

## The Top 77 of All Time



**VoteTop77.com**

**VOTE for your favorite songs in the 17th Top 77 of All Time!**

It's fast, it's easy and it's fun!

Vote for any song from any time!

Vote for as few as one song or as many as seven. Your choice.

Vote just once. Duplicate voters must be eliminated so every voter is equal.

This year's Top 77 will be revealed for the first time on  
Rewound Radio on December 26th.

We have an automatic ballot to make it easy!  
Simply type in the name of the song and our customized program  
will offer you alternatives of the title and artist.  
If your song is not there, you can write it in.

Vote today... and tell your friends and colleagues to join in.

It's easy to remember: [VoteTop77.com](http://VoteTop77.com).

Thanks for being a part of this year's Top 77 Songs of All Time!

# Final Paper: Radio in 2024



“Fighting to Stay Free”

#188...November-December 2014

## **And now, ladies and gentlemen...**

...I wondered, how many college professors could actually do the assignments they give their students? So, for this *Hz*, I decided to tackle one I've assigned my "Introduction to Radio" class:

Forecast what radio will be like (or if it will even be) in 2024. Try not to exceed 1,000 words.

Here goes. (I've taken the liberty of single-spacing, if that's ok.)

## **The Future of Radio**

By Rich Appel

Consider the following:

- Radio is successful when it generates enough revenue not only to keep itself going, but also to invest in its future.
- Radio generates revenue from advertisers who get proven results from delivering their messages to consumers by using the airwaves in the most effective fashion.
- Advertisers get these results, and resulting revenue, when stations have enough listeners who fit both the advertiser's intended user profile and who match the intended target of the station's programming.
- Listeners choose – and adopt - a station when it satisfies their programming desires, whether it means playing the “right music” or delivering necessary non-music programming (news, talk, sports) during time spent listening.
- In 2014, radio succeeds because it is the easiest medium for most consumers to use: they simply turn their car's ignition and radio is there to enjoy.
- Radio is, at its core, an appliance or product people use on a daily or at least regular basis. It is therefore no different than other products that are part of our daily lives.

Accepting all the above as true, conventional commercial radio is being challenged by a changing world, with additional and more attractive ways consumers can receive content they want every day, and by which advertisers can reach these consumers. This is due to:

- The rise of audio services not found on conventional radio, whether also free – such as those delivered by web streaming – or for a cost, such as satellite radio or on cable TV.
- The resulting revamping of car (and eventually home) audio entertainment systems designed to make listening to these other services as easy as to commercial radio.
- The shift in power from delivery systems to consumers in terms of music choice, allowing consumers to more easily choose, listen to and own all the music they want.

- The shift in power from delivery systems to consumers in terms of news, with not only wider choices across all media but apps for news, weather and traffic that will soon be available at the push of a button from the driver's seat.
- The shift in power from advertisers to consumers, who now have greater control over receiving messages while enjoying delivered content.

Simply put, in order for radio to continue being successful, it needs to:

- Improve on other audio choices offered consumers.
- Offer consumers what other choices cannot.
- Create a new and viable model for advertisers that does not send consumers elsewhere during commercial breaks.

Consider how other products have handled this challenge. Crest toothpaste at one time owned the cavity-fighting position with consumers. As other cavity-fighting toothpastes entered the market or offered additional advantages, Crest needed to up its game, which it did by adding tartar control. Even before YouTube gave consumers the freedom to watch whatever videos they wanted anytime, music video networks such as MTV and VH1 had already reinvented themselves by providing lifestyle and reality programming targeted viewers could not get elsewhere.

Over the next decade, then, here is what commercial radio will need to do in order to continue to generate revenue and remain a vital part of the consumer's day:

- **Further embrace the Disney Channel, PBS or event location model of ad support, as in replacing spot clutter with sponsorships and content branding in any way possible.** This will be necessary as the younger (and future) end of the advertiser-coveted 18-49 demographic abandons commercial radio in favor of just-as-easily accessible stations with less or no commercial interruptions. CBS Radio has taken a step in that direction by branding their New York studios "The Royal Caribbean studios" (which is a stretch as clearly, CBS' studios are not located on a boat and/or in the Caribbean). In any case, if commercial radio does not want the money demo to associate it with unusually long commercial breaks, this must be addressed.



“Wet Wednesday” on CBS-FM?

