RADIO
regen

PROVE IT
AN AUDIENCE RESEARCH TOOL FOR
COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS

Contents

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EIGHT

Overview

The Prove It toolkit is a resource for community radio stations to enable them to conduct their own audience research. It provides stations with the information and expertise to both measure their audience listener figures and assess the impact that they are having on their community of listeners.

Prove It has been developed by Radio Regen working with a number of community radio stations in the Greater Manchester area. The project was supported by an Ofcom Community Radio Fund grant.

Using Prove It

The Prove It manual contains step-by-step information about an evaluation technique that will help you to find out more about your listeners and the effectiveness of your station in achieving your goals.

You will need to:
- o commit some staff time to the process
- o organise a group of local volunteers to help with a street listener survey
- o and - if you can deliver the project in partnership with a community radio station near to you, this will give your results added credibility.

Prove It guides you through a research process which will assess your audience figures and ask listeners and key stakeholders about the value of your station to them. The manual contains:
- o a template for the audience research questionnaire
- o guidance about conducting audience research on the street
- o details of a software 'plug-in' which has been developed to input and analyse the data from the listener survey
- o a template for interviewing key stakeholders
- o instructions for organising a listener focus group
- o report templates to present the results of the street survey, interviews and focus group.

Undertaking Prove It requires a commitment of staff resources, but this manual aims to make the process as easy as possible, and the results should be invaluable to station managers and for potential funders, project partners, and advertisers. The cost of similar research undertaken by an external agency would probably be far beyond the reach of most community radio stations.

The table on the next page summarises the various steps in the Prove It process and the resources you will need to commit at each stage.

Summary of the Prove It process

First step …	Ideally, find a nearby 'buddy' station who wants to work with you to collect audience research information about both of your stations. Alternatively, find some independent local volunteers who can help you with the project - perhaps students from a local college. The value of Prove It will be greatly reduced if your own station volunteers collect the data.	
Then …	**What you have to do ….**	**Prove It provides ….**
Listener survey	• Find around 6 volunteers to carry out some on the street questionnairing, over 2 days in 1 week • Identify 2 or 3 good locations to carry out the street survey • Arrange a brief training session for your volunteers, and provide transport or expenses for travelling to the street survey locations • Collect up the questionnaires and enter the survey results into the Prove It number crunching 'plug-in'	• The street survey questions and instructions and survey badges for volunteers • The Prove It 'plug-in' which will analyse the questionnaire results and automatically produce a survey report
One-to-one interviews	• Identify a number of key community figures and stakeholders relevant to your station • Conduct ideally 6 one-to-one interviews over a week with these people • Listen back to and make notes on or transcribe the interviews, and then interpret the results. Allow several days to do this.	• Questions for key stakeholders and community figures • Instructions on how to analyse the interview data
Listener focus groups	• Produce and play a radio advert calling for your listeners to participate in a focus group • Take calls from people wanting to participate in the focus group, and arrange a date and venue for this • Run the focus group, with the help of a volunteer • Listen back to and interpret the focus group data. Allow a couple of days to do this.	• Instructions on how to set up a focus group, including a script for an on-air advertisement, focus group recruitment poster, a consent form, and focus group questions • Instructions on how to analyse the focus group data
And finally	• Put together the data you have collected above into a Prove It station report	• A template and instructions for writing the Prove It report

ONE

Introduction

Prove It aims to provide an affordable, credible and practical way for stations to assess their listener numbers and, even more importantly, to prove their impact beyond simple audience figures – to funding bodies and their staff, volunteers and communities. This is vital for community radio stations especially in today's ever harsher funding environment.

In the words of a community radio practitioner:
> 'It's clear that we should be doing research as a vital component of our sustainability, and this should be built into the fabric of the everyday activity at the station rather than being an add on. It works to build our case as a sector and for stations to get money'.

The Prove It toolkit gives guidance for data collection by station staff and volunteers - how to conduct street surveys, record one-to-one interviews, and facilitate focus groups. The approach has been successfully piloted at several stations in Greater Manchester.

Ideally, data should not be collected by a station's own volunteers - when conducting the street survey in particular, this is very likely to lead to biased results and reduce the credibility of your survey. Prove It suggests that it is best to use a 'buddying' approach - whereby nearby community radio pair themselves to collect data in each other's transmission areas. However, if necessary, the process can also be adapted so that a station carries out the research supported by other local volunteers.

The aim of the toolkit

When thinking about the impact that their station is having, a station manager will inevitably start by asking the question: "how many people are listening?" Having this numerical information can help to attract advertisers and support a station's case for funding by, say, their local authority.

But whilst potential advertisers are keen to have data on listener figures, grant funders often ask for information on what 'difference' a project will make.

Prove It enables listener information to be collected to meet the needs of advertisers, and - equally or perhaps even more importantly - gathers information about how successful a station is in making a difference - delivering 'social gain'.

All of the UK's 200+ full-time licensed community radio stations are focused on promoting social gain. The Community Radio Order 2004 - which established community radio as a broadcasting sector - defines this type of radio as:
> "Local services provided for the good of members of the public, or of particular communities, in order to deliver social gain, rather than for commercial reasons"

This means that community radio stations should aim, through their broadcasting activity, to achieve outcomes such as helping people into employment, improving the take up of public services, enabling access to local democratic processes, and boosting well-being.

Station managers know from their day-to-day interactions with volunteers and listeners that they are successful in delivering such social gain, but they may not know how to go about measuring this.

It is vital that the sector can properly account for itself beyond the simple matter of 'audience size' and be able to demonstrate its broader impact - in order to successfully engage with key local stakeholders and funders. Put simply, a practical and sound research approach can be a key tool for a station's survival.

Prove It equips community radio managers with the tools to collect 'qualitative' information about how successfully their station is engaging with its listeners, local community, and stakeholders - the impact and value that the station has - as well as the 'quantitative' numbers-based information about the station's audience.

Having evidence of a station's positive impact can help to secure grant funding and service delivery contracts - and as local services are devolved to outside providers, new opportunities for sustainable funding are opening up. Being able to show that a station is trusted by its listeners - beyond high listener numbers - can be of value to some advertisers and sponsors. Equally, finding out that your station isn't having the hoped for impact can help you to review your approach and work to maximise the impact.

TWO
Radio research

Research - well thought out and independent research - should enable you to create a rich picture of your station. It should illustrate, with real examples, how your station works, what meaning it has for key figures, where you strengths (and weaknesses) lie, and what you have to offer funders and stakeholders.

Types of research

There are two types of research, qualitative – concerned with quality - and quantitative – concerned with numbers.

Quantitative research involves counting things. How many people listen to this radio station? Which areas do they live in? What programmes do they like? How many stakeholders do we have? These sorts of questions can be answered by a survey – conducted face-to-face, on a website, or over the phone. RAJAR is the most well known quantitative tool for audience measurement for the radio sector - collecting data from a sample group using listening diaries. But due to the relatively small size of the sample, community radio stations are unlikely to feature in RAJAR listener figures.

Qualitative research explores attitudes, perceptions and tastes about a station and its actions. It might explore why listeners tune in or how the station reaches out to its community. Numbers don't tell us about this because they can't ask how and why someone makes a choice or expresses a preference. The data from a listener focus group can provide rich material for a station in planning its future output. Qualitative data can be collected through surveys by asking for comments in surveys, or by conducting interviews and focus groups.

Prove It uses both types of research because together they produce much more useful data. At the end of your Prove it project, you will be able to present an immediate picture of your station's listeners and their preferences using the survey data collected, and a detailed picture from interviews and focus groups conducted with a variety of key community figures.

The Prove It approach

Prove It engages listeners, key community figures, and 'stakeholders' to tell the story about the meaning that the station has to them. The objectives for working with each of these groups are:

1. *Listeners*: Engaging with and understanding the relationship that listeners have with their community radio station.
2. *Community*: Illustrating the depth and quality of engagement the station has with its community.
3. *Stakeholders*: Exploring how the station works with key stakeholders to help them meet their aims.

Impartiality

It is important for the credibility of your research that, as much as possible, it is carried out by a third party. If you ask your station volunteers to conduct a street survey, however hard you try to counter it, it is very likely that a bias will be introduced - volunteers won't want to show that very few people are listening to your station, or that listeners have critical views. Similarly, in a focus group situation, the discussion will be much more open and honest if the people engaged are talking to an independent party, rather than to station staff - especially if they have any negative points to make.

Impartiality could be achieved by:

- o paying for a researcher to undertake your Prove It project - although we realise that your station is unlikely to have the funds for this.
- o recruiting volunteers external to the station - perhaps from a local college or other local community group - to undertake the street survey, conduct the interviews, and record the focus group sessions
- o pairing up with another community station close to you who also wants to undertake Prove It research - what we have called 'buddying' - and 'swapping' station volunteers to carry out the research at each of the buddy stations.

'Buddying'

We've suggested 'buddying' as an approach to making the results of Prove It more objective and credible - you and your buddy station carry out the research for each other and swap results at the end.

We realise that such buddying might not be possible in all instances. There may not be a station close enough to you for this to be practical, or, perhaps more likely, you might not be able to find a nearby station wanting to carry out Prove It research. Although, it is worth mentioning that you and your buddy station don't have to commit to undertaking the research at exactly the same time.

If you can use the buddying approach, there will be other benefits, as well as the independence it will give to your research. Your buddy station will become your critical friend, and you theirs. Engaging with another station's community, listeners and stakeholders will give you a unique insight into their practices and may help you to identify new opportunities for your station.

Buddying also presents a networking opportunity. Running a community station, often fire-fighting through some days, can be a lonely and inward-facing job. It's easy to become less aware of other stations and their activities. Networking - sharing good practice and collaborating - opens up opportunities and provides a sounding board, which can have a positive effect on the radio station and its volunteers.

THREE

Running your Prove It project

There are four main stages to the Prove It project. The exact approach to each of these will depend on how you are tackling the issue of independence - whether you are using student volunteers or buddying with another station. But the essentials of each of the stages are:

1.   **Listener surveys** to collect audience and impact data, to build an initial picture of your work and community.

For this first stage, you need at least six volunteers to carry out a street survey in two to three locations in your broadcast area. This should ideally happen over two days within one data collection week.

Once the surveys have been carried out you should factor in a day to enter the data collected using the Prove It plug-in (see further details about getting and using this piece of software in section 4).

2.   **One-to-one interviews** with key community figures and stakeholders to investigate how well your station works within its community and helps others to meet their goals.

Ideally you will carry out a total of six one-to-one interviews over a week - with three community figures and three stakeholders. If you are using the buddying approach, you should provide contacts for your buddy to approach and set up interviews. Once the interviews have been conducted, you should allow a couple of days for listening back to the interviews and interpreting the results. If you are buddying, this analysis can either be done by your buddy station, or by yourselves.

3.   **A listener focus group** to delve deeper into some of the points raised in the survey data.

This third stage needs the most planning as it requires producing and playing a radio advert on your station, calling for participants. If you are buddying, you could together produce different versions of an advert for each station.

You can also recruit focus group participants by asking a question of listeners when you are carrying out the street survey.

Once you have run the focus group, you'll need to spend a day or two listening back to and interpreting the data. Again, if you are using a buddy station, this analysis could be done either by your buddy station, or by yourselves.

