

HISTORY

- radio is one of the oldest forms of media
- BBC (British broadcasting company) was established in 1922 and became British broadcasting **corporation** as a public corporation in 1927
- John Reith was the first General Manager
- BBC has always been not-for-profit and any money made goes back into making programmes
- Reith's vision for the BBC: Broadcasting must be a public service and should not solely be for entertainment purposes. it should represent "all that is best in every department for human knowledge, endeavour and achievement."
- independent of government control and receives government funding under the license fee
- has to operate under agreements with government

RADIO TIMES

- First published 1923
- Listed the new radio programmes on offer
- Important for this new technology - told people how and when to use their radio
- Still published today

PIRATE RADIO 1960s

- Radio Caroline was an illegal station playing pop music
- Broadcast from a ship to escape licensing laws
- Protesting the control of the BBC
- It was made illegal to listen to pirate radio
- but the BBC still lost loads of listeners

BBC RADIO

- After losing listeners to pirate radio, the BBC organised to attempt to get listeners back
- Radio 1, 2, 3 and 4 established 1967
- With the introduction of digital radio, even more were added
- Each station has a distinct brand and audience:
- RADIO 1:** entertain and engage a broad range of young listeners with a distinctive mix of contemporary music and speech. Its target audience is *15-29 year olds* and should provide some things for younger teenagers
- RADIO 2:** distinctive,, mixed music and speech service, targeted at a broad audience. Appeals to all age groups *over 35*
- RADIO 3:** mix of music and cultural programming in order to entertain and engage its audience. Around its core proposition of classical music, its speech-based programming should inform and educate about music and culture. It should feature Jazz, world music, drama, the arts and religious programming. should appeal to listeners of *any age seeking to expand their cultural horizons through engagement with the world of music and arts*
- RADIO 4:** mixed speech service, offering in-depth news and current affairs. Including drama, reading, comedy, factual and magazine programmes. Should appeal to listeners *seeking intelligent programs with inform, educate and entertain. its average age is 56, bu it's constantly evolving to attract the next generation of listeners*

CURRAN AND SEATON - woman's hour

- the media is controlled by a small number of companies primarily driven by the logic of **profit and power**
- media concentration generally limits or inhibits variety, creativity and quality
- more socially diverse patterns of ownership help to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous media productions.
- The media is controlled by a small number of companies** - this applies best to conglomerates
- BUT..
- The BBC is a large player in the UK media industry
- They own a large number of national and regional radio stations
- Some people think the BBC has an unfair advantage because of how it is funded
- The BBC is not a large conglomerate
- SO... Not driven by profit – as a public service broadcaster they do not make a profit
- The BBC has power through established history and reputation of quality.
- But their power is limited by... income from the license fee, being held to account over delivering their remit and now by competition
- Woman's Hour offers; Variety, Creativity, Quality**
- covers a broad range of topics; including menopause, female pioneers in animation the nurse's strike, ADHD in women, and popular culture



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Page 1 of 4.

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CURRAN AND SEATON - woman's hour (cont)

Focus on women and a female-centric angle differs from most radio shows / podcasts

Imaginative way shows are conceived of and put together

Less obvious or niche topics covered – finding subjects other radio is not covering

prestige of presenters Anita Rani and Emma Barnett

high production values

HESMONDHALGH woman's hour

Cultural industry companies try to minimise risk and maximise audiences

They do this by formatting their cultural products

Largest companies/conglomerates now operate across a number of different cultural industries

Woman's Hour is somewhat risky

'Niche' audience

Broadcast outside of peak audience times

Often non-mainstream subject matter

Rather than an attempt to maximise audiences, we could see it as an attempt to appeal to diverse audiences

Because of the BBC remit they have to do this

BUT

Star power of presenters and guests

The 'format' of the show is relatively fixed – this hasn't substantially changed over the years

The BBC does operate in different areas of media – TV, radio, online, publishing etc,

HESMONDHALGH woman's hour (cont)

Conglomerates often aim for *synergy*. one product made by the company promotes another

Not so much the BBC BUT...

- Some BBC products do have official merchandise

- And some BBC formats are sold internationally

-And they increasingly supplement TV shows with podcasts

WOMANS HOUR - intro

Woman's Hour is a magazine programme

Split into segments, like articles in a magazine

Usually includes interviews with a range of different guests

But also sometimes music, phone-ins, etc.

Case Study 1: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/so-unds/play/m001pmnw> Ellen White, How to ask for a pay rise, astronaut Christina Koch, Morning-after pill Released On: 18 Aug 2023

Case Study 2: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/so-unds/play/m0012fw9> Fridge Girl, Gen Z, bell hooks Released On: 17 Dec 2021

Womans hour case study 1

Does it fulfil the remit? - Yes

Entertain

Inform - Astronaut Christina Koch

Educate - how to ask for a pay rise

Womans hour case study 2

Does it fulfil the remit? - yes

Inform - Gen z

Educate - bell hooks

entertain - fridge girl

Womans hour audiences

Hall's Reception Theory

Dominant/hegemonic reading: the reading or 'position' that the producers want the audience to have. the audience accepts the message the producers intended to convey.

