

## Programming Your Web Site

### From *PD Grad School*

I love pleasant surprises. Especially at radio gatherings.

Recently, Dan O'Day staged his 8<sup>th</sup> annual *PD Grad School* in LA, with a full curriculum of great speakers, topics, and interaction. One of the standout sessions was conducted by Dan himself about *Programming Your Web Site*.

### Preconceived Notions

I expected the *usual* routine you hear at most convention sessions about the importance of an internet presence, whether to-stream or not-to-stream, and the same old boring statistics about market-penetration, number of stations on the internet, blah-blah-blah. (Gag!)

Instead, attendees were bombarded with a fast-paced barrage of truly

actionable facts (many of them new). There were lots of specifics — sites worth seeing, features worth adapting, including examples of what *not* to do. Dan's presentation pulled no punches in making a series of logical arguments that challenged many of my preconceived, well-reasoned (or so I thought!) notions about how to be web-wise. I couldn't take notes fast enough! Get ready to take a few of your own. Grab a highlight pen and let's get rollin'.

(Continued — see *Programming Your Web Site* on page 2)

## TOP 10 *for* 2000

### 10 Thought-Starters For Building Better Radio In 2000

By Paul Amos

**Content is king!** As programmers, don't focus on the change to technology, concentrate on how we can *use it to improve content*.

(Continued — see *Top 10 For 2000* on page 5)

## Continuing Education For The *Dedicated* Radio Programmer

### Inside "PD" Issue # 52

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# Programming Your Web Site

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Dan was very forthcoming in freely crediting internationally respected Web User Advocate and developer **Jakob Nielsen**, as the source of much of the material covered. Nielsen is author of the world's best selling internet book, *Designing Web Usability: The Practice Of Simplicity*. This is the book you *must* have if you're to be allowed anywhere near your station's web site. (Available from amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com at a 20% discount for \$36). See the accompanying sidebars in this issue of "PD" for background philosophies about Jacob Nielsen.

Dan did an outstanding job of adapting Nielsen's information into radio-specific examples (making the principles easier to understand and ultimately more actionable). During the course of the irreverent session, numerous radio sites were nominated as "finalists" for "worst web site", candidly naming names. (I won't steal Dan's thunder by disclosing the URLs. But if you contact him (danoday@danoday.com), I'm sure he'll share some of the many of the examples with you.

## Deliver A Great Online Experience

There's a big difference between the parallel plains of existence between **off-line** and **online** experiences by listeners.

- Off-line, when the listener has made a conscious or conditioned choice to listen to the radio, your competition is mainly the other 10-100 radio stations in your market.

- When the listener/consumer goes online, your competition becomes 10 million other websites!

Therefore, it's not about your radio station, it's about your *listener*.

**The only three things you need to know about web visitors:**

- 1) They are **lazy**
- 2) They are **selfish**
- 3) They are **right**

They have been conditioned to be that way —

conditioned to believe they can and *should*

expect a lot from the "gift economy" that has been cultivated by exemplary user-focused businesses like America Online, Ebay, Yahoo, and Amazon.com. AOL, for example, has made surfing the net so easy any idiot can fake their way through it, while Amazon's "one-click ordering" *respects* the consumer's time. Another company that "gets it" is Bank Of America. One of their page-links, "Take Me To My Money", speaks the consumer's language, direct-targets the #1 reason why most visitors log onto their site, and boils it down to the lowest common denominator.

## The New Rules

If you aren't concentrating on what the consumer wants and expects from a web site, you're not following the rules of e-commerce. "Better" usually equals "faster" and "easier" (or a combination thereof)

**The web-user's mantra is very simple: "Don't ask me to do the same thing TWICE"**. Like those elaborate animated "welcome"

pages. They may have lots of splash and flash (which may titillate geeks, other PDs, and your Chief Engineer), but most users will be annoyed that you're wasting their time by making them "click" just to "enter". If your opening page isn't your home page, "you've lost a point", perceptually. Another thing to consider — even if your welcome-screen is really flashy for a few visitors, in essence you're telling a much larger number of your other visitors, "your browser is not good enough for us".

**When it comes to web usability, there are two key factors: #1 Speed. #2 Ease Of Navigation.** So why not make it easy and quick for a listener to get what they may have come for. (Like, "what song is playing right now?")

## Come On, I Don't Have All Minute

You should deduce from all this that the worst

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**Radio drives traffic  
to web sites  
better than ANY  
other media.**

TW Tip #15072, #16100

**The two speeds at  
which users are able  
to surf the web are:**

- 1) Too slow**
- 2) REALLY too slow**

**Make a visitor wait  
more than a second  
(or a couple of  
mouse-clicks) and  
they'll get bored.**

# Programming Your Web Site

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thing your web site can do is: waste visitors' time. Make every aspect of your web site as easy as possible.

If your home page doesn't download quickly (due to memory-hogging graphics), the "world wide wait" you put your visitor through loses you another perceptual point. If you don't utilize underlined text-links, you've lost another.

**Just how much smaller and faster your web pages could be may surprise you.** Web pages often contain as much unneeded information as they contain critical info. (Often 50% dead weight) Many web-designers use very liberal amounts of formatting, because people by nature don't tend to think of "white space" as actual data. Mizer is a low-cost software application (\$69.95) that automatically compresses and optimizes your JPEGs

and GIFs, removing unneeded information to make the files smaller for faster downloading. Available at [www.antimonysoftware.com/mizer.html](http://www.antimonysoftware.com/mizer.html).

**Your visitors usually have three questions when they land on your home page:**

- **Where Am I?**
- **Why should I care?** Instantly tell them why they're there. A visitor shouldn't have to go more than 3 clicks to get something really useful from your site.
- **How do I get outta' here?** The first question to ask when designing your site: what do our *customers* want the site to do?

