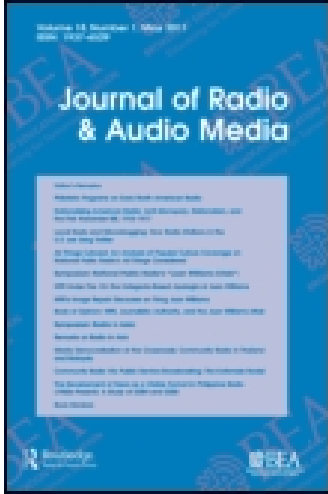


This article was downloaded by: [University of Newcastle (Australia)]
On: 06 October 2014, At: 01:53
Publisher: Routledge
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH,
UK



Journal of Radio & Audio Media

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hjrs20>

A Uses and Gratifications Study of Contemporary Christian Radio Web Sites

Joshua M. Bentley^a

^a University of Oklahoma

Published online: 15 May 2012.

To cite this article: Joshua M. Bentley (2012) A Uses and Gratifications Study of Contemporary Christian Radio Web Sites, Journal of Radio & Audio Media, 19:1, 2-16, DOI: [10.1080/19376529.2012.667025](https://doi.org/10.1080/19376529.2012.667025)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19376529.2012.667025>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

A Uses and Gratifications Study of Contemporary Christian Radio Web Sites

Joshua M. Bentley

Following the uses and gratifications approach, this study explores why people visit and use Web sites for Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) radio stations. An online survey of 320 visitors to 9 CCM radio Web sites found that listening online is the most commonly used feature of these Web sites followed by features related to finding information. A factor analysis identified two underlying gratification dimensions: lifestyle management and information seeking. Simple regression analysis found that different gratifications sought are related to using different features on these Web sites.

Introduction

Radio station Web sites serve a variety of purposes. Stations can use Web sites to sell online advertising, provide additional content to the audience, or promote their brand (Potter, 2002). Noncommercial stations can also use Web sites to solicit donations from listeners (Greer & Phipps, 2002; Moody, 2002). However, it is not enough to consider stations' goals for their Web sites. The needs and goals of the users must be considered, as well. Understanding why audience members choose to visit radio station Web sites enables stations to design better sites and thus, allocate their resources more efficiently.

This study focuses on a particular radio genre—Contemporary Christian Music—and employs a uses and gratifications approach to explore how and why people use Web sites affiliated with this type of station. Previous research has looked at uses and gratifications for other types of radio station Web sites, including classic rock (Murphy, 1998), college radio (McClung, 1999), and public radio (Moody, 2002; Moody, Greer, & Linn, 2003). However, research suggests that religious Web sites offer their own unique uses and gratifications (Laney, 1998). Because CCM radio Web sites are religious, they deserve to be studied separately from other radio Web sites. No previously published articles have been found that directly address the uses and gratifications of CCM radio Web sites, so this article seeks to fill that gap in the literature.

Joshua M. Bentley (M.S., Oklahoma State University, 2010) is a doctoral fellow in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma.

Contemporary Christian Music Radio

Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) is a style of music that arose out of the Jesus Movement in the 1970s (Lochte, 2007; Woods, 1999). Musically, it has become very similar to mainstream adult contemporary or pop music, but it is distinguished by its religious lyrics (Creasman, 1996). CCM radio has become an important player in the mainstream radio market (Kelly, 2003). According to Donovan (2009), the number of CCM radio stations more than doubled from 1998 to 2008, making CCM radio the fourth most common radio format in the United States and the second most common music format behind Country. The ratings service Arbitron reported that the CCM format reached more than 16 million listeners a week in 2009 and tied for 12th out of 55 formats in nationwide market share (*Radio Today*, 2010).

According to Arbitron, 63% of CCM radio listeners are women and 64% of listeners are between 25–54 years old (*Radio Today*, 2010, p. 59). Nearly one third of this audience has an annual household income of \$75,000 or more (p. 61). Arbitron also states that CCM listeners are “among radio’s most well-educated listeners,” with 72% of CCM listeners having attended or graduated from college (p. 61).

