

OFCOM CONTENT SAMPLING REPORT

Station: Heart 106 (East Midlands)

Dates sampled: Thursday 15 November, Friday 16 November and Saturday 17 November 2007

CONTENT SAMPLING FINDING

Heart 106 is a full service talk and music station targeting 30-54 year olds in the East Midlands.

Localness is mainly delivered by Heart 106 through its specific speech features and news output. It includes longer news bulletins at weekday breakfast, lunch and drive, and a review of the week's news on Saturday mornings. Outside news, its talk output is delivered through the late night phone-in, as well as features and competitions, although it was noted that sports coverage was minimal.

Musically, Heart plays a mix of adult contemporary, current and classic easy listening and soul that sits comfortably with its target age group of 30-54.

Heart 106 is operating within its Format.

Heart 106 Character of Service

A FULL-SERVICE TALK AND MUSIC STATION WITH 24-HOUR NEWS FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS REGION, TARGETING PRIMARILY 30-54 YEAR-OLDS.

Heart 106 Format Detail

Speech is a very important part of this regional service, and should be challenging as well as reflecting what is happening in the region. For instance, there will be at least three hours of daily weekday phone-ins and some Saturday sport as appropriate. Speech will usually fall between not less than a third and a half of the daytime output with weekends and non-daytime not less than a fifth.

There will be 24-hour news bulletins, and at least during peak-time these will each be at least five minutes long. They will include local/regional news from at least 0600 to 2200 weekday and peak-time weekends.

Music can be up to 50% adult contemporary, with the remainder made up from a mix of modern easy listening, classic easy listening and Soul/Motown. Specialist music which complements the main mix may be broadcast outside daytime.

Format obligations: pre-sampling observations

Heart 106 is a regional radio station for the East Midlands, including Nottingham, Derby and Leicester, launched in 1997. The station, formerly known as Century, was acquired by Chrysalis Radio (now Global Radio) and re-branded as Heart 106 in 2005.

The station's Format requires it to provide a full-service radio station, targeting 30-54 year olds with talk and music.

Localness and general Format findings (excluding news)

Heart's Format states that "speech is a very important part of this regional service". Outside news bulletins, this obligation was largely fulfilled by the weekday late night phone-in with Adrian Allen, which tackled challenging issues such as sentencing of sex offenders. Other speech features included the early-evening music-based quiz "The Time Tunnel Challenge", and a weekday morning feature "Sort Your Life Out". On the days sampled, the latter featured a legal phone-in and fitness advice from personal trainers. Remaining speech outside breakfast came largely from pre-produced packages such as a one minute what's-on guide "The List", rather than forming an intrinsic part of the station's fabric. While regular travel news and weather also featured at peak times, it was noted that Saturday sport content did not extend beyond coverage within national Sky News Radio bulletins; this has been discussed with the station.

News

On the two weekdays monitored, locally-produced bulletins mixing local, national and international stories were broadcast by Heart 106 on at least an hourly basis between 0600 and 2200, including ten to fifteen minute extended bulletins ("The Heart Report") at 0600, 1300 and 1800. On the Saturday we monitored, the locally-compiled bulletins ran from 0700 to 1400, plus a half-hour recap of the week's news at 0630 ("Heart Report Extra"). This represents an over-delivery when compared to Heart's Format.

Examples of local news stories featured during the monitoring period included: dealing with terror threats against the East Midlands, an increase in complaints against local Police forces, a Worksop man accused of murdering his wife in America, and crime rates in the East Midlands. At other times, externally-produced national and international news bulletins were broadcast at hourly intervals.

Music

Heart 106's core music remit, as set out in the Format's Character of Service, is to target 30-54 year-olds in the East Midlands. Listening to the station and analysing music logs for the three days, we considered that the range of music played sat comfortably within this remit, with tracks from artists such as Leona Lewis, Madonna and The Doobie Brothers.

The detail of the Format states this should be up to 50% adult contemporary, with the remainder made up from a mix of modern easy listening, classic easy listening and Soul/Motown; an appropriate balance between these was in evidence. Soul and Motown tracks included Jackson 5/*I'll Be There*, Marvin Gaye/*Heard It Through The Grapevine*, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles/*Tracks Of My Tears*. Classic Easy Listening was represented by Dusty Springfield/*Son of A Preacher Man*, Elton John/*Your Song* and Louis Armstrong/*What A Wonderful World*, while Modern Easy Listening featured Norah Jones/*Don't Know Why*, Celine Dion/*Because You Loved Me*, and Ronan Keating/*If Tomorrow Never Comes*.

The Format allows for (but does not require) "Specialist music which complements the main mix" outside daytime, and Heart provides "Club Classics" featuring dance music from the 1970s to early 2000s on Friday and Saturday evenings.

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.