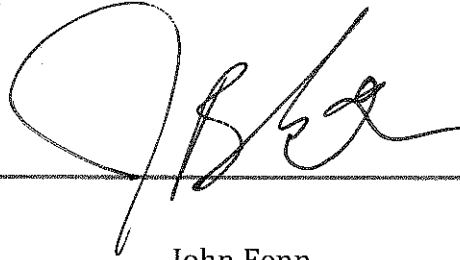


# **After the licensure: Promoting localism and access in emergent community radio stations.**

**A Master's research project by Erin Roberts | Spring 2012**

**Presented to the Arts Administration program of the University of Oregon in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master's of Science in Arts  
Management**

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Fenn', written over a horizontal line.

John Fenn  
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Date: 6/5/12

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I'd like to also award my family a giant, shiny trophy for all of their support and patience.

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##### **KGNU Community Radio (April 2010 - present)**

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Organized local journalists in the development of a consortium reporting model for WGXC. Led community advisory board meetings. Edit audio for WGXC broadcast.

#### **Program Director, News Director and Chief of Operations**

##### **KBUT Community Radio: Crested Butte, CO (December 2006 – Sept. 2008)**

##### ***2008 Nonprofit of the Year, Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce***

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#### **Producer, “Local Shakedown”**

##### **Radio1190: Boulder, CO (January 2002 – March 2006)**

Co-host of weekly live on-air broadcast. Organized and hosted live interviews and on-air performances by local artists. Promoted and co-sponsored local live music and arts productions.

#### **Musician**

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## **Abstract**

While there is not a formal, legal definition of community radio, according to Reed and Hanson (2007) its key defining features are localism and access. This master's project intends to address the gap in research regarding the process emergent community radio stations use to develop initial programming that promotes localism and access. This project examines the importance of community identification in the development of programming and focuses on the influence that a community radio station's commitment to hyper-local programming can have in attracting a participating community.

## **Keywords**

Community participation, localism, access, community media, community identification, programming

## **List of Figures**

Conceptual framework, see Appendix A.

## 1.1 Problem Statement

While community radio “does not have a formal, legal, definition... there are two key characteristics that distinguish it: localism and access” (Reed and Hanson, 2007, p. 215). This master’s project intends to address the gap in research regarding the process emergent community radio stations use to encourage local participation and access through programming. This project examines the importance of community identification and definition in the development of programming, and focuses on the influence that a community radio station’s commitment to hyper-local programming can have in attracting a participating community. Very little study has been done on programming in community radio; in fact, “community media has received very little scholarly attention, even within the field of media studies itself” (Rennie, 2007, p. 16) and researching community radio “ can provide important insights into the wider research of media studies” (Rennie, 2007, p. 20).

Recent changes in FCC policy make this research extremely timely and relevant to the field of media studies. In October of 2007, the FCC opened up a week long filing window for qualified nonprofits to apply for a full power non-commercial educational license. “For ten years, no new licenses had been given out. If you had ever dreamed of starting your own radio station, this was likely to be your last chance before all remaining FM spectrum was given away” (Future of Music Coalition, 2012a). This filing opportunity resulted in the licensure of over 200 new stations. With little existing research on community radio programming, many stations are asking a similar question—“How do emergent community radio



stations develop initial programming that encourages community access and participation?” This research critically examines how stations are defining their communities, articulating the need for a radio station, and defining the purpose of their initial programming to produce an accessible and participatory broadcast.

## **1.2 Purpose statement and Primary Research Questions**

My primary research question “How do emergent community radio stations develop initial programming that encourages community access and participation?”

In order to address this questions, I address the following primary and secondary research questions:

1. How do community radio stations define community?
  - 1a. Is community the same as audience for a radio station?
2. How was the need for a community radio articulated?
  - 2a. Why does the community need a station?
  - 2b. What is the history leading up to the formation of the station?
3. What is the purpose of the radio station’s programming?
  - 3a. Who does it serve?
  - 3b. How is need for programming identified?
  - 3c. What is the process for developing programming at a community radio station?
  - 3d. How is does the programming affect its defined community?
  - 3e. How does the community influence a station’s programming?
4. How can existing radio stations serve as models to emergent stations in the development of programming?

4a. What resources are available from existing stations and NFCB to guide emergent stations in the process of programming their stations?

### **1.3 Assumptions and Biases**

As a researcher, I realize that I could bring certain personal and professional assumptions and biases to the study. I closely identify with the stations that serve as case studies on a personal and professional level, and after working in the field for many years, have my own definition of community and established opinions on community radio programming. I approached the project aware of my preconceptions and biases, and took these into account as I gathered and synthesized data.

### **1.4 Limitations and Delimitations**

To narrow the scope of this study, I delimited the number of community radio stations examined to three. While broadening my research to include more stations would enhance the generalizability of the study, time constraints allowed for the synthesis of data from only three stations. I also delimited the study by conducting a maximum of two interviews at each site.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research is significant to the field of media arts in that there has been very little research done in general on the field of community media. In addition, there are very few resources available to emergent stations to aid in defining community and in developing accessible and participatory programming. In critically examining the process existing stations used to encourage access and

participation through programming, I intend to fill the gaps in knowledge by developing a resource manual for community arts organizations to use in program development. This research is applicable to the larger field of Arts Administration because of radio's interconnectedness with community culture; "As a forum for local arts and cultural organizations, community media support and encourage local cultural production" (Howley, 2005, p. 35). Because community radio stations are "strategic initiatives to counteract a climate of political apathy and social alienation that confounds a sense of belonging in local communities" (Howley, 2005, p.35), this research aims to provide useful recommendations across the field of Arts Administration how to engage community members and encourage participation in an organization.

## 1.6 Methodological Paradigm

This project uses a qualitative approach in order to "construct social reality, cultural meaning" (Neuman, 2006, p. 13) and "focus on interactive processes" (Neuman, 2006, p. 35). Because I am interested in the *interpretations* and *social realities* of WDRT, Radio Boise and WTIP and their corresponding participating communities, I base my research in interpretive social science. The main questions in my study are "how" and "who" in order to explain emerging trends in community radio programming. I explore how the stations define their communities, how they position themselves within their communities, who participates in the stations' activities, who influences station programming, and who is influenced *by* station programming. The research is applied and descriptive, to "present a picture of the specific details of a situation, social setting, or relationship" (Neuman, 2006, p. 35).

In line with interpretive social science, I see social reality “as consisting of people who construct meaning and create interpretations through their daily social interactions” (Neuman, 2006, p. 13). I explore not only how the selected case study sites interpret their role in the community, but also how their participating communities do the same.

## **1.7 Strategy of Inquiry**

In studying the process emergent radio stations use to develop accessible and participatory programming, I chose to employ the case study to “examine, in depth, many features of a few cases over a duration of time” (Neuman, 2006, p. 40) in an attempt to understand and explain a particular case and its implications on a more universal scale. I chose to do an in-depth, comparative case study of three community radio stations, WDRT, Radio Boise and WTIP. WTIP is an existing station in Grand Marais, MN that began broadcasting in 1998. WDRT and Radio Boise are a part of the new cohort of FCC applicants, receiving a license in 2008 broadcasting live in September 2010 and April 2011, respectively. I did a comprehensive study on the process WTIP used to develop programming that encouraged community access and participation, paying particular attention to how the founders defined community and to the factors leading to the successes and failures of early programming. I also examined the processes WDRT and Radio Boise are currently using to develop accessible and participatory programming, paying particular attention to how its founders are defining community and to what resources are available (from existing stations and from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters) to aid in program development.

I carefully selected cases that will help “connect the micro level, or the actions of individual people, to the macro level, or large-scale social structures and processes” (Neuman, 2006, p. 41). Because a case study focuses on a limited number of specific cases, “nothing is more important than making a proper selection of cases” (Stake, 1994, p. 243), as “understanding the critical phenomena may depend on choosing the case well” (Stake, 1994, p. 243). Key informants can increase accessibility to a case, “[making] it possible to collect remarks in situ, which could shed light on direct observations” (Hamel, 1993, p. 3). I chose my particular sites to study based on the high level of accessibility to key informants and familiarity with their corresponding organizational cultures, mission, and aesthetic.

Through extensive research, observations, and interviewing, I worked to connect the micro with the macro, “a small step toward grand generalization” (Stake, 1994, p. 238). Each case study was synthesized during research, taking into account his or her sociological interpretations of collected observations and other data. The intent of each case study is to tell a part of the case’s “story”. “Many a researcher would like to tell the whole story but of course cannot; the whole story exceeds anyone’s knowing, anyone’s telling” (Stake, 1994, p. 240).

## **1.8 Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

My data collection procedure consists of a series of interviews at each station. At WTIP, I interviewed the General Manager and Program Director. At Radio Boise and WDRT, I interviewed the General Manager and Board President, respectively. I also interviewed an executive staff member at NFCB regarding

existing resources for nascent radio stations in developing initial programming. Due to the extensive nature of the interviews, I allocated an hour and a half for each interview. Please see Appendix B for preliminary interview scripts. I only interviewed subjects consenting to the use of identifying information in my study. The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device, and the audio stored on memory cards for transcription. All audio was stored securely, and I am the only person with access to the files. I will keep the audio files and any other data from interviews for potential use at radio conferences or to archive for station use.

## **1.9 Recruitment**

I recruited the interviewees by first calling them on the phone to gauge interest in the study, then sending formal invitations via email. Please see Appendix B for a representative recruitment letter and telephone script. Upon agreeing to the interview, informants signed a consent form, found in Appendix B.

## **1.10 Document Analysis and Coding**

I began analyzing interviews, observations, and documents through coding, or “the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information” (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). While “the traditional approach in the social sciences is to allow the codes to emerge during data analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p. 187), I also looked to organize information by fitting data into predetermined codes. Please see Attachment C for examples of predetermined coding. Predetermined coding is aligned with topic areas pertinent to my conceptual framework, such as cultural community, access, localism, and participation.