- **Develop content unique to commercial radio.** Other services using the word “radio” have succeeded by offering unique programming not only at the expense of AM/FM but seemingly with its blessing, as over the past 20 years commercial radio has relinquished the role of special content provider (and often, curator and historian). Gone are weekly local countdowns, nightly and weekend special features, even air personalities who helped define and distinguish a station from all other competition. The current rules of thumb seem to be: 1) play only the biggest hits, and most people will listen, and 2) don’t talk much because people just want those hits. The easier it becomes for listeners to find and customize that music experience elsewhere, the more urgent it will be for AM/FMs to stand out from the crowd. Take note again of CBS Radio and how it revived top 40 on FM in the early 1980s by reviving the format’s most basic elements, which everyone else had forgotten about or left behind.
- **Develop content worthy of re-broadcast or podcast.** Television has been onto this for years and benefited from it. Then again, since TV has been around, video content has always been something consumers have wanted not only to view if they’d missed it the first time but also to experience again (and again). Radio can also do this too, something already proven by at least one air personality, Howard Stern. It probably wouldn’t take 500 more Sterns to create enough can’t-miss content to keep commercial radio afloat by 2024: done right, programming that’s music- or issues-driven, or just plain topical, could air multiple times a day or week over various stations to reach the most targeted listeners and maximize advertiser impressions.
- **Strengthen the relationship with the listener.** During the 1960s and 1970s, radio was expert at doing this without the level of interactivity we have

now. The problem these days is far greater competition for the same listeners; in other words, everyone wants to be your ‘friend.’ Nonetheless, radio must discover new ways to be a constant and welcome part of listeners’ lives. One obvious way that didn’t exist in the pre-digital era is to take advantage of online advertiser activity. If every account geared to a station’s key demo had a “K94.7 discount” which took effect when listeners knew a word or song or DJ, the greater the benefit and the more likely listeners would be to consider the station a daily help beyond its information/entertainment value.

- **Partner with other media.** While everyone in radio says they do this, is it possible that YouTube channels and Facebook pages are more like spinoffs than companions? Radio needs to figure out how to tie with other media in ways that will benefit audio content first and foremost. No better example exists than when must-hear hosts use it to tease the most important product.

So, that’s what radio needs to do. Now to predict what it will do. Where will we be in 2014?

- **Most radio listening will be in cars and on portable devices** that mix media with other functions more effectively than today’s smartphones and tablets. Conventional AM/FM radios will no longer exist except as battery-operated backups during emergencies/power outages (so kept in the same drawer as flashlights).



2024: Toast and jams? Unlikely.

- **AM will reinvent itself** as a stand-alone police, traffic, weather, what-to-do-in-town-x and what-to-do-in-an-emergency band, also with stations serving ethnic listener segments.

- **FM will be a mix** of AM's current money-makers (news, sports, maybe issues talk) and holdover "mass music" formats, most of which will be nationwide with local inserts where (or if) necessary.
- **Most other music formats aimed at young adults (and out-of-money demos) will be split across pay and non-pay channels**, many of which will also be corporate-owned and nationalized. More Internet-based owners of format clusters will emerge to compete for ad dollars, and the best of the independent online channels will be purchased or taken over in the process.
- While "on-demand" will take a greater share of music listening, **there will still be a place for the DJ**: as ringmaster (morning shows), tour guide (if ad-supported stations can pay them), and entertainer (although more likely on the talk side). The art of weaving talk and music will either be limited to hip-hop (or whatever hip-hop evolves into) or lost entirely, except for unpaid enthusiasts and an archive of classic airchecks.

That's my forecast (I know, I passed my own 1,000-word limit). So, what's my grade?

**PLUG-OLA:** Hope to see you at the 9th Annual Oldies Fans Meet-and-Greet Saturday November 15 at Ben's Deli in Manhattan. Join WCBS-FM's Sue O'Neal, Rewound Radio's Bob Radil, Sirius XM's Cool Bobby B, myself and many, many others for some good old time rockin', rollin' and noshing. More info here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1412880318958588/>

Thanks to Jeff Scheckner and Bruce Slutsky for putting this together every year.

Speaking of them oldies, join me Saturday, December 27 at 1pm Eastern when I count down the top 100 hits of 1961 (same year upside down, so it must be good) on Pop Gold Radio ( <http://popgoldradio.com/> ).

**Hz So Good** online (current issue, and archive back to 2010) at <http://www.60s70s.org/HzSoGood/> .

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