CCM radio is unique because a large number of CCM stations are noncommercial (Lochte, 2007). An industry Web site, *insideradio.com*, reported that 82.8% of CCM stations in the US were noncommercial (“Inside Radio Format Counts,” 2010). Instead of relying on advertising revenue, noncommercial stations are funded through donations from individuals and businesses (Federal Communication Commission, 2008). Nevertheless, noncommercial stations still compete with other media for listeners. In fact, because noncommercial stations usually rely on donations from audience members to fund a large portion of their annual budget, these stations need to attract and maintain as many loyal listeners as possible.

Importance of Radio Station Web Sites

The Internet can be an important tool in a radio station’s effort to build its audience. One key element of a radio station Web site is the ability to stream audio online and, thus, to reach additional listeners. According to Arbitron, 54.4% of FM stations and 38.7% of AM stations stream their broadcasts online (*Radio Today*, 2010). In 2009, Arbitron reported that 558 Contemporary Christian FM stations were steaming over the Internet—more than any other format in the United States—and that CCM listeners were approximately 30% more likely to listen online than the general public (*Radio Today*, 2009). Although Country music stations have since surpassed CCM stations in online streaming (*Radio Today*, 2010), it is still evident that CCM stations use Internet streaming as one tactic to maintain and build listenership.

In addition to broadcasting online, most stations use Web sites to provide information about their programming, contests, and upcoming events (Potter, 2002). Stations may collect email addresses from visitors to their Web sites and contact those people with promotional information or to conduct audience research. As

mentioned previously, some noncommercial radio stations use their Web sites to solicit donations, as well (Greer & Phipps, 2003; Moody, 2002; Moody et al., 2003).

There are many ways Web sites can potentially benefit radio stations. However, if audience members do not visit these sites, the benefits will not be realized. For instance, Potter (2002) found that many radio station Web sites did not provide the content that users most desired. Clearly, it is important to consider CCM radio Web sites from the listener or user perspective. The uses and gratifications tradition in mass communication research is an appropriate way to do that.

Literature Review

This literature review provides a brief summary of the uses and gratifications approach, followed by discussions of how this approach has been applied to CCM radio and to radio station Web sites.

The Uses and Gratifications Approach

The uses and gratifications perspective studies media according to the functions they perform (Rubin, 2009). Simply put, uses and gratifications scholars are interested in *how* and *why* people use media. Early examples of this type of research include Herzog's (1954) study of the reasons people listened to daytime radio serials, and Berelson's (1954) investigation into what people missed about the newspaper during a newspaper strike. However, Katz (1959) is commonly regarded as the father of uses and gratifications research because of his editorial calling for social scientists to focus on what people "do with the media" instead of what "media do to people" (p. 2). According to Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), the uses and gratifications approach assumes that audience members are active in media use and select the media they believe will gratify their needs. Because there are multiple sources of gratification, media must compete for people's attention. Furthermore, this approach assumes that people are sufficiently self-aware to be able to explain their motivations in surveys or interviews.

Since the 1960s, various typologies of uses and gratifications have emerged (Severin & Tankard, 2001). Weiss (1971) held that media functions were either "fantasy-escapist or informational-educational in significance" (p. 312). McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972/2000) offered four types of what they called "media-person interactions" (p. 447). These included diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance. People have been found to use television for many functions, such as learning, passing time, arousal, escape, companionship, and relaxation (Rubin, 2009). Radio also offers information, companionship, mood enhancement, and relaxation (Mendelsohn, 1964). Research into the uses and gratifications of the Internet has consistently found motivating factors such as information, convenience, communication, entertainment, and interactivity (Charney, 1996; Eighmey, 1997; King, 1998; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Lin, 1999).

Uses and gratifications research is often criticized for failing to clarify its key concepts (Rubin, 2009). Some authors have lumped together uses and gratifications, while others have treated them as distinct concepts without providing clear definitions. For the purposes of this study, the term *uses* will refer to what people do when they visit a Web site (e.g., what features they use), and *gratifications* will refer to the benefits people derive from those uses (e.g., how they feel when they use a Web site).

CCM radio Web sites combine certain functions of radio, Christian music, and the Internet. Therefore, past research on CCM and CCM radio, as well as radio station Web sites, will be considered next.