4.   **Producing a summary report of your data**

This final stage brings together the initial listener survey and the interpreted data from the interviews and focus group. This report should give a rich picture of the meaning and impact of the station, for listeners, the community and for stakeholders.

We have provided a template report which you can use to insert your data into if you have used the suggested questions. This report presents the data in a way that can be used when you need to prove the impact of your station.

If you have a buddy station, you could write each others reports. However, given the importance of this stage, you might like to write your own report drawing on the data that your buddy has collected. If you write your own report, you should pass it to your buddy station for their comments.

From start to finish, you should be able to carry out the Prove It project over a month. Repeating this process every two years with your buddy would give you a long range picture of the station's effectiveness and performance.

Finding a buddy

If you are able to find a station to 'buddy' with to undertake Prove It, this would be ideal, in terms of the independence of the research and the other benefits it would bring to your stations.

If you can find a station very different from yours to buddy with, even better! This way your insight into their practices will be further away from your daily tasks and you'll have the potential to learn more from their set-up.

For the Prove It trial we paired stations up on the following criteria:
- **Stations were within fifteen miles of each other** and/or there were good transport links. This is important to enable volunteers easy travel to carry out the other station's survey.
- **Each station served a different type of community** e.g. one station served a geographical community and the other a community of interest. It was intended that the other station was an outsider, looking in, bring different perspectives to their buddy's data.
- **Stations had been operating for different amounts of time**. For example, we paired one station, licensed in 2005, with another licensed in 2010. Experience was valuable to the newer station whilst a new perspective benefited the established station.

But if you have a limited choice of stations to buddy with, any buddy is better than none!

When you have found a suitable buddy, you'll need to plan the project together. Most of all, be clear why you are doing this. Is there a report you need to write soon to demonstrate your effectiveness for a project? Are you undertaking an evaluation of your work within your community? Are you applying for funding? Do you need to demonstrate a track record for delivering core services?

Sharing your main purpose helps to give you direction for your project as though we have suggested a format, you will want to present your data in a way that is helpful. You should therefore plan for this from the start.

FOUR

The listener survey

Why survey?

The Prove it listener survey will you an indication of listener numbers. This is the mainstay of traditional 'RAJAR' audience research, and is invaluable in pitching for advertising and sponsorship for your station.

Given the breadth of the Prove It approach, of which the street survey is only one part, we hope that this element can be completed as easily and quickly as possible, using the standard questionnaire template and accompanying plug-in to analyse the data.

The Prove It survey

A standard survey has been designed for the Prove It evaluation, combining existing surveys that demonstrate best practice, and feedback from station managers - see **Appendix 1B**. The survey asks standard demographic questions and goes on to delve deeper to explore the relationship the listener has with the local community station.

The survey is split into two distinct sections:
1. A general section to look at the overall percentage of listeners and understand where they come from and their awareness of the station. Respondents don't go past this page if they are not a listener of the station.
2. A detailed listener section where the respondent answers questions about when and how they listen to the station and their perception of the station's role in the community.

Survey volunteers may think they are 'failing' if few of the respondents progress to the 'listener' section of the questionnaire, but it should be emphasised to them that we are seeking a representative listening figure, so every response is valuable.

Planning the survey collection

Permission please

You should choose two or three areas to do your data collection. You may need permission to carry out the survey at these locations. For areas such as local markets and on public land e.g. the pavement adjacent to a square, you should approach your local council. Shopping centres are often privately owned so you should seek permission from the centre manager. It is ok to carry out a street survey when there is no selling involved, it is in a public space, and your volunteers are clearly identifiable.

Preparing the sessions

You should aim to collect at least 150 responses for the survey. Split over two sessions with six volunteers, this means that each volunteer will need to survey about 13 people in each session.

Each volunteer should wear a badge **(Appendix 1C)**clearly showing others they are carrying out a survey. Both the template survey and badges are included in this toolkit.

Print enough surveys and badges to prepare your volunteer packs. These should include:
1. A clip board with enough surveys for one session
2. A pen
3. A badge

4. A sheet of instructions
5. Maps and travelling instructions for each location

Training your team

You need to arrange for a group of volunteers who can help over two short data gathering sessions. Each session should last about two hours and take place on two different days at different times of the day in the same locations. For example:

- o Session 1 - Tuesday morning at a local market, along a local parade of shops, and in a leisure area of the town
- o Session 2 - Friday afternoon, at the same locations

In the above example, these places might be expected to contain different types of listener, giving a representative spread.

Prior to going out for each survey session, hold a short training session with your volunteers to go through the process. These are the steps you might choose to take:

- Introduce the survey and the volunteer's role in being an impartial data gatherer
- Explain the nature of the two part survey and highlight that it's ok to not find lots of listeners to the station; it's about building an overall picture.
- Go through each question so volunteers can address any queries they have about what a question might mean or how to ask it.
- Go through the 'instructions for volunteers' **(Appendix 1A)** as this outlines the process of approaching a potential respondent and how to ask the questions.
- Remind volunteers that they should take care to approach a good range of ages and an equal mix of female and male respondents.
- Choose a volunteer with whom to enact a scenario of a volunteer getting a brush off from a potential respondent – it's all about developing a thick skin, keeping a smile and finding the next respondent!
- With the same volunteer, enact the scenario working through the survey with a respondent who doesn't listen to the partner station; therefore the questioning stops at the end of page one.
- Finally, enact the scenario of working through the whole survey with the respondent and the potential focus group recruitment at the end.
- Each respondent who completes a survey should be asked if they would like to take part in a focus group to be held at a future date. If they say yes, their contact details can be recorded at the bottom of the survey.

Carrying out your survey

When you have completed the short training session at the station (or at your buddy's station), go out with your volunteers, who should work in pairs, to the chosen locations, and start off the survey. If getting to each location involves a journey by public transport you should consider reimbursing your volunteers. You should make sure you are available for the duration of the survey by mobile phone if any problems arise.

Your pairs of volunteers should position themselves slightly separately but within eyesight of each other for safety and to help build confidence. Once they have found a respondent and completed a questionniare, they should initial the top corner and move onto the next.

Each data collection session should last for around one and a half to two hours. Be available at the station to welcome volunteers back with their completed surveys. Keep the completed surveys in bundles sorted by volunteer so any issues with the data collected can be easily identified. When everyone is back, your buddy should thank you for your time and the session ends - unless you decide to hold a data entry session straightaway - see details in next section.

FIVE
Using the plug-in for your survey results

Once you have collected your survey data, you will need to manually enter the results from your questionnaires for data analysis. We suggest that you use the volunteers who conducted the survey to do this, perhaps immediately after a survey session.

You can either enter the results into a spreadsheet that you have produced, or, alternatively, we have produced a Prove It 'plug-in', to simplify this process.

The Prove It plug-in simplifies the process of entering the results, and produces a report containing a short narrative and some graphs and statistics. The plug-in works with a website content management system (CMS) called Wordpress - a free platform that is commonly used by community radio stations to develop their websites.

The plug-in is available from Radio Regen, and instructions for using it are given in **Appendix 1D**.

Survey summary template

If you use the plug-in for the data entry of your survey results, an automatic summary of your survey results will be produced, as shown in the template below i.e. the blanks shown here will contain your survey results. You could also produce this report by Excel analysis of your data.

The results of this survey aim to provide an indication of the number of people listening to the radio station, their listening habits, and the meaning the station has for the listener and their local area.

General Information
___ people were interviewed using a non-probability sampling technique. The survey sampling took place within the station's reach area defined by the station. Volunteers aimed to interview a broad range of respondents based on age and gender. The majority came from the ___ and ___ postcodes.

When asked, ___ % stated that they listened to ___ and proceeded to complete the detailed listener section of the questionnaire. Of those who did not listen to ___ , ___ % were aware of the station.

Station listeners
When asked how regularly they listened, the most popular response was ___ who listened ___. Listeners tended to tune in for programmes during the ___ and ___ part of the day/week. Of these listeners, ___ % had acted on information heard on ___ with the most popular action being "___ " and the second most popular being "___".

The questionnaire then looked at the role of the station for the listener and their perceptions about its role in the community. ___% agreed that the station was more relevant to their local area than other stations. ___ % agreed that ___ was entertaining. Importantly, for extending the station out to its community, ___ % agreed that ___ offered local people opportunities. % agreed that the station had an impact on the local community.

Using the rest of your survey data
The final parts of the survey contain qualitative or attitudinal responses to questions about the impact of your buddy's station within its community.

For each qualitative question, collect together the responses and order them into groupings of similar responses or under themes such as 'community impact', 'relevance of station to listener' or perhaps 'would like to see more of'.

SIX

One-to-one interviews

Why interview?

Your street survey enabled you to ask a relatively large number of people the same questions to produce a broad overview of listeners' attitudes to your station. Conducting one-to-one interviews allows you to ask the same questions....and many more, set within the format of an intimate conversation that allows you to go beneath the surface. Whilst the reach is much smaller for interviews than a respondent survey, the data you are gathering is far richer.

The interview format used in the Prove It research is that of a semi-structured interview. This means that you have a broad outline for the interview covering your main areas of interest, but you are also free to pursue interesting points raised by the interviewee.

Complementing your survey data

Your audience survey laid the foundation for your evaluation. The interview stage engages **key community figures** and **stakeholders** and fleshes out the survey data. The interviews will be the core element of proving your effectiveness in reflecting your community and delivering core services.

The Prove It interview

We have provided a Prove It interview format for community figures and key stakeholders (see **Appendix 2A**). This is designed to ask questions that yield useable and relevant data for a Prove It report 'template' (**Appendix 4**). You may also want to ask extra questions to find out what people think you do well, what you might improve, and what activities you could branch out to do next.

The questions used derive from the definitions of social gain in the Community Radio Order and from priorities within the community radio sector.

If you are carrying out the Prove It process with a buddy station, the community figures relevant to your station will be interviewed by a third party, and should feel able to speak more honestly and directly about their experiences than if they were speaking to you. If you are not working with a partner station, you could still consider engaging a third party to conduct the interviews, to add objectivity.

You should interview both stakeholders and community figures who have had some involvement with your station.

Stakeholders

A stakeholder is a person or an organisation that has a stake within the radio station or its activities. These could be organisations that e.g. provide project-based funding for the station, commission the station to produce programmes on their behalf, use the station to carry out volunteer training, or engage the station to help deliver core services for them e.g. media training. These must be recent or current stakeholders so that their contribution has the most relevance.

Interviews with stakeholders are about teasing out the key priorities they want to achieve, the relationship the station has with the person or organisation, and how the station is helping them to meet their priorities. Being able to prove this demonstrates to others the potential benefit of working with that station.

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Examples of stakeholders who took part in the Prove It pilot are:
- A school teacher who commissioned a station to have staff working with the children on a closed loop school-based station and make broadcast content
- A local NHS trust who pay for the station to produce a health show and run feature-length information adverts
- A team from a council-run cultural partnership that uses the station to deliver volunteer training
- A festival organiser who commissions the station to cover the festival live on air.

Community figure

A community figure is an individual who holds some standing or a particular role within the broadcast area of the station. These may be individuals who have had a role at the station, appearing on programmes or helping to shape activities. They may be working in partnership with the station as part of business or cultural forums, their role might be religious, or they may work with particular interest groups within the community.

Key to their relevance to the research will be their past and present interaction with the radio station and its community. As such, they hold valuable knowledge about the meaning of the station and its work. Being able to prove the impact and relevance of the station within its community is valuable for funding and project bids.

