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## **HOW LOCAL RADIO STATIONS IN KAZAKHSTAN ARE USING SOCIAL NETWORKS**

The formats of digital broadcasting significantly influence the development of the entire sector of Kazakhstani media, including electronic media. The media market transmitted to online. Over the past quarter century, domestic radio broadcasting has been seriously modified. After gaining independence, broadcasting in Kazakhstan developed in two directions: as a private business and as a government agency with state radio programs, supervised by the Ministry of Information and Communication.

The purpose of the article is to study the transit forms of domestic radio broadcasting, the features of the transition from classical to digital formats. The author of the study examines the concept and forms of digitalization of online radio stations, as well as options for using radio stations for social networks, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The results of the research showed that commercial radio stations specializing in music content more systematically and actively use social networks, while state stations specializing in news content do not actively use the potential of social networks. There is also a similarity of the situation with the advertising product, which is more actively represented on commercial radio stations.

**Key words:** Kazakhstan, local radio station, digital format, social networks, audience.

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## **Қазақстандағы жергілікті радиолардың әлеуметтік желілерді қолдануы**

Цифрлық хабар таратудың форматы қазақстандық медианың, соның ішінде электронды ақпарат құралдарының дамуына ерекше әсер етуде. Медиа-нарық онлайн жүйеге біртіндеп көшуде. Соңғы онжылдықта отандық радио хабар тарату қызметі өзгеріп, жаңа деңгейге шықты. Ел тәуелсіздігін алғаннан кейінгі жылдары Қазақстандағы радио хабарларын тарату екі бағытта: коммерциялық және Ақпарат және коммуникация министрлігімен бақыланатын мемлекеттік хабар тарату ретінде қалыптасты.

Мақаланың мақсаты – отандық радио хабарларын тарату формаларын, соның ішінде радиостанциялардың классикалық хабар таратудан цифрлық форматқа көшуін зерттеу. Мақала авторы онлайн-радиолардың қағидалары мен формаларын және Twitter, Facebook, Instagram секілді әлеуметтік желілерді пайдалануын қарастырады. Зерттеудің нәтижесінде ақпараттық радиолар өздерінің аудиторияларын жаңалықтармен кеңінен қамтамасыз ету арқылы танымалдыққа ие болса, музыкалық радиостанциялар әлеуметтік желілерде көбірек жарнама жасайды. Яғни музыкалық хабарлар таратуға маманданған коммерциялық радиолар әлеуметтік желілерді мемлекеттік арналарға қарағанда жүйелі түрде пайдаланады. Ал, мемлекеттік радиоларда көбінесе жаңалықтарға және ақпараттық мазмұн басым болатыны және әлеуметтік желілерде белсенділігі төмен екендігі айқындалды.

**Түйін сөздер:** Қазақстан, жергілікті радиостанция, сандық формат, әлеуметтік медиа, аудитория.

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## Как локальные радиостанции в Казахстане используют социальные сети

Форматы цифрового вещания существенным образом влияют на развитие всего сектора казахстанских СМИ, включая электронные. Медиарынок переходит в онлайн. За последнюю четверть века серьезно модифицировалось отечественное радиовещание. После обретения независимости радиовещание в Казахстане развивалось по двум направлениям: как частный бизнес и как правительственное учреждение с государственными радиопередачами, курируемое Министерством информации и коммуникации.

Цель статьи – изучение транзитных форм отечественного радиовещания, особенностей перехода от классических к цифровым форматам. Автор исследования рассматривает концепцию и формы цифровизации онлайн-радиостанций, а также варианты использования радиостанциями социальных сетей, таких как Twitter, Facebook и Instagram. Результаты исследования показали, что коммерческие радиостанции, специализирующиеся на музыкальном контенте, более системно и активно используют социальные сети, в то время как государственные станции, специализирующиеся на новостном контенте, не достаточно активно используют потенциал социальных сетей. Также отмечается схожесть ситуации с рекламным продуктом, который более активно представлен на коммерческих радиостанциях.