Uses and Gratifications of CCM

Uses and gratifications studies of CCM radio listening have found that listeners use this format for entertainment, to reinforce spiritual beliefs, and to avoid secular radio (Creasman, 1996). Using factor analysis, Woods (1999) identified three underlying gratifications that influenced CCM radio listening. The first factor, para-community, suggested that some listeners “vicariously celebrate shared beliefs in para-community with other believers” (p. 238). This factor included survey items related to spiritual guidance, fellowship, and witnessing. In other words, listeners were using CCM radio for activities more often associated with church. Wood’s second factor, content reaction, indicated that listeners were seeking something that was not “secular” but would be “consistent with their core values as Christians” (p. 238). The third factor, lifestyle management, was related to how CCM radio helped listeners “manage their emotional, physical, and spiritual lives” (p. 239).

In a focus group study of college students, Hooper (2004) found that CCM listeners used the music “to further develop their spirituality, to worship God, to alter their moods, and to share their Christian faith with others” (p. 7). She also received several responses related to the content reaction factor in the Woods (1999) study. Many of the students wanted to avoid non-Christian music, or felt that “they should not listen to secular music” (Hooper, 2004, p. 8).

It seems likely that uses and gratifications associated with CCM radio may be related to CCM radio Web sites, as well. However, radio and the Internet are very different media, so it is also worth considering uses and gratifications that motivate people to visit radio station Web sites.

Uses and Gratifications of Radio Web Sites

Several studies have explored the uses and gratifications of radio station Web sites. Murphy (1998) surveyed users of classic rock radio Web sites and, using factor analysis, found seven underlying motivations: feels good to know the radio station; aesthetics; downloading; interaction; information; relaxation; and entertainment.

McClung (1999) conducted a similar study of college radio station Web sites. His factor analysis of 32 gratification items produced six dimensions to why people

visited these sites: interaction with station; social integration; interaction with the page; entertainment; escape; and companionship. McClung also asked respondents which interactive Web features were important to them. An overwhelming majority of respondents (82.6%) said audio streaming was important. When asked to choose from a list of five reasons for visiting the site, 43.5% of respondents said they came to check the music, while 24.5% came to get information and 16.5% came to be entertained.

Moody (2002; see also Moody et al., 2003) examined uses and gratifications of public radio Web sites. Her survey contained 11 use items and 9 gratification items. Most respondents said they used public radio Web sites to learn about programs, to get news about the station or the community, to listen to the radio online, and to check the programming schedule. The top three gratifications sought from public radio Web sites were information, convenience, and entertainment (Moody et al., 2003). A factor analysis of the gratification items uncovered two dimensions (Moody, 2002). One contained responses based on information, convenience, and surveillance (an "information seeking" factor), but the other was difficult to categorize, as it contained responses on everything from entertainment to value reinforcement to companionship. Moody labeled this factor "other gratifications" (p. 45).

It seems likely that people visit CCM radio Web sites for many of the same reasons they visit other radio Web sites. However, research suggests that Web sites for religious organizations also have certain unique uses and gratifications. Laney (1998) conducted an online survey of visitors to religious Web sites and found that some people used religious Web sites to reinforce their beliefs. Furthermore, many respondents were "seeking friendship or companionship with others who are spiritually minded" (p. 168). Because CCM radio stations are religious, their Web sites may provide additional uses and gratifications that other types of radio Web sites do not. Because no previous studies have been found that directly examine the uses and gratifications of CCM radio Web sites, this article seeks to extend the previous research by exploring how people use CCM radio Web sites and what gratifications they seek from them. The following research questions are posed:

- RQ₁: What features do people use on CCM radio station Web sites?
- RQ₂: What gratifications do people seek from CCM radio station Web sites?
- RQ₃: What are the underlying dimensions of gratifications sought from CCM radio station Web sites?
- RQ₄: How do gratifications sought influence people's use of CCM radio station Web sites?

