

GLOSSARY OF PRODUCTION TERMS

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Note: This glossary includes all phrases in common use in the production and broadcasting of a radio program. Hence some engineering terms must of necessity be included, along with the many stage and professional designations.

For those readers who note in this list a similarity to another glossary printed some months ago by Printers' Ink Monthly, it may be stated that inasmuch as Mr. Carlile was consulted by the Printers' Ink Monthly and inasmuch as both lists cover largely the same territory, a close parallel was bound to ensue. None the less, because of the importance of the subject matter, the VARIETY RADIO DIRECTORY is again going over the ground, with some alterations, some additions, and some omissions.

A

Abie—Anyone who is sure fire.

Ace—Anyone who is at the top in ability among directors, assistant directors, producers and announcers.

Across-Mike—Projection of voice or musical sound.

Ad Lib—To extemporize lines not written into the script, or in music to play parts not in the score, which is entirely at the announcer's or musician's discretion.

Adenoid—Any vocalist with a voice that is "tight."

Arsenic—Synonym for "poison." A disagreeable or boresome program.

ASCAP—American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers which licenses public performances of the music of its members.

Audio—The electric circuits—microphones, cables, lines and amplifiers—used in radio transmission. Differentiates the actual sound circuit from the power circuits and from the radio frequency circuits used in reception. Also refers to a range of audible frequencies.

Audition—A trial of artists or musicians under actual broadcasting conditions.

B

Background—A sound effect, musical or otherwise, designed for use behind dialogue or other program elements.

Balance—The arrangement of musicians in a studio so as to produce a transmission of equal volume from all instruments or voices and so as to effect the most artistic relationship between instrumentalists and vocalists.

Bays—An upright support of varying height on which are placed pieces of apparatus called "units."

Beam—

(a) The direct line running perpendicularly from the face of the microphone or the loud speaker.

(b) The small angle with the face of the microphone or loud speaker within which that instrument functions at its greatest efficiency.

Beards—Errors made in obvious fashion during the course of a program. See "Fluffs."

Belcher—Any performer having a "frog" in his throat.

Bend the Needle—Projecting an unexpected volume of sound into the microphone so that the needle on the volume indicator is moved violently against the stop.

Birdie—Sound resembling a bird's "tweet-tweet." Sometimes heard on transmitting or receiving equipment.

PRODUCTION TERMS—Continued

- Bit*—A small part in a dramatic program; this is a “bit” part and the performer who plays it is referred to as a “bit player.”
- Bite It Off*—Cut the music abruptly.
- Blasting*—Piling more volume into the microphone or other transmitting equipment than it can take; distortion results.
- Blinker*—
- The signal light used to call the attention of the conductor or artist; it is operated from the control room.
 - Term used at NBC to denote the program executive responsible for scheduling sustaining programs.
 - A reference to talent agents.
- Blue Gag*—An off-color comedy line.
- Blurb*—A statement handed out for publicity purposes.
- Board*—The engineer's control panel connected with the studio.
- Board Fade*—The manual and electrical fade out of a program on the studio control board.
- Breaks*—Interruptions in radio program transmission.
- Bridge*—Music or sound effects used by director in dramatic shows to indicate scene transitions.
- Bring It Up*—An order indicating necessity to increase the volume.
- Bugs*—Cause of trouble in equipment which is working imperfectly.
- Burps*—Onomatopoeic word describing noises frequently heard on transmitting or receiving circuits.
- Button-Puncher*—An announcer whose responsibility consists in switching a studio to the proper circuit (used chiefly at NBC).

C

- Canaries*—Vocalists (used chiefly of coloratura sopranos).
- Cans*—Headphones.
- Carbon*—Carbon type of microphone. Earliest in use by radio broadcasters.
- CGM*—A term used at NBC to denote that the chimes are to be given in Chicago.
- Character*—A casting term referring to a dramatic part requiring characterization.
- Chimes*—Musical notes used on some stations or networks for identification and for reversals by the telephone company.
- Circuits*—A complete electrical channel used for telephone or transmission purposes.
- Clambake*—A program for which preparations are filled with uncertainties, and rehearsals filled with errors, with changes and failures, and which is likely to result in a bad performance.
- Clamaroo*—See “Clambake.”
- Clean It Up*—To make changes in a program during rehearsals so as to assure a satisfactory performance.
- Clear a Number*—To obtain permission from official sources to make use of a certain musical selection.
- Close the Rights*—Check the musical and literary copyrights.
- Clientitis*—Pain suffered as a result of sponsor interference.
- Cliff-Hangover*—A radio serial thriller.
- Coaches*—Vocal and dramatic instructors.
- Cold*—Describes the opening of a radio program which begins without theme or musical introduction or background.
- Cold Dramatics*—A dramatic sketch without music.

PRODUCTION TERMS—Continued

- Coming-Up*—The ten-second warning cue before going on the air.
- Commercial*—A program sponsored by an advertiser—also the sales talk on a radio program.
- Commercial Credits*—Specific mention of the client or his product.
- Condenser*—A type of microphone employing a diaphragm with directional characteristics. The same as all other diaphragm types but more quiet.
- Conflict*—The condition created for a performer with two assignments scheduled at the same time.
- Corn*—Unsophisticated show treatment. Simple and obvious musical or dialogue arrangement.
- Corny*—Unsophisticated.
- Corn-Fed*—Artists lacking cultural background.
- Cornfield*—A studio setup employing a number of standing microphones.
- Corn-on-the-Cob*—A harmonica.
- Continuity*—Prepared copy for programs.
- Control Room*—Housing for the monitoring equipment from which the show is both directed and controlled.
- Crawk*—An animal imitator.
- Credits*—The commercial copy mentioning the advertiser or his product. Acknowledgment of sources and ownership of program material.
- Credit Writer*—One who composes the advertising copy.
- Creeper*—A performer who creeps toward the microphone during the broadcast.
- Cross-Fade*—To fade in one sound from one source while sound from another is faded out.
- Cross-Fire*—Interfering telegraph transmission.
- Cross-Talk*—Interfering conversation originating at a point other than that of program origin.
- Cross-Tone*—Any tone that interferes with clear reception.
- Crowd Noises*—The sound of a crowd produced by an effect record or by a number of people in the broadcasting studio.
- Cue*—
- (a) The closing words of an actor's speech as a signal for another actor to enter.
 - (b) A sound, musical or otherwise, or a manual signal calling for action or proceeding.
 - (c) The use of a phrase designating the transfer of the point of program origin; or, as in the case of network identification, such as, "This is the Columbia Broadcasting System," "This is the National Broadcasting Company," "This is the Mutual Broadcasting System," which is used as a signal to radio and telephone operators for the switching of channels.
- Cue Sheet*—An orderly tabulation of program routine containing all cues.
- Cushion*—A portion of the program near its end, composed of a musical number or sequence of sound or announcement which can be lengthened or shortened according to time requirements.
- Cut*—
- (a) To abruptly stop transmission or any part of the program either by stopping performers or by use of an electrical switch on the control board.
 - (b) The deletion of program material to fit a prescribed period of time.
- CVC*—The chorus, verse and chorus of a musical selection.