**Ключевые слова:** Казахстан, местная радиостанция, цифровой формат, социальные сети, аудитория.

This study discusses how radio in Kazakhstan developed since independence in 1991 and challenge by the radio station into a digital format, which is suitable for transmission over the Internet. This study examined the way in which 34 radio stations in Kazakhstan are using the social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Radio stations in Kazakhstan developed partly as a private enterprise and partly as a government entity with government radio operations controlled by the State Television and Radio Broadcasting. Results of the study revealed that news stations provided more news items for their audiences while music stations had more promotional in social media.

According to the Networked Readiness Index for 2014, it ranked 38 out of 148 countries (up six places from 2013). Among media and ICT platforms in Kazakhstan radio remains the most widely available, reaching directly into more than 70 percent of adults' homes in the country. Despite the claims by some, radio continues to remain one of Kazakhstan's two ongoing favorite media sources, second only to TV. Radio in Kazakhstan since independence in 1991 changed and market developed partly as a private enterprise and partly as a government entity with government radio operations controlled by the State Television and Radio Broadcasting Corporation.

This study set out to establish the impact of new media on radio broadcast through a case study of Kazakh Radio. It was guided by five objectives that focused on the extend of the use of New media platforms by Kazakh Radio and identifying the challenges faced by Kazakh Radio in its use of New media. The study applied the survey research design. The population included the employees of Kazakh Radio and the listeners especially in Almaty City and Astana. The target population was the management and staff of the new media department as they were the ones directly involved with the new media. The listeners were sampled purposively to get as much relevant data as possible. Data was collected by use of a questionnaires and oral interviews for each group of respondents. If a listener indicated from the onset that they listened to another radio station, they would not be given the questionnaire but would give to the next respondent. The data collected revealed that a majority of listeners of Kazakh Radio were well versed with new media. The study results show that as a result of accepting and adopting the new media technologies the benefits have been immense; increase on advertising revenue, growth of audiences due to the variety provided on the website like podcast, music downloads, news and You-tube videos. Kazakh Radio has been quick to adopt new media through its all-interactive website, which caters to

listeners all over the world. The younger generation listens to radio using their mobile phones. One can access Kazakh Radio website to get the relevant news anytime instead of waiting for primetime news. Kazakh stations are successful; the radio market in Kazakhstan is dominated by Russian radio. Finally, the research group organized all information of Kazakh radio, which we used in our research. Internet media has its own specific tools (their amount is higher and they are more modern than casual media).

Historically, radio came to Kazakhstan in the 1920s as it did to the rest of the world. *Kazakh Radiosy* began broadcasting in 1921 under the direction of the Soviet government. By 1927 the station broadcast its earliest programs in the Kazakh language. *Kazakh Radiosy* was under Soviet ideological control until the fall of the Soviet Union, and Kazakh radio came under the control of the Kazakh government (Brown, Yerkimbay, Myssayeva, 2017).

According to the research study about the “Radio and the Development of Kazakh as a National Language” (Brown, Yerkimbay, Myssayeva, 2017) there are three broad approaches scholars use to classify radio broadcast organization. One approach is commercial radio which is profit driven, has a consistent and stable format, and today is likely part of a network of corporate owned stations. Another approach is public service radio. This approach is driven by a need to serve the public rather than generate profit. Public service radio takes a variety of forms from national professional organizations such as the BBC to community radio stations staffed by local volunteers (Lowe and Bardoel, 2009). The last approach is government radio which is sponsored and funded by a government. This approach is used to enhance national prestige, promote national interests, indoctrinate the population, and develop cultural ties among otherwise divergent people (Clark, 2012). Most of Kazakhstan’s radio history is government sponsored radio and is tied to the legacy of Russian broadcasting. The Soviet Union was one of the early adopters of a ‘government radio’ approach to broadcasting and this extended to the use of radio in Central Asia. Radio was an important tool used to spread Soviet ideology in Central Asia, and use of the Russian language was a key part of this effort (Yudin and Keith, 2004).

