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JUNE 15, 2016

STATE OF THE NEWS MEDIA 2016

Audio: Fact Sheet

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Last updated June 2016

The American public's consumption of audio content, which includes radio news and talk shows in addition to music, sports and other programming, continues to increase. Advances in consumer technologies allow increasing numbers of Americans to choose to listen to radio on a variety of newer platforms, while at the same time, terrestrial radio continues to reach the overwhelming majority of the public.

On the financial side, radio revenues continued to trend at cross currents in 2015, with traditional "spot" advertising (ads aired during radio broadcasts) in decline and digital revenue on the rise. But for all the gains in digital, spot advertising still accounts for three-quarters of all radio revenue. Digital (station website advertising) amounts to less than 10%.

Most audio data does not break out programming or news stations by category, but BIA Kelsey does track the total number of all-news radio stations in the U.S., which held steady in 2015, though many of these may soon change hands as CBS Corporation prepares to sell or spin off its entire radio division.

Data on podcasts (<http://www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/podcasting-fact-sheet/>) – an increasingly popular form of audio listening – and public radio (<http://www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/public-broadcasting-fact-sheet/>) are analyzed in separate fact sheets.

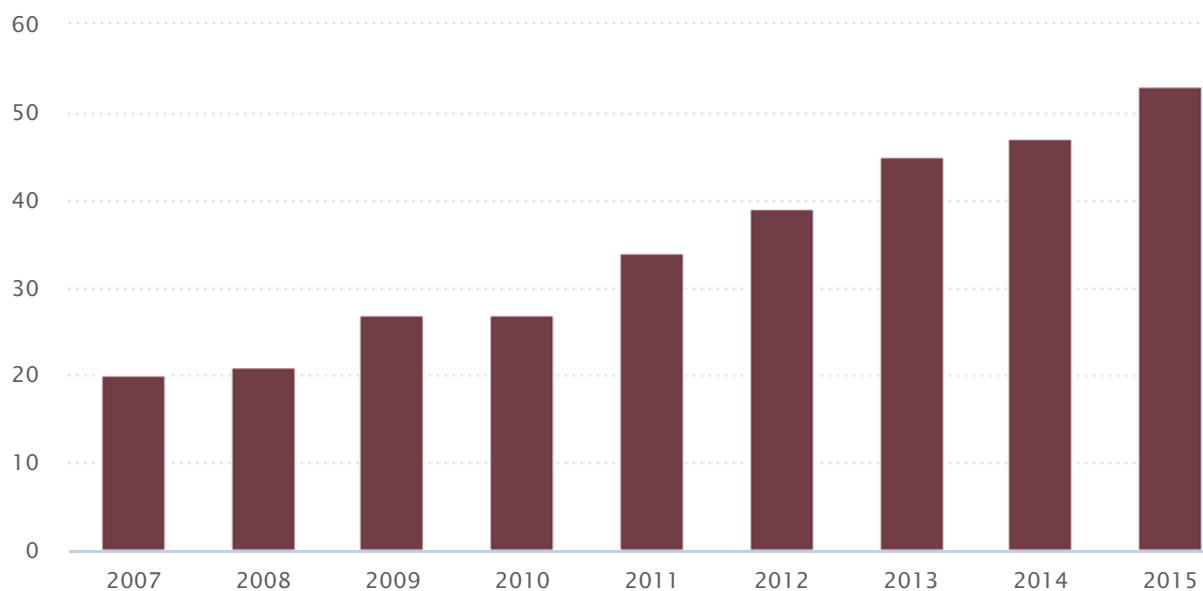
Radio Listenership

According to data from Edison Research, the percentage of Americans 12 years of age or older who have listened to online radio in the past month has once again continued to grow – rising from 53% in 2015 to 57%. That share is about double the percentage of Americans who had done so in 2010 (27%). Updated data for devices of choice for online radio listening in 2015 were not available, but during 2014, 73% listened on smartphones, while 61% listened on desktops and laptops.