Negotiated reading:

Womans hour audiences

Hall's Reception Theory

Dominant/hegemonic reading: the reading or 'position' that the producers want the audience to have. the audience accepts the message the producers intended to convey.

Negotiated reading: the viewer can see the intended message of the text, and adopts some aspects of it, and combines them with their own thoughts and views, thereby making it 'negotiated'

Oppositional reading: the viewer completely rejects the intended message and instead proposes a new, resistant reading. This will depend their own views, beliefs and experiences.

When the show first came on air, more women would have been 'housewives' – so more able to have the radio on

Now older, retired audiences might tune in

Or stay-at-home parents



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Page 2 of 4.

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Womans hour audiences (cont)

But today many younger women will be unable to listen because they are at work (Although some people might be able to listen whilst at work or working from home)

Woman's Hour is also available as; A podcast - downloadable from the BBC website, Spotify, Apple Store etc. Through BBC Sounds online platform and app

Users can subscribe to be automatically updated on new episodes

There is also a round-up of highlights broadcast on Saturday at 4pm – Weekend Woman's Hour

END OF AUDIENCE - CLAY SHIRKY

the Internet and digital technologies have had a profound effect on the relations between media and individuals.

the idea of audience members as passive consumers of mass media content is no longer tenable

media consumers have now become producers who 'speak back to' the media in various ways, as well as creating and sharing content with one another.

Shirky said that the internet allows audiences to talk back to producers and communicate with each other

Listeners can contact the show to... have their say on what's being broadcast and suggest a subject

Listeners can share thoughts with others using the Twitter hashtag – #womanshour

This might be positive or negative

CONVERGANCE - HENRY JENKINS

Technological convergence: Technology that that once needed separate systems is now gathered together in one digital device. However, also means that technology can be accessed across a range of platforms/devices.

TC: production

- Production is cheaper and easier
- Radio is not just broadcast live as an FM or LW analogue signal
- Is now also streamed digitally to the internet
- Shows can now be carefully archived so none are lost

TC: distribution

- Distribution was once only through live broadcast and needed a radio set.
- Initially large and expensive - a piece of furniture limited to one room in the house
- Then cheaper and more portable

BUT NOW

anything with an internet connection can access radio - phones, computers, TV

TC: circulation

- Radio programmes can be circulated long after the original broadcast.
- Podcasts and streaming mean episodes remain available
- The BBC website has Woman's Hour podcasts going back 3 years
- Selected older episodes can be accessed too

CONVERGANCE - HENRY JENKINS (cont)

Cultural convergence: Digital technology has democratised the radio / podcast world. Anyone can access the means of media production because the cost is low and the skills needed are low (in comparison to pre-digital). In the past only those with a license to broadcast radio were able to produce, distribute and circulate programmes. Now, anyone can make a podcast and put it on the internet and promote it themselves.

This changes the type of media made, and who makes it. Anyone can make a podcast, not just a radio specialist. Spoken word podcasts are easier to make and do not have issues of copyright (no music royalties).

Podcasts have made Radio 4 more popular. Lots of Radio 4 shows could be adapted quickly and easily into a podcast.

However, there is lots of competition as many podcasts are not made by the BBC

Why target younger audiences?

Less likely to listen to radio

Used to 'on-demand' access

Busy!

May feel that radio doesn't represent them

Womans hour regulation

OFCOM

Radio must protect children under 15 from hearing unsuitable content E.g. drug references, violence, sexual content, strong language, offensive material



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Page 3 of 4.

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Womans hour regulation (cont)

9pm watershed after which adult material can be broadcast - **This only applies to TV**

On radio, broadcasters must be aware of when children might be listening
EG. School times, weekends, holidays, type of radio station, target audience etc.

Broadcasters also have to protect all listeners from harm and offence

This covers similar areas to protecting children - but also discriminatory content, and regulations on competitions and voting

Broadcasters can be fined if they fail to do this

E.g. the BBC were fined after offensive voicemail messages were broadcast on Russell Brand's radio show in 2009
Woman's Hour is unlikely to be heard by children
Daytime slot during school term – children should be at school

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Daytime slot during school term – children should be at school

Children are unlikely to seek out Radio 4 – not the target audience

The material could potentially still cause offence ... so ... The BBC would have to weigh this against the value of the show

Podcasts and streamed radio shows can potentially be listened to at any time, and by anyone ... so ... So Ofcom's usual rules and regulations don't really apply

Womans hour regulation (cont)

The BBC often releases podcast versions of broadcast shows
If it's broadcast on radio, it's subject to Ofcom regulation
If it's only a podcast, accessed on-demand, it is not regulated by Ofcom.

- because Woman's Hour is broadcast first, and then released as a podcast ... listeners could only complain to Ofcom about the original broadcast

Some platforms have their own rules E.g. iTunes requires podcasts to be marked as explicit if they have swearing or 'adult content'

woman's hour additional segment

Is the orgasms segment offensive?

It covers important topics such as challenging taboos around women's sexuality

Academics and experts discuss the issue

Covering the BBC remit to educate, entertain and inform

No strong language – only accurate, medical terms are used

So they could counter any complaints by saying that the wider aims and values of the show are more important than any one listener taking offence

OVERALL generally would not be considered offensive



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