

BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

**RADIO AND ITS LISTENERSHIP
IN THE INTERNET AGE**

Case studies of The Voice of Vietnam (VOV) and VOVNews

DANG THI THU HUONG

July 2008

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bournemouth University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

July 2008

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Abstract:

After approximately 100 years of radio, it is inevitable that radio in Western countries not only survives but also develops, despite fierce competition with visual media. However, having competed with other media for more than 15 years, radio in Vietnam is experiencing a significant loss of audience (especially the youth, the well-educated, and the people in urban areas). It should be noted that due to a 30 year war and 20 years of embargo by the US and other Western countries, information about Western countries in general, and journalism in particular, was in short supply in Vietnam. For this reason, gaining experiences from radio's developments and its adaptability in Western countries - in order to apply these to Vietnamese radio - is an imperative need.

However, at present, radio in Western countries has reached a significant turning-point, when a number of terminologies – which are used according to the radio's variants, including web radio, digital radio, and visual radio - have challenged the perceptions of radio which have been accepted for almost a century. The questions 'What is radio?', 'Is web radio 'radio'?' and 'Does web radio enhance radio development?' are contentious issues which have been discussed for some time without a conclusion.

On the other hand, web radio has a significant impact on Vietnamese radio in the sense that it brings radio to the Internet community who are generally believed to be the young, well-educated and people in urban areas who listen to traditional radio the least. It is suggested that web radio is potential way to capture the neglected traditional radio listeners in Vietnam.

From an historical point of view, this thesis will investigate the changes of radio in terms of technology, radio programming and ways of listening, in order to understand the development of radio from its inception to date. Moreover, radio will be placed in the context of the competition and interplay between mass media. This will be done in order to explore the contention that the existence and development of each medium depends not only on its own characteristics, but also on its ability to adjust itself to a new technological environment - as well as the ability to adapt methods and tools from other media to strengthen its position. It is contended that web radio is the product of

the competitive and interactive environment in which it operates: and its characteristics can only be clarified with reference to those relationships between mass media systems.

Having investigated the political, historical, socio-economical and cultural contexts of radio and web radio in Vietnam, the thesis explores the ways in which modern radio theories and practices from Western countries can be applied to Vietnamese radio, and examines if web radio is a means to capture new audiences, particularly the groups who have neglected traditional radio.

In order to achieve this aim, three major research methods will be applied: historical and secondary data; online and offline surveys and in-depth interviews of radio listeners, non-radio listeners, and web users about their habits of consuming media, the impact of the Internet on their habits, and their needs towards web radio also will be undertaken.

List of Publication

To date, six publications have been accepted from this work:

1. DANG TT HUONG, 2005. Radio in the Digital Age: Attracting contemporary audiences. In: *Journalism: Theories and Practices*, Vol.5, Hanoi National University Publisher, p. 85-102.
2. DANG TT HUONG, 2005. Web radio and its audiences. Paper presented at *Improving the quality of VOVNews Conference*, on 21 June 2005, VOV, Hanoi.
3. DANG TT HUONG, 2005. The position and characteristics of web radio in mass media systems. Paper presented at *MeCCSA Second Annual Conference*, 23-24 June 2005. Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies
4. DANG TT HUONG, 2006. Web radio - its characteristics and its potential role in shaping Vietnam's image in global community. In *Media-Asia Research Group 2006 conference: Media and Identity in Asia*, on 15-16 February 2006. Curtin University of Technology, Sarawak, Malaysia.
5. DANG TT HUONG, 2006. Changes in the Vietnamese Government's policies and laws of journalism after the economic renovation in 1986 and their effects on Vietnamese journalism. In: *Media: Policies, Cultures and Futures in the Asia Pacific Region*, on 27-29 November 2006. Curtin University of Technology, Australia.
6. DANG TT HUONG, 2009 (forthcoming). Voices of Vietnam after the Economic Renovation. In: Wanning Sun, Krishna Sen and Denise Woods (ed.). *Peripheral Media, Marginal Communities: Media and Politics in the Asia-Pacific*. Sussex Academic Press.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who enabled to me to complete this thesis. First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge the time, patience, guidance, advice and support of my supervisory team: Prof. Sean Street, Dr. Hugh Chignell and Prof. David Gauntlett. I am particularly grateful to Prof. Street who provided inspiration, specialised advice and encouragement throughout the duration of my studies. My sincere gratitude is also expressed to Dr. Chignell, who offered timely and important constructive criticism. Many thanks are also extended to Prof. Gauntlett for his support and critical guidance for the first two years of my research.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of John Brackstones who provided generous support in the completion of my online survey, especially hosting my online questionnaire on Bournemouth University's website. I am also thankful for the kindness and support of Jan Lewis, Matt Holland, Allan Brown, Christine Clack and many other staff at Bournemouth University.

I am deeply indebted to Marian Mayer who provided support for academic English and grammar, correcting both and also offering suggestions for my thesis.

My gratitude is also extended to the following organisations for their support and valuable assistance which facilitated my research, including VOV, VOVNews and the Faculty of Journalism (Hanoi National University). Acknowledgments are also due to Dong Manh Hung and Mai Phuong Thuy, editors and journalists at VOV, as they assisted me with their own experiences of working in the media.

I gratefully acknowledge the funding sources that made my PhD work possible. I was funded by the Vietnamese Government for my 4 years of study at Bournemouth University. For the first time after the reunification of Vietnam, the Government has, through an innovative programme, allocated a specific budget to send Vietnamese students to study abroad. It is anticipated that the accumulated knowledge and direct experiences of these students may help Vietnam to more rapidly develop and integrate into the global economy. Both academically and personally, my journey over the past 4

years has changed my way of thinking, has inspired me and provided a new impetus to my future career.

My time at Bournemouth was made enjoyable in large part due to the many friends that became a part of my life. There is a Vietnamese traditional saying: 'When we live, the location is a place to stay, when we leave, that place will stay in our heart and our memory', I will always remember the wonderful time I spend in Bournemouth.

Last but not least, I offer my sincere appreciation to my family and friends who constantly offered love, companionship and support during my research.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Copyright statement.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
List of publications.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of content.....	vii
List of figure.....	xi
Abbreviations.....	xii

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale.....	1
1.1.1. A brief account of the radio landscape in Vietnam.....	2
1.1.2. A brief account of the radio landscape in Western countries, especially in the UK and US.....	4
1.1.3. Web radio and its potential impacts on radio development in Vietnam.....	6
1.1.4. The discourse surrounding web radio and its effects on mass media development.....	7
1.1.5. Journalism research in Vietnam.....	13
1.2. The research structure.....	17

CHAPTER II: AIMS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

2.1. Aims.....	20
2.2. Research Methodologies.....	20
2.2.1. Mixed method research.....	20
2.2.2. Quantitative Research Methods: Offline and Online Surveys.....	21
2.2.3. Qualitative Research Method: Focus Group Interviews.....	28

CHAPTER III: ADAPTATIONS IN RADIO IN BOTH THE UK AND US SINCE ITS INCEPTION

3.1. A brief literature review on radio history in the UK and US.....	35
3.2. Changes in technologies.....	37
3.3. Changes in the ways people listen to radio.....	39
3.3.1. From a communal to an individual activity – from a medium of prime-time entertainment to a medium of companionship.....	39

3.3.2. How radio became more accessible.....	40
3.3.3. New audiences – new demands.....	42
3.4. Changes in radio programming.....	44
3.4.1. From a programme medium into a format medium.....	44
3.4.2. Phone-ins and the participatory relationship of radio and its listeners.....	46
3.4.3. Evening programmes to morning and on-demand programmes.....	47
3.5. Radio landscape in the Digital Age.....	48
3.5.1. Digital Audio Broadcasting.....	49
3.5.2. Satellite radio.....	51
3.5.3. Digital Cellular Communications.....	53
3.5.4. Web radio (Internet Radio).....	54
Summary.....	56

CHAPTER IV: In the competitive-interactive relationships between mass media: WHAT IS WEB RADIO?

4.1. The emergence of the ‘fourth’ medium: Online Journalism.....	59
4.1.1. Online Journalism’s characteristics.....	60
4.1.2. Review of online journalism.....	63
4.2. The nature of the mass media’s relationships and web radio’s position in mass media systems.....	71
4.2.1. The competition between mass media.....	71
4.2.2. Principles of the interactive and cooperate relationships between mass media.....	75
4.3. Web radio – its definitions, characteristics and developments	86
4.3.1. What web radio is.....	86
4.3.2. Characteristics of web radio.....	88
4.3.3. Influencing factors on the developments of web radio.....	93
4.3.4. Web radio audiences.....	99
Summary.....	101

CHAPTER V: THE DEVELOPMENT OF RADIO IN VIETNAM SINCE ITS INCEPTION (1945) TO THE YEAR OF RENOVATION (1986)

5.1. The ‘golden age’ of radio in Vietnam during the wars.....	103
5.1.1. Brief history of Vietnam during 1945-1975.....	104
5.1.2. VOV and its ‘golden age’ between 1945-1975.....	110
5.2. The development of VOV during the Centrally Planned Economy 1975-1986.....	124

5.2.1. Vietnam's Economy during the subsidised period 1975-1986.....	124
5.2.2. The development of VOV during the subsidised period 1975-1986.....	127
Summary.....	131

CHAPTER VI: CHANGES OF VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND ITS IMPACT ON RADIO SINCE THE ECONOMIC RENOVATION 1986

6.1. 'Doi Moi' and its impacts on Vietnamese society.....	136
6.2. Changes in the journalism landscape in Vietnam after the Economic Renovation, and its impacts on radio development.....	139
6.2.1. The challenges to VOV's position of dominance following the expanding mass media system.....	139
6.2.2. The relationships between State, the Media and the Audience: the rise of audienceship post the Economic Renovation and its influence on VOV's development.....	144
6.2.3. The fiercely competitive environment after the Economic Renovation and the weaknesses of VOV programmes.....	152
6.2.4. Market Journalism vs. State Journalism: the new mission of VOV.....	159
Summary.....	164

CHAPTER VII: The Vietnamese web user community: THEIR PERCEPTIONS, OPINIONS DEMANDS TOWARDS MEDIA, ESPECIALLY RADIO

7.1. The profile of web users: Who are they?.....	167
7.2. Media consumptions and perceptions of web users.....	171
7.2.1. Challenges for the dominant position of television in the Internet Age.....	171
7.2.2. Web users: attitudes toward the Internet.....	175
7.2.3. Newspapers: an enduring rival.....	176
7.2.4. Challenges for radio in the visual age.....	180
7.3. Differences in media consumption and perceptions between web users: both domestic and abroad.....	186
7.4. Non-radio listeners: Why DID they walk away?	189
7.5. The profile of radio listeners: Who are they?.....	199
Summary.....	203

CHAPTER VIII: CAN WEB RADIO CAPTURE THE GROUPS WHO HAVE NEGLECTED TRADITIONAL RADIO?

8.1. The characteristics of web radio listeners: Web users vs. web radio listeners.....	205
8.2. Web radio listeners: perceptions, attitudes, consumption of and demands toward web radio.....	209

8.2.1. Perceptions and attitudes towards web radio.....	209
8.2.2. Online listening: What are audiences looking for?.....	211
8.2.3. Online listening: Has it come a habit?.....	215
8.2.4. Problems encountered when listening to online radio.....	217
8.3. Radio listeners and web radio listeners: What do they think about VOV and VOVNews	220
8.3.1. How do you locate the VOVNews website?.....	220
8.3.2. What do you think about the VOVNews content and design?.....	221
8.4. How can VOV and VOVNews improve their services?.....	230
Summary.....	234

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION

9.1. Key factors contributing to the success of radio in developed countries.....	236
9.2. Major factor in the recent dramatic decline in radio listening in Vietnam.....	239
9.3. Radio, the Internet and web radio: What are the relationships between these media?.....	244
9.4. Vietnamese web users: Media consumption habits and demands towards radio, the Internet and web radio.....	246
9.5. Non-radio listeners: Why DID they walk away?.....	249
9.6. Web users and online radio listeners: Domestic vs. Overseas.....	251
9.7. VOV and VOVNews: How to serve better their listeners in the Internet Age.....	253
9.8. Beyond the PhD thesis: Further investigation	256
REFERENCES.....	257
APPENDIX.....	307

List of Figure

1. Diagram 1. Mass Media Systems.....	85
2. Diagram 2. Visual Radio System.....	333
3. Figure 1. The Party Press system before Renovation.....	150
4. Figure 2. Market-based Party Press System.....	150

List of Tables

1. Table 1. How old are you?	168
2. Table 2. Academic Qualifications.....	169
3. Table 3. Statistics for modes of access to media.....	181
4. Table 4. Geographic location vs. Awareness of participants of radio's characteristics and future	184
5. Table 5. Media consumption patterns	187
6. Table 6. Differences in awareness of the ways radio can be listened to, between home and overseas participants.....	188
7. Table 7. Web users vs. Web radio listeners: Demographic profile.....	206
8. Table 8. Differences in awareness of ways radio can be listened to: Web radio listeners vs. web users.....	208
9. Table 9. Web users vs. Web radio listeners: Perceptions and Attitudes towards radio.....	209
10. Table 10. Web radio listeners vs. Non-web radio listeners: How media are consumed daily.....	210
11. Table 11. Why do web users listen to web radio?.....	212
12. Table 12. What do you think about the VOVNews design?.....	221
13. Table 13. What do you think about VOV content?.....	225
14. Table 14. Geographical location vs. Opinions about the VOVNews design (%).....	229
15. Table 15. Geographical location vs. Opinions about the VOV content (%.).....	230

ABBREVIATIONS

1.	Aggregate Tuning Hours	ATH
2.	Australian Broadcasting Corporation	ABC
3.	British Broadcasting Corporation	BBC
4.	Columbia Broadcasting System	CBS
5.	Communist Party of Vietnam	CPV
6.	Computer Assisted Reporting	CAR
7.	Copyright Arbitration Royalty Panel	CARP
8.	Copyright Royalty Board	CRB
9.	Democratic Republic of Vietnam	DRV
10.	Digital Millennium Copyright Act	DMCA
11.	Digital Multimedia Broadcasting	DMB
12.	Digital Radio Mondiale	DRM
13.	Disc Jockeys	DJs
14.	Federal Communications Commission	FCC
15.	General Packet Radio Service	GPRS
16.	General Post Office	GPO
17.	Home Box Office	HBO
18.	International News Service	INS
19.	Internet service providers	ISP
20.	London Broadcasting Company	LBC
21.	Mechanical-Copyright protection Society	MCPS
22.	Ministry of Post and Telecommunication	MPT
23.	National Broadcasting Company	NBC
24.	National Public Radio station	NPR
25.	Non-Programme Associated Data	NPAD
26.	Performing Right Society	PRS
27.	Phonographic Performance Limited	PPL
28.	Plain Old Telephone Service	POTS
29.	Programme Associated Data	PAD
30.	Small Webcaster Settlement Act	SWSA

31.	The Associated Press	AP
32.	The Digital Performance Right in Sound Recording Act	DPRSA
33.	United Kingdom	UK
34.	United Press	UP
35.	United States	US
36.	World Wide Web	WWW
37.	Foreign Direct Investment	FDI

Chapter I:

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

This chapter describes the motivations, approaches and major stages of the research undertaken and reported in this thesis that investigates the ways in which to develop radio in Vietnam in order to capture audiences, particularly the groups who have neglected traditional radio.

My initial inspiration for this research arose from my observation of the differences in the radio landscapes of Vietnam and developed countries, particularly the UK and US. In Vietnam, since the Renovation (1986), the economic situation has significantly improved, as have the living standards of the general population. However, at the same time, radio in Vietnam has lost its dominant position within the mass media system, and is losing its audiences dramatically, especially amongst specific demographics: people living in urban areas, those who are well educated, and the youth. It is thought in Vietnam that because radio is a relatively cost-free medium, it remains popular amongst the poor and those who are living in rural or remote areas; and radio may not be able to retain the audiences those who are wealthy enough to have the opportunity to access visual media.

However, it is the case that in developed countries, including the UK and US, radio continues to experience successes, even though their audiences, generally speaking, have greater opportunities to access television and the Internet than those living in developing countries. Therefore, the central problem may not be due to the income levels of the audience, but other factors. The differences in the radio landscapes of Vietnam and the UK and US, will be discussed in following chapters in order to explore why radio in developed countries (e.g. the UK and US) continues to maintain its strong characteristic in capturing all sectors of society, and how radio in Vietnam can apply these experiences to its development.

At present, radio in the UK and US has reinvented itself and offers a number of radio's variants, including web radio. Therefore, the following sections will also explain why my thesis focuses on web radio, its relationships with traditional radio and listeners, its impact on the development of radio, and especially, explore whether web radio is a potential means to strengthen radio and capture audiences who have neglected traditional radio in Vietnam.

1.1.1. A brief account of the radio landscape in Vietnam

Generally speaking, the development of radio in Vietnam can be divided into two main periods. The first period was regarded as the 'Golden Age' of radio, lasting more than 40 years, from its inception in 1945 to 1986 (the beginning of the Economic Renovation). Due to unique historical and socio-economic conditions in Vietnam - discussed in detail in Chapters V and VI - during this period, Vietnamese radio had enjoyed a position as the predominant medium. The radio's success, on one hand, established for Vietnamese radio, a firm position in the mass media system and created a highly regarded reputation which no other media, including newspapers or television could achieve. On the other hand, this long reign generated a number of conservative characteristics, which limited its adaptability to new developments in mass media systems, as well as changes in political and socio-economical policies after 1986. For this reason, the second period of radio's development, from 1986 to date, has been a challenging time for radio in Vietnam. Having faced fierce competition with visual media, Vietnamese radio is losing its position within the mass media system, and its audience, particularly those living in urban areas, those who are well educated and the youth (Vo Tien 2004; Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.138; Nguyen Mai Phuong 2003, p.25; Dieu Anh 2005, p.24-25) (See more in Chapters V and VI).

Moreover, at the same time, radio in Vietnam has been assigned new missions as a response by the Government to the changing global political landscape. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, for the first time, the Vietnamese government had to reconsider the concept of 'friend' and 'enemy'. In 1991, CPV declared that "Vietnam is willing to be a friend to all countries in the world community, striving for peace, independence, and development" (CPV 2007, p.51; Nguyen Manh Hung 2002). The changes in the global situation, in addition to the

domestic and foreign policies of the Vietnamese Government, have led to the assignment of new missions for Vietnamese journalism, especially VOV. Media organisations, particularly VOV, have to make contributions to ending Vietnam's isolation and expanding international relations; whilst maintaining favourable conditions for social and economic development, and enhancing Vietnam's status in the world arena. One of these missions is to shape a new and more contemporary image of Vietnam - a developing country, the Vietnam of renovation and development, not a country known only through the Vietnam War.

On the other hand, since 1975, as Vietnam was no longer in conflict with America, it has become a relatively isolated country (in terms of the global political landscape) which no longer is a major political concern and of interest to Western blocs. The coverage of Vietnamese issues in the US media declined from 7% in 1971 to 1.5% in 1977 (Bogart 1981 cited Hoang Thanh Ai 2005, p.2), and shrank gradually, during each decade, from 1985 to 2001 (Hoang Thanh Ai 2005). The number of foreign correspondents in Vietnam is very small, no more than 15 individuals, according to Lamb (Yoon 2002), because Vietnam is not a newsworthy country, in comparison, for example, with Indonesia, Afghanistan or Arabic countries.

More importantly, because the global media is dominated by developed countries, the flow of information is usually disseminated from a Western perspective; therefore, this may not always reflect developing countries' positions¹. According to Lamb (Yoon 2002), the portrayal of Vietnam, particularly by Hollywood is "absolutely dreadful". Hoang Thanh Ai's (2005, p.38) study revealed that the *New York Times* - one of the most popular newspapers in the US - when informing about Vietnam, often ignored the major and positive changes in the country since its Economic Renovation in 1986. Thus, the most important issues which radio in Vietnam currently face are:

¹ For example, in the television series *Twentieth Century Battlefields* shown on BBC in 2007, the 'Tet Offensive' was highlighted as one of the 20th century's greatest battles. However, even though it was a turning point in the Vietnam War, the Tet Offensive was a military defeat for the Communists and the North Vietnamese Army. Conversely, Vietnamese media tends to highlight the *Hochiminh Campaign*, which led to the fall of Saigon and the reunification of Vietnam.

- how radio in Vietnam can develop in the competitive environment with other media.
- how radio can fulfil its new political missions assigned by the Government, and attract advertisers to improve its financial revenues.

It should be reiterated that whilst radio in Vietnam is failing to maintain its historically strong audiences, radio in the UK and US, continues to experience successes, regardless of the emergence and dramatic developments of visual media as discussed in the following sections.

1.1.2. A brief account of the radio landscape in Western countries, especially in the UK and the US

In a market with a great number of visual media providers, radio in the UK and US continues its strong position amongst well-educated and wealthy groups, discussed in detail in Chapter IV (McNair 2003, p.12; Mosco 2005, p.127; Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006b). In other words, radio in Western countries has not only survived, but continued to achieve significant successes in the television and Internet age, regardless of widespread predictions of the death of radio (Hendy 2000; Priestman 2002; Fleming 2002; Shingler and Wieringa 1998; Pease and Dennis 1993; Masterton and Patching 1986).

However, radio - the oldest electronic mass medium - has reached an historical turning-point. For the first time in its 100 years of development, radio in developed countries provides not just a single, but a number of platforms for listeners, including AM/FM (which previous generations could access), digital radio, digital television and even the Internet.

The emergence of the Internet has changed the rules for sending and receiving messages of traditional mass media, including radio. Radio has traditionally been listened to according to the schedule of a radio station; however, it can now be listened to on demand. With web radio, audiences not only 'hear' radio programmes, but also can

'view' text, pictures and even video files. Via podcasting², listeners now listen to radio when and wherever they choose to. Radio used to be perceived as a 'push' medium, in the sense that broadcasters determined the content offered - in other words, pushed towards - the listeners, whereas, web radio offers a 'pull' technology whereby the content may be 'pulled off' by the receivers.

Radio, a local medium in the de-massified (Toffler 1980) media trend, now has a global reach. Western and Eastern journalism have the same environment (the Internet) to compete in order to capture the same audiences (online users). The advantages of web radio also offer a number of impacts on radio's development in Vietnam discussed in the following section.

Practically, broadcasting radio programmes via the Internet seems to be an additional option for most traditional radio stations. Moreover, many web radio stations are completely independent from traditional ("terrestrial") radio stations and broadcast only via the Internet. Whilst, other forms of digital radio, including DAB has become popular in Western countries (developing countries tend still to be experimenting with this technology), web radio appears in most countries.

However, theoretically, there are no satisfactory answers to the questions: 'What is web radio?', 'Is web radio 'radio'?' or 'Does web radio enhance radio?' (discussed in section 1.1.4). Therefore, amongst a number of new radio's variants, I focus on the characteristics and development of web radio, the one "which has attracted most public attention over the past few years" (Berry 2004, p.289). The following sections will discuss the impacts of web radio on radio development in Vietnam, and the theoretical issues radio and web radio face.

² Podcasting is a method of distributing multimedia files, including audio programmes or music videos via the Internet for playback on mobile devices.

1.1.3. Web radio and its potential impacts on radio development in Vietnam

The emergence of web radio has had significant impacts on radio in Vietnam, firstly, in the sense that web radio potentially delivers Vietnamese radio to audiences, including 3 million Vietnamese overseas those traditional radio cannot (or finds difficult to reach). Unlike online newspapers, web radio can provide not only information, but also has the ability to create 'emotional effects'. The Vietnamese language programmes broadcast via radio are particularly impacting for expatriates, who live far way from their home country, and who may be suffering from homesickness. Via web radio they may enjoy the sensation of hearing their first language spoken, evoking memories of the place where they were born and grew up, and reconnecting audiences with Vietnamese customs and culture.

More importantly, whilst the global media has been dominated by developed countries, the Internet in general, and web radio in particular, may provide opportunities for developing countries, such as Vietnam, to reach global audiences and capture the interests of audiences who are mostly located in developed countries.

At the same time, in Vietnam, audiences can easily listen to international radio stations, including the BBC and VOA, which they find difficult to listen to via traditional radio sets. Furthermore, for the first time in Vietnam, there are a number of radio stations only available online, including YouthRadio, DigitalMusic (Nhacso.net), Showbiz (Thegioinghesi), Music (Nhac.Caigi.com), VCTV (vctv.com) and Expatriate (VNN.vn). Most importantly, web radio may potentially provide a means for Vietnamese radio to capture new audiences: the youth, the well-educated, and those living in urban areas.

It is worth noting that in Vietnam the percentage of the population who own television sets is significantly higher than those who own radio sets, in urban, and in rural areas³. However, there has recently been a remarkable increase in the number of web users in Vietnam (32.5% per year) (Communist Journal 2005). These web users are potential

³ By 51% and 16% higher, respectively, according to data compiled from the latest available study (GSO 2002).

web radio listeners, thus, it is possible that via the Internet, radio may see an increase in the number of radio listeners, similar to the growth in the number of listeners when radio was installed as standard equipment for all cars.

Therefore, in my thesis, I will investigate whether web radio is a means of modernising the radio industry and explore how to improve web radio in Vietnam. Also, due to the fact that definitions of radio and web radio continue to be controversial issues which have been discussed amongst radio researchers in recent years without satisfactory consensus, my thesis endeavours to contribute to the academic body of knowledge of extant radio study.

1.1.4. The discourse surrounding web radio and its effects on mass media development

The emergence of web radio has challenged perceptions of traditional radio which have been accepted for almost a century. As a result, web radio has been the subject of much discourse during the last decade. Having pondered why should an audio signal delivered through the Internet be called “radio” in the first place, Black (2001) posed a number of questions: if “Internet radio” is not the same as traditional radio, “why has it borrowed the name?”, and “Which comes first, the name or the medium?”. Dubber (2003 cited Garner 2004, p.49) was uncertain when positing: ‘If you put it (radio) on the Internet, is it still radio?’. The question whether we could call what we listen to on our computer ‘radio’ continues to be a problematic issue (Berry 2004, p.285).

This problem becomes more important in the sense that it relates to a number of legal issues in countries such as Germany. According to Mühlenfeld (2002), there has been political discussion about web- radio and its legal status:

The main question is whether web radio can actually be considered broadcasting per se and whether it has the same effects and influence as other mass media.

While Black (2001) wondered whether “Internet radio” is a different medium from “radio”, Abitron/Edison Media Research (2007b) defines it as: “...simply radio programming transmitted over the Internet instead of the airwaves”. However, a number

of researchers contend that web radio is not radio. Price-Davies (Thames Valley University) - in an email to the UK radio studies list on 3 June 1999 - argued: "For the most part Internet radio is not radio- it's more like an audio-on-demand service". Price-Davies (ibid) argued that it was fixed in one specific location (usually the desktop), and thus lacked the portability/mobility that distinguished contemporary radio listening; furthermore the programming was of highly variable quality, and lacked the connection with an audience that radio could achieve. Price-Davies (ibid) thought that:

Whilst it is occasionally entertaining to listen to the re-broadcast output of a station from the other side of the world - it is impossible to feel part of the listening community - the traffic information, local news and information, etc., for example, are meaningless. As for Internet stations- much of their output is more like that of a jukebox (one where you only have a limited amount of control over the music that you listen to). This lack of identification with the listenership is one of the most serious obstacles.

Berry (2004, p.285) suggests:

Perhaps, we can define radio as being a programme or series of programmes intended to be received without images and broadcast live rather than accessed on demand.

However, via web radio, audiences can listen to live radio programmes broadcast on air via a computer. Even with on-demand services, the radio programmes people listen to via the Internet are, usually, an exact mirror of the programming heard previously broadcast over-the-air. Therefore, in that sense, is an on-demand programme not 'radio', according to Berry's (2004, p.285) definition? Interestingly, Berry (ibid) may not have complete confidence in this definition, admitting that:

I have had this debate several times with colleagues on the UK based "Radio Studies" email discussion list, and while we have had some stimulating debates I am not sure that we have ever reached a satisfactory answer.

Dubber (2003 cited Garner 2004, p.49) believed that in order to study online audio, the medium must be approached on its own terms, and not merely as an extension of AM/FM transmission. Priestman (2002, p.4) argues that:

Radio needed no more definition than the transmission system by which we picked it up. All sound programming carried from a transmitter to our tuner using the properties of electromagnetic waves we called radio. What is more the precise nature of the radio medium is determined by the available technology we use to hear it and that has changed over time.

Priestman (2002, p.49) further suggests:

...it will be most helpful to define the 'web radio station' as only the streaming audio part of a website, as described earlier under 'streaming'.

However, according to Coyle (2000), there are three main types of radio-style functions and outcomes on the Internet: station's real-time radio broadcasts, on-demand radio programmes, and finally, Internet features, including news summaries, programme scripts and links to other sites. In other words, web radio has already adopted a number of strong elements of the Internet, including visual effects and interactive capabilities (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.7). Therefore, with web radio we have a redefinition of radio as both a medium and a technology. Consequently, web radio, including webcasts of "traditional radio" and web-only stations should be investigated as a single entity: a variant of radio, only available in the Internet, using streaming or podcasting to deliver radio programmes, which are supported by web features - for example texts, pictures, and interactive tools - to serve niche audiences: the Internet users.

In addition, predicting the future of web radio is also a problematic issue. A number of people are optimistic about listening to radio via the Internet. Peter Everett (cited Beck 2002), the ex-BBC producer argued:

Global internet radio will segment listeners by niche interests rather than by geographic location. The connection/identification will be different but just as strong as, if not stronger than, that generated by locality - based services... I like to know what is happening in distant places - both those I know from visits and those I don't. Radio stations do for the ears what postcards do for the eyes. In short, I am excited about Internet radio, and I think it is going to be huge.

A number of researchers are cautious about the future of web radio. One temptation in such a visually orientated world is to argue that the most beneficial thing this

technology can do for radio is to supply it with images or text. Indeed, according to Priestman (2002, p.44) this was the reason why many radio enthusiasts were suspicious of web radio, because they feared that the requirement to interact visually weakened radio's unique identity and heralded its takeover by TV. Warren (2005, p.170-171) is not convinced that the Internet has enhanced radio listening, and has doubts about the nature of the future of web radio.

At this point, the following questions are posed: what are the characteristics of web radio and what are the relationships between radio programmes, text, and pictures in web radio production. Crisell (2004, p.7) raises a significant issue:

... Whether this (Internet Radio) would be "enhanced radio"- radio with added pictures or "reduced radio"- radio which has been relegated to the status of a soundtrack. Given the primacy of our faculty of sight the latter possibility may seem more likely.

Conversely, a study by Arbitron/Edison Media Research (2000) affirmed that as the Internet is first and foremost a visual medium, web radio producers need to make their sites visually appealing, and high-quality web design is essential.

A number of researchers have endeavoured to identify new terminology to define radio and web radio. Tacchi (2000, p.292), coined the term 'radiability' for all that is radio (or similar): "By radiability I mean the technical ability to be radio or to be radio-like or 'radiogenic'...". Beck (2002) suggested the term 'radioworld' for the enormous range of all the particular instances of radio:

The point to be made here is that all the instances of 'radiability' or 'radioworld' across the media, may resist our traditional concepts of formal analyses... It could be that we can't say at the moment what is, and what is not radio/audio, and we do not have sufficient terminology and theory to do so.

It should be noted that due to its relatively recent emergence, there are a limited number of publications specifically related to web radio, even though the number of web radio stations has radically increased and is widespread globally.

After approximately 10 years of web radio development, in terms of technological aspects, a number of authors have investigated web radio as a new way of broadcasting

and listening to radio (Walcutt 1998; Hendy 2000); others are investigating the new technologies which render existing Internet radio (and TV networks) more attractive to roaming users (Cheng 1999; Tedesco 1999; Dutta and Schulzrinne 2004). Linderman (2000) predicted the factors influencing the expansion of web radio, including wireless Internet technology; others have explored technical tools for managing and customising audio broadcast content on the Internet, for example the Customised Internet radio (CIR) framework (Krishnan and Chang 2000, p.609-618). Also, researchers have explored a number of issues, including copyright, such as Kerschbaumer (2000), Priestman (2002), Albinak (2000, 2002a, b, c), McClung *et al.* (2003) and Harwood (2004), or the diversity of content which Internet radio can and has provided for its listeners (Compaine and Smith 2001).

To date, there have been also a number of studies investigating the way radio stations use the Web. In 1998, Lind and Medoff (1999, p.218) undertook a content analysis of 900 radio station sites and found that they underutilised the Internet (at the time of study) as they contained 'surprisingly little information content'. However, it was not long that traditional radio realised the importance of the Internet and started to recognise the Web as a potential outlet for programming information (Sands 1999 cited Abelman 2005, p.18), as a source of advertiser income without cluttering their broadcast signals (Keith 1999), and as a promotional tool (Lin and Jeffres⁴ 2001, p.555-573; Potter⁵ 2002; Pitts and Harms⁶ 2003, p.270-281; Hamula and Williams⁷ 2003; Ren and Chan-

⁴ Lin and Jeffres (2001, p.555-573) - by analysing 422 websites related to local newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations - found that radio websites utilised the Web primarily for promotional purposes

⁵ Potter (2002) analysed the home pages of 365 randomly selected FM station web sites. The findings indicated that there was a significant difference between the information stations provide on their sites, and what listeners want to find, particularly in terms of interactive elements on station websites, live broadcast and community information.

⁶ Pitts and Harms (2003, p.270-281) analysed the content of 461 radio station websites to determine how radio stations use the Internet for promotional purposes and found that radio stations underutilised the advantages from the Internet to support their stations, in terms of accessibility and interactivity, for example, email addresses, search engine, site map, or had not used sufficiently the web to provide news, weather and sports information to online users

⁷ Hamula and Williams (2003, p.262-269) examined how radio station in small markets used the web as a promotional tool and found that small market radio stations preferred specific types of

Olmsted⁸ 2004). Ferguson (2000) suggested that radio stations use the Web as an imaging tool for retention-oriented promotional campaigns, a conclusion reinforced by recent content analyses performed by Potter (2002), and Pitts and Harms (2003). Perhaps, utilising the web as a promotional tool enabled radio stations (with websites) to have significant higher Arbitron/Edison Media Research ratings for target and tangential audiences than stations without websites (Murphy and Rayho 1997 cited Abelman 2005, p.18). Consequently, at present, most web radios related to conventional stations offer online advertising information about the traditional station - including the radio station's history and development, the organisational operation, the staff, the schedule of their programmes, and of course, highlighted radio programmes via on-demand services. These studies informed my thesis in investigating the relationship between VOV, VOVNews and its listeners.

Amongst the existing texts regarding web radio, the majority are "how to" publications, which are principally guides for audiences intending to listen to radio online (Walcutt 1998, Heberlein 2002), or guidelines for broadcasters planning to build and manage a radio station on the web (Sawyer and Greely 2000). In these texts the practical aspects of establishing and managing a web radio station are addressed, but not the theoretical sites, including the definition of radio and web radio, the relationships between mass media (after web radio particularly and online journalism in general emerged), the relationship between radio, web radio and their listeners in the Internet Age, or predictions about the future of web radio.

Priestman (2002) has established the foundation for web radio research, discussing technology, legal issues, the relationship between broadcasters and the music industry and the radio content available in the Internet. Priestman (2002, p.30) realised that for the first time, (web) radio faces the challenge of defining itself by the nature of its content rather than the technology required for its production. As a result, the question

website content, particularly, promotion of on-air contests, advertising for radio stations, information about station personnel, and music requests.

⁸ Ren and Chan-Olmsted (2004, p.6-25) undertook content analysis to explore the difference between the web content of Internet-based radio stations and terrestrial radio stations streaming online, and found that the terrestrial radio station websites acted more as information providers, whilst the Internet-based station websites acted more as the communication facilitators.

of 'What is web radio' and 'Is web radio 'radio' continue to be open issues. Moreover, the characteristics of web radio have yet to be clarified, and there are no criteria offered for the successful establishment of a web radio station. There is a lack of available data relating to the characteristics and demographics of web radio audiences. This is important information that relates directly to the future development of the medium and consequently an area of potential further investigation.

Without adopting approaches of previous researchers, in this thesis I will place radio and web radio in the context of mass media systems and investigate the relationship between mass media in those systems. This relationship has enabled all mass media to co-exist and co-develop (without replacing each other), although they have the same function of delivering information and entertainment. It is anticipated that analysis of the findings will suggest an answer to the questions 'What is radio?' and 'What is web radio?'. Furthermore, I endeavour to explore the nature of web radio - its strengths, weaknesses, and potentials - in order to investigate how to improve the quality of web radio, and contribute to the academic body of knowledge of radio studies in general. The following section will explain the final reason for my undertaking this research project.

1.1.5. Journalism research in Vietnam

In Vietnam, journalism research can be divided in to three stages⁹: before 1945, from 1945 to 1975, and after 1975. In the first stage, the study of journalism was included in research into literature, as the majority of journalists and researchers were writers, and the barrier between literature and journalism was not distinguished (Tran The Phiet 2005, p.6; Ha Minh Duc 1994, p.1).

In the second stage, 1945-1975, due to the political situation in Vietnam, there were two systems of journalism existing separately, one in the North and the other in the South. In the South, there were a number of texts published relating to journalism, including those

⁹ They are divided in to 3 stages, according to the major landmarks in the history of Vietnam in general, and media's development in particular: the first Vietnamese newspaper was debut on the 1st April 1865 (Do Quang Hung 2000; Huynh Van Tong 2000), in 1945, Vietnam proclaimed to be independent, and in 1975 the nation was reunited.

of Vu Bang (1969), Te Xuyen (1968), Huynh Van Tong (1965), Nguyen Ngu Y (1965). These texts focused on the development of newspapers, the only medium available during this period (although it is noted that the French Government broadcast a small French language radio station before 1945 (Le Dinh Dao 2003)). In the North, the majority of journalism studies comprised articles published by Party leaders, including Ho Chi Minh, Truong Chinh, To Huu and Hoang Tung (Tran The Phiet 2005, p.6).

In the third stage, from 1975 to date, journalism is investigated from different dimensions, including the history of journalism development, theories and practices, journalism genres and the journalism of Ho Chi Minh. However, according to a number of researchers, including Tran The Phiet (2005, p.6) and Do Anh Duc (2005, p.26), journalism research and radio study particularly are in the fledging stages, and have not yet caught up with the dramatic development of journalistic practices in Vietnam. Regardless of a dearth of publications in this field, as the majority of journalism researchers in Vietnam studied in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries in the 1970s and 80s, most texts published in Vietnam referred to Russian sources, which may be out of date.

Moreover, almost all texts on the subject of radio refer to the history of Vietnamese broadcasting, or are the reminiscences or memoirs of a number of experienced and well-regarded journalists. Existing publications regarding the history of radio's development have focused on the period between VOV's inception (in 1945) and 1975, highlighting the role of VOV during the 30 years of conflicts in Vietnam. The development of VOV after 1975 was referred to in only 5 pages of the book *Broadcasting* (VOV-Sub Institution of Journalism 2002) and less than 10 pages in the book *50 years of VOV's development* (VOV 1995). In terms of web radio, it is nominally referred to in a limited number of texts on radio as a new way to listen to the radio. In Vietnam, there are no texts specifically relating to web radio or other modern radio variants, including DAB, as a distinct entity.

Additionally, audience, and radio listening research - in particular - have not been paid sufficient attention in Vietnam. There is a single Audience Research Department, part of the Committee of Ideology and Culture (VOV-Sub Institution of Journalism 2002, p.106), however, this Department does not routinely publish findings about media

audiences, including radio listening behaviour. Regarding VOV, it was not until 1997 that the Listener Department was assigned a duty to investigate radio listenership (VOV 2003, p.30). With the exception of a limited number of listener's surveys conducted by VOV itself, researching radio listeners was undertaken sparsely by just a few researchers, including Ly Hoang Ngan (2000) and Tran Ba Dung (2007).

Most importantly, whilst radio is able to maintain its important role in the geographical areas where listeners cannot afford to access visual media, radio's competitive ability - the primary motivation for radio to develop - can only be explored when radio is placed in the same environment as its competitors. However, in Vietnam, there is no extant research to investigate reasons for the rapid decline of radio listening in urban areas, or amongst the groups who are young and well-educated - the groups of people who may have more opportunities to access visual media. Therefore, this research should be conducted because only when having placed radio in the highly competitive arena with visual media will it be possible to explore its endless ability to adapt to changing environments. In other words, it is only within this fierce competition can radio improve its quality in order to survive and develop.

It is worth noting that to some extent, Vietnamese journalism shares a number of similarities to that of China. Before the economic reforms (in both countries), the Chinese and Vietnamese media were well integrated into the communist political structure as a means of political control (Pan and Chan 2003; Burgh 2000, 2003; Winfield and Peng 2005, Huang 2003; Lee 1994 and Chapter V). In this structure, journalists were expected to share the perspectives and practices of the Soviet model of the press that define them as party propagandists (Siebert *et al.* 1963), in addition, the roles and functions of the media in both countries continue to be to 'educate, agitate and organise the masses' (Yong 2000, p.617; Duong Xuan Son *et al.* 1995; Huu Tho 2000, p.252-255). Similarly to Vietnamese journalism during the subsidised period, in China, no negative reporting was permitted - even reporting a traffic accident was forbidden (Burgh 2003, p.802) - until the taboo was broken around 1980s. Since the economic reforms, the media landscapes in both countries have changed significantly (Zhou 2000, Pan and Chan 2003, Winfield and Peng 2005, Yong 2000; Chapter VI). A number of the changes in media in China are similar to those of Vietnam. For example, for the first time in both countries, most press outlets have obtained financial self-sufficiency,

rendering them independent of the Party/State budgetary control (He and Chen 1998 cited Zhou 2000, p.599; Winfield and Peng 2005; Chapter VI). After the Economic Reform in China, there also emerged fierce competition amongst media outlets, which was unusual, if it occurred at all, in the former planned economy (Zhou 2000, p.599). Moreover, whilst remaining subject to the Government's ultimate control, in terms of content, the media in both countries are encouraged to raise revenues, particularly from advertising, which means that the consumer has to be taken into account (Burgh 2003, p.803; Yong 2000, Chapter VI).

However, pioneering researchers who wrote about China's media reforms have become more interested in the impact of commercialisation on the Chinese press system and the interplay of power within the Communist Party-state (Chu 1994, Zhao 2000). A number of these researchers have analysed the press transformation within a state-versus-market framework (Hao *et al.* 1998, Wehrfritz 1998, Zhao 2000), whilst other authors have mainly attempted to interpret and explain the apparent presence of tensions and ambiguities involving the Chinese Communist Party's political control and economic liberalism (Lee 1994; Winfield and Peng 2005), or discuss the relationship between changing journalism and democratisation and political communication (Chuan-Chin 2000; Burgh 2000, 2003; Yong 2000; Zhou 2000). None of the existing English documents I have reviewed and analysed explores the competition amongst media itself, and how radio can cope with the sudden and fiercely competitive environment, particularly with visual media, after the Economic Renovation. Most importantly, the primary purpose of my research is to investigate experiences regarding radio's development in Western countries in order to apply those which are relevant to Vietnamese radio. Therefore, Chinese journalism may be of interest to a limited extent; however is not a subject of my research, and is therefore unlikely to inform this thesis.

Moreover, due to the 30 years of war and conflicts and 20 years of political and economical embargo by the US and other Western countries, information about Western countries, particularly their media, was in short supply in Vietnam. For this reason, gaining experiences from radio's developments and its adaptability in Western countries - in order to apply these to Vietnamese radio - is an essential imperative. The following chapter will present the research questions and methodologies, the data used in the

inquiry and the process of compiling this thesis, whilst the next section will provide the structure of my study.

1.2. THE RESEARCH STRUCTURE

My thesis comprises nine chapters, including an Introduction and Conclusion. Following the second chapter about Aims and Methodologies, the third and fourth chapters will discuss two distinct approaches for investigating web radio: the historical development of radio and the mass media's competitive and interactive relationships. These two chapters, drawing a comprehensive landscape of radio's development in the UK and US - focusing on the Digital Age - will establish a foundation in order to compare and contrast radio's development in Vietnam in the five following chapters.

Chapter III will explain the first research approach to investigate web radio, incorporating an historical perspective. It is contended that it is its endless adaptabilities that have enabled radio to survive, develop and maximise its audiences, regardless of fierce competition with visual media. In the Internet Age, radio provides not only a single platform for listeners, but a number of radio's variants. Consequently, new terminologies are used, according to these variants, including web radio, digital radio, and visual radio. From an historical approach, this chapter endeavours to investigate deeply a specific radio variant, one which challenges the perceptions of radio that have been accepted for almost a century: web radio.

Whilst the historical perspective in chapter III is the first point of view adopted to identify web radio, web radio will also be investigated from an alternative approach: the relationship between mass media within their systems, particularly since the emergence of a new form of journalism - online journalism. This will be done in order to propose new ways to define web radio and explore web radio's characteristics in comparison with conventional radio. This chapter comprises three sections: the emergence of the 'fourth' journalism - online-journalism; the competitive and interactive relationships between mass media and the definition of web radio and finally, web radio: its characteristics and development.

Chapters III and IV do not only provide two approaches to define web radio, but also draw a picture about radio's development in developed countries since its inception to the Internet Age. This useful foundation enabled me to compare and contrast radio's development in Vietnam with that of developed countries, in order to explore possible reasons why radio in these countries continues to experience fruitful achievements, although, this is not the case in Vietnam, particularly in urban areas.

The opening chapter about Vietnamese radio, Chapter V, describes the development of radio, especially VOV, from its inception in 1945 through to 1975 (when the Vietnam War ended), to 1986 (the starting point of the Economic Renovation). It is contended that radio's position as the dominant communication medium of VOV which lasted for 30 years during the war period, continued to remain so for more than 10 years until Vietnam applied the Economic Renovation. However, during this period, VOV had a number of weaknesses, which limited its adaptability and development in the following stage, when radio faced fierce competition with visual media.

Chapter VI deals with the current situation regarding radio in Vietnam within the context of the significant changes in Government policies and the media landscape after 1986, when, for the first time, media organisations became subject to market conditions. However, in the new socio-economic renovation, the dominant position of VOV in the mass media systems was challenged dramatically. Radio in Vietnam is losing its audience, especially people in urban areas, the well-educated (including students, academic and white-collar workers) and the young. Hence, Chapter VI investigates the impacts of the Economic Renovation on media, its changes and the major challenges this resulted in for radio. This chapter is intended as a bridge to investigate the relationship between radio, web radio and radio listeners after the Economic Renovation in the following chapters (VII, VIII).

Chapter VII explores reasons why the identified groups no longer favour radio. Having analysed data from the offline and online surveys, and focus group interviews, I will explore the habits of consuming media, especially radio and the Internet, of the groups of audiences who listened to radio the least. Moreover, I will examine why the percentage of radio listeners amongst these groups were significantly low in recent years and explore if and how the Internet changes their habits of consuming media. This

will be done in order to discover if web radio is a means to capture these audiences for radio. This is an important issue, crucial to the further development of radio in Vietnam discussed in Chapter VIII.

Chapter VIII will focus on the Internet community, clarifying web radio listeners' characteristics, their perceptions and opinions towards radio, the Internet and web radio, and their media consumption behaviour. Most importantly, I endeavour to explore if web radio strengthens radio listenership in the Internet Age. Having analysed, in-depth, listeners' comments about VOV and VOVNews' services, I will propose solutions to improve radio in Vietnam.

Finally, the concluding chapter will be a review of the thesis, in which the research findings will be related to the research questions. The conclusion also discusses, briefly, the results of my research, its importance to the study of radio and the development of radio and web radio in Vietnam.

Chapter II:

AIMS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Following the Introduction, this chapter will address the research questions and methodologies applied to my thesis. Not only does this chapter provide a comprehensive discussion of and justification for the selected research methodologies, it also explains in detail the research procedure (and problems occurred) when I was undertaking the empirical studies.

2.1. AIMS:

My initial purpose for conducting this research was to explore the ways in which radio has adapted itself in the UK and US in order to apply these relevant experiences to the development of radio in Vietnam. Due to the constraints of this research, I intend to focus on web radio, one of radio's variants in the Digital Age, which has attracted the most interest from public opinion and discourse amongst researchers (Berry 2004).

Most importantly, my research will explore the relationship between traditional radio, web radio and radio listeners. I endeavour to explore the impacts of web radio on traditional radio in Vietnam, especially in the changing circumstances after 1986. In addition to these aims, my thesis will investigate whether web radio can strengthen the listenership within the identified groups who have neglected traditional radio in Vietnam - those who live in urban areas, the young and the well educated - and identify how to improve the quality service of radio and web radio in Vietnam.

2.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

2.2.1. MIXED METHOD RESEARCH

It has often been observed (Benbasat *et al.* 1987, p.382) and is widely accepted that no single research methodology is intrinsically better than any other. Each method reveals slightly different facets of the same symbolic reality, and provides a different line of

sight directed towards the same point, observing social and symbolic reality (Berg 2007, p.5).

Therefore, many authors have called for the use of combination of research methods - in other words, mixed methods - in order to improve the quality of research. By combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements (Berg 2007, p.5; Hansen *et al.* 1998, p.1). Hence, in order to investigate this project - "*Radio and its listenership in the Internet Age: Case studies of VOV and VOVNews*" - I decided to use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods: offline and online surveys, and focus group interviews. The following chapter will explain why and how I apply those methodologies. It is also acknowledged that mix methods research means dealing with different types of data and consequently, different kind of data analysis, which will be presented in Chapters VII and VIII.

2.2.2. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS: OFFLINE AND ONLINE SURVEYS

According to Williams (*et al.* 1988, p.18), it was not until 1930s that the social sciences, mass communication research particularly, had matured to the point at which investigators could seriously attack the intellectual issue of media effects. Williams (*ibid*) also indicated that statistical methods, more precise measurement techniques, and the eventual trend towards using computers all marked the development of social science research as it moved towards empirical, quantitative investigation. These techniques were important as only when these research tools became available that a scientific approach to the study of mass communication could be initiated (Lowery and DeFleur 1983 cited Williams *et al.* 1988, p.18).

Jensen (2002, p.214) regards surveys as a major form of quantitative research that does not involve any manipulation of participants or their circumstances in advance as they collect data after the fact. Surveys are typically cross-sectional - that is, they gather large amounts of data from large samples (Schroder 2003, p.225). One of the strengths of surveys is that they can measure many variables (including demographics and lifestyle information, attitudes, motivates) thus allowing statistical analysis of multiple

and complex relationships (Williams *et al.* 1988, p.35; Wimmer and Dominick 1994, p.109) and are thus relatively cost-effective (Schroder 2003, p.225). Gray and Guppy (1999 cited Schroder 2003, p.225) also affirmed that if a researcher's goal is to determine a single value, describe a variable with more than one value, describe a relationship between variables, explain a relationship among variables, or influence something, then a survey is a useful research instrument. Furthermore, they can be used interactively to refine hypotheses and questions.

Surveys collect data after the fact, and usually seek to provide empirical data collected from a population of respondents on a whole range of topics or issues. Surveys are not simply restricted to the collection of information, but also a useful method for researching individual opinions, attitudes, behaviour and so on, towards a whole range of topics and issues (Negrine and Newbold 1998, p.225). Surveys can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings, for example newspaper reading, television viewing, and consumer behaviour patterns (Wimmer and Dominick 1994, p.108).

In order to explore the characteristics, behaviours, opinions and knowledge of potential web radio listeners towards web radio and radio particularly, and other media in general, I conducted offline and online surveys¹⁰.

2.2.2.1. Offline survey:

The offline survey was conducted in May 2005 in Hanoi, in order to investigate the needs of consuming radio and the Internet of the well-educated and the youth, who it was anticipated may be potential web radio listeners. In my research, I applied the technique of "convenience sample", referred to as a convenience or availability sample (Berg 2007, p.43; Davies 2007, p.55; Black 1999, p.125), in which the category of sample relied on available subjects - those who are easily accessible. It is noted that

¹⁰ However, it is acknowledged that in survey research, there is no acceptable and valid methods to determine whether respondents' answers are truthful (Wimmer and Dominick 1994, p.134), therefore, I have to accept the answers as they are given.

even though “availability samples” were chosen in my offline survey, participants were evaluated for appropriateness of fit for my research: they were those who have greater opportunities to access online media as they work with computers and have high accessibility to the Internet, including students, white-collar workers and business people. They were thought to be web users and potential web radio listeners.

In my offline survey, I applied the technique of ‘self-completion’ or self-administered questionnaires (Shoemaker and McCombs 1989, p.155; Negrine and Newbold 1998, p.236), in which I myself delivered the questionnaires to participants and left individual participant to complete the questionnaire on their own and in their own time, and collected questionnaires at a later point. Self-administered questionnaires give participants more privacy, and ensure standardized presentation of questions (Shoemaker and McCombs 1989, p.155). Amongst the 408 participants in my offline survey, 191 were students, of which 112 studied at the Faculty of Journalism and 79 studied at the Faculty of Tourism (Hanoi National University). 217 questionnaires were delivered in person to five companies: the Auditing and Accounting Financial Consulting Company (AFC), Deposit Insurance of Vietnam, the Environmental Investment Company, Dragon Capital and the Van Lang Shipping Company - 57, 53, 43, 35, and 29 respectively. 374 questionnaires were returned, of which seven questionnaires were not valid due to incorrect answers (after cross-checking several questions¹¹). It should be noted that as my questionnaires were handed out in person, the offline survey actually overcame the major weakness of lower response as it is often the case of the mailing self-administered technique (Shoemaker and McCombs 1989, p.155). The number of questionnaires (in my offline survey) valid for analysis was 367, which was a high response rate (89%).

Even though the offline survey drew a picture about perceptions and attitudes of the young and well-educated towards mass media (especially radio, the Internet and web radio), and the ways they consumed media; it did not provide a detailed picture about web radio listeners. The number of participants who knew about web radio was only 65 (17%).

¹¹ If a participant stated that he/she did not know he/she could listen to radio via the computer, and later on, said that he/she had ever listened to web radio, I regarded the response as not valid.

One of the weakest points of this offline survey is that web radio listeners are scattered all over the world, whilst all of the offline survey participants were located in Hanoi. That means, regardless of some useful results which the offline survey generated, the samples in the offline survey did not reflect well enough the Internet community, which has a special characteristic - globalisation. Moreover, the offline survey did not include the opinions of expatriates, one of the groups whom it is thought may find web radio most valuable. Most importantly, as the number of web radio listeners in the offline survey was modest, it is not possible to build a picture about the characteristics, opinions and demands of this community towards radio and web radio. Therefore, findings from the offline survey were limited applied in my thesis, and basically, most of data analysed in Chapters VII and VIII generated from the online survey conducted in February 2006 (otherwise it is stated that the statistic came from my offline survey 2005).

2.2.2.2. Online survey

In February 2006, I conducted an online survey, which looked more closely at the web user community - as they have a strong potential to become web radio listeners. The findings from my online survey also potentially provide significant information about the web user community, an emerging factor in media audiences, which were not taken into account in previous surveys, including those undertaken by VOV (2001a) or Tran Huu Quang (2001).

In order to conduct this online survey, I applied the technique of “purposive samples” (Berg 2007, p.43-44, Davies 2007, p.57; Black 1999, p.118) in the sense that samples are believed to be ‘typical’ or ‘representative’ of the population being studied. The followings will explain how I can select ‘purposive samples’ for my online survey.

Even though online fora are popular in Vietnam and also easily accessible for my research, I realised that members for these fora often gathered by their specific interests, for example those who like cars may join otofun.com, while those who like travelling may join phuot.com¹², and those who want to share information and experiences in

¹² Ôtô means a car and Phuot means travelling in Vietnamese language.

giving birth and raising children may join webtretho.com or lamchame.com. Consequently, members of the online fora may not reflect well enough the demographics of Vietnamese web users. Therefore, I decided to select email addresses from those who posted their opinions in a number of well-known Vietnamese online newspapers, including *VietnamNet*, *VNExpress*, the *Youth of HoChiMinh City's Online Newspaper* and the *Pioneers*. The topics discussed included a wide range of subjects from politics, socio-economics, culture, and education to lifestyle issues. Those topics arose as a consequent of the wide range of web users in terms of gender, age and profession; as a result, it is thought that these participants may well reflect the Vietnamese web user community. It also should be noted that, in my analysis in Chapters VII and VIII, the term 'web users' are used to refer to the whole sample of my online survey, including those who listen and those who do not listen to web radio. The term 'web radio listeners' refers to those who are web users and listen to web radio, whilst 'non-web radio listeners' are those who are web users, but have not listened or do not listen to online radio.

The online questionnaire was titled '*What do you think about radio, the Internet and web radio?*'. It consisted of 21 questions with approximately 100 variables. The survey aimed to:

- explore the characteristics of web radio listeners, in terms of demographics (including gender age, educational attainment, profession and location).
- investigate media behaviour of web users (in general) and web radio listeners (in particular).
- examine the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of web users and web radio listeners about radio, the Internet and web radio.
- explore the perceptions and opinions of VOVNews listeners towards the content and design of VOV and VOVNews.

The online survey was created using SNAP and subjected to SPSS for analysis. The survey was translated into Vietnamese in order to make it easier for Vietnamese people to understand. Before conducting this online survey, I sent the questionnaire to a small

group of participants to test (as I also did when conducting the offline survey), in order to assess the clarity of the question, make sure that participants understand all questions and answer the questions asked, and ensure the survey is just long enough for their patience. The pre-testing was useful, as some minor changes had been made before the survey was actually posted online¹³. The online survey was hosted by the Market research Group at Bournemouth University.

I conducted the survey by distributing it via a link from an email message to more than 4,500 collected email addresses. Because online surveys are self-selecting, it was important that the introductory email should capture the attention of potential respondents and encourage their participation. After 3 weeks, I received approximately 1300 responses of which 1215 were valid for analysis¹⁴. The percentage of valid responses for the online survey was 26%, compared with the numbers of emails sent. The following are some of the advantages and disadvantages we found after conducting the online survey:

¹³ After the pilot research, I eliminated the question regarding participant's income from my questionnaire. The reason was that my participants were scattered in many countries, and due to the differences in the living standards between different countries, it seemed very difficult to compare the income level amongst participants. For example, in Vietnam, the average income per capital is approximately 1000 USD per year, and in big cities like Hanoi, the Party Committee is striving to reach an average income per capital of 1,500 USD per year. In other words, a wealthy participant in Hanoi may have an income much lower than that of an un-wealthy participant living in the UK or US.

Furthermore, if I had asked this question, I would have to list the income scale, which would be a wide range from the bottom category to the top level. Having consulted a small group of the targeted participants in Vietnam (in my pilot research), I found that participants did not feel comfortable when their incomes were one tenth compared to the top income level in my questionnaire (particularly when my home targeted participants belonged to the 'elite' groups in Vietnam, in terms of educational attainment and social status). The unhappy feeling when answering the 'income' question might reduce their interests in answering the rest of my questionnaire. Most importantly, I intended to encourage participants to leave their detailed information, in order to conduct focus group interviews at the follow-up research stage. Therefore, in order to avoid "potentially embarrassing questions" (Wimmer and Dominick 1994, p.113) for participants, I decided not to ask participants about their income.

¹⁴ The other, approximately, 85 responses were either blank or duplicated.

Advantages of conducting an online survey	Disadvantages of conducting an online survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Can reach a wide geographical area * Offers anonymity¹⁵ * Rapid responses (typically 1-3 days) * Saves time in electronic data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Percentage of responses is relatively lower than that of the offline survey * Difficulties locating respondents and their email addresses. * Time-consuming in collecting email addresses and replying when respondents sent emails chatting or posing questions to researchers. * The online questionnaire has to be shorter than the offline one as web users are usually not patient when surfing the Internet. Therefore, information gathered from online surveys may be more limited than offline surveys.

These two surveys provide a general picture about the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of the well-educated, the young and web users towards radio, the Internet and web radio.

However, survey research has a number of disadvantages. In a survey, without control of independent-variable variation, researchers cannot be certain whether the relations between independent variables and dependent variables are causal or noncausal (Wimmer and Dominick 1994, p.109). In order to gain a better understanding of the data collected, the surveys' findings should be combined with other qualitative methodologies, including focus group interviews. In this way, the broad data obtained from the surveys will be supported by deep information obtained through qualitative analyse.

¹⁵ It should be noted that anonymity is a useful feature when conducting listener surveys in Vietnam, due to a number of characteristics of Vietnamese audiences referred to in the VOV (2003, p.35) study. It was reported that Vietnamese people were sensitive about the term 'survey' because this word in Vietnamese means 'investigation', which is mostly undertaken by police officers. Secondly, due to a culture of hesitance to criticise directly, and respect for the long history of the development of VOV, Vietnamese listeners tended to express positive opinions towards VOV and its radio programmes when they were interviewed in person (in face-to-face survey) (VOV 2003, p.36).

Interestingly, one of the useful outcomes of the online and offline surveys is that there are a significant numbers of participants willing to take part in my online in-depth interviews or focus group interviews in the follow-up stage, approximately 200 and 160 participants, respectively. By conducting interviews, I will gain more information about web radio listeners' needs and the requirements of journalism in general and web radio. Having combined all methodologies applied, I will explore to what extent VOV and VOVNews satisfy their listeners, and ways to develop radio and web radio in Vietnam.

2.2.3. Qualitative Research Method: Focus Group Interviews

According to Hansen (1998, p.257), discovering the important issue of “how” audiences make sense of media messages is not easily done through survey research alone. Survey research is good at providing a snapshot of audience beliefs, attitudes and behaviour - the “what” of audience and media relationships - but is much less suited to telling us about the “why” and “how” of such relationships (ibid). In other words, questionnaire are appropriate for obtaining quantitative information and explaining how many people ‘hold’ a certain (predefined) ‘opinion’, whilst focus group interviews are better for exploring how points of view are constructed and expressed (Kitzinger and Barbour 1999, p.5).

In order to examine the dynamics of the role of radio, the Internet and web radio, or how audiences use the media as a resource in their everyday lives, it is necessary to turn to more qualitative methods. These will allow me to observe - in a more ‘natural’ setting than that of the survey - how audiences relate to media (both as technologies and as content). Therefore, I intended to conduct focus group interviews - a method first used in the evaluation of audience responses to radio programmes during the early 1940s (Merton 1946 and 1987 cited Stewart and Shamdasani 1990, p.122; Merton 1990).

It is noted that despite the early origins in the social sciences, the method became widely used in the next few decades in commercial marketing research rather than in sociology and related discipline (Greenbaum 1998 cited Bloor *et al.* 2001, p.2). It was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that the approach experienced a renaissance in social sciences, bringing with it renewed examination of its methodological merit and applications (Stewart and Shamdasani 1990; Hansen 1998, p.259). In Vietnam, the

methodology of focus group interviews is a new technique, which has not been applied in publicised audience research studies. In Vietnam, audience research continues to be dominated by questionnaires (VOV 2001a, Tran Huu Quang 2001; Ly Hoang Ngan 2000a, b; Tran Ba Dung 2007), individual interviews (Tran Huu Quang 2001) or feedback via letters from listeners, readers or viewers.

In my thesis, focus group interviews are used in the latter stage of quantitative projects. Findings from the focus group interviews will facilitate the interpretation of previously obtained quantitative results, add depth to the responses in the offline and online surveys, and provide new insights and knowledge about the relationship between radio, web radio and Vietnamese listeners, which previously were not well understood.

Even though a focus group may not actually offer the same depth of information as individual interviews (Berg 2007, p.149; Fern 1982, p.6-7; Greenbaum 2000, p.17), this research method allows me to observe how audiences make sense of radio and web radio through conversations and interactions with each other. I will utilise the ‘group interactions’ - in which one group member reacts to comments made by another (Berg 2007, p.144-146; Kitzinger and Barbour 1999, p.4) - as a part of the data-gathering method. This group dynamism has been described as a “synergistic group effect” (ibid). The focus group interviews will also provide for me an opportunity to observe nonverbal responses such as gestures, smiles, frowns, and so forth, which may carry information that supplements the verbal responses. Interestingly, using this approach, the informal group discussion environment of the focus group interview structure will encourage participants to speak freely about their behaviours, attitudes, and opinions. The open response format of a focus group also provides an opportunity to obtain large and rich amount of data in the respondents’ own words.

Having explored the role of media, particularly radio, in the everyday life of these groups of audiences, it is anticipated that the data collected from the interviews will generate answers to the questions: Why these groups of audiences neglect traditional radio, and how radio can compete with other media to re-capture these groups? Furthermore, pursuing the premise that these groups of audiences have greater opportunities to access the Internet, the focus group interviews are intended to examine whether web radio is a means to bring radio to these audiences. The focus group

interviews will also investigate audience perceptions, opinions and listening behaviour towards VOV and VOVNews in terms of the content, radio programming and web design.

As the focus group interviews were conducted amongst those who participated in my offline survey 2005, I had an opportunity to select and recruit participants according to their age, occupation and education in order to facilitate and enable free exploration and disclosure of their opinions while discussing semi-structure questions within groups.

During November 2006, I conducted nine focus groups, ranging from six to ten participants in each group (two groups of 6, four groups of 7, one group of 8, 9 and 10 participants). All of the focus groups were held with strangers in order to avoid the “polluting” and “inhibiting” effect of existing relations between group members (Kitzinger and Barbour 1999, p.8). As the participants were selected according to certain characteristics in common (Krueger and Casey 2000, p.4; Greenbaum 2000, p.3) that relate to the topic of the focus group, I divided participants into two categories: radio listeners and non-radio listeners. The groups of radio listeners and non-radio listeners were interviewed separately in order to compare the differences in opinions between these groups of participants. Amongst the 9 groups, there were 5 groups of students and 4 groups of office-based workers. Regarding the groups of students, the discussions were held at the office of the Faculty of Journalism (Hanoi National University), whilst group discussions of office-based workers were held in a room at the Auditing and Accounting Financial Consulting Company (AFC). Each discussion lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. All discussions were recorded and photographs were taken¹⁶.

