

OFCOM CONTENT SAMPLING REPORT

Station: Forth One (Edinburgh)

Dates Sampled: Sunday 6 January, Monday 7 January and Tuesday 8 January, 2008

CONTENT SAMPLING FINDING

Forth One is a contemporary hits station for Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife.

News, sport, listener participation and specific speech programming segments, such as a weekly late night phone-in and 'Forth Action', all contribute to delivering localness on Forth One. Local news bulletins feature at least hourly during weekday daytime and there are regular sport and travel updates. Outside of daytime, news bulletins comprise both Scottish and UK-wide stories. Forth One comfortably meets the requirement that speech should account for at least 10% of its daytime output.

Musically, the station delivers on its Format commitment to play predominantly chart hits from today and the past 15 years, and some specialist dance music programming is also featured.

Forth One is operating within its Format.

Forth One Character of Service

A CONTEMPORARY AND CHART MUSIC AND INFORMATION STATION FOR UNDER 40s IN THE EDINBURGH AREA.

Forth One Format Detail

Music programming will be predominantly (up to 90%) current chart hits, new releases or hits up to 15 years old. The main mix should be spiced with Scottish pop or rock and/or other hits. Specialist music programmes for the target audience, which complement the main music mix, may be broadcast in non daytime, and should include soul, rock and music targeted at Edinburgh youth.

The station will be music-led, but information, sport, entertainment and features of particular local relevance will be in evidence throughout programming, with bulletins containing local news run at least hourly during peak-time. National or regional news will feature at other times. Speech should account for at least 10% of daytime output.

Format Obligations: Pre-sampling observations

Forth One is the heritage local commercial station for Edinburgh, commencing broadcasting in 1975. It also has a sister station on AM, Forth 2, which targets a slightly older audience of over-35s.

Forth One's Character of Service requires it to be "a contemporary and chart music and information station for the under 40s in Edinburgh. " The detail of the station's Format reinforces this through a requirement to play predominantly current chart hits, new releases or chart hits from the past 15 years.

The three days monitored fell within the first week of the New Year and so some of the station's regular presenters were on holiday.

Localness and General Format Findings (excluding news)

Outside of formal news bulletins, Forth One fulfilled its localness requirements through sports bulletins, travel news, regular listener participation and a late night weekly phone-in, 'The Open Line'. In this programme, which is shared with Forth 2, Reverend Andy Monaghan took calls from members of the local community on a wide range of issues and provided advice.

During the sampling period, Edinburgh was experiencing a period of snowy weather and Darren and Dingo, who presented the breakfast show in the absence of regular host Boogie, kept listeners regularly informed about traffic conditions and school closures. Meanwhile, the 'Hit List' evening programme provided information updates about a power-cut that had occurred in south-east Edinburgh.

Traffic and travel bulletins were included regularly during breakfast and drive time shows and members of the public were encouraged to call in to the station's 'Jamline' to update the studio on breaking traffic news.

Forth One ran the 'Forth Action' feature twice daily on weekdays, whereby listeners were encouraged to provide details of local charity or community initiatives. During the sampling period, one of these focused on the charity 'Tackle Africa' which used the popularity of football to educate people in Africa about the spread of HIV and AIDS. A football coach for a local under-12s team was due to travel to Ghana the following weekend to work with this charity and he used the 'Forth Action' service to promote his trip. 'Forth Action' also promoted the Woodlands Trust Christmas card recycling campaign and provided details of where in Edinburgh people could go to recycle their cards.

The station's Format requires it to air locally-made output for at least 18 hours per day. It comfortably exceeded that requirement on the days monitored, with the only programmes on the schedule not being produced in Edinburgh being 'Ross King in LA' and the 'Hit40UK'. King's programme in LA featured some high profile celebrity interviews with the likes of Michael Caine, George Clooney, Michael Douglas and Billy Connolly.

News

Forth One is over-delivering with regard to the amount of local news bulletins it airs. During the sampling period, local news bulletins were broadcast half-hourly during peaktime, and hourly local bulletins were aired during weekday daytime. At other times, regular local, Scottish and UK-wide news bulletins were broadcast. Overnight news bulletins were externally-produced. This information is accurately described in the station's public file.

Examples of local news stories featured during the monitoring period included the release of Kenny Ritchie, an Edinburgh man who had spent 21 years on death row in America; the retirement of the Chief Constable of Fife Police; and that Lothian and

Borders Police had arrested 133 people for drink-driving offences during its four week campaign over the festive period.

Music

Forth One's music output satisfied the Format requirement of being predominantly current chart hits, new releases and hits no more than 15 years old. Artists heard during the monitoring period included the Sugababes, Amy Winehouse, Jack Johnson, Leona Lewis, Kate Nash, Oasis, Razorlight and Rihanna. Specialist dance music shows are broadcast on Friday nights and Saturday evenings.

The station also met its Format requirement to play Scottish pop, rock or other hits. During the sampling period several Scottish bands and artists were aired, such as Amy Macdonald, Leon Jackson, the Fratellis, KT Tunstall, the Proclaimers, Travis and Paolo Nutini.

Music programming on Forth One contained a considerable amount of listener interactivity and participation. There were a number of specific slots for listener choices, such as 14.00-15.00 on Sunday afternoon, 17.30 on weekday drivetime and every 15 minutes during the weekday evening 'Hit List' programme.

Notes on Content Sampling

Ofcom's Content Sampling Procedure :

In Ofcom's move of emphasis from input regulation towards output regulation, content sampling has become an important regulatory process. Ofcom has already published the methods to be applied when formally listening to local commercial stations to create a content sampling report. These methods and processes are published at <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/contentssampling/>.

Background Information

Content sampling is a major Ofcom tool in judging the level of station compliance with regard to

- a) Public File*
- b) Localness*
- c) Music*

Content sampling may be carried out as part of an organised process, or may be as the result of a complaint.

Public File

Public File obligations are enshrined within each station's Licence. The Public File and/or station website will, in many cases, not only support the findings of content sampling, but signpost monitors to output that enhances specific aspects of localness and music, whether or not it involves the specific days being monitored.

Localness and Music

Localness guidelines are available on Ofcom's website at www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/car/localness/ and station localness and music obligations will vary considerably from Format to Format.