

# **ACADEMIC STUDIES IN SOCIAL, HUMAN AND ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES-2019**

**Editors**

**Prof. Dr. Hasan BABACAN**

**Doç. Dr. Abidin TEMİZER**

**ACADEMIC STUDIES**  
**IN SOCIAL, HUMAN AND**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCES-2019**

**Editors**

Prof. Dr. Hasan BABACAN

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abidin TEMİZER

Cetinje 2019



## **Editors**

Prof. Dr. Hasan BABACAN

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abidin TEMİZER

**First Edition** • © February 2019 /Cetinje-Montenegro

**ISBN • 978-9940-540-70-8**

© copyright

**All Rights Reserved**

**Ivpe**

**web:** [www.ivpe.me](http://www.ivpe.me)

**Tel.** +382 41 234 709

**e-mail:** [office@ivpe.me](mailto:office@ivpe.me)



**Print**

Ivpe

Cetinje, Montenegro

# **THE HISTORY EVOLUTION OF RADIO IN THE WORLD ON ITS DIGITAL JOURNAY**

**Mihalis KUYUCU\***

## **Introduction**

As a medium for communicating, informing, and entertaining, radio transmission has evolved emphatically since its inception. Even after the evolution of televisions and high-speed internet, radio remains a relevant and important medium, particularly in developing countries. Despite its relevance, the position and future of radio in the modern media space remains questionable. In fact, there have been predictions that with the rise of digital media, radio would cease to exist. Yet, as a few stations closed down, the rise of new content formats and stereo signals advanced radio to new heights. The penetration of radio into inventions such as automobiles enabled it to flourish even at times when its popularity appeared to diminish. In today's digital environment, radio still plays a role in people lives, as well as in marketing (May, 2013). As radio continues to live in different content channels and delivery platforms it is important to understand its history, its changes and role in the digital world, and the listening habits in the world today.

## **2. Radio History in The World**

Today, radios are a common technology found in homes, cars, and even on mobile phones. In fact, in today's society it would be almost impossible to find anyone that has not used, seen or heard of radio. However, this was not always the case because before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, radio communication and transmission in its wireless form as we know it today was unheard of. Even after radio was developed in the late 1800s several years had passed before it became a household fixture. The history of radio is even more fascinating as it is filled with controversy; while Nikolai Tesla from Missouri, United States demonstrated the workings of a wireless radio in 1893, credits go to Guglielmo Marconi as radio's father and inventor. Marconi, of England, acquired this accreditation because he obtained the first wireless telegraphy patent in 1896. Eventually, Tesla acquired patents for basic radio in 1900. Still, in 1901, Marconi sealed the position of the first radio inventor by becoming the first individual to transmit radio signals across the Atlantic Ocean (TechWholesale, 2014).

Before World War I, institutions mainly used radio to contact ships, which sailed out of sea. Radio communication at the time was particularly beneficial during emergencies. During World War I, the usefulness of

---

\* (Assoc. Prof.) E-mail: michaelkuyucu@gmail.com)

radio became significantly apparent as the military used it as a tool for receiving and sending messages to the armed forces. Following World War I, radio's use and popularity spread to include civilians with broadcasting stations cropping up in Europe and the U.S. Therefore, broadcasting stations such as British Broadcasting Company (BBC), Westinghouse's KDKA, AT&T, CBS and NBC were created and each were offered specific rights such as toll broadcasting, chain broadcasting, manufacturing of transmitters, and manufacturing of receivers.

In Britain, the BBC commenced radio broadcasts in 1922, but only peaked when newspapers went on strike in 1926. It was at this time that the BBC and the radio became popular as it was public's leading source of information. In both the United Kingdom and the United States, radio continued to become a source of entertainment as many households now owned one (TechWholesale, 2014).

Radio's importance and significance continued during World War II, as it was used as a tool for informing the public about the war. Governments also used it to gain public support, while families used serial music programs such as "Top-40" as sources of entertainment. Eventually, new forms of music such as rock emerged causing FM radio stations to overtake the mainstream AM stations (TechWholesale, 2014).

Today, the original radio broadcasting signals as invented by Tesla or Marconi have changed drastically. Traditional radio transmissions have evolved with the invention of Internet radio stations and satellite radio. Nowadays radios are found in homes, in vehicles, and other mobile devices. Additionally, the audience can now choose to listen to news, music or talk shows.

