



Multi-media effectiveness: No 4



Using radio with online

How radio and online combine to fulfil brand interactions



New research from the Internet Advertising Bureau and the Radio Advertising Bureau

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Introduction

Since the early days of the internet being used for commercial purposes, radio has been recognised as a valuable medium to help drive people online.

To a large degree this has been driven by the complementary functional characteristics of the two media – the parallel (or secondary) nature of radio makes it an ideal companion to the primary, and normally solitary, activity of surfing online.

However, there is little understanding about this conjunctive use of the two media, e.g. how many people listen when they are online, why they combine these media in this way, and the opportunities this presents for brands.

To help build further insight into this area, the RAB and IAB have jointly funded new research into how the two media combine. This research is presented here alongside existing understanding of this increasingly popular media pairing.

New learning – should we be talking?

The Other Lines of Enquiry/Navigator research conducted on behalf of IAB and RAB suggests that adding radio to online enables brands that seek to stimulate immediate response to reach out to and engage new customers, and prompt them to search, enquire, or purchase online.

There is more to be learned about the effects of radio and online working together in the real world and we are keen to collaborate with brands that are using them in combination.

Is this relevant to the brands you work on?

If you'd like to explore working together to help develop learning in this area, please give the RAB a call on 020 7306 2500 or the IAB on 020 7886 8282.

Summary of key findings

Benefit for brands

Radio and online, combine push and pull to reach out and engage consumers and fulfil brand interactions.

Future growth

- **Online and radio are the only media predicted to grow audience**

The huge growth in online audience is increasingly affecting time spent with other (traditional) media - radio is the only traditional medium that people predict they will be spending more time with in the near future.

Size of opportunity

- **Almost 50% listen to radio when online each week**

67% of the sample claimed that they ever listen to radio when online and 72% of these claimed to have listened in the last week (i.e. 48% of total sample). The research also suggests that **at any given time 20% of people who are online are also listening to radio** – making this conjunction a significant media opportunity in its own right!

Communication effects

- **Online and radio provide complementary rational and emotional consumer benefits**

Online is perceived as a convenient channel for helping people find what they want, when they want it, whereas radio is perceived as offering the human touch, helping to shape the moods and rhythm of the day. In conjunction, they feed each other by keeping the consumer engaged across each other's momentary low points, leading to an increase in overall time spent with this media combination.

- **Radio and online are 'social connectivity' media**

Radio and online are both perceived as providing connection with people's social communities but on different levels. Online operates more within people's immediate social network, allowing them to stay in touch with friends and highly defined communities of interest (My World). Radio connects people with their wider network e.g. their local community or broader community of interest (My Wider World).

Effectiveness

- **Combining radio and online significantly enhances response**

57% of the sample claim to have checked things on the internet after just hearing about them on the radio, with 59% claiming to use search to find more details. This isn't just restricted to editorial mentions – 39% claimed that advertising has prompted them to search for something on the internet.

New research into the radio/online conjunction

There is a general belief within the media community that consumers are increasingly combining usage of radio with PC usage/online media. To date, this has predominantly been based on logical assumption rather than research into the specifics of this media conjunction.

The aim of the RAB/IAB research project was to provide more insight into how often, when, where and why consumers combine usage of these two media, and to gain an understanding of the benefits that the conjunction offers advertisers.

Methodology

To meet this broad ranging brief necessitated a use of both quantitative and qualitative research, conducted by research companies Other Lines of Enquiry and Navigator.

Quantitative research was used to help define usage patterns for online and radio in more detail, with particular regard to frequency, time and location of individual and combined usage. It was also used to develop understanding of how people respond to these media, when combined. The quantitative element consisted of a self-completion online questionnaire with a sample of over 500 adults who met the criteria of being active internet users and regular radio listeners. The results were weighted to reflect the current profile of internet users with regard to dial-up vs. broadband access.

Qualitative research was used to add insight into why particular usage patterns have evolved and gain a deeper understanding of the communication effects of the two media, both in isolation and combination. The qualitative project consisted of 12 in-depth interviews amongst young working adults – regular radio listeners with internet access at work and home.

The findings

The findings have been summarised into the following topic areas:

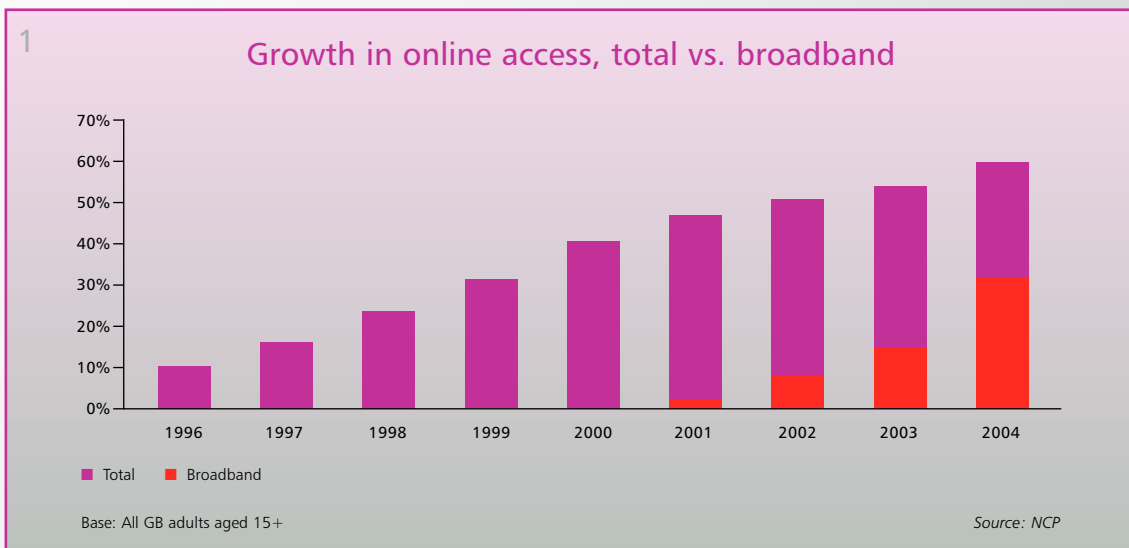
- The developing role of the internet in people's lives
- Effects of the internet at the centre of the media ecology on other channels
- The online/radio conjunction – how often, when and where?
- Why radio and online are natural media partners
- What happens when radio and online combine?
- Benefits and implications for advertisers

The developing role of the internet in people's lives

Growth in access

In less than a decade, the internet has evolved from a niche medium to a mainstream one. The rate of growth has slowed over the last few years, yet the medium continues to evolve with broadband replacing dial-up connection.

As of mid-2005, some 27 million people have access to the internet in the UK, with just over half of these having broadband access.



