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Social Media, Interactivity and Radio Production in the Digital Age:
A Case Study of Commercial Radio Hong Kong

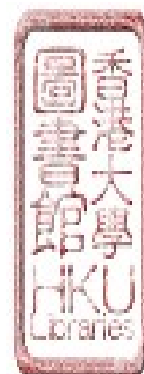By
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Supervised by
Dr. Gary Wong Pui Fung

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the Degree of Master of Social Sciences in Media, Culture and Creative Cities
at the University of Hong Kong

July 2016

Abstract of thesis entitled

"Social Media, Interactivity and Radio Production in the Digital Age: Commercial Radio Hong Kong as a Case Study"

Submitted by

Fung Tsz Yeung, Henry

for the degree of Master of Social Sciences in Media, Culture and Creative Cities
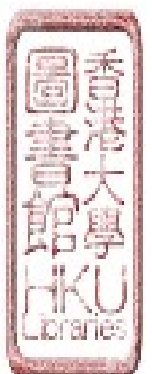
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Undeniably, radio industry is dying in the digital age when every individual can broadcast messages to a mass public via social media. According to a statistical report published by the Hong Kong Broadcasting Authority (2011), the usage of radio has dropped noticeably year by year since 2007 in our territory. To revitalize the industry, radio stations have expanded into online space which transforms radio production. However, studies related to radio, just like radio itself, are often regarded as a subaltern topic which is not sufficiently up-to-date to present the changes within the industry. Hence, this paper aims at studying the impacts of digital media, social networking websites in particular, on the production of radio content and the interactivity between radio practitioners and listeners by using Commercial Radio Hong Kong (CRHK) as a case study.

In order to gain more comprehensive data, two data collection methods, namely in-depth interviews and content analysis, were used in this study to gain insights to the radio practitioners' personal accounts on radio digitalization and the current social media activities of both radio producers and users. By analyzing the data, this study found that CRHK has transformed itself from a conventional radio broadcaster to an interactive radio station by streaming all their radio programmes online and by
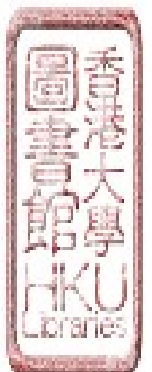
leveraging social media to interact with its audience. This has proved the validity of Henry Jenkin's theory of media convergence where the relationship between existing media technologies and audiences has been altered because of the integration of old and new media. Despite the shared belief of enhancing the interactivity and engagement with the audiences through social media, radio practitioners generally have mixed feelings towards such change as workload has increased significantly.

Moreover, this study found that social media content and on-air content of CRHK are not well integrated that radio producers generally use social media as a promotional tool rather than an arena for producer-listener interaction, hence the potentials of the interactivity brought by social media in radio production is not fully met. Because of these, this research suggests CRHK to professionalize and intensify its web content by several ways- to hire more social media specialists; to visualize its radio content via live streaming on Facebook; to promote the Facebook fan page to enhance the radio audiences' involvement in content production. Through these, it is believed that more audiences could be attracted which can put a halt to the decline of the radio industry.
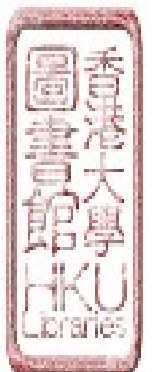
Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signed _____

Fung Tsz Yeung, Henry

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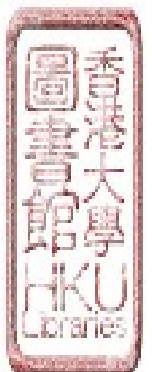
Of course, I need to send my sincere thanks to all my supportive friends and colleagues who always stand by me and encourage me. Big thanks!

Finally, I have to give my biggest credit to two incredible women- my beloved mum and girlfriend. You are every reason that I strive for a better me. Thank you very much and I love you all.
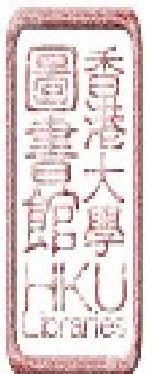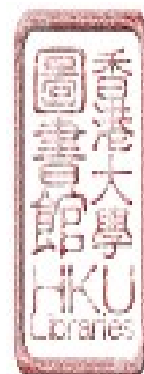
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introductory Remarks

"When I was young I'd listen to the radio, waiting for my favorite song." The song *Yesterday Once More* by the Carpenters vividly reflects the perception of radio several decades ago — it was a one-way communication system that individuals could only passively consume the radio content being provided the radio broadcasters indiscriminately without any interaction or participation (Gazi, Jędrzejewski & Starkey, 2011).

Before the digital age, radio programmes could only be transmitted through dedicated terrestrial transmission networks (i.e. amplitude modulation (AM) & frequency modulation (FM)). In Hong Kong, there are 13 licensed radio channels with Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) operates seven, while Commercial Radio Hong Kong (CRHK) and Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited operate three respectively. Among all the three radio stations, CRHK Channel 1 was ranked as the most frequently listened radio channel (HKBA, 2011). According to a report published by Hong Kong Broadcasting Authority (2011), 92% of households in Hong Kong were able to listen to radio programmes via AM/FM waves at home. The usage of radio however dropped noticeably. Only 58.1% of the respondents in 2011 had listened to radio broadcast in the month prior to the survey that was conducted, compared to 66.5% in 2007. Noticeably, radio industry is facing a big problem of audience lost.

As radio is a one-way communication system, audience could not interact with the radio broadcasters that their opinions and feedbacks are often ignored. Although the establishment of telephone-balancing units (TBUs) has enabled listeners to have phone-in conservation with hosts during live radio programmes, the power imbalance between radio broadcasters and radio listeners is still huge (Starkey, 2014).

With the growing popularity of new information and communication technologies,
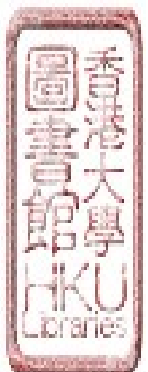
radio is facing revolutionary transformation too. Its content is now also available on a wide variety of satellite, cable and wired telecommunications networks, not to mention the Internet (2011). According to Willems (2013), the convergence between traditional and new media has created a space where the power of the media producer and consumer interact in unforeseeable ways. The rise of the Internet and mobile technologies has transformed the top-down, linear media institutions such as radio into participatory organizations where the audiences can interact with the content producers regularly via various types of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, radio listeners in nowadays can no longer viewed as inert bodies and minds who passively waiting to be filled up with the information provided by the radio broadcasters (Hendy, 2000). Indeed, they are given the unprecedented role in the process of commenting, handling or even creating radio content (Turkle 1997).