Amongst the 65 participants participating in the group interviews, there were 33 females and 32 males. The number of student participants was higher than that of office-based participants, 38 and 27, respectively (as 5 of the 9 groups comprised students). Due to their occupations, the 38 student participants were aged between 19-21 and the other 27

¹⁶ Apart from the fourth group as the participants stated that they did not wish to be photographed. It should be noted that photographs were taken only in order to help me to easily retrieve the animation of each group in the analysis stage. All of the participants’ personal data and their photographs were treated confidentially and privately.

office-based participants ages range from 24 to 35. In my research the age group 18-35 is regarded as the youth, albeit old enough to make their own independent choices and have their own listening patterns. Furthermore, they are regarded as being old enough to be able to afford some of the relevant technology. The youth were found to be the group of people who listen to radio the least (VOV 2001a, Tran Huu Quang 2001), yet, surf the web the most. Having interviewed these groups in-depth, I will explore whether web radio can bring radio to these identified groups of audiences who it has been found have neglected traditional radio.

At the point of conducting the focus group interviews, all of the participants lived in Hanoi, however 12 of the 65 participants originally came from rural areas. These participants rent accommodation in Hanoi to study or work. Therefore, interestingly, they may share different experiences through their change of living environment: it has been found that this influences the habits of media consumption.

The focus group interviews were conducted in the following stages: having introduced myself and briefly explained the purpose of the interview to the participants, the participants introduced themselves. After that, for all the groups, participants were asked about their consumption media habits, in general, and radio and Internet preferences in particular. The follow-up questions differed between the groups of radio and non-radio listeners.

Regarding the groups of radio listeners, I asked them how often they listened to the radio and if they had recognised changes in radio content in recent years. If so, what were these changes and how these changes met their needs? They were also asked if they knew of any developments in the radio industry, especially ways to listen to radio, in developed countries and particularly in Vietnam, and if they listened to any Vietnamese radio, apart from VOV. If so, what were the programmes and what did they think about them? I also inquired whether they listened to foreign radio stations, and if so, what they were. The focus group members were then asked about their perceptions and opinions regarding these radio stations.

Following this, my questions became more detailed about VOV and its services, such as whether participants distinguished differences between VOV1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and if

they were aware of any changes in VOV channels recently. If participants indicated that they were aware I asked them to identify the changes. I also asked which channel they most often listened to, and if they listened to that channel by chance or whether they intentionally tuned in to that channel. Participants were asked what they thought about the channel's services in terms of accuracy, immediacy, interest, diversity and usefulness of information. I also asked whether there were any particular programmes they often listened to, what they thought about VOV presenters, and if they had any suggestions for VOV to improve its service.

Having established, from the offline survey, that participants were Internet users, I also asked questions related to the Internet and their web surfing habits. I asked how often they logged on the Internet, what activities they most often did while surfing, and whether they had listened to radio online. If any participants stated that they had listened to web radio, I then asked what their opinions were about it, and what features they wanted to have in the website were. I also questioned whether they preferred to listen to live radio programmes or on-demand radio programmes on web radio. Finally, I asked if they listened to VOVNews, what they thought about its service and if they had any comments to improve the quality of VOVNews service.

Regarding the groups of participants who rarely listened, or did not listen to radio at all, I endeavoured to explore the reasons "what made them walk away from it". For example, I asked if they remembered the last time they listened to radio and why they gave up listening. The group discussions became lively when participants gave their reasons for giving up radio, including external factors and personal reasons. This information is significant and highly important as it shows the hidden aspects of public opinion about VOV's services. It is only when VOV understands these issues that the organisation can explore ways to improve their services and capture audiences. Significantly, I also found that a number of perceived negative aspects of VOV's services - which caused listeners to neglect radio - have been improved for some time. However, the non-radio listening participants were not aware of any information about the changes. These issues will be discussed in detail in Chapter VII, however, at this point, it is worth noting that although the quality of radio programmes itself is important in capturing listeners, providing information about the changes and improvements in radio programmes is also crucial. Therefore, as an important promotional tool, it is

thought that the Internet can strengthen relationships between radio and its listeners, particularly within the increasing web user community.

Regarding the discussion with non-radio listener groups, I also asked them how long they had been accessing the Internet; how long and how often they logged on to the Internet. I wanted to explore whether the Internet had changed their habits of consuming media, and what the changes were.

They were then asked about the activities they most often combined when working with computers. I also asked if they had listened to radio online. If participants stated that they had attempted to do so, I then asked their opinions about web radio. If participants stated that they had not done so, I asked whether they intended to listen online in the future.

Even though my focus groups provide fundamentally important information for the thesis, the methodology still has a number of limitations. For example, a number of participants were hesitant to talk, whilst on the other hand, there were participants trying to influence others through their opinions (despite having paid attention to compiling groups according to the participants' ages and occupations). Furthermore, it is important to note that whilst 65 participants is an appropriate sample for qualitative research purposes, it may not be a sufficiently large sample to generalise to the total web user population. Therefore, the results of the focus group interviews will be analysed in combination with the online and offline surveys' data in order to clarify to what extent web radio in general, and VOVNews in particular, satisfy their listeners. The data combined will explore what web radio should do to improve its quality from the listener's perspective.

Chapter III:

ADAPTATIONS IN RADIO IN BOTH THE UK AND US SINCE ITS INCEPTION

As described in the previous chapter, radio - the oldest electronic mass medium - has currently reached the point where a number of radio variants have been developed, especially web radio, which challenges the perceptions of conventional radio that have been accepted for nearly a century. Therefore, investigating the definition of web radio, its characteristics, and particularly its relationship with audiences and traditional radio are imperative, especially when the questions: 'What is web radio?' and 'Is web radio 'radio?' continue to be controversial issues which have been the subject of academic discourse in the UK since 1999 without satisfactory answers.

Differing from previous researchers in defining web radio, in my thesis, I will investigate web radio from two dimensions, as mentioned previously. This chapter is my initial approach to defining web radio, in which I review the development of radio in the UK and US from its inception. This will be done in order to discover radio's adaptability, the changes in radio's characteristics and the ways in which audiences listen to radio. It is contended that radio has survived, and continues to develop due to its capacity for adaptation, and that web radio is a new variant of radio in the Digital Age.

Furthermore, investigating the development of radio in the UK and US also provides benefits for developing radio in Vietnam in the sense that Vietnamese radio can learn experiences from the adaptations of radio in these countries in order to develop and compete with visual media. Therefore, this chapter will become a foundation for me to compare radio's development in the UK and US with that of radio in Vietnam in Chapters V and VI.

3.1. A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW ON RADIO HISTORY IN THE UK AND US

As a new phenomenon in mass media systems, in order to investigate web radio, it is important to understand the historical perspective¹⁷. Additionally, experiences from the development of radio in the UK and US will provide useful lessons for radio's development in Vietnam. Hence, historical investigations of radio development by prior researchers, including Briggs (1961, 1965, 1970, 1979, 1985, 1995), Scannell and Cardiff (1982, 1991), Inglis (1990), Geddes (1991), Garratt (1994), Seymour-Ure (1991), Hill (1996), Coe (1996), Hilmes (1997), Douglas (1999), Hendy (2000), Street (2002), Crisell (2001, 2002), Sterling and Kittross (2002), McNair (2003) and Hennessy (2005) are relevant sources of information for my thesis.

Briggs'¹⁸ (1961, 1965, 1970, 1979 and 1995) five volume history of broadcasting is largely a chronological narrative, which explores cause and effect relations (Chignell 2004, p.6). Even though Briggs' works provide rich information, which is especially valuable for radio researchers, they are mostly concerned with the BBC. However, Street (2003, p.5) emphatically states that the study of radio in the UK should "not just" be perceived as "a history of the BBC". Therefore, in my thesis, other publications about the history of broadcasting in the UK are studied as a secondary data, including Street's (2002a) text, which covers broadcasting history from the prehistory of wireless (1838–1922) to the digital age (1990-2002).

Whilst Street (2002a) focuses on the programmes and personalities rather than on particular broadcasting ideologies or political and social contexts, Crisell's (2002)

¹⁷ According to prior researchers, including Williams (1988, p.36) and Hansen (1998, p.15), one of the strengths of the historical research is that it provides an ability to identify past trends as a baseline for comparison with and investigation of current processes. Therefore, in order to investigate a new radio's variant in the Internet Age - web radio - it is important to explore how radio has developed and adapted itself to changes in new technologies and the emergence of new media.

¹⁸ Briggs' (ibid) works comprehensively covered the development of the BBC, from its existence as private company in 1922, through its 'golden age of wireless' from 1927 to 1939, to the Second World War 1939 - 1945, with particular focus on the ten year period of development after the war, when broadcasting witnessed the rise of television and the end of the BBC's monopoly.

publication is a concise and accessible history of British radio and television, discussing key moments in media history: from the first wireless broadcast in 1920 through to recent developments in digital broadcasting and the Internet. Although the nature and evolution of broadcasting, the growth of broadcasting institutions and the relation of broadcasting to a wider political and social context are covered, albeit in brief, Crisell's (2002) book should be considered as an introduction to British broadcasting, as its title states. Referring to the US, Douglas (1999) provides useful information for my thesis about the history of broadcasting in the US from the 1920s, when the 'radio boom' spread across America, investigating the ascendance of DJs and the Top 40 format and the FM revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, capturing the rise of NPR and the phenomenon of talk radio in the 1990s.

A number of authors, including Inglis (1990) focused on the development of radio and television technology. However, although having described the names and achievements of the scientists and engineers responsible for the development of the complex electronic systems which made radio and television possible, Inglis (1990) dealt with radio technology in only 3 of 10 chapters. The remaining chapters focused on television technology and broadcast video recording. The literature on radio production and writing for radio, including Horstmann (1997), McInerney (2001), MacLoughlin (2001), Hilliard (1991, 2000), Connelly (2004), Adams and Massey (1995), Hausman (*et al.* 1995), Walters (1994) and McLeish (2005), enables the thesis to summarise theories relating to modern radio production (radio programming).

Moreover, the development of radio in the Digital Age is mostly discussed in journals¹⁹. A review of these literatures has provided a general picture about the development of radio since its inception to date.

Whilst most of the existing radio studies are organised along chronological lines and follow the various influential phases of radio's development, in this thesis, I intended to investigate radio's development in the UK and US, focusing on four themes: the

¹⁹ For example: Tacchi (2000, p.289-298), Berryman (2004, p.118-120), Black (2001, p.397- 408), Hilmes (2004), Lax (2003, p.326-349), Priestman (2004, p.77-88) and Bagharib and Tan (2004).

changes in technologies, the way people listen to radio, radio programmes and the radio landscape in the Digital Age²⁰. These changes will be investigated as they demonstrate vividly the endless adaptability of radio in developed countries in the competition with visual media. The study, therefore, will not only provide valuable insights for radio's development in Vietnam, but also prove that radio's variants, including web radio, are new adaptations of radio in the Internet Age.

3.2. CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGIES

In this section, the importance of technology to the birth of radio, and its development from inception to date will be explored from a social perspective. In other words, this chapter will investigate the effects of the changes in radio technology rather than the technological developments per se.

Radio was born as a result of a convergence of Art and Science, in which Science was a decisive factor (Street 2002a, p.11; Briggs 1995, p.43; Mosco 2005, p.128). Moreover, interestingly, whilst opinions differ as to who the 'Father of Radio' was - as this title is attributed to a number of individuals, including Marconi, De Forest and Popov (Briggs 1981; Agree *et al.* 1994; Crisell 2002; Street 2002a; Spencer 2005; Busby 1998), whomever is regarded as the original inventor, all of these individuals have one feature in common: they were physicists. In addition, radio's invention remained an international and evolving process in the years of continued technical development from the late 1890s to 1914, with contributions from significant numbers of scientists, physicists and engineers, including Clerk-Maxwell, Bell, Faraday, Telsa, Watson, Ader, Lodge, Hertz, Fessenden and Fleming (Sterling *et al.* 2002, p.27; Thumm 2006; Hill 1996, p.9-10, Street 2002a, p.13; Briggs 1961, p.26; Kryzhanosvky *et al.*; Corazza 1998, p.1307; Bittner 1996, p.160; Lochte [no date], p.27).

²⁰ The main purpose of my research is to investigate the adaptability of radio in Western countries in the competitive environment with visual media, in order to apply relevant experiences to the radio development in Vietnam, particularly when Vietnamese radio had to face an emerging competitive environment with visual media after the Economic Renovation. It should be noted that the media systems and regulations in Western countries are different to those of Vietnam (See more in Chapters V and VI). Therefore, a number of factors, for example regulations, which may significantly influence on the development of radio in developed countries, are not a subject of my research.

That is to say, the development of radio since its inception has depended heavily on its ability to utilise technology as MacGregor (1997, p.174) stated that:

...with the possible exception of the military there is probably no other industry that relies as much on technology as broadcasting does.

In this sense, the utilising latest technology to improve radio services, including digital audio broadcasting and webcasting, has proved once again this strong relationship between radio and technology.

The changes in technology - including transmission (AM and FM), recording and radio receivers (See more at the Appendix) - not only improved the quality of radio services, but importantly, emerged at an ideal time for radio, providing abilities for radio to reinvent itself, increase its popularity and survive in the fierce competitive environment it faces with other media. However, most these technological developments were available long before they were applied. For example, the transistor was first discovered in 1947, but it did not become widely used until the 1960s (Fleming 2002, p.25). It also took almost a decade for FM to gain a regular licence to broadcast in the US (Sterling 1984, p.3).

In other words, it was the “supervening social necessities” (Winston 1995 cited Fleming 2002, p.25) which acted as accelerators in the development of media and other technology. Livingstone (1999, p.60) also pointed out that the media’s successes in dominating the market (and everyday life) depended deeper on the social shaping and contexts of use than on the technological capacities per se. It is the needs of audiences and the improving living standards which are major driving forces for radio in applying technological developments. For this reason, investigating the changes in the ways people listen to radio, in order to understand how radio has adapted and should continue to acclimatise itself in the new changing socio-cultural contexts, is discussed in the following section.

3.3. CHANGES IN THE WAYS PEOPLE LISTEN TO RADIO

3.3.1. From a communal to an individual activity - from a medium of prime-time entertainment to a medium of companionship

Due to several reasons, including the cost of radio sets (Scannell and Cardiff 1991; Douglas 1999; Craig 2004, p.3; Briggs 1981, p.33; Pegg 1983, p.40, 47; Paulu 1981, p.2, 23) and the absence of television to provide alternative entertainment in the home, it was common practice for the members of a family, friends, and neighbours to converge in the homes of those wealthy enough to possess a radio set and listen to radio together (Pegg 1983, p.197; Douglas 1999, p.70; Crisell 2002, p.11; Warren 2005, p.9), in other words, listening to radio became almost a community event (See more at the Appendix).

In the US, radio was America's favourite pastime in the 1930s and 1940s, however, its position faded in the 1950s - when television emerged and became popular - and in the 1960s radio had to redefine its role. Nevertheless, it was providential for radio that due to a fortuitous number of improvements arriving at an ideal time, especially the invention of the transistor amplifier (as mentioned previously), radio sets had become smaller and portable. Instead of being a primary medium - as it used to be (Warren 2005, p.9) - radio became a secondary medium - the one that is most often used when people are pursuing other activities. From a medium of prime time entertainment, radio had emerged as a medium of companionship (Busby 1988, p.232). This was also the time when a number of pirate radio stations emerged which played continuous pop music, ideal for background listening, thus, enabled radio to emerge as a medium which was distinct from television (Lax 1997, p.26).

Listening to radio had also changed from a group to individual activity (McLuhan 1987, p.306; Pegg 1983, p.197; Douglas 1999, p.70; Crisell 2002, p.11). Today, most listeners tend to listen to radio alone rather than in a small group of friends or relatives²¹. When a radio is playing to a group of people, it is often to function as a 'background' sound in a place of work or for communal activities.

²¹ 83% of audiences stated that their listening took place alone (Hargrave 2000, p.5).

Consequently, radio addresses each listener as an individual, although radio audiences may be counted in millions. Intimacy is regarded as radio's strength, especially due to the way radio presenters deliver messages to their audiences (Street 2002a, p.32)²². Hendy (2000, p.156) pointed out:

The incantation to radio scriptwriters is to write in a way that sounds natural *when spoken*, because the words always have to be voiced by someone in order to reach their audience - and the more natural and spontaneous the speaker sounds, the more intimate will be the broadcaster's relationship with the audience.

Until now, intimacy has continued to be one of the characteristics that has rendered radio uniquely user-friendly within the mass media system, and enables it to capture audiences regardless of competition with visual media (Wilby and Conroy 1994, p.26; Crisell 2002, p.11-13; Shingler and Wieringa 1998, p.38-40; McLeish 1994, p.7).

However, regarding Vietnamese radio, the notion of intimacy has not been paid sufficient attention to by radio producers. Perhaps this issue is an additional reason why Vietnamese audiences neglect radio, preferring television. The complaints by listeners about the presenting styles of Vietnamese radio presenters generally, and VOV presenters in particular, and an analysis of this problem will be discussed in Chapters VI and VII.

3.3.2. How radio became more accessible

In its early days, listening to radio used to be complicated and costly due to shortages and the relatively high cost of radio receivers, and the complex assembly of a radio set (Scannell and Cardiff 1991; Douglas 1999; Craig 2004, p.3; Briggs 1981, p.33; Pegg 1983, p.40, 47; Paulu 1981, p.2, 23) (See more at the Appendix). However, by the time radio would have to face its major competitor - television, the price of a radio set had already reduced and radio sets became popular. In 1935, the Philco radio set was

²² In radio light entertainment, many presenters, such as Steve Wright (at that time a BBC Radio 1 presenter), even played the reactions of recorded voices, 'Ooh! Wow!' (Crisell 2002, p.190). Goffman (1981 cited Crisell 2002, p.190) suggested that the broadcasters must talk as if responsive people were before their eyes and ears.

produced, which cost just over £5 and was designed to be affordable for any employed person (Scannell and Cardiff 1991, p.359). For the first time, radio sets became a standardised, reasonably inexpensive and mass-produced commodity. Gradually, people could afford to own one, and sometimes, even more than one²³.

A number of technical inconveniences had also to be resolved before listening to radio could become a simple and social activity. More importantly, it is no longer the case that audiences have purposefully listen to radio, as radio is highly accessible and has proved to be as the most ubiquitous mass medium, which serves audiences wherever they want. In the Digital Age, with the emergence of web radio, audiences - those who are able to access the Internet - can listen to radio whenever they wish. Providing a new appealing service to its listeners, web radio is arguably able to capture larger radio audiences. As a result of the dramatic expansion of Internet usage, radio's popularity has an opportunity to increase. It is predicted that this popularity may stimulate radio listening, as happened when radio was fitted as standard in cars.

At present, listening to radio via digital platforms is capturing an increasingly significant share of the total radio audiences (approximately 14%) and has been one of the major recent trends in radio listening in the UK (Ofcom 2004a, p.15; Ofcom 2006b, p.15) (See more at the Appendix). The fact that audiences are becoming used to listening to radio via a range of devices illustrates the highly flexible and adaptable capabilities of radio in the Digital Age.

Whilst new technological developments offer greater choice, and create higher expectations from audiences, along with the emergence of new media, a new generation of audience has arrived. This generation is referred as the "digital generation", "children of the information age", or even "computer nerds", and "addicted surfers" (Livingstone 2002, p.2). In order to capture this new audience, radio has to understand their

²³ In the US, by 1938, more than 91% of urban homes, and nearly 70% of rural homes had a radio set, and half of these homes had at least two radios (Sterling and Kittross 2002, p.204). In the UK, three million households had a radio set in 1930. By 1939, the figure had tripled, and in that year, three-quarters of British households owned a radio (Scannell and Cardiff 1991, p.362).

characteristics, their needs and demands. The following section will sketch out the general characteristics and the needs of this new generation.

3.3.3. New audiences – new demands

“The Net Generation²⁴ has arrived!”, in using this as his opening statement, for the first time Tapscott (1997, p.1) proclaimed the Net generation so important that he argued it would change the audience landscape. Recent studies define the Net Generation as those who are growing up using the Internet (Rettie 2002, p.254), who may have never known life without the Internet (Lorerzo and Dziuban 2006, p.2; Oblinger and Oblinger 2005; Combes 2006, p.401), or who have been variously described as tech-savvy, web-savvy and Internet-savvy (Combes 2006, p.402).

More importantly, the new generation - the Net generation - seem less interested in traditional radio than their elders. Traditional radio’s audience is ageing, and becoming more middle-aged than the general population (MacFarland 1997, p.74; Ofcom 2006b; Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2007, 2008). Recent statistics from Ofcom (2006b) reveal that in the UK, 16-24 year olds listen to less radio per week than the population as a whole.

The more opportunities and freedom listeners have in choosing the radio station they prefer in the Digital Age, the more curious about content they become, as they surf in and out of different stations. In 1994, research (cited Fleming 2002, p.17) into radio audience’s attitudes showed that people tend to find a station they like and stick with it, developing a loyalty to a station’s style, its presenters and schedules. Six years later, it was found that there was no longer this loyalty to a particular station (Hargrave 2000). Previously, listeners enjoyed little choice, and typically listened to a narrower range of programming. When listeners are given greater choice and services, much of the time, they search for the right kind of programme to match their mood at any given moment.

²⁴ Tapscott (1997, p1-3) invented the term ‘Net Generation’ which he defined as those born between 1977 and 1997, not just those who are active on the Internet. This terms is used later in a number of studies, including Oblinger and Oblinger (2005), Lorerzo and Dziuban (2006), Combes (2006, p.402).

In 2004, Ofcom conducted a survey among 18 to 30 year olds to investigate the attitudes of young UK audiences towards radio (Ofcom 2004c). The findings illustrate how the younger generation use radio, and to some extent, how their attitudes will help to shape the future of radio. According to Ofcom (2004c), this age group wanted more control over what they listened to, including via radio, iPod or MP3 music devices. They tended to listen alone and used their music, either from their collection or from the radio, as “a form of cocooning, shutting themselves off from the world” (Ofcom 2004c). They tended to have wide and diverse tastes and were prepared to search online to find what they wanted to listen to. They expressed preferences for more intelligent news reporting, to be stimulated by interesting speech programming that was designed for their age group, and new music, which broadened their horizons, as well as information, including weather, traffic, and travel news - the information which helped them to live their lives. Most importantly, it was found that in order to survive and remain significant to the young audiences, radio must change. Radio must be available in ways they wanted to consume it. The young listeners wanted a wider choice of stations and the new functions that digital radio could offer.

As mentioned above, in the Digital Age, a wider range of media competing for the attention of the same audiences simply means that the total audience is being divided between a larger number of operators. When a new medium emerges the existing media have to face fierce competition, and the audience market becomes more fragmented. In other words, the emergence of the Internet has threatened all traditional media, including radio.

Individuals have a limited amount of time, which can be seen as a kind of social capital, therefore if the time they spend on an activity increases, then they will logically have to make sacrifices in other areas (Neuman 1995; Bagozzi *et al.* 2007). However, whilst the majority of researchers found that heavy computer users are not heavy television viewers, this is not the case for radio listeners (UCLA 2000, Stempel *et al.* 2000; Lee and Kuo 2002; USC 2004, 2008; Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006, 2007). The majority of participants who listen to digital radio platforms do not spend less time listening to AM/FM radio, as a result, total radio listening is added (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006e, p.3; 2007, p.4; Ofcom 2006c, p.150; Rajar 2008, p.3). As Hendy (2000, p.128) suggested, radio is the medium which is most complementary to

one of the fastest-growing leisure activities, namely surfing the net. Therefore, the Internet probably helps cushion a future decline in radio listening, especially amongst the youth who are online the most.

In other words, these developments provide increasing challenges as well as greater opportunities for traditional radio. The needs of radio listeners are changing. Listening habits changed significantly when television emerged. At that time, radio had proved successfully its capabilities to adapt. At present, again, listening habits are changing after the emergence of the Internet. As a result, media, including radio, should adapt to respond to that need. The following section will discuss how radio in the UK and US has changed its programming to capture new audiences.

3.4. CHANGES IN RADIO PROGRAMMING

3.4.1. From a programme medium into a format medium

In the UK, the notion of radio programming first appeared during the very early development of the BBC (Carpenter 1996, p.3). However, Sir John Reith²⁵ intended to vary the output in such a way that the listener might be ‘surprised into’ an interest in a subject which they had not previously enjoyed or even known about: the intention was always to give the listeners “something a little better than she thought she wanted” (Crisell 1994, p.21). In other words, BBC would offer mixed programming, a wide and diverse range of programme materials over the course of each day and week (Scannell and Cardiff 1982, p.167-8). Typically, this included news, drama, sport, religion, music (light to classical), variety and light entertainment. Not only did this programming cater for different social needs (education, information, entertainment), it catered for different interests within the listening public, including children, women, professionals, farmers, and fishermen (ibid). However, this paternalism was challenged in the 1930s, especially after the launch of Radio Luxembourg. According to Shingler and Wieringa (1998, p.7), when Radio Luxembourg began broadcasting in 1933, that station became highly popular with audiences (particular female and working-class audiences) tired of the BBC’s “stuffiness”.

²⁵ The BBC’s Director-General for its first sixteen years.

By the mid-1950s, due to the dual threats of television, the total listening audience began to shrink. This forced radio producers to change to retain listeners. After decades endeavouring to be all things to all people, radio programmers realised that differentiation might be a way to attract audiences (MacFarland 1997, p.63). In the middle of the 1950s, radio in the UK was reorganised so that it would complement television rather than compete with it: focusing on daytime week-day slots, and specialist programmes for smaller audiences at evenings and weekends (Shingler and Wieringa 1998, p.10), which will be discussed in detail at a later point. In addition, as most listeners listen to music to strengthen or create a particular mood, when they turn to a specific format station, they know exactly what moods and feelings will be evoked and stimulated (Douglas 1999, p.33). Possibly, this is one reason why the later development of 'formats' in radio became so successful in the US (ibid).

As a result of the heavy competition for listeners' attention, a number of radio formats have been created²⁶, including Country, Adult Contemporary, News/Talk, Gold/Classic Rock, CHR (Contemporary Hit Radio), Urban, Oldies and Nostalgia (MacFarland 1997, p.74-82; Hendy 2000, p.100-1). According to Busby (1988, p.227), there were 24 different radio formats in use in the US.

The phenomenon of radio refining its formats for programming - in order to attract a tightly focused group of listeners - was termed the "de-massified media" by Toffler (1980, p.174), and later re-termed as "narrowcasting" by a number of researchers, including Hendy (2000) and Priestman (2002). This phenomenon provided a new characteristic for the radio industry, which is usually referred to as broadcasting, in the sense that radio is nowadays narrowcast, in terms of its content, and broadcast in terms of its distribution.

Regarding radio in Vietnam, it is significant to note that Vietnamese radio continued the model of mixed programming until late 2006. It was not until September 2006, for the first time that the music channel Xone FM (VOV3), comprising programming for targeted listeners (aged 16 to 35), was broadcast. This channel was, and still is, supported by Australian producers who provide technical and content advice, and is the

²⁶ Formats began in the US in the 1950s with Top 40, but not until the 1990s in the case of British commercial radio.

only music radio channel broadcast in Vietnam to date. Even though Xone FM was launched over a month before my focus group interviews were conducted, there were significant numbers of participants who knew of, and gave more positive feedback about this channel than other channels of VOV. VOV programming and its relationship with listeners will be discussed in detail in Chapters VII and VIII, however, at this point, it is acknowledged that radio in Vietnam adapted changes in programming decades later than radio in the UK and US. This may be one of the reasons why radio in Vietnam has less success in the competitive arena it faces.

3.4.2. Evening programmes to morning and on-demand programmes

Before the emergence of television, most listeners devoted their evening to radio. In the first issue of *Radio Broadcast* magazine (1920 cited Fowler and Crawford 2002, p.3), the editors commented that:

The rate of increase in the number of people who spend at least part of their evening listening [in] is almost incomprehensible.

However, television emerged and gradually took over radio's dominant position in the mass media system, and occupied the evening time formerly devoted to radio, as discussed previously. Having relinquished its evening time to television, radio chose an alternative means of survival: focusing on daytime slots and specialising in evening and weekend programmes for smaller niche audiences. *Today* (1957) on radio and *Tonight* (1957) on television were first both broadcast simultaneously. Their titles, according to Cain (1992, p.80) illustrated the way in which, at this time, radio was perceived as a strong medium for attracting daytime audiences, leaving the evening largely to television. Indeed, today radio listening peaks most noticeably during wake-up time and breakfasts on weekdays (Ofcom 2004a, p.35; Ofcom 2007c, p.249; Seymour-Ure 1991, p.151; Arbitron/ Edison Media Research 2006d, 2007, 2008). The afternoon audience steadily declines, building again for an hour or so in the late afternoon rush hour, and then succumbs to television with the exception of a late rally at bed-time (Crisell 2002, p.204; Arbitron/ Edison Media Research 2006, 2007, 2008).

With the emergence of the Internet, the Net generation has arrived, and audiences' needs have changed as previously discussed. At present, audiences want to access media

when and where they choose to, resulting in changes in radio programming, which on-demand services should pay greater attention to. According to the latest Rajar (2008) data, in the UK, almost 12 million people claimed to listen to radio via the Internet, including 7.6 million who have listened to on-demand programmes. Moreover, 4.3 million have downloaded a Podcast. Almost half of 'Listen Again' listeners stated that they listen to radio programmes that they did not previously listen to as a result of using the on-demand service. As the rising popularity of portable digital music devices²⁷, it is predicted that listening on-demand will be a noticeable feature of listening habits in the future.

3.4.3. Phone-ins and the participatory relationship of radio and its listeners

Paulu (1981 cited Crisell 1994, p.191) implied that phone-ins originated on American radio. By 1935, millions of American radio listeners seemed to be responding to something different in radio: the voice of the people could be heard on air (Loviglio 2005, p.38), whilst in Britain, radio phone-ins began in 1968 on BBC local radio, and were adopted by commercial stations when they arrived in the 1970s, (Fleming 2002, p.137).

Because radio language is relatively simply understandable, due to the nature of the medium (Crisell 2002, p.192), via phone-ins, radio programmes are introducing a spontaneous oral language spoken by ordinary people, which is highly accessible to a wide audience. Listeners enjoy these programmes, because they "like to hear fellow human beings talking, even if they talk a load of rubbish" (Hayes 1994 cited Shingler and Wieringa 1998, p.113). In addition, as phone-ins are programmes dealing with workaday concerns via the everyday language of ordinary people, they strengthen radio's characteristics of intimacy, diversity, simplicity, and personal, which other visual media cannot compete with. Consequently, this ability is an advantage for radio in its competition with visual media.

²⁷ Approximately 27% of adults in the UK owing an MP3 player at the end of the first quarter of 2007, 18.4% of owners using MP3 to listen to downloaded radio content (Ofcom 2007c, p.247).

More importantly, phone-ins not only provide a chance for ordinary people to raise their voices, express their opinions, or enter public debate, but also create radio a two-way communication (ibid). Phone-ins enabled mass audience think about the new role that radio should play (Loviglio 2005, p.38): audience-participation - which blurred the line between audience and broadcaster. The notion and practice of audience-participation have attracted significant attentions from researchers in the Internet Age, discussed in detail in the following chapter.

In short, changes in societies, changes in technology, and changes in competition present radio programme-makers with great challenges. Radio programmes must reform, driven by audience demand for greater diversity, specialisms and immediacy, made possible by new technology. The historical development of phone-in programmes in the UK and US proved conclusively the importance of encouraging listener participation in radio programmes, and strengthening the intimacy of radio. However, due to external factors, which will be analysed in Chapter VI, radio in Vietnam seems relatively reluctant to adopt new radio tactics in order to capture audiences. It was not until 1994 that the first phone-in programme was broadcast (Kim Cuc 1995, p.7; Vinh Tra 2004, p.5-9). Gradually, many programmes have adopted the phone-in as an important part of their format, and significantly, a number of phone-in programmes are rated in the top ten programmes of VOV (See more in Chapter VI). The delay in applying this technique in radio programming - phone-ins - has possibly reduced radio's ability to compete with visual media in Vietnam, which possibly attributed to the dramatic decline in radio listening in Vietnam in recent years.

3.5. RADIO LANDSCAPE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In the Digital Age, as soon as audiences have the opportunity to enjoy listening to radio in new ways, radio is confronted with theoretical problems. A number of terminologies have emerged, which challenge the definition of traditional radio. In the following section, a current radio landscape will be mapped, as a foundation for investigation of one of the radio variants which has generated, according to Berry (ibid, p.288) "the most" interest amongst researchers and audiences: web radio. Moreover, it will be done in order to offer for the Vietnamese radio industry a comprehensive view about the

radio development and future scenarios of radio in Western countries, which will in turn, provide suggestions for Vietnamese radio to explore its own way to develop.

3.5.1. Digital Audio Broadcasting

Broadcast radio has entered the 21st century, accompanied by a revolution in technology: DAB, which replaces traditional analogue radio systems with higher fidelity, greater noise immunity and new services. Unlike TV and Internet platforms, DAB was designed primarily for radio, and in the UK, has been allocated spectra specifically for radio services (Ofcom 2004a, p.88).

DAB began its development in the mid-1980s, and the first public transmissions began in the UK in September 1995²⁸ (Lax 2003, p.326; BBC 2006c, p.2). Over 475 million people around the world are able to receive over 800 different DAB services, and there are now over 200 different DAB receivers for consumers to choose from (World DAB 2006).

There was an optimistic expectation that the superior new digital radio system would replace analogue FM radio (Ala-Fossi *et al.* 2008) and achieve international success (Rudin 2006) due to its special characteristics and benefits. For example: through the use of digital encoding, multiplexing and single frequency networks, digital radio allows more stations to be broadcast over a given amount of spectra than analogue radio (Lax 2005). With DAB digital radio, listeners can choose the station they want by name from a text display screen and gain a more robust reception and pure, clear sound consistently, as long as the receiver is within the coverage area (BBC 2006; Lax 2005). DAB also provides new functionalities, including pausing and rewinding live radio broadcasts (DigitalOne 2005). Digital radio allows for the launch of a range of potential multimedia and interactive services, including the ability to download music, access travel information, news, and sport headlines and receive scrolling text facilities listing the artist and title of the song playing (Ofcom 2004a; BBC 2005; DigitalOne UK 2005; Bagharib and Tan 2004).

²⁸ Three years before digital TV.

However, while DAB offers many potential benefits, and initially attracted a significant number of radio listeners, there are still potential obstacles which could impede the growth of digital radio. These problems included technological issues (for example coverage, choice of services, and the availability of current smaller analogue stations operating via digital radio platforms (Ofcom 2004a, p.90-91;125-133)), consumer awareness of digital radio and its benefits (Ofcom 2004a, p.129-130) and relatively expensive DAB radio receivers (Ofcom 2004a, p.133; Ala-Fossi *et al.* 2008, p.5).

Most importantly, it seems that DAB has not attracted same level of attentions from different Western countries. According to a meta-analysis of recently compiled data from World DAB (2006a), 43 countries have launched digital radio. However, the UK, Germany and Denmark are amongst the very few advanced countries in terms of DAB receivers and listenership²⁹ (Turner *et al.* 2005, p.3; Ofcom 2004a, p.112; Ala-Fossi *et al.* 2008, p.5) due to the commitment to DAB of both the governments and the public service broadcasters in these countries (Ala-Fossi *et al.* 2008, p.5). On the other hand, some Western countries, including Sweden, Finland, Ireland and Canada are not interested in DAB. In December 2004, the Swedish Government announced that they would not propose a plan for an expansion of DAB broadcasts and a switch from analogue FM radio to DAB, but encouraged the radio industry in Sweden to focus on other digital means of distribution, such as podcasting, streaming audio and broadcasting radio via digital terrestrial TV (Swedish Radio 2006). Finland also totally shut down its DAB network in 2005 (Ala-Fossi *et al.* 2008, p.5).

Technically, the introduction of DAB was hindered by a lack of standardisation³⁰. In addition, during the last 10 years, DAB has been gradually left behind in technological development, especially in audio coding and multimedia capability (*ibid*). Therefore, in Ala-Fossi *et al.*'s study (2008, p.13), only a few European radio experts thought that in the next 10 years DAB had any opportunity to become the dominant platform in

²⁹ Apart from the UK and Germany, there were no countries in which receiver sales had exceeded 10,000 units by 2004 (Ofcom 2004a, p.112).

³⁰ Whilst the 'Eureka 147' DAB standard (which is not compatible with the old FM and AM broadcast services) has been adopted in Canada, Europe and parts of Asia; in the US, digital radio schemes maintain compatibility with the old analogue broadcasting schemes, using an approach known as in-band on-channel (IBOC) (Dang TT Huong 2005a).

Europe. Even in the advanced DAB countries like Britain and Denmark it was expected that to have supplementary digital platform like DRM or DMB (ibid).

In 2005, South Korea expanded the concept of DAB to DMB³¹, which is a variant of the Eureka-147 DAB standard (Bae *et al.* 2006, p.1518; Ofcom 2004a, p.89; Turner *et al.* 2005, p.3), and became the first country to launch DMB services (Terrestrial (T-DMB) and Satellite (S-DMB)), followed by Germany in June 2006 (Cha 2006). According to Bae (*et al.* 2006, p.1518), T-DMB was adopted by the World Forum for DAB as a global standard in December 2004. Both T-DMB and S-DMB offer electronic programme guides (EPGs) to enable the listener to discover what is been broadcast on one channel while listening to another.

3.5.2. Satellite radio

Interest in broadcasting via satellite has increased dramatically since the mid 1970s when its potential was demonstrated by a number of services, especially HBO - the first company to use satellite as a means of delivering television signals to cable systems (Negrine 1988, p.7). It was not until 1990 that listeners in the US had an opportunity to access radio programmes directly from satellite systems (Warren 2005, p.166), and up to date, Sirius and XM Radio remain the only two companies which dominate satellite radio broadcasting in this country (ibid).

As satellite radio is a special digital radio that receives signals broadcasts by communications satellite, it provides high quality of transmission and clearer discrimination than analogue, making the use of smaller receiving antennas possible (Hudson 1988, p.227). This feature allows listeners to follow a single channel regardless of location (WorldSpace 2006b). Moreover, satellite offers a wide variety of programming with at least 50 channels each of talk and music (Warren 2005, p.167). According to Perebinossoff (*et al.* 2005, p.90-91), satellite radio provides programming unavailable elsewhere, and niche programming aimed at a specific segment or group of the national population, for example the gay and lesbian community.

³¹ DMB can transmit video, audio, and other data, and is able to handle the latest, more efficient multimedia encoding technologies, such as Windows Media 9, MPEG-4 or Real Video 9, to capture the characteristics of mobile multimedia broadcasting.

WorldSpace has its own two satellites, AfriStar™ and AsiaStar™, to cover most of Europe, Asia and Africa. Each satellite has three beams and each beam is able to send up to 80 channels directly to portable satellite radios (WorldSpace 2006a). The WorldSpace satellite radio can also broadcast multimedia content. WorldSpace provides over 100 channels of 100% digital quality music, news, and sports, many previously not available via radio throughout the WorldSpace coverage area (WorldSpace 2006b).

It is noted that, in order to consume radio programmes from XM Satellite Radio, Sirius Satellite Radio or WorldSpace, listeners require special receivers and pay a subscription (Warren 2005, p.168; Worldspace 2006b).

Europe, including Britain began to reconsider their policies towards cable systems and satellite broadcasting from about 1980 onwards (Negrine 1988, p.7). In the UK, when the BBC began transmitting its television programming on Intelsat in 1987, they began using the two mono channels provided by the Intelsat transponder to transmit the BBC World Service radio station (Goodfriend 1988, p.152). In addition, satellite radio is delivered by Sky Television in the UK as part of their satellite television service. To date, there are a number of radio stations available on the Sky Digital service. Differing from the US, where satellite radio is seen as an additional choice, most major radio stations in the UK also simulcast via satellite radio (Fleming 2002, p.30).

Even though there are different types of satellite services in the US and Europe³², satellite broadcasting is mainly utilised in television services (Negrine 1988, Home Office 1981, Pavlik 1998, p.96-103; Collins 1991). In addition, according to the majority of European radio experts in Ala-Fossi *et al.*'s study (2008, p.12), satellite radio will not become important in their home countries as Europe is divided into "tribal societies" due to the multi-culture and multi-languages of many nations.

³² In the US low-powered satellites operating in the fixed-satellite service frequency bands are used to transmit programme services to cable networks using large diameter ground antennae, while direct broadcasting services (DBS) are applied in Europe (Home Office 1981; Negrine 1988). DBS is aimed directly at individual households thereby by-passing cable systems altogether (Negrine 1988, p.10).

3.5.3. Digital Cellular Communications

Cellular Communications is an over-the-air delivering media currently used for telephone services, including voice and data transmission (Pavlik 1998, p.102). The telecom technology has developed from the humble analogue POTS to the current third-generation or 3G³³ digital cellular systems.

Visual Radio³⁴ - a technology developed by Nokia to allow listeners easier access to interactive radio stations - enables radio broadcasters to offer a visual and interactive user experience for its radio listeners via mobile phones. The world's first Visual Radio broadcasts began on March 4, 2005 in Finland (Visualradio.com 2006). The visual content displayed on the terminal screen, such as song title, artiste's name and slideshow, are delivered via the telco network which is synchronised with the FM radio broadcast. Although similar to what a DAB receiver could do with the PAD and NPAD services, the sound and mobile reception qualities are still basically analogue FM (Bagharib and Tan 2004). It is acknowledged that Nokia's Visual Radio is not radio streaming. The audio is received via a regular analogue FM radio embedded in the mobile `phone. The new interactive visual channel is carried to the receivers through the mobile phone network by a two-way wireless Internet connection, e.g. GPRS - a commonly used digital packet data service. All timing data used to synchronize the presentation of the content to the reception of FM radio program is also delivered through the mobile network (Visualradio.com 2006).

Currently, Nokia handsets have only FM radio and at least initially, Visual Radio will use only still images. Unlike DAB, Visual Radio listeners have to bear the cost of accessing visual services (Bagharib and Tan 2004; Visual.com 2006).

³³ 3G has the added advantage of being a full-duplex system, and has the potential to provide data rates at up to 2Mbits/s.

³⁴ It should be noted that the term 'Visual Radio', which Korean broadcasting systems use is different from the term 'Visual Radio', the service Nokia's GPRS/FM offers. Street (2005, p.21) indicated that this situation renders the market place confusing and argues that a consistent way of describing these services would be a benefit.

According to recently compiled data from VisualRadio.com (2008), only 8 countries including the US, the UK, Finland, India, Spain, Turkey, Thailand and Singapore have agreed protocols for Visual Radio.

It is technically possible to deliver digital audio over mobile `phone systems, using `3G` - this may or may not include access to the internet. However, these systems are based on `one-to-one` rather than `one-to-many` communication; and are expensive ways to deliver traditional linear broadcasting. In other words, it is a costly way to receive an otherwise free service. As a result, their role is likely to be complementary in widening consumer choice, including offering clips of material for particular interest groups (Ofcom 2005; Bagharib and Tan 2004).

3.5.4. Web radio (Internet Radio)

After the introduction of the first audio streaming software (RealRadio 1.0) in 1995, the Internet radio became a new platform for digital audio delivery with interactive multimedia capability (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.20; Priestman 2002). Radio-style audio programming was put over streaming Internet connections: no radio transmitters need be involved at any point in the process.

The company - Progressive Networks, which developed RealRadio 1.0 - soon became RealNetworks and went on to rapidly improve the capabilities of their RealRadio, closely followed by a number of competitors³⁵. Streaming audio over the Internet, enabled firstly by RealRadio is considered as:

... the equivalent moment to the first transmission of speech by R.A. Fessenden in place of Morse code on the `radio telephone` in 1906...

Priestman (2002, p.7)

³⁵ Amongst these were Xing – which has become a subsidiary of RealRadio that concentrates on MPEG audio based (MP3) products and services, Windows Media Audio (WMA) - produced by Microsoft, and Winamp - produced by Nullsoft (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.21; Priestman 2002, p.7).

Although the quality was poor, people could recognise what it was and envisage the possibilities for a new type of transmission for radio - webcasting (Ha *et al.* 2003, p.156), and new type of radio broadcast - web radio.

To date, there are no data regarding the first web radio station. However, in 1996, 178 web radio stations already existed (Walcutt 1998, p.4), and the BBC Online commenced its full service on 15 December 1997 (BBC 1998). The number of web radio stations increased significantly in the following years (Walcutt 1998, p.4; Miles and Sakai 2001). Whereas DAB has only been initiated in Western countries - developing countries tend to still be at the experimental stage - web radio appears in most countries³⁶.

Importantly, further technological developments have allowed listeners to download audio files/radio programmes for access at any time. Podcasting enables listeners to automatically receive the latest broadcast of their chosen programme as soon as it is available on the Internet. Podcasts differ from the relatively widespread practice of streaming audio files in that they are intended to be downloaded and played at the user's convenience (Allan 2006, p.171).

In order to receive a podcast, listeners need an internet connection and a piece of podcast software, usually available free of charge, for example, iTunes, Juice and Doppler (BBC 2007), which can search a web radio station for new programmes and automatically download them to the listener's portable digital music devices. According to Ofcom (2006a, p.58), this was the factor which led to podcasting's success in 2005, when broadcasters, including Virgin Radio, made highlights from their shows available

³⁶ According to recent data compiled from the website RadioLocator (RadioLocator.com 2006), there are more than 17,500 web radios in 136 countries and territories. The US has the largest number of web radio stations - 13,903 followed by Canada, the UK and Australia, 960, 364 and 282 respectively.

Due to the significant increase of web radios in recent years, some webcast directory websites - or *aggregators* (a term used by Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.22), including live-radio.net, live 365.com, radio-locator.com, broadcast.com and radiotower.com - which allow audiences to access easily thousands of radio station worldwide, have emerged.

for downloading. At present, a number of broadcasters, including LBC, produce exclusive paid-for podcasts sold directly to end-users.

It was the rising popularity of portable digital music devices that provided a potential opportunity for podcasting services. In the UK, approximately 27.3% of adults owned an MP3 player by the end of the first Quarter (2007), and 18.4% of owners used a MP3 device to listen to downloaded radio content (Ofcom 2007c, p.247). At present, in developed countries, including the UK, audiences can access to the Internet anywhere they can obtain a mobile signal - at least a 3G phone signal - by simply plugging a “dongle” into to a laptop: no wire connection to the local telephone exchange is required (Johnson 2008; Brignall 2008). At the time of writing, these services have only recently been marketed, however, it is proposed that by 2009, the digital telecommunication companies, 3 and T-Mobile, will cover 98% of the UK’s population with mobile broadband networks capable of speeds up to 7.2 Mb per second - or nearly twice the current typical home broadband speeds - and nearly 20 times faster than existing 3G services (Brignall 2008). These new developments in technology increase the popularity of Internet accessibility, and consequently, services related to the Internet, including web radio.

Summary

This chapter has investigated radio’s development in the UK and US since its inception, focusing on its adaptations as a result of advancements in technology and consequent changes in the listening habits of audiences. Even though radio in the US is typically commercial (with the exception of NPR), in contrast to the more pluralist mix of commercial, state-controlled and public service stations across Europe and elsewhere (Hendy 2000, p.4), radio development in both countries shared a number of similarities. From its emergence in the late 1800s, throughout its development as the first electronic mass medium in the 1920s, until now, radio in the UK and US has proved itself capable of significant adaptations, in order to take its place alongside new forms of electronic media. In the ever-changing world of mass information and entertainment, radio reinvented itself through geometric progressions and it remains one of the most vital and popular forms of media (Shingler and Wieringa 1998, p.ix). In the Digital Age, due to fiercer competition with newly emerging media and increasingly demanding

audiences, radio has provided numerous variants, which render it highly accessible for audiences.

It is acknowledged that all digital forms enhance radio through multimedia services, including text, still pictures and the feature 'slide show'. It has been found that the radio industry has enhanced itself via the addition of non-radio features to digital radio, as well as utilising other visual media to support radio programmes. At present, the evolution which 'enhanced radio' through multimedia is still at an experimental stage, and should be further investigated.

The historical approach applied in this chapter suggests that web radio is one of the radio variants in the Digital Age which has proved, once again, the changing capacity of radio in new social, economic and industrial environments. However, the combination of radio and the Internet creates a number of special characteristics for web radio which none of the other radio variants have. For this reason, the historical approach in this chapter should be combined with the investigation in the following chapter - exploring the relationship between mass media in the Internet Age - in order to define web radio and its characteristics.

Furthermore, the historical approach in this chapter not only contributes to exploring web radio's definition and characteristics, but also provides benefits for studying the development of radio in Vietnam. The early days of radio in Vietnam were relatively similar to those in the UK and US. Previously, listening to radio was difficult and costly. Radio sets in Vietnam were so expensive that very few people could afford to own one. For decades since its inception in 1945, in Vietnam, listening to radio was a group activity as people gathered under a public loudspeaker or around a radio set to listen to broadcasts. As was also the case in the UK and US, listeners' habits in Vietnam have changed since television was first broadcast in the late 1970s and significantly, after the Economic Renovation (1986). The emergence of the Internet in the late 1990s has also created a new competitor for traditional media, including radio, and threatened its share of the media market.

It is significant in relation to this thesis, that radio in other industrialised countries - including the UK and US - continues to retain a strong position - regardless of fierce

competition with other media; whereas, radio in Vietnam is losing its listeners dramatically, especially the youth, the well-educated and urban audiences. It is believed this is due to the differences in adaptabilities of radio in the UK, US and Vietnam.

This chapter has illustrated, conclusively, that the key of the success of radio in the UK and US is derived from its extensive abilities to adapt and reinvent itself. Radio in the UK and US has utilised technological improvements and developments as well as its strong characteristics - as a distinct medium - in order to fortify its position and continue to develop. In this sense, radio development in the UK and US has provided invaluable experiences for the future development of radio in Vietnam, especially when Vietnamese radio has demonstrated a number of weaknesses in terms of adaptability. The slow and limited adaptation of Vietnamese radio - regardless of the rapid changes in listeners' habits and socio-economic developments - are major issues, restricting Vietnamese radio's ability to compete effectively with visual media, this notion will be critically investigated from Chapter V onwards.

It is worth noting that the development of radio in Vietnam has combined rudimentary and modern technologies. Having entered the 21st century, when technology has offered vast opportunities for people to choose the media they prefer; Internet Cafés are available even in rural areas in Vietnam, the radio loudspeaker system continues to exist in every corner of urban areas, broadcasting unsolicited information to the population. Moreover, whilst traditional radio sets are disappearing in many households in Vietnam, personal access to a computer has increased significantly during recent years. For this reason, radio's development in Vietnam - since its inception - and more importantly, whether web radio is a potential means of strengthening radio's position and capturing new radio listeners in Vietnam will be investigated in-depth in Chapters VI, VII and VIII.

In the following chapter, a new dimension, the relationship between radio and web radio in mass media systems, will be investigated, in order to define and clarify web radio, its characteristics and its role in capturing radio listeners.

Chapter IV:

In the competitive - interactive relationships between mass media:

WHAT IS WEB RADIO?

In the previous chapter, the historical perspective - the first approach to define web radio - suggests that web radio is one of radio's variants which renders radio highly accessible in the Internet Age. In this chapter, web radio is investigated from another perspective - the relationships between mass media within their systems - particularly since the emergence of a new form of journalism: online journalism. These competitive and interactive relationships between mass media have enabled them to coexist and co-develop even though they have the same functions of delivering information and entertainment. This chapter comprises three sections, including: *The emergence of the 'fourth' medium: Online-journalism; The nature of mass media's relationships and Web Radio's position in mass media systems; and Web radio - its definition, characteristics and developments.*

4.1. THE EMERGENCE OF THE 'FOURTH' MEDIUM: ONLINE-JOURNALISM

It took radio 37 years to build an audience of 50 million and television about 15 years to reach the same number of viewers. But it took the World Wide Web *just over 3 years* to reach its first 50 million users!

(Naughton 2000, p.27)

The emergence and continuing development of the Internet has significantly affected journalism, at least in two noticeable ways: by providing new resources and tools for journalists and offering a new means of communication (Deuze and Paulussen 2002, p.237). Many studies have been undertaken to examine the effects of CAR: including the 'omnipresence' of the Internet in daily reporting, changing technology and journalist practices, the effects of emails, posts in newsgroups in an anonymous environment and

fast-paced communication (Singer 1997; Cottle and Ashton 1999; Garrison 2000). More importantly, the majority of these studies have emphasised the use of the Internet as a means of communication, a platform for journalistic endeavours and challenges, which will be discussed in the following section (Kopper *et al.* 2000, p.499).

This form of journalism is variously referred to as ‘multimedia’ (Quinn 2005, p.147; Deuze 2004; Jankowski and Hansen 1996 cited McMillan 2006, p.206), ‘digital journalism’ (Deuze 1999, p.374; Kawamoto 2003; Scott 2005, p.89), ‘new media’ (Negroponte 1995; Livingstone 2002; Lister *et al.* 2003; Pavlik 1988; Shorrock 1988), ‘network journalism’ (Bardoel 2002, p.502), ‘convergence journalism’ (Quinn and Filak 2005), ‘web journalism’ (Stovall 2004; Massey and Luo 2005, p.359), and ‘online journalism’ (Morgan 1998, p.52; Deuze 1999 and 2003; Deuze and Paulussen 2002; Ward 2002; Wolk 2001; Scott 2005). This type of journalism is seen as online journalism as it is produced more or less exclusively for the WWW (Deuze 2003, p.206) and defined as journalistic activities on and through the Internet, concerned with the use of journalism products and services (Kopper *et al.* 2000, p.499).

Most importantly, it is regarded as the ‘fourth’ form of journalism³⁷ (Morris and Ogan 1996, Deuze 1999 and 2003; Deuze and Paulussen 2002; Bardoel 2002), the one that has grown into “the most powerful medium” (Pryor 2001, p.22) since the first live radio broadcast in 1920.

4.1.1. Online journalism’s characteristics

One of the reasons for online journalism’s rapid development is that it has the potential to take the best features of newspapers, magazines, radio and television and remediate them into a single new product with the strengths of existing media, yet few of the weaknesses (Carlson 2003, p.53). Online journalism also possesses a number of unique characteristics, which other media could not.

The most important feature of online journalism is its interactivity (Bardoel 2002, p.504; Deuze 1999, p.377; Pavlik 1998).

³⁷ The other three being print, radio and television.

Negroponte (1995, p.54) drew a sharp contrast between “passive old media” and “interactive new media”, predicting the collapse of broadcast networks in favour of an era of narrowcasting and niche media on-demand. Even though interactivity is not unique to new media, McMillan (2006, p.206, 215) acknowledged that traditional media, such as newspapers, seem to have a limited capacity for interaction. Conventional media offer feedback for their audiences via letter writing or telephone; however, this is not as convenient as the click of a mouse on a website. Priestman (2002, p.8) argued that the path of a radio broadcast is in one direction only: “...from station to transmitter mast to radio receiver to our ear”. Even though the audience may telephone or write to a broadcaster, most listeners to mainstream radio do none of these things, they simply listen to radio (Priestman 2002, p.8). In effect, ordinary people have quite limited opportunities to participate in the generation of traditional mass media content, and even less to discuss it (Nord 1995 cited Schultz 2000, p.206).

Although the use of the term ‘interactivity’ exploded in popular, trade and scholarly discourse in the early 1990s (McMillan 2006, p.205), notions of interactivity have been discussed since the mid-1980s. Rice (1984, p.35) suggested that the term “fully interactive media imply that the sender and receiver roles are interchangeable”. Nearly two decades later, Rogers (2003, p.314) emphasises the same theme when defining interactivity as “the degree to which participants in a communication process can exchange roles in and have control over their mutual discourse”. Steur (1992 cited Downes and McMillan 2000, p.159) defined interactivity as “the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time”. However, Rheingold (2000) suggests that the asynchronous characteristic of interactive tools, including email and newsgroups is one of the key benefits of these interactive media.

Researchers have suggested a number of dimensions for exploring interactivity. For example, Schultz (2000) indicated two types of interactivity: reader-to-reader and journalist-to-reader. Others identified three levels: user-to-user, user-to-documents and user-to-system (Szuprowicz 1995; McMillan 2006, p.209-221). Audience-driven consumption is an important element of interactivity, which has three levels: firstly, the consumer interacting with the provider, secondly, the consumer interacting with the

consumer, and finally the consumer becoming the provider, or active co-creator (Ward 2000, p.24; McMillan 2006, p.215).

New technology offers greater opportunities for audiences to interact with media content providers. Consequently, this creates new characteristics for young audiences - that are more active, on-demand and interactive (as discussed in the previous chapter). For this reason, interactivity, generally considered a central characteristic of online journalism, has provided, for online journalism, significant advantages in its fierce competition with traditional media.

Hypertextuality is also regarded as a specific feature of online journalism (Bardoel 2002, p.504). Online journalist may use this characteristic to supply news content with hyperlinks to original documents, which could include links to discussions of the pros and cons related to the issue, or links to other sites with information, and a selection of material in news archives (Pavlik 1999 cited Bardoel 2002, p.504). This feature enables the capacity for greater depth in online reporting (Allan 2006, p.25). With the exponential increase of information on a worldwide scale, the necessity for offering further information about a news report has become a crucial addition to journalist's skills and practices (Deuze 1999). Deuze (2003) also distinguished between *internal* hyperlinks, referring to other texts within the material's domain, and *external* hyperlinks to texts, located elsewhere on the Internet.

Asynchronicity is a further, special feature of online journalism (Bardoel 2002, p.505), in the sense that it offers information which can be consumed either immediately - as is the case with radio and television consumption - or accessed later - a characteristic typical of print media.

A number of features, including personalisation, individualisation (Deuze 1999, p.377), immediacy (Allan 2006, p.23-26) and 'pull' medium (Allan 2006, p.27; Priestman 2002) - whereas traditional media are 'push' or 'spoon-fed' - also are mentioned as significant factors in attracting web users.

However, differing from the above characteristics - which mostly offer advantages for audiences who consume media online - there is one feature of online journalism which

has a significant impact on the definition and development of older media: convergence (Deuze 1999, p.377) or multimediality (Bardoel 2002, p.505). As a result of the convergence of media modalities, multimedia can be seen as the combination of information offered in different formats, produced by different sections of one or more media organisations. Alternatively, as a divergent concept, all parts of the site are developed from a multimedial starting point, offering the web user several routes into the site's contents. In the Internet, the 'linearity' of broadcasting, especially radio, can be combined with the 'non-linearity' of a multimedia environment³⁸. In other words, online journalism has converged a number of the characteristics of print journalism with broadcasting journalism. For the first time, the typical perceptions of traditional media, and radio in particular, have been challenged in the Digital Age (See more in 1.1.4).

4.1.2. Review of online journalism

4.1.2.1. The development of online journalism

After nearly 20 years of development, online journalism has been identified as having occurred in three stages (Fortunati 2005) or waves (Pryor 2002).

By 1994, the first major European newspapers³⁹ arrived online (Hall 2001, p.27). By 1996, most news outlets, both print and broadcast in the US had a web presence (Scott 2005, p.93). However, at that time, online journalism was initially a supplement and complement to the dominant print and broadcast news media (Regan 2000 cited Scott 2005, p.93). The content was generally limited to what the industry now calls 'shovelware' (Scott 2005, p.93; Hall 2001, p.28), or 'parasitic' material (Bardoel 2002, p.503) which means that text/audio/video had been 'repurposed' or recycled from the original form for web publication without changing the content. This period is now referred to as the first stage of the development of online journalism (Fortunati 2005, p.30).

³⁸ In the Internet, information-based, real-time linear radio programme services are combined with non-linear radio content delivery and consumption, for example downloading and podcasting. In addition, the linear flow of a radio programme can be supported with non-linear content in the form of text available in the website.

³⁹ *The Daily Telegraph*, the *Financial Times* and the *Irish Times* (Hall 2001, p.27)

During the second stage, the site that accompanied a traditional newspaper began to change in an attempt to exploit the potentiality of the new medium. This was the point at which in-depth services, audio and video features, and an archive were proposed (Fortunati 2005, p.30). At this stage, the network-related media began to overcome the status of 'shovelware' (Bardoel 2002, p.505), shaping the 'fourth' form of journalism. However, according to Murray (1997 cited McMillan 2006, p.206) the medium was still at an early stage of development and continued to depend on formats derived from earlier technologies instead of exploiting its own expressive power.

The third and present stage is that of the 'mature' site, which has learnt somehow to use multimedia language and is struggling to find a strategy for "economic return" (Fortunati 2005, p.30). In this third stage, online journalism has demonstrated in full its unique characteristics, which distinguished it from other types of journalism.

In addition, along with the rapid development of online journalism, research into this form of journalism has also flourished. Pioneering research about online journalism was first published in 1997, according to Deuze and Paulussen (2002, p.238). Correspondingly, researchers have focused on online journalism, dealing with one or more specific aspects as discussed as follow.

4.1.2.2. Impacts of online journalism on society

A number of studies investigated the impacts of the Internet, in general, and online journalism in particular on society⁴⁰. Heinonen (1999, p.30-31) argued that society today seems to be undergoing a crucial transformation, from the industrial era - described with symbols and icons of industry: chimneys, assembly lines, factories - to the information era - represented by media, network and computers. Negroponte (1995) believed that new digital technologies are creating a fundamentally new - digital world -

⁴⁰ Traditional media, generally speaking, are one-way communication (Priestman 2002, p.8, 136), whilst the Internet is a two-way technology, which enables the borders between producers and receivers to blur in the Internet environment. This technique has had a significant impact on the information society and has become an emerging discourse amongst media researchers. As web radio is operated in the Internet environment, and is a subset of 'online journalism', it is thought that a brief review about the impacts of online journalism on society would be useful to understand the role and position of web radio.

one that we must accommodate. According to Dyson (1998 cited Mosco 2005, p.40) computer communication will make:

... everything different: power shifting away from the centre toward individuals and small organisations, more fluidity and continuous change, increasingly irrelevant national boundaries.

Shaw *et al.* (2000, p.74) argued that the Internet certainly has opened up a possibility for people seeking the top of Maslow's hierarchy: self-actualisation. A number of texts, including those of Cottle and Ashton (1999), Bardoel and Deuze (2001), Weijden (2007), have pointed out in recent years that the functions of journalism and the role of the journalist are changing.

A number of authors have agreed that online journalism's ability to serve audiences as quickly and completely as possible could be seen as an important step in democratisation for the public (Deuze 1999, Deuze *et al.* 2002, p.243; Abu-Fadil 2005). Moreover, according to Deuze (1999, 2000), online journalists are moving towards a 'guide dog' rather than 'watchdog' role on the Internet.

As any one can become a journalist (Wilson cited Bardoel 1996, p.288), online journalism reflects a contemporary global trend towards community journalism that relates closely to (the promises of) so-called public, civic, citizen or 'do it yourself' journalism (Deuze 2002, p.242; Bardoel 1996; Halavais 2002; Abu-Fadil 2005; Allan 2006; Weijden 2007). Beers (2006, p.117-118) argues that all three types of Internet 'independent'⁴¹ media, including E-zine news media (which develop and present original content using traditional journalism approaches), the blogosphere and open publishing sites (where users provide the content, for example OhmyNews.com in Korea) share a common feature which is that they have online functions. As a result, they are able to be democratically interactive in ways traditional media cannot. Weijden (2007, p.4) states that this phenomenon can be seen as a wonderful development: "it is about sharing, about creativity, about participation, about community, about democracy". Additionally, as the Internet has generated large numbers of radical

⁴¹ Independent news media is defined as news media not subject to the most common pressures associated with the dominant, corporate form of ownership (Beers 2006, p.115).

websites and discussion groups which encourage the public to bypass their moderate and possibly more balanced opinions, group polarisation emerged (Sunstein 2001, p.65). According to Sunstein (2001, p.75), group polarisation:

... helped fuel many movements of great value...including the civil rights movement, the antislavery movement and the movement for sex equality.

The Internet is the only medium through which interaction and debate take place via an autonomous and electronic fora, bypassing the control of media (Castells 2004 cited Weijden 2007, p.14). However, even though the Internet is able to bring a public sphere into existence or contribute it, Poor (2005) argues that this would not happen automatically. Perlmutter (2005 cited Abu-Fadil 2005, p.3) doubts whether bloggers truly represented the general population as they came from the higher income and better-educated segment of the population. The volume of content on blogs also does not always equate to substance, as even though in a number of cases citizens posting information online could compete with traditional media (Allan 2006, p.5-10), their veracity, accuracy, balance and fairness were not always beyond question (Abu-Fadil 2005, p.4; Allan 2006, p.21-29). Furthermore, the increasing individualisation and fragmentation of audiences created a major problem for the future of public communication in terms of the organisation of communities and public debates (Bardoel 2002, p.509).

A number of studies expressed concerns about the impacts of online journalism on the public sphere. They argued that although the new technologies have great potential for democratic communication, left to the market there is little reason to expect the Internet to serve democratic ends (Herman 1998, p.201; McChesney 1999, p.176). A number of authors contend that 'market-driven journalism' is a reality (Cohen 2002, p.544) and "online news content is very often market-based journalism of the rankest order" (Scott 2005, p.111). According to Cohen (2002, p.544), the Internet itself does:

...little to alter the macro-level (corporate ownership) and micro-level (advertisers' pressures) constraints on journalists...The influence of mass conglomerates on news production functions in much the same way as in traditional media, if not more so.

Scott (2005) argued that the move to an online format has exacerbated negative trends which have dogged print journalism for decades, whereby the public service mission of democratic journalism has been abandoned by the commercial press. Scott (2005) believed that less costly and more saleable trends have emerged, such as sensationalism, confrontational mock debates, disproportionate coverage of marketable business news, blurred distinctions between editorial and advertising content, extensive reliance on press releases and publicity from government agencies and corporations.