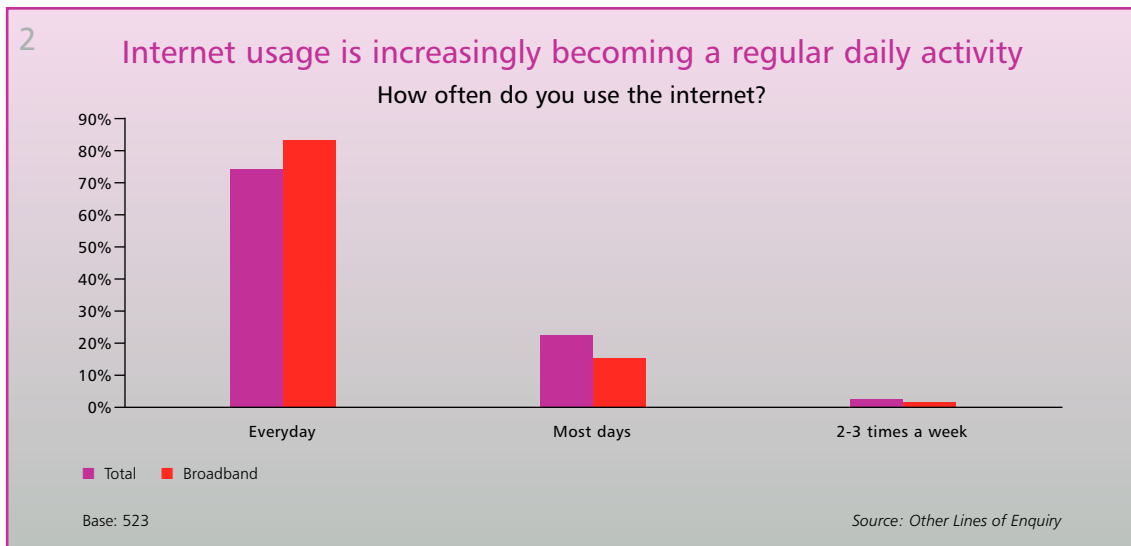
Some recent research studies suggest that the continued rapid growth of broadband will have a significant effect on future internet usage behaviour. Therefore, where relevant, we have made some comparisons between the broadband sample and total weighted sample (representing the current profile of dial-up vs. broadband access) in order to get a better understanding of how internet usage will evolve in the coming years.

Frequency, location and time of usage

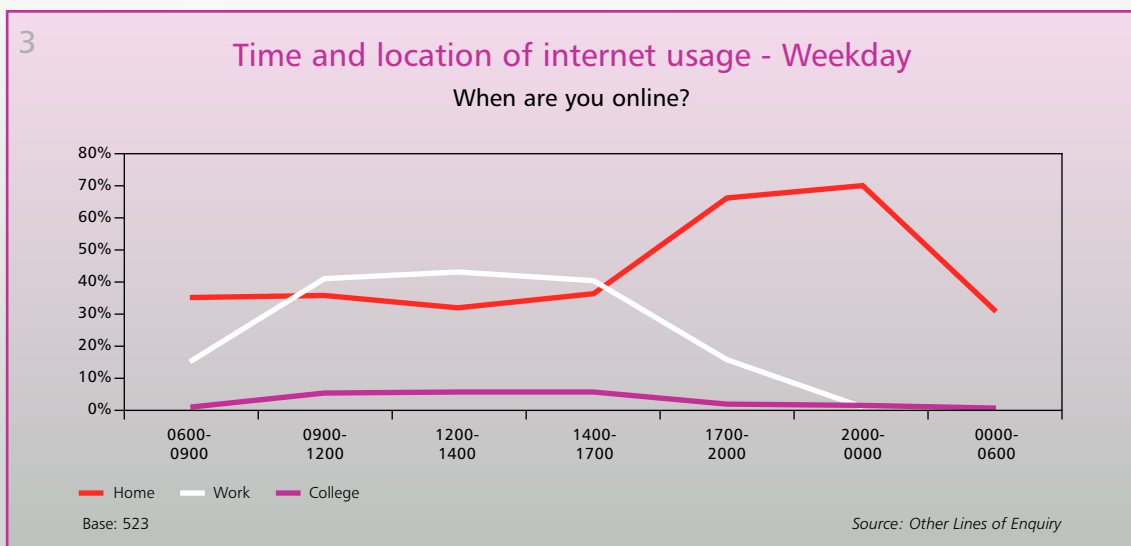
Online usage is inextricably linked with PC usage. Amongst our sample, 96% had online access via a PC at home and 73% had online access via their PC at work.

The PC is a central part of the working lives of most office workers and tends to be on all of the time. At home, the PC/internet is more likely to be turned on for a specific task or purpose and then shut down once the task is complete. In both cases, the internet is only a mouse click away – although with broadband access the web is 'always on', meaning there are no barriers whatsoever to 'hopping on and off the web' at will.

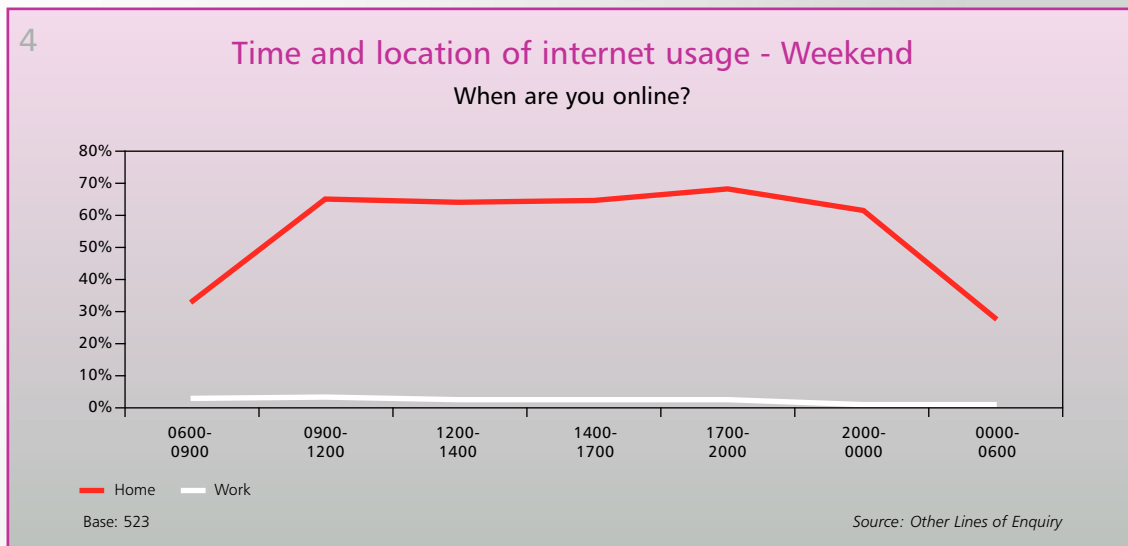
The effect of this is greater ease of access whenever and wherever people want, and this is reflected not only in terms of claimed time and location of online usage but also in terms of how often.



Most daytime internet usage during the week occurs at work. At-home usage rises dramatically during the evening.



Weekend patterns of internet usage are very different with home usage dominating the day. Logging-on climbs fast during mid-morning then rises gently to peak between 5-8pm, competing with TV's early peak time audience.