D

Dampen the Studio—To aid acoustication through the use of portable sound absorbance, such as rugs, screens, drapes, people, etc. Sound absorbing surfaces to walls, floor or ceiling.

PRODUCTION TERMS—Continued

Dawn Patrol—Engineers and announcers who open the studio and put on the early morning programs.

Dead Book—The file of continuity and program material which has been used on the air.

Dead Mike—A microphone not connected or out of order.

Definition—Clean cut transmission and reception, making possible the complete identification of the various musical units in an orchestra, in chorus and sounds from the effects table.

Director—

- (a) The responsible departmental executive.
- (b) Sometimes the managing executive for a station.
- (c) Program director. Same as the director in a play or theatre or sound pictures. The actual authority responsible for the presentation of a program, whose business it is to cast and select all associated artists, edit continuity and scripts and supervise the rehearsals.
- (d) Assistant director: Functions as a studio manager in much the same fashion as the stage manager in the theatre and the assistant director in sound pictures. He is responsible to the director and program department heads for orchestral and vocal setups and balance, sound effect personnel and equipment and variable acoustic conditions and studio discipline. He is responsible also for program timing and keeping of the "log."

Discrepancies—Mistakes made in the studio and recorded in the station "log."

Dixie—The Columbia Broadcasting System Southern Network.

Dog—A passe or mediocre musical number or hackneyed piece of writing.

Dog-House, In the—

- (a) To be in bad favor with the departmental chief.
- (b) To have one's schedule loaded down with unimportant and routine assignments.

Down in the Mud—Down in volume, or low in clarity.

Dress—The final complete rehearsal.

Dressing the Program—Adding the finishing touches to a radio program.

Drooling—Unimportant talk.

Drop and Ring—Drop the channels and ring chimes. An NBC Phrase.

Dubbing—Transposing recorded material to a new record.

Dynamic—A type of microphone designed as an improvement on the condenser microphone and having a higher degree of efficiency.

E

Echo Chamber—A reverberant room used to add hollow effects and actual echoes (that is, the repetition of sounds). These effects may be produced both mechanically and electrically.

Eight Ball—An astatic microphone characterized by non-directional pick-ups and having a 360-degree beam.

Eighty-eight—A piano.

Engineer—Technician who designs, operates or controls the electrical equipment.

EST—Abbreviation of Eastern Standard Time.

Ethritus—Hardening and inflammation of the ear drums due to continued listening to the loud speaker run at a high level.

F

Fade—A diminishing of volume.

Fader—The device for electrically diminishing volume.

Fades—Same as "Board Fade."

- Fade Out*—The manual and electric diminution of volume to zero.
- Fairy Godfather*—Easy-going sponsor.
- Fairy Godmother*—Unimaginative musical director.
- Fake*—Ad lib.
- Feed*—To transmit a program over telephone lines to stations or groups of stations or to any listening point.
- Feed-Back*—The coupling of input to output of amplifiers either electrically or acoustically, resulting in squeal or howl.
- Fights the Music*—A singer who struggles with vocal production.
- Fill*—
- (a) The transmission of a stand-by program to meet the requirements of an unused portion of an assigned program period.
 - (b) To add program material to complete an assigned period.
- Fill For*—A program designed especially for regional or sectional broadcasts and such regional or sectional networks designated.
- Fill In*—One who stands by to perform in case a program change has to be made immediately. See "Stand-by."
- Filter*—An electrical device used to change tone characteristics by eliminating or augmenting frequencies.
- Fish Bowl*—The clients' studio observation booth.
- Flesh Peddler*—An agent selling talent.
- Fluff*—Missing a cue, or muffing a gag.
- Free Lance*—Personnel not regularly employed but given special assignments.
- From Hunger*—Anything that spells trouble.
- Frying*—Hissing sound caused by defective microphones or amplifiers.
- Fuzzy*—Vocal or instrument music lacking clarity and definition.

G

- Gag*—Generally applied to a highly noticeable twist of comedy. A "two-line" gag is a cue with a gag rejoinder.
- Gain*—
- (a) Control of volume used in transmission.
 - (b) "The gain" is the monitoring equipment used in this control.
- Gelatine*—A tenor with a thin, quavering voice.
- Get Hot*—Instrumental ad lib arrangement of popular music. The equivalent of "Jazz it up."
- Giving Credits*—Crediting the source or ownership of material used on the program.
- Godbox*—An organ.
- Goose-Neck*—A gallows-shaped microphone stand or one with a flexible neck. Also a saxophone.
- Grasshopper*—Young supernumerary of an advertising agency.
- Grief*—Program trouble.
- Groan Box*—An accordion.
- Guide Sheet*—A schedule to establish the program routine.

H

- Ham It*—Over-acting for emphasis—blustering.
- Hambone*—Unconvincing blackface dialectician.
- Ham-Fest*—A gathering of participating actors discussing a broadcast.
- Hash Session*—Meeting of production director and talent after dress rehearsal and before broadcast to discuss changes in program.
- Haywire*—Temporary equipment or equipment in poor condition.
- Heartbreaker*—Commercial audition on speculation.

PRODUCTION TERMS—Continued

Hog-Calling Contest—A strenuous commercial audition for announcers.

Hold It Down—An order for the studio engineer to reduce the volume.