Scott (2005, p.111) stated that not only does online journalism rebroadcast existing “very poor” journalism; it often resorts to featuring and expanding on the most outrageous, eye-catching headlines. As a result, currently, rather than strengthening democracy by cultivating the knowledge and participation of citizens, use of the Internet tends to deepen the crisis of political legitimacy by offering a broader launching platform for the politics of scandal (Castells 2003, p.158).

Scott (2005, p.121) concluded that the clash between profit seeking and public service has not been swept away by the Internet, but conversely, made more acute. Scott (ibid) believed the main problem of online journalism is both the crisis and those proponents of the professional status quo, and those who saw the Internet as a great opportunity.

4.1.2.3. Impacts on media professional practice and the development of traditional media

Challenges and concerns regarding the impacts of the Internet on journalistic profession are also voiced. A number of studies investigated the differences between online journalism and traditional journalism, in order to investigate attitudes, skills and competencies for online journalists (Deuze 1999, 2002), or explored the characteristics of online journalists, which are ‘technology-driven’, ‘audience-oriented’ and ‘service-minded’ (Deuze *et al.* 2002, p.237-245). Additionally, it was found that digital technologies, including access to the Internet, have facilitated changes in working practices, including cost savings and efficiently gains (BBC 1996, p.12; Cottle and

Ashton 1999). Garrison's (2001, p.233) study⁴² found that "the web is firmly in place as the leader in interactive database resources available to journalists". In other words, the Internet has become the dominant news-gathering resource for journalists. Deuze and Paulussen (2002, p.245) contended that these tendencies will change journalistic practices, standards and skills.

Other researchers were concerned about journalist practice in the Digital Age. The convenience of constant feeds from wire services and press releases, together with the availability of the Internet, may encourage journalists increasingly to produce news from their desks, using passively received materials, including press releases and publicity from government agencies and corporations rather than actively exploring issues. This may increase the influence these sources have on driving the journalistic agenda (Manning 2001, p.105; Scott 2005). The development of 24-hour news channels in broadcasting has resulted in immediacy becoming more valued than analysis, and a blurring of the line between news and sensationalism (McNair 1998, p.130; Cottle and Ashton 1999; Abu-Fadil 2005). Moreover, 'desk journalism', in combination with the pressure of immediacy and increasing workload of journalists - due to multi-skill requirements - has exacerbated the risk of lack of accuracy in reporting (Bromley and O'Malley 1997; Cottle and Ashton 1999). Journalists have reported that they become stressed and feel that the quality of their products worsens (Cottle and Ashton 1999). Hall (2001, p.143-174) agreed with these opinions contending that the Internet can lead to a further questioning of issues, including accuracy, objectivity and credibility, and to a further blurring of the distinctions between editorial content and advertising.

The emergence of online journalism has created a number of debates, not only in terms of its potentials and impacts on society and the public sphere, but more importantly, on the development of other media. A significant number of researchers investigated the impact of the Internet on older media, including the influence of Internet use on television watching, radio listening and newspapers reading as discussed in the previous chapter. However, even though audiences can listen to radio via the Internet, none of

⁴² Garrison's (2001, p.233) study - which examined the spread of online information technologies within US daily newspaper newsroom over 6 year period beginning in 1994 - asserted the value of interactive internet information-gathering tools to journalists.

these studies clarify whether 'listening to live and on-demand radio programmes via the Internet' was categorised as 'radio listening' or 'Internet consuming', whilst radio listening via digital platforms, including web radio, has increased significantly in the last few years. For this reason, the question of how the Internet affects radio listening remains an important area for future research.

The impact of the Internet on other traditional media is also investigated from another dimension: the theory of competition. In order to investigate the impact of the Internet on older media and their struggle to survive, Lehman-Wilzig and Cohen-Avigdor (2004) proposed the 6-stage natural life cycle model of new media evolution: comprising birth (technical invention), penetration, growth, maturity, self-defence, and adaptation. Having applied Rogers' (1983) diffusion of innovations model, Lehman-Wilzig and Cohen-Avigdor (2004) proposed that in the market penetration stage, the new medium enters the market, developing new users, and attracting users from 0% to 16% of the market. If successful in exceeding a 16% share, it moves to the next stage: growth. During the stage of growth, developers and users learn to exploit, apply and expand the unique capabilities of the medium (16 to 50% of the market). In the maturation stage, the new medium finds its place in the dynamic communications environment (50-90% of the market). In the fifth stage - defensive resistance - the competition between old media and the new medium forces the former to seek new directions in order to preserve their traditional audiences. According to the authors (ibid.), the market then declines from 90 to 50% for the traditional medium. The final stage is of either adaptation - whereby the traditional medium adapts to the new situation by developing a different function and/or preserving (finding) its (new) audience, or convergence - the traditional medium cannot survive on its own, but preserves its function by merging with or incorporating into a new medium, or the third possibility, obsolescence.

However, as all mass media, particularly newspapers, radio, television and online-journalism continue to co-exist and co-develop without replacing each other, the process of 'adaptation' begins and continues to develop when a new medium arrives, through its 'growth' and 'maturation' stages. Furthermore, not only does the former medium have to seek defensive resistance and adaptation, the new medium has to find a way to utilise

the strong characteristics of older media to strengthen its own position⁴³, which will be discussed in detail at the section 2.2.3. In this sense, the 6-stage natural life cycle model (ibid) of new media evolution has not yet explored the complex relationships between mass media.

Some researchers have consciously attempted to make historical linkages between new and old media. Marvin (1990, p.8) focused on the interplay between new and old purposes in new media. New media and new ways of using old technologies, and other possibilities for the exchange of social meaning, are frequently introduced within a pattern of tension created by the coexistence of old and new. Marvin (ibid) suggested the tension created by the coexistence of the old and new becomes a focus of interest because it is novel. Fortunati (2005) investigated the mediatization of the Internet and the internetization of the media. However, the study “focused specially on the invasion of the net by newspapers” (Fortunati 2005, p.29). In other words, researchers have not paid sufficient attention to distinguishing different kinds of online journalism when traditional media, including newspapers, radio and television invaded the Internet. This is a significant point, as the Internet is both a macromedium (comprehensive in scope and global in size, also disseminating the shortest messages to the smallest audience) and a metamedium (a platform for older media) (Adams and Clark 2001, p.29). In essence, none of the pioneering researchers attempt to explore the relationships between mass media in order to investigate and define the hybrids between traditional media and the Internet, including web radio.

In the following sections, I will apply the theory of the niche (Dimmick 2004) to explore the nature of the relationship between mass media, which allow them to co-exist and co-develop in a highly competitive environment. More importantly, I endeavour to explore a new way to define web radio and its characteristics in order to contribute to the extant body of academic knowledge.

⁴³ For example, when television broadcasting started to take off in the late 1940s and early 1950s, in the US, television producers adopted the network programming methods used in radio (Perebinossoff *et al.* 2005, p.5). To date, television and radio continue to utilise the strong features of print medium to promote their stations and attract greater interest from audiences. For example, information about television and radio’s schedules, programmes and producers are available in many magazines and newspapers.

4.2. THE NATURE OF THE MASS MEDIA'S RELATIONSHIPS AND WEB RADIO'S POSITION IN MASS MEDIA SYSTEMS

4.2.1. The competition between mass media

The need to communicate with other human beings is as fundamental as the physical requirement for food and accommodation - a necessity for survival (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.4). The desire of human beings to deliver information to a large number of people, and receive information in a short time was initially satisfied when print journalism arrived. As a result of Gutenberg's invention of the printing machine,⁴⁴ printed press began to revolutionise people's ability to communicate information and ideas. Print journalism was warmly welcomed and dominated society - as the only means of reaching a wide audience from a distance - during the 17-19th centuries. There is no evidence of competition between mass media until radio appeared (Dimmick 2003, p.43).

When radio arrived - although the price of a radio-set at that time was still very high, especially for working-class people - the population reacted to the new medium with enthusiasm in both the UK and US (Black 1972, p.23; Briggs 1965, p.6; Douglas 1999, p.128). The impact of radio on print media was in response to a legitimate concern that broadcasting would mean the end of print media (Lazarsfeld 1940 cited Kayany and Yelsma 2000, p.216).

In the UK, having faced an emerging competitor - radio, a number of rearguard actions by newspapers against the BBC were undertaken. For example, the Newspaper Proprietors' Association put pressure on the government to forbid any news broadcast until 7 pm (Lax 1997, p.24). The BBC could not broadcast news other than that which was obtained from the main agencies such as Reuters - this was deliberately supplied in the form of written bulletins rather than with radio listeners in mind. In the early years of broadcasting, the GPO also banned all political commentary and controversy and most political speeches (Crisell 2001, p.21). Towards the end of the 1930s, the press was still fighting a rearguard action against the BBC, by requiring certain news sources to embargo material as 'not for broadcasting'. It was the need to cover the 1938 Munich

⁴⁴ Between 1440 and 1445/6, according to Stöber (2004, p.489).

crisis, by every means possible that finally enabled radio news to compete with newspapers on equal terms. In other words, the restriction on the supply of the news in the UK was not finally lifted until the European crisis 1938 (Paulu 1956, p.156).

In the US, with the rapid expansion of the NBC and CBS in the early thirties, radio schedule billings increased while newspaper advertising lineage fell. Radio news coverage was utilising Press Association reports to successfully compete with newspapers having a decided advantage in delivery of news reporting in terms of timeliness. For this reason, by 1933, the American Association of Newspaper Publishers had persuaded AP, UP and INS to suspend their services to broadcasters (Schramm and Roberts 1971, p.53; Emery and Emery 1988 cited Lehman-Wilzig and Cohen-Avigdor 2006, p.717). Radio then had to gather its own news stories.

The competition between mass media became more intense after the arrival of television, and later the Internet. The introduction of BBC Television in the early 1950s resulted in a decline in radio listeners. Faced with competition from first one, and then two television networks, especially the advent of ITV in 1955, radio in the UK went into a long decline that some commentators predicted would prove fatal (Paulu 1961, p.155; Shingler and Wieringa 1998). Weiss (1968 cited Kayany and Yelsma 2000, p.217) found that the introduction of television into audience's schedules reduced the amount of time they spent with most other media. Similarly, Robinson (1981 cited Kayany and Yelsma 2000, p.217) also reported that those who spent more time watching television spent less time with radio.

In the case of newspapers, the situation is similar. Not only is there a significant decline in the number and circulation of newspapers, but more importantly, the percentage of people reading a paper daily in both the UK and US (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.78; Toffler 1980, p.174-5; Mediaweek 2005, p.11; Hollifield *et al.* 2006, p.1; Kopper *et al.* 2000, p.503).

Compared with the Internet, television and conventional radio is a 'push' medium (Negroponte 1995, p.170; Fleming 2002; Priestman 2002) in the sense that a small number of journalistic providers and publishers create programming content and then 'push' it at viewers whose freedom of choice is limited to the range that those producers

decide to publish. Meanwhile, the Internet can offer a 'pull' technology, in the sense that web users decide what they want and then ask for it to be delivered to them simply through the 'click' of a mouse. Moreover, because it is relatively easy to publish on the web, the range of choice is exponential and varied. In other words, the Internet is a more active medium, whereas TV is passive⁴⁵.

For the past 50 years, American leisure time home has been dominated by television. Increasingly, over the last decade, Internet users have 'bought' their time to go online from the time they previously spent watching TV. More importantly, as discussed in the previous chapter, the more experience users have with the Internet, the less television they watch.

Recently, the competition between mass media to capture audiences has a new rival: online journalism. Time spent on various media then becomes an issue since the underlying assumption is that individuals have a limited amount of time, whilst the supply of information is expanding exponentially (Huston *et al.* 1999; Neuman 1991; Cuilenburg *et al.* cited Bardoel 1996, p.286). As a result, all traditional mass media have had to share their own customers and, to some extent, lost their own audiences: as discussed in the previous section.

A number of media theorists have argued that the introduction of a new medium will not cause major changes in the media landscape (Coffey and Stipp 1997, p.61), others suggest that a revolution in the way people consume different media, will ultimately lead to the death of traditional media (Coffey and Stipp 1997, p.61; Stephens 1998).

⁴⁵ However, 'pull' technology is not always the best choice for audiences. It was noted that in the early hours after the September 11 attacks, most of the major online news sites in the US, including CNN.com, MSNBC.com, ABCNews.com, CBS.com and FoxNews.com, were largely inaccessible due to the "congestion collapse" of the Internet infrastructure (Allan 2003, p.119-121). There was even an advisory message on the homepage of the popular Google.com search engine, stating that if audiences were looking for news, they would find the most current information on television or radio (See more in Allan 2003, p.124). As a result, when the Internet cannot accommodate audiences' demand, "the audience shifts back to traditional media sources" (Outing 2001 cited Allan 2003, p.124).

It should be noted that, apart from 'pull' technology, the Internet can also at the same time offer 'push' functions, for example, providing live radio programmes online for listeners.

Nevertheless, one intriguing aspect of this phenomenon is that, unlike other commodities, even though mass media have the same function of delivering information and entertainment, they continue to co-exist and co-develop in the highly competitive environment of the Digital Age.

In economic terms, competition generally is said to occur when a substitute production is available that provides the consumer with similar utilities at a similar price (Hollifield *et al.* 2006, p.3). In mass communication, competition is defined as the struggle between media organisations for resources in the extant market (Dimmick 2003, 2005). Dimmick (2003, p.41) argued the nature of the competition between mass media is measured operationally by the overlap between the industries' niches on a particular dimension. The theory of 'niche' dimensions explains the coexistence via the concept of ecological differentiation or niche difference (Dimmick 2003, p.61), which was originally a Darwinist theory - divergence (Dimmick 2003).

The theory of 'niche' implies that successful coexistence of competitors requires a difference in niche or limiting similarity. In mass media, at least six types of resources that are the object of competition are proposed: 1) consumer gratification utilities and consumer gratification opportunities - which refer to both the use that consumers make of media content and their ability to access that content where and when they need it, 2) media content, 3) consumer spending, 4) time spent consuming media, 5) advertising revenue (Dimmick 2005, p.351) and 6) a labour force of trained media professionals (Hollifield 2006, p.60-69).

However, Dimmick (2003, p.125) has discussed only a small part of this complex paradigm: advertising and gratification utilities. Moreover, even though Dimmick (2003, p.123) argued that "among media organisations and industries, competitive exclusion or extinction is rare while niche differentiation is common", niche differentiation - due to the unique characteristics of each medium and the adaptations of traditional media when a new medium arrived - was not explored.

Generally speaking, none of the studies regarding media competition have attempted to explore the interactive and cooperate aspects of the relationships between mass media - in which one medium utilises the strong characteristics from other media to strengthen

its position - although, this is one of the main means by which mass media co-exist and co-develop. Therefore, in the following section I will investigate the complex relationships between mass media, focusing on the interactive and cooperate aspects.

To date, there are no studies investigating web radio in association with competition and interactivity between mass media. For this reason, having investigated these relationships, I will endeavour to explore new ways to define web radio and its characteristics in order to contribute to the existing body of academic knowledge about these issues.

4.2.2. Principles of the interactive and cooperate relationships between mass media

4.2.2.1. The co-existence landscape

Radio was widely predicted to engender the end of newspapers, and television the end of radio, and the Internet the end of newspapers, television and radio (Priestman 2002). However, it is clear that these predictions were exaggerated. In what is commonly referred to as the television and the Internet Age, radio and newspapers still enjoy significant achievements (Howard 2001, p.viii; Farhi 2005).

There is a rich global radio network with approximately 9,000 radio stations across Europe, another 11,000 or so in the USA, many thousands more in Latin America and growing numbers in Asia, Africa, Australasia - perhaps somewhere in the region of 40,000 or more stations worldwide (Hendy 2000; CIA Fact Book 2006). The number of radio stations is significantly higher than the number of television stations worldwide. Consequently, audiences have greater potential opportunities to receive information and entertainment from radio than from television.

More importantly, audiences still consider radio as an effective medium from which to obtain information (Ofcom 2007, p.25; McNair 2003, p.12). On average, in the UK and US, listeners listen for about 22 hours each week - just a little less time than people devote to television (RAJAR 1999; Douglas 1999). The figures are similar elsewhere. In Europe, suggest that most people listen for something between 17.5 and 28 hours each week (Tyler and Laing 1998 cited Hendy 2000, p.124).

With respect to newspapers, they remain one of the most relied-upon media for news and information, and continue to innovate and expand the ways in which they reach consumers (Farhi 2005). More than 439 million people buy a newspaper daily (WAN 2006). Furthermore, the term *newspaper* covers a surprisingly broad range of publications, ranging from small weekly journals to huge metropolitan dailies with circulations of approximately one million copies. Therefore, whereas to some extent there is a decline in the number or circulation of national newspapers, mini-magazines and small papers aimed at small, special-interest, regional, local markets and free newspapers, continue to expand dramatically. With new, fast and cheap short-run printing presses, every organisation, community group, and political or religious organisation today can afford to print its own publication. In 1975 there were 185 free newspapers in the UK, as compared to 1,140 'paid-fors', eleven years later, the balance between 'frees' and 'paid-fors' were 842 and 867, respectively (McNair 2003, p.209). According to WAN (2006), when free dailies are added to the paid newspaper circulation, global circulation increased 1.21% compared to the previous year, and 7.8% over the past five years. It is apparent that despite concern about slow circulation growth, the newspaper industry is still in a healthy condition.

In short, new media have not replaced older media, rather, people's information and communication environments have become more individualised, integrating print, audio, still and moving images, broadcasting, telecommunications, computing, and other modes and channels of communication and information sharing (Lievrouw and Livingstone 2006, p.1).

Thus, a central question arises: why do, and how can mass media co-exist and co-develop? In the following section, I will investigate three aspects which support the co-existence and co-development of mass media: the unique characteristics of each medium, its adaptations when a new medium arrived and its abilities to utilise other media to strengthen its position.

4.2.2.2. The principle of non-replaceable and adaptable characteristics

Each medium has its own unique characteristics and attributes, distinctive functions and markets, which cannot be replaced by other media. In mass media systems, radio,

regarded as “the most resilient” medium (Howard 2001, p.viii), can be proud of its universal availability (Mosco 2005, p.127; Potter 2002), it is “certainly the one with the widest reach and greatest penetration” (Pease and Dennis 1993, p.xii), “the world’s most pervasive media” (Shingler and Wieringa 1998, p.ix). Radio is referred as the fastest information medium, which newspapers or television cannot compete with in terms of immediacy (Crisell 2002, p.13; Masterton and Patching 1986).

Regarding newspapers, print journalism is unique in terms of its portability and permanence (Quinn and Filak 2005, p.26). Due to its codes of printed text, including numbers, drawings, photographs and diagrams, newspapers can cover highly complex information, and provide deep analyses, while radio and television are linear and transient media. Furthermore, readers may read whenever they wish to, in whatever order they choose, re-read as many times as they need to, wherever they wish (RAB 2007). These characteristics allow readers to feel that they ‘control’ the way they receive information - a feeling radio and television cannot bring to audiences. In addition, from an archival perspective, the permanency of newspapers also provides readers with a historical record of the day (Quinn and Filak 2005, p.26).

Notwithstanding these unique characteristics, each medium also proves successfully its endless abilities to adapt to changing environments. Historically, mass communications have demonstrated that when a new medium arrives, the previous ones will reinvent themselves to ‘catch up’ with social and technological changes. After the arrival of radio, newspapers were superseded as the primary news medium. Such was the concern regarding the position and future of newspapers that radio was banned from broadcasting news before 7 pm, as discussed in previous sections. However, no external influence - even pressure from the authorities - could change the fact that radio was becoming the fastest medium and would eventually dominate news services.

In 1938, the restriction on supplying news for radio was finally lifted (as discussed in the previous chapter). Surprisingly, despite sophisticated news broadcasts by radio, newspapers continued to flourish. The key of newspapers’ success is that newspapers had reinvented themselves and provided audiences with services which radio could not compete with - including deep analysis and comment. At present, as newspapers innovate once again, it is the time of tabloids, free newspapers and local and specialised

print publications which serve a particular small group according to their locations, habits, professions, ages or religion (Toffer 1980).

Referring to radio, its history has proved vividly and definitively its abilities to adjust and reinvent itself to new environments, including social and technological changes. When television arrived, it usurped radio's place in the home and its position as a main medium of news and entertainment. It was therefore assumed that radio's time would pass (Hendy 2000). However, radio reinvented itself to become an intimate friend accompanying listeners wherever and whenever they wished. Not only did radio change to adapt to the revolution in the way people listen to it, but also in radio programming, both the content and format. To date, radio continuously reinvents and adjusts itself and solidly adapts to the Digital Age, as discussed in the previous chapter.

4.2.2.3. The principle of utilising other media

Together with the abilities to reinvent and adjust, mass media also prove their extensive capabilities in utilising other media to widen their sphere of influence. According to McLuhan (1987, p.26), this is done through:

... the technique of insight, and as such is necessary for media study, since no medium has its meaning or existence alone, but only in constant interplay with other media.

The interactivity and utilisation between mass media enable their co-existence and co-development. However, this also rendered the relationships between mass media more complex, especially after the emergence of the Internet. The utilisations occur in a number of aspects, including information-gathering, content 'cross-promotion', marketing, revenue enhancement, ownership convergence, and 'content across' (convergence or 'multiplatform' delivery).

The utilisation of information, in terms of information-gathering, is crucial for mass media. Mass media compete with each other to provide the fastest and most effective information for audiences, however, no single media can provide a complete service for their customers - the audience. Radio and television can bring to viewers and listeners live news as it happens. Conversely, conventional television and radio are passive, it is easy for the audience to miss information when distracted. Furthermore, once broadcast,

the information is gone. The permanency of newspapers enables readers to return to stories again and again. However, audiences are only able to read about events when they are already a day or two old. For this reason, in order to complement each other, it is relatively common that when an event occurs, radio informs, television reports and newspapers comment. At present, the Internet is a crucial information source for journalists in all types of media (Deuze 1999). Recently, BBC News Online emerged as 'the third broadcast medium', the synergies that collaborate with a television counterpart are keys in establishing the best of its service (Allan 2006, p.37). In that sense, one medium utilises other media as information resources for its journalistic endeavours.

Not only do media inherit and develop information from others, they also are heir to the genres of their predecessors. New media content is likely to be based on the previous medium's style and format⁴⁶ (Pavlik 1998, p.73; Chan-Olmstead and Park 2000; Lehman-Wilzig and Cohen-Avigdor 2004, p.714; Cain 1992, p.78-80; Perebinossoff 2005, p.5).

Apart from 'information-gathering', mass media also utilise each other by content 'cross-promotion' or 'cross-fertilising' (Kawamoto 2003, p.11). Typically, content 'cross-promotion' includes such elements as a "tomorrow's newspaper headlines" segment on TV or radio, and the reader, particularly magazine readers, often read

⁴⁶ Early television shows were often based directly on old radio programmes, including soap operas, variety shows and comedy and western series (Pavlik 1998, p.73). For example, in the UK, radio was the originally the host of long-running series such as My Word, an early panel game, which later transferred to television as Does the Team Think? and Saturday Night on the Light (Cain 1992, p.80). In terms of comedy, amongst the most notable successes were Hancock's Half-Hour and Whack-O!, which made Tony Hancock and Jimmy Edwards major television stars. According to Cain (1992, p.78), this type of programme first began on radio in 1954, and moved to live television in 1956.

Similarly, in the US, when television broadcasting started to take off in the late 1940s and early 1950s, its producers adopted the network programming methods used in radio (Perebinossoff 2005, p.5). Television adopted not only the programming processes of radio but also its stars and advertisers. Numerous radio programmes made the transition to television, where they successfully established themselves - many becoming some of early television's most successful programmes (ibid).

reviews about actors, celebrities, or films, which are were shown, are showing, or will be shown on television.

The 'cross-promotion' also includes the phenomenon of radio/television stations producing their own publications to promote their stations. From earlier times, when the BBC was newly established, the first General Director, Lord Reith conceived the idea of a journal that would publicise the BBC's programmes, and which would also enhance the image of the fledgling company. So was born the *Radio Times*⁴⁷ in September 1923 (Street 2002, p.31) in order to respond to listeners' comments and criticisms. As an adjunct to educational programmes for adults, *The Listener* (1929) was published by the BBC to strengthen its relationship with listeners (Cain 1992, p.22). The practice of radio or television stations producing their own publications remains popular. Radio and television schedules are also available in many newspapers or magazines. Vice versa, magazines and journals also advertise their new editions on television and radio.

'Cross-promotion' is also a means for mass media to drive audience members back and forth between them. For example, if a single company owned at least two outlets (including radio, television and newspapers), a common cross promotional tool used - "talkbacks" - would comprise appearances by radio journalists on air to talk about stories print journalists are covering, or vice versa.

At present, the broadcast news media are using the web in creative and complementary ways. It is not uncommon for newspaper readers, television viewers or radio listeners to be driven to go online for further information about issues that could not fit into the scheduled time slot of traditional programmes⁴⁸. This is an effective and efficient way to develop audience relations, and utilise the content that does not fit on air, but has value to those viewers interested in learning more about a story. For this reason, almost all radio or television stations have created websites with detailed programming

⁴⁷ By 1939, the *Radio Times* had a circulation of three million, and became Britain's best-selling weekly periodical (Cain 1992, p.22).

⁴⁸ For example asking questions of experts, sending emails to reporters, and learning about special effects used in the programmes.

information, live and on-demand radio programmes or video clips of upcoming or past programmes, and sometimes, live coverage of breaking news.

Ownership convergence is also a growing trend in mass media (Kawamoto 2003). Where radio or television publishes its own publications to strengthen its listeners/viewers relationships as discussed above, such convergence creates extra journalistic business. The cross-promotion of the traditional and digital media components of a single media organisation is a constructive way in which these two divisions can co-exist, each helping to drive audience traffic to the other site.

As digital media continue to grow as platforms for the news and information needs of the public, the traditional news media and their digital media offshoots will need to reposition themselves, as they are essential to each other's long-term survival (Kawamoto 2003, p.12). Fuller ([no date] cited Quinn and Filak 2005, p.4) stated that:

...owning television, radio, and newspapers in a single market provided a way to lower costs, increase efficiencies ...[and]... provide higher quality news in times of economic duress.

A number of television stations have interests in the radio market. According to one Ofcom report (2006b, p.59), in the UK, the links between radio and television were strengthened when Ulster Television acquired The Wireless Group and Channel 4 took a controlling interest in OneWord, a national digital-only speech station. Channel 4 Radio Online launched in June 2006, offering podcasts and streamed access to a range of specially commissioned shows that included sequels from *Richard and Judy*, *Lost* and *Big Brother*. Channel 4 Radio also launched *The Morning Report*, a 30 minute ITN-produced news programme, on the digital station OneWord. Currently, users must register to gain access to the site. However, this may provide Channel 4 with useful audience and demographic data regarding the popularity of different programmes. The company also successfully won a bid in July 2007 for the licence to run the second national commercial DAB multiplex (Channel 4, 2008). In the US, CBS, which is known as a television network, actually owns 5 television and 13 radio stations.

Another aspect of the cooperative relationship between mass media is the phenomenon of 'content across' multiple-media platforms, in the sense that radio can be listened to

via digital television or a computer. Recent Ofcom (2007, p.33) research found that over 60% of British adults (aged 15+) have listened to radio via television or the Internet. The number of adults who have, at some time, listened to radio via their TV in the UK has steadily increased over current years. Radio listening via digital platforms has helped the radio industry maintain its share of the media market particularly as listening to radio via AM and FM has considerably decreased in the Internet Age (Ofcom 2007, p.34).

In other words, whenever it is possible, a mass medium will take advantage of other media to strengthen its position. It is inevitable that in the Internet Age, traditional mass media will seize digital methods of production and transmission to enrich their capabilities and capture audiences. The Internet is a special environment, as it is both an individual mass medium - the fourth journalism - and a "metamedium" (platform for all older media) (Adams and Clark 2001, p.29)⁴⁹. Consequently, the interactive and cooperative relationships between mass media in the Internet Age have become more complex than ever.

When the WWW was first introduced in 1991 (Berner-Lee and Fischetti 1999), it served as a platform for the exchange and communication of text - so-called hypertext. Two years later, it became possible to exchange graphic features as well as plain text (Deuze

⁴⁹ As mentioned previously, a computer can become a 'radio device' and the Internet can be regarded as a new platform for radio to deliver its programmes to its listeners.

However, the Internet is a special environment, as it is both a 'metamedium' (platform for all older media) (Adams and Clark 2001, p.29) and an individual mass medium – the "fourth journalism" (Morris and Ogan 1996, Deuze 1999 and 2003; Deuze and Paulussen 2002; Bardoel 2002) (as discussed in p.61 and 71). With streaming technology, radio-style audio programming was put over streaming Internet connections: no radio transmitters need be involved at any point in the process. Consequently, a new type of radio emerged - web radio. Web radio can provide for its listeners new radio programmes only available on the Internet, and number of features traditional radio cannot, for example, texts, pictures, video files and interactive tools. Web radio, on one hand, is a radio variant, but on the other hand, having operated in the Internet environment, it is also a subset of 'online journalism' - the fourth medium after print, radio and television. (See more in p.54-56; 88-93). That is to say, the Internet is both a new platform for traditional radio, (consequently, a supporter of it), and a new type of radio - web radio - a competitor to traditional radio stations in capturing web users (See more in pages 86-88).

1999, p.375). It was not until 1995 that an American company called Progressive Networks made available a software package, RealAudio, that stripped down the detail contained in digitised audio (Priestman 2002). This allowed audio to be passed from a speaker as a (more or less) continuous stream of sound - at somewhat higher quality than an ordinary telephone conversation. The process became known as live 'streaming',⁵⁰.

Streaming audio was introduced before streaming video because it requires less bandwidth and is technically simpler to process (Priestman 2002, p.7). As a result, by the time video was first streamed on the Internet, the streaming audio was somewhat more mature, with an entrepreneurial streaming audio broadcasting industry already in full swing.

When it was discovered that the Internet can convey not only text, graphics, but also sound and video files, traditional mass media, sooner or later, all invaded the Internet. This is the strategy, which mass media have historically adopted and continue to do so, highlighting their abilities in utilising other media to strengthen their position. However, the invasion by traditional media of the Internet has not only changed the entire media landscape, but also challenged the characteristics and definitions of traditional media, particularly radio.

At the time of writing, all traditional mass media have their 'representatives' on the Internet (see Diagram 1). Having existed in the same environment of the Internet, a representative of a newspaper can 'pick up' an audio interview (an element of radio) or a video file (an element of television) and add it to its website. Similarly, a representative of radio can add to its website peripheral, non-radio options such as text, pictures or video files. As a result, the borders between the representatives of traditional media are becoming blurred in the Internet. In addition, those representatives have created a new form of mass medium - online journalism, which, in turn, competes with conventional mass media. Most importantly, a number of new terminologies have

⁵⁰ With streaming audio, users would not have to wait for an entire audio file to download before they could listen to it. Instead, with RealRadio, after a few seconds of buffering (pre-storing) the audio file, including music or speech would begin playing (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.20)

appeared due to the combination of conventional mass media and the Internet, including web radio and Internet television.

Having placed web radio and radio in the mass media systems, this chapter attempts to explore the characteristics of web radio and its role, from a specific dimension: the competitive and interactive relationships between mass media. In combination with the historical dimension discussed in the previous chapter, the following section will endeavour to answer the question: what is web radio?

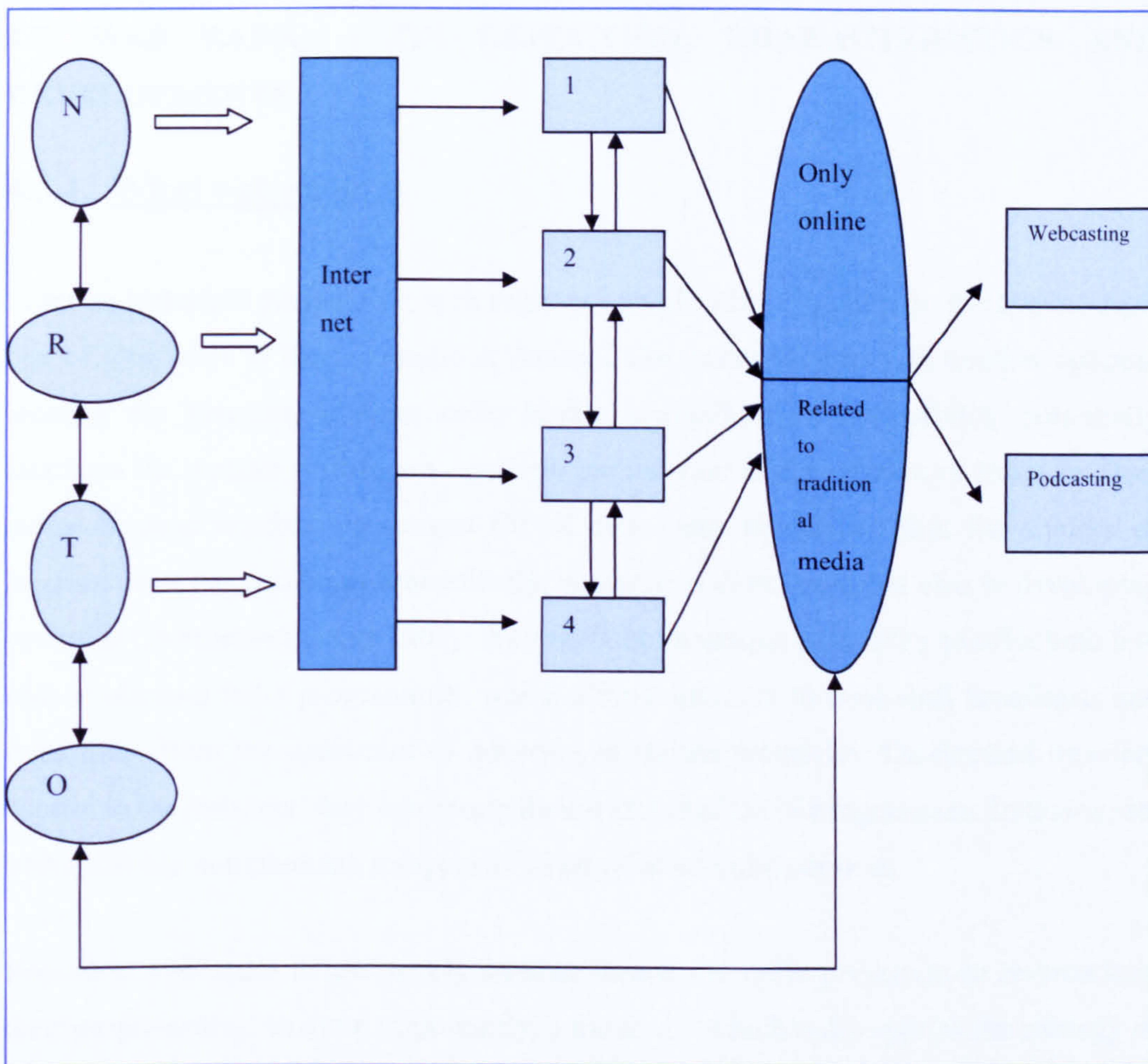


Diagram 1. Mass media systems (Dang TT Huong 2005b).

N: Newspaper	1: Text-based websites
R: Radio	2: Web radio
T: Television	3: Tri-media websites
O: Online journalism	4: Internet TV

4.3. WEB RADIO – ITS DEFINITION, CHARACTERISTICS AND DEVELOPMENTS

4.3.1. What web radio is

From an historical perspective, web radio is one of radio's variants in the Digital Age, one of four ways to listen to radio at present. The computer becomes another optional receiver for listeners, making radio highly accessible. Its accessibility potentially increases the number of listeners - as with the increase in the number of listeners since radios became standard equipment for all cars - due to the fact that the number of Internet users has increased dramatically, not only in developed, but also in developing countries (Internetworldstats 2007). Web radio has a unique possibility to offer both live and on-demand radio programmes, which allows listeners to time-shift broadcasts and frees them from the constraint of adhering to station schedules. On-demand transfers control to the listeners: they can create their own schedule of programmes. In this sense, web radio is a complement, a supporter to established radio services.

However, web radio is not merely another means for radio producers to re-broadcast their programmes, but more importantly, a means by which radio applies the strategy of utilising other media to strengthen its position: a promotional tool, a potential outlet for programming information and a reinforcement of a station's brand image (Lind and Medoff 1999; Hamula and Williams 2003; Abelman 2005, p.18; Keith 1999; Potter 2002; Ferguson 2000; Pitts and Harms 2003). Most web radio stations derived from conventional stations offer advertising information about the traditional station - including the history of the station, the organisational operation, the staff, the schedule of their programmes, and of course, highlighted radio programmes via on-demand services. For that reason, web radio, generally speaking, is an outcome of the 'cross-promotion' and 'content-across' strategies discussed previously. Web radio is a promotional tool for terrestrial radio stations, and a means to drive audiences back and forth between radio and the Internet to maximise benefits. Moreover, web radio is also a phenomenon of 'cross content' relationship between mass media in the Digital Age, when a media production can be consumed in different platforms.

Unlike other radio variants in the Digital Age, web radio conveys peripheral, non-radio options, including texts, graphics and even video files - as web radio is operated in the Internet environment. In this sense, web radio is not 'radio' but, strictly speaking, a hybrid between radio and the Internet, a subset of online journalism, focusing on audio. Web radio is inherently interactive as listeners are not only able to interact with station, but also with each other via interactive tools, including text messages, email fora or chat rooms. Furthermore, listeners may become active contributors to the web radio content (Kozamernik 2006, p.6). The mixed characteristics of web radio have generated academic discourse on whether web radio is 'radio' amongst researchers for a number of years without reaching a consensus as to its definition (as discussed in chapter I).

Most importantly, web radio has created a new type of radio, which uses the Internet as a means of distribution - not wave-based technology such as it the case with traditional broadcasts. According to Ting and Wildman ([no date] cited Garner 2004, p.49), broadcast over-the-air models proved expensive in terms of capital outlay, although ongoing costs were both low and predictable; whereas streaming models were extremely inexpensive to produce initially, but costs were incurred on a per-listener basis. Internet-only audio sources have seen a significant increase in audience figures and the race is on between traditional radio stations and Internet-only audio⁵¹ (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2000a, 2002, 2005). Web-only radio stations, which offer a wide range of musical genres and more control of what audiences can listen to, are predicted to draw more listeners from traditional radio (Borrell Associates Inc., 2004; McBride 2004). In my online survey (2006) and focus group interviews (2006), significant numbers of participants listed the YouthRadio, Yahoo!Music and Nhacso.Net (those radio stations only available online) as their most visited web radio stations. Consequently, web radio has become a new rival of conventional radio, and a

⁵¹ In 2000, approximately 30 million Americans had listened to web-only radio stations (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2000a, p.4). In 2002, the number of Americans who said they had listened to web-only radio stations increased more than 30% compared to that of the previous year, 12% and 9%, respectively (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2002, p.15). In another study (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2005, p.20), it was found that the ability to listen to content not found elsewhere was the top reason for listeners to listen to web radio (17%). In addition, a significant number of radio stations available on the most popular Internet radio brands, such as America Online's AOL@RadioNetwork, Yahoo!@Music, Microsoft's MSN Radio and Live365 are exclusive web-only radio stations.

number of researchers, including Sawyer and Greely (2000, p.24) contend that: “Some think (us included) that traditional radio will be destroyed by Internet radio”.

Moreover, web radio is also a representative of radio in the revolution of traditional media, in which radio could not afford not to engage: invading the Internet. For the first time, radio has a means through which to compete with other visual media in the same environment - the Internet, and more importantly - a visual environment. As a result, a number of researchers have discussed “whether this (Internet Radio) would be “enhanced radio”- radio with added pictures, or “reduced radio”- radio which has been relegated to the status of a soundtrack” (Crisell 2004, p.7). At this point, a central problem arises: which strategies should web radio apply to capture listeners when competing with visual media in a visual environment? This is an important area for further research.

4.3.2. Characteristics of web radio

Web radio is a hybrid of radio and the Internet, and more importantly, operated in the Internet environment, and as a subset of online journalism, it provides a number of characteristics which traditional radio cannot. Web radio is also one of radio’s variants in the Digital Age, helping radio maintain its share within the mass media market in a highly competitive environment - the Internet Age. Therefore, web radio differs from other subsets of online journalism, including online newspapers. This section places web radio in relationship with traditional radio and other subsets of online journalism in order to explore its characteristics.

Traditional radio is operated as a one-to-many communication medium, which created a field of broadcasting, whereas web radio is much more a one-to-one format⁵², which is

⁵² Having operated in the Internet environment, web radio offers ‘pull’ technology for its listeners in the sense that the content, including radio programmes, was put on the website to be pulled off as and when the listeners needed it. In addition, in traditional broadcasting, the content editors determine the selection and sequence of the programmes. However, on the web, users can both customise and personalise their news on the home page.

Recently, the BBC has planned to allow its radio listeners to create their own station as part of a push that will see a single music strategy across the corporation for the first time (Day 2006). This is

referred to as narrowcasting (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.26). However, whereas traditional radio is based on broadcasting to an audience located in a specific geographic region, web radio is global the moment it is operated, due to the characteristics of the Internet. Web radio can bring great benefits for expatriates, who not only require up-to-date information but also wish to enjoy a sense of the place and culture where they were born and grew up (Naughton 2000). Web radio also is a popular service for audiences who have 'niche' interests that may not be adequately catered for by their local radio stations, or those who want to explore culture and information about other countries via radio. In addition, even for local people, web radio is an efficient way to listen to radio because many office buildings have physical barriers which make it hard to receive a clear AM or FM signal - possibly because their steel structure deflects the signal or through interference generated by busy computer networks (Priestman 2002, p.67). In this instance, web radio provides the only viable way for listeners to tune in to their favourite terrestrial station, with the extra benefit that the choice of station is completely individual for each person using a computer.

Radio on the Internet can be also useful in keeping a line of communication open in areas under the control of an autocratic regime, for example the Radio B-92 in Belgrade⁵³ (Fleming 2002, p.30; BBC 1999; Bracken 1999). It is also noted that in democracies, web radio allows access to broadcasting groups which previously were

one of the key tenets of the radio strategy which allows listeners to personalise content offered online, and create their own unique radio station with programmes handpicked according to the listener's preferences. The plan, called Creative Future, is designed to "deliver more value to audiences over the next six years" in the on-demand world (Day 2006). These on-demand programmes enable web radio to be much more a one-to-one format rather than one-to-many communication as it is the case of traditional broadcasting.

However, at the same time, via web radio listeners still can listen to live radio programmes. In this case, the Internet becomes a radio device and web radio becomes another platform for traditional radio.

⁵³ Yugoslav authorities shut down the independent radio station, B92, in Belgrade several times (in 1991, 1996 and 1999) due to its anti-government demonstrations, including the annulment of municipal elections, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BBC 1999; IPI 1998). However, after the station's transmitter was switched off in 1999, the station posted print versions of its news on its web site, and also began using RealAudio to broadcast live via the Internet, reaching audiences globally (Fleming 2002, p.30; BBC 1999).

restricted, including pirate radio or amateur radio (Barnard cited Fleming 2002, p.30; Priestman 2002, p.25).

Traditional radio is a linear communication, which can only be accessed in real time. As a result, audiences were unable to listen to their favourite programmes when they went out or were required to carefully arrange their lives to fit around the radio schedule. However, with web radio - where the radio signal is relayed over the Internet through the WWW - audiences can listen to radio programmes on-demand. The on-demand concept can extend the lifetime, and therefore the audience, for an expensive programme, and consequently, extend the service to listeners and support justification for costly productions (Wall 2004, p.34-35). More importantly, with on-demand services, audiences can listen to their favourite programmes whenever they choose, as often as they wish to. As Negroponte (1995, p.169) stated:

On-demand information will dominate digital life. We will ask explicitly and implicitly for what we want, when we want it. This will require a radical rethinking of advertiser-supported programming.

As a result of the development of technologies, audiences are now offered more opportunities and greater freedom to access information according to their needs⁵⁴. For listeners who enjoy listening to the wide variety of Internet audio programming, yet cannot always listen to their favourite shows when they are scheduled, or take time to download them manually, podcasting is increasingly available. Podcasting brings convenience of choice to internet audio that was previously only available to digital video recorder users. Where new content is available through some sort of aggregator, it can be automatically downloaded, and saved in a medium of the listener's choice for access at their convenience via a portable player. Podcasting allows listeners further opportunities to listen to radio programmes *wherever* they wish.

⁵⁴ In January 2005, BBC (2005) re-launched an updated version of Radio Player, which for the first time allowed listeners to 'pause' a programme at any point, switch off the computer and then resume listening from the same point at any time during the seven days that the programme is available. The new BBC Radio Player also enhances the live listening experience by providing details of the programme being broadcast and that which will follow for each station, it is also integrated with the BBC's News, Sport and Weather Players, providing one-click access to an extensive range of audio and video from the BBC's News and Sport Divisions.

Web radio provides live, and more importantly, archived radio programmes, therefore, it can be considered a two-platform medium, where linearity comes together with 'layering'.

In the case of conventional radio, people may only listen to a limited choice of channels and programmes, which are produced and pushed to them (Priestman 2002, p.136-8). However, due to developments in technology, via web radio, listeners may have an unlimited choice of channels and programmes, which they 'call' to their screen according to their needs and preferences. In traditional broadcasting, the content editors determine the selection and sequence of the programmes. However, on the web, users can both customise and personalise their news on the home page. This form of personalised schedules creates a perception that users control delivery, resulting in a more intimate relationship with the website, and consequently media organisations.

While traditional broadcasting is one-way communication, the Internet is a two-way technology. For most traditional mass media, including radio, once a message is produced, the only choice left to the audience is either tuning in or tuning out. Conventional radio offers no means for immediate feedback from the listeners; as a result, there is no opportunity for producers to modify the communication, with the exception of phone-in programmes. If conventional listeners wish to make comments or express views, they have either to telephone or write letters to the radio station, which is not always convenient. As Priestman (2002, p.8) noted: "most listeners to mainstream radio do none of these things, they just expect to listen to radio".

Regarding web radio, listeners can easily post feedback - by the 'click' of a mouse. The signposts, including 'contact us' or 'email us' will be easily recognised on a website. Most web sites also set up fora for web users to post their opinions including, 'Have your say', the BBC, or 'Your say', the ABC. In this way, even as a radio programme is on-air, listeners are encouraged to visit the web site to give feedback to the radio station. It should be noted that at present, new audiences are increasingly active, selective, and interactive - as discussed in the previous chapter - therefore, interactivity has been identified as an important feature through which media may capture new audiences.

Traditional radio - commonly regarded as a “blind medium” (Crisell 2002, p.3) - has only sound as its single means to deliver information and entertainment. However, having operated in the Internet environment, web radio shares the common characteristics of online journalism - combining live, and, or archived radio programmes with other visual elements, including web pages, graphics, chat, and instant messaging. Furthermore, in contrast to other subsets of online media - including, online newspapers and Internet television, visual media - web radio focuses on audio elements. In a new and growing trend of consuming media - using two or more media simultaneously (Jenkins 2006, p.16; Rutherford 2004 cited Quinn and Filak 2005, p.8) – web radio provides a great potential for Internet users to access information and music while working. Exploiting the unique nature of radio - a secondary medium - web radio is able to compete with other visual media as audiences may listen to radio programmes while working with computers, searching or surfing the web.

However, in comparison with traditional radio, web radio presents a number of weaknesses. Firstly, radio is an inexpensive medium, almost cost-free for audiences to receive information and entertainment; whilst, in order to consume radio programmes via web radio, a listener requires a computer and Internet connection with at least a 56KB modem. Listeners have to pay an Internet provider fee and a telephone line charge, which can be costly in developing countries. Most importantly, in some instances listeners must pay a fee to download radio programmes, as discussed in chapter I.

Web radio requires its listeners to be in physical proximity to, and in control of, a computer - it lacks portability, one of the most important characteristics of traditional radio (Black 2001, p.400; Lax 2003; Berry 2004, 2006). Traditional radio is portable, however, in order to consume web radio, most listeners are restricted to the limitations of a personal computer (Wall 2004, p.34), with the exception of a small range of portable Internet radio sets that, in order to access global radio stations, require a wi-fi network. Moreover, a small LCD screen displays only metadata, including song titles, artist names, remaining and elapsed play time (Kozamernik and Mullane 2005). In other words, portable Internet radio sets lack the main features which Internet radio stations provide for listeners, including text, pictures, and most importantly, interactive tools.

It is noted that the original web standards were not developed for transmitting sound or moving pictures: a sound file requires a considerable amount of digital ‘space’ (Priestman 2002, p.6). As it is more difficult to transmit audio files than text files via the Internet, web radio requires more complex technology systems to transmit and receive codes than normal online newspapers. A number of technological obstacles for the development of web radio will be discussed in the following section.

4.3.3. Influencing factors on the development of web radio

The future of web radio does not only rely on the public’s response to this medium, but also two other important factors: technology, and legal issues. For this reason, although my thesis focuses on the relationships between web radio, traditional radio and listeners, this section will sketch out the problematic issues which web radio in the UK and US - two of the largest web radio markets - has encountered. Even though media regulations, including control and licensing authorities, differ from country to country, general information, regarding legal issues relating to web radio in the UK and US, may be useful to inform a framework for regulating web radio in Vietnam, particularly as copyright law in Vietnam is still at a fledgling stage of development⁵⁵.

4.3.3.1. Technology

The central technology of sound on the WWW is streaming audio. Basically, this technology does two main things: it compresses the file size and uses “pack switching”⁵⁶ to send data (Priestman 2002, p.52-76; Ha *et al.* 2003, p.156-158). The major difference between using streaming audio and simply transferring a full file is that as packets are sent and delivered to the receiver the computer immediately assembles the data. Required files must completely downloaded once the final packet is sent, and then the entire batch is reassembled into the file. With streaming media, when

⁵⁵ In Vietnam, the Law of Intellectual Property was officially passed on the 29th November 2005, and was enacted from 1st July 2006. In addition, it was not until the 1st January 2007, that copyright fees for public performances of a sound recording, including transmissions via radio and television were applied.

⁵⁶ Data travels over the Internet in small bits and segments known as packets (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.37).

sufficient packets are captured to assemble fragments of listenable audio, the packet data is then assembled and played (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.37). For this reason, streaming algorithms were regarded as “the real secret behind webcasting” (Keyes 1997 cited Ha *et al.* 2003, p.158), as it allowed audio (and later video) data to be played in real time when it is downloaded over the Internet, obviating the requirement to store the data. Furthermore, streaming offers solutions to networking problems, including the availability of hard disk space on the users’ computer, as content is maintained on the provider’s site, and listeners need only to visit the site to play the content almost instantly.

Although webcasting seems promising, a number of barriers for development remain, of which the most pressing are compression algorithms and bandwidth (Ha *et al.* 2003, p.158-163).

Regarding terrestrial transmission, the broadcast spectrum is a limited commodity - which restricts the space available for radio stations⁵⁷. For web radio, bandwidth limitation is a major problem as it restricts the number of listeners who can access the station at the same time⁵⁸ (Priestman 2002, p.55; Ha *et al.* 2003, p.161). Also, network congestion is severely limiting the potential growth of web radio (Griffiths 1999 cited Ha *et al.* 2003, p.161). Additionally, the speed and quality of the transmission depends on available bandwidth. Other technological barriers include slow or erratic Internet connections (depending on network traffic), which may not always function. Unfortunately, due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, audiences may encounter links that do not work, ‘rebuffering’ will increasingly be a common problem for web radio users, due to the high level of Internet traffic, the quality and speed of Internet connections or simply the server load. This problem can be solved with broadband,

⁵⁷ Therefore, in order to broadcast a terrestrial radio station, broadcasters have to consider the available frequencies on the spectrum.

⁵⁸ According to Priestman (2002, p.55) bandwidth is a key concept for web radio practitioners. For any producer transmitting web radio, it is important that their bandwidth can be able to cope with multiple requests for streams, one for each simultaneous user. If more listeners try to take streams than a server’s bandwidth can accommodate, individual receiver connections may fail, and listeners may not be able to listen to that station online. Unlike terrestrial broadcasting, the cost of transmission goes up with the size of a station’s audiences.

which is increasingly available in developed countries, although not yet in the developing world (InternetWorldStatistics 2007)

It is anticipated that new technologies will break down these significant barriers to webcasting over the Internet. A number of companies, such as Real Networks were building their own dedicated streaming media networks to avoid the traffic jams often found on the public network⁵⁹ (Streaming Media 2002; Ha *et al.* 2003, p.162). For this reason, although the streaming market has yet to significantly challenge the traditional broadcasting market, “streaming media is thriving in the enterprise market” (ibid).

4.3.3.2. Copyright Issues

As attractive content from programming providers is vital for the success of web radio, Internet copyright becomes one of the central legal concerns for webcasters. In this section, I will summarise changes in copyright laws and profit agreements due to the emergence of webcasting, and its effects on the development of web radio, in the UK and US, especially the US. Priestman (2002, p.166) argues that the lead on music copyright is being taken in the US for a number of reasons. The US generally has the highest Internet use and is the pioneer of technological developments in this field.

Sensing the Internet’s potential impacts on the music industry, the US Congress passed the DPRSA in 1995 (McClung *et al.* 2003). Under this Act, copyright holders of sound recordings were given the exclusive right (with exceptions) “to perform the copyrighted work publicly by means of a digital audio transmission”⁶⁰ (Harwood 2004, p.679).

However, three years later, the US Congress tightened the reins on Internet transmissions by passing the DMCA (1998), which granted greater authority to copyright holders of sound recordings (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.393). Under the

⁵⁹ However, the actual impact of streaming devices still need to be further investigated.

⁶⁰ The Act categorised digital transmissions in a three-tiered system, based on their likelihood to affect record sales. Whilst the first tier, interactivity, and the second tier, subscription services, were subject to the highest level of regulation, the third tier, including non-subscription and non-interactive transmissions, were exempt from the DPRSA (Harwood 2004, p.680). In other words, these exemptions extended beyond AM/FM broadcasts to also include all non-subscription, non-interactive digital transmissions.

DMCA, only “non-subscription broadcast transmissions” were exempted from licensing requirements (Harwood 2004, p.681)⁶¹. Unlike AM/FM radio stations, who pay a fixed amount for the right to play songs, webcasters were required to pay, not only a license for the musical composition, but also license fees to copyright owners of sound recordings (Reid 2004, p.325-327; Harwood 2004, p.674).

Moreover, webcasters will pay royalties for the sound recordings they play on the Internet, based on the per-performance rate structure that was recommended by the CARP and adopted by the Copyright Office (Ha *et al.* 2003, p.164). According to Harwood (2004, p.684), in February 2002, CARP released its rate recommendations, in which Internet-only webcasters were required to pay twice as much as their counterparts who were retransmitting terrestrial radio broadcasts, \$0.0014 and \$0.0007 per performance, respectively. Nevertheless, as Internet radio stations run fewer advertisements than AM/FM webcasts, they generally have less income than AM/FM webcasts (*ibid.*).

The majority of webcasters’ reaction to the CARP proposal was unenthusiastic (Albiniak 2002a, p.7; 2002b, p.38; Shields and Bachman 2002). The responses of the Internet radio industry to the Copyright Acts resulted in a number of successes for webcasters, including the Librarian of Congress’s decision to amend CARP, and the passing of the SWSA (Dec 4, 2002). The Librarian of Congress’s amendment reduced the Internet-only performance fee to \$0.0007, equal to those paid by AM/FM webcasters. The rates for archived programming on non-commercial radio stations also were reduced from \$0.0005 to \$0.0002 per performance (Harwood 2004, p.686). However, for a station with 1,000 listeners, the total fee could be more than \$1,000 per hour, financially prohibitive for small and independent webcasters who generate little or no revenue (Harwood 2004, p.675).

Currently, webcasters must conform their transmissions to the sound recording performance convention, defined as a transmission during any three-hour period of no more than three different songs from any one album, if no more than two selections are

⁶¹ This meant that non-broadcast transmissions, such as webcasts, previously exempted from the DPRA, are now subject to royalty requirements.

transmitted consecutively (Ried 2004, p.328). Restricting the number of songs played within a three-hour period limits the content that a webcaster may transmit. Typically, the numbers of artists within niche or emerging genres are smaller - as opposed to mainstream genres, such as classic rock and pop music - consequently, this restriction may have a disproportionate effect on niche markets. Furthermore, less well-known or favoured musical formats may struggle to find sufficient songs and artists to complete a three-hour playlist before a fourth song by an artist can be played (Reid 2004, p.337).

The CRB recently again raised rates for Internet webcasters. The decision - which was published as a Final Rule and Order on May 1, 2007 (CRB 2007) - established higher rates for commercial and non-commercial webcasters⁶². In addition, commercial and non-commercial webcasters will pay an annual, non-refundable minimum fee of \$500 for each calendar year or part thereof.

The CRB's decision has received unenthusiastic responses from webcasters and a number of members of Congress (ibid.). According to RAIN (2007), hundreds of webcasters demonstrated their disapproval of the royalties by joining a Day of Silence on May 8 and June 26, 2007 - a similar successful action had been taken on May 1, 2002 which led to the reduction of performance fees for webcasters (Harwood 2004, p.685).

Significantly, to date, two bills have been introduced – the Internet Radio Equality Acts: H.R.2060, 110th Congress, 1st Session (2007) and S.1353, 110th Congress, 1st Session (2007) - both of which would nullify the Board's decision.

The situation is different in the UK and most of the rest of the world, radio stations pay two types of licence fees to broadcast music. The first is the performers' rights fee, administered by PPL (2006a, b). The second is the composers' and songwriters' rights

⁶² Commercial webcasters will have to pay \$0.0008 per performance for 2006, and annual increases up to \$0.0019 per performance for 2010 are planned. For non-commercial webcasters, if the total Internet transmissions number less than 159,140 ATH a month, an annual per channel or per station performance royalty of \$500 from 2006 to 2010 will be charged. If total numbers are more than 159,140 ATH a month, the performance royalty will be \$0.008 per performance for 2006, with proposed increases to \$0.0019 per performance in 2010 (similar to commercial webcasters).

fee, administered by the MCPS, and the PRS (Grossman 2006). All Web radio services are required to pay royalties for all of the music they stream to their users, no matter the size of the services, and regardless of whether these services are generating any income (PPL 2006a, p.1). It should be noted that in the UK the applicable royalty rate will vary according to the territory in which the end user is based (PPL 2006b, p.1). Currently, for all streaming to users in the UK, the rate is £0.000515 (PPL 2006a, p.1). However, Grossman (2006) argued that new rules on royalties were stifling British web radio stations, while allowing foreign rivals to broadcast into the UK unhindered.

It is noted that in the UK, even though Ofcom is the regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services (Ofcom 2007a), they do not regulate stations carried on the Internet, whether streamed or providing programmes for download (e.g. as podcasts) (Ofcom 2007, p.45).

At present, the battle between webcasters and lawmakers continues unabated in the US and the UK. Issues of contention include definitions of what radio is being based on physics, not functions (Grossman 2006). However, web radio is different: it may refer to shuffling tracks, personalisation or downloading. Grossman (2006) predicted that podcasting, arguably the next step, is even more fraught with licensing troubles, as it is difficult to define the audience for a podcast.

The strict legislation, on one hand, may threaten the development of web radio, but on the other hand, reflects the potential expansion of this new medium. According to Harwood (2004, p.689), despite the Library of Congress's (2002) rate recommendations, the number of Americans who stream either audio or video at least once a month has increased by 27.5%. The latest study conducted by Arbitron/Edison Media Research (2007) reveals that the number of online radio listeners has increased by 50% (from 8% in 2005 to 12% in 2006), and at present, approximately 29 million Americans (aged 12+) listen to web radio weekly. The following section will sketch out the web radio listeners' landscape.

4.3.4. Web radio audiences

One of the most important factors influencing the development of any medium is the public's response. Therefore, this section will sketch out the audience landscape for web radio, based on pioneering audience studies in the UK and US - two of the largest markets for Internet users. This will be done in order to give a general idea of the future of web radio's audiences in developing countries, including Vietnam.

The number of Internet users has increased dramatically in recent years, from 16 million in December 1995 (NUA 2002) to 1,133 million in June 2007, which comprises more than 17% of the current world population (InternetWorldStats 2007). According to compiled data from the Internet World Statistics (2007), in 35 countries more than 50% of the population are Internet users.

Households with broadband Internet access - enabling greater content creation, wider choices, greater user control, and increasing user-participation - now significantly outnumber those with dial-up access. In the US, in 2006, 58% of those who have Internet access at home use either cable or a DSL modem for high-speed Internet connection, compared to 38% who use a dial-up service - 25% of these users also plan to acquire high-speed Internet services within 12 months (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006a, p.5). Five years earlier, just 12% of Americans with Internet access at home used a broadband connection (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2005, p.5). In the UK, in 2006, 40% of households had high-speed Internet access, compared to 8.5% three years previously (Johnson 2006).

Not only has Internet access increased noticeably, time spent online is also increasing, rising from 9.4 hours per week in 2000 to 12.5 hours in 2004 (USC 2004, p.28). The study shows that the more experience users have with the Internet, the more time they spend online⁶³. One intriguing finding of this project is that nearly two-thirds of all users (65.4%) engaged in other electronic activities while online, of which the largest number (36.4%) listened to recorded music, the second largest engage in instant

⁶³ Experienced Internet users, who have seven or more years online, log on the Internet for 17.1 hours per week (USC 2004, p.32).

messaging and the third listening to the radio, 31.4% and 27% respectively (USC 2004, p.54). This habit illustrates a new trend in consuming media, discussed in previous chapters, and provides a promising area for web radio to develop.

At present, the American audiences who have listened to online audio or watched video online comprises 49% of the general population (aged 12+), 69% of those who have broadband access at home, 60% of Internet users (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006a, p.36). In 2006, the weekly web radio audiences in the US increased by 50% over the previous year, from 8% to 12% (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006a, p.5). Recently, in the UK, the BBC (2007) has announced that more than 21 million hours of BBC radio is consumed online per month (live and on-demand), more than double than that during the year 2005 (BBC 2005a).

The main reasons people listen to web radio were as follows: to listen to audio they cannot get elsewhere, to control or choose the music played, fewer commercials and more music variety, 17%, 15%, 14% and 13%, respectively (Arbitron/Edison Media Research study 2005, p.33). Only 8% listened to web radio because of less DJ chatter and 7% listened because web radio was new. This suggests that people listen to web radio mainly for convenience and personal needs.

According to recent studies, web radio listeners are predominately male, young adults (aged between 18-34), and more importantly, employees or students, reading a graduate or post graduate degree, from higher socio-economic groups, living in high income families, and using broadband (Arbitron/ Edison Media Research 2005b, 2006a, 2007; PEW/Internet 2005, p.12; RRadio Networks 2004). In effect, at present, web radio audiences are 'elite' groups in terms of social and economic status.

However, because the number of Internet users have increased dramatically and are becoming, significantly, a heavy 'on-demand' audience, and the number of high-speed Internet services is rapidly and widely increasing (Johnson 2006; Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006a, NTIA 2004), it is predicted that the market for web radio has potential to expand. Web radio's global reach provides for this medium a global scale of audiences, offering traditional radio potential audiences they were previously unable to capture. More importantly, as Internet users are located mostly in developed

countries, web radio may be a possible means for developing countries to reach audiences in the developed world.

Summary

Web radio is not simply (although it can be) radio programming re-transmitted over the Internet instead of airwaves. Strictly speaking, web radio is a hybrid of radio and the Internet. Web radio emerged from the competitive and interactive relationships between mass media, where they do not only compete, but also interact and utilise other media to strengthen its position and capture larger audiences. Web radio is one of radio's variants in the Digital Age - which proves once again the endless adaptabilities of radio to changing circumstances - and is also a subset of online media - a newly emerging but rapidly developing journalistic practice. As a result, web radio is not only a supporter, but also a rival of traditional radio.

Having undertaken the research to date, it is my belief that web radio should be investigated as a single entity with special characteristics. It is important to combine both radio and Internet approaches, in order to explore deeply web radio's characteristics, its development, as well as the future of web radio. As one of radio's variants, radio programmes are of crucial importance for web radio, however, as a subset of online journalism, Internet features, especially interactive elements should always be taken into account to capture Net users. More importantly, as a hybrid of radio and the Internet, web radio has to deal with a number of issues facing online journalism as discussed in Section 1.2.

At present, web radio is still in a fledging stage, not only in terms of its operation, but also regulation and audiences. Even though a number of barriers remain, web radio continues to develop. Whilst the number of traditional radio listeners have been declining rapidly in recent years (Ofcom 2007, p.101), with promising benefits offered for audiences and traditional radio stations, web radio – hand in hand with other digital radio platforms - may halt the decline of radio listeners in the Internet Age.

The characteristics of web radio, especially its global reach, may provide opportunities for developing countries to raise their voices in the world community. For the first time,

Western and Eastern media have the same environment - the Internet - through which to broadcast. The issues - whereby new technologies may bridge gaps between rich and poor, the powerful and powerless, the haves and have-nots - have been and continue to be a focus for a number of researchers (Rice and Haythornthwaite 2006). However, in this thesis, my aim is to examine the role of web radio as a potential bridge between Vietnamese expatriates – mostly refugees of the Vietnam War - and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. In addition, web radio could be utilised as a means to bring Vietnam to the world, and the world to Vietnam. These issues become more important as they are missions assigned by the Vietnamese Government to journalism, especially radio, since the Economic Renovation period.

Most importantly, in this thesis, I endeavour to explore the impacts of web radio on traditional radio and its listeners. Earlier studies have found that web radio audiences comprise the youth, individuals who have obtained higher education qualifications, and those from high income groups. In Vietnam, these groups either do not listen to radio or are amongst those who listen the least. For this reason, the central question: whether web radio is a way to capture these groups of audiences who have been neglected traditional radio in Vietnam, will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter V:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RADIO IN VIETNAM SINCE ITS INCEPTION (1945) TO THE YEAR OF RENOVATION (1986)

In addition to discussing two approaches for defining web radio, the previous two chapters, more importantly, have drawn a picture about radio's development in the UK and US, from its inception to the Internet Age. This picture establishes a useful foundation from which to compare and contrast radio's development in Western countries with that of Vietnam, in order to explore possible responses to the question: why radio in developed countries continues to experience fruitful achievements, whereas in Vietnam, particularly in urban areas, this is not the case.

