

Karelys Gordon, Researcher
Grace Guido, Researcher
Ryan Myers, Researcher
Megan Perry, Researcher
Dillon Williams, Researcher

December 7, 2022

Mr. Larry Hoyt
Westcott Community Center, cc: Westcott Radio
826 Euclid Avenue
Syracuse, New York 13210

Dear Mr. Hoyt and Other Concerned Parties,

Our team has conducted intensive, informative and in-depth research on Mr. Hoyt's show on Spark! Radio, Hit'n'Mix. In this final research report, we hope to show you research results that reflect your audiences' wants and needs in preparing for the future of this show. In the following pages, you will find a great wealth of information from start to finish as it relates to our research, rationale and recommendations. We have greatly enjoyed collaborating with you on this work, and hope to have exceeded your expectations.

Should you have any questions following this presentation, please feel free to reach out to us at dwilli06@syr.edu.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration,

Best,

The Research Team
Karelys, Grace, Ryan, Megan and Dillon

Rediscovering Radio Through Research

December 7, 2022

Karelys Gordon, Grace Guido, Ryan Myers, Megan Perry and Dillon Williams

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The host of “Hit’n’Mix” Westcott Radio Show approached our group of public relations professionals to research and suggest methods to grow his audience. Based on our discussion with him regarding his goals, we conducted research among Syracuse University and college aged students to learn more about their music listening preferences. We distributed an online survey which was completed by 68 Syracuse University and college aged respondents. Additionally, we conducted one focus group with eight Syracuse University students. Overall conclusions from the survey and focus group indicate that many college aged students prefer listening to music on streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music. Based on our findings, we proposed recommendations including marketing Hit’N’Mix to a different age group, joining streaming services such as Spotify or Apple music to post the radio shows, and looking into local advertising options to increase awareness of Hit’N’Mix.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background and Objectives of Research	5
Problem Statement	5
Public(s) and Concepts to be Studied	5
Review of Related Research	6
Methods	8
Research Design	8
Sample or Subjects	8
Data Collection	8
Analysis Technique	8
Timetable	9
Budget	10
Findings	10
Conclusion and Recommendations	16
Appendices	18
Draft Measuring Instrument	18
Biographies of Researchers	18
Infographic	19
References	20

Background and Objectives of Research

Background and Objectives

This research was conducted to benefit The Hit'n'Mix show on Westcott Radio. The host of Hit'n'Mix is looking to expand the audience of the radio show and reach a younger audience. In order to expand the reach to younger audience members, it is essential to understand the needs and wants of a younger audience in relation to radio listening. This research helped solve the problem of understanding what specific programming a younger audience may enjoy listening to and how likely they would be to listen to the radio.

Through this research, we reached a better understanding of how younger audiences listen to radio, and how likely they would be to listen to radio under different circumstances. It also shed light on what type of music younger audience members like to listen to and how often they deviate from their favorite type of music. Finally, the research shows what ratio of talk show hosting/music playing younger audiences enjoy and what they ideally expect from a radio show in terms of programming.

An additional component of this research taps into the basement band culture at Syracuse University, a scene of potential interest to generate listening among a younger audience. The research indicates how likely students would be to listen to Hit'n'Mix if local, live Syracuse University bands were included in the programming. It also indicates potential local, live bands that would be popular candidates to potentially work with and listen to on the show to maximize listenership.

Problem Statement

The client reports low listenership of The Hit'n'Mix show on Westcott radio and desires an increase in program listenership specifically with younger audience members.

Public(s) and Concepts to be Studied

The publics we focused on are Syracuse University students/locals in that age demographic (18-22). We focused on the following concepts: the popularity of local college bands, the public's willingness to listen to the popular bands live/recorded on radio, the public's willingness to hear new

music during this programming, and the public's willingness to hear a radio host during this programming.

Review of Related Research (Literature Review)

In *Spotify Vs. Radio: The Battle Continues* (n.d.), Broadcast Programming and Research examined the idea that radio is too slow in embracing new, hit songs. The research indicated that the top music on the radio is older (in terms of release date) on average as compared to the top music on Spotify. Overall, this research demonstrated that there might be different functionalities of Spotify and Radio, with Spotify being the primary method for users to listen to brand new music from their favorite artists, and radio being a method to enjoy music that is more widespread in its popularity for a longer period of time.