Hop—Volume.

Hot Mike—A microphone in which the current is flowing. Also called a “live mike.”

Hot Switch—A rapid program transfer from one originating point to another.

I

In the Beam—Within effective directional range of microphone or loudspeaker.

In the Mud—Too little tonal volume; a lack of clear definition.

Ingenue—A female performer with a youthfully pleasant voice.

Interpolation—A musical phrase or chorus added in a selection for purposes of contrast or the elaboration of a theme.

J

Jam Session—Spirited ad lib renditions of standard popular tunes. See “Wood Shed.”

Juvenile—A performer whose voice is indicative of youthful age.

K

Kill—

(a) Stop the rehearsal or broadcast pending instructions from the director or omit portions of the program entirely.

(b) Cancel scheduled program.

Kill the Mike—To turn off the electric current feeding a microphone channel.

L

Lady Macbeth—Superannuated tragedienne.

Lay an Egg—Performance of a program or part of a program resulting in a complete failure.

Lead—The most important male or female role in a dramatic program.

Leaving Here O. K.—An engineering phrase indicating proper transmission at a certain point. Used in checking technical difficulties.

Leg—A branch of a radio network feeding stations in a region not served by the main lines.

Let—An NBC designation of a local electrical transcription program.

Level—The amount of volume audibly noted or electrically measured.

Lick—An ad lib which deviates from the written music. Usually “hot.”

Light and Shade—Variations from quietness to tenseness, softness to shouting, which have a tendency to save a production from dull sameness.

Listening Audience Inheritance—Holding an audience, which has been listening to a program broadcast immediately before it, into the succeeding program.

Live Mike—A microphone into which the current is flowing. See “hot mike.”

Live Studio—One which is acoustically reverberant.

Lock Jaw—The affliction ascribed to a tired or lifeless singer.

Log—A record of every minute of broadcasting, including all errors. An accurate journal required by law.

Loop—Two-way circuit or line.

M

Madame Cadenza—A flighty female vocalist.

Make System—Announcing the network by name for cue to the telephone company.

Make the Local—Identifying the local station by broadcasting its call letters.

MC—Master of ceremonies.

Master Control—Technical direction center.

PRODUCTION TERMS—Continued

- Middle Breaks*—Station identification in or near the middle program.
- Mike Hog*—One of a group of performers using a microphone who elbows the others away. Analogous to an up-stage player in the theatre.
- Mike Mugger*—An artist who insists on working too close to the microphone.
- Mike Technique*—The performer's ability to control his or her position in relation to the microphone in order to secure the most effective results.
- Mike-Wise*—Understand microphone technique.
- Mix*—Combining the input of two or more microphones to effect a complete balance.
- Monitor*—
(Noun) Studio engineer who adjusts volume control to make it suitable for long line transmission.
(Verb) To check the program by means of audio equipment.
- Mixer*—A panel for controlling and blending the sounds picked up by microphone.
- Mixing*—Blending sound.
- Mob Scene*—A group of performers serving as a crowd background.
- MPPA*—Music Publishers Protective Association.
- Mushy*—Poor musical definition of an orchestral pickup.

N

- N. E.*—New England Network.
- Nemo*—A corruption of "remote." Any program originating outside of the broadcasting studio or requiring portable equipment.
- Neutral*—Theme music used to back up announcements.
- NON*—An NBC symbol signifying that no chimes are to be given.
- Noodling*—The tuning up of musical instruments with practice runs, trills, scales, etc.

O

- O. Henry*—The tag line on script material.
- Off*—Directing of sound away from microphone.
- Off Mike*—Setting performer's position away from the microphone.
- Offside*—An off-color comedy line. A "Blue Gag."
- Old Cow-Hand*—Experienced staff member called upon to escort important guests about the studios.
- Old Sexton*—A bass soloist with dark vocal quality.
- On the Beach*—Unemployed.
- On the Button*—Ending exactly on time. Same as "on the nose."
- On the Cuff*—A service for which artists receive no compensations.
- On the Head*—The starting of a program on schedule time by reason of the proper timing of the preceding broadcast.
- On the Log*—An entry in the studio record, complimentary or otherwise.
- On the Nose*—Describes the ending of a program exactly on the second.
- One and One*—Instructions given to an orchestra to play one verse and one chorus of a song.
- One and Two*—A term instructing the orchestra or soloists to play or sing one verse and two choruses of a number.
- One Shot*—A single program which is not one of a series.
- One-Timer*—See "one shot."
- Out in the Alley*—Out of the microphone range.
- On*—Sound directed toward the microphone.
- Overboard*—When the program is too long for the time allotted to it.

P

- P. A.*—Public address or talk-back system.
- Pancake Turner*—Any technician controlling the playing of double-faced records.

Panel—The control board of one or more units.

Patch—A temporary and removable studio equipment connection.

Patch It In—To tie together various pieces of apparatus to form a circuit.

Peak—Maximum amplitude of sound in electrical energy formed while flying through a circuit. The maximum point of the needle swing on a volume indicator "kick."

Peaks—The distortions resulting when the amplitude is too great for the apparatus. Sometimes applied to performers whose uneven voice control causes peaks.

Pests—Radio fans seeking autographs of performers.

Pick Up—

(a) Location of microphones in relation to program elements.

(b) Acoustical value of program.

(c) The origination point of a broadcast.

(d) A device containing an electro-mechanical member which vibrates when in contact with a moving phonograph record; a modulated electric current for the purpose of making the record audible from a loud-speaker.

(e) Colloquially, the process of gathering material for broadcasting a particular event and other than the actual radio transmission thereof.

(f) Primary apparatus used to convert sound to electrical energy.

Pick It Up—A term used in instructing musicians or actors to speed up his delivery.

Pick up a Cue—Be prompt in speaking lines immediately after the preceding speaker has concluded.

Pipe—Distributing a radio program from one point to another.

Piped Program—A program transmitted via wires.

Piping the Show—The act of sending a program over wires.

P. L.—A private line.

Plantmen—Maintenance men in a radio station or a network.

Playback—The playing of a recording for audition purposes immediately after it is made.

Play Ons—Brief music used to support the introduction of the radio performers.