Today Kazakhstan has two of the three forms of radio. State sponsored radio continues to operate. After Kazakh independence state radio continued broadcasting as the newly formed Kazakhstan Radio and Television Corporation (KRTC), but audiences were

low. Four state radio channels currently broadcast in Kazakhstan. The channels include: *Kazakh Radiosy*, *Shalkar*, *Astana*, and *Classic*. *Kazakh Radiosy* is the traditional state channel with a long history in Kazakhstan. It broadcasts the core programming produced by the government’s corporation ([www.kazradio.kz](http://www.kazradio.kz)). *Shalkar* draws programming from *Kazakh Radiosy*, but focuses on the Kazakh language and broadcasts only in Kazakh ([www.shalkarfm.kz](http://www.shalkarfm.kz)). *Astana* is a music and information channel ([www.astanafm.kz](http://www.astanafm.kz)), and *Classic* features classical music, particularly music produced by Kazakh musicians. The channel is a project co-sponsored with the Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory ([www.classicfm.kz](http://www.classicfm.kz)). Because Kazakh radio was part of the Soviet ideological apparatus, there was a perception that the state owned Kazakh radio was somewhat inferior and not particularly sensitive to the needs of audiences. State radio today struggles to connect with audiences, in large part because of the authoritarian legacy of a Soviet approach to radio broadcasting (Ibrayeva, Missayeva and Alzhanova, 2012).

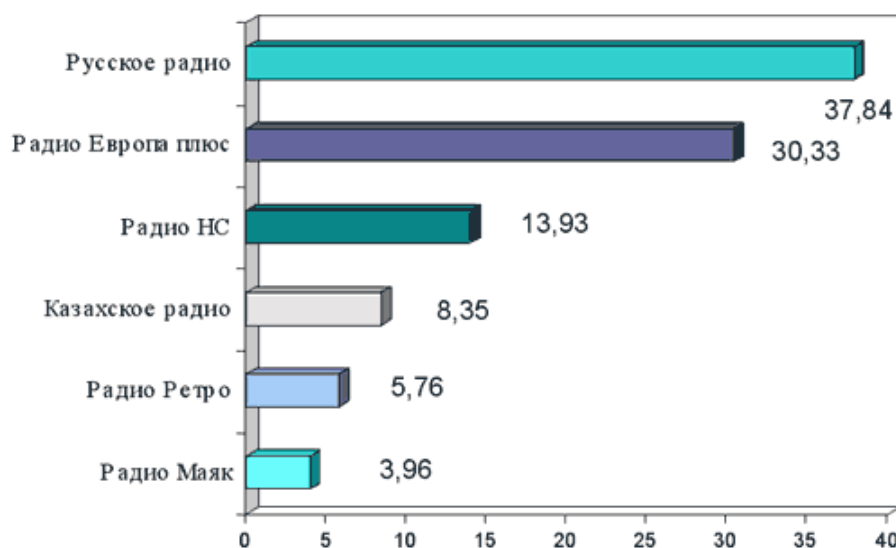
Kazakh commercial radio is present but struggles. Commercial Kazakh radio arrived in the early 1990s and by the mid-1990s competed for audiences and advertising with transnational commercial radio from Russia. Moscow was the center of Soviet radio’s ideological network, and serves as the center for commercial broadcasting today that is exported to a number of international markets. Russia entered the Kazakh commercial market with an established history of international broadcasting while Kazakh-based radio was emerging with little market experience. This put Kazakh commercial radio at a disadvantage. Networks such as *Radio Russia-Kazakhstan* and *Europa Plus-Kazakhstan*, both part of Russia’s international media presence, are the most popular radio channels (Ibrayeva, Missayeva and Alzhanova, 2012). Through the mid-1990s private Kazakh commercial stations relied on advertising but faced many challenges. First, there was little experience with commercial radio. Advertising supported media was a new concept. Second, there was pressure from the state. Kazakhstan was an authoritarian state and press freedom with audience-centered programming had not been tested. Third, the infrastructure to train broadcasters and deliver programs was not as ‘professional’ as international imports, particularly from Russia. Currently about 30 commercial stations operate in Kazakhstan, some networked throughout the country. For example, *Auto Radio* is one of the more successful private commercial radio stations. It was