## 1.11 Validity and Scope

“Less concerned with matching an abstract construct to empirical data and more concerned with giving a candid portrayal of social life that is true to the experiences of the people being studied” (Neuman, 2006, p. 196), I worked to ensure the validity of my research, “based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of the account” (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). To ensure validity, I triangulated among interviews and data collected to examine evidence and verify its themes. Throughout the interview process I used member checks to validate the information synthesized is true to the interviewees’ intent. This research draws heavily on personal interviews, and member checking involved “conducting a follow-up interview with participants in the study and providing an opportunity for them to comment on the findings” (Creswell, 2009, p. 191). As mentioned in previous chapters, I do foresee bringing certain biases to the study. I intended to be as forthright through self-reflection as possible to allow the reader to see how my personal history and interpretations have shaped my synthesis of research findings. To further validate my findings, I incorporated information that runs counter to my established themes, “because real life is comprised of different perspectives that do not always coalesce”, and “discussing contrary information adds to the credibility of an account” (Creswell, 2009, p. 192). Finally, I used my research advisor as well as graduate school peers as external auditors to review the project.

I realize that the scope of this master's research project is rather narrow, affecting the generalizability of its findings. I intend to paint a vivid picture of the process three different radio stations used/are using to develop initial programming that encourages community participation and access, realizing "that the value of qualitative research lies in the particular description and themes developed *in context* of a specific site" (Creswell, 2009, p. 193). While the research may not be broadly generalizable, I do believe the findings will serve as a professional resource to emergent stations and other community arts organizations in the development of new programming.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Community, Audience and the Public Sphere

#### *Community*

Community is often defined in terms of geography, social networks and communication systems. While often “anchored to particular places” (Scott, 1999, p. 809), community could be defined as “less miscellaneous jumbles of individuals following many different and disconnected pursuits than they are collectives whose members become caught up in mutually complementary and socially coordinated careers” (p. 809). Community forms around “the everyday practices, forces, and conditions that shape daily life in ways both subtle and profound” (Howley, 2010, p. 20), and “the cultural codes of representation, identity formation, and public expression” (p. 20). In defining community, this research intends to “explore and specify the relationship between communication and community” (Janowski, 1991, p. 163) with attention to community radio as “a cultural resource that is used to facilitate cultural citizenship” (Meadows et. al. 2005, p. 179).

#### *Public Sphere*

Community is commonly referred to in terms of the public sphere, with the community public sphere “seen as a discrete formation or space that develops in a unique context and ... is the product of contestation with the mainstream public sphere” (Meadows et. al. 2005, p. 180). Rather than adopting Habermas’ idea of a single, all-encompassing public sphere, (Habermas, 1997) this research presents community in terms of multiple, overlapping and competing public spheres (Fraser, 1992). Habermas asserts that “the advent of systems of mass communication

undermined the foundation of civil society ... by displacing civic culture and promoting consumer culture” (Howley, 2010, p. 74). This generates debate from critics who argue that his work “neglects alternative public spheres developed over time by women, racial and cultural minorities, the working class, and other groups deliberately excluded from participation in the bourgeois public sphere” (Howley, 2010, p. 20). In line with popular theory on participation and access in community radio, Habermas does highlight that “democratic communication demands active and engaged civic participation” (Howley, 2005, p. 19). While the broadcast spectrum has gone through periods of homogenization, dominated by large commercial conglomerates, the community radio movement is seen as a reaction to the homogenization. Thus, this research aligns itself more closely with Nancy Fraser’s idea that communities exist as individuals move within a network of “multiple, sometimes conflicting” (Meadows et al, 2005, p. 180) public spheres in our daily lives through our direct and indirect membership in social, cultural and political groups (Fraser, 1993).

### ***Communication***

Essential to community formation is communication. As articulated by scholars such as James Carey (1989) and Anthony Cohen (1985), the ‘symbolic construction of community “emphasizes the role of communication—language, print and broadcast media, and other symbolic practices—in creating a sense of shared identity and collective solidarity between disparate groups and individuals” (Howley, 2010, p. 64). Community radio stations thus serves an important role in the creation of community by encouraging dialog, between diverse constituents of

the community. In encouraging on-air dialog, community radio stations both produce and maintain the culture of the community.

### ***Audience***

Because of community radio's participatory nature, the terms community and audience are often used interchangeably in the field. Because community radio "aims to participate in the life of the community, but also to allow the community to participate in the life of the station... at the level of ownership, programming, management, direction and financing" (Milan, 2008, p. 26), the participating community and broadcast audience often largely overlap. The *congregationist imperative* (Howley, 2010) blurs the categories between production and consumption, basing itself on "a very simple starting point: the audience—the community" (p. 47). This is due, in part, to "the often intimate, diverse, and intensely personal relationships listeners have developed with their local community radio stations" (Meadows et al, 2005, p. 182). Because of the difficulties in identifying and interrogating the nature of community radio audiences, "one element absent from virtually all scholarly work on community broadcasting thus far is the audience". Yet it is clear that there is not a one to one relationship between a community radio station's audience and community. While few detailed statistics on community radio listenership exist, it is safe to say that some community members neither participate nor listen to their community radio station. Similarly, not every community member that listens to their community station actively participates in the production of their local station.

## 2.2 Defining community radio

Community radio refers to small-scale community media projects sharing features such as “not-for-profit status, locally oriented and produced content, editorial independence, social mission, presence of volunteer and non-professional staff” (Milan, 2008, p. 25). Three main terms are often used in literature to describe community media: localism, access, and participation. These terms are also what distinguish community radio from public radio. While community and public radio share many similarities, such as non-profit status, democratic governance and decision-making, a commitment to fairness in broadcasting and similarities in public funding, listener subscription and underwriting policy, “proximity, relevance and a sense of participation and sincerity” (Jauert, 2002, p. 26) are definitive to community radio. Community radio stations “are almost always Class D broadcasters in the US, so they transmit at 250 watts or less, so stations are very close, both literally and figuratively, with their source communities” (Wallace, 2008, p. 46). While public radio emphasizes quality and product, community radio emphasizes process and recognizes “amateurish charm... that is, the broadcasts are not judged primarily based on their technical or journalistic correctness, but rather on their ability to evoke or express participation and nearness” (Jauert, 2002, p. 26).

### ***Localism***

A strength and distinguishing characteristic of community radio is its “localism.” “This characteristic, which is reflected in local ownership, local decision-making, local accountability, and locally derived approaches to meeting local community need, is a unique approach in today’s media environment” (CPB, 2004, p. 5).

Community radio stations are deeply rooted in both geographic and social setting (Hollander et al. 2002), as “place, community, and the cultural economy are often closely related” (Scott, 1999, p. 810). Because community radio stations are as diverse as the localities that host them, “the context in which community media operate plays a decisive role in shaping and informing” (Howley, 2010, p. 2) their efforts. A response to the “hegemony of dominant media institutions and practices” (Howley, 2005, p. 35), community stations focus on local news, arts and culture content, often the only outlet for locally relevant news and information in the community. Drawing from a largely volunteer population with a varying degree of programming autonomy, community radio draws from voices centered in the immediate community. A saying often heard when referring to community radio is “radio by the people, for the people”. “With community radio, programming is produced by people fundamentally similar to the station’s audience” (Reed and Hanson, p. 220). Community radio relies largely on its volunteer workforce, usually greatly outnumbering the station’s paid staff. The on-air volunteers give voice to the diverse constituents of the community. Gibbs Ginderman, the general manager for a community radio station in West Virginia explains:

A lot of people say, “I couldn’t be on the radio, because I don’t talk right.” The answer we always give them is, “The radio station’s supposed to sound like you.” One purpose of a community station is to reflect and reinforce the community’s image of itself. Most broadcast media are somebody’s fantasies or images or dreams, put into everyone’s house around the country. Our idea is, “This is Pocahontas County and this is what the people are like here.” (Reed and Hanson, p. 225).

In addition, localism provides the basis for individual and collective identity formation as our sense of self is largely shaped by a shared sense of place. This suggests that localism is “a social construction mediated within and through

communication and culture” (Howley, 2010, p. 8), and that community radio is the conduit through which culture is communicated.

The concept of localism is intertwined with those of access and participation, in that “it is a by-product of access and community group participation” (Rennie, 2006, p.121). By enabling community members access to and participation in station programming and decision-making, the community station becomes inherently representative of the local community.

### ***Access and Participation***

Community media is often defined as “media that allows for access and participation” (Rennie, 2006, p. 25), and as “an audience-oriented approach to broadcasting by focusing on localism in its programming and community access” (Reed and Hanson, 2007, p. 221). While access implies “the availability of communication tools and resources for members of the local community” (Howley, 2010, p.16) and participation is “community involvement in the production process”(Howley, 2010, p.16), the concepts are inextricably entwined in community radio. Run largely by volunteer members, community radio “aims not only to participate in the life of the community, but also allow the community to participate in the life of the station... at the level of ownership, programming, management, direction, and financing” (Girard, 1992, p. 13). By allowing for community access and participation, community radio stations facilitate democratic and participatory communication in that programs are made by the community and for the community. In championing participatory communication, community radio emphasizes process over product, in that “community radio is a social process or

event in which members of the community associate together to design programmes and produce and air them, thus taking on the primary role of actors in their own destiny” (Fraser, 2001, p. 6).

By enabling community members access to and participation in station programming and decision-making, the community station becomes inherently representative of the local community, “that is to say by providing a venue for individual and collective self-expression, community media make knowable not only the enormous variation of people, interests, and relationships within a locality, but also, critically, the commonality and interrelatedness of these individuals, groups, and concerns” (Howley, 2010, p.266).