Plops—The sound of a speaker whose pronunciation of the letters B and P results in distortion because of too forcibly emphasizing these letters.

Poison—A disagreeable or boresome program or person.

Producer—

(a) One who originates and brings a program or presentation.

(b) The individual or the broadcasting company who offers a program for observation or consideration, or who brings a performance before the public.

Production—The building, organizing and presenting of the radio program.

Production Director—Individual in charge of radio studio programs.

Production Logs—Records kept by assistant directors or production men assigned to radio programs.

Program Balance—

(a) The arrangement of musical and dramatic units in a program so as to secure a maximum of entertainment values.

(b) The similar arrangement of programs during a scheduled period of broadcasting.

Program Monitor—A loudspeaker or radio set over which the quality and the character of the program may be checked.

- Projecting*—Taking the audible foreground while enacting a dramatic role.
Provisional Cut—A cut in a program planned conditionally in case of emergency. An attempt to facilitate the timing of a program in case the time allotted to it is with little notice reduced. See "Cushion."
Punch the Mike—To press the switch controlling the microphone.
Putty Blower—A trombone.

R

- Racked Up*—Radio equipment placed permanently on racks.
Racks—See "Bays."
Reading High Hat—The reading of written material in an aloof manner.
Repeat—A term denoting the second presentation of a regular studio program for those stations not served by the original broadcast due to time differences.
Ribbon—A velocity microphone.
Ride Gain—To control the volume range of a program electrically in order to transmit it over lines and equipment within proper limits.
Ride It—Swing instrumental ad lib.
Round Robin—A wire loop going from one point through various other points and returning. It can be broken at any point and programs sent either way for various program originations or for split network purposes.
Rover Boy—An advertising agency junior executive.
Runovers—Occasions when the program overruns its allotted time.
Rebroadcast—See "Repeat." Also a trans-Atlantic pickup.
Repeater—An amplifying station used to boost the volume on long lines.

S

- Schmalz*—Super-sentimental rendition of a musical number.
Scoop—To outwit a rival network or station in the broadcasting of a special event or public interest program.
Scooper—A vocalist with ascending slur attacks.
Scoutmaster—An advertising agency executive.
Scratches—Noises caused by faulty equipment.
Segue—The transition from one musical number to another without a break or announcements.
Service the Script—Casting, rehearsing and presenting material in the manuscript.
Set Up—Arrangement of musicians, performers and sound effects in a studio to achieve the most favorable acoustical effect.
Short—Describing a show lacking sufficient material to fill the allotted time.
Short Voice—A voice with a limited range.
Show—
 (a) A radio program or broadcast.
 (b) A conceited performer.
Signature—The musical number or sound effect which regularly identifies a program.
Slap Bass—To play a bass violin by slapping the strings.
Sneak In—To bring music in softly and swell it to full behind dialogue.
Sock—The tag line of a gag.
Song Plugger—A music publisher's representative who promotes his firm's songs.

- Sound Effects*—Various devices or recordings used to produce life-like sound imitations.
- Sound Man*—Studio technician who produces either manually or by recordings the desired sound effects.
- Sound Table*—Movable table for small sound effect properties.
- Sound Track*—A graphic record of sound produced on film or on sensitized paper.
- Sound Panel*—Movable panels of rock wool for sound absorption or hard surfaces for reflection.
- Sour*—An off-pitch voice or instrument.
- Specialty*—A musical selection presented by a vocal group with piano accompaniment.
- Spiel*—The commercial or advertising copy.
- Spieler*—A radio commentator; also an announcer.
- Split Channel*—Two or more network sections working simultaneously with different programs.
- Split Networks*—Networks divided for the simultaneous transmission of two or more programs for the service of selected stations.
- Spreader*—A performer consuming a longer period of time on the actual broadcast than has been allowed in dress rehearsals.
- Stand-By*—
- (a) A substitute program ready to go on the air in any emergency.
 - (b) A warning to performers to get ready to take the air.
- Stand-by Group*—The performers engaged to take part in a “stand-by” program, if necessary.
- Squeak-Stick*—A clarinet.
- Step It Up*—Increase the volume.
- Stick Waver*—An orchestra leader.
- Straight Reading*—Reading material without undue emphasis or characterization.
- Stretch*—Slow up the reading or musical numbers so that the show will finish exactly on time.
- Studio Mothers*—Mothers of performers, usually juvenile performers. Like stage mothers, only worse.
- Sync (Sink) (Synchronize)*—The synchronizing of two or more radio stations on a wave length. In another sense, simultaneous terminating of respective programs on two networks, so that network legs may be switched from one to the other or to a common program.

T

- Tag Line*—The climax of a dramatic sequence.
- Take It Away*—The cue from studio engineer to the engineer of succeeding program.
- Taking a Balance*—Preliminary testing to determine the sound quality of a certain program.
- Taking It Cold*—See “Cold.”
- Talking Down*—Condescension on the part of a radio speaker. Considered an unpardonable sin in good broadcasting.
- Talking in His Beard*—Speaking in muffled voice.
- Tear Jerker*—A radio script with a sad or pathetic appeal.
- Theme*—See “Signature.”
- Thick*—When the individual instruments in a group selection are not distinguishable.

- Throw It Away*—Dramatic direction to performers or engineers to fade dialogue regardless of script.
- Time Check*—Synchronizing the time-pieces of all concerned in a broadcast.
- Tight Show*—A program timed accurately to fit its allotted period. Also a program which in rehearsal times a few seconds over the allotted time and should either be cut or played rapidly, provided the material permits a rapid treatment.
- Town Crier*—A vocalist who sings too loud.
- Transition*—The change from one dramatic scene to another. The music, sound or silence that is used to suggest this change.
- Transmission*—A program; an "hour"; any modulations by a radio transmitter.
- Two-in-Hands*—Radio sketches composed chiefly of two characters, as Amos 'n' Andy, etc.
- Turkey*—A flop or failure.
- Turn Over*—To relinquish control at close of one program and the assumption of control by engineers on succeeding program.
- Tying-in*—Coming into a chain program which may already be in progress.

U

- Under*—A program that's too short.
- Unilateral*—A velocity microphone sensitive only on one side.
- Unit*—A piece of electrical apparatus devoted to one specific function.