Therefore, the two key words to remember for the success of your site: **quality information.**

**What makes web visitors return?**

(Continued — see Programming Your Web Site on page 4)

**Jakob Nielsen, Ph.D.,** is a User Advocate and principal of the Nielsen Norman Group. His work background includes Sun Microsystems (as a Distinguished Engineer), Bellcore, the IBM User Interface Institute, and the Technical University of Denmark. He holds 46 US internet-related patents. Management expert **Tom Peters** speaks for many when he says "Jakob Nielsen knows his stuff like, literally, no one else!". The New York Times calls him "the guru of web page usability".

He obviously practices what he preaches. His web site, [www.UseIT.com](http://www.UseIT.com) (which stands for Usable Information Technology) is a sterling example of how to make a site both interesting and easy to use. In addition to text treats like his biweekly column on web usability you'll find numerous streaming audio and video discussions. (A great debate between Jakob Nielsen and **Seth Godin** (the author of *Emarketing* and *Permission Marketing*) is available by directly logging onto [www.business2.com/articles/1999/03/content/debate.html](http://www.business2.com/articles/1999/03/content/debate.html)

Some of Nielsen's profound observations are covered in the sidebar to the right.

## Nielsen Factoids

Philosophy and commentary from *USA Today's* interview with Jakob Nielsen and other articles (from Nielsen's UseIT website, [www.useit.com](http://www.useit.com))

- ✓ **A "splash" page before your home page.** In general, any page where you can do nothing but click for the next page is pretty close to useless.
- ✓ **The home page.** Can you tell at a glance what the site is about? Does it display things the user is interested in (as opposed to what the company is selling or trying to promote)?
- ✓ **Usability requires tight editing but access to depth.** Permit people to dig into information – start with short descriptions then give more and more.
- ✓ **Web "hits" mean more ad revenue . . . but . . .** If you slow people down too much, they'll say your site isn't worth their time.
- ✓ **The goal of design . . .** should be to *optimize* the user's time (then they become *loyal* users). Bringing them back the next day is a more important goal than selling once more cent of advertising today.
- ✓ **Future Trends.** The Web of 2005 will be 100 times bigger than now, and 10,000 times as important (launching the network economy).
- ✓ **Use of cutting-edge multimedia technology.** Stay a version behind (one year behind the evolution in the playback software). Restrain yourself to using encoding formats that will work with older software since many of your users will not have upgraded yet. If users have to download a new plug-in or install new software just to view your site, most of them will simply go away.

TW Tip #11124, #15073, #16101, #3259

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## Here's what makes web visitors return:

- 1) High quality content
- 2) A site that is often updated
- 3) Minimal download time
- 4) Ease of use

## Web Design

- ✓ Having one person design your site is usually more effective than farming it out to multiple vendors (each of whom have their own hidden agendas for pet projects or links).
- ✓ View it on several different computers (representing a broad variety of speed, RAM, browsers, etc.)
- ✓ Never view a demo from a hard drive presentation — judge it by actually visiting the URL and going through all the motions.
- ✓ Tear your site apart every 30 days — keep re-inventing it (keeping the best of the best and adding great new features). KIIS-FM in LA has done a particularly outstanding job of refreshing their site. (See "Fresh Up To Date" on page 7 of "PD" issue #36 for background).

## Tons O' Tips — To Remember and Put Into Practice

- ❑ Your visitors spend 99% of their time on the web in *other* web sites. So *that* is how your site is being judged (alongside AOL's site, not in the context of whether your site is better than your direct-competitor FU92's lame site).
- ❑ 90% of web users' time is spent on the wrong page. So make it the right page as fast as possible. Place an internal search engine on every page, so users can enter what they're looking for. (See Jakob Nielsen's Uselt.com site for a good example).
- ❑ Write 50% less on your web site. Use more bullet points, short paragraphs, and fewer words. Visitors usually come to do, not to read.
- ❑ Don't let text fill the entire screen horizontally. Too wide makes it harder to read. (Have you ever noticed that most books and newsletters have narrow columns? Think that's for a reason?)
- ❑ It's better to use one long page instead of page continuations (for ease of printing).

**Write 50% less on your web site. Use more bullet points, shorter paragraphs, fewer words. Visitors come to do, not to read.**

- ❑ Don't use reversed-print. (How many books, newspapers, or magazines do you see with white lettering on black/dark background?) It also makes it difficult for your visitor to cut and paste any text.
  - ❑ Avoid hard-to-read color combinations (e.g., blue ink on black).
  - ❑ Continuously "blinking" lights in the visitor's peripheral vision get in the way and become annoying. If you have a call to action/buy, have it blink three times, then stop.
  - ❑ Make your web site accessible to all browsers. (Shockwave has been known to be very buggy on some computers/browsers.) One station, apparently determined to drive visitors away from their site (or just plain piss people off), had this greeting on their welcome page: "this may crash your system".
  - ❑ 90% of all computers are preset for 480 x 600 resolution. Most users don't know how to adjust beyond this. So don't ask them to.
  - ❑ Make it easy for visitors to copy/paste a graphic or text. (Try to incorporate your call-letters within it, so you get additional impressions.)
  - ❑ Instantly tell the visitor why they're there.
  - ❑ Avoid "under construction" delays.
  - ❑ Remember your web site is "active". (A yellow page ad is passive.)
  - ❑ Visit your station's web site *daily* (maybe several times daily), so you know what your listeners/visitors are experiencing (and to catch any problems early).
  - ❑ Test your web site just like you'd research your audience. Real life, real-time research helps you peel away each leaf of the onion quickly. Through research, one company discovered a simple improvement (the result of a one-minute fix) that increased return visits from 23% to 48%.
  - ❑ Conduct observational focus group research often (recruiting new people to study). Talk to 5 or 6 users — put them through the paces and observe them as they try to navigate your site. Invite them to "think out loud" ("We'd like you to *tell us* what you're trying to do as you click your way through our site.")
- (Continued — see Programming Your Web Site on Page 5)

# TOP 10 <sup>for</sup> 2000 Thought-Starters For Building Better Radio In 2000

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- 2 Go beyond mere streaming audio to build *relationships* with your audience.
- 3 There needs to be more focus on training to improve quality and content.
- 4 It's not the radio business — it's the *entertainment* business.
- 5 Slogans don't sell, *emotions* do. The challenge is to build total stationarity.
- 6 On music — tight lists, feature friendly.

