

UNITED STATES DOMESTIC RADIO NETWORKING

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This article, with its accompanying chart, attempts to be the complete description of national radio networking in the U.S. Several items have been left out on purpose: state networks, sports networks, and the distinction between "Traditional" networks (who pay their affiliated stations "compensation" for carrying the network commercials) and so-called "network-type audio services" where the money flows in the opposite direction. The hard and fast rules in this area are blurring quickly. Notable by their absence are two of the "new" networks, Enterprise and Continental, both of which recently announced that they were going out of business. It may take quite a while, and quite a few additional economic failures, before the whole business of radio networking settles down from its current, euphoric state.

Here are explanations of what appear in the columns in the chart:
 Column 1: This contains the name of the "main" network or multi-network business venture along with the name of its ultimate owner (if known) and its home base.

Column 2: Here, I've put a proposed, standard abbreviation for use by DXers. Due to the large number of "sub-networks" now in service, I settled on three or less letters for the main net, followed by two or less letters for the sub-net.

Column 3: Name of the sub-network, if there is one.

Column 4: A brief description of the target audience of this sub-network, if known.

Column 5: The format(s) of the radio stations on which this sub-network is intended to appear. These aren't carved in stone.

Column 6: The types of network programs fed by this sub-network. There are four types: (a) newscasts, (b) features (programs less than 15 minutes long which aren't newscasts), (c) "long-form" programming (stuff between 15 minutes and several hours in length such as "The Larry King Show" on MBS, "Meet the Press" on NBC, "Mystery Theater" on CBS and "Morning Edition" on NPR) and (d) "full-format" programming (in which the network supplies everything a station needs to conduct its broadcast day except for local commercials and station identification announcements)

Column 7: Interconnection. Virtually all the national networks have announced something between the planning and execution of a satellite delivery plan by now. However, I'll try to show the current operating condition as of mid-March, 1982. For those on satellite or planning to go that way, I've tried to give the satellite and transponder on which network service is carried. The "W" stands for Weststar, "F" stands for RCA Satcom. There are at least three ways to distribute audio by satellite: (a) by single-channel-per-carrier analog FM, (b) by frequency-division multiplex, placing the radio signal as a subcarrier of an existing video transmission, and (c) by time-division multiplex, by breaking up the audio program into digital "bits" and combining them into one, massive, rapid bit stream which modulates a single RF carrier. The three digits after the abbreviation of the satellite owner indicate the satellite number and transponder number. For example, "W402D" is Weststar IV, transponder 2D; "F324" is Satcom III, transponder 24. "L" stands for "landline", "S" for satellite.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Main Network Name (Owner & Home Base)	Abbreviation via- tion	Sub-network Name	Target Audience	Stn. For- mat	Network Program Types	Interconnection
ABC Radio Networks (American Broadcasting Companies, Inc., New York NY)	ABC/C	ABC Contemporary	12-34	T40	a, b, c	L
	ABC/D	ABC Direction	25-44	POP	a, b, c	L
	ABC/E	ABC Entertainment	35-49	MOR C&W	a, b, c	L
	ABC/FM	ABC/FM	25-44	BFL CLA	a, b, c	L

ABC/I	ABC Information	25-54	NWS TLK	a, b, c	L	
ABC/RR	ABC Rock Radio	18-34	AOR	a, b, c	L	
ABC Radio Enterprises (same)	ABC/SR Superadio	18-49	POP	a, d	S W3__(c)	
	ABC/TR Talkradio	25-54	TLK	d	S W3__(c)	
Associated Press (Washington)	APR	Associated Press Radio Network	12+	all	a, b, c	S W301(a)
Associated Press & WSM, Inc. (Nashville)	APR/MC	Music Country Network	25-54	C&W	c	S W301(a)
Mormon Church (Salt Lake City)	BBM	Bonneville Beautiful Music	35-64	BFL	d	S F303
CBS Radio (CBS, Inc., New York)	CBS	CBS Radio Network	25+	all	a, b, c	L
	CBS/RR	RadioRadio	18-34	AOR	a, b, c	L
Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. (Atlanta)	CNN/R	Cable News Network/Radio	25-54	NWS	d	S F3__(b)
Dow Jones Publications (New York)	DJR	Dow Jones Radio	25-54	NWS TLK MOR	a, b	S W404D(c) S W301(c)
Family Stations Inc. (Oakland, CA)	FR	Family Radio	25+	GOS REL	d	S W404D(c)
Mutual Broadcasting System (Arlington, VA)	MBS	Mutual Radio	25+	all	a, b, c	S W402D(a)
Muzak	MUZ	Muzak	25+	sca*	d	S W402D(a)
National Broadcasting Co., Inc. (Radio Corporation of America, New York)	NBC	NBC Radio Network	25-54	all	a, b, c	L
	NBC/S	The Source	18-34	AOR	a, b, c	L
	NBC/TN	Talknet	25-54	TLK MOR	c	L
Unity Broadcasting Co. (New York)	NBN	National Black Network	blacks	SOL	a, b, c	L
Public Radio Stations, Corp. for Public Broadcasting (Washington)	NPR	National Public Radio	7+	all	a, b, c	S W402D(a)
Physicians' Radio Network (New York)	PRN	Physicians Radio Network	doc-tors	sca*	d	L
General Tire & Rubber Co. (New York)	RKO/1	RKO/1 Radio Network	18-34	POP	a, b, c	S W301(a)
	RKO/2	RKO/2 Radio Network	25-49	MOR C&W	a, b, c	S W304(a)

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Sheridan Broad- casting Co. (Arlington, VA)	SBN	Sheridan Broad- casting Network	blacks	SOL GOS	a, b, c	S W402D(a)
Burkhart & Abrams, WCCO et al (Mokena, IL)	SMN/CC	Satellite Music Network/Country Coast to Coast	25-49	C&W	d	S F303(b)
	SMN/SS	StarStation	25-49	POP	d	S F303(b)
	SMN/TM	Traditional MOR	35-64	MOR	d	S F303(b)
	SMN/UC	Urban Contemp- orary	18-34	SOL T40	d	S F303(b)
Sunbelt Broad- casting Co. (Colorado Springs)	TRA	Transtar/Music Connection	25-34	POP	d	S W404D(a)
United Press International (Scripps- Howard News- Papers, New York)	UPI	UPI Audio Net- work	25+	all	a, b, c	S W301(a)
United Stations (New York)	USN	United Stations Country Music Network	25-49	C&W	d	S W503D(a)

*sca stands for subsidiary communications authorization, usually a 67 kHz subcarrier on an FM broadcast station, offered usually by subscription to a special-interest audience.

Note: There's a satellite shuffle in progress as I write. Westar I is to be replaced by Westar IV in April 1982. Westar V replaces Westar II in the fall. Networks will use the same frequencies and transponders on both the old and replacement satellites. The nomenclature for the new satellites has been used here.