"YOU'RE IN THE RADIO LAB!" - UNIVERSITY RADIO STATIONS SERVING THE WIDER COMMUNITY, USING CASE STUDIES FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM, AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES

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Introduction

In a number of areas globally,the development of what has come to be known as 'community' radio has occurred in many forums, such as ICT centres, community groups, churches or social clubs. However a number of countries have found universities to be natural hosts for the early development of this type of broadcasting. This has occurred in some areas due to radical political changes, for example in the ex communist country of Hungary (Velics, 2012) or the newly democratised state of Uruguay (Light, 2012), and the university has been regarded as a 'neutral' area.In other countries, universities have had a keyplace in the development, formation and sustainability of this sector of broadcasting, notably the United States, Australia and latterly the United Kingdom. Community radio may be seen as a natural development of what happens in universities anyway, - experimentation into the physics of broadcasting, a commitment by politically active academics and students to use radio to provide alternative views and culture to the mainstream media andthe enhancement of education using broadcasting technologies.

There are also pragmatic reasons for universities to host community radio stations. A university is a semi-public site, the university authorities can welcome external visitors but also provide some restrictions and security to access if needed. A university frequently occupies large premises that may be able to find space for a fledgling community radio station and its volunteers. The radio station will often benefit from the institution's utilities such as lighting, heating, plumbing and other basic infrastructures which are expensive to set up, but which cost the university very little extra to offer an on site community radio station. The students themselves are a pool of enthusiastic volunteer broadcasters, who will use the broadcast and management experience gained from the station as hands on, real life experience which they can put on their CVs and benefit from when they apply for professional jobs on graduation. Consequently one sees some of the earliest community stations based at universities or closely associated with them and these have continued to broadcast to the present day. Some of these stations broadcast for the community of students and staff of the host institution and use these people as the volunteer broadcasters and contributors. Others see their role as serving a wider community outside the university organisation and reflect this in their listenership and broadcasters.

It is worth considering the difference between "Campus" radio and "Community " radio. Campus, college or student radio may be thought of a radio station running on an educational campus or within the site and premises of that establishment. In the US, Wall (2007) estimated there to be around 1400 college radio stations, but only a small number of these target an

audience outside their campus or class themselves as a community radio station. In the United Kingdom universities on a *single definable site*, that is a campus, along with other similar organisations such as a hospital, military base or prison are eligible to apply for a Low Powered, AM licence,LPAM,and broadcast to a tight radius surrounding their defined site. For example, the University of East Anglia's campus radio, Live Wire broadcasts on 1350AM. Nottingham University's station, URN,is also on 1350AMbut since they are 150 miles apart there is no risk of interference(see Live Wire 1350, http://www.livewire1350.com/ and URN 1350 http:// urn1350.net/). Both these campus radio stations are targeted at the student body within the site that they serve and broadcast to and are run by students who are also the broadcasters. However other United Kingdom radio stations based on campuses are licensed as 'community' radio stations. For example 107 Spark FM at the University of Sunderland and Radio LaB 97.1 at the University of Bedfordshire are community radio stations, which actively promote new musical genres, musicians and artists from their local areas as well as providing radio for groups who are otherwise underserved by radio broadcasting locally.(see 107 Spark, http://sparksunderland.com/ and Radio LaB 97.1 http://www.beds.ac.uk/radiolab).

A community radio stationis generally run on a not-for-profit basis and run primarily by volunteers. However as has been pointed out in literature on the subject (Baily et al, 2008,Foxwell, 2001, Gordon, 2006) this does not do justice to the many variations of community radio globally. As Chignell (2009:119) says, 'It seems, however, to be generally agreed that community radio stations place a priority on their relationship with an identified community and attempt to satisfy the perceived social and cultural needs of that group.' Along with this definition however it should be noted that community radio broadcasters areoften regarded as political activists or providing an alternative view to the political or cultural mainstream views in the country or area in which it functions (Baily et al 2008:31-32).