This chapter and those that follow will map the radio landscape in Vietnam and examine reasons for the significant decline in radio listener numbers recently, regardless of the long-standing dominant position of radio since its inception until the Economic Renovation (1986). Experiences of radio's development in the UK and US will be selectively applied, in combination with radio audiences' opinions and comments in order to explore possible ways to develop radio in Vietnam in the later sections.

As a hinge chapter introducing a section about Vietnamese radio, in this chapter, I will describe and analyse the development of radio in Vietnam, which has fluctuated from its 'golden age' during the wars (1945-1975) to a 'dominant position' in the subsidised period (1976-1986), and the current crisis, where the number of listeners has declined dramatically. This will be done in order to establish an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of radio in Vietnam, as well as to provide a foundation for an analysis of audiences' opinions and ways to develop radio in Vietnam in the following sections.

5.1. THE 'GOLDEN AGE' OF RADIO IN VIETNAM DURING THE WARS

In Vietnam, VOV, the first recognised radio station, was set up, not in response to public needs, or for commercial purposes - as was the case with the BBC and other

radio stations in the UK and US - but as an agent of propaganda to disseminate urgent political messages by Ho Chi Minh, during preparations for the establishment of the DRV (VOV 1995, 2000a; Nhan Hanh 2003, p.7). Soon after the formation of the Vietnamese independent government was announced, the country became engaged in a 9-year conflict for independence against French colonialism, followed by a struggle for reunification and American military invasion for more than 20 years. Finally, both France and America - regardless of their rich and well-equipped forces - were defeated by a country that had not been recognised in the geo-political world map until the middle of the twentieth century.

The victory of Vietnam was attributed to a number of factors, most importantly the patriotism and solidarity of the Vietnamese people under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party (Tran Ba De 2000c, p.270-272). Significantly, it was propaganda, particularly via radio, that encouraged Vietnamese soldiers and the population to fight seemingly undefeatable enemies (Vo Nguyen Giap cited Brown 2002, p.169; Lu Van Dien 2000, p.331-334).

The following sections will discuss the unique socio-political condition in Vietnam during the 30 years of protracted conflicts against two most powerful enemies. Without understanding the especial context in which VOV was operated and developed, it is difficult to understand the importance of VOV's role in mobilising the country in a 'People's War' until its final triumph, and VOV's special position in mass media systems in Vietnam for more than 40 years since its inception.

5.1.1. Brief history of Vietnam during 1945-1975

Generally speaking, Vietnamese history can be characterised by the endless effort of its people to preserve the country's national identity, culture, sovereign status and unification against colonialism, including the thousand-year-long struggle against Chinese control (111BCC-AAD938), followed by a long effort to preserve independence and territorial unity against the French, Japanese and more recently America.

In August 1945, at the end of the Second World War, the surrender of the Japanese, following closely upon the collapse of French power in Indochina - France's richest and most important colony (Woods 2003, p.3) - left a vacuum into which Vietnamese nationalists rapidly moved. After 80 years of resistance against French rule without success, finally, on the 2nd September 1945, Ho Chi Minh publicly announced the formation of the DRV. With this statement, the Vietnamese Revolution appeared complete, however, economically and politically, the country was in turmoil with numerous difficulties, including a tragic famine that caused the death of two million people (approximately 20% of the population of ten million) (Le Mau Han 2000a, p.11). At that time, 90% of the Vietnamese population were illiterate (ibid) (consequently, newspapers did not have a constituency to develop which offered an opportunity for radio). At the beginning of Ho Chi Minh's Government, there were no rice stocks, no fiscal reserves, no official bureaucracy, or civil services, and no foreign recognition of Vietnam as a new nation (ibid)⁶⁴.

The situation deteriorated as rival parties struggled for their share of power, and most importantly, the former colonialists, particularly the French and Guomindang troops, attempted to re-occupy Vietnam (Le Mau Han 2000a, p.11-19; Ruane 1998, p.12-13). Reluctantly, Ho Chi Minh came to believe that a negotiated French return to power was the pragmatic solution to the dilemma (Brown 2002, p.32, Tucker 1998, p.44; Chapuis 2000, p.147). However, the more Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese Government tried to make concessions, the more the French transgressed the Preliminary Agreement⁶⁵ of 1946. On the 19th December 1946, Ho Chi Minh issued an appeal to "the entire people

⁶⁴ It was not until the 18th January 1950 and the 30th January 1950 that the People's Republic of China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, respectively, recognised the Vietnam Democratic Republic (Le Mau Han 2000, p.69).

⁶⁵ In March 1946, the 'Vietnam-French Preliminary Agreement' was concluded, in which Ho Chi Minh agreed to permit 15,000 French troops to return to Hanoi within 5 years, in exchange for French recognition of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Ruane 1998, p.14). However, the French only recognised Vietnam as a free (but not independent) country, belonging to the French Union, albeit with its own government, army and foreign affairs' policies. The French even proclaimed a separatist French-controlled government for South Vietnam as the Republic of Cochinchina (Le Mau Han 2000, p.46), and in March 1949, and installed Bao Dai as a puppet ruler of the South of Vietnam (Chapuis 2000, p.155; Brown 2002, p.36).

to wage a resisting war” (Le Mau Han 2000b, p.49). Hence, the nine-year struggle, referred to as the First Indochina War, began.

It is noted that in September 1949, the Soviet Union successfully tested an atomic bomb, in the process, destroying the American atomic monopoly (Ruane 1998, p.24). During the same year, Mao Zedong’s communist forces defeated Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist Army in the Chinese civil war, engendering American anti-communist concern regarding a Communist expansion in the region (Brown 2002, p.37). The intervention by America in the South of Vietnam some years later was a consequence of that concern with the goal of ‘containment’ of the Communist expansion⁶⁶. In a press conference on the 7th April 1954 - one month before the defeat of French troops by Vietminh - the 34th US President Eisenhower predicted a scenario, later referred to as the ‘Domino Theory’, in which a Communist victory in Vietnam would result in surrounding countries falling one after another like a ‘falling row of dominoes’ (Vandemark 1995, p.5). The ‘Domino Theory’ (1954) was used to justify ever-deepening US involvement in Vietnam from this point onward. In reality, during his presidency, Eisenhower greatly increased US military aid to the French in Vietnam in order to prevent the establishment of the Democratic Communist Government in Vietnam as previously discussed.

Regardless of the significant military and financial support from America, on May 7th 1954, the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu, and forced to withdraw completely from Vietnam (Le Mau Han 2000c, p.120-121; Downing 2003, p.149). This was a resounding victory, as for the first time, an impoverished and unrecognised country defeated successfully a wealthy colonial, developed country (Ho Chi Minh 1996 cited Le Mau Han 2000c, p.128). At this point, the French Government agreed to recognise the full freedom and independence of Vietnam (Le Mau Han 2000c, p.128). However,

⁶⁶ In July 1950, the US military involvement in Vietnam officially began when President Truman authorised \$15 million in military aid to the French (Karnow 1994, p.192; Ruane 1998, p.22; Brown 2002, p.192). Over the following four years, the US provided nearly \$3 billion support for the French and by the year 1954, the American Government had provided nearly 80% of all military equipment used by the French in the Vietnam War (Pentagon Papers Vol.11971, p.77 cited Brown 2002, p.38; Ruane 1998, p.22).

the Geneva Accords (July 21st 1954) divided Vietnam into two parts, at the 17th parallel. The North was designated the DRV while Bao Dai's regime was established in the South, although, according to the Accord, elections were to be held throughout Vietnam within 2 years with the purpose of reunifying the country (Ruane 1998, p.34; Vandermark 1995, p.5).

Vietnam, therefore, would have had independence and unity if the Geneva Accord (1954) had been implemented. However, one year later, Bao Dai was overthrown (Brown 2002, p.41), with support from American, the Republic of South Vietnam was proclaimed, with Ngo Dinh Diem - formerly Bao Dai's Prime Minister - as the country's first President (ibid). On the 17th July 1955, despite this being the deadline for the unifying elections set by the Geneva Accord (1954) Ngo Dinh Diem refused to participate (Nguyen Van Thu 2000a, p.154; Vandermark 1995, p.6).

Through Ngo Dinh Diem, Washington hoped to establish a viable, non-communist government in South Vietnam. However, Ngo Dinh Diem's arbitrary rule and authoritarian manner provoked mounting domestic dissent⁶⁷ (Vandemark 1995, p.6; Ruane 1998, p.22; Brown 2002, p.44-45; Downing 2003, p.150; Nguyen Van Thu 2000a, p.157-161). Against the savage persecution of Ngo Dinh Diem's regime, the population in the South engaged in resistance and action against the Government. In March 1959, an armed revolution began as Ho Chi Minh mobilised a 'People's War' to fight Ngo Dinh Diem's regime and reunite the nation (ibid).

Nevertheless, it was not a political but a religious crisis - Buddhist⁶⁸ - that initiated the events and reactions that culminated in Ngo Dinh Diem's downfall (Brown 2002, p.47). Within 2 years of Ngo Dinh Diem's assassination, as a result of military coups, 10 successive Governments were convened, attempting to take control of South Vietnam (Nguyen Van Thu 2000b, p.198-199).

⁶⁷ During 1955 - 1958, 90% of communists in the South were killed or arrested and imprisoned (Nguyen Van Thu 2000, p.157).

⁶⁸ The crisis began when a senior Buddhist monk soaked himself in petrol and committed self immolation in a Saigon street on the 11th June 1963 in order to protest against President Diem's religious discrimination (Nguyen Van Thu 2000, p.191; Donaldson 1996, p.93)

Despite the unstable political situation in South of Vietnam, in July 1965, President Johnson decided to 'Americanise' the war, which expanded promptly and substantially US military presence in Vietnam, from 16,000 'advisors' in 1954 (Roselle 2006, p.6), to 200,000 US military personnel in 1965 (Tucker 1998, p.16,116), this figure reached a climax of 540,000 in 1968 (Tomes 1998, p.117). Consequently, the Vietnamese conflict became an 'American war' (Roselle 2006, p.37).

Also in that year, American military activities escalated with the carpet-bombing of North Vietnam (Karnow 1994, p.430) - for three and half years - approximately one million tons of bombs, rockets and missiles were dropped⁶⁹ (roughly 800 tons per day) (ibid, p.468). However, the campaign was counter-productive: the loss to the American air force was approximately triple than that of the damage to North Vietnam (Karnow 1998, p.472). Moreover, the flow of soldiers, volunteer fighters and supplies into the South over the Ho Chi Minh trail, via such simple conveyances as bicycles, was not curtailed (Donaldson 1996, p.100), but in fact, approximately 10 times higher than that of the previous period of conflict⁷⁰ (Tran Ba De 2000a, p.220).

Importantly, in America, the antiwar movement, which initially began in 1964 and early 1965, increased significantly in number and size (Brown 2002, p.118; Ruane 1998, p.83). After the Tet Offensive public opinion polls revealed President Johnson's overall approval rating had dropped to 36%, while approval of his Vietnam War policy was 26%, which meant that his credibility – the key to a president's capacity to govern – was diminished (Karnow 1994, p.559).

The failures in the Vietnamese theatre of war, combined with anti-war movements in the US, and around the world, influenced the American government to reduce their active troops, from 540,000 in 1968 to 24,000 in 1972 (Ruane 1998, p.90; Roselle 2006,

⁶⁹ During the entire war, the number of bombs US dropped in Vietnam was approximately four times higher than the number dropped throughout World War II: the largest display of firepower in the history of warfare (Karnow 1994, p.430, 468).

⁷⁰ According to Pham Vinh (2004, p.30), during 16 years between 1959 and 1975, more than 1.6 million cadres and troops, and millions of tons of food, weapons, military equipment and medicines were also sent to the South, which made up more than 88% of the Southern armed forces, 81% of military equipment and 85% of the transportation in the South fields.

p.50). Nevertheless, the American Government did not admit their defeat⁷¹ until the failure of the second air attacks on North Vietnam in December 1972 (Karnow 1994, p.667; Tran Ba De 2000b, p.245-247).

On the 30th April 1975, North Vietnam forces took over Saigon, ending the war and reunifying the country under communist control, forming the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Tran Ba De 2000c, p.267). At the same time, Washington extended the political and economic embargo - already in effect against North Vietnam since 1964 - to all of Vietnam (Thayer 1999, p.2; Vietnamese Embassy (America) 2007). This embargo was not lifted for some 30 years: until the 3rd February 1994 (Jelh 1994).

Finally, after 30 years of resistance by the Vietnamese people, France and then later America was defeated. The key successes of the Vietnam War are attributed to a number of factors, most importantly, it was a 'People's War', waged by the Vietnamese Government - in which every man, every woman, every social and economic unit, large or small was sustained by a mobilised population - that led to the victory (Tran Ba De 2000c, p.270 -272).

At this point it is important to reiterate that it was propaganda that encouraged Vietnamese soldiers and the population to fight seemingly undefeatable enemies. Politics was, as Vo Nguyen Giap (1962, p.55 cited Brown 2002, p.169) stressed, 'the soul of the army'. The propagandising system acted as a bridge between the Communist Party and the country's population, it instructed the Party's policies and guidelines, and more importantly, appealed to and mobilised the whole population in the 'People's War'. The 'People's War' would not have succeeded without the use of propaganda, which was disseminated predominately via journalism, particularly radio. The following section will investigate the development of VOV since its inception and explore its

⁷¹ After more than 4 years and 9 months of discussion, in January 1973, the 'Paris Peace Accords' was signed by the US, North Vietnam, South Vietnam and the Viet Cong Governments (ibid; Time 1973). Two months after the Paris Peace Accords was signed, the last remaining American troops withdrew from Vietnam, ending America's longest (overseas) military campaign with over 2.7 million Americans having been involved (Johnson 2004, p.59), it was the country's most humiliating defeat (Ruane 1998, p.24,102). However, geographically and politically, Vietnam remained divided, and South Vietnam was considered as one country with two governments, one led by President Nguyen Van Thieu, and the other by the Viet Cong.

fundamental roles during the 30 years period of conflict in order to explain why and how VOV could retain its dominant position in mass media during the period 1945-1975.

5.1.2. VOV and its 'golden age' between 1945 -1975

5.1.2.1. The importance of the birth of VOV

VOV, the first radio station in Vietnam, was established on the 7th September 1945, five days after Vietnam was declared a Democratic Republic by the then President Ho Chi Minh (Ta Ngoc Tan 2001, p.112; Nhan Hanh 2003, p.7; Mai Thanh Thu 2000, p.8). However, a few weeks after Vietnam was proclaimed independent, the country was immersed in military conflicts, which lasted over 30 years, to preserve its independence and unification. For this reason, the first 30 years of the development of VOV was undertaken in wartime conditions.

It is noted that before 1945, in Hanoi, there was only a single, small radio station broadcasting in French, mostly for French troops and the French community resident in Hanoi (Le Dinh Dao 2003, p.13; Do Quang Hung 2000, p.223). In Saigon, there was a small private commercial radio station (ibid). According to the reminiscences of Tran Lam (1995b, p.15-17) - the first General Director of VOV - those who were assigned to establish a new radio station knew nothing about radio, except the fact that a radio station should comprise 3 main components: a transmitter, a radio studio and an editorial office - similar to that of a newspaper, and that it would require presenters. Nevertheless, with support from a number of "patriotic intellectuals" and engineers, finally, a radio station was set up, initially on the 22nd August 1945, and officially broadcast two weeks later (Le Quy 2000b, p.14). As previously discussed, due to the political and socio-economic crisis in Vietnam at that time, VOV was established in an extremely difficult and challenging situation: there were no radio-specific facilities, no financial resources, and no experienced or professional staff (Tran Lam 1995b, p.15-17). However, the birth of VOV marked a significant and seminal point in not only media's development in Vietnam, but also the history of the emerging Democratic Republic nation.

Before 1945, the area that included Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia was referred to as Indochina - united politically under French colonial rule. As a result, for almost a century French was regarded as the country's official language, whilst Vietnamese was taught in schools for only one hour a week as a foreign language (Tran Lam 1995b, p.21). Vietnam was a colonised country, consequently, the nation lost its voice and language. The name 'The Voice of Vietnam' was chosen to denote and signify pride in the emerging nation, for the first time, raising the Vietnamese voice in the world community. Thus, since its inception, VOV has always begun broadcasts with the statement: "This is The Voice of Vietnam, broadcasting from Hanoi, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam" (later changed to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) as a signature announcement⁷². As VOV was not merely a radio station (in the typical sense) but also the voice for an independent nation, it became a medium to which significant attention was paid, by the newly-established Government, especially President Ho Chi Minh, and also the general population.

It should be reiterated that VOV was established first and foremost due to the urgent political instructions determined by Ho Chi Minh (op cit.). The establishment of a radio station at that time, with reference to its domestic purpose, was considered of such importance because it would facilitate a bridge between the central government, local authorities, and the general population. With reference to foreign policy, radio broadcasts could cross any geographical frontiers, informing international communities about Vietnam, its people, and its struggle for freedom and independence. At that time, it was believed that, as a result of this endeavour, Vietnam would receive sympathetic support from the rest of the world regarding the country's resistance to the French colonisation of Vietnam (Nhan Hanh 2003, p.7). Therefore, during the war period, in addition to President Ho Chi Minh's 5 visits to VOV (Tran Huu Hanh 2000, p.107-112),

⁷² In the earliest days of VOV, radio presenters were excessively proud of the newly established Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and consequently their tone was sanctimonious. Even Government leaders recognised the pretentious attitude, and in the late 1970s it was suggested that presenters should talk in a more natural manner (Tran Lam 1995, p.23). However, the extreme pride in the presenters' voices - to some extent causing an exaggeratedly formal style - resulted in a great number of radio listeners in my recent offline survey commenting that 'VOV's presenter's voice are not friendly'. The forceful manner of VOV's presenters during the wars, which encouraged Vietnamese people to fight enemies is, perhaps, no longer suitable for the present time, especially when radio is regarded as an intimate medium.

many leaders of the Communist Party and the Government - including the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Le Duan, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, and the top-ranking General Vo Nguyen Giap - paid visits to the radio station, in order to encourage its staff and direct its operations (VOV 2000a). This encouragement and guidance from the country's senior leaders and members of the Vietnamese Government somehow motivated VOV staff, and strengthened VOV's position as the main communication medium during the war period.

5.1.2.2. VOV domestic service: propagandising and agitating the People's War

VOV fulfilled successfully its mission as a political tool of the newly-established Government, especially in propagandising and agitating people against what, at that time, were regarded as enemies of the people, the state of famine and illiteracy, and military enemies (Tram Lam 1995). The appeals and public instructions from the Government, and news from the battlefields were usually promptly broadcast on air. In the history of VOV's development, a number of events have been highlighted as 'golden moments' contributing to VOV's highly regarded reputation and its position, which none of the country's other media enjoyed.

One such 'golden moment' was a radio programme broadcast on the 24th September 1945. Situated in the same building as the Information Exchange Centre, the then General Director of VOV received news from the President of the Southern Committee (of Vietnam) that the French had opened fire (Van Yen 1996, p.5). Due to the serious nature of this political event, even though VOV almost ended their programmes, the then General Director of VOV decided to continue broadcasting to listeners nationwide whilst awaiting further instruction and information from the Government. As there were no archives, no newspapers, and no music⁷³, VOV's producers decided to translate orally the book 'Condemn the French Colonial' from French to Vietnamese, and broadcast this contemporaneously. The forceful and emotive voice of the presenters, highlighting the perceived crimes of French colonialism, was intended to motivate the population to resist the military action by the French. It was not until 01:00 on the 24th

⁷³ At the beginning, VOV was only able to broadcast live music programmes, due to the lack of recording facilities (Tran Lam 1995b).

September that President Ho Chi Minh issued an appeal to the population of South Vietnam to resist the French (Dong Manh Hung 2006, p.36-37; Nguyen Manh Phuong 2002, p.17-18; Van Yen 1996, p.5). On that night, Vietnamese people gathered around a radio set or public loudspeaker to wait for the latest news. Via VOV, the “Appeal to the Southern Vietnamese people for Resistance against the French” was broadcast immediately after receiving a telegram from the Government; only a few hours after the French opened hostilities in the South of Vietnam (Internal Documents at VOV). For the first time, an important Government instruction was broadcast immediately to the whole nation (Tran Lam 1995b, p.31-33). Since that time, VOV has become an essential disseminating tool for the Government’s issuance of guidelines or instructions.

It is noted that whilst Ho Chi Minh appealed to the Southern people to resist the French, he and his Government exerted all diplomatic efforts to effect a peaceful resolution. However, after spending 4 months in France endeavouring to negotiate full independence for Vietnam without success, Ho Chi Minh returned to Hanoi with only a provisional agreement⁷⁴ as mentioned previously. Ho Chi Minh’s concessions implied in the provisional agreement disappointed Vietnam’s hard-core militants, some of whom accused Ho Chi Minh of ‘selling out’ to the enemy (Karnow 1994, p.171). Many of Ho Chi Minh’s followers were deeply suspicious of French intentions and believed full independence was achievable only through armed struggle (Ruane 1998, p.16). However, Ho Chi Minh intended to delay military confrontation, to strengthen the Vietminh’s military position, and, by extension, its prospects of success. Ho Chi Minh preferred a non-military solution: believing that if a semblance of peace could be maintained, in time, a new government might emerge in Paris, leftist in orientation and prepared to take the Vietminh seriously (Ruane 1998, p.17, Le Mau Han 2000a, p.43). At this historically significant time, it was important to explain and make clear to the whole nation the nature of the concessions, urging the population to consider a peaceful resolution, yet, on the other hand, to prepare urgently for war. Therefore, one day after Ho Chi Minh arrived in Hanoi, he visited VOV, where he broadcast directly to the

⁷⁴ The provisional agreement stated that a further round of talks was scheduled for the spring of 1947, and in the interim, both sides agreed to renounce violence as a means of settling their differences (Ruane 1998, p.16)

country, calling for moderation, whilst urging the population to prepare for the worst (Nguyen Manh Phuong 2002, p.17-18; Tran Lam 1995b, p.144-145).

At this time, the country was on the verge of war. The Vietnamese Government and internal organisations, including VOV had already prepared for the possibility of war: the staff and facilities of VOV had been evacuated⁷⁵ (Hong Giang 2000, p.24-25; Le Quy 2000b, p.14). On the 17th December 1946, when the French ordered the Vietminh to lay down their arms, a war of nation-wide resistance officially began (Chu Duc Tinh 2006). At 20:00 on the 19th December 1946, the Vietminh militia struck, sabotaging the municipal power plant (Tran Lam 1995, p.45), while VOV was broadcasting its usual evening programme. Having heard the sound of canons, VOV presenters, who had been alerted in advance to the possibility of military action, announced calmly: “Hanoi has opened fire! The national resistance has started! This programme will cease broadcasting immediately. However, please turn on your radio tomorrow to listen as usual.” (Vinh Tra 2000, p.136). Also on that night, Ho Chi Minh wrote a personal appeal to “the entire people to wage a resistance war” (Hong Cu 2006). Early the following morning, Ho Chi Minh’s appeal was sent to VOV. This was the point at which Ho Chi Minh ceased to seek peaceful resolution, urging the Vietnamese people - “any man or woman, old or young, regardless of religion, politics, ethnicity... who has a gun, use the gun, who has a sword, use the sword, if you do not have a gun or sword, use a hoe, spade, stick or cane” (Ho Chi Minh 1995, p.480) - to resist the foreign invasion.

It is important to note that during some 80 years prior to the August 1945 Revolution, all national liberation movements aiming to overthrow French rule in Indochina ended without success. For the first time, a political party - Vietminh - was able to assemble the Vietnamese for a single purpose: to resist the French, using the slogans ‘All for the Nation’ and ‘All for the Fatherland’ (Le Mau Han 2000a, p.13-15). As a result, the Communist Party’s organisations, including VOV, received substantial support from the Vietnamese population, both in terms of material and human resources, particularly the latter. Consequently, soon after having been established, VOV was able to broadcast in

⁷⁵ The station’s remaining facilities in Hanoi were later destroyed so that they would not fall in to enemy hands (Hong Giang 2000, p.24-25; Le Quy 2000b, p.14).

French, English, Chinese, Laos, and even Esperanto (Le Quy 2000a, p.60-67), and after 1954, this figure increased to 11 languages⁷⁶ (ibid). A significant number of VOV staff, at that time, had previously been professionals, including professors, lawyers, writers and artists, a number of these individuals later became key figures in the Government's Cabinet or famous artists and writers (Tran Lam 1995b, p.47, 78-79). During the 1960s, VOV's orchestra, which contributed significantly to VOV broadcast, especially its music programmes, was the most famous one in the North of Vietnam, with more than 120 musicians and singers (Le Quy 1995, p.6-7).

In addition to the benefits gained from utilising the skills, knowledge and experience of these professionals, VOV also had access to an invaluable information source: the Offices of the Generals of the Vietnamese People's Army (Tran Lam 1995b, p.53). A significant number of VOV staff were sent to battlefields to obtain 'live and direct' information for its radio programmes, some of whom were killed whilst on these missions, subsequently honoured as revolutionary martyrs (VOV 1995, p.199-200).

From 1954, VOV began broadcasting specialised programmes to targeted audiences. Programmes for the South targeted people in Southern cities, and Southern rural areas, especially soldiers serving the Southern Government, to agitate and propagandise enemy troops (Nguyen Kim Trach 2003, 2005). The VOV programmes, made with the benefit of unique information sources, produced by patriotic staff, including the revolutionary intellectual elite (as mentioned previously), encouraged the Vietnamese people to resist the French and American invaders, they agitated and propagandised the North's enemies, and appealed for support from the station's international audiences (Tran Lam 1995a; VOV 2000).

Interestingly, radio was often perceived as the primary medium during periods of war and conflict, as was the case in Vietnam, this phenomenon also occurred in the US and UK during World War II (Horten 2003, p.2; Briggs 1995). Nevertheless, the reasons for the importance of radio during the war period differed between radio in the US, UK and in Vietnam. In the US, during the 1930s - 1940s, radio was a daily companion, a

⁷⁶ Eleven languages were French, English, Chinese, Laos, Esperanto, Thai, Cambodian, Indonesian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish (Le Quy 2000, p.60 - 67).

window to the outside world, a trusted provider of news and information, and a distraction and entertainment medium, 90% of American families owned at least one radio set and listened to an average of three to four hours a day (Horten 2003, p.2). In Vietnam, only military officers had a radio set and the majority of people listened to radio via a public loudspeaker, which was often located in a village leader's house. However, radio was extremely important because its signals could be transmitted over any geographical frontiers and reach anyone, especially the 90% of the Vietnamese population who were illiterate at that time. For the majority of Vietnamese soldiers and people, during the wars, radio was the major, and in many cases, only medium from which to obtain news, information, and instructions from the Government (Lu Van Dien 2000, p.331).

In Vietnam, the power of morale of the Vietnamese people, strengthened through propaganda, especially via radio, was perceived as a determining factor if the country was to achieve military victory. The patriotism and long history of fighting for freedom and independence of the Vietnamese people (as discussed previously) had generated heroes in battlefields, and in turn, it was propaganda, especially via radio, that encourage 'heroic acts'. On air, news stories about Vietnamese heroes, for example To Vinh Dien, Be Van Dan, Phan Dinh Giot⁷⁷ were broadcast, and they were praised as symbols of patriotism and bravery. Another often repeated story of heroism was the story of Ngo Thi Tuyen⁷⁸. According to Young and Buzzanco (2002, p.98-99), via radio, Hanoians learned about Ngo Thi Tuyen's action and the fate of the Dragon's Jaw Bridge, from which they believed that if this bridge could stand somehow their country would prevail. A number of educated people reproduced the lyrics of songs and poems broadcast on radio, and taught these to others (Lu Van Dien 2000, p.332), in turn, in

⁷⁷ To Vinh Dien placed his own body under the wheel of a heavy artillery gun to prevent it from rolling down the slope and becoming ineffective, Be Van Dan used his body as a gun's tripod so that his comrades could continue to fire at the enemy and Phan Dinh Giot blocked an enemy gun hole with his body.

⁷⁸ The morale strength and desire to avenge her 22 dead comrades in arms enabled Ngo Thi Tuyen, a nineteen year old volunteer, astonishingly, to shoulder 95 kilogrammes of ammunition - twice her body weight - to supply artillery defending the militarily strategic Dragon's Jaw Bridge (Young and Buzzanco 2002, p.98-99). The bridge itself stood as a powerful symbol of resistance in the face of almost continuous American air attacks from 1965 to 1972 (ibid).

order to increase morale and strength of purpose within communities. According to Nguyen Thanh Cai (2000, p.409) after having listened to the programme 'The Appeal from a battlefield' many young men and women volunteered to join the army. In short, news-stories about the victories of the Vietnamese army and heroes in battlefields, in particular, and about the war in general, encouraged and strengthened the will of the Vietnamese people to fight until the nation's triumph (Nguyen Thanh Cai 2000, p.408, Lu Van Dien 2000, p.331-334).

The Government's ability to convey these and other heroic acts helped to maintain the morale and determination of the Vietnamese people during the wars to resist their enemies. Hence, radio was regarded as an important weapon, improving the morale for the Vietnamese army and people (Lu Van Dien 2000, p.331-334).

5.1.2.3. VOV's external service: agitating and propagandising the country's enemies and the international communities

VOV's programmes not only encouraged patriotism and supported the Vietnamese people in the resistance, but also succeeded in agitating and propagandising against the country's enemies. As mentioned previously, the external services of VOV were broadcast immediately after the radio station was established, and, during the Vietnam War, radio propaganda against US troops was prioritised by the North Vietnamese (Le Quy 2000, p.60). The most famous presenter of the English language service was Trinh Thi Ngo, also known as Hanoi Hannah⁷⁹, who made three 30-minute daily broadcasts, directly targeted at American soldiers (Wintle 2006, p.306-307; Dao Dinh Tuan 1995, p.5; Huong Son 1995, p.6-7). Hanoi Hannah was believed to be more successful than either Axis Sally or Tokyo Rose⁸⁰ at influencing US soldiers (Price 2001). In her

⁷⁹ Hanoi Hannah's was the beguiling voice that sought to persuade hundreds of thousands of American Marines to lay down their weapons, and either change sides or return home (ibid). Hanoi Hannah (cited Shenon 1994) spoke directly to American soldiers about the traditions of the Vietnamese, and their determined resistance to aggression. She told them that they were poorly informed about the prosecution of the war, endeavouring to make them aware that no act was more mistaken than to fight in an unjust war, to die, or be maimed for life without good reason: with the intention of demoralising them and encouraging them to refuse to fight (Price 2001).

⁸⁰ Axis Sally was the Allied soldiers' name for Mildred Gillars, who worked for Radio Berlin. Her programme was aimed at demoralising GIs in Europe. Her favourite tactic was to talk about

broadcasts, Hannah always announced the names of the American troops who had died in battle during the previous month (Shenon 1994). She also read - in broadcasts - articles from American newspapers and magazines about anti-war demonstrations in the US, in order to better convince American soldiers and remind the troops of how unpopular the war was back home (ibid).

Regarding international radio listeners, during the wars, especially the war against America, Vietnam was the centre of the international communities' interest. As mentioned previously, as soon as the first radio programme was broadcast in Vietnamese, VOV also produced programmes in foreign languages and importantly, during the Vietnam War, the external broadcast services were increased to 12 languages, including Vietnamese for Vietnamese expatriates (Tran Lam 1995a). Regarding the VOV's English language service, there were three programmes broadcast at different times throughout the day for three targeted English-speaking groups of listeners: the English communities in Southeast Asia and Western Europeans; American soldiers (GIs) in Southeast Asia, and particularly, the American population. The latter was a special programme broadcast directly from Havana (Cuba), which will be explained in detail at a later point.

The information broadcast by VOV had a wide audience, because listeners worldwide wanted to be informed, from the Vietnamese perspective, and learn of the Vietnamese peoples' experiences of the war. And in turn, VOV received significant support from international communities, which helped VOV continue to broadcast.

In 1954, VOV was provided with a radio transmitter, which at that time had the biggest transmitter capacity in Southeast Asia, by the Soviet Union (Tran Lam 1995b, p.76). A significant number of recorders were also supplied for VOV by the Soviet Union, Hungary and other Communist countries (Le Vo 2000, p.98-99). However, the most useful support VOV received was from Cuba and China, as they allowed VOV to be broadcast from their countries.

unfaithful girlfriends and wives back home. 'Tokyo Rose' were in fact a group of women, most of them Japanese-Americans who had returned to Japan during the World War II. They would taunt Americans about facing certain death (Price 2001).

During the Vietnam War, Vietnam and Cuba formed a special relationship, “like siblings of the same family” (Ho Chi Minh 1966 cited Ly Van Sau [no date]; Tran Quang Khai 1996, p.5). President Fidel Castro (1966 cited Jose 2004) stated that “for Viet Nam, we, Cuba were willing to give our lives”. Therefore, the Vietnamese Government’s proposal to broadcast VOV’s programmes from Havana was vigorously supported by the Cuban Government. After 6 months of preparation, on the 2nd January 1968, the VOV’s English language radio programmes were officially broadcast from Havana. At this time, the Vietnam War had reached a peak as the American military had bombed North Vietnam, and the number of American soldiers operating in the theatre of war in Vietnam had reached approximately half a million. Every day, six 20 minute-programmes - beginning with the clear statement: ‘This is the Voice of Vietnam, broadcasting from Havana’ - were broadcast directly to the US. The programmes especially targeted the mothers and wives of American soldiers fighting in Vietnam, in order to inform them about the realities of the war from the Vietnamese perspective, and encourage them to deter their sons and husbands from taking part in the war (Le Tien 2000a, p.47; Le Quy 2000a, p.74-76; Tran Quang Khai 1996, p.23-24).

After one month, the VOV’s office in Havana received more than 1000 letters and telephone calls from listeners expressing appreciation for the programmes (ibid). After 2 months, the VOV programmes broadcast from Havana received the highest number of letters from listeners receiving broadcasts from Havana, including Cuban radio, and remained at this level (peaking at 3000 letters per month) until 1976, when the VOV’s office was recalled, ending 3000 days of utilising Cuban radio frequencies (Tran Lam 1995a; Le Quy 2000a, p.76; Le Tien 2000a, p.47). According to Le Tien (2000a, p.47) - one of the VOV presenters at this ‘special mission unit’ - in the middle of 1968, the Cuban radio station also helped VOV to broadcast in Spanish for Latin American listeners. As discussed previously, the various global anti-war movements were one of the most pressing imperative for the American Government’s decision to withdraw their troops from Vietnam, leading to the cessation of the military action (op cit.). The support provided by the Cuban Government is a special and unique event in radio’s history, unprecedented in any other sovereign nation in the world (Le Tien 2000a, p.48).

At this point, it is noted that the perception of propaganda is different between Western and Eastern journalism. According to the Marxist-Leninist theory of journalism,

propaganda is regarded as one of the main functions of revolutionary journalism (Duong Xuan Son *et al.* 1995), whereas from the Western perspective, the word ‘propaganda’ continues to have negative connotations (Taylor 2003, p.1). However, it is not the aim of this thesis to critically analyse the nature of propaganda, but to highlight the importance of propaganda, and more importantly, the role of VOV and its propagandising as an agent of the Government in the victory of the Vietnamese people during 30 years of conflict.

As propaganda and war have often been inextricably linked (Taylor 2003, p.5), and propaganda during wartime has been referred to as a ‘munitions of the mind’ (Taylor 2003), a weapon of “no less significance than swords or guns or bombs” (ibid), it was understandable that it was used effectively by the Vietnamese Communist Party to wage the People’s War.

During the conflicts between 1945 and 1975, VOV became one of the most efficient means of mobilising the Vietnamese people - and more importantly, the only medium bridging the North’s Communist Party with Southern people - in fighting for liberation and reunification of the country, and appealing for the assistance and support of other friendly countries towards Vietnam (Nguyen Thi Dinh⁸¹ 2000, p.317-324; Tran Lam 1995a; VOVa 2000; Sub-Institute of Propaganda 2002, Lu Van Dien 2000, p.331-334).

As VOV was regarded as the ‘voice’ of the Communist Party, maintaining radio broadcasts and an on-air presence was a crucial and demanding mission. During the 9-year period of resistance against the French, even though the facilities were limited, VOV maintained a reserve station, and despite having to relocate 14 times to avoid detection by the French military authority, VOV continued, without cessation, its transmission (Ta Ngoc Tan 2001, p.114; Nhan Hanh 2003, p.7). In 1965, at the onset of the first air attacks on North Vietnam, the Vietnamese Government proposed a plan to utilise the Kunming (Chinese) radio station’s frequencies, in cases of emergency (Le Tien 2000a, p.82-86; Le Quy 2000a, p.77-79). Subsequently, in December 1972, when

⁸¹ Nguyen Thi Dinh was a founding member of the National Liberation Front, and elected chairwoman of the South Vietnam Women’s Liberation Association in 1965. After the Vietnam War, she served on the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party and became the first female Major General in the Vietnam People’s Army.

the major radio transmitter in Me Tri (Hanoi) was destroyed, VOV was compelled to cease broadcasting, however for only 9 minutes, before resuming broadcasting via the Kunming radio station, beginning the broadcast with the signature announcement “This is the Voice of Vietnam” (Nhan Hanh 2003, p.7). During the following 2 years, almost 100 VOV staff were posted to Kunming to produce programmes and ensure the ‘Voice of Vietnam’ was always broadcast for listeners, both domestic and overseas (Vien Phuong 2000, p.42-44).

Summary: A Comparison between radio in Vietnam and the UK and US

It is worth noting that from its inception to 1975, radio in Vietnam shared a number of similarities and had differences with those of radio in Western countries in their ‘golden age of radio’. As with the early development of Western radio, it was common in Vietnam, during this period that a group of people would gather around a single radio, or listen to broadcasts outside their homes, under a public loudspeaker (Duong Thanh Lam 2002, p.5; Nguyen Thanh Cai 2000, p.407-414, Vo Duy Hung 2000, p.375-380; Do Vinh 2000, p.325). Homemade radio sets were also popular, and VOV even organised a competition amongst communes to find the one that had the most homemade radio sets (Tran Lam 2000, p.5). However, whilst group listening in Western countries ended soon after radio became portable and affordable during the 1950s, in Vietnam, group listening remained common until the late 1980s, and even to date, public loudspeaker systems continue to exist in not only rural areas, but also urban areas, including the capital, Hanoi. The existence of the public loudspeaker systems during the conflicts enabled essential news and information to be broadcast to the majority of the Vietnamese people. In the immediate post-war period, for approximately 10 years, the loudspeaker system continued to provide important public information and announcements. However, in the last decade of the twentieth century, and increasingly in recent years, it became an inconvenient feature that - to some extent – has reduced the interest in listening to radio for urban audiences, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Importantly, it was the war period that created the distinctive position for radio. In the US, during World War II, due to its accessibility and almost ubiquity, radio played a fundamental role in transforming the public cultural arena into a wartime culture. As a

result, the majority (67%) of Americans stated that radio did the best job of serving the public during the World War II, outperforming newspapers (17%), film (4%) and magazines (3%) (Horten 2003, p.2). However, whilst VOV became the 'voice' of the Communist Party and one of the most efficient means of mobilising the Vietnamese people during the 30 years of conflicts, as discussed previously. In the US, during the World War II, state-run radio propaganda had only a limited reach and lifetime, and failed to establish radio's importance in the war propaganda effort on the home front, and eventually ended in mid-1943 (Horten 2003, p.3-6). Whereas, the VOV has not only successfully fulfilled its role as the Government's propaganda tool during the wartime, but continues in this function to the present days.

The most significant difference between radio listeners in Western countries and in Vietnam were the motivation and purpose for listening to radio. Western audiences enjoyed listening for pleasure (with the exception of the wartime period). However, the first 30 years of development of VOV was the period of conflicts in Vietnam. Therefore, Vietnamese people listened to VOV, not only in order to receive information, but also to strengthen their beliefs and morale during periods of conflict⁸² (Quang Long 2003, p.13; Nguyen Thanh Cai 2000, p.407-414; Le Hao 2000, p.169-177). This was particularly the case in relation to civil and military resistance, and the leadership of the Communist Party and President Ho Chi Minh (VOV 2000a). Western audiences enjoyed entertainment programmes on radio, while Vietnamese audiences listened purposefully to obtain information about the war, the country's future and to hear appeals or instructions by Ho Chi Minh and his Government. Consequently, maintaining the VOV's broadcasts became of crucial importance (as discussed earlier).

For Western audiences, radio was initially perceived as a new cutting-edge technology, where 'Art and Science joined hands' (Briggs 1995; Street 2002), and only later as a service (McQuail 1987, p.15). However, in Vietnam, radio, from its inception, was a

⁸² The Vietnam War is a typical Guerrilla war, where it is extremely difficult to distinguish between military and civilian targets, between a civilian and Viet Cong (Oliver 2006, p.179; Thomas 2005, p.26). This was a war, where not just young men of military age assisted the Viet Cong, but old men, women and even children were involved (Parr 2008, p.99), and the most common belief was that any Vietnamese man, woman and child might be a Viet Cong operative (Kwon 2006, p.52). As the majority of Vietnamese people got involved, they wanted to listen to the only medium available at that time - radio - not only in order to know what was happening, but to strengthen their beliefs and morale during the conflicts.

symbol of the country's independence and freedom, associated with the development of the newly established DRV.

It is common to suggest that Vietnamese people regarded VOV as not only a radio station, but also an 'intimate friend'⁸³ (Nguyen Thanh Cai 2000, p.407-414; Lu Van Dien 2000, p.331-334; Hong Mai 1995, p.11-12). The strength of feeling of Vietnamese audiences toward radio continued until the present time, therefore, in the majority of surveys conducted by VOV, even though audiences were no longer actively listening to VOV, they reported high levels of appreciation regarding its programmes. It is thought that participants responded positively in order to please the interviewers who were staff of the highly regarded VOV that has a particular place in the participants' affection (VOV 2003, p.36). Due to this particular issue, findings about listeners' behaviour and listening consumption from independent studies are valuable for VOV in order to strengthen its ability to compete with visual media.

Moreover, whilst radio in Western countries had to face the emergence of television, and soon became involved in fierce competition with other mass media in order to capture and retain audiences, radio in Vietnam faced no such competition during the 30-year war period, as at that time it was the only broadcast media. In Vietnam, television was not introduced until the late 1970s, and more than 90% of the Vietnamese population at that time were illiterate (Le Mau Han 2000a, p.11), in addition, the number of newspapers was also limited during the period of conflicts. More importantly, Vietnamese journalism at that time entirely followed the Soviet Communist Theory of Press (Schramm 1963)⁸⁴, where the media system did not 'compete' or 'contradict' in terms of political or economic interests. In fact, during the 30-year period of conflict, all media organisations in Vietnam supported each other in a single imperative endeavour: propagandising, agitating and organising the nation in a popular Peoples' war.

⁸³ When the VOV station was bombed, people from Hai Duong province were willing to provide bamboo and wood, and sent volunteers to build houses for VOV staff (Tran Lam 1995, p.136-138).

⁸⁴ In addition, due to the Communist Theory of Press, this situation of no competition between mass media remained more than 10 years after the war ended.

Due to these special circumstances, regardless of the shortage in facilities, and lack of professional staff in terms of radio production and broadcasting, during 30 years of war, VOV was the dominant communication medium in Vietnamese society. This position continued for more than 10 years after the Vietnam War, and it was not until the Economic Renovation that VOV began to face new and serious challenges. The following section will discuss the socio-economic contexts and its consequent effects on the development of VOV in Vietnam during the subsidised period, lasting since the reunification in 1975 to the Economic Renovation in 1986. This will be done in order to examine reasons for the dominant position of VOV during more than 10 years after the Vietnam War ended, and also explore hidden causes that let radio to lose its audiences in the competition with visual media after 1986.

5.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOV DURING THE CENTRALLY PLANNED ECONOMY 1975 - 1986

5.2.1. Vietnam's Economy during the subsidised period 1975 - 1986

During wartime, victory is the only criterion for economic efficiency, and the Vietnamese Communists were extremely successful. However, many of the Vietnamese leaders could not imagine that the economic and political methods appropriate to war might become counterproductive in peacetime (Kolko 1997, p.20).

After 30 years of military conflict, from 1975, Vietnam advanced the development of the newly reunified country by applying a centrally planned economic model - regardless of innumerable difficulties, including the aftermath of war; social problems; the mass flow of refugees; a political and economic embargo by the US and a number of Western countries; and a series of natural calamities. This centrally planned economic model - basically, similar to that of the Soviet Union's in terms of its internal mechanisms, although it was inferior in its level of development - was utilised to develop a socialist economy in Vietnam, moving from a small, regulated economy to a large-scale socialist production-based economy, bypassing the stage of capitalist development (CPV 1976). The policy entailed the nationalisation and centralisation of the entire economy, and consequently, individual and personal interests were not protected (Bui Tat Thang 2000, p.21).

Collectivisation in the direction of large-scale socialist production was regarded as one of the three proposed agricultural revolutions during the first five-year plan (CPV 1976). However, collectivisation became one of the major casualties of the plan (Brown 2002, p.266), as agricultural production remained at a standstill (Boothroyd and Pham 2000). Nevertheless, instead of a timely renovation of the previous inefficient system of agricultural cooperatives in the North, the same model was again applied to the South of Vietnam, without adequate attention being paid to the special conditions prevailing there. As a result, a severe stagnation and deterioration in agricultural production occurred throughout the country. Low productivity in the agricultural sector and imbalances, shortages and severe poverty characterised the Vietnamese economy at that time (Brown 2002, p.226).

At that stage, Vietnam was a 'backward' agricultural economy, as 80% of the population were living, working and dependant on agriculture or related sectors, yet annual agricultural production was not sufficient to feed the population (Bui Tat Thang 2000, p.22), despite the fact that the Government was compelled to import 5.6 million tons of food between 1976 and 1980 (Boothroyd and Pham 2000). More importantly, because agriculture accounted for nearly 50% of GDP, and over 80% of the population were living in the countryside, any major deterioration in agriculture and disturbances in the rural sector had a significant negative socioeconomic impact on the whole country.

Through the model of a centrally planned economy, the Government controlled the whole process of production through to consumption. Prices of agricultural and non-agricultural cooperative products were closely related to the government's procurement policy, and the two-way contract system. Under this system, the Government supplied financial resources and raw materials for an enterprise, and assigned a fixed number of products (a 'norm') that the enterprise could produce and submit to the Government, regardless of any changing circumstance in the market (Xuan Trung and Quang Thien 2005a). The 'norm' was later regarded as a stranglehold that restricted almost all creativity, motivation and enthusiasm within enterprises (Xuan Trung and Quang Thien 2005a, b, c; Dang Phong 2005). Routine items like soap and needles could not be found in Hanoi, where the only department store was empty – except for window displays of goods absent from the selves (Karnow 1998, p.40).

For most Vietnamese people having to face soaring inflation and a rapid drop in purchasing power at that time, austerity was an inescapable fact of life⁸⁵. In the period from 1975 to 1980, most economic targets set in the five-year plan by the Fourth Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party were not met, and a number of economic indicators barely reached a third of their stated targets. Overspending of the state budget increased dramatically by 25% to 45% (of revenues) in the years after reunification (Bui Tat Thang 2000, p.22). As consumption was greater than the national income, the Vietnamese economy depended heavily on various sources of foreign aid, and the country incurred significant debts that, by the early 1980s, equalled the annual national income (CPV 2005a, p.444; CPV 2005b, p.47).

At that time, errors in the general readjustment of prices and wages, and in monetary changes, in late 1985, gradually drove the socioeconomic situation into a national crisis. Industrial and agricultural production both stagnated, circulation stalled, inflation rocketed to three digit rates, peaking at 777.47% in 1986 (CPV 2005a, p.444; CPV 2005b, p.47). The quality of life for the majority of the population was poor and continued to decline. Daily necessities such as food, consumer goods, transport, and health and education facilities were seriously deficient, as a consequence, public confidence declined.

In short, in the 10 years after the war, the centrally planned development of the Vietnamese economy was, for the most part, unsuccessful. In essence, the level of industrialisation remained the same, despite ten years of intense efforts to promote heavy industrial development. Furthermore, apart from the economic crisis discussed above, Vietnam was confronted with two additional problems: how to catch up economically with its neighbours in Southeast Asia, and how to compete within a globalised framework (Huu Ngoc 2004).

⁸⁵ The monthly salary and price subsidies paid to an ordinary worker or civil servant was barely enough to support his family (Hang Chuc Nguyen *et al.* 2005; Xuan Trung and Quang Thien 2005e). Consequently, an increasing number of employees and public officials succumbed to the lure of "outside temptations" and misused their status and power for illegal financial gain (Xuan Trung and Quang Thien 2005b). The condition worsened as a number of social problems including collusion, corruption and commercial speculation emerged (Xuan Trung and Quang Thien 2005b).

At this historical turning point, the most pressing demand on the Government was to find feasible and efficient measures to mediate the crisis and integrate into the global economy. Nguyen Van Linh, the party general secretary (a key author of the Economic Renovation elected in December 1986) declared that escape from the “current chaotic situation created by inflation is our most urgent task between now and the end of 1987” (Nguyen Van Linh 1986 cited Esterline 1988, p.97). Since that time - as a result of the government’s policy changes - the people of Viet Nam have experienced major changes in most aspects of their lives, including mass media.

5.2.2. The development of VOV during the subsidised period 1975 - 1986

As mentioned in chapter I, media research in Vietnam is an immature field, as there are only a handful of publications referring to this area. Research regarding journalism during the subsidised period in Vietnam is even more limited⁸⁶. Despite the dearth of literature regarding journalism, and VOV in particular during this period, in this section, I still endeavour to draw a picture of VOV’s development from 1975 - when Vietnam was reunified - to 1986 - when the Economic renovation was launched. This will be done in order to examine the nature of radio’s development in Vietnam, and explore the factors that caused VOV to lose its dominant position in the mass media system, and in particular why radio is currently neglected by its audiences, especially in urban areas.

From 1975 to 1985, due to the serious economic crisis at this time, journalism faced innumerable difficulties. Most newspapers reduced the frequency and circulation of their publications. In 1984, a number of newspapers were compelled to reduce their circulation by 25%: compared to their circulations in 1976 (MCI 2006). Due to these reduced circulation, and the Government’s policies during the subsidised period, it was difficult for ordinary people to subscribe to a newspaper. Regarding other visual media,

⁸⁶ None of the publications on media history in Vietnam discuss in detail this period. Significantly, in the book, titled *50 years of VOV’s development*, information about the development of VOV during the subsidised period was mentioned in text equivalent to one page, referring only to the changes in VOV’s operation during the period 1977-1993 (Tran Lam 1995b, p.153-154). In fact, information about Vietnamese journalism during the subsidised period was only available sporadically in a number of journal articles, book chapters or in a limited number of memoirs of experienced ex-journalists.

in Vietnam, television was first broadcast experimentally in 1971, and officially launched on the 16th June 1976 (Tran Lam 1995, p131-137). The number of television sets, and consequently their availability in Vietnam, was very limited at that time. In effect, for the majority of Vietnamese people, until early the 1980s, radio remained the primary medium of information and entertainment.

Nevertheless, even though VOV maintained its dominant position in the mass media system, VOV had a number of weaknesses, which became key factors in VOV's loss of dominance soon after the Economic renovation was launched.

Although literally, Vietnam was reunited and VOV potentially had opportunities to develop in the improved socio-economic situation, in fact, during the first few years after reunification, VOV faced a number of difficulties in term of facilities, staff, and operations. From the late 1960s to 1975, a significant number of VOV staff were either sent to set up a new national orchestra (Tran Lam 1995, p.97), support radio stations in the South of Vietnam, in Laos and Cambodia (Tran Lam 1995, p.113-115), or to prepare a national television station (Tran Lam 1995, p.127). In addition to the staff losses, regarding the framework of organisation for radio and television stations, during 16 years (1977-1993), there were a number of changes, which affected strongly the development of radio Vietnam (Tran Lam 1995, p.153-154; MCI 2006). The most influential decision was the Government's resolution to hand over the transmission system and frequencies from VOV to the GPO, resulting in the Radio Station becoming a subscriber of the GPO in 1987 (Tran Lam 1995, p.154). Due to these ill-thought through changes, the coverage areas of radio were narrowed, so that even people in Thai Binh province (109 km from Hanoi) could not receive radio signals (MCI 2006). Until 1992, only 31% of the population in Vietnam were able to listen to radio (Huu Tho 1992, p.71, 96). In other words, the number of radio listeners reduced significantly, because of this decision. This phenomenon became more problematic when newspapers began to boom after the Economic Renovation.

Moreover, the subsidised period in Vietnam coincided with the high point of the Cold War, which was a period of East-West competition, tension, and conflict, characterised by mutual perceptions of hostile intention between two military-political alliances or blocs, led by the Soviet Union and the US. Vietnam regarded the Soviet Union and

other Communist countries as 'a stone foundation' for its international relationships. When informing about the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, Vietnamese journalism, VOV in particular, often concentrated on the positive aspects, achievements, and successes of these countries and ignored their failures or negative aspects. Conversely, when informing about Western countries, VOV focused on political and social problems, and other negative aspects, and did not mention their successes in technology, economics, or social welfare developments (Tran Lam 1995, p.151). Vietnamese journalism and VOV in particular also tried to conceal the difficulties and poverties experienced by the Vietnamese population at that time, regardless of the serious economic crisis previously discussed (Dang TT Huong 2001a).

During the subsidised period, information broadcast on radio, television, or published in newspapers was principally one-way communication, generated by the central government, directed to local authorities, and also from the Party and Government to the general population⁸⁷ (Tran Lam 1995, p.150). Even when reporting the realities of life, VOV presenters continued to use exemplars that would illustrate and support the Government's policies. Because of the one-sided and selective information broadcast, VOV at that time did not reflect everyday conditions accurately; consequently, news-broadcasting lacked veracity and failed to persuade or influence audiences (ibid). This deficiency, in conjunction with a general incompetence in journalism, dating from the subsidised period, had significant negative impacts on public perception of mass media. Generally speaking, people were not interested in the information provided by mass media, including VOV at that time (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.84).

⁸⁷ It should be reiterated that during wartime, victory was the only target the Communist Party and Vietnamese people tried to achieve. Vietnamese people listened to radio to get information about the war and understand the instructions and guidelines from the Party. Therefore, during the conflicts, even though information broadcast on radio was one-way communication, propaganda via the most effective medium at that time - radio - contributed significantly to the triumph of the Vietnamese nation. However, regardless of the political and socio-economic changes after Vietnam was united, during the subsidised period, information broadcast on radio, television or published in newspapers continued to be principally one-way communication.

The media were operated according to the guidelines and plans of the Propaganda and Training Committee, without concern for revenues or benefits, or even losses in commercial journalism, during the subsidised period. The Government controlled the entire process of journalistic production, from the inputs - including salaries for journalists, paper and printing utilised - to the outputs, including distribution. Journalistic productions were published without regard for the audiences' interests or needs (Tran Hoan 1992, p.112). As a result, media organisations did not have to compete with each other to increase their audience or attract advertisers to gain additional financial resources. Furthermore, they failed to pay sufficient attention to audience opinion. For these reasons, audience research in Vietnam is still in a fledgling stage. Regarding VOV, it was not until 1987 that the Listener Department was set up for the purposes of strengthening the relationship between VOV and its listeners (VOV 2003, p.30, 32). However, in early 1990s, the Listener Department was dissolved, and it was not until December 1997 that this department was re-established and initially assigned the responsibility of researching audiences (ibid).

It is important to reiterate that, radio was first and foremost a technology, and only later perceived as a service (McQuail 1987, p.15). In Western countries, since its inception, to date, technology consistently maintained a strong influence on the development of radio. As discussed previously in chapter II, it was the invention of FM that provided radio with a new landscape. Due to its advantages, FM radio currently dominates two thirds of the world's radio broadcasts. More importantly, new technologies created revolutions in the listening culture and experience when the transistor was created in the 1950s-1960s, and again when radio was installed as standard equipment for all cars, initially in the 1960s (op cit.). Due to these technological developments, radio, for the first time, became portable and could be listened to whilst driving: an environment in which radio defeats its competitive (visual) media. Throughout nearly a century of development, whilst radio in Western countries has utilised advanced technology to improve the quality of recording, the aesthetics and convenience of receiver apparatus, in order to satisfy listeners' needs, it is not the case in Vietnam. Radio sets available in the market place in Vietnam are not only limited in styles but also poorly designed. In addition, public loudspeakers remained ubiquitous throughout the duration of both wars, and the subsidised period until today. Moreover, due to the outdated technologically utilised by VOV, and the limited facilities available to radio producers, including those

for recording and transmission, the quality of radio programmes, in terms of sound, was significantly low (Vu Tra My 2001, p.73).

Most importantly, as discussed previously, all of the available technological possibilities have been applied in Western radio's continuous development, for a single purpose: capturing radio listeners, especially within the fierce competitive environment with visual media. In other words, it is the needs of audiences and improving living standards, which have been the major driving forces for radio when applying technological developments, in order to adapt and continue to acclimatise itself to the new changes in socio-cultural contexts. In Western countries, radio has adapted from a medium of prime-time entertainment to a medium of companionship, listening to a radio has become easier than ever, and changed from a communal to an individual activity (see Chapter III). Not only did radio develop to adapt to the revolution in the way audiences listen to radio, but also in radio programming, both the content and format. The function of radio changed, it became narrower, targeted niche audiences, and encouraged greater audience participation. From mixed radio programmes to a wide variety of radio formats - including news/talk and music radio programmes - radio stations have brought a wide range of choices to meet the multiple and complex needs of audiences. Radio's adaptabilities have become the key factor in maintaining its popularity, audiences and market position in the fast-developed mass media system in Western countries.

However, in Vietnam, during the subsidised period, VOV continued to broadcast its programmes via one channel, serving all classes, ages, and genders in society. It was not until July 1994 that VOV began to broadcast via 2 channels (Dong Manh Hung 2006, p.13) - one focusing on news and current affairs, the other, education and socio-economic issues - however, both channels continued to broadcast mixed programmes, including news/talk and various genres of music. In addition, even though radio is widely regarded as an immediate medium (Crisell 1994), due to a number of challenges in terms of facilities and qualified staff, VOV ceased its live broadcasts from 1953 until 1994 (Dong Manh Hung 2006, p.59). It was not until the 1st July 1994 that the 'News and Music' programme, for the first time after nearly 40 years, was broadcast live (Vu Tra My 2001, p.110). In addition to the lack of immediacy, generally speaking, the content of VOV did not satisfy its listeners (Dang TT Huong 2006a).

As discussed in Chapter IV, the relationships between mass media are highly complex, as they not only compete, but also interact and cooperate with each other in order to co-exist and co-develop. Besides the abilities to reinvent and adapt, radio broadcasters in Western countries also prove their extensive capabilities in utilising other media to widen their sphere of influence. In earlier times, in order to enhance the image of a fledgling company, the BBC published the *Radio Times* (Street 2002, p.31), and a few years later, another publication - *The Listener* - was born to strengthen the relationship between the BBC and its audience (Cain 1992, p.22). However, the VOV did not issue any publications until November 1998, when for the first time a newspaper named *The VOV's Weekly* was born (Dong Manh Hung 2006, p.14). According to my investigation, this newspaper developed independently and it rarely publicises articles about VOV's programmes or staff⁸⁸. VOV's programme schedules also did not appear in this newspaper until 2005. This shows that VOV during the subsidised period was not only devoid of competition, but also failed to interact and utilise other media.

At this point, it is notable that the relationship between radio and its listeners, once again, highlights the differences between radio in Vietnam - before 1986 - and Western countries. In Western countries, the notion of 'audience' has for some time been a central concern for mass communicators, both in scholarly and professional discourse (McQuail 1997, p.4-6). Audiences exist as (not in) relationships within (not with) a particular media institution (Ettema and Whitney 1994, p.1-18). A number of major concepts of audience have been identified, including the concepts of audiences as information receivers – the assemblage of readers, viewers, or listeners (Shannon and Weaver 1949; Schramm 1963, McQuail 1997, p.26-30; McQuail 2007, p.408-409) and audiences as consumers of media products, because mass media are the purveyors of the commodities (Cantor *et al.* 1986, Billings 1986; McQuail 1997, p.30-32; McQuail 2007, p.409-410). A number of researchers argue that the audience engages in an institutionalised role, a relationship in the market-based media system that involves

⁸⁸ This newspaper comprises a number of sub-sections, including News - Foreign Affairs and Socio-Economy; Lifestyles - Law; Agriculture and Farmers; Culture - Literature - Art and Sports; Education and Society. In other words, rather than being a publication which should increase support for VOV by providing information about VOV, including VOV's staff, programmes, and schedules as it is the case for the *Radio Times* and *The Listener* of the BBC - VOV Newspapers appears to be no different from any newspaper in Vietnam.

marketers, media producers and consumers of media products (Turow 1997; Webster and Phalen 1994) - in other words, audiences are “coins of exchange” because the mass media system has a vested relationship with advertisers (Yong 2000, p.621).

However, in reality, none of these conceptions of audiences had found their ways to Vietnamese journalism before the Economic Renovation, as the mass media system was, at that time, perceived as an indispensable component of the Communist Party organisation and an instrument for the Party to carry out its revolutionary mission, as discussed previously. Although newspapers were initially transplanted from the West to Vietnam in 1865 (Do Quang Hung 2000; Huynh Van Tong 2000), the term ‘audience’ did not appear in the journalistic vocabulary until Vietnam began implementing economic reforms. Rather, those whom the media addressed were referred to as ‘the masses’ or ‘the people’.

As mass communication - radio in particular, in communist countries including Vietnam - is used as an instrument of the state and the Party (Schramm 1963, p.121), the roles and functions of media are to educate, agitate and organise the masses. Journalists, therefore, fulfilled the role of agitators, propagandists, and organisers (Schramm 1963, p.124; Duong Xuan Son *et al.* 1995). In this sense, broadcaster’s responsibilities would include informing their audience of millions; carrying to the masses the teachings of Marx and Lenin, Ho Chi Minh’s ideologies; raising the cultural-political level of all classes in society, and contributing to the general education and improvement of Vietnamese citizens (Duong Xuan Son *et al.* 1995, Huu Tho 1997). In Vietnam, ideological education is the key means of uniting the masses for the Party’s political agenda. The media, radio in particular, are required to educate the masses, to serve the people, to organise the masses, to turn Party policies into actions by the masses and to strengthen the connections between the Party and the people. Consequently, the masses are on the receiving end of a one-way communication process, disseminating and reporting on the Party’s leadership.

It was not until the Economic Renovation that the notion of ‘audience’ began to emerge, thus allowing the media to depart from a politically pre-determined role - a role within a top-down propaganda system, a relationship between the Party and the masses - to relocate themselves in the context of an emerging market-oriented mass media system.

This notion will be discussed in detail in the following section. This one-way communication is believed to be one of the main reasons Vietnamese audiences neglected and rejected journalism in general, and radio in particular, during the subsidised period.

In short, during the period 1975-1986, radio and VOV in particular, suffered a number of weaknesses. However, due to the non-competitive environment within mass media, the ideologies of the Soviet Communist Theory of the Press, and its unique relationship with its listeners after 30 years of conflicts, VOV continued to dominate mass media.

Nevertheless, the media landscape has radically changed since the Economic Renovation - the Renovation transformed Vietnam from one of the world's poorest countries in the 1980s, to one of the most successful countries in the world in terms of economic growth, poverty reduction, and increased household welfare (Glewwe 2004, p.1). The following sections will explore the policies of the Economic Renovation, its impact on Vietnamese journalism during the last 20 years, and more importantly, investigate the challenges, as well as potential opportunities for radio to develop.

Chapter VI:

**CHANGES OF VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT POLICIES
AND ITS IMPACT ON RADIO
SINCE THE ECONOMIC RENOVATION 1986**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the centrally planned economy of 1975-1986, did not only drive the Vietnamese national socioeconomic situation into a crisis, but also held back the development of media, in general and radio in particular.

The Economic Renovation (1986) - transforming from a subsidised economy to a market economy - has changed the country in many aspects, including the media landscape. For the first time since reunification, all Vietnamese media organisations were subject to market conditions, in which they could raise revenue from advertising (The 1989 Law of Journalism) or from business services (The 1999 Law of Journalism). Vietnamese media developed, in terms of quantity and quality. Consequently, Vietnamese audiences, who found it difficult to subscribe to a newspaper in the subsidised period, could now enjoy a wide range of choice of media.

However, for the first time, radio in Vietnam had to compete with other media to maximize their audiences, in order to increase income from subscriptions, advertisers, and justify the continuing - albeit limited - financial support from Governing organisations. The 'market-economy' factor has challenged significantly the position of radio - the previously dominant medium in Vietnam for more than 40 years. The position of VOV after 1986 will be investigated and critically analysed in this chapter, in order to make it more understandable when exploring public opinions about VOV and VOVNews in the following sections.

6.1. 'DOI MOI' AND ITS IMPACTS ON VIETNAMESE SOCIETY

At the 6th Congress Party in December 1986, the government launched the Economic Renovation (Doi Moi), as a transition from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented one with a socialist direction, engaging in the general global development trends adopted by other developing countries, and the process of gradual globalisation and regionalisation. With the slogans “*face the facts, analyse exactly the truth, speak the truth*” and “*criticism and self-criticism*” (CPV 2005a, p.10), the Party critiqued its mistakes in previous years, with the aim of assessing carefully its achievements, analysing those mistakes and drawbacks and setting forth an all-round renovation policy⁸⁹.