Examples of key community figures who took part in Prove It are:
- The rector of a local church who occasionally broadcast a music programme and sign-posted people to the station from his community work
- A community liaison officer for a health organisation working closely with members of the community who provided advice and news content to the station
- The training officer of a youth organisation who worked alongside a station to provide services and volunteer support to young people not in education, employment or training
- A key worker for an organisation working with older members of the community who recorded memory shorts to be used in broadcasts.

Arranging interviews
We sent an introductory email to potential interviewees as follows:

Dear _____

I am contacting you to ask for your assistance with a project I am working on. I am carrying out some independent research about _____ FM who I understand you have used or worked with recently.

I would like to conduct a short one-to-one interview with you to be recorded for analysis only. The aim of the interview would be to discuss your priorities, the work you do, and the role the station has in helping you to achieve these priorities. The interview would last no longer than 25 minutes.

If you could contribute to this project, please let me know some times and dates that suit you to hold the interview. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01234 567890 or email myname@myemail.com

As people are usually very busy, your email might be overlooked, so follow it up with a phone call a few days later.

You should be clear that the research is independent and that the participant may withdraw at any time. You can give the interviewee a broad outline of what you want them to talk about, but don't send the

actual questions prior to the interview as this would enable the interviewee to be rehearsed in their answers. Your aim is for as natural a conversation as possible.

Ideally you should hold three interviews with stakeholders and three interviews with community figures. Choose your interviewees carefully to avoid any overlapping interests or work as you want to build as diverse a picture as possible.

If possible, set aside a couple of afternoons to hold the interviews so that any additional lines of questioning are fresh in your mind.

Carrying out your interviews

When you have scheduled your interview times you should prepare your interview pack to take with you. This consists of:

1. Directions to get to your interviewee
2. A copy of the questions (these have been produced as hand cards in the appendices)
3. A voice recorder with fresh batteries for recording the interview
4. Any information about the interviewee or their organisation that you can read in advance so you feel a little knowledgeable about them

Arrive in good time having read the interview questions so you need to refer to your hand card as little as possible. This helps to maintain the feel of a conversation. Test your voice recorder.

The interview questions used in the interviews provide a semi-structured conversation allowing you to follow up with any other relevant questions. It's always good practice to do an ice breaker as it helps the interviewee to relax and possibly forget about the voice recorder.

Introduce yourself and briefly outline the research - that you are there to explore the relationship the interviewee has with the station and discuss how the station has an impact on their priorities.

Stakeholders
Ice breaker: *Interview opens with interviewee describing their involvement with the station and its community.*
1. What are their key priorities?
2. How does or could the station help them fulfil these key priorities?
3. How does the station link with the stakeholder (are they engaging at all)?
4. What is the quality of the relationship?
5. How engaged is the station with the stakeholder's key needs?

Community figures
Ice breaker: *Interview opens with interviewee describing their involvement with the station and within the community.*
1. What are the station services used by community groups/figures?
2. How does the community engage in the station's operation?
3. What value do they place on them?
4. How does that station account for itself to the community?
5. How does the station change their view of their neighbourhood?
6. If the community figure didn't use the station how else would/do they engage with their target community?

It should take about 20-25 minutes to ask the questions within a conversational format. To keep the interview focused there are some techniques you can use.
- Lead one question on naturally from another when the interviewee touches on a relevant point.

- If the interview is unhelpfully moving away from your questions, listen and then break eye contact to check the next question.
- If an answer is vague, pick up on a relevant point and rephrase the question again.

At the end of the interview, thank the interviewee for their time. It's good practice to assure your interviewee that any publicly used quotes will be checked with them prior to dissemination.

Listening and transcribing

It's a good idea to listen back to the interview and make notes about particularly important points that were discussed as soon as possible, while it's fresh in your mind. You will also need to produce a more detailed record of your interview, and there are two ways in which you can do this:

1. Listen to your interview several times and type up detailed notes, including as many directly relevant quotes as possible. You are aiming to produce an accurate record of what the interviewee said, without writing down every word.

2. Produce a complete transcript of the interview, by listening back to it and typing as you hear it. You could also use a volunteer or professional transcription service to do this for you. The aim is to achieve a script that is as close as possible to verbatim. An example of a transcribed interview is included in **Appendix 2B**.

The first option will take you much less time; the second option will take more time and you may also decide to pay for it to be done. However, being able to refer to and hand over transcripts of these interviews is really valuable. The content can be used for your Prove It report and also afterwards for different projects where quotes from the transcript can be used as direct evidence.

Analysing your data

Analysing qualitative interview data can seem like a daunting task when faced with a transcript or detailed notes. One researcher has referred to the potential task as dealing with 'data soup'. The aim of analysis is to deal with this potential soup of information and find some order to it.

You don't need complex software or a PhD to be able to do this efficiently and to be able to meet your objectives. If you asked all the questions in a somewhat orderly fashion, then this is a good starting point for sorting your data.

The method you should use to analyse your data is called **'thematic analysis'**. In essence, this is sorting your data into themed areas (your questions is a good start) and then breaking relevant quotes down into sub-themes.

Start with a spreadsheet and put each question on its own line. As you listen back to your interviews or work on hard copies of your transcripts, noting in the margins, start to pick out quotes and arrange them into themed 'codes' under each question. These codes might be ones like 'station accountability', 'station engagement', 'alternative engagement', 'key priority' and so on. There are no hard and fast rules, it is about what is most appropriate for your content.

The idea is that you do this until you have wrung out as many sub themes, or codes, and cannot pick out any more relevant quotes. As you do this keep working on your spreadsheet, rearranging the codes so it starts to make sense. Doing this brings some order into your data soup.

You can read more about carrying out thematic analysis here:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thematic_analysis.

SEVEN

Focus groups

Focus groups are a common tool for market and media research. They bring together a group of participants in the form of a shared conversation. This section bring together some of the advice from Janey Gordon, a radio researcher and practitioner at the University of Bedfordshire. She summarises focus groups as *"an excellent way to ask some of your listeners direct questions about how they feel about your station and allow them to prompt each other into recalling and sharing examples. It puts a human face on the bald statistics of audience research"*.

A more detailed discussion of focus groups is included in **Appendix 3D**.

Why carry out a focus group?
The focus group complements your street surveys. It builds up a more detailed picture of the views of listeners by bringing them together to discuss your buddy station. The semi-structured format for the focus group - a group conversation – enables the listeners' experience of the station to be explored in more depth in a natural but focused way.

The Prove It focus group
The aim of the Prove It focus group is to find out why people are listening to the station, what the station is doing well, and how it could enhance its output. It might also give some indication as to why people don't listen to the station.

Planning your focus group
When we tested Prove It with stations in Manchester, we found that gathering participants for a focus group did involve a lot of effort. So, although this is the last stage of the process, you should plan for it from the start.

There are three suggested ways to find recruits for your focus group.

1. You can begin to collect potential participants for your focus group when you carry out your street survey. At the bottom of each survey sheet is a space to write the contact details of interested participants. Collate these at the end of your survey and give each one a call to thank them and ask about their availability, to remind them about their interest in the focus group, and to help you plan.

2. Record and run an advert calling for participants. This should use voices that are not familiar voices to your listeners, in order to maintain objectivity. We provide a script below (**Appendix 3A**) for the advert which lasts about thirty seconds. You can access the one made for Gaydio here: http://tinyurl.com/gaydioad.

    This advert should run for about a week to ten days, at different times of the day. Potential participants call your number to register their interest and give you their availability.

3. Put up a poster a couple of weeks before your planned focus group session in various public places in your broadcast area, asking people to call you if they are interested in participating. A template for a poster is provided in **Appendix 3B**.

A little bit of 'bribery'

It can be hard finding participants for a focus group. A small prize offered to participants - like a £20 high street voucher - can be helpful in pushing up responses to your advert. The draw could be spread between the participants for both buddy stations. Mention the competition in your advert, poster and when carrying out your surveys.

Carrying out your focus group

For running your focus group you should:

- *Arrange a venue for the focus group*. The focus group should **not** take place on your station premises as this will make it feel like it is owned by your station, rather than part of an independent research project. Rooms can be very cheaply booked at places such as libraries and council buildings.
- *If possible, find an external facilitator and volunteer to run the group*. This will give a feeling of separateness and objectivity to the focus group; the volunteer can help with note taking.
- *Make sure refreshments are available*. It will welcome participants to the session and help them to feel at ease.
- *Consent forms*. You should have two consent forms for each participant, one to sign and one to keep. This outlines the research and lets them know they can withdraw from participating at any time. A model consent form is provided in **Appendix 3E**.
- *A voice recorder*. This is for recording the focus group. Make sure it is pretty incognito and has a good mic to pick up the various voices clearly.

The facilitator should be on hand to welcome the participants before the allotted start time. They should thank the participants for coming and ask them to read and sign the consent form. The focus group should take no longer than 40 minutes to run.

Like the one-to-one interviews, it is useful to have an ice breaker to get the conversation flowing. A suggested question format is as follows:

Station listeners
Ice breaker: *Focus group participants introduce themselves, talk about their radio listening habits and are asked to consider who their community is.*
1. Who is the listening community for the station?
2. Can they describe their connection and loyalty to the station?
3. Does the station's output feature as a central point in their lives or is it audio wallpaper?
4. As a listener, how do they interact with the station?
5. How does the station change their view of their community?

A hand card of these questions is provided in **Appendix 3C**.

The facilitator should introduce each of the questions and give the opportunity for all participants to express their views. Take care to keep the session balanced so it does not become dominated by a few more vocal participants.

Your note taker is there to record who is speaking – rather than the detail of what people say - so that when you listen back to the recording you can put voices to faces. Participants should be noted down as 'Participant One' or 'Female One' and so on.

You should aim for a semi structured discussion with space to follow up interesting points.

Listening and transcribing

The process for transcribing your focus group is the same as for the interview stage. You can choose to either take notes from repeated listens, making sure to include quotes. Or you can choose to transcribe

the focus group. We would recommend doing the latter as it can help to make sense of often a wide ranging conversation when you see it typed out.

Whichever option you choose, listening to the recording of your focus group will help to clarify what was said and put faces to voices but take care to retain anonymity.

Analysing your data

The steps for analysing your focus group are the same as for the interviews; it is the process of thematic coding. Take time to extract themes and quotes from the interview, arranging these codes into sub themes which match the questions. Create sub themes for interesting points that arose during the conversation.

Carrying out your analysis at the same time as your interviews can help cut the time taken down and provide some continuity across the interviews and the focus group.

EIGHT

Using your data

Writing up your data

The information you have collected in the one-to-one interviews and focus group will be used to write the station's Prove It report. The data from the listener street survey, giving audience listener numbers, will be added to the end of this report as an appendix.

We have drawn up a **model report form** – this can be found in the **Appendix 4**. It has a standard front cover that describes the research, the types of interviewees you spoke with, and what research questions you were seeking to answer.

Shhhhhh….

Keeping the names of those you interviewed and worked with anonymous for your report is best practice. The idea is to carry the freedom interviewees felt during the process into your report.

However, remember to present the data in a constructive manner so that if the interviewees read the content, they would feel comfortable about continuing their relationship with the station.

Structuring your report

Once you have reduced your interviews and the focus group material into a series of codes which have started to yield key themes, you can start to answer your questions to write up your data. Having questions that derive so closely from the aims and objectives of Prove It means you can be confident you are presenting relevant results.