Academics and media practitioners are very enthusiastic in studying the technological changes that traditional radio is undergoing today. However, at this point in time, there is a dearth of study that has explored the impact of social media on the production of radio content from the producer's perspective. Therefore, this study seeks to provide an initial look at how radio producer adapt the social networking technologies to their program production to enhance audience involvement as well as their attitudes on such interactivity, which may directly and indirectly affect their needs and behaviors related to the radio production. Moreover, as most of the radio studies are from the West with extremely limited focus on Asian context, not to mention, in Hong Kong, this research also aims at narrowing down the aforementioned research gap by using Commercial Radio Hong Kong as a case study to gather more insights on radio industry with the following objectives and research questions.
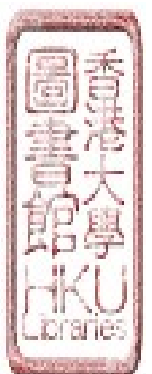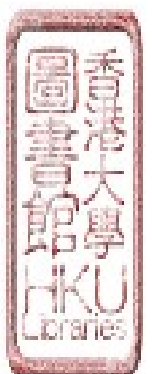
1.2 Research Objectives & Research Questions

This research aims to investigate the impacts of social media (i.e. Facebook, Online forum, YouTube) on the production of radio programme. Moreover, this study also hopes to understand the interactivity of radio broadcasters and audience in the production of radio content as well as the attitudes of radio producers on such interactive relationship brought by the advancement of digital technology. Specifically, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the impacts of social media on the production of radio content in Hong Kong?

2. To what extent radio digitalization and the use of social media in particular, contribute to greater interactivity between radio producers and audiences?

3. How do radio broadcasters perceive and manage the transition into the new digital age by making use of social media in radio production?

1.3 The Organization of the Thesis

This study aims to study the digital shift towards a more participatory production culture happening in the radio industry brought by the rise of social media. The paper consists of five chapters. This introductory chapter outlines the background of radio industry in the digital age and the purposes of this research study. Chapter two is the literature review which provides theoretical and sociological perspectives supporting the main arguments of this study. By reviewing media theories, digital cultures, and prior research case studies, this chapter will map the relationship between social media, interactivity and radio production. In Chapter three, the two research methodologies used in this study- semi-structured in-depth interview and content analysis- will be elucidated, in which the interviewees' characteristics and process of data collection will be outlined.

After analyzing the web contents of CRHK and responses excerpted from formal interviews, the findings of this research will be discussed thoroughly in Chapter four, with reference to the theories of media convergence reviewed in the literature review. In general, the findings presented in this chapter argue that CRHK has actively expanded into online space by developing different digital platforms which open up more opportunities for radio listeners and Internet users to contribute their ideas and thoughts to radio production as what media optimists like Henry Jenkins (2006) and Bruns (2008) argued. However, there is still a significant room for CRHK to act on in order to fully integrate its online and on-air contents together. Therefore, in Chapter 5, some research implications will be articulated based on the observations gathered from the course of interviews with radio practitioners and content analysis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Media Convergence in the Digital Age

The concept of media convergence can be traced back to the 1950s when some newspapers such as *The Tampa Tribune*, a daily newspapers published in Tampa, Florida, owned television stations and shared news functions (Colon, 2000). However, it was not until 1983 that Ithiel de Sola Pool, a political scientist working at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, formally introduced the word 'convergence' as a force of change within the media industries (Jenkins, 2006). According to Pool (1983), there were new communication technologies emerged in the mid-1980s which enable the media contents to flow through different media platforms and offer greater degree of audience's participation. In other words, it is the new technologies that caused 'convergence of modes' which in turn blurred "the lines between point-to-point communication, such as post, telephone and telegraph, and mass communications, such as the press, radio and television" (p.23).

The argument of Pool has subsequently drawn the attentions of many media scholars in the 20th century. For instance, Doyle (2002) used the technological determinism perspective like Pool to talk about media convergence by referring it to the combination of telecommunication technologies, computing, and media. Moreover, Menon (2006) also mentioned that convergence can be classified as a three-dimension phenomenon including 3 crucial components- technology, organization and market.

Undeniably, discussions over convergence and the research on this phenomenon have facilitated scholars to realize its complexity and significance (Lehman-Wilzig & Cohen-Avigdor, 2004). Yet, the huge wave of publications, conferences, and debate about media convergence began only after the release of Henry Jenkins' book *Convergence Culture: Where old and new media collide* (2006).
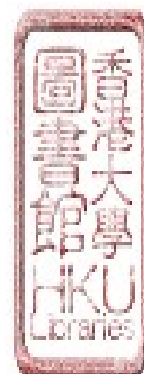
Henry Jenkins' Theory of Media Convergence

Unlike the previous scholars who heavily emphasized the technological progress in converging the media, Jenkins regards convergence as a cultural and social shift which occurs within the brains of individual users and through their social interactions with others. Therefore, the aims of Jenkins is not to document all the changes happening in the American media industries, but to better understand how convergence is impacting both the media production and consumption, by conducting an ethnographic research interviewing and observing an array of media professionals and consumers.

According to Jenkins (2006), media convergence is a movement of the world where a range of media, both the old and new ones, is integrated. Because of this, the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences has been altered. In fact, media convergence can be anatomized into three crucial parts: (i) the flow of media content across multiple media platforms, (ii) the cooperation between multiple industries, and (iii) the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want.

Media convergence is both a top-down corporate-driven process and a bottom-up consumer-driven process. For Jenkins, two forces coexist and mutually benefit with each other. On the one hand, media outlets are exploring ways to expand the flow of media content across various distribution channels in order to attract more audiences, which in turn can benefit the companies' revenue since this could invite more potential advertisers (Etana, 2013). On the other hand, consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies to bring the flow of media more fully under their control and to interact with other users. Therefore, convergence of media is more than simply a digital breakthrough as it involves the introduction of an array of new
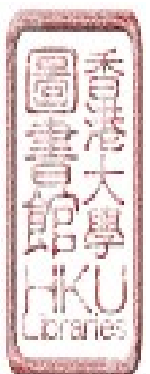
digital technologies which empower media users not only to consume but also "to archive, annotate, transform, and recirculate media content" (2006b, p. 155).

2.2 On-Air & Online: Convergence of Radio

Digitalization and the rise of new communication technologies have created a great transformation to media markets, particularly conventional mass media like radio broadcasting. In today's digital age, radio industry has become a more web-based and multimedia business instead of a one-way sound transmissions medium (Tufan, 2014). In fact, most of the radio stations in the 21st century have a web presence that radio programmes are streamed online. Moreover, smartphone applications as well as social media sites such as Facebook Fan page were also set up and introduced to the radio listeners in order to fit with audience needs and uses. According to Cordeiro (2012), the advancement of Internet technologies has led radio broadcasters to change their way in producing and distributing the radio contents significantly.

