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Radio, new technology an awkward mix

Radio vs. new technology

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News networks are abuzz with President-elect Barack Obama's plans to use YouTube as well as radio to carry his weekly messages, a la Roosevelt's Fireside Chats, to the public. YouTube being the Internet site with people's movies. The Ruth Carr Chorus of Asbury Tower, frequent Asbury Radio guests, have videos up there. It's great!

But how do you listen to these radio chats through the radio? Radio and TV news replay snippets of President George Bush's radio addresses. But I've never heard them identify the station. Where is it on the radio dial? When is he on?

It's a lot easier to Google "Obama radio message" and find excerpts of the talks on the Democratic Party site, than it is to actually find him on the radio. And not all radio listeners use the Internet. Ironically, this reality may bode badly for radio's survival.

Our California professor friend Jerry Del Colliano recently devoted a whole column of his Inside Music Media column to the new media. He insists that one reason "radio has fallen on hard times is because the CEOs who run it don't understand the next generation . . ." Del Colliano believes sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and others complete the multiple media environment and, as such, are "part of the new world."

Del Colliano's "Millennials," the upcoming generation who attend his college classes, are the new market. The new technology will keep radio in their lives, he says. Although, he cautions, "Now don't go off half-cocked like some of the out-of-touch corporate radio types and find some embarrassing radio use for Twitter. Just enjoy it." But how?

I'm a perfect candidate. While not a corporate type, I was sending out my broadcasted Asbury Radio show live over Asbury

Radio.com years ago, when communications were so slow, listeners complained about dead air while their computers paused to gather the next batch of sound (called buffering). I also posted studio photos of guests, thus employing multimedia. While we're off the air, I've been making mp3 files of events and interviews and posting them for web visitors, a la podcasting, or what Del Colliano calls the emerging "new radio."

Despite all this, I never thought of myself as the "new radio" type. I confess that I get cranky when people instant message me while I'm trying to work. And I'm not a fan of chat lines. Their disjointed, out-of-sync conversations remind me of Thanksgiving dinner with my ADD-afflicted family.

But I signed up for Twitter, where the main activity seems to be answering the question, "What are you doing?" in 140 words or less. Immediately, Twitter's administration started alerting me to friends and acquaintances who were also members of Twitter and wanted to be counted among my Twitter page friends and to invite me to appear on their pages. Very cool, though a little silly, too.

Hey, you'll never believe who just tweeted me: Jerry Del Colliano! He's waxing philosophical about something. I think I'll ask him how to find Obama on the radio . . .

Oh, Del Colliano just wrote back, says he doesn't think Obama is on the radio yet. Well, hopefully by January, we'll get this worked out.

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