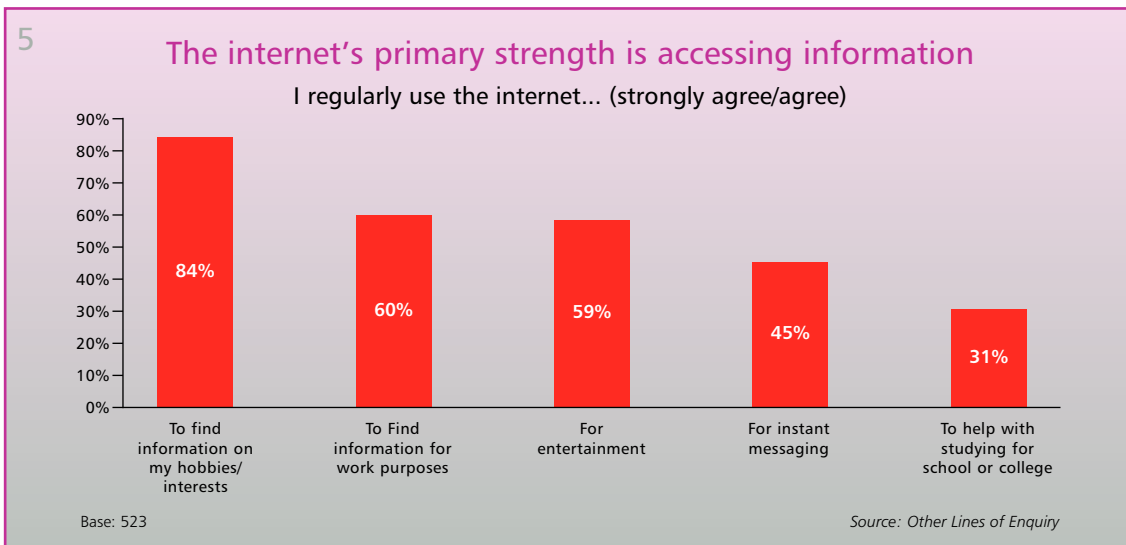


Reasons for using the internet

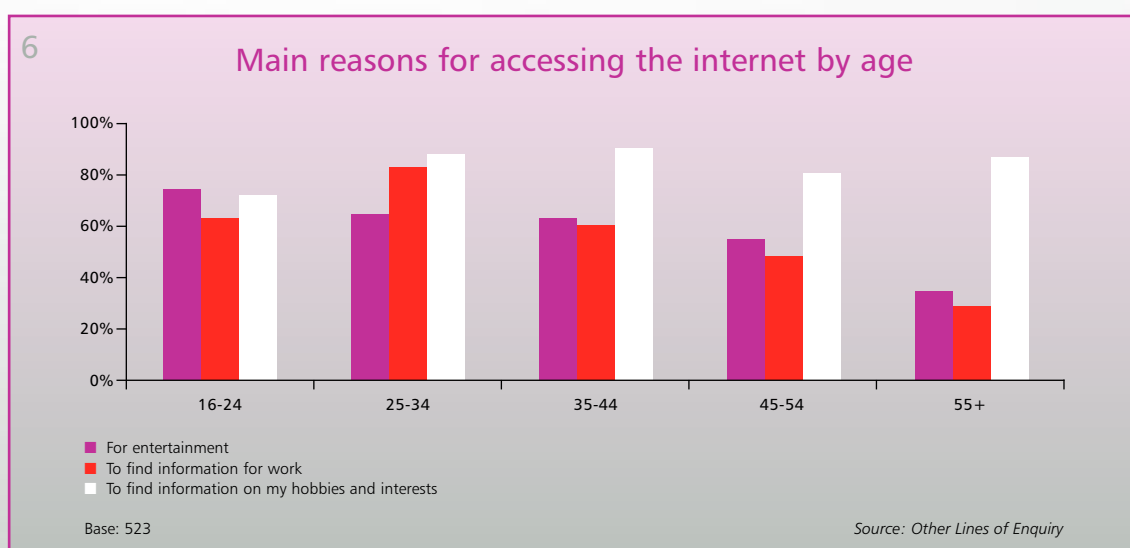
Our two studies suggest that the internet offers both functional and emotional benefits to users. Its primary functional benefit (both at work and home) is ease of accessing information, both work and hobby/interest-related.

In terms of emotional benefits, users cite the internet's ability to keep them connected to a social network when at work via email, instant messaging, online chat rooms, or hobby-related websites. In this role, it helps the workplace to seem less entirely about work and contributes to an overall sense of the boundaries between work and other parts of life becoming blurred.

In a similar vein, the internet also seems to play an interesting 'mental refreshment' role for people engaged in an arduous task, temporarily diverting their attention elsewhere to allow them to readdress the task with new vigour. Some respondents suggested that it was equivalent to a trip to the coffee machine or water cooler.



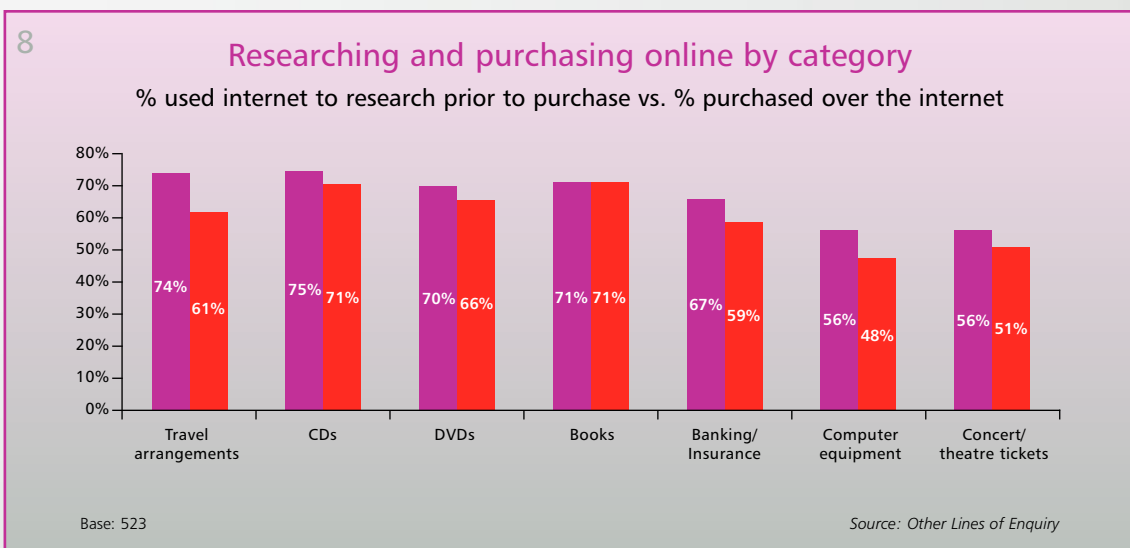
Whilst this is indicative of overall internet habits, usage varies by age. Older respondents are most likely to use the internet to access information about hobbies and interests; young professionals for work-related information; and younger audiences for entertainment.



Using the internet as a shopping tool is also central to the medium's appeal, and the online retail experience is very different to that of the high street. Apart from the obvious benefits of being able to research a wide variety of products and compare prices from many different stores, users also claim to enjoy shopping online, perhaps because it puts them more in control.



Our research suggests that online shopping is mainstream in many markets with even higher value purchases now being made as well as researched online.



Effects of the internet on other media channels

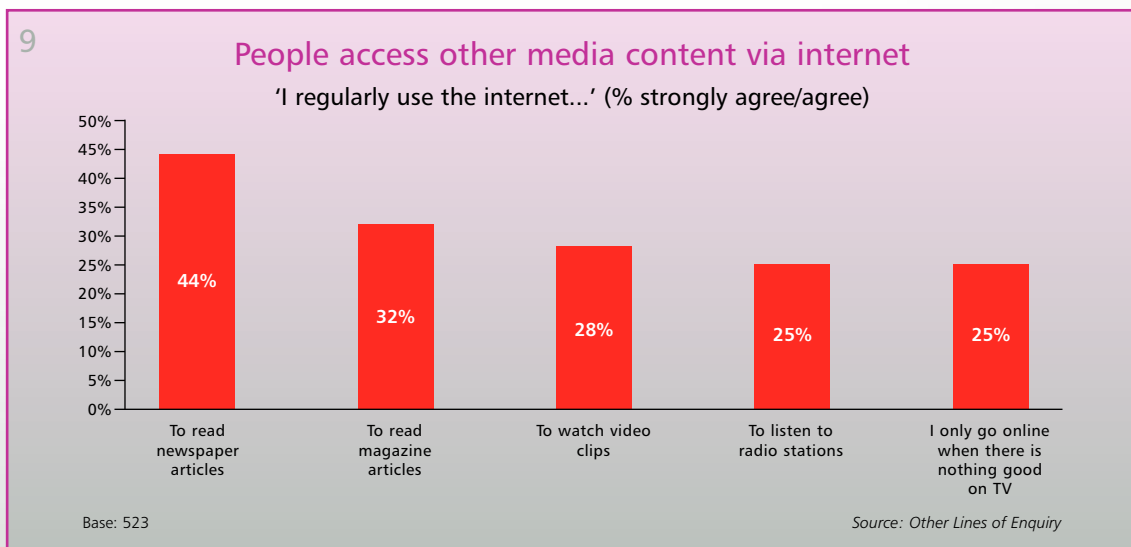
The media ecology

John Naughton, author of 'A brief history of the future' (about the development of the internet) hypothesises that media is an ecology in itself. When a new medium is introduced into the ecology, existing media have to adapt based on their characteristics and strengths relative to the new medium. For example, when television began broadcasting, radio changed from being a focus (or primary) medium to being a parallel (or secondary) medium - a role that it still plays today.