As in the radio production, the rise of new media and digital devices has opened up new realm for radio producers to work on when generating the radio contents. In addition to the on-air radio production, preparing and managing the social media contents have also become very important work duties of the radio practitioners in today's digital environment. As clearly pointed out by media scholars like Jenkins (2006) and Willems (2010), new media have made possible new forms of participatory media culture where audiences and consumers have plenty of opportunities to offer their contribution to content production. Radio practitioners have developed a tendency towards new collaborative forms of production that consumers can interact with the broadcasters regularly through the use of new media, thereby transforming the radio station from a top-down, one-way business into a participatory organization (Zoellner & Lax, 2015).

On the other hand, the streaming technology also makes radio broadcasting available
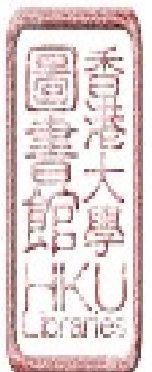
via various of digital devices and networks, hence empowering the radio contents to be distributed in multiple platforms. As a result, radio listeners nowadays no longer need hi-fi tuners or portable radios with whip aerials for receiving the radio contents. They can simply download a mobile application and listen to the radio streaming according to their own consumption patterns and availability. Most importantly, listeners can also pick and choose their favorite radio programmes from a broad range of channels and radio stations via their digital devices. In short, digital technologies have made possible new ways to produce and deliver content, and bring a wider use of ever more sophisticated multimedia, interactivity, and on-demand services which significantly transforms the radio landscape (European Broadcasting Union, 2006).

2.3 The Notion of Interactivity in Radio Production

Tracing back to 1932, Bertolt Brecht dreamed for the future development of radio that "it did not only allow to send messages but to receive and not only to hear but also communicate and connect audiences" (Tufan, 2014, p.88). 80 years later today, Brecht's foresight have come into reality that the emergence of new media has enabled the traditional radio to go beyond a transmission medium, but more like a communication medium that allows interaction between radio broadcasters and radio listeners through the aid of social networking websites and other Internet technologies (2014). As mentioned by Zelenkauskaite (2016), the trend of technological convergence has reconfigured the classic mass media like radio into converged media that it has multiple distribution channels involving many interactive applications which foster two-way communication, synchronicity and exchange. Therefore, today the term "interactivity" is undeniably one of the most important concepts in the radio literature.

According to Carpentier (2007), interactivity is a term originated from interaction,
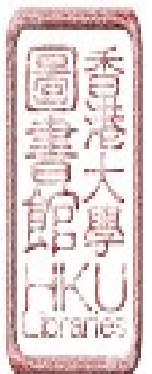
referring to communication between people. However, the facets of interactivity should not be limited to human relations, but the relationship between new communication technologies and social networks that formed by human. Theoretically, Steuer (1992) defined interactivity as the extent to which users can take part in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment. To achieve interactivity, a communication process has to be built and maintained by the senders and receivers exchanging elements of equal, active and mutual participation (Schmidt, 2011). In other words, the foundations of the relationship between a medium and its audience has changed that radio listeners can break their silence by contributing their ideas, comments or even real voices to radio broadcasting.

In fact, interactivity is not a recent phenomenon in radio history that there have been interactions between audiences and radios since the 1930s when audience participation in call-in talk shows started to be aired in radio (Chase, 1942). Moreover, before the arrival of Internet, radio listeners also wrote letters, sent SMS messages, and even made phone calls to radio producers in order to contribute their opinions on the radio programmes as well as to raise questions and reactions with regard to what is said on air. Yet, the creation and democratization of Internet and new communication technologies has multiplied the opportunities for radio listeners to get in touch with the medium, hence enhancing the level of interaction (Tufan, 2014). In general, the literature of interactivity includes multiple concepts like participation in traditional form of media production (e.g. phone-in; letter), participation in new digital media (e.g. e-mail; online blogs), and content co-creation and prosumer culture brought by the popularity and interactivity of social media (Jenkins, 2006; Bruns, 2009).

Without doubt, interactivity is very important to radio production since it ensures dynamism on air while building a sense of proximity with the listeners. By
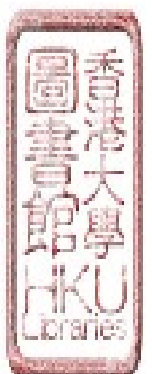
accumulating more loyal audience, the number of listeners will also increase that eventually enhances the profitability of the radio station. Because of such importance, the Commercial Radio Hong Kong has incorporated participative technologies that made possible by Web 2.0 in content production. In order to contextualize the findings presented in this thesis, the following section will shed lights on the efforts of CRHK in transforming itself from a conventional radio broadcaster to an interactive radio station.

2.4 Commercial Radio Hong Kong in the Digital Age

Established in 1959, Hong Kong Commercial Broadcasting Limited (CRHK) is one of the two commercial radio stations based in Hong Kong. Currently, CRHK runs two Cantonese channels on the FM band (FM88.1 & FM90.3) and an English one on the AM band (AM864) to provide balanced entertainment, informative and educational programmes. All of the channels are 24-hour broadcast and each of them has its distinct programming and target audience. Specifically, FM88.1 (Channel 1) is a talk-based channel broadcasting current affairs, traffic and financial information while FM 90.3 (Channel two) is a music-based channel targeting at the younger generation and audience who are feverish with pop music. According to a survey issued from the Broadcasting Authority where a total of 2,171 informants were recruited (2011), CRHK Channel 1 (27.4%) and CRHK Channel 2 (19.9%) were the two most popular channels in our territory, followed by Radio Television Hong Kong Radio 1 (19.4%) and Radio 2 (14.9%).
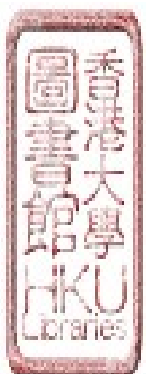
Despite the popularity of CRHK, the number of radio listeners in Hong Kong has noticeably dropped. According to a recent survey, although 95.5% of households consisting of persons aged 15 or above were able to listen to radio programmes at home, only 58.1% of persons aged 15 or above had listened to radio broadcast within
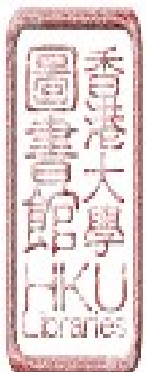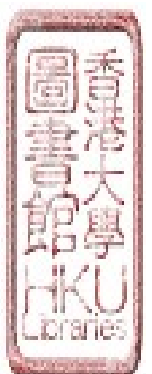
a month in 2011, compared to 66.5% in 2007. Worse still, among those who had listened to radio, only 31% of them consumed radio contents on a daily basis, meaning that most of the radio listeners are not loyal consumers that they have relatively low attachment to radio programmes (Consumer Search, 2011). Because of these, CRHK has actively digitized all its radio programmes that they are now available in multiple-platforms ranging from the Internet to mobile phone.