V

- V.I.*—Volume indicator.
- Velocity*—A ribbon type of microphone.
- Visual Show*—A radio program which is also being presented before a visual audience.

W

- Web*—A network.
- West of Denver*—Signifying engineering difficulties which can't be explained.
- White Meat*—An actress.
- Whodunit*—A mystery script.
- Wood Pile*—A xylophone.
- Woodchopper*—A xylophonist.
- Wood Shed*—A severe rehearsal. See "clambake."
- Woof*—A word-sound used by engineers to check "peaks." Also used for time checks, reverberations, frequency and the result of certain string instruments.



GLOSSARY OF RESEARCH TERMS

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Note: Definitions given here are not set up as authoritative and final. It is entirely conceivable that they will need expansion, even revision, for specific purposes. When the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting was begun in 1930, there were many definitions necessary to its operation and interpretation which at that time were not even in common usage. Today these terms are widespread. While some may make different use of them, it has seemed best to define them as they have been intended.

Included in the following are certain purely statistical terms. Instead of technically accurate definitions, effort has been directed toward simple even loose interpretations of terms in language that will best serve the user of a report. Because of space limitation, the list of terms is confined to those most commonly used and most frequently misunderstood.

Average—Sometimes loosely used to denote the Median (q.v.) and so defined in reports. Ordinarily a figure arrived at by adding together several bases, and adding together several corresponding sets of mentions, for a rating representing average conditions. Percentages or ratings should never be averaged unless it is certain that the bases are equal and similar in every way. "Week averages" represent the average of broadcasts on several days of the weeks. There are also "daytime averages," "evening averages," "full-day averages," etc. See also Moving Average.

Base—The total number in any selected group which happens to be used as 100%, against which individual percentages apply.

Basic Area—As defined by the broadcasting companies in their rate schedules. In general, the east and middle west to Nebraska.

Breakdown—A division of the sample into parts, such as income, class, sex, age, section of the country, etc.

C. A. B.—Refers to the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting.

Coincidental—A method of making a survey, calling radio set owners by telephone and asking about listening at the time of the call.

Competition—(a) Program competition is the attempt of two or more programs, on the air on different stations at the same time, to attract listeners. (b) Station competition is that between any number of stations during the same general period to attract the same listeners.

Correlation—May be loosely defined as the degree to which generally similar sets of figures bear a relation to each other. "Close correlation" implies a close relationship.

Coverage—The area which a given station (or combination of stations) is able to reach in satisfactory volume.

Cumulative Figures—Figures that are allowed to build up, being reported progressively until completed.

Day-Part—The method of investigation used in the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting. Set-owners are interviewed at different times of the day and questioned regarding their use of sets for the past two or three hours, or other period.

Diallings—In telephone investigations, all the numbers that are rung, whether answered or not.

- Field**—(a) The places in which the survey is carried on. (b) A statistical term to denote the total number in the group which is being sampled.
- Field Strength**—An engineering method by which the performance of a station is measured at various points in terms of signal strength and clarity (q.v.).
- Fluctuation**—See Variation.
- Follow-Up**—A method of investigation which calls for interviews about a program immediately after the conclusion of that program. Distinguish from “Coincidental,” “Day-Part,” etc.
- Listening Period**—The number of minutes or hours a set-user operates a set, either during the day, or during the period covered by the interview. This may refer to use of the same set by one or more individuals, or to the use of a single set.
- Listener**—One of several persons in the family who listens to the radio set. There are thus ordinarily several listeners for each set. “Listeners per program” refers to the number hearing a given program (usually two or three times the number of “set-users” [q.v.] per program). “Listeners per station,” “listeners per city,” “listeners per set,” etc., all refer to variable periods depending upon the period covered in the survey. Distinguish carefully “listeners” from “set-users.”
- Local Program**—For practical purposes, loosely applied to mean a program on only one, or a very few, stations, as distinguished from network or sectional program. A local program may be sponsored or sustaining.
- Local Time**—The time in use in any given city or cities, as distinguished from “broadcasting time,” “New York time,” etc. For example, a table based on New York summer time showing sets in use at 7 p.m., would refer to use at 7 p.m. in eastern cities on daylight time, which is 3 p.m. Pacific time. The same table based on local time would refer to 7 p.m. in each of the points covered, with different competing network programs in different time zones.
- Long-term Trend**—A comparison of several periods, usually years, showing a generally rising, falling or stationary level.
- Median**—The middle item in a list when all items are placed in numerical order. Half of the items are thus larger than the median, and half are smaller. *Not an average.*
- Mentions**—(Program or Station). A count of the number of times programs (or stations) are named by set-users during the period covered by the survey. If one station is named for two programs by the same set-user, this is a total of two station mentions.
- Moving Average**—In successive sets of figures, a part is sometimes retained while another gives place to a substitute, in computing averages. This in general is known as a “moving average.” Thus, if two weeks are averaged so that the first time the average is made up of weeks 1 and 2, the next time of weeks 2 and 3, the next time of weeks 3 and 4, we have a moving average.
- Multiple Broadcast Program**—One which is on the air several times a week.
- Neighbor**—A program on the same station immediately before or after another under consideration.
- Popularity**—Usually defined as the extent to which a given station or combination of stations, or a program, actually does reach a given section of set-owners.

Rating—A term which varies considerably with individual surveys. There are “program ratings” and “station ratings,” etc. A rating is not a percentage of all radio sets in the country, unless it is based on a true cross-section of the entire country. The most common use of the term takes as 100% a cross-section of sets owned in a group of cities which can be reached by a given program, and uses as a rating the percentage of this cross-section which reports hearing a given program (or station). In the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting the group of cities taken as 100% varies with every program every time it is on the air, according to the cities which that particular schedule of stations happens to reach.

Ratings may be based on one or more of a number of different statistical methods. “Set-owner ratings” take total set-owners called as the base. “Set-user ratings” take the number of sets in use during the period of the interview as the base (either total for period or average per call). A “coincidental rating,” although it sometimes is based on set-owners, is more commonly defined as taking a base of a cross-section of *sets used at the average time of the call* in a group of cities reached by an individual list of stations.