Monthly online radio listenership has more than doubled since 2010

Chart	Data	Share	Embed
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% of Americans ages 12 or older who have listened to online radio in the past month



Note: Edison's survey is conducted in January and February of each year.

Source: Edison Research.

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Satellite and web-based listening in cars

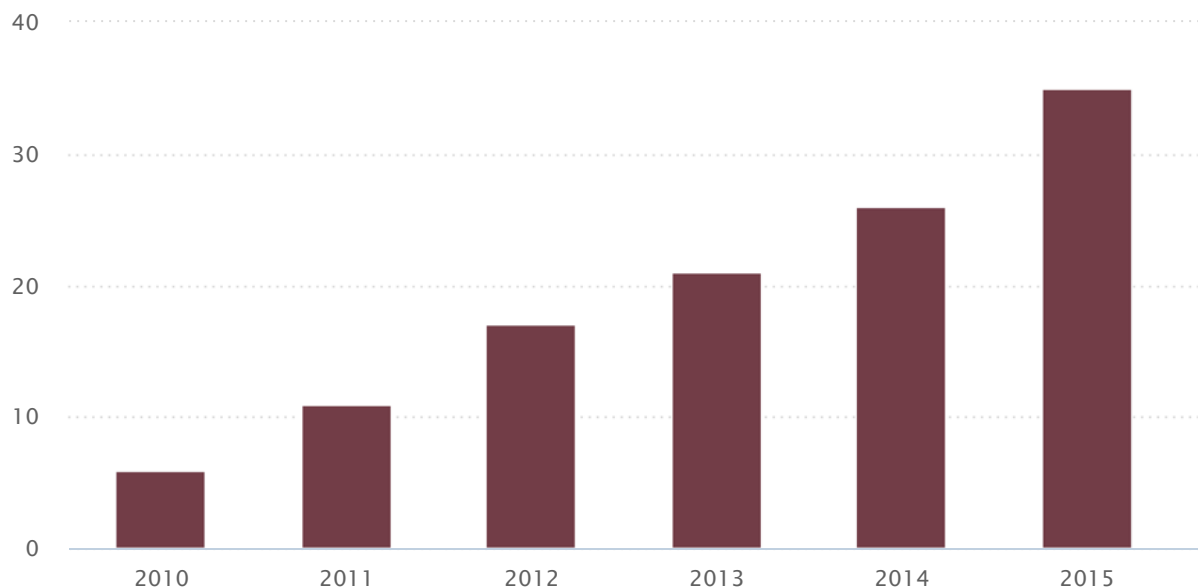
Sirius XM – the only satellite radio platform in the U.S. – reported an uptick in subscribers in 2015 to 29.6 million, up from 27.3 million in 2014.

According to Edison Research, web-based radio listening in cars held about steady, revealing a slowdown from the growth of the past several years. As of January 2016, 37% of U.S. adult cellphone owners have listened to online radio in the car. That is just slightly more than the 35% who did so in January 2015, but about six times the share (6%) who had done so in 2010.

Growth in online car listening through cellphones slows

Chart	Data	Share	Embed
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% of cellphone owners who have ever listened to online radio by phone in a car



Note: Edison's survey is conducted in January and February of each year.

Source: Edison Research.

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Still, traditional AM/FM radio is – and by a large margin – the most common form of in-car listening. Just 8% of listeners in the car named online radio as the source they used most often and 12% named satellite radio, compared with 63% who named AM/FM radio as the audio source they turned to most often. That is up only slightly from 60% in 2015.

Terrestrial listening

Traditional AM/FM terrestrial radio still retains its undiminished appeal for listeners – 91% of Americans ages 12 and older had listened to this form of radio in the week before they were surveyed in 2015, according to Nielsen Media Research. This data is derived from diary-collected listening information from a sample of over 395,000 respondents over the period of one week, as a part of Nielsen’s RADAR study. (<http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/nielsen-global/us/docs/solutions/audio/radar-faq.pdf>)

News format listening

While most radio listenership data is not specific to news, Nielsen does identify two distinct categories of news-related stations – all news and news/talk/information. The cohort of all-news stations is small and in 2015 garnered about 1% of overall audience share of Americans 12 years of age or older, according to Nielsen. That was identical to the 2014 all-news share. The much larger cohort of stations identified as news/talk/information, however, remains one of the most popular radio formats in the U.S. This format – which offers a more limited amount of news programming, in addition to syndicated talk and other information – held steady at the 2014 level of 11% among the ages 12 and older demographic. The only format to attract more audience share is country music (14%).

