heights of quality and availability. I have no scientific grounds for this claim beyond the anecdotal, but I believe aurally received stimuli enjoy a more intensive interaction with the human brain than any other. Drama, sport, classical, jazz, and rock music, and not least news and current affairs, thrive in the radio environment. In short, the pictures on radio are quite simply better, and I say that as a journalist who has only spent the vast majority of his working life in the apparently ultimate visual medium of television. My life in radio lasted little more than three years, yet I found it extraordinarily challenging and, at the same time, fulfilling.

For the working journalist, radio is an empowering medium. It's you against the world. You are effectively dependent upon no one else. You retrieve, process, and broadcast your entire report yourself. Television, for all the pace of change, is still labour intensive and heavily reliant on teams of other technicians and journalists, some of them unknown to you and unseen. Why, one duty man at a satellite switching centre in Honolulu can still make the difference to whether your report ever airs.

Yet radio, in common with every other medium, is still fundamentally dependent upon the flair and ingenuity of the individual journalist. That's why this text book needs to be seen in its true context. The authors have produced an incredibly comprehensive sweep of the basics of radio journalism. Learn and understand this lot and you will have a fine grasp of how it all works. But then there's the rest. Radio journalism is an experiential process. You pick it up and learn from every story you ever do. I am still learning, every day. It tests your capacity to observe and to distil and express what you have observed as nowhere else. You have to understand the nature of sound. Three seconds of natural sound can tell a thousand pictures. But it has to be the right three seconds. Memorable radio combines sound with a use of language that, whilst it may come naturally, can take years to perfect.

My day begins and ends with radio. I have no desire to cheat my senses with a hard image of what is happening. I want my rested imagination to wake gradually. I turn on the radio and begin almost instantly to visualise the news and the evolving day. I do not lie in bed pining for the televisual or photographic image. I want to take in the whole story. It is the same at the end of the day – I want the elasticity of sound to allow my senses to reflect on the day that has passed. It's these demands that we as radio journalists must aspire to fulfil. And not all that can be taught or even read about in a text book. We have to let our imagination run riot. How do I want to respond to this story? What do I want to find out? And whilst objectivity is a watchword, we cannot as journalists deny our own starting points. We are not all the same. I am a man, you may be a woman. Ethnicity, sexual orientation, yes even politics are bound to influence your starting point on a story. We cannot purge ourselves of our own life experiences as we approach a story. Instead we must build on the insights and understanding that those experiences give us. At the same time we must remain open to those experiences we have not had, those understandings we do not possess and we must seek help from other people and sources to reflect.

It's a fabulous chance, working in this field, and if after all this you really WANT to do it, you WILL. And if you do, one day you will, like me, find yourself saying, 'These crazy people, they PAY me for doing something I absolutely love doing.' Good luck!

Jon Snow
London

Preface

There are many definitions of news. We have collected quite a few over the years including, ‘That which is new, interesting and true’ from esteemed radio expert and author Robert McLeish; ‘Subjects I want to know about in a short amount of time,’ from US radio consultant Rasa Kaye; ‘A timely account of a recent, interesting and significant event’ from US news expert James W. Kershner; ‘Something someone doesn’t want you to know’ from the late American broadcast news pioneer Reuven Frank; ‘The stuff I care about and the stuff I want to pass on’, from a woman in a focus group; and our favourite, from the satirical UK television programme *The Day Today*, ‘Fact multiplied by importance equals news’!

The amount and variety of news available to people worldwide has never been greater. Words and their meanings take on huge significance. We live in a sophisticated and complicated world where people are highly sensitive to all sorts of things racial, ethnic, religious and sexual. In this climate, there has never been more of a need for the traditional news reporting values of fairness, accuracy and balance.

Notice we use the word *reporting*. We believe the word *journalism* has become a little tainted over recent years because of the increasing tendency to use it as camouflage for comment and speculation rather than old-fashioned reporting and analysis. It is this blurring of the line between reporting news and commenting upon it that worries us. We think there is a compelling need to return to solid, professional reporting and original story telling – in other words, *pure journalism*.

Bill Keller, the executive editor of the *New York Times*, says reliable news reporting is dwindling despite the internet-driven worldwide information explosion:

‘The civic labour performed by journalists on the ground cannot be replicated by legions of bloggers sitting hunched over their computer screens . . . What is absent from the vast array of new media outlets is, first and foremost, the great engine of newsgathering – the people who witness events, ferret out information, supply context and explanation.’

In an age of infinite choice made possible by new technology, we believe there has never been a better time to emphasise the importance of an editor. When there is less and less time available, people crave a ‘trusted friend’ to wade through what is on offer and make a selection for them based on an objective view of what is important, offering them effectively a daily or hourly news ‘digest’.