In terms of rural development, since 1986, many institutional reforms had been carried out, which had helped to create a vital dynamic that promoted a stable rate of improvement in agricultural and rural development over the previous 20 years (1986-2006). By 1989, peasants spurred by incentives had produced a crop that made Vietnam the world's third largest rice exporter, after the US and Thailand (Karnow 1998, p.44).

One of the most important aspects of the economic reforms in Vietnam was the encouragement of domestic and foreign private investment. The passing of the Foreign Direct Investment Law (1987), which was regarded as the first concrete step towards economic renovation, in 1986, benefited domestic entrepreneurs, although indirectly.

⁸⁹ The aims of the Economic Renovation's policy were fundamentally: a) to eliminate the central command, and the state subsidised mechanism, and transform this to a multi-sector economy with market mechanisms and state regulations; b) to enact policies for the integration of Vietnam into the world and regional economies and encourage foreign direct investment. One of the most important guidelines for the renovation was the open policy of international cooperation with the stated ethos “Vietnam wants to be the friend of all nations in the world for peace, independence, and development” (CPV 2005a, p.502).

The nature of these policies resulted in the transformation from a planned to a market economy in Vietnam, which was significantly different from what had occurred in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries of Eastern Europe. It is worth noting that in Vietnam, an emphasis on social and political stability went hand-in-hand with macro-economic stabilisation and control of state resources.

The Constitution officially recognised the role of the private sector in 1992; however, the most important milestone for private sector development was the Enterprise Law of 2000, with its simplification of registration procedures, which led to the elimination of over one previously mandatory hundred business licences (WB 2006, p.6). This allowed greater freedom for foreign enterprise, which had been highly regulated.

The national Congresses of the Communist Party, held in 1991, 1996, 2001, and the most recent in 2006, continued to reaffirm its commitment to a socialist-oriented multi-sector economy, operating under both the market mechanism and state management. In 2006, the Tenth Party Congress admitted private sector entrepreneurs as Party members, thus stressing the equal status and legitimacy acquired by a range of businesses (WB 2006, p.1).

Together with the establishment and gradual improvement of the legal framework for FDI, Vietnam also signed international bilateral and multilateral agreements on investment encouragement and protection. With commitments amounting to almost 10% of GDP between 1994 and 1997, during this period, Vietnam became the top recipient of FDI among all developing countries and transition economies (WB 2006, p.ii)⁹⁰.

With the renovation process, Vietnam, gradually, overcame many difficulties and hindrances, and achieved significant results⁹¹. During a ten-year period (1990-2000), the average economic growth rate (represented by the increase rate in GDP) reached 7.5%⁹² (CPV 2005c, p.69). This strong performance has been accompanied by a continuation of

⁹⁰ However, the East Asia crisis broke this trend, and after experiencing a sharp decline for almost a decade, the volume of FDI commitments is again approaching to 10% of the GDP.

⁹¹ From a 'starving' country, where until 1988 states of famine continued in a number of provinces - with the Government having to import more than half a million tons of rice for food aid (CPV 2005a, p.445) - Vietnam became one of the world's largest rice-exporters in 1992 (CPV 2005a, p.228). Goods exports grew by an average of nearly 20% annually from 1990 to 2000, approximately 2.6 times higher than the GDP growth rate, whilst the share of manufacturing exports increased significantly, from approximately 8% in 1991 to 56% in 2004. The domestic private sector also expanded rapidly. In 2005, the private sector, including FDI companies, contributed nearly 60% of the GDP (CPV 2005b, p.71).

⁹² In 1999 the economy was seriously affected by the economic crisis in the region and natural calamities; GDP growth was only 4.5 %.

Vietnam's remarkable success in reducing poverty, which has declined from 57% in 1992 to under 20% in 2004 (McCarty 2006, p.5). Inflation decreased from 67.1% (in 1991) to 6% (in 2000) and the exchange rate with the US dollar has remained relatively stable. Budget revenue rose from 15.2% of the GDP in 1990 to approximately 25% in 2005, of which the share contributed by the private sector continues to increase. However, it is acknowledged that at the time of publication, the global economic situation has changed significantly, this will inevitably impact on the Vietnamese economy, with concomitant effects on the media's development.

Vietnam has also achieved successes in education, popular media, and other social activities (Haughton 2000; Haughton *et al.* 2001). With the exception of the significant alleviation of poverty (National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities 2001, p.27; CPV 2005c, p.79), the literacy rate is 96.7% whilst life expectancy is over 70 (CPV 2005c, p.80-81; Pham Minh Hac and Pham Thanh Nghi 2006, p.2). Generally speaking, the Economic Renovation has changed significantly Vietnamese society, improving the living standards of the general population. Vietnamese people have more opportunities to receive and exchange information and entertainment. Along with these changes, their demands toward mass media increase, presenting greater challenges for media producers.

The Economic Renovation also had a major effect on Vietnamese media development, in which the renovation of thinking, and the success of the economic renovation infused a new spirit, providing new means for media to develop, thus creating new characteristics. These characteristics formed a model, which cannot be conceptualised neither by Schramm's (1963) 'Soviet' Communist model nor the Western model of a libertarian press system, as they are affected by Vietnam's open-market economy mediated by a Government-driven socialist orientation (Dang TT Huong 2006a).

In terms of radio, the strength of development of mass media, especially television and the Internet after the Economic Renovation, created major competitors for radio. Unfortunately, in this competition, radio in Vietnam has failed in capturing audiences, especially those living in urban areas and those who are young and well-educated. However, as a light at the end of a tunnel, the emergence and dramatic development of the Internet offers a potential way for radio to capture these groups of audiences: via

web radio. The following sections will explore the new characteristics of media in Vietnam after the Economic Renovation, their effects on, and challenges to, radio's development, and more importantly, the potential opportunities radio may have to develop.

6.2. CHANGES IN THE JOURNALISM LANDSCAPE IN VIETNAM AFTER THE ECONOMIC RENOVATION, AND ITS IMPACTS ON RADIO DEVELOPMENT

6.2.1. The challenges to VOV's position of dominance following the expanding mass media system

After the Economic Renovation, media organisations in Vietnam increased significantly in terms of quantity. Regarding newspapers, during 11 years (1995-2006), the number of newspaper increased more than double, from 375 to 813 (Hong Vinh 2005, p.11; Resolution No. 219/2005/QD-TTg; Do Quy Doan 2008). By 2010, it is anticipated that there will be a total circulation of 900 million per year, equivalent to 10 publications for each person (The Information Strategy toward 2010, 2005). It should also be reiterated that, after more than 50 years of improving educational standards, Vietnam has improved its literacy rate from 90% illiteracy in 1945 (op cit.) to 96.7% literacy in 2006 (op cit.). These developments have greatly increased the potential readership for newspapers, with a concomitant effect on radio audiences - consequently, increasing competition between these media - as radio was no longer the only medium audiences could easily access.

In terms of television, currently, the national television station (VTV) has five channels. In addition to VTV, there are 4 regional television stations and 64 provincial television stations. The household ownership of television sets increased both in urban and rural areas, from 81% to 89%, and from 44% to 61%, respectively, during the period 2002 - 2004 (GSO 2002, 2004). At present, there are 10 million television sets nationwide, and approximately 85% of households in Vietnam are able to watch television (MCI 2006).

Moreover, Vietnamese people can watch television free of charge⁹³. In recent years, the national and local television stations have created more channels, broadcasting News and Current Affairs programmes, Talk Shows and Game Shows, amongst which there are a number of copies of popular western television formats. These programmes have attracted large audiences and significantly increased competition with radio. It should be noted that after the economic renovation, the living standard of Vietnamese people has increased significantly, resulting in most households, especially in urban areas being able to afford a television set, or even two television sets. For example, in HoChiMinh City, within 5 years (1991-1995), the figure for television ownership more than doubled, from 41% to 97% (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.170). The greater availability of television sets provides more opportunities for audiences to access this medium, resulting in a recent increase in television viewing.

Internet development in Vietnam also has resulted in the country being amongst the top countries in the ASEAN,⁹⁴ for Internet use, with an increase of 32.5% per year (Resolution No 219/2005/QD-TTg, Communist Journal 2005⁹⁵). Currently, there are seven ISP (Tuoitreonline 2008), hundreds of online newspapers and approximately 2500 websites with millions of logs-on per day (MCI 2006). The emergence of the Internet in the late 1990s also created another competitor for radio. With reference to online journalism, there are approximately 100 journalistic websites in Vietnam. According to the latest data from the Vietnam National Internet Centre (May 2008), 23.5% of the population in Vietnam are web users. The Vietnamese Government

⁹³ Even though digital and cable television have only recently been introduced in Vietnam, this might be a growth area, as the fees for digital and cable television at present are easily affordable (but only) for those living in urban areas.

⁹⁴ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. The ASEAN region has a population of approximately 500 million, a total area of 4.5 million square kilometers, a combined gross domestic product of almost US\$ 700 billion, and total trade of approximately US\$ 850 billion (ASEAN 2008).

⁹⁵ In Vietnam, journalistic reporting for the mainstream media often accepts information provided by government sources as authoritative and credible.

anticipate that by 2010, the number of Internet users will comprise 30-40% of the general population (Information Strategy toward 2010, 2005)⁹⁶.

Having competed with visual media, and in particular, with the significant improvements discussed above, Vietnamese radio should have become more easily accessible, and retained its popularity, as radio in developed countries did when television emerged (See chapter I). However, instead of expanding and becoming increasingly available to audiences, Vietnamese radio has shrunk in terms of its coverage and household ownership of radio sets. As mentioned in the previous chapter, after the reunification, VOV experienced a number of changes in terms of its operation and transmission, narrowing its coverage. It is important to reiterate that until 1992, only 31% of the population in Vietnam could listen to radio (Huu Tho 1992, p.71, 96), and until 1994, VOV's broadcasts could cover only 21% of Vietnam and reach 49% of the population (Vu Tra My 2001, Le Dao 1996, p.2). In other words, whilst newspapers and television enjoyed a number of successes, radio was struggling with its coverage until the middle of the 1990s.

Surprisingly, while in developed countries the number of radio sets per household continues to increase, recently - as Scupham ([no date] cited McInerney 2001, p.31) stated: "In America, there are more radio sets than people" - the number of radio sets per household in Vietnam is not only low, but has reduced considerably in recent years. According to the GSO's data (Radio Journal 1996, p.1), in 1995, 30% of households in Vietnamese rural areas had radio sets. From 2002 to 2004, the number of radios per household in rural areas decreased from 27.25% to 18.55 % (GSO 2002, 2004). Similarly, in urban areas, the percentage of households with radio sets also shrunk from 29.02% to 20.2%⁹⁷ (ibid). According to 2002 date (Hoang Hong Duc 2002, p.4), the

⁹⁶ Even though the recent development of the Internet usage in Vietnam is clearly evident, the figures in this paragraph should be treated with caution, as they are the only available sources provided by the Vietnamese Government.

⁹⁷ It was shocking data, according to the General Statistics Office (2002, 2004), that within 2 years, the number of radio sets in households was reduced by 30%. However, having explored all accessible and available studies, I could not find any convincing reasons for this decrease. It may be likely that the broken radio sets were not replaced. In addition, perhaps, whilst the number of nuclear families increased significantly, these young families did not buy a radio set as their principle

number of radios per capita in Vietnam was 12%, while in other neighbouring countries, such as Malaysia, Korea, and Taiwan, the percentages were 45%, 93% and 67%, respectively (ibid).

The radio set is not only absent in many households, but also in the market place, because manufacturers and enterprises in Vietnam tend to pay more attention to television sets than radio, as selling a television is more profitable than selling a radio (Radio Journal 1996, p.1). The reluctance of manufacturers to produce and improve the development of radio sets (particularly in terms of the aesthetics and ergonomics as mentioned previously) in Vietnam may reflect, to some extent, the development of the Vietnamese radio industry.

Another disadvantage for Vietnamese radio is that whilst drive-time is regarded as a 'prime' time for radio in developed countries, this is not the case in Vietnam, as motorbikes are the main means of transportation for Vietnamese people⁹⁸. According to the Capital Security Newspaper (December 2007, p.1), in Hanoi, the number of motorbikes is nearly 10 times higher than the number of cars, approximately 2 million and 200,000, respectively. As cars are not popular, Vietnamese radio does not enjoy the prime 'drive-time' slots as radio in developed countries does.

In the fierce competition with visual media after the Economic Renovation, radio in Vietnam is losing dramatically its audience, and its position in the mass media system.

household item. As this is an important issue, there should be further researched into the decline of radio sets in households in Vietnam.

⁹⁸Asia dominates the global market of motorcycles, with roughly 95% of total production originating in several Asian countries (Ohno 2007, p.11). The use of motorcycles in Vietnam is highly intense, even by Asian standard (ibid, p.12), with consequent significant influence on the Vietnamese life style. In term of radio listening, the lower percentage of car ownership limits to some extent the popularity of radio ownership. Therefore, it is a problem in developing countries in Asia, in general and in Vietnam in particular, that radio in these countries may not be able to enjoy the 'drive-time' slots, as it is the case for radio in developed countries. However, the popular use of motorcycles is not the only factor for the decline in radio listening. In Vietnam, apart from the low car ownership, the percentage of radio ownership in households is also low, and more importantly, a number of weaknesses in radio programmes generated since the subsidised period have made listeners walk away from radio (See more in Chapter VII and VIII).

In Vietnam, nowadays, radio is mostly listened to in rural, not urban areas. As mentioned in chapter I, according to my offline survey conducted in 2005, only 14.4% of academics and professionals in Hanoi listened to radio everyday. In a survey undertaken by Tran Huu Quang (2001, p.138), who interviewed 697 participants in Ho Chi Minh City - the largest city in Vietnam - just 13% of participants said that they listened to radio daily. While 24% of the population in rural areas stated that they listened to radio every day, just 9% of those in urban areas did so (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.138). In urban areas of Ho Chi Minh City, the number of radio listeners reduced significantly from 40% in 1987 to 27% in 1993, with a further drop to 9% in 1997 (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.170,182).

However, according to VOV's data, the number of regular radio listeners in surveys conducted continues to remain at a relatively high level, 78-80% (VOV 2000, 2004). In a survey conducted in 2000 (VOV 2001a, p.8), the number of radio listeners was even higher than that of television viewers, 77.85% and 73.02%, respectively⁹⁹.

It is interesting to explore the paradox that whilst usage of the Internet has increased dramatically and the Internet itself has become an important competitor for radio, it also provides a potential means for radio to develop, in the sense that people can listen to radio via computers. This phenomenon may enable radio in Vietnam to capture more listeners, as radio in developed countries did when installing radios as standard equipment for all cars (See chapter I). In actuality, how this might occur, and how Vietnamese radio has utilised and indeed should utilise web radio will be a further issue discussed in detail from the listener's perspective in the following chapters.

⁹⁹ The figures from VOV's surveys should be treated with caution because they are the only official data about radio listeners available in Vietnam at the present time. In addition, in an internal report, VOV (2003, p.35) acknowledged a number of limitations in VOV's conducted surveys, for example hundreds of participants' handwriting appeared to be identical, and even in some specific areas where FM radio was not yet available, the VOV surveys' participants still stated that they enjoyed listening to FM radio. In addition, due to a culture of hesitance to criticise directly, and respect for the long history of the development of VOV, Vietnamese listeners tended to express positive opinions towards VOV and its radio programmes when they were interviewed in person (in face-to-face survey) (VOV 2003, p.36).

The increase of media productions provides greater opportunities for audiences to access public information. It was no longer the situation of, to cite a commonly used term, “selling as handing out and buying as asking for alms”¹⁰⁰. For the first time, audiences became consumers who could choose from a wider range of media products. In addition, the needs of audiences were being paid attention to, and for the first time, mass media had to compete with each other and develop independently in commercial terms. The following section will take a deep look at the relationship between state, media and audience, in particular investigating the relationship between VOV and its listeners after the Economic Renovation 1986.

6.2.2. The relationships between the State, the Media and the Audience: the rise of audienceship post the Economic Renovation and its influence on VOV’s development

The transformation from a monopoly state sector economy to a multi-sector economy ushered a new period of development for media in Vietnam, but it was not until May-June 1987 that Vietnamese journalism reached its turning point, with a series of articles, namely *Things That Must Be Done Immediately*, carrying the by-line N.V.L¹⁰¹ (Nhan Dan 1987).

The series of articles titled *Things That Must Be Done Immediately* (ibid) instanced various improprieties of state agencies, especially “acts of bullying the masses and violating the people’s rights” (Esterline 1998, p.90, Hai Au 2005). Demanding that such wrongdoing be exposed and corrected, N.V.L exhorted the citizenry to “inspect and examine” governmental activities (Nhan Dan 1987). In addition to the previous year’s ‘criticism and self-criticism’ campaigns, N.V.L was encouraging the general population to engage in a new campaign against bureaucratic centralism. After three months, the

¹⁰⁰ An idiom used during the subsidised period in Vietnam, which expressed the scarcity of commodities.

¹⁰¹ This pseudonym was found later to be a shortened version of the name, Nguyen Van Linh, the then General Secretary of the Communist Party, recognised as having revitalised Vietnam’s economy by reducing state control and introducing elements of a free market system.

N.V.L. articles generated approximately 600 letters denouncing various agencies and bureaucrats (Esterline 1998, p.90).

According to Huu Tho¹⁰² (2005 cited Hai Au 2005), it was N.V.L who set up a new function for Vietnamese journalism - a people's forum - which was later institutionalised by Laws and Instructions, including the Journalism Law (1989). According to Huu Tho's (ibid) recollections of events at that time, he asked the then General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh why he wrote under the name N.V.L, and Nguyen Van Linh replied that, although as a General Secretary of the Communist Party he could instruct various levels of society to take precautions against bureaucrats: when writing the newspaper articles, he wanted to create a popular opinion in fighting bureaucratic conservatism, inviting all citizens to respond (Hai Au 2005). In other words, the then General Secretary highly appreciated the role of journalism - and its influence on public opinion - in fighting the negative aspects of the transition of Vietnam's society towards a socialist model. Two years after the *Things That Must Be Done Immediately* articles were published, the Law of Journalism (1989) was enacted which stated that:

Journalism in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is essential mass media in society. It acts as an organ of the Party, Governmental and other social organisations as well as public fora.

(The 1st Article of the Journalism Law 1989)

The functions of journalism are also clarified in the 6th article of this Legislation as follows:

3. To reflect and instruct public opinion; be a public forum for people to exercise their freedom of speech.

4. To discover and honour 'good people and good factors'; to fight illegal activities and negative phenomena in society...

At this point - whilst it is not the aim of my thesis to investigate and compare media systems in Western countries and Vietnam - it should be noted that Vietnamese journalism differs to that in Western countries due to differences in political systems,

¹⁰² The ex-Head of the Central Ideology and Culture Committee and former Editor-in-Chief of Nhan Dan.

local circumstances, history, culture, and Orientalist behaviours - these issues often are regarded as main factors in shaping various journalistic models and roles worldwide (Zelizer 2004, p.154-157; Hallin and Mancini 2004; Gunaratne 1999).

Due to these differences, the Authoritarian, Libertarian and Social Responsibility Models of Seibert's (ed. 1963) *Four Theories of the Press*, usually referred to as Western models, at present, "are of limited use in understanding the European experience" (Hallin and Mancini 2004, p.10). According to Hallin and Mancini (ibid), the Liberal Model, characterised by a relative dominance of market mechanisms and commercial media, prevails across Britain, Ireland, and North America (Hallin and Mancini 2004, p.11); whereas the Polarised Pluralist Model, formed by integration of the media into party politics, weaker historical development of commercial media, and strong role of the state, is popular in the Mediterranean countries of Southern Europe (ibid). The Democratic Corporatist Model, formed by a historical coexistence of commercial media and media tied to organised social and political groups, and by a relatively active, legally limited role of the state, prevails across northern continental Europe (ibid, p.143-165), whereas in the US, journalism relies on audience interest and attention to survive (McQuail *et al.* 1998, p.252 cited Zelizer 2004, p.154). Additionally, whilst proposing three "ideal" types of media systems, Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.11) acknowledge that the media systems of individual countries fit these models only roughly, as France is a mixed case of Polarised Pluralist and Democratic Corporatist Models, whilst British journalism is a combination of the Liberal and Democratic Corporatist Models.

Fundamentally differing from Western models, journalism in a number of developing countries, including those in Asia and Southeast Asia, promotes a distinct type of journalism, focusing directly on society, activating a sense of collectivity. Journalism adhering to Asian values was regarded as one of the contributors to Asian economic success, in which there is a twinning of press freedom and responsibility: the privileging of national interests over individual ones, harnessing the aims of national betterment (Xu 1998, Dang TT Huong 2001c, Mehra 1989 cited Gunaratne 1999, p.207). These are the principle reasons for harmony between the press and the government in Asia (Mehra 1990 cited Gunaratne 1999, p.205).

Furthermore, the concept of human rights conceived in the Western adversarial democratic tradition has no exact equivalent in East Asia (Hsiung 1985 cited Gunaratne 1999, p.205) which inherited a consensual, group-orientated ideology. The holistic, consensual and communal values of the Orient have changed the scope of human rights to include an affirmative obligation on the state to advance the economic, social, cultural well-being of their peoples.

Whilst, Vietnam and a number of ASEAN countries proposed an Asian model of journalism, in terms of the press working with government to build a national consensus (Dang TT Huong 2001c), the model of Vietnamese journalism continues to differ from that of its ASEAN neighbours. Whilst Thailand and the Philippines have opted for the so-called Western model, and Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia apply a semi-controlled press (Guanarate 1999, p.208; Busch 2004, p.9), in Vietnam, media enterprises are state-owned and controlled, and members of the Communist Party occupy most management positions in media organisations (Dang T T Huong 2001, 2002; Busch 2004, p.9, Do Xuan 2005). Vietnamese journalism, as an instrument of nation building, is mandated to support the state's development efforts (Tran Quang Nhiep 2002, p.19-20; Huu Tho 2000). Furthermore, Vietnamese journalists must respect, embrace and voice the authenticity of Vietnam. Therefore, the notion, introduced during the late 18th century, that journalism constituted a Fourth Estate of government, a system of checks and balances of the other three forms of power - executive, judicial and legislative - (Moy and Scheufele 2000, p.744; Carlyle 1905 and Cater 1959 both cited Zelizer 2004, p.147), is not relevant in Vietnam (Huu Tho 2000, p.252). Moreover, as the global media market has come under the domination of a plutocracy of mega-media conglomerates (Gunaratne 2002, p.348), according to Vietnamese scholars, the power of media in Western countries, in fact is in the hands of a small number of capitalists, not that of the general population (Huu Tho 2000, p.253).

In Vietnam, the fundamental tenets of journalism are to propagandise, agitate and organise the masses (The Central Culture and Ideology Committee and the Ministry of Culture and Information 1997, p.39-48; Duong Xuan Son *et al.* 1995). With the influence of the Renovation, journalism in Vietnam does not only act as an instrument used by government to shape public opinion, but also fora for people to raise their voices (Tran Quang Nhiep 2002, p.147). Soon after journalism became accepted as a

public forum, audience opinions, suggestions, and comments towards Government policies were gradually published. The slogan: "People [have a right to] know, discuss, inspect and examine" was placed in a prominent position in a number of newspapers, including *The People* (Nhan Dan Newspaper). New columns for reader's opinions, such as 'The People's Forum', 'People's Opinion' and 'People's Talk' emerged in a significant number of newspapers. The effectiveness of this endeavour is a possible area for further investigation; however, at this point it should be noted that the emergence of this phenomenon has created a new landscape for Vietnamese journalism.

The content of journalism also became more diversified, for example, investigating pressing issues in society in order to satisfy its audience. After 1986, *Tuoi tre* (The Youth Newspaper), *Sai Gon Giai Phong* (The Saigon Liberation Newspaper) and a number of newspapers in HoChiMinh City pioneered the renovation of journalistic content. Interestingly, HoChiMinh City was the vanguard of the economic renovation and gained significant benefits after the renovation policy was applied. According to Tran Huu Quang (2001, p.81), changing the style of delivering information via 'The Youth Newspapers' and other newspapers in HoChiMinh City has broken through the limitations of the conservative thinking which previously limited journalism in the bureaucratic, administrative and traditional system that had historically operated. Journalists explored, investigated and broadcast urgent issues and events that occurred during the transitional period, for which there was no existing model. Amongst these pressing issues, corruption, social problems, bureaucratic conservatism, and the negative aspects of an open-market society were the subjects that most concerned the general population (ibid). The more pressing issues in society were reflected in newspapers, the greater attention from the audience newspapers could attract.

It is important to reiterate that since the renovation, the Government began to cease subsidies, and allowed journalistic organisations to seek other financial resources, including those from advertisers and subscribers. In order to attract more advertisers, the key for journalistic organisations, is to capture larger audiences. Commercial competition - a new phenomenon, which did not exist in Vietnamese journalism during the subsidised period - emerged amongst journalistic organisations. For the first time, Vietnamese media had to serve two masters, the Party and the audience. The flow of information was no longer one way, from central government to the people, as it was

during the subsidised period (Figure 1), but influenced by advertisers and audiences themselves, as described in Figure 2.

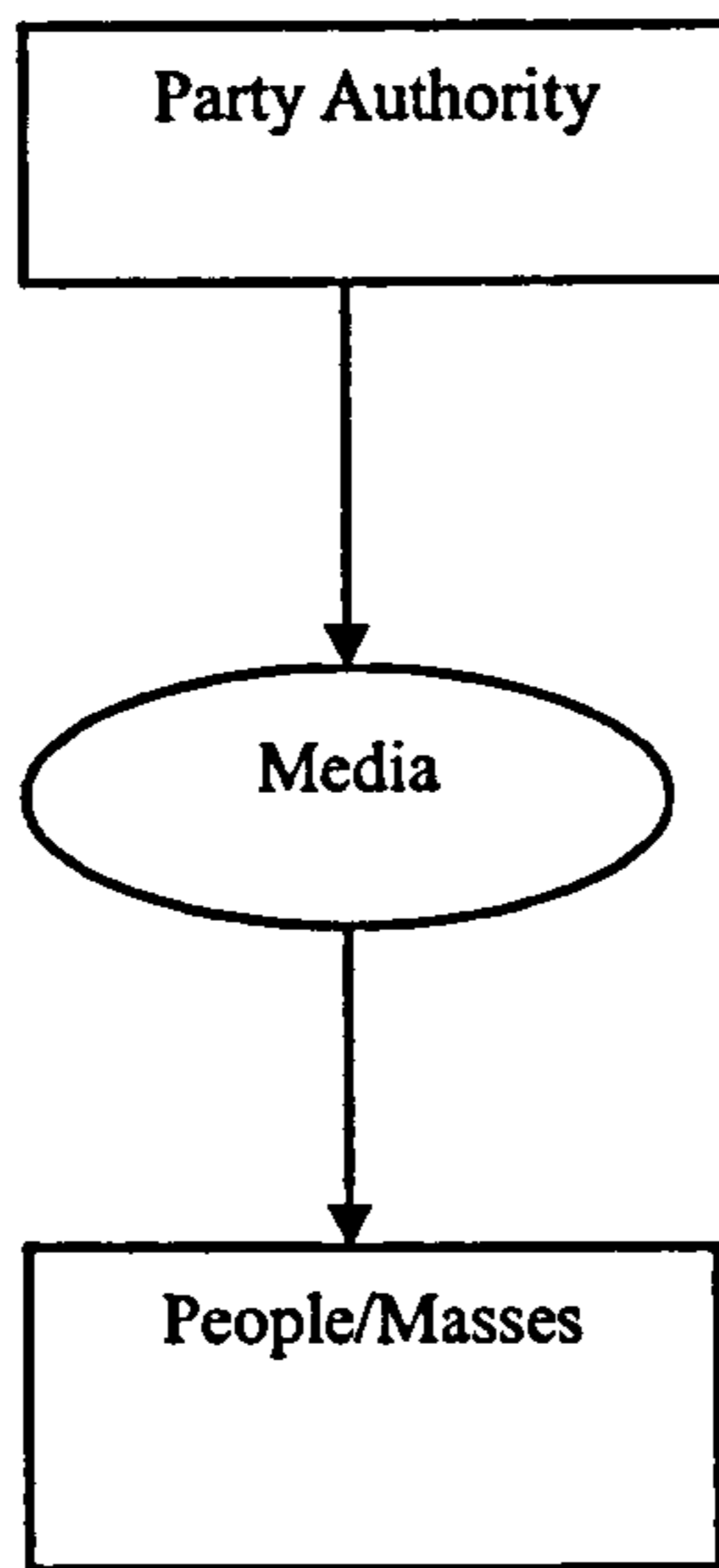


Figure 1. The Party Press system before Renovation.

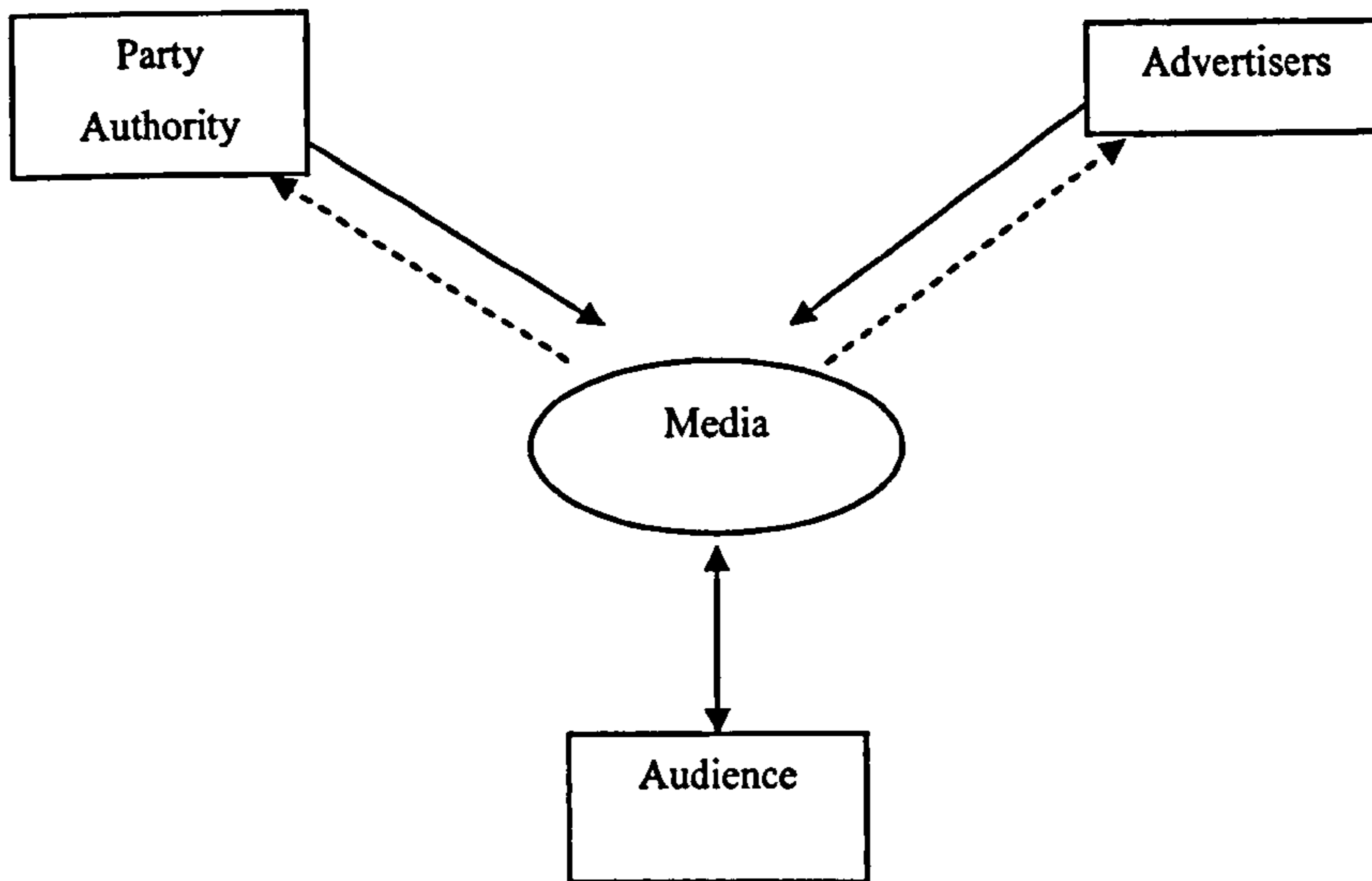


Figure 2. Market-based Party Press System

These two diagrams, which represent the institutional arrangements of the Communist Party Press system and the current market-based Party Press system, show clearly that Vietnam's media has evolved from a one-way to a two-way communication system. This situation is similar to that of Chinese journalism after the economic reform (as mentioned in chapter I). The masses are no longer merely the followers and subjects of an information system, but consumers and commodities in the market-place: audiences. More importantly, capturing larger audiences becomes an essential imperative for any media organisation, as it is the only way to fulfil both the political and commercial demands of the current condition. Understanding audience's new needs has become a key requirement for every media organisation.

However, at this important stage, VOV was losing its special relationship with listeners, which had enabled it to become a dominant medium during the previous 40 years. 52 years after VOV's inception, the VOV's Listener Department was established and assigned the duty of researching audiences (VOV 2003, p.30). Whereas, in the US, audience research was undertaken very early. In 1926, a number of listener surveys - which aimed to identify 'Mr Average Radio Enthusiast' or explore what listeners liked in radio programmes - were reported on *Radio Broadcast* (Smulyan 1999, p.96, 97). In the UK, radio audience research was paid significant attention to due to the success of commercial programming in the 1930s (Street 2006, p.111), regarding the BBC, the Listener Research Department was established in 1936 (Lewis and Booth 1989, p.73).

Moreover, as mentioned previously, even in 'The VOV Weekly', information about VOV's staff and programmes rarely appeared, and radio schedules have only been available in recent years. It also should be noted that apart from the VOV's own sources (including VOV weekly/monthly newspaper and VOVNews), it is difficult to find radio schedules elsewhere, resulting in problems in finding favourite programmes for radio listeners, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters. In short, VOV has not utilised the promotional techniques to strengthen its relationship with audiences applied successfully by the BBC and other radio stations in developed countries (See Chapter II).

Most importantly, as mentioned in the previous chapter, during the subsidised period, a number of weaknesses in VOV, in terms of programme content and format, have been

identified. These weaknesses, and how they affect the development of radio, particularly when VOV has to compete with visual media, will be investigated in the following section.

6.2.3. The Fiercely Competitive Environment after the Economic Renovation and the Weaknesses of VOV programmes

Before the Economic Renovation, the mass media system that emerged in Vietnam was different from that of Western countries. As discussed previously, during the subsidised period, journalism was operated according to the guidelines and directives of the Propaganda and Training Committee, without concern for revenues, benefits or losses, typically not the case in commercial journalism in the West¹⁰³. The Vietnamese Government controlled the entire process of journalistic productions: from the inputs, including salaries for journalists, the paper and printing products utilised; to the outputs, including distribution. Journalistic productions were published without regard for the audiences' interests or needs (Tran Hoan 1992, p.112). As a result, media organisations were not required to compete with each other to increase their audience or attract advertisers to gain additional financial resources.

Another difference between media in Western countries, particularly the US, and Vietnam before the Economic Renovation was Vietnamese society's attitude toward advertising. Media in Western countries, with the exception of a small number of public service media such as the BBC, are primarily businesses driven by profit motives, and therefore, advertising becomes an important factor. However, in Vietnam, during the 30 years of conflicts, and the following 10 years of the subsidised period, advertising was perceived negatively, regarded as a product of capitalism (Le Dinh Dao 2003, p.13).

¹⁰³ Systems of subsidy, to some extent, have been applied in a number of Northern European countries (Hallin and Mancini 2004, p.161-164). However, in the Democratic Corporatist Journalistic Model, media is treated as a social institution, and political manipulation of the subsidies for purposes of pressuring newspapers is unlikely (ibid, p.163). In addition, in these countries, public broadcasting systems have been well-funded and advertising revenues have constituted a small part of these systems' funding (ibid, p.164).

Nevertheless, in an open-market economy, in which the costs of inputs and outputs were subject to market conditions, media organisations were required to become commercially aware and operate according to a different economic model. At this time, individual journalist's incomes, including royalties and benefits, began to be paid by not only governing bodies, but also advertisers and subscribers.

It was a number of newspapers in HoChiMinh City which took the initiative in exploring new ways to improve newspaper revenue in the mid 1980s. According to Tran Huu Quang (2000, p.81), the "Sai Gon Liberty Daily" was one of the first Vietnamese newspapers to accept advertisements on July 1st 1981¹⁰⁴.

In 1989, in journalism legislation, it was stipulated for the first time that journalism should be allowed to advertise or broadcast advertisements and obtain revenue from advertising (Article 25, op.cit.). Ten years later, in the Amended Journalism Law (1999), the regulations for advertising were amended. A number of acceptable sources of revenue for journalistic organisations also were clarified. It has also become common in Vietnam that media organisations operate more than one publication and provide more than one service, whereas during the subsidised period this was not the case (Resolution No. 219/2005/QD-TTg 2005).

Gradually, revenue from advertising became more important and at present, it represents a proportion of between 40 and 60% of newspaper revenue (Tran Huu Quang 2000, p.81). Significantly, a number of newspapers rely totally on advertising revenue,

¹⁰⁴ Even though the Economic Renovation was officially and nationally applied in Vietnam in 1986, the notion and practice of a 'new way of thinking' initially emerged earlier, in the 1980s; however, this was only at a local level and within a small scale. *Sai Gon giai phong*, regarded as the first newspaper in HoChiMinh City (previously Sai Gon), accepted advertisements in 1981, however, most of advertisements at that time were personal or classified advertisements. After the Economic Renovation in 1986, advertisements started to be popular in all media through the country. However, a number of companies used 'unsuitable' language and pictures judged by Vietnamese cultural and political standards in their advertisements (for example, a company might use a picture of a political leader shaking hands with its company's leader as an advertising picture). Consequently, the Law of Journalism 1989, on one hand, officially allowed any media organisation in Vietnam to seek advertisements to improve their revenues, but also strictly regulated the content of advertisements in some areas.

including VNExpress, one of the largest Vietnamese online-newspapers (VNExpress 2005). According to recent data (Le Dinh Dao 2003, p.14), television advertising consumes 50% of the advertising market; outdoor and newspaper advertising occupies 20% each, whereas the share for radio advertising is a very small percentage. As advertising on radio in other neighbouring countries such as Singapore or Thailand has gained around 15 - 20% of the total advertising revenues (ibid), this suggests a potential area of revenue for radio in Vietnam, notwithstanding acknowledged political and economical differences.

In the fiercely competitive environment, the quality of media products becomes the key factor for success for all media organisations. However, a number of VOV's weaknesses, which existed during the subsidised period continue to remain and affect strongly VOV's position in the current mass media system.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in terms of programme content, during 1945 – 1975, VOV satisfied listeners (domestic and international) informed on conflicts within Vietnam, as Vietnamese people listened purposefully to obtain information about the wars, the country's future, and to hear appeals or instructions by Ho Chi Minh and his Government. Vietnamese people listened to radio not only in order to receive information, but also to strengthen their beliefs and morale during the periods of conflicts. However, after reunification, VOV concentrated its focus on the positive aspects, achievements, and successes of Communist countries (Tran Lam 1995, p.151; Hoang Trong Dan 2003, p.20-21), and tried to conceal the difficulties and poverties experienced by the Vietnamese population at that time (Dang TT Huong 2001a), regardless of the serious economic crisis previously discussed in chapter IV. Until the late 1990s, when the renovation had infused a new spirit into journalism, exploited by newspapers and television, thus enhancing their positions in the mass media system (Dang TT Huong 2006a), VOV continued to provide programmes with limited information, too many general instructions and guidelines persisting with its traditional, conservative format (Tran Trong Truy, 1997, p.18). As a result, people became increasingly disinterested in programmes provided by VOV (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.84; Tran Lam 1995, p.151), and began to consume other media.

In terms of programming, until the middle of the 1990s, VOV's programmes were produced conventionally via analogue recording, all programmes were recorded before broadcast, whether they were entertainment programmes or news and current affairs (Kim Cuc 1995, p.7). As discussed in chapter II, electronic recording techniques using tape, developed in and after the late 1950s, provided greater flexibility in making recordings in the sense that they expanded the variety of sound effects achievable, mistakes could also be rectified (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.239, 240). In the latter part of 1980s, the compact disc had become popular - which gradually replaced analogue tape recording - and computers became a major factor in digital recording in the early 2000s (see Chapter II). Yet, in Vietnam, it was not until July 1994, that VOV broadcast its first live programme - since reunification - as part of a scheduled series (Kim Cuc 1995, p.7; Vu Tra My 2001, p.110). In terms of local radio stations, according to 2001 data (Vu Tra My 2001, p.110), only one third of Vietnamese local radio stations experimented with live broadcast. Until 2002, 70% of VOV radio programmes continued to be produced via analogue tape recording (Nguyen Manh Phuong 2002, p.27, 47, 57).

Moreover, before recording, in Vietnam, a radio programme had to go through a complicated procedure of editing, referred to as the seven step process. In this process, a reporter collected data and wrote an article, before passing it to an editor to edit. After editing, this article was returned to the reporter to rewrite, before sending to a presenter to read and record on a master tape. The article would then be produced along with others as part of a programme, before broadcast (Nguyen Manh Phuong 2002, p.27, 47).

Due to this complicated process, most news programmes were out-of-date before broadcast. Consequently, in order to produce timely news, many articles were sent to presenters immediately before recording. The presenters did not have time to look through the editorial copy in advance, resulting in stilted emotionless broadcasts (Vu Ha 1996, p.8-9). To further exacerbate the problem, on the wall, directly in front of the presenter's table in the studio, was posted a large banner with the slogan "Millions of people are listening to you!" (Vu Ha 1996, p.9). This slogan was intended to remind presenters about their responsibilities towards their audience, though, this caused presenters to feel a high degree responsibility toward the audience, resulting in their broadcasting in a solemn voice, lacking intimacy, regarded as the main strength of radio, particularly in the sense of its being a 'blind' medium (Wilby and Conroy 1994,

p.26; Crisell 2002, p.11,13; Shingler and Wieringa 1998, p.38 - 40; McLeish 1994, p.7). Gradually, this slogan was removed from studios, and VOV presenters are now encouraged to talk in a more natural manner to listeners. However, according to a 2002 study (Nguyen Manh Phuong 2002, p.94), just one third of VOV reporters were able to speak comfortably (and not read formally) in front of a microphone.

Furthermore, VOV lacks the flexibility to adapt, adjust and reinvent itself to the technological and social changes, as has been undertaken successfully by radio in developed countries. As discussed in chapter II, radio in the UK and US had changed, moving from “all things to all people” radio stations to targeted, niche audience radio stations; from being mixed radio programmes, to a wide variety of radio formats, from a medium of prime-time entertainment to a medium of companionship. However, to date VOV continues broadcasting its style of mixed programmes, even though it now provides 6 channels¹⁰⁵. It was not until the 20th September 2006, that for the first time, a music channel was dedicated to the youth audience (from 16 to 35): VOV3. This channel has infused a new spirit in radio audiences and attracted significant attention from the youth and the Internet user community in Vietnam. It demonstrates an initial sign of success for format programmes, and the following chapter will discuss in-depth, listeners’ opinions about VOV in general and VOV3 in particular.

¹⁰⁵ From 7 September 2003, the VOV1 was renewed as News and Current Affairs channel which provides news documentaries and features on politics, diplomatic affairs, economics and art and literature for listeners at home and abroad. VOV2, established on 1 July 1994, provides news stories, in-depth reports and features on different aspects of society, culture, literature and art and spiritual life. VOV3 is regarded as the Music, News and Entertainment channel, which first broadcasted on September 7, 1990. From September 2006, VOV3 was re-formed its programming to focus to groups of people from 16 to 35. In order to improve the quality of radio programmes, VOV reduces to broadcast just 10 hours/day. VOV4 is for Vietnamese ethnic minorities (of which there are approximately 54) and VOV5 and VOV6 belong to the Overseas Service of VOV.

However, all channels (with the exception of VOV3) are mixed radio programme providers. Vietnamese traditional and international music can be listened to on all three channels VOV1, 2 and 3. Children programmes can be listened on VOV2 or VOV3 (before September 2006). Before the renewal, via VOV3, audiences could listen to various types of music from music for children to popular, jazz or rock, opera, chamber music, international music or traditional music. VOV1 provides mixed programmes for all classes of listeners from rural to urban areas; whilst VOV2 provides mixed programmes for all ages and all genders.

Apart from limitations in programming, a number of problems in terms of radio specialisms, including genres, also have been identified, for example, in news broadcasting. Until the late 1990s, radio listeners continued to complain about radio news programmes, especially the reporting of official and government news releases. Tran Trong Tuy (1997, p.18) constructively criticised radio reports, noting that they were overly verbose, providing poor quality of information. Moreover, But Ngu (1998b, p.9) complained that radio news still remained prolix in style, much as it was before the Renovation, with the introduction of all official titles, including Party and Government positions. As a result, news broadcasts became wordy, boring and uninformative. Furthermore, many news stories were similar in style, accompanied by sound effects of applause, whilst most news reporting of further developments in the renovation were similar, as they routinely reported the successes and activities of factories, corporative, and state-owned enterprises (Tran Trong Tuy 1997, p.18). Radio interviewing was another problem as this genre began to appear in most programmes, due to its low quality (But Ngu 1998a, p.10-11). VOV radio interviews were often 'interviewer led' rather than 'interviewee led'. VOV presenters tended to follow the syllogism structure when questioning interviewees, typical questions asked were: what is the current situation (in your enterprise)? What are the advantages and disadvantages (for your enterprise) at the moment? And finally, what are the solutions (for your problems)? Spontaneous questions arising from the responses were not pursued (ibid, p.11).

Furthermore, whilst game show has been popular on television, it was not until 4th September 2005 that the first game show was broadcast on radio, and, initially via the Voice of Ho Chi Minh City's People, not VOV (MCI 2005). Regarding the use of music, until the middle of the 1990s, VOV presenters were confused about how to use music within the context of radio programmes (Kim Cuc 1995, p.8), as a result, the music was either not relevant to the content of radio programmes or too long and monotonous, so that listeners became bored and disinterested (VOV 2001a, p.28).

A number of radio genres applied successfully in developed countries have not been introduced into Vietnamese radio until recent years. For example, the phone-in format - which began in the US since 1930s and in the UK in 1968 (op cit.) and was regarded as a technique to strengthen radio's characteristics, including intimacy, diversity, simplicity and personalisation (as discussed in chapter II) - was not introduced into

Vietnamese radio until 1994 (Vinh Tra 2004, p.5). Speech Radio - where presenters provide information, particularly on current affairs and news stories in an accessible and easily understood fashion (McInerney 2001, p.179) - have flourished since the beginning of broadcasting (ibid). However, it was not until 2001, that talk radio and talk shows were proposed as a potential formats to be explored and experimented by VOV's staff (Tien Long 2001, p.27).

As previously discussed in chapter III, in order to co-exist and co-develop with other media, radio in developed countries has not only proved its endless abilities to adapt to the changing environments, but also utilised the interactive and cooperative relationships with other media to widen their sphere of influence and capture listeners, including 'cross-promotion'. However, advertising for radio programmes is not paid sufficient attention to by VOV. While television schedules are popular in newspapers and magazines in Vietnam, it is not the case for radio schedules. Even on air, until 2008, VOV rarely trailed forthcoming programmes, whereas VTV has done so successfully. The lack of promotional techniques has negatively affected listeners' interests and accessibility to radio.

In 1996, in an interview, Tran Lam (Radio Journal 1996, p.43), ex-General Director of VOV, admitted that after reunification, while radio's facilities had improved, the old way of thinking and producing radio, which had lasted several decades, created an inertia that could not be changed overnight. Phan Quang (1995, p.1-2), the then VOV General Director, also admitted that for a number of reasons, particularly economic and financial difficulties, radio in Vietnam, at times, had been neglected. When the mistakes were recognised, radio had lost a significant time, and fallen behind other media, in terms of development (ibid). As discussed previously, VOV had become complacent, not only through the subsidised period, but also for 10 years after the Economic Renovation.

VOV's position was seriously challenged, as during this decade, a great number of media organisations emerged endeavouring to satisfy increasingly demanding audiences. These developments have led to VOV's current difficulties, as VOV seeks to capture listeners and attract those who have neglected radio. This is an urgent imperative for VOV as it is not only required to attract advertisers, but also, more

importantly, to fulfil the new political missions assigned by the Vietnamese Government, which will be investigated in the following section.

6.2.4. Market journalism vs. State Journalism: the new missions of VOV

In Vietnam, even though the first Vietnamese newspaper was published on the 1st April 1865 (Huynh Van Tong 2000, Do Quang Hung 2000), The Vietnamese Revolutionary Journalism Day (21st June 1925) – celebrated annually - was the date when the *Young People Newspaper*¹⁰⁶ was first débuted. Since the inception of this newspaper, Vietnamese journalism has been entrusted the task of educating the population about Communist policies, promulgating Government propaganda and encouraging Vietnamese people to fight the country's enemies. Ho Chi Minh's edict that "Journalists are revolutionary fighters, their pens and papers are sharp weapons" is cited in a extensive number of reports, conferences and books about journalism as a guideline for Vietnamese journalism.

Before the economic renovation, the Vietnamese ideology of journalism was similar to that of the Soviet Union and other communist countries, where mass media were used instrumentally by the state for various political purposes, particularly as propaganda tools. Schramm (1963, p.122) argued that the communist communication system had only "a single purpose" which served party and state policies.

However, Schramm's (1963) model of Communist media ideology is no longer sufficient in conceptualising media in the case of Vietnam. The research subject of Schramm's (1963) study was the Soviet press, which was based on a centralised command economy or state socialism system, where, according to Siebert (*et al.* 1963, p.5) "the profit motive [of the press] has been removed". Schramm's (1963) description of the Soviet press was, perhaps, applicable to Vietnamese press before the Renovation, whereas, Vietnamese journalism reforms have, to date, followed a market socialism model, in which journalism is state owned but market oriented. In this model, there is

¹⁰⁶ This is an official organ of the Association of Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth Comrades (which later became The Communist Party of Vietnam), founded and led by Ho Chi Minh.

press competition, the operation of diverse business ventures by the news media, limited government subsidy, leading to a concomitant increasing growth of the country's advertising industry. New competition, commercial advertising, human-interest stories, and even tabloid publications containing sensationalised stories appear in Vietnamese media. Rather than being a "great deal of sameness about the content of media on any day" (Schramm's (1963) description) and propaganda-oriented, a number of Vietnamese newspapers have been criticised as over-sensational and money-driven (Huu Tho 1992).

In other words, in the current market-driven environment, the situation for mass media has changed dramatically. In terms of financial support, media's revenue has changed from government-funded sources to, chiefly, advertising, circulation, and financial investment in other ventures (Busch 2004, p.9). The role of media also changed from the single function of the Party's mouthpiece as an organ of ideological indoctrination to a multi-functional system, including resources for advertising with higher circulations and wider audiences. The nature of media products is no longer only that of political and ideological propaganda, they are also market commodities (Dang TT Huong 2001b). In addition, media content comprises not only official government news, but also public interest news, entertainment, advertising and increasingly, foreign programmes (Tran Quang Nhiep 2002, p.55-56).

Although journalism is still defined as a non-profit undertaking of the state, it is now undertaken as a commercial operation. Advertising, allowed from the 1980s (The 1989 Law of Journalism), has begun to impact on the entire media system. Whilst retaining ultimate discretion over content, the Government also encourages the media to raise funds, in particular from advertising, consequently, the audience/consumer has now to be taken into account (as discussed in previous section). Concomitant renovations of personnel and budgetary procedures have conferred new powers and duties on editors and programme producers. These powers and duties require media producers, in turn, to be more responsive, both to their audiences and advertisers (Vietnam Journalist Organisation 1998), by enabling them to allocate funding to production offices according to ratings, and to recruit employees in a (relatively) open market.

The commercialisation of the press dramatically influenced Vietnam's media landscape with regard to media ownership and financial support. With media commercialisation, the Party and government organs became business entities, similar - to some extent - to the Western capitalist system, adopting advertising, subscription dependence and capital investment practices.

As a result, mass media have expanded their function from propagandising to providing news, general information, knowledge, and entertainment, enabling the expression of public opinion, and criticising the daily working of government, particularly the wrongdoing of officials (Tran Quang Nhiep 2002, p.147-153). In short, after two decades of renovation, Vietnamese media have been transformed into a multi-structured media industry with multiple functions rather than being pure propaganda tools.

In other words, Vietnamese mass media currently play a dual role simultaneously, as commodities in the market and apparatuses of ideology. In this sense, mass media must cater to two masters with two distinct prerequisites. Despite the fact that officially and principally the media's role is still defined as the voice of the government (Nguyen Duc Binh 1997, p.37; Huu Tho 1997, p.76-77), the new economic structure means they have also to accommodate the interests of their advertisers and audiences. Due to the fierce competition between mass media after the Economic Renovation 1986 (as discussed previously), the latter may be more significant and urgent for the media managers, but the former still affects the media content.

However, as a result of Party initiatives, the press system operates with a greater degree of openness and freedom, where constructive criticism and suggestions about Government policies can be discussed, although, the nature and role of the press remains fundamentally unchanged. Consequently, mass media in Vietnam are functioning within a 'regulated marketisation' system. It is important to note that no media organisation can be established as an independent business; they are assigned an official rank and must be registered under a recognised institutional publisher or government organisation. Journalists may only train in Government institutions.

At present, even though the Vietnamese mass media system has undergone significant changes, government control of the media continues to be the principle hard and fast

rule (Nguyen Duc Binh 1997, p.37). As it was the Government that initiated such commercialisation, press control - with the emergent convergence of the state and the market - may even be strengthened in the context of commercialisation. In other words, authoritarianism in the Vietnamese media system may persist through government control. In the Vietnamese system, mass media are restricted from communicating messages that would undermine the established authority or negatively affect the country's political values (Law of Journalism 1989, 1999).

Therefore, the Western model of the press - defined by such characteristics as an independent news media with legally sanctioned press freedoms and formalised institutional independence from the state (Seibert 1963) - cannot develop in Vietnam. In other words, a new theoretical model, which requires further investigation, is necessary for the Vietnamese media in transition, a model integrating both political and economic dimensions, in which a market/authoritarian based understanding of the media should be considered.

However, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries also had significant impacts on Vietnamese society in general, and journalism in particular, in the sense that for the first time, the Vietnamese government had to reconsider the concept of 'friend' and 'enemy'. As mentioned in chapter I, changes in global socio-political conditions, and the domestic and foreign policies of the Vietnamese Government, have led to the assignment of new missions for Vietnamese journalism, especially VOV. One such mission is shaping the new image of Vietnam - the Vietnam in renovation and development. A number of instructions and resolutions were promulgated by the Vietnamese Government and the Communist Party¹⁰⁷ in order to instruct journalists regarding new political and social missions.

¹⁰⁷ Including: the Instruction No.11CT/TW of the Central Communist Party on the 13 June 1992 promulgating the renovation and strengthening the external information service, the Announcement No.188-TB/TW of the Central Communist Party on the 29 December 1998 - promulgating external information in the new changing situation, the Instruction No.10/2000/CT-TTg on the 26 April 2000- strengthening the control and reinforcing the external information service; and the Resolution No.36/NQ-TW of the Political Bureau on 24 March 2004 regarding overseas Vietnamese people.

As the Voice of the Vietnamese Government, media organisations, especially VOV, have to make contributions to ending Vietnam's isolation and expanding international relations. The targeted audiences for the overseas services of Vietnamese media are Vietnamese expatriates, foreigners living in Vietnam and the worldwide community.

Regarding the Vietnamese overseas, at present, there are more than 2.7 million Vietnamese people living abroad (Resolution No.36-NQ/TW)¹⁰⁸. The Vietnamese Government state that overseas Vietnamese are an inseparable part of the community of Vietnamese nationalities, a resource of the Vietnamese nation, acting as an important factor in strengthening Vietnam's friendship and cooperation with other countries (ibid). Many open policies and measures have been adopted to facilitate Vietnamese overseas to return to visit families, undertake commerce and develop collaborations in science, technology, art and culture. However, it is acknowledged in Resolution No.36-NQ/TW that the guidelines and policies of the Party and State regarding overseas Vietnamese have not been fully understood and implemented. It is thought that the major cause is derived from insufficiency of information provided by mass media about the Party's policies regarding overseas Vietnamese. Therefore, one of the major tasks to remedy the situations is as follows:

Strongly reform communication and information activities to help overseas Vietnamese better understand the country's situation and Party and State policies; Invest further in radio, television and internet programmes targeting overseas Vietnamese, focus on renewing the content and format of these programmes and equipment; support the publication of print media and an increase in radio and television channels broadcasting overseas...

(Resolution No.36-NQ/TW)

¹⁰⁸ The majority (80%) of these individuals live in developed countries, where they have settled and integrated into local communities with differing economic and political positions. Vietnamese communities overseas have certain economic potentials. They also have connections with both foreign businesses and international organisations, and could help introduce partners for Vietnamese enterprises and organisations. Many have high levels of education and expertise. A number of Vietnamese expatriates hold important positions in research or academic institutions, businesses, and international organisations, and therefore may have strong connections with economic and scientific establishments in the host country (Resolution No.36-NQ/TW).

Prior to the emergence of the Internet, it was difficult to disseminate information for Vietnamese expatriates as the cost of sending books and newspapers by post was prohibitive and AM radio signals did not have a global reach and were neither strong nor clear enough for audiences in many geographical locations (Tran Mai Hanh 1998, p.2). In other words, the Internet has extended radio's reach, providing an opportunity for VOV to capture audiences that traditional radio could not.

The Internet emerged and provided new opportunities for both audiences and media producers to exchange and receive information. With the special characteristics, discussed in chapter III, web radio provides potential means for VOV to capture new listeners, particularly overseas audiences. In addition, web radio may bring radio to the Internet user community – including academics, professionals and the youth, significantly, these are the groups who have neglected traditional radio. Whether web radio is a means to extend radio's reach, public opinions about web radio and how VOV can utilise web radio to strengthen its position will be discussed in the following chapter.

Summary

The combination of historical data discussed in the previous chapter and current information regarding VOV provided in this chapter has completed the picture of the development of VOV since its inception. These two chapters not only place VOV within the political and socio-economic contexts of Vietnam - especially in the competitive environment with visual media after the Economic Renovation - but more importantly, in comparison with radio's development in Western countries, in order to identify and discuss its successes and failures during over 60 years of development. Most importantly, Chapters IV and V have also identified and discussed primary reasons for the loss of significant numbers of radio listeners in recent years. As a result, it is concluded that the major challenges VOV currently faces are: how to compete with visual media and capture audiences in order to fulfil both political and commercial demands. In this sense, the strong development of radio in Western countries may provide useful experiences for Vietnamese radio.

At present, radio in Western countries is reaching an historical turning point since the Internet appeared. As discussed in previous chapters, the emergence of the Internet has significantly changed the landscape of mass media, introducing challenges, as well as opportunities for radio to develop. Therefore, how to capture radio listeners in the Digital Age remains an open question for radio researchers, even in developed countries.

Moreover, there is a recently emerging and dramatically increasing group of audiences: the Internet users, as a consequence of the Internet's ubiquity. These users are thought to be the young, the academics or professionals, and those living in relatively high technology societies. They are target market that mass media endeavour to capture and satisfy. Curiously, these are the groups who listen the least to radio in Vietnam, and yet the groups Vietnamese radio needs to attract.

The following chapters will investigate the Vietnamese Internet user community and explore their needs and demands towards media, especially radio. Significantly, understanding the new demanding audiences may enable radio in Vietnam to develop further and capture audiences.

Chapter VII:

The Vietnamese web user community: **THEIR PERCEPTIONS, OPINIONS AND DEMANDS TOWARDS MEDIA, ESPECIALLY RADIO**

This chapter is one of the most important sections of the thesis, as it provides a comprehensive investigation of the emerging and dramatically increasing groups of audiences - that consequently, continue to attract great attention from media producers - these, however, have not been taken into account in previous surveys in Vietnam: the Vietnamese Internet user community. Having drawn from my offline and online surveys conducted in 2005 and 2006, respectively, and my focus group interviews undertaken in late 2006, this chapter will explore the Internet user's characteristics, and more importantly, web user community's perceptions, attitudes and opinions towards mass media, especially radio and the Internet; their habits of consuming media; their needs, interests, and demands in order to understand why these groups do or do not listen to traditional radio, and whether they listen to radio via the Internet. Establishing the answers to these questions may help VOV better understand and satisfy the needs of their audiences.

This chapter also compares and contrasts media consumption of Vietnamese web users, at home and abroad, in order to explore possible differences in their perceptions, attitudes and opinions towards media. The Vietnamese expatriate community is not only one of the target audiences for Vietnamese media, more importantly, their opinions reflect the attitudes of audiences who live in societies with relatively high living standards, 'high technology' surroundings and high levels of competition (between media) environments. It should be noted that these features are evolving in Vietnamese society. Therefore, it is felt that their opinions and demands towards media, and radio in particular, may help media producers in Vietnam identify their failures and successes in meeting the needs of new demanding audiences. Consequently, this chapter will provide

a useful foundation for a fuller investigation of the web radio listening community in the final stage of the research project.

7.1. THE PROFILE OF WEB USERS: WHO ARE THEY?

Although Vietnam was connected to the Internet relatively recently - December 1997 (VNA 2007), the number of Internet users has increased dramatically during the last decade. The number of web users increased two and half times within 2 years, from 6.3 million (7.7% of the population) in January 2005¹⁰⁹ (VNNIC¹¹⁰ 2005) to 15 million (18% of the population) in January 2006 (VNNIC 2007). In addition, the ADSL service was launched in Vietnam in late 2003, initially with 183 ADSL subscribers, by May 2008, there were over 1.6 million ADSL subscribers (VNNIC 2008). According to the latest statistics, the number of Internet subscribers increased to nearly 6 million, with approximately 20 million Internet users (VNNIC 2008). This corresponds to 23.5% of the Vietnamese population (*ibid*), higher than the average level of Internet users in Asia (13.7%) and the world (20%) (World Internet Statistics 2008).

As the Internet is a new technology, which has developed considerably within the last decade in Vietnam, the majority of online users are young people. In my online survey, web users identify themselves as young: 77% of participants are aged under 35 years, followed by participants aged 35 to 49 years old, 17.4%. Very few web users are over 65: 0.5% (Table 1). Furthermore, amongst those who are over 65, only two live in Vietnam, significantly both have doctoral degrees.

The large divide between the young and the old in my qualitative research is quite similar to that of British web users. According to the UK's National Statistics Office

¹⁰⁹ It should be noted that the Internet usage in 2005 was almost double the target of the Vietnamese Government for developing Internet usage at that time (Decision No.33/2002/QD-TTg; Decision No.95/2002/QD-TTg).

¹¹⁰ VNNIC is a non-profit affiliation to the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, established February 2000 to manage, allocate, supervise and promote the use of Internet domain names, addresses, and autonomous system numbers in Vietnam. It also provides Internet-related guidance and statistics and facilitates international activities on the Internet.

(NSO 2006, p.3-4)¹¹¹, 83% of 16 to 24 year olds access the Internet, compared with 15% of the group over 65.

Young people not only access the Internet more than older users, they also access it more often. Over 90% of participants aged between 20 and 34 log on to the Internet daily, whilst approximately 75% of participants over 65 do so. Being young audiences, web users are extremely important to advertisers and media producers, partly because of their growing spending power but also because, in the longer term, they represent future audiences.

Age		No.	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 20	43	3.5%	3.6%	3.6
	20 to 34	889	73.2%	73.4%	77.0
	35 to 49	211	17.4%	17.4%	94.4
	50 to 65	60	4.9%	5.0%	99.3
	Over 65	8	.7%	.7%	100.0
	Total	1211	99.7%	100.0%	
Missing	System	4	.3%		
Total		1215	100.0		

Table 1. How old are you?

In terms of gender, in the UK, males are more likely to access the Internet than females, 65% compared with 55%, respectively (ibid). In my quantitative research, the gap between males and females who access the Internet is larger, as approximately 69.7% of web users are males, compared to nearly 30.3% females. Generally speaking, in Vietnam, males access information more than females (Truong Xuan Truong 2001, p.64). In other recent surveys (Tran Huu Quang 2001, VOV 2001a, Ly Hoang Ngan 2000b, Tran Ba Dung 2007), the number of males reading newspapers, watching television and listening to radio is constantly higher than that of females. As the online

¹¹¹ It should be noted that the statistics of the UK's National Statistics Office (2006) found the percentage of web users, in terms of age and gender amongst the general population, whilst data from my quantitative research investigates the age group and gender amongst the Vietnamese Internet user community.

survey was conducted amongst those posting their comments on online newspapers, this also suggests that males seem to be more active and more confident using the Internet as they post more comments than females do.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High School degree	96	7.9	7.9	7.9
	College/University degree	787	64.8	64.8	72.7
	Higher education (Master/PhD/Postdoc, ect)	317	26.1	26.1	98.8
	Secondary School Degree	15	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	1215	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Academic qualifications

More importantly, web users belong to the middle and upper middle classes of Vietnamese society, in terms of educational attainment and professional status. Table 2 shows the level of qualification of web users, in which, 90.9% of participants have at least a College/University degree. Only 7.9% have a High School Certificate level of education, 1.2% of these have a Secondary School Degree¹¹². It should be noted that, because 3.6% of participants are aged under 20, many may have been studying at High School at the time this survey was conducted. In the US, Stempel *et al.*'s (2000) study also found that Internet use increased with education and income.