- 7 You'll deliver up to 50% more P1 listeners if you have a hot breakfast (morning) show.
- 8 There will be fewer jobs for DJs. Look in different places. You're after *entertainers*.
- 9 In the year 2000, the oldest baby boomer will leave the 25-to-54 demo.
- 10 Magic happens in the radio station, not the small room down the hall. Brainstorm for ideas with *anyone* and make the process totally *enjoyable*.

TW Tip #7273, #2162, #5070, #6232, #15074



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During his 20-years in radio, Paul has served as DJ, Promotions Manager, Production Director, Program Director, and Group PD for stations on the Gold Coast, Canberra, and Brisbane. His focus is on-air content and research issues for ESP clients. Reach Paul by phone at 011-61-7-3839 6733 or by e-mail: [paulamos@espmmedia.com](mailto:paulamos@espmmedia.com)

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- For free online survey software you can use on your site, visit [www.zoomerang.com](http://www.zoomerang.com)
- Defy Sturgeon's Law\*  
\* Sturgeon's Law was, so legend has it, coined by writer Theodore Sturgeon in response to the question asked during a speaking engagement, "Don't you think 90% of science fiction is crap?" Sturgeon's response was "90% of *everything* is crap".
- If you subscribe to the theory that most radio personalities have "faces for radio", consider using baby pictures or caricatures of your jocks or hosts.
- Every word on a site should be something that will impact on a listener. Avoid useless features, like web-counters. Some listeners assume your site is a success and may be disappointed that your hit-count isn't higher (thereby making your web site appear to be a failure in their eyes).
- Keep all of your links *active*. Your web-master should regularly check all links to make sure they haven't moved.
- If your site is "all links", your site will be less "sticky". Don't make it too easy for visitors to leave you too quickly.
- Great idea that can help you efficiently crystallize useful information onto your web site: have your receptionist start writing down all of the curly questions she gets asked by listeners over the course of a typical day/week. Then, devote a web page to FAQ's your listeners have been asking.
- If you don't update your site frequently, avoid tell-tale reminders of how stale your site is. For example, "Last update: April 18, 1998" tells a visitor on April 18, 2000 that your web site is not a great priority in your marketing efforts (and therefore, probably not worth "sticking" with).
- Make sure your web site is compatible with Web TV. For a free emulator to test your site on a Web TV interface, visit [www.develop.webtv.com](http://www.develop.webtv.com)
- Avoid SHOUTING COPY (all caps). Too hard to read, thus annoying.
- Listeners who are trying to find you shouldn't have to use <http://www>. or [.com](http://.com) to reach your web site.
- Make sure you own your own website. Often a web designer will try to claim ownership of it.
- A trusted station employee should be your administrative contact. Don't out-source this.

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- ❑ **You** (and two or three other key management personnel) should know the password to your station website. This alpha/numeric password should be changed (at least monthly).

## HITS = How Idiots Track Success

Don't judge your web site's effectiveness just by how many "hits" you achieve. Rather, consider your *conversion rate*. Conversion rate = the number of visitors who get the **most desired response** divided by the number of total visitors. Go beyond just page views — check for Unique Daily Visitors.

## Four powerful ways to attract visitors

- 1) Start a message board (which must be moderated)
- 2) Advertise on-air
- 3) E-mail Newsletter
- 4) Keep re-mailing new letters to your database (strive to contact everyone every 30 days)

## 2 good reasons to fire your web designer:

- Splash screens (which take eons to download)
- Site maps (if your site needs a map, it's not efficiently laid out to be user friendly)

## To DB – Or Not To DB

Perhaps the most valuable asset to be derived and mined from your web site is your listener/visitor database. It's your direct-link to listeners (pre-qualified to have an affinity to your station – your P1s and hyper-P1s). So build one. A db "club" is one way – good, because it passes the "Permission Marketing" test since they've come to you (see "PB"

issue #48, page 1 for information about **Seth Godin's** philosophies). Give listeners a good reason to join your db club. ("We'll e-mail you the minute any tornado warnings are issued.")

Your e-db is another of those "use it or lose it" things. So think of inventive reasons to regularly keep using it. ("If you're a member of the Magic 88.8 E-Mail Army, you'll be receiving a special e-mail delivery of contest clues that could help you win \$10,000 sometime today.") But don't send any e-mail unless it's *worth something* to the listener. (If any of your e-messages are perceived as "spam", it will be harder to earn their attention in the future.) Consider using software which enables you to auto-respond to personal e-mail.

## A Course Is A Course, A Course, Of Course

My brief overview barely scratches the surface of this substance-packed session, which Dan is in the process of expanding into a full-day or multiple-day on-site seminar/workshop. For more information, contact Dan [danoday@danoday.com](mailto:danoday@danoday.com) or call (310) 476-8111. Tapes of the condensed session are available through Dan's *Whole O Catalogue* (viewable at [www.danoday.com](http://www.danoday.com)). But I would strongly encourage stations and groups to commission the full-day custom presentation when it's available. You find it's money well invested.

TW Tip #7274, #1123, #3256, #15071, #16099



**Dan O'Day** (pictured here with Dr. Don Rose and Gary Owens) is already planning his *PD Grad School 2001*, to be held in LA next February.

Early-bird discounts are available by calling (310) 476-8111.

## Lifestyle File™

When you come across something that lives up to its claims, it's worth passing along to friends. Radio Shack has come out with a new gizmo they call the Sleep Machine. It's a sound-effect playback system that contains 6 sounds which have been known to help induce sleep – soothing rain, the clickety-clack of the rails as heard from the inside of a train, ocean surf, the gentle howl of prairie wind, a babbling brook, and night sounds of crickets chirping. The self-contained unit is small enough (8" x 5" x 2") to be portable and comes with a built-in 4" speaker plus an external pillow-speaker. A selectable timer can be set for 30, 60, 90 minutes, or continuous play. And it really *does* induce sleep. Can also be used as a relaxing backdrop in the office. Costs \$40.