Statistically, 881903.com, the official website of CRHK providing live radio streaming as well as updated radio program schedules and DJ profiles received 6,059,200 monthly page views in 2011 where there were about 600,591 unique users (NielsenOnline Site Census, 2011). Also, the exclusive website for FM Channel 903, my903.com., was set up by CRHK to provide its audience with first-hand information related to the Channel's campaigns & events, in addition to the most updated news concerning lifestyles, games, technology, and traveling. Moreover, the mobile application Hong Kong Toolbar which not only provides free livestream broadcast of Commercial Radio's programmes but also features instant news and traffic conditions were downloaded by more than 1,500,000 users by 2015. Meanwhile, in order to expand its revenue source, CRHK also launched a mobile application called the Commercial Radio Archive where members can pay a subscription fee to review full version radio programmes archives without time and geographical limitation. By July 2015, this application was downloaded by more than 400,000 users (Commercial Radio Interactive, 2015).

On the other hand, since social media has become a common tool for users to share information, thoughts and interests and thus create interaction opportunities, CRHK also tried to incorporate social networking website to enhance the connectivity with the audience so as to promote the corporate image (Tufan, 2014). Accordingly, a division called Commercial Radio Interactive (CRi) was established to develop

interactive digital broadcasting and communicative components such as messages boards, online blogs and online voting for radio audiences to interact with the producers. Moreover, the station also encourages its radio producers to create their own Facebook fan page in order to engage its listeners so as to reach out to new audiences. In this paper, the researcher will draw on the data gathered by interviewing the radio practitioners and web content analysis to discuss how radio station makes use of social media to interact and engage with audience in radio production.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research study aims to investigate the impacts of social media on the radio production in Hong Kong. In order to gain a better understanding of the radio production process and its relation to the online space, two research methods, namely semi-structured in-depth interviews and content analysis, were employed to gather data. In the following, the data collection process will be elucidated thoroughly.

3.1 Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews

The researcher conducted 6 semi-structured in-depth interviews with the radio practitioners working in CRHK between 12th November, 2015 and 15th June, 2016. The reason of choosing this research method is that it allows the researcher to listen to the personal accounts of interviewees about their feelings towards the transformation of radio production brought by social media which serves the needs of the research purposes. Moreover, since the research topic is relatively new which has little scholastic base, this research method also enables the researcher to probe into the research matters and ask follow-up questions during the interview based on some pre-framed structured interview questions (Bryman, 2008).

Before the interview, the researcher created an interview schedule which comprised of 14 questions covering the interviewee's job nature, feelings about radio digitalization and its impact on radio production so as the strategies to interact with the audience (see Appendix 1 for details). Then, the researcher submitted the research proposal, interview questions, potential interviewee list as well as the informed consent form to the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties to seek for the ethical approval.

For the data collection process, the researcher was first referred by the Academic Supervisor to meet with the Project Advisor in CRHK on 9th November, 2016. Then, the Project Advisor utilized her personal connection to help recruit interviewees of the
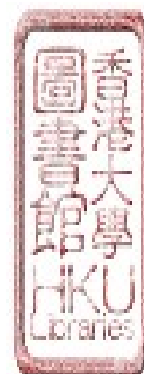
first 2 interviews. Through a purposive snowball sampling whereby the informant was asked to recommend other radio practitioners to be interviewed, the remaining 4 interviewees were successfully recruited. All the interviews were conducted in Cantonese and lasted about 50 minutes in a quiet and comfortable environment (i.e. Coffee Shop, Meeting room), except one which was conducted in phone. With the interviewees' consents, all the interviews were audio-recorded by an iPhone for further analysis. To ensure the relevancy and representativeness of the interviewees, all the informants were recruited based on the following criteria: (i) Worked in CRHK for at least 1 year, (ii) Produced/Involved in the radio production process, (iii) Created/Managed the web and/or social media contents. To ensure the anonymity of the radio practitioners, all of the interviewees were given pseudo-names. Details of the interviewees are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Interviewees' Profile

| No.	Name	Position	Channel	Date of Interview
1.	Megan Li	Radio Producer and Host	FM881	12th Nov, 2015
2.	Peter Kwok	Radio Development Manager & Host	FM881	27th Jan, 2016
3.	Katherine Li	Radio Host	FM903	19th Feb, 2016
4.	Grace Chan	Program Assistant	FM881	30th March, 2016
5.	Tsz Ying	Program Assistant	FM881	30th March, 2016
6.	Joshua Yuen	Radio Host	FM881	15th June, 2016
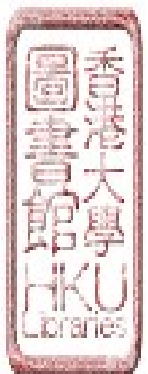
3.2 Content Analysis on Facebook Fan page

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the current social media activities of both radio practitioners and audiences, the researcher conducted a content analysis on the Facebook fan page of the radio programme "FM881 On a clear day"[1] between 1st March, 2016 and 15th June, 2016. According to Yidirim & Simsek (2006), content analysis is a very useful research tool to identify notions and relations that would define the collected data. By codifying both quantitative and qualitative data, it is believed that the researcher could figure out how active the radio practitioners and listeners are in using social media to interact with each other.

In this study, the coding scheme involves five measurement items which can be divided into two parts. The first part features on the production side of the social media contents of which the news feeds (including photos, news, and videos) posted on the facebook fan page and the comments left by the web administrators and/or radio producers were being measured. On the other hand, the second part aims to measure the level of engagement of the audiences by counting three items: (i) number of likes, (ii) number of shares, and (iii) number of the comments left by the social media users.

Moreover, in order to study the relationship between on-air and online contents, the researcher also analyzed the radio programme on-air in addition to the social media contents. Again, "FM881 On a clear day" was the major area to investigate since it is an opinion-based programme which highlights the value of "reflecting the voice of the public". In a 4-hour programme, radio hosts invite guest(s) from different sectors or political parties to discuss current issues and public affairs. Therefore, it is meaningful to analyze whether the radio hosts would take the netizens' voices into their discussion and how the online space facilitates their radio production.