Pew Research Center’s own survey work adds insight here, finding radio to be a common source of news among adults in the U.S. In research asking about how people are learning about the U.S. presidential election (<http://www.journalism.org/2016/02/04/the-2016-presidential-campaign-a-news-event-thats-hard-to-miss/>), 44% of adults said they learned about it from radio in the past week. Radio outpaced both national (23%) and local (29%) print newspapers, although it trailed local TV news (57%) and cable TV news (54%).

News stations

(http://www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/audio-fact-sheet/pj_2016-06-15_state-of-the-news-media_audio-01/) According to data from BIA Kelsey, at the close of 2015, the number of all-news stations stood at 32, an increase of just one from the previous year. However, that growth already appeared to have vanished in early 2016 with the news in late March that Cumulus Media laid off most of its news staff (http://www.mercurynews.com/tv/ci_29709673/ronn-owens-moves-ksfo-major-bay-area-radio) at KGO in San Francisco in a shift in format away from local news programming in favor of syndicated talk.

Although ownership of the remaining 31 all-news stations is divided among 16 entities, one company – CBS Corporation – owns 10, or about one-third of all of these stations. But in mid-March of 2016 CBS Chairman and Chief Executive Leslie Moonves announced that the company was exploring a range of options to sell or spin off its entire radio division (<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/cotown/la-et-ct-cbs-announces-cbs-radio-sale-20160315-story.html>) of 117 stations – including the 10 news stations – spanning 26 markets.

The 2015 cohort of news/talk/information stations – substantially larger than that of all-news – showed little change from 2014, dropping by just one station from 1,990 to 1,989.

Number of news/talk/information radio stations fluctuates only slightly in past six years

Chart	Data
Share	Embed

Number of all-news stations at close of 2015 stood at 32

Calls	AM or FM	City of license	State of license	Parent
WBBR	AM	New York	NY	Bloomberg Communications Inc.
KQV	AM	Pittsburgh	PA	Calvary Inc.
KCBS	AM	San Francisco	CA	CBS Corporation
KFRC	FM	San Francisco	CA	CBS Corporation
KNX	AM	Los Angeles	CA	CBS Corporation
KYW	AM	Philadelphia	PA	CBS Corporation
WBBM	AM	Chicago	IL	CBS Corporation
WCBS	AM	New York	NY	CBS Corporation
WCCO	AM	Minneapolis	MN	CBS Corporation
WCFS	FM	Elmwood Park	IL	CBS Corporation
WINS	AM	New York	NY	CBS Corporation
WWJ	AM	Detroit	MI	CBS Corporation
WJDY	AM	Salisbury	MD	CC Media Holdings Inc.
WOKV	AM	Jacksonville	FL	Cox Media Group
WOKV	FM	Atlantic Beach	FL	Cox Media Group
KGO	AM	San Francisco	CA	Cumulus Media Inc.
WYAY	FM	Gainesville	GA	Cumulus Media Inc.
KLIV	AM	San Jose	CA	Empire Broadcasting Corp
WAMT	AM	Pine Castle Sky Lake	FL	Genesis Communications
WIXC	AM	Titusville	FL	Genesis Communications
WTLP	FM	Braddock Heights	MD	Hubbard Broadcasting Inc.
WTOP	FM	Washington	DC	Hubbard Broadcasting Inc.
WWWT	FM	Manassas	VA	Hubbard Broadcasting Inc.
WMEA	FM	Portland	ME	Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation
WMCD	FM	Claxton	GA	Neal Ardman
WWNS	AM	Statesboro	GA	Neal Ardman
KPMI	AM	Bemidji	MN	Paskvan Media Inc.
KRFP	FM	Moscow	ID	Radio Free Moscow Inc.
KOMO	AM	Seattle	WA	Sinclair Broadcast Group Incorporated
KOMO	FM	Oakville	WA	Sinclair Broadcast Group Incorporated
WRSW	AM	Warsaw	IN	Talking Stick Communications LLC
KNEZ	FM	Fernley	NV	Times-Shamrock Communications Inc.

