

CONTENT SAMPLING REPORT

Station : Q102.9 FM

Dates Sampled : 19th, 21st, 24th September 2006 and 30th November 2006

Content Sampling Finding :

The station easily achieves the 20% weekday daytime speech minimum through regular features such as entertainment news, traffic and travel, hourly news bulletins and presenter links.

Whether through the news stories, competition features, or other participative elements such as the Community Noticeboard, the general output of the station gives a strong sense of localness. Unfortunately the station's Public File did not provide the "snapshot of localness and musical output" as required and we will pursue this with the Q Network group.

As per the pre-sampling observations, musically, the station sound was an eclectic yet familiar mix, with no genre or era dominating the output.

This station is operating within its Format

Station Character of Service :

A MUSIC AND INFORMATION STATION FOR LONDONDERRY

Station Format Detail :

Q102.9 is a music-led station for Londonderry, playing a mix of gold hits, recent chart hits and adult orientated rock. There should also be a sprinkling of locally produced/Irish music. Current chart hits would never be expected to make up more than half the music output.

Speech (normally at least 20% of the weekday daytime output) will cover travel, weather, entertainment, whats-ons, sport and so on. Bulletins containing local news should run at least during weekday peaktime. At least a couple of these bulletins should be extended (around 10 minutes). National news will feature at other times.

Format Obligations : Pre-sampling observations ...

Serving the Londonderry area this music-led Format carries moderate speech obligations (20% of weekday daytime output) which should be easily achieved through the required speech features. The music requirements would suggest a familiar yet interesting mix.

Localness and General Format Findings (excluding news)

The station's output included frequent opportunities to reference the local area, including regular traffic and travel updates. On one occasion, outside of the

scheduled update, a caller was taken to air and provided information on an emerging traffic problem.

Throughout the day presenter links made relevant references to upcoming programming features such as spotting the 'Q Jeep' in the area as part of an ongoing station promotion, clues for the 'Radiogram Anagram', taking part in the 'Mystery Voice' competition, details of the 'Twisted Lyric' fun feature or the 'T-Shirt Giveaway'. Showbiz news on a more national/international level included the likes of P Diddy, Madonna, Jade Goody and covered television soaps such as Emmerdale and Eastenders.

At the time of sampling, the region was experiencing some heavy rain and the presenter took the opportunity to advise drivers to ensure they observed appropriate stopping distances. Later in the day a Community Noticeboard announcement included a Met Office Forecast for residents to 'be prepared' for adverse weather conditions. Further safety notices were announced including practical steps for householders in the event of power loss (e.g. check for torches, batteries, fresh water etc.) Other announcements included an appeal for blood donations and the move of a local musical artist to London to further her career in the music industry.

Attached to the pre-recorded Noticeboard feature a representative from the Millennium Forum – a local theatre and events venue – was taken to air and gave an update on upcoming events and touring theatre productions to be staged at the Forum.

During the sampling period, certain issues were raised by promotional broadcasts heard and these will be taken up directly with station management.

'The Late Lounge', from 11pm, commenced the overnight networked programming across the Q Network. This programming originates from Q102.9 and is in accordance with the Format conditions.

News

During the sample period, news bulletins covering local, national and international stories were aired on the hour throughout daytime. Usually leading with the local stories, bulletins averaged 3.5mins and were enhanced through the inclusion of relevant audio. Local stories included: a report on a break-in at a local Spar store with comment by a local Councillor, commuting in Derry, an issue of children being involved in dealing and couriering drugs in the Bogside area and news of up to 200 new jobs in the Derry area. The sample period demonstrated a strong focus on local content – the reported theft of a laptop resulted in an appeal for listeners to be on the alert should they be offered such an item cheaply. Another bulletin included information of a concert cancellation at the Riverside Theatre.

In accordance with the Format requirements for, "at least a couple" of extended news bulletins, 15 minute news bulletins were broadcast at 1pm and at 6pm during weekdays. These reports were appropriately augmented by detailed sports news and business reports. Outside of daytime, news was provided by IRN.

Music :

Unfortunately the playlist supplied by the station seldom reflected the actual output heard. Nevertheless, during daytime the music mix was generally of an up-tempo feel and covered a range of genres from across the years: *Teenage Kicks* – The

Undertones, *Break Out* – Swing Out Sister, *A Design For Life* – Manic Street Preachers, *Self Control* – Laura Brannigan, *Red, Red Wine* – UB40 and *Ain't No Other Man* - Christina Aguilera. Other artists featured included The Killers, David Bowie, Wings, Beyonce, K T Tunstall and Patti Austin.

Music output often reflected listener choice selection, either through dedications or features such as the 'Top Five at 5'.

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.