

Internet Broadcasting: Is it worth it?

You're probably asking yourself, "Why should our local/community station bother broadcasting over the Internet? Our programming is geared to a local audience, not a global one. Our listeners just listen in their car or home stereo. Seems like overkill..."

Broadcasting on the Internet, or "streaming" as it is called, *does* reach a global audience, but that's not why most local/community stations have taken to the Internet airwaves. Instead, it's an opportunity to reach your audience mid-day, while at work.

"It used to drive me crazy when the signal would fuzz in and out," says Beth Markova, a Boston professional and folk music fan who listens to WUMB [91.9FM] at the office. "Now, I can stream through my computer. It's great too, because I'll be driving in to work, and hear something on Dick Pleasants' show and race up to the office to catch the rest of it through the computer."

Indeed, most stations that stream over the Internet report that audience numbers peak during mid-day, between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

Pam Schroeder, a graphic designer living in San Francisco appreciates the convenience and quality of streaming while at work; yet, for her, the real thrill is tuning into her hometown community radio station.

"When I left Colorado Springs last year, I was really sad about leaving KRCC [91.5FM] behind," she remembers. "So needless to say, I was delighted to find their stream on the Internet!"

The Internet may not take over the radio waves, but it's clear that – especially as new home electronics and portable devices continue to emerge - it can help bring your broadcast to your listeners, no matter where they are.

How Do I Get Started?

For most stations, streaming your signal to the Internet is as easy as having a computer available and an Internet connection. Live365, Inc. is one such company who makes the process this simple. Their service can be set up and turned on in a matter of hours.

Generally speaking, your station will need a computer (with at least 400 MHz), soundcard (standard on most computers) and an Internet connection (broadband connection is preferred, though some stations may use a 56k dialup modem). If you have all these, or can obtain these items, your station can be ready to stream! With the use of Live365's software and bandwidth, you will have the flexibility to stream your signal to your awaiting audience.

How Does It Work?

In most cases, your computer would be attached to an output plug from your station's soundboard. Live365's software would then need to be installed on this computer. To complete the transmission, your computer would then need to have the appropriate Internet connection. As sound is transmitted from your station's soundboard, Live365's software picks up the signal, translates the signal into digital format and sends it to Live365's servers via your Internet connection. Once Live365 receives the signal, they in turn send it through their streaming servers and out to the listeners via a simple link that you provide on your website. For your listener, it looks as if the stream is coming directly from your web site.

Is It Easy for the Listener?

Ease of use is what makes Live365's Internet broadcasting service #1 in the Arbitron ratings. With over 8 million hours streamed each month, Live365's network of stations far surpasses any other network of broadcasts currently available. One of the reasons for this huge listenership, is the ease in which one can listen to a broadcast.

To access your stream, a listener would go to your site, click on a "Listen now" link and be instantly prompted by a small "set-up" window sitting on top of your website. This window only appears the first time a listener tunes into your broadcast. Once the listener completes the first-time setup, they are instantly connected to your Internet broadcast.

What are the Costs? Here's the NFCB Benefit!

NFCB broadcasters are eligible for discounted rates through Live365. Each station initially receives \$60 off the monthly fee for the Standard Package, (regular price \$200/month). If 51 or more NFCB stations sign up for the Standard Package, all stations will receive \$75 off the monthly fee. The Standard Package includes enough bandwidth to serve 100 simultaneous listeners per broadcast, a customized player, 365 MB of storage space and technical support. Additional information and other packages can be obtained by calling (866) LIVE-365 or by email at nfcb@live365.com.

Live365's knowledgeable staff has helped numerous radio stations start streaming, and they are available to assist you any time. For examples of their service in action please feel free to visit a couple of their clients:

www.klon.org/
www.wumb.org
www.krcc.org