We cannot help but feel that the slant away from reporting and into colourful comment and never-ending speculation with an agenda is leading to question marks over the way people trust what we do.

A report by UK regulator Ofcom published in 2007 called *New News Future News* says the level of disengagement from news by some young people and ethnic minorities has grown since 2002. Both groups perceive bias and exaggeration in what they are told through

broadcast journalism. The question of disengagement is also linked to concerns about detachment from the wider democratic process.

This underlines how important it is for radio to continue to safeguard impartiality with editorial decisions which are based on dispassionate objective criteria rather than on the basis of bias or prejudice as in some newspapers.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4 in 2007, Helen Boaden, director of BBC news, said:

‘Impartiality for me is a process, not a state of grace. It is about open mindedness to all points of view . . . it’s about catching yourself out in conscious and unconscious biases. It is about balance – but not balance on the one hand, on the other hand. It’s much more about getting a diversity of views so that the audience can choose for itself which approach and which evidence they find most satisfactory. The way I was raised in the BBC is always to get beyond opinion and test evidence. That sounds simple. It often isn’t because even the methodologies of testing evidence can be open to claims of bias. Following the evidence is often the most useful way to get to the truth – but the truth is never simple.’

In his excellent book *Flat Earth News*, author and journalist Nick Davies suggests journalists are often required to be neutral. In other words, they become invisible and deliberately refrain from expressing the judgements which are essential for journalism:

‘Neutrality requires the packaging of conflicting claims, which is precisely the opposite of truth-telling. If two men go to mow a meadow and one comes back and says “The job’s done” and the other comes back and says “We never cut a single blade of grass”, neutrality requires the journalist to report a controversy surrounding the state of the meadow, to throw together both men’s claims and shove it out to the world with an implicit sign over the top declaring, “We don’t know what’s happening – you decide”.’

The BBC has undertaken extensive research on audience expectations and perceptions of impartiality. In a report on the findings of the research, six out of ten people agreed that broadcasters do not give a fair and informed view. The report’s author, independent programme maker John Bridcut, wrote:

‘Impartiality in broadcasting (used to involve) keeping a balance to ensure the seesaw did not tip too far to one side. Those days are over: In today’s multi-polar Britain with its range of cultures, beliefs and identities, impartiality involves much more than two sides . . . The seesaw has been replaced by the wagon wheel where the wheel is not circular and has a shifting centre with spokes that go in all directions.’

On the ground, BBC correspondents adhere to the principle of being first-hand witnesses dealing in raw facts. World Affairs Editor John Simpson says:

‘As journalists we have to be very clear about our function. It’s to give people the plain unvarnished facts as fully and honestly as possible. We must not tell them what to think; leave that to the newspapers. Let the facts speak for themselves; if we try to persuade people what to think, we’re being politicians instead of objective reporters.’

Quite.

As radio expert Robert McLeish wrote in his excellent book *The Techniques of Radio Production*, first published in 1978:

‘The reporter does not select “victims” and hound them – he does not ignore those whose views he dislikes – he does not pursue vendettas nor have favourites. He does not promote the policies of sectarian interests and he resists the persuasions of those seeking free publicity. He is fair. Having no editorial opinion of his own, he seeks to tell the news without making judgements about it. He is the servant of his listener.’

Writing on journalism resource website www.poynter.org, Max Frankel makes the point that good reporting should aid understanding:

‘News is the portrayal and ordering of information in vivid image and narrative. News is the transformation of facts into stories so they can be understood and remembered in ways that inform and instruct, even as they delight or dismay. News not only portrays events, it ranks them in some order of importance as defined by public needs and interests. And besides recounting events, meaningful news digs to discover their cause and assess their consequence.’

When the original version of this book was published in 1992 under the title *Local Radio Journalism*, the introduction argued that many people thought of radio news as the purest form of news available because of its sheer brevity; news on the radio has to be pure because it is so short. There is still some truth in that statement today. Research in 2007 called *The Big Listen* undertaken among 10,000 listeners by The RadioCentre, the trade organisation that represents commercial radio in the UK, showed that nearly three quarters of them describe radio as trustworthy – double the number that trust TV and three times the score for the Internet.

To maintain that precious trust and to maintain the confidence of the listening public, professional radio news is therefore under an obligation to be pure: the pinnacle of journalism – wide-ranging and well-informed, presenting the facts, the whole facts and nothing

but the facts. Perhaps in doing so, radio journalists will become the role models for new audio-providers such as podcasters.