A fuller explanation of the high educational level of web users is useful at this point in relation to average qualifications in Vietnam. According to the General Population Statistics (GSO 2006, index 5), 88.7% of the Vietnamese population graduated from High School, whilst the number of people gaining a degree at least from a College is 4.8%. It should be noted that, in the Internet community, approximately 90% have at

¹¹² The Education System in Vietnam is divided into four main stages: Primary Education begins at age 6 and continues until age 11, Secondary Education from age 11 to 15, and students will enter High Schools from 15 to 18. After that, students take exams to enter to Higher Education, including Colleges and Universities.

least a College Certificate. At the time of conducting this survey, the Internet is perhaps more popular with groups who have achieved higher educational attainment. However, the Vietnamese Government has published priority policies and undertaken significant efforts to develop the Internet, with the aim that by 2010, 80% of the youth in urban and rural areas will have access to it (Decision No. 246/2005/QD-TTg, p.3). In this sense, gradually, web users will not be restricted to the higher education groups, and will become more popular amongst the youth: the future generation of media's audiences.

Furthermore, web users may have better jobs and higher incomes than an average employee in Vietnam. The average income of those who have a University degree is approximately three times greater than those who have a High School Degree (Navigos Group and Vietnamworks 2005, p.25; Thai Thanh 2006). According to the Vietnam Salary Survey (Hoang Hong 2007), those who have a Master's degree have an average income almost triple that of those who have a College Certificate, and approximately 6 times higher than those who have only a High School Degree. In other words, 90% of web users who have at least a College Degree are likely to have higher incomes than the general population. Similarly, according to the UK's National Statistics Office (2006, p.4), the higher an individual's income, the more likely he or she is to have accessed the Internet. In the UK, 93% of those with an income of £36,400 or more had used the Internet, more than twice the proportion of those earning £10,400 or less (ibid).

Most Vietnamese web users in my quantitative research are academics and professionals: approximately 25% of web users work in an academic environment. Almost 20% of these work in computer/electronics fields. Participants who work in Finance sectors, Advertising/Marketing/PR sectors, Media/Publishing/Entertainment sectors and office workers numbered 12.4%, 6.8%, 5.8% and 5.4%. Just 0.5% (n=1215) of participants identified themselves as housewives.

In short, web users in Vietnam comprise groups of audiences, who are young, have relatively high educational attainment, and higher incomes than the average Vietnamese population. As an elite group of audiences - at present - web users may have different media consuming behaviour than traditional audiences. More importantly, as representatives of the Internet generation, web users' current attitudes and behaviour toward media may reflect that of the next generation of audiences. Consequently, how

web users consume media, and what they think about media, particularly radio and the Internet are imperative questions, which will be discussed in the following section.

7.2. MEDIA CONSUMPTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF WEB USERS

This section will identify the media consumption of web users - including web users abroad and in Vietnam - non-radio listeners and radio listeners. This will be done not only to explore the media consumption of the target groups, but also to specify, locate and compare radio usage with the use of other media. It is anticipated that the comparison will reveal the current struggle to capture the academic and professional audiences between radio and other media in Vietnam.

7.2.1. Challenges for the dominant position of television in the Internet

Age

At present, according to my quantitative and qualitative research, television remains the main medium of entertainment and information for the majority of web users. However, the emergence of the Internet has created a redoubtable opponent. Significantly, whilst newspapers and magazines continue to be consumed by approximately one third of the respondents, radio is the least utilised source of information and entertainment.

Four out of five (83%, n=1209) respondents in the quantitative research watch television every day, whilst 90% (n=1209) of web users log on to the Internet daily. The number of overseas participants who log on to the Internet daily is even higher, nearly 98% (n=268). As more people are using the Internet at work, this figure is likely to be increased.

Even though the percentage of my online survey's participants logging on to the Internet is slightly higher than that of participants watching television daily, in my qualitative research, across all groups, most participants continue to regard television as their major source of information and entertainment.

The most effective way of differentiating attitudes for the two media is to present respondents with a simple dilemma - which would participants (in my qualitative

research) miss most if required to give up one or the other? Interestingly, almost twice as many chose the Internet. In other words, in the future, it is difficult to predict if television will continue to be the main source of information and entertainment for these groups of audiences.

Although most participants in my focus group interviews state that they watch television every day, less than one third of them (16/60) spend more than 3 hours daily in front of the television. In addition, nearly two thirds of the interviewees state that their time watching television has significantly reduced since they were connected to the Internet.

...ten years ago, if I did not go out with my girlfriend, I would spend nearly the whole evening watching television¹¹³. However, these days I often watch the News on VTV1, and, after that, prefer to go online.

(Male, 32, office worker)

This participant also states that he can stay online until midnight, even though he has spent 3 or 4 hours online at his office. This is not just the habit of office workers, but also for students, as a significant number of students in my qualitative research state that they often go online after watching television programmes, for example, news and current affairs, football matches or game shows.

The qualitative and quantitative studies also found that men tend to go online at home more than women, especially married women. Another participant (male, 24) says that he has a habit of web surfing, joining a number of fora or playing games online. He estimates that he spends approximately 6-7 hours online per day, including time spent online at work.

¹¹³ It should be noted that, in the late 90s, television in Vietnam made significant changes in programmes. For the first time in 1996 game shows were broadcast. A number of live shows, including news and current affairs, were also first introduced. It was not until the early 1990s television was broadcast every night.

Approximately two thirds of the focus group interviewees state that they often watch television with their families, especially when having dinner. The most popular programmes are news and current affairs, game shows, talk shows and films.

There are two televisions in my house, one in the living room and the other in my bedroom. We [my parents, my wife and my children and me] often watch television during dinner time, for half or nearly one hour. Er...It depends on the programme, if it is interesting or not. It is the only time during the day that all my family gathers to chat while watching television. After that, my wife starts doing housework...er... sometimes with my mother, sometimes on her own, or with me - er... not often. My children go to their room to study. My father continues watching television. I usually go to my bedroom, and turn on the computer while waiting for my wife to join me to watch television before going to sleep.

(Male participant, 35, office worker)

This is typical of Vietnamese families, as the extended family is quite popular in both rural and urban areas. This situation reminds participants of the time when families used to gather round the radio to enjoy information and entertainment and share a family experience, as discussed in chapter II. This is to say, there is a pure change of medium, but not the situation.

In other words, television has become a social medium (Hargrave 1994, p.9; 2000, p.9; Barnett and Morrison 1989, p.1) allowing the family to share a leisure activity in their own living room. However, it is interesting to note that whilst television became, and remains, a group activity, radio and the Internet are typically consumed by individuals. In this sense, radio and the Internet share a common feature: they are an 'asocial' - a solo medium which is isolationist rather than communal (ibid) - however, more importantly, offering a personal space for the audience to enjoy their choice of information and entertainment.

It should be noted that the rise of a new media, for example, the Internet, may not increase the overall media consumption of audiences. A media consumption study (PEW 2006) found that the total time that Americans spend consuming news was largely unchanged from a decade ago, when their news choices were much more limited. A possible reason for this phenomenon is that audiences not only use media in

multiple forms to fit their busy lives (Quinn and Filak 2005, p.8), they began to use two or more media simultaneously to cope with the range of media choices and the competition for attention (Rutherford 2004 cited Quinn and Filak 2005, p.8). It is felt that as radio and the Internet are often consumed in the same 'individual' environment, they can be combined to offer the most information, which is less time consuming for audiences in the Digital Age.

The qualitative research also revealed that after dinner, a significant number of female participants, especially those who are married, leave the television - which they do not switch off – to undertake housework and may come back to watch television again if there is an interesting programme available. A small number of male participants state that they continue watching television (with a remote control flicking between channels), whilst nearly half of male participants - at the end of their favourite television programmes - leave the dining room to go to their bedrooms and switch on their computers. It seems that young participants tend to watch only their favourite programmes rather than watching "any programme" or "all programmes" as found in the survey conducted in 1997 (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.132, 139).

According to age group, the participants aged 50-65 watch television daily the most, 96.6% (n=59). The numbers of participants aged from 20 to 34, and under 20 watching television every day are approximately 78% (n=882) and 81% (n=43), respectively. It is presumed that younger participants (aged less than 35) may prefer to get involved with various activities - rather than staring at the television screen - for example, socialising, or, possibly, surfing the web. The percentage of participants aged from 20 to 34, and from 34 to 49 logging on the Internet every day is 92.2% (n=885), and 90.4% (n=209), compared with 80% (n=60) of the group aged over 50 years. In addition, the more experienced web users are, the less time they spend watching television. This trend is similar to the findings of the Arbitron/Edison Media research in the American population (chapter III).

In short, even though television is regarded at present as the most important medium for the majority people in Vietnam, my findings revealed that the position of television has been challenged in the Internet Age. The qualitative and quantitative studies also found that web users do not only spend less time in front of the television, but also would

prefer to access the Internet, rather than television - if compelled to choose between the two media. The following section will provide more information about the online activities of web users.

7.2.2. Web users: attitudes toward the Internet

My quantitative research found that the majority of participants regard the Internet as an important tool for their work or leisure activities (59.9%, n=1207). 39% (n=1207) of participants even regard the Internet as an integral part of their everyday life. A very small percentage of participants state that the Internet is not important to them. Amongst the group who disregard the importance of the Internet, the percentage of females is almost double than that of males. These attitudes toward the Internet are similar to those found in my qualitative research, across all focus group discussions.

In my qualitative research, one of the participants (19, student), a self-identified 'Internet addict', states that he could not settle well to anything if he did not go online at least once a day. Another female participant (26, office worker) tells the group that when the Internet connection in her office was down, she, as well as most of her colleagues, could not concentrate on work but continued to log on to the Internet to see whether it was working again. A female participant (20, student) says that she had online friends, and even felt happier chatting with them than with her classmates. Another male participant (34, office worker) states that every month he saved a significant amount of his salary in order to update his laptop or buy high-tech accessories. For him, a laptop is not only a facility for work and study, but also an integral part of his life, because the Internet provides him unlimited information and a wide range of entertainment. Most importantly, this is the information he is interested in and can control access to.

The quantitative research found that while going online, the majority of participants only surf the web. However, while online, males participants tend to explore more activities than female participants. Approximately half of the male participants often open at least 3 or 4 websites simultaneously, of which one may be a music site or web radio. In the qualitative study, one male participant (25, office worker) says that he

could choose from dozens of music radio stations from the Yahoo Messenger Website, so, as a habit, he often turned on the Chill-out radio station whenever online.

Significantly, the quantitative study also found that participants, who regard the Internet as a vital part of their everyday lives, tend to listen to web radio the most (67.2%, n=469), compared with 58.5% (n=718) of those who state that the Internet is merely a useful tool for their work/leisure. In the quantitative research, the group of participants, who think that the Internet is not important to their lives, listen to web radio the least (only one third of them have ever listened to web radio).

Curiously, the qualitative research additionally found that amongst the groups of participants who rarely, or do not, listen to traditional radio, five participants have listened to radio online. In addition, each of these five participants is experienced web users with at least 4 or 5 years of access to the Internet. Significantly, the stated reasons for these participants listening to radio online are fairly different from those of traditional radio listeners – which will be discussed in detail in the later section.

At this point, it should be noted that the leading position of television (amongst traditional media) has been challenged in the Internet Age. However, at the same time, the Internet provides a number of opportunities for traditional radio, a relatively inferior medium (which has only sound to convey information and entertainment) to capture new audiences. Following a brief discussion of the newspaper consumption of the focus groups (in my research) in the next section, my thesis will provide further details regarding radio usage, its challenges, and opportunities in the Internet Age.

7.2.3. Newspapers: an enduring rival

My quantitative research found that newspapers continue to play an important role in delivering information and entertainment to many participants, remaining an enduring opponent of other media, including radio. Approximately 40% (n=1202) of the participants in the quantitative research state that they read newspapers every day, while 26% (n=1202) do so several times per week. This statistic is slightly higher than that in America, where just more than half of Americans (54%) read newspapers during the week (PEW 2006). However, it is acknowledged that, whilst PEW (2006) investigated

the American general population, participants in my quantitative research were students, academics and professionals – the groups who are most likely to read newspapers (Tran Huu Quang 2001).

In terms of age, it seems that young people read newspapers less than older generations. The quantitative research found that between the ages 35 to 49, 49% (n=208) of participants read newspapers (the highest percentage of the groups), whilst in the groups aged under 20 and from 20 to 34, only 42% (n=42) and 37% (n=880) read newspapers daily.

In addition, males tend to read newspapers more than females, 44.4% (n=835) and 33.4% (n=364), respectively. Once again, this phenomenon highlights the fact that in Vietnam, males continue to have more opportunities to access information and new technologies than females¹¹⁴. The professions that have the highest percentages of newspaper readers are Media/Publishing/Entertainment, Office workers, Researchers and the Business sector, 61.4%, 61%, 55.6% and 53.7%, respectively, whilst the participants in Agriculture/Forestry and Construction/Architect groups read newspapers the least, approximately 16%. Amongst student participants, over 30% read newspapers every day.

As mentioned previously, my research did not aim to reflect the reading behaviour of the general Vietnamese population, but more precisely, focused on the groups who are presumed to have greater opportunities to access media, resulting, possibly, representing the fiercest competition market for mass media. However, it is acknowledged that as most samples in my quantitative and qualitative research were academics and professionals - who obtained relatively higher education - they tend to read newspapers more often than the general population, as education have been found to correlate to readership. Other studies (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.102; PEW 2006) also found that those who obtain higher educational attainment seem to read more newspapers than those who have lower levels of education, and those who are academics and

¹¹⁴ In Vietnam, due to the continuing influence of Confucianism, males, to some extent are privileged over females. Housework is regarded as women's work, whilst politics or socio-economical issues are often the prevail of male discussion. Therefore, males have and spend more time reading newspapers, watching television or going online to obtain information.

professionals read more newspapers than blue-collar workers, farmers and businessmen and women.

According to my qualitative research, office workers tend to read newspapers more frequently than students. One possible reason for this phenomenon is that a number of companies in Vietnam provide free newspapers and magazines in staff rooms or lounges. Therefore, as a habit, office workers may casually read daily newspapers before they begin work. Surprisingly, even though most participants think that the price of newspapers is reasonable, they claim that their habits of buying a newspaper have reduced significantly in recent years. The reasons for this behaviour will be explained at a later point, however, at this point, it should be noted that the percentage of newspaper readers might not be as high (as presented in my survey) if employers did not provide newspapers in common rooms for staff.

A male participant (29, office worker) says that he does not buy a newspaper often as he usually obtains information from other sources, including the Internet. Another female participant (student, 19) reveals that she does not wish to spend money on information she can easily get free from the Internet. However, apart from the emergence of the Internet, there are also a number of other reasons, which should be considered.

Previously I often bought a newspaper in the morning from street vendors. However, since peddling was forbidden in Hanoi, I do not buy newspapers often. I do not want to subscribe to a newspaper, because I am not that kind of 'newspaper' addict, but I do not often buy from a news-agent either, as it is not convenient for me on my way to work¹¹⁵.

(A male participant, 35)

It is possible that the availability and easy accessibility of a medium affects significantly its consumption. The comment of this participant reminded me about the decline of radio listening in Vietnam due to the narrowing in radio coverage and the reduction in

¹¹⁵ The motorbike is the main means of transportation in Vietnam. Therefore, if an individual wishes to buy a newspaper from a newsagent, he (she) has to wheel his/her motorbike across the pavement to reach the kiosk, finding a place to park and lock his/her motorbike – which is quite difficult, because the pavement is always busy.

ownership of radio sets as discussed in the previous chapter. At present, when radio can be listened to via a digital television or a computer, it is thought that, its accessibility has increased, potentially increasing the number of radio listeners.

On average, participants spend less than 30 minutes reading newspapers per day. None of the participants reads the whole newspaper; they select only the main news stories, or features, wherever the titles and pictures are attractive. Even reading a specific article - unless it is a very important one - readers often skim through - and get main titles and ideas of that article, but do not read line-by-line. This reading behaviour is not only applied to traditional newspaper but also - more seriously, it is argued - to online newspapers. As a result, textbooks on online journalism always advise shorter, simpler and sharper writing for online journalists. However, this advice has not been taken sufficiently seriously by the VOV website producers, as there are numerous complaints about its writing style which will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

According to my qualitative research, most participants read newspapers for news and current affairs. Their consumption of newspapers increased considerably when major events occur, including reports of corruption and political or socio-economical crises.

Normally I read my office's newspapers. However, if I heard some interesting news the night before on television, I'd buy a newspaper the following day. Newspapers always provide more information, data and analyses than television or radio.

(A male participant, office worker, 33)

As discussed in the previous chapter, after the Economic Renovation, newspapers, particularly those in Southern Vietnam, pioneered renovation of their contents, focusing on the most public concerns and issues, including corruption, inflation, and other socio-economical crises. These changes strengthened readership, and increased the number of newspaper readers in general, consequently, creating more pressure on radio professionals.

The majority of participants enjoy magazines weekly, as these provide in detail the information they are most interested in. As a result, focusing on small groups with their

specific interests has become a development strategy for newspapers, as summarised in a number of studies (chapter III).

Most importantly, across all the group discussions, participants in my qualitative research disclosed that they often visit the online version of their favourite newspapers or magazines. The latest PEW (2006) news consumption survey also found that newspapers, which have seen their audience decline significantly, are now stemming further losses with the help of their online editors. In other words, while traditional media in general, and newspapers in particular, are challenged notably by the emergence of the Internet, the online versions of those organisations - to some extent - have supported traditional media and strengthened their relationship with audiences. The following section will provide information about the challenges and opportunities of another traditional media - radio - in the Internet Age.

7.2.4. Challenges for radio in the visual age

This section examines how radio is used and the role it plays in everyday life. According to both my quantitative and qualitative research, the percentage of people who listen to radio is relatively low, compared with those who watch TV, log on to the Internet or read newspapers.

It is noted that whilst the figures for television and computer ownership are relatively high amongst participants, this is not the case for radio ownership. My quantitative research - conducted in 2005 - found that while the number of participants who owned a television or computer was relatively high (94% and 100%, respectively), just 25.1% participants owned a radio set. Similarly, in my focus group interviews, the figure for television ownership is considerably higher than that of radio ownership, 92% and 26%, respectively¹¹⁶ (Table 3). Although the price for a radio set is relatively low, people do not buy a new set to replace an old or broken one as many of them have given up listening to radio.

¹¹⁶ It is noted that my offline survey and focus group interviews were conducted in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Therefore, figures of radio ownership are higher than that of general urban areas in GSO's statistics in 2002 and 2004 (see Chapter VI).

	Male (no.)		Female (no.)		Total
	Student	Office worker	Student	Office worker	
Participant	19	13	19	14	65
TV owners	16	13	18	13	60
Radio owners	7	3	4	3	17
Computer owners	19	13	19	14	65
Music device (including iPod, Mp3) owners	7	8	2	4	21
Mobile telephone owners	19	14	19	14	65
Motorcycle ¹¹⁷ owners	19	10	19	13	61
Car owners	0	3	0	1	4

Table 3. Statistics for modes of access to media

My qualitative research has revealed a number of reasons for this phenomenon. One female participant (19, student) states:

I know that my grandfather has a small radio set. He listens to it in his room. My parents do not have any radio sets, because they only watch television, and for me, I do not think I need one, because I prefer to go online or watch television.

Another male participant (34, office worker) says that:

My family have a radio set. It is quite old and I do not even remember where I left it. By the way, I gave up on radio quite a while ago. Recently, I bought a CD player to listen to music. However, to be honest, I do not care if my CD player has a function for tuning to radio.

Significantly, throughout the discussions, a number of participants conceptualise radio as an 'old-fashioned' medium. A female (20, student) states:

In my residential quarter, I often see old war veterans gathering, listening to a radio. These people also like most radio programmes I listened by chance, they [the listeners and broadcasts] always talked a lot about history and the past. This image is engraved in

¹¹⁷ Identifying participants who do not have access to radio whilst travelling.

my memory, and for me, radio is associated with the old. I want to be an active, young and dynamic person, I do not think I like radio.

Some young participants in the student groups say that no one in their families listens to radio; as a result, they do not develop a habit of listening. This has implications for encouraging future generation of radio listeners. There are also several opinions from the student groups stating that, for them, traditional radio is always associated closely with the image of old people. According to these participants, up-to-date ideas have to be related to high technology, such as the Internet.

In order to address these issues, regular listening habits should be encouraged within the family environment. Developing regular listening habits in children, within radio listening family can only be strengthened if the child finds something off interests in radio programmes. Moreover, radio has to adapt itself to fit the child's new world. At the moment, when most participants state that they cannot live without the Internet, web radio may create a new image for radio amongst the young and capture their attention.

Approximately 29% (n=1206) of participants in my quantitative research listen to radio every day, this percentage is just slightly higher than the number of participants who rarely listen to it (28.1%). The findings from my quantitative research are significantly lower than that of developed countries, including the UK and US (Chapters I and III). However, these figures are still significantly higher than those of my quantitative research (2005), and studies conducted by Tran Huu Quang (2001) and Tran Ba Dung (2007) where the numbers of participants listening to radio daily were 13.3%, 9% and 18% respectively.

It is thought that the main reason for the differences in the findings is the sample of participants. The participants for my quantitative research (2005) were urban, academic and professional groups in Hanoi, whilst for Tran Huu Quang's (2001) study, they were urban participants in Ho Chi Minh City, and for Tran Ba Dung's (2007) research, participants sampled from both urban and rural areas. However, in my quantitative research in 2006, the participants were sampled not only from urban and rural areas in Vietnam, but also throughout the world, particularly in developed countries. Interestingly, the media consumption of participants in developed countries is higher than that of participants in Vietnam, especially in terms of radio listening and Internet

surfing (discussed in the following section). As a result, the percentage of listening consumption is slightly higher than that of previous surveys, including my offline survey conducted in 2005.

However, it is not the low percentage of radio listeners but the perceptions and attitudes of participants towards radio that are the most concerning issues. Whilst the majority of participants state that the Internet is important, or very essential to them, my quantitative research found that only 24.1% (n=1207) of participants think radio is, and continues to be, an important medium of information and entertainment. In addition, whilst six out of ten Vietnamese participants living abroad continue to regard radio as an effective medium, only four out of ten (41.9%, n=928) of the Vietnamese home audience agree.

Alarmingly, for the radio sector, there are significant numbers of participants who do not believe in the future of radio. According to the quantitative research (Table 4), 37.1% (n=932) of Vietnamese participants in Vietnam think that radio will eventually be replaced by other media, including television and the Internet. In addition, just 16.5% (n=930) of participants in Vietnam continue to regard radio as an important medium of information and entertainment. It is important to note that approximately 85.7% (n=43) of participants aged less than 20 state that radio is no longer an important medium for them, and in the group aged 20 to 34, this figure is approximately 83.8% (n=681). As these groups are the next potential generation of radio audiences, their attitudes towards radio should be paid greater attention to by radio producers.

Interestingly, a number of strong characteristics of radio - which enabled radio to compete with visual media in developed countries during the last several decades, including its immediacy, ubiquity, and intimacy - are not apparent to my online survey participants, particularly those in Vietnam (Table 4).

My quantitative research found that less than one sixth of participants in Vietnam believe radio is the fastest medium, whilst less than half of these groups think they can access radio anywhere, whenever they wish to. In addition, whilst radio researchers regard radio as an intimate medium (Crisell 2002; Street 2002), significantly less than half (approximately 40%, n=927) of Vietnamese participants in Vietnam agree (Table

4). At this point, a number of questions arise: Whether radio (in Vietnam in particular) has lost its strong characteristics and why my online participants have low levels of knowledge about the strengths and recent developments of radio.

Which of these following statements do you agree with?	Home participants		Overseas Participants	
	No.	%	No.	%
Radio will eventually be replaced by other media including television and the Internet	346/932	37.1	39/275	14.2
Radio is, and continues to be, an important medium of information and entertainment in my life	153/929	16.5	138/274	50.4
Radio is the fastest medium	121/929	13	28/275	10
Radio is the least costly medium	662/937	70.6	217/275	78.9
You can listen to radio anywhere you want	458/928	49.4	203/275	73.8
Radio is an effective information and entertainment medium, accessible while other activities are undertaken	389/928	41.9	165/275	60
Radio is the most intimate medium	375/927	40.5	185/274	67.5

Table 4. Geographic location vs. Awareness of participants of radio's characteristics and future

Whilst the quantitative research had identified a gap between the natural characteristics of radio and the perceptions of participants about it, the qualitative research - to some extent - exposed the reasons for this gap. As radio communicates with listeners via the personalities of radio presenters (Barnett and Morrison 1989, p.4), the ways presenters deliver information are extremely important in strengthening the relationship between radio and its audience. However, many listeners in the qualitative research state that they are not interested by the ways presenters deliver information.

So monotonous! Some male presenters had no emotion or passion for presenting news... er... not only news, but also features, and reports and even in interviews! Their voices were so boring, regardless of the rhythm of the Vietnamese language...I have to say that female presenters broadcast better...

(Male, 34, office worker, non-radio listener)

According to a number of participants, VOV presenters deliver information as if they are reading, not talking intimately to their audience. Supported by the information provided by VOV journalists in the previous chapter, it is found that solemn broadcasting is and continues to be a problem in a significant number of radio programmes. However, on the other hand, a number of participants in my qualitative research complain that some radio presenters cannot articulate well, either they use too many interjections such as er, um, well, etc, or stammer, which annoys participants or affects their listening.

I listened to a number of live programmes on radio. However, I think some presenters were not confident when talking. As they spoke they stumbled over their words and used too many er, um, uh, etc ... when talking. It is annoying, isn't it?

(Female, 27, office worker, non-radio listener)

Adopting a friendly manner in presenting and delivering information will create pleasant feelings for listeners (Street 2002) and vice versa. My findings suggest that the presenting style in Vietnamese radio is the reason why the percentage of participants who regard radio as an intimate medium is considerably low in the quantitative research.

In addition, the quantitative research not only demonstrates the undervaluation of radio's characteristics by participants, but also reveals the low level of general knowledge about radio amongst these groups. Regarding ways people can listen to radio, at present, listeners have the ability to listen to radio via AM/FM, digital radio, digital television, satellite, a computer or a mobile phone. However, whilst 88.6% (n=1205) participants in the quantitative research are aware of their ability to listen to radio via AM/FM, there are modest numbers of participants who know that it is possible to listen to radio via digital radio, digital television and satellite radio, 30%, 14.4%, and 7%, respectively¹¹⁸. The lack of knowledge about ways to listen to radio in the Digital

¹¹⁸ It is important to note that digital radio has not yet been launched in Vietnam and digital television is in an experimental stage. Perhaps that is a reason why my participants in Vietnam have a low perception about the new ways to listen to radio via digital radio and digital television.

Age may reflect a lack of attention towards radio by these participants, and perhaps, a lack of information provided by radio stations for their listeners. These groups of participants belong to the 'elite' groups of audiences in Vietnam, in terms of educational achievement. Therefore, by and large, the awareness of normal Vietnamese people towards radio and radio's variants is likely to be even lower.

However, at least, there is promising news for web radio producers as the number of respondents who are aware that they can listen to radio via the Internet is relatively high, 60.6% (n=1202). One of the interesting findings of my quantitative research is that 85.3% (n=727) of those who know that radio can be listened to via the Internet have listened to web radio.

Interestingly, whilst in Vietnam radio is regarded as a medium for the poor, and traditionally has more listeners from rural areas, amongst overseas participants - who live in relatively higher living standard environments - the percentage listening to radio was found in my quantitative research (ibid) to be significantly higher than that of domestic participants. The differences in consuming media behaviour between the participants in Vietnam and those overseas will be highlighted in the following section.

7.3. DIFFERENCES IN MEDIA CONSUMPTION AND PERCEPTIONS BETWEEN WEB USERS: BOTH DOMESTIC AND ABROAD

The comparison of media consumption and perceptions between web users at home and abroad may enable Vietnamese media producers to understand better their target audience groups, both at home and abroad. More importantly, as the participants abroad predominantly live in relatively higher technology surroundings where there is greater competition between mass media - these features are evolving in Vietnamese society - their perceptions and opinions about media may reflect those of the Vietnamese audiences in the future.

		Daily		Several times a week		Weekly		Monthly		Less than monthly		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Television	People at home	813	87.5	89	9.6	18	1.9	8	0.9	1	0.1	929
	People abroad	191	69.7	68	24.8	7	2.6	8	2.9	-	-	274
Newspapers	People at home	444	48	255	27.6	180	19.5	21	2.3	25	2.7	925
	People abroad	82	29.9	68	24.8	73	26.6	19	6.9	32	11.7	274
Magazines	People at home	153	16.8	328	36	176	19.3	160	17.6	93	10.2	910
	People abroad	29	10.8	56	20.9	52	19.4	63	23.5	68	25.4	268
Radio	People at home	258	27.7	219	23.5	104	11.2	91	9.8	259	27.8	931
	People abroad	94	34.6	63	23.2	56	20.6	16	5.9	43	15.8	272
Internet	People at home	825	88.4	88	9.4	14	1.5	6	0.6	-	-	933
	People abroad	267	97.8	5	1.8	1	0.4	-	-	-	-	273

Table 5. Media consumption patterns

The figures in Table 5 are self-explanatory. However, one or two are worthy of special mention. According to my online survey, Vietnamese web users abroad seem to watch television and read newspapers less frequently than web users in Vietnam, but more often log on to the Internet, and listen to radio. Just 29.9% of the Vietnamese participants overseas read newspapers every day, compared to 48% of those living in Vietnam. Moreover, the number of television viewers amongst Vietnamese participants abroad is significantly lower than that of those living in Vietnam, 70% and 87.5%, respectively.

Interestingly, the overseas Vietnamese community seem to spend more time listening to radio and surfing the Internet. 34.6% (n=272) of overseas participants listened to the radio every day, whilst only 27.7% (n=931) of the Vietnamese domestic audience listened to it on a daily basis.

The overall differences in radio listening between participants at home and abroad are entirely consistent with listeners' perception of radio's role in their lives and their general knowledge about the development of radio in Vietnam. It should be noted that overseas participants have more knowledge about the ways they can listen to radio (See Table 6). The number of overseas participants who know that they can listen to digital radio, digital television, computer or satellite radio, is significantly higher than that of those living in Vietnam, by 32.4%, 14.2%, 21.2% and 7.6%, respectively.

Medium		Home Participants	Overseas Participants
AM/FM	No.	823/931	245/274
	%	88.4	89.4
Digital Radio	No.	212/926	151/273
	%	22.9	55.3
Digital television	No.	104/926	69/272
	%	11.2	25.4
Via the Internet	No.	519/929	209/271
	%	55.9	77.1
Via Satellite	No.	49/924	35/271
	%	5.3	12.9
Via Mobile	No.	353/924	88/271
	%	38.2	32.5

Table 6. Differences in awareness of the ways radio can be listened to, between home and overseas participants.

Furthermore, overseas participants express more positive views about the future of radio than domestic participants. The number of domestic participants in my quantitative research who believe that radio will eventually be replaced by other media is approximately 2.5 times higher than that of overseas participants, 37.1% (n=935) and 14.2% (n=275), respectively. Whilst seven out of ten (73.8%, n=275) overseas

participants believe that they can listen to radio everywhere they want to, less than 50% of participants in Vietnam agree. Amongst the overseas Vietnamese participants, more than 67% perceive radio as an intimate medium, compared with only 40% of the home audience. Moreover, the number of overseas participants who regard radio as an effective secondary information and entertainment medium (while they are undertaking a primary task), is approximately one and a half times higher than that of participants in Vietnam (60%, n=275 and 41.9%, n=928, respectively).

It was found that overseas audiences have more information than home audiences about ways they can listen to radio. Nearly 78% (n=267) of web users abroad are aware of their ability to listen to radio via the Internet, compared with 55.9% (n=931) of web users at home. Moreover, those who live abroad have more experience with the Internet than those at home. The percentage of overseas participants who have been accessing the Internet for more than 5 years is 24.1% higher than that of home participants (69.5% and 45.4%, respectively).

From the evidence of the online survey, it is thought that overseas participants may acquire more information about radio's adaptations in the new environment of technological developments in which they live than those living in Vietnam. A better understanding of radio's development (via various variants in the Digital Age) may enable overseas participants to listen to radio more often than the respondents in Vietnam, and as a result, have more belief in the future of radio than the Vietnamese home participants. In other words, participants in Vietnam do not only listen to radio less than those who are abroad, but also have less information about, and consequently belief in, the future development of the radio industry. That is to say, listening behaviour has a strong correlation with knowledge about radio and belief regarding its development. Therefore, increasing the ownership of radio sets by popularising radio, providing information about radio's development and promoting its future may strengthen listenership and encourage audiences to listen to radio.

7.4. NON-RADIO LISTENERS: WHY DID THEY WALK AWAY?

Without an explanation of the reasons why audiences walked away from radio, radio in Vietnam will not be able to identify ways to develop and compete with visual media to

maximise their audiences. With this in mind, five groups of non-radio listeners were formed and after five discussions - for the first time via focus group interviews - the characteristics of these audiences were established. The reasons which cause participants to leave radio can be separated into two main categories: the lifestyle of Vietnamese people in what is a transitional period, and the services of radio (the delivery of information and entertainment) - the VOV service in particular, and the radio industry in Vietnam in general.

A number of issues related to the lifestyle of the majority of the urban population in Hanoi, for example transportation, public loudspeakers and breakfast habits significantly affect the behaviour of radio listening.

The main transportation in Hanoi, in particular, and other cities in Vietnam in general, is the motorbike. In Hanoi, while the population is just over 3 million (Hanoi People's Committee 2008), there are almost 2 million motorbikes (Capital Security Newspaper 2007, p.1). Most participants in my qualitative research have motorbikes and use them as their main means of transportation, none state that they listen to any kind of audio device when driving, particularly when wearing a motor helmet. This feature makes audiences in Hanoi different from those in developed countries, where cars and public transportation are the main mode of transport for city-dwellers, and listening to radio when driving is a popular activity.

However, it is worth bearing in mind that the number of motorbikes in Hanoi has exceeded the capacity of the physical infrastructure (Doan Loan 2006). Many problems are caused by the overload of motorbikes such as traffic congestion - not only at peak hours - and a significant increase in fatal traffic accidents. In Hanoi alone, there are approximately 1000 traffic accidents annually, which cause thousands of deaths and injuries (ibid). Also, hitherto unmentioned, is the problem of pollution in the environment. While the Hanoi authorities are applying strategies to reduce the number of motorbikes and increase public transportation, it should be noted that the number of moneyed classes in Vietnam has increased significantly after the Economic Renovation 1986. Even though vehicle prices in Vietnam are among the highest worldwide due to high import tariffs and taxes (Thanhvien Newspaper 2006), the number of car owners has increased notably during recent years. According to the Vietnam Automobile

Manufacturers' Association (VAMA, cited Thanhnien Newspaper 2006), car sales in Vietnam (by 12 foreign-backed firms) rose 21 percent in December 2006 from the previous year. A country of 84 million people now has approximately 680,000 registered vehicles and adds 3,500 each month to the total (Thanhnien Newspaper 2006). In the near future, when car ownership and public transportation become more popular in Vietnam, it is anticipated that the number of radio listeners will increase, as more people listen to radio or download programmes on their audio devices while driving or travelling via public transportation.

Furthermore, it is the ubiquitous presence of public loudspeakers mentioned in a number of discussions in the qualitative research that is a possible reason why people do not to listen to radio. One of the interesting aspects of the study is that the discussions became extremely animated when people talked about public loudspeaker systems in Hanoi¹¹⁹. Each district has a specific radio station, broadcast via electric wires to public loudspeakers, the times of the broadcasts vary from station to station, normally between 5.30-7 am. Across the discussions, it was found that, generally, the district radio stations broadcast from between 30 minutes and one hour in the morning and possibly another 30 minutes in the afternoon (around 5.30 pm).

Even though the stations broadcast at different times, the problems they cause for the participants are similar, including bad reception, inappropriate timing of broadcast and poor quality of programmes.

¹¹⁹ The loudspeaker systems were set up in 1954 (Mai Thanh Thu 2000, p.8), when the Communist Party took over the North of Vietnam, and continue to exist up to the present time, not only in rural but also urban areas in Vietnam. During the Vietnam War and the subsidised period, the public loudspeakers had a particularly important role in informing and entertaining people (See Chapter IV and V). At that time, very few families could afford to own a radio set. The circulations of newspapers were especially limited and the number of television sets was 'counted on one's fingers' (Hoang Thanh Ha 1996, p.5). Regularly, in the morning and afternoon, at specific times, dozens of citizens gathered under a loudspeaker to listen to radio programmes. Until now, the loudspeaker systems continue through electric wire broadcasts, organised by local authorities. Apart from a limited number of radio programmes transmitted simultaneously from VOV1, local wire radio stations broadcast their own programmes, which are mostly propaganda news, local instructions and music.

...They [local radio producers] broadcast from 5.30 am, and you know, via loudspeakers, so, I cannot sleep, no matter how late I stay up the night before. The problem is I often stay up late at night, er, usually over midnight, you know, I study, or if I do not study, I need to go out with my friends, or at least watch some programmes on the television. Therefore, the morning radio programmes are annoying...

(Female, 20, student)

Another male participant (28, office worker) irritably states that he cannot believe that the public loudspeakers continue to exist in the Digital Age, in urban areas, such as in Hanoi, where people have numerous opportunities to access information from various sources. He continues:

... What kind of programmes are on these local radio stations? Just some news, warning about security issues, reminding people to go to the local meeting, informing retired people when their pensions are available to collect, or informing about new policies and instructions from the Central or Local authorities. Moreover, the transmission is terrible with a lot of interferences and atmospheric...

(Male, 28, office worker)

On the other hand, more than one participant were less critical of the public loudspeakers and local radio, broadcast via electronic wire. However, although having accepted that the loudspeakers are reminiscent of a remarkable period in Vietnamese history - when dozens of people gathered to listen to news and current affairs every morning and afternoon - they also think that the public loudspeaker's time has passed.

At the moment, it becomes an obsession for me when I have to listen to such imposed noise and imposed information.

(Male, 33, office worker)

More importantly, a number of participants state that they cannot listen to their own radio sets during their preparations to go to work, on the way to work, and returning home, as the sounds from public loudspeakers are always ever-present - noisier than the average volume they wish to use to listen to their own radio. In addition, a number of participants perceive loudspeaker 'radio' and radio as one, as in the Vietnamese

language, both can be referred to by the same word - 'đài'. At present, the public loudspeaker system seems an unsuitable means for satisfying the need of urban audiences in Vietnam. Furthermore, it engenders an antipathy to radio and discourages audiences from listening to radio.

The issue related to local radio stations and the public loudspeaker systems in Hanoi, in particular and in major cities in general, has been raised several times in the mass media. Opinions raised included the possibility of dismantling these systems, however the public loudspeakers remained in existence at the time I conducted the focus group interviews. It is possible that in the near future - because local news and information is still very useful and valuable for communities - the local public loudspeakers can become community radio stations similar to those in developed countries.

The quantitative research found that just less than 60% (n=928) of domestic participants regard radio as an effective information and entertainment medium which they access while they are undertaking other activities. According to the latest survey conducted by VOV (2001), 65% of participants stated that they did not listen to radio because they did not have time to do so, regardless of the fact that radio is considered a secondary medium - a source of companionship (Barnett and Morrison 1989, p.3) that allows people to work and listen at the same time (Crisell 2002; Douglas 1999; Street 2002) - a very different experience from watching television or reading a newspaper. The possible explanations for this phenomenon were highlighted in the qualitative research undertaken at the follow-up stage. Amongst these explanations, the lifestyle, (including breakfast habits) of the majority of participants was found to be a key issue.

In Hanoi, the official working day begins at 7.30 am, or 8.00 am (in some special circumstances). This is quite early, therefore, most participants do not have sufficient time to cook a breakfast at home. They prefer to have a bowl of noodle from a mobile vendor (hang rong) on their way to work or place of study, or buy a snack of steamed glutinous rice to eat during their break. The typical time taken to prepare for work or study for participants is just 15 to 20 minutes for male participants and 30 - 45 minutes for female participants, this was found across all discussions. This means the gap between waking and departure is too short to allow radio listening, for a number of participants.

I am always in a hurry in the morning. I wake up earlier than my husband. I try to be ready before he wakes up, and I have to prepare for my children to go to school as well. I try to do every thing quickly and quietly, otherwise I will disturb my husband or my parent-in-law's sleep. Furthermore, I do not have a radio in my room. There is only one in my parent-in-law's room.

(Female, 32, office worker)

Her routine in the morning is quite typical in discussions, however in order to understand this explanation better, it is important to discuss about the housing issue of the majority of non - radio listeners in Hanoi. Urban housing has been a difficult social problem that has occupied the attention of the state and social organisations over 50 years. In Hanoi, for example, there were 6 square metres of housing per capita in 1954; by 1994, this figure had dropped to 4m² per capita¹²⁰ (Boothroyd and Pham 2000). It has not come back to nearly 6m² of housing per capital until recently (Hanoi People's Committee 2005), due to a Government policy resulting in a movement for "the state and people to join efforts" to build and repair houses. There are a significant number of city-dwellers continue to live in a shared house or tube house¹²¹, where there is no

¹²⁰In the period from 1965 to 1975, the state budget was used in the North to build neighbourhood units with two- to five-storey apartment buildings, based on the Soviet model. Due to a lack of experience in urban planning and management, the state paid more attention to the construction of houses rather than the organization of urban space and infrastructure according to a master plan. Thus, housing construction in this period exceeded the capacity of the physical infrastructure such as water, drainage, electricity, roads, and environmental sanitation.

In the period of totally subsidized housing, the state endeavoured to serve as the sole producer and distributor of housing for most urban residents. This system did not work as effectively as expected. The main reason for the shortcomings was the imbalance between supply and demand, financial constraints of the state budget, and difficulties in the administrative allocation of housing which created many disputes and complaints. The policy of state subsidization and distribution of housing fostered a passive behaviour among urban residents who did not care to maintain their houses because maintenance was viewed as the state's responsibility. The outcome of these policies was that up to the early 1990s, only 30 percent of the state's employees, mainly those in Northern cities, received housing from the state. The remaining 70 percent had to make their own housing arrangements or live in very poor conditions (Viet Nam Ministry of Construction 1996 cite Boothroyd and Pham 2000).

¹²¹ The term "tube house" is informally used to refer to the traditional type of urban building in Hanoi. These one- and two-storey structures are characterized by their narrow street-frontage (two -

private room except bedrooms. For many participants, they do not want to tune the radio in the morning as it may disturb other family members, or other people in the shared house.

Generally speaking, the group of non-radio listeners seem to not have time to listen to radio, or more likely, they do not have a right time to listen to it. In the morning, they are all in a hurry to go to work or study. In addition, having lived in a shared house or tube house, they do not tune the radio in the morning as it may disturb other people. Exclusive of the fact that for those living near the main street, the noise from a loudspeaker already exists, and is loud enough that should and could not add to any extra sound (from a radio). All of participants use motorbikes as their main means of transportation (as previously discussed). At their office or study places, there is no radio set. Later, back home at 6.00 pm or 6.30 pm, participants reported that they tend to switch on the television. Throughout the day, participants do not find time for radio. Perhaps, this is a possible reason why 65% of participants in VOV's survey (2001, p.17) stated that they did not have time to listen to radio.

Apart from their lifestyles, the main reasons why these participants become non-radio listeners are radio's content and services. Notwithstanding the presentation issue, mentioned previously, which may discourage participants from listening to radio, the qualitative research also found a number of important factors causing listeners to neglect radio. Amongst radio's services, radio programming, radio writing and radio presenters are central problems.

A male participant (31, office worker), who although he listens to a few VOV programmes broadcast via loudspeaker every week, does not identify himself as a radio listener. He offers further explanations for his opinions about radio:

The programmes provided by VOV are not my style. I do not want to listen to these boring broadcasts. Whenever there is news on the radio, for example news about a ceremony or meeting or

to four-metres) and extreme depth in from the street (twenty - to forty-metres or more), and their mix of residential and commercial street-front activities.

conference, you always have to listen to such a long name list - including their official titles - of politicians, officers or VIPs who attended that event. The purpose of the event is mentioned somewhere at the end of the news, when you feel already tired of listening.

(Male, 31, office worker)

This opinion was concurred with by other members of the group, in discussion. Another female, 25, office worker reveals:

The radio programmes were not interesting, even news and current affairs. The quotations from the Party and Government Instructions, Resolutions, Reports or Documents were repeated regularly on air. Other articles or features were boring as well. Most of them refer to positive news about practical life. Others just purely informed of progress, for example, at present this factory produced how many pairs of shoes, or this company achieved how many percent of their target figure or how many hectares of rice this province had grown. That was it! I found very little interesting information on the radio.

“It is getting worse on Anniversaries, for example Victory Day, Independent Day or Army Day. You will find similar programmes from year to year for these days”, another opinion from a non-radio listener, who is female, 20, student.

A large number of participants give up listening to radio because they find other media faster in delivering information. A male participant, 36, says that he used to listen to radio. However, he stopped listening a long time ago. He talked to the group about his negative experience of VOV, when, in 1990, American forces invaded Iraq. He had to wait until the news programmes at 12 am to learn about the invasion, even though the event happened in the morning of that day. Another participant (male, 34) also talks to the group his experience related to the September 11, 2001 event in New York. While all other media broadcast this news, VOV did not broadcast detail about the event until the programme ‘International Current Affairs’ was aired. A number of participants share the same opinion that VOV is cautious when broadcasting international news; as a result, it is often later than other international media.

Regarding the group of young participants (students), they say that VOV programmes are monotonous, with many propaganda programmes and less music - which are not

suiting to their tastes. A number of other participants (office workers) state (jokingly) that VOV programmes are more suitable for retired people, for old veterans or Army people.

It is important to note that, apart from the contents of programmes and programming, it is radio's lack of promotion which militates against listening to radio. A significant number of participants were not aware of changes in radio programming, therefore, they continue to hold negative perceptions about the (previous) VOV programmes. A female (35, office worker) remembers that she used to listen to radio in the morning. One of the reasons she gave up listening is:

In the morning, I want to hear some brief important news, not music. I want to have thoughtful programmes with high speed of rhythm to help me feel more enthusiastic. I cannot stand the programmes with a slow attitude, and a lot of advertisements!

This style of broadcasting referred to by the participant was adopted by VOV in the 1990s, but ceased to be used by the early 2000s. However, this female participant had given up listening before knowing that VOV had made changes in 2003 and again in 2006 in programming, especially in morning programmes.

It should be noted that this female participant's story is not an isolated case. Many participants in the qualitative research state that they cannot find their favourite programmes. A female participant, 19, says that she wants to listen to pop music programmes, which she accidentally found on air. However, she does not know when VOV broadcast this type of programme. If she turns on the radio by chance, she may find a programme for *Ageing People* or an *Agriculture and Countryside* programme or a *For Army People* programme.

Her view is supported by another male participant, 33, in the group discussion, who says that he feels disappointed after several attempts at listening, as he only gets either chamber music, or programme for 'Overseas Audiences'. He also remembers that during the early 1990s, he always had to wait until 8pm to listen to a 'Pop Music Programme' on VOV1. However, nowadays he has more opportunities to listen to Pop Music via other media, and his regular listening habits regarding radio have already ceased.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is difficult to identify the specific 'characteristics' of different radio channels in Vietnam, because all channels are mixed channels, except the newly re-established VOV3 - the first music channel for the target group 16 to 35, first aired on September 2006.

Apart from the programme schedules, which are broadcast several times on air, it is very difficult to find any newspaper published radio schedules or highlighted radio programmes, as discussed previously. It should be noted that none of the local radio stations publishes their own publications to promote radio programmes either. The quantitative research also found that the number of participants, who know VOV website address via on - air programmes, is just 21% (n=521). It should be emphasised that as discussed in Chapter III, Western media, whenever it is possible, always take advantages from other medium to strengthen its position, especially in driving audiences back and forth between them. It indicates that there is a big room for VOV to strengthen its position and listenership via utilising other media, including its publications and the Internet.

Apart from the main reasons discussed above, some participants state that the poor reception they receive via their radio sets is an additional reason why they rarely listen to radio, whilst a number of participants express that they always prefer visual media than radio.

Therefore, having addressed the question 'Do you want to listen to radio again?', opinions of 32 participants, who rarely or do not listen to radio, categorised in two groups. One group (over one third of the participants - 12/32) continue to maintain their belief that they will not listen to radio in the future. One male participant (24) affirms that he does not enjoy listening to radio very much and he can live happily without it, while another female participant (20) says that radio is not "rice" for her (a necessary element of her daily life), and it does not matter if she listens or does not.

Conversely, the other two thirds of participants state that if there were a radio set available at a convenient time, and informative and interesting programmes broadcast, they would like to listen to radio again. In other words, the majority of participants may listen to radio again, but it is not an unconditional relationship. Listeners do not want to

commit their time to select and listen to radio, but expect radio to bring valuable information and entertainment to them when they need it. In addition, increasing accessibility to radio is also a key issue to re-attract radio listeners.

7.5. THE PROFILE OF RADIO LISTENERS: WHO ARE THEY?

This section will provide information about the groups of radio listeners, identify their characteristics, and, more importantly, explore their motivations for their loyalties to radio. Interestingly, whilst the groups of non-radio listeners complain about radio programmes and presenters, a number of radio listeners, particularly in the relatively aged groups, compliment VOV programming and its presenting.

They [VOV] have changed a lot. More news, I think, therefore, more up-dated information, focusing on public concerns, for example, the programme last week about the problem of children from rural areas leaving schools to go to Hanoi to earn money, or the programme yesterday criticising actions in the Ministry of Transportation [PMU18]. I think they are good programmes...

(Male, 34, office worker)

As mentioned in the previous sector, during the last decade, VOV has improved significantly its programmes and programming. Since 2004, the number of news and current affairs programmes in VOV1 (the General News and Current Affairs Channel) has increased from 10 to 16 (Vu Thi Lan Anh 2004, p.5). In other words, instead of 90 minutes of news per day, as it previously was, at present, VOV1 broadcasts in total 180 minutes of news (Dong Manh Hung 2006, p.31). Moreover, from the 1st May 2006, 25 newly structured programmes began broadcasting via VOV1, which focused on the most public concerns, including employment, youth's forum and religions (V.H 2006).

However, even in the groups who listen to VOV the most, participants continue to complain that there is significant potential for VOV radio producers to improve their programmes. Before examining audience desires and aspirations in greater detail in the following chapter, it is necessary to investigate their demography as well as the lifestyles of radio listeners in order to understand their media consuming behaviour as well as features affecting their listening behaviours.

It is important, bearing in mind that there is a significant geographical effect regarding radio listeners. Whilst at the time of the interviews all participants identified themselves as living in Hanoi: more than one third of (12 out of 33) radio listeners originally came from rural areas. They were living in Hanoi in either University Halls or rented houses. Seven of the 12 participants state that since moving to Hanoi, their time spent listening to radio has been reduced (however, they still listen to radio for approximately half an hour per day, several days a week). The remaining five participants state that they continue to listen to radio as often as they used to listen in their hometown, usually in the early morning, afternoon or late at night.

The other 21 students and office workers in the group of radio listeners are Hanoian. They often listen to radio when cooking and eating dinner, alone in their homes. A number of listeners listen at night to the programmes, 'Reading stories at night' or 'News at the end of the day', before going to sleep.

It may come as a surprise that a number of office workers state that they have developed a regular habit of listening to radio when they began using a proper kitchen situated in a separate room. As mentioned previously, housing in Hanoi in particular has been a difficult social problem that has occupied the attention of the state and social organizations for more than 50 years. According to an official document (Hanoi People's Committee 2003), Hanoi has a population density approximately 12 times higher than that of the national average, and is the city with the highest population density in Vietnam. Therefore, the socio-economic strategy of Hanoi for 2010 and 2020 is to build a number of urban areas in order to relocate residents from the centre of Hanoi.

One female participant (21, student) says that her family started listening to radio when they moved to a new flat in Trung Hoa - Nhan Chinh (a new developing area in Hanoi). Previously, her family lived in Hang Bo street in the ancient quarter of central Hanoi, where six households share a two-storey building. There was a lack of space to dry clothes and no outdoor space for leisure activities. The residents recently made a great effort to improve and enlarge the small spaces they occupy. Her family utilised the balcony to build a kitchen. Within a small area of the balcony, approximately 3m², there were usually oil-burning stoves, a small kitchen cupboard, a china cabinet, and

very small area for one person to cook. Because there were a large number of households and individual people living in this building, the house was always noisy, especially during the early evening when all of the families had to cook and eat dinner that they did not need any background sound from a radio. Since moving to a two bedroom flat in one of the developing areas in Hanoi, her family has a 13-14m² kitchen and dining room. Her father bought a radio and her family now enjoy listening to it when cooking and eating dinner.

This participant's story is quite typical, as currently, an increasing number of middle-class Vietnamese people are moving to the developing areas in Hanoi where new buildings provide an improved standard of infrastructure, including clean water, modern sewage systems and local amenities. According to the development strategy for 2010 (Hanoi People's Committee 2005), in 2010, the standard housing per capita in Hanoi will be 8-9 square meters. By that time, many households in Hanoi will have a proper kitchen and perhaps, their family will have an individual environment in which to listen to radio.

Three out of ten radio listeners state that they maintain a regular habit of listening to news programmes at night before going to sleep. According to a male participant (35, office worker), he prefers the late night news on radio to that of television, because he can turn off the light and listen to radio whilst falling asleep. "The television's screen, when the light is turned off, is very annoying", he explains. Another female participant (32, office worker) says that she has the habit of listening to radio in bed, because when "closing your eyes, letting a radio presenter lull you to sleep is very much a pleasure". It should be noted that, from 11pm, VOV broadcasts very light programmes, including 'Reading Stories at Night' or 'Reciting Poems' or 'Programmes for Couples', often broadcast by famous presenters. She states that in the 'Reading Stories at Night' programme, the radio presenters talk sotto voce, and, "they are talking as if they are telling to you, personally, a story". Therefore, as Barnett and Morrison (1989) stated, it should be borne in mind that the feelings of intimacy created by radio are attributed to the intimate nature of what is heard as much as to the private nature of the medium itself.

Four out of the 33 participants have cars, and all of them state that they often listen to audio output while driving. They state that driving is undertaken in an empty atmosphere. As radio is a means of mitigating feelings of loneliness (Barnett and Morrison 1989, p.2), listening while driving creates interest; as it improves their mood and cheers them up when they are alone. Significantly, participants reported that they use radio to alleviate the boredom of a car journey – or to keep them awake and alert. In addition, they may be updated with information when driving. However, participants also mention that they do not always listen to radio while driving, unless interesting news or current affairs or music programmes are being broadcast. If there were no interesting programmes, they would change to listening to music via CDs. In other words, an opportunity is available in these instances for radio to capture listeners; however, the key to success (in capturing listeners) lies in the quality of radio programmes.

It should be noted that the majority of the 33 radio listeners know that they can listen to radio online, and 23 of them actually have listened to it. The number of web radio participants in the radio listener group is much higher than that of the group who rarely listen to radio, 23/33 and 5/32, respectively.

Therefore, it is worth reiterating that most web radio listeners are people who are already regular listeners to traditional radio. They go online to listen to their missed favourite programmes, especially music programmes, or enjoy the pleasure of listening while surfing the web. Most participants in the qualitative research state that they listen to the radio for the music. However, a number of participants say they listen to hear news programmes.

One of the most interesting features of the interviews is that, amongst the groups of participants who identify themselves as radio listeners, there are also a number of participants who do not often listen to traditional radio, but listen to radio online. In addition, there are a number of participants stating that they gave up listening to radio long time ago and returned to listening after listening to radio online. Significantly, a number of participants state that since they began listening to VOVNews they realised that VOV has made significant changes in its programmes and they listen to radio when it is convenient for them. A male (31, office worker) says that he began listening to

radio recently when his friend sent him a link of VOVNews about an entertainment programme. He discovered several radio programmes on that site, and listened to them. He found it was a pleasure to listen to the on-demand programmes, especially music programmes, and started listening to radio occasionally while online. Additionally, he remembers that there is a radio in his house, and since then, he often listens to it before going to bed because: “The music on radio in the evening was targeted at me” (Male, 25, office worker).

Even though they comprise a small group of participants at the moment, their listening habits offer a signal for a new and significant trend in radio listening communities in Vietnam: the web radio listener community.

Summary

Having combined both the qualitative and quantitative research, this chapter has not only identified the demographic characteristics of web users - the new emerging and dramatically increasing groups of audiences (the groups who currently listen to radio the least) - but more importantly, explored their media consuming habits, their perceptions, attitudes and opinions towards radio and the Internet. It was found that whilst continuing to regard television as a primary medium for information and entertainment, the majority of participants chose the Internet as their future media. Moreover, it was found that radio is the medium utilised the least when receiving information and entertainment for these groups of audiences.

Interestingly, listening behaviour correlates with, or more likely, is in direct proportion to, participants' general knowledge about the development of radio and their belief in radio's future. Whilst the Internet's usage has increased dramatically during the last few decades, it has provided, and continues to be an important platform for any enterprise to advertise their products, including the media industry. Significantly, in terms of media, the Internet is not only a promotional tool, but actually, a new medium of information and entertainment, and has created a complex situation where it has become a platform for all traditional media to demonstrate their representatives (chapter IV).

Therefore, as discussed in chapter IV, the Internet is not only a rival, but also a supporter for traditional media, including radio. Via the quantitative and qualitative research, it was found that there is a signal in the return of radio listening amongst the groups who listen to traditional radio the least. The percentage of respondents who are aware that they can listen to radio via the Internet is relatively high, compared with the awareness of their ability to listen to radio via digital radio, digital television or satellite radio, 60.6%, 32%, 14.5%, 7.8%, respectively. In addition, amongst those who know that they can listen to radio via the Internet, 85.3% (n=727) have listened to web radio.

Most importantly, the majority of non-radio listeners reported that they would be interested in listening to radio again, if radio provided interesting programmes that were highly accessible at convenient times. Since listeners can listen to radio via their computers, radio's accessibility increases significantly, and the global reach characteristics of web radio indeed provides greater choices for listeners. It is presumed that the development of web radio may offer a new way for radio to develop and capture larger audiences. The following chapter will identify the characteristics of web radio listeners, their demands and needs regarding radio and web radio, in order to evaluate the role of web radio in radio development in the Internet Age.

Chapter VIII:

CAN WEB RADIO CAPTURE THE GROUPS WHO HAVE NEGLECTED TRADITIONAL RADIO?

The findings discussed in the previous chapter have provided promising potentials for radio producers, in the sense that there is a sign of a resurgence of radio occurring in groups of web users - those who may listen the least to traditional radio. Interestingly, the significant catalytic effect for the return to radio by listeners is online radio. At this point, a number of questions arise: who are web radio's listeners; what are their needs and demands towards radio and web radio, particularly VOV and VOVNews; do they listen to web radio by chance or intentionally, and for these groups, whether listening to radio online is just an incidental action or will it become a habit? This chapter endeavours to discover the answers to these questions in order to explore whether web radio is a means to capture the groups of listeners who have neglected traditional radio.

8.1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WEB RADIO LISTENERS: WEB USERS VS. WEB RADIO LISTENERS

The previous chapter has identified the characteristics of web users, in which they emerged as young academics and professionals, who have obtained relatively higher educational attainment, and consequently, comparatively higher incomes than the average general population in Vietnam. In other words, web users belong to 'elite' groups within the general population in Vietnam, in terms of educational achievement and income. However, according to the figures shown in Table 7, it is found that web radio listeners belong to a further 'elite' within those groups, as they are web users of a particular age range, educational attainment and online experience.

Many web radio listeners have obtained College or University degrees, in addition, one third have completed higher education. The educational attainment of web radio listeners is significantly higher than the average educational degree web users obtain. As discussed in the previous chapter, with higher educational attainment, web radio

listeners tend to have relatively high status occupation, and consequently, higher income than the average general population in Vietnam.

		Web Users	Web radio listeners
Educational Attainment	Secondary School	1.2%	0.3%
	High School	7.9	6.3
	College/University	64.8%	62.9%
	Higher Education	26.1%	30.6%
Age	Under 20	3.6%	-
	20-34	73.4%	68.2%
	35-49	17.4%	21.2%
	50-64	5.0%	10.6%
	Over 65	0.7%	-
Gender	Male	60%	77.6%
	Female	40%	22.4%
Online experience	Less than 1 year	1.2%	-
	1 to 3 years	16.6%	10.6%
	3-5 years	27.6%	17.6%
	Over 5 years	50.9%	68.2%
	Do not remember	3.7%	3.5%

Table 7. Web users vs. Web radio listeners: Demographic profile

Moreover, most web radio listeners identified themselves as young, but not teenaged. None of the web radio listeners are aged under 20 or over 65. None have been accessing the Internet for less than 1 year, conversely, 68% have used the Internet for more than 5 years (Table 7), therefore, web radio listeners can be said to be experienced Internet users. The possible explanation for this finding is that listening to radio online belongs to 'exploring activities' within the Internet, which occurs mostly within the groups who are experienced web users, but also those young enough to be interested in discovering and exploring new media.

It should be emphasised that in Vietnam, the majority of traditional radio listeners are older people. People who were aged between 20 and 40, listened to radio the least, whereas people over 50, especially those over 60, listened to radio the most (VOV 2001a, p.10; Tran Huu Quang 2001). Conversely, web radio listeners are young.

Possibly, because the Internet is a relatively new technology - which has developed dramatically over the last decade - the majority of online users are young people. In this sense, via web radio, the radio listener community in Vietnam is regenerated.

Furthermore, between web users and web radio listeners, there are not only significant discrepancies across age ranges, but also across gender lines. The quantitative research found that the number of female participants who have ever listened to web radio is just one third of that of male participants (74.1% and 25.9%, respectively). Whilst the difference across gender is not surprising¹²², the discrepancy across the age ranges of female participants is. Almost all female participants who have listened to web radio are aged between 20 and 34. In the age group between 35 and 49, only 8.9% of female web users have listened to web radio, compared with 21% of male web users in the same age group. In the age group between 50 and 64 years old, the percentage of males listening to web radio is six times higher than that of females, 6.4% and 1%, respectively. Once again, males appear to be more active and more interested in new technologies than females. This phenomenon was observed in the early days of radio, when men were more interested in wires and crystal sets, and radio became an extension of the male identity (Douglas 1999, p.73).

Additionally, the quantitative research found that web radio listeners not only belong to an 'elite' group of web users, but also are those who have more knowledge of radio, especially ways to listen to radio in the Digital Age, and consequently, have a stronger belief on the future development of radio.

Table 8 demonstrates that the number of web radio listeners, who are aware of ways to listen to radio, are considerably higher than those of normal web users. The number of web radio listeners - who are aware that they can listen to radio via the Internet, digital radio, digital television, satellite, and mobile `phones - is higher than that of web users, by approximately 40%, 9%, 6%, 3% and 8%, respectively.

¹²² Because the number of male web users is significantly higher than that of females by 39% as mentioned previously.

	Web users		Web radio listeners	
	No.	%	No.	%
AM/FM	1071/1208	88.7%	651/740	88%
Digital Radio	363/1201	30.2%	290/738	39.3%
Digital Television	173/1200	14.4%	154/736	20.9%
Via the Internet	729/1202	60.6%	740/740	100%
Via satellite	84/1197	7%	72/735	9.8%
Via mobile `phone	441/1197	36.8%	328/735	44.6%

Table 8. Differences in awareness of ways radio can be listened to: Web radio listeners vs. Web users

Not only do web radio listeners have higher levels of awareness about the ways radio can be listened to, they are also more positive about radio's future, and significantly, value more highly the role of radio in their daily life than web users (Table 9). Generally speaking, web radio listeners have more knowledge than web users about radio's characteristics, for example, ubiquity, intimacy and it used as a secondary medium. Moreover, the number of web radio listeners who regard radio as an important medium of information and entertainment and believe that radio will continue to develop is higher than that of web users, by 8.7% and 12.7%, respectively. As a result, the findings suggest that listening behaviour has a strong attachment to, or more likely, is directly proportional to, the listener's knowledge about radio's development, and belief in its future.

In the US, online radio audiences also tend to be male and it attracts young adults, with 36% of listeners age between 18 and 34 (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2007c, p.6). It also attracts a higher income audience; the number of online radio listeners who live in a household with an annual income of \$100,000 or higher is 40% higher than those of general population in the US (ibid, p.7).

In short, through analysis of the statistics, it is found that web radio listeners tend to be male, young, and those who have obtained relatively higher education attainment (and higher incomes), and those who are experienced web users. In essence, web radio listeners, at present, belong to the 'elite' groups in Vietnamese society. However, as Internet usage has recently increased significantly - in not only urban, but also rural

areas in Vietnam - the community of web radio listeners is believed to have potential for expansion.

With which of the following statements do you agree?	Web users		Web radio listeners	
	No.	%	No.	%
Radio will eventually be replaced by other media including television and the Internet	184/460	39.8%	201/742	27.1%
Radio is and continues to be an important medium of information and entertainment in my life	85/457	18.4%	201/741	27.1%
Radio is the fastest medium	52/459	11.3%	96/740	13%
Radio is the cheapest medium	330/462	71.4%	544/743	73.2%
You can listen to radio everywhere you want	202/458	43.7%	454/739	61.4%
Radio is an effective information and entertainment medium while you are doing other activities	178/460	38.5%	363/738	50.8%
Radio is the most intimate medium	129/458	27.9%	429/738	58.1%

Table 9. Web users vs. Web radio listeners: Perceptions and Attitudes towards radio

8.2. WEB RADIO LISTENERS: PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES, CONSUMPTION OF AND DEMANDS TOWARD WEB RADIO

8.2.1. Perceptions and attitudes towards web radio

Whilst the habits of consuming television and newspapers are similar between web radio listeners and non-web radio listeners, there are significant differences between the two groups in terms of consuming radio and the Internet (Table 10). The number of web radio listeners listening to radio and logging on to the Internet daily is considerably higher than that of non-web radio listeners, by 7.5% and 10%, respectively.