## 2.3 Programming

With “a certain blurring of categories between production and consumption”, community radio programming is an expression of community need, with programming an “adaptation of media for use by the community, for whatever purposes the community decides” (Berrigan, 1979, p. 8). Community radio offers “local programming overlooked by more powerful and better funded national groups” (Wallace, 2008, p. 46) and is often seen “as a free space for expression and self-expression: a radio producer can play music and discuss topics with a freedom that cannot be found in any mainstream media, constrained by commercial requirements and/or by the owner’s beliefs” (Milan, 2008, p. 30).

Localism is a guiding factor in community radio programming, as many community radio stations “provide the *only* source of local news and information to their communities” (Meadows, 2005, p. 176). Community radio advocates say that

“[local content], in particular, is a major reason why they listen” (Meadows, 2005, p.176) and define local content as “locally produced music, and news and information about ‘everyday’ local events and issues of community concern” (p. 176). As diverse as the communities they represent, community radio stations decide on programming to best accommodate the diversity of their corresponding communities. Most community stations fit broadly into one of the following categories: News-talk; News-classical; News- jazz; and Variety, with volunteer programmers hosting much of the day’s broadcast. See appendix I for examples of community radio program schedules.

While local content, both as news and music programming, is considered hallmark of community radio, many community stations broadcast a combination of nationally syndicated programming and locally produced content. Community stations “have two main options for their programming and production activities: acquire a program or produce it themselves” (CPB, 2004, p. 8), with the two largest program providers being National Public Radio (NPR) and Public Radio International (PRI). While broadcasting nationally syndicated programming may seem contradictory to community radio’s emphasis on locally produced content, programs from NPR and PRI (not to mention the wealth of other distributors such as Pacifica and PRX) may nonetheless fill a gap in national news coverage for a community, offering a much needed alternative to commercial media outlets in the region. In addition, studies by CPB show that locally produced programming is less cost effective than the acquisition of nationally syndicated programming; “An increase in programming expenses was strongly associated with a decrease in net



revenue... most stations that increased their spending on programming did not experience a sufficient increase in revenue to cover the additional costs during the period examined” (CPB, 2004, p. 8). Thus, it appears financially advantageous for stations to consider a mix of nationally syndicated and locally produced programming.

According to NFCB, with community radio “it’s all about the programming”:

There are many ways to program a non-commercial community radio station, and there really are no wrong ways, but there are consequences. Every choice that you make will have consequences. You will have more listeners or fewer listeners, you will have different types of listeners. You will have more or less impact. So it’s really important you begin with the question, how do you define public service? And how do you define success? (NFCB, 2012a)

NFCB also highlights three basic rules to programming, in order to best take into account the ideas of public service and success:

The business of radio is programming. It’s not community building, it’s not movement building, it’s not developing an exemplary internal process. These are things that may result from your programming and they may be a very important part of your mission, but your actual business as a radio station is programming. This is your product; 2. Programming exists to serve listeners. Programming does not exist to serve volunteer programmers, even though they may be doing all the programming and it does not exist to serve board members or funders or underwriters; 3. Programming causes audience. If you have a large number of listeners, it’s because a large number of people find your programming important and compelling, they like it. If you have programming that people want to listen to, they will find a way to listen to you. (NFCB, 2012c)

More findings regarding the history of community radio programming as well as challenges faced by emergent community stations in programming will be disseminated in the case study of NFCB resources found in Chapter 3.

Overall, the literature regarding community radio programming reiterates the complexity and diversity of communities in which community radio stations exist, with programming a reflection of a community’s constituents and a response

to community need for a representative media outlet.

## **2.4 National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB)**

Research of community radio in the United States, particularly when examining recently licensed stations, cannot neglect the importance and influence of NFCB on community media development. NFCB “has played an important role beneath the very public surface of U.S. mass media through its influence on the nation’s broadcast policies and programming” (Huntsberger, 2007, p. 3) and continues to support emergent and existing community radio stations through its membership services.

NFCB was formed by a group of broadband activists in 1975, representatives from a small group of noncommercial educational stations who “envisioned an opportunity to develop a more democratic form of mass media, ... wanted to bring radio to geographically isolated areas that were not served by other NCE stations, ... [wanted] to build independent havens for discussion and experimentation that could exist beyond the economic and political pressures of the marketplace of U.S. mass media, [and] wanted to secure a viable position for community radio within the marketplace” (Huntsberger, 2007, p. 4) 35 years later, NFCB now represents the interests of over 250 community broadcasters across the country.

Characterized as “large and small, rural and urban, eclectic or targeted toward specific communities”, the member stations are “distinguished by their commitment to localism and community participation and support” (NFCB, 2012a).

While other representative organizations exist for community broadcasters,

“the National Federation of Community Broadcasters is the oldest and largest organization of community-oriented, nonprofit radio stations in the United States” (Huntsberger, 2007, p. 3). As its mission, NFCB advocates for public policy, recognition, and resources on behalf of its membership, while providing services to empower and strengthen community broadcasters through the values of localism, diversity, and public service [NFCB, 2012b]. Board member Deb Benedict from member station WTIP reiterates NFCB’s mission to its member stations, saying “NFCB provides the framework for collaboration and partnership, as well as access to invaluable assets. By sharing resources and information, member stations can help one another—and their listeners—to surmount current difficulties” (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 7, 2010).

Resources and information are the heart of NFCB’s service to community radio stations. In addition to offer the annual member conference which offers “opportunities for staff development, skill building, networking, affinity groups, inspiration, new ideas, discussions and exchanges, [and] a place to connect with peers, get your battery re-charged, and expand your horizons beyond your station” (NFCB, 2012c), NFCB provides its member stations advice, ideas, models, examples and referrals by phone. It provides free informational webinars on topics ranging from programming to board governance, and offers on-site visits to conduct board and staff retreats, advising on financial planning, assistance with long range planning, facilitation of conflict issues, training of new managers, and evaluation of technical issues and other situations. These services have been instrumental in providing WDRT, Radio Boise and WTIP the necessary resources from licensure to

broadcast. I will be referencing NFCB regularly in Chapters 3 and 4, while further disseminating the case studies.

## 2.5 Community Radio Policy

In October of 2007, the FCC opened up a week-long filing window for qualified nonprofits to apply for a full power non-commercial educational license. “For ten years, no new licenses had been given out. If you had ever dreamed of starting your own radio station, this was likely to be your last chance before all remaining FM spectrum was given away” (Future of Music Coalition, 2012). This filing opportunity resulted in the licensure of over 200 new stations.

Understanding the rationale behind the recent filing window necessitates an understanding of the history of radio regulation in the United States. Radio regulation has long been considered necessary due to “distinctive political characteristics associated with the power to broadcast and to shape public opinion” (Moss, 2003, p. 7). In the early 1920s, “first with ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication, and later with radio broadcasting, the cacophony of voices transmitted over a limited radio spectrum threatened to undermine utility of the entire medium” (Moss, 2003, p. 3). Limited number of transmitters can broadcast using the radio spectrum in one given area, and free market regulation of the industry was not proving effective. “As a result, competing transmitters clogged airwaves in urban areas, prompting calls for government oversight” (Wilke, 2009, p. 368). Congress passed the Radio Act of 1927, establishing the forerunner to the FCC, so “that public interest, convenience, or necessity would be served” (Radio Act of 1927) and “to prevent, among other things, restraint of diverse expression over

the airwaves” (Moss, 2003, p. 11). Beginning in 1941, the FCC implemented policies such as the ‘local ownership’ rule that restricted station ownership as a “means of preventing monopolies, encouraging competition, and maintaining diversity in viewpoints presented to listeners” (Wikle, 2009, p. 368).

In 1967, recognizing that commercial radio programming was becoming too homogenized, Congress passed The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 which established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the first federal source of funding for public radio in the US. CPB was “a response to the contention that commercial media’s reliance on advertising revenue and its need to attract a mass audience made it structurally incapable of serving the cultural, informational, and educational functions of a democratic mass communication system” (Washburn, 1995, p. 1149) and its funding was to allow stations to offer programming far more diverse than what was offered at existing commercial stations. In other words, by providing federal support for public radio, public stations would not have to rely as much on marketing themselves to their listeners for private support. Public radio in the 1970s, at the height of its CPB funding, was characterized by its diversity and capacity to reach niche audiences.

The deregulatory 1996 Telecom Act, introduced by the Reagan Administration, “brought unprecedented change to broadcasting, including the consolidation of independent radio stations within mega networks (Wikle, 2009, p. 365). The Act was meant as reform legislation intended to open up competition in media control, yet resulted in “the media landscape in the United States dominated by a handful of conglomerates with control over and financial interests in print,

radio, television” (Bradford, 2000, p. 82). The 1996 Telecom Act removed national ownership limits; the year before the Act was signed, a company or individual could own up to two AM and two FM stations in a single radio market area. After the Act, this number increased to between five and eight. “Despite its stated goal of increasing competition, the Telecom Act resulted in a significant decrease in competition” with “the value of station mergers in 1996-1997 [exceeding] \$13 billion” (Wikle, 2009, p. 369), compared to \$1.5 million the year before. The result was a few large corporations dominating the market, forgoing locally pertinent community news and cultural programming for prerecorded national news.

Another devastating result, in severe contradiction to the call for diverse expression by the Radio Act of 1927, was that “the rush to build networks pushed up the price of stations, making it increasingly difficult for minorities and women to enter full-power broadcasting” (Wikle, 2009, p. 369). Many radio stations no longer reflected the communities in which they broadcast, shifting emphasis away from localism in favor of efficiency and profit maximization. In addition, “seeking to maximize profits, network stations also began focusing their programming to appeal to wealthier listeners, leaving fewer stations offering programming popular among minority listeners” (Wikle, 2009, p. 369).

As the Telecom Act was intended to increase market competition yet resulted in massive monopolization of the airwaves, in Congress “even conservative Republican members of Congress [began] to complain about the disappearance of radio news programming”, recognizing that “simple changes in rules regarding the number of stations a single company can own... and the responsibilities of

broadcasters could dramatically improve the character and quality of American radio” (McChesney, 2005, p. 33).