The idea of *Essential Radio Journalism* is to help towards journalistic purity and integrity. It is a working manual and handbook for radio journalists as well as a textbook for broadcast journalism students. You should find it helpful whether you are looking for your first job or have many years experience in radio.

Although much of the book focuses on the UK radio industry, we have tried to make the principles as universal as possible. We have also included a chapter which gives an overview of radio across the globe.

This edition is more detailed and comprehensive than previous versions. You will find chapters on technology, legalities and ethics as well as production and bulletin techniques together with presentation tips and advice on how to break into radio journalism.

Perhaps for us the most important parts are the chapters on writing and reporting for radio. Words are at the heart of what we do – and our use of them needs careful thought based on knowledge of the full range of techniques available to us.

There are many potential pitfalls facing radio journalists today, ranging from the importance of trust and impartiality through to a return to the basics of good reporting. In a world of digital television, blogs, podcasts, video-on-demand, search engines and the iPod, traditional radio risks being left behind.

Indeed, more and more journalists from other fields are encroaching on the territory of radio journalists; for example, many newspapers now offer podcasts and news bulletins on their websites. Newspaper reporters are often sent out to report stories with a video camera or portable recorder as well.

Happily though, it seems listeners are more in love with radio than ever before. We should remind ourselves why that affection is so high. It is because radio is free, easy to use, a friend and – crucially – a medium they can genuinely trust.

There is of course a final danger, arguably the biggest danger of all. We have to guard against journalism becoming what has become known as ‘churnalism’.

In *Flat Earth News*, Nick Davies argues that newsrooms must avoid becoming news factories where the imperative is feeding an ever-growing number of outlets at great speed:

‘Working in a news factory, without the time to check, without the chance to go out and make contacts and find leads, reporters are reduced to churnalism, to the passive processing of material which overwhelmingly tends to be supplied for them by outsiders, particularly wire agencies and PR. In these circumstances, the news factory will produce an effective and reliable product for its readers, viewers and listeners only if those outside suppliers are delivering an effective and reliable account of the world.’

As a radio journalist, you should never think of news as that which simply appears on a screen in front of you in the office. Never forget that *real news* is what you go out and find through your own efforts.

Do not simply cover stories – uncover them.

Paul Chantler
Peter Stewart
Autumn 2008

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1 Radio In The UK

The UK has a strong tradition of public service broadcasting, a flourishing commercial radio industry and a growing community radio sector.

The following information was correct at the time of going to press in spring 2009 but, due to the ever-changing media landscape, is subject to sometimes quite rapid and significant change.

The majority of stations in Britain are owned and operated either by the British Broadcasting Corporation (the BBC) or commercial companies. BBC stations are funded publicly through the television licence fee. They provide a wide variety of entertainment and information in both music and speech formats. Commercial companies rely on advertising and sponsorship revenue. Many of these companies are owned by large groups such as GMR Radio and Global Radio. Commercial stations mostly feature music and entertainment but also feature news and information. There are national, regional and local stations.

Two main transmitting systems operate in the UK. The most extensive and widely used is the conventional analogue terrestrial system which appears on four wavebands: FM and AM (still sometimes called Medium Wave), which are the most commonly used; Long Wave and Short Wave. Analogue radio services are now being supplemented by a growing number of digital services for which listeners need a new radio set.

The BBC is obliged by law to be impartial, accurate and independent. It operates under Royal Charter and its stations operate under 'service agreements' drawn up by the BBC Trust, an independent group of trustees acting in the public interest. The BBC also operates the World Service broadcasting news, information, education and entertainment globally in 33 languages. This is financed by a government grant and not through the TV licence fee.

Commercial stations are licensed and regulated by the government's Office of Communication, Ofcom, and operate under official Formats which specify their content and style.



John Humphrys in the studio of the *Today* programme. Courtesy: BBC

National radio

There are five main UK-wide BBC stations and three national commercial services broadcasting on FM or AM. More national stations broadcast on digital.

The BBC stations are:

- **Radio One** – A pop music station targeted at young people playing chart, dance, urban and alternative music, much of it new or released in the last few years, featuring presenters such as Chris Moyles and the well-established news programme *Newsbeat*.
- **Radio Two** – The UK's most listened to station combining a wide variety of popular music and culture with a diverse range of specialist music, features, documentaries and comedy including well-known presenters Terry Wogan and Chris Evans.
- **Radio Three** – Playing classical music but also featuring jazz and programmes about culture and the arts.
- **Radio Four** – Featuring intelligent speech including news, drama, comedy and current affairs. Journalism is the spine of Radio 4. It is the home of highly acclaimed, highly rated and long-running programmes such as *Today*, *The World At One*, *PM* and *Any Questions?*
- **Radio Five Live** – Featuring rolling news and sport 24 hours a day with breaking news, expert analysis, discussion and live sports commentaries.