A further characteristic stressed by AMARC (The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters)is that a community radio station encourages the active participation of the community it seeks to serve. (AMARC,1995)

This article suggests that universities are well positioned to host community radio stations, not only due to their physical location and premises but also because of their population of students and academics who may be willing participants. Along with scholarly works, the article draws on research visits and interviews conducted with volunteers and staff in university based radio stations in the United States, Australiaand the United Kingdom. It providesexamples of university radio stations, which in addition to serving the students and academics on their own campuses,also have an audience amongst their local communities. The article indicates why this has happened and how the station aims to serve this wider group. It begins by providing a brief overview.

The Early History in the US

The development and investigation of 'radio' as a medium has been bound up with universities since Heinrich Hertz demonstrated electromagnetic waves, or radio waves, at the University of Karlsruhe in Germany. At that time Hertz had no obvious use for radio waves. But following the work of Marconi in drawing together a number of experimental works, radio stations based at university sites were pivotal in the early development of radio technology. The early 'programming content' is indicative of an interest in using the benefits of the technology for society at large.

One of the earliest accounts of the boundaries between physics experimentation and broadcast 'content' to benefit the local community is from the University of Wisconsin, in Madison. In the early 1900s, Professor Edward Bennett from the electrical engineering department and Professor Earl Terry, a physics academic who was experimenting with radio waves, started to collaborate on radio experimentation. Bennett obtained an experimental licence to broadcast, 9XM and on 4th December 1916, Terry conducted the first of a regular series of experimental 'broadcasts', in that he transmitted a wide signal, without one particular single target receiver. (Rieland et al 2011)

Up until this time, transmissions on radio waves had been generally point to point, rather than point to multipoint, for example, ship to ship or ship to shore. Professor Terry's first broadcast was in Morse code and carried a local weather forecast. Terry saw radio as a benefit to society and disseminator of useful information and ideas. In an agricultural area he chose a weather report as the broadcast content, in that it would be useful information and encourage an audience. (WCFTR, 2007). However since it was in Morse code, a series of 'dit's and 'dah's, the receiving audience would have to have a radio receiver and be able to transcribe Morse. So Terry asked in his broadcasts that the transcribed weather forecasts, should be placed in a public place such as a shop or on a church notice board. The Madison radio station began voice broadcasts, licensed with what could then be accurately termed a 'call sign' of 9XM, from its physics department in 1921, the content carried was still to benefit its local agricultural community with weather and market reports as well as, on 1st November, a classical concert. (Schardt, 1996) By the 1920s United States broadcasting regulation was changing and the station was relicensed as WHA and then when Public Radio became a radio form for the United States in 1967, the call sign changed once more to WPR, which it still is at the time of writing. It operates as a non-commercial station under a Public Radio Licence.

From the earliest days this station, based in the university town of Madison has been one that valued educational content for its listeners and sought to provide distinct social benefits for its audience. Although it is no longer strictly a university based station, it still has close links with the University of Wisconsin and describes itself as being a "service of the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and University of Wisconsin - Extension." (WPR, http://www.wpr.org/). The University is obviously very proud of its place in broadcasting history and has a prominent display case of artefacts from its early broadcasting days.

Whereas WPR started broadcasting due to the research by academics in its electrical engineering and physics departments, other radio stations have started to broadcast due to a close association with a neighbouring university and made use of the staff and students rather than the premises. During the second world war, Lewis Hill was a pacifist and conscientious objector in the United States. After the war Hill wanted to start a non-commercial radio organisation to promote peace and non-violence, this became the Pacifica Organisation. (Whiting 1992)

Hill managed to gather funds, a core of paid staff and a group of volunteers and on 15th April 1949 opened the radio station KPFA, in the university town of Berkeley, California. KPFA was (and still is) based a short walk away from the University of California, Berkeley campus, although KPFA has never been under its auspices or authority. However according to Gertrude Chiarito, one of the early members of staff, Lewis Hill felt that Berkeley was the ideal location for his radio station.

[Hill] felt that Berkeley would be the only place that it could possibly happen, that it would be accepted, that there would be cooperation. It was a kind of universal place because of the

University, and because the people at that particular university came from such widely scattered areas. (Chiarito, quoted in Whiting 1992).