Naughton asserts that the ability of the internet to serve a huge variety of relevant content when people want it has placed it right at the centre of the current media ecology.

So, what effect is the new species of media having on the way people consume traditional media?

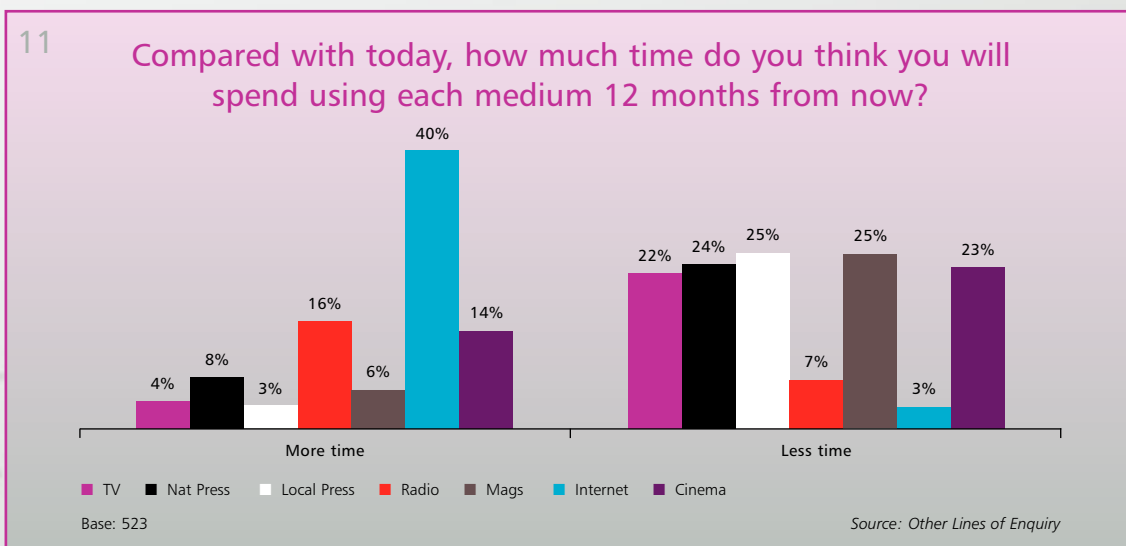
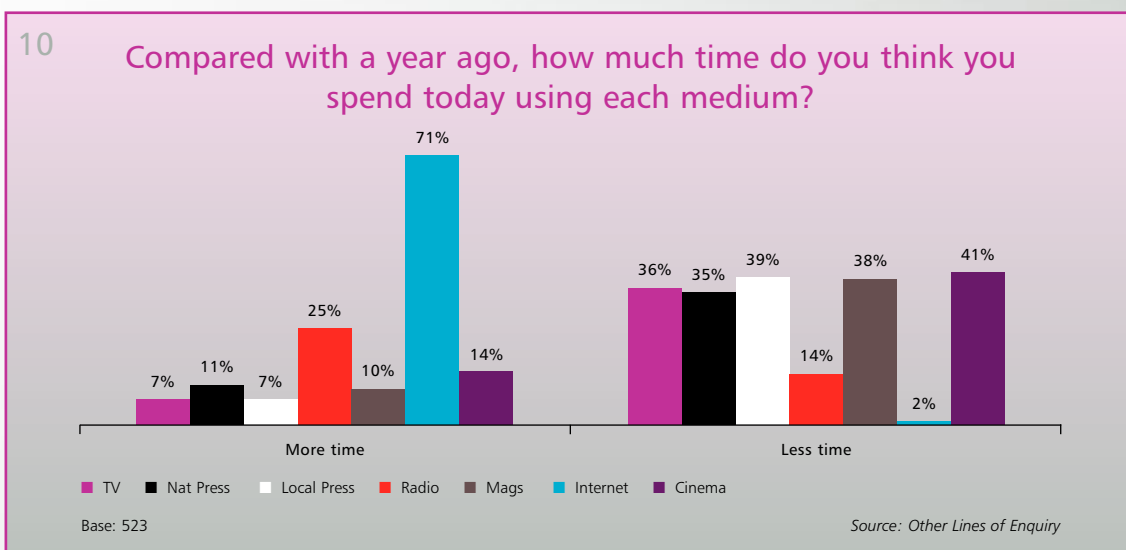
Firstly, our research demonstrates that people are increasingly using the internet to access content more commonly associated with other media types (see chart below).



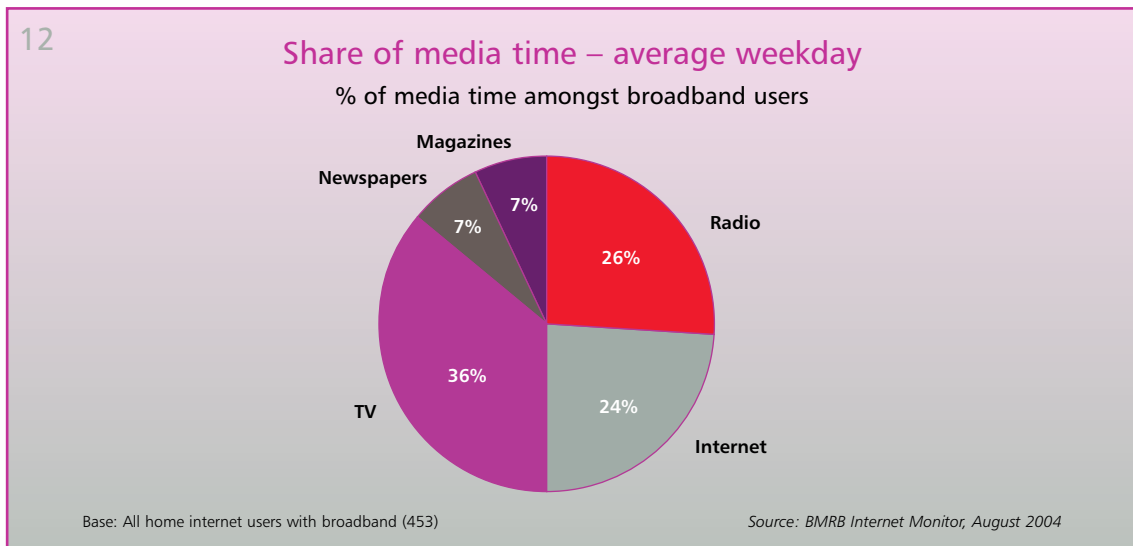
It is generally understood that people are not increasing the amount of time that they spend with media (if anything, there is a trend towards spending less primary time with media) indicating that accessing this type of content online must be partially replacing usage of the media channel through which it has traditionally been accessed.

Spending more/less time with which media – current and projected

This is reflected in people's perceptions about how their media habits are evolving - our research revealed that overall people feel they are spending less time with all media compared to a year ago, with the exception of internet and radio. The same pattern is revealed when people are asked to project which media they will be spending more/less time with in 12 months time.