There are also BBC stations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The three national commercial stations are:

- **Classic FM** – The UK's first national commercial station which went on air in 1992 playing popular classical music. Owned by Global Radio.
- **Absolute Radio** – Playing rock and pop music. Owned by TIML and Absolute Radio.
- **TalkSport** – Featuring a variety of sport and current affairs phone-ins. Owned by UTV Radio.

Absolute and TalkSport both broadcast throughout the UK on AM although Absolute (previously called Virgin Radio) also simulcasts on an FM frequency in London.

Regional radio

There are 20 commercial regional stations in the UK covering populations ranging from about one to six million people.

They feature mostly music and entertainment. Many are adult contemporary formats aimed at people aged 25 to 44 such as Real Radio in Scotland, Yorkshire and South Wales (owned by GMG Radio); Smooth Radio in the North West and the Midlands (owned by GMG Radio); Heart in the Midlands (owned by Global Radio); and Wave in Solent (owned by Bauer Radio).

Some regional stations feature specialist music such as Galaxy in the North East, Manchester and Yorkshire playing dance and R&B music (owned by Global Radio); Kiss in the South West and East of England playing dance (owned by Bauer Radio); and Kerrang in the Midlands playing rock (owned by Bauer Radio). There are also commercial radio talk stations in Edinburgh (Talk 107) and Liverpool (CityTalk).

Local radio

Growth

Local radio in the UK started in 1967 when the BBC opened Radio Leicester. The BBC retained its monopoly for six years until the first commercial station LBC began broadcasting in London in 1973. It was followed a few days later by Capital Radio.

Throughout the 70s and early 80s, the number of BBC and commercial stations continued to grow. All stations were initially allocated both an AM and FM frequency but in the mid eighties commercial stations were encouraged to 'split' transmissions, offering different programme services on each of their frequencies. Many chose pop on FM and oldies with more speech and information on AM.

Meanwhile, the BBC grew its local town-based stations into countywide operations. For example, Radio Brighton became Radio Sussex and Radio Medway became Radio Kent.

In the late 80s and early 90s, both BBC and commercial stations consolidated into larger operations. Commercial stations, independently owned by local individuals and companies, were acquired by larger media groups. Some BBC stations combined to cover more than one county, for example Radio Sussex started broadcasting to Surrey and became BBC Southern Counties Radio.

When re-licensing the commercial stations, the regulator introduced official Promises of Performance for each station to ensure local content and programming were maintained despite any change in ownership.

In the commercial sector, the battle for audiences – and advertising revenue – became fierce with programming and promotional techniques imported from the US and Australia where commercial radio was better established.

In BBC Local Radio, a more serious approach featuring talk and speech has led to stations carving a niche for themselves among a generally older audience.

Despite the massive growth in the number of stations, the total number of people listening to the radio – national, regional or local – still stays the same at about 45 million people. Nine out of ten people in the UK are regular radio listeners.

BBC Local radio

BBC Local Radio is a speech-based network of stations focusing on local news, current affairs, topical information, community debate, social action and local sport linked by mature, personality presenters in a convivial, friendly style.

There are now 40 BBC local stations across the UK serving different and contrasting communities. Some, such as Radio Manchester and Radio WM in the West Midlands, cover large cities and conurbations. Others, like Radio Cornwall and Radio Norfolk, are based in predominantly rural areas.

Each station is on the air for an average 18 hours a day, typically from 6am to midnight. Many stations join together and broadcast regional output in the evenings. The trend in the 1990s to merge stations for cost reasons has now been reversed in some areas with additional investment. For example, both Radio Oxford and Radio Berkshire have been brought back on air (after broadcasting for a time as BBC Thames Valley) and Southern Counties now produces two different breakfast and 'drive time' shows, one for Sussex (from its Brighton studios) and one for Surrey (from its base in Guildford).

On average, BBC Local Radio's speech content has increased from 50% to 75% over the last few years. At breakfast time and during afternoon drive time the stations become all speech. The phone-in is an important part of each BBC station's output as it is considered

The newsroom at
BBC Radio
Manchester.
Courtesy: Nick Lloyd
Photography



an open gateway to the audience in an era where interactivity through email and texts is becoming commonplace.

Many listeners to BBC Local Radio are aged 45 and over. Research shows that, as people get older, their sense of local attachment becomes stronger, their roots deepen and their appetite increases for local speech radio which reflects their community. Because BBC Local Radio was established in the late sixties and seventies, the older generation became loyal listeners.