Source: Nielsen Media Research, used under license.

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Source: BIA/Kelsey.
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Revenue

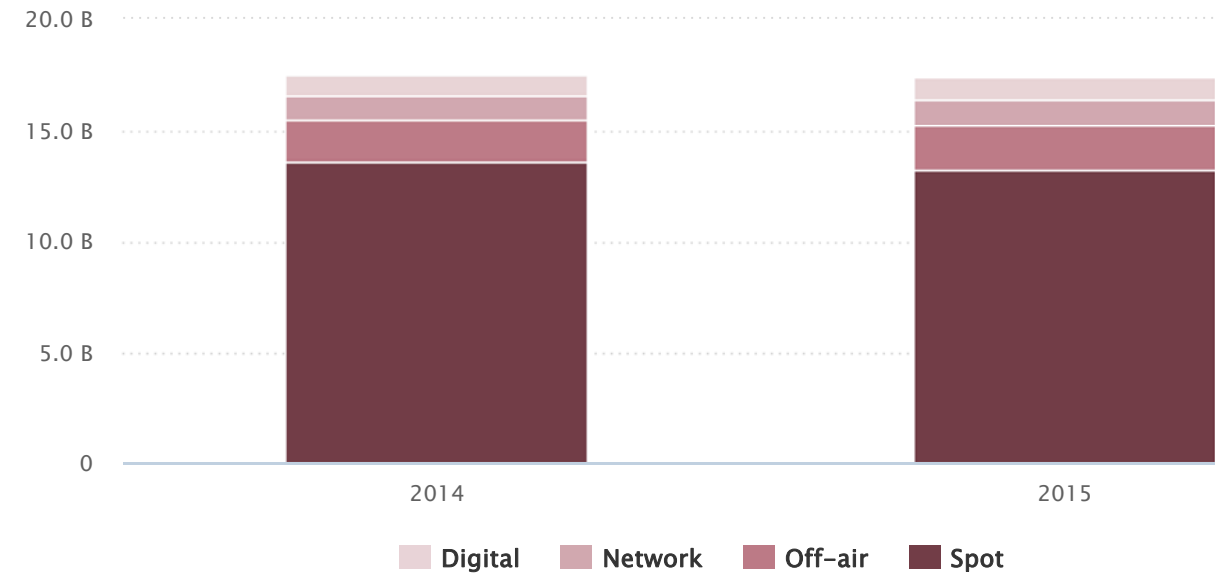
AM/FM's revenue from "spot" advertising (ads aired during radio broadcasts, its main

revenue source) declined 3% in 2015, while revenue from digital and off-air advertising both posted gains – 5% and 11% respectively. This revenue pattern largely mirrored that of 2014, when spot dollars were also down 3% for the year, but digital and off-air advertising had gains of 9% and 16% respectively. Still, digital and off-air ad revenues make up only about 18% of total advertising dollars in 2015 – a slightly larger share than one year ago (16%). Overall, revenue for the radio sector in 2015 was on par with 2014 levels.

Number of news/talk/information radio stations



Annual revenue in U.S. dollars for full year



Note: Revenue figures are for full year.

Source: Radio Advertising Bureau.

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Sirius XM reported a modest boost in revenue for the year, up from \$4.2 billion in 2014 to \$4.6 billion in 2015.

More Data

Sirius XM subscribers (<http://www.journalism.org/media-indicators/audio-sirius-xm-subscribers/>)

Weekly radio listenership (terrestrial) (<http://www.journalism.org/media-indicators/audio-weekly-radio-listenership-terrestrial/>)