The model report form gives headings under which you can write up your results. Some pointers for doing this are:
- Start each section with a description of who you spoke to and their relevance to your station. This doesn't have to describe each individual but give a flavour of who was involved.
- Arrange relevant quotes from your interviews that fit under each heading so you are answering the main aims
- Write around these quotes but keep them clear and in their original form. Quotes are really valuable for making research come to life as readers will 'hear' what is being said about your station.
- Keep your points succinct and distanced if possible. You are writing for a variety of audiences, so you want to be able to easily extract objective information.
- Your conclusion brings these points together. It may feel a little repetitive but you are showing what the strongest themes were to come from your research.

Writing the report should not feel like an onerous task, you are just bringing together the themes you have exposed in your data analysis and telling the story of your buddy station. Keeping your language clear and your sentences short will help your report to stay focused.

Accounting for your value – putting your results to use

Congratulations, you have completed your own Prove It project!

The Prove It report and listener survey results arm you with the evidence to account for the value of your radio station within its community. The survey is your first indicator of what you do and the value placed

on your broadcast and community services. When you speak to advertisers and sponsors you will have some reliable figures to represent the station. More crucially, you also have the data that underlies and gives meaning to these figures.

The different sections of the Prove It report are designed so that you can directly answer questions relating to the social gain that you produce, and how you help others to meet their key priorities. Quotations from the report can used to evidence your claims to potential partners and funders.

The research and reports that you have undertaken can be used for:
- Funding applications
- Proof of delivery with current stakeholders
- Advertising and sponsorship packs
- Within bids to provide services to others e.g. service level agreements within the public and private sector
- Information about your station to future volunteers
- A way of accounting to your current volunteers

Everyday research culture in your station

We believe that research does not stop at the end of a project - it is process that can be built into everyday practice.

Prove It as a methodology should be run every two years to build a rich legacy demonstrating evidence of impact. There are other techniques you can use to contribute to everyday critical evaluation. Carrying out continual research practices and making research an everyday event builds capacity amongst your staff and volunteers.

Some ideas for everyday research techniques are:
- Have a notepad by each phone in your station. For every caller, record their postcode, their reason for listening, and the nature of their enquiry. Collecting this data and recording it on a spreadsheet tells you over time, where your (active) listeners are, their motivation to listen, and the nature of their engagement with the station.
- Contact a sample of interviewees a few weeks after they appeared on the radio station and ask if appearing has made a difference to their project or organisation.
- Build in collection of statistical data for advertisers as well. One station hosted a radio advert for a theatre production. The theatre agreed to ask new visitors who hit their advertised-for demographic where they had heard about the production. If they mentioned the radio station, this was recorded and fed back to the manager.
- Use your website to ask a single question about how effective a recent production or programme was.

We hope you have found this toolkit useful and are considering carrying out your own Prove It project.

If you would like to discuss running a Prove It project with the help of Radio Regen, contact Phil Korbel by emailing phil@radioregen.org

If you have queries related to the development of this methodology or about the toolkit, please contact Eleanor Shember-Critchley by emailing mscrow@mscrow.com

Appendices

Tools for your Prove It project

Included in these appendices are the following tools to help you run your Prove It project:

Appendix 1 - The street survey

1A. Instructions for volunteers

This survey is to help gauge the amount, type and opinions of radio listeners in the local area. You should aim to complete twenty surveys over two periods of data collection. Please **initial each survey** in the top right hand corner after completion.

You should handle the survey in the following ways:

1. Approach respondents of all ages – we need to get a good spread of the age ranges.
2. Stop someone politely by saying:
    a. Hello, I'm carrying out a radio survey
    b. Do you have a minute to spare?
    c. Tapping your badge as you say this and making eye contact helps to get a positive response
3. Do *NOT* mention or prompt for the station name in any way.
4. If you are asked who you work for, say a 'local media group'.
5. If asked, say the results will be used to compile a picture of radio listenership in the local area.
6. Where 'e.g.' is written, use these as question prompts.
7. If the respondent is not a STATION listener:
    a. Thank them for their time and finish at the end of page one.
8. Question seven often prompts their memory so if they recall listening to STATION, proceed with the survey.
9. If they are a STATION listener:
    a. Continue the survey
    b. At this point, you can mention the station name but **not** that you represent them
    c. Make sure you say 'STATION' for questions 15a-e as respondents sometimes think the survey is just about the local area
    d. On the final two questions, your neutrality should mean you get a more honest response (positive and negative remarks about STATION) which is what we want!
10. Thank them for their time.

If they are a regular listener please ask if they would be interested in attending a listener focus group in YOUR TOWN. If they are interested, please take their name & telephone number.

1B. Street survey questions

1. The respondent is:	Male ☐	Female ☐					

2. Which age range do you fit into?

17 or under ☐	18-24 ☐	25-34 ☐	35-44 ☐	45-54 ☐	55-64 ☐	65+ ☐

3. Are you:

Working ☐	Not working ☐	Retired ☐	Student ☐

4. In which postcode do you live? Please state first part e.g. M21

_____

5. Do you listen regularly to the radio?

Yes ☐   No ☐

6. Which stations do you listen to?

_____   _____   _____

7. Do you listen to STATION?

Yes ☐   No ☐

8. If you don't listen to STATION, do you know this area has a community radio station?

Yes ☐   No ☐

9. Is there a reason you don't listen to STATION?

_____

_____

_____

10. How often do you listen to STATION?

Daily ☐	Weekly ☐	Monthly ☐	Hardly ever ☐

11. When do you tend to listen? (tick all that apply)

Morning ☐	Lunchtime ☐	Afternoon ☐	Evening ☐	At night ☐	Weekend ☐

12. Please state any particular programmes you listen to?

_____

_____

1. Have you acted on any information you've heard on the station?

Yes ☐   No ☐

14. If yes have you:	Called the station	Taken part in a phone in	Visited the station	Volunteered at the station	Attended event promoted on STATION	Contacted an organisation featured on STATION	Other (please state) _____
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____

15. Comparing **STATION** to other stations, to what extent do you agree with the following:

15a. STATION is 'more relevant to my local area'	Strongly agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly disagree ☐	Prefer not to say ☐	Don't know ☐
15b. STATION is an entertaining station	Strongly agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly disagree ☐	Prefer not to say ☐	Don't know ☐
15c. STATION offers local people opportunities	Strongly agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly disagree ☐	Prefer not to say ☐	Don't know ☐
15d. STATION has had an `impact on my community'	Strongly agree ☐	Agree ☐	Neutral ☐	Disagree ☐	Strongly disagree ☐	Prefer not to say ☐	Don't know ☐

15e. If so, how? _____

16. STATION is 'relevant for my age group'	Yes ☐	No ☐

17. What (if anything) do you value about STATION? _____
_____

18. How do you think STATION could be more relevant to you? _____
_____

19. Do you have any further comments about STATION? _____
_____

Radio Survey

Radio Survey

Radio Survey

Radio Survey

1D. Plug-in instructions

Using the Prove It Plug-in

Introduction

The Prove It plug-in was designed in response to some preliminary survey work we did with a local radio station. The experience of manually inputting all the survey data onto a spreadsheet and working out some of the percentages was time consuming and not altogether satisfactory. The plug-in fulfils two main aims of the survey stage:

To make data entry simple: The survey is only a small part of the methodology as it paves the way for showing you the depth and value of the interview and focus group stages. However, the importance of being able to produce quick and accurate listener figures that begin to explore the relationship the station has with its listeners is important. The plug-in enables stations to have multiple volunteers entering your survey responses onto the website database. The survey is a master one, designed for the Prove It project however there are specific fields like postcodes and local radio stations are all easily changed. As volunteers can all work on the plug-in at the same time, there's no risk of having too many versions of the same data file being used at once.

To make data crunching simple: Professional programs that crunch survey data are both very expensive and unwieldy for the main aim of analysing 150+ responses. The plug-in carries out a basic analysis of quantitative questions producing a percentage. This means managers can quickly get the percentage of listeners, of different age groups, most popular postcode areas etc. For qualitative answers these responses are brought together so it's possible to read the various responses given for each question. Unfortunately, computers are not advanced enough to carry out the nuanced analysis qualitative data requires – that needs your knowledgeable hand.

This guide has been written as if you were hosting your own version of the plug-in. If you do not have a Wordpress website or would prefer to use the Toolkit website for logging your Prove It project see our suggestions at the end of chapter three.

If you install the Prove It plug-in on your own website you can substitute the domain "exampledomain.com" for your own. Installation instructions, including setting up users and your own survey, are available from Radio Regen when requesting the plug-in itself. This guide is aimed for anyone entering data.

Entering data – for users

Logging in
As a volunteer you have been granted a 'role' on the Community Radio Toolkit website that enables you to access the data entry part of the plug-in. You will be assigned to the buddy station you have been doing the survey for and you will not be able to edit or view the data for your own station.

To login, visit: http://www.exampledomain.com/wp-admin.

You will see a login screen like the one below. Enter the username and password that will have been given to you for the sole purpose of Prove It data entry. When you have entered these, click on 'Log In'.

Adding a survey

When you have logged in you will be in the Prove It admin area. Click on 'Results' to load the survey entry section. Unless volunteers have been working on the station surveys already you will see an empty list like the picture below. Click on 'add new' to start data entry for one of your completed surveys.

Unless you are subscribed as a volunteer to assist with more than one station the first field you will see will be a dropdown box with your station already selected.

Proceed to enter the responses from your first survey. For questions like 'which stations do you listen to' the respondent can list up to three. You can select more than one station by holding down the 'ctrl' key on your keyboard and clicking the names of the stations. They are highlighted so you know they have been selected whereupon you can release the 'ctrl' key.

If your respondent was not a listener of your buddy's station just complete the answer to 'Is there a reason you don't listen to _____ station?' and save your survey.

A few of the questions are qualitative, that is, the respondent will have given you a worded response rather than have chosen an item off a pick list on the survey. You need to enter the response in the relevant text box.

When you have completed the survey you should select the 'result completed' check box but please note that once submitted the survey cannot be edited. So if you need to come back and complete or edit the survey at a later time, leave this checkbox unchecked.

Make sure you return to the survey to complete it and select the checkbox as this lets the administrator know you are finished with it.

Whether you have completed the survey or not you can save your work by clicking in the 'publish' button.

If you checked the 'result completed' checkbox, on clicking the 'publish' button the site will save the survey and reload the results listing page. To confirm your survey has been saved you will see the following message:

This Result has been marked as Completed. No further editing or updating is possible.

Here is what the results listing page looks like with a completed survey.

Keep repeating the process, starting with 'add new' until you have entered all your collected surveys.

Logging out
When you have finished you should sign out of the website. Do this by clicking the down arrow next to your username salutation on the top right-hand side of the screen.

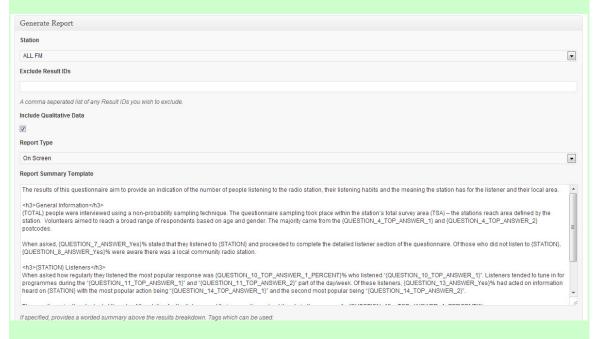## Producing your Prove It report – for the project manager

When you and/or your volunteers have completed your data input for your buddy station you can produce your report. To do this, login with your admin details for Wordpress and click on the 'reports' button on the left-hand menu. The reports and questionnaire buttons only appear for admin users.