Fortunately, “a progressive agenda for radio policy is being advanced on Capitol Hill” (McChesney, 2005, p. 33), and the future of community radio policy in the US appears to be transitioning back towards favoring localism and diversity in station ownership and programming, much as the originators of the first US broadcast policy intended it to be. With the 2007 filing window resulting in the licensure of over 200 new noncommercial, educational and nonprofit media outlets, community radio stations are once again beginning to enliven communities through participatory media.

## **Chapter 3: Case Studies**

### **3.1 Overview**

This research examines how emergent radio stations develop initial programming. In order to better understand this process, I explored the programming processes of WDRT and Radio Boise, two stations licensed in the most recent FCC filing window in 2007, and WTIP, a veteran community radio station licensed in 1998. WDRT and WTIP are located in rural communities with small populations, while Radio Boise broadcasts from a large metropolitan area. In studying programming in three different community radio stations, this research intends to examine the importance of community identification and definition in the development of programming. These case studies also focus on the influence that a community radio station's commitment to hyper-local programming can have in attracting a participating community.

### **3.2 Case Study 1: Radio Boise**

Radio Boise filed a broadcast license with the FCC in October 2007 and began broadcasting terrestrially on 89.9FM in April of 2011. Radio Boise began as a 24-hour Internet radio station and initiated local issues-oriented programming in July of 2005, offering a variety of locally and nationally produced programming in its initial broadcasts.

Radio Boise intends to fill a niche by offering programming not available anywhere else on the airwaves in the Boise, ID. Radio Boise "highlights content that receives little attention on current radio broadcasts and avoids duplication of



existing programming options” (Radio Boise, 2012a). The station’s programming is derivative of its mission, in that Radio Boise “aims to cultivate a stronger sense of ‘place’” in the Treasure Valley by “providing an unprecedented diversity of locally produced, high quality audio programs to inform, energize and educate its listeners” (Radio Boise, 2012a). Localism is paramount in Radio Boise programming. The station intends to provide its listeners with over 75% locally produced content through music programming, and:

also serve as a community-wide bulletin board for issues-oriented information and act a performance platform for the creative skills of local musicians, artists and youth. Inspiring creativity in the process of addressing community issues and enhancing social, cultural and environmental awareness is our goal. By increasing opportunities for members of the community to access local media to talk and listen to one another, community radio will help grow our local “cultural health”, enhance the quality of place, and further the American tradition of democracy (Radio Boise 2012a).

In formulating initial programming, the staff of Radio Boise evaluated offerings by other regional media outlets. There are a handful of commercial stations in Boise as well as an NPR affiliate in town “that has been doing a better job of including locally relevant content, but still they only offer around 10% locally produced programming” (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010).

To develop initial programming, Radio Boise developed an application process to screen potential programmers, with applications reviewed by the station’s Program Director. The application requests specifics of the show being proposed and refers applicants to review programming standards before applying to ensure their proposals are aligned with the station’s mission and philosophy and to “encourage people to think about their programming before actually committing to producing it” (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010). Radio Boise

values programming “that will add value to listeners when they hear its content” and that is “indispensable to the listening community by filling a gap in current regional programming offerings” (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010). Radio Boise uses the following principles to establish programming priorities:

1. Program Fit—is the program consistent with the purpose and mission of BCR?
2. Alternative Coverage—Does it avoid duplication of existing radio broadcasts?
3. Are we the best organization to provide this service?
4. How can we work with other organizations to provide services? (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010).

Programming at Radio Boise is decided upon by the station’s Program Director. While Radio Boise debated the use of a programming committee to make decisions on station programming, they initially decided to appoint programmatic decision-making to a single elected Program Director in order to streamline the process:

In theory, I would like a Program Director who I implicitly trust with decisions to carry out the mission and philosophy of the station through our programming. We haven’t gone to a programming committee structure yet. I’ve found that both models have benefits and both have hindrances, but it’s hard to come to a consensus with a committee unless you have a really great facilitator and a well communicating body of people who generally see things the same way (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010).

Initially, structural continuity in programming was a challenge for Radio Boise due to high employee turnover. Being an all-volunteer organization, it was hard to retain a Program Coordinator. Jeff Abrams says, “we have had three Program Directors in the last three years and that has been a challenge to the station because we need to also focus on fundraising and messaging and outreach” (J. Abrams,

personal communication, March 12, 2010). As a result, “the programming is something [Radio Boise] has just sort of allowed to happen and develop as we get programming applications” (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010).

Operating as an internet radio station until resources were in place to broadcast as a terrestrial station (the station’s construction permit mandated this happen by April 2011), Radio Boise’s initial program schedule was an eclectic mix of locally produced music shows and included a small offering of nationally syndicated public affairs shows unavailable from other Boise radio stations. While the station intended to continue to produce an air locally produced shows, Abrams hoped that by the time the station went on-air, the programming would be “more robust”.

Abrams saw the initial on-line program schedule as a work in progress, with the station’s mission guiding programmatic decision-making:

I’d like to make our programming more robust. And really that gets down to, what should our community radio station be? Which gets down to the mission that our board designed. The programming that is going on in the larger field of community radio is all over the place and I think that depending on your mission, you’re going to program completely different (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010).

Abrams acknowledges that his station’s programming will not serve the needs of all residents of Boise, but intends to focus and refine his programming to attract a large and dedicated listenership:

I am seeing a trend toward more focused and “professional” suite of programming where it may not have as many programs appealing to the widest range of people but you might have more robust programming focused down a particular center lane of programming which develops a more hard core listener base. I’m trying to think about that before I lock us into programming (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010).

Radio Boise relies heavily on support and advice from NFCB and other, more mature community radio stations across the U.S. in order to avoid common organizational and programmatic mistakes, as well as to inform station staff on important trends and policy changes affecting community radio stations:

What I'm doing now is looking across the valley and seeing what established radio stations are grappling with now. If I can learn from their maturity and the questions they are answering now resulting from operating a radio station for twenty years, I'm going to do my level best to learn from what they're facing and what they're wrestling with (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010).

Radio Boise values community participation and access in the production of its programming, believing that "by increasing opportunities for members of the community to access local media to talk and listen to one another, community radio will help grow our local "cultural health", enhance the quality of place, and further the American tradition of democracy" (Radio Boise, 2012a).

The program schedule in place in March, 2012 reflects a democratic approach to programming, hosting specialty music shows ranging from disco to gospel and with locally produced public affairs shows focused on real estate, environmentalism and local breaking news, among others.

### **Case Study Summary**

Boise Radio aims to produce local programming that both reflects the unique composition of Boise's residents and helps enhance the cultural health and quality of "place" in Boise. Its focus is not to serve all residents of Boise, but instead to develop a devoted listenership by offering programming not currently available by

other commercial and non-commercial Boise stations. Programming is mission-driven. Radio Boise's programming develops organically as a result of the participatory and accessible nature of the program application process. Boise Radio attributes staff turnover as a challenge to programming consistency. The station devoted early efforts to creating sustainable programming processes and to researching best practices in the field.

### **4.3 Case Study 2: WDRT Community Radio from the Ground Up**

In 2003, residents of Viroqua, Wisconsin came together in town hall meetings concerning how they envisioned their community in 2020. "And one of the ideas that came out was that how to get messages about topics like economics and the environment to the public was a community radio station" (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010). From the meeting in 2003, Driftless Community Radio, Inc. (DCR) was incorporated "in response to public demand for a radio station that would meet the unique needs of Wisconsin's Driftless region" (WDRT business plan, 2010, p. 4). An engineering study in 2003 identified 91.9FM as available frequency for the station, yet with no open FCC filing window for FM applications, DCR formed as an internet radio station, broadcasting online from 2005-2009. DCR filed for a full-power FM license during the FCC's 2007 filing window, and was granted a construction permit in 2009, with three years time allotted for construction. The board of directors selected the call letters WDRT to stand for "Driftless", acknowledging the "community's strong ties to the land" (WDRT business plan, 2010, p. 4).

WDRT is located in the heart of the Driftless region of Wisconsin. Having missed the major glacial drift that flattened much of the Midwest, the Driftless region of Wisconsin is known for its hills and deeply carved river valleys:

Viroqua is such a unique area. The county seat, it's only a town of about 4800. The county is one of the poorest rural counties in the state, but it's an odd mix of people who moved out there to pursue alternative lifestyles including the original influx of hippies in the late 70s. They were the ones who funded Organic Valley, which is the largest employer in the county. Organic Valley is also the largest distributor of organic produce and dairy in the nation (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

Small organic farms prosper in the county, while the establishment of high-acreage commercial agriculture is impossible due to the geographic constraints of the Driftless region.

As DCR "exists to serve the community" (WDRT business plan, 2010, p. 30)

WDRT is using the demographics of the region to help define the radio station's community, and is emphasizing unbiased access and inclusion. Tamara Dean, board president of WDRT notes:

In defining our community, we intentionally wanted as broad a definition as possible. One of the challenges our community faces is some mistrust and division between two major cultural community groups, the longstanding farm families descended from the original Norwegian-American immigrants and the newcomers, who might have lived here for four years but are still considered newcomers. The older farming families regard the newcomers with suspicion and the newcomers might not necessarily respect the traditions of the older farm families so we wanted to act as a bridge between these factions... One of our board members put it really well "We're not left of the road, we're not right of the road, we're not middle of the road—we ARE the road" and we do see ourselves as a channel (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

The vision and values of WDRT reflect inclusion in defining community, envisioning "a community that accepts diverse perspectives, engages in mutual support" and valuing "the promotion of tolerant and respectful appreciation of the commonalities that link us as people [and] the diversity of interests, ethnicity, heritage, gender,

sexual orientation, economic conditions, religious choice and ages” (WDRT, 2011a) <http://wdrt.org/about-wdrt/mission-values.html>) of the community.