Commercial local radio

Commercial radio survives on sales revenue from selling advertising and sponsorship. In order to achieve sales, a commercial station has to attract a large audience and cater to the largest potential market. Therefore most commercial stations in the UK play mainstream popular music presented by entertaining personalities supplemented by local news and information.

There are now more than 250 local commercial stations in the UK. About half of them serve communities of fewer than 500,000 people.

Almost all the stations broadcast 24 hours a day. Local stations include those covering big cities such as Capital in London, Clyde in Glasgow, BRMB in Birmingham and Metro in Newcastle; medium size stations such as Trent FM in Nottingham and KCFM in Hull; and smaller stations in rural areas such as Moray Firth in Inverness, Lincs FM in Lincolnshire and Stray FM in Harrogate.

There are also small-scale commercial stations serving just one town or community. The smallest station in the UK is Two Lochs Radio in Gairloch and Loch Ewe in Scotland which covers an area of just 1,681 people. Other smaller stations include Spire FM in Salisbury, Sun FM in Sunderland and Rutland Radio. Because of their size, some stations have struggled to break even financially. Others have formed alliances to share costs, expertise and programming.

During the daytime peak listening hours, most stations carry live programming produced locally. During evenings, stations either automate their output using a computer play-out system or join together with other stations to broadcast network programming. In late 2008, many of the medium sized stations owned by Global Radio, such as Chiltern FM and Essex FM, were re-named as Heart FM, to make branding and networking easier.

Commercial stations operate a variety of different formats. Among the most popular are:

- Contemporary Hit Radio (CHR) playing top 40 pop music aimed at people in their teens and twenties.
- Adult Contemporary (AC) playing classic pop hits from the 70s, 80s, 90s and today aimed at people in their twenties and thirties.
- Gold playing pop from the 60s and 70s aimed at people aged 40 and older.
- Urban playing R&B and hip hop.
- Rock playing classic and contemporary rock and alternative music.

London has the most crowded and competitive radio markets in the UK with a wide range of stations and more diverse formats including XFM (alternative rock music), Kiss (dance), Choice (urban), Heart (adult contemporary), Magic (adult contemporary), Smooth (easy listening), Capital (contemporary hit radio) and Premier (Christian). London also has two commercial all-speech stations, LBC 97.3FM and LBC News on AM.

The regulator, Ofcom, is a government appointed organisation which awards licences, sets content standards, deals with complaints and ensures compliance with the official Formats that form part of a station's licence.

Digital radio

There are three broadcast methods or 'platforms' for digital radio in the UK – DAB, digital television and the internet. All these platforms offer an increased level of choice and sound quality over what is available on the FM and AM analogue wavebands. Radio over mobile phones is also at the cutting edge of technology.

Radio via DAB

DAB or Digital Audio Broadcasting uses digital technology to make audio sound better. It offers improved CD-quality sound with hardly any interference such as hiss, crackle or fade. Because DAB is a more efficient way to use radio spectrum, it means there is more space for new stations as well as for the transmission of scrolling text and data services such as programme schedules and written contextual information about programmes.

With DAB, it is much easier to select a station because you tune in by the station name from the text display screen so there are no frequencies to remember.

Many FM and AM stations also broadcast their programmes on DAB. There is also a whole raft of new, specialist stations unique to DAB and tailored to specific demographics and tastes. DAB radio brings double and sometimes treble the choice of stations offered on analogue radio. It is available across 85% of the country. Some towns and cities can now choose up to 50 stations. In London, nearly 60 stations are available on DAB. There are no subscriptions to pay.

In order to hear DAB, listeners have to buy a digital radio set. There are now more than 300 different DAB radio products on the market offering consumers a range of style and functionality. Millions of new DAB radios have been sold and one in five people now own one. Many other audio products including music centres and clock radios now offer DAB radio as an integral function. Some DAB radios allow you to pause and rewind live radio so you can catch something you might have missed such as a weather forecast, a traffic report or a news bulletin.

Widespread availability of DAB radio in cars is still some way off but there are encouraging signals coming from major car manufacturers. Already some popular car models are offering DAB as standard or as an upgrade.

DAB is transmitted via multiplexes for specific areas where several services are grouped together and transmitted simultaneously.

The BBC's multiplex contains simulcasts of all five BBC national stations plus other services such as:

- **1Xtra** – Playing contemporary black music.
- **Five Live Sports Extra** – Live sporting commentaries.
- **6 Music** – Rock and pop music from the last 40 years.
- **BBC 7** – Comedy, drama and books.
- **BBC Asian Network** – Aimed at young British Asians.