The particular rating system used is ordinarily defined clearly at the beginning of a report. This should be read carefully before it is applied to the individual percentages.

Rebroadcast—Picking up by a station of a program broadcast by another station and relaying it.

Remote Town—City or town at a distance from a network station city.

Repeat Broadcast—Placing of exactly the same program on the air at a time different from the original broadcast, usually for the purpose of reaching people in other parts of the country at a more suitable hour than the original broadcast makes possible.

Sample—The number of interviews that constitute the survey. These are distributed over certain areas, cities, towns, income classes, and other divisions in the effort to form a true cross-section of whatever is to be studied. Size and proper distribution of the sample determine the reliability of the survey. “Random distribution” of the sample implies no effort to place given numbers of interviews in any separate grouping. “Controlled distribution,” “quota control,” or “allocated sample” mean the assignment of a given number of calls in each of many different groups, such as incomes, section of the country, sex, age, etc.

Set-Owner—A radio-equipped home. Not an individual, and usually considered as a home contacted where the set is in working order. One set-owner may represent several sets, and/or several individual listeners.

Set-User—A set-owner, usually a family, using its radio set at all during the individual period being covered by any separate part of the survey. If a survey covers a full day in each interview, the set-user is probably the family using a set at all during the day. If the survey covers only fifteen minutes, or a single minute (as in the coincidental) set-use applies to those times. A morning user (afternoon, evening, full day-time, full day, etc.) refers to use at all during the whole morning (afternoon, etc.).

Signal—May be loosely defined as the music, talk, or any other sound which the listener hears from a given station. More exactly, the signal is the electrical impulse or radio wave broadcast by the station.

- Slump*—A decline in rating, percentage, etc.
- Split Network*—A special combination of stations designed to cover a limited area.
- Sponsored Program*—A network or local program which is put on the air for the commercial purposes of one or more companies or individuals served by the station or network.
- Station Area*—The geographical area which a station reaches.
- Station City*—City, in or near which, the transmitter of a station (usually a network station) is located.
- Supplemental Cities (or Stations)*—Arbitrary groupings by the network of cities or stations usually outside the basic area.
- Sustaining Program*—A network or local program which is not sponsored for commercial purposes.
- Triple Network City*—City in or near which are located the stations of three networks. There are also “dual network cities,” etc.
- Typical*—Loosely defined as a figure (rating, percentage, etc.) which occurs often, and may be expected to be representative of the majority of ratings, percentages or individual circumstances. “Atypical” is the unusual.
- Variation*—Ups and downs of a given rating (percentage, etc.) due to seasonal changes, differences among incomes, sex or age preferences, differences by days, parts of the day, etc. Also sometimes arising from insufficient cross-section.

GLOSSARY OF RECORDING TERMS

Prepared by World Broadcasting System, Inc.

Note: Only specialized phrases are included here. For the general terminology employed in recording, see the other Glossaries.

- Master*—An accurate reverse copy of the original wax, made in a hard material, generally copper. Both pressings and mothers can be made from the master.
- Master Test Pressing*—A pressing obtained from the master prior to the making of a mother or production pressings; tested by competent listeners trained to detect musical and processing defects.
- Mother*—A copy of the master in a hard material, generally copper; the impression corresponding to those originally cut in the wax.
- Preform*—A biscuit made of vinylite powder in such a form that it can conveniently be passed through a heated tunnel.
- Stamper*—An exact reverse reproduction of the mother. Made of hard material, generally copper, which is either nickelled or chromium-plated, and used to make the impressions in the material, from which the final records are made.
- Thermo-Plastic Mother*—A special type of mother. This type of mother is obtained from the master by making an exact reproduction in a material which is plastic when heated.
- Vinylite*—A transparent, non-hygroscopic plastic, having properties suitable for the production of high quality records.
- Wax*—A soft substance, free from chemical impurities and dirt, in which the original impression is made.

GLOSSARY OF COMMERCIAL RADIO TERMS

By JOSEPH J. WEED

President, Weed & Co., Station Representatives

Note: These terms apply to the daily business of buying and selling network, or spot, time. They are intended to cover, in loose form, the ground most often traversed in sales transactions concerning stations or networks as commercial commodities.

Account—A bookkeeping term transferred into the sales phase of radio, designating any buyer of radio time; i. e., one whom the station bills as debtor for time purchased. The terms "sponsor" and "account" are frequently used as synonyms.

Account Executive—A designated person in an advertising agency who administers an "account"; the go-between an account and advertising media.

Across the Board—A commercial period used by a sponsor at least five times a week at exactly the same time each day. Thus, a sponsor who purchases a 15-minute segment from Monday through Friday at 5 p. m. is known "to hit the 5 o'clock strip." The origin of the term "strip" undoubtedly lies in the drawing up of station schedules, when a penciled notation through the same time segment every weekday made a "strip across the board."

Advertiser—

- (a) **National Advertiser**—An advertiser whose products have nationwide distribution, or who can profit by advertising on a national scale.
- (b) **Regional Advertiser**—An advertiser whose products are sold only in a restricted area, or region, and who advertises accordingly.
- (c) **Local Advertiser**—An advertiser whose sales and promotion are confined to his local town or marketing area.

Affiliation—The network connection of any station.

Agency—Generally used to designate an advertising agency; i. e., an organization whose primary function is to counsel and aid the advertiser in preparing a campaign to stimulate purchases of his goods.

Agency Commission—A sum—usually 15% of the gross receipts from an account—paid to the advertising agency by any medium which has been used in a campaign. (Note: An advertising agency is NOT hired by the advertiser; its compensation is derived from media in which advertising is placed via the "commission" system. The origin of this practice dates back to the time when advertising agencies were brokers in newspaper space, rather than counsellors for advertisers.)

Announcement—Pure advertising via radio; commercial promotion sans any entertainment attempts.

- (a) **Straight Announcement**—Usually an announcement running one minute, or 100 words.
- (b) **Short Announcement**—An announcement of 50 to 75 words.
- (c) **Cut-in or Chainbreak**—An announcement, from 10 to 30 words in length, inserted into the pause between programs. Since these pauses are slightly longer than necessary for mere identification either of station or network, the local station often sells the excess time for very short announcements.