WDRT has found it much harder to connect with and gain support from the older, more traditional farming families of the region. Tamara Dean recognizes that WDRT won’t have a listenership unless the station embraces a broad demographic. In garnering community support, she is focusing on the older demographic instead of the “newcomers, more liberal townsfolk” (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010). She says:

You don’t have to cater to the [newcomers], but you certainly have to consider them and welcome them. You have to make more of an effort to reach out to the older community. One thing we’re doing is reaching out to the more established organizations in the area, the chamber of commerce, the bank, the Lutheran church (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

By posting informational fliers and becoming regular presence in more traditional community venues, Dean hopes that WDRT will have a broad appeal and be considered welcoming to community members with a diversity of lifestyles and interests.

WDRT began broadcasting live on September 17, 2010. In order to determine an initial program schedule, WDRT used its mission, vision, and values as guidelines for content and structure. WDRT intends for its programming to continue to develop from the “ground-up”, that is, developed by the community and for the community:

I don’t think in our community we could get away with saying “this is [the programming] we’re going to give you, now give us your money”. We’re dependent on the community, we exist for the community, so we have to bring them not what WE think is ‘us’ but what they want to hear. And that means we go through these community listening sessions (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010).

WDRT designed a series of community listening sessions as a forum for discussing programming, as well as to raise awareness of WDRT's mission and service. The first listening session was held in Spring 2009 in the future studios of WDRT, offering community members an opportunity to see the station's future home and making the station more "physical and real" to the public. The facilitators asked two main questions: 1) How do you envision WDRT playing a role in your community?; and 2) How do you want the station to sound? Around 50 community members attended, and in answer to the first question responded:

- A uniting force, a bridge between community divisions that emphasizes our commonalities
- A channel for open communication, unbiased in its accessibility
- A means of respectful civil discourse
- A reflection of the community's heritage
- A reflection of the community's uniqueness
- A daily clearinghouse of information, including news and weather
- A space for youth to learn and express themselves
- A collaborator with and promoter of local arts and the library
- A source of entertainment (WDRT business plan, 2010, p. 29)

In response to how they wanted WDRT to sound, the crowd emphasized the importance of detailed local weather and news and expressed a desire for a broad range of music, plus arts programming that showcases musicians, actors, and writers from the area (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010). WDRT held a subsequent listening session in Summer of 2009 at a Lutheran church and put up posters at the Feed Coop, the hardware store and the gas station trying to entice people who may not typically think of participating in the community station to feel welcome and involved.

To select initial programming, WDRT solicited program ideas and applications from the public that were then evaluated by a programming committee



made up of board members and community advisory members. The programming committee generally required that applicants provide audition tapes as an example of what a program would sound like once on-air. In order to teach potential community members how to use radio equipment for production and editing, WDRT holds training sessions to teach potential volunteers how to use radio equipment for production and editing.

In developing a final program schedule for their initial broadcast, WDRT used the historical knowledge of existing community radio stations to best determine structure. WDRT “[pays] attention to program schedules that have worked for other stations” (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010). In doing so, WDRT was able to postulate in what time slots certain types of programming would best fit. For example, “because of Viroqua’s agrarian community, whether people are ‘traditional’ or ‘newcomers’, they are likely to have an agrarian tie in some way, so WDRT proposed the Morning Milk Hour at 5am, *Programming for cows and the people who milk them*” (T. Dean, personal communication, February 26, 2010). WDRT’s initial program schedule did not include the Morning Milk hour, but does include approximately 80% locally produced programming, including music, talk, news, spoken word, and other cultural programming. WDRT Local News runs every evening from 5:30 – 6:30PM.

In developing initial programming, WDRT also worked to concurrently develop a process for program evaluations; “One of the things we’ve learned from other stations is that we need a process for ongoing evaluation of shows to make sure things are fluid and we’re meeting the needs of our listeners” (T. Dean,

personal communication, February 26, 2010). WDRT sees the importance in having the institutional processes in place to document and evaluate show efficacy once on-air. This will prevent “tenure” of programs developed by community members that may no longer serve the needs of the community, or no longer serve WDRT’s mission, vision, and values.

### **Case study summary**

WDRT uses its mission, vision and values as the guiding principles in deciding initial programming. WDRT has worked to actively engage a broad demographic in discussion in order to best serve the programming needs of the greatest number of people. Programming is developed “ground-up” at WDRT, with community listening sessions informing programming decisions. Access and participation are encouraged at WDRT by soliciting program applications from community members and providing training on radio equipment and recording devices. Having established programming processes and protocol in place is valued by WDRT as necessary to develop quality programming consistent with mission, vision and values. WDRT relies heavily on resources offered by NFCB as well as on the advice of veteran community radio stations to help develop processes essential to the success of the organization.

### **3.4 Case Study 3: WTIP - North Shore Community Radio**

WTIP broadcasts from Grand Marais, the county seat of Cook County, Minnesota. Its year round residents number just over 1300, with second homeowners boosting summer population to 20,000 and summer tourism bringing in over 100,000 visitors (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

WTIP is the first and only community broadcaster on the northern shore of Lake Superior. The station was launched in 1998 “by a small group of pioneering volunteers sitting around a kitchen table who believed that community radio in Cook County could play an important role in building a sense of shared community” (WTIP, 2011a).

WTIP defines its community as “a community of listeners” (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010). Deb Benedict, General Manager of WTIP and former Board Chair of National Federation for Community Broadcasters defines WTIP’s community as:

[expanding] beyond just the year round residents because we are a destination town, village, and region. With the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and with a lot of second homeowners from the upper Midwest and a lot of vacationers, 35-40% of our members do not have a zip code in our immediate broadcast area (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

WTIP staff works to better understand its listenership by being “boots in the street” (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010), in other words, by participating in community events and engaging citizens, both year-round and seasonal, in discussion. To better define its community of listeners, WTIP conducts regular listener surveys to gauge who is listening, to what and when, and sends regular e-newsletters to its members encouraging feedback. WTIP’s Program Director Roger Linehan emphasizes the importance of community identification in best serving its listenership:

WTIP programs for its audience. Through our surveys, listener email and anecdotal evidence, we have a good handle on who our listeners are and what they like. We are always open to response from the listeners and take what they want into account. Because we have a very good idea of listeners’ demographics, [our programming]

evolves to meet their needs. Knowledge is power (R. Linehan, personal correspondence, February 18, 2011).

Further encouraging participation, WTIP recently moved into a new studio space located on the main highway in Cook County and the only highway leading into Grand Marais, designing the new building “to be more of a community center versus an enclosed encapsulated radio station, in order to encourage folks to participate in the station” (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

According to Deb Benedict, WTIP’s community of listeners has rapidly grown over the last 3 years as a direct result of its increased focus on locally-produced programming.

WTIP began in 1998 as a partnership with KUMD, the University of Minnesota Duluth station, initially rebroadcasting much of KUMD’s programming and with KUMD staff assisting with development, membership, and underwriting. Over the years WTIP has worked towards independence from this partnership:

Slowly over the years we have engaged more volunteers and produced more local content. The contact we had with [KUMD] allowed us to do that and last year at this time we were able to get a PTFP grant to buy public radio satellite system services and meet the requirement to purchase national programming ourselves. We became all locally generated programming, generating a 24/7 broadcast out of our studios but still incorporating some locally traded and national programming (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

Since gaining independence from KUMD, programming at WTIP is selected to offer “a little bit of something for everybody” (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010). While some larger community and public stations focus on one type of music (ex. Jazz or blues) or broadcast only news and public affairs, WTIP

chooses to maintain an eclectic programming schedule, a mixture of locally produced news and music programming combined with select regionally and nationally produced programming. Deb Benedict explains this rationale:

We have a smaller population yet we know everybody does not think or operate the same, and does not listen to the same kind of music. We selected programming and placement based on what we know our community's lifestyle is and when they listen (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

While not every member of Cook County's physical community is a part of the WTIP listening community, WTIP strategically engages a variety of populations with programming designed to provide community resources not offered by other regional media sources:

I think a lot of people don't listen to radio because it isn't in their scheme of things. I've worked hard to change this habit by selecting certain programming and trying different things. By bringing in school kids weekly to do school news, we have engaged a lot of their parents as new listeners. Broadcasting sporting events has brought in a lot of new people who listen and find other programs they like. Many have learned not to just tune in for the original reason they started listening but for other reasons as well (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

According to Benedict, the locally produced community calendar, airing daily from 8 – 10AM “has become a mainstay for a lot of people no matter what they think of the other types of programming” because it serves as an important source for local news and announcements, filling “a niche in our community that can't be done by Minnesota Public Radio, which also has transmitters up here, or by our weekly newspaper” (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010). WTIP's ability to thoroughly cover local news is possible because of the:

strategic decision to make our news department a *department* versus one part-time person. We actually have three full-time news people that are able to produce local features on different aspects of

our community and cover events, record meetings, interview community members. Our news department binds community together and helps our station improve and grow and become more of a key thing in people's lives (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

WTIP had no news department when Deb Benedict was hired in 2001.

Benedict implemented a programming survey in 2009 "to find out what to focus on and why" (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010) and found that listeners were greatly in favor of adding much more local programming and expanding the local news department. In response, and in accordance with a part of WTIP's mission "to provide timely and accurate reports of local and state events, including weather, news and community happenings; to provide a forum open to all residents of the area for the discussion of public issues", WTIP expanded its local news coverage from 1 to 3 employees, initially funding the growth through regional granting agencies then sustaining the growth through a larger Corporation for Public Broadcasting grant. With the news team in place, both membership and underwriting grew and WTIP continues to fund the department through those sources.