There are two national commercial radio multiplexes. The first, called Digital One, is owned by Global Radio and simulcasts all three national analogue commercial stations as well as a range of other digital-only services including Planet Rock. The London multiplex features stations such as Heart, Smash Hits and QRadio.

Ofcom is also licensing a large number of local digital multiplexes to enable regional and local stations to be heard digitally. Of course, more radio stations mean more opportunities for journalists and presenters.

An example of one of the stylish DAB radios on the market



Radio via digital television

Radio stations – both new ones and simulcasts of existing stations – are available by cable and satellite television. Against all expectations, listening to the radio via television has taken off in the UK with nearly 40% of adults having tried it and 20% listening every week.

Apart from all the major radio services available on analogue and via DAB, digital television also carries a wide variety of other radio stations including specialist stations for sports fans, gay people, ethnic minorities and shoppers.

Radio via the internet

Receiving radio via the internet is not new, but the growth of broadband in homes throughout the UK means this is growing in popularity as a way to tune into favourite UK radio stations or find new digital stations as well as tune into stations from all over the world. More than one in five adults have listened to radio via the internet – also known as web radio – and one in ten listens every week. There are a growing number of internet-only stations such as Play Radio UK offering a range of genre-specific channels.

Almost all UK national, regional and local stations 'stream' their output on their website to enable people to listen live. In addition, there are other services such as downloadable podcasts or 'listen again' features on radio station websites. Podcasts can either be excerpts from a particular programme or a unique specially-recorded piece of audio made available

for downloading onto an mp3 player such as an iPod. 'Listen again' features allow you to hear online a recent programme or feature from a programme on demand.

Radio via mobile phone

Many people in the UK, especially the young, tune into radio via mobile phones. Figures show that one in four people aged under 24 listens to radio via a mobile. Mobile manufacturers in the UK include FM radios in handsets as a standard feature. By contrast in the USA, it is surprising to learn that hardly any mobile phones have FM radios in them.

As mobile handsets become more sophisticated, manufacturers are looking to offer an even wider range of radio services at better quality by installing DAB digital radio chips. New functions will become available as a result of this. Mobiles with internet ability, such as the i-Phone, can be used to receive web radio stations.

Community radio

There are a growing number of community radio stations which cover small geographical areas on a not-for-profit basis and which are focused on delivering specific social benefits.

About 70 community stations are on the air reflecting the variety and diversity of cultures, demographics and tastes in the UK. For example, there are stations catering for elderly people, children, young people, the Muslim community, the black community, the Asian community, Christians, Irish Gaelic speakers and a wide variety of musical tastes.

In the next few years, there are expected to be many more community stations starting up as Ofcom has received scores of applications and expressions of interest from groups.

The holders of community radio licences can seek financial support from local authorities as well as Ofcom's Community Radio Fund which has awarded nearly £1 million in grants.

Restricted radio

Restricted Service Licences or RSLs are low-powered temporary radio stations on FM and AM. RSLs are for a limited geographical coverage area such as a town or up to two miles within a city. Thousands of RSL licences have been granted over the last few years to people wanting to broadcast for a variety of reasons.

For example, a short-term licence for 28 days may celebrate a local event, broadcast for a religious period (such as Ramadan) or be run for an educational project. Long-term licences are for radio stations within an establishment – for example people in hospital, students in college, forces personnel on an army base or visitors to a shopping centre or theme park.

Pirate radio

There are hundreds of pirate radio stations broadcasting illegally in the UK, usually in the big cities at weekends. Although they may play specialist music not heard on other stations, they are breaking the law. Their transmissions interfere with the signals of legal stations and

in extreme cases affect emergency service radios and the frequencies used by air traffic controllers at airports causing a safety risk.

In 2006, Ofcom carried out more than 1,000 studio raids, seizing equipment, transmitters and aerials.

Because of the illegality of pirate radio stations, it is risky for novice broadcasters to become involved as this might have an adverse affect on a career in professional radio.

2 RADIO WORLDWIDE

There have never been more radio stations on the air across the world. New privately owned stations and networks are growing alongside established state broadcasters in many countries. What follows is by no means comprehensive but simply an overview of the way radio is developing in some key territories.

North America

The United States has the most highly developed mass media in the world. Unlike in the UK, where radio first developed on a national and public service level without commercials, almost all radio in the US began as local and commercial and remains that way today.

There are about 10,000 commercial radio stations in the US. In the cities, there are stations to satisfy almost every musical taste, language preference and point of view. Music is usually found on the FM waveband while news, sports and talk stations predominate on the AM band.