Methodology

This exploratory study was conducted using an online survey and a nonrandom convenience sample. The target population was users of noncommercial CCM radio

Web sites, so responses were solicited by posting links to the survey on nine noncommercial CCM radio Web sites from February 1, 2010, through February 28, 2010. The majority of these radio stations were identified through the Radio Research Consortium's list of top-rated noncommercial religious stations in the U.S. ("Spring 2009 eRanks," 2009; "Spring 2009 Quarter," 2009). These stations were considered the most desirable participants because their ratings made them industry leaders. The two lists represented a total of 49 noncommercial radio stations that devoted a majority of their airtime to Contemporary Christian Music. All 49 stations were sent e-mail invitations to participate in the study. Thirteen stations showed interest, initially. These stations received follow up emails and telephone calls. However, only seven of these stations ultimately posted a link to the survey on their Web sites. Two more CCM stations, not on the Radio Research Consortium list, agreed to participate in the study. One of these stations was affiliated with another station that was already participating. The second station had a prior working relationship with the study author. The majority of stations were located in Midwestern cities ranging in population from several thousand to over one million. Two stations were located in the South and one was located in a medium-sized California city.

SurveyMonkey.com was used to create and host the Internet-based survey for this study. The survey instrument included 54 items, although not all were applicable to the present study. Most items, including six demographic items, were adapted from two previous studies (Moody, 2002; Woods, 1999). To address RQ₁, respondents were given a list of 18 features commonly found on CCM sites and asked to rate each one on a scale of 1 to 5 according to how often they used it (1 = *never*, 5 = *all the time*). The 18 features were identified by content analyzing the Web sites of the 13 CCM stations that originally indicated an interest in the study. Features appearing on a majority of those Web sites were included in the survey instrument. Eight of the features were similar to features included in Moody's (2002) study, so her survey items were used or modified whenever possible. However, new items were created for the other 10 features.

For RQ₂, respondents were asked to rate their agreement to 13 gratification items on a scale of one to five (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Nine of these gratification items were taken directly from Moody (2002) and four gratification items were adapted from Woods (1999) to fit CCM radio Web sites instead of radio stations.

The survey was pre-tested to assess clarity and completion time. All respondents in the pre-test were able to finish the survey in less than 10 minutes.

The survey generated 433 responses over a 4-week period. However, 113 cases were deleted because the respondents indicated they were under 18 years old, or because of significant missing data. The final number of valid responses was 320. Although this was a self-selected convenience sample, it was determined that an online survey was the most logical way to reach the target population. Wimmer and Dominick (2000) have suggested that nonrandom convenience samples, while not generalizable, can be appropriate for exploratory research (p. 83).

Results

Of the 320 valid survey responses, 206 (65%) were from women and 110 (35%) were from men. Most respondents were between 30 and 59 years old (73%, $n = 231$) with the single largest age group being 40–49 (26.5%, $n = 84$). Respondents were generally well educated, with 84% ($n = 268$) having at least some college. Although 27 people chose not to report their annual household income, those who did were almost evenly split between households earning less than \$50,000 per year (51%, $n = 150$) and households earning more than \$50,000 per year (49%, $n = 143$). The overwhelming majority of respondents attended church at least once per week (81%, $n = 274$). Just over half (52%, $n = 167$) reported listening to their local CCM station for 3 or more hours per day, and 78% ($n = 257$) visited the station's Web site at least a few times a month.

The demographics of this respondent profile are fairly consistent with Arbitron's findings regarding CCM radio listeners (see *Radio Today*, 2010). However, the reported time spent listening and number of visits to station Web sites may suggest that respondents to this survey were especially loyal fans of CCM radio. All findings should be interpreted accordingly. The next four sections address each research question in turn.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked what features people use on CCM radio station Web sites. As seen in Table 1, listening to the station online was the most used feature ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.388$), followed by five features related to information seeking: reading about concerts or events ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.032$); seeing what songs have recently played ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 1.232$); getting information about programs ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.065$); learning about on-air personalities ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.041$); and learning about contests ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.167$). Only the top two Web site features had mean scores above 3, indicating that they were used at least "sometimes." Half of the items had means between 1 and 2, suggesting that they were used "once or twice" or "never."

Research Question 2

The second research question asked what gratifications people seek from CCM radio station Web sites. Mean scores for each gratification statement are reported in Table 2. Respondents indicated at least some agreement with 8 items, and disagreement with 5. The strongest agreement was with the statements, "I appreciate the values, ideas, or attitudes I find on it" ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.930$), "I use it to get information" ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.926$), and "It helps me stay aware of what's going on" ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.955$). An additional item asked respondents to choose which of the 13 statements was the most important reason they used the Web site.

