Radio Disc Jockey Encyclopedia Article

Radio Disc Jockey

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Radio Disc Jockey

Radio announcers who play music, or discs, are often called disc jockeys. They introduce records, commercials, news, and public announcements that are aired at a radio station.

While on the air, disc jockeys comment on the music, weather, news, and traffic. They may interview guests, take requests from listeners, and manage listener contests. They usually make up comments as they go, working without a formal written script.

Some disc jockeys get to choose the music that will be played during their shows. However, they usually must choose music from an approved play list put together by the station's program or music director. At smaller stations, disc jockeys may have off-air duties such as operating the control board, which is used to broadcast the programming, commercials, and public service announcements according to schedule.

A small number of radio disc jockeys reach celebrity status, such as Wolfman Jack, whose radio career spanned from the 1960s to his death in 1995.

Mathematics and Radio Work

Mathematics comes into play when preparing the station's schedule. A certain percentage of air time may be set aside for music, another percentage for commercials, and so on. Timing is critical at a radio station. The play times of music, commercials, and other programs must add up precisely so that there is no "dead air."

Mathematics is also used in the radio industry when conducting listener **demographic** studies. Statistics are used by the radio stations to determine their target audiences and to periodically assess the demographic makeup of their listeners.

Educational requirements for a radio disc jockey job vary. However, many stations prefer a college degree or vocational and technical training. In college, courses in communications and broadcasting are useful. Working at the college radio station is also valuable experience.

See Also

Music Recording Technician.

Bibliography

Field, Shelly. *Career Opportunities in the Music Industry,* 3rd ed. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1995.

Internet Resources

Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2000–2001 Edition. <http://stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>.