Although currently KPFA operates with a Public Service Licence as part of the Pacifica group of stations, its early aspirations were very much what might be recognised as a community station and very radical. It used a good deal of volunteer support in terms of its broadcasters, artistic contributors and administrative support. Hill felt that the broadcasters must be responsible for their own content and should have a close relationship with their audience. The station relied heavily on the staff and students from the university in its early years of operation and it could be argued that having such a thoughtful and creative team from the University, who are the still the main employer in the town set many of the standards for KPFA. The station became noted for its radical ideals and activism and in 1964 became identified as the broadcaster sympathetic to the challenges by the student body to the University ordinances forbidding political activism on the campus. 'Listeners kept their dials tuned to KPFA through the remarkable convulsions that transformed the once conservative town into the "People's Republic of Berkeley"'. (Lasar, 2000:221)

The station still evokes strong passions in its supporters. Although it was the first station of the Pacifica network, the KPFA station staff take a more radical line than the overarching network view, sometimes with ensuing difficulties. (Lasar, 2000) Despite close links with students and staff, KPFA has no official link with the University of California, Berkeley. It seems unlikely that a university would tolerate such an extreme station as a part of its institution and the University does have its own student campus radio station on site, KALX, which is a more traditional student run music station.

Although both the radio stations discussed above arguably started out as what may be termed community radio stations, they now both operate under public service licences, issued by the US regulatory body the FCC. Public service stations in the US get some funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, some from 'underwriting' messages and most from appeals to their audience to simply give money to support them. They operate as a midline between commercial radio and community stations, in that they tend to employ their staff and have a professional view of the station output, but still aim to serve a local audience and provide a wider selection of programmes than a commercial station would, some from public service programme providers such as National Public Radio and Public Radio International (NPR and PRI).

In Australia and the UK universities operating under a 'community' licence are relatively easily identified, but the United States model of radio broadcasting for the community is somewhat more complex with a greater variety of licences being issued to university based radio stations and with various commercial, 'public', 'community' and college radio stations all broadcasting from university sites. According to Loviglio (2011) there have been not-for-profit, community stations since the 1920s in the United States, many housed in universities, but these days community radio stations as distinct from public service and commercial stations, are a small sector of US radio broadcasting. The role of volunteers and deep engagement with the local community are the chief features that distinguish these not-for-profit stations from public service stations. Recently, US legislation has increased the potential for Low Powered FM station licences to be granted in more densely populated regions and the assumption is that these will be applied for by community radio groups. (See Public Law 111 - 371 - Local Community Radio Act of 2010, enacted 2011). The impact of this new legislation has yet to be assessed.

Wallace (2008:45-49) provides a study of radio at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. This institution, hosts two radio stations, WFCR, 88.5 FM a public radio station, which takes

syndicated programming from NPR and PRI, gains some funding from public sources and considers itself to have a public service remit to benefit its local community. The second station based at the university is WMUA, a college station, with community involvement, a hybrid, as Wallace describes it, where over the course of the year there is more external community involvement than student, despite funding for the station coming from student sources. Wallace directs our attention to some of the problematic areas of combining a student station with a community station. In particular the manner in which the community stay in the area served by the station and gain expertise and 'professionalism' over a number of years. Despite WMUA giving the students a guaranteed 51% vote on the station board, after a few years an individual student will graduate and move on, whereas the community volunteers remain and form a caucus of opinion as to the running of the station, that tends to favour the community members'programmes over the students'. (Wallace, 2008: 45-49)

The 1970s - Community radio in Australia

In Australia community radio is a well-entrenched part of the broadcasting environment with over half the population listening to a community radio station every month and around a quarter weekly. (McNaire Ingenuity, 2010:5) The Australian audience for community radio particularly appreciates accessibility and open style of presentation along with the stress on Australian music andarts. (Meadows et al 2007:28-48) The majority of universities in Australia boast a radio station based on their premises, near by or closely associated with the institution. These are almost all on air and on line, although a few are on line only, for example Radio MonashatMonash University(see Radio Monash, www.radiomonash.net). In Australia the first radio stations that were not part of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation or commercial companies were at universities and although these began with a purely educational remit they have developed into some of the most enduring community stations in Australia.