TW Tip #21044

## Vision: It's All In How You See It

**Nicholas Graham**, CUO ("Chief Underpants Officer") of Joe Boxer Corporation, says he isn't in the underwear business.

**"We are an entertainment company. Our philosophy is that the brand is an amusement park — and the product is a souvenir."**

TW Tip #7275, #3260

**Deep Background**

Another Todd Wallace Insight Interview

**Walter Sabo**

The name **Walter Sabo** is synonymous with FM Talk Radio. And successful Talk Radio period.



**Programmer's Digest** has been proud to exclusively feature many thought-provoking articles from **Walter** (see "Consolidation Means: Nothing's Changed" in "PD" issue #28, "What Music PDs Can Learn From TalkRadio" in "PD" issue #43, and "Targeted Talk Ten Years Later" on page 10 of "PD" issue #51).

Today we'll get even more in-depth with **Walter** about the intricacies of the art and science involved with Talk Radio, FM Talk, and what he calls Targeted Talk™.

**"PD"**: **Walter**, first, give us a brief overview of your background and bio.

**WS**: Like most of us, I got a job in radio the minute I was legal (at 15). At a daytimer, WCRV in New Jersey. I went to Syracuse University and worked at stations in Syracuse (which has the best pizza in America!). My first full-time job was at 99X, WXLO/New York City, as Promotion Manager and Talk Show Host. I did a talk show for teens — on

Sundays on FM in 1973. We pulled a 33 teen share by pacing a talk show for teens and producing it for Top 40. That's when it became clear to me that you could reach any target with talk.

After that, I did the same thing at WNBC and their All News FM, WNWS. **Dick McCauley** hired me to help bring the ABC FM Network to life in 1976. When I was hired, it was just offered as a gift to the big AM affiliates — something to put news on their automated FMs. We turned it into the first FM Rock-oriented network in history. And we made it profitable by offering news and concerts that made sense to AOR stations.

**Fred Silverman** hired me to run the NBC FM owned stations (WYNY/New York, WKYS/Washington, WKQX/Chicago, and KYUU/San Francisco). The goal was to have them reach 25-34s on FM. This was in 1979. I hired **Mike Phillips** to be VP of Programming. Together we created a format that had never been done. Let's make big personalities, foreground personalities, and strong service elements and play adult currents and

recent gold. I was assured that it would be impossible — that it would never work on FM — that FM would only support Rock and Classical and Beautiful Music. We didn't even have a name for it, but it became known as Adult Contemporary. One thing that might be surprising considering that those stations were owned by RCA) is that they were all technical disasters. The worst physical plants I had ever seen! So, in addition to creating new formats, hiring 200 people in six months, and proving that FM was viable, we had four capital construction projects to manage simultaneously in the four most unionized cities. The GMs, **Dan Griffin** at WYNY, **John Hayes** at KYUU, **Dick Penn** at WKQX, and **Ray Yorke** at WKYS deserve credit for their professionalism during that demanding time. The NBC FM stations had lost money for 40 years and after just three years of the right kind of teamwork the division was successful and profitable! And, along the way, we created some national stars, like **Donnie Simpson** in DC and **Dr. Ruth Westheimer** (an FM Talk Show Host with giant young adult shares).

**Ed McClaughlin** then hired me back to ABC to be the VP of all six networks and he taught me the importance of making a show — a really BIG show. He also taught me a key fact —

**Radio is a simple business, people make it hard.**

After ABC, **Tom O'Neil**, the Chairman of RKO-General gave me the opportunity to consult all of the RKO stations. Thanks to **Jerry Lyman**, I did that for eight years (longer than it had ever been done). During that period, I helped the GMs and PDs bring at least five of the stations to the highest ratings they had ever enjoyed. The division overall grew from a break-even to enormous profitability.

**"PD"**: Your experience at ABC, NBC, and RKO meant you were working with some of America's all-time greatest Music stations. What are some of the programming life-lessons you learned from Music Radio that you've brought forward with you to spoken-word radio.

**WS**: Play the hits. Just the hits. It applies to Music, Talk, All News. Leave your favorites at home. There was a driving belief at those companies that **all that matters is what's on-the-air**. Finding and managing an air talent was the most important job.

**"PD"**: What kind of format disciplines do you think are absolutely vital to the kind of Talk Radio that properly recycles audience and efficiently extends TSL.

**WS**: Understanding how to build *cume* is the secret to recycling audience and (Continued — on the inside of this insert)

# Deep Background

**WS:** (continued) reported TSL. Every week the diaries get mailed back. So every week, a *new* cume must be built. Every second the listener has many media options so every second your station must please a listener so much they would be willing to admit in writing that they are listening to your station. The key mathematical indicator of success in AQH rank is *not* TSL rank, it's Cume rank.

**"PD":** You've been a successful programming consultant for 17 years — what do *you* bring to the party that a radio station's programming department can't do on their own?

**WS:** Three things — hopefully more —

**First — perspective.** Creating radio 24/7, which I have done on site many times, is very difficult. A good PD gets *involved* with every aspect of the station and the lives of their team. Over time, it's natural to listen to the station from the inside, not the outside. When you truly know how hard it is to create, it becomes easier to "excuse" on-air mistakes. A good consultant maintains the perspective of an *outsider*.

The listener doesn't know that the host's kid is sick and that's why he or she isn't focused — and remember, *the listener doesn't care*. I remind clients that all that matters is what's on-the-air.

**Second — new ideas and personnel recommendations** that make sense for the station's target audience. Our team tries to maintain a superior awareness of trends that impact the station's target listener. Let's put those trends to work for the client, before we hear them across the street. In that process, because I come out of divisional and network management, we can uniquely help a PD sell the idea "upstairs". I've sold programming concepts to the Board Of Directors of RCA, ABC, and General Tire (RKO). We can help turn creative ideas into *dollars-and-cents* ideas.

**Third — as a result of the first two: Ratings!** No client keeps a consultant because they enjoy sharing lunch. Our company keeps clients an average of 8 years because we keep the clients in ratings.