Questionnaire

Reports

This brings you to the report page. If you have only input data for your buddy station there will only be one station name to select.

You can choose to view your results on screen, to download it as a PDF document or to download it as a CSV file for use in a program like Excel.

If you would like to see the qualitative responses, click the 'include qualitative data' checkbox. If you would like to see the report summary which picks out headline results, click the 'include report summary' checkbox. Then, click 'run report'.

Generate Report

Station

ALL FM

Exclude Result IDs

A comma seperated list of any Result IDs you wish to exclude.

Include Qualitative Data

☑

Report Type

On Screen

Report Summary Template

The results of this questionnaire aim to provide an indication of the number of people listening to the radio station, their listening habits and the meaning the station has for the listener and their local area.

<h3>General Information</h3>
{TOTAL} people were interviewed using a non-probability sampling technique. The questionnaire sampling took place within the station's total survey area (TSA) – the stations reach area defined by the station. Volunteers aimed to reach a broad range of respondents based on age and gender. The majority came from the {QUESTION_4_TOP_ANSWER_1} and {QUESTION_4_TOP_ANSWER_2} postcodes.

When asked, {QUESTION_7_ANSWER_Yes}% stated that they listened to {STATION} and proceeded to complete the detailed listener section of the questionnaire. Of those who did not listen to {STATION}, {QUESTION_8_ANSWER_Yes}% were aware there was a local community radio station.

<h3>{STATION} Listeners</h3>
When asked how regularly they listened the most popular response was {QUESTION_10_TOP_ANSWER_1_PERCENT}% who listened "{QUESTION_10_TOP_ANSWER_1}". Listeners tended to tune in for programmes during the "{QUESTION_11_TOP_ANSWER_1}" and "{QUESTION_11_TOP_ANSWER_2}" part of the day/week. Of these listeners, {QUESTION_13_ANSWER_Yes}% had acted on information heard on {STATION} with the most popular action being "{QUESTION_14_TOP_ANSWER_1}" and the second most popular being "{QUESTION_14_TOP_ANSWER_2}".

If specified, provides a worded summary above the results breakdown. Tags which can be used:

If you chose to download the report as a PDF or CSV file the page will reload with a download link.

PDF Report Generated. Please download by clicking here

If you chose to view the report on screen it will load the report, complete with bar graphs.

Appendix 2 - One-to-one interviews

2A. Interview questions for community figures and key stakeholders

Community figures

Ice breaker: Interview opens with interviewee describing their involvement with the station and within the community.

1. What are the station services used by community groups/figures?

2. How does the community engage in the station's operation?

3. What value do they place on them?

4. How does that station account for itself to the community?

5. How does the station change their view of their neighbourhood?

6. If the community figure didn't use the station how else would/do they engage with their target community?

Key stakeholders

Ice breaker: Interview opens with interviewee describing their involvement with the station and its community.

1. What are their key priorities?

2. How does or could the station help them fulfill these key priorities?

3. How does the station link with the stakeholder (are they engaging at all)?

4. What is the quality of the relationship?

5. How engaged is the station with the stakeholder's key needs?

2B. Transcribed interview example

(ESC = Interviewer, SW = Local youth trainer, ( ) denotes missing word(s) and 3 dots … denotes the person did not finish what they were saying, = the speaker is interrupted by another speaker but then continues with their sentence, heh denotes laughing).

ESC Sorry, this is Stacey from xxxxxxx, sorry Stacey, you were saying what you are doing, so what do you do?

SW Well we run at the moment a foundation learning course, so we do functional skills in English, Maths, EPD which is employability and Personal Development, erm our aim really is to take people who haven't got work, or NEET, not in employment, education or training, and try and find them a progression, and also try and get them more qualifications. So we try and link up with a local partnership, you know, get local partnerships, such as Wythenshawe FM. We work with the Lifestyle Centre but all of these places, in order for them to survive, they need funding, but we are a charity as well, obviously YMCA training, so obviously we draw down funding from the YPLA to have the learners here, for their education, but then unless we can map across their education into an activity and show that, you know, it will fit into their educational programme, it is very, very difficult. So, we try to make it a bit more interactive, so we will work with people like Wythenshawe FM then, we don't any additional funding to work with them, so then what we have to do is just take it out of our own budget, to pay to work with them. So, I work with Jason, sometimes he comes in, and does short courses, and does them for free to try and get then young people interested. Then when we hire their studio, or work with them, obviously we have to find the funding to pay for them, and the same with The Lifestyle Centre, so if we want to work with The Lifestyle Centre and use the football pitches, and the facilities, we again have to find the funding to pay, but we can't draw down any additional funding, because it is interactive, it just has to be part of the programme, so it just comes out of their general budget.

ESC So how is it that the relationship started with Wythenshawe?

SW With Wythenshawe FM?

ESC Hmmm.

SW Erm, a few years ago I was hoping to run a programme that was on team work. It is called Using Teamwork, it is a Northern Open College Network qualification, and I had a lot of young lads in with me, and I was saying to them what sort of thing do you want to do, because obviously if you want to get a qualification, it has to interest them, and they were saying oh well in my spare time I spit lyrics, and one of the others said oh yea, yea, yea, I do that and, you know, they were all telling me their lyrics, and I thought it would be really good to try and get them to do something related to their interests. So, I just basically phoned Wythenshawe FM, and I saw that they had a volunteer project, so I wondered if they would do a taught session, and they did Radio In A Day, and it is basically a very short course about the history of local radio stations, about them, about their funding about, you know, what is appropriate around the laws, and then they would get to record small parts each, and put it together as a programme, and eventually we worked so well together that we went back and everybody took their parts, looked at a radio show for an hour, and what it should be like, erm put it together, and we did an hour long radio show live on air, so.

ESC What did the boys think?

SW They absolutely loved it, they absolutely loved it. Not only hearing themselves on the radio, but when it was all edited together, and it sounded really, really good, and they were so happy about it, and like we gave them a copy of the CD, and one of them, who came back here, he just came back to visit, it was two years ago and he stills remembers it, and he has still got the CD.

ESC Good.

SW I had it in my car in fact heh, so yea. He felt this sort of sense of achievement, like he had done something. It was a bit like your five minutes of fame, or you know, three minutes of fame, I have been on the CD, or I have been on the radio, and even though it was a local radio show, he felt that he had sort of made his mark somehow.

ESC That is both peer and external recognition at the same time.

SW	Yes it is, and that is the thing, they were going around telling their friends I'm going to be on the radio, I'm going to be on the radio, and other people listened to it, and then you know, when we did it they would get a certificate as well from Wythenshawe FM, we did an award ceremony for all their additional certificates, and when they went up the Lord Mayor at the time gave them out, and erm said oh this is brilliant, and actually the Lord Mayor at the time was a woman, she's was a Lady Mayor at the time, and she was saying you know, I think it is so, so important to have this sort of art, sport, music focus, you know, to show that you can achieve through it, because I didn't want them to think oh we are all going to be DJ's, but equally that communication skill, you know, that appropriateness of language that is so difficult to teach, you know, not one of them swore, not one of them said anything offensive, and it shows you that they do know, and in the local community when they are with their friends they don't always tap into that part of the brain that says that is not appropriate, but they did know, and I was really proud of them, because they not only got the Wythenshawe certificate, they got Wythenshawe FM Radio In A Day certificate as well. So, you are kind of doubling up on, you know, those short achievements, you know, they had a certificate for that, and it is amazing. You would be surprised at how proud they are at getting a certificate, and they are, and not only do they put it on their CV, it is just that pride of being able to take it home, or to Gran's, you know, it worked really well.
ESC	Is that something that has continued?
SW	On and off, because there are funding issues obviously.
ESC	Yes, so are you paying them for the time?
SW	Yea, to be fair to them, you know, they have to make enough money to survive as well. The first one we did two years ago, erm that was with a lady that worked with the local youth, and then we did over this summer just gone, we ran a summer programme, and I explained to Jason then that the issue was that it was a summer programme, we weren't going to have any accreditation, so we wanted small hits, you know, certificates for things. Basically, they were between school and college, they were wondering around, they had nothing to do. We had to get them in, so we did orienteering, we had a lady in for cooking, we had a lady in for sexual health. We wanted to bring it all together, and sort of say this is our experience, so I spoke to Jason, and he was working with some students, social work with students, who wanted to experience working with young people, and he offered to let me work with them for free, you know, for a couple of sessions, and again they did another show, but they used all the things, rather than trying to stretch it out for weeks and weeks, they used all the things they had already experienced. One of the girls did a feature on keeping chickens heh, because she had chickens in her back garden, and one of them did the weather, but they did their own twist on it, which I really like, and they sort of went oh it's raining, and somebody else said yea it's pouring down isn't it, and then they went put your willies on everyone, and that was the weather heh.
ESC	Heh.
SW	You know, and they loved it, and they put it in, because that was them, and it reflects them, and I think it is really good to sort of reflect them in that way, in a secure environment here, and for people to hear that they are not these people who go around swearing and spitting.
ESC	They are just kids really.
SW	Yea, they are, I mean, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years isn't very old, and I think it really helps break down these barriers, when you hear, you know, if you turned on Wythenshawe FM, and you heard this, you know, happy, you know, chatty young people do quite a funny show, I think it makes a massive difference.
ESC	Well there is something to be proud of, they are not being looked down upon, or seen with any sort of fear, and I think that is a rare time.
SW	It is. I think to be able to hear them, and not see them, then hopefully if you did see them, and you realised that was the person talking about chickens, you know, maybe you would change your perception slightly. I don't blame people for stereotyping, I don't, because I think if you live here, and there is trouble in your street, with a certain number of people, and you see that person with their hood up, but you can't see their face properly, you kind of, through that experience you kind of start to generalise, and I can see why people do, but this is why to be heard, I can't invite people into the classroom, for health and safety reasons, and safe guarding, but if they could come in here, and see them in here, they would have a different