Australia saw a number of political changes in the 1960s that changed broadcasting. A number of grass roots campaigners were expressing dissatisfaction with the two tier broadcasting system of 'public' and commercial broadcasters that was set up in Australia in 1932 and still existed. There were calls for a third tier of community access. (Forde et al 2002:10). The liberalisation in 1972 took the form of radio stations being granted licences for educational and course material to be broadcast. A few were already using broadcast techniques to disseminate material using bandwidths that were not generally available to the public, for example VL-2UV at the University of NSW. Another early provider of more widely available university broadcast services was VL-5UV,based at the University of Adelaide, which opened in June 1972.The station is now simply called Radio Adelaide and it makes the claim to be the first true 'community' radio station in Australia. (Langdon,1995:5) In an interview conducted at Radio Adelaide in 2006, Debbie Welch, the General Manager, confirms that during the 1970s the Australian government was under pressure from a number of quite disparate groups to open the radio airwaves to a wider group of broadcasters. These groups ranged from anti-war protesters, Aboriginal communities and those wishing to listen to classical music to name but a few. She believes that the Australian government felt that allowing universities to broadcast was a 'safe' option, while broadening access to the airwaves and that using radio was an imaginative use of technology to spread education.

Radio Adelaide is still rooted in its educational brief. It is based at University of Adelaide premises, its key employees are paid University staff and the University underwrites around one fifth of the station costs. Debbie Welch acknowledges the privileged position this puts them in

as a community station. In return the University benefits by having a fully functioning live radio station in the centre of Adelaide, which appropriate cohorts of its students use as a training se-edbed and which is a very attractive 'value added' for university applicants. The station is also a Registered Training Organisation, which provides accredited training courses for the wider community, not simply at undergraduate or graduate levels. This is a revenue source for the station and provides widening access to education provided by the University.

Most importantly, Debbie Welsh believes, Radio Adelaide's programming can be eclectic and diverse.

My first question doesn't have to be, "Is this suitable?" My first question [with regard to programming] is "What's interesting? Who's missing out? Who'll benefit?"... We are genuinely leading diversity... we promote this by asking, "Who feels 'entitled' when they walk through the door?"(Welsh 2006)

Debbie Welch made a point concerning the university administration, which is arguably true across the whole group of university community radio stations. Radio Adelaide's core members of staff are employed and paid by the University, and the salaries are generous compared to staff at other community stations. However the station's costsand financial operating systems are dictated and prescribed by university procedures. Like many large institutions these can be cumbersome and time consuming. Welch felt that this meant that the station was not always rapidly mobile and reactiveto listeners' and volunteers' needs. (Welch, 2006)

Following the first group of Australian university radio stations, a group of stations specialising in classical or 'fine' music were licensed and in 1978 a third tier of community broadcasting became fully legitimised in Australia.Several other Australian university stations licensed in this later wave are notable. RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) has links with two community radio stations, 3RRR and SYN.As with a number of Australian university based stations the original broadcasters and volunteers and listeners have aged with the station and the station has matured with them. 3RRR is a community radio station based off the university premises but with historical links to it and although now independent, 3RRR still has an educational community radio licence. It broadcasts a wide variety of material to a Melbourne audience of over 300,000, from whom it receives financial support. It sees itself as being an activist station, somewhat left of centre and proudly avoids corporate sponsorship, making its money instead from listener subscription and support. Financially, it is the most buoyant of the Australian community stations having 12,000 regular subscribers. (Letch, 2005 and About RRR, http://www.rrr.org.au/about/profile/)

In 2000, RMIT launched a second community radio station, which is targeting a purely youth audience. SYN (Student and Youth Network) was a merger between a high school station, 3TD and SRA, the Student Radio Association from RMIT. This has formed a youth music station, which also has an educational remit for its volunteers, rather than its listeners. SYN runs a series of training programmes during the year for prospective volunteers and according to its website around 8000 young people have been actively involved. It also has an audience of around 80,000 listeners.(Ives, 2005 and SYN History, http://syn.org.au/about/history) This would appear to be a pragmatic solution to the problem identified by Wallace. 3RRR has a slightly older volunteer base and listenership than the student demographic. Indeed some RMIT lecturers are regular volunteers at 3RRR, but their students can take part in the more youth orientated programming of SYN.

