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Capitol Broadcasting Is Harvesting Reams Of Listening Data From Connected Cars.

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Venu Koganti, Buzz Knight, Jon Accarrino (L-R)

Capitol Broadcasting Company receives near real-time radio listening data from cars and trucks in its North Carolina base to use in making programming decisions and for sales purposes. In a pilot study with connected car data company Wejo, the owner of 13 radio stations in Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington, NC is studying other use cases for leveraging in-car data.

The data comes from in-car sensors in vehicles made in 2015 or later that transmit billions of data points to automakers. Manchester, England-based Wejo currently has deals with 28 car companies to access their data and expects to sign up more in the next 6-12 months.

Among the data points are the number of vehicles from participating automakers on the road and the number of listening journeys, defined as each time a driver starts and stops a car. The company currently has 22 million vehicles across four continents on its platform.

Wejo has completed pilots or is in talks with other broadcasters, including some of radio's largest groups. The goal is to roll out a Software As A Service (SaaS) model by the end of the second quarter of 2023. "The idea is to really learn from our customers," Venu Koganti, Senior VP Sales (Advertising & Media), Wejo, said during a panel this week at NAB Show 2023. "We know we have this data that can be useful, but how exactly is it useful?"

Calling it a Google Analytics for radio listening in the car, Jon Accarrino, VP, Transformation, Capitol Broadcasting Company said he's excited "to have real data of what people are listening to on the radio, and not a sample or survey that somebody filled out." The data he's getting from Wejo shows how long motorists listened and the volume they listened at. It can show whether the station was the first one they tuned to in a particular listening "journey" or whether they tuned in from another station and if they then tuned out to go to a third station.

"I can look at this data and see that 65,000 people listened to my radio station this morning. No other ratings service or data service can give me that data," Accarrino said. That is helping inform programming decisions. "Maybe this commercial break is in the wrong place. Maybe this genre of music isn't as popular as we thought it would be," Accarrino said. "Oh no, we played a Michael Bolton song and everyone turned off our station. Now we know why."

In addition to listening metrics and audience heat maps, live maps provided by Wejo show hard braking and acceleration incidents. Users can also see when people have their windshield wipers turned on and at what speed. Accarrino sees weather and traffic reporting applications from this, especially for Capitol Broadcasting's WRAL-TV.

"We do tons of weather, we have eight meteorologists on staff," Accarrino told the NAB Show crowd, pointing to a display image of a heatmap showing windshield wiper activity. "Think about how different that would be in a TV weather forecast. Yeah, you see the rain clouds coming in, and everybody has their own Doppler. But when we start to integrate in the wiper heatmap, it's a cool visual that no one else is offering."

The Session, entitled, "Cracking the Radio Code with Connected Cars," was moderated by Buzz Knight, CEO of Buzz Knight Media. – *Paul Heine*