Benedict is aware that emergent stations must build a solid operational infrastructure while growing the news and public affairs department, but believes that listenership grows by focusing on local issues:

My advice for newly licensed stations is local, local, local. It is a national watch-word right now, especially with how homogenized and limited news is becoming, and with local newspapers folding. I would recommend doing as much local information programming as possible. Initially I recognize that this can be hard because of staffing. You have to have a development person in place, you have to have a general manager in place, you need a program director. But the next key position is a news person or a news department (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

In focusing on local information and issues, WTIP serves to connect community members “by helping people get to know others in the community which hopefully provides a stronger connection, a better understanding, and helps people come together and work together and put their differences aside to solve local problems”

(D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010). Roger Linehan also champion’s WTIP’s ability to engage the community:

Instead of being divisive and splitting people from each other, we are helping them to talk with each other. If you view a new station as a kind of community engaging communications tool, you’ll go a long ways toward being successful (R. Linehan, personal communication, February 18, 2011).

Both Benedict and Linehan mention that their ability to engage goes beyond county limits. With such a large percentage of the county as second homeowners, a small percentage of their listenership comes from listeners residing out of town and listening via webcast. These listeners tend to listen to stay connected with the community and stay abreast local news and information, and WTIP considers the web listeners an important part of their community of listeners. For example, during a major recent forest fire that threatened many homes in the area and forced large scale evacuations, WTIP considerably increased their high speed webstream to serve out of town listeners that wanted to know if their cabins were in danger of destruction. Linehan says that while these listeners are “hundreds of miles away, they are still part of the community we serve” (R. Linehan, personal communication, February 18, 2011).

WTIP has an established process for program proposals and program evaluation, and an advisory entity oversees programming, “proving a good ear for

potential new programs and for whether or not the programs are meeting the mission of the station” (R. Linehan, personal communication, February 18, 2011). The goal of the committee is not to criticize or remove programs, but instead to provide support and encouragement to hosts and suggest potential steps hosts can take to make improvements.

### **Case Study Summary**

WTIP defines its community as “a community of listeners”. Staff value community identification and work to define their listening demographic and know what kind of programming that demographic wants to hear. In shifting programming from a KUMD rebroadcast to all locally produced programming, WTIP continues to grow its listenership and community support. WTIP believes that the inclusion of locally produced programming, specifically local news and information, is key to the development of a robust listening community. By strategically putting station dollars towards a dedicated news department, WTIP has been able to better fulfill its mission and better serve its listener community. Each program at WTIP is evaluated based on its ability to serve WTIP’s mission and values.



## Chapter 4: Analysis

This research examines the process emergent community radio stations use to develop programming, focusing on the importance of identifying and defining the station's participating community. This chapter will synthesize data collected from the case studies and literature to address the original research questions, focusing on established and emergent keywords and themes.

### 4.1 Research Questions

The intent of this qualitative study is to explore how emergent radio stations develop initial programming to promote community participation and access. The following secondary questions address the primary research topic:

1. How do community radio stations define community?
2. How is the need for a community station articulated?
3. What is the purpose of the station's programming?
4. How can existing stations serve as models to emergent stations in the development of programming?

Key words were identified within which to frame this research, and additional themes emerged throughout the development of the literature and case studies. Key words and themes initially used to frame this study were: community, audience and public sphere; participation and access; communication; programming; and localism. Emergent key words are infrastructure, professionalism and process. While these questions and themes provided an important framework to contain the research, the answers to these questions often overlapped. Throughout the process, some questions were found to not contribute to the primary research question, and

new questions emerged. In the following section, I will focus on the most prominent themes emerging from the literature review and case study to synthesize a response to the primary research question.

## 4.2 Synthesis

This section will analyze the literature review and case studies in reference to key themes that emerged during research. Only themes that served to support the primary research question will be synthesized.

### **Community, Audience, Public Sphere**

Radio Boise, WDRT and WTIP all define themselves in terms of geography, social networks, and communication systems. All are strongly rooted in particular geographic places (Scott, 1999). WTIP and WDRT are similar in that they are located in very small towns, geographically removed from large metropolitan areas. Radio Boise is located in a much larger city, but still defines itself as very anchored to place.

The three stations define their communities in terms of the communities served by the radio station. They reference their listener communities as multiple, overlapping and competing spheres (Fraser, 1992), symbolically constructed through the stations' ability to create "a sense of shared identity and collective solidarity between disparate groups and individuals" (Howley, 2010, p. 64).

WDRT and WTIP approach defining community by using as broad a definition as possible to reflect inclusion, and both work to define their listener demographics through surveys, listener emails, and anecdotal evidence. WDRT actively approached members of the community not typically associated with radio

listenership in order to be “a channel” to promote “tolerant and respectful appreciation of the commonalities that link us as people” (WDRT website). WTIP defines community as “a community of listeners”, its listenership expanding beyond its terrestrial broadcast and reaching to online listeners who live outside the region part of the year. WTIP believes it has a role in community engagement, using radio as “a cultural resource that is used to facilitate cultural citizenship” (Meadows, et. al., 2005, p. 179).

Radio Boise differs in its approach to defining community, partly due to geographic differences in station location. Located in a large city, Radio Boise chooses not to approach community definition by embracing the largest possible demographic, but instead by focusing on a more specific listenership defined as “the product of contestation with the main public sphere” (Meadows, et. al., 2005, p. 180).

The terms audience and community are used interchangeably by all three radio stations, supporting the congregationist imperative (Howley, 2010) which blurs the categories between production and consumption. As WTIP uses the term “community of listeners”, the station also uses interchangeably the term audience in referring to its community. All stations acknowledge that not all members of the geographic community are a part of their listener communities, or audience.

### **Localism**

In each case study, localism is the key defining and driving factor in developing station programming. WTIP, WDRT and Radio Boise were formed to fill

a gap in local news, information, and cultural programming not provided by existing media sources.

Because the stations operate in different communities and community radio stations are deeply rooted in both geographic and social setting (Hollander, 2002), the “context in which community media operate plays a decisive role in shaping and informing” (Howley, 2010, p.2) programmatic content. In addition, localism appears to be the driving factor for listenership. In the case of WDRT, at community listening sessions held to discuss what the community wanted out of their community station, the crowd emphasized the need for detailed local weather and news, and cultural programming showcasing local artists. WTIP credits its rapid growth in listenership and membership to an increased focus on locally produced programming and the expansion of its news team. And Radio Boise “aims to cultivate a stronger sense of place” (Radio Boise, 2012a) by airing 75% locally produced programming to serve as a “community-wide bulletin board” for local issues oriented information and as a performance platform for local artists.

By focusing on localism in programming, the stations provide the basis for individual and collective identity formation, as sense of self is largely shaped by a shared sense of place. Stations serve as a conduit through which culture is communicated, with localism “as a social construction mediated within and through communication and culture” (Howley, 2010, p. 8).

### **Participation and Access**

The themes of participation and access emerged throughout the case studies intertwined with themes of community and localism. In examining localism,

participation and access emerged as “a by-product of access and community group participation” (Rennie, 2006, p. 121). Findings in the literature review and in each case study show that, by enabling community members to participate in station programming and decision making, the stations become inherently representative of the local community.

WDRT describes its development as “ground-up”, developed by the community and for the community. The station solicited the participation of the community by inviting all to listening sessions serving as a forum for discussing programming and communicating WDRT’s mission and values. WDRT, along with WTIP and Radio Boise, promotes participation and access through volunteer trainings developed to instruct potential volunteers on radio broadcasting and recording equipment.

Radio Boise believes in community radio as a social process by increasing opportunities for community members to access local media and participate in station programming. As with WTIP and WDRT, Radio Boise encourages participation through an open application process for potential programmers, facilitating democratic and participatory communication.

By encouraging participation, each case study site emphasized that in providing a venue for participation, their stations make known to the community “the enormous variation of people, interests, and relationships within a locality... , the commonality and interrelatedness of these individuals, groups, and concerns” (Howley, 2010, p. 266). WTIP describes itself as a tool for community engagement, bringing disparate groups together. Radio Boise hopes that in increasing

opportunities for participation, the station can “foster cultural health” (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010). And WDRT sees participation and access as “a channel” to promote “tolerant and respectful appreciation of the commonalities” (WDRT, 2011). All case studies illustrate that while community radio often expresses the diverseness of its community, it also serves to connect people by highlighting sameness.

All station managers spoke more of community participation as it related to planning and oversight. Literature researched on participation focused primarily on participation by community members in the production of the broadcast (Howley, 2010, p. 16), yet the case studies in this research spoke more to how the stations themselves participated within the community. Because community radio is defined by volunteer driven production, the theme of community participation in the day-to-day affairs of the station was not a predominant theme. Instead, stations focused on discussing how they could best participate in their respective communities to best serve and connect listeners.

### **Programming**

Consistent with the NFCB’s statement that “the business of radio is programming” (NFCB, 2012c), Radio Boise, WTIP and WDRT all focused a majority of early efforts on developing relevant programming.

Radio Boise, WTIP and WDRT are all mission-driven organizations and develop programming closely aligned with their mission and values, since “depending on your mission, you’re going to program completely different” (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010).

Radio Boise emphasizes the importance of offering programming “that cannot be found in any mainstream media” (Milan, 2008, p.30) by producing “content that receives little attention on current radio broadcasts and avoids duplication of existing programming options” (Radio Boise, 2012a). Radio Boise positions its programming more as an alternative to mainstream media than do WDRT and WTIP, largely because of its location within a larger metropolitan area. WDRT and WTIP both emphasize meeting the unique needs of their respective rural communities by providing locally relevant content. The two rural communities have limited access to a variety media outlets, while Boise residents have a number of radio stations and newspapers to choose from.

Localism is the driving force behind program development at Radio Boise, WDRT and WTIP. At each station, programming is developed as an expression of community need, adapting its program schedule “for whatever purposes the community decides” (Berrigan, 1979, p. 8). In that each community differs, programming also differs as a reflection of each community. Radio Boise, WTIP and WDRT focus on “locally produced music, and news and information about ‘everyday’ local events and issues of community concern” (Meadows, 2005, p.176). Local programming is a product of the programmer application process, the integration of a local news department, and the creation of local arts programming by station Program Directors.