In Australia, the model of a university radio station helping to launch further community based stations is common. There would appear to be two reasons for this, firstly, the strong

Australian support for community broadcasting permeates those involved in it and there is great pride in having helped launch other stations, it is regarded as a demonstration of the original station having been successful. The second reason explains how this happens, which is due to the central funding that the station can access by dedicating part of its output to a particular niche audience, for example the aboriginal or ethnic communities. This allows members of that community to develop their own programming skills and pool of volunteers before they apply to be a fully-fledged station in their own right (Gordon, 2006).Curtin FM based at Curtin University in Perth have aided several local community stations start up, including a station for the local indigenous aboriginal community and a station for the reading and print handicapped (O'Shaughnessy, 2005). Curtin FM itself started up in 1976 following a visit to the United States by an Australian government minister when he became fully aware of the community broadcasting going on there. Five 'Special ' radio licences (ie non 'educational' licences) were issued to pilot this style of broadcasting of which 6NR based at the Western Australia Institute of Technology was one. This station developed with the Institute into Curtin FM at Curtin University. Pieta O'Shaughnessy is a long time community radio activist and was associated with Curtin FM for many years. In an interview with her conducted at the station in 2005 she was adamant in her advice for new community stations. She viewed the situation from the reverse point of view, '[Community radio stations] should have a link with a university- try to be on campus, it covers your rent!'(O'Shaughnessy, 2005).

She pointed to other advantages to the station including access to funds for broadcast training, which she observed that larger broadcasting organisations were reluctant or unable to now carry out for themselves, but would support a university based station to engage in. 'You also have access to academic staff... and the university owns the licence, which avoids the politics of communities!'A benefit to the university itself is that it has a clear way of engaging with its local community. Curtin University's mission statement is, 'Curtin is committed to innovation and excellence in teaching and research, for the benefit of our students and the wider community.' (Vision, Mission and Values, http://about.curtin.edu.au/vision-mission-and-values.cfm) Pieta O'Shaughnessy felt that the station served its host university demonstrably and well in this respect. However as with 3RRR, Curtin FM's audience now is not the usual student age range.

Curtin FMhas a total audience of approximately 187,000 and has a higher audience level than some Perth commercial radio stations. Approximately 140,000 of that audience is aged 45 years or over.

(Curtin FM, http://www.curtinfm.com.au/sponsorship.html).

The station is based in purpose built premises in the centre of a large campus slightly outside Perth, so unlike Radio Adelaide, which is on a busy main street for example, listeners are unlikely to drop in.Its programme output is diverse but with presenters and a music policy that reflect an older audience. The music dates from the 1940s to the end of the twentieth century. The on-air professional presenters are paid, along with sales and management staff. The station encourages community volunteers to help with production and administration.

Community radio legitimisation in the UK

In the United Kingdom community radio was only fully legitimised in 2004.In its annual report on the sector, Ofcom (the UK regulatory body) states that in 2009/2010 15% of the population could receive broadcasts from a community station, so its listenership overall is not large, although some stations believe they are getting good local audiences.More recently with the development of community radio in the United Kingdom, a group of stations have opened,

based at universities andwith full time community licences. Some are student led and are funded and run by a student society as a part of the National Union of Students, a national organisation, with branches in each university. These include, for example, Demon, (De Montfort, Leicester) CUR 1350 (Cambridge) and CSR FM (Canterbury). Other stations form a part of the academic curriculum and tend to be run by a member of the university staff. Radio LaB 97.1 at the University of Bedfordshire is one of the latter.