According to Forbes (Rosenblatt, 2021), a study conducted by Edison Research and Triton Digital that measures the use of online audio cites radio as being “the big loser.” As internet connectivity and knowledge of digital media has increased, radio listening has decreased. Connected to this decrease of radio listeners is the lessening of radio as a source of audio specifically in the car. There has been a significant increase in podcast listening, which could indicate an insurgence of interest surrounding talk-show style media.

A Daily News columnist, Richard Wagoner (2019), analyzed the way his sons and their friends listen to music. Wagoner, a huge fan of the radio, was surprised to discover that neither of his teenaged children listen to the radio. They both prefer Spotify or other streaming services due to the convenience of listening to what they want to, exactly when they want to, and getting algorithmic recommendations rather than a host-curated song list. An additional drive towards Spotify is the \$4.99/month college-student discount for ad-free music. However, Wagoner posited that this does not mean the death of radio. Rather, if radio hosts cut down on the ads and learn how to serve younger audiences better, the hosts still have a chance at drawing in younger listeners.

A Detroit based radio station, WDET, has adapted to the increasingly digital world and has attracted the younger audience they need to survive. In their recent study, they show how they have

managed to build a younger listenership by experimenting with podcasts, events, and other ways to build community. According to Michelle Srbinovich, the radio station general manager, “30 percent of WDET’s broadcast audience is under the age of 35, and most are younger than 45” (Lichterman, 2016). In the interview, she also mentions how engagement is a big thing. In the beginning WDET was only a news station, however, Srbinovich mentions how bringing community, culture and events has helped increase listenership and bring on a new younger and diverse audience.

Through an online survey, participants were asked about their music format preferences between physical, digital file, free-streaming, paid-for streaming, radio, and live music. Participants were asked to further elaborate, in a qualitative, open-ended format, why they prefer their selected favorite. Participants were sampled from Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom, and the mean age of the sample was 34.53, with an age range of 16 to 71. Of the sample size N=393, 12 participants selected radio as their favorite music format. Participants who prefer radio identified that radio comes with an inherent lack of control over what music is heard, and that this can lead to “serendipitous encounters with known and unknown music.” They also identified that radio is easy to access and provides a low level of stimulation that facilitates commuting by car. The ideas of discovering new music and providing low stimulation appear to be contradictory.

Methods

Research Design

The study will include conducting a focus group, as well as a survey, to better understand how the college-aged demographic (18-23) interacts with radio programming.

Samples or Subjects

Syracuse University undergraduate students will be sampled. They will be selected using convenience sampling. Students will be recruited for the survey through various methods such as social media, text/email, and in-person. Students will be recruited for the focus group in a similar method. We estimate the sample will be mostly representative of the University student body, though participants may skew in favor of the Newhouse School population.

Data Collection

Focus group and survey questions will center around:

- The frequency with which SU undergraduate students listen to radio programming (quantitative).
- Qualitative aspects of radio programming that would make participants more likely to listen to radio programming (Host commentary, live band performances, pre-recorded band performances).
- The genres of music that participants listen to, and how often they deviate from their favorite genres (qualitative).
- Which local, student bands students are familiar with and how likely they would be to listen to them on the radio (qualitative).

Analysis Techniques

Focus group and survey outcomes will be reviewed to determine which, if any, programming aspects would be likely to result in increased listenership among younger audiences.

Timetable

Week One: (Oct. 17- 21)

- Formulate a comprehensive list of questions to draw-up a questionnaire for surveying the publics identified previously
- Using members of our team as initial subjects, surveying in-order to ensure we are asking the right amount and types of questions

Week Two: (Oct. 24- 28)

- Using Qualtrics surveying tool, release our survey out to the public's previously identified open for exactly one week

Week Three: (Oct. 31- Nov. 4)

- Compile and analyze results from survey

Week Four: (Nov. 7 - 11)

- Begin crafting a list of questions for a focus group to be conducted during week three of our timetable

Week Five: (Nov. 14 - 18)

- Conduct a focus group with a group of ten-or-more members of our identified publics throughout the week when schedules allow

Week Six: (Nov. 21 - 25)