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[1] https://www.facebook.com/881onaclearday/?fref=ts
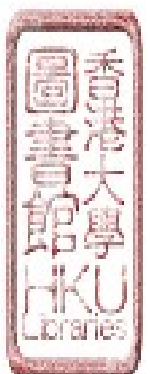
Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Revitalizing the dying industry? Media and Technological Convergence in CRHK

By analyzing the web content of CRHK, my study found that CRHK is the leading radio station in Hong Kong incorporating new media into radio production. Similar to other radio broadcasters like Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and Metro Radio, CRHK has a strong web presence that all the radio programmes were uploaded to its main website, with details such as content summary, names of presenters, program duration, etc. Moreover, it also provides smartphone apps and uses social networking websites such as Facebook to promote its radio programmes. Yet, what makes CRHK stands out from other radio stations is that it includes many participatory elements to engage its radio audiences in its website so as radio programming. As mentioned by Peter Kwok, Development Manager of CRHK, "*We tried to connect with the audiences so that people will see us not just as a radio station, but an interactive media organization.*"

As pointed out by some other interviewees, merging the radio production with new media is not an easy task since it requires significant organizational and economic input. When asked about the reasons behind such transformation, Megan Li tried to attribute this to the difficulties in running a radio station nowadays. "*All traditional media face the same problem- loss of audience. In order to maintain and attract new audiences, we must rely on the Internet and digital technologies. Without mobile application, who will listen to radio nowadays?*"

As further elaborated by Grace Chan, Program Assistant of CRHK, "*To me, radio and Internet are two different worlds. The former is very conventional that its main audience should be those in their middle age or even elder. Yet, online world is full of young adolescents who seldom, if not never, listen to radio. Therefore, to approach*
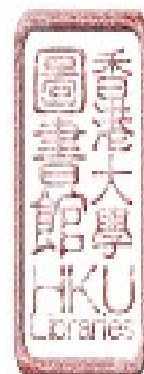
this group of target audiences, our radio station has no choice but to conform to the current trend to integrate Internet technologies in radio production." Data from Facebook proved that online contributors are generally younger than the average listeners' age of CRHK Channel 1.

In fact, CRHK has tried to introduce an online forum in its website 5 years ago in order to involve its radio audiences in generating the radio contents. However, it is not as popular and interactive as Facebook that it was gradually being replaced. In fact, one of the biggest advantages of developing online space is that it allows both radio programmers and audiences to extend the discussion time of the radio programmes. As pointed out by Tsz Ying, Program Assistant of CRHK, "*As a licensed commercial broadcaster, we have to follow very strict regulatory rules and scheduling that our airing time is rather limited and controlled. Therefore, from time to time, it is not surprising to hear that our radio hosts tried to draw a very hectic conclusion at the end of the programme even though the discussion apparently has not yet finished. Thanks to the establishment of Facebook fanpage we can now continue the discussion in the online space. Moreover, due to the time limitation, sometimes our radio contents prepared could not fully broadcast to the audiences. Yet, we can now use Facebook to solve this problem.*"

By actively combining the social media and other communication technologies with radio production, CRHK is undoubtedly in line with the current trend embracing the opportunities brought by digitalization. In 2012-2014 three consecutive years, CRHK won the Media Convergence Awards issued from the Hong Kong Association of Interactive Marketing (HKAIM). Therefore, the efforts of CRHK in transforming itself from a conventional radio broadcaster to an interactive radio station have been recognized by many media professionals and outlets. Moreover, in certain extent it also proves the validity of Henry Jenkins' theory of media convergence where old and
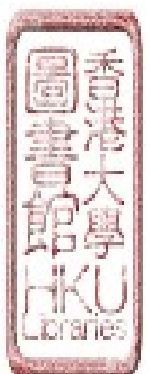
new media collide and integrate with each other, making media (radio) contents accessible across different platforms (2001). Moreover, the audiences nowadays are empowered by new media technologies to participate in the media content production which transformed the traditional media outlets like radio into participatory organizations (2006).

4.2 Enhanced Interactivity between Radio Broadcasters & Listeners by Social Media

There are large body of scholarship claiming that the evolution of social media such as Facebook and Twitter in particular has made possible new forms of participatory culture where audiences are empowered by these new technologies to participate in the media content production that greatly enhance the interactivity and connectivity between radio producers and radio listeners (Jenkins, 2006; Willem, 2010; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011). Through the use of social media, radio listeners can express their point of view, whether favorable or critical, on a particular issue addressed on air. These comments can be used in-house for the preparation of broadcast or they can contribute to live content creation. Most importantly, broadcasters can also utilize social networking websites to pose questions to the audience and ask for their opinions, thereby fostering channeled, ordered, and easy-to-follow conversations between radio producers and listeners.

Since 2010, many radio programmes in CRHK, including "On a Clear Day", have established their Facebook fan page in order to open up the "off-air" relationship between radio producers and listeners. According to Peter Kwok, "*we value greatly the audiences' opinions and feedbacks as if we value our program quality. To gather their voices, we established a comment box on our website about 5 years ago where individuals could leave message there. However, its popularity and level of interactivity generated has no competition with Facebook that we have mostly*

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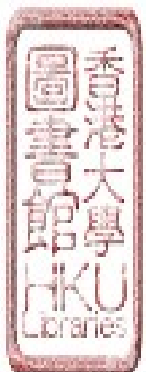
abandoned the comment box that now we fully devote ourselves to developing our

social media contents in order to reach out to more potential audiences."

In fact, all interviewees agreed that the creation of Facebook fan page could shorten the distance between radio producers and listeners which led to greatly interactivity. For instance, Megan Li, Radio Producer and Host, mentioned that by subscribing a particular Facebook fan page, radio audiences have automatically become a friend of the radio programmes. Despite the fact that not all Facebook subscribers are radio listeners, they could still receive information from the radio producers regularly, thereby creating a sense of social bond. Moreover, some of the interviewees such as Grace Chan also highlighted the value of developing social media that it can go beyond programming through direct interaction with listeners, hence turning radio from listening to more like a communication.

However, it is too premature to presume that the emergence of social media and other new communication technologies have made a great leap in turning all the radio listeners into active participants. Although these technologies have given radio audiences' unprecedented role in the process of engaging, sharing or even creating media contents (Vittadin, 2002), this study found that there are relatively few people actively contribute his/her ideas and opinions to the radio practitioners. This is reflected by the low number of comments and shares received in each of the Facebook news feed, despite the large number of subscribers. As mentioned by a Guardian reporter, "If you get a group of 100 people online then 1 will create content, 10 will 'interact' with it and the other 89 will just view it" (Arthur, 2006). The analysis of the "On a clear day" facebook fan page showed that on an average each news feed posted only received 50-100 reactions (likes, angry, ignoring, etc.) and 10-30 comments, depending on the content. Therefore, it is noticeable that most of the radio audiences in Hong Kong still remain as a passive spectator who only consumes the media

content passively without providing ratings and evaluations in the online space.

On the other hand, by analyzing the use of social media of other radio programmes, it was discovered that there is great variation between programmes in the level of engagement with social networking sites (See Table 2). In other words, the space for audiences to interact with the radio producers also varies between programmes. For example, the Facebook fan page of "On a Clear Day" has attracted more than 27,500 subscribers that the web administrator regularly post news feeds on their page and invite both radio listeners and non-listeners to comment. Yet, some radio programmes of CRHK such as "Goodnight Kiss Kiss Kiss"[2] and "Begin with Music"[3] only have less than 3000 subscribers with very limited likes and comments received.