Audience—All who listen to a radio program broadcast over a specific station are said to be the "audience" of that station.

- (a) *Regular Audience*—Those listeners claimed to be listening regularly to a specific station. Further explanations of this term are impossible, due to the wide variation in method of determining what constitutes a “regular” audience.
- (b) *Potential Audience*—All those set-owners able to tune in any specific station without difficulty are said to constitute that station’s potential audience.

Audience Builder—A good program—one which attracts a large audience.

Base Rate—See Rates.

Basic Station—See Station.

Blanket Contract—A long term contract, whose stipulations, discounts, etc., cover a series of individual advertising campaigns by any one sponsor and/or his subsidiary companies.

Block—A program which cannot be moved out of the time segment it occupies into substitute time.

Blocked Out Time—(a) Time which for some reason or another may not be sold. (b) A plan put into operation by the National Broadcasting Co., which provides for certain periods in the broadcasting day to be under permanent option to the National Broadcasting Co. and certain other periods to be free from this option.

Build-Up—Any plan to increase the popularity of a program, personality or product.

Build-Up Announcements—Announcements run by a station previous to the initial broadcast of a new program in order to start it off with a good audience. (Frequently these announcements are rendered free as a merchandising service—see Merchandising.)

Campaign—A series of programs or announcements designed to accomplish a certain advertising objective. Usually a “campaign” is formulated in terms of 13 weeks, or multiples thereof.

Chain Breaks—See Announcements.

Channel—The wave length occupied by a radio station—the broadcasting frequency.

- (a) *Clear Channel*—A channel held for the sole nighttime operation of a single (high-wattage) station.
- (b) *Regional Channel*—A frequency split up among four or five stations located strategically so as to avoid interference with each other.
- (c) *Local Channel*—A channel permitted to low power stations only, and set up on the same general basis as a regional channel but with many stations at more frequent intervals.

Client—An active or potential advertiser.

Commercial—Any broadcast which is paid for. Opposite of “sustaining program” or “sustainer.”

- (a) *Commercial Announcement*—Same as “Announcement” (which see).
- (b) *Commercial Continuity*—That portion of a radio program devoted to the advertiser’s sales message.
- (c) *Commercial Manager*—An employe of a radio station in charge of commercial programs.

Commission—A percentage of the total amount of the contract intake paid an individual or an organization for efforts in assisting to secure that contract. (See Agency Commission; also see Station Representatives.)

Continuity—The frame of a radio program in written form. This usually includes that part of the program which is to be spoken.

Cooperative Program—A commercial program paid for by more than one advertiser. Cooperative programs are frequently used by units of an industry or profession, any one of which is not large enough or influential enough to necessitate a widespread campaign, but which, when added together, may undertake widespread advertising in cooperative sharing of expenses and benefits.

Co-Sponsor—An advertiser who, in company with other advertisers, pays for a share in a commercial program.

Courtesy Announcement—An announcement given an advertiser without charge. Usually in connection with a change in time or day in the schedule.

Cumulative Discount—See Discount.

Cut-Ins—See Announcements.

Daytime Station—A station which signs off at sundown.

Dead Spot—A location well within the normal service area of the station where the signal of a certain radio station is either very poor or absolutely inaudible.

Dealer Helps—Various types of material and efforts designed to increase retail sales. Window streamers, counter cards, flyers and window displays are the most common.

Directional Antenna—A broadcasting antenna designed to approximately send a strong signal across diametrically opposed compass points, meanwhile shutting out the signal from all other points. Thus, a directional antenna may be used to throw a strong North-South signal while excluding East-West coverage.

Discount—A percentage of the revenue from radio time deducted for one reason or another.

- (a) *Agency Discount*—A sum—usually 15%—paid the advertising agency. See Agency Commission.
- (b) *Cash Discount*—A special 2% (usual) discount allowed by certain stations to advertising agencies in consideration of receiving the advertiser's payment within 10 days of billing date.
- (c) *Cumulative Discount*—A discount earned by combining several frequency discounts into a large-scale deduction.
- (d) *Frequency Discount*—A discount allowed the advertiser off the base rate for running a multiple number of programs within a certain period.

Disc—Any recording.

Fading—The increasing and diminishing of the strength of signal from certain broadcasting stations in definite localities.

Fill—Any program used to fill out a period.

Frequency—(a) The wave length on which a radio station is licensed to broadcast—kilocycle frequency. (b) The number of programs or announcements run per day, week, month or year.

Frequency Discount—See Discount.

Full Time Station—A station licensed by the Federal Communications Commission to operate 24 hours a day if desired. The usual period of operation, however, is about 18 hours a day.

Hashing—Jumbled signals from two radio stations on the same frequency, or adjacent frequencies, audible in a single locality.

Hook-Up—Two or more stations connected by wires.

Independent Station—See Station.

Interference—Anything which interferes with the proper reception of a broadcast signal. This may be the signal of another station, local electrical disturbances, or natural static electricity.

Institutional Program—A program designed to build good-will and create a favorable impression, as opposed to a program aiming at immediate sales.

Lines—The wired linkage between two or more stations. Lines are referred to as "Class A," "B," etc., in accordance with their quality—i.e., their ability to carry wide tonal ranges.

Live Campaign—A series of programs or announcements broadcast by living performers (as opposed to recordings).

Local—Anything originating in the station itself or the town in which it is located.

Long Lister—A trade term applied to station representatives who have a long list of client stations.

Medium—A ready-created means of public information or entertainment which the advertiser may use as a channel for distributing his sales message. Radio, magazines, newspapers, etc., are media.

Merchandising—A subsidiary service rendered by some radio stations to the advertiser, either gratis or at very low cost, for the purpose of (a) making his radio campaign more effective in terms of listener-buyers; (b) building goodwill among dealers, distributors, etc.

- (a) *Build-up Announcements*—See Build-up Announcements.
- (b) *Dealer Contacts*—Personal calls made upon local dealers to familiarize them with the advertising planned and solicit their cooperation and support.
- (c) *Dealer Mailings*—Letters mailed to the local dealers with the same object in view.
- (d) *Wholesaler or Jobber Contacts*—Similar efforts with the wholesaler.
- (e) *Investigations*—Contacts made with the wholesale or retail trade in an endeavor to learn specific facts on sales or distribution.
- (f) *Publicity*—Printed information designed for free insertion as news in a newspaper or trade publication to the advantage of the advertiser.