Veteran station WTIP is adamant in its belief that an investment in quality local news and public affairs programming will radically increase listenership and community support. Radio Boise and WDRT are committed to the production of

local news and public affairs, but have limited resources in early years to dedicate towards local news programming. Localism at these two new stations draws heavily from volunteer programmers' contributions.

### **Emergent themes: Infrastructure, Process & Professionalism**

Three themes emerged during these case studies: infrastructure, process and professionalism. These themes were not readily evident in my review of literature but were referenced in interviews with station managers at Radio Boise, WDRT and WTIP.

Radio Boise and WTIP emphasized the importance of a solid *infrastructure* in the ability to create consistent programming. Radio Boise's general manager Jeff Abram's spoke of the challenges of structural continuity in the programming department, saying "we have had three Program Directors in the last three years and that has been a challenge to the station because we also need to focus on fundraising and messaging and outreach" (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010). WTIP credits its initial partnership with KUMD as integral to their ability early on to develop membership, underwriting and development departments while "[engaging] more volunteers and [producing] more local content" (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010). Deb Benedict of WTIP recommends that emergent stations build solid operational infrastructure while continuing to grow local news and public affairs departments.

Both WDRT and Radio Boise are concentrating efforts on developing consistent managerial and administrative *processes* in their first few years to ensure consistency in line with best practices in the field. Radio Boise and WDRT draw



heavily from research of best practices from NFCB, and are using that research to develop sustainable program application and program review processes.

Contradictory of much of the past literature on community radio, *professionalism* in programming is important to emergent stations. Research suggests “broadcasts are not judged primarily based on their technical or journalistic correctness, but rather on their ability to evoke or express participation and nearness” (Jauert, 2002, p. 26). Yet Jeff Abrams of Radio Boise sees “a trend toward more focused and ‘professional’ suite of programming” (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 12, 2010) and WTIP has invested in a professional news department, believing that the emphasis on professionalism “binds community together and helps [WTIP] improve and grow and become more of a key thing in people’s lives” (D. Benedict, personal communication, March 9, 2010).

## **Chapter 5: Recommendations on process**

From findings evident in the literature review and emergent in the case studies, the following recommendations may be made to radio station managers in the development of initial programming. While these recommendations are geared towards managers in community radio, they may also be applicable to emergent community arts organizations working to develop programming that attracts a local and participating community.

### ***Identify and define participating community***

Community radio stations exist to serve their communities. In order to create effective programming, a station must closely identify which community members it aims to serve. Station managers may define their communities through surveys, listening sessions, anecdotal evidence or by being “boots in the street”. As the geography and demographics of each community vary widely, so will the listener communities of each station. Some community radio stations find value and success in accommodating the largest possible demographic, while others choose to focus on a specific listenership. Whichever role a station assumes, it is extremely important for the station to know its audience and accommodate their programmatic needs.

### ***Encourage participation in the development of programming***

Successful emergent community radio stations include the community in the process of developing programming. Because radio programming is created “by the people, for the people”, the inclusion of the participating community in the development of programming ensures that the programming will be relevant and

desirable to its listenership. By encouraging participation in program development after properly identifying the station's participating community, stations will inherently produce programming that is representative of its listenership. Also, the inclusion of community members in the planning and development of radio programming creates goodwill toward the community station which, in turn, aids in growing listenership and volunteer workforce.

### ***Build infrastructure***

Structural and financial stability are very important to the success of an emergent community radio station. Stations have seen great success in starting small while building membership, development and programming departments. With advanced technology readily available, many stations are able to begin broadcasting as a 24-hour internet station while recruiting volunteer programmers and building listenership and financial resources. In addition, stations have seen success in partnering with existing nonprofits or other public radio stations that may guide in the development of personnel and provide technical support. Solid operational infrastructure allows emergent stations to produce consistent programming and grow listenership.

### ***Produce compelling, original & professional programming***

Community stations have the ability and freedom to produce original content not available on competing mainstream stations and listeners of community stations often turn to their local station to hear original and locally relevant content. Due to the democratic nature of the application process to host radio programs at many stations, community radio stations are able to draw program ideas from an

extremely varied and diverse volunteer programmer pool. Research finds value in developing original programming and investing resources in the training and development of skills in both volunteer and paid on-air programmers. Amateurish charm will inevitably have its place when relying on on-air volunteers, but an emphasis on training and professionalism for all programmers may result in an increase in community support and listenership.

### ***Invest resources in localism***

Localism appears to be the key defining feature in the development of community radio programming and also the driving force behind growth in listenership. Most community stations are formed to fill a need for locally relevant news, information and cultural programming, and the inclusion of hyper-local programming directly fills that need. As media outlets become increasingly homogenized and with print media struggling to remain viable, stations strategically delivering locally relevant content are able to better grow listenership and community support. In addition, by focusing on local information and issues, community stations may be able to connect disparate community groups by engaging community members in discussion to solve locally relevant issues.

### ***Application to the field of Arts Administration***

The previous recommendations are extremely applicable to administrators of emergent and existing arts organizations, particularly community arts organizations. Emergent arts organizations could benefit from a thorough process in identifying and defining the organization's target audience or participating community. In addition, existing organizations may be able to better serve their

audience by routinely evaluating and redefining who that audience is. Community arts organizations are highly dependent on a participating community, as are community radio stations. The better defined an organization's audience, the better able the organization will be to fulfill its mission and serve community need.

Community arts organizations also may consider the inclusion of community participation in the development of new programming. Through surveys, community advisory boards or communication with members, organizations can potentially gauge community participation in future programming through a democratic development process.

Arts managers should invest time to produce original, compelling programming not offered by existing arts organizations. As many radio listeners turn to community radio as an alternative to mainstream media, participants in community arts may be seeking an alternative to mainstream programming offered by large, nationally focused arts organizations. Similarly, by emphasizing local issues and local aesthetic, community arts organizations may be able to build audience by offering programming unique to their communities.

A solid infrastructure is integral to the success of any arts organization. Consistent personnel, systems and processes aid in the continued smart growth and success of community radio stations, and the same can be applied to arts organizations large and small.

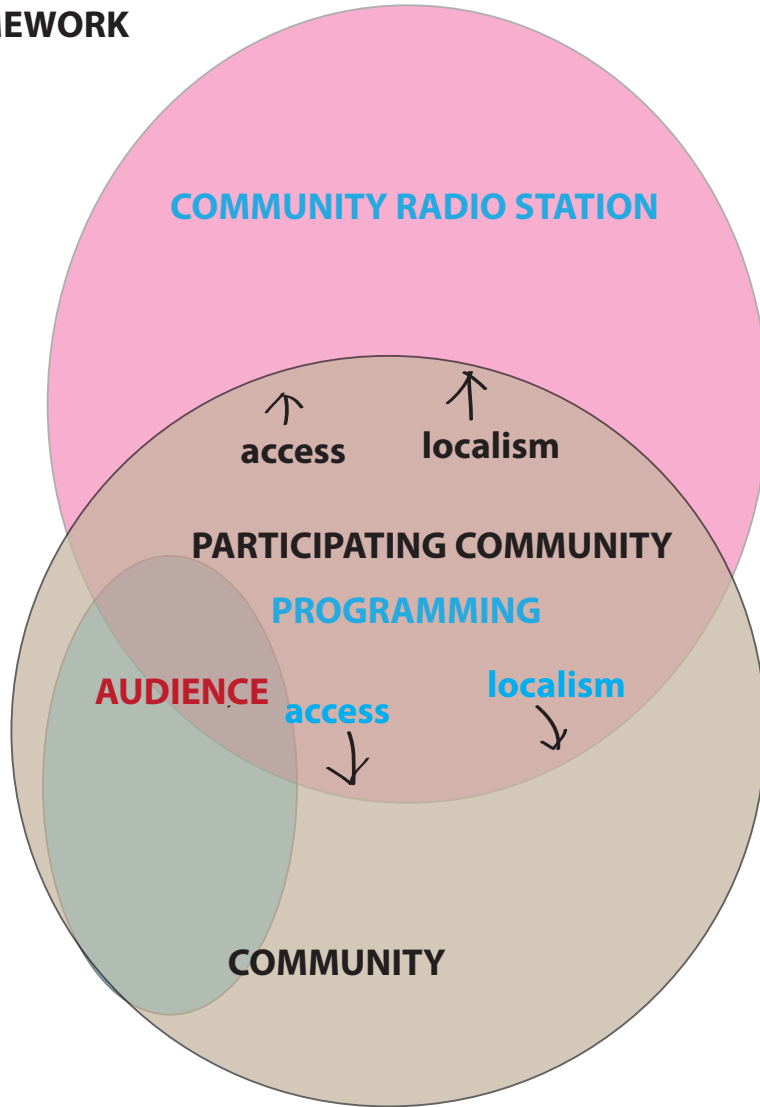
Finally, arts administrators should consider the benefits of partnering with their local radio station in the promotion of existing programming and in the creation of new and collaborative programming. Community stations generally offer

underwriting opportunities for a fee much less than traditional advertising costs. Investing in underwriting gives arts organizations increased visibility by community listeners, many of which show goodwill towards underwriters supporting their community radio station.

Community stations often encourage the submissions of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) by other local nonprofit organizations, allowing arts organizations to submit free announcements about special events and fundraisers that are broadcast throughout the day's programming.

The programming process tends to be democratic at most community radio stations, with community members able to submit program proposals and host shows of their choosing, upon station approval. Local arts organizations have seen great success in developing programming to compliment existing in-house offerings. Whether producing an artist conversation hour highlighting touring or local talent, or producing original radio drama, arts organizations can build audience while developing new and original programming. Additionally, there is no fee to host a radio show at a community station, making the partnership a cost effective way to expand programming.