### **3.How did Radio Change in The Digital World?**

On the one hand, technological advancement has created some threats to radio through alternatives such as podcasts, and audio streaming of content through mobile devices. On the other hand, digital evolution has contributed to radio's sustainability through apps such as BBC's iPlayer Radio and TuneIn. The mentioned channels enable fans of radio to access and listen to multiple stations worldwide. Additionally, establishing radio stations is now easier as radio stations are no longer required to acquire broadcasting licenses provided that they have access to the internet. Radio broadcasters are only required to have rights to play music or to air information regarding patented and copyrighted property. More so, with the rise of technology, traditional radio stations have changed their platforms enabling them to appeal to the digital age. For instance, BBC Radio 1 uses videos and social media to attract younger listeners. Doing so makes BBC's content more entertaining and immersive and enables the station to adapt to new trends and developments. To retain brand relevance,

BBC's Radio 1 also uses a YouTube channel, which has up to 2 million subscribers and a billion video views. Therefore, BBC continues to offer its audience digital radio content in all the platforms available through the company's 'Listen, Watch, Share' slogan. The mentioned efforts/strategies have enabled radio to evolve and to survive in the digital world. The simplicity of radio medium makes it even easier to carry into the future (Saracen, 2015). Thus, the internet has eased the passage of radio into the digital world as it provides flexible and convenient online interaction and broadcast. Thus, the audience is able to multitask, as they perform other chores such as driving and jogging, capabilities that other digital platforms such as Facebook cannot afford.

#### **4.The Role of Radio in The New Digital World**

While the popularity of other traditional media channels stagger in the digital age, radio continues to grow stronger. For instance, as of 2014, cable viewership had declined by 9%, while newspaper weekday circulation in the U.S. has been declining by 19% since 2004. The downward trend seen in the mentioned channels would indicate that radio is facing the same fate. Fortunately, this is not the case as radio has remained a popular and steadfast tool for personal and business consumption. In fact, according to Nielsen's Audience Report, 91% of consumers from the U.S. aged 12 and above still tune in to radio on a weekly basis. This is in addition to 91.3% of adults aged between 18 and 24 years (Jackson, 2017).

One of the reasons why radio has continued to remain popular in the digital world is that it has become an effective tool for boosting online sales. Advertisers, marketers, and business people have come to rely on radio to drive leads towards the web, as well as to promote and increase organic search. Radio has created a circle of attraction from advertisers mainly due to its relative low cost, immediacy, and extensive reach. The mentioned features have motivated radio listeners to make buying decisions, as they are attracted by promo codes, and the local business ties (Radio Asia, 2013). Additionally, celebrities and local hosts have become trusted sources for referrals; once they create radio endorsements, they speed up consumer buying decisions. Therefore, entrepreneurs and marketers have come to identify radio as a tool for driving sales conversions on product and company websites. Radio listeners are also qualified audiences as they easily convert from leads to sales at surprisingly high levels. At the same time, broadcasters and radio producers/presenters have come to identify with radio as they use social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Weibo to engage listeners and to publicize businesses, products, and services.

Radio also plays the role of a quality score. According to an Audience Report by Nielsen, 243 million Americans tune in to the radio every week, and on average, music stations and talk stations spend 12 minutes and 20 minutes respectively on commercial breaks every hour. Thanks to radio's pervasive reach (mobile, cars, homes, streaming and others), it has enabled businesses to garner a wide audience to not only listen and take action on commercials, but to also rate company's products and businesses performance on channels such as Google. Therefore, the more a company is able to channel qualified audience from radio to digital platforms who then search and locate the company's products or business, the more influence it has on ranking and on the company's ad-cost per click (CPC) (Jackson, 2017).

Radio is also a source for reliable local news in today's communities. As other media channels try to regain the trust of the public, radio has stayed far from broadcasting and spreading fake news. In fact, fake news have only boosted the reputation and financial sustainability of BBC local radio when in 2017, the government saved the channel from undergoing a \$13 million budget cut. Therefore, radio has remained a source of reliable and relevant local content, something that Google and Facebook are still striving to achieve. More so, radio speaks to and communicates with communities directly and immediately. For instance, during emergencies, locals and other radio listeners recognize radio as the main source of fast and reliable information, as seen during western London's Grenfell fire or the Manchester bombing. During the two incidences, local, commercial, and public radio stations took the central role of reporting as they interchanged their schedules to provide important information, as well as to accommodate stories. Therefore, even with competition from other digital platforms, radio has remained a trusted source for local news and communication among many Europeans. In fact, radio ranks ahead of the Internet and TV, with only 1 out of 3 European Union citizens indicating that they trust the internet (Obreja, 2017).

