

CLASSICAL MUSIC RISING

For the last six years as Director of Audience Research for KJZZ and KBAQ in Phoenix I have tracked public radio trends every month to identify the best performing stations in our industry. This includes following the all-classical stations in the Top 30 Nielsen Audio markets. Below are some observations on what we have learned from the Portable People Meter data which applies to all stations in both PPM and diary markets, as well as some tips for station personnel in the Top 50 markets that process PPM data.

I have worked in public radio for 40 years as a Program Director, a consultant, and as an instructor for various workshops including MEGS (Morning Edition Grad School), the PD Workshop, and the Arbitron University. I have been on the board of the Radio Research Consortium since 2007.

Scott Williams, February 2017

Lessons learned from PPM

- People tune in more often and listen for much shorter durations than reported in the Diary methodology.
- In an analysis of Classical station trends in Fall 2015, Walrus Research discovered a huge difference in Weekly Time Spent Listening reported for PPM versus Diary market stations. In PPM markets, the typical Classical listener spent 3 hours and 31 minutes weekly, while in Diary markets TSL to Classical was 6 hours 35 minutes.
- Cumes increased in PPM because people listen to more stations every week than reported in Diaries. Some of that listening may be of an “incidental” nature and of very little value for the station.
- PPM lets one recognize that listeners do not listen exactly the same every week.

Tips for PPM Users

- Track market time spent listening on a weekly or monthly basis to better understand the use of all radio in your market and to place your station’s numbers in context.

- Daily Cume is an important metric to monitor as it tells you in broad sense how many listeners you have today who are coming back tomorrow.
- Another use of Daily Cume is to calculate how listeners are using you each day of the week. Utilizing time periods of six months to a year are recommended for meaningful results.
- Just because you can focus on small periods of time always be cognizant of the sample size before making crucial programming decisions.
- The exception to the small periods of time rule is when analyzing the size of your audience on both holidays and during on-air fund drives. The best metrics for this analysis are AQH Persons and Daily Cume.
- PPM data clearly indicate that both listening (AQH) and the number of listeners (Daily Cume) decline during on-air fund drives. When scheduling these drives remember that the Nielsen Audio week begins on Thursday and ends on Wednesday. A strategic question to ask is: Will our fund drive negatively affect, unnecessarily, one week or two weeks of audience estimates?
- When your numbers change dramatically you may also notice differences in demos. This is a clue to investigate possible panel changes. To do this click on *Local Radio eBook* on the Nielsen Answers page. Three clicks are necessary to find the information you are seeking: *View Market Info*, *Population Estimates & Sample Summary*, and *Sample Summary*. On the *Persons and Household Sample Summary* page the information to review includes In-Tab Target, In Tab Persons and Panel Turnover.

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