Unravelling the history of campus (often called student radio) in theUK,is somewhat anecdotal. "Crush", at the University of Hertfordshire claims to have broadcast as a pirate, that is an unlicensed, station in 1960. URY at the University of York campus, has a more reliable title as the first non BBC station to broadcast under a test licence in the UK in 1967. Both stations are functioning campus radio stationsrun by students and with Low-powered AM licences, LPAMs, which are held by about 40 schools, colleges and universities in the UK. (Ofcom, 2011, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/radiolicensing/rsls/longterm_rsls.htm)

These are not community stations and do not have any remit to broadcast to a wider audience. Indeed their licences restrict them to the single definable site that they are based upon.

Pieta O'Shaughnessy from Curtin FM was involved in the development of what may be considered to be the first United Kingdom community radio station, Wear FM, which was based at the University of Sunderland and launched in 1990. The station broadcast under an 'incremental' licence. These were licences instigated by the then UKregulatory body, the IBA,and designed to be for stations which would broadcast in an area already served by an independent, commercial, station but would cater for a more niche audience. The applicants were frequently from groups previously broadcasting illegally as pirate radio stations. However Wear FM grew from a perfectly legitimate initiative by the Sunderland Community Radio Association. The SCRA started out by aiming to run a community radio station that identified social inclusion as its prime objective (Lister et al, 2010:294). Pieta O'Shaughnessy was appointed as the manager and she was responsible for building the station in premises provided by the University of Sunderland and equipping it. (O'Shaughnessy, 2005) O'Shaughnessy explained 'Town and gown really did meet [at Wear FM]. A lot of people who would not enter tertiary education- entered it!'   In 1992 Wear FM won the Sony award for Local Radio Station of the year (Lister et al 2010:294). According to Lister et al (ibid), Wear FM is a salutary example of a station that was successful under the management of a 'benevolent dictator', or what Everitt calls a 'charismatic and knowledgeable leader' (Everitt, 2003:48).

'The democratic process doesn't work at a community station, you need managers who are benevolent dictators. Wear had very strict rules. One whiff of drugs and you'd be off air. No drugs and no booze.' (O'Shaughnessy, 2005)

Pieta O'Shaughnessy left Wear in 1993 and the station began to have severe financial and management difficulties and eventually after a number of changes has become a wholly commercial station, Sun FM 103.4 (Lister et al 2010:292-309). The stationfound that it was unable to cope without a formal management structure. Lister also feels that the station's 'Promise of Performance', that is the terms of its licence, were excessively ambitious. He points out that no commercial station would accept such terms. Wear FM was able to set up and operate for a few years but found it financially impossible to sustain itself. The University of Sunderland who had invested considerable capital into the station, in order to try and keep it going, in part as a teaching facility, felt it necessary to wind up the operation. Although the station was based at the University premises it was not originally managed by University, which only came in

a later stage when the station was having financial difficulties and ultimately oversaw its sale to a commercial company.

However the University of Sunderland,was obviously not put off hosting a community radio station and in 2009, it once again opened its own onsite community radio station, 107 Spark. It joined the Universities of Bedfordshire and Lincoln in holding a community radio licence where the students take part as volunteers or as a part of their studies. Other universities have close ties with community stations. The University of Glamorgan was part of the pilot study conducted in 2002 for community radio in the UK. It was closely associated with GTFM in Pontypridd, Wales and provided the evening programming.Currently the University of Glamorgan keeps a close working relationship with GTFM. The University employs a Community Radio Tutor who co-ordinates GTFM's regular radio training courses, although the station is not within the University confines. (GTFM, http://www.gtfm.co.uk/about.aspx)

The university stations operating under a community licence must operate under the same terms as all UK community stations. They are obliged by their licences to keep to their 'key commitments', which includes an obligation to provide 'social gain' to the community they serve. Ina station's original application they willoutline how they intend to provide 'social gain' and the 'key commitments' of their licence is then worked out with successful applicants and the regulatory body Ofcom.