Having discovered that web radio listeners are experienced web users, the qualitative research explored media consumption and found that listening to radio online seems to have a direct proportion to the online-experience of web users. Even though the

majority of participants (61.2%, n=1215) in the quantitative research only surf the web when undertaking activities with the Internet, it was found that the more online experience the web users have, the more often they are likely to listen to online radio. None of the participants who had accessed the Internet for less than one year listen to web radio. However, 4.5% (n=1197) of respondents who have 1 to 5 years Internet experience listen to web radio while surfing the web; and, amongst those who have more than 5 year Internet experience, 9.6% listen to web radio while online. It seems that the more often people go online, the more likely they are to explore the Internet and utilise its advantages and possibilities while undertaking other activities with computers.

How do you consume media daily?	Newspapers		Television		Radio		Internet	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Web radio listeners	331/737	45	613/735	83.4	238/737	32.3	711/738	96.4
Non-web radio listeners	188/456	41.4	385/461	83.5	115/460	25	390/461	84.6

Table 10. Web radio listeners vs. Non-web radio listeners: How media are consumed daily

It should be emphasised that participants in both the qualitative and quantitative research seem to have positive attitudes towards web radio. In my online survey, the number of participants who are aware of their ability to listen to radio via the Internet is relatively high, 60.6% (n=1215). Moreover, 85.3% (n=727) of those who know that they can listen to radio online, actually, have listened to it. Furthermore, nearly 73% (n=727) of those who have listened to web radio can list the names of web radio stations they have visited. In this list, apart from a number of web radio stations, which are related to terrestrial ones, there appears web radio stations only available via the Internet, including Nhacso.net or YouthRadio. In addition, a number of web radio stations broadcast in foreign languages, including the BBC, VOA, RFA and YahooLauchcastMusic, are also listed as web radio stations participants often visit.

Interestingly, 85.5% (n=455)¹²³ of those who have not yet listened to web radio intend to try it one day. It seems that, if audiences know about this new way to listen to radio (via the Internet), they would probably do so at some points. Therefore, in this instance, radio may have an opportunity to strengthen and broaden its listener communities.

8.2.2. Online listening: what are audiences looking for?

The majority of web radio listeners listen to live radio programmes via web radio, followed by those who listen to on-demand radio programmes (80% and 71.1%, respectively). These two main habits of online listening can be explained, as they reflect two distinctive characteristics of online radio: simultaneous and on-demand broadcasting - one is inherited from traditional radio, and the other is an exclusive feature of the Internet. As has been found in a number of studies, including those of Street (2002) and Crisell (2002), radio has been, and continues to be, a concomitant medium that allows listeners to share a feeling of 'simultaneity' with contemporaneous event. This could be the reason why the majority of web radio listeners in the qualitative research state that they listen to live radio programmes online in order to keep them updated with current affairs. Very few participants in discussions state that they listen to on-demand news and current affairs programmes, unless there is specific information they are desperately seeking.

¹²³ The question No.12b in my online survey asks participants "If you know that you can listen to radio via the Internet, would you like to try it one day?". A significant number of participants, who are not aware that they can listen to radio via the Internet (39%), state that they will listen to online radio (perhaps if they know that it is possible). In addition, a significant number of participants who are aware that they can listen to radio via the Internet, but have not listened to it yet also state that they will listen to web radio. As a result, the online survey has a relatively high level of non-web radio listeners intending to listen to web radio in the future, partially as a result of the questioning employed..

Reason to listen to web radio	No.	%
Listen to radio live	586/734	80
Listen to radio on-demand	521/733	71.1
Listen to audio files you cannot find anywhere else	466/742	62.8
Feel it is more convenient to get information and entertainment while working with computers	218/732	29.8
Feedback to DJs or radio stations	125/731	17.1
Explore new radio stations	111/730	15.3
Curious about new ways to listen to radio	55/730	7.6

Table 11. Why do web users listen to web radio?

One male participant (33, office worker) in the qualitative research states that he listens to radio as he wants to hear updated information. In the office, he has a one-hour lunch break and often listens to radio online during that time. This participant prefers to listen to live programmes on web radio, because according to him, radio should be live and up-to-date. He says that he has developed this habit because he finds it is convenient to listen to radio. He also mentions that he would not bring a radio set to his office; however, if his computer can access radio broadcasts, he is happy to access online radio.

On the other hand, it is music and entertainment programmes that web radio listeners listen to most via the on-demand service. It should be noted that on-demand is a special Internet characteristic that, for the first time, enables listeners to enjoy programmes they previously might miss unless they had arranged carefully their timetable. Across all discussions, a significant number of participants state that they are often online at night, sometimes very late at night. As it is very quiet when all of their family members have gone to sleep, these participants are likely to have a private environment and feel more freedom to do whatever they choose to. Moreover, Internet transmissions at night are often faster and more efficient than during daytime, when possibly more people log on the Internet. In that silent and private environment, participants tend to turn on music, or listen to a music programme online whilst surfing the net. It should be noted that none of the VOV channels broadcast after 12 pm, therefore, for those who stay up later than

12 pm, on-demand is their first choice, unless they access live international radio stations.

Another main reason why participants listen to online radio is to access programmes that are not available on traditional radio. At the follow-up research stage, the qualitative data has revealed the type of programmes that are not available on traditional radio, which attract the listeners' interest.

Interestingly, a significant number of participants listen to foreign language radio stations, both speech and music radio. In the focus group interviews, participants state that they listen to international radio stations to gain alternative perspectives on Vietnam, Vietnamese current affairs and international issues. However, for a number of participants, the purpose of listening to online radio is simply to learn and improve their language skills. In Vietnam, the Vietnamese language is spoken both in the office and at home, therefore, according to participants across discussions, listening to online international radio allows them an opportunity to immerse themselves in a foreign language environment and improve their listening skills. The online radio stations which featured significantly in the qualitative research are the BBC, VOA, Radio France and Chinese Radio, as English, French and Chinese are the most popular international languages in Vietnamese society at present. However, due to personal limitation in language abilities, a number of participants state that they often listen to VOV5 and VOV6¹²⁴, because the presenters speak more slowly than presenters in foreign radio stations. It should be reiterated that the web users belong to academic and professionals groups, as a result, studying foreign languages may be a part of their studies or an occupational requirement.

Furthermore, a significant number of participants reported that they go online to listen to, and download their favourite music, demands not catered for by VOV. One male participant (20, student) says that he would listen to his music selection if radio were unavailable, "but I prefer radio music programmes because that is what keeps me up-to-date with the latest releases, more importantly, it educates me about music trends and general knowledge about music". In the list of web music radio stations participants

¹²⁴ As mentioned previously, these stations broadcast Vietnamese content in foreign languages.

have visited, a number name Live.365, Yahoo Music Launchcast; and some Vietnamese radio stations only available online, including YouthRadio, Nhacso.net.

At this point, it should be emphasised that even though the questionnaire sought to identify all major factors that encourage participants listen to web radio, it failed to list one main reason why overseas participants listen to radio online: nostalgia. In online interviews I conducted with a number of overseas participants after the online survey, it was found that significant numbers of overseas participants listen to online radio because they miss their homeland and mother tongue language. One male overseas participant (38, accountant) chatted with me:

I left Vietnam more than 20 years ago with my parents. My father died, and now only my mom lives with me. Since I discovered that VOV broadcast online, I download its programme or tune the VOV radio online for my mom ... My mom listens to folk programmes, and she cries when listening to the radio programme at our traditional Lunar New Year...

Another participant (female, overseas, 32, housewife) shared with me the following comments:

I married an American, and have been living in the US for 6 years. I listen to VOV online as it helps me to feel I belong to a Vietnamese community. When my husband comes back from work, we only watch US television. I like the programmes 'For overseas participants' on VOV1, or sometimes I just listen to VOV1 or VOV3 live online when doing housework...

Also via online interviews, a number of Vietnamese participants, who are studying abroad, shared with me that they listen to VOV online or Vietnamese music via CDs to overcome feelings of isolation whilst living in a foreign country with other international students. More interestingly, many overseas participants, who have already settled in a foreign country, tune in to Vietnamese radio programmes, particularly 'Learning Vietnamese' in order to familiarise their children with the Vietnamese language.

With its characteristic of global reach, web radio can provide for audiences programmes that are not available via traditional radio. This may be an opportunity for Vietnamese expatriates to listen to radio in their mother tongue, and consequently, alleviate homesickness. On the other hand, for Vietnamese participants living in Vietnam, web

radio offers an opportunity to satisfy their needs, including studying foreign languages, obtaining current information from Western perspectives, or listening to their favourite music, which have not been sufficiently catered for by VOV. Radio can be particularly valuable in bringing information to the individual, rather than requiring the individual to commit time to finding it. In other words, as audiences may more readily listen to radio when it is available and convenient for them, online radio is a potential means to capture their interest.

8.2.3. Online listening: has it become a habit?

Even though participants, both domestic and overseas, state various reasons for listening to radio online, it should be noted that only 29.8% (n=732) of web radio listeners listen to web radio because they feel it is a convenient way to access information and entertainment whilst working with computers. Only 20% of web radio listeners, who have been accessing the Internet for less than a year, think that listening to web radio is a convenient way to do so. However, 33.7% of web radio listeners, who have from 1 to 3 years Internet experience agree; and the number of web radio listeners, who have been using the Internet for more than 5 years who agree is 31.2%. It would seem that the more people go online, the more likely they are to think that listening to web radio is a convenient way to get information and entertainment while undertaking activities with computers.

However, it was the qualitative research that identified the relationship between listening to web radio and undertaking primary activities with a computer by web radio listeners. A number of participants state that it is pleasant to listen to light programmes, particularly music programmes, whilst undertaking other activities, for example, shopping online, surfing for holidays, reading online newspapers or accessing online fora.

One male participant (30, office worker) states:

My job requires me to work with the computer 8hrs a day. Sometimes I feel stressed and my eyes get tired after long hours in front of a computer, I just want to close my eyes and let the music [either CDs or music web radios] refresh me, and calm me down...

Another male participant (31, office worker) adds:

During the busy period, I often have to work overtime. When the office is quiet, and I am tired ... I often take a short break at my desk just listening to music for 10 or 15 minutes, sometimes via my playlist on the computer, and sometimes, radio online...

Whilst participants are working with computers, they tend to find and enjoy entertainment which is easily available, and most convenient for them on their computer or the Internet. In this situation, radio may be a superior choice as the participant's eyes have become too tired to enjoy visual media. For some participants, it is the radio that lightens their mood at different times of the day, particularly when they feel dejected during a long working day.

On the other hand, participants across focus group discussions also state that if they are concentrating on their work using computers, they do not bother to listen to radio online, especially speech radio. These findings have been interpreted to mean that the relationship between listening to online radio and the primary activity undertaken by listeners is different to that of traditional radio. Instead of simply being a secondary activity, undertaken simultaneously with the listener's primary activities, as is the case with traditional radio, online radio offers a different relationship: linear, rather than simultaneous listening. For a number of web radio listeners, listening is likely to be an entertainment activity which they alternate with their working activities.

The qualitative research identified a number of reasons why participants listen to online radio, which have not been found in the quantitative research. One male participant (20, student) states that he is a blogger, and that he often uploads music programmes which have been selected via CDs or downloaded from various online radios to his blog. He reveals:

I want to express my taste in music, and maybe those who are interested in my entries can have an opportunity to enjoy my music as well. [laughing] I do not know if it is the music or my entries which attracts the most viewers to my blog...

This participant highlights a significant phenomenon, a new trend in the young community: self-expression via blogs. At present, not only is the number of blogs

increasing considerably, but also their contents have become more diversified with text, audio and video files. With this new trend, online radio has an opportunity to increase its popularity within the web user community.

However, even though the number of participants who are aware of their ability to listen to radio via the Internet - and actually have listened to it - is relatively high (60.6%, n=727), it is noted that they do not listen to web radio regularly. Very few web radio listeners in both the quantitative and qualitative research listen to web radio on a daily basis. More often, the majority of web radio listeners (60.8%) listen to web radio weekly, from one to 3 hours.

8.2.4. Problems encountered when listening to online radio

The question 'What are the problems you have when listening to web radio?' in the quantitative research aimed to investigate the barriers for web radio listeners when listening to radio online. The question intended to explore the reasons why at present listening to web radio is relatively modest, and has not yet become a regular habit for web radio listeners. The survey investigated three major factors influencing online listening, including technical and financial issues, and the services of online radio.

The speed and quality of transmission are of major concern for web users when they listen to web radio (Table 12). More than half of the participants 59.2% (n=731) state that the problems of speed and quality of transmission affects them strongly or moderately. In the qualitative research, a number of web radio listeners refer to problems with broken links, firewalls, buffering and re-buffering. Only 20% (n=731) of web radio listeners express satisfaction with the speed and quality of the transmission. These issues can be resolved with broadband and advanced technologies. However, at present, the ADSL services in Vietnam still face a number of difficulties, in terms of the cost and quality of services, which have been the subject of complaints by web users (The Phong 2005, VNet 2005b, 2006, 2008, Hoang Hung 2006, 2008).

Whilst participants express concerns about technical issues when listening online radio, the cost of listening seems not to have significant effects on them, as found in both the quantitative and qualitative research. Possibly, as web radio listeners are an 'elite' group

in terms of educational attainment, and consequently, income, the cost of accessing the Internet is not a major concern. In addition, in the qualitative research, the majority of participants state that they do not pay the Internet fee specifically to listen to radio. Regardless of listening to online radio, these participants would connect to the Internet for work and study activities. Therefore, for them, listening to radio online is actually an additional benefit.

However, whilst finance is not a barrier for listening to online radio, the content of radio programmes is an issue. In the quantitative research, 59.9% (n=727) of web radio listeners state that uninteresting radio programmes are the most problematic for them. It is more surprising that the actual number of web radio listeners - who regard uninteresting programmes as problematic - is possibly higher, according to the findings from my qualitative study. Through discussions, apart from those who emphasise the importance of interesting radio programmes, a number of participants state that interesting programmes are not important to them. However, their further explanation tells another story. One male participant (31, office worker) in the qualitative research states that he regards online listening as secondary, an inferior activity, accessed while undertaking primary activities via the computer, therefore, he does not mind if he cannot find anything interesting, as simply he will switch the radio off. In this sense, the findings suggest that when web radio listeners state that uninteresting radio programmes do not affect them, it does not necessarily indicate they are satisfied with the services of web radio stations and the quality of radio programmes, as listening is regarded as a secondary activity, these groups of participants will easily give up listening if they are dissatisfied with the programme's content. In effect their dissatisfaction is implicit in their actions.

It should be noted that this behaviour differs from the findings of Hargraves's study (2000, p.15), when in the UK participants said that they would search through those stations - which were set as their favourite stations - until they found something interesting to listen to. In other words, whilst participants in Hargrave's research (2000, p.15) were likely to persist until finding a suitable programme, the participants in my qualitative research seem easily to give up searching when they cannot find a programme of interest. Possibly, the reason for this difference is that Hargrave's participants were searching radio programmes whilst travelling in cars - a traditional

environment for listening: a private, intimate and personal space (Flintoff 2003, p.iiv) - whilst participants in my qualitative research were searching radio programme when surfing the net - the cyber world - which engages web users with a wide array of entertainment. As a result, capturing the groups who already have a range of opportunities to access various types of media will be a greater challenges for radio producers.

As global reach is a special feature of web radio, it may come as a surprise that an individual could not find any interesting programmes on the net. Having answered the question regarding locating their favourite programmes amongst the thousands of online radio stations available worldwide, a number of participants in the qualitative research response in similar terms to the following statement:

I do not intend to search the radio programmes amongst thousands of radio stations available online. I prefer to listen to Vietnamese radio when I want to relax. Listening to foreign language radio stations is not relaxation, but a challenge for me (laughing), as I have to concentrate and despite doing so, sometimes I cannot understand what presenters are talking about...

(Male participant, 31, office worker)

This opinion is echoed by other participants in the group. The majority of participants only listen to foreign radio stations to improve their language skill or obtain specific information they are seeking, they do not usually do so for entertainment purposes, unless the station broadcasts their favourite music that has not been catered for by Vietnamese radio. Although the majority of participants prefer to listen to Vietnamese radio stations, at present, the number of Vietnamese online radio stations is modest. As a result, this may limit their choices in selecting favourite programmes for web radio listeners.

Significantly, the qualitative research also provided further explanations why listening has not yet become a habit, that were not discovered in the quantitative research. Across discussions, a number of web radio listeners state that they do not listen to web radio as a regular habit, because they have only recently begun listening to radio online. Self evidently, the habit has not yet been developed. In addition, for a significant number of

participants, radio is only one of various options they may access when online. In this circumstance, the key issue remains the quality of the service which will be a fundamental factor in capturing the attention of web users. The following section will explore what radio listeners and web radio listeners think about the service of VOV and VOVNews.

8.3. RADIO LISTENERS AND WEB RADIO LISTENERS: WHAT DO THEY THINK ABOUT VOVNEWS?

8.3.1. How do you locate the VOVNews website?

As the main feature, which distinguishes web radio from other online media is radio programmes (discussed in chapter III), in this section, the opinions of participants who self-identified as radio listeners and web radio listeners about VOV and VOVNews service will be discussed in order to investigate in detail the strengths and weaknesses of these radio services.

Before investigating in-depth the quality of the service VOVNews provide for its listeners, it is important to establish by which means web radio listeners have located VOVNews. Out of 743 web radio listeners in the quantitative research, only 60.5% have listened to VOVNews. A slightly higher number of overseas Vietnamese listen to VOVNews than Vietnamese home audiences, 62.3% (n=222) and 59.7% (n=521), respectively.

It should be noted that the majority of VOVNews listeners locate the website address independently. 62.9% (n=520) of web radio listeners find the website address via search engines or web links. The second way in which VOVNews listeners discover the address of VOVNews is through friends: individual and spontaneous channels (23.2%, n=513). Amongst those who have listened to VOVNews, only 21.9% (n=521) learn the website address from on-air radio programmes, and very few (2.5%, n=519) know the

website address from posters or advertising, whilst a number of participants state that they discover the VOVNews website by chance¹²⁵.

This finding demonstrates that VOV has not paid sufficient attention to informing audiences and encouraging them to listen to VOVNews. Such problems may restrict the number of VOVNews' listeners in particular and web radio listeners in general.

8.3.2. What do you think about the VOVNews content and design?

The quantitative research endeavoured to explore the opinions of web radio listeners towards VOVNews's design and content, and to discover possible ways to improve the VOVNews service.

8.3.2.1. How web radio listeners assess VOVNews's design

It is a surprising to note that, in the quantitative research, whilst six out of ten VOVNews listeners regard VOVNews as an easy-to-use website, nearly half of the participants cannot give definitive answers to the question whether VOVNews is a well-designed website or not. The findings of the qualitative study concur with this outcome.

	Easy to use		Well-designed website	
	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly agree	84/520	16.2	23/507	4.5
Agree	249/520	47.9	136/507	26.9
No opinion	119/520	22.8	220/507	43.4
Disagree	60/520	11.6	118/507	23.4
Strongly disagree	8/520	1.5	10/507	1.9

Table 12. What do you think about the VOVNews design?

¹²⁵ A number of participants clicked more than one option, therefore, the total percentage is over 100%.

The number of participants who regard VOVNews as an easy-to-use website, state that they do so because VOVNews is structured clearly and simply. Conversely, according a significant number of participants, because VOVNews is so simple, it has become a boring website. At this point, it is useful to describe the structure of the VOVNews's website. At the time this research was conducted, VOVNews's front page offered news in text, and a further three sub-pages, divided according to categories, including VOV, English, Audio and Video¹²⁶.

One male (35, office worker) states that after several design changes, VOVNews remains an unappealing website with its blue-grey textile background. He also adds that people visit the website in order to listen to radio programmes, including on-demand radio programmes. However, apart from four live radio channels (which were first broadcast online in late 2005), there are only two on-demand radio programmes listed on the front page of VOVNews. In addition, the two highlighted programmes are often displayed for several days on the site, consequently, they become outdated before they are placed. In addition, the two highlighted programmes have no additional information, including the time of broadcast on air, length of programmes, presenters and more importantly, brief information about its content. This view is supported by another male participant (31, office worker) who states that although the design of VOVNews has been changed significantly during the last two years, only the front page has been paid attention to, not the sub-pages. As a result, consistency in quality of the front page and sub-pages is very low.

The discussion continued with comments from another female (23, office worker). She is a fan of the programmes "Quick and Snow Show" (the title is written in English) and "A Window of Love", and often listens to missed programmes via the on-demand site. According to this female participant, the on-demand programmes are listed both in alphabetical order and by separate categories, including 'Features', 'Music', 'Narrated Stories', 'Quick and Snow Show' and 'Interviews'. However, apart from the title, there

¹²⁶ VOV is a sub-page providing information about the history of VOV, its organisation, staff, international relations and broadcasting schedule. However, a number of sections remain empty as of my last visit on April 2008, such as history and international relations. Audio and Video is an on-demand site, and the English sub-page is an English language version of VOVNews which targets English speaking communities in Vietnam and abroad.

is no further information about the radio programmes. This participant stated that the design of the on-demand site does not look professional.

Until late 2006, when the focus group interviewing was conducted, there was no search engine function on the VOVNews's website, as one male participant (20, student) notes:

VOVNews has a lack of Internet features, including a search engine, web link, and even printable version, email to friend or post your comment options, like other online newspapers. I, personally, do not use these options. However, the lack of these features makes VOVNews boring and less professional.

(Male, 20, student)

Another female participant (19, student) makes the criticism that VOVNews has very few hyperlinks, and that VOVNews's website is presented as a set of unconnected news and features. From her point of view, the hyperlink is a widely used web feature and she feels disappointed that VOVNews does not offer this feature. Her opinion is supported by other web radio listeners' comments. One male participant (25, office worker) thinks that web features provide more choices for web users and that this should be taken into account when VOVNews designs the website.

One male participant (27, office worker) also states that he would like to explore the website to see if there is anything interesting, but often cannot find interesting information in the news site of VOVNews. Therefore, if visiting VOVNews, he often goes straight to the radio page to listen to music. He also adds that the VOVNews design reminds him of the characteristics of VOV radio programmes before the Economic Renovation, which are conservative, stagnant and tedious. The aesthetic of the web design - this participants continues – sometimes discourages him from listening to VOV radio programmes.

Generally speaking, web radio listeners do not express satisfaction with the VOVNews website, as although they perceive VOVNews as an easy-to-use website, the number of participants who believe it is well-designed is modest.

8.3.2.2. How web radio listeners assess VOVNews's content

As web radio is a hybrid, a combination between radio and the Internet (chapter III), VOVNews content does not only provide radio programmes, but also a number of Internet features, including text, pictures and video files¹²⁷. As a result, the responses to the question regarding VOVNews's content are wide ranging, as they cover not only comments about VOV's radio programmes, but also news in text, pictures and occasionally, video files¹²⁸.

Generally speaking, participants in the qualitative research seem dissatisfied with the text news service provided by VOVNews. One female (27, office worker) contends that VOVNews's text is not professional. While Internet users want to have concise information, VOVNews frequently provides lengthy articles online. Another participant (male, 30, office worker) states that whilst news stories in other media websites are typically less than 200 words, news stories on VOVNews are often 4-5 times longer, and he would have to use 3 screen scrolls to read through, therefore he always gives up before finishing an article. Another participant (female, 18, student) states that she always skims through paragraphs on the news site. However, it is difficult to skim on

¹²⁷ VOVNews is a representative of the terrestrial VOV radio station on the Internet. At present, all of radio programmes available via VOVNews are the rebroadcast radio programmes from VOV. However, having operated as web radio, apart from VOV's radio programmes, VOVNews also offers a number of features exclusively available on the Internet, including texts, pictures and interactive tools. These features also contribute to the 'content' of VOVNews, enabling it to compete with other online newspapers on the Internet.

As the result, in terms of radio programmes this section combines comments from both web radio listeners and traditional radio listeners. However, comments made to the exclusive features of VOVNews, are generated only from those who have listened to VOVNews.

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VOVNews because of its ‘thick’ paragraphs. This female participant prefers a single paragraph of 2-3 sentences, not the minimum of 10 sentences that usually appear on the VOVNews’s website, which are uncomfortable to read. In addition, titles of online articles are often long and not appealing, as one male participant (20, student) states. He cites examples of typical titles on the VOVNews website, such as “The Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung meets voters in Hai Phong”, “Vietnam treasures its ties with Poland”, “Vietnam and Czech promote cooperation in environmental protection”, “Party leader Nong Duc Manh concludes visit to Mozambique”¹²⁹.

As radio programme content is the unique feature, which distinguishes web radio from other types of online media, the content of radio programmes is indeed an essential factor in capturing online listeners. In order to identify the current level of appreciation and enjoyment derived from VOV programmes, respondents in the quantitative research were asked how they evaluate VOV radio programmes in terms of accuracy, diversity, immediacy and usefulness of information.

Once again, the number of participants who do not offer opinions about the content of VOV are significantly high, especially in terms of the diversity, immediacy and usefulness of information, 34.7%, 27.1% and 29.8%, respectively (Table 13).

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	No opinion	Not satisfied	Very unsatisfied
Accuracy	17.2	64	10.6	5.42	2.78
Diversified information	8.8	29.6	34.7	23.1	3.8
Updated information	6.64	41	27.1	19	6.26
Useful information	7.4	52.5	29.8	8.1	2.2

Table 13. What do you think about VOV content? (%)

¹²⁹ These are typical titles cited as examples by one participant in the discussion. They may not be the actual titles on the VOVNews website.

However, whilst the features of accuracy and usefulness of information satisfy 81% and 59.9%, respectively, this is not the case for the features of diversity and immediacy. The number of participants who are satisfied (and very satisfied) with the diversity of information VOV provides is 38.4%, just slightly higher than the number of participants who cannot make up their minds about this issue, 34.7%. In terms of the feature of immediacy, less than 50% of participants express satisfaction with the service of VOV. The findings from my qualitative research are just slightly lower than those resulting from VOV's (2005) study where 51% of participants surveyed stated that VOV did not provide immediate information, compared with other online newspapers. In other words, it was found in both surveys that VOV has not achieved more than 50% satisfaction with the immediacy amongst the participants.

It should be reiterated that whilst web radio listeners seem dissatisfied with the immediacy and diversity of information provided by VOV, the majority (81%) agree that VOV is reliable provider of information, whilst just approximately 8.2% of VOVNews listeners express dissatisfaction with this feature (Table 13).

Regarding capturing the attention of media producers and advertisers, it is important to identify not only information about audience size, but also the reasons why audience behave the way they do. Once again, whilst the quantitative research explores 'how many' VOV listeners share the same opinions in evaluating VOV service in terms of its accuracy, diversity, immediacy and usefulness of information, the qualitative research, in turn, identifies 'how' and 'why' respondents have these opinions. Interestingly, the qualitative research found that participant's opinions about VOV's content conflict, particularly in terms of diversity and immediacy issues.

In the qualitative study, a significant number of participants continue to complain about the diversity of VOV's radio programmes, even though it has developed from broadcasting one mixed channel, to offering six channels, endeavouring to provide a range of services for different types of listeners. However, it continues to be difficult for listeners to locate their favourite programmes as all six channels are mixed channels, with the exception of the newly re-established VOV3, first aired in September 2006, over one month before my interviews were conducted. As a result, only a few participants in the qualitative study are able to describe the target listeners of different

radio stations in Vietnam. This finding differs significantly from Hargrave's (2000, p.16) study where in the UK participants were found to have high levels of understanding that different radio stations were targeted at different audiences. Participants in Hargrave's (2000, p.16) study could even categorise the radio stations by age and gender, in addition, they were able to describe the target listeners, even when they did not listen to that particular station. However, in my qualitative research, this is not the case.

Nevertheless, the discussions became animated when participants discussed the content of VOV3 before and after its re-organisation. As VOV3 was newly restructured, a significant number of radio listeners were not aware of the changes, and for this reason, commented about the previous VOV3 channel, focusing on the lack of variety in programming and the formal manner of presenters. For example "They [VOV3] don't play a very wide selection of music.", "They are just digging up all the old records", "...the very formal manner when a presenter introduces a song, always like this: Following is song X presented by singer Y". As a result, these web radio listeners state, they prefer to listen to TheYouth online radio station provided by TheYouth online newspaper rather than VOV3.

However, those who have listened to VOV more recently have significantly different views. A number of younger participants state that VOV3 has changed considerably, referring to the new format, its broadcasting of pop groups and new music trends, and especially, the enthusiastic and friendly DJs, who they say infuse new energy into the channel. Significantly, the majority of those who have listened to VOV3 recently recognise that VOV3 targets the youth, especially those under 30¹³⁰.

As with the issue of diversity, the feature of immediacy has generated significantly conflicted opinions amongst participants.

Generally speaking, a number of radio listeners in the qualitative study state that they are aware of the considerable changes in VOV, in terms of radio programming and its content. A male participant (35, office worker), states that he thinks VOV is more

¹³⁰ In fact, the target audience of VOV3 is the youth, between 16 and 35.

immediate now, compared with previous radio programmes, with more news and current affairs. This view is supported by another female (30, office worker), who also says that VOV's radio programmes have significantly improved (she used to listen to radio years ago), because there are more live programmes, more discussion shows and especially, more interactive programmes.

It is noted that as mentioned previously, VOV1 - which broadcasts from 4.45 am to 24 pm - has increased its news and current affairs programmes from 10 a day (before September 2003), to 19 (before April 2006), currently there are 23, of which 14 are live programmes. A number of programmes that were the subject of negative comments from listeners, including chamber music programmes, have been removed.

However, a number of participants in the qualitative research continue to think that VOV does not provide sufficiently high levels of immediacy. A significant number of participants complain that VOV presenters continue to read newspaper articles, and therefore the immediacy of VOV is less than in newspapers. Significantly, there is a response that offers VOV a potential opportunity to improve the audience's perception of immediacy. A female participant (19, student) states that when she listens to the BBC, she often hears the BBC presenters announce the time, throughout a programme, spontaneously, adding a sense of real time. This practice reminds listeners that they are listening to a live broadcast, and consequently, maintains their interest. However, VOV only broadcast the time at 3 hourly intervals, for example 6, 9 or 12 o'clock via a recorded announcement. In short, in addition to planned strategies for redesigning programmes, flexible ways in which the immediacy of radio programmes may be enhanced should be considered by VOV producers.

Notwithstanding the previous negative comments, there are positive findings in the qualitative research: a significant number of radio listeners highly appreciate the recent changes in radio presenting on VOV. A female participant (27, office worker) states that VOV presenters are younger and more dynamic; as a result, they infuse energy and enthusiasm into the radio programmes, particularly news and current affairs. Moreover, a number of participants are able to name their preferred presenters. This is a significant phenomenon as listeners relate to radio stations, first and foremost, via the personalities of presenters (Pierssene 1984 cited Hargrave 1994, p.9). Consequently, the

characteristics of radio presenters will influence the listeners' perception of a radio station, and, more importantly, will be a factor in encouraging or discouraging listeners from listening to radio. That participants remember the names of a number of VOV's presenters is encouraging news for VOV.

It is important to emphasise that whilst investigating opinions of web users regarding VOV and VOVNews, it was found that the attitudes of overseas participants towards VOV and VOVNews differs from those of participants living in Vietnam. In the quantitative research, it is found that overseas participants seem more demanding than those living in Vietnam. In terms of VOVNews design, the numbers of overseas participants agree that the website is user-friendly and well-designed are 17.9% and 5.1%, respectively, less than those living in Vietnam.

		Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Easy to use	Vietnam	18.4	50.2	22.0	8.0	1.5
	Overseas	9.6	41.1	25.1	22.4	1.8
Well-designed website	Vietnam	5.4	27.3	44.9	20.8	1.6
	Overseas	2.0	25.6	39.2	30.7	2.5

Table 14. Geographical location vs. Opinions about the VOVNews design (%).

Not only are they more demanding about web design, overseas listeners also have greater expectations than listeners in Vietnam about the content of the website. The numbers of domestic listeners who are satisfied (and very satisfied) with the accuracy, diversity, immediacy and usefulness of information VOV provided are greater than those living abroad, by 10.5%, 12%, 10.3% and 9.9%, respectively (Table 15). Conversely, the numbers of overseas listeners who express dissatisfaction with the accuracy, diversity, immediacy and usefulness of information VOV provided are greater than those living in Vietnam by 7.3%, 17.3%, 6.4% and 6.4%, respectively. By and large, VOV overseas listeners offered more negative comments and gave less positive feedback than those living in Vietnam, regarding VOVNews's design and content, possibly as they have relatively higher living standards and greater access to IT mediated media.

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	No opinion	Not satisfied	Very unsatisfied
Accuracy	Vietnam	20.7	64.5	9.5	3.6	1.7
	Abroad	9.2	65.5	12.7	9.7	2.9
Diversified information	Vietnam	11	30.9	35.2	18.6	4.3
	Abroad	4.0	25.9	33.8	33.8	6.5
Updated information	Vietnam	8.2	40.3	26.3	19.2	6.0
	Abroad	3.0	35.2	30.2	23.3	8.3
Useful information	Vietnam	9.5	53.4	28.5	7.2	1.4
	Abroad	2.5	50.5	33.0	10.5	4.5

Table 15. Geographical location vs. Opinions about the VOV content (%)

It is important to note that one of VOV's stated missions, at present, is to create a 'bridge' between Vietnamese expatriates and their homeland (as discussed previously in chapter I), however, the numbers of overseas listeners who are satisfied with VOV and VOVNews services are modest. None of the identified content features, including immediacy and diversity provides satisfaction for more than 50% of overseas listeners (Table 15). This finding suggests that there is great potential for VOV and VOVNews to meet the remit of the mission assigned by the Party, thereby strengthening the relationship between VOV and its expatriate audiences.

8.4. HOW CAN VOV AND VOVNEWS IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THEIR SERVICES?

It is a surprising to note that even though the number of web radio listeners who are not satisfied with VOVNews design is significantly high, the majority of responses to the open question 'How to improve the quality of VOVNews service?' in the quantitative research do not suggest changes or improvements in the design, but the website's content. Therefore, it is thought that even though participants prefer to visit a well-designed webpage, the most important feature for them is the content of the website. Regarding the content of VOVNews, comments to improve the website can be categorised into two main groups: radio programmes and Internet features.

In terms of radio programmes, participants' comments focused on radio programming, presenting styles, use of music, and most importantly, the quality of the radio content. A significant number of participants state that they would prefer VOV to improve its programming, particularly restructuring programming, focusing on niche audiences rather than functioning as a mixed channel for all ages and all classes. Moreover, phone-in programmes are also identified as participant' favourite programmes, which should be developed further as it engages the listeners and offers a sense of ownership. As discussed previously, VOV is a reliable and trusted information provider in terms of accuracy, however issues have identified regarding immediacy and diversity. Whereas 81% of participants feel very satisfied or satisfied with the accuracy of information provided by VOV, just less than half of participants (n=522) indicated satisfaction with the immediacy of information. Regarding the diversity and usefulness of information, the numbers of respondents who say that they are satisfied (and very satisfied), are 38.2% and 59.9%, respectively. It was found in the qualitative research that participants would prefer a wider range of information, more radio features focusing on social concerns - including living conditions, corruption, socio-economic developments, employment and social welfare - updated information regarding weather forecasts and traffic news, and especially, more entertaining programmes, for example quiz shows.

Participants also want VOV to reduce reading newspaper articles on air, and change the conservative structure applied in many programmes. For example, one presenter introduces the title of an article, and another reads the article's content, and the conservative approach to interviewing during which presenters traditionally ask typical and formulaic questions as discussed previously. This repetitive format is neither engaging, nor does it retain listeners' attention.

A number of participants continue to complain about the uninteresting content of some programmes, including 'Programmes for Army People' broadcast from 6.30 am to 7am, 'Government and Law' at the middle day and 'Programme for War Veterans' broadcast at around 7 to 8pm. A small number of participants would prefer VOV presenters to talk to listeners in an intimate manner. In other words, VOV presenters should pay more attention to the ways in which they speak to the audiences to strengthen the relationship between listeners and VOV.

Significant numbers of participants comment that VOV should pay more attention to the inclusion of music in programmes, including jingles, background music, and sound effects, in order to make programmes more interesting, and also create special characteristics for each programme. Participants also mention that VOV should reconsider the music used in a number of programmes. For example: respondents do not enjoy lengthy songs played in short programmes, or the repetition of the same song in various programmes throughout the day (as happens frequently, especially during 'anniversary' days), and request that appropriate songs be chosen to suit specific programmes.

At this point, it should be emphasised that, in terms of content of radio programmes, there is a difference between requirements for traditional radio and web radio. In terms of traditional radio, participants tend to prefer to listen to more features, live interviews, analyses, documentaries and discussion. A number of participants also emphasise that VOV should provide analysis from a range of perspectives - which would add interest and allow greater understanding of subjects under discussion - rather than repeating Party and Government' instructions, resolutions or official Party statements. These comments from participants are supported by findings from my offline survey conducted in 2005, in which, 68% of participants express their preference for more news and current affairs, 55%, economic programmes, 46%, programmes on social issues, including employment, social welfare, social problems, and 20%, more updated information about weather forecasts or market prices of basic commodities.

However, the majority of those who often listen to radio online prefer to have more music, entertainment and interactive programmes. Not only live programmes, but also on-demand and downloadable programmes are required. The focus group discussions support the findings of the quantitative research, in which participants listen to web radio mostly because they wish to listen to live radio programmes (80%), followed by on-demand radio programmes, and audio files they cannot find elsewhere, 71.1% and 62.8%, respectively. It should be noted that most participants seem happy with the transmission of live radio programmes, but not with on-demand services. The majority of comments focus on the simplicity and lack of efficient information in the highlighted on-demand programmes, for example, apart from the title of the radio programme, there

is no additional information, about presenters, scheduling, the duration, and most importantly, a brief outline of the programme's content.

A significant number of participants would appreciate VOVNews improving its music sites, live, on-demand and downloadable programmes. A number of participants comment that only selected radio programmes on VOV are rebroadcast on the on-demand site, but not VOV3, whilst VOV3 is the music radio channel, recently restructured, providing a wide range of music for the youth. As discussed previously, participants tend to listen to radio online for entertainment, therefore the lack of on-demand VOV3 programmes limits choice for web users.

As VOVNews is a web radio, the Internet features are also important in attracting web users. Even though the majority of participants in my qualitative research focused on the content of radio programmes, a number of comments made about VOVNews's design are worth noting here. Participants state that instead of using so many colours, graphics, frames and shadows to highlight news stories VOVNews should re-structure the website and perhaps highlight important news by using larger pictures or posting the stories in prominent areas of the website. A number of participants state that they are looking forward to using a professional media website which provides multiple options for web users, including RSS, the ability to customise the website, send emails to friends, print options, and search engines¹³¹. Significantly, some participants comment that VOVNews's design is quite 'flat', suggesting that VOVNews should redesign the site and create highlighted areas within the website to capture the attention of users. A significant number of VOVNews listeners complain that the layout of special features such as 'Interactive interview', 'Environment and Development', 'Q and A about land and property' and 'Stories at Midnight' have a similar design, format and colour with advertisements, which cause confusion about what is editorial content and what is advertisement on the website. In terms of text, the majority of comments focus on the suggestion that news stories on VOVNews should be shorter, clearer and more appealing.

¹³¹ At the time the focus group interviews were conducted, none of these options were available on the VOVNews's website,

In short, whilst having stated that VOV's radio programmes are improving, they have not yet met listener needs in many respects, including content, programming and presentation style.

Summary

It is found that web radio listeners are 'elite' groups in the Vietnamese society in terms of educational attainment and income. They identify themselves as young: 74% of web radio listeners are aged between 20 and 34. Moreover, they are experienced Internet users: 56.8% who first went online more than 5 years before taking part in my qualitative research. More males tend to listen to web radio, 74.1%. And more Vietnamese expatriates tend to listen to web radio than audiences living in Vietnam: 78% of overseas web users have listened to web radio, compared with 57.1% of domestic audiences.

In terms of media behaviour and consumption habits, it is found that the majority of participants currently continue to regard television as their major source of information and entertainment. However, whilst participants seem to spend a modest amount of time reading newspapers and listening to radio daily, the majority state that they have become more dependant on the Internet as a source of information and entertainment. Interestingly, participants seem to have a positive attitude towards web radio, 72.9% of those who have listened to online radio can name the station they frequently visit, whilst 85.5% of those who have not listened to web radio state that they would like to try it one day. Even though listening to online audio has not yet become a habit for the majority of participants, it is found that the habit of listening to online radio is proportionate to the online experience of web users.

The relationship between listening to online radio and the primary activity undertaken by listeners differs to that of traditional radio. Instead of simply being a secondary activity - which traditional radio has provided since the transistor was created - web radio offers another type of relationship, linear rather than simultaneous: listening is likely to be an entertainment activity which web users alternate with their working activities with the computer.

On the other hand, whilst financial issues seem not to be a major barrier for web users to listen to radio online, improving the quality of programmes and technical issues, including the speed and quality of transmission are significant concerns. Technically, the speed and quality of transmission of audio and video files will be resolved through broadband or ADSL, which will become available with the development of the Internet provision in Vietnam. Therefore, improving the quality of radio programmes is the most pressing issue at this time. However, VOVNews service has not yet met the needs of web radio listeners, in terms of both content and design. Only the feature of accuracy satisfied more than 80% of participants. The features of diversity and immediacy, which satisfied approximately 50% of participants each, should be paid more attention to by VOVNews producers, suggesting a potential reason why only 60.5% of web radio listeners name VOVNews as the web radio station they often visit. In other words, in order to attract web users to VOVNews, VOV producers should pay greater attention to improving the quality of radio programmes, especially in terms of its immediacy and diversity.

CONCLUSION: FINDINGS AND SOLUTIONS

9.1. KEY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SUCCESSES OF RADIO IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

One of the main purposes of my study was to explore the factors that allow radio in developed countries - such as the UK and US, where audiences have greater opportunities to access visual media than those living in developing countries – to continue to maintain its strong characteristics in capturing audiences. This was done in order to apply relevant experiences to the development of radio in Vietnam. With this in mind, the first two chapters of the thesis have investigated the development of radio in the UK and US, since its inception to date, focusing on the Internet Age, as due to the emergence of the Internet, the landscape of conventional media has changed extensively.

The key factors of the success of radio in developed countries are derived from its extraordinary abilities to adapt and reinvent itself in a constantly evolving environment. Radio would not have been invented without natural science and scientists, and cannot develop without adapting itself, continuing to utilise newly available technologies. The developments in technology, including transmission (AM and FM), recording and radio receivers did not only improve the quality of radio service, but importantly, emerged at an ideal time for radio, providing the means for radio to reinvent itself and survive the fierce competition it faced with visual media. However, most of these technological developments were available long before they were exploited and applied¹³². It was the “supervening social necessities” (Winston 1995 cited Fleming 2002, p.25) which acted as accelerators in the development of media and other technologies. Livingstone (1999, p.60) also pointed out that the media’s success in dominating the market (and everyday

¹³² For example, the transistor only became widely used in the 1960s, more than ten years after it was first invented (Fleming 2002, p.25), similarly, it also took almost a decade for FM operators to gain regular licences to broadcast in the US (Sterling 1984, p.3).

life) depended on the social shaping and contexts of use, rather than on the technological capacities per se.

In this sense, it is the needs of audiences which are the major driving forces for radio to apply technological developments. It is important to acknowledge that the achievements of radio in Western countries are not only due to advanced developments in technologies, but more likely, as a result of its endless efforts to renovate itself to meet the audience's needs.

Historically, radio first encountered fierce competition with visual media not long after its emergence. By the early 1940s, radio took over newspaper's position and became the predominant news medium (Horten 2003, p.14), and a form of collective entertainment for the family (Barnett and Morrison 1989, p.1). It was predicted at that time that radio broadcasting would lead to the end of print media (Lazarsfeld 1940 cited Kayany and Yelsma 2000, p.216). Within a relatively short period of time, the introduction of BBC Television in the early 1950s resulted in a decline in radio listeners in the UK. Faced with competition from first one, and then two television networks - with the advent of ITV in 1955 - radio in the UK began a long decline that some commentators predicted would prove fatal (Paulu 1961, p.155; Shingler and Wieringa 1998). The competition between mass media became more intense after the arrival the Internet, as discussed in chapter III. However, one intriguing aspect of the resulting competition is that unlike other commodities (even though mass media have the same function of delivering information and entertainment), they continue to co-exist and co-develop in the highly competitive environment of the Digital Age.

The historical development of radio has proved definitively its abilities to adjust and reinvent itself to new environments, including social and technological changes. When television usurped radio's place in the sitting room, and took over its position as a main medium of news and entertainment, radio became an intimate friend, accompanying listeners wherever and whenever they wished. Radio changed to adapt to the revolution in listening habits, particularly in radio programming, both content and format. From mixed radio programmes to a wide variety of radio formats, radio stations have brought a vast range of choices to meet the multiple and complex needs of audiences. Radio

became narrower, targeted audiences and encouraged greater audience participation. (See more in Chapter III).

Importantly, radio continues to possess and strengthen the special feature which allows it to compete successfully with powerful competitors (visual media), that is to say: ubiquity. Utilising the advantages of a relatively low-cost medium, from both the producer and receiver's perspectives, radio became the most local of electronic mass media (Hendy 2000, p.21), serving the needs of small groups of fragmented audiences, consequently becoming more pervasive than television. The increasing accessibility of radio in the Internet Age once again enhances the ubiquitous characteristic of radio, and consequently, its position in mass media systems.

Moreover, radio in the UK and US has demonstrated persuasively its own unique characteristics, which cannot be replaced by any other media. In these countries, radio is regarded as "the most resilient" medium (Howard 2001, p.viii), which can be proud of its universal availability (Mosco 2005, p.127; Potter 2002). Radio is "certainly the one with the widest reach and greatest penetration" (Pease and Dennis 1993, p.xii), "the world's most pervasive media" (Shingler and Wieringa 1998, p.ix). Radio is referred as the fastest news and information provider, which newspapers or television cannot compete with in terms of immediacy (Crisell 2002, p.13; Masterton and Patching 1986).

Apart from the efforts of radio itself, the lifestyle of Western consumers also provides a potential environment for radio to develop. Radio has become 'the most ubiquitous medium' (Peace and Dennis 1993, xii) in the UK and US - where there is almost one receiver for every man, woman and child (Lax 1997, p.26), or even "more radio sets than human beings" (Scupham [no date] cited McInerney 2001, p.31). At this point, it is important to note that the car is the main means of transportation, therefore, radio in developed countries enjoys an ideal environment to serve listeners (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2000b, 2007, 2008; Ofcom 2006c).

Besides possessing the ability to reinvent and adjust, radio in developed countries has also proved its extensive capabilities in utilising other media to widen their sphere of influence. The utilisations occur in a number of aspects, including information-gathering, content 'cross-promotion', marketing, revenue enhancement, ownership

convergence, and 'content across', as discussed in detail in chapter III. In short, radio and other mass media in the UK and US drive audiences back and forth between them to capture larger numbers of media consumers, consequently, maximising benefits. This became a key factor in enabling mass media to co-exist and co-develop, despite having the same functions of delivering information and entertainment. This is an important concept that Vietnamese media, radio in particular, should consider when entering the market-economy.

However, at present, radio in the UK and US is facing the issue of a decline in audience' listening, especially amongst the youth (Ofcom 2004, p.5). In order to maintain the interest of listeners, particularly the younger generation, referred as the 'Internet generation' or the 'Ipod generation', once again, radio in the UK and US has to adapt itself to survive and develop. For the first time in its 100 years of development, radio in developed countries provides not only a single, but a number of platforms for listeners, including AM/FM, digital radio, satellite radio, the mobile `phone, digital television and especially the Internet. Significantly, web radio has attracted the most public attention in recent years (Berry 2004, p.289).

Due to the limitations of time and the research area of this PhD thesis, I focused on web radio, in order not only to investigate radio's adaptation in the Digital Age to obtain experiences for Vietnamese radio's development, but also in an endeavour to contribute to the body of theoretical and academic knowledge regarding radio study.

9.2. MAJOR FACTORS IN THE RECENT DRAMATIC DECLINE IN RADIO LISTENING IN VIETNAM

Having investigated the development of radio in Vietnam, this thesis identified a number of issues leading the recent, dramatic decline in radio listening in Vietnam, regardless of its long history as the dominant medium since its inception (1945) to 1986.

For 30 years (1945-1975), as the Party and Government's propaganda tool, VOV retained its position as the most important medium in the mass media system in Vietnam, because it was the most efficient means of mobilising the Vietnamese people. Most importantly, radio was the only medium bridging the North's Communist Party

with the Southern Vietnamese population - fighting for liberation and the reunification of the country, and appealing for the assistance and support of other friendly countries (Chapter V). After Vietnam reunified, VOV continued to play an important role in society as the dominant medium of information and entertainment for more than a decade. The explanation for this phenomenon is that Vietnam was confronted with a serious economic crisis between 1975 and 1986, due to numerous difficulties, including the aftermath of war, a political and economic embargo by the US and a number of Western countries, and also, the failure of the Government and Party to apply a centrally planned economic model. Consequently, as a relatively free-cost medium, especially with its loudspeaker systems, radio continued its position as a leading mass medium in Vietnam, particularly in the context of the limitations of the newspapers' circulation and television ownerships at that time. More importantly, it was not only the limitation of media choices, but also the audience's respect for VOV's role during the wars, that maintained the listeners' loyalty to this medium, even though, during the subsidised period, a number of weaknesses of VOV, in terms of radio programming and content, had emerged (Chapter VI).

It is noted that there was no competition amongst mass media in Vietnam until the late 1980s, when the Economic Renovation was launched, the transition from a subsidised to a market economy. For the first time since reunification, all media organisations were subject to market conditions, and required to compete to maximize their audiences, in order to increase income from subscriptions, advertisers, and justify continuing – albeit limited - financial support from Governing organisations. More importantly, the successes of the economic reforms, and a renovation in 'thinking' infused a new spirit into Vietnamese journalism, and provided the means for media to develop. The number of newspapers increased significantly, in conjunction with a significant rise in literacy amongst the Vietnamese population, which strengthened the readership. In addition, with the improvement of living standards for the majority of the Vietnamese population after the Economic Renovation, a television set, previously an unattainable luxury, became an affordable item for most families. However, whilst newspapers and television enjoyed significant developments in terms of circulations and television ownership, Vietnamese radio shrunk in terms of its coverage and household ownership of radio sets (Huu Tho 1992, p.71, 96; Vu Tra My 2001, Le Dao 1996, p.2).

The situation of VOV is reflected in a well-known Vietnamese traditional saying: “The ‘wrong’ of today is, to some extent, the ‘right’ of yesterday which has remained unchanged”. After the Economic Renovation, newspapers and television has adopted a number of changes in content and format, and consequently, achieved significant successes. Whereas radio, VOV in particular, continued its conservative style of broadcasting (or more precisely, slowly changed it) - the style, which provided successes for VOV during the period of conflicts, and more than a decade post war, yet perhaps is no longer suitable for radio’s development at the current media environment.

Apart from the captivating visual power of television, which renders it the major competitor for radio, since 1980s, newspapers in Vietnam also emerged as an impressive competitor. Newspapers pioneered changes in format and content to meet the needs of audiences. ‘The People Newspaper’ was one of the first newspapers to encourage the general population to engage in new campaigns against bureaucratic centralism, and fight negative aspects of the transition of Vietnamese society towards a socialist model, with the series *Things That Must Be Done Immediately* by N.V.L (Esterline 1998, p.90, Hai Au 2005). In addition, *Tuoi tre* (The Youth Newspaper), *Sai Gon Giai Phong* (The Saigon Liberation Newspaper) and a number of newspapers in HoChiMinh city pioneered a renovation in journalistic content, investigating pressing issues, including corruption, social problems, bureaucratic conservatism, and the negative aspects of the emerging open-market society: subjects that most concerned the general population (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.81). As a consequence, newspapers gained increased audience attention.

Regarding radio, until 2002, 70% of VOV’s radio programmes continued to be produced via analogue tape recording (Nguyen Manh Phuong 2002, p.27, 47 and 57) - technology, developed in the late 1950s, replaced by the compact disc in the latter part of the 1980s, followed by digital recording in the early 2000s (Chapter III). Moreover, it was not the delay in applying new technologies in radio production, but the delay in renovating the content of radio programmes that probably caused the decline in radio listening, particularly after the Economic Renovation. It was not until July 1994 - almost 20 years after the reunification - that VOV broadcast its first live programme as part of a scheduled series (Kim Cuc 1995, p.7; Vu Tra My 2001, p.110). Regarding Vietnamese local radio stations, until 2001 (Vu Tra My 2001, p.110), only one third

experimented with live broadcasts. Until the middle 1990s, VOV continued to provide programmes with limited information, too many general instructions and Government diktats via its traditional, conservative format (Tran Trong Truy 1997, p.18), focusing heavily on the positive aspects, achievements, and successes of other Communist countries (Tran Lam 1995, p.151; Hoang Trong Dan 2003, p.20-21). As a result, audiences became disinterested in the programmes provided by VOV (Tran Huu Quang 2001, p.84; Tran Lam 1995, p.151), and switched to alternative media.

Most importantly, VOV lacked the flexibility to reinvent itself and adapt and adjust to the technological and social changes that had been undertaken successfully by radio in developed countries (as discussed in chapter II). In the UK, by the middle of the 1950s, in order to compete with the popularity of television, radio evolved from a programme medium into a format medium, moving from “all things to all people” radio stations (MacFarland 1997, p.63) to targeted, niche audience radio stations (MacFarland 1997, p.74-82; Hendy 2000, p.100-1), from offering mixed radio programmes to providing a wide variety of radio formats. Whilst the radio listening behaviour of listeners has changed from a communal to an individual activity, radio in developed countries has changed from a medium of prime-time entertainment to a medium of companionship. In other words, radio in developed countries reinvented itself and provided a broad range of choices to meet the multiple and complex needs of audiences

Regarding Vietnamese radio, to date, VOV continues broadcasting its style of mixed programmes (with the exception of the newly reorganised VOV3). Apart from the issue of mixed programming, a number of problems in terms of current practices - including genres, presentation, the use of music, and the fixed procedure for programme production - also have been identified in this thesis as possible causes for the decline in radio listening (Chapter V). Another factor that influences radio listening is radio promotion. VOV did not undertake promotional campaigns for its programmes for a long period of time. On air, it is not the usual practice for presenters to introduce the following programme. It was not until the middle of the 2000s that radio schedules were published in the *Voice of Vietnam Weekly*, or even on the website of VOVNews, until April 2008 (the last time I visited this site) there was no information specifically about VOV, including the history of its development, staff or international relations.

It was admitted by the top leaders of VOV that the old ways of thinking and producing radio, which had lasted several decades, created an inertia - which could not be changed overnight - affected strongly radio's development (Radio Journal 1996, p.43). In addition, Phan Quang (1995) - the then General Director of VOV - also acknowledged that radio was neglected from some time, causing it to lag behind the development of other media, thus creating difficulties for radio in capturing audiences and its future development.

The lifestyle of urban Vietnamese people also creates challenges for radio in capturing listeners. In Vietnam, especially in cities, motorcycles are the main means of transport, as a result, radio in Vietnam cannot take advantage of the 'golden' drive-time broadcast slot, as is the case for radio in Western countries. Moreover, housing issues, including the lack of private space for individuals to listen to radio also restricts the potential for radio to capture listeners.

More importantly, for a significant number of young people, radio is perceived as being an old-fashioned medium, whilst new technologies, such as the Internet are their preferred medium. In this sense, utilising other media, particularly the Internet, to renew the image of radio is an imperative and potential opportunity to change perceptions of radio amongst the youth.

With the successes of the Economic Reform, Vietnamese society has changed significantly. Not only has a moneyed class emerged, causing an increase in car ownership, public transportation has also been paid greater attention to by the Vietnamese Government. As a result, radio in Vietnam may have potential new environments through which to attract larger audiences. Moreover, the urban Vietnamese increasingly live as nuclear family units and have greater living space with separate kitchens, allowing them to listen to radio whilst cooking or doing housework. More importantly, the emergence and rapid development of the Internet has created an increasing Internet community, of which most are the young, and those living in urban areas.

Alongside this social development, a potential opportunity for radio has been identified, as via the Internet, radio can create a close relationship with its audience. However,

whether web radio can capture listeners who have neglected traditional radio is a question which will be addressed in the following sections.

9.3. RADIO, THE INTERNET AND WEB RADIO: WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THESE MEDIA?

The emergence and continuing development of the Internet has significantly impacted on society in general, and journalism in particular, however, the nature of these impacts is debatable. Regarding the Internet as a means of communication, a number of authors contend that online journalism's ability to serve audiences as efficiently and completely as possible could be seen as an important step in democratisation for the public: so-called public or civic journalism (Deuze 1999, Deuze *et al.* 2002, p.243). However, a number of studies argued that although the new technologies have great potential for democratic communication, left to the market - as 'market-driven journalism' is a reality (Cohen 2002, p.544) and "online news content is often market-based journalism of the rankest order" (Scott 2005, p.111) - there is little reason to expect the Internet to serve democratic ends (Herman 1998, p.201; McChesney 1999, p.176), as discussed in Chapter IV.

Challenges and concerns regarding the impacts of the Internet on the journalistic profession are also complex. For a number of authors, the characteristics of online journalists are 'technology-driven', 'audience-oriented' and 'service-minded' (Deuze *et al.* 2002, p.237-245). However, other researchers were concerned about journalistic professionalism in the Internet Age, in terms of accuracy, objectivity and credibility, lack of analysis, and to a further extent, the blurring of the distinctions between editorial content and advertising (McNair 1998, p.130; Bromley 1997; Cottle 1999; Hall 2001, p.143-174).

The emergence of online journalism has led to a number of debates, not only in terms of its potentials and impacts on society and the public sphere, but also on the development of other media, in terms of media consumption, and more importantly, the public's perception of traditional media. Whilst a number of studies (PEW 1997, 2006; Coffey and Stipp 1997; Johnson-Smaragni *et al.* 1998; Allen 1997 cited Shaw *et al.* 2000; UCLA 2000; James *et al.* 1995; Kayany and Yelsma 2000; Dutta-Bergman 2004; USC

2004, 2008) revealed that Internet use has significant impacts on reducing television watching, however regarding radio listening, this is not the case. Other studies found that the Internet either did not have an impact on radio listening or that it increased radio listening (Chapter IV).

Significantly, it should be noted that, at present, radio can be listened to via a number of platforms, including AM/FM, digital radio, digital television, satellite, mobile `phones, and computers, including podcasts. However, the phenomenon of radio broadcast via the Internet has challenged perceptions of traditional radio, which have been accepted for almost a century. The question whether we could call what we listen to on a computer 'radio' continues to be a contentious issue (Black 2001; Dubber 2003 cited Garner 2004, p.49; Berry 2004, p.285; Price-Davies 1999; Priestman 2002, p.4; Peter Everett [No date] cited Beck 2002). Therefore, one of the main purposes of this thesis was to explore the nature of web radio - its strengths, weaknesses and potentials - in order to investigate the relationship between radio and web radio and its listeners, contributing to the academic body of knowledge of radio studies, and exploring possible ways to improve the quality of web radio's services.

My thesis explored web radio from two perspectives: firstly, the historical development of radio, and secondly, the competitive and interactive relationships between mass media within their systems. From the historical perspective, it is argued that web radio is one of the variants of radio that render it highly accessible in the Internet Age. From my investigation of the relationships between mass media, particularly radio, the Internet and web radio within the mass media systems (See Diagram 2), it is proposed that web radio is a hybrid of radio and the Internet. Operated in the Internet environment, as a subset of online journalism, web radio provides a number of characteristics, which traditional radio and other radio variants in the Digital Age cannot. At the same time, as one of radio's variants, web radio differs from other subsets of online journalism, including online newspapers. As a result, web radio provides special and unique features, including live and on-demand radio programmes, local content and global reach, linear communication and multi-layered information (via hyperlinks), receiving and interactive options, as discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

However, the most important issues are identifying the needs of audiences, particularly the Internet generation, and exploring whether web radio is a possible means for radio to capture the audiences who have neglected radio in Vietnam. This is the most important question my thesis endeavoured to examine.

9.4. VIETNAMESE WEB USERS: MEDIA CONSUMPTION HABITS AND DEMANDS TOWARD RADIO, THE INTERNET AND WEB RADIO

The most important factor influencing the future of any medium is the audience's response. Therefore, investigating the relationship between audiences and media - especially the relationship between radio and web radio and its listeners - is the main purpose of this thesis. It should be noted that the growth of the Internet did not only provide for mass media a new medium of information and entertainment, but more importantly, created a new generation of audience, the Net Generation (Tapscott 1997). This generation is arguably unique, not due to their large numbers, but to their emergence during the dawn of a new interactive medium of communication: the Internet. As a result, the Net generation, distinctively differs from the Baby Boomers and Busters,¹³³ and attracts vast attention from media producers (Tapscott 1997; Rettie 2002; Oblinger and Oblinger 2005; Combes 2006). Even though the Net Generation is described in generational terms, age may be less important than exposure to technology, as individuals who are heavy users of IT tend to have characteristics similar to the Net Generation (Oblinger and Oblinger 2005). Therefore, through sampling Internet users as participants, my quantitative study endeavoured to provide a comprehensive investigation of these distinctive groups of audiences. It is important to note that these groups have not been surveyed in previous studies in Vietnam.

In terms of demographics, it is found that 77% of participants in my quantitative study are under 35 years old, 90.9% of participants have at least a College/University degree, and the majority of participants are students, academics or white-collar workers (See Chapter VI).

¹³³ Baby Boomers and Baby Busters are generational terms, referring to those who were born during 1946-1964 and 1965-1976, respectively, by a number of authors, including Tapscott (1997) and Rettie (2002).

At this point, it should be reiterated that the demographics of web users (in my online survey) represent the groups who - from the evidence of previous studies (Ly Hoang Ngan 2000a, b; VOV 2001a, Tran Huu Quang 2001) - listen to traditional radio the least, or do not listen to traditional radio. In this sense, having targeted web users, my thesis does not only investigate the media consumption habits, perceptions, attitudes and opinions towards media of these new emerging and dramatically increasing groups of audiences, but more importantly, explores why these groups do or do not listen to traditional radio, and whether they listen to radio via the Internet. Establishing the answers to these questions may help VOV better understand their audiences' needs.

Via the quantitative and qualitative research, it is found that whilst Vietnamese web users continue to regard television as the current main means of information and entertainment, the passion of participants for the Internet is greater. Almost twice as many participants in the qualitative study would choose the Internet if required to give up either the Internet or television. Whilst newspapers and magazines continue to be consumed by approximately one third of the respondents, radio is the least utilised source of information and entertainment

Significant numbers of participants in my research undervalue the role of radio in their everyday life. Just 23.6% (n=1206) of participants think radio is, and continues to be, an important medium of information and entertainment. Moreover, participants have relatively low levels of knowledge of the characteristics and development of radio. Approximately 40% (n=927) of Vietnamese participants think radio is the most intimate medium, and less than half of these groups think they can access radio anywhere, whenever they wish to, most importantly, less than one sixth of participants in Vietnam think radio is the most immediate medium. Regarding ways people can listen to radio, whilst 88.6% (n=1205) of participants in the quantitative research are aware of their ability to listen to radio via AM/FM, the numbers of participants who know that they can listen to radio via digital radio, digital television and satellite radio are modest, 30%, 14.4%, and 7%, respectively. Consequently, one out of three participants in Vietnam think that radio will eventually be replaced by other media, including television and the Internet. As these groups of participants belong to the 'elite' groups of audiences in Vietnam, in terms of educational achievement, by and large, the

awareness of the general population towards radio and radio's variants is predicted to be even lower.

Whilst participants in my quantitative research seem to underestimate the importance of radio, the majority of participants regard the Internet as an important tool for their work or leisure activities (59.9%, n=1207), in addition, 39% (n=1207) of participants regard the Internet as an integral part of their everyday life. Significantly, the quantitative study also found that participants who regard the Internet as a vital part of their everyday lives tend to listen to web radio the most (67.2%, n=469), compared with 58.5% (n=718) of those who state that the Internet is merely a useful tool for their work/leisure. The group of participants who think that the Internet is not important to their lives listen to web radio the least (one third have listened to web radio).

It was found that participants listen to online radio for live programmes, on-demand programmes, and programmes that are not available via traditional radio. Few participants listen in order to contact DJs, or explore new ways to listen to radio. The majority of web radio listeners listen to radio online for entertainment, and do not choose to listen to speech radio, unless they listen during a break, when they do not have to concentrate on their work. Whilst traditional radio has played the role of secondary medium, online radio, particularly music radio, is a primary activity for participants who take a brief relaxing break during a long day at work.

One of the most interesting findings of the qualitative research is that a number of participants elect to listen to traditional radio after listening to radio online. Having given up listening for a period of time, participants began to realise that there are interesting programmes available on traditional radio, scheduled at convenient times, for example, late at night before going to sleep, or whilst cooking and having dinner. Whilst Internet usage continues to increase dramatically, the number of online radio listeners has the potential to develop, consequently, the radio listener community may expand.

However, even though web users seem to have positive attitudes towards web radio - 85.3% (n=727) of those who are aware that they can listen to radio online have listened to it, and almost 73% (n=727) of those who have listened to web radio can list the names of web radio stations they have visited - listening to online radio has not yet

become a habit. Very few web radio listeners (approximately 2.7%) in both the quantitative and qualitative research listens to web radio on a daily basis. More often, the majority of web radio listeners (60.8%) listen to web radio weekly, for between 1 and 3 hours.

Whilst financial issues seem not to be a major barrier for web users to listen to radio online, improving the quality of programmes and technical issues, including the speed and quality of transmission are the highest concerns. Technically, it is possible to resolve the speed and quality of transmission of audio and video files through broadband or ADSL, which will become available with the development of Internet provision in Vietnam. Therefore, improving the quality of radio programmes is the most compelling issue at this time. The issue of whether VOVNews listeners are satisfied with VOVNews's service will be addressed in the final section of the thesis, whilst the following section will outline the reasons why these groups of participants have neglected traditional radio.