organized in 1998 in Almaty and now broadcasts in 17 cities. It broadcasts an eclectic music format with traffic and weather reports, and limited talk. The station primarily targets a male audience ([www.avtoradio.kz](http://www.avtoradio.kz)).

The third general form of broadcasting, an independent public service radio, is absent from Kazakh-

stan's radio landscape, with the exception of one BBC channel in Karaganda. Government sponsored radio stations offer public service and local programming, but programs are developed under government direction (Brown, Yerkimbay, Myssayeva, 2017).

1. Table Top 10 contains a list of the outputs of the radio programs with the highest ratings.



### Rating of radio stations in Kazakhstan

In just over the last 25 years, several developments have occurred that are challenging radio in Kazakhstan. While radio began to accept and awkwardly adapt to the new realities in the post-consolidation and digital music era, the Internet experienced another growth spurt in the form of Social media. In addition, the satellite radio companies merged, and mobile operating systems with music and radio apps began proliferating on consumer hand phones and tablets.

Describing the relationship between radio and social media is a lot more straightforward. The radio industry's reactions to the latest developments with social media have been multifarious. How are radio stations utilizing this new social media environment? Are some applications a threat, or does radio see them more as a tool and collaborator in reaching and maintaining relations with listeners? What is the proper way to create and manage a social media (Facebook, Instagram) page? These are only some of the questions that are popping up in water cooler conversations at radio stations the world over. As radio practitioners and researchers, our study seeks to join the discussion by exploring radio's relationship with social media platforms, specifically the Facebook and Instagram.

Along with the widespread adoption of the Internet, users are now shifting from being passive media recipients to active content creators on the social networks. Since acquiring and retaining a large-scale listenership is crucial to commercial station businesses, especially because it depends on revenues from advertising, they have started to discover the opportunities that social network sites offer in terms of community building. Consequently, we can draw conclusions on the relationship between the traditional radio station service and the radio station's social software presence via Facebook and Instagram.

### Conclusion

The interviewees for this project provided a snapshot of the relationship between radio and social media. This is a snapshot because the traditional media landscape and social media use in Kazakhstan is fluctuating.

The key direction of the forthcoming stage of the republic's development will be the creation of a number of high-tech industries in the priority sectors of the country. Currently, state programs are being implemented: "Electronic Government", "Information Kazakhstan-2020", "Digital Kazakhstan".

In the program “Information Kazakhstan 2020” it is planned “by 2020 to increase the volume of television production of Kazakhstan production to 60% of the total airtime. The number of Internet sites in .kz and .kaz domains should increase by 50% compared to 2012, the number of Internet media will make up 95% of their total number (Kazinform, 2012).

The country has developed the State Program Digital Kazakhstan, its main goal is the progressive development of the digital ecosystem to meet the challenges of sustainable economic growth and enhance the country’s competitiveness in the international arena. In the course of the implementation of this program. The main aim of this program is the need for the development of a digital economy

in Kazakhstan using IAOD global network of economic and social activities carried out through the Internet, mobile and social networks.

The Internet, new media and new digital technology have revolutionized the educational process for the training of future journalists. Disciplines corresponding to the new era of the digital era began to appear, such as Digital Journalism, Convergent Journalism, Internet Journalism, Modern Media Technologies, Multimedia Journalism, Audiovisual and Digital Media, and others. The development of electronic media is carried out in the era of the global digital revolution. Modern achievements in the field of social media change the modern journalism, which becomes digital, multimedia.

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