- Out of Office for Holiday

Week Seven: (Nov. 28 - Dec. 2)

- Compare and analyze results of both surveys and a focus group to find commonalities, and determine outliers within the data
- Formulate final report for presentation to client featuring data collected throughout our seven-week study

Week Eight: (Dec. 5 - 8)

- Final presentation on December 7, 2022 during Public Relations Research class period

Budget

Activity	Cost	Total
Survey	\$0	\$0
Focus Group	\$0	\$0
Background Research	\$0	\$0
Time Spent Analyzing Data	\$0	\$0
Time Spent Compiling Results	\$0	\$0

TOTAL: \$0

Findings

Survey

Question	Answers
What is your primary method of listening to music?	Spotify: 32 respondents Apple Music: 9 respondents Radio: 2 respondents Other: 4 respondents
On a scale of 1-5, how often do you listen to the radio in a week?	1) Not at all: 42 respondents 2) Often: 5 respondents 3) 2-3 times a week: 15 respondents 4) Almost every day: 1 respondent 5) Every day: 4 respondents
(If often, 2-3 times a week, almost every day, or every day) In what situation do you listen to it (i.e. in the car, with friends, etc.)	No data collected
(If not at all) Why do you not listen to the radio?	Recurring answers included: 1) Radio is not as convenient as streaming services 2) Streaming services allow you to choose to play what you want 3) Radio isn't always available (e.g. doesn't own a car or have it with them on campus)
What would enhance your listening experience on these current platforms?	Recurring answers included: 1) Less commercials/ads 2) Better music with more variety or song

	recommendations 3) Easier access with lower costs 4) I'd change nothing 5) More personalization or better user interface
What would make you want to listen to radio as opposed to other methods?	Recurring answers included: 1) I would not change 2) Fewer ads or talking in between songs 3) More audience interaction 4) Being able to skip songs 5) Easily accessible or easier to find genres that I want to listen to
I know how to access local radio stations.	True: 28 respondents Somewhat: 11 respondents False: 4 respondents
I would be more likely to listen to the radio if it had host commentary.	True: 6 respondents Somewhat: 17 respondents False: 20 respondents
I would be more likely to listen to radio if I liked radio show guests.	True: 28 respondents Somewhat: 11 respondents False: 4 respondents
I would be more likely to listen to the radio if I wanted to be introduced to new music.	True: 25 respondents Somewhat: 11 respondents False: 7 respondents
I am interested in listening to new music that deviates from my music taste.	True: 28 respondents Somewhat: 11 respondents False: 4 respondents
I see myself increasing my listening time on the radio in the future.	True: 1 respondent Somewhat: 16 respondents False: 26 respondents
(If somewhat or false) What could radio shows do to make you listen to the radio more often?	No data collected
On a scale of 1-5, how interested are you in the local "basement band" culture?	1) Not at all: 15 respondents 2) Slightly interested: 13 respondents 3) Somewhat interested: 11 respondents 4) Very interested: 3 respondents 5) Highly interested: 1 respondent
On a scale of 1-5, how willing would you be to listen to a radio show with live music?	1) Not at all: 3 respondents 2) Slightly willing: 13 respondents 3) Somewhat willing: 13 respondents

	4) Very willing: 11 respondents 5) Highly willing: 3 respondents
What is your gender?	Female: 22 Male: 15 Prefer not to answer: 1
What is your current age?	1) 18 or younger: 5 respondents 2) 19: 6 respondents 3) 20: 14 respondents 4) 21: 9 respondents 5) 22: 2 respondents 6) 23: 2 respondents
What is your home state?	Answers included: 1) New Jersey 2) New York 3) Massachusetts 4) Florida 5) Vermont 6) Georgia 7) Pennsylvania 8) Colorado
What is your major?	Answers included: 1) Environmental and Interior Design 2) Cosmetologist 3) Civil Engineering 4) Education 5) Computer Art and Animation 6) Aerospace Engineering 7) Chemistry and Forensics 8) International Relations 9) Spanish Education 10) Biology 11) Television, Radio and Film 12) Animation and Art History 13) Business Analytics 14) Policy Studies and ESP 15) Mechanical Engineering 16) English Education 17) Music 18) Sound Recording Technology 19) Biochemistry 20) Natural Resource Management 21) HDFS 22) Health and Exercise Science