These perceptions of changing media behaviour are even more prevalent amongst broadband users and are having a major effect on the time that people spend with each medium. The BMRB Internet monitor reveals that on an average weekday people spend as much time with radio and online as they do with TV.

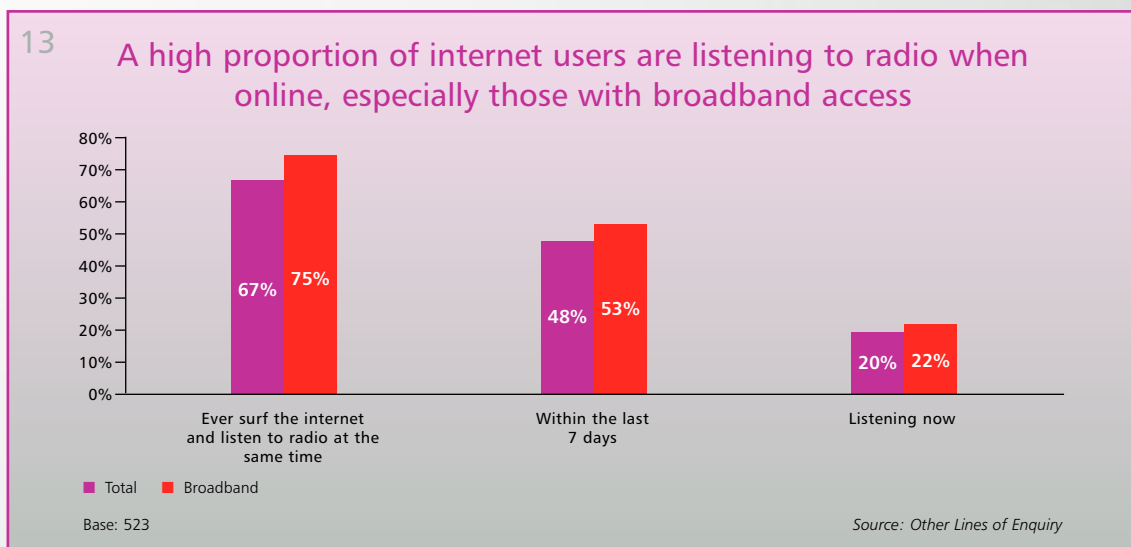


Overall, research suggests that whilst the internet is reducing the time that people feel they spend with most traditional media, it appears to be having the opposite effect on radio.

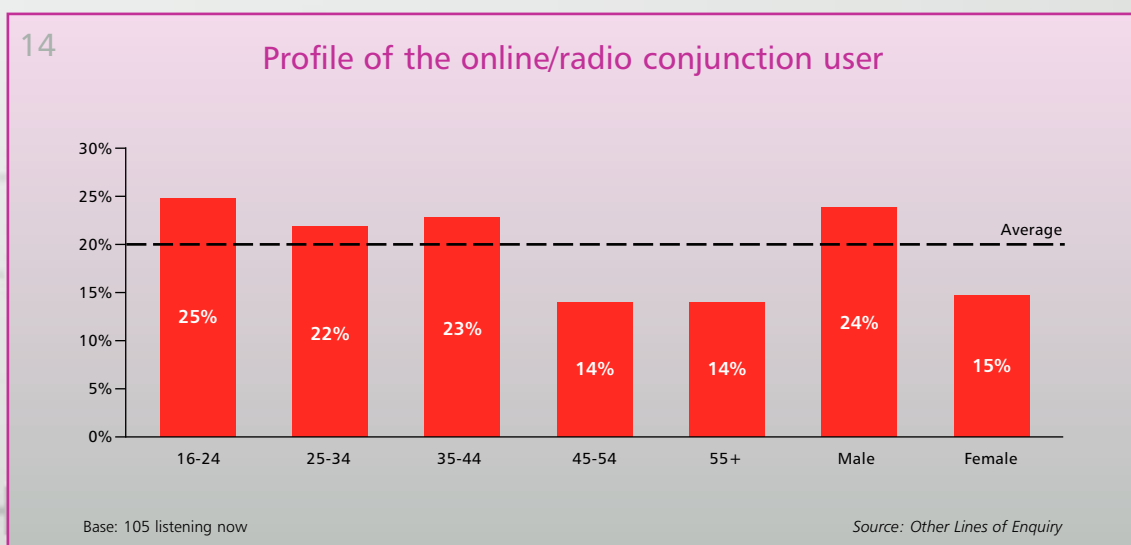
The online/radio conjunction – how often, when and where?

In the last section we explored how radio is benefiting from the growth in internet usage. In this section we explore why this is happening. Evidence suggests that people are increasingly using them in conjunction. But how many people listen to radio whilst online? And how often, when and where are they combining their use of the two media? Our research reveals that two-thirds of web users have surfed the internet and listened to radio at the same time, and almost three-quarters of these listen when online every week. Broadband users are much more likely to use radio and online together, probably because it is easier for them to listen via the internet – they don't need a separate radio receiver in the room to be able to listen.

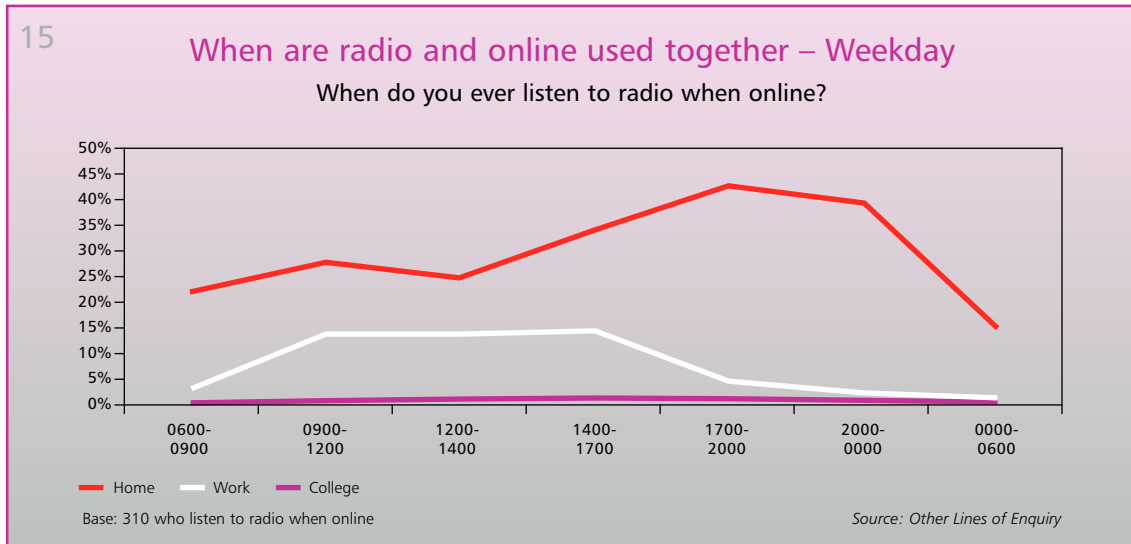
At any given time, 20% of web users are also listening to the radio.