**"PD":** I've always believed that one of the keys to a good programming doctor's success is the right "bedside manner" that makes a client feel comfortable. (Nothing's worse than an adversarial relationship between a consultant and a management team.) How do you approach the consultant/client relationship?

**Understanding how to build *cume* is the secret to recycling audience and extending reported TSL. Every week, a *new* cume must be built.**

**WS:** Our team, lead by Harry Valentine, listens very carefully to what the client hopes to achieve. All recommendations flow from their goals and their superior knowledge of their city. After that, we have one rule: **tell the client the truth**. We are useless if we tell them just what they want to hear. If something is working, we applaud the loudest. If it's not going to work, we owe it to that client to say so emphatically. We are the early warning system, NORAD. People don't always like the news from NORAD, but they are damn glad to get it.

**"PD":** So, you don't just come in and ask, "Where does it hurt?" — you're more proactive and holistic in the way you advance the relationship.

**WS:** We do whatever we have to do, to give the client the facts so that they can produce the *best* on-air product.

**We have one rule: tell the client the truth!**

**"PD":** Walter, you've revolutionized Talk Radio programming by creating the first successful 24/7 format for younger adults on the FM band. It's been ten years now since you launched *New Jersey 101.5*, in the underbelly of New York and, of course, *Real Radio 104.1* in Orlando. Both of these stations have been stellar success stories and classic examples of "how-to". What are

some of the things you've learned during the evolution of these stations?

**WS:** A CHR and a Talk station are measured by the same Arbitron diary. Format rules that work in Music work in Talk. We have proven beyond any doubt that, by targeting one listener and using the same format all day, a talk station can enjoy a consistent audience share all day. That's obvious in Music, but it had never been applied to Talk.

**"PD":** How are *New Jersey 101.5* and *Real Radio 104.1* different today from the day they were launched?

**WS:** The principles are identical, but they are better every day because the relationship between the hosts and the audience *grows* every day. They know each other better.

**"PD":** Do you think that Targeted Talk™ can only be done on FM — or is this also a great opportunity for AM radio stations?

**WS:** We have helped many AM stations apply these common sense principles in all size markets — from



# Deep Background

(Continued)

**WS:** (continued) WRKO/Boston to WISN/Milwaukee to WVNN/Huntsville. Remember that, nationally, 44% of the AM Talk cume is over-65. The smart PDs and GMs at those stations were anxious to apply our proven Targeted Talk™ strategies to lowering their average listener age. And it works! Finally, Talk stations on AM or FM have control of their demographic target. We've solved the biggest challenge of any Talk station — we have given them the ability to win *any* demo they select. Now a station can have the sales impact that has always been part of Talk, combined with the exact demo-profile they desire. Pick your demo: a 20-year-old, 30, 40, 50 — whatever management selects, we give them the programming weaponry to win the target.

**PD:** What would you say are the hallmarks of a great Targeted Talk™ station?

**WS:** There are several differentiating points —

- ✓ **Superior definition and knowledge of the target listener.** Before you start a Talk station, the most important question to ask is: *Who* do you want to talk to?
- ✓ **Creation and vigilant management of the guidance system.** *Where* you point the rocket is determined by the format.
- ✓ **On-air talent that is hired for their appeal to the target listener** (not for any other reason) and their willingness to deploy the format every single hour.

**Nothing moves  
product off a  
shelf like live  
copy on a talk  
show. Nothing!**

**PD:** What role does audience research play in the programming of a Targeted Talk™ station?

**WS:** You have the best conversations with the people you know the best. *Real* talk show hosts have a superior knowledge of their *listener*, not necessarily a superior knowledge of radio. That knowledge comes from research. It should be *ongoing*. Great hosts spend all of their time *observing* their audience, watching what they watch, shopping where they shop, trusting that their listener's day-to-day concerns are a very big deal. Formal research is also very helpful. But day-to-day *observational* research is what cuts through.

**PD:** We always like to ask everyone we interview about some of the best pieces of advice they've received, both in life and in radio. What are some that stick out in your career that others might benefit from?

**WS:** That line from the movie *Good Morning Vietnam*, "Hell, it's only radio!". Get out of the station and pay attention to what *listeners* say and do. Notice what works in all other media. Notice, for example, that Wrestling, *Rugrats*, and NASCAR get the best ratings

on Cable. Pay attention to the cover headlines on popular magazines — they spend a fortune to research those headlines. Watch all the popular TV shows. Before you can make a dime in radio, you have to make a good show. Respect what people do, not just what they say they do.

**PD:** For some of our readers who may be undergoing "the crash course in spoken-word programming", thanks to consolidation opportunities, what are some of the things you'd suggest they keep in mind.

**WS:** I'll give you several —

■ **All reaction is a miracle.** Many music stations are beloved. But all successful Talk stations have large contingents of listeners and advertisers who *don't* like the station. A "beloved" Talk station is usually a *failing* station. For a single radio station to say things that are *remembered, quoted, and analyzed* is a miracle. And there is no better environment for an advertiser's message.

■ **Your real job is to keep the on-air hosts fearless.** Never, *ever* share the criticism you hear about the station with hosts. Make sure your Sales Department doesn't either. Their job is to turn those objections into cash (not to bring fear into the hallways).

■ **Charge more.** Nothing moves product off a shelf like live copy on a talk show. Nothing! Internet sites will tell you that nothing brings more hits to their site than a mention on a talk radio show. That's why, despite awful demos, AM Talk Radio mints money. It works! But no station has come close to charging what it's worth or what it could get.

**PD:** Any recommended reading for the freshmen class of programmers in Talk Radio?

**WS:** Subscribe to *American Demographics* — it helps to see the national trends that impact listener interests and advertiser spending. Subscribe to *Variety*, *Electronic Media*, and *Editor & Publisher* — those are the trades of your *real* competitors. And read what your *listeners* read.

**PD:** What good books have you read lately?

**WS:** *The Autobiography Of Alice B. Toklas* by Gertrude Stein. In it, the reader learns how much controversy and outrage was caused by artists like Picasso. In fact, she viewed heated controversy as *key* to an artist's success. That's a good thing for talk show hosts and management to remember.

