

Name: Michael Hamilton

Representing: Self

What are your comments on these proposals?:

Ofcom must continue, not just to give guidance on localness, but to enforce it. In the current climate multi-ownership within the same marketplace (e.g. GMG's Century FM and Smooth FM which have identical TSA's in the North West and soon also the North East) and sharing of facilities where entire stations are moved completely outside their TSA (e.g. 96.3 Rock Radio - formerly Q96 - which has moved to co-locate with Real Radio and UTV's three stations under one roof which is coming to Newton Le Willows) are becoming more and more commonplace. Is there any point in having hundreds of local stations at all if there is no localness. TLRC, EMAP, GCAP et al might as well broadcast network shows day and night, taking IRN and playing the same music, possibly even broadcasting the same ads if they aren't forced to be local. In the current climate of cost-cutting right left and centre localness is being lost. Just one example is the news coming from Manchester for Rock FM in Preston and London for the entire Galaxy network (which isn't even remotely local) whenever people at either Rock or Galaxy in Leeds are on holiday. Ofcom's decision to allow the former Vibe stations to be networked from London during daytime is another of localness being lost. Ofcom must listen to stations and ensure the presenters aren't just all doing the same links out of the same tabloids every day and force them to talk about something happening in their TSA. A minimum number of events (not just Outside Broadcasts) in the local area (e.g. careers fairs etc) which the radio station visits could also be an idea. I'm not an old anorak harping on about public service broadcasting. I'm a youngster who realises that with the likes of ITV binning off practically all local programming apart from the news, radio is all there is left. I work for a small TLRC station and love filling our news bulletins with stories from our TSA that our listeners don't hear mentioned anywhere else. And when in my links on my show at the weekend I'm always telling everyone about charity events in the area, my life as a local, the local football team. People tell me my show's great and one of our former owners recently said the news on the station is the best it's ever been. Let local radio thrive and the local advertisers will spend. Allow cost cutting to continue and expect continued dominance from the BBC and commercial radio to die a death because none of the local advertisers think the product's any good.

DAB: Ofcom needs to look at this. How are small stations supposed to survive when the FM frequencies are going to be switched off so mobile phone companies can have the spectrum, and the small stations can't afford to go on DAB - or their competitor who owns the multiplex won't let them. Why must we have endless varieties of national (often presenterless) rock stations filling up DAB but local stations are left out. For example, in Liverpool Juice FM can't get on DAB because the multiplex owners, EMAP, have filled the space with Smash Hits, Kiss, Kerrang... Juice has changed owners twice since Forever Broadcasting decided they weren't interested in DAB. Now the owners UTV would love to be on, but can't.