

Friends and Feelings: The Appropriation of Facebook by Irish Radio Stations to Enhance Audience Engagement Through Affective Media Experiences

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Irish Radio/Media in Context

- **83% of Irish Adults Listen Daily (↓ 4%) Ipsos/MRBI**
- **Popular SNSs: Facebook (62%), Twitter (30%), LinkedIn (26%)**
- **Consumers Multi-Tasking/Multi-Screening**
- **Audience Participation a Key Element of Radio Programming**
- **Irish Public Texting Less - Using Social Media More**
- **Advertising Spend is Migrating to Digital Online Platforms**

Theoretical Background

- Active audience in convergence culture (Jenkins 2006) ‘people formerly known as the audience’ (Rosen 2008)
- Commodification of Affect in the knowledge/information economy (Smythe 1981, Fuchs 2010, 2015) Marxian labour theory
- Forms of capital (Bourdieu 1984), bonding, bridging capital (Putnam 2000) strong, weak ties (Granovetter 1973)
- Affective Communication and Spreadable Media (Jenkins et al. 2013), Millennial theory (Strauss & Howe 1991)

Methodology

- Interviews with radio professionals - local, regional & national stations
- Online Audience Survey N=419
- Textual Analysis of radio station Facebook pages
- Direct Observation of producers

Networked Audience

- Embracing convergence culture and spreadable media
- Seeking information, entertainment, discussion and goodies on Facebook
- Some users want increased involvement in radio output – contribute content to station
- Users respond to affective content and share with members of their social network which builds their social capital, affinity to station
- Majority of users are lurkers, low interactivity levels, do not engage

Commodification of Affect

- Youth stations have identified the strength of emotion in audience engagement - likes, emoji reactions, shares, comments
- Curate Facebook content from numerous sources, incl. audience
- Use Facebook content to affect audience emotionally which promotes engagement
- Strategic goal: accumulation of social capital = economic capital
- Difficult to form tangible link to revenue growth

Affective Experiences on Facebook

- Facebook uses Nostalgia to engage users - photos from past
- Beat target audience is largely Millennials (born 1982-2002)
- Beat use memories from youth to create affective experience
- Highest reaction to affective content, share with friends of age cohort
- Emotional impact on audience helps build an affinity with a radio station, sense of shared feelings

Examples of Affective Posts

Beat 102 103
24 May at 14:00 · 🌐

These were great!



WHO REMEMBERS THESE?

Like · Comment · Share

👍 48,431 people like this. Most Recent ▾

➦ 505 shares

💬 View previous comments 2 of 5,042

Beat 102 103
26 May at 21:00 · 🌐

You couldn't get these for love nor money!



WHO REMEMBERS THE GREAT TELETOBBIES SHORTAGE OF 1997?

Like · Comment · Share

👍 3,035 people like this. Most Recent ▾

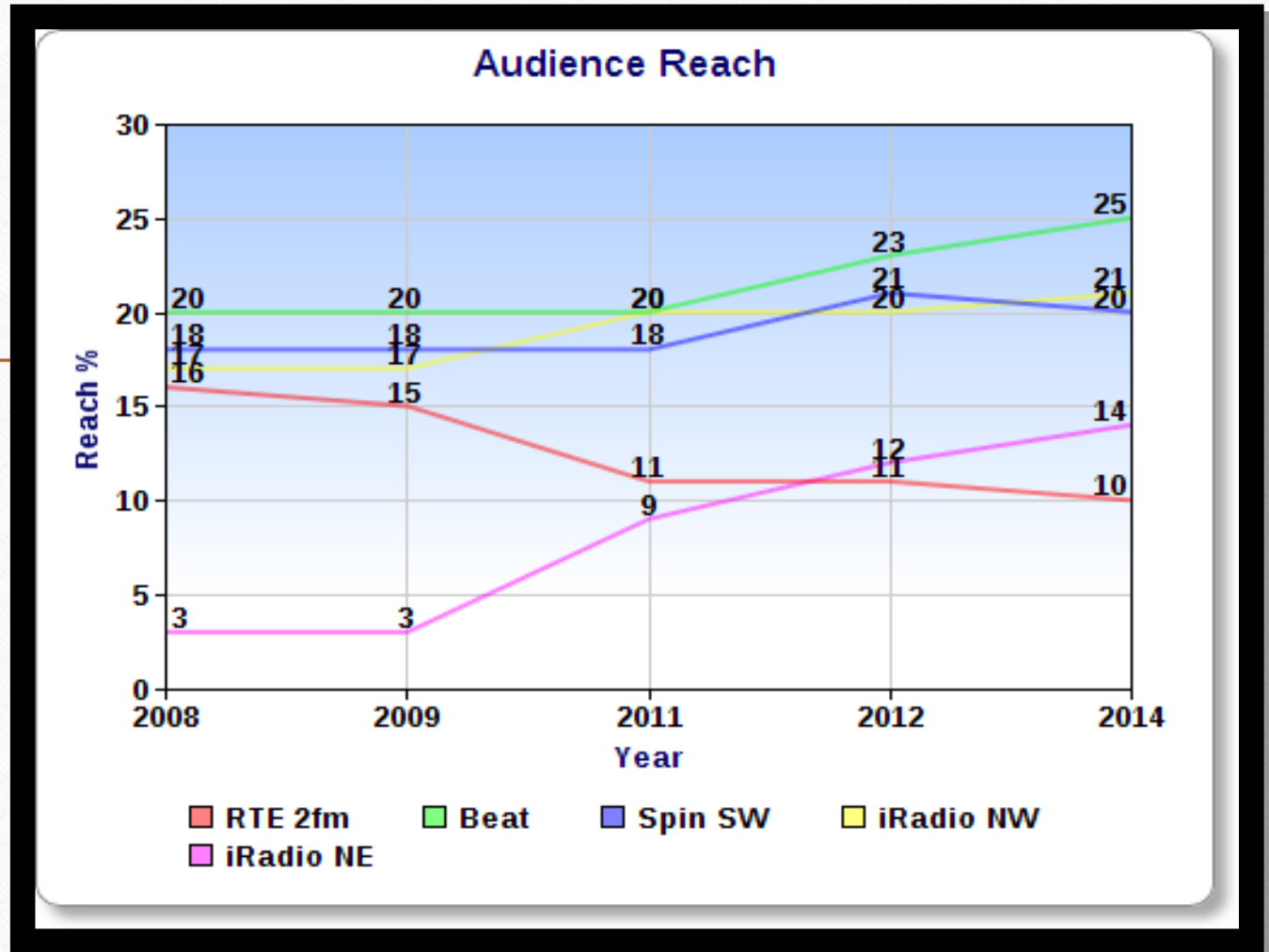
➦ 239 shares

Affective = Effective?

- Does increased social capital equal increased economic capital?
- Increased listenership?
- Stations try and build bridging, social, cultural and reputational capital among networked audience
- Stay ahead of the competition incl PSB

Audience Reach 2008-2014

- iRadio NE 11% gain
- Beat 5% gain
- iRadio NW 4% gain
- Spin SW 2% gain
- RTE 2fm 6% loss
- Market Share Followed Same Pattern



Conclusions

- Radio's integration of Facebook has made it more engaging for audiences
- Facebook and other SNSs key to radio's future
- Future of Advertising Spend is Digital
- Affect and emotion are effective at engaging audiences
- Must match content to stations audience (age, location, special interest etc.)
- Music and entertainment stations are driving change in radio engagement

Thank You

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