	perception, which is why I think to have them do something, which is public, is really good for them, and for the local people really.
ESC	In many ways you are both a stakeholder as well as a community figure, with Wythenshawe FM.
SW	Yea.
ESC	So, on the stakeholder side, can you sort of bullet point then, because you have talked about quite an in depth relationship with Wythenshawe.
SW	Yea.
ESC	And it clearly has an understanding of what you are trying to achieve, so can you summarise what you key priorities are, and how they help you meet them?
SW	The key priorities here with the young people, are firstly, and it sound ridiculous, to get them in, to get them to stay here, once they have joined it is very difficult, because they have got all sorts going on in their lives, homeless, social services, all sorts of things, so it is to get them in, once they are in, and they are secure here, and they prioritise here over the mate down the road who is doing some deal, erm once they are here, then I have to improve their academic achievement, that is what the YMCA training is trying to do. It is not as simple as that, because it is very complex, because there are other issues going on. Once we have done this we have to try and help them find an overall aim, you know, what do they want to be doing when they have left here? So, once we find an aim, we help them write a CV, we help them write a letter of application, we prepare them for work, and then we help them progress. Now, Wythenshawe FM help us in lots of these ways, because if you imagine, I am going to sit here and say to somebody, okay you are going to speak in front of all these people, they don't want to do it. They are not used to doing it, and so if they get to the point where Jason will say right, I am going to record you now, at first they won't do it, they don't want to do it, you know, they don't want to be heard, they don't want these people to see, as they see it, their weaknesses, and so Jason, and all the other people that work there will say, come on ,just say a few words, or say Mary, Mary quite contrary, or say this, and it builds their confidence very, very gradually to the point where they will then speak in front of the whole group. We have recorded a whole debate, and we have said this is for radio, don't lose your temper, and it is preparation for life, as well as work really, and that is the important thing. Plus that sense of you can achieve, you know, it is two days, maybe sometimes that they are doing the radio show, and at the end there is something they can hear, something they can take home, they have got a certificate, they have got a CD, and it is that achievement that really boosts their confidence a little bit at a time, until they are ready to move on, and when they are ready to move on from us I can then think, they can do an interview, because, you know, they have just spoken on national radio, well local radio. It is funny, they can't speak to strangers, lots of them, they get used to me, and they won't speak to anyone else, so other people coming into work with them is another barrier broken down. It is about breaking down barriers, to enable them to be able to move on really, and plus I have a lot of people interested in music, and it is just oh I can't do this, I can't do that, and by the end of it, you know, recently two of my boys went over, and they made a CD, and on this CD was two tracks that they had gone and recorded, edited and then they have got their own CD. It is their own track.
ESC	Gosh.
SW	And they feel now that they have achieved something, that before was just an interest, whereas now they have gone out on this, you know, and you can go to an interview, and it is really difficult like, you or I could go to an interview, and they say right team work, how are you at team work? And you say, oh yea I am very good at teamwork, and they wait, and they look at you, whereas they can say oh I worked with a number of people, and I did this, and I produced a CD, and it is about having the evidence to back up this points. Standard statements on a CV, that are all of them right, but then can they actually prove that they have got it?
ESC	Do you know if any of them go out into the community and continue that sort of interaction? Do any of them ever go on to volunteer at the station, or stay more permanently?
SW	Erm, I had somebody on my course that did volunteer briefly at the station, and I have a couple of boys who have continued to write their own tracks, erm and they have tried to send them off to a few places to see if, you know. I have got a couple of people who have gone out

and bought the software that Wythenshawe FM, you know, they have asked for it as a gift, and so they can record their own tracks. So, it has kind of led onto a hobby that hopefully will lead to something else, and it has given them hope that maybe it will, but as for volunteering, I don't know if anyone has actually gone onto volunteering, other than, there was one young man, but I think the whole sort of DJ'ing thing is less interesting than making the music, and that side of it.

ESC   What sort of value do you place on the relationship with Wythenshawe?

SW   I find that, I mean, I have got photographs all over on my walls of Wythenshawe FM, all over up there of them recording. If you walk down the corridor you will see pictures of them recording, and I am trying to sell education to people, and I am trying to sell education based on their interests, and if I did have the link with Wythenshawe FM that I have, I couldn't sell education based on their interests, because so many, especially young men, and lads, have got interests in music, and so if I tried to say to them oh come in and do English and Maths heh, and you can do a teamwork qualification on cooking, it is not going to work, whereas if I, because I have such good links with Wythenshawe FM, and we work together, and we will say we have got this money, what can you afford, and I mean that is really one of the only barriers, is finances, and I can say to these young people what are you interested in, and I can tell you fifteen, twenty, no twenty percent I would say of the people who come in here will say music, and then I will say I'll tell you what then, if you want to you could do a qualification through this, or this, you know, if I want to do functional English, part of it is speaking and listening, do they want to do a presentation at the front of the class, saying this is M&M or this is Professor Green, I like his music because, or do they want to go out and work on a radio station? You know, it is about a lot of these young people haven't gone to college. They either don't like the structure of it, they haven't got the grades, there are lots of reasons, they couldn't go in and say I couldn't come in today because I have got to pick my brother up from school, because my Mum works, and I don't stay with Dad, you know, it's less personalised, so they come here, and they have got a lot of barriers, and a lot of issues, and if I turn around and say to them yea, that's okay, we are going to Wythenshawe FM next week, this place becomes more of a priority, and that is the important work that they do. That and the relationship that Jason has with them, he comes in and he is very affable, and very friendly, and he understands, because he has worked with Wythenshawe for a while, and so he won't come in and say right, everybody sit down, I'm going to tell you about radio. He will understand how much they need to know, and how much is just additional stuff, that is not really interested or relevant to them.

ESC   How much of the relationship hinges on Jason?

SW   Erm, he is my link with it now, with Wythenshawe FM now, before that I worked with Helen, erm I had a very, very good link with Helen, but obviously because we don't have a link that is sort of set up officially, we are not officially partners, we see each other as partners, because I worked with Helen, and then I worked with Jason, and if Jason left and then the next person came along, if they didn't have the same give and take relationship it wouldn't be able to continue, but hopefully, I mean after Helen had gone, and Jason sort of seems to have taken over working with the young people, it has worked really well, because there was a little bit of a lull after Helen left, I wasn't sure who to contact, and they didn't really know about our links from before, but then Jason, he actually comes in here, and we go to him, you know, so we can work it between us, because the studio is quite small, so taking twenty-seven learners heh.

ESC   How has that worked since they have moved location?

SW   It is more difficult, I mean they were there and they had lots of different rooms. When Helen worked there, we used to take them in the rooms, and do role play, and get to know each other, so what has happened this time is Jason has come here over the summer, come in our class room for a while, gone in next door, or chatted to them, and done some recording, and messing about, and then they have had to do a lot of the recording in our building, and then take it over, but then it was difficult to edit, because it was smaller, but I mean we just phase it and take them in groups to do the editing, it just didn't flow as well, purely because they had to move, and they have got the two basics now, there and The Lifestyle Centre, so it is trickier.

ESC   Part of what they are supposed to do within the community is to be accountable to the community, do you feel that they have a sort of open accountability?

SW	They have done with the young people, I think that they are very open with them, and they work well with the young people, and they are welcoming, and I have seen their leaflets to say, you know, you can come and do this really, you can come and volunteer. They don't really seem to target any particular age group. I mean, my only experience is through working with the young people, and they seem to be, I think they could do with more opportunities, but it is always funding issues. There is a studio at The Lifestyle Centre, and it used to be run by the youth service, and they used to take my learners one day a week, one afternoon a week, this is the youth service at the music place, and they go in, they just learn some skills, like they go in three at a time and learn skills, and then there were guitars and stuff as well, and they could record things, and learn to play little instruments and stuff, and I know that originally with Wythenshawe they were hoping to take up something like that, but again it has just not been possible, whereas the youth service used to go to the youth club at The Lifestyle Centre one evening a week, and have an open session, where one person, or two people at a time, could go in and do some recording, and it worked really well, but since this service has kind of gone I know that there is a real gap there, which I think that Wythenshawe FM could plug that gap, but unfortunately they don't have the funding or the staff to do it, and they could be good for the open people, if they could be open for sessions in the evening, so.
ESC	Yes, sort of flowing with their daily lifestyle really, people that are the target users I guess.
SW	Yea, well that was how The Lifestyle Centre worked, a lot of it was just purely people go in to do the music sessions.
ESC	Yea.
SW	So, whereas the other youth club that was open around the corner somewhere, there was some trouble there, and they ended up closing it down. I mean, who really wants to volunteer, and be open for lots of teenagers that they don't know? Unless there is structured activity it doesn't work, so.
ESC	Do you think, I mean you have talked a lot about children, they are children, young people, taking their own journeys, do you think the station has had a role in changing your view, and maybe their view of their neighbourhood, with Wythenshawe?
SW	I don't think that they have as many listeners as they could have, and if they did, if somehow they could increase their number of listeners, I certainly think they would be able, because a lot of the people who would get involved with Wythenshawe FM are people that more people would listen to, do you know what I mean? Or have features on things that people would listen to. Very few of my class are actually involved with Wythenshawe somehow will listen to Wythenshawe FM, but I know that they do local what's on, and if we have an event here, we contact them and say this is happening, could you advertise this for us? But other than that, I don't really know what sort of messages, it is difficult to try and get messages across, I mean I know that we did, when we did our programme, an interview with Steve Egan, who is the local boxing coach, you know Jimmy Egan's son, and a lot of our young people started going to the gym. One or two still go now boxing, so you can have an influence, and I think it does, but I think in order to have an influence you need people like Steve, local sort of semi-celebrities, and people do listen to them, but I don't know how much. How many people would actually listen at the moment, and I don't know how you would get those listeners on board.
ESC	Is that because they have issues with not enough promotion, and not enough publicity, and difficulty receiving them, or?
SW	It may be difficulty receiving, because if I tried to tune in now I wouldn't be able to.
ESC	I find that quite shocking.
SW	I think it may be difficulty receiving, and also I think some of them, there is one show that they are all listen to, there is one in the evening. I don't know if they still do, I will have to ask them, but it was like Grime music, so that is why heh, but it is like that, early evening, getting ready to go out, on Friday sort of, that type of timing, and that type of show, with that sort of music would be perfect, and even to allow them to send in their own tracks. I would have an open show where you play some sort of tracks that people like. I only know Professor Green, I don't know anybody else, erm but you know, that type of music, and then in the middle, if it was possible, because you would have to listen to the track first, have rather than a request show, you could have a show where they send in their track, and you play it, and that would be brilliant.

ESC	So that is almost taking on a Pirate radio mentality, isn't it, because you know, someone would say that is the role of pirate radio.
SW	It was.
ESC	If it was a community based type one, it was to break the artists from air programme, and I think of say Buzz FM, they did.
SW	Hmmm, and I think if they could, because they put so much effort into their music, they really do, and we were considering running a competition, and that you know, there were certain rules to these tracks, like if they succeeded by sticking to all the rules, then there one track would be played just once, you know, on the show, erm but we haven't got any further with it heh. It was a consideration, let's run a competition.
ESC	Yea, it is such a way to validate somebody, and show that they have achieved.
SW	You would be amazed at the change it can make in a person, it does, you know. The two boys who have made those tracks, they have got this little CD in their folders, and they have made a cover for that, and it is in their CD holder, and they know it is a part of their qualification, but they kept saying to me can we redo it, there is a part I want to change heh, they have submitted it now, but oh can we do a better one anyway, and it really does matter, and they talk about things like you know a loss of parent, or a child, or a friend even, or what it feels like to meet someone you really like and, you know, no different from the songs here in the charts, accept that there are over these tracks that they have made, and they are just spinning the lyrics at the top, so.
ESC	It is kind of a safe place really, doing that sort of thing, isn't it?
SW	Yea.
ESC	Because it is contained, even though it is something that is external, and can be appreciated without looking at the person.
SW	And without looking too deeply at them, it is just like therapy.
ESC	Yea, no, it is, I totally agree. Erm, if the station didn't exist, would it alter how you engaged with your target audience?
SW	Yea it would, because it is very, very difficult to engage the type of learning we have anyway, without taking away something that they really enjoy, and amazingly the people who don't even want to get involved with writing the lyrics, or spitting the lyrics, or editing, will go with those learners to support them, give them advice, and they get involved, and they feel that it is more interactive. It is real to them, you know, doing proportion, and percentage, and whatever else that they kind of have to do to pass their Maths and English. If that was this whole course, than they would drop out really.
ESC	It is kind of irrelevant really.
SW	No, and it's not real to them and, you know, that is the thing with Wythenshawe FM. It adds a different dimension to their education, and it is more relevant to them, and it is still educational. I mean amazingly you can sneak literacy into sort of like lyrics, you can sneak in Maths into rhythm and, you know, and meter and things, and you can drop in these words and teach them, and it works, and Jason and the others like Simon, was very good with them. It just makes it more relevant, and they like it because it is local, that is the other thing. If we had to go to Manchester, they would be like why, and what are they going to be like with us, and yet for some reason they feel safe in their own environment.
ESC	Is that because they can sort of possess it? It is theirs?
SW	Partly, and partly because they feel like they won't be judged.
ESC	Yeah.
SW	Because they think that if you are working in Wythenshawe, and you have worked with Wythenshawe for a while, and you are based in with Wythenshawe, you won't be judged. A lot of young people don't want, it is like if I said there is a studio in Cheadle they would say I'm not going there, and I would say why, and they are like no because they will look down on us, and they will say this, and that, you know, they are not embarrassed about their accent, or what they are trying to say, or the clothing, you know, it is a very safe, enclosed community with Wythenshawe, and it is a bit like safety in numbers, and everybody sort of dresses