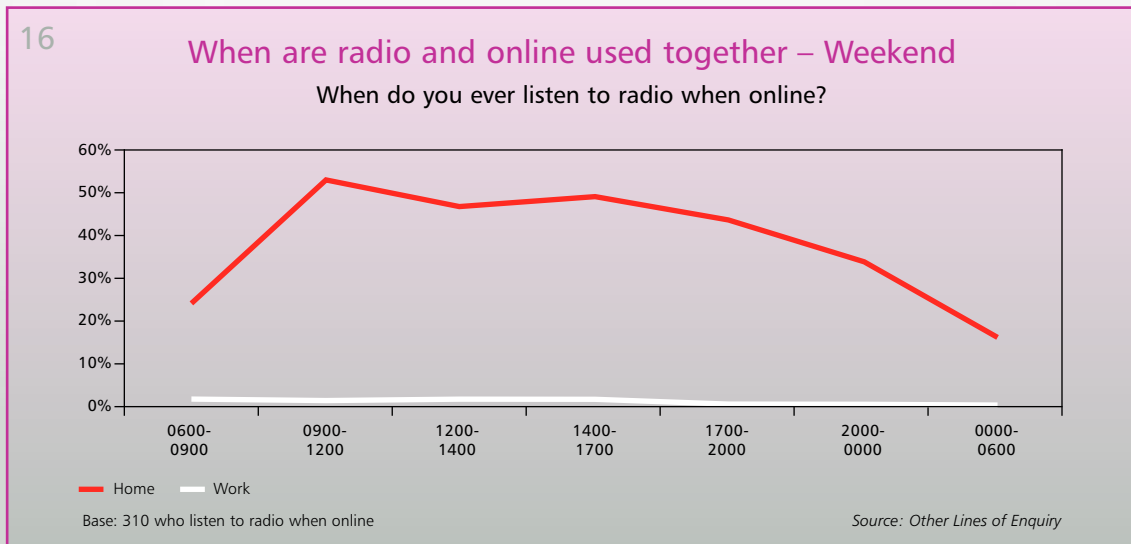
Research demonstrates that the online user that concurrently listens to radio is more likely to be male and younger.



On the average weekday, a fair degree of combined radio and internet usage takes place at work but there is a much higher incidence of them being used together occurring at home in the evening.



At the weekend, the picture is very different. Combined use of radio and internet takes place almost exclusively at home and peaks during mid-morning.

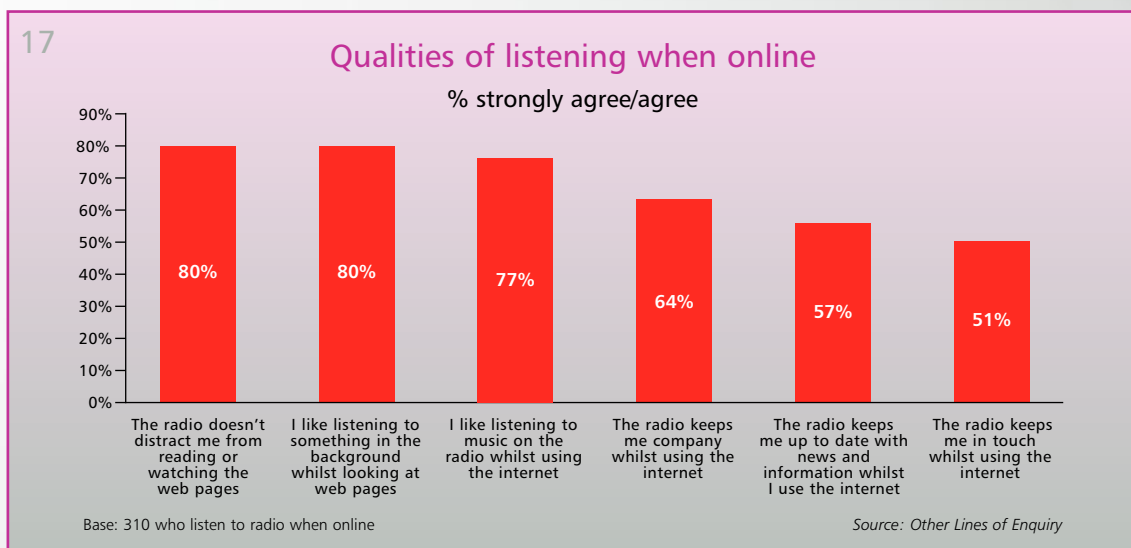


In summary, our research demonstrates that the radio and online conjunction is both of a significant scale and regular enough to make it a viable media channel in its own right.

Why radio and online are natural media partners

Research demonstrates that a large majority of web users combine online sessions with radio – in this section we explore the characteristics of the two media that make them perfect media companions.

On the majority of listening occasions, radio operates in classic background mode – a parallel medium used to accompany a primary task – and therefore fits well with using the PC/internet. Research demonstrates that people like combining the two mediums and that listening to the radio doesn't distract people from their online tasks.



But the strength of this media conjunction extends beyond just the complementary functional qualities of the two media. Emotionally, radio tends to play a very different role to that of the task-focused nature of online.

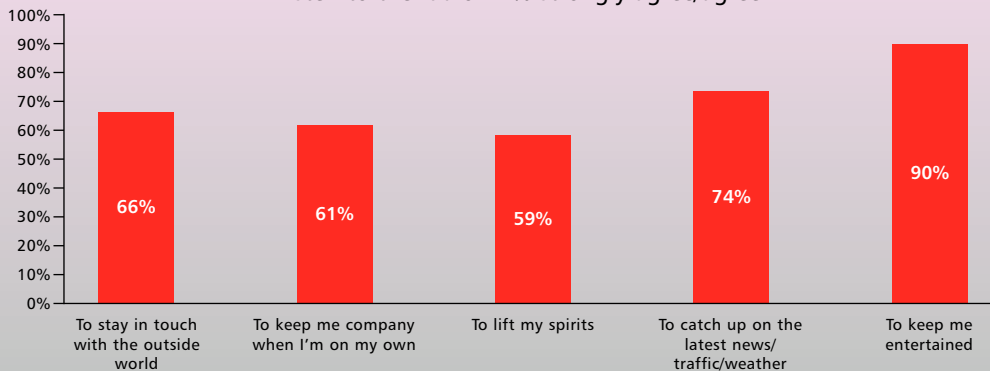
Radio's role as a parallel medium appears to be to deliver "atmosphere on tap", helping to lift people's mood when engaged in solitary activities or tasks, and providing a sense of "being connected" to the outside world (see chart overleaf).

Qualitative research suggests that radio's qualities in this area are especially important when working late or at home, helping to convert what is essentially "chore" time into something more enjoyable. By alleviating feelings of isolation/loneliness, radio really can make tasks feel more enjoyable.

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Radio provides atmosphere and connectivity

'I listen to the radio...' % strongly agree/agree



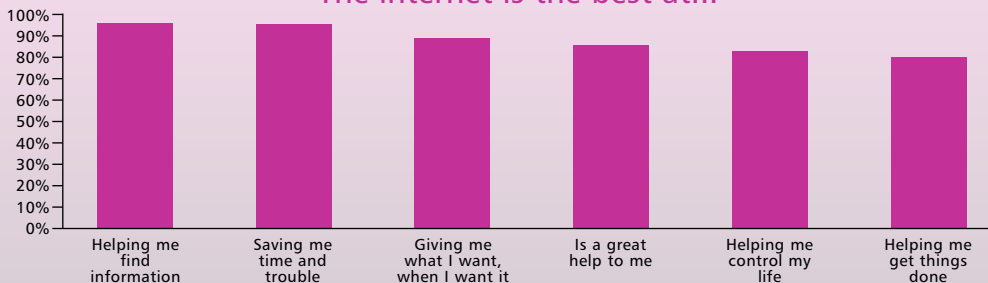
Base: 523

Source: Other Lines of Enquiry

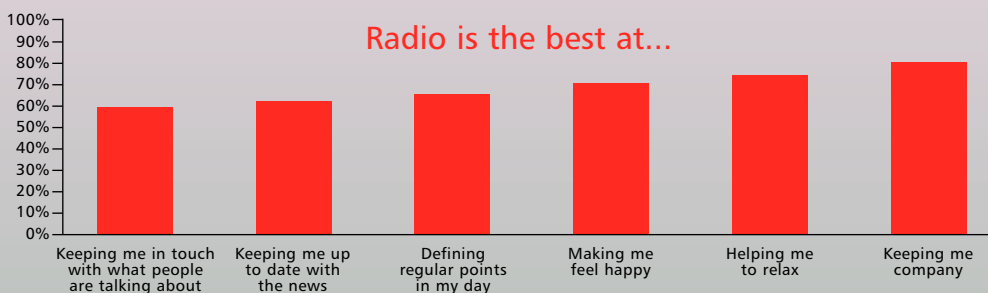
A better understanding of the relative qualities that each medium brings to the conjunction is revealed when people are asked to judge which of the two media is better at delivering against a specific set of criteria.

