

# How Diarykeepers Record Their Listening

In 1996, Arbitron conducted a study that identified trends in how diarykeepers used station identifiers to record their listening. This study (which used a random sample of 43,125 diary entries) told a story: that lone Call Letters were the most commonly used station identifier, with over 50 percent of all diary entries containing a Call Letter.

A comparison of this trend against more recent data suggests that a shift has occurred in the way diarykeepers use station identifiers to record listening.

Using data retrieval tools that were not widely available in 1996, a census of all quarter-hours (a complete accounting of quarter-hours rather than a count of a sample of diary entries) included in the Fall 2002, Spring 2002, and Fall 2001 surveys was taken. As those 103,456,251 quarter-hours were counted, the station identifiers associated with each quarter-hour were noted, and proportions of each category were tallied. This quarter-hour view tells a story much different from 1996's diary entry view.

## Analysis of the Data

Current Analysis	% of Fall 2002 Survey Quarter-Hours	% of Spring 2002 Survey Quarter-Hours	% of Fall 2001 Survey Quarter-Hours
Identifier			
Call Letters <i>only</i>	17.9%	18.3%	18.9%
All entries containing <u>Call Letters</u>	34.5%	34.8%	36.1%
Frequency <i>only</i>	42.0%	41.9%	41.4%
All entries containing a <u>Frequency</u>	68.0%	67.6%	67.6%
Station Name <i>only</i>	7.8%	7.9%	7.8%
All entries containing a <u>Station Name</u>	19.2%	19.4%	18.7%
Programming <i>only</i>	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
All entries containing <u>Programming</u>	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%

Current Stats Versus Old Study Conducted in 1996	Identifier	% of Entries Containing Identifier Spring 1996 <sup>1</sup>	% of Quarter-Hours Recorded by Identifier Fall 2002 <sup>2</sup>
	Call Letters <i>only</i>	33.4%	17.9%
	All entries containing <u>Call Letters</u>	52.1%	34.5%
	Frequency <i>only</i>	27.9%	42.0%
	All entries containing a <u>Frequency</u>	51.0%	68.0%
	Station Name <i>only</i>	10.2%	7.8%
	All entries containing a <u>Station Name</u>	19.6%	19.2%
	Programming <i>only</i>	0.3%	0.5%
	All entries containing <u>Programming</u>	1.5%	2.1%

<sup>1</sup> Estimates based upon a sample of 43,125 listening entries, Spring 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Total Quarter-Hours, Fall 2002 Survey = 34,597,711

HOW

DIARYKEEPERS

RECORD

THEIR

LISTENING

### Current Analysis Examples

#### Identifier

**A**

Call Letters *only*

All entries containing Call Letters

**B**

Frequency *only*

All entries containing a Frequency

**C**

Station Name *only*

All entries containing a Station Name

**D**

Programming *only*

All entries containing Programming

### Call Letters

A station's Call Letters are its most unique identifier, yet, on average, around 35 percent of listening in the tallied surveys included a station's Call Letters. As shown in Example A, these recent data are far outpaced by the findings of the Spring 1996 study, where 52.1 percent of diary entries included a station's Call Letters.

So if diarykeepers do not use Call Letters to record their listening as much as they used to, what station identifier has taken the place of Call Letters? Over the three major surveys included in this study, diarykeepers have used a station's *Frequency* to record a greater amount of listening than any other station identifier.

As shown in Example B, a much greater proportion of listening has been reported by Frequency during the surveys included in this study than was the case in 1996 (up to 68.0 percent from 51.0 percent). This rise may be attributed to several factors, including the general trend toward stations (particularly on the FM band) to identify themselves over the air by exact frequency, and due to the increased penetration of digital-display radios at home, in the car and in the workplace.

So in an environment where the use of Call Letters to record listening has declined in favor of Frequency, what do the data indicate about the use of Station Names?

### Frequency

#### Diary Entry Examples

Call Letters *only*

3:30	4:00	WBAL	x			x		
4:30	5:30	WPOC		x	x			

All entries containing Call Letters

6:00	7:15	WKYS 93.9		x	x			
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Frequency

11:30

All entries

6:00

% of Fall 2002 Survey Quarter-Hours	% of Spring 2002 Survey Quarter-Hours	% of Fall 2001 Survey Quarter-Hours
17.9%	18.3%	18.9%
34.5%	34.8%	36.1%
42.0%	41.9%	41.4%
68.0%	67.6%	67.6%
7.8%	7.9%	7.8%
19.2%	19.4%	18.7%
0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
2.1%	2.0%	2.0%

## Summing Up

When the results of the 2001-2002 analysis are compared to those from 1996, it is clear that a move toward diarykeeper use of Frequency over Call Letters is under way, while use of Station Name and Programming identifiers has generally remained stable over time.

Of course, these numbers apply to the survey as a whole; variance within markets, within formats, and within the ways diarykeepers record listening from station to station is to be expected.

### Station Name

As shown in Example C, diarykeeper use of a lone Station Name to report listening has declined to 7.8 percent from 10.2 percent in the 1996 study. However, use of a Station Name within an entry has remained stable, suggesting that Station Names continue to be an important identifier, accounting for 19.2 percent of all listening.

In addition to Call Letters, Frequency, and Station Name, diarykeepers occasionally use Program/Personality ("Programming") identifiers to record their listening. What did the quarter-hour census show about diarykeeper use of Programming names to record listening?

### Programming

As shown in Example D, while levels of Programming listening have risen slightly since 1996 (from 1.5 percent to 2.1 percent), levels of lone Programming listening continue to be marginal, at less than 0.5 percent.

Please note that "Programming" includes both nationally syndicated and local program references. While Arbitron has yet to quantify proportions of Programming references that are nationally syndicated vs. locally originating, it is clear that a large proportion of all Programming quarter-hours record listening to a few, but very popular, personalities such as Howard Stern and Dr. Laura.

only

11:45	103.1		x		x		
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containing a Frequency

6:20	88.1 NPR		x		x		
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Station Name only

5:15	5:30	The Bay		x		x	
5:30	9:30	ESPN Radio	x			x	

All entries containing a Station Name

3:10	4:00	Heaven 600	x			x	
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All entries containing Programming

7:10	7:30	105.7	x			x	
:	:	Howard Stern					



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[www.arbitron.com](http://www.arbitron.com)

**New York**

142 West 57th Street  
New York, NY 10019  
(212) 887-1300

**Chicago**

222 South Riverside Plaza  
Suite 1050  
Chicago, IL 60606  
(312) 542-1900

**Atlanta**

9000 Central Parkway  
Suite 300  
Atlanta, GA 30328  
(770) 668-5400

**Los Angeles**

10877 Wilshire Boulevard  
Suite 1600  
Los Angeles, CA 90024  
(310) 824-6600

**Dallas**

13355 Noel Road  
Suite 1120  
Dallas, TX 75240  
(972) 385-5388

**Washington/Baltimore**

9705 Patuxent Woods Drive  
Columbia, MD 21046  
(410) 312-8000

**Birmingham**

3500 Colonnade Parkway  
Suite 400  
Birmingham, AL 35243