	similarly, and speaks similarly, and you are comfortable here, and if someone said to me where are you from I would say Manchester, if you ask someone from Wythenshawe where they are from, they say Wythenshawe.
ESC	Yes, it's funny, isn't it, there is a real differentiation in the term of who I am, and who my community is.
SW	And I think they A. Sort of appreciate somebody working here, being based here, and you know it's like, they know what it is like with Wythenshawe, they have covered themselves their own radio station, it is called Wythenshawe FM, you know, but like equally, it would exclude people who don't want to be here, you know, like what you were saying earlier, so it is like well, do you change the name? And that is another thing, if you are outside with Wythenshawe, and you have this view of Wythenshawe, you are not going to listen to Wythenshawe if you are in the local area. My Mum lives in Brooklands, you know, my Mum is not going to listen to Wythenshawe FM, because she is expecting kids going like oh no like heh, but I don't know if they have a specific target audience. I mean if you think of Galaxy, personally I wouldn't listen to it because it is not my type of music, and I see that as young people. I will listen to Key 103 in the morning on my way in, that suits me fine. I would, maybe when I was at home, listen to sort of Magic or something, you know, all the oldies, but then Wythenshawe FM doesn't have an exact identity. I think that is part of their problem as well.
ESC	Right.
SW	It doesn't really have a, it is for the people in the village, which range from seventy plus.
ESC	Yea to be honest we sort of phase throughout the day through different age groups.
SW	I agree, and I mean, and you would want to be able to think that throughout the day maybe most of the people at home maybe, or the older people, you know, Mums that aren't working or whatever, and then towards the evening people who are going out, the young, and then people know not to listen heh, because you know, I wouldn't like that music, but I think it lacks an identity, and I think that is maybe why not at many of the young people volunteer. If I said do you want to go and volunteer on Galaxy they would be like yea.
ESC	Of course, or course. I think that is really helpful feedback for them.
SW	I don't think it is that they are a poxy little station, I think it is that lack of identity. They don't know how they are going to feel, if they say oh I am a volunteer with Wythenshawe FM, they don't know if the other people are going to go wow what are you doing that for? Or urgh why are you doing this? And I think to get more volunteers it would have to be funny onwards, like a youth radio. If it was a youth radio station and it played their music, then they would volunteer.
ESC	Yea. Okay, Stacey, I think that is everything I need to ask, that is so helpful.
SW	Sorry I do talk a lot heh.
ESC	No, no that's perfect.

Appendix 3 - Focus groups

3A. Focus group advert script

Do you have something to say about YOUR STATION?

An independent researcher is holding a listener focus group

And they want your thoughts about the station

Can you join them?

If you want to be part of this

And live in the YOUR TOWN area

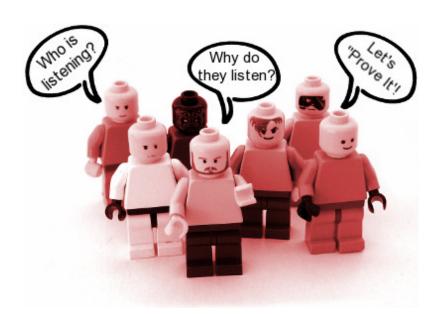**Call 0123 456789 - leave your name and number – and they'll get back to you.**

If you have something to say about YOUR STATION

Then they want to hear it.

Call 0123 456789 to join the conversation …

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT *YOUR STATION* ?

WE WANT TO HEAR IT!

An independent researcher is holding a listener focus group in *YOUR PLACE*. It's for listeners to discuss their thoughts about the station.

Can **you** join us?

Call 01234 567890 or email myemail@mydomain.com with your name, number and the area you live in – and we'll get back to you.

3C. Focus group questions

written by Janey Gordon, University of Bedfordshire

Station listeners

Ice breaker: Focus group participants introduce themselves, talk about their radio listening habits and are asked to consider who their community is.

1. Who is the listening community for Your Station?

2. Can they describe their connection and loyalty to the station?

3. Does the station's output feature as a central point in their lives or

   is it audio wallpaper?

4. As a listener, how do they interact with Your Station?

5. How does the station change their view of their community?

3D. Advice on running a focus group

written by Janey Gordon, University of Bedfordshire

How to run a listener focus group - Advice for community radio stations

What is a focus group?

A listener focus group is an excellent way to ask some of your listeners direct questions about how they feel about your station and allow them to prompt each other into recalling and sharing examples. It puts a human face on the bald statistics of audience research.

The general concept of a focus group comes from the world of marketing and public relations. Suppose a clothing company wants to find out how to sell a winter range of coats to, for example, older women, it will contact a group of women who they know have bought clothes from them previously and are in the age range they want to find out about. The company will ask a group of between 8-12 women to come and meet together and have a discussion about what they like about the clothes they have bought previously, any reservations they may have and what they are looking for when they buy winter coats.

The discussion is guided and facilitated by a 'moderator', who will make sure that all the participants get a turn to speak and everyone's opinions are heard and valued. There will also be a 'note-taker' to assist the moderator and it is likely that the discussion will be recorded. The focus group will meet in a relaxed and informal location and be given refreshments. They may be offered a small gift or reward for attending but are not usually offered a fee or a financial reward.

Media companies such as radio stations and community radio stations find focus groups extremely valuable when trying to find out about their audience. Listener figures simply will tell a radio station how many people are listening, but a focus group can suggest what the listeners really like about the station, indicate where irritations might lie and where the station might develop its output and community services.

Why run a focus group?

The aim of running a focus group amongst your listeners is to find out *why* they are listening to the station. This might also give some indication as to why other people don't listen to the station or what the station is doing well and where it might do more to enhance its output for listeners. For a community station it will also provide some valuable data with which to approach possible funding agencies or advertisers and may also be an indication of 'social gain' for your annual reporting.

The ethics of running a focus group

In order to get valuable information from a focus group it is important to run it in a fair and ethical way. Meeting a group of friends at your house, giving them a nice meal and then asking how they like your radio station, will not provide useful information.

First of all, find two people who are not formally connected with your radio station, and certainly not a part of the management structure, to act as the moderator and note-taker and conduct the focus group. The participants should not feel that the moderator or the note-taker represent the radio station. They should be seen as being objective. Local schools, colleges or universities may be helpful in supplying a moderator and note-taker from amongst the staff or more mature students. Media departments may be very interested and pleased to be able to help you in this way. If you have a good relationship with another community station locally you might consider running a focus group for each other.

Next find your listeners to take part. There are various ways to do this and a combination is advisable.

- You can do some on air announcements, asking for focus group participants.
    The advantages of this are that:
    - It is an easy and obvious method for a radio station
    - It demonstrates that you value your audience, even to those not interested in participating
    - You are approaching all your listeners directly

The disadvantages are:
- o You will have volunteers from the most vociferous members of your audience
- o Volunteers may have a one particular issue they wish to promote

- • Over a week or so, ask listeners who contact the station for other reasons, such to make a dedication, if they would be interested in taking part.
- • Use your existing listener contacts from previous programme correspondence, competitions, or listeners who have contacted the station to express an interest in the stations work or output.
- • Ask for focus group participants when listeners are attending another event that you organise.

You should over recruit initially, have a list of about fifteen possible participants. You are likely to have some dropouts when you confirm with them. The final group should not be more than twelve, try to make sure that you have at least six. If the first twelve are totally firm that they are coming along, keep the others in reserve and use them first next time. The participants should be adults, eighteen years and over, unless you have a compelling reason to use younger people. If this is the case, you will need to make arrangements for proper chaperoning and someone with a CRB check to supervise anyone under sixteen. You will also need a parent or guardian to give written permission for them to take part.

All participants will be given a consent form to read and sign. This gives the general outline of what the focus group is about, how the information will be used and expresses a loose code of behaviour for them. There is a sample below.

When and Where?

The time of the focus group meeting will depend on the group involved, but usually early evening works well and will help to encourage attendance. You will need a quiet room or area, in the station itself or elsewhere, where the focus group will not be disturbed and which is large enough for the final group plus moderator and note-taker.   There should be enough seats for everyone and it is usual to provide light refreshments such as water, tea, coffee and biscuits or what ever is appropriate.

The focus group is facilitated by the 'moderator' and notes made by the 'note-taker', who can also take care of the sound recording of the session. Most importantly, no one who could be felt to be a part of the station organisation, whether manager, administrator, or volunteer should be present at the focus group. This is fundamental to the ethical practice and objectivity of what you are doing. Having said this you will obviously need to brief your moderator and note-taker as to what you want to find out.

The focus group should last no more than around one hour so about five or six topics are reasonable to cover during this time. Fortunately, in community radio the research team at Griffith University conducted a series of focus groups amongst community radio stations in Australia and we are able to benefit from their experiences. They found that the topics that emerged regularly from the groups were:

- • The Accessibility of station for the listeners
(Can listeners make contact by phone, email, SMS, SNS, walking in the door?)

- • Presentation and style
(How do listeners regard their on-air relationship with the station? Do they feel that the presenters are 'friends', knowledgeable, representative of the community?)

- • Local news and information
(Do listeners choose the station for its 'local' information?)

- • Music
(What do listeners like or dislike about the music programming? Music has been shown to be culturally defining, it is not simply something that happens between the speech!)

- • Diversity
(Are listeners aware of the communities within communities the station broadcasts to? Do they appreciate the variation of the programming for the different listeners you serve?)

These topics are good starting points, but your moderator can be briefed to include another topic or two that is specific to your station, for example the station coverage of a particular local event that you would like some feedback about.

So how exactly does the focus group to run? Let's assume that you are the moderator for another local community station who will then do the same for you.

The listeners who have agreed to take part should be welcomed and offered refreshment, told where the toilets are and generally made comfortable. Each will be given two consent forms, one to sign and one to keep (a template for a consent form is below). When the group is ready, the station staff and volunteers should leave the room, and the next hour is run by the moderator and note-taker.

