

# CONTENT SAMPLING REPORT

**Station :** Passion 107.9

**Dates Sampled:** 14 February, 4/5 & 8 March 2006

**Station Character of Service:**

THE STATION WILL BE THE VOICE FOR THE YOUNG OXFORD AREA WITH A MIX OF PRIMARILY NEW, 'CUTTING EDGE' AND CREDIBLE CHART MUSIC WITH NEWS, INFORMATION AND YOUTH CULTURE FEATURES TARGETING 15-29s IN THE CITY.

**Station Format Detail :**

Passion is the voice of young Oxford with a daytime mix primarily of new and 'cutting edge' urban, dance, alternative and credible chart music (mainstream chart material must not account for more than a fifth of daytime music and pre-release/pre-chart entry tracks must be strongly evident and normally account for at least 2 plays each hour, averaged across daytime). Outside daytime the music will frequently be more radical with a greater amount of new music/tracks from outside the mainstream; specialist music programmes must account for at least 30 hours each week and include a new music review, urban, dance and alternative music programmes.

Speech should account for at least 20% of weekday daytime and 15% of weekend daytime output. This should include regular and frequently updated traffic/travel/weather/what's on listings, twice weekday daily 'youth culture' information/entertainment features; weekly discussion/phone-in of at least 2 hours duration which may include some music and be aired outside daytime; and 12 'social action/awareness' campaigns each year. Local news will run hourly at least during weekday daytime and peaktime weekends, with a news/sport magazine programme, containing local and national stories, of at least 15 minutes duration each weekday in daytime.

**Format Obligations :** Pre-sampling observations

Passion is a youth targeted service with specific obligations regarding the music mix and the amount of specialist programming (at least 30 hours per week). Mainstream chart material must not account for more than 20% of daytime output; pre-release/pre-chart entry tracks should on average account for at least 2 plays each hour during daytime.

There is an hourly obligation for local news and an extended 15 minute bulletin during daytime. Local news should be in evidence at peaktime during weekends.

Speech programming should provide 'youth culture' information/entertainment and a weekly discussion programme of at least 2 hours outside daytime, which can contain some music.

## **Localness and General Format Findings** (excluding news)

Weekday daytime programming was clearly youth orientated with entertainment and showbiz news featuring across the day. Outside of news bulletins, regular traffic and travel news and, to a lesser extent, competition items provided 'localness' – together with locally focused presenter anecdotes sourced from their own life experiences. For example mention of the Oxford Playhouse and light-hearted item about a recent research finding revealing that people in Oxford spend a year of their lives looking for lost items.

The Format dictates that (at least) 12 social action/awareness campaigns are broadcast each year. While no such campaigns were in evidence during our sampling period, the station did provide audio of recent campaigns, which included Drug awareness; Mental Health Issues and Debt.

Weekend programming provided references to local sporting activities; dedications; showbiz news and television listings. The two hour discussion/phone-in stipulated in the Format is scheduled on a Sunday evening 'Passion Feedback' 21.00-23.00 and during this sampling period focused on 'Dating Disasters'. Double headed presentation with a music mix, which relies on listener participation from text messaging and emails rather than phone-in contributions.

## **News**

The news service is good. Locally mixed bulletins were aired every hour, with half-hourly updates at breakfast and drive. The station is obliged to provide a 15 minute extended bulletin during daytime each weekday. However, this requirement is exceeded, with two extended bulletins being broadcast each weekday, at 13.00 (15 minutes) and 18.00 (12 minutes). Local stories were refreshed during the day and included items about: UCAS reports increase in Oxford applications; first finger scan method for payment piloted in Oxford store; Oxford Civic Society Report on litter and obtrusive modern signs; Driver killed in road crash; Oxford based charity reports on bullying in local schools.

Sports news included football latest and an item about amateur boxing between Oxford and Cambridge that evening.

Frequent traffic and travel updates were heard throughout (daytime/peaktime).

Weekend – local bulletins at peaktime and more emphasis on sport.

## **Music:**

The station's remit is for urban, dance, alternative and credible chart music – with a cap on mainstream chart material of 20% during daytime. Pre-release/pre-chart entry should be evident – with at least 2 plays each hour.

A broad mix of urban, dance and alternative/indie. While mainstream artists such as Robbie Williams; James Blunt; Kelly Clarkson and Girls Aloud are in evidence, there is a cap on their inclusion. New tracks were featured and mixed with 'credible' chart music, the station sounded credible and fresh.

The Format dictates that there should be 30 hours of specialist programming per week and this is being delivered. Many of the genres that feature can fairly be categorised as 'nocturnal listening' (the most obvious example being specialist dance

music), and as such it is acceptable for a certain proportion of this service's required specialist hours to be broadcast late at night or during the early hours of the morning.

The new presenter for a Saturday evening specialist show was heavily trailed in daytime.

The commitment to a new music review is satisfied by 'Passion Interactive' Mon-Thurs 1900-2000, which solicits listener votes for their favourite new track and showcases new tracks. The station also has two weekend chart shows, one featuring Oxfordshire's Hit Thirty and a syndicated 'Smash Hits' chart programme.

### **Content Sampling Conclusion:**

The Passion Format commitment to music is outside the mainstream and the high number of specialist (30) hours reflect its unique direction. Another consequence of its standing, apart from the mainstream, is its restriction on mainstream pop and the demand for alternative tracks reflecting the 'cutting edge'.

Its news obligations, too, reflect its place in a university city with obligations for extended news bulletins and a weekly discussion programme, which can contain music but must retain its speech base.

**This station is operating within its Format**