

Three things will drive broadcast innovation

 By [Colin Cullis](#)

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Innovation doesn't necessarily require you to change what you do, but it almost always requires you to change the way you do it. This is true for broadcasting. The best broadcasts create a connection with those who are listening. In its purest form, broadcasting is about great storytellers telling great stories whether in music, talk or entertainment.



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Listening patterns, an explosion of choice and new platforms have compelled current broadcasters to evolve and to surface broadcasters that have a broader mix of talents. Here are three aspects of broadcasting that are changing and how to make the most of them:

1. From mass to niche audiences

Everyone can be a broadcaster now although few can build a meaningful audience. The number of options though, makes it less likely to find a channel that can reach a large and diverse audience. While the loss of mass audiences is a challenge, it is easier to create new channels and formats and if done well, will deliver greater loyalty from that audience.

2. From live to persistent broadcasts

Live radio is not going anywhere, but great radio no longer has to disappear after the broadcast. Listeners fit into one of three timeframes: listening live; listening live while following along online; following online and listening to highlights as they are posted or when it suits them. The shift to more audiences falling into the second and third way of listening will grow. You need never miss a thing again. So you better make sure it was worth keeping.

3. The talent of the future

A great voice and good technique remain as key attributes of a successful broadcaster, but as the audience becomes more focused, it will be expected that presenters become more informed. A music show will need someone with more to offer than enjoying the music, a sport show with someone who is not a sports fanatic will not fly.

Because the content does not disappear after the show it needs to be packaged to last. A good example would be the recent Hamish & Andy clip posted to YouTube that in less than a week had over a million views. The prank call relied on a good idea and a fantastic subject, good execution and some tight editing. It is important to understand that your live content does not only need to be good the first time you hear it, but that it will remain good when played again.

The best subjects are the ones the audience can relate to, ideally even share an experience. Presenters that are great observers and that can add humour to their stories, whether for entertainment or news, will have the advantage. You have heard the line that we once listened to politicians and laughed at comedians, but now do it the other way round... The success of shows like John Oliver, Graham Norton, James Corden and Trevor Noah indicate the approach needed for the best shows. Everyone will not have the team of writers needed to do that, but it begins with a strict focus on what is relevant and can be discussed in an engaging way.

Innovation in broadcasting will come from presenters who evolve to make the most of the narrower audiences looking for something that is highly engaging and available when they want it. Those that can deliver it can look forward to on air and online success.

ABOUT COLIN CULLIS

Colin Cullis strives to find new and better ways of telling stories everyday in his role as product owner for Primedia Broadcasting's talk stations, 702 and CapeTalk. His searching often throws out fascinating insights into innovations and trends that are changing the way we live, and inform his weekly feature on The Money Show with Bruce Whitfield, called Business Unusual. Tune in on Wednesdays just after 7:30pm to hear more from Colin.

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