Radio is also a source of entertainment as AM/FM radio, as well as digital radio have remained dominant forces for music listening in the U.S. For instance, according to a report namely, Share of Ear, by Edison Research, AM/FM radio was responsible for more than half of the time spent listening to music, in Q2 of 2017. Majority of the population that reported having used traditional radio for music or as a source of entertainment was 18 years and older. In comparison, listeners for other digital sources were 6% (Pandora), 5% (TV music channels), 3% (podcasts), 8% (YouTube music videos), 12% (owned music), and 4% (Spotify) (Miller, 2017). Therefore, due to its ease of use in cars and when commuting, as well as cost efficiency, radio has continued to dominate the

music/entertainment industry even in the face of massive competition from multiple digital platforms.

### 5. Radio Listening Habits in The World Today From Traditional and Digital Platforms

Content consumption for radio has not changed much with the rise of digital media platforms. On the one hand, tech surveys indicate that more radio listeners are switching from using the traditional AM/FM radio. On the other hand, consumers are still trying to access radio through various digital platforms. For instance, as indicated in the figure below, radio listening on regular AM/FM radio comprises of 70% against 27% of listeners using digital platforms. The digital platforms mostly in use include smart speakers, computer streaming, podcasts, mobile apps, while AM/FM radio includes traditional platforms at home, work, or school or even in a vehicle. When certain audiences such as Millennials are isolated, the digital share of the consumption for radio broadcast goes higher. The trend is noticeable especially among fans of sports and other similar or alternative activities (Jacobs, 2018). Therefore, radio listening habits have not changed rapidly in the digital era. In fact, traditional ways have continued to flourish over digital ways confirming that regular AM/FM radio stations are still relevant.

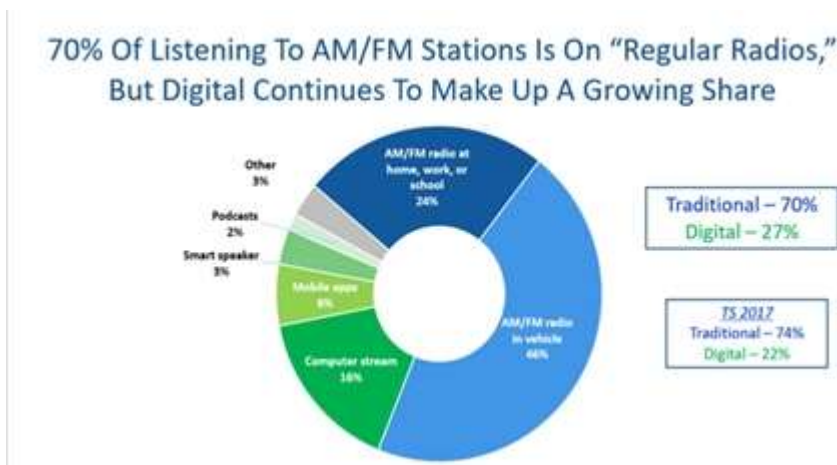


Figure 1. Traditional vs. Digital Radio Listening in Source: (Jacobs, 2018)

The chart below shows radio listening trends for the past 5 years, which indicate that the shift from traditional to digital home station listening has been on the rise. For instance, traditional listening dropped from 85% to 70% from 2013 to 2018, while digital listening rose from 14% to 27% over



the same period (Jacobs, 2018). While the trend indicates a drop in the use of traditional radio, this channel continues to remain resilient with reports indicating that 85% of the adult population in the U.S. continues to listen to an hour of radio content every week. In comparison, audio streaming continues to rise albeit slowly, with only 21% of the adults in the U.S. confirming that they use at least 30 minutes each week to listen to music via radio apps or the Internet. Still, the current gap between traditional and digital listening is going to reduce with time as seen in the number of online audio streams, which increased by 62%, between January and June 2017 (Gigante, 2018). Therefore, while the stable audience for radio listening, both traditional and digital has boosted radio's relevance in today's digital world, traditional listening through AM/FM radio remains under constant threat from digital platforms.