Talk radio was barely in existence until about 25 years ago and has become extremely popular. Listeners phone in and talk to celebrities, personalities and experts. Freedom of expression in the US is guaranteed by the constitution and some stations give airtime to extreme hues of political – often right-wing – and religious thinking. Elsewhere, outspoken ‘shock jocks’ push at the boundaries of taste.

Music formats have become increasingly specialised. Among the top formats are adult contemporary, top 40, urban (hip-hop and R&B), oldies and country. Spanish stations have also become popular in the last few years because of the rising numbers of people in the US who speak Spanish as a first language.

Most US commercial stations are now controlled by media conglomerates such as Clear Channel, Emmis, Infinity and others.

In an era when TV is the glamour medium, the reach of radio is awesome. Almost every American household – 99% – has at least one radio set. The average is five per household.

Most music stations have a personality-based breakfast show, often in the form of a ‘double header’ with two presenters, usually a man and a woman. There may also be ‘zoo’ format shows where a group of people, usually reflective of the target audience, present the show. These shows have a high proportion of talk on topical issues. During the rest of the day, programming is presented locally. Sometimes local stations opt into nationally syndicated programming carried across hundreds of stations. Localism is reflected in opt-out slots for commercials, promos and news.

Many US music stations only carry news at peak times in the morning. Across the day there are fewer news bulletins. News is compiled by one or two people and is usually locally focused, although wire feeds from news agencies are used to reflect national and international stories. Speech stations, which usually take syndicated talk-shows outside breakfast (such as those fronted by Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity and Dr Laura), often opt-out for news breaks from their parent company (such as ABC, CNN or Fox). These are sometimes, but

not always, followed by a local bulletin before the listener is returned to the syndicated show. Unlike on UK stations, the editorial agenda on most stations is very inward-looking and local. Rarely do international stories get reported. Some stations have agreements with local TV stations to use audio gathered by TV crews. The writing and presentation style on American radio is very informal and conversational.

American public broadcasting grew in the 1970s and is partly government funded but also supported by private grants and subscriptions. National Public Radio (NPR) has more than 600 member stations and offers a highbrow mix of news, debate and music without advertising. There are about 1,500 radio stations run by universities and colleges, many of which act as talent feeders into mainstream commercial stations. Many US presenters started in college radio.

The government sponsors radio stations aimed at audiences outside the US, 'Voice of America' being one. In recent years, stations for audiences in the former Soviet bloc have been cut back while stations targeting audiences in the Middle East and Asia have been launched.

A new form of radio that is gaining popularity in the US is satellite radio. The two biggest radio services are Sirius and XM, both of which offer hundreds of channels on a subscription basis. Unlike terrestrial radio, these services feature few or no commercials. They are also not regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, the FCC, so have a great deal of freedom to broadcast whatever they like. Satellite radios are now installed in some cars and in the few years since they started have attracted millions of listeners.

Canada has a long history of public broadcasting. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) was set up in the 1930s as a response to the growing influence of American radio.

CBC operates English-language network Radio One and cultural network Radio Two. It also operates French-language services *Première Chaîne* and *Espace Musique*. There are about 2,000 licensed radio stations in Canada, many of them commercial.

Australia and New Zealand

The two dominant types of radio in Australia are format-driven commercial stations and national public broadcasting stations run by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, ABC.

There are more than 260 commercial stations on air in Australia, most of them in regional markets with 40 in the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. Following changes to ownership rules, there has been considerable consolidation in the industry over the past few years. Major networks dominate ownership although some smaller independent and family-owned companies still have influence in some regions.

Among the main players are Austereo, DMG Radio, Australian Radio Network, Macquarie Regional Radioworks and Star Broadcasting Network. Sydney is one of the busiest radio markets with 20 or so stations competing with each other. The main FM music stations include Nova, Triple M and 2DayFM with newstalk station 2GB on AM.

Australians expect to hear the news either on the hour or half hour. Attempts to introduce news at 20 past and 20 to the hour or at 15 or 45 minutes past the hour have failed.

The ABC runs a large number of in-house newsrooms across all capital cities and most regional centres. Most capital city commercial stations also have their own newsrooms and sometimes resources are shared with other stations in a group in the same city. Most bulletins are tailored for each station's output.

The main source of news for most commercial stations is Australia's only news agency wire service, Australian Associated Press (AAP) supplemented by the sharing of stories between network stations and, of course, locally-generated material.

The ABC's writing style is formal; commercial stations, especially those targeting younger audiences, have adopted a more conversational, informal style. AM stations run news round the clock while the FM stations only broadcast news during the daytime.

