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Time-Shifted Content May Help Station Ratings, But Listening Time Needs To Grow.

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Three minutes. That is how long the average person listened to on-demand broadcast audio content according to an analysis of Nielsen data. Futuri reviewed millions of occasions of minute-level listening data between January 2020 and August 2021 and determined the majority of on-demand listening occasions ranged from two to five minutes.

Futuri Product Manager Jim Tarantine says the message from the analysis is that unlike how listeners consume on-air radio, there's less tolerance for anything but the best in the time-shifted world. "Don't just push things out for the sake of pushing them out because somebody told you to do that. That doesn't help anyone," he advised. The message from listeners is clear: "Even though I'm a radio nerd, I'm not going to listen," he said.

During a webinar last week, Futuri noted that on-demand audio that was created with its POST platform generated listening occasions that were nearly 30% longer than the average. Tarantine theorized that had to do with the fact that it tightly edited the broadcast bits down to their best elements.

Getting listeners to cross the five-minute mark in any given quarter hour could be critical. That is because Nielsen gives a radio station ratings credit for any on-demand audio that a listener consumes within 24 hours of its original airtime as long as at least five minutes are consumed in any quarter hour period. The impact could be more than just ratings, too. It means that even if a station is not having great success monetizing the podcasts on their own, if they boost overall ratings it could help increase a station's ad revenue overall.

"I'll be candid. On-demand broadcast audio doesn't have a major impact on ratings, but it's real. And it's growing and every little bit counts," said Tarantine.

Coming Off The Podcast Sidelines

Many in radio have remained on the podcast sidelines so far. But the Nielsen data and the results of a flurry of research that Futuri has been conducting during the past year show what it calls a growing need for radio to embrace on-demand.

"During the pandemic, people had a year and a half to make new habits and how they access content and they're doing it digitally. The pandemic massively accelerated the shift to digital," agreed Senior VP of Marketing Zena Burns.

To prove the point, Futuri recently conducted several focus groups with more than 100 media consumers and found every time it bought up "radio" the respondents cited non-broadcast platforms like podcasts and streaming music services. "You can look at these shifts as doom and gloom or you can look at them as an opportunity to think differently about how you distribute and monetize the content you're creating," said Burns.

In one of the more surprising findings, 60% of the repurposed morning show on-air content is still listened to during morning drive. That means that daily 7:20 feature may instead be listened to in the on-demand realm at 7:50 by some listeners.

Tarantine said the data shows listeners still want what radio has to offer. "Broadcast content is still good. Listeners just wanted it at their own different times," he said. It also suggests that lifestyle changes brought on by the pandemic are behind the time-shift, not the content itself, Tarantine said. The Nielsen data shows nearly two-thirds (63%) of on-demand listening is taking place at home versus 37% outside the home.

"Long form, original podcasts are fantastic and important. But there's no reason you shouldn't include on-demand broadcast audio," said Burns. "It's content you're already creating in your podcast mix. By and large radio personalities do incredible work and have unmatched relationships with their communities. Why not take that hard work that goes into creating quality on air content and make it available for listeners to access when and how they want to."

Futuri – which has created POST, a tech platform used by stations to quickly time-shift live radio content – also sees a monetization opportunity for radio to get a bigger piece of growing podcast ad revenues that are projected to top \$1 billion this year. Turning just two morning drive bits into on-demand podcasts per day would create more than 500 pieces of content in a year. If one advertiser pays \$50 for each of them, it would add up to more than \$25,000 per year, he said.

Download a copy of the Futuri's "Growing Audience with On-Demand Broadcast Audio" white paper [HERE](#).