9.5. NON-RADIO LISTENERS: WHY DID THEY WALK AWAY?

For the first time via focus group interviews, the characteristics of non-radio listeners were established, in order to explore the reasons why listeners walked away from radio, consequently enabling Vietnamese radio producers to identify ways to develop and compete with visual media to maximise their audiences. The reasons why participants neglect radio can be separated into two main categories: the lifestyle of Vietnamese people in what is a transitional period, and the services of radio (the delivery of information and entertainment) - VOV's services in particular, and the radio industry in Vietnam in general.

A number of issues related to the lifestyle of the majority of the urban population in Hanoi, for example transportation, public loudspeakers and breakfast habits, were identified in the qualitative research as significant factors affecting their habits of radio listening. Therefore, even though radio is considered a secondary medium - a source of companionship (Barnett and Morrison 1989, p.3) that allows people to work and listen at the same time (Crisell 2002; Douglas 1999; Street 2002), findings from the qualitative study suggested that the majority of the urban Vietnamese seem to not have

time to listen to radio, or more precisely, do not have an ideal time to listen, due to their lifestyles. Interviewing radio listeners, it was found that a number of participants have begun to listen to radio again, after moving to homes more suited to personal listening, or as a consequence of listening to radio via the Internet.

Apart from Vietnamese urban lifestyles, the low percentage of radio ownership amongst the urban population, the lack of information about radio schedules and the poor quality of reception also affect strongly radio listening.

However, the main reasons why these participants become non-radio listeners are radio's services, amongst which radio programming, programme content, radio presenting styles, and the selection of music are central problems. Participants complained about the radio programming, in which news and current affairs are lengthy, less informative and not sufficiently immediate. As VOV's channels are mixed channels (with the exception of the newly reorganised VOV3), it is difficult for listeners to find their preferred programmes, especially when radio schedules are not widely available.

It is important to note that the majority of participants in the 5 non-radio listener focus group interviews had given up listening some time previously, and were not aware of the changes in radio programmes on VOV.

Therefore, having responded to the question 'Do you want to listen to radio again?', over one third of these participants in the qualitative study continued to maintain that they will not listen to radio in the future. Conversely, two thirds of the non radio listeners state that if there were a radio set available at a convenient time, and informative and interesting programmes were broadcast, they would like to listen to radio again. In other words, the majority of participants may listen to radio again, but it is not an unconditional relationship. These findings suggest that increasing accessibility to radio and improving the quality of radio services are the key factors to re-attract radio listeners.

9.6. WEB USERS AND ONLINE RADIO LISTENERS: DOMESTIC VS. OVERSEAS

The comparison of both perceptions and consumption of media between Vietnamese web users in Vietnam and those overseas may enable Vietnamese media producers to understand better their target audience groups. More importantly, as the majority of overseas participants have access to relatively higher technology and the greater competition within their media environment (it is noted that these features are evolving in Vietnamese society) their perceptions and opinions about media may reflect those of the Vietnamese audiences in the future.

Generally speaking, overseas participants seem to watch television and read newspapers less frequently than those living in Vietnam, yet spend more time surfing the Internet and listening to radio. 34.6% (n=272) of overseas participants listened to radio every day, whilst only 27.7% (n=931) of the Vietnamese domestic audience do so.

In addition, overseas participants have more knowledge regarding the ways they can listen to radio, including digital radio, digital television, computers or satellite radio, than those living in Vietnam. Furthermore, overseas participants value more highly the importance of radio in their daily lives, and express more positive thinking about the future of radio than domestic participants. The number of domestic participants in my quantitative research who think that radio will eventually be replaced by other media is approximately 2.5 times higher than that of overseas participants, 37.1% (n=935) and 14.2% (n=275), respectively.

In short, the overall differences in radio listening between participants in Vietnam and abroad are entirely consistent with listeners' perceptions of radio's role in their lives and their general knowledge about the development of radio.

It is important to emphasise that, whilst overseas participants seem to have better understanding about radio, stronger beliefs in the future of radio, and actually listen to radio more often than those living in Vietnam, they provide more negative comments than participants in Vietnam about VOV and VOVNews' services. In terms of VOVNews's design, only 10% (n=139) of overseas listeners strongly agree that the

website is user-friendly, compared with 18.4% (n=380) of those living in Vietnam who agree with this statement. Moreover, whilst 24.4% (n=139) of VOVNews overseas listeners state that they disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, this is the case for just 8.9% (n=380) of those living in Vietnam. Similarly, the number of VOVNews listeners in Vietnam who regard VOVNews as a well-designed website is significantly higher than those living abroad, 33% (n=373) and 25.6% (n=133), respectively.

Not only are overseas participants more demanding about web design, they also have more expectations than listeners in Vietnam about VOVNews's content. Generally, the numbers of overseas listeners who are dissatisfied with the accuracy, diversity, immediacy and usefulness of information provided by VOVNews are greater than that of those living in Vietnam. In addition, with the exception of accuracy and usefulness, none of the identified content features, including immediacy or diversity of information provides satisfaction for more than 50% of overseas listeners (Chapter VII).

Extrapolation of the findings suggest that as most overseas participants live in relatively higher technology surroundings, with greater competition within the media, they have more opportunities than domestic participants to access IT mediated media and may be exposed to more sophisticated radio from other sources than VOV¹³⁴. Furthermore, having lived in Western society and to some extent, absorbing Western culture, ideologies and ways of thinking, overseas participants seem to be more critical than those living in Vietnam. Due to culture effect participants living in Vietnam are less likely to express critical opinions.

¹³⁴ It should be noted that amongst overseas participants in my online survey, the majority live in developed countries, including the US, the UK, Australia, European countries, Canada and Japan or advanced developing countries like Korea and Singapore. Of these respondents, approximately 34% live in the US. The participants who live in Australia, France and the UK are the second, the third and the fourth largest groups, 13.7%, 11.9% and 8.7% respectively. The percentage of respondents living in Asia (except Japan, Singapore, Korea and China) and Africa is statistically low. The figures in my online survey were supported by the Government's report, in which nearly 80% of Vietnamese expatriates are living in developed countries (Resolution No.36-NQ/TW).

It is noted that one of VOV's missions currently assigned by the Party is to 'bridge' Vietnamese expatriates and their homeland (as discussed previously in chapter I). However, by and large, regarding VOVNews's design and content, overseas listeners offered more negative comments and less positive feedback than those living in Vietnam. These findings suggest a potential means for VOVnews to meet the remit of the Party's mission, thereby strengthening the relationship between VOV and its expatriated audiences.

9.7. VOVNEWS: HOW TO SERVE BETTER THEIR LISTENERS IN THE INTERNET AGE

In order to identify ways for VOVNews to develop, it is important to clarify the participants' opinions of VOVNews service, in terms of its content and design. Interestingly, differing opinions occurred in both categories where participants comment about VOVNews services.

In terms of design, VOVNews is thought by more than 64% of participants to be a user-friendly website due to its simple structure and design. However, a number of participants in the qualitative research state that VOVNews is too simple and therefore is a boring website. This is a possible reason why only one in three participants in the quantitative research agreed that VOVNews is a well-designed website.

Arguably, the most conflicting opinions occur when participants were asked to identify the quality of content of VOV. Apart from the feature of accuracy, which satisfied 81% (and dissatisfied just 8.2%) of participants in the quantitative research, the other three features, including immediacy, diversity and usefulness of information, particularly the first two features, received significantly different evaluations from participants. The number of participants who are satisfied with the diversity of information VOV provides is 38.4%, just slightly higher than the number of participants who do not offer comments about this issue, 34.7%. Almost one in three participants cannot make up their minds about the immediacy and usefulness of information VOV provides. This phenomenon reflects the uncertainty of participants when evaluating VOV's content.

In the qualitative research, it was found that the differences in opinions may occur because participants were divided: a number of participants offered comments from the perspective of former radio listeners, whilst others are current radio listeners. A significant number of participants gave up listening some time previously, therefore, they were not aware of the changes in radio programmes, and continued to offer comments about the programmes they previously listened to. These participants provided the most negative comments about VOV services.

The participants who have continued to listen to VOV are aware of the recent changes in radio programmes, in which VOV provided more up-dated information, via a more intimate manner of presentation, and greater diversification after the reorganisation of VOV3. However, these changes do not yet meet their demands. Despite being aware of the changes on VOV, these participants continue to complain about radio programming and radio content, for example the length of feature articles or news and current affairs.

As VOVNews is a web radio, apart from radio programming, Internet features also play a significant role in capturing web users' interest. However, the majority of participants in the qualitative research state that VOVNews lacks the professional features of an online media organisation, for example, hyperlinks, 'print option', 'email to a friend', or 'give your comments' and RSS. VOVNews's text is lengthy, uninteresting, and less informative and immediate than other online newspapers. One of the most important factors of a web radio station – the on-demand radio service - also received significantly negative comments. The major need of online radio listeners is entertainment, however, at the time this research was conducted, VOVNews had not provided VOV3 on demand, even though VOV3 is the only music channel available on the VOV network. Moreover, apart from the title of an on-demand programme, VOVNews does not provide further in-depth information, for example, scheduling, name of presenters, and most importantly brief information about the programme content. In short, the VOVNews service has not yet met the needs of web radio listeners, in terms of both content and design, suggesting a possible reason why only 60.5% of web radio listeners name VOVNews as the web radio station they often visit.

Nevertheless, the majority of responses to the open question 'How to improve the quality of VOVNews service?' do not suggest changes or improvements to the design,

but focus on the website's content. Perhaps, the most important element for web users is the content of the website they visit.

Regarding the content of VOVNews, comments about improving the website can be categorised into two main groups: radio programmes and Internet features. In terms of radio programmes, participants' comments focused on radio programming, the presenters, and most importantly, the quality of the radio content, for example, restructuring programming, reducing the frequency of newspaper articles read on air and choosing appropriate music for specific programmes. Participants expressed a preference for the following: a wider range of information; more radio features focusing on public concerns - including living conditions; corruption; socio-economic developments, employment and social welfare - more interactive programmes, including phone-ins; more updated information about weather forecasts and traffic news, and especially, more entertaining programmes, for example quiz shows.

Whilst most participants seem happy with the service - for example, the transmission - of live radio programmes, this is not the case for on-demand services. Participants express a preference for additional information about a radio programme, and more importantly, more on-demand entertainment programmes.

A number of comments regarding VOVNews's design should also be taken into account. For example, VOVNews should re-structure the website and perhaps highlight important news by using larger pictures or posting the stories in prominent areas of the website instead of using numerous colours, graphics, frames and shadowing. Furthermore, a significant number of VOVNews listeners complain that the layout of special subjects and columns have a similar design, format and colour to that of advertisements, which causes confusion about which is editorial content and which is advertising on the website. Significantly, a number of participants state that VOVNews's design is 'flat', suggesting that they should redesign the site and create highlighted areas to attract the immediate attention of users. A number of Internet features should be improved in the website, including 'Have your say', 'RSS', 'Downloadable', 'Customise your page', 'Blog', and 'Search Engine'.

Finally, in order to attract web users to VOVNews, VOV producers should pay greater attention to improving the quality of radio programmes, as well as the website design.

9.8. BEYOND THE PHD THESIS: FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Researching radio and its listenership in the Internet Age can fruitfully contribute to the future of radio development in Vietnam. However, the future of radio does not only rely on the public's response to this medium. Hence, in order to develop the radio industry in Vietnam, a number of further research initiatives should be undertaken, for example: modern radio programming, training radio professionals, legal issues, including Government policies toward the development of radio, and the application of modern technologies in producing radio programmes.

Researching radio and its listenership in the Internet Age - focusing on web radio - is a significant challenge, because the Internet is a constantly-evolving and dramatically increasing technology. Therefore, elements of the data used in the thesis are rendered out-of-date by the time of publication. In addition, as the WWW is "still in its infancy", as the web's inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee ([no date] cited Waters 2008) stated recently, further major developments of the internet are predicted, consequently, a wide range of issues related to web radio and its development should be investigated further in the future.

[82.988 words]

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Appendix:

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE ADAPTATIONS IN RADIO IN BOTH THE UK AND US SINCE ITS INCEPTION

In order to provide better understanding about the development of radio in the UK and US this appendix offers extra information to what that has been discussed in chapter III of the main thesis. However, due to the logistic structure of these sections, there might be a few repetitions with what were discussed in chapter III.

1. CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGIES

1.1. The birth of radio

On the 16 June 1920, the *Daily Mail* referred to a thirty-minute recital over the wireless airwaves of the famous singer Dame Nellie Melba, on the previous day as ‘a wonderful half-hour’ (Street 2002a, p.11), when “Art and Science joined hands, and the world ‘listening-in’ must have counted every minute of it precious” (The *Daily Mail* 1920 cited Briggs 1995, p.43). Mosco (2005, p.128) later described the magic transmitted through the air with no evidence of their passage as more than just the work of God, it was the medium of God’s work. This event is considered to be highly significant, marking the birth of radio.

Interestingly, whilst opinions differ as to who the ‘Father of Radio’ was - as this title is attributed to a number of individuals, including Guglielmo Marconi, Lee De Forest and Alexander Popov (Briggs 1981; Agree *et al.* 1994; Crisell 2002; Street 2002a; Spencer 2005; Busby 1998), whomever is regarded as the original inventor, all of these individuals have one feature in common: they were physicists. Radio’s invention remained an international and evolving process in the years of continued technical development from the late 1890s to 1914, with contributions from significant numbers

of scientists, physicists and engineers, including James Clerk-Maxwell, Alexander Graham Bell, Michael Faraday, Nikola Tesla, Thomas Watson, Ader, Oliver Lodge, Heinrich Rudolf Hertz, Reginald Fessenden and John Ambrose Fleming (Sterling *et al.* 2002, p.27; Thumm 2006; Hill 1996, p.9-10, Street 2002a, p.13; Briggs 1961, p.26; Kryzhanosvky *et al.*; Corazza 1998, p.1307; Bittner 1996, p.160; Lochte [no date], p.27).

That is to say, radio was born as a result of a convergence of Art and Science, in which Science was a decisive factor. The development of radio since its inception has depended and continues to rely heavily on its ability to utilise technology as MacGregor (1997, p.174) stated that:

...with the possible exception of the military there is probably no other industry that relies as much on technology as broadcasting does.

In this sense, the utilising latest technology to improve radio services, including digital audio broadcasting and webcasting, has proved once again this strong relationship between radio and technology.

Returning to the birth of radio, in spring 1895, Marconi took his wireless experiment outdoors (Kryzhanosvky *et al.*), sending a telegraph message without wires; however, voice was not transmitted. The transition from wireless transmission to broadcasting would not have been practicable without the development of the valve, variously described as, according to Briggs (1961, p.28), the 'Cinderella of electronical science', 'the magic lamp of radio', 'the truest "little giant" in all history' and the greatest invention since fire, the lever, and the wheel. Breakthroughs in this area are credited to Fleming and Forest (Varhan 2002, p.54; Briggs 1961, p.51). The full significance of Fleming's experiments were not appreciated until Forest inserted a third electrode into Fleming's valve in 1907, thus making it a triode, took 'the most important single step in the whole development of radio communication' (Briggs 1961, p.28). The triode, a multi-electrode valve, enabled much more sensitive wireless receivers to be produced and permitted radio-telephone messages to be picked up at far greater distances than had been previously thought possible (Douglas 1999, p.51; Briggs 1961, p.28).

The term 'radio', as applied to a form of communication, was first suggested by Monro 1898 (Hill 1996, p.7). Briggs (1961, p.29) found that the word 'radio' was beginning to be used more widely between 1908 and 1914 not only among scientists but amongst:

...a motley group of people, mostly boys and young men working all alone on crude apparatus in the isolation of their own home.

It should be noted that radio waves differed from other sorts of electromagnetic radiation, for example light, heat and X-rays, because of its frequency range (Lax 1997, p.26-27) - radio waves range from frequencies as low as about 1 kHz up to around 100 GHz (ibid). Even though this could be regarded as a huge range of frequencies, there never seems to be enough radio frequency space available to satisfy demand (ibid), because the frequencies allocated for broadcasting must be separated to allow for the sidebands and channel selection. Therefore, one of the advantages of DAB, which enabled it to develop during the last two decades is that it allows a greater number of radio stations to be broadcast over a given amount of spectra, which will be discussed at a later point.

Speech and music contain frequencies between approximately 50 Hz and 15kHz, which are much lower than radio frequencies (Lax 1997, p.28). Therefore, the techniques of modulation are used to carry the sound frequencies on higher frequency carries waves. Two methods of modulation are used in traditional broadcast radio: amplitude modulation (AM) and frequency modulation (FM). Importantly, it was the invention of FM that provided for radio a new landscape and new ways to develop.

1.2. FM revolution

AM was the dominant means of broadcasting during the first two thirds of the 20th century, and remains broadly used into the 21st century. AM technology is simpler than either FM radio or DAB, but in most cases, has greater power than FM stations with a longer range (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.218). However, AM radio signals can be disrupted by physical barriers, for example skyscrapers and other sources of radio frequency interference (Priestman 2002, p.67; Lax 1997, p.29). The bandwidth of AM channels is not sufficient for high-fidelity services, there is a wide variation in the daytime coverage of AM stations, depending on the power available, soil conductivity and frequency

(Inglis 1990, p.60). In some instances, government regulations even require AM radio stations to reduce their power or 'sign off' at sunset to avoid conflict with other station signals that carry further at night (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.218).

Due to its technical deficiencies, AM broadcasting began to lose a major part of its market share to FM, which was invented by Armstrong during the early 1930s (Hill 1996, p.166; Inglis 1990, p.121; Sterling and Kittross 2002, p.116, 157). However, when FM broadcasting began to develop experimentally in 1936, the radio industry treated it as a minor innovation. Few sets were equipped to receive FM signals and FM experimental stations did not appear until the late 1930s nor were they subject to regular licensing until January 1, 1941 (Sterling 1984, p.3). Those AM stations that also had FM licenses regarded them as a 'secondary' service of little consequence or potential (ibid). Stations with both AM and FM licenses often transmitted their AM programmes on FM, as well as in simulcasts, in order to keep the FM signal on the air at virtually no cost. This poor relation has grown significantly, particularly since the end of World War II (Agee *et al.* 1994).

Although FM stations can be heard only for relatively short distances, they are virtually static-free and can transmit music with greater fidelity in stereophonic sound. Investment in FM stations is generally low; however, it could be an effective commercial medium from the broadcaster and advertiser's perspectives (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.218) because FM stations can target the content of their broadcasts to audience segments with specialised listening interests. This technique is called narrowcasting (Priestman 2002; Agee *et al.* 1994, p.218) and today is widely used to emphasise the fragmented audiences of radio in the Digital Age (See more in Chapter III). Due to their larger audiences, AM stations cannot specialise as much as FM stations are able to. Furthermore, the development of FM stereo gave FM stations the ability to broadcast music close to the quality of a stereo record or tape player. As a result, FM's appeal was strong amongst younger listeners.

Gradually, new radio sets for homes and cars were built with both AM and FM bandwidths. Many FM stations took on much the same mixture of advertising and entertainment broadcast as AM stations. In the US, between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, the FM share of the audience increased by 38%. FM reached parity with AM in

1979, and by 1988, its share had risen to 75% (Inglis 1990, p.143). According to meta-analysis of incomplete data from the CIA Fact Book (2005), at present, almost two thirds of all radio stations worldwide are FM (29,000 FM radio stations amongst approximately 46,000 radio stations all-inclusive).

Initially, FM radio was considered insignificant and inconsequential, as is similarly the case regarding a number of radio's variants in the Digital Age. However, due to its advantages, FM radio is currently utilised for two thirds of the world's radio broadcasts. Therefore, it is thought that researching the abilities of radio variants in the Digital Age, including web radio is necessary and importance, even though at present, they are still in fledgling stages.

As discussed previously, the advantage of FM is that it provides clearer sound that strengthens its listenership. Changes in recording technology have also improved the quality of sound recorded and consequently, radio programmes are clearer. This is an important factor for radio, the 'listening' medium; therefore, advances in recording technology will be discussed in the following section.

1.3. Changes in recording technology

As sound is the main instrument in delivering information and entertainment for radio - in order to capture listeners - radio has to provide reliable and interference-free high quality speech and music to the listeners at home and those who are mobile. In the process of improving radio services, the role of recording technology is significant. In this section, I will not investigate in detail the development of audio recording - from the phonoautograph, the first recording device (Sterne 2003, p.31; Dellaira 1995, p.192), to the phonograph (Martin 2001, p.848; Fish 2001, p.6), and the latest, including the compact disc and minidisk - however I will highlight the practical philosophies upon which such technical strategies were based.

Magnetic recording of audio was first proposed by Poulsen in 1898 (Spiceland 2004; Street 2002b, 2006, p.117). For several decades thereafter, work was undertaken to develop a satisfactory commercial product using the principles described by Poulsen (ibid). However, none of these efforts were successful (Inglis 1990, p.106). A number of

the devices developed were manufactured in the US, although not marketed and it took nearly a quarter of a century before the emergence of broadcast radio made the development of such an invention relevant (Street 2002b). During the early 1930s, various versions of tape recording entered the market (Spiceland 2004, p.1533). The development of a satisfactory method for recording audio signals on magnetic tape was:

...one of the technical breakthroughs that enabled radio broadcasting to adapt to the postnetwork era.

(Inglis 1990, p.105)

Initially, applying the recording technology to making radio programmes was relatively slow. It was not until 1927 that the idea of 'bottled programmes' - that is to say material which could be recorded and broadcast at a future date - was debated at the BBC (Street 2006, p.117). The reasons for its initially slow development were explained by Briggs (1985, p.121):

'Live' broadcasting was greatly preferred, almost on moral grounds, to recorded broadcasting: it suggested to the listener, 'this is it'. Suggestions were made also that at the other side of the microphone if artists knew they were being recorded and retakes would be made, they would give mediocre performances.

Gradually, it was realised that tape recorders made it possible for stations to prerecord commercials and programme segments with equipment that was relatively inexpensive and did not require a high degree of technical skill to operate. Magnetic recording was a key element in broadcasting's transition from live to recorded programming. According to Day (1996, p.204-205), when recording technology was introduced to New Zealand in 1928 - 1929, radio stations saw the increased use of records as the answer to the problems they had experienced in finding sufficient live performers to fill their broadcasting hours. Moreover, it also reduced the cost of making radio programmes (ibid).

While the BBC preferred authenticity in relation to recording (as it was regarded that live broadcasting connoted 'real' events), the commercial stations¹³⁵ had an interest in

¹³⁵ Recording sponsored programming in the UK for transmission from European broadcast sites

developing recording techniques to the highest and most efficient standards of quality and durability (Street 2002b). Street (2003, p.150) argued that it was the competitive element in the use of the technology of the time - a significant period in radio's development (Street 2006) - that actually accelerated expansion. Importantly, the recording technology enabled the BBC's Empire Broadcasting Service, first launching on 19 December 1932, to be repeated and available in different time zones (Street 2002a, p.49). Due to advanced recording technology, the power of radio that derives from its ability to speak directly from the air to the human imagination can be multiplied when the message can be repeated over and over again (Flintoff 2003, p.vi).

Recording technology also had an additional effect on radio programming. This effect was a US broadcasting innovation, where the programmes were referred to as 'electrical transcriptions' (Day 1996, p.206). According to Day (*ibid*), Harris, the Broadcasting Director of the Radio Broadcasting Company of New Zealand visited the US in the winter of 1930 for various matters, prominent amongst which was a search for recorded programmes. The *Journal Radio Record* (1931 cited Day, 1996, p.206) stated that the introduction of radio serials was a logical consequence of the improvement in recording techniques.

It was not until World War II that breakthroughs by German engineers were made which led to the sophisticated performance and versatility of today's recorders. The value of the German technology was immediately recognised by American engineers who entered Germany at the beginning of the occupation, and it was adopted immediately by American manufacturers (Inglis 1990, p.106).

Electronic recording techniques using tape, developed in and after the late 1950s, provide greater flexibility in making recordings (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.239). Utilising the technique of analogue tape recording, a record created through an intricate melding of several taped sound tracks into a master recording. In the middle of the 1970s, radio technology was already in the midst of another technological revolution built on the development of light-weight field recording equipment - which allowed reporters to record sound at the scene of any news event, including interviews, crowd sound and traffic noise - and multitrack recording and mixing (Flintoff 2003, p.vi). As the craft of radio production improved, and due to the use of electronic recording equipment

expanding the variety of sound effects achievable, the skill of the studio sound mixer was as important as the ability of the actors, musicians and performers (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.239-240, Flintoff 2003, p.v).

Recording technology provided not only a change in radio programming but also genres. From the late 1960s, a radio 'new wave' occurred: a new art of 'wild sound' recording made possible by the advent of portable recorders and microphones (Madsen 2005). Apart from a renaissance in radio drama, documentary and feature production in radio (Madsen 2005; Flintoff 2003), a number of new genres emerged, including Parker's ballads, in which Parker used portable recorders to capture the voices of ordinary people from all over the UK, which later were heavily edited and mixed with MacColl's songs to form a 'ballad' (story) (Madsen 2005, p.195).

An additional advantage of recording on tape was the ability to erase or record over a previous recording so that mistakes could be rectified. The analogue tape recorder also made it possible to cut the tape and join it together at any point (splicing). This allowed the recording to be edited. Pieces of the recording could be removed, or rearranged (Hendy 2000, p.48). However, tape recording is not a perfect recording medium, as the relationship between the size of the electrical information signal and the magnetising force on the tape coating is not a linear one, on playback, the relationship between the magnetisation and the signal current induced in the tape head is also not linear. These defects can be corrected electronically, but this is costly. Furthermore, the tape itself can suffer from only one or two defects (Lax 1997, p.77). In the latter part of the 1980s, the compact disc gradually became popular (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.235). A new revolutionary form of recording began, and analogue tape recording was gradually displaced. With digital methods, copies of recordings could be exact. Compact disc audio is sampled 44,100 times each second, this is often enough to catch all the nuances a human ear can hear (Russ 2001, p.38).

Recently, computers (digital audio workstations) have played an increasing role in the recording studio, as their use eases the tasks of cutting and looping, as well as allowing for instantaneous changes, such as duplication of parts of the recording, the addition of effects and the rearranging of parts of recordings. The most important advantage of digital signals is that they can be transmitted or recorded with virtually no loss of

quality, while analogue signals cannot (Sterling and Kittorss 2002, p.355). As a result, the development of recording technologies, based on issues of quality, durability, editing capability and portability, provides opportunities to radio producers to make high quality radio programmes - one of the most important factors in capturing radio listeners.

However, digital recording is just an element of the digital revolution, which includes transmission, storage, and processing/editing of audio signals that has achieved exponential progress during recent decades (Dunaway 2000). More importantly, it is digital technology that has challenged perceptions of traditional radio by creating a number of radio variants, including web radio. The radio landscape in the Digital Age will be discussed in section 2.4 whilst in the following, I will investigate the improvements of radio receiver apparatus to explore how they affected listeners' enjoyment when listening to radio.

1.4. Improvements in receiver apparatus

Radio receivers play an important role in the development of the radio industry, as they are the last bridge connecting radio with its listeners. Interestingly, the fiercer competition radio has to face with other media, the more radio receivers have been improved. They have not only developed in terms of receiving sound, and ease of tuning, but also their aesthetics and ergonomics. The radio set has changed from a crude and complicated machine to an attractive feature of almost every environment. The changes in receiver apparatus have satisfactorily attracted the listener's attention and retained their association with radio.

At the beginning of the radio industry, as Eckersley (1942, p.104) stated, potential audiences had found problems with the amplification of sound via a loudspeaker. As radio receivers suffered from serious technical limitations which made good quality reception difficult to achieve. The crystal set was the most popular, because it was the least expensive and easiest to operate (Pegg 1983, p.36). Due to the cost of acquiring a commercial radio, home radio set construction also rapidly became common (Pegg 1983, p.36; Sterling and Kittross 2002, p.89; Douglas 1999, p.57) - however it was a crude form of listening (ibid).

By 1922, valve sets had replaced crystal sets in popularity, due to their improved reception (Douglas 1999, p.77), yet, they were inevitably troublesome. Often, valve sets interfered with their own reception and with other nearby receivers. Most sets had a limited ability to pick up weak signals and a limited ability to tune finely, and they could pick up only one frequency at a time. Douglas (1999, p.78) highlighted the point that these sets could not retain adjustments:

One night, after painstaking tuning, you would lure in a station only to discover that the next night, having left your dials in exactly the same spot, the station was nowhere to be found.

The valve sets required not only valves but several types of expensive batteries. In addition, they are extremely insensitive, as relying on the power of the transmitter (Pegg 1983, p.38). They were also incapable of separating signals of equivalent strength, unless these were widely separated on the waveband. Moreover, the GPO normally established restrictions on the length of the aerial which could be used - a hundred feet being specified among the restrictions listed on the back of each licence (ibid).

In short, tuning an early receiver was an art, and their audio quality left much to be desired (Sterling and Kittross 2002, p.89). Gradually, as a result of many innovations, which considerably improved the performance, quality of sound, selectivity and sensitivity of the receiver, by 1925, the quality of loudspeakers had improved dramatically.

By the 1930's, valves had become increasingly reliable and the price of receivers had started to fall (Briggs 1985). The first push button radios were produced in the mid 1930's, and short wave bands were popular, this development gave the listener access to a broader range of broadcasting. Smaller valves were developed during World War II, which eventually gave rise to the more compact receivers of the late 1940's and early 1950's. Most of the popular BBC medium and long wave stations that audiences are familiar with today, were broadcasting by the late 1940's (ibid).

The most important development in broadcasting technology occurred when the first transistor was manufactured in 1947 (Brinkman 1997; Pinto [no date]; Hill 1996, p.169). The transistor permitted radios to be made smaller, less expensively, and

increased portability. Transistors also consumed less power, were more reliable, and did not require time to 'warm up'. Nonetheless, it was not until 1956 that the first British all-transistor radio was produced (Hill 1996, p.185). For the first time in its history, radio became conveniently portable, which led to a revolution in listening culture in the 1950s-1960s. In other words, what the transistor achieved was a revolution in the way radio was used, something which was recognised by Gillard of the BBC (cited Crisell 2002, p.29):

The transistor has made the radio into the truly ubiquitous mass medium. Radio is no longer something to which you necessarily have to go. Radio goes with you. So it becomes a personal service...Consequently, the usefulness of the medium is enormously enhanced, and those in charge of sound in the years ahead must increasingly take this service function into account... in planning their programme output.

Interestingly, the transistor revolution began at the very time when radio had lost its pre-eminence, and seemed to be facing extinction due to the emergence of television. Due to this new and apparently innovative advantage of transistor, radio could be carried around, and its messages absorbed in a way not possible with other electronic media, not even with portable television (Crisell 2002, p.28-29). Over the next 20 years, transistors displaced valves almost completely, with the exception of very high power, or very high frequency applications (ibid). Not only did the transistor allow listeners to take their radio anywhere, it greatly extended the number of things they could do while listening, such as driving their cars, doing exercise or gardening. By the end of the 1970s, 70% of radio receivers were either portable or mobile (Vandhan 2002, p.57).

These technological developments not only offered progressive convenience for radio sets, but importantly, improved its aesthetic, from a crude and complicated machine - "more like something out of contemporary science fiction than a simple household object" (Scannel and Cardiff 1991, p.357) - to a desirable consumer item in the home. At the point when, for the first time, the 30-line ('low-definition') television experiments could be transmitted in synchronised sound and vision in March 1930, the appearance of radio sets had been improved enough to satisfy consumer taste (Hill 1996, p.62-64).

In the UK, exhibitions to introduce and promote wireless apparatus (and later radio set) were open to the public for 40 years (1922-1962) (ibid, p.222-225). Due to this activity, the radio industry in the UK had an opportunity to present various kinds of radio sets and encourage listeners to enjoy listening radio. In 1946, approximately 80% of British homes already owned a radio set (ibid, p.166). As radio was designed to function also as a piece of furniture, the idea of a small, compact second set, off the mains, transportable, for use around the home in the bedroom, kitchen, study, or playroom was conceived. By the late 1940s, the radio industry began manufacturing models for the 'second set' market, purposely designed, "catering for every shade of taste", from the small bedside 'second set' at under £10, to the multi-band receiver for worldwide reception at around £50 (Hill 1996, p.166-170-175). This phenomenon increased the popularity of radio and consequently, radio listening.

Another highly significant improvement in broadcasting technology, which again, contributed to radio's popularity, was the car radio. The first time that a wireless radio had been built into a private motor car in the UK was probably in 1927 (Hill 1996, p.58). In the US, the number of cars that had radios had increased from 1% at the beginning of the 1930s to 25% by 1939 (Craig 2004, p.9). In the UK, the standard installation of car radios began in the 1960s (Paulu 1961, p.55) and by 1990, 85% of British cars were automatically fitted with radios, over half of which were used whenever the cars were driven (Seymour-Ure 1991, p.4). Up to date, one of radio's unique advantages is that it is an 'on-the-go' medium (Piiro 1994 cited MacFarland 1997, p.74; Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006). On weekday mornings, over one-third of all radio listening occurs in cars, and in the afternoon, in-car listening dominates, approximately 45% of all radio listening (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2007c, 2008; Ofcom 2006c). At present, radio can be listened to via computers, once again, radio's popularity has an opportunity to increase as a result of the dramatic expansion of Internet usage. It is predicted that this popularity may stimulate radio listening, as happened when radio was fitted as standard in cars.

In short, the changes in technology, including transmission (AM and FM), recording and radio receivers have had significant impacts on the development of radio. They not only improved the quality of radio services, but importantly, emerged at an ideal time for radio, providing abilities for radio to reinvent itself, increase its popularity and

survive in the fierce competitive environment it faces with other media. Intriguingly, most these technological developments were available long before they were applied, as discussed in chapter III. In fact, the media's successes in dominating the market (and everyday life) depended deeper on the social shaping and contexts of use than on the technological capacities per se (Livingstone 1999, p.60). For this reason, investigating the changes in the ways people listen to radio, in order to understand how radio has adapted and should continue to acclimatise itself in the new changing socio-cultural contexts, is discussed in the following section.

2. CHANGES IN THE WAYS PEOPLE LISTEN TO RADIO

2.1. From a communal to an individual activity - from a medium of prime-time entertainment to a medium of companionship

When radio first arrived, enthusiasts initially had to listen to broadcasts via headphones. Because the reception was generally poor and relied on headphones, listening was a solitary activity which allowed the listeners little freedom to do anything else (Crisell 2002, p.11; Douglas 1999, p.70).

With the advent of the loudspeaker, any number of audiences could join in listening to radio (Warren 2005, p.9). Additionally, due to several reasons, including the cost of radio sets as mentioned above and the absence of television to provide alternative entertainment in the home, listening to radio became almost a community event. It was common practice for the members of a family, friends, and neighbours to converge in the homes of those wealthy enough to possess a radio set and listen as a group (Pegg 1983, p.197; Douglas 1999, p.70; Crisell 2002, p.11; Warren 2005, p.9).

In the UK, the social effects of radio began to be obvious by the mid-thirties, when people were working for 10 hours at the factory or office, and listening as a family leisure grew, especially at weekends (Cain 1992, p.22). The time dedicated to listening depended on which programmes were preferred and when they were scheduled, so that people planned other activities around listening to these programmes. As Warren (2005, p.9) said:

Work schedules, family chores, school homework, even civic activities or meetings were rearranged to permit time for listening to favourite radio programmes. Mealtimes were changed in order to listen to popular shows like *One Man's Family*... Nobody ate, nobody moved, nobody uttered a sound until *One Man's Family* had concluded its daily episode.

Similarly, in the US, radio was America's favourite pastime in the 1930s and 1940s, it faded in the 1950s - when television blossomed - and in the 1960s radio had to redefine its role. However, it was providential for radio that due to a fortuitous number of improvements arriving at an ideal time, especially the invention of the transistor amplifier, radio sets had become smaller and portable, as discussed previously in chapter III. This was also the time when a number of pirate radio stations emerged which played continuous pop music, ideal for background listening (Lax 1997, p.26). In other words, radio began to emerge as a medium which was distinct from television (ibid). From a medium of prime time entertainment, radio had emerged as a medium of companionship (Busby 1988, p.232).

Consequently, radio addresses each listener as an individual, although radio audiences may be counted in millions. Intimacy is regarded as radio's strength, especially due to the way radio presenters deliver messages to their audiences. Early speakers on radio spoke formal and stiff English (UK, US). However, radio presenters soon discovered the power of being intimate on air. It was 1923 when the BBC presenter, Alan, became extremely popular with audiences, his secret was that when he talked to millions, he conveyed the sense that he was speaking to one (Street 2002a, p.32). In radio light entertainment, many presenters, such as Steve Wright (at that time a BBC Radio 1 presenter), even played the reactions of recorded voices, 'Ooh! Wow!' (Crisell 2002, p.190). Goffman (1981 cited Crisell 2002, p.190) suggested that the broadcasters must talk as if responsive people were before their eyes and ears. Until now, intimacy has continued to be one of the characteristics that has rendered radio uniquely user-friendly within the mass media system, and enables it to capture audiences regardless of competition with visual media (Wilby and Conroy 1994, p.26; Crisell 2002, p.11-13; Shingler and Wieringa 1998, p.38-40; McLeish 1994, p.7).

2.2. How radio became more accessible

In its early days, listening to radio used to be complicated and costly (Scannell and Cardiff 1991; Douglas 1999; Craig 2004, p.3). For example, radio fans had to learn the difference between the three kinds of batteries that were needed to operate the new three-element vacuum valve. Even shop-bought sets required some assembly, such as the 'cat whisker' and thin wire provided to make contact with the crystal of the valve radio sets. If it was placed on the wrong spot, the listener heard nothing. The same was true for early valve sets, which required hairline calibrations to tune in different stations (Douglas 1999, p.69-70).

Moreover, listeners also had to face a number of problems with their expensive and complicated radio sets due to seasonal effects:

... and what listeners who had bought their apparatus in the winter did not know until a few months later was that static was much worse in the summer, sometimes making the operation of a receiving set 'practically impossible'...

(Douglas 1999, p.70)

The technical obstacles of the receivers created considerable inconvenience for listeners. Seventy-five percent of all correspondence received by the BBC from listeners before 1930 was on the subject of receiver's reception (Scannell and Cardiff 1991, p.358).

Listening to radio was also costly. In the US, when commercially manufactured radios became available in 1920, a crystal set cost \$25, and a valve set cost \$60. However, inexpensive sets were no bargain due to their lack of quality and performance, and the average price per set climbed well above \$100 (Sterling and Kittross 2002, p.89). Nevertheless, money could buy distance and amplification: in 1924, a crystal set with a 20-mile range cost between \$10 and \$25, a three-tube set with a range of up to 1,500 miles cost between \$100 and \$500 (cited Douglas 1999, p.70). In the UK, even in the 1930s, the price of a radio set ranged from £8 to £30 (Briggs 1981, p.33).

A fuller understanding of the cost of listening to radio at the early stage of its development can be gained from comparing the cost of radio sets to incomes and the cost of living at that time. In the UK, incomes for the two largest occupational groups, agricultural workers and miners, were typically £1.10s to £2 per week during the period 1918 to 1939 (Pegg 1983, p.47). Similarly, in the US in 1929, when a new car could be bought for less than \$600, the average price for a radio was \$136 (Maclaurin 1949 cited Craig 2004, p.3). Moreover, in the UK, listeners had to pay an annual licence fee to access radio. The original receiving licence used by experimenters with no transmitter capacity was introduced in July 1922, (cost ten shillings - 50p), and was continued until 1971 (Pegg 1983, p.40; Paulu 1981, p.2, 23).

Besides the issue of cost, there was a further factor influencing decisions to purchase a radio set: the availability of electricity. At the end of World War I, only 6% of houses in the UK were connected to an electricity supply (Scannell and Cardiff 1991, p.361). Similarly, in the US, while 85% of urban homes had electric services by 1930, only 10% of farm homes did, and it would not be until the mid 1940s that even half of farm homes were electrified, according to the Department of Commerce (1975 cited Craig 2004, p.3). For this reason, many working-class households purchased a battery-powered radio during the 1930s, however, this solution was not ideal, as the batteries had several disadvantages, including leaking.

Surprisingly, during the early years of radio, whilst listeners had endured a number of problems over the years - straining to hear out-of-town stations, inferior signals, low power, interference and scratchy records - they remained loyal and generally uncomplaining (Warren 2005, p.7). One possible reason for this phenomenon is that at that time, television was not available or not popularly available. The BBC Television broadcast service began on 2 November 1936, and it was not until 1955 that the BBC spent half as much of its budget on television as on radio (Cain 1992, p.31). Gradually, the audience for television was seriously eroding the radio as well as the cinema audience (ibid).

By the time radio had to face its major competitor - television, the price of a radio set began to reduce as discussed in chapter III. In Britain, when the government abolished the radio licence fee in 1971, the cost of buying and listening to radio was significantly

reduced. By the end of the 1970s, radio had become so relatively inexpensive that there were 2.53 sets to each household (Paulu 1981, p.350) - in effect, one set for every man, woman and child in the UK (Lax 1997, p.26; Crisell 2002, p.12). In the US, at present, the percentage of radio sets per person, is even higher: there are more than 2 radio sets for every person (Agee *et al.* 1994, p.210). These figures show that from a costly medium, radio has now become highly affordable, and almost a free medium for receiving information and entertainment which almost everybody can access (Shingler and Wieringa 1998).

At present, radio listening is highly accessible. With the emergence of many digital forms of radio, listeners can listen to radio via digital radio sets, digital televisions, computers or mobile telephones. Listening to radio via digital platforms is capturing an increasingly significant share of the total radio audiences (approximately 14%) and has been one of the major recent trends in radio listening in the UK (Ofcom 2004a, p.15; Ofcom 2006b, p.15).

In terms of time spent listening to digital services, the most popular choice is DAB, accounting for 54% of total digital radio listening hours (Timm 2005; Robinson 2006). Not only does listening to digital radio via DAB generate the majority of hours listened, the number of people listening on alternative platforms is growing rapidly¹³⁶ (Rajar 2008, p.3-4). Furthermore, the number of audiences listening to radio programme 'podcasts' also increased by more than double, from 2 million to almost 4.3 million during 2006-2008 (Ofcom 2006b, p.13; Rajar 2008, p.9).

Whilst conventional radio audiences can only listen to a limited choice of channels and programmes - which are produced and pushed forward to them - web radio listeners may have an unlimited choice of channels and programmes, which they 'pull' to their screen according to their needs and wants. Recently, the BBC has planned to allow its radio listeners to create their own station as part of a push that will see a single music strategy across the corporation for the first time (Day 2006). This is one of the key

¹³⁶ By the second quarter of 2006, 15.3% of the adult population in the UK were 'DAB households'; 38.9% had listened via digital TV and 22.8% had listened via the Internet. In 2008, approximately a quarter (23.7%) of the UK's adult population have listened to web radio and 8.1 million people listen to radio via the Internet weekly (Rajar 2008, p.3-4).

tenets of the radio strategy which allows listeners to personalise content offered online, and create their own unique radio station with programmes handpicked according to the listener's preferences. The plan, called Creative Future is designed to "deliver more value to audiences over the next six years" in the on-demand world (Day 2006). Live listening on the web and 'listen again' remain popular with the BBC's radio player services, providing 20 million hours of live listening and 12 million on-demand requests in March 2006 alone (Ofcom 2006a, p.67).

These statistics demonstrate that, at present, radio has several variants, and the fact that radio programmes are available via many devices, renders them highly accessible for listeners. Audiences are becoming used to listening to radio via a range of devices, not only traditional radio sets. This development illustrates the highly flexible and adaptable capabilities of radio in the Digital Age.

However, technological developments in the digital age have led to enormous changes in the media landscape. New technological developments offer greater choice, and create higher expectations from audiences. Moreover, along with the emergence of new media, a new generation of audience has arrived. This generation is referred as the "digital generation", "children of the information age", or even "computer nerds", and "addicted surfers" (Livingstone 2002, p.2). In order to capture this new audience, radio has to understand their characteristics, their needs and demands.

2.3. New audiences – new demands

As discussed previously in chapter III, Tapscott (1997, p.1) proclaimed the Net generation so important that he argued it would change the audience landscape. The Net generation represented 30% of the population in the US, compared to 29% of 'baby boomers', this is another generation large enough to rival the cultural hegemony of the ubiquitous 'baby boomers'. What makes this generation unique is not just their large numbers, but that they are the first generation to grow up surrounded by digital media, and for the first time in history, children are far ahead of their parents in shaping the use of a new technology (Tapscott 1997, p.2). Importantly, recent studies define the Net Generation as those who are growing up using the Internet (Rettie 2002, p.254), who may have never known life without the Internet (Lorerzo and Dziuban 2006, p.2;

Oblinger and Oblinger 2005; Combes 2006, p.401), or who have been variously described as tech-savvy, web-savvy and Internet-savvy (Combes 2006, p.402).

These new audiences are described as: increasingly active, selective, self-directed producers, as well as consumers; social, analytical, self-reliant, curious, contrarian, creative, media-savvy, bored with television and focused, able to adapt, high in self-esteem, possessing a global orientation, and importantly, an unstoppable force for transformation (Tapscott 1997, p.86-99; Livingstone 1999, p.63). Audiences are increasingly viewed as plural: multiple, diverse, fragmented or individualised (Livingstone 1999, 2004). Conversely, audiences have become less predictable, more fragmented, and more variable in their engagement with media (Livingstone 1999, p.63). Audiences want to control over their media, consuming their media where, how and when they choose (Allan 2006, p.3; Sturm 2004 cited Quinn and Filak 2005, p.9). Audiences tend to demand convenience, and they are usually willing to pay for it - accessing their news in the form that is most convenient for them (Quinn and Filak 2005, p.9). New technology, and the emergence of new media, provide increasing choices for audiences, and create more expectations of media. Increasingly, the audience's needs and expectations have challenged media, especially radio, in the Digital Age.

The new generation - the Net generation - seem less interested in traditional radio than their elders. Traditional radio's audience is aging, and becoming more middle-aged than the general population (MacFarland 1997, p.74; Ofcom 2006b; Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2007, 2008). Recent statistics from Ofcom (2006b) reveal that in the UK, 16-24 year olds listen to less radio per week than the population as a whole as discussed in chapter III.

In the Digital Age, a wider range of media competing for the attention of the same audiences simply means that the total audience is being divided between a larger number of operators. When a new medium emerges the existing media have to face fierce competition, and the audience market becomes more fragmented. In other words, the emergence of the Internet has threatened all traditional media, including radio.

Individuals have a limited amount of time, as a result, time displacement between mass media, after a new medium's emergence, has become and remains an interesting area of study. A number of researchers found that Internet usage decreases other media use, especially television watching, including the PEW (1997, 2006), Coffey and Stipp (1997), Media Metrix (1997), Crispell (1997), Van der Voort *et al.* (1998), Kayany and Yelsma (2000), USC (2004, 2008) and Dutta-Bergman (2004). However, this is not a situation of unequivocal decline. Whilst the majority of researchers found that heavy computer users are not heavy television viewers, this is not the case for radio listeners. A number of studies, including UCLA's (2000), Stempel *et al.* (2000), Lee and Kuo's (2002), USC's (2004, 2008) and Arbitron/Edison Media Research's (2006, 2007) found that an increase in Internet use depressed television viewing, but stimulated radio listening. The majority of participants who listen to digital radio platforms do not spend less time listening to AM/FM radio, as a result, total radio listening is added (Arbitron/Edison Media Research 2006, p.3; 2007, p.4; Ofcom 2006c, p.150; Rajar 2008, p.3). As Hendy (2000, p.128) suggested, radio is the medium which is most complementary to one of the fastest-growing leisure activities, namely surfing the net. Therefore, the Internet probably helps cushion a future decline in radio listening, especially amongst the youth who are online the most.

3. CHANGES IN RADIO PROGRAMMING: FROM A PROGRAMME MEDIUM INTO A FORMAT MEDIUM

The changes in listening habits of radio listeners – due to television's emergence – were driving forces for radio producers to improve their programmes and create new styles to retain radio listeners. Radio programmes became more important, as Fisher (1994 cited MacFarland 1997, p.22) said:

Recent history has shown that when radio has tried to become technology-driven rather than programming driven... the results haven't been that pretty...

The following sections will discuss the changes in radio programming made in order to capture listeners, and the resulting change in the landscape of radio.

In the early days of radio, in the US, it seemed that virtually nothing was 'fixed': not the frequencies of stations, the method of financial support, government regulations and nor the design, domestic location of radio itself or a clear purpose in broadcasting (Douglas 1999, p.56, Smulyan 1994, p.94-95). With a few exceptions, such as the Sunday broadcasts of church services, there was no predictable programme schedule¹³⁷.

However, in the UK, the notion of radio programming first appeared during the very early development of the BBC (Carpenter 1996, p.3). In 1924, only two years after the first transmissions, and while the BBC was still a privately owned business, the suggestion was made that the company should broadcast on a separate wavelength to carry "highbrow education and better class material". The separation of highbrow material from general programming was not, however, an idea that appealed to Sir John Reith, the BBC's Director-General for its first sixteen years (Carpenter 1996, p.3).

Mixed programming offered a wide and diverse range of programme materials over the course of each day and week (Scannell and Cardiff 1982, p.167-8). Typically, this included news, drama, sport, religion, music (light to classical), variety and light entertainment. Not only did this programming cater for different social needs (education, information, entertainment), it catered for different interests within the listening public, including children, women, professionals, farmers, and fishermen (ibid).

As Crisell (1994, p.21) pointed out, Reith's aim was to vary the output in such a way that the listener might be 'surprised into' an interest in a subject which they had not previously enjoyed or even known about: the intention was always to give the listeners "something a little better than she thought she wanted". However, this paternalism was challenged in the 1930s, especially after the launch of Radio Luxembourg. According to Shingler and Wieringa (1998, p.7), when Radio Luxembourg began broadcasting in 1933, that station became highly popular with audiences (particular female and working-class audiences) tired of the BBC's "stuffiness".

¹³⁷ Typically, stories targeting children might be followed by a lecture on "hygiene of the mouth" or "how to make a house a home", which would in turn be followed by phonograph music or "Madame Burumowska, formerly of the Moscow Opera" singing Rimsky-Korsakov's "Hymn to the Sun" (Kaempffert 1922 cited Douglas 1999, p.56).

By the mid-1950s, as discussed in chapter III, due to the dual threats of television, and newly built commercial radio stations, radio programmers realised that differentiation might be a way to attract audiences (MacFarland 1997, p.63). As most listeners listen to music to strengthen or create a particular mood, when they turn to a specific format station, they know exactly what moods and feelings will be evoked and stimulated (Douglas 1999, p.33). Possibly, this is one reason why the development of 'formats' in radio became so successful (ibid). Hendy (2000, p.130) also pointed out that:

... whereas viewers tend to seek out programmes rather than channels, for radio listeners it is the station which counts more than anything else...

The first step forward in modern format-orientated radio occurred with the birth of the programme *The Top 40* in the US (MacFarland 1997, p.64; Norberg 1996, p.1). According to MacFarland (1997), the 'countdown' programme *Your Hit Parade* had been a radio network staple since the 1940s. Independent music-and-news stations had often featured listings of the popularity of current records, and carried 'countdown' programmes that played the top 40 or so most popular songs that week. Listenership for the 'countdown' programmes seemed especially strong, therefore, many stations tried this 'Top 40' format. Because radio is significantly less costly to produce than television (Hendy 2000, p.11), the radio industry can fragment and capture small groups of audiences by serving their specific needs. As a result of the heavy competition for listeners' attention, a number of other radio formats have been created, including Country, Adult Contemporary, News/Talk, Gold/Classic Rock, CHR (Contemporary Hit Radio), Urban, Oldies and Nostalgia (MacFarland 1997, p.74-82; Hendy 2000, p.100-1). According to Busby (1988, p.227), there were 24 different radio formats in use in the US. Geographic location and population demographics are the most important factors in determining radio station formats (ibid).

4. RADIO LANDSCAPE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

4.1. Digital Audio Broadcasting

DAB began its development in the mid-1980s as a European Union project, and the first public transmissions began in the UK in September 1995 (three years before digital TV) (Lax 2003, p.326; BBC 2006, p.2). Having reviewed documents relating to DAB,

including Hendy (2000), Lax (2003), Ofcom (2004), Digital One (2005), BBC (2006), Digitalradionow (2008), World DAB (2006), and UKDigitalradio (2008), a number of potential benefits that digital radio technology brings will be explored as follows.

Through the use of digital encoding, multiplexing and single frequency networks, digital radio allows more stations to be broadcast over a given amount of spectra than analogue radio (Lax 2005). There are national, regional, and local radio stations broadcast on DAB Digital radio, and also new, unique, stations on DAB with programming designed for different segments of the audience. So, rather than being 'all things for all people', DAB offers listeners stations dedicated entirely to their tastes, or to demographics and niche interests (DigitalOne 2005). This is likely to provide benefits to listeners, who will enjoy a wider choice of radio services, in addition advertisers will benefit from a wider choice of outlets and reduced costs.

With DAB digital radio, listeners can choose the station they want by name from a text display screen and gain a more robust reception and pure, clear sound consistently, as long as the receiver is within the coverage area (BBC 2006; Lax 2005). DAB also provides new functionalities, including pausing and rewinding live radio broadcasts (DigitalOne 2005). Digital radio allows for the launch of a range of potential multimedia and interactive services, including the ability to download music, access travel information, news, and sport headlines and receive scrolling text facilities listing the artist and title of the song playing (Ofcom 2004a; BBC 2005; DigitalOne UK 2005; Bagharib and Tan 2004).

While DAB offers many potential benefits, and initially attracted a significant number of radio listeners, there are still potential obstacles which could impede the growth of digital radio. These problems included coverage, choice of services, and the availability of current smaller analogue stations operating via digital radio platforms, which should be resolved before DAB can achieve its full potential (Ofcom 2004a, p.90-91;125-133).

DAB is claimed to provide a "CD sound quality, pure undistorted sound" and "more robust, hiss and crackle-free reception" (DRDB 2006; World DAB 2006b; BBC 2006b). However, it is uncertain that sound quality is the most important factor in listening choice (Lax 2005, p.339). Furthermore, the BBC (2002 cited Lax 2005, p.339) also

states that the difference in sound may not be as readily apparent if the listeners already receive good FM.

DAB digital radio sets remain expensive, relative to analogue sets (Ofcom 2004a, p.133). Moreover, consumer awareness of digital radio and its benefits continue to be low. Despite the fact that 92% of respondents stated that they had heard of DAB, 7% stated that they knew little about what digital radio offered (Ofcom 2004a, p.129). Moreover, even though the percentage of participants who were aware of the term 'digital radio' was quite high, there was a limited understanding of the specific features and benefits that digital radio technology offered over conventional radio services. Among respondents who claimed to know at least a little about digital radio, 63% referred to better sound quality, while only 21% referred to the greater number of stations available. Even fewer participants cited other benefits, including the ease of tuning, not having to change radio frequencies while driving, and the ability to record radio programmes, 5%, 4% and 3% respectively (Ofcom 2004a, p.130).

As of 2004, the UK was by far the most advanced country in terms of DAB receivers and listenership with more than 800,000 sets sold (Turner *et al.* 2005, p.3; Ofcom 2004a, p.112). According to a meta-analysis of recently compiled data from World DAB (2006a), 43 countries have launched digital radio. Apart from the UK and Germany, there were no countries in which receiver sales had exceeded 10,000 units by 2004 (Ofcom 2004a, p.112). Some Western countries, including Sweden, Finland, Ireland, and Canada are not interested in DAB, as discussed in chapter III.

4.2. Satellite radio

The simple concept of the geostationary satellite had been proposed in 1945 by the science-fiction writer Clarke (Cain 1992, p.122; Hudson 1988, p.216, Varhan 2002, p.58). In 1957, space research was first carried out in the US - primarily for military purposes - and 5 years later the space research and its applications were implemented in communications satellite systems¹³⁸ (Hudson 1988, p.216). A number of experiments

¹³⁸ According to Hudson (1988, p.217), in the experimental era, Applied Technology Satellite series (ATS-1) were built to determine whether satellite communications could improve quality health care for Alaska natives by the means of listening to 'doctors on call'. In the US, after the success of this

with satellites were conducted *after that, and by the mid 1970s*, the technology has been transferred to the private sector (ibid). Interest in broadcasting *via satellite has increased* dramatically since the mid 1970s when its potential was demonstrated by a number of services, especially HBO - the first company to use satellite as a means of delivering television signals to cable systems (Negrine 1988, p.7). Europe, including Britain began to reconsider their policies towards cable systems and satellite broadcasting from about 1980 onwards (ibid). Even though there are different types of satellite services in the US and Europe¹³⁹, satellite broadcasting is mainly utilised in television services (Negrine 1988, Home Office 1981, Pavlik 1998, p.96-103; Collins 1991).

It was not until 1990 that listeners in the US had an opportunity to access radio programmes directly from satellite systems (Warren 2005, p.166). The first satellite broadcasting service was CD Radio, which evolved into Sirius in 1999, and the second company to obtain a license from the FCC was XM Radio (ibid). They remain the only two companies which dominate satellite radio broadcasting in the US.

It is noted that satellite radio had emerged due to the limitations of AM and FM radio. In the early 1990s, audience research found a number of faults with radio, including a lack of variety in programming, and a lack of difference between stations (Warren 2005, p.167). Listeners were not satisfied with radio reception, especially while driving. In other words, the needs of audiences were a driving force to utilise satellite technology in broadcasting.

While in the US two companies dominate satellite radio - XM Satellite Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio - in the UK, satellite radio is delivered by Sky Television as part of their satellite television service. To date, there are a number of radio stations available on the Sky Digital service. Differing from the US, where satellite radio is seen as an additional

test, satellite was used to support an education project that linked schools and produced radio programmes about community life.

¹³⁹ In the US low-powered satellites operating in the fixed-satellite service frequency bands are used to transmit programme services to cable networks using large diameter ground antennae, while direct broadcasting services (DBS) are applied in Europe (Home Office 1981; Negrine 1988). DBS is aimed directly at individual households thereby by-passing cable systems altogether (Negrine 1988, p.10).

choice, most major radio stations in the UK also simulcast via satellite radio (Fleming 2002, p.30).

WorldSpace has its own two satellites, AfriStar™ and AsiaStar™, to cover most of Europe, Asia and Africa. Each satellite has three beams and each beam is able to send up to 80 channels directly to portable satellite radios. Inside each WorldSpace digital satellite radio is a proprietary chipset designed to lock onto the WorldSpace satellite signal in specific regions of the world (WorldSpace 2006a). The WorldSpace satellite radio can also broadcast multimedia content. WorldSpace provides over 100 channels of 100% digital quality music, news, and sports, many previously not available via radio throughout the WorldSpace coverage area (WorldSpace 2006b).

4.3. Digital Cellular Communications

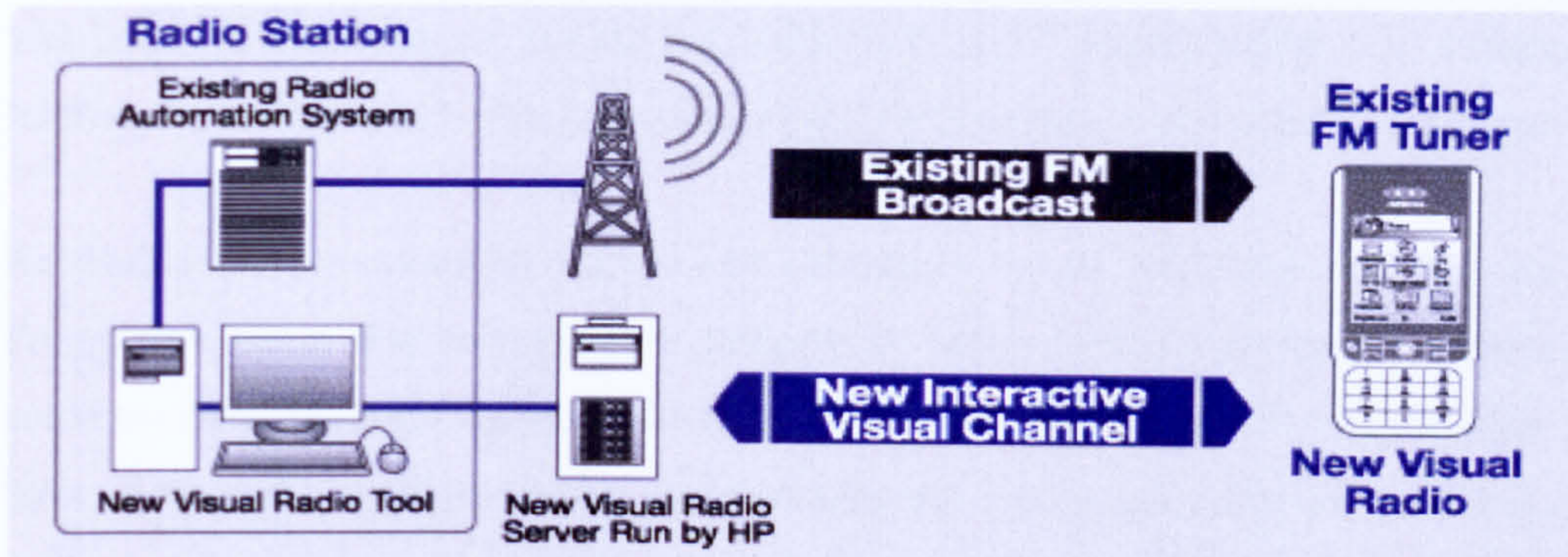
The introduction of digital cellular phones in the 1990s has helped enable individuals to be contactable almost at anytime and anywhere. This telecom technology has developed from the humble analogue POTS to the current third-generation or 3G¹⁴⁰ digital cellular systems. The convergence of mobile and broadcasting technology is occurring across the world and different standards are emerging (Turner 2005, p.3). A survey conducted by Nokia on their first mobile phone model with an FM function found that radio was the second most popular feature and that almost 80% of these owners use the radio feature at least once a week (Bagharib and Tan 2004). The number of mobile phone models with an integrated FM radio receiver has grown recently.

Visual Radio¹⁴¹ - a technology that enables radio broadcasters to offer a visual and interactive user experience for its radio listeners via mobile phones - first broadcast on March 4, 2005 in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of Kiss FM in Finland (Visualradio.com 2006). Currently, Nokia handsets have only FM radio and at least

¹⁴⁰ 3G has the added advantage of being a full-duplex system, and has the potential to provide data rates at up to 2Mbits/s.

¹⁴¹ It should be noted that the term 'Visual Radio', which Korean broadcasting systems use is different from the term 'Visual Radio', the service Nokia's GPRS/FM offers. Street (2005, p.21) indicated that this situation renders the market place confusing and argues that a consistent way of describing these services would be a benefit.

initially, Visual Radio will use only still images. Unlike DAB, Visual Radio listeners have to bear the cost of accessing visual services (Bagharib and Tan 2004; Visual.com 2006).



The Visual Radio system structure

Diagram 2. Visual Radio System.

The diagram illustrates the Visual Radio System that connects mobile handset users with radio stations: the existing broadcast over the traditional analog FM airwaves plus the new interactive visual channel that is provided over the mobile phone network (Beletski 2006)

It is technically possible to deliver digital audio over mobile `phone systems, using `3G` - this may or may not include access to the internet. However, these systems are based on `one-to-one` rather than `one-to-many` communication; and are expensive ways to deliver traditional linear broadcasting. In other words, it is a costly way to receive an otherwise free service. As a result, their role is likely to be complementary in widening consumer choice, including offering clips of material for particular interest groups (Ofcom 2005; Bagharib and Tan 2004).

4.4. Web radio (Internet Radio)

As discussed in previous sections, digital transmissions began to be applied to broadcasting in the late 1990s, and in the later years of the 20th century, Internet radio was born. This consists of putting out radio-style audio programming over streaming Internet connections: no radio transmitters need be involved at any point in the process.

RealRadio 1.0 developed by Glaser and colleagues (at an American company called Progressive Networks) was a highly compressed audio format that enabled streaming audio over the Internet (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.20). In early 1995 - shortly after the birth of the web - the first version was demonstrated. Although it did not handle music well, a spoken voice of low-AM quality (still listenable) could be heard and streamed successfully if the connection held and files sent forth data. Gradually, due to progressive development of the software, with rapid user adoption and effective marketing, RealRadio soon emerged as the way to distribute audio on the Internet, and as a result, many pioneering radio stations began with RealRadio as their technology of choice (ibid, p.21).

The company, Progressive Networks soon became RealNetworks and went on to rapidly improve the capabilities of their RealRadio, closely followed by a number of competitors. Amongst these were Xing – which has become a subsidiary of RealRadio that concentrates on MPEG audio based (MP3) products and services, Windows Media Audio (WMA) - produced by Microsoft, and Winamp - produced by Nullsoft (Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.21; Priestman 2002, p.7).

To date, there are no data regarding the first web radio station. However, in 1996, 178 web radio stations already existed (Walcutt 1998, p.4), and the BBC Online commenced its full service on 15 December 1997 (BBC 1998). The number of web radio stations increased significantly in the following years (Walcutt 1998, p.4; Miles and Sakai 2001). Whereas DAB has only been initiated in Western countries - developing countries tend to still be at the experimental stage - web radio appears in most countries. According to recent data compiled from the website RadioLocator (RadioLocator.com 2006), there are more than 17,500 web radios in 136 countries and territories. The US has the largest number of web radio stations - 13,903 followed by Canada, the UK and

Australia, 960, 364 and 282 respectively. Due to the significant increase of web radios in recent years, some webcast directory websites - or *aggregators* (a term used by Sawyer and Greely 2000, p.22), including live-radio.net, live 365.com, radio-locator.com, broadcast.com and radiotower.com - which allow audiences to access easily thousands of radio station worldwide, have emerged.