Focus Group

Question	Answers
Can you introduce yourself by saying your name?	<p>The participants were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Izabella - Ava - Ellany - Steven - Allie - Nina - Kirsten
What kind of music do you listen to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classical Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specifically while studying/doing work as background music - Disco - R&B - Oldies
What is your primary method of listening to music?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apple Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two Participants - Spotify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three Participants
How often and in what situations do you listen to music?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walking / commuting - Studying - With other people - Working out at the gym <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More upbeat music - Alone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The participant likes to enjoy the moment with friends - In the Car - Reading - All points of the day
When do you listen to the radio?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In their mom's car - Using Apple music radio - Reading an article in NPR and choose to play it - In the car far distances - Never, they only use Spotify - Pretty much never, when phone is not working - When bluetooth isn't working - Only in the car with mom

What would make you want to listen to radio as opposed to other methods?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Podcast on spotify or apple podcast - They were interested in the news aspect of the radio - If there were less distracting features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not a fan of the sounds effects / ads - Radio was more accessible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio is inaccessible, it would be easier if radios have a channel on apple music - Radio stations would diversify the music genre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not playing the same - Radio was more curated to their taste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently, radio is not curated to each specific person - Radio gives the opportunity to expand (or learn) about new music - Updated way to listen to music - The commenter is not a positive factor
What features do you like/look for in radio shows?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening to songs that have not heard or throwback songs - Just music, no host - More personal, this is for someone - vintage, wholesome vibes - Would like to have a pop culture and socio political issues - Local news radio shows - More like a podcast (argue about a topic) - Funny and opinionated podcasts - Prank calling, funny segments that you get from song to song - Focus on a specific genre
What features do you dislike about radio?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Random noises to grab attention - Talk show host-like commentary
What would enhance your listening experience on your current platforms? What is current media missing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apple music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would like to have a Spotify Wrapped - Would like music and podcast suggestions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spotify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similar songs to the ones you like that you do not know - Not having one song/playlist (from a suggested playlist / “off day”) change the your own algorithm - Like the private mode - Podcasts on shuffle
If you wanted to listen to new music, how would you find new music to listen to?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Word of mouth, recommendations from friends - Watching tv - Suggested playlist on Spotify - Social Media, mainstream audience, tiktok through trends - “Genre playlist” on spotify - Get playlists from friends - Enhance feature on spotify - Being in the car with other people
Do you know how to access local radio channels besides being in your car?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking it up online, but why would I when having Spotify or Apple Music? - No (7 participants)
Are you familiar with any local bands or bands on-campus? If so, who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, cannot remember name - No - Heard of bands through friends - Greedy Johns - Froggy’s Music - No bands, but a cappella groups - Knows a few friends who play in bands
Would local or live music make you more likely to listen to the radio, especially if it was a band you were familiar with? Why or why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If I knew someone in a band, yes - Otherwise, no
Did we miss anything you want to add?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio is inaccessible, not aware of radio (unless informed by friends) - Streaming services are more accessible
All things considered, is there really anything that would make you listen to traditional radio or increase your traditional radio listening habits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Probably not - No, Spotify is catered towards me - If Spotify had some type of scandal, then I would use the radio - No

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not for music, maybe for a specific host - Long drives, if there are less ads and more local bands - No, only for sports events
--	---

Conclusion and Recommendations

The first target of our research was to analyze an audience's willingness to listen to radio. The results from our survey and focus group indicate that there is not a lot of interest in listening to music via radio. Local residents ages 18-23 prefer to use streaming services in order to access their music as the services give them control to listen to what they want, when they want it. While many did state that they'd be interested in being introduced to new music, they also stated that they would not want to sit through radio commercials and host commentary to access it, especially when streaming services are so much more accessible than radio.

The second target of our research was to analyze the audience's interest in local basement band culture to hopefully highlight the local bands on the show and draw in more local listeners. Unfortunately, our research proved that not many Syracuse students are interested in the local basement band culture either, showing that this would not be a successful endeavor for the radio show to embark upon.

