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The Effect of Management and Policy Change on the Diversity of Output Broadcast by BBC Radio One and BBC 1xtra between 2000-2004

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ABSTRACT

British broadcasting has undergone significant change in recent years, as the nation prepares to switch from analogue to digital broadcasting. This process has already begun, with the full switch over to the digital platform scheduled in Britain for 2012. Appropriately, at the forefront of the development of digital broadcasting in Britain is its public broadcaster: The BBC. In line with both government, and organisational objectives, the BBC has developed a range of new television, and radio channels aimed at providing a service that will continue to be appropriate to audiences further into the twenty-first century.

This research examines the output of two BBC music radio stations, Radio One and 1xtra, considering how changes to management, policy, and strategy in each station can affect the output they broadcast. Radio One and 1xtra both use a strategy of broadcasting new music to target a youth audience. However, Radio One is a mixed-genre station broadcasting on analogue radio, while 1xtra is a niche station broadcasting on the digital platform. By comparing the stations I attempt to draw conclusions about the BBC's digital strategy, and what implications these have for the output of both Radio One and 1xtra in the digital age.

Discussion in the first half of the research focuses on the internal operations of the BBC. I consider the BBC's approach to the diversity of the content it broadcasts, and what this approach reveals about the different priorities of the organisation. Close examination of the management changes made at both an organisational, and individual station level provide further insight into the context guiding priorities and policy decisions made in the BBC, Radio One, and 1xtra. The second half of the research pays greater attention to the actual output broadcast by Radio One and 1xtra, using content analysis methodology to measure similarities, and differences between the two stations. Through the simultaneous examination of management and policy changes, and of the output broadcast by the two stations, I aim to make conclusions about how changes made internally have had a direct impact on the diversity of music broadcast on Radio One and 1xtra.