**APPENDIX I: CONCEPTUAL  
FRAMEWORK**



**Geographic area**

## APPENDIX B: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Interview Protocol: WTIP

Case Study:

Data ID#

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Interview Location:

Interviewee Details:

Consent:

Oral  Written (form)  Audio  OK to quote  Member  
Check

Notes on Interview Context:

Key Points:

*Coding*

*Information*

*Notes*

<i>Coding</i>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Fundraising		
Community needs Assessment		
Programming		
Access		
Hyper-localism		
Community engagement		
Technology		
Policy		



*Semi-Structured Interview Questions for WTIP's past and present employees, board members, and volunteers:*

*About the interviewee:*

1. *What is your name and how long have you lived in \_\_\_\_\_?*
2. *What was your involvement with WTIP in its nascent years?*
3. *In what ways are you involved in the station now?*
4. *Why did you become involved with community radio?*
5. *Had you had any experience in community radio prior to working with WTIP?*

*Gaining support, encouraging participation:*

6. *What was WTIP's initial mission, or main goals as a station?*
7. *Who did WTIP aim to serve when first broadcasting?*
8. *How did WTIP staff and volunteers define its community or targeted listening populace?*
9. *How did WTIP "market" itself to the community, or how did the station convince the community of the need for a local radio station?*
10. *Who were the main proponents/opponents of community radio before broadcast?*
11. *How did staff/volunteers encourage access to and participation in the station?*
12. *What were the strengths and weaknesses of WTIP's approach to garnering community support for the radio station?*
13. *Do you feel any community groups were marginalized in the process?*
14. *How important were fundraisers in fostering support and gaining visibility for WTIP?*

*Programming:*

15. *How was the programming structure developed and decided upon for WTIP's initial broadcasts?*

16. *What did the up-front programming look like?*
17. *Did the community have input into what initially went on air? How?*
18. *What was the process for participation by the community?*
19. *How did WTIP strive to represent its defined “community” through programming?*
20. *How did WTIP’s initial programming serve to garner community support for the station?*
21. *What programs were most successful and which did not last?*
22. *What factors influenced the popularity of a program?*
23. *How was access and localism encouraged through WTIP’s programming?*

*Into the future:*

24. *How has WTIP’s programming changed over the years, and how do you see it as a reflection of community change?*
25. *How has WTIP’s mission changed over the years?*
26. *How has the community changed?*
27. *What programs have been most popular, and why?*
28. *What did you learn while working at WTIP on how to engage the community?*
29. *In your opinion, does WTIP encourage community access and participation? How? In what ways has this changed from the station’s early days?*

Interview Protocol: WDRT/Radio Boise



Case Study:

Data ID#

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Interview Location:

Interviewee Details:

Consent:

Oral  Written (form)  Audio  OK to quote  Member  
Check

Notes on Interview Context:

Key Points:

*Coding*

*Information*

*Notes*

<i>Coding</i>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Fundraising		
Community needs Assessment		
Programming		
Access		
Hyper-localism		
Community engagement		
Technology		
Definition of Community		

Policy		
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*Semi-Structured Interview Questions for WDRT/RADIO BOISE's current employees, board members, and volunteers:*

*About the interviewee:*

1. *What is your name and how long have you lived in \_\_\_\_\_?*
2. *Describe your involvement with WDRT/RADIO BOISE.*
3. *Why did you become involved with community radio?*
4. *Had you had any experience in community radio prior to working with WDRT/RADIO BOISE?*

*Gaining support, encouraging participation:*

5. *What is WDRT/RADIO BOISE's mission or main goals as a station?*
6. *Who does WDRT/RADIO BOISE aim to serve?*
7. *How do WDRT/RADIO BOISE staff and volunteers define its community or targeted listening populace?*
8. *How is WDRT/RADIO BOISE "marketing" itself to the community, and how is the station convincing the community of the need for a local radio station?*
9. *Who are the main proponents/opponents of community radio?*
10. *How do staff/volunteers encourage access to and participation in the station?*
11. *What resources is WDRT/RADIO BOISE using to help the planning process and help define community?*
12. *How are you delimiting your targeted listening audience from the greater community?*
13. *How important are fundraisers in fostering support and gaining visibility for WDRT/RADIO BOISE?*
14. *What role does fundraising play in engaging WDRT/RADIO BOISE's future communities, and in promoting access and participation?*

*Programming:*

- 15. How is the programming structure being developed and decided upon for WDRT/RADIO BOISE's initial broadcasts?*
- 16. What does your proposed programming look like?*
- 17. Does the community have input into WDRT/RADIO BOISE's programming? How?*
- 18. What is the process for community participation?*
- 19. How does WDRT/RADIO BOISE strive to represent its defined "community" through programming?*
- 20. How does WDRT/RADIO BOISE's initial programming serve to garner community support for the station?*
- 21. How will you promote access and localism encouraged through WDRT/RADIO BOISE's programming?*

Interview Protocol: NFCB



Case Study:

Data ID#

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Interview Location:

Interviewee Details:

Consent:

Oral  Written (form)  Audio  OK to quote  Member  
Check

Notes on Interview Context:

Key Points:

*Coding*

*Information*

*Notes*

<i>Coding</i>	<i>Information</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Fundraising		
Community needs Assessment		
Programming		
Access		
Hyper-localism		
Community engagement		
Technology		
Policy		

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*Semi-Structured Interview Questions for NFCB's president, or other informed staff member.*

*About the interviewee:*

- 22. What is your name and how long have you worked with NFCB?*
- 23. Why did you become involved with community radio?*
- 24. What resources does NFCB provide for newly licensed stations in regards to the challenges of getting from licensure to broadcast?*
- 25. What are the most significant challenges that upstart radio stations are facing today?*
- 26. How has this changed from the 1970s and 80s, when many community stations of today got their start?*
- 27. What are the main challenges in defining a station's "community"?*
- 28. Is it possible to include and broadcast to very diverse constituencies within a community while still maintaining neutrality? (Can community radio be everything for everyone?)*
- 29. Should financial donors have more input on station's programming?*
- 30. What are the main challenges in developing a station's initial programming?*
- 31. What are common mistakes stations make in developing initial broadcasting?*
- 32. How does a station promote access and community participation in its early years on the air?*
- 33. How does a newly licensed station convince its community that supporting a community radio station is a good idea?*
- 34. What literature exists to help new stations define community?*
- 35. How has technology changed the way community members access and participate in community radio? What are the benefits/downfalls in technological advancements?*

Data Collection for Document Analysis



Case Study:

Data ID:

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Document Location:

Document Type:

Reference Citation:

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Coding	Information	Notes
Fundraising		
Community Needs		
Programming		
Access		
Hyper-localism		
Community Engagement		
Technology		
Definition of Community		
Policy		
Board of Director		
Community Advisory Brd.		



Data Collection: Participant Observation



Case Study:

Data ID:

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Activity Location:

Activity:

Details:

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Coding	Information	Notes
Fundraising Community Needs Assessment Programming Access Hyper-localism Community Engagement Technology Policy		

## APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT INSTRUMENTS

### Interview form

Date

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Dear <POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEE>:

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Program Development in Emergent Community Radio Stations*, conducted by Erin Roberts from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore how emergent community radio stations develop initial programming that encourages community participation and access.

While community radio "does not have a formal, legal, definition... there are two key characteristics that distinguish it: localism and access" (Reed and Hanson, 2007, p. 215). This master's project intends to address the gap in research regarding the process emergent community radio stations use to encourage local participation and access through programming. This project will examine the importance of community identification and definition in the development of programming, and focus on the influence that a community radio station's commitment to hyper-local programming can have in attracting a participating community. This research will critically examine the following main research questions: 1) How do community radio stations define community? 2) How is the need for a community radio station articulated within a community? 3) What is the purpose of a station's programming? 4) How can existing radio stations serve as models to emergent stations in the development of programming?

You were selected to participate in this study because of your professional history with WTIP/WDRT/RADIO BOISE and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to community radio. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during winter 2010. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place over the phone or using Skype. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 970-765-5676 or [erobert3@uoregon.edu](mailto:erobert3@uoregon.edu), or Dr. Fenn at [jfenn@uoregon.edu](mailto:jfenn@uoregon.edu). Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration. I will contact you shortly to speak about your potential involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

Erin Roberts  
7 Monroe St.  
Eugene, OR 97402  
970-765-5676  
[erobert3@uoregon.edu](mailto:erobert3@uoregon.edu)

## Consent Form

Research Protocol Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Program Development in Emergent Community Radio Stations**

Erin Roberts, Principal Investigator

University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Program Development in Emergent Community Radio Stations*, conducted by Erin Roberts from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore how emergent community radio stations develop initial programming that encourages community participation and access.

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Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will be carefully and securely maintained. With your permission, your name will be used in any resulting documents and publications. If you wish, a pseudonym may be used with all identifiable data that you provide. It may be advisable to obtain permission to participate in this interview to avoid potential social or economic risks related to speaking as a representative of your institution. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

I anticipate that the results of this research project will be of value to the cultural sector as a whole, especially in the Pacific Northwest region. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 970-765-5676 or erobert3@uoregon.edu, or Dr. Fenn at jfenn@uoregon.edu. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Please read and initial each of the following statements to indicate how you would prefer to be identified:

\_\_\_ I consent to my identification as a participant in this study.

\_\_\_ I wish to maintain my confidentiality in this study through the use of a pseudonym.

Please read and initial the following statements to note your agreement:

\_\_\_ I consent to the use of audiotapes and note taking during my interview.

\_\_\_ I consent to the potential use of quotations from the interview.

\_\_\_ I consent to the use of information I provide regarding the organization with which I am associated.

\_\_\_ I wish to have the opportunity to review and possibly revise my comments and the information that

I provide prior to these data appearing in the final version of any publications that may result from this study.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You have been given a copy of this letter to keep.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

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