Table 2

CRHK popular radio programmes' level of engagement with social media

No	Programme Name	Channel	No. of Subscribers	No. of Photos Posted
1.	On a Clear Day	FM881	28,340	1541
2.	On a Clear Day	FM903	65,253	2974
3.	Begin with Music	FM881	3,882	50
4.	Good Morning King	FM903	76,039	1957
5.	Goodnight Kiss Kiss Kiss	FM881	2,195	410
6.	Summit	FM881	N/A	N/A
7.	Good morning	FM881	N/A	N/A
8.	When I was young I listen to the radio	FM903	96,574	982

As admitted by Megan Li, "*CRHK has a diversified organizational structure where*

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[2] 月光光呵呵呵

[3] 一切從音樂開始
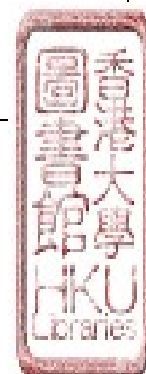
each radio programme has its own team in producing and managing the radio content. When I mention a team, it in fact means only several persons taking care of every aspect of the programmes. Therefore, with very limited human resources, it is not surprising to find that some of the radio programmes perform poorly in integrating social media in their production." In general, radio programmes of CRHK Channel 2 have greater adaptability to social media and have higher level of interaction with the audience. This is perhaps largely due to the fact that "*we really pool a lot of time and resources in managing our Facebook fan page that I believe that we have developed a sense of cohesiveness (virtual community) among our fans*", says Katherine Li, a reputable radio host of Channel 2.

In line with the argument of Jenkins and his colleagues (2013), my interview data shows that social media like Facebook can foster the active role of users in process of circulating content and commenting on radio programmes which promotes a new participatory culture that enables mass collaboration and interaction among radio practitioners and users. However, as mentioned by Jensen (2008) and McMillan (2002), interactivity is comprised of technological and communicative dimensions. Having a very interactive platform like Facebook, therefore does not guarantee the two-way interaction. This study found that the levels of interactivity largely depend on broader social context and the organizational factors in which they are developed, similar to the findings of Carpentier (2011). By using the AIP model proposed by Carpentier as a framework to analyze the level of interactivity, it is discovered that most of the radio listeners in Hong Kong only access to the Facebook fan page for acquiring information without having much interaction with radio practitioners, not to mention, participating in radio production. Even though users are given the right to send private message to radio practitioners freely, the level of interaction between broadcasters and listeners is rather low.
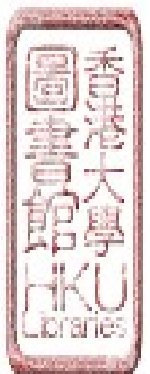
4.3 Part of the Job: Conflicting Attitudes of Radio Practitioners towards Radio Digitalization

While all of the interviewees agreed that digitalizing the radio content is the best, if not the only way to survive, their attitudes towards the opportunities and changes brought by the new media are quite diversified. For instance, according to Megan Li, "*I do support digitalizing all the radio contents since this can promote the radio programmes and enhance our company's image effectively. Frankly, radio station could not survive without the Internet.*" However, when asked about her opinions on the enhanced participation of radio listeners in content production, she becomes quite conservative, "*As an opinion-based radio programme, it is very difficult for us to greatly involve the audience in generating the content since this will lower our autonomy in controlling the flow and pace of the programme*." In fact, these kinds of conflicting attitudes are shared by many interviewees that they on one hand hope to utilize the digital technologies to create a sense of close and friendly image that can strengthen the relationship with the audiences. Yet on the other hand they still hope to remain the traditional mode of production where they can have full control over the content produced. According to Hesmondhalgh (2002), autonomy is a crucial normative concept for work as a whole, especially comes to creative labor like radio producers. Therefore, it is not surprising to discover that media practitioners generally want to defend their autonomy since it has been central to their professionalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

When it comes to the actual work, their attitudes towards digitalization become even more diversified. Despite the fact that CRHK has an affiliated company called Commercial Radio Interactive (CRI) responsible for streaming the radio programmes online so as to update the official website and smartphone apps, most of the social media contents are in fact produced and managed by the independent radio
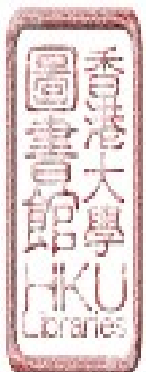
practitioners. As a result, in addition to their busy schedules, radio producers have to dedicate certain amount of time to prepare, read, and reply the comments posted on Facebook which significantly increase their workload so as the work pressure.

As mentioned by Tsz Ying, Program Assistant of CRHK Channel 1, "*When I come back home, I still try to browse our Facebook page and reply the comments if necessary. Moreover, when something important happens, I am very used to work at home until deep night in order to prepare materials for tomorrow's radio programmes.*" The working hours and leisure time of the radio practitioners seems to be blurred, making some of the practitioners feeling very stressed. However, as pointed out by Joshua Yuen, reading comments on Facebook is a pleasurable experience that he sometimes could find many interesting points and ideas from there. Moreover, the number of "likes" that he received also serves as a strong encouragement which leads to greater sense of job satisfaction, akin to the research findings of Gupta (2015) who discovered that the use of Facebook by employees during their working hour creates positive effect feelings towards their job.

4.4 Online but not On-Air: The Reality of Participatory Culture in Radio Production

According to Schmidt (2011), inviting radio audiences to participate in radio is very attractive to radio professionals since it ensures dynamism on air while also establishing a relationship of proximity with the listener. Tracing back to the old days when the Internet technologies have not yet developed, radio producers in CRHK have already invited listeners to talk on air and contribute to the radio production more or less autonomously and independently. Moreover, some radio hosts also read out listeners' handwritten letters and discuss the content with them on air. While these approaches are still valued by many radio practitioners nowadays, it is undeniable that
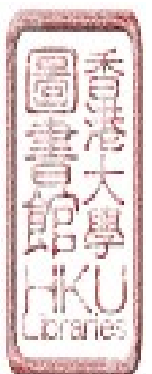
social media have provided a more convenient and interactive platform for the audiences to participate in radio production. As mentioned by Peter Kwok, "*Although I like the old days more, we can't go back but to move forward. […] To be very honest, no one will write us any letter commenting on the radio programme in nowadays. […] Everyone is using Facebook, we can't resist it but to embrace it.*"

In fact, most of the Facebook fan pages of CRHK are operated as an open-source system where users can react to, comment on and share the news feeds posted by the radio practitioners freely. Moreover, they can also send private message to the fan page administrators directly. Therefore, it provides an invaluable platform for Facebook users to contribute to the content production that their messages left can be used in-house for the preparation of the broadcast or as a source of new stories. As pointed out by Grace Chan, "*As an opinion-based programme, it's very important to how the pubic think about and react to a particular social issue. However, it is impossible to reach out to thousands of radio listeners during the 2-hour recording session. Therefore, we use Facebook as an extension of our programming and to know whether the opinions of our radio hosts were 'down-to-earth'[4] enough.*"