Table 1
Most Used Features on CCM Radio Web Sites

Web Site Feature	<i>M*</i>	<i>SD</i>
Listen to the Station Online	3.04	1.388
Read About Concerts or Events	3.03	1.032
See What Songs Have Recently Played	2.65	1.232
Get Information About Programs	2.33	1.065
Learn About On-Air Personalities	2.29	1.041
Learn About a Contest	2.15	1.167
Vote for Music you Like	2.09	1.298
Pledge or Donate Money	2.06	1.130
Find Photos, Audio, or Video Clips	2.05	1.080
Enter a Contest	1.98	1.106
Find Station Contact Information	1.97	1.004
Learn About Underwriters	1.85	0.962
Read About Station History, Facilities, or Coverage Area	1.73	0.854
Visit a Blog or Facebook Page	1.73	1.118
Share a Prayer Request	1.64	0.914
Look for Local Church Information	1.50	0.836
Request a Song	1.43	0.836
Tell the Station About Your Community Event	1.40	0.773

*Note: 1 = Never; 5 = All the time.

The top answer was "I use it to get information" (26%, $n = 84$), followed by "It helps me feel closer to God" (20%, $n = 64$) and "I appreciate the values, ideas, or attitudes I find on it" (19%, $n = 62$).

Research Question 3

The third research questions asked what underlying dimensions there are in the gratifications people seek from CCM radio Web sites. Because this was an exploratory study, principal components analysis with Varimax rotation was performed to look for latent factors in the data. The sample size of 320 provided more than 24 cases per variable. A correlation matrix indicated numerous correlations of .30 or greater. All measures of sampling accuracy on the diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were greater than .50, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was a strong .905. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .001$). The data were determined to be suitable for factor analysis.

According to Reinard (2006), standard criteria for defining factors is a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0, at least two primary loadings of .60 or greater, and no cross-

Table 2
Gratifications Sought from CCM Radio Web Sites

Gratification Statement	<i>M*</i>	<i>SD</i>
I Appreciate the Values, Ideas, or Attitudes I Find on It	4.12	0.930
I Use it to Get Information	3.86	0.926
It Helps Me Stay Aware of What's Going On	3.74	0.955
It's Entertaining	3.70	1.030
It's Convenient	3.65	0.986
It Helps Me Feel Closer to God	3.40	1.228
I Use it Because It's not a Secular Web Site	3.31	1.204
It Helps Me Relax	3.29	1.212
It Helps Me Share the Gospel With Non-Christians	2.97	1.159
I Use it to Feel Connected With People	2.93	1.094
It Helps Me Pass the Time	2.71	1.172
It Helps Me Organize My Day	2.62	1.038
I Use It to Feel Religious	2.21	1.134

*Note: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree.

loadings of .40 or greater. Based on these criteria, four items had to be eliminated due to cross-loading. A two-factor solution emerged that accounted for 60.8% of the variance (see Table 3).

Factor 1 had an initial eigenvalue of 4.08. It accounted for 45.3% of the variance and Cronbach's alpha was .838. This factor was labeled "lifestyle management"

Table 3
Web Site Gratification Factors

Gratification Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2
It Helps Me Pass the Time	*.690	.011
I Use it to Feel Connected with People	*.798	.316
It Helps Me Share the Gospel with Non-Christians	*.745	.381
It Helps Me Organize my Day	*.775	.284
I Use it to Feel Religious	*.736	.073
I Use it to Get Information	-.029	*.803
It Helps Me Stay Aware of What's Going on	.290	*.819
It's Convenient	.179	*.619
I Appreciate the Values, Ideas, or Attitudes I Find on It	.261	*.671

Note: Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.

Downloaded by [University of Newcastle (Australia)] at 01:53 06 October 2014

because it resembled Woods' (1999) factor of the same name. Three items related to organizing one's life, and 2 items related to religion loaded onto this factor. The combined mean for the 5 items in Factor 1 was only 2.70 ($SD = .875$), suggesting that respondents tended *not* to seek gratification from CCM radio Web sites.