As a radio station there is likely be a sound recording device available to do an audio recording. This should not be intrusive or bulky but should clearly pick up all the conversation in the room. It is worth testing it before hand.

The moderator and note-taker introduce themselves and explain the format of the session. There is no need for the participants to introduce themselves as the comments will be anonymous. The consent form also asks that participants respect each others anonymity.

The moderator then introduces each topic and everyone in the focus group will be given the chance to have their say about it. Open discussion is fine but the moderator needs to ensure that one or two participants don't take the field and exclude others.

The note-taker takes notes as to what is said. It is useful for them to use abbreviations for the participants, 'Female 1", "Male 3" or "Participant 4" and so on. They cannot be expected to write verbatim, but the key points are useful. For example

F1: "I really like the music on the midnight show. It's just right to relax to when I come off my shift".
Discussion about late night music policy generally.
M5: " Actually, I think I could get that type of music on a mainstream station. Shouldn't a *community* station offer something a bit different?"

The note-taker can also help the moderator by keeping an eye on time, indicating that a quiet participant has not been included and generally being another pair of eyes and ears for the moderator. Finish off by thanking everyone and making sure they know how valuable their time and input has been for the station and for all the other listeners.

A note on the ownership of the data

In research terms the ownership of the data collected varies. If a large chain store has paid for a series of focus groups, they will expect to own the material collected and literally expect to have possession of notes, audio recordings etc. However if the work is being done by academics, for other research purposes, they will expect to own the data and not give the raw material to the stations. In the case described here, it can be assumed that the community station is the sponsor of the research and so 'owns' the material collected. Even so the individual participants should remain anonymous as far as reasonably possible.

So what now?

You now have considerable rich data from your focus group, in the form of a set of notes and a recording of what took place. What do you do with it?

The list below goes from the simplest research feedback to the more sophisticated.

- **Immediate feedback**
  The moderator and note-taker can give brief feed back to the station based on their notes and experience of what happened. This can happen verbally and straight away. Care needs to be taken not to identify individual participants.

- **A written report**
  The feedback from the moderator and note-taker can be written up into a short report.

- **Transcription**

The recording can be fully transcribed into a word document. This is not such a hard job, although somewhat tedious. If the focus group has kept to one hour, the transcript will be about 9000-10,000 words.

There are professional transcribers, but this could be expensive. Audio transcription software is available, but be aware that this will require a good clear recording and may not cope well with dialects.

It is important that the anonymity of the focus group participants is fully maintained in the transcript.

- **Analysis**
  Once you have a transcript as a word document it may be systematically analysed for issues that the participants thought important or mentioned once or more.
  - o Key word analysis
  This involves identifying certain words, for example "Music" and finding all the occasions when the word "music" is mentioned.   When these are collated it will give a good idea about the various views of the participants concerning music. Most word processing packages will do this for you using the <find> function.
  - o Software Analysis
  This uses a similar process as a manual key word analysis but is done by a piece of software designed for the purpose. The Griffith team used 'Nvivo', and other packages are available. These are sophisticated and enormously helpful for analysing and manipulating larger quantities of data. For example if you were to do several focus groups with different sections of your community.

How often?

Once you have conducted one focus group for your station, it is worth doing again. How often depends on what you what to find out and the resources available. For example if in the results of your first focus group you discover that your participants noted that it appeared difficult to make contact with the station, you might want to put some changes in place and then check up in six months time that these had been effective by holding another focus group. On the other hand if you simply want to get a regular overview of the strengths of your station, to include in the annual report, you only need to conduct a focus group once a year, a few weeks before the report is written.

Final thoughts…

As with any data collection and handling you need to behave ethically towards those involved and the actual data itself. Beware of gaining huge amounts of material that you do not know how to handle, what it means or where to go with it after the initial collection. One good focus group can tell you a great deal about your station and its listeners, but you must remember that it is not statistical and cannot be quoted as statistically valid.

What a focus group will do is put a "human face" on statistics. It allows for a less structured setting than a one to one interview and encourages sharing between participants, which will stimulate recall and memories of programmes that they have enjoyed as listeners to your community radio station.

[*Radio station name and logo*]

Consent to participate in focus group

You have been asked to participate in a focus group conducted by [*your name of station name*]. The purpose of the group is to understand [*briefly explain why you are running the group*]. The information gathered from the focus group will be used *[briefly explain how you will use the information]*

You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group and you can withdraw at any time. To withdraw after the group has taken place please contact *[your contact details].* Although the focus group will be recorded and notes taken, your responses will remain anonymous and no names will be mentioned in the final report.

There are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. We want to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone. We hope you can be honest even when your responses may differ from those being given by others in the group. In order to encourage the right atmosphere, we ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group and that responses made by all participants are kept confidential within the group.

I understand this information and agree to participate under the conditions stated above:

Name (Please print):

Contact email:

Contact number:

Signed:

Date:

"Prove It" Report for *Your Station*

A qualitative analysis of a station's engagement with its listeners, wider community and stakeholders

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to communicate the analysis of one-to-one interviews and focus group data that has been undertaken for Your Station.

The "Prove It" methodology is derived from an Australian academic project and customised for the UK community radio sector. Using this methodology, stations partner up to carry out each other's research for the minimum of cost and maximum of objectivity.

Due to the lack of quantitative studies available to community radio in the UK the methodology involves a survey section. This street survey provides the stations with a baseline listener figure and an initial picture of listener engagement with the station. The survey report is provided separately. This report focuses on the analysis of the qualitative data gathered on behalf of the station by its buddy station as a process of peer review.

Participants - rationale for the interviewees

It is widely acknowledged that the success of a community radio station is less about the 'product' of a programme within a beautifully crafted schedule but about the outcomes and engagement with the community the station sits within. The methodology broke the community into three key groups; listeners, the wider community and stakeholders. The aim was to work with these three primary groups and the research gave equal weighting to each in the analysis.

Listeners: The research aimed to engage with and understand the relationship listeners have with their local community radio station. It did so initially via the street survey and later with a focus group to focus on how the station touches their daily lives, what they would like to see in future programming, how well the station engages new supporters and volunteers and how the station differentiates itself from others.

Community: The research aimed to illustrate the depth and quality of engagement the station has with its community. It did so via one-to-one interviews with key community figures identified by staff at the subject radio station. These interviews, carried out by the buddy, explored the relevance of this station within its community, the depth of engagement with these key community figures and explored how valuable these relationships were.

Stakeholders: The past few years have highlighted the changing nature of funding and support for community radio in particular and the voluntary sector in general. For the research to be of particular value for future planning, the aim was to explore how the station works with key stakeholders, the quality of the relationship, how stakeholders meet their objectives

through community radio and identified future concerns and changes faced by this key group.

A critical friend

The report addresses these three key groups and the main questions asked of each group. The analysis compares and contrasts the responses given by interviews to show where the station is achieving its objectives and, in the case of community figures and stakeholders, where the station is helping them to meet their objectives.

The aim for all the interviewees was to be a critical friend; therefore where lines of questioning touched on station issues or a failure to engage with the community additional questions were asked. Interviewees valued the relationship they had with the station and wanted to see it grow and succeed so these criticisms are generally balanced out with positive feedback.

The outcome is a report that can be used for:

• Internal development of the radio station; through the reflection of past successes and failures and future possibilities

• A tool for reporting back to volunteers and the station's board

• Solid evidence for accounting to grant making bodies and stakeholders

• As part of the station's annual reporting mechanism

The buddy case study

Stations have worked together in pairs to carry out each other's surveys, interviews and focus group. Doing so meant a degree of objectivity as stations were not carrying out their own research. It also meant participants felt freer to discuss the relationship they have with the station who is the subject of this report. Interviews were carried out with community figures and stakeholders. These were generally defined as:

Community Figure: A significant person or representative of a group, who is embedded within the community the station broadcasts to and are recognisable within the community. Community figures generally work alongside the station on their own projects, calling upon the resources of the station to promote their work, occasionally work in partnership, often targeting the same people who constitute station listeners. Examples of community figures would be third sector workers, cultural groups, religious figures, sports and special interest groups etc.

Stakeholder: A significant person or representative of a group who have either a financial or resource based stake within the radio station. Stakeholders engage the services of the radio station to meet their own specific needs such as the delivery of a project, to raise awareness of the stakeholder's work, to help deliver training to the stakeholder's staff or target group etc. Examples of a stakeholder would be organisations such as the NHS, local councils or emergency services that often hold service agreements with the radio station, or charitable organisations and housing groups delivering their own training.

Questions asked and themes pursued

Once participants were identified the buddy researcher made appointments for one-to-one interviews that generally took place in the participant's environment. The interviews followed a semi-structured style that enabled the main themes of the research to be answered whilst picking up on issues and topics the participant wanted to bring to the interview. The main themes for the interviews were:

Listeners

- Identify who is the listening community

- Establish the listener's connection and loyalty to the station

- Discuss the station's output; whether it features as a central point in the listener's life or constitutes audio wallpaper

- Establish if, and how, the station changes the listener's view of their community

Community

- Identify the services used by community groups/figures

- Establish how the community figure engages with the station's operation

- Constitute the value the community figure places on this relationship

- Discuss how the station accounts for itself to the community

- Understand whether the station plays a role in changing the community figure's view of their area

- Identify how, if the community figure did not use the station how else they would engage with their community

Key stakeholders

- Identify the stakeholder's key priorities

- Understand how the station does, or could, help the stakeholder fulfil these key priorities

- Show how the station engages with the stakeholder; whether it is a continual process or even happening at all

- Establish the nature and quality of the relationship between station and stakeholder

- Discuss how the station engages with the stakeholder's needs

The main body of this report builds a rich picture based on the interview questions. The report tells the story of the achievements of Your Station, examines its role within its community and address how it achieves the soft outcomes related to social gain.

Main discussion

Your Station

Summarise the main characteristics of the radio station.

Listeners

Summarise the focus group that took place.

Qualitative responses from the survey

- Identify who is the listening community and summarise the relationship listeners have with the station (part two of the survey).

Focus group analysis

Describe the focus group who took part, the types of listeners they were and their interest in taking part. Structure your data to address the headings of:

Listener discussion of Your Station's output:
Insert discussion here.

Listener interaction with Your Station:
Insert discussion here.

Listener connection and loyalty to Your Station:
Insert discussion here.

Your Station's role in changing a listener's view of their community:
Insert discussion here.

Community figures

Briefly describe the community figures interviewed. Structure your data to address the headings of:

The services used and nature of engagement:
Insert discussion here.

The value community figure places on their relationship with Your Station:
Insert discussion here.

How Your Station accounts to its community:
Insert discussion here.

The station's role in changing the community figure's view of their community:
Insert discussion here.

The significance of the station for enabling the community figure to engage with their community:
Insert discussion here.

Stakeholders

Briefly describe the stakeholders interviewed. Structure your data to address the headings of:

Indentify the stakeholder's key priorities:
Insert discussion here.

Discussion of how Your Station engages with its stakeholders:
Insert discussion here.

Discussion about how Your Station helps to indentify and fulfill them:
Insert discussion here.

Description of the value and quality of the relationship between Your Station and stakeholder:
Insert discussion here.

Conclusion

Bring the relevant points from the interviews together to summarise:

- How listeners view *Your Station*

- The type and quality of the relationships between *Your Station* and its community

- How *Your Station* helps, or could help, stakeholders meet their key priorities

- Points on what *Your Station* does well and what it could do better.