**PD:** What are some of the books you think are "foundational" *must-read* books for radio programmers?

**WS:** It's eclectic. All the Trout & Ries books on marketing. *Ogilvy On Advertising*. Howard Stern's books. The late Rick Sklar's (*Rocking America*), Ron Popeil's *Salesman Of The Century*, which is a pragmatic study of *why* people buy what they (Cont on back)

# Deep Background

(Continued)

**WS:** buy. *Word Of Mouth Marketing* by Jerry Wilson.

**"PB":** On balance, do you think consolidation has been good for radio — or bad?

**WS:** For the business, it has been good. Smart management can finally measure radio billing against the *total* ad media pie, rather than just against one station across the street. But the true potential, both for the business and creatively, will come when an entire generation of management and talent has grown up in this system. They will not have old walls, only vistas of *potential* in their minds. *Then*, we'll see what consolidation *really* means.

**"PB":** Do you have a pet peeve about radio today?

**WS:** Yes. We have 100% distribution and never brag about it! Every other medium *starts* with "distribution" as their first slide in the sales presentation. Let's see, Cable is up to about 50% acceptance of homes passed.

Cable companies get very excited when there are two boxes on one house. We, on the other hand, have *many* boxes, often in the same room! Internet — about 5 to 10% of all homes. The big, *really big* monthly magazines have distribution of a million a month. They sell "pass along" readership as though it was a real statistic! But to put it in proper perspective — a million a month is *half* the audience WINS/New York achieve in a *week!* Yet *Glamour*, *Mademouselle*, *Sports Illustrated* get \$35-50,000 per page. Our inferiority complex in sales remains. And that's why the medium only achieves about 8% of all ad revenue — while capturing 98% of the audience. That tells me that radio Program Directors are geniuses. No other medium has been as successful at *consistently reaching* all of the American public, all day, since its inception. Let's *sell* that!

**"PB":** Man, we have covered the gamut! Walter, what have we left unsaid? Any final words of parting?

**WS:** Trust that what you know works in Music Radio will also work in Talk. Teach your hosts how Arbitron works. Create a format and inspire them to follow it so they get *full credit* for their hard work. And finally, trust that what your *listeners* talk about over lunch is a very big deal and should be discussed on-the-air. If two best friends would never discuss it over lunch in the cafeteria, why the hell would you put it on-the-air.

**"PB":** Before you get away, earlier you mentioned "new ideas". I know you've recently come up with a novel

approach to tracking down the very *best* new ideas. Why don't you tell "PB" readers about it?

**WS:** The best response from a manager to a new, unproven idea is, "I hope it works". What they usually say is, "Who else is doing it?" As a medium, we tragically don't have development budgets. All we've got is the ability to encourage each other. Frankly, the big groups should offer a reward for new ideas. Until they do, *we'll* offer one. The best new programming or marketing idea submitted to Sabo Media this year wins \$10,000 cash.

**"PB":** Now that's what I call an incentive! Tell us more.

**WS:** Making sure your station is a must-listen every day is the first step to assuring that your station is a must buy for an advertiser. It's show business, first comes the *show*. Rather than simply reminding my peers of this dynamic, my company decided to make it *official* and reward vision. Reward the new idea, new marketing plan, new technology. The idea that has the most positive impact on the greatest number of potential listeners will win the prize.

**Teach your hosts how  
Arbitron works.  
Create a format and  
inspire them to follow  
it so they get full credit  
for their hard work.**

**"PB":** I understand you'll be assembling a committee of judges. Who do you plan to have on that august panel?

**WS:** They will be from programming, management, sales, and engineering — no one from my staff, including me. Their decision will be independent, we are just the facilitator.

**"PB":** And if any **Programmer's Digest** readers want that \$10,000, *where* should they send their ideas?

**WS:** They should submit to "New Idea", in care of Sabo Media, Suite 1000, 230 Park Avenue, NYC 10169. If it's just on paper, that's fine. If it's in the field, also good. A person must state that it is *their* idea (or must list all the creators). Submit it by November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000. Give all contact information, including where they'll be on Christmas Day, because that's when they'll get the check!

*TW Tip #1122, #3255, #6231, #7252, #13021, #17058, #20040, #21042*

**Walter Sabo** is President of **Sabo Media** (with offices in New York, LA and South Florida).

Reach Walter by phone at **(212) 808-3005** or by e-mail [SaboMedia@Compuserve.com](mailto:SaboMedia@Compuserve.com).

To Reach "PB": Call (480) 443-3500 Fax (480) 948-7800 or E-Mail [TW3tw3@aol.com](mailto:TW3tw3@aol.com)

Programmer's Digest

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# radio index

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See the **Deep Background Interview** with **Walter Sabo** in this issue of 'PD'. Learn some of the secrets behind why **Targeted Talk™** pulls such great demos.

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Programmer's Digest

# The Insert

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**Programmer's Digest?**  
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## Programming Consultation

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## Power 92's "Rules For Life"

Posted for his staff by KKFR PD Bruce St. James

- 1) Clean Up After Yourself
- 2) Don't suck up, don't slap down
- 3) Look out for each other
- 4) Do whatever it takes to get the job done
- 5) Recognize accomplishments.  
Congratulate victories

- 6) Smile
- 7) Challenge the "norm".  
Be creative and different.
- 8) Play to WIN
- 9) Don't fear failure
- 10) Think like an owner. Owners focus on  
*results* (regardless of who's watching)

TW Tip #7276, #21045

## The Audience At Large

they've examined the listening habits of over 500,000 Arbitron radio diarykeepers, preparing their *PD Profile*® reports for client stations. Half a billion here, half a billion there, and soon you're talking some serious findings. And some of the findings, comparing trends of 1995 to 1999, need to be *taken* seriously by programmers and management.