Factor 2 had an initial eigenvalue of 1.39. It accounted for 15.49% of the variance. Cronbach's alpha was .743. Factor 2 was labeled "information seeking." It contained three items that resembled Moody's (2002) "information seeking" factor, as well as one item about shared values, ideas, or attitudes. Not only did respondents think of CCM radio Web sites as convenient sources of information, but they also saw that information as consistent with their worldview. The combined mean for the four items in Factor 2 was 3.84 ($SD = .727$). Overall, respondents agreed that this gratification factor was, indeed, a reason to use CCM radio Web sites. A more detailed discussion of these factors and their implications is offered in the discussion section.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question asked how gratifications sought from CCM radio Web sites influence people's use of those sites. To examine how gratifications related to Web site visits, the gratification factors of lifestyle management and information seeking, as well as the four gratification items that did not load onto either factor, were regressed on frequency of Web site visits. The model was not significant.

Next, the two gratification dimensions and the four additional gratification statements were regressed onto the most commonly used Web site features: listening online; community events; recently played song information; and program information. As reported in Table 4, lifestyle management (Factor 1) was a negative predictor of listening online, while the relaxation gratification was a positive predictor. Respondents who visit station Web sites for information seeking (Factor 2) were more likely to access information about concerts and community events, as well as programming information. Accessing information about recently played songs was positively predicted by the entertainment and relaxation gratifications, but negatively predicted by the desire to avoid secular media. Overall, most relationships were weak, except for the relationship between information seeking and community events.

Discussion

This exploratory study attempted to identify uses and gratifications that motivate people to visit CCM radio station Web sites. The data revealed that audio streaming was the most used Web site feature. The next five most commonly used features were all related to information seeking. This finding matches previous studies show-

Table 4
Gratification Factors Regressed on Web Site Feature Use

Gratifications	Listen Online	Community Events	Recently Played Song Info.	Program Info.
Lifestyle Management	-.248**			
Information Seeking		.424***		.291***
It's Entertaining			.163*	
It's Not Secular				-.175*
It Helps me Relax	.223**		.190*	
$R^2 =$.059	.406	.078	.087
$F =$	3.148**	9.850***	4.190***	4.682***

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. The gratification "It helps me feel closer to God" was not a significant predictor in any model and is excluded from the table. Only significant Betas are reported.

ing that people rely on the Internet for information (e.g., Charney, 1996; Eighmey, 1997; King, 1998; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Lin, 1999).

Two underlying factors were identified that describe gratifications associated with CCM radio Web sites. The lifestyle management factor in this study seems to match Woods' (1999) factor of the same name. Woods reported that three "time management," three "religiosity," two "habit" and one "emotional management" items loaded highly on his factor (p. 236). Similarly, the lifestyle management factor in this study had loadings from "It helps me pass the time," "I use it to feel religious," "It helps me share the Gospel with non-Christians," "I use it to feel connected with people," and "It helps me organize my day." These items suggest that survey respondents saw a connection between managing their time, their relationships, and their spiritual self-expression. Although the statement, "It helps me organize my day" seems more like an information seeking gratification, previous research has found that radio "brackets the day" by helping people feel energized in the morning and relaxed in the evening (Mendelsohn, 1964, p. 242). Some people use news and weather information in the morning to feel more comfortable about what to expect that day. Perhaps respondents interpreted the item this way.

Both Woods' study and the present study found relatively low agreement with these items and the underlying factor. Respondents seemed to indicate that lifestyle management was not an important reason for them to use CCM radio or CCM radio Web sites.

The "information seeking" factor that was identified in this study was also found by Moody (2002) in her study of public radio Web sites. However, in this study an additional item related to values, ideas, and attitudes also loaded onto the factor. Laney (1998) noted that belief reinforcement was a gratification associated with some religious Web sites. In this case, it may be that CCM radio Web site

Downloaded by [University of Newcastle (Australia)] at 01:53 06 October 2014

users want more than mere information. They want information that reinforces their spiritual worldview. As mentioned above, the Internet is widely used as a source of convenient information. This factor is consistent with that research, but adds a religious element to it.

Related to this finding is the interesting fact that religious items did not load onto their own gratification factor. Instead, two religious items loaded onto the first factor, and one item related to values loaded onto the second factor. It appears that the religious uses and gratifications of CCM radio Web sites are not distinct from other uses and gratifications. Rather, religion appears to shape and influence the way audience members think about those other uses and gratifications.

