

# CONTENT SAMPLING REPORT

**Station:** Reading 107 FM

**Dates Sampled:** Wednesday 5, Thursday 6, Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 July 2006

**Station Character of Service:**

**A LOCALLY-ORIENTED MUSIC AND INFORMATION STATION FOR 25-54 YEAR OLDS IN THE READING AREA.**

**Station Format Detail:**

The station is very much the voice of the area and speech will account for at least 20% of weekday daytime output (15% weekends). Community-focussed views and information (including sports coverage, local community/charitable organisations and business news) of relevance to the target audience will feature and include issues of concern to local ethnic communities. A news magazine of at least 15 minutes will feature each weekday daytime, with hourly bespoke local news at least throughout daytime (as defined above) and national/international news at other times.

The music will reflect a spread of hits from across the years and current chart hits will not normally be expected to comprise more than 20% of daytime music output. However, the music mix may be varied to allow the inclusion of themed programme features. Specialist music output that complements the main music mix must be broadcast, generally in non-daytime, for at least 10 hours a week.

**Format Obligations :** Pre-sampling observations ...

The station serves the Reading area and came on air in October 2002. The obligations for speech programming are relatively low, although the output should reflect a commitment to the local community and there is an expectation that occasional information of interest to the local ethnic community be in evidence.

Current chart material should not account for more than 20% of weekday output and there should be a spread of music from across the decades. There is flexibility toward the provision of specialist music, which should compliment the main mix.

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

The double headed breakfast sequence included frequent traffic and travel updates (which were also in evidence outside of breakfast and drivetime) together with a Business News item and Reading 107's 'Jobfinder' slot, which also featured at other junctures in the day. This was in addition to general presenter banter about show business items and a competition feature. Outside of breakfast there were occasional references to upcoming 'what's on' events in the area, such as the Henley Festival and tribute bands that were touring the area.

During mid-morning on the 5<sup>th</sup> July there was an interview with the editor of the 'Wokingham Times' who discussed the disappearance of a local schoolboy; the case may now be solved because of new evidence. He also commented on an initiative to

introduce anti-knife detecting equipment into local secondary schools. Presenter banter also included discussion about the world cup; a short phone-in about acceptable clothing during the hot weather and a brief look at the papers. We did not hear, during this sampling period, any information of concern/interest to the ethnic community.

Saturday programming included traffic and travel news in addition to car park availability updates to assist shoppers. While speech programming was reduced during the weekend period, there was nevertheless a good deal of discussion about the world cup final; competition items and general presenter banter about the music. In true local radio tradition, there was even a plea to find the owner of a lost dog, which had been left tethered in the local shopping precinct.

## **News**

Over the sample period, each weekday bulletin was a mix of local, national and international stories. Bulletins were consistently 3 to 4 minutes in duration. While the Format does not dictate that there should be a headline service on the half hour, there was a 1 minute headline service during peak times. At 6pm a 15 minute *'Reading Tonight'* round up of the news stories of the day. Weekend programming bulletins included national/international and sports news.

Local stories covered during the sample period included: Latest developments to bring Crossrail to Reading; Bereaved Berkshire mother calls for more awareness in young people concerning drink driving; Highways Agency agrees cash injection into junction 11 on M4; Homeless man found dead after injecting himself with a lethal dose of heroin while in Royal Berkshire Hospital; Trial of teenager who viciously attacked local man; Royal Berkshire Fire Service initiate campaign to alert residents to regularly test smoke alarms; Caroline Lucas MEP for the South East attends Greenpeace blockade at Aldermaston; Teenager attacked and stabbed by gang; Pupil at St Georges school in Ascot tests positive for drugs; The Royals report back for pre-season training and the Henley Festival starts.

## **Music:**

There is a spread of music from the various decades and the 20% ceiling on chart material is not exceeded. Artists from the various decades include: **60s** – Monkees; Moody Blues; Freda Payne; Chris Farlowe; Procol Harum; Righteous Brothers; TRex; **70s** – Gloria Gaynor; Barry White; Hall and Oates; Tavares; Yvonne Elliman; Blondie; Abba; Thin Lizzy; Billy Joel; **80s** – The Jam; Eurythmics; Chicago; Elvis Costello; Culture Club; Katrina and the Waves; Toto; Mike and the Mechanics; **90s and onwards** – Gabrielle; Take That; REM; Shania Twain; Aerosmith; Lighthouse Family; Macy Gray; Robbie Williams; Sting; U2; Madonna; David Gray; New Radicals and Bryan Adams. **Current material** included: Keane; Mary J Blige with U2; Gnarls Barkley; Will Young; Lily Allen; Corinne Bailey Rae and Sugababes.

Music programming to compliment the main mix included an hour of non-stop music from the 80s Monday through Friday; 'Saturday Night Fever' from 6pm – 10pm followed by 'Saturday Night Wind Down' from 10pm – Midnight. On Sunday, two hours of 'Million Sellers' with David Hamilton followed by 'The A List'.

## Content Sampling Conclusion:

The station's 20% speech limit is comfortably achieved through news, traffic and travel updates together with local information items and general presenter banter. While we did not hear any items of interest to the ethnic community during this sampling period, the station did provide us with items that had been part of the output recently. Examples included: as part of the 'My Reading' feature – 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for Barbados independence; local Asian shopkeepers conference; European Club Evenings during June and July. News reports have covered a police initiative to rescue Chinese and Lithuanian women from prostitution; the plight of Romany travellers; is the stop and search in the Thames Valley fair on everyone and a local councillor is rebuked for comments deemed inflammatory about crime committed in his area..

The news service contained a range of local news stories that were accompanied by comprehensive actuality. These were further explored in the extended evening news round up. Although there is no obligation to provide a headline service, this was in evidence during peak times. Weekend bulletins contained national, international and sports news.

The station promotes itself as playing 'The Best Music' and the mix was from across the decades, encompassing a range of genres. Current chart material did not exceed the 20% ceiling. The specialist music strands reflected the decades and particular genres, for example disco tracks during 'Saturday Night Fever' and easy listening/ chill out tracks during 'Saturday Night Wind Down'. The non-stop eighties feature across weekday evenings did not generally mirror daytime output.

**This station is operating within its Format**

## 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 [www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/contentsampling/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/contentsampling/).*

### 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 [to be] enshrined within each station Format. 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/ifi/rbl/car/localness/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/ifi/rbl/car/localness/)*

*and station localness and music obligations will vary considerably from Format to Format.*