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The internet is the best at...



Radio is the best at...



Base: 310 who listen to radio when online

Source: Other Lines of Enquiry

To summarise the complementary characteristics of the two media, people perceive the internet to be a peerless aid for helping them find what they want, when they want it. By contrast, radio brings the 'human touch', helping to shape the moods and rhythm of the day.

What happens when radio and online combine?

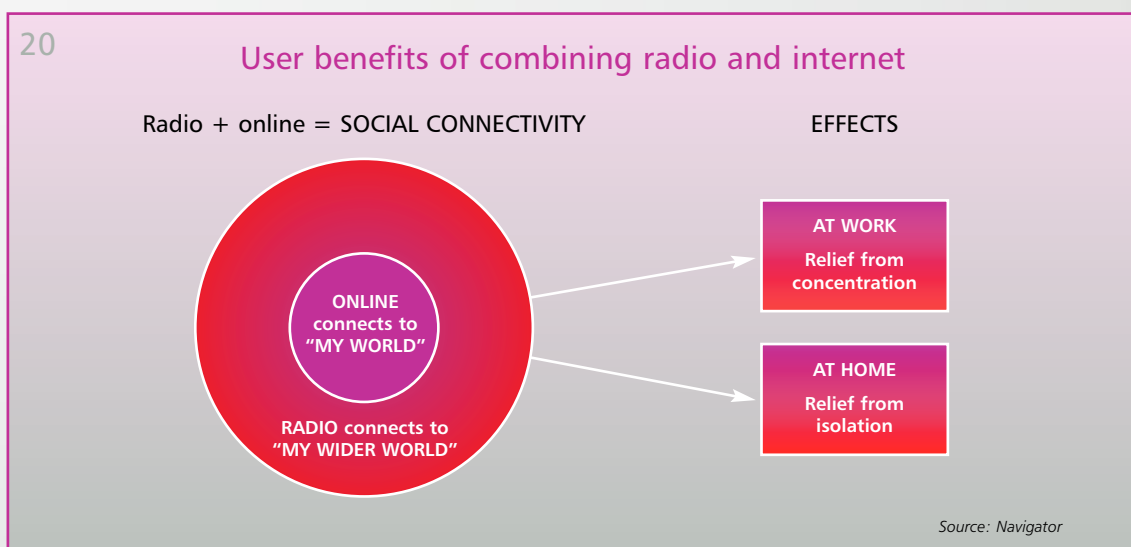
Users of the combination of radio and online perceive it in a positive and benign light when compared to most traditional primary media. Radio's parallel nature helps to create a more positive atmosphere for the primary task of online usage, which in itself benefits from a sense of positive purpose.

Qualitatively, there is evidence to suggest that when people listen to the radio when online at home, their online sessions tend to be longer.

This could be attributed to the sense that switching the radio on is a sign of sitting down to a 'session', as opposed to just nipping online quickly to pay a bill.

Also, it appears that the two media harmonise in some way to help carry the user past temporary 'blips' with particular elements of each medium, e.g. such as frustration with a user-unfriendly website, or the boredom of hearing an oft-repeated song, thus increasing overall dwell-time.

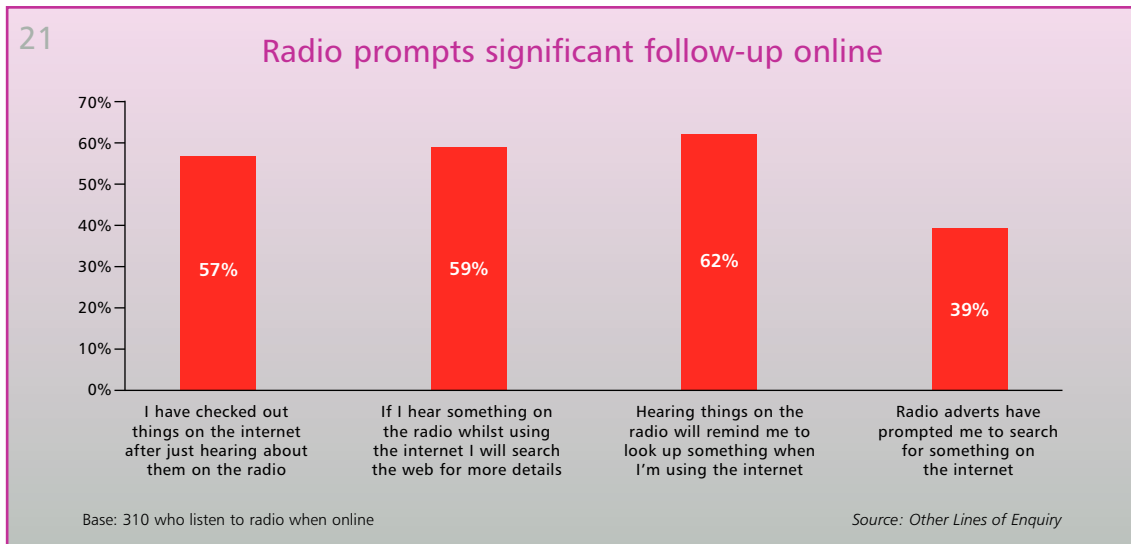
Finally, the role of the two media in terms of social connectivity and the qualities that this brings to users of the conjunction, both at home and at work, might also contribute to people remaining longer with this combination of media (see chart below).



Whatever the cause, online users are in a more relaxed frame of mind when listening to radio, and seem more prepared to be diverted away from the task that they originally set out to pursue with their PC/online.

In this sense, radio is seen as a source of 'prompts' for things to look up on the web, to help expand beyond an existing repertoire of sites. New ideas of what to seek out online are positively welcomed.

This concept of radio as a 'prompt' for internet usage is backed up by quantitative research, where there is evidence of significant follow-up of radio onto internet, as detailed in the chart below.



It is interesting to note that a significant proportion of people acknowledge that they respond to radio advertising by searching online. Beyond prompting search, there is also qualitative evidence of radio advertising helping to increase click-through on banner advertising (this is reinforced by the QXL case study at RAB OnLine rab.co.uk). When used in conjunction with online, radio is acting as an **"indirect response"** medium, alerting people to new products or offers that they follow-up on through another channel. Online increasingly appears to be the consumer's favoured route for seeking out further information because (as we identified in the last section) it provides instant access to what they want, when they want it. Qualitative research suggests other factors that may be contributing to the responsiveness of this media combination.

There is evidence that a presence on both radio and online can lend a sense of greater substance to a brand, and create more confidence and willingness amongst consumers to follow-up on the Internet. The value of this is highlighted by recent research from AOL, which reveals that 80% of online consumers prefer to buy on the internet from companies they already know. The qualitative respondents also revealed some additional insight into the emotional communication characteristics of the two media. Perhaps because both media connect people to different elements of their social network and associated communities of interest, they feel that encountering brands on the radio and on favourite websites has positive connotations in terms of specifically speaking to 'people like me'/being more relevant to them.