The Community Radio Order 2004 is the legal framework under which UK stations operate. It defines 'social gain' as being,

(a)the provision of sound broadcasting services to individuals who are otherwise underserved by such services;

(b)the facilitation of discussion and the expression of opinion;

(c)the provision of education or training to individuals not employed by the person providing the service; and

(d)the better understanding of the particular community and the strengthening of links within it.

(Ofcom 2010)

It may be seen from these provisions that the community stations must interact and develop a close relationship with the section of the community that they are providing 'sound broadcasting services' for. The Universities of Sunderland, Lincoln and Bedfordshire have designated their community as being the local young people, including their students. Lincoln also targets the arts and community groups and Bedfordshire has a commitment to provide some programming for the 55+ age range. Unsurprisingly they allsee media training and education as being a strong part of their remit and in practice interpret this as being both for their student body as well as other young people locally. Each station has a commitment to provide formal broadcast training courses as a part of the station's modus operandi.

Clearly these three stations are all relatively new, but early indications are that they are fulfilling their obligations. Siren FM at Lincoln, is the oldest and has been broadcastingsince 2007. During a focus group conducted amongst their listeners,respondents noted that the

station was approachable and accessible. (Gordon, 2012) Their annual report lists a number of courses that have been offered to young people from outside the student body and other events and activities they have initiated for their local area. 107 Sparkand Radio LaB 97.1 both started full time broadcasting in 2009 and at the time of writing have not yet been required to report to the regulator.

However from personal experience at Radio LaB 97.1, it can be reported that the station is promoting local and unsigned bands and very new music is on its schedule. The station also has broadcast the work of local poets and radio dramatists who would otherwise have a very limited audience for their work.

Discussion

From the examples above it would seem that community radio based on a university campus developed for pragmatic reasons that differ slightly in each country. In the US very early development was for experimental reasons that became embedded in a university campus or, in the case of KPFA, the presence of the university provided the volunteers and appreciative audience that the station needed to succeed. The regulatory framework in the US allowed for universities to start radio stations and over the years a number have become professional public service stations such as WPR. Australian universities used political liberalisation to start broadcasting as educators in the first instance and then developed as community radio broadcasters. Where the stations have retained their community radio brief there are examples from both countries of the older presenters and volunteers from the local area staying at the station, while the younger students graduate and move on. This does cause problems as Wallace (2008) identifies when it is difficult for new student volunteers to find a slot on the station and it serves an increasingly older demographic. It is something that the UK stations have not yet had to be concerned about, but should possibly keep in mind when designing their constitutions and procedures. The stations may wish to fill the summer months by using local volunteers, when many of the student body are away from the premises, but if the university is to support them financially they will need to show that the student body uses the station.

Music forms a core part of the output of all the stations examined and there was evidence from the UK stations that 107 Spark and Radio LaB 97.1 are actively encouraging a wider playlist than commercial and main stream radio. Work done by Waits (2008) and Wall (2007) suggests that there is some evidence that US college stations also attempt to increase the range of music available from the limited play list of the commercial stations. In Australia community radio stations are required to play at least 25% Australian originated music. The stations visited were proud to do this and did not regard the rule as onerous. Australian research has foundthat music is regarded by Australians as being culturally defining, not only for a youth audience but also for ethnic, new migrant and aboriginal groups. (Meadows et al 2007, Forde 2002)

Using the station as a part of the academic curriculum is common in the UK and Australia. Arguably this is why the university is prepared to finance them and allocate staff time to them. The students regard the presence of a live radio station where they can gain professional practice and expertise as value-added for their university course and may be attracted to a particular university because of the station based there. Journalism students provide a strong local news service at Siren FM and at 107 Spark at a time that local news is being depleted on mainstream radio in the UK. On Radio LaB 97.1media students are encouraged to produce long form and creative programming not usually found outside the BBC networks.

However, despite university stations encouraging a vibrant cultural output it is questionable if the respective university authorities wouldtolerate very extreme cultural products or the broadcasting of views that were critical or radically political.