According to Deuze (2010), social media have become an inseparable part of media life allowing the creation and exchange of user-generated content. However, by analyzing both the Facebook and on-air contents, it seems that there is very little integration of social media content in the on-air programmes. Take "On a Clear Day" as an example, although the radio producers have introduced an interactive online polling called "Cannot Help Laughing"[5] where Facebook users could choose and comment on the most hilarious quotes from a public figure or organization of the week, radio broadcasters normally only spend about 15 minutes in reading out the

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[4] 接地氣

[5] 忍唔住笑
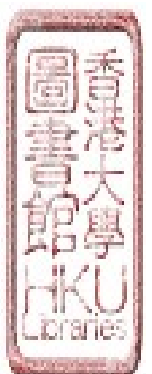
comments so as to discuss the result once a week, normally on a Friday morning. Therefore, it is obvious that radio broadcasters generally regard social media as an extension of their airing time that they still possess great power and control over the content selection and production. Therefore, the presumption that radio audience possesses great power to participate in radio production under Web 2.0 seems to be over-generalizing.

In short, CRHK follows the same trajectory as what Jenkins (2006) predicted that it combines different discourses in online platforms and introduces the participatory culture to radio production. However, this study found that both the online and on-air content are not fully integrated and the level of participation of Internet users is also very low, contrary to what Deuze (2007) foreseen where audiences are immersed in online communities by taking part in various activities, content creations and conversations. Perhaps, as Carpentier (2011) mentioned, the expectation of a hyper-active and hyper-productive audience is overly optimistic in light of the inactiveness of the radio listeners in Hong Kong.
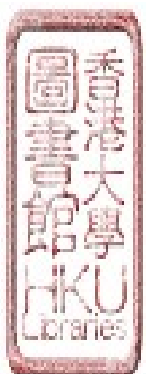
Chapter 5: Research Implications

After analyzing the current practices of CRHK's radio programmes incorporating new participatory components provided by the emergence of the social media and other Internet technologies, there are several research implications that are worthwhile for CRHK and other radio stations in Hong Kong to pay attention to and to act on.

5.1 Professionalization and Intensification of Social Media Contents

In this paper, I argue that CRHK is a leading media organization in Hong Kong adopting new media technologies in producing media content to maintain and attract audiences. Generally speaking, creating contents for social media and websites become daily job duties of radio practitioners in addition to the already-busy on-air programming. As proclaimed by Paterson & Domingo (2008), production of online content requires a different skill set in order to make it interesting and meaningful to the Internet users. However, this study found that CRHK does not put enough emphasis on training all the production staff to produce quality content for the web and social media but solely rely on the existing technical skills of several junior staff. Moreover, by interviewing the radio practitioners, most of them also grumbled the heavy additional workload induced by generating the web content, hence causing them to hold a love-hate attitude towards radio digitalization.

In order to professionalize the social media contents so as to reduce the job pressure of the radio practitioners, it is suggested that CRHK should hire more specialists to manage the Facebook fan pages in such a fast-paced media environment. Nowadays, media consumers would not wait for a particular news or radio programme in order to seek for information but to actively search online. Therefore, CRHK should make the social media content as an extension of the traditional radio programme instead of viewing it as a 'plus'. To achieve this, on the one hand it is vital for CRHK to intensify its Facebook contents by designating a person or even a team to upload the
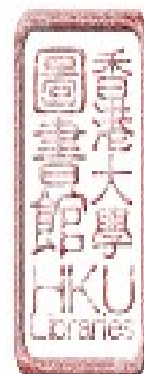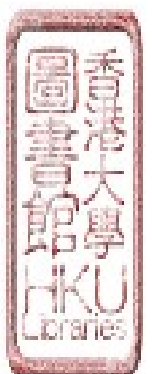
news feeds from time to time. For instance, CRHK may pay reference to the practice of BBC Radio Cumbria where the station has introduced a dedicated Social Media Producer to oversee and coordinate the online activity of other staff in order to ensure the consistency and quality of the web contents (Zollner & Lax, 2015).

On the other hand, radio producers should also try their best to integrate their online and on-air contents together to enhance the listening experience. Currently, the Facebook fan pages mainly serve as a promotional tool rather than a highly interactive platform to engage with the audience in radio production. Internet-user-generated content did not feature much in the on-air programmes. Given that many CRHK's programmes like "On a clear day" are live recorded, practically there is little room for radio hosts to interact with their listeners via social media and/or phone-in since this could jeopardize their autonomy in controlling the flow and content which may lower the programme quality. Despite of this, radio broadcasters should actively consider to hold a discussion on Facebook prior to recording and to read out the Internet users' comments while broadcasting. It is believed that this can enhance the connectivity with the radio audiences which can attract more new listeners, hence revitalizing the radio industry.

5.2 Enhancing Radio Listeners' interest to participate in radio production
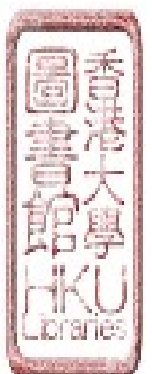
Unlike the arguments of Schmidt (2015) who presumes that the number of listeners who take initiative to contribute to radio production will surge with the increasing number of interactive platforms available, this study found that most of the radio listeners in Hong Kong still consume both on-air and online content passively without expressing much of their opinions. To enhance interactivity, it is recommended that CRHK should adopt the following strategies to attract listeners' interest to participate in radio production.

Firstly, CRHK should encourage the radio producers to promote the Facebook fan

pages during broadcasting the radio content from time to time. Since radio broadcasting is audio-based, social media serve as an effective means to visualize the radio content by uploading the photos and/or videos that were taken during the recording session. Recently, Facebook has introduced a live streaming function where users can broadcast the real-time video content to its subscribers. It is believed that CRHK may use it as a good starting point to engage with the audiences.

Secondly, revamping its mobile applications and website interfaces are also very important for CRHK to consider for enhancing the ease of audience to participate in radio content production. According to Cordeiro (2012), the design of the digital interfaces that allows users to express themselves and the computer literacy of radio listeners are the two most important factors in affecting the effectiveness of online interaction. While it is inappropriate for CRHK to pool any resource to educate its users how to use social media like Facebook, it is worthwhile for the station to review on the current interfaces of all digital platforms to see whether they are user-friendly enough for radio listeners to voice out their opinions freely. By enhancing the accessibility of both radio podcast and social media contents, it is believed that more opinions and ideas can be gathered which will in turn benefit the production of radio contents.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In 2006, TIME magazine chose "You" as the person of the year, recognizing the millions of individuals who anonymously contribute user-generated content to the Internet. Undeniably, the rise of new communication technologies have transformed not only the way how radio stations produce and distribute content but also changed the way people consume the radio contents. Nowadays, audiences no longer satisfy with the sound quality transmitted but strive for a sense of individual connection to the radio station. As a result, radio broadcasting is in a process of change where broadcasters are eager to make the industry to become a more web-based, interactive and multimedia business (Cordeiro, 2012). In this research paper, the digital shift happening in the radio industry, specifically the emergence of social media on radio production and audiences' involvement in radio, was investigated.