## Radio Listening Behavior (1995 to 1999)

Rhody Bosley's *Research Director, Inc.* has analyzed more radio audience ratings diaries than any other company (besides Arbitron). In just the past five years,

### Time Spent Listening

TSL to radio is down 3.1% from '95 to '99. But the TSL to the *average station* is down 10.6% as diarykeepers listen to 4.9% more stations. (Stated in quarter-hours)

| Year         | 1995  | 1996 | 1997  | 1998 | 1999 |
|--------------|-------|------|-------|------|------|
| TSL to Radio | 100.7 | 99.5 | 101.3 | 98.8 | 97.6 |
| TSL Ave Sta  | 32.9  | 33.3 | 32.5  | 31.4 | 29.4 |

### Occasions & Duration Of Listening

Arbitron diarykeepers are tuning in to the average radio station *fewer times* in a week and *listening a little less* on each occasion.

| Year             | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Occasions        | 6.3  | 6.3  | 6.1  | 5.8  | 5.7  |
| Average Duration | 5.4  | 5.3  | 5.4  | 5.4  | 5.2  |

### Daily Diary Percentage

Every day of the week shows a lower percentage of the station's diarykeepers tuning in.

|      | 1995  | 1996  | 1997  | 1998  | 1999  | % Chg* |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Mon  | 51.6% | 52.6% | 51.3% | 50.5% | 50.1% | -2.9   |
| Tue  | 51.3% | 52.7% | 51.5% | 50.3% | 50.3% | -1.9   |
| Wed  | 51.0% | 51.7% | 51.0% | 49.6% | 49.4% | -3.1   |
| Thur | 58.3% | 59.2% | 57.7% | 57.0% | 57.2% | -1.9   |
| Fri  | 55.5% | 56.1% | 55.2% | 54.1% | 54.2% | -2.3   |
| Sat  | 40.0% | 41.3% | 39.6% | 38.7% | 37.1% | -7.3   |
| Sun  | 31.7% | 32.7% | 31.7% | 31.6% | 30.4% | -4.1   |

\* Percentage change 1999 vs. 1995

### Daypart Recycling

Recycling of a typical station's audience between key dayparts declined comparing 1999 to 1995 data. For example, the percentage of audience that was recycled from M-F 6-10a to M-F 10a-3p was off -6.7%. (Read this table *across*, then down)

|             | M-F 6-10am | M-F 10a-3p | M-F 3-7pm | M-F 7p-Midn | Wknd 6am-Midn |
|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| M-F 6-10am  | 100.0      | -6.1%      | -6.3%     | -8.5%       | -8.8%         |
| M-F 10a-3p  | -6.7%      | 100.0      | -8.2%     | -10.9%      | -9.8%         |
| M-F 3-7pm   | -4.6%      | -2.9%      | 100.0     | -5.7%       | -6.8%         |
| M-F 7p-Mid  | -3.2%      | -6.3%      | -2.8%     | 100.0       | -2.8%         |
| Wknd 6a-Mid | -7.7%      | -7.7%      | -7.5%     | -7.9%       | 100.0         |

### % Of Diarykeepers By Location

Comparing 1999 to 1995, both the percentage of a typical station's diarykeepers that listen at-home and the percentage that listen at-work dropped. Meanwhile, the percentage of diarykeepers that listened in-car increased slightly. (The percentage that listened in "other" locations held steady).

| Year  | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | % Chg  |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Home  | 47   | 47   | 45   | 44   | 44   | -6.4%  |
| Car   | 72   | 73   | 73   | 74   | 73   | +1.4%  |
| Work  | 23   | 22   | 23   | 22   | 20   | -13.0% |
| Other | 6    | 6    | 6    | 6    | 6    | 0.0%   |

To receive a copy of the full report, or to order a PD Profile for your station or cluster, call Rhody Bosley at (410) 377-5859 or e-mail [rbosley@researchdirectorinc.com](mailto:rbosley@researchdirectorinc.com).

TW Tip #19076, #20041, #11125

# News/Talk & Surveillance

## Targeting

### Compiling A "RedBook" — For Newsrooms and Studios

When unexpected things happen — storms, earthquakes, mass shooting, explosions, air disasters, etc. — some stations are caught short. They fail to react in the correct manner and quickly enough.

To deal with unusual happenings, most stations have a "RedBook" (call it what you want) in their studio/newsroom to help announcers/DJs/hosts/anchors deal with emergencies.

RedBooks may be books. Or they may be emergency details written on a white board. Or kept in a computer. The latter can be a trap if the system goes down (so regularly printout an updated hard copy of everything).

Newsrooms need to play a part in what should be in the RedBook and are often given that task.

Remember, the RedBook is only a tool and the PD and/or News Director should always be called. The GM and Chief Engineer may also have to be called (depending on the crisis).

The first page should list emergency numbers. Home, mobile, pager, every possible number of station personnel who might need to be contacted. This page should also include the numbers of all the emergency services including power and water companies. (See "The Fine Detail Of An Expanded Storm Coverage Policy" on page 8 of "TT" issue #9.)

You also might want to include numbers your listeners might need, including a suicide prevention hotline, homeless shelter, etc.

Your RedBook should also include home numbers for all staff, a list of internal extensions and a list of contact numbers for other stations in your group or network.