Practical Implications

This study found that the main uses for CCM radio Web sites were listening online and seeking information. By providing a live audio stream online, radio stations make themselves available to people who cannot listen over the air for some reason. Certain listeners may live or work in areas where the broadcast signal is weak (or does not reach, at all). Others may not even have a traditional AM/FM radio (e.g., at their offices). Furthermore, by providing easily accessible information about upcoming events, songs, programs, and on-air personalities, station Web sites can supplement the information listeners hear over the air. For example, listeners may hear about a concert on the radio, but forget the time, location, or ticket information. Because information on a Web site is more permanent than live comments by an announcer or prerecorded spots, a station's Web site may be the best medium for sharing this kind of specific information. This characteristic of the Internet may be why so many uses and gratification studies have found information seeking to be a motivator for going online.

This study has also demonstrated that different gratifications sought from a Web site are related to using different features on that site. People who come to a Web site seeking information can be expected to behave somewhat differently from people who are seeking to relax or find entertainment. Radio stations that want to increase traffic to their sites need to understand what users want and design their sites accordingly. Unfortunately, while this study did identify gratifications that predict usage of certain Web site features, it did not find any gratifications that predicted respondents' overall number of visits to a CCM radio Web site. Future research should continue to search for these predictors.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It cannot be overemphasized that this is an exploratory study using a nonrandom sample. These results are intended to provide a basis for future research. They cannot be generalized to a broader population.

Other limitations stem from the fact that data were collected online. Evans and Mathur (2005) noted that Internet research often has poor response rates because it is impersonal, instructions may be unclear, and potential respondents may have privacy or security concerns. Furthermore, because an online survey was used to collect data for this study, responses were not verifiable. One assumes that most participants answered the survey questions as honestly as possible. However, respondents were asked to self-report their Web site usage and those data could be biased by respondents' perceptions or memories.

Given these limitations, there is obviously much more room for further research in this area. A replication of this study, using a truly random sample, and including more radio stations, would produce more useful data. Furthermore, qualitative questions might capture dimensions of CCM radio Web site use that this study missed. It would also be interesting to develop a longer inventory of gratification items than this study employed. The survey items used here were adapted from Moody (2002) and Woods (1999). However, more items might produce more factor loadings and provide a clearer picture of the underlying dimensions of CCM radio Web site gratifications.

Given that this study relied on participant recall via survey responses, there is room for more precise measurement of CCM radio Web site user behavior. A study that used software to track how often people visited a Web site and used various features would generate more reliable data. Such a study could also examine how accurately participants recalled their own Web site usage.

Conclusion

This study has been one of the first to examine the uses and gratifications associated with CCM radio station Web sites. It has found a similarity between CCM radio Web sites and public radio Web sites in the "information seeking" gratification. It has also found a similarity between CCM radio Web sites and CCM radio stations in the "lifestyle management" gratification. Furthermore, this study has also provided evidence that the different gratifications sought from Web sites are related to different ways of using these sites. Hopefully, these findings will serve as a basis for further study in this area.

References

- Berelson, B. (1954). What "missing the newspaper" means. In W. Schramm (Ed.), *The process and effects of mass communication* (pp. 36–47). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.
- Charney, T. R. (1996). Uses and gratifications of the internet. *Masters Abstracts International*, 35(03), 612. (UMI No. 1383342)
- Creasman, P. A. (1996, April). Sanctified entertainment: Contemporary Christian music radio. *Religious Broadcasting*, 26–30.
- Donovan, K. P. (2009, January 2). Christian contemporary radio stations continue steady growth. *The Christian Post*. Retrieved October 7, 2009 from <http://www.christianpost.com/>