In summary, the effects of the combination of radio and online are especially powerful in terms of driving greater response, but there also appear to be some positive emotional benefits for brands using both media in combination.

Benefits and implications for advertisers

Benefits

It is clear that the complementary characteristics of radio and the internet offer many benefits to advertisers. The two media seem to feed each other both in terms of building their audience base (short and longer term) and how they interact to create enhanced effects from advertising.

Assuming relevance and interest has been established, the consumer decision whether to follow-up on radio advertising online seems more a question of 'why not?' rather than 'why?'.

Combined they offer an opportunity for advertisers to build greater brand ubiquity, reach out to and engage new customers, and prompt them to search, enquire and purchase online.

These qualities are of particular value to advertisers seeking to efficiently increase response levels to campaigns. Additionally, the conjunction provides an effective method of alerting consumers to relevant information/entertainment available online and engaging them in deeper conversations with brands (see **RAB OnLine (rab.co.uk)** 'Understanding radio, the brand conversation medium' for more on this subject).

Implications

Advertisers wishing to optimise the benefits of the radio and online conjunction should consider the following guidelines:

1. Aim for a simultaneous display presence in both radio and online

Whilst there is evidence to suggest that people are prepared to follow-up on radio advertising at a later time when they are online (e.g. when they get to work after hearing radio ads in the morning), research suggests that the conjunction is most effective in allowing instant access to further information.

So, whether using banner ads or rich media, it makes sense to ensure that online activity is timed to coincide with when the radio advertising is being aired.

2. Invest in paid-for listings on search engines

Search is quoted as one of the main routes for following-up on radio advertising online. This intuitively seems sensible – people may not recall a specific web address (and are unlikely to be waiting with pen and paper to note it down) but they know that a quick search online will help them find what they're looking for.

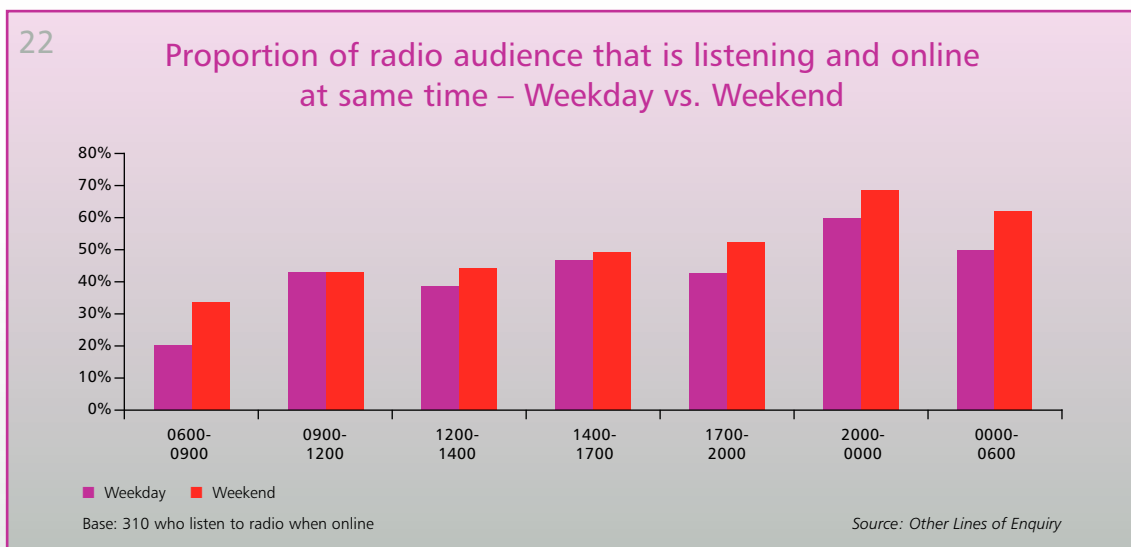
So, if search is the main route in, it is advisable to consider paid-for/sponsored listings in search engines to ensure that the link to your brand is one of the first to come up when relevant keywords related to your radio advertising message are entered.

3. Consider advertising on radio at times when the highest proportion of listeners are online

If cost-efficiency of response is especially important to you, then it makes sense to time your radio advertising to be aired when the highest proportion of the radio audience claims also to be online.

As detailed in the chart below, the highest proportion of radio listeners also using the internet occurs in the late evening and overnight (8pm to 6am) on both weekdays and weekends.

It is worth noting that whilst the radio audience across these segments is on the increase (perhaps as a result of dual usage with the internet), it is much lower than at peak breakfast listening times – so whilst ‘wastage’ will be reduced by employing this strategy, so will absolute levels of coverage.



This approach may not be relevant for all strategies. For instance, you may choose to specifically target people prior to work in the morning with the aim of them following-up online when they get into the office. The ‘Freeloader’ case study at RAB OnLine provides details of how such an approach was employed to drive online gaming.

4. Develop greater creative synergy between radio commercials and online advertising/content

Timing your radio and online advertising to run simultaneously can have huge benefits in terms of response, however these can be optimised further by ensuring as much synergy as possible between your radio and online creative content. This isn't just about the detail – and it's worth noting here that people take out different levels of detail from radio and online advertising – it's also important that tonally the radio advertising and online content are strongly related.

What techniques are there for optimising radio and online synergy? There is no simple answer but most ideas relate to developing a central campaign theme that can be translated both visually and aurally. Alternatively, the radio advertising could be used to promote specific keywords that will lead to your brand via paid-for search.

Importantly, it's worth remembering that whilst it is beneficial for your radio and online ads to feel strongly related, the desired response to each may be very different. For example, radio's role might be to reach out and emotionally engage people into responding with the accompanying role for online being to optimise that response and deliver accountability.

5. Put measures in place to gain understanding about the additional effect of radio on online response

One of the main benefits of the internet for advertisers is its perceived accountability – most campaigns are able to demonstrate some level of consumer interaction with the advertising, from click-through to purchase.

Our research demonstrates that adding radio advertising into the mix can increase response to and interaction with online campaigns. Running online as standalone activity prior to the radio advertising allows the advertiser to compare response levels with and without radio in the mix, thus quantifying the uplift effect that the medium has on online activity.

Over time, there will be increased opportunities to target online campaigns geographically. This will allow advertisers to compare the specific effect of radio concurrently with standalone online activity (and vice versa) through standard test/control region methodology.

Summary of key findings

Benefit for brands

Radio and online, combine push and pull to reach out and engage consumers and fulfil brand interactions.

Future growth

- Online and radio are the only media predicted to grow audience in the new media ecology

Size of opportunity

- At any given time, 20% of internet users are listening to radio at the same time

Communication effects

- Online and radio provide complementary rational and emotional consumer benefits

Online = convenient access to information

Radio = the human touch, helping to shape moods across the day

- Radio and online are 'social connectivity' media

Online = My Immediate World

Radio = My Wider World

Effectiveness

- Combining radio and online significantly enhances response

57% of the sample claim to have checked things on the internet after just hearing about them on the radio



The Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) is the trade association for online advertising. With over 150 members, it is run for the leading media owners and agencies in the UK Internet industry. The IAB's main aim is to help advertisers find the best role for online advertising, to engage their customers and build their brands. Our mission is to put online on the agenda of every marketer in UK. For more information email info@iabuk.net or call 020 7886 8282.



The RAB exists to guide national advertisers and their agencies towards effective advertising on Commercial Radio. The RAB is funded by the Commercial Radio industry and is impartial within the medium. To find out more go to **RAB OnLine** (rab.co.uk) or call 020 7306 2500.