The newsroom should provide instructions on what to do in a weather emergency (including National Weather Service phone numbers, etc.) and 24-hour contact information for all news staff. In turn, news staff should keep with them their own RedBook, in case they can deal with an emergency away from the station (so make sure to include studio hotline and warmlines numbers). Tip: Include a Street Directory. Reprinted with permission from John Williams' *Broadcast News*, the Newsletter of the Newsroom (to subscribe, e-mail [jwaus@camtech.net.au](mailto:jwaus@camtech.net.au))

TW Tip #10075, #7277

## Talk Topics

### Top 10's From Michael Harrison's *Talker's Magazine* (week ending 4/21/00)

To subscribe to *Talkers*, call 413-567.3189 or visit their website [www.talkers.com](http://www.talkers.com)

- **Top Topics:** 1) Immigration Policy/Foreign Affairs 2) Economy 3) Politics 4) Crime & Violence 5) Environment 6) Legal System 7) Religion/History 8) Sports/Entertainment 9) The Media 10) Personalities/Gossip
- **Top Stories:** 1) Cuban Boy 2) Stock Market 3) Prez Race 4) Hillary Race 5) Columbine Anniversary 6) Earth Day 7) Tax Day 8) Easter/Passover 9) Major League Baseball/NBA Playoffs 10) Bell replaced by Siegal
- **Top People:** 1) Elian Gonzalez 2) J. M. Gonzalez, Uncle Lazaro 3) Janet Reno 4) George W. Bush 5) Al Gore 6) Rudy Giuliani 7) Hillary 8) Bill Clinton 9) Jesus/Moses 10) Art Bell/Mike Siegel

## Check Your FBI Files

Here's one you'll want to share with your air talents (who'll want to share it with their listeners). The recently passed

Citizens Freedom To Information Act now makes it possible for average U.S. (and some foreign) citizens to gain internet access to any files being kept on them by the FBI. Most files even include recent photographs. Check yours.

Click on [www.thecenter2000.com/access\\_public\\_records.htm](http://www.thecenter2000.com/access_public_records.htm).

Enter the appropriate details and your request will usually be processed within a minute.

TW Tip #15075

"You have not lived a perfect day, even though you have earned your money, unless you have done something for someone who will never be able to repay you."

— Ruth Smeltzer

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Jeff Young's **Radio 411** ([www.radio411.com](http://www.radio411.com)) is the cyber-home of *Ocean Toons* and the *Bobby Ocean Cartoon Gallery*.

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TELL HIM I IGNORED HIS STATEMENT BECAUSE HE SAID THE NEW FORMAT WOULD PAY FOR ITSELF WITHIN MONTHS...

## Sticker Mania

Part 3 of a series

**"Back" End Opps.** The backside of your station's car-sticker is a great promotional opportunity for advertisers. The perfect place for value-added coupons. In fact, many stations find that a 4-color *full color* backside can be sold to a promo partner for *way more* than the simple black and white backing (Makes you appear to be a first class operator, too, both to the listener and within the advertising community.)

Some stations prefer to reserve the peel-off back for station promotion (promoting the morning show, the accompanying big bucks sticker contest, or even as a solicitation for a marketing database or for music/perceptual research respondents.) One way of accomplishing both is to reserve half of your sticker-back for the station and the other half for a client. (If you position the crack and peel die-cut in the middle, it works perfectly, 50/50 fair.)

By the way, always look for clever plays on words to turn such mundane necessities as "how-to" instructions into an amusing impression. On the back of one of WBCN/Boston's recent stickers, for example, were the words "Place Window HERE" . . . bound to cause a chuckle, and therefore a positive impression).

**Sticker-ops in all sizes.** Size matters. Thing is, you never know *which* size your listener may prefer. (Stickers, we're talking!) Some stations cover all the bases by offering *various* sizes of stickers on the same sheet (one the typical car-sticker, plus several smaller or medium-size "anywhere" stickers which could get stuck no telling where (computer monitors, notebooks, bikes, mailboxes, whatever). Drop this hint to listeners by actually *calling them* "Anywhere Stickers" (or "Everywhere Stickers) and you'll see 'em poppin' up anywhere and everywhere.

From a cost-efficiency standpoint, it doesn't increase the cost of a sticker-run very much (hopefully you've passed along the cost to an advertising partner anyway), but it considerably improves the odds that one (or more) of your stickers will actually end up getting "stuck".

*TW Tip #3261, #4131, #17059*

### Coming Up In "PD" Issue #53

One of our most popular features —

#### The Round-The-World Roundup

A collection of over 50 great new, easy-to-steal contests, promotions, topicals, and public service projects

## Programmer's Digest

### Sweepers/Splitters/Bumpers/Liners/Ins&Outs

(Male) If you listen around the dial right now, we're pretty sure the other guys are chatting away.

(Female) How about if we just keep pourin' on the Soft Rock? Thanks for checkin' out the 8am All Music Hour on B101.

If your boss is on you and you can't get away, get away anyway. With the relaxing sound of Lite 103.

Only ONE Sydney radio station makes you feel good all Summer long, without the slow sleepy stuff. 2-DAY FM.

Mix 96-9 — the station that OWNS the 80s!

For your information — since 6 o'clock this morning, WYSP has played five songs. WMMR has played 44 rock songs. You tell US who's Philadelphia's Rock station. MMR means more rock.

Variety means you don't hear the same songs over and over. Variety is what you get when you listen to FM 100.3 KILT. We play the freshest new music (song clip) But unlike the other Country stations, we don't forget those all-time favorites you love (song clip). Today's Country! Yesterday's favorites! FM 100.3 KILT!

(Voice 1) You're in the middle of a full 30 minutes of nonstop new Country!

(Voice 2) On Houston's New Country Leader, 93Q.

## Elements of Stationality

Finally, you don't have to settle for the same old Country songs, over and over! Now, you have Young Country! The new Kick 95! The best new songs without all the old stuff. (jingle) Kick 95! (shout) Young Country! Kick 95!

From the only radio station you'll ever really need on the weekend. PMFM 96.5. (Perth, Australia)

Our commercial breaks are half as long as the other guys. We're back to the music NOW, with another long set of Sacramento's best music mix. Soft Rock with Less Talk — on 96.1, Mix 96.

99.9 K E Z. More great soft rock, with the Beth & Bill Stamp Of Approval.

Fewer commercials means you get back to the music faster. (Soundbite) Let's hear it out there. (Soundbite) Yeah! Today's Music Alternative, 100.5 The Zone.

Blazing your workday from downtown to the Medical Center, 97.9 The Box.

You do enough repetitive tasks at work — listening to music shouldn't be one of them. 102.9 MGK gives you a great variety without the repeats. Enjoy the benefits of No Repeat Workdays, 9 to 5, only on Philadelphia's Classic Hits station, 102.9 MGK.

TW Tip #9216

## Coming Up Next In The World's **Fastest Growing** Programming Newsletter

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