- article/20090102/christian-contemporary-radio-stations-continue-steady-growth/index.html.
- Eighmey, J. (1997). Profiling user responses to commercial Web sites. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 37(3), 59–66.
- Evans, J. R., & Mathur, A. (2005). The value of online surveys. *Internet Research*, 15(2), 195–219.
- Federal Communications Commission. (2008, July). *The public and broadcasting: How to get the most service from your local station*. (Report prepared by The Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission). Washington, DC. Retrieved July 15, 2011 from http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/decdoc/public_and_broadcasting.pdf
- Greer, C., & Phipps, T. (2003). Noncommercial religious radio stations and the Web. *Journal of Radio Studies*, 10(1), 17–31.
- Herzog, H. (1954). Motivations and gratifications of daily serial listeners. In W. Schramm (Ed.), *The process and effects of mass communication* (pp. 50–55). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.
- Hooper, B. K. (2004). Holy rock 'n' rollers: College students and contemporary Christian music. *Southwestern Mass Communication Journal*, 19(2), 1–13.
- Inside Radio Format Counts. (2010). *Monthly chart of format counts reported by M Street Corp and Inside Radio December 2009–December 2010*. Retrieved January 26, 2011 from <http://ftp.media.radcitey.net/ZMST/insideradio/TOTALFormats.html>.
- Katz, E. (1959). Mass communication research and the study of popular culture: An editorial note on a possible future for this journal. *Studies in Public Communication*, 2, 1–6.
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. In J. G. Blumler & E. Katz (Eds.), *The uses of mass communications* (pp. 19–31). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Kelly, B. (2003). *Christian radio: Not just a "niche format" anymore*. Retrieved October 5, 2009 from <http://arbitron.com/downloads/christianradio.pdf>.
- King, R. E. (1998). The uses and gratifications of the World Wide Web: An audience analysis for local television broadcasters. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(03), 579A. (UMI No. 9923298)
- Korgaonkar, P. K., & Wolin, L. D. (1999). A multivariate analysis of Web usage. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39(2), 53–68.
- Laney, M. J. (1998). Mediated religion: Motivations for religious Web site usage. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(07), 2274A. (UMI No. 9936278)
- Lin, C. A. (1999). Online-service adoption likelihood. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39(2), 79–89.
- Lochte, R. (2007). Contemporary Christian radio in the United States. *The Radio Journal—International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media*, 5(2/3), 113–128.
- McClung, S. R. (1999). Uses of college radio station Web sites: an exploratory study. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(01), 16A. (UMI No. 9959298)
- McQuail, D., Blumler, J. G., & Brown, J. R. (1972/2000). The television audience: a revised perspective. In P. Marris & S. Thornham (Eds.), *Media studies: A reader* (2nd ed.), (pp. 19–31). New York: New York University Press.
- Mendelsohn, H. (1964). Listening to the radio. In L. A. Dexter & D. M. White (Eds.), *People, society, and mass communications* (pp. 239–249). New York, NY: Free Press.
- Moody, S.A. (2002). Public radio on the Web: A uses and gratifications analysis. *Masters Abstracts International*, 41(03), 647. (UMI No. 1411385)
- Moody, A., Greer, J., & Linn, T. (2003). Public radio station Web sites and their users. *Journal of Radio Studies*, 10(2), 255–261.
- Murphy, R. E. (1998). Determining the value of radio station Web sites: An exploratory study. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(03), 580A. (UMI No. 9923309)
- Potter, R. F. (2002). Give the people what they want: A content analysis of FM radio station home pages. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 46(3), 369–384.
- Radio Today (2009). Retrieved July 15, 2011 from http://www.arbitron.com/downloads/Radio_Today_2009.pdf.

- Radio Today* (2010). Retrieved January 26, 2011 from <http://www.arbitron.com/study/grt.asp>.
- Reinard, J. C. (2006). *Communication research statistics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rubin, A. M. (2009). Uses-and-gratifications perspective on media effects. In J. Bryant & M. B. Oliver (Eds.). *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (3rd ed.), (pp. 165–184). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Severin, W. J., & Tankard, J. W., Jr. (2001). *Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media* (5th ed.). New York: Longman.
- Spring 2009 eRanks (2009, September 3). *Noncommercial religious stations: Top 30 noncommercial religious subscribers—spring 2009 Arbitron diary-based markets only*. Retrieved October 22, 2009 from <http://www.rrconline.org/reports/pdf/Sp09%20Religious%20eRanks.pdf>.
- Spring 2009 Quarter PPM eRanks (2009, August 18). *Noncommercial religious stations*. Retrieved October 22, 2009 from <http://www.rrconline.org/reports/pdf/Sp09%20PPM%20Religious%20eRanks.pdf>
- Weiss, W. (1971). Mass communication. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 22, 309–336.
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2000). *Mass media research: An introduction* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Woods, R. H., Jr. (1999). Contemporary Christian music radio: A uses and gratifications analysis. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(10), 3568A. (UMI No. 9948526)