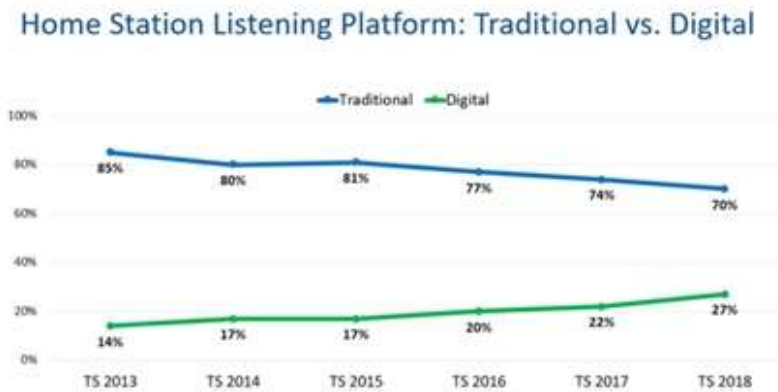


Figure 2. Radio Listening From Home Traditional vs. Digital Radio  
Source: (Jacobs, 2018)

## 6. Conclusion

Radio as a medium for communicating, informing, and entertaining has evolved emphatically since its inception in the early 1900s. The history of radio started when Nikolai Tesla from Missouri, United States demonstrated the workings of a wireless radio in 1893. Still, Guglielmo Marconi of England is accredited as the inventor of radio as he was the first to obtain licenses and to transmit radio signals, in 1901. Spanning from its massive use before the 1920s, and during World War 1 and World War II, radio has embraced changes and challenges to make it through to the digital world. Today, the internet has eased the passage of radio into the digital era as it provides flexible and convenient online interaction and broadcast. The role of radio in the digital era has remained that of communicating trusted and reliable news, entertainment through music, and most recently, for boosting online sales through advertisements and marketing. Notably, radio listening habits have been competing between the traditional AM/FM

radio channels, and the digital platforms. While the traditional radio platforms at home, work, school or even in vehicles have remained resilient over time, the digital channels such as speakers, computer streaming, podcasts, and mobile apps are catching up. The millennials are the highest consumers of digital content, thus, increasing the demand for digital listening compared to traditional listening.

## References

- Cordeiro, P. (2012). Radio becoming radio: Convergence, Interactivity and broadcasting trends in perspective. *Journal of Audience & Reception Studies*, 9(2), 492-510.
- Gigante, M.D. (2018). The Media Habits of Americans in 2017: Internet, TV, Radio, and Print Trends. *MDG Advertising*. Retrieved from <https://www.mdgadvertising.com/marketing-insights/the-media-habits-of-americans-in-2017-internet-tv-radio-and-print-trends/>
- Jackson, P. (2017). The Rise of Radio in a Digital World. *Marketing Architects*. Retrieved from <https://www.marketingarchitects.com/blog/the-rise-of-radio-in-a-digital-world>
- Jacobs, F. (2018). The Rapidly Changing Face of Radio Listening. *Jacobs Media Strategies*. Retrieved from <https://jacobsmedia.com/rapidly-changing-face-radio-listening/>
- May, A. (2013). Why Radio is Still Relevant in a Digital Age. *Just Media*. Retrieved from <http://justmedia.com/2013/08/why-radio-is-still-relevant-in-a-digital-age/>
- Miller, L.S. (2017). Paradigm Shift: Why Radio Must Adapt to the Rise of Digital. *American Bar Association*. Retrieved from [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/entertainment\\_sports/publications/entertainment-sports-lawyer/2017/fall2017/paradigm-shift/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/entertainment_sports/publications/entertainment-sports-lawyer/2017/fall2017/paradigm-shift/)
- Obreja, R. (2017). What is Local Radio's Digital Future? *Radio World*. Retrieved from <https://www.radioworld.com/global/what-is-local-radios-digital-future>
- Radio Asia. (2013). Radio and Social Media: Where to next. *Radio Asia*. Retrieved from [http://rthk9.rthk.hk/mediadigest/20130911\\_76\\_123037.html](http://rthk9.rthk.hk/mediadigest/20130911_76_123037.html)
- Saracen. (2015). What is the future of radio in a digital world. *Saracen*. Retrieved from <http://saracen-media.co.ke/2015/07/16/what-is-the-future-of-radio-in-a-digital-world/>

TechWholesale. (2014). History of the Radio: From Inception to Modern Day. *TechWholesale*. Retrieved from <https://www.techwholesale.com/history-of-th-radio.html>