Moving forward, we would recommend that Mr. Hoyt considers joining a streaming service such as Spotify in order to reach a wider audience. Because there is the ability to host a podcast and create different playlists, Mr. Hoyt could have ample opportunities to continue his current efforts on a platform where he would have access to a much wider audience. If not, we would recommend that Mr. Hoyt looks into local advertising options to spread awareness of how to access the recordings of his radio shows so that there is a well-known online "streaming" option for his content.

Limitations

One limitation from our research is that we did not receive data for two of the survey questions. These survey questions were optional for participants and were skipped by all who took the survey. The questions that we were unable to collect data for were questions three and twelve. Additionally, we

needed to conduct more focus groups in order to be able to generalize the findings to a larger population. Ideally we would have conducted three focus groups with participants aged 18-23 in order for our findings to be representative of the target population. Furthermore, we could have had more diversity in our focus groups including diversity in age, gender, race and socioeconomic status.

Sample size for our survey was also a limitation. Considering the undergraduate student population of Syracuse University was 14,778 in Fall 2021, we would need a sample size of over 300 participants using random sampling to be representative of the population.

Additional limitations include time constraints. We conducted our research and analyzed our results from October 2022 - December 2022. With a longer time period, we could have generated more survey respondents and conducted more focus groups.

Future Research

Further research we would recommend for Mr. Hoyt to look into conducting includes how successful a switch over to streaming services would be. It would open him up to a national or even global audience, but further research could be conducted to see if an audience is there for it. Research could also be conducted on how to most effectively advertise to local audiences to teach them how to access Mr. Hoyt's recorded shows. Finally, we would recommend that further research be conducted with a different audience demographic to see if there would be more interest there for Mr. Hoyt's show than there was with our target audience aged 18-23.

Appendices

Draft Measuring Instrument

We plan on utilizing Qualtrics for a survey and a focus group. Above, you can find the list of questions asked in both the survey and focus groups.

Biographies of Researchers

Karelys Gordon: Karelys Gordon is a dual Public Relations and Marketing major at Syracuse University. She is from Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. Karelys is interested in bringing life to products, organizations and companies with creativity while understanding a customer's needs. Outside of school, she enjoys exercising, hiking, going to the beach and spending time with friends and family.

Grace Guido: Grace Guido is a dual Public Relations and Innovation, Society & Technology major. Grace is from Northern Virginia, right outside of Washington, D.C. She is interested in technology public relations, the impact of technology on people's lives, and equity issues relating to technology. Outside of school, Grace enjoys reading, cooking and baking, exercising, and spending time with her friends and family.

Ryan Myers: Ryan Myers is a dual Public Relations and Psychology major with a Voice Performance minor at Syracuse University. He grew up in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, the "mushroom capital of the world." Ryan serves as the Co-PR Director of Otto Tunes A Cappella, as well as the PR Engagement Assistant for the First Year Players. In his free time, Ryan enjoys disc golfing, singing, watching football, and spending time with friends.