Mobile Unit—A miniature broadcasting unit, usually short wave, which may be moved quickly to any point. This is becoming increasingly more valuable as its many possible uses are realized.

Musical Clock—Any program which employs music interspersed with time signals at regular intervals. An early morning feature on a great many stations.

Musical Fill—A "fill" using music. See Fill.

Network—Two or more stations united by lines. These are as follows:

- (a) *National Network*—A network of stations covering the entire United States or the greater part of it.
- (b) *Regional Network*—A network covering only a definite portion of the country.
- (c) *Split Network*—A portion of the main network. Usually a necessity created by distribution problems.
- (d) *Special Network*—A group of stations not ordinarily united by wires, tied together temporarily for a special purpose.

Network Time—That time on a radio station under permanent option to a network.

COMMERCIAL TERMS—Continued

Originate—To create a program.

Outlet—Any radio station.

Over-All Cost—The total cost of broadcasting a definite program or campaign.

Package—A special service assembled and sold to an advertiser, usually with a concession in rate. Thus, a baseball "package" may represent a sum of programs comprising pre-season games, build-up announcements, regular schedule games, and other similar fare classifiable as a unit. The advertiser is billed in terms of a lump sum, for a lump service, rather than in terms of many composite items.

Participating Program—A program, generally built as a unit by the station, in which segments may be sponsored by various advertisers. The idea behind the participating program is (a) to afford sponsorship of a good quality program on a cheap basis; and (b) to attract sponsors who otherwise would find it impossible to afford radio broadcasting.

Part Time Station—A station licensed by the Federal Communications Commission to broadcast only at certain definite hours.

Primary Coverage—See Coverage.

Program—Any broadcast designed to entertain or instruct the listener.

(a) *Commercial Program*—Program that is paid for by an advertiser.

(b) *Sustaining Program*—One that is put on gratuitously as a service to the listener.

(c) *Participating Program*—See Participating Program.

(d) *Local Program*—One broadcast locally only.

(e) *Network Program*—One which is broadcast over a number of stations.

(f) *Service Program*—A program which delivers a listeners' service such as news, sports, etc.

Plug—A commercial announcement.

Rates—

(a) *Base Rate*—The master rate set up by any station or network. From this master rate, all other rates of like nature are computed. Usually the base rate is taken to be one hour on a one-time evening basis. Half-hour and quarter-hour base rates are, however, common. And individual peculiarities make for other types of base rates.

(b) *National Rate*—The fee for broadcasting charged the national advertiser.

(c) *Local Rate*—The fee charged the local advertiser.

(d) *Network Rates*—The fee charged for using more than one station on a single broadcast.

(e) *Class of Rates*—Most stations charge different rates for different periods in the day or evening on the theory that there are larger audiences at certain times than others. For the most part the class "A" rates (the highest) apply to nighttime broadcasting and classes "B," "C," etc. (lower in scale) to other times of the day.

(f) *Gross Rate*—The card rate before any discount is deducted.

(g) *Net Rate*—The rate after discounts have been deducted.

(h) *Over-All Rate*—The entire charge including talent and time.

(i) *Package Rate*—A special rate for a "package" of broadcasting. See Package.

Recording—A transcribing of a radio program into a permanent or semi-permanent cast for reproduction purposes. Also used in reference to a phonograph record.

Remote Pickup—A broadcast which originates outside of the studio proper, as, for instance, in a night club, ball park, etc.

Schedule—(a) The orderly arrangement of programs throughout the day. (b) A plan for broadcasting; a campaign.

COMMERCIAL TERMS—Continued

- Script Show*—A program chiefly monologue or dialogue. Any program read entirely from a written manuscript.
- Serial*—A series of programs involving a continuous story or contingent events.
- Service Features*—Special use of the facilities of a radio station to provide a regular service to the listening public. These include news reports, weather reports, time signals, temperature reports, etc.
- Short Lister*—A station representative with a limited list of clients.
- Signal Strength*—The strength of the electrical impulse at any given point remote to the transmitter.
- Skip Signal*—A radio signal which is progressively audible and inaudible and then audible again at various points crossed while traveling in a straight line away from the transmitter. See Dead Spot.
- Spot Broadcasting*—Announcements or programs broadcast independently over one or more radio stations (as opposed to network broadcasting).
- Spots*—(a) Locations selected for spot broadcasting. (b) Locations for announcements or programs available in the schedule of a station.
- Staggered Schedule*—Announcements or programs run at different times on different days.
- Station*—A radio broadcasting unit operating upon license from the Federal Communications Commission.
- (a) *Basic Station*—One belonging to the basic group in a national network.
- (b) *Supplementary Station*—An affiliate of a national network not in the basic group.
- (c) *Independent Station*—A station not connected with a network.
- Station Representatives*—(a) Individuals or organizations employed to sell the station's time to national advertisers. The usual commission paid the representative by the station is 15% of the "net"—i.e., 15% of the amount of sponsor money secured after the agency commission has been deducted. (b) Any authorized envoy of a radio station.
- Station Time*—(a) The commodity which the station has to sell. (b) Where "blocked off" time exists, the time not under option to the network.
- Studio Program*—A program which originates in the studios. See Remote Pickup.
- Sustainer*—A program broadcast by the station "in the public's interest, convenience and necessity" and not paid for.
- Talent Cost*—The cost of producing the program aside from station time charge.
- Time Broker*—An individual or organization acting as an intermediary between radio stations which have no duly authorized representatives and the advertiser or his agency.
- Time Buyer*—(a) An employee of an advertising agency whose responsibility it is to know radio stations and their markets and to make the proper selections of stations in accordance with the requirements of the advertiser. (b) Anyone who buys radio time.
- Transcribed Campaign*—Announcements or programs broadcast from recordings. See Campaign.
- Transcription*—A recording of announcements or programs made for broadcast purposes only.
- Transmitter*—The actual electrical apparatus which releases the broadcast impulse into the air.
- Waxes*—See Transcription.
- Web*—A trade term commonly used instead of "network."