Using Commercial Radio Hong Kong as a case study, this research shed lights on the impacts of social media on the radio production. Starting from 2004, CRHK has made great effort to digitalize its radio content and has incorporated new resources for participation, especially through social media, in order to attract audiences and to make the business profitable in such a fast-changing media environment. After analyzing the web content of CRHK, Facebook, among all the other social networking websites, is highly adopted by the radio station because of its great popularity and its perceived enhancement of interactivity between radio stations and producers. This is consistent with the previous findings by Schmidt (2011) and Zoellner & Lax (2015), where radio audiences have more opportunities to reflect their voice to broadcast content, turning themselves from passive receivers to content contributors with the use of social media.

However, this paper finds that radio practitioners of CRHK generally hold a conflicting attitude towards radio digitalization and the incorporation of social media
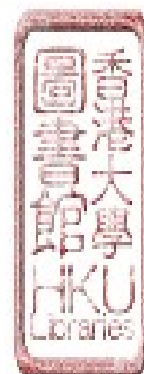
to their already-busy work schedule. This is mainly because of the heavy workload and pressure induced by the creation of online content, despite all the interviewees agreed that social media is a precious and necessary platform for radio station/practitioner to interact and engage with audiences. Moreover, some of the interviewees also worried about their decreasing autonomy in controlling the content and flow of the radio programme because of the increasing involvement (power) of the audiences in content production. Therefore, the interview data shows that the readiness and eagerness of radio practitioners to embrace many of the opportunities to interact with their audiences through social media are not strong enough to promote the participatory media culture as argued by Henry Jenkins (2006).

Furthermore, according to my research findings, there is rather limited integration of online and on-air content that social media content is not directly linked to what is said on air, although there is a strong tendency to strengthen such convergence. As a result, the researcher suggests CRHK and other radio stations in our territory to professionalize and intensify the social media content in order to enhance the interactivity with the audiences. Social media not only offers radio station opportunities to engage the audiences, it also allows broadcasters to offer images, videos and graphics which enhance radio programming. Moreover, through the successful use of social media, radio content can potentially be expanded into new spaces allowing extended and deeper discussion between broadcasters and audiences even after the programme has ended (Berry, 2014).

As concluded by Jędrzejewski (2014, 34), "the success of radio in the competitive digital environment depends on whether it is able to provide the content people want on convenient platforms in accessible, customizable and easy-to-navigate ways". While it is notoriously difficult to predict future, the researcher holds his firm conviction that social media is where the future of radio station lies. Radio
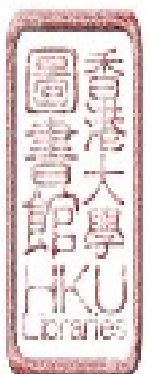
broadcasters must grasp the opportunities brought by social media to enhance the interactivity with the audiences. In such a highly competitive media environment, only by increasing listeners' loyalty and attachment to the radio station can CRHK safeguard the interest of advertisers, in other words, be commercially profitable. After all, radio is not going to die because of its incapability to incorporate social media content into radio production. Yet, it definitely dies out when listeners and advertisers abandon it. Meeting audiences' needs with a skillful use of new communication technologies should be a key for market success of radio in the digital age.
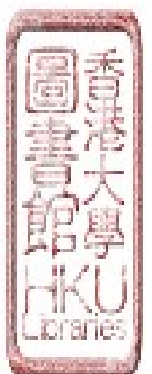
Appendix 1: Interview Questions

A. Interview Questions (General)

Q1: How long have you worked in the radio industry and what brought you into this industry?

Q2: Can you briefly describe the major difference of your work between now and the time when you first started working?

Q3: How does CRHK try to engage the listeners via digital technology such as social networking websites?

Q4: To you, Why CRHK wants to motivate audience participation via new media?

Q5: What are your attitudes about the engagement of audiences in radio production?

Q6: Do you think that the engagement of listeners in radio production can improve your work performance/program quality? Why or why not?

Q7: What are the obstacles that need to overcome in order to enhance the engagement of audiences?

Q8: What are your thoughts about the future development of CRHK?

B. Interview Questions (Specifically to Radio Producers & Hosts)

Q1: Do you clearly know about your target audience(s)? If yes, who are they?

Q2: How did you interact with you audience before the emergence of social media? And how it has changed after the emergence of social media?

Q3: In the process of producing the radio content, to what extent do you think you have the autonomy to deliver your own thought?

Q4: Do you use social media such as Facebook and Instagram? Will you share any radio/work-related feeds with your friends? Why and why not?

Q5: To you, are there any change in the power relationship between radio producers and audience in terms of the production of radio content?

Q6: To what extent do you think the audiences' opinions can be reflected in the
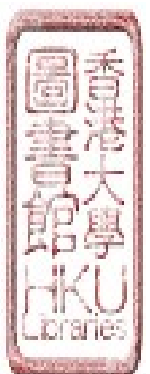
program?

C. Interview Questions (Specifically to Radio Web Development Staff/ Program Assistant)

Q1: In general, how many people use the mobile application of CRHK to listen to the radio programs every day?

Q2: What are the strategies adopted by your department to enhance audience engagement?

Q3: What are the difficulties of integrating more new digital technologies into the radio program?

Q4: Do you think that the current technical system of CRHK is capable enough for engaging the radio audience before/during/after the radio program? If not, what are your suggestions?
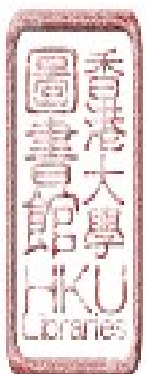
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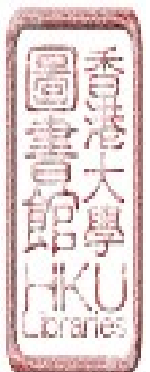
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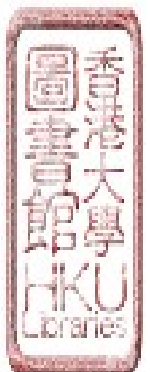
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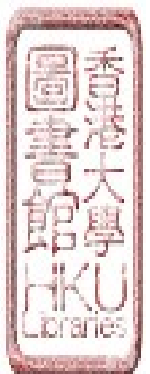
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