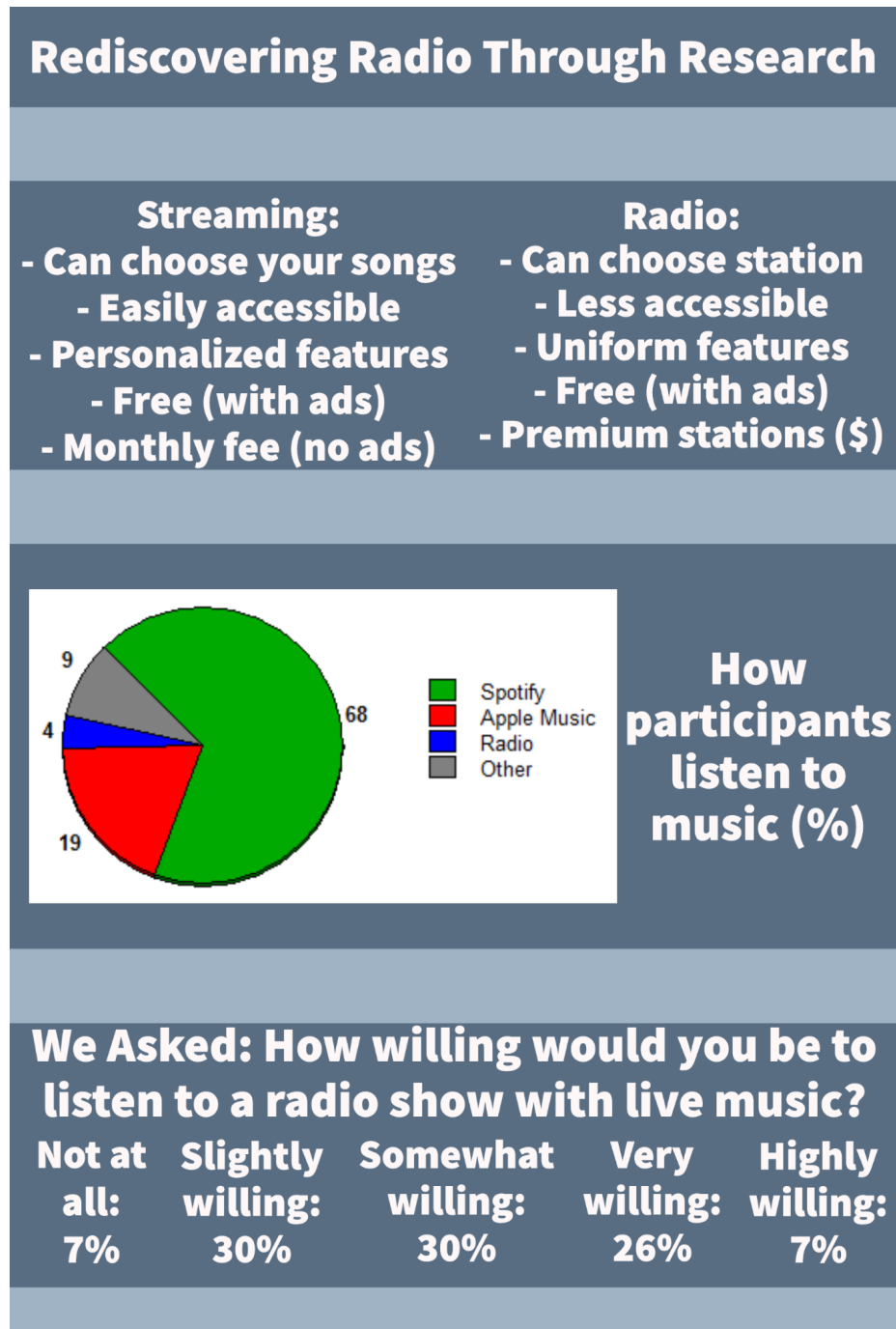
Megan Perry: Megan Perry is a Public Relations major with a Business minor from Syracuse University. She is from New Jersey and likes to spend her free time painting, creating pyrography projects and cultivating new plants. Megan is also very interested in music and is involved with multiple music groups on campus, so this research is especially important for her.

Dillon Williams: Dillon Williams is a Public Relations major with a Psychology minor at Syracuse University in Syracuse, NY. Dillon was born and raised outside of Chicago, IL for the majority of his life

before moving outside Sacramento, CA before beginning his academic career at Syracuse University.

Dillon serves on the executive board of Hill Communications, a boutique student-run public relations firm run out of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, as the Director of Programming.

Infographic



References

- EBSCO Information Services*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d>
- Lichterman, J. (2016, June 30). *How Detroit's public radio station is trying to attract younger listeners*. Nieman Lab. Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://www.niemanlab.org/2016/06/how-detroits-public-radio-station-is-trying-to-attract-younger-listeners/>
- The power of Radio - Friedrich Ebert Foundation*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kabul/05492-engl-part.pdf>
- Rosenblatt, B. (2021, March 12). *New survey bears good news for Spotify and podcasts, Bad News for Radio*. Forbes. Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/billrosenblatt/2021/03/12/new-survey-bears-good-news-for-spotify-and-podcasts-bad-news-for-radio/?sh=5ced52a24d0c>
- Spotify vs. Radio: The Battle Continues: Broadcast Programming & Research*. Broadcast Programming & Research | BPR World. (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://www.bprworld.com/news/spotify-vs-radio-the-battle-continues/>
- Wagoner, R. (2019, August 13). *Radio: How Radio Programmers might reach younger listeners*. Daily News. Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://www.dailynews.com/2019/08/13/radio-how-radio-programmers-might-reach-younger-listeners/>