KPFA appears to have benefited from being close to a university but has never resided on the campus. It has on occasions had stormy periods in its management, but these have never impacted on the university. Whereas the University of Sunderland attempted to bail out Wear FM when it had severe problems but ultimately presided over its demise. (Lister 2010) In Australia during the 1970s the government appeared to feel that university community stations were a 'safe' method of trialling radio alternatives. But as Welch mentions university processes must be complied with and compared to a community station that is not co-joined to a large institution, it is restricted in the speed that it can plan, fund and operate.

As community stations providing a radio service that is acting as an alternative to mainstream commercial and public service stations, one might expect to find radical forms of discussion, public debate or cultural endeavour. In particular since the core volunteer and listener base are likely to be university under or post graduates and an articulate and engaged group. In the examples and fieldwork studied there were a limited number of examples of this in terms of speech programming. Local news stories were given greater prominence on community stations in university community stations, than they would have gained on stations with a wider coverage. For example during the general election in 2010, Radio LaB 97.1was able to give election night coverage just for the local town, in a way that would not be possible on a commercial or BBCstation. However licensed university community broadcasters are constrained by the same broadcasting laws that apply to any broadcaster. So although the programme agenda can be very local and coverage may be given to niche events that are relevant to the university students or staff, they are unlikely to be particularly radical or extreme in their content, not least since the university, which is funding them may have a view on this. However this does not apply to their music output, which can be very challenging, fresh and eclectic, providing a very real alternative to mainstream media for young people and a broadcasting platform for local musicians.

Conclusion

A university can provide a sustainable natural environment for a non-commercial radio station and in particular one that targets its local community. The overarching academic organisation and more literally the buildings provide a home for alternative forms of radio and the university students and staff provide a pool of articulate, creative and thoughtful volunteers. In addition a university radio station can provide good experience for students and non university volunteers to learn and hone broadcasting skills.

In the earliest days of radio, university stations, such as the one at the University of Wisconsin, were aware that they could provide a broadcasting service to those living close to them. As radio developed university stations haveextended the range of output for listeners, particularly in the range of music played, that is not offered by commercial or mainstream stations and also in forms of niche programming that mainstream broadcasters may not be providing locally.

In the US and Australia, not-for-profit stations, targeting audiences beyond that of the campus have been amongst the most enduring, although they have on occasion developed into something beyond their original remit. Stations such as Curtin FM and 3RRR have changed over the years to provide programming for an older audience and the American public radio stations that started within universities generally no longer use a body of volunteers for their programming but employ paid broadcasters.

The university stations visited and examined benefited from using university premises when they were starting up and along with this they were also able to access university utilities, as well as some staff time on occasion and certainly benefited from using the student body as volunteers. The university also benefited from having the stations on site and a number in all three countries made use of its facilities for assessed students' assignments. The relationship with the university authorities was usually good. Although it was noted that stations not as radical as KPFA but still wishing to engage in political activism were aware that they needed to be mindful of the views of their host university.

Radio LaB 97.1 is my own university community radio station and is one of the newest, having gone on air in April 2010, ninety-four years after Professor Terry transmitted the weather forecast to Madison, Wisconsin and thirty eight years after Radio Adelaide got its licence to broadcast. It is very typical of the group of community radio stations discussed. It is supported by the University in terms of premises and utilities and has many volunteers from the student body. Some teaching and assessment takes place based on having a live station in the University. Over the first year of operation it has succeeded in gaining a local audience amongst both the student body and other local young people. It has featured new music, local bands, musicians, comedians, writers and children and is attracting applicants to the university because of their chance to broadcast on the station. One issue peculiar to the university environment is that many volunteer broadcasters go home during the academic breaks leaving the station with limited live programming. Clearly as a community radio station, Radio LaB 97.1 needs to attract volunteers from the local community to provide a consistent radio service through out the year and but like the older stations needs to be aware that while involving the local community it is still a university based and funded organisation. However Radio LaB 97.1 has served to extend and challenge the range of output for local listeners and also offer a varied mix ofmusical and speech content not offered by other local commercial and public service stations. It keeps broadcasting using a range of automation and live programming all year round and sees itself as the latest in a line of community radio stations generally benefiting from its base on a university site.

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