In the era of mobile phones with instant access to most people, radio news tends to be generated from within the newsroom with reporters rarely leaving the building to gather audio. The radio station with several news vehicles and access to a boat or helicopter is long gone. Economies of scale have led to audio-sharing with TV crews.

In regional or rural areas of Australia, the commitment to radio news varies. Some networks have 'hub' newsrooms in large regional centres serving their stations in small towns. These stations may have one journalist who works at the peak-time breakfast output and the rest of the day's news comes from the hub. More recently some networks have a journalist working from home – sometimes miles away from a market – providing news.

New Zealand's broadcasters enjoy one of the world's most liberal media arenas. The broadcasting sector was deregulated in 1988 when the government allowed competition to the state broadcaster. There are now scores of independently owned commercial radio stations throughout the country, modelled on US and Australian formats. Public broadcaster Radio New Zealand runs three radio networks – National Radio, Concert FM and the AM Network.

India

India has become the fastest-growing radio marketplace in the world. Radio is still where many Indians, especially those in rural areas, get their entertainment and news.

Until 2000, the only radio in India was the government's All India Radio. Since then, the airwaves have been completely privatised with scores of licences and frequencies being offered for auction in every city and town.

This has led to an explosion of new commercially-funded radio stations across India. Some big cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Chennai have up to 11 radio stations and there are still more licences to be won for smaller cities and towns. Many stations are being launched by big groups trying to build valuable networks. The biggest groups are Radio Mirchi, owned by the Times of India newspaper group; Reliance/Adlabs, who run a group of stations called Big FM; and the Radio City group of stations.

Formats consist of music and fun phone-ins, linked together by RJs or Radio Jocks. Bollywood film music is enormously popular in India and most stations have this as the centrepiece of their musical offering. The biggest problem with the privatised stations is that they all sound the same. Consultants from overseas are working with local management to improve the differentiation of station sounds.

There are certain restrictions on the new wave of stations. No networking is allowed at the moment, so local stations in different parts of the country cannot share programming. Also no commercial stations are allowed to broadcast news, although this is likely to change soon.

The only station currently permitted to broadcast news is the government's All India Radio, one of the largest radio networks in the world. AIR has many different services, catering to different regions and languages across India. There are general channels featuring film music, news and comedy as well as stations aimed at specific audiences such as young people.

Europe

France

Radio in France is increasingly popular. The long-established commercial stations, particularly RTL and Europe 1, still command large audiences. As a result of deregulation in the 1980s, they have been joined by a multiplicity of formatted, thematic FM stations, often consolidated into successful commercial networks such as hit music station NRJ and oldies station Nostalgie. There are about 1,200 stations in France. Radio France is the country's public broadcaster and operates national and regional outlets including the speech-based France Inter and all-news France Info. Radio France Internationale (RFI) is the international broadcaster with numerous outlets worldwide.

Germany

Radio in Germany is organised in a decentralised fashion in line with the federal political structure. Each of the country's 16 regions regulates its own public and private broadcasting. The intention behind this is to prevent the exploitation of the media by a strong national government, as happened under the Nazi dictatorship. There are two public broadcasting corporations, ARD and ZDF. Private radio was nonexistent in Germany until the early 1980s when commercial radio was allowed to compete with public radio. Like France, the UK, America and Australia, formats target specific demographic groups with music and talk. Germany's international broadcaster is called Deutsche Welle and broadcasts radio services in many languages.

Spain

In Spain, radio is considered a very influential medium owing to its large audiences, greater than many other countries. Spanish people are very loyal radio listeners. As with other European countries, there is now a mixture of public and private broadcasting. There has been a spectacular expansion of radio stations in recent years with the emergence of new commercial operators. Despite the proliferation of broadcasters and their diverse political stances, concerns have been raised about political influence in the media, particularly public broadcasting. The main players in Spanish radio include public network Radio Nacional de España (RNE) which broadcasts speech network Radio 1, cultural network Radio Clásica, youth-orientated Radio 3 and news station Radio 5 Todo Noticias; the commercial Cadena SER network which operates more than 50 national and regional stations; and other groups such as Onda Cero, Cadena COPE and Punto Radio.

Italy

Italy's blend of politics and media has made headlines inside and outside the country, with watchdogs and some politicians pointing to former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's influence over public and private broadcasting. About 2,500 commercial radio stations broadcast in Italy. A few of them have national coverage and most are music based. They share the airwaves with stations from the national broadcaster RAI including flagship national network Radio 1, entertainment-based Radio 2, cultural station Radio 3 and parliamentary station GR Parlamento. Among the main commercial broadcasters are Radio 24 covering news and business, and Radio Italia and R101 both of which play Italian pop music.